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CTQ

The Anniversary of Concordia Theological Seminary	
Walter A. Maier	1
Concordia Theological Seminary: Reflections on Its	·
One-Hundred-and-Fiftieth Anniversary at the	
Threshold of the Third Millennium	
Dean O. Wenthe	7
Celebrating Our Heritage	
Cameron A. MacKenzie	17
F. C. D. Wyneken: Motivator for the Mission	
Norman J. Threinen	19
Father from Afar: Wilhelm Loehe and Concordia	
Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne	
James L. Schaaf	47
The Protoevangelium and Concordia Theological Seminary	
Douglas McC. L. Judisch	75
Preach the Word!	
The One-Hundred-and-Fiftieth Anniversary Hymn	95
Confessional Lutheranism in Eighteenth-Century Germany	
Vernon P. Kleinig	97
Book Reviews	127
Indices to Volume 59 (1995)	
Index of Authors and Editors	153
Index of Titles	
Index of Book Reviews	
Books Received	



F. C. D. Wyneken: Motivator for the Mission

Norman J. Threinen

What does Friedrich Conrad Dietrich Wyneken have to do with Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne? Unlike Wilhelm Loehe, he was not among those in Germany who resolved to establish a missionary seminary in the new world for the training of pastors in America. He was not among those who collected money and books for its founding. Unlike Wilhelm Sihler, he was not the person who got this seminary off the ground and then constituted part of the initial faculty of the seminary. Indeed, Wyneken was not even the pastor in Fort Wayne any more when the seminary opened in 1846. Nor was he a founding member of the Missouri Synod in 1847 when it took steps to take over the seminary in Fort Wayne. Yet, as Concordia Theological Seminary has acknowledged in making him the focus of a special sesquicentennial lecture, Wyneken was one of the authentic founding fathers. He was a founding father because he began an educational venture in Fort Wayne on which this seminary could later build. But beyond that fledgling educational venture, he is worthy of that honor for much broader reasons.

Where does Friedrich Wyneken fit into the story of Concordia Theological Seminary? If Wilhelm Loehe can be called "Father from Afar"¹ to this seminary, Wyneken can perhaps best be described as the "Motivator for the Mission" of which this seminary was a very important component in the mid-nineteenth century. For behind Loehe, who spearheaded a mission effort among Lutherans in Germany which resulted in the formation of this seminary stood the activist figure of Friedrich Wyneken. Behind Sihler who did much of the on-site work of establishing this seminary and who directed it during its formative years stood the church-political figure of Friedrich Wyneken. It is appropriate, therefore, that the second of the special lectures designed to mark the one-hundred-and-fiftieth anniversary of Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne should have had its focus on Friedrich Conrad Dietrich Wyneken.

I.

Friedrich Wyneken was born the son of a Lutheran pastor, on May 13, 1810, in Verden in the Kingdom of Hanover. While Friedrich was still a young boy his father died leaving his mother to care for the family of eleven children. Somehow she was able to have all of her six sons complete university, three of them as lawyers and three of them as pastors. After Friedrich Wyneken had completed his *Gymnasium* in Verden, he went on to study theology first in Goettingen (1827) and then in Halle (1828-1830). We are ignorant of the nature of the religious upbringing which he had at home, but during his two and a half years of study in Halle, Wyneken was influenced toward positive religion by the professor of theology, Friedrich Tholuck (1799-1877), a leading representative of the German Awakening of the nineteenth century.

Following his university experience, Wyneken was a private tutor for four years in the von Henfstengel home in Leesum near Bremen. These were years of spiritual struggle during which he learned to know and appreciate the Holy Scriptures, largely through von Henfstengel, an awakened pastor.² Later he commented that he had so little knowledge of the Scriptures when he became a tutor that he began his instruction in biblical history with an exposition of the Book of Maccabees. For a brief period he was the rector of a Latin school in Bremenvoerde and then for another two years was a private tutor, during which time he accompanied his young charge to Italy.

The Awakening in nineteenth-century Germany was marked by an interest in missions, and such an interest was also a characteristic of Wyneken during this time. When the Stade Bible and Mission Society was formed in 1832, several members of Wyneken's family became active participants. Wyneken himself was probably prevented from being directly involved by his tutoring commitments. He had, however, avidly read mission periodicals to which von Henfstengel subscribed and these periodicals alerted him to the great need for pastors in America to gather the scattered German immigrants into congregations.³ Moved by the desperate conditions depicted in these mission reports about scattered Germans in North America, Wyneken decided to volunteer his energies to being a missionary-pastor on the American frontier. It was not love for adventure nor love for the Saviour or the scattered Germans in America that moved him. Rather, as he later said, "I went contrary

to my will and after great conflicts, from a sense of duty, driven in, and by, my conscience.³⁴ It was a motivation which one might expect from someone caught up in the spirit of the Awakening.

As soon as he was released from his responsibilities as a tutor, Wyneken took the examination for ministerial candidates and was ordained in Stade on May 8, 1837, along with a fellow candidate of theology, E. W. Wolff. Later that year, Wyneken and Wolff left Germany "sent with the best wishes of the [Stade] Bible and Mission Society."⁵ By courtesy of an "awakened" ship-captain Stuerje, the pair were given free passage to Baltimore.

As already indicated, Wyneken was, at this stage, an "awakened" Christian and not yet a confessional Lutheran. Indeed, a fellow Hanoverian pastor later described him as "a fiery zealot against all narrow churchliness"⁶ at this time. Thus, he had no difficulty working cooperatively with the Reformed and others who shared his awakening interests. The Stade Bible and Mission Society, with which he and his family were associated, functioned in a similar way. It was officially Lutheran but it had, from the beginning, financially supported the missions of the Reformed Barmen Society and the Moravian mission in Greenland. In 1836 it had joined with several other local (Lutheran and Reformed) mission societies to form the non-confessional North German Mission Society.⁷ Later, in Bremen, the port from which Wyneken and Wolff departed Germany, Gottfried Treviranus, the Reformed pastor of St. Martin's Church, befriended them and provided financial help for their journey.⁸ Then, when he arrived in Baltimore early in 1838, Johann Heaesbaert with whom he became acquainted was serving a mixed congregation of Reformed and Lutherans. And as Wyneken was sent out by the mission committee of the Pennsylvania Ministerium, it was not with instructions to gather scattered Lutherans but rather to gather scattered German Protestants.9

Heaesbaert became ill shortly after the arrival of Wyneken and Wolff; so Wyneken remained for a time to shepherd the Baltimore congregation. After Heaesbaert recovered, Wyneken was commissioned by the Pennsylvania Ministerium to serve as a missionary-pastor in Indiana. By the last week in September Wyneken had arrived in Fort Wayne, where Jesse Hoover had laboured for two years. Hoover had started congregations in Fort Wayne and Friedheim but on May 23, 1838, he had died leaving these congregations without a pastor. Wyneken received and accepted a call to serve these congregations, and Fort Wayne became his base of operation as he travelled extensively throughout the surrounding territory. His experiences as a frontier missionarypastor convinced Wyneken that many more men were needed for the formidable task. He first appealed to the General Synod for more If the General Synod could not provide more manpower. missionaries, he was convinced that an appeal to Germany, particularly to the mission societies, would provide them.¹⁰ Wyneken's travel experiences in the area of Fort Wayne formed the basis for reports and pleas for help which he now sent back to Germany.

His pleas were not without results. On November 15, 1839, a Society for Protestant Germans came into being in Bremen with auxiliary societies founded between 1840 and 1843 in Stade, Frankfurt, Hanau, Kiel, and Hamburg. In 1840 this Bremen Society sent two missionaries to America, and in 1842 five more followed.

Around the end of 1839 or the beginning of 1840 Wyneken wrote what appears to have been an early version of his famous Distress of the German Lutherans in North America. He sent it to the Stade Mission Society, and it was published in one of the first issues of its mission periodical near the beginning of 1840.¹¹ In this document Wyneken appealed in very graphic form to his fellow Lutherans in Germany for pastors to gather the scattered Germans on the American frontier. By the time he wrote it Wyneken had begun to move in the direction of becoming a confessional Lutheran. He later related that in his early reports "concerning the shocking spiritual need of the Germans in America" he hoped to motivate the formation of mission societies "which would send over preachers who believe in general to help alleviate the need."¹² But his experiences on the frontier had helped him recognize that with "believing" preachers the damage could not be addressed "at its root."¹³ He now was anxious to have "Lutheran" missionaries come to bring the word of God to his German countrymen in America.

One of the men in Germany who read Wyneken's appeal was Wilhelm Loehe. It happened that late in 1840 Loehe was visiting Karl von Raumer, one of his former professors at the University of Erlangen who was a leader of the Awakening in Erlangen. In von Raumer's home Loehe read Wyneken's appeal in the Stade Mission Society's periodical and was motivated by it to do something to support the effort to provide pastors for the American frontier. The heart of his response at this point was simply to gather funds for this mission effort but, to reach a wider audience, Loehe prepared an article for publication in the *Sonntagsblatt* edited by his friend Johann Wucherer.¹⁴ He also provided information to his congregation and prayed for the venture.¹⁵

Yet when money began to come in, Loehe and Wucherer were unsure where they should direct it. They had no inclination to establish their own mission society which might use it to send pastors. One possibility was to send it to the Stade Mission Society which had printed Wyneken's appeal in the first place. Another possibility was to send it to the Dresden Society for North America. While they were trying to decide, Adam Ernst and later Georg Burger, two tradesmen without any university background, offered themselves for service on the American frontier. Loehe and Wucherer founded the Neuendettelsau Society for Home and Foreign Missions, and a new mission venture for work among scattered Germans in America was born.

III.

Although Wyneken was aware of some results from his pleas for help, he likely was not aware of what was going on in Bavaria. In any case, he felt that he needed to return to Germany to press for more response. The General Synod approved sending him to Germany already in 1840, but Wyneken did not feel he could leave his parish shepherdless. The opportunity to go to Germany came in 1841, when the Stade Mission Society sent G. Jensen to cover Wyneken's pastoral responsibilities. Since Wyneken was also suffering from a throat ailment for which he needed medical treatment in Germany, the timing was fortuitous. In October of 1841 Wyneken and his young wife, Maria Sophie nee Buuck, set sail for Germany. Upon his arrival Wyneken met with the Bremen Society which was involved in preparing and sending missionaries for America. He also met with several confessional Lutherans in Germany: Ludwig Kraussold and Karl von Raumer in Erlangen; Georg Philipp Edward Huschke, President of the *Oberkirchenkollegium* of the Old Lutherans, in Breslau; Johannes Benjamin Trautmann of the Dresden Mission Society; Franz Delitzsch in Leipzig; and a number of others in Berlin. He also met, for the first time, Wilhelm Loehe from whom he probably learned of the work that was under way in Bavaria on behalf of the scattered Germans in America. Loehe's comment on their meeting was: "We became very fond of him and he of us."¹⁶

Returning to Lesum, the home of his family in Germany, on May 22, 1842, Wyneken learned that a group of confessional Lutheran pastors and candidates were about to meet in Hanover for a "Pentecost Conference." The conference had been organized by Ludwig Adolf Petri, the director of the preachers' seminary in Hanover. Weary from his travels and suffering from stress because his wife was about to give birth to their first child, Wyneken nevertheless wrote a letter to Petri for the participants in the conference. On Wednesday, May 25, 1842, this letter was read during the noon meal to the fifty-two pastors and candidates of theology attending the conference. The style and content of the letter was similar to Wyneken's earlier appeal. "The need of the church in America . . . should compel every preacher, indeed anyone who takes the church seriously, to do everything he can to help the church in America," wrote Wyneken. He called for the whole Lutheran Church in Germany to come together cooperatively to carry out a plan which would provide pastors who would gather congregations in America through lively preaching and even found synods in America to exercise discipline in doctrine and life. It was a pitch which he had also made in his earlier contacts in Breslau, Berlin, Saxony, and Bavaria.¹⁷ Moved by Wyneken's letter, the gathered assembly of preachers asked Petri to get together with Wyneken to prepare an appeal for the entire German-speaking church and, through G. Ch. Adolf von Harless, G. P. Eduard Huschke, and J. B. Trautmann, to establish contact with the Lutherans in Bavaria, Silesia and Saxony to undertake such a joint venture.¹⁸

Wyneken's letter to the pastors and candidates at the Pentecost Conference was indicative of his ability to think organizationally. A year earlier, before leaving America, Wyneken had written to F. Schmidt, the editor of Die Lutherische Kirchenzeitung, indicating what he thought was needed in America. "I desire with the help of God to have six or eight pastors come to America," he wrote, "who are to parcel out a section of the country among themselves. A superintendent is to be at the head of all, who is to visit each circuit and who should be elected for a period of about four years. The preachers ought to visit their circuits first without attempting to organize the people into congregations. After some time, however, this ought to be done." What was to be their confessional Still in America before visiting Germany, it is orientation? interesting to note that in 1841 Wyneken did not feel that they needed to be Lutheran. "As a confessional basis the Augsburg Confession or, where the people are Reformed, a Reformed confession should serve," he had written,¹⁹

Wyneken sojourned in Germany for another year after the Pentecost Conference, taking care of his medical needs and raising the sights of German Lutherans to the compelling need for pastors in America. In his lectures he gave vivid descriptions especially of the activities of the Methodists who were influencing many Lutherans, including members of the Synod of the West to which Wyneken and his congregation in Fort Wayne belonged. Friedrich Lochner, who later came to America and became a pastor in the Missouri Synod, experienced one of Wyneken's lectures. "The most brilliant part of his lecture was his description of a camp meeting. When he reached the moment when the individuals are invited to come to the mourners' bench, Wyneken suddenly approached those in the audience who were sitting or standing immediately in front of him, seized their hands, and asked them, 'Don't you, too, want to be converted?"²⁰

After Wyneken returned to America in May of 1843, Lutheran leaders in Germany made some efforts to follow through on his plan. On September 7-8, 1843, a General Conference of Members of the

Evangelical Lutheran Church was held in Leipzig under the leadership of Andreas J. Rudelbach. Beyond this, however, not a great deal seemed to have been done cooperatively in Germany in a formal way. Ultimately Loehe and Wucherer became the key people in Germany for carrying out the front-line work of preparing men for the American mission field. Adam Ernst and Georg Burger were sent to America already in 1842. Six more men were sent two years later. Loehe and Wucherer published a monthly periodical in 1843 to publicize the efforts on behalf of the scattered Germans in America. Called *Kirchliche Mitteilungen aus und ueber Nord-Amerika*, it enlisted the help of others such as Councilor Karl von Maltzen of Mecklenburg.

Petri also did what he could to advance the cause. Loehe's men made their way through Hanover where they were provided with hospitality and financial support for their journey. In addition, by 1846 Petri had motivated seven fully-trained candidates to offer themselves for the North American mission field.²¹

IV.

On his return to Germany in 1841 various people recognized that Wyneken had become more of a confessional Lutheran. In Bremen he had met with Johann Hinrich Wichern in whose "Rauhaus" the missionaries to America of the Bremen Society for Protestant Germans were being trained. His meeting did not go well because of what Wichern perceived to be Wyneken's "Lutheran strictness" and because Wyneken did not trust Wichern's "confessional soundness."²² Petri also took note of the change in Wyneken. In a letter to his friend Luehr, Petri commented that Wyneken had returned "as a resolute Lutheran and now must help to lead also those here to clarity and decisiveness."²³ In reality, as he met advocates of the growing Lutheran confessionalism in Germany, Wyneken was also strengthened in his Lutheran confessionalism. Thus, when he returned to America, he exhibited a strong inclination to live his confessionalism in his pastoral practice.

Soon after he arrived in Fort Wayne, Wyneken had joined the (Lutheran) Synod of the West of which his predecessor had become a charter member when it was organized in Louisville, Kentucky, in

1835. This synod covered the territory of Kentucky, Illinois, Indiana, and part of Ohio and in 1841 became a member of the General Synod. As an "awakened" pastor rather than a confessional Lutheran, Wyneken initially had little difficulty with the open ecumenical stance and weak adherence to Lutheran doctrine and practice of the Synod of the West.²⁴ Upon his return to America from Germany, however, Wyneken began to follow a more rigid confessional stance in his practice. To help bring matters to a head between himself and the synod, as well as within his own congregation, Wyneken invited the synod to meet in Fort Wayne in October of 1844. An accusation brought against him before the synod by a member of his congregation gave him an opportunity to make a two-hour statement, both in German and in English, to defend his actions on the basis of the word of God and the Lutheran Confessions.²⁵

Even then, however, Wyneken did not leave the Synod of the West. In May of 1845 he was a delegate of the Synod of the West to the General Synod. Since Wyneken's appeal had not been complementary to the General Synod, that body resolved to write to the Lutherans in Germany to counteract the negative publicity which it had received. Wyneken's rejoinder was that, if the General Synod felt that he had misrepresented its position, the synod could clear itself of the accusations which he had made in a twofold manner. It could send books and periodicals representing its doctrinal position to Andreas Rudelbach, Adolf von Harless, and other prominent editors of Lutheran periodicals in Germany for their opinion on the validity of the accusations; or it could publicly renounce these books and periodicals and condemn the doctrine and practice contained in them.²⁶ When the General Synod declined to follow either of Wyneken's proposals, Wyneken and his congregation in Fort Wayne withdrew from the General Synod. The following year the Synod of the West divided and disappeared. The effect of this development was that Wyneken, who by then had moved to Baltimore, was left without membership in a synodical body.

Before his sojourn in Germany, Wyneken had simply appealed to

the Germans for missionary-pastors. As an "awakened" person it would have been obvious to him that they should be true Christians, of course. But whence they were to come, what their confessional orientation was to be, and how they were to be prepared did not seem to be important issues for him. Others could see to that.

An obvious source of missionary-pastors of which Wyneken was aware was his home-church of Hanover. This church and probably others in Germany had an over-supply of such men so that it was not uncommon for candidates to wait many years for a pastoral position. Some of these candidates subsequently responded and came to America with Petri's urging. But many did not. Wyneken later wrote, "What miserable beings the candidates must be that they hear of this wretchedness, have no position yet in Germany, are not deterred by ill health, and still do not come here. . . . They should come by the dozens."²⁷

Wyneken also knew that some of the mission societies were preparing missionary-pastors both for the other mission fields and for the American frontier. Wyneken's actual experience with training pastors may not have occurred until he returned to Germany. Indeed, immediately after he arrived back in Germany in January of 1842 he discussed with Wichern the preparation of pastors for the Bremen "Society for Protestant Germans." On that occasion Wyneken laid out for Wichern "clear criteria for the educating of colonial preachers."²⁸ Since the two parted on less than amiable terms, Wyneken at that time likely voiced his concern with Wichern that these preachers have a confessional basis, a criterion with which Wichern disagreed. Later, when he met with Loehe, Wyneken again encountered a situation where men were being prepared to be pastors in frontier America. This experience was more positive and the two parted good friends, such good friends, in fact, that when Loehe issued his Agenda fuer die deutsch-lutherischen Gemeinden Nordamerikas in 1844, he dedicated it to Wyneken. "I have dedicated this Agenda to you, dear friend and brother. For it is prepared in heart-felt love toward my brothers in North America and among these you were the first with whom I became united in the work of love which is occurring on the other side of the ocean. Please accept my gift and my heart-felt greetings."²⁹ While Loehe

had looked to the Moravians for the pattern for preparing emergency pastors for America, he was preparing his emissaries to go forth as *Lutheran* missionary-pastors, not as generic *Christian* pastors. In his instruction to them, Loehe specifically said, "You seek the office of servant of the German *Lutheran* Church.... You embrace with deep devotion the confessions and doctrine of the Lutheran Church."³⁰

When Wyneken returned to America in 1843, the need for training German Lutheran pastors for the frontier must have continued to be on his mind. For a year later he began to provide pastoral training for two young men, Gerhard Heinrich Jaebker, who was twenty-three years old, and Carl Heinrich Friedrich Fricke (Frincke), who was twenty years old. Although these educational efforts of Wyneken in his Fort Wayne parsonage were likely far from a formal seminary experience, they are regarded as the beginning of the work which in 1846 became Concordia Theological Seminary.

In actual fact, Wyneken likely followed a tutoring approach to prepare these two men for ministry, an approach which had been used among Lutherans in the eastern United States a century earlier before any formal seminaries were started.³¹ How Jaebker came under Wyneken's wing is unknown. About Carl Fricke we have a He was born on July 13, 1824, in bit more information. Braunschweig, Germany. There he received some education before leaving for America in 1842. Eventually he found his way to Fort Wayne. Almost immediately after Wyneken returned from his trip to Germany, Fricke happened to attend a service of worship in Wyneken's church. After the service he challenged Wyneken for preaching from the Bible. Shocked at his forwardness, Fricke's friends tried to silence him. "However, Wyneken," we are told, "clasped his hands together in his manner, laughed uproariously, went to him and said, 'Listen, young man, I like you. A person knows where you stand." When Wyneken asked him what he had against the Bible, Fricke responded with some typical rationalistic rhetoric. As Fricke held forth, "Wyneken listened quietly and then spoke to him as only Wyneken could." This conversation changed Fricke's whole orientation. Wyneken opened Fricke's eyes and at the same time won his confidence. For a time Fricke stayed with his secular employment but attended Wyneken's church. Later, as

Fricke became better grounded in doctrine, Wyneken confronted him with the great need of the American Lutheran Church for preachers and strongly encouraged him to prepare for the ministry. After a long inner battle, Fricke agreed, and Wyneken began to offer him theological preparation for his vocation.

Nothing is said in this account about the format or content of Wyneken's preparation of Fricke and Jaebker for the ministry. One historian says that "their theological training chiefly emphasized preaching and catechizing."³³ It was obviously not a protracted program, for Wyneken left for Baltimore on February 23, 1845. On Sihler's arrival in Fort Wayne to become Wyneken's successor, we are told that "the students Jaebker and Fricke were living [with F. W. Husmann] in the parsonage." Following the pattern of his predecessor, Sihler taught them theology and had them carry out practical teaching and preaching duties under his supervision in the area of Fort Wayne.³⁴

Actually Jaebker and Fricke may not have been the first whom Wyneken guided through personalized study into the ministry. On May 17, 1840, F. W. Husmann arrived in Fort Wayne to become the first teacher of St. Paul's. Wyneken was the pastor of the congregation at the time. While serving as the teacher of the school, Husmann took up the study of theology. He also pursued intensively the study of Greek, Hebrew, and Latin. The account given by his biographer indicates that he took up these studies "privately." However, it is highly unlikely that Wyneken, as Husmann's pastor and the theological overseer of Husmann's activities as a teacher in Wyneken's school, would not have been involved in assisting Husmann as he pursued these studies. Later when Wyneken was in Germany and a part of the congregation wanted to call G. Jensen, whom the Stade Mission Society had sent to fill in during Wyneken's absence, Husmann played a major role in preventing a split in the congregation. When Jensen accepted a call to Pittsburgh, Husmann preached in St. Paul's Church until Wyneken returned. Both before Wyneken left for Germany and after he returned, Husmann was involved in reaching out to scattered Germans in the same way that Wyneken was.³⁵ Again, it is difficult to imagine that his preaching and missionary activity would not have had the supervision of Wyneken.

When Wyneken accepted a call to Baltimore, Husmann became the temporary pastor of St. Paul's Church in Fort Wayne, and it is likely that he also served as a colleague and supervisor for the pastoral preparation of Fricke and Jaebker during the interim until Sihler arrived in July. In October of 1845 Husmann accepted a call to serve as pastor of St. Paul's Church in Marion Township and two neighboring congregations. But he was not ordained at the time, since Husmann still called himself a licensed candidate of the Ministerium of Pennsylvania at the pre-organizational meeting of the Missouri Synod in July of 1846 and was actually ordained in 1847 at the synod's constituting convention. Jaebker, meanwhile, accepted a call to serve congregations in Adams County near Fort Wayne, and Fricke continued his preparation for pastoral service under Sihler.

VI.

When Wyneken accepted a call to Baltimore, he effectively moved out of the geographic center in which much of the action was taking place. On September 13-18, 1845, when Loehe's men and some of their associates met in Cleveland, Wyneken was present as well as Husmann and Fricke. Friedrich Lochner, who wrote an account of the meeting, described Wyneken as "humble, charitable, and zealous."³⁶ The regard in which he was held was evident in that he was one of the four who preached at the meeting.

Wyneken was not in attendance at the meeting in Fort Wayne in July of 1846 when the constitutional framework of the group which became the Missouri Synod was crafted. Husmann and Jaebker, however, were present and were among those who signed the constitution at that time. Then in April of 1847, when the synod formally came into being in Chicago, Wyneken was conspiciously absent, although Husmann, Jaebker, and Fricke were present. By 1848, when the synod met for its second annual convention, Wyneken and his congregation had become members of the nascent Missouri Synod. Then in 1850, with Walther elected to lead the seminary in St. Louis and Wyneken serving Trinity Church in St. Louis, technically as the assistant pastor to Walther, Wyneken was elected president of the synod.

During the years after he left Fort Wayne, we are ignorant of what role, if any, Wyneken played in the formation of Concordia Theological Seminary. As already noted, he was absent from the meeting in 1846 when the details of forming a seminary in Fort Wayne were ironed out and the decision formally made to open the seminary. Yet the idea of founding a seminary in America where the German emergency helpers could get their final preparation was already firmly established in Loehe's mind in February of 1846.³⁷ As a result the seminary could open in October of that year with Loehe and the other Lutheran benefactors in Germany providing money, a candidate of theology to teach, and eleven students. Wyneken was involved in some earlier discussions with Loehe on the subject, this information was not known or acknowledged by those on the scene at the time. Sihler certainly did not acknowledge Wyneken's pioneering efforts when he gave notice of the opening of the new seminary on October 24.³⁸ Nor did he mention it in his tribute and account of Wyneken's life in Der Lutheraner at the time of Wyneken's death in 1876.39

Regardless of any earlier role which Wyneken may have had in the formation of the seminary in Fort Wayne, his election to the presidency of the Missouri Synod thrust Wyneken into a public role which in various ways had a direct impact on the seminary in its early years. The most significant event in this regard was his trip to Germany with Walther to deal with the developing conflict with Wilhelm Loehe over questions of church and ministry.

VII.

A variety of circumstances in America and in Germany around the middle of the nineteenth century contributed to the conflict. In America Walther and the Saxons had undergone the traumatic experience of having to depose their leader Martin Stephan, after they had invested him to be their bishop just before they left their ships to settle in Perry County, Missouri.⁴⁰ Stephan's departure had been followed by debates within the community as to whether they could still lay claim to being part of the people of God, the church. In the course of these debates, C. F. W. Walther emerged as the theological leader of the Saxons in Missouri.

Meanwhile, as the Saxons had been making their way up the Mississippi to St. Louis, two other groups of emigrants, one from Prussia under J. A. A. Grabau and another from Silesia under L. F. E. Krause, arrived in Buffalo, New York. Krause returned to Germany while his group proceeded to Wisconsin. In the absence of a pastor they appointed a layman to conduct services as they had done back home when all of their pastors had been imprisoned for opposing the Prussian Union. When Silesians in Wisconsin asked Grabau in Buffalo whether this action was justifiable, his answer was negative. In December of 1840 Grabau wrote his *Hirtenbrief* to instruct the Silesians in Wisconsin regarding the office of the ministry. Grabau also sent a copy to the Saxons in Missouri.⁴¹

Because of their own turmoil the Saxons did not come to grips with the contents of Grabau's *Hirtenbrief* until July of 1843. When they did, they stated that they could subscribe to the *Hirtenbrief* in general, but they criticized positions in it which reflected what they saw as the errors of Stephanism. Grabau was disappointed at this reaction with the result that he in turn charged the Saxons with false doctrine. Some congregational situations in which Saxon pastors began to serve people who had been excommunicated by Grabau added to the tensions. At its first convention, in June of 1845, the Buffalo Synod approved Grabau's position as its official position and issued a harsh address to the Saxons. This was essentially the situation when the Saxons came into contact with Wyneken and Loehe's emissaries.

Whether Wyneken and Loehe's men were fully aware of the controversy between Grabau and the Saxons is difficult to know. They were at least aware that both groups existed. To the five emissaries whom he sent to America in 1845 Loehe gave instructions that they should unite "with those members of the faith who have emigrated from Saxony and Prussia."⁴² The five emissaries did not get to meet Grabau when they arrived in New York, and he did not endear himself to them when he accused them unjustly of chiliasm without even having met them. Furthermore, when the Loehe men and the Saxons invited Grabau to their meeting in Fort Wayne in 1846 and subsequently to the constituting convention of the Synod in 1847, he declined on both occasions to

attend. Their impression of Grabau would not, therefore, have been positive.

On the other hand, Loehe's men had received a good impression of the Saxons. From what they had read in Der Lutheraner they felt a theological kinship. In their face-to-face meetings with the Saxons, they were similarly impressed. Aside from any discussions on issues of church and ministry which might have formally translated into the constitution of the Missouri Synod, no formal discussions on the divisive issues between Grabau and the Saxons were held. Loehe's men and their associates seemed simply to find themselves in agreement with the position at which the Saxons had earlier arrived through intense struggle. Wyneken seems to have had a similar experience. Indeed, Fricke, whose theological direction Wyneken had shaped three years earlier, was sent out by the Missouri Synod at its constituting convention to be a missionary to new settlements while still an unordained candidate of theology, a move which Grabau soundly criticized as being indicative of Missouri's doctrinally unsound view of the office of the ministry.

The issue was apparently so little of an issue to Loehe's emissaries that they did not even seek advice on the matter from Wilhelm Loehe, their "Father from Afar." An indication that these issues may not completely have come to clarity for Loehe himself until 1849 is the fact that none of Loehe's emissaries sided with him against the position reached by the Saxons until 1852 when George Grossman made an issue of it in Michigan. To be sure, Loehe's initial reaction to the Missouri Synod's constitution was not positive; he felt that it had a tendency toward Americanization and was too democratic. But in 1846 Loehe did not feel strongly enough about the issue to discourage his emissaries from joining the new synod. He even stated that, if he himself was in America, he would join it.⁴³

In Germany, however, events were occurring which focused Loehe's attention more specifically on issues of church and ministry. The year 1848 was a politically agitated year in Germany. All traditional authority in government and church was challenged. Napoleon's act of unifying many of the approximately three hundred political entities at the beginning of the nineteenth century had already made the earlier state-church structure, based at least somewhat on the principle of *cuius regio eius religio*, completely anachronistic. Lutheran Franconia, for example, was a part of Roman Catholic Bavaria in the post-Napoleonic political era, which meant that a Roman Catholic king had the right to make appointments for the Lutheran Church in his territory. The events of 1848 provided for a separation of the church from the state, a situation which might have rectified such an intolerable situation. The new situation, of necessity, called for a debate about the nature and function of the church.

As a contribution to the debate Loehe wrote a small document in 1849 entitled "Aphorisms Concerning the Offices of the New Testament and Their Relation to the Congregation." In this document Loehe traced the ministerial office (*Amt*) back to the apostles and stressed that bishops are shepherds of the church who lead or rule the church as well as feed it. In contrast to the democratizing trends in Germany, which wanted to give the general population a substantial say in the affair of government, society, and the church, Loehe took a theological stance which was consistent with the more conservative approach to authority.

Others, however, took an opposing view. Among them were the theologians at the University of Erlangen which Loehe had attended. In his "Principles of an Evangelical-Lutheran Church Constitution," Johann Wilhelm Friedrich Hoefling in 1850 laid out in a systematic way the view of the theologians of Erlangen. In contrast to Loehe, Hoefling held that the office of the ministry came from God through the priesthood of all believers. He saw in ordination nothing more than an ecclesiastical blessing. He saw no need for bishops and wanted the leadership of the church to be reorganized to increase the role of the congregations.⁴⁴

The democratizing trends in Germany were, of course, embodied in much of life in the United States, and this situation would naturally have made Loehe uneasy about any similar trend in the Lutheran Church here. The debate in which he had become involved with professors at his *alma mater* would undoubtedly make him alert to any indications of a viewpoint which was similarly opposed to his own position. These two factors could not help but have a bearing on Loehe's attitude toward the stance of the Missouri Synod on the issues under discussion. As Loehe himself wrote concerning the conflict between himself and the Missouri Synod, "While our American brethren believe that the administration [*Rechte*] of the congregation must come forth on the basis of the spiritual priesthood of all believers, it appeared to us ... necessary on the basis of the doctrine of the office of the ministry to make the boundaries between the ministry and the congregation very clear."⁴⁵

The Missouri Synod, on the other hand, was similarly wary of any indication that Loehe might be leaning toward the position of Stephan and Grabau on church and ministry, which it regarded as Romanizing. As C. F. W. Walther expressed it, "On the basis of newspapers and private explanations, our synod believed that Pastor Loehe in the teachings on church, ministry, church-authority, church-government, etc. . . . was inclining toward the teachings of Rome and a separate priesthood. On his side Pastor Loehe thought that our synod had been moved by the prevailing intoxication of freedom [grassirenden Freiheitsschwindel] and, sacrificing the divine dignity of the holy ministry and the blessing of an ordered church-government, had given in to democratic principles."⁴⁶

Neither Wyneken nor Walther favored the democratizing trends in Germany and the United States. In his appeal for pastors for the scattered Germans on the American frontier, Wyneken had talked about "the fraud concerning liberty which has been concocted by the unrestrained spirit of man and which is destroying all divine order."⁴⁷ The Missouri Synod leaders knew that they had not been motivated by this spirit in the formation of their new synod. To permit him to see this truth and thereby to heal the rift developing with him over this issue, the Missouri Synod in convention in 1850 invited Loehe to come to America to confer with them and to experience how its congregational system worked.

When Loehe was unable to do so, the synod sent a delegation to visit with Loehe in Germany. Strategically, one of the delegates was Wyneken who was not only the president of the synod at the time but also a man whom Loehe regarded as his friend. He was also a man who might be seen by Loehe as somewhat more balanced in his viewpoint since he had not been involved in the debate between Grabau and the Saxons. In a special communication with members of the synod, Wyneken pointed to four things which made the healing of the rift very important: (1.) the scriptural command "to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace; (2.) the heavy responsibility before God not to put under a basket the light which had been given to the synod on the questions under discussion; (3.) the duty of self-preservation to do everything to avoid the rift because continued confusion in the church would have negative consequences; and (4.) our great shortage of preachers makes a close tie with the brethren in Germany a necessity.

It was important, indeed, to do more than heal the rift with Loehe. If relationships with the Lutherans in Germany were to be maintained on a sustained basis, it was important that the debate about church and ministry in Germany come to a conclusion compatible with the position of the Missouri Synod. Thus, Wyneken said, "Now is the time and any delay will be dangerous. For now the debate over church and ministry is still an open question. When it is over, as it appears it will soon have to be under current circumstances in the German Church, our efforts will have little or no value."⁴⁸

To influence the debate in Germany Walther offered an enunciation of a position which had been shaped within the American scene and reflected the sentiments of others within the Missouri Synod. The Voice of our Church on the Question of Church and Ministry was published in Germany. It took a stand on the legitimacy both of the ministry and of the congregation. It very clearly affirmed the uniqueness of the ministry without setting it off too strongly from the congregation. According to it, the ministry is unique over against the priesthood of all believers. Yet the ministry is not a peculiar order of superior holiness but is an office of service. It has received its authority to preach the gospel and to administer the sacraments and the keys from God through the congregation. Ordination is not a divine appointment but is an apostolic churchly arrangement which is a public and solemn confirmation of the call.

Wyneken and Walther left New York for Europe by steamship on August 27, 1851. From Walther's report of their journey, it is apparent that Wyneken was much more familiar with the German scene than Walther. He had not only had more personal contact with the German scene than Walther but his contact with German Lutheranism had been more recent. Immediately upon their arrival they inquired of some Lutherans with whom Wyneken was familiar as to whether the "Prussian separated Lutherans" would be holding a synod that year. None was scheduled. Soon after they came to Germany they spent time recuperating from the journey in Verden with Wyneken's aged mother. On the following Sunday they worshipped in a service led by Carl, Wyneken's brother. Later they also had contact with two other brothers of Wyneken.

Walther also visited friends and relatives in Germany. Later in their journey he visited a couple of his sisters. He also made contact with Franz Delitzsch, a friend from his days in the university. As the two delegates of the Missouri Synod travelled throughout Germany, they were openly received by confessional Lutherans in the various states. Finally they came to Neuendettelsau where Loehe also warmly received them. In anticipation of their coming he had devoted an entire issue of his *Mitteilungen* to them. After their visit with him Walter reported jubilently, "With God's help and grace, the purpose of our visit was reached . . . the faithful friend of our church in America . . . is again completely our friend; his doubts about us have disappeared."⁴⁹ The steamship which brought Wyneken and Walther back to America docked in New York on January 16, 1852. The relationship with Loehe and the German Lutheran Church was apparently secure.

While neither Wyneken nor Walther articulated it specifically, the trip had some very important consequences for the seminary in Fort Wayne. For the only purpose of the seminary initially was to receive students from Germany who would complete their preparation for the ministry at this institution. Without the flow of such students it would have little or no purpose for being. Matters eventually turned out differently than Wyneken and Walther thought. By the summer of 1853 fraternal relations between the Missouri Synod and Loehe were irreparably broken. While the seminary survived, the break with Loehe undoubtedly reduced the size and changed the composition of the student body of the seminary. Unquestionably the reduced flow of students from Germany was a concern for the synod, which prompted Walther in 1855 to propose that a preparatory school for the "practical" seminary in Fort Wayne be established in Germany.⁵⁰ A school to recruit students in Germany and to prepare them to enter the synod's preaching and teaching seminaries was later established to replace Loehe's support after Walther returned to Germany for reasons of health and enlisted the help of Friedrich Brunn. An institution was established by him in Steeden in Nassau in 1860 which, over the decade that followed, provided a third of the Missouri Synod's pastors. Many of them were channelled through the "practical seminary" which had begun in Fort Wayne.⁵¹

VIII.

Wyneken served as president of the Missouri Synod for fourteen years, from 1850 to 1864. That he should have experienced the phenomenal early growth of the Missouri Synod must have felt like a miracle to Wyneken. One cannot help but hear an echo of Wyneken's hopes and dreams fulfilled as he addresses the convention of the Missouri Synod assembled in Fort Wayne in 1852. "With great thanksgiving, our heart must be raised to the Lord anew with each synodical convention which the Lord in His mercy gives us the privilege to experience. For we continue to see His love, grace, and faithfulness even in these last difficult times. It is nothing short of a miracle in my view that, in places where only a few years ago a German Lutheran preacher traversed the vast woodlands and endless prairies only now and then to visit the scattered members of his church to serve them with the bread of life. today a synod can gather which numbers more than a hundred preachers, professors, and teachers as workers in the vineyard, a synod which draws into its membership annually more and more congregations who rejoice that also here the light of true doctrine is once more held high to enlighten hearts with the truth. ... We must certainly praise the Lord who has truly done such great things among us.",52

During his years as president Wyneken's natural talent for organization was put to good use as the synod was reorganized into four districts in 1854. Reorganization also affected the seminary in Fort Wayne. Over the years the idea of combining the synod's two seminaries gained considerable strength; even the seminary's president, Wilhelm Sihler, saw wisdom and blessing in this move. Thus, in 1860, Wyneken appointed a committee to study the matter, and the convention in that year recommended that the practical seminary be moved to St. Louis. The outbreak of the Civil War in the following year made the move urgent, since Missouri granted theological students exemption from military service where Indiana did not. Thus, the practical seminary moved to St. Louis in 1861.⁵³

In June of 1864 Wyneken received a call to Cleveland, Ohio. Taking leave both of his pastorate in St. Louis and of the presidency of the synod, he served Trinity Church in Cleveland until October of 1875. For reasons of health he then moved to California, and his last months were spent in the home of his daughter and son-in-law in San Francisco. There he died of a heart attack on May 4, 1876, just short of his sixty-sixth birthday.

In reporting Wyneken's death in *Der Lutheraner* of May 15, 1876, Walther described him as "a highly gifted spirit, a truly evangelical preacher, a pastor experienced in the school of spiritual struggles, a fearless witness of pure truth, an avid warrior for the same, a faithful guardian of the church, a man without deception whose entire being bore the mark of honesty, an opponent of all lies and hypocrisy, a true Nathanael; in short, a true Christian and a faithful servant of the Lord who recognized in humility only his weakness, not his strength. For a multitude of preachers and laity, he was a model; for thousands, he was a spiritual father; for whole areas of America, he was their apostle."⁵⁴

Friedrich Carl Dietrich Wyneken was the motivating spirit behind much of what became the Missouri Synod and a founding father of Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne. We have good reason to take heed of his example. We have good reason, as well, to praise God because of him.

The Endnotes

- 1. James L. Schaaf, "Father from Afar, Wilhelm Loehe and the Seminary in Fort Wayne," the first lecture in a series of four on the founding fathers of Concordia Theological Seminary.
- Rudolph Rehmer, "Lutherans in Pioneer Indiana," Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly, 40 (April 1967): 20.
- 3. Although missionary periodicals have a practice of copying items from each other, such missionary reports might have originally come from the Basel Mission Society, which sent Friedrich Schmidt to Ann Arbor, Michigan, in 1832. The Christian Society for German Evangelicals in North America, popularly called the Langenberg Mission Society, was formed at the initiative of the Rhenish Mission Society in 1837 about the same time, probably in response to similar reports.
- 4. Letter of F. Wyneken to A. Biewend, November 29, 1842, quoted in Walter Baepler, *A Century of Grace* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1947), 54.
- 5. Klaus Schroeder and Hermann Seebo, Geschichte der hundert Jahre der Stader Bibel-und Missionsgesellschaft (Stade: A. Pockwitz, 1932), 10.
- 6. Letter of L. A. Petri to Pastor Luehr, around May 25, 1842, partly quoted in E. Petri, *Ludwig Adolf Petri: Ein Lebensbild* (Hanover: Verlag von Heinr[ich] Feesche, 1888), 260-262.
- 7. Georg Haccius, Hannoversche Missionsgeschichte, Erster Teil (Druck und Verlag der Missionshandlung in Hermannsburg, 1909), 141.
- 8. Gottfried Mai, Die Bemuehung der Evangelischen Kirche um die Deutschen Auswanderer nach Nord-Amerika (1815-1914) (Bremen, 1972), 71.
- 9. Christian Hochstetter, Die Geschichte der Evangelisch-Lutherisch Missouri Synod in Nord-Amerika und ihrer

Lehrkaempfe (Dresden: Verlag von Heinrich J. Naumann, 1885), 94.

- 10. C. A. W. Krauss, Lebensbilder aus der Geschichte der christlichen Kirche (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1911), 741, cited in Rehmer, 22.
- 11. Martin Schmidt, Wort Gottes und Fremdlingschaft (Erlangen und Rothenburg o. Tauber: Martin Luther-Verlag, 1953), 57. Contrary to the view that this was the document known as the Distress of the German Lutherans in North America is a comment by Wilhelm Loehe in his Rechenschaftsbericht to the effect that, after Wyneken had left Loehe, he sent a completed manuscript to his friends in Erlangen, who did not deem it fitting to publish it in its entirety. They took an extract of it and had it published in Harless' Zeitschrift fuer Protestantismus und Kirche (February 1843). Wilhelm Loehe: Gesammelte Werke, 4:127.
- 12. Letter of F. Wyneken to L. A. Petri, May 22, 1822, contained in E. Petri, *Ludwig Adolf Petri: Ein Lebensbild* (Hanover: Verlag von Heinr[ich] Feesche, 1888), 272-282.
- 13. Ibid.
- Wilhelm Loehe, "Die lutherischen Auswanderer in Nordamerika, Eine Ansprache an die Leser des Sonntagsblattes," in Klaus Ganzert, ed., Wilhelm Loehe: Gesammelte Werke (Neuendettelsau: Friemund Verlag, 1962), 4:18.
- 15. Wilhelm Loehe, "Rechenschaftsbericht der Redaktoren der kirchlichen Mitteilungen aus und ueber Nordamerika ueber das, was seit 1841 geschehen ist, samt Angabe dessen, was sofort geschehen sollte" (1847), in ibid, 4:126; also a letter of Loehe to von Raumer, January 4, 1841, in 1:577.
- 16. "Rechenschaftsbericht," 4:127.
- 17. Letter of F. Wyneken to L. A. Petri, May 22, 1842.
- 18. Undated letter of L. A. Petri to Pastor Luehr, in Petri, Ludwig Adolf Petri: Ein Lebensbild, 260-262.

- 19. Letter of F. Wyneken to F. Schmidt, 1841, cited in Baepler, 58.
- 20. W. G. Polack, *Fathers and Founders* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1938), 56.
- 21. Petri, 304.
- 22. Martin Gerhardt, Johann Hinrich Wichern (Hamburg: Agentur des Rauhen Hauses, 1927), 1:291.
- 23. Letter of Petri to Luehr.
- 24. John B. Gardner, "The Synod of the West," Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly, 1 (January 1929): 85.
- H. G. Sauer, Geschichte der St. Pauls Gemeinde zu Ft. Wayne, Indiana, vom Jahre 1837-1887, 29, cited in Edward John Saleska, Frederick Conrad Dieterich Wyneken, 1810-1876, unpublished thesis leading to the degree of Master of Sacred Theology, 1946.
- 26. Walter Baepler, A Century of Grace (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1947), 63.
- 27. Chr[istian] Hochstetter, Die Geschichte der Evangelisch-Lutherisch Missouri Synod in Nord-Amerika und ihrer Lehrkaempfe (Dresden: Verlag von Heinrich J. Naumann, 1885), 106-107.
- 28. Gehrhardt, 291.
- 29. Wilhelm Loehe, "Vorwort zur ersten Auflage," Agenda fuer christliche Gemeinden des lutherischen Bekenntnisses in Gesammelte Werke, ed. Klaus Ganzert (Neuendettelsau: Freimund Verlag, 1953), I:9.
- 30. August R. Suelflow, "The Beginnings of 'Missouri, Ohio, and other States,' in America" in *Moving Frontiers*, edited by Carl S. Meyer (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1964), 99 (emphasis added).
- 31. Theodore G. Tappert, "The Church's Infancy," in *The* Lutherans in North America, ed. E. Clifford Nelson, revised

edition (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980), 46. C. F. W. Sapper, "Ehrengedaechtnis des weiland P. Karl H. 32. F. Frincke," Der Lutheraner, 62 (February 27, 1906): 77. Erich H. Heintzen, Prairie School of the Prophets (St. 33. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1989), 20. C. F. W. Sapper, "Ehrengedaechtnis des weiland P. Karl H. 34. F. Frincke," Der Lutheraner, 62 (February 27, 1906): 77. E. S. H. Husmann, "Biographical Sketch of F. W. 35. Husmann," Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly, 1:10. 36. Friedrich Lochner is so quoted in Baepler, 88. 37. Schaaf quotes a letter of Loehe to Alt, February 25, 1846. Manuscript, 26. 38. W. Sihler, "Das lutherische Seminar zu Fort Wavne," Der Lutheraner, 3 (October 31, 1846), 29-30. On the other hand it may be significant that Wyneken apparently was directly involved in chosing Sihler, the only man with a doctorate of philosophy among Loehe's emissaries, as his successor in Fort Wayne. 39. Sihler, "Lebensabriss . . . Friedrich Wyneken," 105. 40. W. O. Forster, Zion on the Mississippi (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1953), 288-303. 41. A detailed discussion of the entire proceedings is provided by Roy A. Suelflow, "The Relations of the Missouri Synod with the Buffalo Synod up to 1866," Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly, 27 (April 1954): 1-19; (July 1954): 57-73; (October 1954): 97-132. 42. H. Ruhland, "Rev. F. Lochner's Report on His First Contacts with the Saxons," Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly, 7 (October 1934): 77-81. 43. Suelflow, 119.

44. For an overview of the discussion see Holsten Fagerberg, Bekenntnis Kirche und Amt, in der deutschen Konfessionellen Theologie des 19 Jahrhunderts (Uppsala, 1953), 101-117.

- 45. Wilhelm Loehe, Kirchliche Mitteilungen aus und ueber Nord-Amerika, 10 (1851), quoted by C. F. W. Walther in "Reisebericht des Redakteurs," Der Lutheraner, 8 (March 16, 1852): 114.
- 46. C. F. W. Walther, "Reisebericht des Redakteurs," Der Lutheraner, 8 (February 17, 1852): 97.
- 47. Wyneken, "Aufruf," in Zeitschrift fuer Protestantismus und Kirche, 5 (1843), 157.
- 48. Fuenfter Synodal-Bericht der deutschen Ev.-Luth. Synod von Missouri, Ohio u.a. Staaten vom Jahre 1851 (St. Louis: Druckerei der Synod von Missouri, Ohio und andern Staaten, 1876), 165.
- 49. Walther, Der Lutheraner, 8 (February 17, 1852): 98.
- 50. Carl S. Meyer, Log Cabin to Luther Tower (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1965), 46.
- 51. A. Stallmann, Ein Proseminar vor hundert Jahren, a fourpage pamphlet, originally part of a larger unidentified periodical [1961]: 43-46. AM VII. A. 7 in the Brunn Archives located in the Lutherische Theologische Hochschule, Oberursel, Germany. On Brunn, see the author's article "Friedrich Brunn, Erweckung und konfessionelles Lutherthum," Lutherische Theologie und Kirche, 16 (February 1992): 29-47.
- 52. Sechster Synodal-Bericht der deutschen Ev.-Luth. Synod von Missouri, Ohio u. a. Staaten vom Jahre 1852 (St. Louis: Druckerei der Synod von Missouri, Ohio und andern Staaten, 1876), 200.
- 53. Heintzen, 54-56.
- 54. [C. F. W. Walther], "Todesnachricht," Der Lutheraner, 32 (May 15, 1876), 72.