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Haussler, John Cecil (1899–1986)

KATHERINE KOH

Katherine Koh

John Cecil Haussler was a renowned Adventist educator and scholar who taught history, music, and Bible at six different Seventh-day Adventist institutions during his sixty-year career, before retiring in 1982. Dr. Haussler spent most of his career at La Sierra College (later the La Sierra Campus of Loma Linda University, now La Sierra University), where he served in both the History Department and the School of Religion. He was also an ordained

minister.

Early Life

John Cecil Haussler (called Cecil) was born on October 19, 1899, to Gustave Haussler (March 1859-September 1915) and Louise Anna Schneider (March 1865-November 1945), both children of German immigrants who settled in Missouri. Haussler was the sixth of seven children born to Gustave and Louise: Iva, Stella, Gustave, Gertrude, Anne, John Cecil, and Joseph. At the time of Haussler's birth, his family owned a farm just outside of Alvin, Texas. During Haussler's early life, his family suffered a series of tragedies. In September 1900, the Galveston Hurricane, a category four storm, ripped through the coast of southeastern Texas, destroying the Haussler's farm. Moving to north Texas, the family established a cattle ranch that was soon after ravaged by foot and mouth disease. The family then moved to Cowlitz, South Kelso, Washington, where Haussler spent the remainder of his youth. When Haussler was fifteen, his father was killed in an accident.

The Hausslers were devout Methodists, but following the death of Haussler's father, his mother attended a Seventh-day Adventist camp meeting, where she converted to Adventism. Cecil Haussler was seventeen at the time and awaiting entrance to the United States Naval Academy at Annapolis, Maryland, but his mother entreated him to turn down the offer and attend Walla Walla College instead. He never attended the Naval Academy, enrolling at Walla Walla College along with his brother Joseph and sister Anna. Shortly after, Cecil converted to the Adventist faith.

Career and Marriage

Cecil Haussler graduated from Walla Walla College in 1923. Shortly after graduation, he began his career as dean of men at Canadian Junior College (now Burman University), where he also organized a choir of forty members. He then moved to Southwestern Junior College (now Southwestern Adventist University) to teach history. While there, he married Doris Alberta Holt (1899-1988), head of the music department and an instructor in piano and voice. The two were married in June 1925 and welcomed their only child, a daughter, June La Rae on August 18, 1926 (1926-2006). That same year, the Hausslers sought a mission appointment to the Solusi Union in Africa, but were denied an appointment due to Doris Haussler's health. Instead, Cecil Haussler attended Occidental College in Los Angeles, California, where he earned a Master's degree in history in 1927.

The couple then moved to Southern Junior College (now Southern Adventist University), where Haussler again taught history while his wife became head of the music department and taught piano. During his time at Southern, Cecil Haussler became heavily involved in the music programs on campus conducting a male glee club, the college choir, and the college church choir. In 1935, he became principle of the Walla Walla College Preparatory School. In 1941, the Hausslers moved to California, where Cecil Haussler joined the faculty of La Sierra Academy, teaching Bible and history. In 1944, he became a faculty member of La Sierra College where he remained for the rest of his career, teaching biblical studies and history. While teaching, Haussler wrote his doctoral dissertation on the history of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in California, earning a Ph.D. from the University of Southern California in 1945.

Although Cecil Haussler spent most of his career in Adventist education, he preached as a licensed minister in Canada and the United States until the Southeastern California Conference ordained him in 1942. During his time at La Sierra College, Haussler participated in camp meetings, evangelistic series, on-campus religious revivals, as well as ministering in quieter, more personal settings. For example, for over a decade he and his wife hosted a weekly discussion and prayer time in their home on Sabbath mornings for students of La Sierra College.

Later Life

Cecil Haussler retired in 1982, after serving the Seventh-day Adventist Church for nearly sixty years. After a long period of convalescence, he died on June 24, 1986, in Riverside, California. He is buried in Montecito Memorial Park in Colton, California.

Legacy

John Cecil Haussler left a legacy of careful scholarship and humble Christian service to students at six Seventh-day Adventist educational institutions. His numerous lectures and studies on Daniel and Revelation deposited in the La Sierra University library attest to both the attention to detail he poured in to his work, as well as his steadfast belief in the Adventist faith. The interconnection between his work and his faith is eloquently etched in to the epitaph on his tombstone, "with loving kindness have I drawn thee."

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