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We say what we do and we do what we say. And what we say is that “We Are Your Seminary” and “We exist to form servants in Jesus Christ who teach the faithful, reach the lost, and care for all.” And, because our congregations do matter and future generations are counting on us, we will remain consistent in our business practices.

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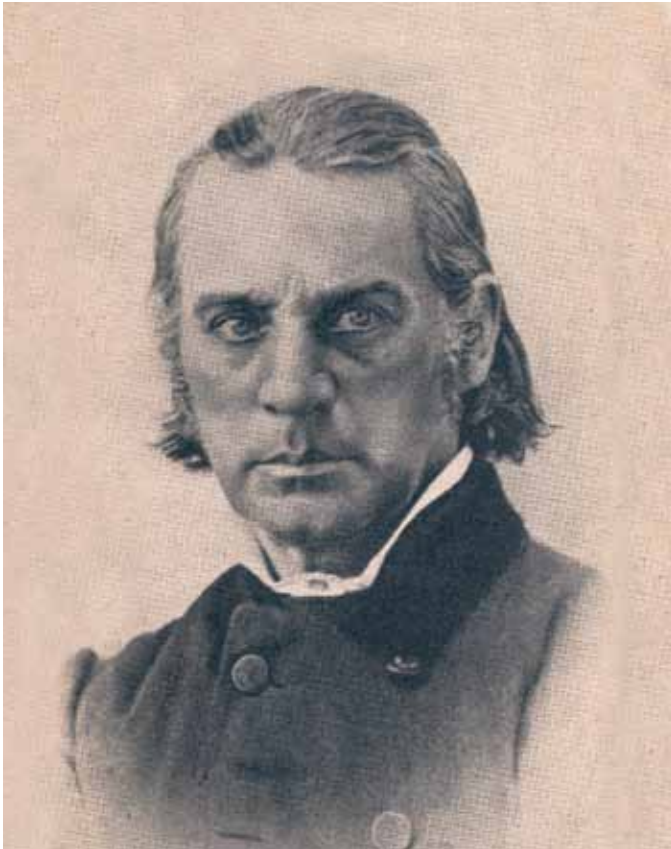
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Through the Ages

Andrea L. Schultz



*Above: Rev. Wilhelm Loehe
Opposite page: Rev. Friedrich Wyneken*

“Vielleicht warden auch Prediger daraus,” a pessimistically hopeful Rev. Wilhelm Loehe wrote in 1846, speaking of the “katecheten” (catechists) who would be trained as quickly as possible without compromising the requirements of the Office of Holy Ministry at the practical seminary in Fort Wayne. “Perhaps they will become Preachers.”

The spiritual landscape of the American frontier in the 1840s was a grim prospect. Starved of access to God’s Word, a practical seminary was the Lutheran Church’s response to the cries of her German pioneers. It’s a story that’s been told many times here at Concordia Theological Seminary (CTSFW), Fort Wayne: ordained missionary Friedrich Wyneken appealing to the church back in Germany for help, Loehe answering that call by sending money and half-trained ministers who would complete their education in America so that they could immediately begin serving, and the resulting formation of a seminary and a Synod. The scattered flock was baptized, catechized, reprimanded, forgiven and called on to serve those who served them.

Such is the refrain of the Church across time. The history of Christ Jesus feeding His people is one that cycles through the same story, generation after generation. The world cries out in need, and God uses our feet to go, our mouths to speak and our ears to hear. Pastors feed His sheep, who feed their shepherds. Bound as we are by time, so often we see only the age that is set before us. But the tuition grants, financial aid programs, donation drives and Co-ops that serve the students at CTSFW are the bricks mortared on groundwork that was laid over 170 years ago by other men and women.

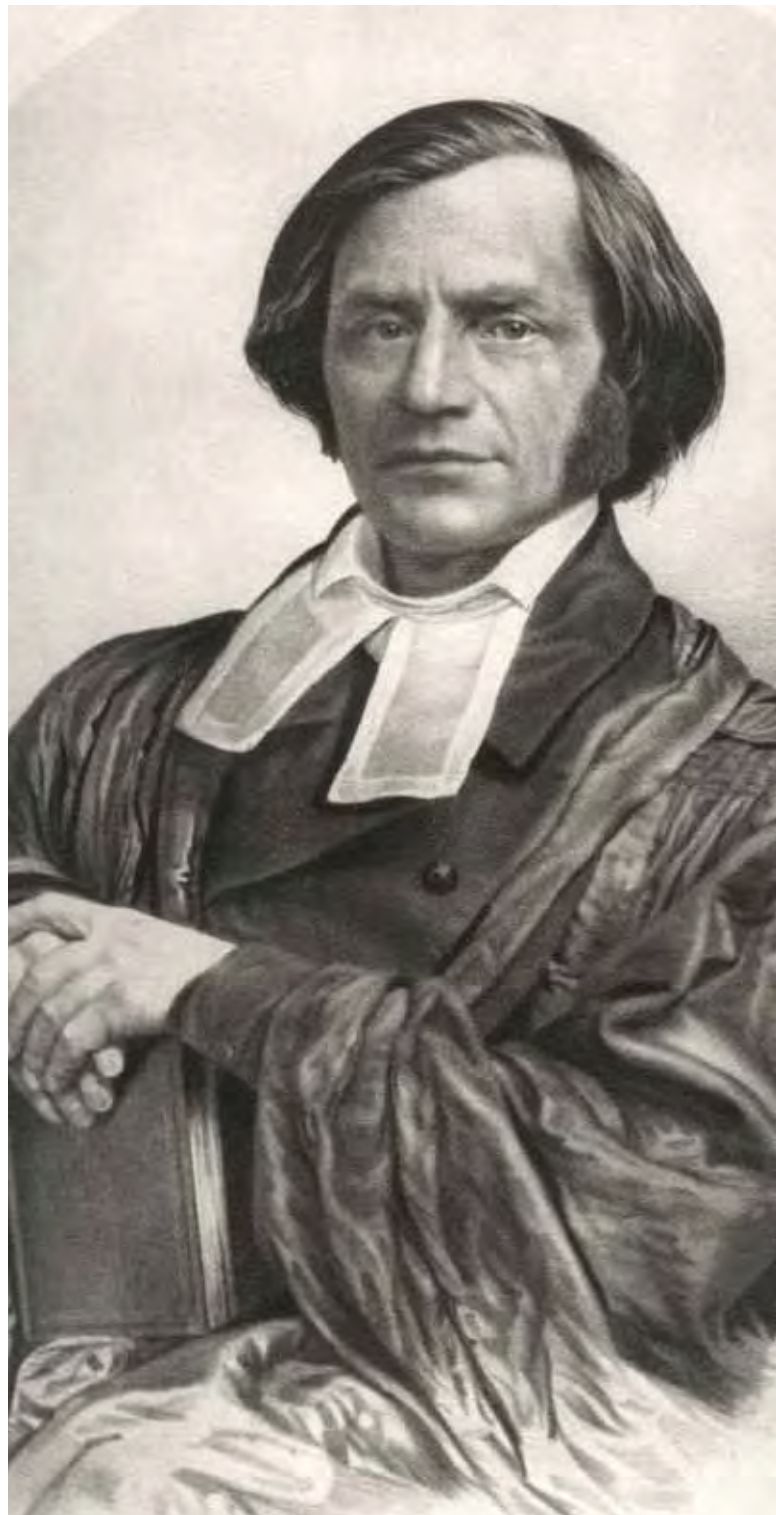
Estate planning is a major part of the bedrock on which our giving rests, and the church’s first recorded donation to the Seminary in Fort Wayne through the death of one of her saints is nearly as old as the school itself. In 1849, three years after the Seminary began, 31-year-old Seminary Professor A. Wolter died from cholera, willing the school over half his assets,

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including his horse. The \$1,200 estate bequest (bolstered by a gift from his sister in Germany) paid for a desperately needed four-room house following expansion of the Seminary in 1850. Seven years later, Dr. Wilhelm Sihler, the Seminary's first president, and his colleague, Professor August Craemer (later her third president), canvassed area churches for support of another building program, rather than strain an already overtaxed Synod burdened by a poor economy and plans to expand the theoretical seminary in St. Louis. Local congregations responded with \$7,000.

Many of CTSFW's student aid programs also began in the early years, established by the wives of these men. Susanna Sihler, unofficial housemother, formed a sewing circle at St. Paul's Lutheran Church to mend clothing for seminarians, unknowingly starting what is today the Synod's oldest continually operating Ladies Aid. Later, when Craemer became a faculty member, his wife Dorothea joined Mrs. Sihler's efforts. Mother Craemer, as she became known, supervised the kitchen and commissary, visiting farmers with Mrs. Sihler to gather food. Nearly 170 years later, local businesses, farmers and individuals alongside the support of the LWML still stock the Food & Clothing Co-op at CTSFW, and Donation Day, which has been a tradition at the Seminary for over a century, takes place this year on October 9.

But of course the story—and the boast in the generosity of the Church's people—is older still. In 2 Corinthians 8:4, St. Paul praised the churches in Macedonia, who supported the apostle's mission work, "begging us earnestly for the favor of taking part in the relief of the saints." Before His death on the cross, Jesus' physical needs were often cared for by such faithful women as Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joseph, Salome and Peter's mother-in-law. The origins of tithing spring from the Old Testament, especially in God's establishment of the priesthood among the Israelites. And we see God's changeless and unknowable grace when He declared of the Levitical priests through His prophet Ezekiel: "This shall be their inheritance: I am their inheritance: and you shall give them no possession in Israel; I am their possession" (Ezek. 44:28).





Desperate need cries out once more at our door. We live in a society hostile to the truth, among a people whose souls starve for what they refuse to seek. Vacancies remain a concern, as does student debt. Though additional programs have been created to assist congregations in specific, limited cases, the best thing CTSFW can do for the Church is to continue to train residential students.

Desperate need cries out once more at our door. We live in a society hostile to the truth, among a people whose souls starve for what they refuse to seek. Vacancies remain a concern, as does student debt. Though additional programs have been created to assist congregations in specific, limited cases, the best thing CTSFW can do for the Church is to continue to train residential students. “You can’t become a soldier online,” explained the Rev. Jon Scicluna, chief operating officer at CTSFW and a former police sergeant, “you go to boot camp. You can’t become a police officer online—you go to the academy. Seminary is the training ground for pastors.”

Thus the 100% tuition grant, meant to ease the burden of student loans; another chapter in an ancient story. “By working with the students we can help remove the debt cloud that follows them wherever they go,” Rev. Scicluna went on. “The grant is for the Church. It’s a commitment to residential formation. A commitment to the success of the LCMS. A commitment to send out good pastors.” This campaign has been slowly maturing over the past six years, pushed to fruition by the need of the Church and built on an endowment that must continue to grow through the generosity of the Church and her members. “It’s an ongoing partnership with the Church to be able to provide the shepherds for God’s sheep.”

The Rev. Matthew Wietfeldt, director of admission, views the 100% tuition grant through the eyes of the Church’s future pastors and deaconesses, who will someday fill her vacancies. “It means that Seminary is now possible for more people. I can tell our prospective students and their loved ones that we are breaking down the barriers between them and studying at the Seminary. When we put our students’ needs first, they are able to put their preparation for service in the Church first and not worry about the concerns that can get in the way of their formation.”

In an 1846 appeal for donations on behalf of the newly formed Seminary, Dr. Sihler wrote:

We wish to train

1. Men full of faith and well versed in God’s Word.
2. Men who will have nothing to do with the so-called Lutheran synods given to false unionism.
3. Men who have good knowledge and personal experience of this truth.
4. Men able and strong in teaching law and gospel.
5. Men who will serve the church in love and humility.
6. Men who will suffer every cross for the precious confession.
7. Men who will take heed to themselves and to all the flock.
8. Men who will be diligent in preserving the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace.

And so we pray: may it be for us in these days too, Lord. Amen.

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