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The Georg Sverdrup Society

NEWSLETTER

2023 Summer Forum to Be Held in Clarion, IA

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The Georg Sverdrup Society is going to Iowa this summer. Saturday, July 22, is the scheduled date, 9:00 a.m. to lunch. The location will be Holmes Evangelical Lutheran Church, 2139 Hancock Avenue, Clarion, Iowa 50525.

Holmes Evangelical Lutheran is a new congregation to the Lutheran free church tradition, so the day's emphases will be on the basics and introductions. Pastor Martin Horn will speak on "Mutual Assistance Among Congregations," and Mr. Larry Walker will speak on "Augsburg Seminary and the Lutheran Free Church." A third

speaker has not yet been scheduled.

Anyone interested in attending, please RSVP in advance to

Dr. Martin Horn, email haugepastor@hotmail.com, or Loiell Dyrud, email at lod@wiktel.com.



Oftedal Family Chest

Georg Sverdrup

- Born to Pastor Harold Ulrich Sverdrup and his wife Caroline Metella, nee Suur, at Balestrand, Sogn, Norway, on December 16, 1848.
- Died on May 3, 1907, in Minneapolis, MN, and buried in the Lakewood Cemetery.

In June of 2022, editor Larry Walker traveled to Norway to participate in the Hafsfjord Jubilee celebration on Karmøy Island and in Stavanger.

During that visit, he spent time with a relative, Mr. Sigve Bø of Randaberg. Sigve showed him the chest pictured here. He said the chest had belonged to the mother of Prof. Sven Oftedal of Augsburg College. He explained that Stokka farm, where Oftedal's mother, Gunhild Omundsdatter, was born, was a neighbor farm to his own family's farm. When furnishings were auctioned off,



his family acquired this chest, which he keeps in a place of honor in his home.

Sigve also showed Walker Hodnefeld farm on Moster

Island, where some of Walker's ancestors lived. This Hodnefeld family sent the first invitation to Hans Nielsen Hauge to visit the Stavanger area. They had been Moravians, but converted back to Lutheranism in response to Hauge's preaching. They were friends and supporters of John Haugvaldstad, the Stavanger businessman who became *de facto* leader of the Haugeans after Hauge's imprisonment.

2022 Annual Meeting Report: From Denmark to Dalton: Commemorating the Catechism and Choralbook of Erik Ludvigsen Pontoppidan

Following a delicious lunch at noon, President Brian Lunn convened the 2022 annual meeting of the Georg Sverdrup Society. This year's gathering commenced at 1:00 on Saturday, October 8, at Zion-Sarpsborg Free Lutheran Church of Dalton, MN. Pastor Lunn called on Dr. Eugene Boe of the Lutheran Brethren Seminary in Fergus Falls to bring a greeting and prayer. Dr. Boe thanked the society for its work, spoke of our shared heritage, and expressed his appreciation, having recently requested membership.

The songfest constituted a significant portion of the event. Local retired pastor and former secretary of the AFLC, Brian Davidson, provided commentary on some of the selections chosen for the *Ambassador Hymnal for Lutheran Worship*. As part of the committee that produced the publication, Pastor Davidson described some of the selections translated for the book including, "Just One Step." This song had been earlier published in the *Concordia Hymnal* (1932) under the title, "One Resolve." Director of AFLC Parish Education, Marian Christopherson, accompanied on the piano.

Dr. Jerry Moan of the Free Lutheran Schools served as the keynote speaker, addressing the assembly on the topic, "Eric Ludvigsen Pontoppidan, the 'Spener of Denmark': A Look at the Man and His Catechism." In his treatment of the Danish court preacher and bishop of Bergen, Moan elaborated on Pontoppidan's most treasured work, *Sandhet til Gudfrydthet: forklaring til Dr. Martin Luthers lille Katekisme* (Truth unto Godliness: An Explanation of Luther's Small Catechism), published in 1736. He also reminded the listeners of Spener's pietistic hymnal for Danes and Norwegians, released in 1740, among other devotional resources. These and other written works influenced Scandinavians for centuries and continue to be appreciated by pietists and followers of the Free Lutheran tradition worldwide.



Left: Dr. Jerry Moan discusses "Eric Ludvigsen Pontoppidan: the 'Spener of Denmark.'"



Below: Mr. Larry Walker reads from "The Significance of Infant Baptism for the Congregation."

Returning again to the musical themes of the day, host Pastor Mark Johnson drew upon his Swedish heritage, speaking on Lina Sandall and singing her most famous piece, *Tryggare kan ingen vara* ("Children of the Heavenly Father").

To conclude the annual meeting program, Mr. Larry Walker, journal editor, read from his recent translation of one of Sverdrup's writings, "The Significance of Infant Baptism for the Congregation." John Stensvaag had previously translated the article. However, Mr. Walker thought it wise to include a fresh translation.

Following the program, the business meeting commenced at 2:00. The society determined that, given

inflation, the society needed to raise the subscription cost for our journal. Part of the reason for this increase is to maintain its appearance and paper quality. In other business, Mr. Gary Erickson spoke on behalf of the Nominating Committee. Elected by the assembly for two-year terms on the board were Martin Horn, Timothy Larson, Steve Mundfrom, and Carl Fiskness. The Nominating Committee also brought a slate of candidates for consideration to replace its own outgoing members. Those proposed and elected were Marian Christopherson, James Rasmussen, and Terry Olson.

—Carl Fiskness

Seminary Discussion Forum 2023

On January 13, 2023, the Georg Sverdrup Society was hosted by the Free Lutheran Seminary at its new Student Life Center in Plymouth, Minnesota. This year's attendance was more than 50, with several more watching on live-stream.

We had four presenters this year, beginning with Gracia Grindal, Professor Emerita of Luther Seminary (St. Paul). She spoke on "Georg Sverdrup and the Deaconess Tradition," focusing on Sister Elisabeth Fedde. Using the history of the Deaconess Movement she published in 2014, *Sister Elisabeth Fedde, To Do the Lord's Will*, Grindal spoke about the relationship between Georg Sverdrup and Sister Fedde in

developing the Lutheran Deaconess Hospital in Minneapolis, beginning in the 1890s and on.

The second paper was written by Dr. Stanley Quanbeck, but on the day of the forum he was in Madagascar at an event honoring his late wife, Kathy, who served alongside him many years in the medical mission there. Quanbeck's paper, entitled "Georg Sverdrup and the Ministry of Mercy: Madagascar Medical Missionaries," was presented in his absence by Mrs. Marian (Quanbeck) Christopherson, supplemented with several maps and pictures. His paper highlighted the continuation of the medical tradition begun by Sverdrup-sent missionary Dr.

John O. Dyrnes down to the present.

The third paper was presented by Dr. Brent Olson, Old Testament Professor at the Free Lutheran Schools, entitled "The Congregation as the Temple of God." His paper surveyed the subject of the temple in the Old and New Testaments. This paper completes a three-part series on the congregation begun two years ago with "The Bride of Christ and the Local Congregation" and "Georg Sverdrup's Biblical Foundation of the Local Congregation as the Body of Christ" in *Sverdrup Journal* No. 17.

Mr. Larry Walker, editor of the *Sverdrup Journal*, also presented a recent translation, an excerpt from Sverdrup's "Speech at the Opening of the Deaconess Home, September 1, 1891."

—Brian Lunn



Top left: Prof. Gracia Grindal speaks on "Georg Sverdrup and the Deaconess Tradition."

Bottom left: Mrs. Marian Christopherson presents the paper, "Georg Sverdrup and the Ministry of Mercy: Madagascar Medical Missionaries," by Dr. Stanley Quanbeck.

Below: Dr. Brent Olson reads "The Congregation as the Temple of God."





THE GEORG SVERDRUP SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

300 South Artizan Street
Williamsburg, MD 21795
Georgsverdrupsociety.org

Ordet Blev Kjødt

(The Word Became Flesh)

Directors

Brian Lunn, President
Martin Horn, Vice President
Tim Larson, Secretary
Kris Nyman, Treasurer
Brian Davidson
Steve Mundfrom
Carl Fiskness

Larry Walker, Editor
Loiell Dyrud, Assistant Editor

Prospective members are invited
to contact the treasurer at the
above address.

The Georg Sverdrup Society was organized in December 2003 and is open to anyone interested in the life and work of noted Norwegian-American theologian Georg Sverdrup (1848-1907). The society is registered in the State of Minnesota as a 501 (C)(3) nonprofit corporation. Its activities, which are guided by a seven-member board of directors, include:

- Promoting the study and understanding of the New Testament congregation as understood and explained by Georg Sverdrup;
- Endeavoring to advance the ideal of “free and living congregations” as envisioned by Sverdrup;
- Seeking to foster further translation of Sverdrup’s writings into English;
- Encouraging the study and application of the “Fundamental Principles” and “Rules for Work” as used in the Lutheran Free Church and as continuing to be used in the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations;
- Enlarging the interest in Sverdrup’s works by organizing discussion groups and providing speakers on request;
- Operating a **Sverdrup Society** website linked to <www.aflc.org> for members of the Society and others interested in the life and work of Georg Sverdrup;
- Maintaining a current bibliography of Sverdrup’s translated work as well as a current bibliography of materials written about him;
- Publishing a newsletter for members that provides information on the Society’s activities as well as general information about Georg Sverdrup;
- And encouraging research and study of Sverdrup’s life and work by publishing an annual **Sverdrup Journal**.

From “Augsburg Seminary and Our People In America”

By Georg Sverdrup

Will the Conference’s work actually be continued? That is the key question that we pray each would answer themselves as a matter of serious moral consideration before God. Does this mean that we will try, by God’s Spirit, to uphold the pure and right Lutheran teaching? That we will attempt to testify of repentance and the remission of sins, life and bliss for poor sinners, just as we have begun? Does this mean that we will continue to work for the free, living congregation, just as we have begun? Does this mean that we will seek to earn interest on the talent entrusted to us? Or will we stop? Will the mockers

prove correct, and the congregation’s enemies rejoice that God’s calling was not advanced among us? Will we on the great Day of Judgment come forward and hear the just decree: “You wicked and lazy servant; you buried your talent in the ground?”—there is hardly anyone who is not struck with fear at even such a thought. The Norwegian church in America has clearly suffered and worked too hard to get a seminary off the ground, only for it to look on calmly as all that has been done must be given up on and laid in the grave. It is sin to take one’s own life intentionally—to destroy the poor, earthly life that we have received, which every day hangs by a thread. Is

it not then a greater sin to take your spiritual life and God’s calling and lay those in the grave, slopping the mud of indifference and the sand of worldly cares upon it, and at last roll a large stone over the grave and set death’s seal upon it? We know that it is not the congregations’ wish that this should come to pass.

Source: *Kvartal-Skrift*, Volume 3 (1877), pp. 137-145 —Ed. [Helland]; *Professor Georg Sverdrups Samlede Skrifter i Udvalg* 3:7-14. (Excerpt from p. 12.) Translation by Luke Jennen.