



The Georg Sverdrup Society

NEWSLETTER

Annual Meeting to Honor Dr. J. S. Hamre Oct. 13

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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

The Georg Sverdrup Society will hold its ninth annual meeting in the Radisson Hotel in Fargo, North Dakota, on Saturday, October 13. The Fargo Radisson is where the GSS held its organizing meeting in December 2003, and where the society held its first annual meeting in 2004.

The program, which follows the noon buffet, will be a tribute to Dr. James S. Hamre, who has spent much of his academic life translating and writing about Georg Sverdrup.

Hamre is a graduate of Augsburg College and Luther Seminary. After receiving an MA from the University of Chicago, he received a PhD from the University of Iowa in 1967.

His dissertation, *Georg Sverdrup's Concept of the Role and Calling of Norwegian Americans: An Annotated Translation of Selected Writings*, includes 150 pages of translations from Sverdrup's *Samlede Skrifter* and has been a constant source of information and inspiration for the Society. But even more beneficial has been his 1986 biography, *Georg Sverdrup: Educator, Theologian, Churchman*. If the body of his work on

Sverdrup consisted only of these two items, it would still be of enormous significance to us, but Hamre has also published over fifteen articles on Sverdrup in leading journals as well as translating several Sverdrup articles that we have published in *The Sverdrup Journal*.

Besides his lifelong work on Sverdrup, Hamre has published a number of recent articles of interest to Norwegian Lutherans including "J. A. Bergh (1847-1927): 'The Nestor of Norwegian-American Lutheran Historians'" and "Ulrick Vilhelm Koren: 'It is Written'; 'By Grace Alone.'" Both appeared in *The Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly*. In the 2005 *Lutheran Quarterly*, he published a well-received biography of Dr. B. M. Christensen, former president of Augsburg College and Seminary, entitled "Bernhard M. Christensen (1901-1984)." Last year he published an article on O. M. Norlie, the prolific biographer of Norwegian-American Lutheran pastors and congregations, in *Norwegian-American Studies*, entitled "Olaf Morgan Norlie: Advocate for Norwegian-American Culture."

For almost thirty-five



Dr. James S. Hamre

years, Hamre was professor of religion at Waldorf College in Forest City, Iowa. He presently lives in the Twin Cities.

Do not miss this opportunity to meet and visit with Dr. Hamre, Norwegian Lutheran Historian and the most respected Sverdrup scholar of our day.

The buffet begins at noon, and the annual meeting will be held immediately following the program.

The cost of the buffet is \$17.00. In order to assure an accurate count, please notify Loiell Dyrud by the first week of October. Email: lod@wiktel.com; phone 218-681-6964.

—Loiell Dyrud



From “Spiritual Orientations and Spiritual Conflicts”

By Georg Sverdrup

Translated by Larry Walker

The Georg Sverdrup Society topic for study in 2012 is “Sverdrup and Conflict.” The following translation is an extract from an article Prof.

Sverdrup wrote in the course of a controversy within the United Church, previous to the establishment of the Lutheran Free Church.

The “spiritual orientations” to which Prof. Sverdrup is referring here are spiritual and theological differences in emphasis between individuals and groups within the United Church. The traditionalists within the church constituted one spiritual orientation, the pietists (Haugeans) another. Eventually the differences in spiritual orientation between the Majority and the Minority (the Augsburg group) would lead to the Minority breaking off and founding the Lutheran Free Church.

(Source: *Folkebladet*, April 5, 1892, *Collected Works*, Vol. 4, pp. 262-265.)

But perhaps some are unclear as to what is meant by spiritual orientations. Perhaps some even believe that spiritual orientations constitute a great calamity. Because some are so zealous to deny that such things exist among us, others perhaps conceive that it is better to have no spirit whatever than to have spiritual divisions and conflicts.

“When spirits are moved, living is a delight,” they used to say in Reformation times. But did the spirits move in those days with no strife or noise or uproar? Was no rudeness or mockery or bitterness to be found in the movement? The truth of the matter is that it is impossible to have any spiritual conflict without there being offenses as well. But it is better to have spiritual conflicts, with all their accompaniments, than to have the peace and quiet of death.

This is no excuse for quarrelling, as we are well aware. Peace should

and ought to reign among us. But neither does it prove that all kinds of peace are good, or equally good.

There will always be spiritual conflicts when there is any progress toward spiritual and living peace. What precisely, in the conflict of spiritual orientations, worked in opposition to that goal [i.e., spiritual and living peace]?

What, then, is meant by spiritual orientations within the church?

A spiritual orientation is, obviously, not the same thing as the Holy Spirit. “W”¹ fears that people might think so. First of all, no one is saying that. But in addition “W” is aware, as an old Conference pastor, just as well as we, that it is far from the case that everyone in the United Church possesses the Holy Spirit and permits Him to lead them; so it need hardly be news to point out, both often and powerfully, that there is a conflict which must be fought constantly within the United Church as well—a conflict between the Spirit and the flesh.

But this is not the issue under discussion. When various spiritual orientations share a church community, there are necessarily spiritual and carnal people on both sides. One side is not believing while the other is unbelieving. It is true that, within the church, the difference between spiritual orientations often depends on the degree to which the Spirit of God is given rein, so that it becomes a matter of the extent to which human and worldly spirits are combined in the church’s labor. But one would stray far from the truth to think that on one side there are only God’s children, and on the other only children of the world.

The pietists and the orthodox were indeed two spiritual orientations within the church. But it would be unjust to hold that one side had the Spirit of God exclusively, and the other the spirit of the world

exclusively.

A spiritual orientation is the same thing as a guiding idea, a fundamental principle, a view of life which lends coherence and character to a man’s labor, so that his deportment may be recognizable from one time to another, always reflecting the same fundamental views, and always directed to the same goal. And as a spiritual orientation thus gives coherence to an individual’s life and work, so a spiritual orientation also musters the labors of many people toward a common goal. Whether a man is conservative or liberal in politics often depends on a difference in spiritual orientation. They can be equally good patriots in spite of their opposed spiritual orientations.

One ought also to note that all members of a party are not equally permeated with its spiritual orientation, nor are they all equally aware how determined they are by their spiritual orientation. There are many who grow up with a spiritual orientation, and so become entirely its children, who are not themselves aware how deeply they are entrenched in it. When, for existence, Iver Larson undertakes a private collection for the Lawsuit Fund, he is likely wholly unaware that, in so doing, he is operating in a manner which his ecclesiastical upbringing alone can excuse or explain, and which thus declares his spiritual orientation far more plainly than he comprehends or grasps.

So when we say that there is a difference in spiritual orientation within the United Church, we mean that “the new direction” is a spiritual orientation. We mean that we struggle, in the School Controversy, for a principle, not for a plot of ground. And if our opponents do not believe this of us, we will nev-

(Continued on page 3)

From “Spiritual Orientations and Spiritual Conflicts” (cont.)

ertheless state for the record that there is also a spiritual orientation among them, and that they too are fighting for a principle.

In this manner, it seems to us, we defend both ourselves and our fellowship. It is not the worst thing conceivable that there are spiritual conflicts among us. And instead of raising an alarm about what is unjust and dismaying in spiritual orientations, and reducing ourselves to pure materialists who dispute over externals alone, we should rather lift the strug-

gle and its weapons up into the realm of the spirit, so that these conflicts too may do some good.

But how can it be demonstrated that the Majority in the United Church truly represents a spiritual orientation? That can only be proved by their words and deeds. It is to those we must restrict ourselves. These indeed “W” ought to know and be able to judge. But when he does not feel or understand the difference in spiritual orientation between the majority in the United Church and

the majority in the old Conference, and when our president labors under the assumption that there is no new spiritual orientation, then it is obviously necessary, for the sake of many others, to point out a difference which is easily identifiable through words and actions.

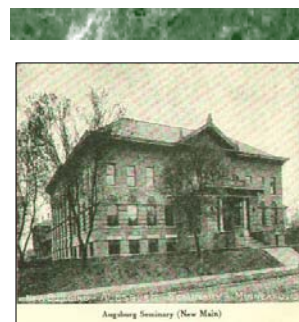
¹The author of a previous *Folkebladet* article to which Prof. Sverdrup is replying.

Annual Meeting of the Georg Sverdrup Society

Saturday, October 13, 2012
Radisson Hotel, Fargo, ND

12:00 Luncheon Buffet
1:00 Program “A Tribute to the Work of Dr. James Hamre”
2:00 Annual Meeting

Buffet Reservations: Contact Loiell Dyrud
lod@wiktel.com 218-681-6964



Accessing Dr. Hamre’s Dissertation Online

In the Georg Svedrup Society, we have many individuals who have put in countless hours to further our translation efforts. One person in particular to whom we are greatly indebted for his dedicated work of translating Sverdrup is Dr. James Hamre. Some of us have commented that without his support and encouragement we would have had a difficult time in getting the Svedrup Society started and advanced as far as we have in the past several years.

Many translations are available today because of Hamre’s diligence in this work and the labor he put into his dissertation—“Georg Sverdrup’s Concept of the Role and Calling of the Norwegian-American

Lutherans: An Annotated Translation of Selected Writings: A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the School of Religion in the Graduate College of The University of Iowa.” This thesis was submitted by Hamre in August of 1967 and is now available online through the University of Iowa.

If you are interested in accessing this thesis, simply follow these steps:

1. Open your web browser, go to www.google.com, and type in “Dr. James Hamre dissertation” in the search bar.

2. Click on the first link at the top of the list. It should say “GEORG SVERDRUP’S CONCEPT OF THE

ROLE AND CALLING . . .” The URL under the link shows the following: ir.uiowa.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2499&context=etd.

Once you click on this link, it will bring you to Dr. Hamre’s dissertation in PDF format. You can save this paper to your computer for later reading.

This dissertation became available to the public within the last year. We are looking forward to meeting Dr. Hamre, who will be honored at our annual meeting in Fargo on October 13.

—Tim Larson



THE GEORG SVERDRUP
SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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(The Word Became Flesh)

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GSS Reprints Volume 1 of *The Sverdrup Journal*

“Who has heard such a thing? Who has seen such a thing? Shall a land be born in a day? Shall a nation be brought forth in one moment?” (Isaiah 66:8)

The miraculous deed that Isaiah proclaims is the birth of the congregation with the outpouring of the Spirit on Pentecost. The congregation did not come to be by some human exertion or wise calculation. It came as a gracious gift from God, a glorious fruit of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. For the ascended Savior fulfilled the promise he gave the disciples, before His death, of the Advocate He would send and the Spirit of Truth He would give them. When the Spirit came, when the tempest roared with majesty, when the tongues of fire sat on each of the disciples, and when the Spirit’s blessed witness of God’s great deeds sounded in many languages, then the congregation came to be, ‘an entire people brought forth in one moment.’”

With these moving words, Georg Sverdrup addressed the fourth meeting of the Friends of Augsburg in 1896. An abiding passion for the work of God in free and living congregations shines forth from the man whose life-work led to the establishment of The Lutheran Free Church and later the present-day Association of Free Lutheran Congregations. The full text of Sverdrup’s report to that meeting is published for our generation of Christians in *The Sverdrup Journal*, Volume 1.

I am personally grateful to have access to much of the inspired thought and written legacy of Georg Sverdrup through the pages of that journal. With so many divergent ideas about the church—what it should look like and how it should function, as well as the question of its principle mission—Christians today need the clarity and visionary thinking of Sverdrup as much as when he first spoke these words.

Because our stock of the first issue of *The Sverdrup Journal* ran out a couple years ago, the Georg Sverdrup Society made the decision to reprint Volume I from 2004. As one who came to the Society after its inception, I gratefully read the

wonderful articles about Sverdrup and the translations printed there. Along with James M. Hamre’s translation of *Congregation and Congregational Life* (quoted above) there are numerous other offerings. I especially enjoyed Martin L. Horn’s insightful article about the translation of the Greek word EKKLESIA into Norwegian and English. One section in particular caught my eye. Horn concludes, “Consistent with Sverdrup’s understanding of *ekklesia* and *menighet*, it would have been better had ‘congregation’ remained the choice in English translations. Though ‘church’ continues to be the word of choice in English translations, it is a weak choice since it has assumed many meanings over the years and does not truly reflect the biblical emphasis of *ekklesia* as ‘the group of common believers.’”

Volume I also contains a Biographical Sketch of Georg Sverdrup and an article titled “Aims of the Georg Sverdrup Society,” both written by Dr. Francis W. Monseth, one of the Society’s first directors. With its many other excellent articles and translations, this reprinted volume is worth much, much more than the effort and expense (which aren’t much) to get a copy for your collection. Price \$5.00 per copy. Contact Rev. Kris Nyman, GSS Membership Secretary, PO Box 400, Beulah, ND 58523-0400.

—Stephen Mundfrom