

April 2016

Volume 13, Issue 1



# The Georg Sverdrup Society

## NEWSLETTER

### “Sverdrup and the Reformation” to be 2016 Topic



#### In this Issue:

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| <b>2016 Topic</b>                      | <b>1</b> |
| <b>January Discussion Meeting</b>      | <b>1</b> |
| <b>2015 Annual Meeting</b>             | <b>2</b> |
| <b>“Jesus in the Rich Man’s Grave”</b> | <b>3</b> |
| <b>Apology</b>                         | <b>3</b> |

The year 2017 will mark the 500th anniversary of the beginning of the Reformation. The Georg Sverdrup Society has designated the topic for the 2016 Journal as “Sverdrup and the Reformation.”

In 1869, Sverdrup wrote:

It is in fact impossible that the Reformers intended . . . to create anew a spiritual class which would have divine right to proclaim the Word and dispense the sacraments on the one side, and to

retain or forgive sins on the other.

For if only a single class possessed the right to proclaim the Gospel and to dispense the sacraments, what had become of the formal principle of the Reformation, the unique authority of Scripture? . . . What profit would there be in placing the Bible in the hands of the congregation, if they did not have the authority to employ it? And if one particular class possessed a monopolistic right to



forgive sins, what then becomes of the Reformation’s real principle that the righteous shall live by faith?

### January Discussion Meeting

#### 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 January 15, the Georg Sverdrup Society held its tenth yearly discussion forum at the Free Lutheran Theology Seminary in Plymouth, Minnesota. In attendance at this gathering were seminary students, local pastors, and interested laymen.

Throughout the morning, three papers were delivered. These papers will appear in the upcoming volume of *The Sverdrup Journal*, “Sverdrup, the Devotional Writer.” The new journal will be released this



*Pastor Carl Vaagenes speaks on “A Translator’s Perspective.”*

summer. Pastor Steve Mundfrom, Valley City, North Dakota, guided the

meeting. He warmly encouraged times of discussion after each presenter.

The program began with devotions by the Dean of the Seminary, Pastor Wade Mobley, who shared on Ephesians 4 and the importance of “equipping the saints for the work of service.” Next, Mr. Larry Walker, editor of *The Sverdrup Journal*, delivered a reading of his article, “An Analysis of two Sverdrup

*(Continued on page 3)*

## Sverdrup Society 2015 Annual Meeting

Members and friends of the Georg Sverdrup Society met on the campus of the AFLC Schools in Heritage Hall for the Twelfth Annual Meeting on Saturday, October 10, 2015.

The main speaker for the program was Philip J. Formo, grandson of Andreas Helland, who was the biographer, compiler, and editor of Sverdrup's written works. Formo spoke on the topic, "Hero, Mentor, and Friend," sharing selections from his fictionalized memoir of his grandfather, *Papa—A Life Remembered*. After having been a special education teacher in the Minneapolis Public School system, Formo sensed a call into ministry and served parishes in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for thirty-one years.

The Georg Sverdrup Society is greatly indebted to the work and time that Andreas Helland invested in collecting Sverdrup's writings in the six volumes of his collected work. Without his tireless effort, Sverdrup's writings and devotionals would likely

have remained unread and possibly lost forever.

Those in attendance greatly enjoyed the personal anecdotes and memories of his grandfather that Formo shared.

The Seminary Chorus shared Nikolai Grundtvig's hymn "Built on the Rock" and also "Great is Thy Faithfulness."

Mr. Andrew Hanson, Director of Music for the AFLC Schools, led the annual "Sverdrup Songfest."

Dr. Carl Vaagenes shared his recent translation, "A Great Responsibility," from Volume Six of *Samlede Skrifter*.

Rev. Stephen Mundfrom, Valley City, North Dakota, gave the Invocation, and Mr. Loiell Dyrud closed the program in prayer.

Shortly after the end of the program, the 2015 GSS Annual Meeting began. In the absence of Treasurer and Membership Secretary, Rev. Kris Nyman, Secretary Tim Larson shared that the society has 104 active mem-

bers. President Mundfrom reported that the 2015 Journal will be "Sverdrup the Devotional Writer." The topic for the 2016 Sverdrup Journal will have a focus on the 500th anniversary of the Reformation and will cover Sverdrup's writings on the topic.

Members elected to two-year teams on the board were Mr. Tim Larson, Mr. Larry Walker, and Mr. Kevin Borg. Elected to 2016 Nominating Committee were Mr. Dan Antal, Mr. Kevin Borg, and Rev. Jon Wellumson.

Following the Annual Meeting, the board met briefly to reorganize as follows: Rev. Steve Mundfrom, President; Mr. Loiell Dyrud, Vice President; Mr. Tim Larson, Secretary; and Rev. Kris Nyman, Treasurer/Membership Secretary.

The 2016 Annual Meeting will be held in the Fargo/Moorhead area in October.



Rev. Philip Formo remembers his grandfather, Andreas Helland, at the Annual Meeting.



The Free Lutheran Seminary Chorus sings for the Annual Meeting.

## From “Jesus in the Rich Man’s Grave”

Joseph of Arimathea made no mistake when he honored the dead in the best way he was able to and as well as he could. But it is better to honor the Living One, who beckons His believing warriors forward in the work for the advancement of His kingdom among the peoples of the earth. Now, after Jesus has been raised and ascended, is not the time to adorn His grave, however gloriously. Now is the time to lift up our eyes—first up to Him who comes in the clouds of Heaven, and then to cast our eyes out over the dark world, wherever so many human

souls wander in darkness, waiting for light and life which they nevertheless can never possess until the Kingdom of God comes to them through the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Now is the time to ask with Paul, “Lord, what would You have me do?”

And He who lives for all eternity will answer and say, “It is my will that you, who have tasted the bitterness of sin and the sweetness of grace, shall be My witnesses to all the suffering, sighing, dying human souls around the world, so that they also may know the power of My death and be the reward of My

sufferings.”

Here there is room for the poor and the rich. Here is plenty for everyone to do, to give, and to suffer. The Kingdom, His Kingdom, with righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit shall extend to the uttermost ends of the earth.

If, therefore, you have a heart like Joseph’s for Jesus who died for you, then remember His love for the lost, and remember that He died for them all. Do not think of adorning His grave, for that is no longer with us, but think how to fulfill the first and last

*(Continued on page 4)*

### We Apologize for the Delay!

We apologize for the late delivery of this newsletter. Our publishing schedule has been pushed back due to the hospitalization of the editor (who has recovered and is back at work now). The 2015 Journal will also be delayed this summer. We appreciate your patience!

## January Discussion Meeting (cont.)

*(Continued from page 1)*

Meditations Translated in M. Helland’s *The Heritage of Faith*,” in which he compared Helland’s translations to Sverdrup’s originals. Dr. Carl Vaagenes gave the first paper entitled, “A Translator’s Perspective,” which was a good segue from Walker’s reading. Among other points, Vaagenes highlighted Sverdrup’s masterful use of language.

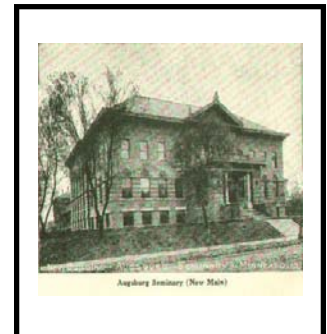
Mr. Kevin Borg, the newest member of the Society’s Board of Directors,

gave the second paper entitled, “A Layman’s Perspective.” A great amount of discussion ensued. Those in attendance were interested to hear how a layman came to appreciate Sverdrup. Borg emphasized Sverdrup’s focus on the Gospel. Rev. Brian Davidson wrote the final paper but was unable to travel from North Dakota to the forum. His paper, “A Pastor’s Perspective,” was read by Steve Mundfrom. Davidson reflected on the devotional nature of

Sverdrup’s writings and the impact they have had on his vocation as pastor.

A time of questions and answers followed each presentation. Those attending raised pertinent issues with each question. This time together sparked excellent thought, reflection, and discussion. A light lunch capped off the morning together. Please consider attending the next discussion forum.

—Brett Boe





## THE GEORG SVERDRUP SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

1016 Spruce St.  
Hagerstown, MD 21740-7217  
georgsverdrupsociety.org

---

### Ordet Blev Kjødt

*(The Word Became Flesh)*

---

#### Directors

Steve Mundfrom, President  
Loiell Dyrud, Vice President  
Timothy Larson, Secretary  
Kris Nyman, Treasurer and  
Membership Secretary  
Larry Walker, Editor  
Brett Boe  
Kevin Borg

*Prospective members are invited to  
contact the Membership 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](http://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 “Jesus in the Rich Man’s Grave” (cont.)

*(Continued from page 3)*

desire of His warm, living heart, that His life and suffering, His death and resurrection, might benefit all of those who suffer and die because the serpent-bite of sin has wounded their hearts. Never think of locking His Gospel up in the cold shrine of a stone church or in the graves of dead congregations, but think how to make the light of the Gospel shine its gentle beams out through the dark and cold regions of the earth. . . .

Behold the people whom Jesus would have saved, who yet wander in sin and the darkness of ignorance! Behold the self-sacrificing men and

women who have taken their lives in their hands and gone out into the unhealthiest countries among the wildest people in order to preach the Gospel of Jesus. Ask where is the living work that springs forth from the love of God poured out in the hearts of His children? Where is the church in which it is a joy to participate for those who love the Savior? Is it not out in the great battlefield of God’s Kingdom, where the disciples of Jesus, following in His footsteps, offer up their lives and blood in loving work for the salvation of souls?

*(This excerpt is from an article by Georg Sverdrup first published in “Gasseren” in 1906, and found in Samlede Skrifter, VI, 182-192. It was translated by Larry Walker and will be available in its entirety in the 2015 Journal.)*