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## HANS NIELSEN HAUGE

His ethics and some consequences of his work



### I Introduction

Hans Nielsen Hauge (born 1771) lived and worked two hundred years ago. Following a sincere and deep longing for God throughout his youth, he had a powerful spiritual experience in 1796. He was 25 years old at the time. He received a calling from God to preach His word to the people and admonish them to repent. Following this, he started travelling throughout the country while combining his spiritual and physical work. While he preached he was an active businessman, a pioneer who started up some 30 businesses all over the country over a four year period. During this whole time, he combined his calling to preach with his other activities. Finally he was arrested in 1804 for a breach of the “Konventikkelplakaten”, the Konventikkel Ordinance, a law which denied lay people the right to preach. He was imprisoned for five years before the prosecution and for another four years before the hearing. In 1814 he was finally found guilty and ordered to pay 2000 riksdaler, a fine he paid with the help of gifts from friends and family. His health was poor following the years of imprisonment, so he discontinued his travelling. He worked on his own estate in Christiania (Oslo) instead, still keeping up his business at the same time. This he did until his death in 1824.

No other person in the history of Norway has so dominated his own time and influenced the time following his death as Hauge. His combination of a Christian life, preaching and business activity contributed to the legalisation of the market as an institution, for Christians too, while it was given a clear social function. This was unique at that time. Hauge also formed a new religious philosophy, from the group to the individual: individuals were no longer only a part of a social group, but individuals with a responsibility for their own lives in keeping with what they learned. This contributed to a spiritual and mental liberation all over the country, and along with other social currents, Haugianism was a contributing factor to Norway's receiving its own constitution and becoming independent in 1814.

Who was this man who was so important to his country's history? What drove him, how did he go about his activity and what was the background for his calling? In this pamphlet we will try to provide the answer as to how a farmer's son from Tune was able contribute to moulding a whole nation both during his lifetime and after his death.

## ***2 Hans Nielsen Hauge and his time***

### **2.1 Social conditions in Norway.**

When Hans Nielsen Hauge was born Norway was united with Denmark. Most of the inhabitants of the country were of Norwegian origin. There was also a middle class in the towns, and in some marketing towns, a majority were from abroad. Many were from Denmark, but other European countries were also represented.

The population of Norway increased substantially during Hauge's lifetime. Two years before his birth there were 728,000 people in Norway. Some thirty years later the population had increased to 883,000 - an increase of over 20%. Children and youth were a much greater part of the population than they are today, and the expected life span was 35-40 years. There were therefore few elderly people. In comparison Hauge lived to be 53 years old.

Nine out of ten people lived in the rural districts, but more and more were moving to the towns. Oslo, which was then known as Christiania, had only 8,000 inhabitants. Bergen was Norway's largest town with 20,000 inhabitants. The town had grown through marketing largely because it was also a European trading centre because of the fishing commerce.

In the towns the middle class were a very powerful group, and they were far on their way to having real autonomy. They brought large amounts of money to the country and the state, a position they well knew how to use to their advantage. This brought about the fact that the government took special consideration of them in the legislation. The middle class had the exclusive right to do business and profit from marketing relations, and there were several monopolies and State-regulated decrees in trading. Of course these favoured them, and other groups had no access to these privileges.

In the rural districts it was the farmers who were the most favoured social group. The farmers, or the farm-owners, owned the land on which they laboured. They also owned animal stock and were for the most part self-supporting. Many farmers also owned forestland, on which they earned money. Most of them also had labourers on their farms. Actually by the turn of the century these labourers and servants were the largest labour group in the country!

As a rule the farmers had leaseholders - or housemen - attached to the farm. Farmers of large properties were likely to have many leaseholders on their land, while lesser farmers had maybe one or two housemen. These were men who were allowed to live with their families on small plots of land with some animals. Unfortunately this was not enough to live on, and they had to take on extra work. Quite often working for the landowner was part of the payment for the plot the houseman disposed of.

People in Hauge's time were attached to one locality. They usually lived where they had grown up. It was not traditional to move out of consideration for one's work. The farmer's sons were taught in the traditions of farming, and when the father died, the farm was often divided among the sons so everybody received a portion. Over time of course, the farms became smaller and smaller, and eventually the farms became so small that it was impossible to live off the land as a sole income. In the towns the sons were taught in the traditions of their fathers' business acumen. Sons of many of the middle class received a portion of their education abroad. As educated adults they went into the family business or into other businesses.

Over time a class conflict developed between the middle classes and the farmers. The farmers were dependent on help from the middle classes if they were to sell their wares on the market. But because of their special privileges, only the middle classes had the possibility of many forms of commerce. This meant that the middle classes and their conditions thwarted the farmers. There were many middle class citizens who had invested in land and forest properties, mainly to have easy access to timber. The middle classes lent money to the farmers so they could meet their obligations. If the harvest was bad or the farmers had less income than was necessary, they went bankrupt and then they lost their farms to the middle class citizens. Many farmers lost their property in this manner, which contributed very much to the conflict that developed between these two groups.

## **2.2 Hans Nielsen Hauge's religious influence**

Hans Nielsen Hauge grew up in a Christian home. His father was a farmer. The home was remarkable for its piety and they had prayer meetings both morning and evening. The Hauge family went to Church every Sunday, and when they could not, they read aloud from Luther's larger collection of sermons.

Hauge was aware and sought knowledge even as a child. In addition to what he learned at school, he read the Bible as well as other Christian literature. Pontoppidan's explanation of the catechism was very important to his understanding of Christianity. Young Hauge eagerly read books written by other great religious teachers. In time he became a deep thinker who more than anything sought the truth. Through his meditations he searched the truth ever more and with ever greater diligence in the Scriptures and the church.

In the 1730's the then reigning King Christian VI had passed a law for local schools and a decree for confirmation. So Hans Nielsen Hauge received his education through the general school system and studied for his confirmation with the priest Gerhard Seeberg, who was a greatly disputed man. Hauge was confirmed in 1786. The only education Hauge received was at primary school level, and as a farmer's son he was never sent anywhere for any higher education or to learn any more. So throughout his life he considered himself an uneducated man, with, however, a growing amount of experience.

During the time that Hauge grew up, Tune and the area round about was pervaded by strong and sometimes conflicting religious currents. In Tune alone there were 17 lay preachers of differing kinds! Hans Nielsen Hauge in other words was part of an environment full of religious unrest, and the many different spiritual currents were confusing to him. According to Hauge himself the most important people to influence his spiritual development were his father and the curate, Ole Christian Hammer. In his book "Viriden's daarlighet" (The World's Unrighteousness) which he published in 1796, he says: "... I heard many words of God from my teachers, Herr Hammer and my father..." Hammer was the third curate in less than eight years since Seeberg became the priest in Tune. Although Hauge had studied with Seeberg for his confirmation, he still considered Hammer a more important teacher of the word of God than Seeberg. However, one cannot get away from the fact that his relationship to the curate had an important influence on his spiritual development - for better and for worse.

The priest Gerhard Seeberg came to Tune when Hauge was 7 years old. Seeberg was a shop-owner's son who had received a good education, including some time in England. Seeberg

was a fully-educated theological candidate as early as 1755. But he was not ordained until the year 1776. He had already studied for his A-levels with a Moravian-inspired priest, and this inspiration was later to become an important part of his own preaching. During the years from his graduation to the time he was ordained, he preached at the Danish Court, among other places. This did not however, make him particularly popular., He showed little social know-how, to put it mildly and was not liked by his ecclesiastical colleagues and leaders. Seeberg was 44 years old when he took up his position as the parish priest of Tune.

Seeberg was very zealous in his work from the very beginning. He was wont to creep into housewives' homes at night to see if they were sleeping alone when their husbands were away; once he refused the Sacrament to 70 people during a service; he denied the curate his pay, he mortgaged the tithing and the land rent which the church received from the farmers; he rebuked a presumably drunken parish clerk in front of a full congregation; he asked about the most private and intimate questions when he took confession, and he thought nothing of taxing the people in the congregation when he lacked funds for himself. It is therefore no wonder that he was much disputed from the first, and there arose innumerable conflicts on his account.

The little community was furious, and there were several lawsuits with him as the opposing party. In 1786 the Chancery in Copenhagen took the matter in hand and suspended him while the lawsuits were being investigated. The next year Seeberg's books of office were forcibly taken from him, but even then he still regarded himself as the rightful parish priest of Tune. In November of 1795 he was finally removed from office because he was "quite simply and totally incompetent and unqualified". Following this, Seeberg lost all respectability, but according to him he had suffered in all innocence as Christ Himself had done before him.

Hauge reacted violently to this hypocritical affirmation. On 4 March, he and four other men visited Seeberg to reprove him and warn him of his pride. They had the verses from the third chapter of Ezekiel in mind. Here it says, if a man does not warn the wicked man of his wicked ways, the wicked man will die, but his blood will God require at his hand. (Ezek. 3:18) Upon their arrival to see Seeberg, he refused to meet them under the pretence of there being smallpox on the estate. Hauge was dumbfounded. The falseness and the religious hypocrisy drove him to despair, but at the same time he now sought God even more urgently. It was only a month later that he was to have his great spiritual experience, which was to change his life for good.

## **2.3 The Spiritual Experience**

Hans Nielsen Hauge went out on 5 April 1796 to plough the lower field beyond the farm. He was working. As he walked behind the plough, he sang a hymn:

“Strengthen my soul with power from within  
So I can feel the promptings of the Spirit  
Catch my soul in speech and mind  
Lead me, guide me as I walk in my weakness.  
I would lose myself and all that I own  
If only you could dwell in my soul,  
Then through the door my troubles will flee  
And all that confounds my inner peace.”

As he sang this verse, all at once he felt his mind lifted up to God. He was past feeling, outside his body and could neither say what was happening to him nor within him. Later he spoke of it as though he, by the grace of God, without any merit of his own, had been allowed a foretaste of the Kingdom of God. It was such an overwhelming, ecstatic experience that words could not describe what he had seen, nor the joy he had felt. Later, he could not say how long the experience had lasted nor what had really happened. The experience nonetheless was clearly attached to the word of God.

When Hauge came to himself, at first he felt remorse - remorse for his sins and for not having served God in all things. After that he felt that nothing in the world mattered and the worldliness with which he had struggled so hard, just vanished. His mind had been transformed, converted and renewed through this powerful experience, and it was as though he saw everything with new eyes. He felt an intense need to read the Bible more and had received new knowledge about how it should be understood, and he felt a deep love for God. The desire that others should be partakers of the same grace as he had received, was also very clear after his spiritual experience out in the fields.

The call he had heard in his mind was what drove Hauge for the rest of his life. He experienced God Himself asking him to proclaim His name to men and to exhort them to repentance. It was so clear that he could in no wise explain it away even to himself, even though he might have wished to, from time to time. The responsibility was a heavy burden, even after such a strong experience, and he prayed that the Lord might take it from him. But as time passed, Hauge became certain that it was the Spirit of God who had extended the call to him. Besides, as he studied the Bible more closely, he received a confirmation that God had called shepherds, fishermen and others of lowly station in the same manner, to do His work. This gave him courage.

To begin with he did not speak of the experience he had had. During the first 14 days following this, there were nights when he did not sleep more than two hours. Many nights he hardly slept at all. He sang and pondered the word of God; neither did he have any appetite. Nevertheless, he forced himself to eat so that his mother would not fear for him. The reason he did not tell of his experience was partly due to his spiritual shyness and humility, and partly because he knew that people would not understand. But the power which he had been given, made all his discourses remarkable.

The first to be influenced by “the new Hans” were two of his own sisters, and that was on the same day it happened. Hauge noticed that he had received the awakening’s gift of grace, and when he spoke of God and was glad, those who heard him, wept. The awakening spread fast to neighbours in Tune and after that, to the neighbouring village, and finally to most of the country as he travelled. Hauge travelled all the way North to Troms, and the revival went that far! Hauge talked of God everywhere he went, and on his many travels there were people who followed him part of the way and came to speak to him of religious matters. There are many stories of people whose lives changed on hearing Hans Nielsen Hauge speak.

The spiritual experience in April 1796 was without doubt the one single event which touched Hauge the most powerfully for the rest of his life. He had seen the obvious discrepancy between the faith and works of certain churchmen and their brothers, and this had driven him to continuously seek God with greater diligence. After that, endowed with spiritual independence, power and a natural authority, he did what God had commanded him to do,

which was to preach the word of God to men so they could repent and bear fruit in accordance with their faith. The spiritual experience had liberated him and given him a mission.

## **2.4 Hans Nielsen Hauge: the person**

In his youth and childhood, Hans Nielsen Hauge was an enthusiastic bookworm, seeking knowledge, with a powerful spiritual longing in him. Over time he developed an intense inner, prayerful life and was preoccupied with truth and honesty. As a natural part of this, it was important to him that life and doctrine matched both in himself and others. This would in later years distinguish his behaviour and his preaching all over the country. After his spiritual experience in 1796 he became endowed with a natural and powerful authority. He became a spiritual leader of the Societies of Friends which grew around him, and he became the self-appointed leader for the business ventures which he initiated. People listened to, and followed his advice, whether it concerned the establishment of a business or spiritual matters,

Hauge was a determined, active and purposeful man. He travelled all over the country preaching, simultaneously establishing small industries in several places. He usually travelled on foot and often knitted as he walked. The gloves and socks were then given away to the poor who needed them. It was his incredible working capacity combined with his pioneering spirit that made him such a successful businessman. He was at the height of his activity during the years 1800-1804. During this period, he established many industries all over the country, from Lista in the South to Troms in the North. Fishing industries, brickyards, spinning mills, shipping yards, salt and mineral mines, the harnessing of waterfalls, paper mills and printing plants were some of the industries he established. The profits were always used to invest in new activities; neither did he hesitate to ask his friends for loans and investments if he thought they were in a position to assist.

Once he had established these ventures, he delegated the daily management to those he thought were the most capable, but he was the strategist who planned and motivated them to finish. Later when he was in the area he would visit the works, and would contribute and help where necessary. Because he established so many industries, saw the possibilities and was successful in most cases, he became an inspiration and an example to those who knew him.. Many found the courage to break away from the traditional pattern - especially in the outlying districts - and to establish their own enterprises, once they had seen Hauge do it and understood that it was possible. Even the civic authorities recognised his business acumen. He was released from prison for a period of 6 months, having been there for five years for defying the "Konventikkel Ordinance", to establish a salt mine for the government at a time when the country was threatened by famine.

Although the business activities were a large part of Hauge's life, he remained faithful to his calling from God to the very end. Everywhere he went he preached the word of God to the people, and his preaching career was better known than his business. His preaching activity became a source of irritation to the clergy and the authorities, for they were of the opinion that he was defying the "Konventikkel Ordinance" which had been decreed in January of 1741. According to this decree the clergy had a monopoly on preaching the word of God, and lay people could not preach except in the presence of a priest. Hauge always took the ordinance with him on his many travels, was always most particular about letting the priest know about his planned meetings wherever he went, in the hope of avoiding a breach of the law. A mild interpretation of the decree actually made it possible to preach as long as the priest was informed of the meeting. Nevertheless this practice varied from place to place in the country,

and many of the clergy felt threatened by Hauge because the people listened to him and followed his advice. They finally managed to have him imprisoned and charged.

Hauge's manner of preaching was popular. He spoke with power and authority using the vernacular and being direct in his speech. He spoke wherever people congregated: in homes, on the church steps, on the storehouse steps, by the factories or as he walked from place to place. People allowed themselves to get carried away. His talks were consuming and sincere, and although they may not always have been well-formed nor written according to the art of public speaking, they were stirring because they witnessed of the fullness of the faith, energy of personality and the compelling power of God's love. Hauge himself said that it was as though a fire within him made it impossible for him to be silent, especially when many came to listen. He spoke of sin, of the Christian life and how to find the path to God. All the while he included strong admonitions of a Christian's responsibility to his fellowmen and to the society to which he belonged.

On his travels Hauge also spoke of everyday things. The rumour was spread from village to village when he was on his way, and people met him on the road to converse with him and follow him to the place he had chosen to stay. He had a great knowledge of people and psychological insight; he talked with people and gave them advice about everyday tasks, about the problems that beset them and he taught them spiritual truths. He respected people for who they were and addressed the individual. For a people who had been taught to listen and not to talk, to obey their superiors and their commands, to meet Hauge was indeed unusual. In him they met a man who listened to them and took them seriously. He had a God-given love for his fellowmen; this they noticed and trusted him for it.

In addition to preaching, he was a good correspondent; more than 500 of his letters are kept in the national archives. He published 33 books and writings of his own, as well as publishing writings from other authors whom he had profited from reading himself. 200,000 copies were published of his own books for a population of about 800,000, which made him the most read author of his time. He also developed an efficient system of distribution throughout the land. Following his imprisonment letter-writing was the most important means of keeping in touch with all his Friends all over the country.

Throughout his life Hauge considered himself to be unlearned. His only education was from the Primary school, nevertheless his knowledge of the Bible and his spiritual insight were worthy of the envy of theologians and other prominent men. Sometimes he even amazed himself. After a while, following his release from prison, a certain intellectual and theological environment developed around his home. It became a natural headquarters of the Haugian movement. In addition Hauge was often visited by bishops, theological professors, priests and other important people in society, who engaged him in long and deep conversation. Hauge himself said that he was flattered "by the respect and friendship accorded him by the most enlightened and respectable men of the country of his birth". (*at nyde Agtelse og venskab hos Fodelandets mest oplyste og aktværdigste Mænd.*)

He was faithful to his calling, conscientious in all his walks, practising what he preached. He was most particular about keeping the law by informing priests of planned meetings, nevertheless he was unafraid of contradicting them if he thought they either behaved or spoke out of keeping with the word of God. He was a man of initiative and action who saw possibilities everywhere, and even just 6 months before his death he brought up the possibility

of establishing a clothes' factory in the centre of the Eastern area. Throughout his life he managed to combine spirituality and practicality.

Hauge did not marry until 1815. Although he was actually imprisoned, since 1811 he had lived on an estate that his brother had bought for him. Out of consideration to his health he was allowed to live outside the prison, on house arrest, but he had to be prepared at all times to report to the prison authorities. After the judgement in 1814, which by the way he chose not to appeal to the King, he married his housekeeper, Andrea Andersdatter Nyhus from Nes in Romerike. A large number of wedding guests were led by the court priest, Pavels, President Bull, the High Court Judge Bull and Hauge's own defence lawyer, the attorney, Lumholtz. Their happiness was not to last long. In December of the same year, Andrea died after the birth of Hauge's son, Andreas. People who visited Hauge later told of how he looked forward to seeing his son grow up, and spent much time walking with him and telling him of the love of the Lord. Andreas was nine years old when Hans Nielsen Hauge died. In 1817 he married again, this time to Ingeborg Marie Olsdatter, a houseman's daughter from Gjerpen in Telemark. They had three children but none of them lived to adulthood.

## **2.5 The Society of Friends**

Societies of Friends were organised as the revival spread across the land. They were sometimes called readers or students, because they studied the Holy Scriptures a great deal and were very knowledgeable. They were also called Haugians. Such Societies were registered all over the country; there must have been several thousand members altogether. These groups met in their homes and spent much time together praying and teaching.

Hans Nielsen Hauge was the self-appointed spiritual leader of these societies, but he delegated the local responsibility to others. He used both men and women as preachers and spiritual leaders. The notion of giving women such responsibilities was revolutionary at the time. But Hauge did not let this bother him. His opinion of equality and worth was right according to his understanding of the Bible. To him the question of gender was unimportant, the really important issue was to find the right person in the right place to accomplish the tasks in hand. Every group needed a leader, or a supervisor as he liked to call them, and this person needed the necessary leadership qualities. The person in question was to be chosen by people in the Society of Friends if Hauge had not chosen someone for them.

These Societies of Friends were distinguished by the fact that people lived in a brotherhood, helping one another both practically and spiritually. There was a clear connection between their life and doctrine. The Haugians behaved carefully, properly and nobly; they were hard working and never refused anybody if they could be of assistance. They showed initiative, charity and sacrifice, and many of the cottage industries the Haugians started up were financed with the help of gifts from Friends all over the country. Another characteristic was that there was room for all kinds of people in the Societies of Friends. The old class distinctions from the farmers' society were gradually wiped out by the fact that men and women, farmers and servants, the crippled and the elderly were all on the same footing. Unselfish love and co-operation distinguished them all. Haugians spent much time together: they spoke to each other of spiritual matters, taught and advised one another and were edified by reading spiritual books. Hauge's letters and writings were also read diligently for all to hear.



Hauge guided the Societies of Friends through his letters. He was a very diligent letter-writer, and through his letters he came with admonishings, personal greetings and spiritual guidance. As the cottage industries developed, the business content of his letters also grew, and as far as Hauge was concerned, he found no discrepancy in including spiritual and business matters in the same letter. In a typical letter from Hauge written in December of 1802, he urges his Friends to be humble, helpful, and diligent in all things, to doing good in order to prevent evil, to showing charity and love. At the same time he mentions the possibilities of various trading and business ventures, and finally asks the recipient of the letter to send him some corn to be used in the establishment of a new venture.

### **3 The Vision and Driving Force behind Hauge's work**

#### **3.1 The Vision**

The vision behind Hans Nielsen Hauge's versatile activity was based on the calling God had given him through the spiritual experience in 1796. In a newspaper article in 1802 Hauge formulated it this way:

*My calling is to love God and my fellowmen.*

This was the vision for all his work in a nutshell. Preaching, working and production were all a part of serving man, the community, and God's kingdom on earth. Riches and other excess funds were simply gifts from God, which one should use to serve one's fellowmen and the community. One was not supposed to use profit for personal aims such as luxury and excesses, but to reinvest in promising projects to create work, and so contribute to others' remunerative work and a possibility for them to improve their lives and those of their nearest and dearest. A Christian should not consider himself above business transactions, quite the opposite, he should engage in it with enthusiasm when the opportunity presented itself because in this manner, he could set a good example for his fellowmen. Everything one owned, both capital and other material goods, should be kept in stewardship for the good of one's fellowmen and the community.

At a time when the middle classes were fighting desperately to hang on to their privileges for their own benefit, this was a completely new thought. Instead of working for one's own personal gain by deliberately suppressing the weakest in the community, that is to say, the poor and the unemployed, Hauge and his Friends drew them in as partners in the creative process; they then received their due reward and a share of the profits.

#### **3.2 The Driving Force**

The driving force, the inspiration and guidance were, for Hauge, to be found in a single book: the Bible. He always had the Bible with him in a bag or in his pocket, and during free moments he would bring it out to read, study and feel renewed. He lived with it in all phases of his life. The word of God inspired and guided him, but he was sometimes challenged about that which he taught when he came upon questions and complications which could not be answered by his simple catechism. In these instances, he had to struggle alone, and had none but God and the Bible to lean on. He spoke of his doubts and scruples in this manner:

*I conversed with the Lord concerning the matters I was struggling with, both about the fundament of God's word and how I was to make His name known for the purpose of bringing the people to repentance. Then it was that He clearly spoke to me in the Spirit providing me with the right answer. Thus it was when I picked up the Bible, it would often fall open upon the page which provided the answer to my very question, or upon that page which worked to my edification and guidance.*

Hauge possessed great biblical knowledge. In his letters and writings, one finds innumerable references to verses from the Bible; as an example, his book, "The Christian Doctrine" of the year 1800 contains 1340 such references! Hauge had read much in the Bible and studied it thoroughly, but he was still surprised by his own knowledge of the Bible. He observed that when he penned his first writings, many Bible verses came to his mind, which he himself was not aware that he had learned, and other deeper thoughts came to him, whence he knew not. He mentioned his childhood as a possible source for this knowledge.

## **4 Hans Nielsen Hauge's Ethics**

There is no collected presentation of Hans Nielsen Hauge's ethics. He has not published anything of that kind, neither has anybody else attempted to make such a compendium in writing. Part of the reason for this could be that this would be a very difficult undertaking since Hauge represents a vision of wholeness that includes a Christian life as well as existence generally. He was no sectarian philosopher with one thought for his private life and quite another for his public life. For him there was a distinct connection between the two, both for himself and for others. This comes across quite clearly in Hauge's correspondence, as previously mentioned. However we will try to render a short and systematic presentation of Hauge's ethics in this booklet. To simplify the process, they can be divided into three main categories: 1) Hauge's vision of mankind, 2) Hauge's vision of society, 3) Hauge's vision of work.

### **4.1 Hauge's vision of mankind**

Hans Nielsen Hauge was inspired by the idea of the spirit of community practised by the early Christians. It was expressed in the way they lived in a spiritual and practical community where all was shared. It was a brotherhood with room for all. This idea of a brotherhood places the interests of the community in the centre and is the direct opposite of the individualism that marks today's society.

Hauge placed this concept of a brotherhood in an economic and material context, where those who had extra capital were expected to invest in something useful which would provide people with work and service. In Hauge's philosophy of a brotherhood, was included the challenge to the Friends to sustain each other economically in times of difficulty and to lend each other money should the need arise. Hauge himself approached Friends around the country on several occasions with requests for merchandise to help establish new ventures; he also asked for money for the establishment of new businesses, or the payment of debts. Haugians helped each other economically which in many ways gave them a head start compared with other traders.

*Do not demand too much nor place too many burdens on your workers, no more than a Fellow Brother can be expected to bear. (Hauge)*

Demands for efficiency and increased production usually take precedence over caring and consideration for individual needs today. However, Hauge was able to place the fellow worker at the centre of attention so that consideration for the individual was balanced with the industry's need for profit, to keep it going. The notions of burdens and brother are important concepts in Hauge's vision of men. He points out that the leader also has the function of caring, that the person in question must have an eye open for the worker's living and working conditions. If anyone is to function well at the work place, the leader must show care and consideration so each one can develop to his best capacity in the work process and - in the community. This requires the right person at the right place, something Hauge emphasised greatly in his work, and people should have tasks which interest them and which they can perform in a correct and useful manner. Hauge was lucky to have a great understanding of people, and insight into how to place his colleagues. He also emphasised that all kinds of people could be given useful work. Neither handicap, gender nor age were of importance to Hauge when it came to working in his industries or for the Haugian Societies.

The aspect of caring is of the utmost importance for the workers' well being and will to work. Hauge understood this, and it is also considered in modern theories of leadership that an improvement of the lot of the worker at his work place, will give the business a better economic rendering. A business which takes care of its workers' well-being, not only their performance, will come to see that there will be greater enjoyment, less absenteeism and in many cases an improvement in the work. This is especially so where the theories of modern leadership are concerned regarding the transformation theory or the theory of change. This theory includes the whole person and points to the fact that if a person is to function well in his working situation, then the people in leadership must consider the individual so he can develop in the process of work and in the social context at work.

*We should beware of all outward appearance of ambition and self-importance.*

Here Hauge warns the Friends of selfishness and individualistic attitudes. He was of the opinion that egocentricity and self-interest are harmful to the community. He was afraid that the Society of Friends would become very self-centred and thus lose its community function. He also meant this on the economic level. That was why he warned his followers against ambition and self-importance as a motivation, because then one would be in danger of being self-centred, materialistic and of seeking solely to secure one's own economic position or social status. The only motive for creating profit or ownership according to Hauge, was not for one's own benefit, but to use what one had for the benefit of others - to share the benefits, to put it simply.

## **4.2 Hauge's vision of society**

It was very important to Hauge that people have no right of ownership over material goods such as money, property or natural resources. These are God's property, which He has given to men in stewardship, for their own benefit and that of their fellowmen. The following quote expresses his opinion on the subject:

*We should use and have the good things of the world to govern as good housekeepers (Hauge).*

The expression “good housekeepers” means individuals have the responsibility of stewardship over something for someone else, that is to say, God, so as to serve the community for the greater good. Stewardship requires a far-sighted perspective both of the planning of resources and the fulfilment of the project. It also requires creativity and seeing possibilities which others may not have thought of. Being an entrepreneur and a pioneer was an important part of Hauge’s life, and he encouraged his Friends to do the same. “ *The good and the wise live and use their talents, strength and fortune for themselves, so that they can shape it for the good of others; they are stewards and look for possibilities.* “ In the philosophy of stewardship lies the clear incitement to also be steward over ecological values, the resources of the earth, in a far-sighted, responsible and social manner.

Hauge was of the opinion that everyone has his share of responsibility within the community, and that those who have the means should contribute to the establishment of enterprises to be able to give people work. It was especially true that within the farmers’ community and other well-to-do people in the country that one should save one’s pennies in case of difficult times. To have some money tucked away in the bottom of the chest was considered a wise disposal of extra resources. Hauge did not criticise this practice outright, but focused rather on the fact that material goods were a gift from God. According to the Bible, one was a steward and should use one’s money in the best possible way so that it could grow and become a blessing to others.

*Everyone should help establish and manage factories and works according to their fortune and gifts, so idle hands may work. (Hauge)*

It was with this challenge that Hauge approached his Friends who had made and saved money in other activities. There was a large amount of unemployment in Hauge’s time especially among labourers. As Hauge travelled around the country, he saw that much of the poverty around was the result of the fact that many had no remunerative work. So it became very important to him to implement measures to create work places.

In Hauge’s opinion, self-interest and personal gain were not the main reason for his investments. On the contrary it was the call to serve that was the driving force and the motivation behind the business activities. While earlier religious leaders had not engaged in trade with the excuse that such activities were wicked and selfish, Hans Nielsen Hauge pointed out the possibility and the necessity of being a child of God in all one’s walks. He showed that it was possible to combine spiritual and practical activity. The Haugians saw quite rightly that certain tradesmen allowed themselves to be governed by desires for personal gain, but that was something which characterised the person and not trading as such. The market place could serve both God and mammon, if you like, depending on how one behaved there. The Haugians initiative and hard-work philosophy contributed to a legitimising of the market as an institution, and so to the building up of a functioning and independent trade and industry among the lesser citizens of Norway.

### **4.3 Hauge’s thoughts on work**

Much of the reason behind giving people work was to be rid of poverty. To work was to accept one’s share of the responsibility, and he sought to have as many as possible in work. At the same time Hauge met with a lot of opposition in the community, mostly during the years in Bergen. He thought that if he and his Friends were busy, hard-working and God-fearing

people, that this would be a positive thing and dampen the opposition. He well understood the shining power of example, and was careful to admonish his Friends to be God-fearing, thrifty and hard-working.

*Our work and our willingness to serve should shine. (Hauge)*

Hauge often used the words “light up” and “shine” in connection with everyday behaviour, especially with work. Hauge knew that the relationship between living and preaching would be most obvious in the work place. He emphasised the need for enthusiasm, hard work and a humble desire to serve. In this way one could be a good example for one’s friends, colleagues and others.

Hauge was of the opinion that everybody needed to be engaged in something worthwhile, having work that was tailored to age, gender and working capacity. The idea of equality was a major principle in his philosophy of work and employment. This was a social and ethical idea which brought down the barriers of the time and placed a high standard for social and ethical philosophy. Hauge’s ideal would even today have problems in being adopted. Eiker Papirmolle, (The Eiker Paper Mill) in which Hauge was heavily involved was a typical example. Of the 50 employed, 21 were women, 12 were youth, some were handicapped physically and others mentally, and one was weak through old age. In Hauge’s working world there was room for everybody as long as they were prepared to do their part.

Hauge’s social and ethical perspective was expressed even while he was in jail. In 1809, behind lock and key without prosecution, there was the threat of a famine in Norway. Because of a war blockade along the coast of Norway, little salt was being imported. Corn was also scarce, and as a substitute for bread, people had to eat more meat and fish. But there was not enough salt for the food conservation. Salt was produced in Vestfold and on Svanoy near Bergen, but in comparison with the need the production was so little as to be considered a drop in the ocean. Hauge then sent a recommendation to the governing commission informing them of his experience in establishing a salt-cooking enterprise. He suggested he be set free from jail, as well as receiving a loan of 300 riksdaler, so he could establish salt-cookeries throughout the country. He was duly set free and received his riksdaler, and after a short time he got another loan and established several other salt-cookeries which functioned with success. After a period of six months’ freedom, during which he had loyally avoided holding any revival meetings and only working with the salt-cookeries, Hauge had to return to prison because his case was due.

## **5 Some consequences of Hauge’s work.**

During Hauge’s time, the farmers were bound to the farm and the area where they had grown up, a tradition which had remained for centuries. Sons took over their fathers’ farms and people remained where they had always been. There was no tradition of leaving one’s place of birth, and neither was there any tradition of getting established elsewhere, nor of doing anything else. Hauge was born into this particular tradition.

Hauge’s preaching released a spiritual liberation among the people in the provinces. It stimulated individuals to making independent choices in spiritual and eventually in practical matters as well. As a result farmers’ sons moved away from their farms to establish themselves as traders in the towns, or moved to other parts of the country to live and work in various fields. Over a period of time, there were businesses run by the Haugians all over the

country and many of them, encouraged by Hauge or other brothers, moved to other areas to start or run businesses. Some established shops, others started with handicraft while yet others started up factories and other industrial projects. A mental and spiritual liberation occurred which was without comparison in Norway at that time.

Interest in Hauge's letters and writings stimulated the majority of the people to learn to read and write. This contributed to a general increase of knowledge in the population. It was well known that Haugians read a great deal and that they were knowledgeable people, which contributed to the fact that many Haugians received positions of trust and influence in the community.

Hauge also preached equality between men and women. He encouraged men to learn to do housework and women to work on the farms. This was revolutionary at that time, and not everybody took it seriously. Hauge had no objection to placing women in leadership positions, whether it was in business or as preachers or.... in the Societies of Friends. The most important question for him was placing the right person in the right place. He also placed great emphasis on the equality of the sexes in his teaching, but after his death this idea eventually faded out.

It is difficult to document to what extent Hauge and the Haugians influenced the historic events which unfolded in Norway at that time. However, certain basic traits of the Haugian movement represented something completely new and contributed in their way to the revolution. For example, the fact that the Haugian movement was countrywide was one of several factors, which contributed to broadening individuals' perspective from the local to the national view. During Hauge's lifetime, people went from considering themselves as part of a class in the districts somewhere in the country, to considering themselves as mobile individuals, citizens of Norway with the responsibility and the possibility of influencing Norway's future.

The fact that people learned to see themselves as individuals in a national connection to a greater degree contributed to the development of a national consciousness, and this in turn contributed to a growing national spirit of community. This eventually led to an increasing desire for national independence, which the farmers' uprising induced. In 1814 Norway received its own constitution. Hauge himself was not present at the writing of it, but of the 112 men at Eidsvoll there were 3 Haugians.

After Hauge's death, the Haugians contributed to the abolishment of the Konventikkel Ordinance in 1842. The clergy had had a monopoly on the preaching of the word of God for a hundred years. With its disappearance, there occurred a tremendous blossoming of freedom to organise religious groups towards the end of the 1800's. Missionary organisations, temperance societies, and political groups saw the light of day, and to this day Norway has the largest number of organisations in relation to its population.

Earlier, trade and trading had been considered incompatible with living a good Christian life. Nonetheless Hauge and his Friends proved that it was possible to combine spirituality and practicality in an exemplary fashion.

They were honest and dignified in their business dealings, while they understood the need for profit and profitability. Instead of laying up as much money as they could for themselves, they used it to reinvest in order to create new benefits for a continually growing number of the

population. While trading had been reserved as a privilege for the middle classes, it had now become a living for a growing number of people from all walks of life. This made for a continually growing number of new ventures, and Norway now received a new middle class made up of farmers and others from the labouring class who had found a living through some other venture than traditional farming.

## 6 Conclusion

Hans Nielsen Hauge was an unorthodox man who broke new ground in religion and business in Norway. He lived as he taught and influenced people wherever he went, whatever station in life. Hauge contributed actively to a spiritual and mental liberation making people more independent than ever before, especially farmers and workers. The influence of the Haugian Movement on the Norwegian population contributed to the formation of a national spirit of community, which was to become one of the fundamental pillars of the Norwegian independence movement. Time has proven that the opinions which Hauge lived by, both his Christian private life and his business ventures, were timeless and universal. They would be well worth following today.

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