

FRIEDRICH CONRAD DIETRICH WYNEKEN

Missionary, Publicist, Pastor and President

BORN: **MAY 13, 1810** *Verden, Hannover, Germany*

DIED: **MAY 4, 1876** *San Francisco, Calif.*

F.C.D. WYNEKEN ARRIVED IN AMERICA in July 1838. Moved by what he heard about the spiritual situation of German immigrants in America, he had come to bring them the Gospel. Already trained and ordained, he was welcomed by Lutherans in the eastern United States and then sent to the frontier located in the Midwest, including places like Fort Wayne, Ind. There, Wyneken found a congregation without a pastor and agreed to serve them, but insisted also on carrying out extensive forays into surrounding areas to find and then minister to Germans without pastors. There were many of them and more were coming.

Wyneken began writing up accounts of his work in America and sending them back to Germany in order to stir up support for the American mission. He was quite successful. His reports were colorful accounts of a colorful ministry. “Just imagine,” he wrote, “German heathen!” Without pastors, many German settlers were slipping away from the faith. Some were victims of charlatans like the barrel-maker whom one community hired to preach because “he had the gift of gab and was cheap too” only to discover that he was mistreating his wife and children. Others simply didn’t care anymore and rejected Wyneken’s offers to baptize, preach and absolve. So more help was needed.

Many of those who later participated in establishing The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod responded to Wyneken’s appeal when they first read it or even heard it from the man himself, for Wyneken returned to Germany in 1841 and lectured extensively on the challenges of establishing Lutheranism in the U.S.

After Wyneken returned to Fort Wayne in 1843, he accepted a position as pastor in Baltimore. There he came into contact with Lutheran leaders who weren’t really Lutheran. Some denied

the real presence of the body and blood of Jesus in the Lord’s Supper, others just thought it unimportant. This led Wyneken and men like C.F.W. Walther to form a new church body, committed to Lutheran doctrine and resolved to practice it. This was the LCMS.

The first president of the Synod was Walther, but after three years he yielded the post to Wyneken who served in this office from 1850 to 1864. It was a period of tremendous growth and therefore of enormous work since the Synod as a whole was carrying out the task that Wyneken had begun: to establish the Lutheran Church in America. In 1864, Wyneken accepted a call to Cleveland to serve once again as a parish pastor. He died in 1876 while visiting his daughter in California.

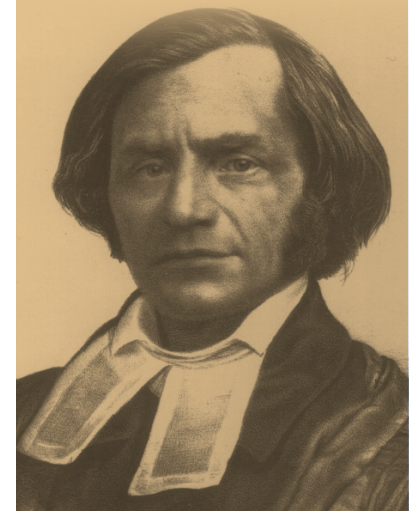
For more information about the 175th anniversary of the LCMS, visit lcms.org/175.

DISCOVER MORE

Johann Christoph Wilhelm Lindemann, *Friedrich Konrad Dietrich Wyneken: An Evangelist among the North American Lutherans*, trans. Sieghart Rein (Fort Wayne: Concordia Theological Seminary, 2010).

Robert E. Smith, “Wyneken as Missionary: Mission in the Life and Ministry of Friedrich Conrad Dietrich Wyneken,” in Daniel N. Harmelink, ed., *Let Christ Be Christ* (Huntington Beach: Tentatio Press, 1999), 321–40.

Norman J. Threinen, “F. C. D. Wyneken: Motivator for the Mission,” *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 60, no. 1–2 (January–April 1996): 19–45.



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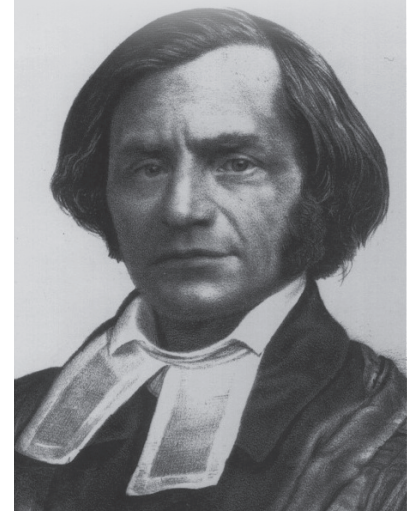
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