



The Georg Sverdrup Society

NEWSLETTER

2009 Georg Sverdrup Society Annual Meeting Held in Minneapolis



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The Sixth Annual Meeting of the Georg Sverdrup Society was held in Minneapolis on October 10, 2009, at the Association Free Lutheran Theological Seminary chapel.

The program began with the ever-popular Sverdrup Songfest led this year by Marian Christopherson. Hymns popular during Sverdrup's lifetime are sung, usually one verse in Norwegian and the remainder in English. This year's hymns included N. F. S. Gruntvig's "*Kirken den er et gammelt hus*" ("Built on the Rock"), Johan Nordal Brun's "*Min sjael og aand, opmuntre dig*" (How Blest Are They

Who Hear God's Word"), and Samuel O. Brunn's "*Far, verden, farvel*" (The Sun Has Gone Down").

The 2009 theme was "Sverdrup's View of Pastoral Education." Our main speaker, Rev. Robert Lee, presented a paper on "Sverdrup's Plan of Pastoral Training for the Congregation."

The AFLBS Seminary Chorus, directed by Mr. Andrew Hanson, sang "Jesus, I Adore Thee" and "Great is Thy Faithfulness." Mr. Larry Walker read one of his recent Sverdrup translations, "Is Augsburg's Work Done?" and former missionary to Brazil,

Rev. John Abel, gave the benediction.

During the business meeting that followed, members chose "Sverdrup and the Word" as the topic for discussion and translation in 2010. Having served two full terms on the Board of Directors, Dr. Francis Monseth and Loiell Dyrud were not eligible for reelection. Members elected to the Board of Directors were Mrs. Marian Christopherson, Rev. Craig Johnson, and Mr. Larry Walker. The date for the 2010 annual meeting was tentatively set for Saturday, October 9.

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.

Spring Forum at NAHA

The Sverdrup Society has arranged a special forum **Friday, April 30**, at the NAHA archives at St. Olaf College in Northfield MN. NAHA, or the Norwegian American Historical Association, maintains a significant archive of material related to Norwegian Americans. The Association has also published many volumes over the years, including Dr. James Hamre's biography of Georg Sverdrup.

The presentation at the

NAHA will include a tour of the Archives, as well as a presentation by Professor De Krey, the Association's archivist. He will speak on the necessity of preserving historical materials for future generations. He will also share with us materials they have related to both Georg Sverdrup and Sven Oftedal.

The session will be at the NAHA offices, in the same building as the library. We will meet at 1:30 p.m. For



Photo Credit: Caleb Williams

further information, call Pastor Martin Horn at 507-789-5851.

Favorite Sverdrup Quotations

From Andreas Helland's Georg Sverdrup: *The Man and His Message*. Selected by Pastor Martin Horn

From Prof. Georg Sverdrup's 1890 report from Augsburg to the annual convention of the Lutheran-Danish Conference:

“At this important moment it will be permissible for me once more to point out the view of the relationship between the congregation and the Seminary which has been the fundamental principle for the work at Augsburg Seminary. We admit that we have succeeded only in part and that we have only imperfectly been able to realize what we have seen as our calling, our task, and our aim. It has, nevertheless, been our daily prayer and the desire of our hearts, that the Seminary might be a spiritual home, where the Spirit of God Himself prepared the young men who were being educated, to be servants of the New Covenant, not of the letter, but of the Spirit, so that both we and our students could say with sincerity in our hearts: ‘We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus as Lord, but us as servants for Jesus’ sake.’ . . . It has been the leading idea of Augsburg Seminary, that the daily meditation on God’s Word should become a means of giving to the young men the life of the Spirit of God in faith and love, so that they, themselves permeated with the Spirit, might be well fitted for doing spiritual service in the congregations . . . A deep insight in the Word of God and His counsel of salvation, a heartfelt sympathy with the need of the human heart, and a self-sacrificing zeal for the salvation of souls and the upbuilding of the body of Christ, this is what our Seminary has endeavored to awaken and foster in the students. . .” (pp.120-121)

From Prof. Sverdrup's last sermon, delivered at Trinity congregation in Minneapolis, Pentecost Sunday, 1902:

“We are in need of spirit and life. It would be both wrong and unfortunate to deny it. In spiritual matters it is necessary to admit the lack if there is to be an opportunity to have it satisfied. If therefore we would say: ‘I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing,’ we would not ask for, nor would we receive any blessing from the Lord by His Holy Spirit. On the contrary, we should have to fear for this judgment from Him: ‘I know your works. You are neither cold, nor hot. Would that you were cold or hot! So, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew you out of my mouth.’

“Let us rather begin to admit that we are lacking both spirit and life, so that we can begin to buy from the Lord, gold refined by fire, and let us anoint our eyes with salve that we may see.’

“Jesus has gone to the Father; and the Father is greater than Jesus was while He was visible in this world. So has the congregation become a greater spiritual fellowship since Jesus went to the Father than if He had remained in visible form on earth and had formed a visible kingdom. But for that reason this is also the condition on which we can be partakers of the Kingdom: ‘*As the Father gave me the commandment, even so I do!*’ Farewell, world and the prince of the world; war and struggle against thee, if so it is to be! Cross and tribulation; a crown of thorns, and reproach in the world, but peace in the heart and glory with God for all eternity. Arise, let us go hence! Amen.” (pp.196-197)

From an essay, “The Sunday and Its Observance”:

“This blessed day draws the heart back to the first day of the congregation, when the little flock sat trem-

bling behind bolted doors, but also when Jesus stood in their midst with His greeting of peace; back to the lonely walk at eventide toward Emmaus with the Savior; back to the mighty rushing wind of the Spirit; back to all the blessed meetings which the congregation of God has had on this day. . . Sunday unites the memory of the victory and triumph of Christ with the garland and crown of the presence of God. And its true observance shall be a means to the end that the victory of Christ shall have our eternal salvation as its fruit.” (p.216)

On the office of pastor, from his last report to an annual convention:

“Those among us who are called pastors and teachers, differ from other believers in this only that they have been given a special gift by the same Spirit, and that the congregation has given them a special position in the common activity, so that they, if they otherwise are what they ought to be, become in an outstanding manner the servants of the congregation to its spiritual upbuilding. . . The free-churchly idea that the Lord Himself has endowed the congregation with all the gifts, talents and powers which are needed for its preservation and growth unto the uttermost ends of the earth until its last day, . . . of this we ought to bear testimony as widely as we are able. And if we for this reason are to be ridiculed and oppressed, it is nothing else that happens to us than what has happened to all sincere witnesses of the Lord before us.” (p.225)

Sverdrup Society Editor Has Novel Published

Larry Walker, editor of the Sverdrup Society Newsletter and Journal, is the author (under the name Lars Walker) of a novel called *West Oversea*, published in 2009 by Nordskog Publishing of Ventura, California.

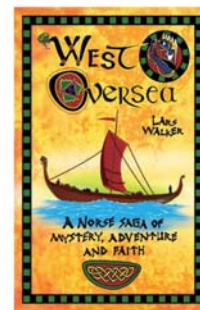
West Oversea continues the saga of Erling Skjalgsson, a genuine historical character from tenth and eleventh century Norway (see the essay, "Never an Unfree Man," in the previous newsletter). In this installment, Erling gives up his property and power in Norway rather than do a shameful deed. Accompanied by his family,

friends, and the narrator, Father Aillil, they sail to Iceland, North America, and Greenland, shortly on the heels of Leif Eriksson's discoveries (Leif makes an appearance in the story). Supernatural enemies attack them on the way, and Erling conceives a dream for the new land of "Vinland," which would have pleased Georg Sverdrup.

Lutheran author Dr. Gene Edward Veith writes of *West Oversea*: "If the measure of an author is the literary company he keeps, I can't remember another book review of mine that name-checked such

an all-star writing team. It's not often that any one author is refreshingly original enough to evoke comparisons to Le Guin, Hillerman, Cornwell, Schaara, and Peters, especially because most of them never sat on a bench in a Viking hall telling sea stories. I hope it's plain that Walker ranks with fast company, and *West Oversea* is more than good enough to make me want to read his other work."

Order from Amazon.com or nordskogpublishing.com.



Journal News

Some copies of the 2005, 2006, 2007 and 2008 editions of the *Journal* of the Georg Sverdrup Society are available and can be purchased as a set of four for \$10. Membership in the society is encouraged and open to all. The membership dues help pay for the printing of the journal. Regular membership is \$25 a year. Membership for students, congregations, and libraries is \$15. Congregations are encouraged to belong to the society in order to get a copy of the journal for their church library.

To order copies of past journals and to start a membership in the society, contact the treasurer: Pastor Kris Nyman, P.O. Box 400, Beulah, ND 58523. For more information on the society, visit its web site at www.georgsverdrupsociety.org.

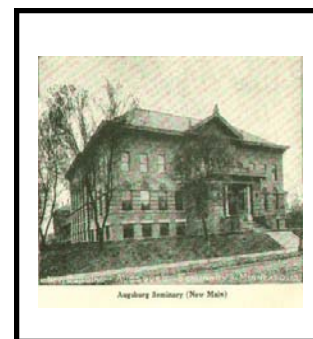
2009 Sverdrup Journal Due in May

The 2009 *Sverdrup Journal* (vol. 6) is scheduled for publication the end of May. Devoted to Sverdrup's View of Pastoral Education, the 2009 Journal includes the paper Rev. Lee presented at the annual meeting, "Sverdrup's Plan of Pastoral Training for the Congregation," a paper on "Sverdrup and the Servant Pastor" by Dr. Francis Monseth, and an annotated bibliography by

Loiell Dyrud that includes summaries of books and articles written about Sverdrup's educational plan.

Perhaps the most important article Sverdrup wrote on the training of pastors, "Ministerial Education in Conformity with the Congregation" ("*Menigheds maessig Presteuddannelse*"), originally translated by James S. Hamre in his dissertation, will be repub-

lished in this journal. Several other translations on the Augsburg Plan of pastoral education will be included as well as seven more translations of Sverdrup's mission meditations from vol. 6.





THE GEORG SVERDRUP SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

317 South Third Street
Kenyon, Minnesota 55946

Ordet Blev Rjød *(The Word Became Flesh)*

Directors

Martin Horn, President
Robert Lee, Vice-President
Terry Olson, Secretary
Kris Nyman, Treasurer
Larry Walker, Editor
Marian Christopherson
Craig Johnson

Prospective members are invited
to contact the secretary 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 “Living Pastors” By Georg Sverdrup

Never, for as long as God’s church has existed, has anyone observed a living congregation being born and developing and growing under the leadership of a dead pastor. Show us one single example!

It is entirely impossible even to begin to express what a curse a dead pastor and his preaching is, both for the unconverted and the converted among his listeners. . . . That those who are asleep are strengthened in their false hope of salvation and that the awakened are lulled into sleep, that the Christian warrior is weakened both in his clear vision and his courage, and that the suffering Christian is disheartened in his afflictions—all these are

but a weak expression of the frightful fruits of a washed-out and truncated, dull and empty proclamation, such as that which an unconverted pastor always carries on.

We do not mean by this to say that anyone who is merely converted is, therefore, qualified to be a pastor. God’s Word and experience show that that is not the case. But neither God’s Word nor Christian experience has ever taught [us] to view it as a matter of indifference whether a pastor is a Christian or not, if only he has gone to a learned school.

By “living pastors,” we mean merely men who are simple disciples of Jesus Christ and followers primarily in the chief point that they live, work, suffer, and struggle for the salvation of human souls

—faithful unto death. Men of spirit, men of love, men of the undismayed proclamation of the truth. Men of total and complete self-surrender.

It is these who are sufficient for the labor for living congregations. Many may be zealous laborers without such an attitude; therefore [their] labor does not lead to that goal.

No more beautiful life can be imagined than such a life of genuine love. It also bears the noblest fruit.

The flock of men who now are commonly called by the name of “Free Church” have, therefore, viewed the correct education of pastors as one of the chief points in “the work of reform to bring forth living congregations.”

An excerpt from an article published in the 2009 Journal of the Georg Sverdrup Society, translation by Larry Walker. This article first appeared in *Folkebladet*, Oct. 4, 1899, and may be found in *Prof. G. Sverdrups Samlede Skrifter*, II: 238-241.