



Lesson 1

Immigrants Bring Their Faith in Christ (1830–1860)

During the Lesson

1. What were the three kinds of Lutheranism?
2. Which description best fits the Wisconsin Synod in its first years?
3. What are the Lutheran Confessions?
4. What were the main reasons Germans emigrated to the United States during the 19th century?



5. Why did Muehlhaeuser found another Lutheran synod in Wisconsin?

6. The Wisconsin Synod was primarily founded by:
 - a. Lutheran pioneers who migrated west from the original 13 colonies.
 - b. Old Lutherans who immigrated from German lands to preserve their Lutheran faith and to flee persecution.
 - c. German immigrants and pastors from mission societies.

7. How did theological compromises arise in mixed Lutheran and Reformed congregations on the frontier?

8. What were some of the problems that resulted?

9. What were some of the major frontier challenges listed by Fachtmann?

Following the Lesson

1. List the major challenges facing the Wisconsin Synod in its first decade.
2. Which one stands out to you as especially important to have addressed?
3. How did the Wisconsin Synod endeavor to meet these challenges?
4. Describe how laypeople and called workers worked together to spread the gospel in the Wisconsin Synod in its infant years.
5. How can today's WELS members embody the missionary zeal of figures like Muehlhaeuser or Fachtmann in their own lives, workplaces, and communities?

6. How might the early struggles of the Wisconsin Synod encourage modern WELS Lutherans to strengthen their commitment to pastoral training and supporting missions, both locally and abroad?

Three Kinds of Lutherans

Old Lutherans

Traditionalist:

Emphasized strict adherence to the original teachings of Martin Luther and the historic Lutheran Confessions (e.g., the Augsburg Confession, the Formula of Concord).

Liturgical Conservatism:

Held to traditional forms of worship, rejecting innovations or changes influenced by modernity.

Opposed to Unionism:

Strongly resisted attempts to merge or unify with other Protestant traditions (e.g., the Prussian Union of Churches).

Orthodox Doctrine:

Stressed pure Lutheran doctrine, focusing heavily on justification by faith and the real presence in Communion.

Mild Lutherans

Moderate Approach:

Represented a middle ground between strict application of doctrine and lax liberal theology.

Pragmatic in Doctrine:

While affirming Lutheran principles, they showed more openness to dialogue and collaboration with other Protestant groups.

Flexible Worship

Practices: Less rigid in liturgical traditions, allowing for some adaptations or simplifications in church practices.

Balance: Sought a balance between faithfulness to Lutheran heritage and responsiveness to contemporary needs and evangelism.

New Lutherans

Progressive Theology:

Advocated for a more modern interpretation of Lutheran doctrine, often influenced by rationalism and Enlightenment ideas or broader Protestantism (e.g., the Second Great Awakening).

Innovative Worship:

Open to significant changes in liturgical practices, sometimes moving away from traditional forms altogether (e.g., New Measures).

Ecumenical Spirit:

Strongly favored ecumenism and union with other Protestant denominations, often at the expense of distinctively Lutheran teachings.

Doctrinal Liberalism:

Downplayed or reinterpreted some historic Lutheran doctrines to align with broader Protestant or modern theological trends (e.g., the sacraments, Sabbath, conversion, etc.)