

Friedrich Conrad Dietrich Wyneken

PART THREE: Mentor and Pastor for Mission

So far, we have heard of Friedrich Wyneken's exploits as a survey missionary during 1838 and early 1839, risking his life for Christ to reach primarily nonchurched German settlers. We have noted his church planting efforts in northeast Indiana and extreme western Ohio, work he did while himself serving what we might call a dual parish in Fort Wayne and Friedheim. We followed him as he took a two-year trip back to Germany to recruit workers and generate support for the mission efforts in North America. And we have seen him growing in his appreciation for confessional Lutheran theology, first over against the Methodists on the frontier but later also as quite distinct from the Reformed with whom he had at one time rubbed shoulders more comfortably.

Now we move on in Wyneken's life story, and we see him in yet another mode of mission concern and support. This time we focus on Wyneken as a mentor for mission, highlighting his work as a pastor in Fort Wayne and in his three subsequent calls. For the Lord wants His church not only to reach out to and gather in the lost and erring, but also to continue shepherding those who have been gathered, feeding them in the pasture of Word and Sacrament. To that end, He gives his church pastors, men who publicly preach and administer the goods held by all members of Christ's body in common. Wyneken was such a man with just this call. What can we learn from Wyneken as pastor, as a mentor and partner for mission?

Wyneken as Mentor

While Wyneken was in Fort Wayne, he especially mentored three men for the ministry. They were Friedrich Husmann, Gerhard Jaebker, and Carl Frincke. We will note each in turn.

Friedrich Wilhelm Husmann. Already in 1839, about a year after Wyneken first arrived in Indiana, he had been expressing a desire to get to the frontier schoolteachers who could teach in German. He got his wish with respect to his own work in Fort Wayne a few months later. On May 17, 1840, Friedrich Husmann arrived to be the first teacher at St. Paul's Lutheran School. Husmann was two and a half years older than Wyneken. Like Wyneken, he came from Hannover, and he had spent time in Bremen, in his case as a teacher. Now Husmann would lend his hand to the mission in America by teaching school under the auspices of a church which Wyneken served as pastor.

Teacher Husmann became a student too. He took up the study of theology, also Greek, Hebrew, and Latin. An account of his life in the very first issue of *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* says that he was doing these studies “privately.” But you don’t need much imagination to envision Pastor Wyneken as having been involved with these studies, quite possibly as tutor, almost certainly as encourager.¹

If Wyneken supported Husmann, Husmann returned the favor in a different way during the time when Wyneken was in Germany. During Wyneken’s absence, some members of St. Paul’s wanted to call the fill-in, Pastor Jensen, to be their pastor. Teacher Husmann along with lay leader Henry Rudisill blunted that move, which would basically have ousted Wyneken while he was away, and in the process they avoided a major split in the congregation.²

Jensen ended up taking a call to Pittsburgh before Wyneken returned from Europe, so Husmann preached at St. Paul’s in the interim. It seems that by this time he was a licensed candidate of the Pennsylvania Synod. These were the days of Lutherans in America “licensing” preachers, a practice that the Missouri Synod stood against from its inception. Of course, Husmann was filling in at St. Paul’s before the Missouri Synod was formed, at a time when presumably he did not know why the Missourians would eventually oppose licensing.

Besides Husmann’s duties at St. Paul’s, he “alternately held lessons” in two other schools, one eight miles distant and the other eighteen miles.³ Husmann accepted a call to be pastor of a congregation in Marion Township and two neighboring churches in October, 1845, which brought his service at St. Paul’s in Fort Wayne to a close.

Husmann was ordained at the constituting convention of the Missouri Synod in 1847.⁴ At that same convention, he was elected to be the Synod’s first secretary, a position he held for the next 13 years. As secretary, he no doubt worked closely with the Synod’s second president, Friedrich Wyneken. (We will have much more to say about Wyneken’s presidency in the final hour of this presentation.)

Gerhard Heinrich Jaebker. Like Wyneken, Jaebker also came from Hannover. Eleven and a half years younger than Wyneken, Jaebker emigrated to America in about 1841. Like Husmann, Jaebker became a teacher at a church where Wyneken was pastor, this one at Friedheim in Adams County.⁵

¹ Threinen, CTQ, 30.

² See St. Paul’s History, 21.

³ St. Paul’s History, 22.

⁴ Threinen, CTQ, 30-31.

⁵ Lutheran Cyclopedia, s.v. Jaebker, Gerhard Heinrich.

In 1844, Wyneken started tutoring Jaebker for the ministry. This tutoring, done basically at Wyneken's Fort Wayne parsonage, was quite different from formal seminary schooling. Yet it was the way lots of Lutheran pastors, also in America, had received their training when lacking seminaries to attend.⁶ The tutoring offered by Wyneken seems to have emphasized preaching and catechizing.⁷

Jaebker went on to serve as pastor at Friedheim for over 30 years, to the end of his life in this world. He was a charter member of the Missouri Synod.⁸

Carl Heinrich Friedrich Frincke. At the same time that Wyneken was tutoring Jaebker, he also took on as another mentee the twenty-year old Carl Frincke, from Brunswick in Germany. Wyneken first met Frincke right after his return from Germany. The young man happened into a service at St. Paul's. When it was over, he raised an objection to Wyneken, for Wyneken had preached from the Bible. Wyneken laughed and said, "Listen, young man, I like you. A person knows where you stand." Then Wyneken asked what Frincke had against the Bible. Frincke's response was soaked in rationalism. Wyneken listened, then responded – as the account of this event puts it – "as only Wyneken could."⁹ Frincke was caught short. With his response, "Wyneken opened Frincke's eyes and at the same time won his confidence."¹⁰

Frincke kept attending church at St. Paul's, and Wyneken naturally began to instruct him in the basics of Christianity. Then Wyneken told young Frincke about the crying need for preachers, and at length he was tutoring Frincke for the ministry along with Jaebker.

Frincke's studies took a little longer than Jaebker's. He finished in 1847, whereupon the brand-new Missouri Synod commissioned him as its first traveling "Besucher" to gather midwestern Lutherans who had no pastor – work that at least resembled Wyneken's early survey efforts.¹¹

A footnote to these stories. Wyneken accepted a call to Baltimore and left Fort Wayne early in 1845. The task of finishing out Jaebker's and Frincke's studies fell to the next pastor at

⁶ Threinen, CTQ, 29.

⁷ Heintzen, 20.

⁸ Lutheran Cyclopedia, s.v. Jaebker, Gerhard Heinrich.

⁹ Threinen, CTQ, 29.

¹⁰ Threinen, CTQ, 29.

¹¹ Lutheran Cyclopedia, s.v. Frincke, Carl Heinrich Friedrich. Frincke was commissioned May 6, 1847, and ordained in Fort Wayne six months later, on November 7, 1847, when he became pastor in White Creek, Indiana. The duties of a *Besucher* as authorized by the Synod's first convention are in Appendix A of Karl Wyneken's STM thesis, 202-205.

St. Paul's, the highly trained Wilhelm Sihler. As Erich Heintzen wrote in his history, *The Prairie School of the Prophets*: "Their progress made a deep impression on Sihler and suggested to him the great potential for the church of a body of pastors with minimal practical training, who could be put into the field quickly, yet would serve effectively. A seminary to train such pastors on American soil was the desperate need of the hour."¹² Wyneken appealed to Wilhelm Loehe in Germany for help toward this end, help which Loehe provided. In October, 1846, Concordia Theological Seminary conducted its first classes, with Sihler as president and chief instructor. Frincke was among the eleven students.

By that time, Wyneken had been in Baltimore for a year and a half. Yet it is altogether understandable that the Fort Wayne seminary considers Wyneken to be one of its founders, along with Loehe and Sihler. Of the three, Wyneken blazed the trail. He was doing pastoral education on an informal, tutorial basis in Fort Wayne before it occurred to anyone to start a seminary there.

Wyneken as Pastor

In and around Fort Wayne

Wyneken was beloved as a pastor. As we have noted, J. J. Nuelson visited Wyneken a year or so into his ministry, in the summer of 1839. Thereupon he wrote to their mutual friend Haesbaert in Baltimore that people in Adams County "seem to cling to him and hold him in deep affection, and the Lord has blessed many souls through him."¹³ Perhaps no anecdote does a better job at depicting the esteem in which he was held than the rather famous account of the preacher's yellow pants.

Wyneken did not have anything resembling fancy clothes. He could not afford such, and his lack of money in this regard did not trouble him. Sometimes he wore jeans to preach, often patched at the knee, like many of his hearers wore. He did have one black suit that he tried to hold in reserve for pastoral duties, but he could not wear it every day. As things were, he used it enough that it was showing definite signs of wear.

One day, Wyneken stopped in at a store in Decatur. The proprietor there was a Romanist. He was also given to excessive drinking, for which Wyneken had upbraided him several times in the past. On this day, the man was cutting a piece of yellow material, durable fabric often called English leather. The shopkeeper offered Wyneken a piece of the cloth. Wyneken said no. He had

¹² Heintzen, 23.

¹³ Quoted in Saleska, 40.

no money for that. The man offered to give Wyneken enough to make a pair of pants. Wyneken still declined. Why? He told the man, "You would stop my mouth and I would not be able to admonish you for your drinking." The man said, "Here is the cloth. Now scold me as much as you like."¹⁴ Grateful to shopkeeper and to the Lord, Wyneken took the cloth and had pants made from it.

He wore those fine sturdy yellow pants everywhere. The deacons at the church found this embarrassing. One of them quietly took up a collection that came to some \$40 for the pastor to get better clothes. But Wyneken ended up giving that money away, to a poor woman whose husband had been ill for a while. When the deacon who had presented him the money inquired about what had happened, Wyneken said, "God can give me twice as much money in return and a new pair of trousers in the bargain, if I need them."

Not long thereafter, on the same day, Wyneken pulled out of the mail a check that amounted to \$80 from his relatives in Germany. Then a tailor in town tricked Wyneken into trying on a new pair of trousers, claiming that they were made for another man just his size. When Wyneken finished trying on the new pants, his good old yellow ones were nowhere to be found. The new pants turned out to be a gift for him. Wyneken turned to his friend the deacon with the words, "What do you have to say now?"¹⁵

On another occasion, in Fort Wayne, a hardened sinner came and announced himself for Communion. Wyneken told him he could not receive the Sacrament. Why? "Because you are a drunkard," Wyneken replied. The man was indignant. "Who told you that? I'll fix that liar! I want to know who told you that!" Wyneken said his informant was someone the man should know and who he would not be able to contradict. He led the man to a mirror, and said: "That man with the red nose and that bloated face told me . . . Now look that man straight in the eye and deny it if you can." Then, reassuringly, Wyneken added: "My dear friend, you are a creature of God. He created you in His image. He redeemed you with the precious blood of his Son. And you, whom God so highly honored and prized, thrust yourself like the swine into the mire and filth of sin and wallow in it." The man asked whether there could be any help for someone like him. "There is help for you too," Wyneken said. He urged the man to repent and trust in the Christ Who had died for him. Then, as the man was leaving, Wyneken added, "Oh, I almost forgot. You may go to Communion."¹⁶

As both these stories show, Wyneken was quite concerned about the behavior of

¹⁴ Hageman, 24-25.

¹⁵ Hageman, 25-27. See Lindemann, 48-49.

¹⁶ Hageman, 28-29.

Christians in the world, especially those on the frontier. Already in 1839, Nuelson was reporting on Wyneken's "plans to introduce a church discipline, in order to at least produce outward discipline and to change the rude behavior of many Germans who want to join his congregation."¹⁷ In fact, a few months *before* Nuelson's visit, and shortly after he himself had accepted the call to St. Paul's, Wyneken and the church council there had composed and the congregation had adopted "several necessary rules, which must be read to every person who should henceforth wish to join the congregation."¹⁸

The document depicted church members as leading pious lives in true repentance and faith. It went on to list two basic commands for each Christian congregation. The first: "To separate oneself from the world and remain undefiled, never putting oneself on equal footing with the world." This entailed avoiding crude vices, and living honorably. It also involved rejecting worldly lifestyle, abandoning the world's frivolity and foolish ways – for example, "dancing, playing cards, and lounging about in taverns." To keep on living in a way distinct from the world, church members needed above all to avail themselves of Word and Sacrament.

The other basic command was that a "Christian congregation is to oust the wicked," as Scripture teaches. The document said: "Anyone who refuses to turn from his evil ways despite all petition and warning should hereafter be expelled from the congregation until he has repented." It added that "acceptance of new members should be performed with great caution. No one should be accepted without previous examination of his faith and lifestyle." And, at least among those who lived in and around town, "only those who have been accepted as members of the congregation should be permitted to receive Holy Communion."¹⁹

It is not hard to detect traces of pietism in this document, largely if not totally conceived by the young and still pietistic Wyneken. And it is ambiguous about visitors or strangers in Fort Wayne communing at St. Paul's. But what we have here, overall, is an effort to make sure that Christians adorned their confession of Christ with holy living, in a setting where it would have been relatively easy to let things slide.

In Baltimore

In autumn, 1844, Wyneken received a call from a church he already knew, Second Lutheran in Baltimore, where Haesbert had been pastor. Here he had been welcomed to America in 1838. He told the congregation in a letter that it was dear to him. However, in the

¹⁷ Quoted in Lindemann, 14.

¹⁸ St. Paul's History, 19.

¹⁹ St. Paul's History, 19-20.

same letter he announced a few conditions for accepting their call. He would use his own Lutheran agenda, especially for administering the sacraments. "He would insist on announcements for communion and the making of the sign of the cross at the proper places in the order of service, and that strict Lutheran doctrine and practice must be followed."²⁰ The congregation wrote back, agreeing to all this. Wyneken accepted the call. He left Fort Wayne for Baltimore in February, 1845.

On the Sunday after his installation there, a communion Sunday, he looked at the altar prior to the service. He was surprised to see wine there in an earthen jug. The wafers sat side by side on the altar with a loaf of bread. Loaves were being used by Reformed and Union congregations who insisted on breaking the bread as a symbol of what they thought was the real absence of Christ's true body in the Lord's Supper. Wyneken called the deacons into the sacristy right away and told them they were not truly Lutheran; they had deceived him. He could not administer communion like this!

They were surprised, for they thought they really were Lutheran. They requested that Wyneken go ahead with the service, as things were, one last time. He acceded. But he told the whole congregation that he wanted them to stay for a little while after church. At that time, he told the whole group that he found them to be a Unionistic congregation, not a Lutheran one. He said it might be best for them to dismiss him immediately.²¹ The people wanted him to stay, though. "Well, then," Wyneken told them, "I will take the Lutheran and the Heidelberg Catechisms with me up to the pulpit and read and explain both of them starting next Sunday. Then each one can see for himself on which side the full truth of the divine Word is found."²²

Controversy ensued. Reformed-leaning church members felt betrayed. Most of them did not want to listen as Wyneken explained. Some of them recruited allies among putative Lutherans around Baltimore to find fault with Wyneken. There were divisions in families within the congregation. "It was a time of trial."²³ Ultimately the Reformed members left, over 80 of them, and started a German Reformed church.

It was during these trials that Wyneken attended the General Synod meeting in May of 1845 and offered motions opposing writings by Schmucker and Kurtz. His actions in his own congregation and his motions on the floor of that meeting brought him a number of critics within the General Synod.²⁴

²⁰ Saleska, 58.

²¹ Saleska, 67. Phelps, LHC, 48 says: "He offered his immediate resignation."

²² Lindemann, 25.

²³ Lindemann, 25.

²⁴ See Lindemann, 25-27.

Through these difficulties, Wyneken's own integrity remained intact. In mid-July of 1846, not even a year and a half after he had started in Baltimore, Wyneken wrote his congregation a letter. He reported a fact he had just learned: that the Synod of the West, to which he belonged for years, had dissolved. Albeit through no fault of his own, he now had no synodical affiliation. But the church constitution of Second Lutheran required the pastor to be a member of some synod. Therefore Wyneken was suggesting that the necessary changes be made, as he put it, "to renew my election and call into your midst." He acknowledged that "this announcement fills me with deep concern."²⁵ It may have provided an occasion for the church to dismiss him on a technicality. Yet he felt he had no choice but to bring the matter to the congregation's attention. The church responded that it would give him time to join an orthodox Lutheran synod.

On the whole, Wyneken "was very slow and careful about introducing ceremonies" in church, "even if they were very dear to him."²⁶ It seems the conditions he had stated before accepting the call to Baltimore amounted to a minimum, but he did not want to give people grief by expecting too much too fast beyond that. This disappointed some of his – what might we say? – more zealous church members, who thought a crucifix and candles on the altar were "indispensable for Lutheranism." He never allowed these on the altar, though, out of consideration especially for older members who were unaccustomed to them. In fact, a full liturgical service was not introduced during Wyneken's Baltimore pastorate.²⁷

Also during his time in Baltimore, Wyneken found himself opposing lodges. He discovered that several of his church members belonged to societies like the Order of Red Men and the Order of Oddfellows. "According to my knowledge," his biographer Johann Lindemann writes, "he was the first pastor in America who publicly took a firm stand against the secret societies and who reproved their works of darkness."²⁸

Baltimore was where Lindemann met Wyneken. In 1848, at age 21, Lindemann came to America and started teaching at the school run by the church where Wyneken was pastor. Lindemann ended up attending seminary in Fort Wayne and, after pastorates in Cleveland for 11 years, he became the first director of the Missouri Synod's Teachers Seminary in Addison, Illinois – the institution that is now Concordia University Chicago. Concerning Wyneken and the Lutheran school, Lindemann wrote, "His school was uppermost in his thoughts," and "he attended to it most conscientiously. He saw a great deal of the teacher," Lindemann reported

²⁵ Quoted in Saleska, 72.

²⁶ Lindemann, 33.

²⁷ Lindemann, 33.

²⁸ Lindemann, 28.

from firsthand experience. “He was always more fraternal than paternal, even toward young teachers. In him they had a faithful friend indeed.”²⁹

Wyneken came into his own as a preacher in Baltimore, in the estimation of Edward Saleska.³⁰ There Wyneken could concentrate far more on the preparation of sermons than in Indiana, where at one point he was preaching between 3 and 6 times a week.³¹ Wyneken almost never completely wrote out a sermon. Nor did he deliver precisely whatever he had written. “His sermon was never complete until preached.”³² He worked on it right up to the time of delivery.

Speaking of delivery, Wyneken tended to start slow. At first, he would seem nervous. His voice would break. He would cough, or stutter, or make some misstatement. “But finally he strikes a key-note, the word which has eluded him, and his nervousness is at an end. From this point on the words flow as a rushing stream.”³³ His words, gestures, and eye movements were now united in pressing upon poor sinners the love of God for them in Christ. “He never pointed to heavenly blessings as something far removed,” Saleska wrote. “[H]e brought them down to earth and so very close to the individual that they could be touched, felt, examined and willingly and eagerly accepted.”³⁴

In the winter of 1848-49, Wyneken toyed with a possible new evangelism vehicle, at least for him: street preaching. His wife and others told him he already had enough to do.³⁵ He disagreed. Still, nothing seems to have come of this.

Wyneken’s five-year ministry in Baltimore was eventful and fruitful. His next call would be as C. F. W. Walther’s associate pastor in St. Louis.

In St. Louis

Walther respected Wyneken a lot. He had called attention to the *Notruf* in an early issue of *Der Lutheraner*. A little later, he credited Wyneken for initiating a “wholesome movement.”³⁶ Understandably, then, he looked forward to having Wyneken as a colleague. In 1850, he wrote

²⁹ Lindemann, 32.

³⁰ Saleska, 73ff.

³¹ 1840. Phelps, LHC, 47.

³² Saleska, 74.

³³ Saleska, 75.

³⁴ Saleska, 76.

³⁵ Saleska, 81-82.

³⁶ See Phelps, CHIQ, 50.

in *Der Lutheraner*: “Wyneken *finally* arrived here in St. Louis on the 16th of this month [April] with his family; all the friends of Zion in our midst will rejoice to hear these glad tidings.”³⁷ The wait had taken a while. Wyneken had been called to St. Louis almost six months earlier, but he stayed on in Baltimore until his successor there was chosen: E. G. W. Keyl of Milwaukee.

Wyneken’s presence was to lighten Walther’s load, for Walther now served both as Synod and seminary president, in addition to his day-to-day teaching duties at the seminary and his pastoral work for the St. Louis *Gesamtgemeinde*, which now had a combined membership of close to 1000 people. Not long after Wyneken’s arrival in St. Louis, a little later in 1850, the Synod elected *him* to its presidency, succeeding Walther, who could now concentrate more on the seminary. Wyneken really was lightening Walther’s load.

Unhappily, little has been recorded about Wyneken’s pastoral work in St. Louis. We are left to assume that he carried on pretty much as he had in Baltimore, although he was now a member of a pastoral staff. One thing that is known is that Wyneken preached long sermons – often an hour and a half. On his suggestion, an hourglass was procured for the pulpit. It didn’t end up helping much. Wyneken would sometimes see the sands run out, turn the glass upside down, then go on for another half-hour. I wonder whether Walther ever tweaked Wyneken for long sermons the way Luther did with Bugenhagen.

By 1854, Wyneken stood in need of having *his* load lightened. The presidency of a growing Synod was requiring more and more of his time. In that year, Johann Schaller was called to Trinity, St. Louis as “vicar” to Wyneken, although he was fully a pastor himself. A later pastor at Trinity compared Wyneken’s and Schaller’s preaching. Wyneken was “fiery, powerful, heart-stirring.” Schaller, by contrast, was “calm, engaging, heart-refreshing, heart-rejoicing.” Overall: “Wyneken’s sermons rushed forward like a torrent sweeping everything relentlessly before it; Schaller’s like a brook, flowing unperturbed.”³⁸

Even with the extra help, by late 1859 Wyneken was ready for a leave of absence from parish duties. Since he was now paid by the Synod for his presidential work, he was able to move back to Adams County, Indiana for a few months, then for four years to a small estate near Fort Wayne, a gift from well-to-do friends.³⁹ All this time he remained technically a pastor at Trinity, St. Louis, which had looked forward to the day when he would come back. However, in 1864, as Wyneken’s Synod presidency was in its final months, he received a call to Trinity Lutheran Church in Cleveland. After securing a release from St. Louis, he accepted this new call.

³⁷ Quoted in Saleska, 82, emphasis original.

³⁸ C. J. Otto Hanser, quoted in Saleska, 85.

³⁹ Lindemann, 37.

In Cleveland

In many ways, going to Cleveland became a tonic for the exhausted and now frail Wyneken. For one thing, it was like old home week for him. He was installed in early November by Husmann, the first teacher at St. Paul's in Fort Wayne, now a pastor in nearby South Euclid. Also nearby, at Zion congregation on the east side of Cleveland, was his nephew – his sister's son – Pastor H. C. Schwan, himself a future president of the Synod. The Wynekenes and the Schwans visited often.

Even the shoes that Wyneken was filling at Trinity, Cleveland were familiar: those of another former teacher colleague, Johann Lindemann, his future biographer, who had just departed to begin work at the Teachers Seminary in Addison. Wyneken told Lindemann, at the Synod's convention in October, that upon arrival "you will find many large stones there on your way perhaps. If you cannot lift them, let them lay and just walk 'round them." Sage advice!⁴⁰

Other conditions in Cleveland were favorable. The congregation was not too large. Most members lived close to the church. Wyneken could visit them with comparative ease. Generally, there was order and peace. Wyneken even found the climate palatable. So he went about his pastoral duties with renewed energy and a cheery disposition. He threw himself into the work.

As always, Wyneken was concerned with Christian education. While he was serving at Trinity, a new school was erected. Wyneken dared to hope for a high school too.⁴¹ On Sundays at 3:00 p.m., he conducted *Christenlehre* for Trinity congregation, not only the children but also the adults. Usually it was preceded by baptisms. One of Wyneken's confirmands in Cleveland was the then-14-year-old Friedrich Bente. "Wyneken made me understand the catechism," the eventual editor of the *Concordia Triglotta* recalled. Wyneken pleaded with the promising boy's parents to send their son to college.⁴² Bente was yet another leader in the Missouri Synod mentored by Wyneken.

It is from the Cleveland years that we have one of the few intact Wyneken sermons which has come down to us, his New Year's Day sermon from 1868 on the circumcision and name of Jesus. Nearly half of this sermon is devoted to applications. Wyneken reflected on how we all enter a new year in the dark as to what the future holds. Yet God has, as it were, "painted over the entrance and door" of the new year a picture and a name, the circumcision and name

⁴⁰ Lindemann, 42.

⁴¹ John Meyer, 535.

⁴² Phelps, LHC, 52.

of Jesus, the One Who shed His blood to save sinners. Through these we can look into God's fatherly heart, come what may.⁴³ Wyneken pointed to God's promises to His people whether we end up facing poverty, sufferings, persecutions, even death. Might I lose my faith in the new year? Wyneken answered, in part: ". . . you will not rely upon your heart; you will rely upon your Jesus, who saves you from your sins. He gives grace anew in Word and Sacrament. His forgiveness of your sins surrounds you like the very air. It is as vast as the heavens themselves. He who has called you is faithful. He will do it."⁴⁴

On the subject of church discipline, Lindemann summed up some of Wyneken's convictions:

He complained often that merciful love was missing from admonitions and punishments at the exercise of church discipline. No lapse was too great or too weighty for him not to think immediately about salvation from it. No sinner was too bad, too depraved to be shown love and kindness by Wyneken. He wanted to save. He admonished and scolded only in order to save.⁴⁵

Trinity, Cleveland grew. The growth was fueled in part by an influx of new immigrants. Wyneken, who still suffered with ailments such as rheumatism, arthritis, and asthma, soldiered on. But he could not keep up with all the work. So the congregation sought an assistant. For three years, this was Pastor Heinrich Cramer. He was succeeded by Wyneken's own son Henry, who was also principal of the school, starting in late 1870.⁴⁶ In early 1874, Henry and his father swapped the head and assistant pastor roles. The next year, Henry became a professor at the seminary in Springfield.⁴⁷

About when Henry left for Springfield, Friedrich, who was now suffering also from a heart condition, retired from Trinity congregation. He preached his farewell sermon on October 6, 1875.

⁴³ Harrison, 432-33.

⁴⁴ Harrison, 436.

⁴⁵ Lindemann, 56.

⁴⁶ Lindemann, 52-53.

⁴⁷ Lindemann, 56.

Applications

Evangelical congregations as setting. Sometimes it is said that while Wyneken was serving as a pastor in St. Louis, he also taught at the seminary there.⁴⁸ If so, I have not managed to find out which courses he taught or how often he taught them. Yet even if he never set foot in a single seminary classroom, Wyneken still made an important contribution to theological education by being pastor to the seminary professors.

Regin Prenter once wrote that professors of theology are teachers of the church. Certainly! But they will not become better theologians. The congregations will sooner improve in which they receive the means of grace and with whom they unite in person to confess their faith. It must begin in the congregations – I mean in the worshipping congregations. Here pastors and lay people must together knock at the door, pray, and seek. And this they can do with great confidence and in joyful hope, because the God of the Gospel is gracious and the Holy Spirit is stronger and wiser than all men. One can, therefore, not begin anywhere but in the local worshipping congregation.⁴⁹

This point is worth making at the Northern Illinois District Pastoral Conference. Some of you are pastors to professors who teach and staff members who serve future pastors, teachers, and other full-time church workers at Concordia University Chicago. You, too, have a contribution to make to the education of church workers at this level. You preach sermons that their professors hear, and lead Bible classes in which they participate. You administer the sacraments to them and their families. You visit them, counsel them, comfort them, and pray for and with them. You are shepherds of the flocks in which they gather along with other saints of God to hear the voice of the Good and Great Shepherd, and respond to Him.

What's that you say – that you are just doing what the Lord has given you to do? I don't think it unlikely that Wyneken would respond: "Precisely!" But don't underestimate its value for theological education.

In fact, don't underestimate the import of your work at all, even if your church is nowhere near River Forest. One of the things we have seen is how Wyneken worked energetically, in a number of congregations, to shape a setting for Gospel proclamation. As Wisconsin Synod church historian Benjamin Phelps puts it, Wyneken's pastoral "leadership

⁴⁸ See, for example, editorial comments by Harrison, 423, 437.

⁴⁹ Regin Prenter, "What Does it Mean Today to be the Church?", trans. Otto Stahlke, *The Springfielder* 35 (September, 1970): 105.

highlighted the clear need to form individual character and congregational culture.”⁵⁰ He was working to cultivate settings where the proclamation of the Gospel could flourish. He moved quickly where the doctrine of the divine Word was at stake, and more slowly when it was not. He gave attention both to the whole flock and to individuals both inside and outside it. He kept the focus on the crucified and risen Christ. He invested in people.

Wyneken’s bluntness. Perhaps you have heard some of the stories I have been telling about Wyneken and wondered whether you could get away with being so assertive and blunt with people. I have thought about this myself.

Sometimes Wyneken did turn people off. Early on in his time in Baltimore, members of other General Synod churches came to his services and found his bluntness difficult to stomach. For example, once he had referred to “Sows who were wallowing about in the vineyard of the Lord,” a phrase some apparently thought over the top.⁵¹ Also in Baltimore, at another point and maybe more than once, Wyneken told someone: “Instead of gaping about in the street, stick your nose into the catechism, for you don’t know it yet.” However, a sympathetic eyewitness said, “One could never be angry with him, for one could tell that he did not say it out of spite, but that it was in keeping with his well-meaning nature to express himself in that manner.”⁵²

Lindemann offered this comment: “At times he behaved in a way that made it seem as if he were unfeeling and unloving. But success usually justified his method that he had used only to bring the person concerned to his senses to make a strong impression upon him.”⁵³ Wyneken seems to have had shrewd intuition. He was a good judge of people.

Not everyone has that kind of gut-level insight, not every pastor either. And not every pastor has Wyneken’s hard-driving personality. Think of the differences between Wyneken and his colleague in St. Louis, Schaller, as these came out in their respective preaching styles. Every pastor has to strive to be faithful with what he has.

Lindemann also wrote: “He never lost his good humor even in the toughest battle. He never forgot to make a distinction between the weak and the malicious ones. He always kept in mind that the human foes were only instruments of the devil, and that the battle was actually his.”⁵⁴ All of these traits make a good model for us. Wyneken was not simply trying to out-shout others. Through it all, they could sense his kindness and his genuine interest in their well-being.

⁵⁰ Phelps, LHC, 53.

⁵¹ Saleska, 77.

⁵² Phelps, LHC, 49.

⁵³ Lindemann, 15.

⁵⁴ Lindemann, 29.

When you add all that into the mix of human interaction, a little plain-spokenness can go down more easily, and even end up being appreciated. I 'd suggest that many of us have a lesson to learn in this regard.

Conclusion

Pastors carry out the mission of the church all the time. The mission is to save: to make disciples by baptizing and teaching, to gather the lost and to edify the gathered. Every sermon is carrying out the mission of the church, every Bible class and catechism class, every hospital visit and every shut-in communion, every preschool chapel and youth group devotion. Much as I pray, and I invite you to pray, that pastors find ways to spend more time reaching out with the Gospel to the non-churched, just so should we maintain that tending one's flock is far from neglecting the mission.

Wyneken was a pastor, and in his work he was a mentor for mission. We have met a few of those he mentored at some length: Husmann, Jaebker, and Frincke in Fort Wayne, Lindemann in Baltimore, even young Bente in Cleveland.

For much of his time as an active pastor, Wyneken also served as president of the Synod. In that capacity, he made many visitations. As he did, he kept on mentoring. He told one young pastor: "Now I am president and I am shaping you. Sometime, when you become president, you shape me."⁵⁵ We will turn squarely to Wyneken's presidency in the final portion of this presentation.

⁵⁵ Lindemann, 41.