



The Georg Sverdrup Society

NEWSLETTER

2020 GSS Annual Meeting Held in Fargo



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In spite of a mid-October snowstorm, a good crowd was on hand for the 17th Annual Meeting of the Georg Sverdrup Society on Saturday, October 17, at St. Paul's Free Lutheran Church in Fargo, North Dakota.

Following the noon meal, Mr. Loiell Dyrud welcomed GSS members and friends to the program held in the sanctuary. Rev. Jim Fugleberg, retired St. Paul's pastor, opened with Scripture and prayer.

The "Sverdrup Songfest" was led by Mrs. Marian Christopherson, AFLC Director of Parish Education. The first song she led us in was "Who Can Tell the Joy and Gladness," written by Lars Oftedal, brother of Sven Oftedal and a mission-oriented pastor in Stavanger, Norway. The English version was translated by Gracia Grindal and the melody was adapted from a folk tune of the Setesdal Valley in Norway. Because our speaker for the afternoon was Rev. John Lee, Missionary to Brazil, her second selection, "Lost in the Night," the classic missions hymn, was especially appropriate. The English translation of this Finnish song was by Olav Lee and the melody from a Finnish folk tune. She pointed out that many of us are familiar with the F. Melius Christiansen choral arrangement of this song. Her last song was by



Missionary John Lee addresses the Annual Meeting

Danish song writer, Hans Adolf Brorson, "I Walk in Danger All the Way," translated by D. G. Ristad and set to a tune from the 1704 Halle *Gesangbuch*.

Missionary John Lee spoke on the topic: "Bringing Sverdrup to Brazil." For members of the Sverdrup Society, his presentation was both enlightening and exhilarating, since it combined Sverdrup's two great passions: The Congregation and Missions. In conjunction with his Portuguese language studies, Lee has been working for the past two years with

Brazilian pastors translating AFLC documents into Portuguese. There is a real hunger among the Brazilian congregations to understand the meaning of "Free and Living Congregations." Pr. Lee and other Brazilian pastors are currently working on translating portions of the Fundamental Principles study, soon to be published by the AFLC here in the United States.

— Loiell Dyrud

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.

GSS Seminary Forum, January 8, 2021

The Georg Sverdrup Society hosted a seminary discussion forum in the Hauge Chapel at the Free Lutheran Seminary, Plymouth, Minnesota, on January 8.

Devotions were led by Pastor Gary Jorgenson, and Mr. Larry Walker read an excerpt from his translation of Georg Sverdrup's article on "Papal Rule."

Rev. Martin Horn presented his paper on "The Congregation as the Bride of Christ."

After the coffee break, Dr. Nathan Olson read his paper on "The Congregation as the Body of Christ," and Rev. Brian Lunn gave a presentation on his ongoing project of "Getting Sverdrup into Logos" (the Bible software program), with a goal of making Sverdrup's work more accessible to students and pastors.

All presentations were followed by discussions. The forum adjourned following lunch.



Dr. Martin Horn speaking on the topic "The Congregation as the Bride of Christ." Horn earned a PhD this spring with his dissertation entitled "Georg Sverdrup's Concept of the Free Congregation: The Congregation as the Bride of Christ."



Dr. Nathan Olson, who recently accepted a call to teach at the Free Lutheran Schools, speaking on the topic "The Congregation as the Body of Christ."

Journal Development Committee

The Journal Development Committee met March 19th at the Free Lutheran Bible College. The Journal Development Committee of the Georg Sverdrup Society has the responsibility to develop the themes for each year's Sverdrup Journal, as well as to select the translations and academic articles for each journal.

The theme of the 2021 *Journal* will be

“Life in the Congregation,” and the journal will include translations of Sverdrup’s writings on subjects such as lay-ministry, infant baptism, and confirmation. The academic articles for the 2021 *Journal* will include “The Congregation as the Temple,” by Dr. Brent Olson, and “Sverdrup on the Lord’s Supper,” by Pastor Gary Jorgenson.

The Journal Development Committee has also proposed themes for the *Journal* for the years 2022–2024. These themes are the following: the 2022 Journal, “Sverdrup and Ministries of Mercy”; the 2023 Journal, “Sverdrup and the Servant Pastor”; and the 2024 Journal, “Sverdrup and the Fellowship of Congregations.”

— Martin L. Horn



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

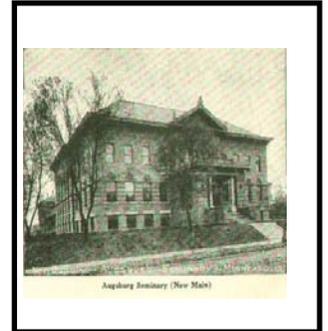
From “Papal Rule,” by Georg Sverdrup

Translation by Larry J. Walker

(This excerpt forms a part of Prof. Sverdrup’s extensive series of articles on “The Church and Church Fellowships,” originally published in Kvartal-Skrift in 1875–76. It is found in the first volume of Sverdrup’s Samlede Skrifter, ed. by Andreas Helland. These essays explain Sverdrup’s view of church history from the time of Christ until his own day. This essay is located between “The Rule of Bishops” and “Sects and the Reformation.” In these essays, Prof. Sverdrup explains his understanding of how it happened that the apostolic church (which ought to be our model) was gradually corrupted through the temptations of power to become the Roman Catholic Church of the popes. —LJW)

It is against this distortion of God’s way of salvation that I, according to my abilities, have striven to maintain that the Kingdom of God is spiritual and its unity, its King, is Christ, the Ascended One, with life and Spirit. It is this simple truth of God’s Word that struck down all the pride of Babel, and it is this faith which overcomes the world, without surrendering the victorious lords into the devilish power of pride. It was this truth which the papacy caused little by little to be forgotten; it was for this that Luther stepped forth. It is this which is always an offense to the Jews, because they have received God’s promises of “a kingdom of Israel” in vain, and the embittered attacks on my monograph seem to result from offense taken at [the idea] that the Lutheran Church will never, in the strength of its “pure doctrine,” be sole heir to the promises of the Kingdom. It is in any case certain [in this view] that it is a far more suitable thing to be under the pope and to acknowledge or agree to “pure doctrine” than to walk in living faith, and it is therefore no wonder if the word of faith is an offense to them now as before. But history must be allowed to stand, and it bears witness that God is faithful in His promises, and that no human’s faithlessness can bring His faithfulness

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THE GEORG SVERDRUP SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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Directors

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Larry Walker, Editor
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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**.

“Papal Rule” (cont.)

to naught. But neither the pope nor pure doctrine can give humanity a share and a portion in the glory of God’s Kingdom; faith alone can do that.

There was contagion within the Roman imperial palaces, and when the Church moved into them, it was infected with the disease. But it would be a notable error, one only explainable by ignorance and party spirit, if one were to think of the papacy from its very beginning as the papacy which existed in Luther’s time. We can now, since history has cast its revealing light on that development, perceive that the seed of ruin was planted early on; but it took a long time before that evil root bore fruit visible to all.

It has been established above that the guidance of the Lord had to bring the church into consciousness of its unity, just at the time when the Roman Empire was more and more disintegrating; and with the powerful position of the episcopacy it was no more than human, at that moment, for people to turn their eyes to the bishop of Rome as the rightful overlord of the whole spiritual kingdom. The world was accustomed to being ruled from that place. And any unbiased reader must admit that however much worldly thought might have already entered into the church, the Christian world cannot boast many greater men of the church than those who sat “in the seat of Peter” during the earliest period after the fall of the Roman Empire. Because in this way the Catholic Church at the beginning, to an exceeding degree, approached faithfulness to its calling, that of proclaiming the church of Christ as a strongly unified spiritual kingdom. For that reason, not much was lacking either, in this first period of the development of the papacy, for the promotion of the bishop of Rome as the spiritual center of all Christianity. There was truly a very short period of which it may be said that all Christendom was gathered around the center of Christian Rome. But that was only a thin slice of the day; it would disappear before the appointed day ran out. For the day of eternity does not dawn within the temporal bounds of history.