



Minutes

Seventh Annual Meeting

Monday, September 16, 2013, 11:00 AM
Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Chapel

Opening

President Daniel Balge opened the seventh annual WLS Alumni meeting at 11:00 a.m. with a reading from Psalm 78:1-7 and with prayer. The alumni sang hymn 543, "God of the Prophets." Professor Stephen Geiger served as the organist for the day.

Greeting from the Seminary

Professor Richard Gurgel spoke for President Paul Wendland. He spoke of how the seminary is celebrating its 150th anniversary under the theme "Heritage and Hope" and encouraged the brothers in their work of passing on our Scriptural heritage and the hope that we have in Christ. He mentioned the encouragement many Seminary students say they have received from a pastor who encouraged them to consider studying for the ministry.

Minutes of September 17, 2012

The minutes of the September 17, 2012, annual meeting were adopted with three corrections.

Elections (President, Treasurer, Committee Members)

The assembled alumni voted to fill vacant positions on the WLS Alumni Executive Committee and Board. After the presentation by Pastor Peter Prange, President Balge thanked all those who were nominated but not elected. He then reported the following results of the election:

- President: Paul Prange (1988)
- Treasurer: Richard Waldschmidt (1990)
- Auditing Committee member: Aaron Dolan (2007)
- Nominating Committee member: Paul Schulz (2001)
- Membership Committee member: John Brenner (1977)
- Investment and Grants Committee member: Ken Fisher (1993)

Recognition of 25th, 40th, 50th, and 60th and beyond Anniversaries of Graduation

President Balge invited those present to stand. At least one 25th and one 60th anniversary celebrant stood.

Roll of Alumni Departed to Glory since Last We Met

WLS Alumni Vice President Tim Dolan read the roll of the 25 WLS alumni who had departed to glory since the 2012 WLS Alumni annual meeting. The alumni then sang hymn 551, “For All the Saints,” stanzas 1-3.

President’s Report

President Balge presented a written report. President Balge, Treasurer Aaron Christie, and Auditing Committee member Benjamin Kuerth declined nomination for election to another term in their respective offices. President Balge expressed thanks for all who have served.

Financial Matters

In Treasurer Christie’s absence, President Balge presented the WLS Alumni treasurer’s report. Pastor Christopher Doerr presented the audit committee’s report in the form of a ditty, reporting—without the use of prose—that the books are in good order. A motion was made and seconded to accept the treasurer’s and audit committee’s reports. The motion carried. WLS Alumni began the year ended 30 June 2013 with a balance of \$6,156; received income of \$4,023; paid expenses of \$5,260; and ended the year with a balance of \$4,919. The balance of the endowment fund was \$7,042 at the end of the year. The report noted that the total amount of gifts has grown over the past three years, and the number of individual gifts was the largest ever this year. Because of these gifts, WLS Alumni was able to award two \$1,000 scholarships instead of one, and was able to increase its support of the Renewed in Grace retreat from \$500 to \$1,000.

Awarding of Scholarships

President Balge welcomed Senior Evan Chartrand and Middler Caleb Schmiede, this year’s recipients of the WLS Alumni scholarships. Both expressed appreciation for the gifts received.

Gift Presented to the Seminary

Pastor Rick Tuttle commented on how earlier this day a first printing of *Adversus execrabilem Antichristi bullam*, Luther’s response to *Exsurge Domine*, having been previously acquired, was presented to the Seminary as a gift from Pastor Joel Luetke and himself. This is the 28th known copy in the world and had been in the library of Phillips Brooks, who wrote the words to “O Little Town of Bethlehem.”

Presentation: “A Unique Foundation: The Wisconsin Synod’s Approach to Seminary Training” (Pastor Peter Prange, WLS 1998)

Pastor Peter Prange reported on the seminary’s unique approach to seminary education. He quoted Armin Panning’s statement that the seminary’s mission is to prepare men for the parish, where the means of grace are applied to the hearts and lives of sinners, rather than to prepare men for academic or professional pursuits. Prange asked and answered the question, “How did we strike upon that idea?”

One factor was the founder, Johannes Muehlhaeuser, who was likely frustrated at the doctrinal battles waged by the Old Lutherans to prove how confessional they were, and who demonstrated compassion for the well-being of pastors coming to America, even when there

were doctrinal disagreements between him and them. Muehlhaeuser's evangelical manner likely had a direct influence on Johannes Bading and Philipp Koehler.

Another factor was the circumstances. The Germans who came to Wisconsin did not come here for confessional reasons, as other regional Lutheran groups had. Their pastors and people did not all believe and understand the same things. They came here for a better life; to farm. In addition, many Wisconsin congregations were not gathered by pastors, but they sought out pastors after establishing themselves. When pastors arrived, they found that there was much work to be done, including the catechization of many congregants. Also, the first Wisconsin pastors were missionaries, not theologians. Their work involved gathering people; they traveled frequently. The Wisconsin Synod itself was "far from monolithic, requiring a patient, evangelical approach."

J.P. Koehler cites the pastor-missionary perspective of Johannes Bading, Philipp Koehler, and Gottlieb Reim, as well as the education they received under Johann Christian Wallmann, as influences that led to our seminary's approach not to produce "professional theologian-scholars" but to produce "shepherds who were primarily concerned about caring for their sin-sick sheep (*Seelsorger*)."

Prange called this a unique foundation, but not completely unique. When we look to Jesus and his disciples, we see that Jesus did not choose the scholar-theologians of his day, but "unschooled, ordinary men" to carry out the God-given task of preaching the gospel. Thus we pray for God's continued blessing on our efforts.

Next Annual Meeting of WLS Alumni: Monday, September 22, 2014

Adjournment by Noon

The seventh annual meeting of WLS Alumni adjourned just after noon.

Respectfully submitted,



Pastor Nathan Ericson, Secretary

Related Documents

- Minutes of the September 17, 2012, meeting
- The Chronicler's Report of WLS alumni who departed to glory since the 2012 annual meeting
- The 2012-2013 WLS Alumni President's Report
- The 2012-2013 WLS Alumni Treasurer's Report