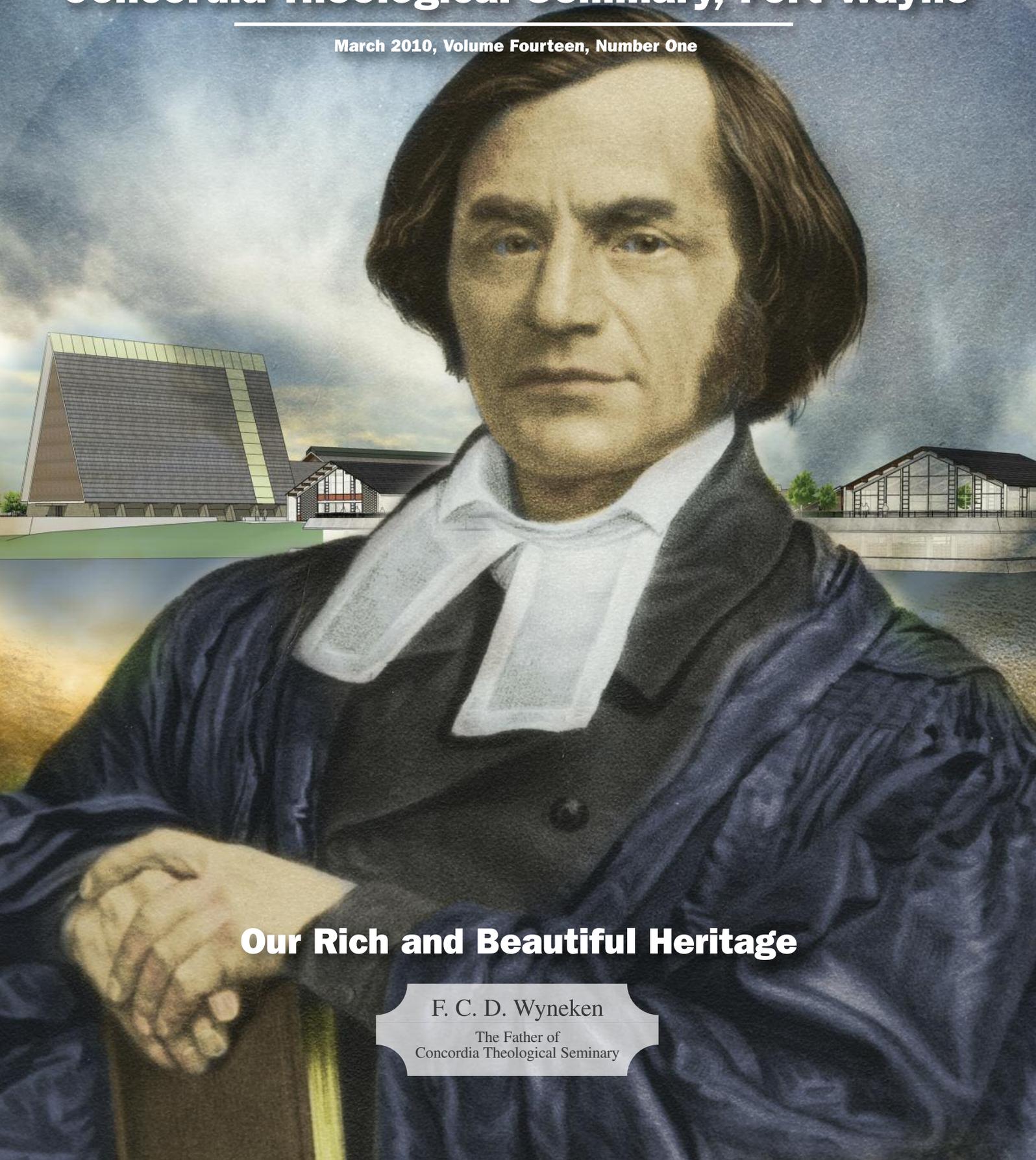


# For the Life of the World

## Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne

March 2010, Volume Fourteen, Number One



**Our Rich and Beautiful Heritage**

F. C. D. Wyneken

The Father of  
Concordia Theological Seminary

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This calendar year we recall the 200th anniversary of one of our seminary’s founders, Friedrich Conrad Dietrich Wyneken (1810–1876). In the demanding context of 2010, Concordia Theological Seminary remains faithful to Wyneken’s founding vision, even while recognizing the rapidity of change that theological education is presently experiencing. In these circumstances, Wyneken’s vision continues to inspire our seminary as it carries out its mission.

### 8 **Luther’s Legacy** By Dr. Cameron A. MacKenzie

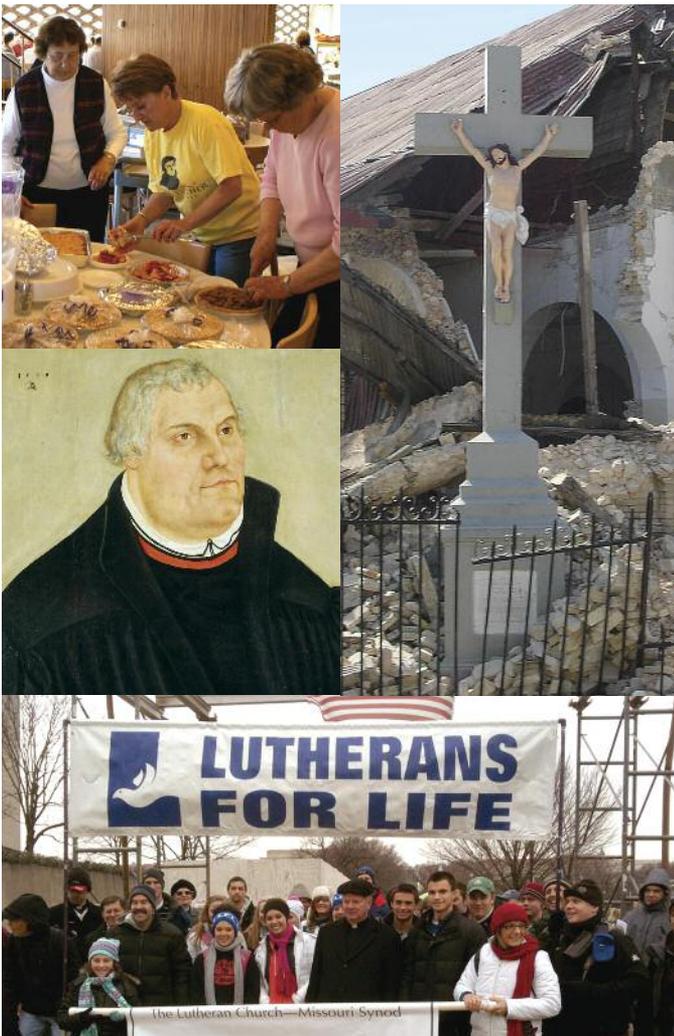
There’s *lots* that separates Luther’s world from ours besides time and miles! So what then is his “legacy” to *our* world? Does Luther have anything to say to people alive now? Perhaps, surprisingly, the answer is a resounding yes! For in spite of all the obvious differences, there are even more important similarities—indeed, constants—that we see in Luther’s world and our own.

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I am thankful for my forefathers who kept pointing me to Scripture and Christ with an eye to the Christian Church and taught me how to journey through death to life everlasting. I also realized that I had now become a part of the faithful witnesses and the son who would pass on the saving words of Christ. Through stories, sermons, devotions, writings and preaching, my congregation would hear and learn from Martin Luther, Martin Chemnitz, C.F.W. Walther, Philipp Melancthon and others who shared similar faith struggles as we did.

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## For the Life of the World

**PUBLISHED BY**  
Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana

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# Our Rich Heritage: Luther, Catechism and Tradition in the Parish Today

By Rev. Kevin L. Kolander

*“...We are surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses...”* Hebrews 12:1

**Growing up Lutheran**, I was used to having lots of church people around me—Sunday School, worship, youth group, potlucks, catechism and Bible class, Lutheran college and seminary—these were the places where God forged relationships with me and His people. My first parish was also a wonderful place filled with kids, families and church members. As my early years as a preacher began to unfold, I soon realized that although the pastor is surrounded by many people, he can also be very lonely, especially during times of study, visits, temptations and changes. But in these valleys and challenges is also where I learned to appreciate the faith of my fathers.

I remember preparing for my first Christmas sermon and feeling alone in the work before me. I had been listening to Lutheran sermons all my life, but now it was my turn to preach God’s story about Baby Jesus, and I was having a hard time putting the words together. The church organist popped her head into my study and asked how things were going. I told her preaching was a big responsibility and that I didn’t really know how to start. She told me to remember what I heard in the past, that God would give me the words and also that I had a church family who would love me no matter

what. The Christmas sermon went fine, and the sun did rise the next day.

Shortly after this moment, I started to read sermons by C.F.W. Walther and Martin Luther. I figured that since I was now a Lutheran pastor, I had better make sure what Lutheran preaching sounded like. I wanted to give my people the same solid food to grow their faith that I had. Week after week I read Luther and Walther's sermons on the Gospel and Epistle for the coming Sunday. Through these men, I learned how to preach faith in Christ and love toward my neighbor. Soon I began to realize that I wasn't as alone as I thought. Although these men were long since gone, my two new "grandfathers in the faith" were with me to help guide and shape what I preached and taught from God's Word.

The elders of my congregation and I also made time to study Walther's *Law and Gospel* in the basement of the

parsonage during the long winters in New York. For months we would read Walther's lectures and discuss these great two doctrines of the Bible. We also started a reading session of the *Book of Concord* where Luther,

Ulrich Zwingli, John Calvin, Philipp Melancthon and others would hold our attention vividly as they taught us how to hammer out Christian thought and confess the faith.

Year after year I would gain more friends in the faith like these who helped shape my Lutheran identity and taught me how to shepherd faithfully a flock that belonged to God. Even though these friends weren't alive, their words helped me feel connected with the larger church, they served as a kind of rudder so I wouldn't go too far on either side, they substantiated and confirmed the Gospel truths, they warned and encouraged me in the faith. Reading sermons and devotions by Lutherans was similar to having a grandfather talk to me about the things I loved most about Christ, the

Church and being a Christian.

For 10 years I was surrounded by a host of faithful witnesses from the past. I am thankful for my forefathers who kept pointing me to Scripture and Christ with an eye to the Christian Church and taught me how to journey through death to life everlasting. I also realized that I had now become a part of the faithful witnesses and the son who would pass on the saving words of Christ and our grandfathers to others in my church family. Through stories, sermons, devotions, writings and preaching, my congregation would hear and learn from Luther, Martin Chemnitz, Walther, Melancthon and others who shared similar faith struggles as we did.

With our forefathers in mind, my congregation learned to memorize and love the catechism, sing, pray, confess and contend for the faith. How amazing that God has given the world Christ, who



*Members of First Lutheran Church Bible Study, January 3, 2010*

gathers us together into one family and surrounds us with other faithful Christians to pass on the saving truths of the Church. What a gathering of relatives we've inherited! We are not alone! We are surrounded by members of Christ's family who learn, teach and model the faith for us and the next generation of Lutheran Christians.

The next decade of my ministry has been equally blessed with the presence of Christians whose traditions, writings and sermons help shape the faithful. It is with great joy to see that God, even in the 21st century, continues to raise up Christian people in our dear Synod to bring us devotions, sermons, Bible studies and writings from our church fathers, some which have never been translated into English.

Like many other congregations, my present church family uses the *Portals of Prayer* from Concordia Publishing House written by living theologians and laypeople who teach us to fight the good fight of faith today, memorize the catechism and take our life from the Sacraments. My congregation has also grown to love devotional literature from the past that follows the Sunday readings and builds faith throughout the church year. Bo Giertz fleshes out the Gospels lessons from Advent to the end of the church year. Nils J.S. Laache and Luther have become favorites for my family and, in fact, our congregation gives Laache's *Book of Family Prayer* to each person who joins our congregation. Johann Starke's *Prayer Book*, Johann Gerhard's *Meditations* and others teach us how to pray as Lutherans did in the past. The new *The Lutheran Study Bible* and the readable *Book of Concord* are more

fine examples of learning from our church fathers, past and present, and teaching the faith to each other. These and similar voices in Lutheranism help gather congregations around Christ throughout the church year, keep us solid in the Six Chief

Parts of Christian faith, and make us grateful to be surrounded and fed by such a wonderful host of Lutherans.

What a joy to be a living member of Christ's family, shaped and grounded by so many Lutherans (past and present) who give us Christ and keep us looking to the Savior, the Head and Shepherd of the household of faith. We are so blessed to be surrounded by such a gathering, which, as I said in the beginning, makes us feel not so lonely as we journey Home together for that final reunion. 

*Rev. Kevin L. Kolander has served two LCMS congregations—10 years in New York and 11 at First Lutheran in Lake Elsinore, California.*

