

FRIEDRICH WYNEKEN

Champion of Lutheran Orthodoxy

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

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

F.C.D. WYNEKEN ARRIVED IN AMERICA America in July 1838, he knew little about the place and people. But what he did know was that God was God and Jesus was Savior in America as well as Germany, and he set out at once to tell people. It did not take him long to discover that the spiritual condition of recently arrived German immigrants was terrible (and often their material condition as well). Moreover, the longer they did without religion, the more they no longer wanted it. So Wyneken himself worked tirelessly to bring the Gospel to people and people into the Church. The harvest was plentiful but the laborers were few — very few.

Wyneken started writing about the situation in America for his fellow Lutherans back home in order to generate support for the mission — and did so with considerable success. A few years later, he went back to Germany for medical treatment and especially to recruit more missionaries for the United States. One of those whom he met and inspired on his trip was Wilhelm Löhe, a pastor in Franconia (Bavaria), who sent about 80 missionaries in the next decade.

At this time in Germany, there were many in the state churches who no longer thought that the doctrinal differences that distinguished Lutherans from other Protestants were important. For them, it did not matter whether Baptism really was a rebirth or whether communicants really ate Christ's body and blood in the Sacrament. But that was not true of Löhe. Along with others, he maintained that such doctrines were still doctrines because they were biblical and therefore also Lutheran.

So while Wyneken educated Löhe about the mission field, Löhe educated him about Lutheranism. The result was that when Wyneken returned to the States, he was much more consciously Lutheran, resolved now to establish

truly Lutheran churches in his new homeland. This meant convincing the members of the congregations that he served to believe and practice according to Lutheran doctrine. He even brought Lutheran and Reformed catechisms into the pulpit so the people could hear him compare the two on the basis of God's Word.

It also meant standing up against false teachers in the synod to which he belonged at first. Wyneken challenged a prominent seminary professor to send his books back to Germany and see if the theologians there could recognize his teaching as truly Lutheran.

Finally, it meant joining The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. The new church body practiced what Wyneken preached: faithfulness to the Lutheran Confessions because they were faithful to the Word of God. Wyneken subsequently became the Synod's second president.

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

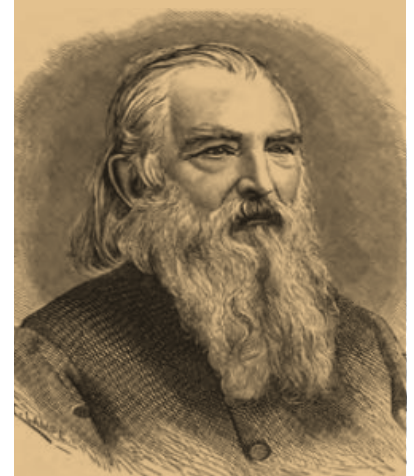


DISCOVER MORE

J.C.W. Lindemann, *Friedrich Konrad Dietrich Wyneken: An Evangelist among the North American Lutherans*, trans. Sieghart Rein (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1912).

Friedrich Wyneken, "The Missouri Synod: A Strength Made Perfect in Weakness: 1857 Synodical Address," in *At Home in the House of My Fathers*, ed. Matthew C. Harrison (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2011): 393–408.

Friedrich Wyneken, "Sermon for Consolation and Encouragement on Luke 2:21, delivered on January 1, 1868," in *At Home in the House of My Fathers*, ed. Matthew C. Harrison (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2011): 428–36.



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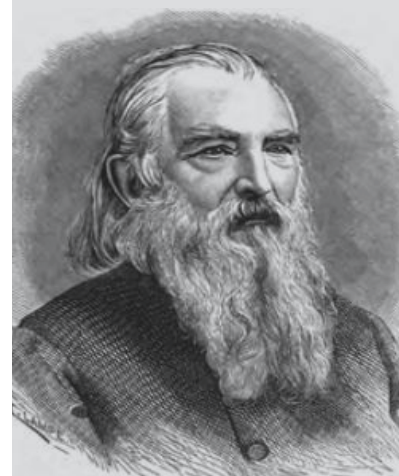


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