



The Georg Sverdrup Society

NEWSLETTER

Rev. Raynard Huglen to Speak at GSS Annual Meeting

By Loiell O. Dyrud

The Georg Sverdrup Society returns to Fargo, North Dakota, for its thirteenth annual meeting on October 8. In 2004 the GSS met in Fargo for its first annual meeting. Since then, the society has rotated between the Twin Cities and the Fargo area.

This year's program speaker will be Rev. Raynard O. J. Huglen. Huglen is a familiar name to Sverdrup Society members since every one of our twelve journals has included a Sverdrup article translated by him. He was also a member of the first Board of Directors for the GSS.

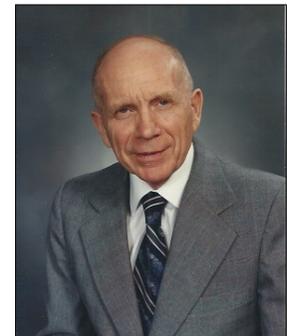
But Huglen's association with Lutheranism extends much further back, past the beginning of the Georg Sverdrup Society and into the very roots of the Lutheran Free Church. His father, Rev. Reinert Huglen, emigrated from Norway in 1904 and entered Augsburg Seminary in the fall of 1911. In March 1911, Prof. Sven Oftedal, one of the founders of the Lutheran Free Church, unexpectedly passed away, so the senior Huglen just missed having studied under the noted professor.

Pastor Raynard Huglen grew up in various LFC parishes where his father served

in both the United States and Canada. After the untimely death of their father, Raynard and two of his siblings returned with their mother, Inga, to her family home in Newfolden, Minnesota, in 1940.

Huglen graduated from Augsburg College in 1950. As a 1953 graduate of Augsburg Seminary, he is currently one of the few pastors on the AFLC clergy roster who graduated from Augsburg Seminary. (After the Lutheran Free Church voted to merge with the ALC in 1962, Augsburg Seminary closed and merged with Luther Seminary in St. Paul.)

He began his ministry in the Lutheran Free Church in Medicine Lake, Montana, and later served congregations in New Effington, South Dako-



Rev. Huglen

ta; Hatton, North Dakota; and Roslyn, South Dakota. He was also an instructor and Dean of Men at the Association Free Lutheran Bible School from 1972-1977.

When the Lutheran Free Church merged with the ALC, Huglen chose to remain with the group

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ANNUAL MEETING OF THE GEORG SVERDRUP SOCIETY

Saturday, October 8, 2016

St. Paul's Free Lutheran Church
2802 12th Street South
Fargo, ND

1:00 Program

Speaker: Rev. Raynard O. J. Huglen

2:00 Annual Meeting



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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 Reformation in Norway

By Larry J. Walker



King Christian III of Denmark-Norway

“We’re Norwegians. We’re Lutheran.” That statement pretty much covered the subject of religion in Norway for many centuries. It still has some relevance in spite of rising secularism. But most descendants of Norwegians are unaware that the Reformation was not a welcome guest in Norway at the beginning.

The Reformation came to Norway more slowly than to Sweden and Denmark. Norway had been united with the Kingdom of Denmark since 1319, and so was governed from a distance. The first Reformation “activist” in Denmark was Hans Tausen (1494-1561), a priest and a friend of Martin Luther, who preached in Denmark beginning in 1525, gaining considerable support. The first Lutheran preacher came to Norway in 1526.¹ King Christian II (1503-1559) of Denmark-Norway was receptive to Luther’s reforms and protected Tausen. His successor, Frederick I (1471-1533) officially condemned the Reformation, but

tolerated its supporters. His son Christian III (1503-1559), who took power after a Protestant military coup, made Lutheranism the official state religion in 1536 and seized all church property. In 1537 the Danish church was entirely reorganized along Lutheran lines. “The Catholic bishops were removed and arrested, and the church was reorganized based on Lutheran church orders . . . in 1537. . . .”²

The king was now the head of the church. Bishops were elected by the clergy of the towns and confirmed by the Crown. The urban clergy themselves were chosen by the mayor and town council; rural clergy by the dean and “respectable men.” The nobility retained its right to nominate. Divine services, sermons, rituals, schools, the legal status of priests, all were regulated. Denmark preserved the episcopal structure, but bishops held only spiritual authority.³

It should come as no surprise that the Norwegians, a traditional people living far from the centers of culture, would resist attempts by a foreign government to meddle with their religious practices and beliefs. “It would take another two generations before Norway was genuinely Lutheran.”⁴ The last Catholic archbishop of Norway, Olav Englebretsson, fought hard against the changes, even having the leader of the opposition murdered. But the support he expected from the Holy Roman Emperor did not materialize, and after failing to take the fortresses of Bergen and Oslo, he fled into exile.⁵ “After [this], a leaderless people submitted sullenly to a small Danish force. . . .”⁶

The Norwegian-American writer P. J. Eikeland wrote:

They seized all the episcopal, monastic, and church property, for the benefit of the Danish treasury. They traveled around through towns and countryside, plundering churches and confiscating anything valuable, so that many churches retained only what was necessary to administer the sacraments. From the cathedral in Nidaros they took St. Olav’s silver shrine . . . , adorned with gold, jewels, etc. Most of the precious images of saints were broken up, burned, and cast into rivers. The monasteries were destroyed. All the bishops were deposed—except for Gjeble Pederssønn of Bergen, who became a Lutheran.

But what did they do beyond *seizing* and *destroying*? At the beginning, nearly nothing. There was no way. . . . They had no pastors to send. For that reason the priests in Norway kept their parishes, but now they were expected to preach Lutheranism. When one of these priests eventually died, the congregation got either no pastor at all, or else some fellow who, for one reason or another, was unwanted in Denmark. And these new pastors, of course, preached in Danish, which the people—at least those in the rural areas—understood little or not at all.

Who can wonder that Norwegians hated both these “Lutheran pastors” and Lutheranism as well? Many even believed that they were doing God a service by murdering such pastors. There is a story of a farmer in Telemark who killed three pastors, and of his son who prayed to God that he might not die before he had slain three as well.⁷

The Reformation in Norway (cont.)

The Reformation not only brought a change in religion to Norway but also a change in government. Prior to these events, Norway had officially been a kingdom in its own right, sharing its king with Denmark. Now Norway was effectively reduced to the status of a province.⁸

The immediate effect of the Reformation in Norway seems to have been a decline in spiritual life. “What deadened the life of the Church in Norway for many generations to come was the use of the Danish language as the medium of all worship and religious instruction.”⁹ While the Reformation brought to each country the opportunity to

have the Bible translated into its own language, this did not happen in Norway, where only the Danish Bible was authorized.¹⁰ (Norwegians can read Danish fairly easily, but most Norwegians were not literate at the time. And spoken Danish is difficult for Norwegians to understand.)

Norway would not truly begin to embrace Lutheranism until a couple of generations of Lutheran pastors had replaced the old Catholic priests. The Reformation in Scandinavia, thankfully, did not involve a lot of Catholic martyrdoms—the only official examples occurred in Iceland.¹¹ The greatest appeal of the “new” doctrine seems

to have been in the introduction of congregational hymn singing and vernacular hymns.¹²

In some ways the Norwegians were like the Irish for a time, a traditional people struggling to cling to its traditional Catholic faith, while a foreign ruler sought to impose a new one on them. However, the Protestant Reformation succeeded in Norway in the end. It would take another 300 years before the idea of the free congregation would take root among some Norwegian Lutherans, and that would happen primarily not in the homeland, but in America.



Hans Tausen
(1494-1561)

Notes

¹ T. K. Derry, *A History of Scandinavia: Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Finland and Iceland*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1979, 92.

² “Reformation in Denmark-Norway and Holstein,” *Wikipedia*, last modified January 19, 2016, accessed September 1, 2016, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reformation_in_Denmark%E2%80%93Norway_and_Holstein.

³ “Scandinavia,” *Speculum Saeculi*, accessed September 1, 2016, <https://europeanhistory.boisestate.edu/reformation/magazine/1560/scandia/denmark.shtml>.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Derry, 89.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 92-93.

⁷ P. J. Eikeland, “Hans Nielsen Hauges Levnetsløp.” In *Mindebok om Hans Nielsen Hauge*, edited by M. O. Wee and O. E. Rølvaag. Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 32-33. [Translation by L. Walker.]

⁸ *Ibid.*, 89.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 93.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 94.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 93.

¹² *Ibid.*, 94.

References

Derry, T. K. *A History of Scandinavia: Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Finland and Iceland*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1979.

Eikeland, P. J. “Hans Nielsen Hauges Levnetsløp.” In *Mindebok om Hans Nielsen Hauge*, edited by M. O. Wee and O. E. Rølvaag, 32-33. Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1926.

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THE GEORG SVERDRUP SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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

Ordet Blev Kjødt

(The Word Became Flesh)

Directors

Stephen Mundfrom, President
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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> 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**.

Rev. Huglen to Speak at Annual Meeting (cont.)

that wished to continue the principles and practices of the LFC in what would soon become the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations. As a young pastor (only thirty-five years old at the time), he was responsible for writing position papers for this newly formed group, including “A Statement on the Historical Situation.”

He was also the first editor of *The Lutheran Ambassador*, the official paper of the AFLC. From 1963, he held this position for the next twenty-seven years, meticulously recording congregational life, AFLC churchwide events, and news of Lutheran activities in general in the twice-monthly peri-

odical. Of special note were his thoughtful editorials offering opinions, often on several different topics in the same issue. Many are still a treat to read today. Through his steady guidance, Huglen kept the *Ambassador* focused on historical, devotional, and spiritual matters with an unfalteringly positive tone.

In 2006, he published *The Race Before Us*, a fine collection of articles and editorials gleaned from his writings in *The Lutheran Ambassador* and other sources.

Since 1977 he has resided in Newfolden, Minnesota, but he continues to translate, write, and serve area congregations on an interim basis.

We are privileged and look forward to

having Pastor Huglen, who has lived so much of his life at the center of the work of the Lutheran Free Church and the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations, as our speaker this year.

The program will also include the traditional “Sverdrup Songfest” as well as a current translation of Sverdrup. To help provide an accurate count for the luncheon (\$7.00), please contact Rev. Steve Mundfrom before September 30 by email at steve.mundfrom@aflc.org or by phone at 701-840-1922 (c).