



The Georg

NEWSLETTER

Fifth Annual Meeting of GSS to Be Held in Fargo, ND

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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.

On Saturday, October 25, The Georg Sverdrup Society will hold its fifth annual meeting at St. Paul's Free Lutheran Church, 2802 12th St. S., Fargo, North Dakota. The luncheon begins at 12:00, followed by the program at 1:00 and the annual business meeting at 2:30.

The speaker for this year's program will be Larry Walker, librarian and archivist for AFLC Schools and editor of *The Sverdrup Journal* and GSS Newsletter. His presentation will focus on "Problems in Translating Georg Sverdrup." It is a timely topic since one of the society's main goals is translating Sverdrup's work.

The fact that language is "alive" and constantly changing creates a special problem for translators working with documents written over a hundred years ago. The Norwegian Sverdrup used at the turn of the last century is not exactly the Norwegian spoken in Norway today. The translator then must become familiar with the somewhat archaic vocabulary of the past and render it readable in today's English. This is the task

of our translators. As editor of the journal, Walker is responsible for the accuracy and readability of our different translators. It helps that he is also a first rate translator in his own right.

A graduate of Augsburg College, Walker is a student of Norwegian history and culture. He is the author, under the name "Lars Walker," of four published novels. A fifth is scheduled for release in 2009.

At last year's annual meeting, the GSS decided to continue its focus a second year on Sverdrup's work on missions. Some new translations will also be shared at this time.

To complement the focus on missions, we look forward to hearing a group of former missionaries to Madagascar sing some well-loved hymns in the Malagasy language. As most GSS members are aware, Sverdrup's original burden for missions concerned the Madagascar field.

Rev. Robert L. Lee will again lead us in "A Sverdrup Song-



The Sverdrup family coat-of-arms (above) was first used in Norway during the seventeenth century by Lauritz Pedersen Sverdrup.



A Letter from Georg Sverdrup

Translated by Larry Walker

Augsburg Seminary
Minneapolis, Minn. 19 May, 1877

Mr. Solfest Langeland!

Dear Brother!

I thank you heartily for your letter of the 9th. I will do what stands in my power to encourage one of our pastors to make a mission trip west some time this summer; but we are but few. The Conference as well is not able to reach out very far. But I believe that Pastor Heggernæs¹ of St. Peter and Mankato could take a trip out there. I will send you our by-laws as soon as we get them printed. Certainly² there is nothing to hinder a congregation from organizing under the constitution which I have sent you. You are entirely qualified to organize. Anyone who organized thus would only have to omit Paragraph 4 of Article II, which deals with affiliation with the Conference, since the congregation knows, at this point, but little about the Conference; and also the congregation must be received into the Conference before affiliating with it.

Nevertheless it is not a good idea to organize a congregation, if it has no hope of [acquiring] the services of a pastor. Such a congregation could easily come to be in a sad condition. It is my opinion, therefore, that it would be best to wait for a time, until you were able to speak with Pastor Heggernæs and to hear to what extent he could promise some kind of service. If he is able to do that, then it would be proper to organize the congregation and call him as pastor. Certainly I want to say the same to you as I say to everyone of the N. Synod³ who ask my opinion, that if you are convinced that the N. Synod's teaching and practice strengthen the people in sinful practices and bring the congregation into slavery under the pastor—of which I am cer-

tain—then there is no longer any obligation to support that fellowship. But if you are not able to see this, then it is better to remain where you are; for there is scope for a believing soul to be saved there just as well as among us. In any case, no one is saved except through many tribulations and much struggle.

May the Lord Himself give you counsel and wisdom, for the issue is an important one both for yourselves and for the people out there [in Watonwan County]. It is a question of whether our essential teachings will be preserved unadulterated to our children.

Yours,
Georg Sverdrup

[*Postscript written above letterhead:*]
Pastor Heggernæs' address is: Rev. N. Heggernæs, Box 902, Mankato, Minn.

¹ An 1874 graduate of Augsburg Seminary, Pastor Nils Simonson Heggernæs (1845-1909) was a pastor of the Norwegian-Danish Conference. He served in Mankato, Minnesota, from 1874-1901.

² The Norwegian word appears to be "Sövrigt," which I cannot find in any dictionary. "Certainly" seems a fair guess as to its meaning.

³ Norwegian Synod.

Our thanks go to Mr. Rolf H. Langeland of Monterey, California, for sharing this letter with us. His notes on its background follow.

Background on this letter, from its owner

Religion on the Prairie –

Watonwan County – 1873-1890

Solfest Langeland immigrated from Sunnmøre, Norway to southwest Minnesota in 1867 to establish a homestead in Odin Township, Watonwan County, an area settled by many Norwegian immigrants. Although most immigrants had been members of the state church of Norway, they were now swept into theological controversies between two American groups known as the Conference and the Synod.

In March 1873, fifteen families in Odin Township, finding the Long Lake Church to the west too distant, organized the Odin Congregation of the Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Church. Services were held in the larger homes, one being that of Solfest and Ingeborg Langeland. The Odin congregation leaned toward the Synod's teaching, and by 1877 members unsympathetic to those beliefs withdrew. Several families united to plan the establishment of a church within the Norwegian-Danish Conference. Solfest Langeland, convinced that the Synod's teachings were in error, resigned from the Odin congregation in 1877 and wrote for guidance to Professor Sverdrup, which elicited the letter translated here. As a result, the Vaage (Conference) church was established, with Solfest Langeland as a founding member. N. S. Heggernæs served as its first pastor from 1877 to 1880.

Each group then erected a church building. The Synod church

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Discussion Forum on Missions Held in Minot, ND

Besides working toward the translation of the six volumes Georg Sverdrup wrote, the GSS also attempts to inform people about Sverdrup by holding discussion forums that focus on the topic for the year.

On Saturday morning, April 19, the Georg Sverdrup Society held its second discussion fo-

rum of the year, this time in Minot, North Dakota. It was a beautiful spring morning as people from Williston, Tioga, Stanley, and Beulah, as well as many from the immediate Minot area gathered at Bethel Lutheran Church, hosted by Rev. Lloyd Quanbeck.

Under the general topic of

“Sverdrup and Missions,” those in attendance heard Rev. Robert Lee speak on “The Context,” Dr. Francis Monseth on “The Congregation,” and Rev. Ronald Dahle on the connection of “Augsburg to Madagascar.” Rev. Dahle had two aunts and an uncle who served on the mission field in Madagascar, as well as many

Religion on the Prairie, cont. from p.2

rose at the southeast corner of Section 20, Odin Township. The first worship service in this building was scheduled to be held on Sunday, July 24, 1881. But on the Saturday afternoon before that, after all preparations had been completed, a powerful tornado from the west totally destroyed the church, sweeping the building away and crushing it to splinters. This misfortune delayed the growth of the congregation, and services were again held in homes.

In 1886 the Odin congregation met with members of the Vaage church to suggest

sharing their building, located in Section 2 of Cedar Township in Martin County. On May 28, 1886, the Vaage congregation voted to grant use of its facilities. In 1890, following three years of discussions, they officially merged into one congregation under the name of St. Olaf Lutheran Church. This congregation celebrated its centennial in 1973.

*Rolf H. Langland,
September, 2008*

Sources:

1. “Solfest Langeland and Ingeborg Brekhus”, by Harold S. Langland, Minneapolis, Minnesota, 1972, 68 pages.

2. “Religious Aspects of Early History of Odin Township,” by Harold S. Langland, Minneapolis, Minnesota, 1975, 12 pages.

Sverdrup Society Website

Members and friends of the Georg Sverdrup Society with internet connections are reminded to check our website at georgsverdrup.org. It included the mission statement of the society, a list of the current directors, and the following translations:

The Norwegian Lutheran Churches in America (1897),
The Free Church Fellowship (1877-78),

The Lutheran Free Church (1897),

David and Jonathan (1877),

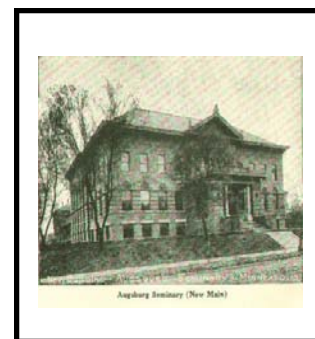
The Principles of Augsburg (1894) delivered on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of Augsburg Seminary, and

A Sermon on John 14:23-31 preached by Professor Sverdrup on Pentecost Sunday, 1902, at Trinity Lutheran

Church, Minneapolis, MN.

There is also a link for those who desire to receive further information about the society.

We are grateful to member Nathaniel Olson, Fargo, ND, for maintaining the site. Future plans call for the inclusion of a biographical sketch of Sverdrup plus other translated material.





THE GEORG SVERDRUP SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

317 South Third Street
Kenyon, Minnesota 55946



Ordet Blev Kjødet
(The Word Became Flesh)



Directors

Loiell Dyrud, President

Francis Monseth, Vice President

Terry Olson, Secretary

Martin Horn, Treasurer

Marian Christopherson

Dennis Gray

Robert Lee

Larry Walker, Editor

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;

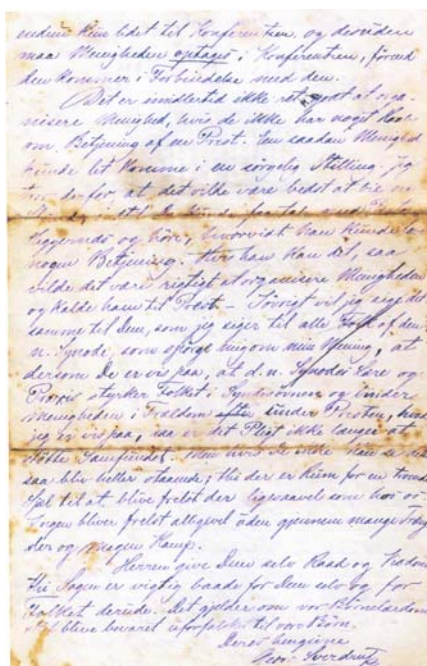
Operating a **Sverdrup Society** website linked to <www.aflc.org> for members of the Society and others interested in the life and work of Georg Sverdrup;

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**.

Sverdrup’s Letter to Solfest Langeland



This is the May 19, 1877, letter from Prof. Georg Sverdrup to Mr. Solfest Langeland, currently in the possession of Mr. Rolf H. Langeland of Monterey, California (see translation, p.2).

Our thanks to him for sharing this letter with our society.