

A Missionary to Forgotten Immigrants in USA

Friedrich Wyneken is a familiar name to LCMS pastors as well as to some of our lay people. Like so many European immigrants, Wyneken arrived on the east coast of the USA in early 1838. Soon he was serving the German protestants in Baltimore, Maryland, but would travel westward to serve the many German farmers who had moved into Ohio, Indiana, and Michigan.

In his missionary endeavors, Wyneken found scattered Lutherans and protestants who had not heard a sermon in years. He baptized numerous children among those scattered and forgotten German farmers in rural Ohio, Indiana, and Michigan. He also began to write letters to his fellow Lutheran ministers still living in Germany about the massive need for their ministry in the New World, telling them of the desperate spiritual conditions of their former countrymen in USA.

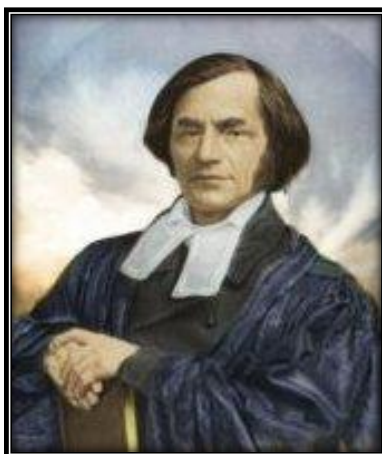
Lutheran Mission Societies responded to Wyneken's appeals and also supported his labors in reaching these poor souls without shepherds to feed them spiritually when the General Synod lacked funds to support him in these endeavors.

After experiencing throat ailments in 1841, Wyneken returned to Germany for treatment. While recovering, he visited many German Lutheran churches and told the congregations about the great need for Lutheran missionaries in America. In Germany, he published *The Distress of the German Lutherans in North America*. Many ministers and seminary students answered the call and came to the USA to serve the Lutheran immigrants and mission societies responded to his appeal by sending additional ministers to the New World to reach these distressed souls.

Theologically more conservative than the synods that he was acquainted with on the East coast, Dr. Wyneken became acquainted with C. F. W. Walther who founded Concordia Seminary in St. Louis and who served as the first president of the

LCMS. Wyneken found a kindred heart in C. F. W. Walther for both God's Word and the Mission of God. He succeeded Dr. Walther as president of the LCMS and would go on to serve 14 years as the second president of our church body. His labors in the Ft. Wayne area planted the seeds and led to the formation of the practical seminary in Ft. Wayne.

When his health began to fail, Wyneken went east to Cleveland and served ten years alongside his son assisting him in a congregation. Then, he traveled to California where a daughter lived in the hope his health would benefit from the milder climate. It was there that he died. His body was sent eastward after the funeral and additional services were held in St. Louis, MO, and Ft. Wayne, IN, before being interned in Cleveland.



Friedrich Wyneken, pastor and missionary, is remembered on May 4 in LCMS circles. He was a Christian man who was concerned for the lost, erring, and spiritually neglected German people in the westward expansion of the United States. He appealed for missionaries and dedicated his life to serving God's people with the living Gospel of Jesus Christ. He was an inspiring missionary in the early years of the LCMS and his concern for the forgotten still uplift us to serve the less fortunate in our midst.

This month let us note Friedrich Wyneken's example, look around Pipestone with mission eyes, and find the hurting and harassed people living near us, both longtime Americans and new Hispanic immigrants, who do not have a church home. Let us intentionally show these forgotten folks the love of God that we first received from Christ, extend friendship to them, and invite them to hear of our Easter Lord at St. Paul Lutheran Church with us!

Jesus says, "Do you not say, 'There are yet four months, then comes the harvest'? Look, I tell you, lift up your eyes, and see that the fields are white for harvest." (John 4:35, ESV)

– Pastor Cliff Adair