

**Peasant Radicalism in Early Nineteenth Century Norway: The
Case of Hans Nielsen Hauge (1771-1824)**

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ABSTRACT

This study explores radicalism among Norwegian peasants during Europe's post-revolutionary period and its evolution to conservatism after the Congress of Vienna, 1815. A peasant preacher named Hans Nielsen Hauge (1771-1824) initiated a religious movement, consisting of young people who found in his expression of religion an outlet for their disaffection. With the French Revolution in recent memory, the Haugeans aroused fears among elites by their anti-clerical and anti-bourgeois sentiment, as well as their cooperative commercial ventures that expressed egalitarian and communitarian ideals, which crossed class and gender boundaries. In 1804, as Europe was about to enter the Napoleonic era, the Danish authorities incarcerated Hauge. When they released him a decade later, Hauge's prophetic zeal turned conservative in an effort to return his followers to the ideals he thought they once shared. This account therefore outlines the role of popular religion in a movement from radicalism to conservatism in post-revolutionary Europe.

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Introduction

This study investigates a solitary case of religious, political, and social radicalism, in North European peasant culture at the dawn of the nineteenth century.¹ It is an account of the suppression, imprisonment, and indemnities levied against a Norwegian peasant, Hans Nielsen Hauge (1771-1824), during and following the Napoleonic era (1796-1814), and it narrates the evolution of his leadership over a radical peasant movement bearing his name, the Haugeans (*Haugianere*). Hans Hauge's peculiar expression of radicalism and religious dissent spread throughout much of Norwegian peasant society in the post-revolutionary period, and then dissipated as Norwegians came to embrace modernity following the restoration of 1815 in Europe. Hauge was motivated by anti-bourgeois and anti-clerical sentiment, he experimented with peasant utopian and cooperative ideas, and he sought to practice a form of egalitarianism that crossed traditional class and gender boundaries. But by the end of his life, the radical peasant from Smålene turned reactionary.

¹ Scholars use the term "radical" variously across the disciplines, but as defined in the *Oxford English Dictionary* (second edition, 1989) the historical sense of the term has four basic applications. "Radical" addresses what is understood to be a fundamental "root" characteristic of its object. It denotes an independence or departure from what one may deem usual or traditional. The term also implies a kind of thoroughness or completeness of method, especially when used in the noun "radicalism." Finally, in the nineteenth century the term was used to describe the extreme section of liberalism and socialism that advocated the most advanced views on political reform, which advocated of thorough political and/or social change (though not necessarily through revolution). However, the term need not be only applied to politics of the left; Metternich's so-called "Restoration" at the Congress of Vienna, 1814-15, could be termed a *radical-conservatism*, particularly when applied to France following the French Revolution and Napoleonic era.

Hauge's life unfolded in five stages, which mark the divisions of this study. Naturally, the first stage was his childhood at the Tune farm in Smålene district from 1771 to 1796. From his home, Hauge gained a religious sensibility that was both rural in its imagination and pietistic in its moral behavior. From 1796 to 1800, Hauge transitioned into the second stage of his life as a revivalist lay preacher and author of religious literature. In the fashion of a guild craftsman of the early modern period, Hauge journeyed throughout Norway practicing his inventive craft and cultivating social networks that would later serve his religious movement. As the authorities accused Hauge and his followers of vagrancy, Hauge entered a third stage in his career from 1800 to 1804, when he attempted to gain respect for his radical religious activities by establishing peasant cooperative ventures and a doctrine of "good deeds" aimed at legitimizing both his travels and his social networks. For these four years Hauge tried to redefine his identity as "a businessman in Bergen." However, this effort did not abate the accusations of fanaticism, rather it added accusations of economic fraud (*Sværmeri*).

In 1804, the Danish government incarcerated Hauge on the grounds of financial fraud; this marked the fourth stage of his life from 1804 to 1814. Removed from his network of friends, he experienced a protracted physical and social alienation, which his biographers have typically seen to have shaken his self-confidence. Meanwhile, his friends carried on the religious and economic enterprises without their leader's inspiration and idealism, except for what they could find in his books. When the Danish government concluded his case on December 23 1814, Hauge was released and reentered a world quite different from the one he had left a decade earlier. Norway and the rest of Europe was changing both politically and economically, and so were Hauge's "friends."

The final stage of Hauge's life, 1814 to 1824, also meant significant adjustments for the peasant preacher. He entered family life and returned to a traditional peasant status and livelihood. But as a peasant, Hauge's life was a bitter mixture of familial affection and tragic loss. In addition to the death of his first wife and three of his four children, he struggled to remain solvent as a peasant. He also experienced disappointment and disillusionment with his followers, whom he tried to redirect toward the ideals he thought they had once shared. Nevertheless, Hauge retained his near mythical status as a religious "chief" (*høvding*) among Norwegian peasants and religious dissenters, and as Hauge's life ended, his legacy continued its journey.

Although Hauge's radicalism was bold and personal, his story is not triumphant. He believed in his ideals, even as they evolved. And he sought to apply them by whatever means available to him. But Hauge's call to radical action ultimately failed to motivate many of his "friends" (*venner*) as the Haugeans were prone to call each other. This study will argue that Haugean peasant radicalism dissipated internally, rather than being crushed by external forces. That is, Hauge's radicalism did not fail because of elite antagonism, though he faced much opposition from both church and state; nor did he fail because of ill-conceived plans and ideas, though Hauge often acted with a good deal of naivety and presumption. Rather, Hauge's radicalism dissipated as he observed with great disappointment his "friends" abandoning the ideals that he had taught them.

Nevertheless, legacies of Hans Nielsen Hauge have persisted to this day both in Norway and among Scandinavian Lutherans in North America. We can find remnants of radical religious dissent in various Norwegian communities. For example, in West Norway there are rural and suburban religious groups that have persisted in calling for the

disestablishment of the Lutheran State Church, which is one of the few remaining state churches in the western world where the local priest (*prest*) still functions as a state official.² Disestablishment in both Britain and Scandinavia has been a brainchild of religious dissent.³ It is a call for the removal of state control over the official religious structures, which is an idea often accompanied with a call to greater lay participation in religious ritual and service. Hauge's legacy contributed to such ideas.

Many of Hauge's followers, emigrating to Canada and the United States during the nineteenth century, brought their religious sensibilities with them and found fertile ground for these ideals. Some joined radical and lay Christian movements, such as the Mormons and Disciples of Christ.⁴ Others built churches and established Lutheran Synods. One such synod was the *Hauge Synod* (1876-1917), which took its name from Hans Nielsen Hauge and had the most adherents of the Norwegian Lutherans in North America who later joined the *Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*.⁵ These Norwegian immigrants set up Lutheran churches in conformity with Haugean ideals; they

² Hauge's legacy is claimed by both the left and the right in the Norwegian political and religious arenas. For example, the popular right-wing religious newspaper *Idag*, a recent, and typical, reference to Hauge came on 1 March 2005, where the author appealed to Hauge's legacy in making an argument against abortion in Norway (see their website www.idag.no). Similarly, the former chairman of the Left Party, who is also a leading liberal theologian in Norway, has written of Hauge as a proto-socialist.

³ Philip M. H. Bell, *Disestablishment in Ireland and Wales* (London: S.P.C.K., 1969); Kenneth Leech, *Setting the Church Free: The case for Disestablishment* (Croydon: Jubilee Group, 2001). For a brief discussion on the European wide phenomena, see David A. Hollinger's contribution title "Religious disestablishment in Western Europe: an undervalued step toward 'diversity within unity'" in "Immigrants and Minorities in Liberal Democracies: A Symposium toward 'Diversity within Unity,'" *Responsive community*.13 (Spring 2003) 2: 25-57.

⁴ Some immigrants, after conversion, returned to Norway to start up sectarian movements; see Ingrid Semmingsen, "Haugeans, Rappites, and the Emigration of 1825" in *Journal of the Norwegian-American Historical Association*, translated by C. A. Clausen, 29: 3; Arne Hassing's "Methodism from America to Norway" in *Journal of the Norwegian-American Historical Association* 28: 192; and William Mulder's "Norwegian forerunners among early Mormons" in *Journal of the Norwegian-American Historical Association* 19: 46. These articles are available at <http://www.naha.stolaf.edu/publications>.

⁵ The family tree of Lutheran church organizations in America can be found at the website of Luther Seminar; <http://www.luthersem.edu/archives/elca.asp?m=-1040>

de-emphasized formal worship, stressed personal faith experience, and advocated lay ministry in varying degrees within their congregations.⁶

For Norwegians in both the old and new countries, Hauge's legacy has taken on a myth-like status. Because most of his writings no longer appear in print, few Norwegians have likely read the volumes of books and letters that he produced, which had made him the most prolific Norwegian author of his day.⁷ Nearly all of the Haugean cooperatives and capitalist ventures have long disappeared and, at most, there remain only markers by which to remember him.⁸ Where commercial ventures have survived the two centuries, such as *Grøndahl & Sons Trykkeri*, one of Norway's largest publishing houses, Hauge's legacy has for the most part disappeared into the history books they publish and has little to do with the actual business.

In view of past scholarship, it appears that the image of Hauge can become "all things to all men." Political pundits on both the left and the right in Norway have claimed Hauge as their own. When his story is only partially told, Hauge may just as readily serve as an example of early Norwegian capitalism as a prototype of utopian socialism and communism. For example, religious historians tend to see in him a revivalist impulse toward voluntarism, while political historians often see parallels with the French Saint-Simonian and British Owenite utopians, and social historians note the nationalist character of both his activity and his legacy.

⁶ I provide briefly the case of Parkland Lutheran Church in Alberta in my conclusion.

⁷ Although this claim has been often been made about Hauge, we should recognize that Norway, being a vassal state of Denmark, did not have a large literary culture during this period. Norwegian literary tradition would flower later in the nineteenth century, often in places where Haugians had a strong presence, such as in Skien, the home of Henrik Ibsen.

⁸ Such as at Strusshavn, Askøy, outside of Bergen, which housed one of Hauge's clearing houses and boat docks, as well as a church the Haugeans had purchased. Today all that remains is a small memorial stone to his effort to employ the local poor of the island.

It is not my aim to revive or challenge Hauge's varying legacies in this study. The myriad of hagiographical books and writings have made such an effort superfluous. However, my aim is to use Hauge in an attempt to understand why peasant culture in the nineteenth century lacked the radical impetus that can be found elsewhere in European culture during the same period. If Hauge was radical, at least during the period of 1796 to 1814, why did his radicalism not endure into the mid-nineteenth century along with other reform and revolutionary movements? I provide a micro history to address this question, which I cannot answer for other peasant movements with their own peculiar circumstances. My argument is that Haugean peasant radicalism dissipated internally, rather than being crushed by external forces, that is to say, Haugeans abandoned their radicalism early in their evolution as a fellowship of Christians.

At first glance, the idea of peasant radicalism in the nineteenth century may appear to be an oxymoron. We may be less surprised to find evidence of it in the sixteenth or seventeenth centuries than in the nineteenth century. After all, it was during the 1848 Revolution that French peasants aligned themselves politically with reactionary and conservative forces. Together they elected a government that they hoped would end the indolent Paris National Workshops and prevent Louis Blanc's radical socialists from making further social and political innovations at the expense of rural taxpayers. The result was the June Days Revolution of 1848, with the peasants on the reactionary side. Even the notorious German Chancellor, Otto von Bismarck, was confident that peasant conservatism would be an ally to stem the advance of liberalism and socialism in Germany after unification in 1871. Bismarck understood the impact that universal male suffrage would have by making the peasantry an ally of the state. Furthermore, the

stereotypical image of the religious peasant in the nineteenth century is more likely to see peasants on pilgrimages to Lourdes or Marpingen and engaged in a seemingly regressive search for superstitious visions and healings, than to find peasants engaged in progressive and innovative reforms within their social environment. Yet, some were radical; Hauge, at least for a time, was one such radical.

Historians and scholars have variously understood the possible radical potential of the European peasantry. Some have seen little or no potential at all, at least not while in the static routines of peasant life. Karl Marx, for example, decried the peasant's refusal to join the proletarian effort in the 1848 Revolution.⁹ Speaking of the French peasants in 1848, he bemoaned that the peasants were too independent, "Their mode of production isolates them from one another instead of bringing them into mutual intercourse."¹⁰ Marx constructed an image of the pre-modern - or even anti-modern - "conservative peasant" who stood in the way of progress with their non-communal attitudes toward property.¹¹

Two noted historians that have further developed Marx' image of the independent peasant are British historian E. P. Thompson and French historian Eugen Weber. Thompson sees the peasant culture in eighteenth and early nineteenth century England as not having yet constructed a class identity, and thus incapable of possessing a significant revolutionary character.¹² Weber similarly argues that the French peasantry lacked a common identity, but that the French state sought to construct a national identity for the French peasants throughout the nineteenth century by bringing modernity to their

⁹ Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels: Collected Worlds*, vol. 2 1851-53 (New York: International Publishers, 1979), 184-197.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ "Each individual peasant family is almost self-sufficient; it itself directly produces the major part of its consumption and thus acquires its means of life more through exchange with nature than in intercourse with society," Ibid.

¹² E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (New York, Vintage Books, 1963), 8.

doorstep in the forms of national infrastructures (i.e., transportation, schools, the railways, and the army).¹³ In each of these perspectives, the peasantry is portrayed as an outmoded economic or political category that must necessarily experience a dramatic change with the arrival of modernity.

In recent years, scholars have provided more nuanced depictions of peasant political identities and actions, arguing that what constitutes “peasant” social and political cultures may include diverse expressions from serfdom to independent farmers. Peter Burke and Robert Muchembled argue that peasant culture evolved out of opposition to particular elite literate cultures.¹⁴ Although their studies allow for limited variations, they fail to consider peasant cultures that had gained a degree of literacy, as was the case in parts of Northern Europe during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. A more nuanced perspective comes from historians Lynn Hunt and Roger Chartier, who have sought out “the history of cultural practices” in order to identify “differences in the appropriation or uses of cultural forms.”¹⁵ Hunt and Chartier are concerned with identifying the development and expression of cultural forms or practices as they engage with the contemporary political, social, and economic context. According to their model, as the context varies, so will the particular social and political expressions.

Scholars who analyze peasant cultures that possess basic tools to engage with their ideological world – i.e., reading and writing - should not be surprised to discover both regressive and progressive forms and practices emerging in these peasant cultures,

¹³ Eugen Weber’s classic *Peasants into Frenchmen: Modernization of Rural France, 1870-1914* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1976).

¹⁴ Peter Burke, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe* (New York: New York University Press, 1978) and Robert Muchembled, *Popular Culture and Elite Culture* (Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University Press, 1985).

¹⁵ See Roger Chartier’s article, “Texts, Printing, Readings,” and Lynn Hunt’s article, “History, Culture, and Text” in Lynn Hunt, ed., *The New Cultural History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 170, 12.

often in a dialectic tension. But even before Hunt, Chartier, Weber, and Thompson provided their assessment of peasant culture, Eric Hobsbawm was contemplating the radical potential and dynamic of some religious movements. He outlined his nascent ideas in *Primitive Rebels: Studies in Archaic Forms of Social Movement in the 19th and 20th Centuries* (1959). In this work, he argues that “pre-political people who have not yet found, or only begun to find, a specific language in which to express their aspirations about the world” contain kernels of modernity, even if they fail to enter completely into the modern age.¹⁶ Although his language and historical trajectory is distinctly Marxist and derogatory in tone, Hobsbawm has recognized the radical potential of some religious groups (e.g., the Italian Lazzaretti, the Sicilian Fasci and the peasant religious communists, as well as some British labor sects). All religious radicals in Hobsbawm’s study fail to enter the modern age because they will not exchange their religious consciousness for a political consciousness. He argued that such an exchange is necessary to engage in true revolutionary action.

A handful of scholars have been willing to follow Hobsbawm by drawing similar conclusions about the relationship between radical religion and modernity. For example, Hugh McLeod has recently argued that the rise of radical religious sects since the eighteenth century has been an impetus to pluralism and, thereby, also to secularization in modern society. He states that secularization implies “intense religious competition, whether between rival branches of Christianity or between religious and secular views of the world.”¹⁷ McLeod identifies a paradox in the secularization theory: increased

¹⁶ Eric J. Hobsbawm, *Primitive Rebels: Studies in Archaic Forms of Social Movement in the 19th and 20th Centuries* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1959), 2.

¹⁷ McLeod’s bias is apparent here as he only considers contestation within Christianity or with secular forms. Given his periodization, he neglects the Jewish religion. See Hugh McLeod, *Secularisation in*

religious expression has been a central factor in the secularization of the western world by promoting - consciously or unconsciously - a pluralistic mindset. According to this model, secularization does not necessarily mean less religion in society. Rather, in a secular society, religion becomes more diffuse, it no longer is able to exercise hegemony over society, and it is less likely to be located at the center of the political culture.

Instead of there being *less* religion in a secularizing society, an *increase* in contesting forms of religion may take place. McLeod's perspective may help historians to account for religious revivalism in both Europe and North America during the nineteenth century without negating the secularizing tendencies of the culture, and at the same time permit the historian to integrate revivalism into a secularization narrative in a more nuanced manner.

Returning to the topic of this study, peasant revivalism in the early nineteenth century was part of the religious diffusion that took place in Western society. Swedish historian, Hanne Sanders, has argued that peasant revivalism in south-central Sweden and rural Denmark during the early part of the nineteenth century fostered the trend toward a pluralistic culture in these societies.¹⁸ Radical religious peasants advocated greater independence and freedom of choice in an individual's religious commitments. Although Scandinavian peasants would most likely not have imagined a community without religion, their demand for freedom to choose where to worship and who should lead them, also implied the right to choose no church and no priest (i.e., forms of atheism and

Western Europe, 1848-1914 (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), 28. He draws his ideas from Jeffrey Cox, "Religion and Imperial Power in Nineteenth-Century Britain," in Richard Helmstadter (ed.) *Freedom and Religion in the Nineteenth Century* (Stanford, 1997), 339-42; and from Thomas Kselman, though McLeod does not cite which text of Kselman he uses to form his theory.

¹⁸ Hanne Sanders, *Bondevækkelse og Sekularisering: En Protestantisk Folkelig Kultur i Danmark og Sverige, 1820-1850* (Stockholm: Stockholm Universitet, 1995).

agnosticism). Sanders portrays secularization and freedom of religion in these communities as partners and products of the legacy of radical peasant religion. It is not by accident that she chose as the front cover to her book *Peasant Revivalism and Secularization* (1995) an artistic rendition of a Haugean peasant revivalist home meeting, even though she does not address the Norwegian situation in her study.¹⁹ The legacy of Hans Nielsen Hauge on modern scholarship is evident in Sander's work, even if she does not explicate further her choice of imagery.

I have structured this study to show that Hauge's radicalism aimed at more than a mere demand for freedom of religious choice. It is likely that Hauge did contribute to the increased demand for voluntary religious expression in Norway, but this study will attempt to identify the extent and limits of Hauge's radicalism, rather than his legacy. I hope to address the question of Hauge's legacy in a future study. Following this introduction, in which I have argued for both the historical and historiographical relevance of Hauge, I will provide a chronological narrative of Hauge's life from birth until death. Historians and hagiographers have all too often focused on specific periods in Hauge's life, but my argument requires an understanding of how Hauge came to interpret his life, especially in the latter years.²⁰ Since Hauge is almost unknown today outside of narrow national and religious circles, it is necessary to provide a detailed account of his life. Woven into the narrative, however, I have also identified and

¹⁹ The image is titled "Haugianerne" (translated "The Haugeans"), and was painted by Adolph Tideman in 1852. The image centers on a young lay preacher standing on a chair in the peasant household, surrounded by a variety of peasants. The image is taken from Francis Sejerstedt, *Norges Historie, Bd. 10 Den Vanskelige Frihet 1814-1851* (Translated, "Norwegian History: The Difficult freedom") (Oslo, 1978), 257.

²⁰ I have not been able to find a single biography or historical analyses that provide a thorough treatment of the whole of Hauge's life. Particularly absent in most biographies is the decade following his release from prison till his death, 1814 to 1824. Historians are more likely to treat his legacy with greater depth than this final decade of his life. I believe that the failure to understand this decade, in which many of his reflections were written and published, is to weaken the interpretation of his life.

analyzed particular expressions of Haugean radicalism. The broad argument here is simply that he was sufficiently radical in both his thinking and his actions to be imprisoned for nearly a decade, 1804-1814, while the Danish government was otherwise occupied with larger continental issues arising out of the Napoleonic wars. The final chapter will explain why Hauge's radicalism failed; that is, why Hauge lost his political and economic radicalism. Although models for the evolution of religious sects apply to this last section (i.e., Max Weber and Ernst Troeltsch sociological categories), I have opted instead to let Hauge speak for himself to the question of failed radicalism by analyzing and giving a critical measure of credence to Hauge's own evaluation of what happened to him and his "friends."²¹

As to the primary sources on Hauge, they are both plentiful but at times trying. An eight-volume set of *Hans Nielsen Hauge's Works* (*Hans Nielsen Hauges Skrifter*, 1947-54), is an unusual source for those who are interested in peasant intellectual and religious culture at the turn of the nineteenth century. As far as I know, it is exceptional to find such a large volume of writings from a single peasant during this period. Peasants who authored and published extensively rarely remained peasants for long; but, with the possible exception of four years (1800 to 1804), Hauge remained a peasant throughout his life.²² Furthermore, Hauge's choice of genre was atypical for peasant authors during this period; there are no romantic poems or fairy tales in these writings. Instead, the collection is for the most part an expression of Hauge's religious, economic and ethical

²¹ The main reason I do not explore Hauge's legacy further is a lack of space and needed resources.

²² During this four year period in which Hauge refers to himself as a "Businessman in Bergen," but both his social connections and those who observed him during this period continued to identify him as a peasant. One might argue that Hauge sought to emancipate his social status, but simply failed. Although this idea is interesting, it is ultimately not useful to engage in this kind of speculation.

ideas. He wrote songs, but these were content-driven. He wrote letters, but these were often pastoral and affirming toward those who were interested in his ideas.

On the other hand, Hauge's writings also contain obstacles. His language was a blend of East-Norwegian and Swedish rural idioms expressed in *Riksmål*, the official language of the Danish empire. His formal peasant education was limited to seven years, but in his biographical sketches he claims to have been an avid reader since early childhood. This may account not only for his verbosity, but also for the awkward manner of expression, at least for the contemporary mind to comprehend. His long and complex sentences are characteristically Germanic. Nevertheless, his metaphors are earthy, and he writes with a refreshing frankness reflective of his extemporaneous manner of speaking.

Secondary sources are bountiful, but most merely repeat old information that indulges the religious sensibilities of the author and the intended audience. Jacob B. Bull's 1919 novel, *Hans Nielsen Hauge*, appears to be the most frequently cited biographical sketch, even in scholarly studies.²³ But it is difficult for the reader to discern when Bull is a good historian and when he is an imaginative and creative author. Hauge provided few autobiographical narratives for historians to dissect, making it difficult to piece together the details of his life.

Nevertheless, there are three older monographs that deserve mention. The first is by Dagfinn Breistein, titled *Hans Nielsen Hauge: Businessman in Bergen* (1955).²⁴ Breistein provides a detailed look at Haugean economics; by identifying the various cooperatives, farms and industries that Hauge inspired and helped start. The study appears to be a belated defense of the accusations of financial mismanagement that were

²³ Jacob B. Bull, *Hans Nielsen Hauge* (Copenhagen: G. E. C. Gads Forlag, 1919).

²⁴ Dagfinn Breistein, *Hans Nielsen Hauge: Kjøbmand i Bergen* (Bergen: John Griegs Forlag, 1955).

the stated grounds for Hauge's arrest in 1804, but Breistein is able to integrate Hauge's ideological and social world to provide a complex perspective of the movement that arose around Hauge. A second monograph was written in English by historian Magnus Nodtvedt, titled *Rebirth of Norway's Peasantry* (1965).²⁵ Nodtvedt may be guilty of succumbing to the hagiographical depictions of Hauge, but his study provides a fascinating glimpse at the peasant culture both preceding and contemporary with Hauge. He argues that Hauge's birth order as the fifth son, and therefore not heir to the farm, along with the religious climate of Hauge's home community, is crucial to understanding the reason for Hauge's ambitious blend of religious and economic renewal. The third monograph worthy of mention is Sverre Norborg, *Hans Nielsen Hauge: Biografi, 1771-1804* (1966).²⁶ Like Nodtvedt, Norborg gives considerable attention to Hauge's community and family, and then moves to characterize the network of "friends" that Hauge gathered around himself as a kind of extended family. While Hauge is not quite a socialist in Norborg's depiction, he appears as a kind of utopian communitarian, similar to the later British utopian, Robert Owen. Not one of these monographs is complete in itself, but together they do provide important information and perspectives on Hauge's life, and reflect the best scholarly work to date.²⁷

My project addresses Hobsbawm's question in *Primitive Rebels* (1959); what was the radical potential of peasant ideas and activity and why did their radicalism not lead to

²⁵ Magnus Nodtvedt, *Rebirth of Norway's Peasantry* (Tacoma: Pacific Lutheran University Press, 1965).

²⁶ Sverre Nordborg, *Hans Nielsen Hauge: Biografi, 1771-1804* (Oslo: J. W. Cappelens Forlag, 1966).

²⁷ A more recent celebrated biography of Hauge is by a journalist, Dag Kullerud, *Hans Nielsen Hauge: Mannen som vekket Norge* (translated, "HNH: The man who awakened Norway") (Aschehoug: Forum, 1996). Kullerud is more aware of the hagiographical pitfalls in studying his subject, but in the end his monograph tells little new about Hauge that we cannot also find in the older works. Kullerud claims that there are over 2000 "separate" biographies of Hauge. While I have not been able to verify this claim, and it may be exaggerated, it does witness to the industry that particularly religious authors have created around Hauge's legacy.

revolution? To the first question, there can be little doubt that Hauge was an innovative thinker who also sought radical forms of change. However, the second question is more difficult to answer. I argue that, although a number of factors came to bear on Hauge's failed radicalism, Hauge's writings indicate that it was his disappointment with his "friends" that dissipated his radicalism and caused the activism of his last decade to be but a shadow of the first eight years of his religious and economic activity. The Haugean movement, which is still around today, became intensely conservative in character, shedding its earlier radicalism. Although a marked lay religious piety persists to characterize this group today, as does a firm commitment to commercial ventures, none of the radical social and religious agenda appears to remain.

Chapter One:

The Revolutionary and Post-revolutionary Context

Hannah Arendt once wrote, “the most radical revolutionary will become a conservative the day after the revolution.”¹ Her claim suggests that the gulf between radical and conservative impulses, as experienced by both individuals and societies, is not all that wide. In a sense, much of Hans Nielsen Hauge’s life (1771-1824) took place “the day after the revolution.” The broader European context, as well as the local context, enables us to apprehend why Hauge’s early radicalism was gradually tempered by reactionary impulses. Although he was by no means a revolutionary, I will situate the radical impulse of his early life in context of the revolutionary age in which he emerged in Norwegian society. The conservative impulses that emerged later in his life remarkably coincided with the period of restoration following the Congress of Vienna (1814-1815) when Austria’s foreign minister, Clemens von Metternich (1773-1859), led the effort to reestablish elite powers in Europe. I do not claim that Hauge’s life was a microcosm of the European experience in the post-revolutionary era, but his story legitimately belongs within the broader continental experience of his time. Hauge was a European radical who turned reactionary in a period that was making a similar shift.

¹ Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution* (New York: Viking Press, 1963).

Hannah Arendt's statement, placed in the context of her analysis of radical socio-political processes in Europe since the French Revolution, implies that scholars of micro-history must be situated within macro-historical events in order to understand how change over time occurred. This is especially relevant when seeking to understand Hauge's life. Not even the Norwegians, isolated in the northern regions of Europe, could ignore the impact of the French Revolution (1789-1793), the subsequent "Reign of Terror" (1793-1794), and the Napoleonic wars and imperial rule (1796-1815).

Hauge's life was located in the ripple effects of the tumultuous events on the Continent. His biographers all too often overlook this crucial point when describing his eight years of feverish religious and economic activity, and his subsequent imprisonment.² For example, the Napoleonic wars and the effort to enforce the Continental System on the rest of Europe was a critical backdrop to the period of Hauge's isolation in prison from 1804 to 1814.³ The embargo against England had an immense economic, political, and social impact on the Danish kingdom, to which Norway belonged. Both France and England pressured the Danish government to choose sides in the conflict. The Danes chose to support Napoleon and the British responded by bombarding the capital city, Copenhagen, on April 2 1807. The devastation was severe not only for the city, but also for the whole kingdom, as the British captured the Danish

² In all secondary sources used for this project, the broad European context remains either outside the narrative or only vaguely in the background. Not even Dagfinn Breistein's otherwise thorough economic and ideological survey of Hauge, *Hans Nielsen Hauge: Kjøbmand i Bergen* (1955) gives a satisfying discussion of the economic wrangling between France and England that was so essential to understanding how the Haugean commercial enterprises evolved along side its ideology.

³ The Continental System was Napoleon's strategy to push Britain out of the European continent disempowering Britain for an eventual military confrontation. The plan was to blockade all economic activity between Britain and the rest of Europe, thereby paralyzing British commerce and economically strengthening France. The Berlin Decrees of 1806 and Milan Decrees of 1807 declared the Continental System in force, and neutral and allied European states were not to trade with Britain. The impact was enormous; British manufacturing suffered, employment became rampant, which led to the outbreak of the Luddite rebellion in 1811-12.

fleet and brought it to England. Thereafter, France and Britain both tried to control the flow of goods across the North Sea, and Denmark was too weak to prevent the effects of these embargos. Moreover, Sweden supported Britain in the conflict with France, cutting Norway off on the eastern side and thereby effectively isolating the Norwegian economy from Denmark and the rest of Europe.⁴ This brought considerable hardship to the Norwegian population, and distracted officials from resolving Hauge's case for nearly a decade. The long-term consequence for the Danish support of France was the loss of Norway and Iceland to Sweden in 1814, as a reward for Swedish loyalty to Britain in the war. When the government released Hauge from his incarceration that same year, he had a new king and government, and a homeland in economic ruin.

The local contexts of Hauge's life meshed with the broader Continental context, fostering a dynamic and fluid social world, from which Hauge ultimately did not stray in his religious and economic activities prior to his incarceration. His family farmed at Tune in Smålene district, located southeast of Kristiania, or present day Oslo, along the eastern border of Sweden. This region served as a geographical and cultural bridge between Norway and Sweden, and was a place suited to foster radical ideas. Bands of soldiers periodically moved through the district leaving and returning to their place of duty. Pietist preachers of a radical Moravian variety also periodically arrived in Smålene to plead with the locals to embrace their version of a spiritual rebirth.⁵ Both soldiers and preachers were sources of news and new ideas from the outside world.

Already in the mid-eighteenth century, these outside influences had threatened the local authorities' control over the peasantry. In order to reduce the proliferation of

⁴ Movement eastward to Sweden was also prevented, as Sweden supported England in the conflict.

⁵ For an excellent description of the religious and political environment of Smålene district, see Magnus Nodtvedt's *Rebirth of Norway's Peasantry*.

uncontrolled ideas, the government preferred local peasants to serve their military duty in their home region, for the soldiers would be only slightly more informed than farmers and rural tradesmen of outside events. In order to prevent the Moravian preachers from disrupting the unity and uniformity of the Danish Lutheran Church and the priestly authority as the primary government representative in the local community, the government enacted the Conventicle Act of 1741.⁶ This law sought to prevent peasants from gathering for religious purposes without official approval from the parish minister, thereby maintaining the state church's spiritual hegemony over the population. The Danish government also enacted a law against vagrancy in 1754 aimed at preventing uncontrolled movement between peasant communities. Although efforts to restrict physical and ideological movement between communities and spontaneous assemblies within communities, Smålene district still experienced periodic contact with the outside world and new ideas due to its location near the tumultuous eastern border of Sweden.

It is significant then, that coinciding with this opening through Sweden to the wider world was a growing literacy among the Norwegian peasantry that was primarily religious in character.⁷ Luther's stress on *Sola Scriptura* ("Scripture alone") had led early Pietists in Northern Europe to advocate a universal education. By the mid-eighteenth century, the Danish government introduced seven years of compulsory schooling for peasant children. These reforms won gradual approval from the peasants as they experienced the benefits of literacy, but these benefits were packaged in the religion of the kingdom. That is, the content of this education was by no means classical, rather it promoted basic reading of religious writings: the Bible, religious psalms and songs,

⁶ Nodtvedt, 74.

⁷ This paragraph is a summary of Magnus Nodtvedt's description of Norwegian peasant culture during the eighteenth century. See Nodtvedt, *Rebirth of Norway's Peasantry*, 62-79.

Luther's small Catechism, and devotional literature by the early Pietist authors.⁸ After completing their basic education, peasant children entered a year of Lutheran confirmation, which was the capstone to their learning. Literacy in Hauge's time, was thereby fused with the religious language and imagery of Lutheranism.

Literacy both enhanced and challenged the pre-existing oral culture, but it also helped foster radical ideas in the population. Continental enlightenment and romantic ideas entered peasant society via returning soldiers, traveling merchants and artisans, and clergymen educated on the continent. These ideas tended to arrive on the peasant level in a more traditional oral manner, such as through a Sunday sermon or a local gathering around a returning peasant soldier. With the introduction of literacy, oral and written forms of communication coexisted in the peasant community. They were not necessarily competing forms, but given the Lutheran priority on Biblicism and the written word, it is likely that ideas orally communicated were less authoritative than ideas proof-texted by Scripture. Radical continental ideas transmitted orally through soldiers and traveling tradesmen would not easily penetrate the rural Norwegian culture, unless these ideas merged with the language and imagery already present, formed by the pervading religious education. Peasant and religious values therefore tended to merge in this semi-literate culture so that peasants expressed their concerns in a language mixed with the earthy tones of the natural environment and spiritual imagery familiar to them.

Prior to Hauge, there were two unsuccessful peasant uprisings in Norway that lacked the necessary leadership and language that characterized Hauge's later religious movement. Both uprisings also illustrate the delicate dance with the authorities that

⁸ Eric Pontipaddon, Johann Arndt, Phillip J. Spener, August H. Francke, and the Catholic mystic, Johan Tauler.

would be required of ambitious peasant radicals. In 1765, peasants spontaneously created an extensive uprising, which historians have called “The War of the Striles” (*Strilekrigen*).⁹ Peasants had traveled to Bergen in order to protest a heavy tax burden imposed by the Danish government. When protesters gathered at the chief diocesan magistrate’s office, soldiers drove them away from the city. This incident grew to mythical proportion as the peasants recounted their bitter experience in their home communities. The next time the government announced a tax collection, thousands of peasants showed up in Bergen to protest and this time they attacked the magistrate and his bailiff. Soldiers were called to intervene, but they refused to do so, being peasants themselves and sympathetic to the cause. To placate the protesters, the authorities then returned a sum of 9000 riksdollars along with a promise that the Danish government would collect no further taxes until they conducted an investigation into peasant grievances. With that, the peasants left the city of their own volition.

The Danish government sent an investigating team along with 350 hired troops to clear up the matter. They rounded up a few peasants whom they declared guilty of leading a rebellion against the government. These peasants were given the death penalty, which the king commuted to a life sentence, in keeping with the image of royal benevolence from a king to his peasants. The rest of the peasants were compelled to pay back the 9000 riksdollars they had been given.

This rebellion had considerable relevance to Hauge’s peasant movement a generation later. There is no record in the government reports identifying a specific peasant leader in the “War of the Striles,” suggesting the absence of a unifying leadership for peasant grievances. However, as this uprising inspired local rebellions against tax

⁹ A *stril* is a rural peasant, usually identified by his or her peculiar dress and accent.

payments in communities along the west coast of Norway, it appears that there were pre-existing peasant networks through which news of events and grievances rapidly flowed.¹⁰ Furthermore, the Danish government issued an ordinance after the uprising that set the tone for the kind of obstacles Hauge and his followers would later encounter. This ordinance declared that anyone who called for a gathering of peasants would face either life imprisonment or the death penalty. The ordinance remained in effect until 1814, the year of Hauge's release from prison. Moreover, ongoing complaints from Norwegian peasants led the Danish government to send trained officials into communities to keep a close watch over peasant stirrings and inform the government about conditions that might lead to further unrest.¹¹

Another uprising, which preceded Hauge by only a few years, illustrates the brutality and fear with which the Danish government met radical peasant action, and further demonstrates the fragile context in which Hauge's radical ideas emerged. In 1786, a peasant revolt began to smolder in south-central Norway, this time led by Christian Lofthus, a wealthy peasant from Nedenes.¹² Believing that peasants could exercise an ancient right to petition the king, Lofthus went to Copenhagen to bring a complaint against the royal bailiff in his home district. He delivered the complaint to the Danish Crown Prince, Frederik, and then returned home under the impression that the king had asked him to gather further evidence for his petition. When Lofthus called peasants together to collect signatures for another royal petition, the local bailiff attempted to arrest him in accordance with the 1765 ordinance from "The War of Striles."

¹⁰ I have summarized the conflict as found in Nodtvedt, 56-58, and H. Arnold Barton, *Scandinavia in Revolutionary Era, 1760-1815* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), 48-50.

¹¹ Nodtvedt, 56-58

¹² Barton, 149-154.

Lofthus escaped to Sweden, where he gathered an armed following of over 800 peasants. The Danish government sent an investigating commission and tried to address the peasant grievances while also laying plans to arrest Lofthus.¹³ Believing himself to be under the protection of the king, Lofthus returned to Norway to address the commission, and was immediately arrested by the bailiff. Lofthus' peasant friends demanded his immediate release and threatened with open rebellion. But the Danish government was afraid that Lofthus might be in perfidious league with the Swedish government, and imprisoned him in Kristiania until he could stand trial. During the trial, the Danes sent soldiers and a Danish man-of-war vessel to quash any possible violent uprising from the peasantry.

The court convicted Lofthus in 1792, sentencing him to life imprisonment at hard labor. He died in 1797, sick and imprisoned, and two years later the Danish Supreme Court upheld the sentence against him as a warning to the Norwegian peasants. The peasants received the message, and there was no further widespread rebellion.¹⁴ It appears then that the Norwegian peasantry was ripe for radical action, but that they needed the right leadership from their own ranks and the right language to express their concerns.

Whether or not radical ideology was a significant factor in these peasant uprisings will remain a unknown until historians uncover further evidence. Nevertheless, the above two examples show that radicalism could potentially receive a positive response from large segments of the peasant population. Both Bergen in West Norway and Nedenes in south-central Norway, however, were too isolated to sustain a widespread uprising. A

¹³ One significant grievance relevant to the later Haugian cooperative and commercial ventures was the Danish grain monopoly in Norway. For a number of years after 1792, the Danish government sought to relax restrictions upon rural trade, which Hauge benefited from in the early nineteenth century; see Barton, 153.

¹⁴ Nodtvedt, p. 58-61

wider network needed to be cast. Furthermore, it was apparent that peasant radicalism could not depend on ancient rights to sustain their resistance to the Danish government, whose aim was to maintain absolute power over the peasantry.

In 1796 and in the wake of the French Revolution, Hauge emerged in the Norwegian peasant society as a religious innovator who formulated a radical religious ideology that served to stimulate and motivate a social networking among Norwegian peasants that openly resisted the hegemony of elite powers in Norway. But his story is one of a complex dialectic between radical and conservative impulses.

Chapter Two:

A Peasant Awakes, 1771-1796

Except for a short stint in Kristiania, Hauge remained in his rural community, Tune, from his birth on April 3 1771, until he turned twenty-five in 1796. Most of what we know about his early years comes from his later recollections in books and recorded sermons, but these memories have didactic purposes that make it difficult for the historian to recreate an accurate narrative. Nevertheless, Hauge's later writings do suggest that Smålene district offered a geographical, political, and religious climate that fostered a religious sensibility in the young peasant. He cultivated and expressed his religious affections and ideas through imaginative rural language and pietistic moral behavior. The metaphorical language through which he was later to communicate to the wider Norwegian peasant society came from the earthy existence of his family's farm.

Hans, the son of Niels, from the hill farm (i.e., Hans Nielson Hauge), had a stable upbringing, yet with no clear prospects for future success. He was the fifth son of Niels Mikkelson, a newly landed peasant and respected member in the Tune community. As a child, Hauge was considered odd, serious, and quite possibly depressed. But it was perhaps because of this demeanor that he became a favorite of the State Church parish minister, Pastor Gerhard Seeberg, a radical Moravian Pietist who took note of Hans' keen biblical knowledge and interest in religious matters. When Hauge turned thirteen, he completed both his seventh and final year of school and entered his confirmation with Pastor Seeberg. His first job was working for his father as a farmhand. Tune community

may have been a convenient and supportive environment, but it did not offer him a future as the farm was too small to be divided between Niels' sons.¹

The work on the farm was pleasant enough, though at times hazardous and disappointing. Three times Hauge nearly drowned in the local river, experiences to which he would later attribute spiritual meaning. He engaged in some small trade of rural products, but soon discovered how hopeless it was to make a serious profit from the urban elite. He liked working with his hands, particularly in building furniture, but rarely felt appreciated by those who would commission his work.² When he tried to work in the urban center, Kristiana, his meager existence, together with a deep sense of dislocation in the unfamiliar city environment, disrupted his religious sensibilities, and he returned to Tune. For a while Hauge served as deputy to his older brother Ole, the local sheriff, which may have provided him with a greater appreciation for the ongoing friction between the two local representatives of Danish authority, the sheriff (*lensmann*) and the priest (*prest*).³

Tune community was, therefore, a frustrating and limiting place for Hauge. As mentioned, his uncertain position as a non-heir to the family farm was not likely to

¹ See Nodtvedt on the issue of peasant land inheritance, 3-9.

² Jakob B. Bull's biographical novel of Hauge (*Hans Nielsen Hauge*, Copenhagen: G.E.C. Gads Forlag, 1919) is a collection of Hauge's personal reflections that were sprinkled throughout his writings. Bull organized these into a narrative that is still respected among historians of the lay preachers movement, though the work has a definite hagiographical purpose.

³ The evolution of the Sheriff (*lensmann*) system is of considerable importance to understanding how Hauge's activities aggravated the division of authority in many of the peasant communities. Although the local pastors and bishops called on the sheriffs to suppress the lay preachers, it is evident that some of these lawmen did so reluctantly and often released the preachers shortly after questioning them. In a few communities the sheriffs refused to cooperate with the local pastor and some even went as far as joining the movement. The Danish government stopped appointing outsiders to this local position of authority, as peasants resented outsiders and claimed a long tradition of administering their own law. It would appear that the government appointed respected peasants from within the community. Hauge's oldest brother received this appointment, and for a period Hauge served as a deputy. That the two sons were appointed to these positions suggests that Niels Mikkelsen and his family were well regarded in their community. It is not surprising that peasant sheriffs would at times side with the peasants against the other competing local authority, the parish minister, who was nearly always an outsider; Nodtvedt, 20, 29.

change, but Hauge was also caught in the religious wrangling of his community. The spiritual indifference he noted in his peers irritated his religious inclinations. But his spiritual mentor, Pastor Seeberg, offered only impractical mysticism, which seemed too removed from the daily life of a peasant. Furthermore, Seeberg had trouble of his own; his Moravianism had driven him from the Church, which reduced his status in the community to that of a sectarian leader. The remote possibility that Hauge might gain further education and one day become part of the Lutheran clergy was severed when Seeberg lost his position in the state church. Therefore, both the economic and religious climate of his home in Tune represented uncertainty and insecurity for Hauge .

Nevertheless, the conflict with Pastor Seeberg brought on a crisis that in the end offered Hauge an avenue for self-expression. By 1796, the young peasant had gained a reputation as a pious figure through his visits to local farms, where he conducted informal religious devotionals (*andakt*) with those willing to listen to him. These visits won him both friends and enemies. Some of the neighbors accused him of being a lackey of the ousted Pastor Seeberg, whose mystical sect disrupted and irritated the peasant community. Hauge's close association with Seeberg had brought his religious identity into question and he needed to defend himself by publicly distancing himself from his former mentor. He needed to assert his independence in matters of religion. At first, he tried to confront Seeberg, but was turned away at the doorstep under the pretext that there was a raging smallpox epidemic in the region and the pastor feared exposure. Hauge then addressed a letter to Seeberg, outlining his concerns. But there was no reply and there would be no face-to-face confrontation between the disciple and his mentor. Something

more dramatic would be necessary if Hauge was to make a clear and visible break with the radical Moravian pastor.

But Hauge had not been successful in ingratiating himself to the new parish minister, Stevelin Urdal. According to his later recollection, he was once holding a devotional gathering at the Grålum farm, near Tune, when Pastor Urdal and Sheriff Johannes Radich showed up and forbade him to carry on the meeting because it violated the Conventicle Act. Hauge claimed that peasant farmers in attendance became agitated at the pastor, and when the pastor struck Hauge and threatened him with capital punishment, the peasants objected loudly.⁴ It seems that nothing more came of the incident, but whatever may have occurred, Hauge appears to have felt caught in the changing religious landscape of his home community. His negative relationship with both Seeberg or Urdal placed him in a vulnerable position, but rather than give up his religious enthusiasm and affections, Hauge began to imagine an opportunity for himself.

Compelled to clarify his relationship with his former pastor and with the new religious leadership in his community, Hauge launched a career as a religious revivalist and peasant author of religious tracts in the late spring of 1796. He was twenty-five years old when he began his search for a religious space in the midst of the laxity he believed to characterize his community, the indifference to religious matters of the state church minister, and the sectarianism of his mentor, Pastor Seeberg. These contrary poles represented an internal dialectic between radical and reactionary impulses that characterize Hauge's first eight years of activity. These impulses shaped Hauge's development into the leader of Norway's first countrywide social movement among

⁴ Nodtvedt cites A. Chr. Bang, *Til Minde Om Hans Nielsen Hauge (1796-1896)*, *Et Jubilæumskriftdt*, 69-9; Nodtvedt, 221-3.

peasants, which found expression not only in religion, but also in the economic and social-political life of the Norway.

Chapter Three:

The Itinerant Preacher, 1796-1800

When Hauge launched a career as a revivalist preacher and author of religious literature in 1796, he did so in a manner consistent with the culture in which he was rooted. But the ideology that he formed was laced with a prophetic radicalism that took aim at religious - and eventually economic - structures in Norway. Many among the Norwegian peasantry recognized a charismatic aura about him and found Hauge's message attractive and relevant to their concerns, as he mixed religious language with their own earthy language. He succeeded in these years because he was able to articulate his ideas in language the peasantry recognized and shared, and he became their first "folk" leader. However, both radical and reactionary impulses characterized his ideology during his first four years as a traveling lay preacher.

Hauge's prophetic role began with his trip to Kristiania in 1796 to print his first book, *The World's Folly*. Subsequently, he traveled around the Norwegian countryside until 1800, when he settled in Bergen. During these four years of travel, Hauge sold his books and tracts to gathered peasants in rural homes, where he preached extemporaneous sermons for religious edification. His preaching circuit expanded outward from Tune to include all but North Norway, and he used his travels to cultivate social networks that would later be essential to his economic activity.

Hauge's decision to travel around the countryside was not in itself a radical act. In the early-modern north-European culture, young artisans from the lower classes

frequently launched their independent careers through travel. Hauge's biographers seem to have missed this tradition when they characterize Hauge's sudden change in 1796 as an exceptional step for a peasant to take. Some see Hauge's transformation from peasant to preacher as either heroically bold or foolishly brash.¹ Others see it as the action of either a sincere religious visionary or a haughtily ambitious young man.² Such characterizations are misguided, because they succumb either to excessive veneration or moral judgment; moreover, they miss the larger context. According to Robert Duplessis in *Transition to Capitalism* (1997), tradesmen in the early modern period often launched a professional career by traveling broadly with their trade to extend their knowledge and to find a location to work.³ This process could take several years, but eventually the artisan would settle and then start a business, and also usually a family, in a suitable location for his craft.

Since Hauge lacked the required theological training, yet felt a profound religious calling, he simply followed a customary pattern to become an artisan. For example, Hauge's early years compare to the artisan, Agricol Perdiguier (1805-1875), a journeyman carpenter in France. Perdiguier, who traveled throughout France in the early nineteenth century in order to develop his trade, published his experiences in *Mémoires d'un compagnon*, which brought him considerable attention from the Paris literati. Perdiguier's success launched his political and literary career.⁴ His effort to develop his

¹ Nodtvedt, 113-122; Norborg, 66-67; Bull, 94-101.

² Kulerud, 77-79; Andreas Aarflot, *Hans Nielsen Hauge: Liv og Budskap* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1971), English translation by Joseph M. Shaw, *Hans Nielsen Hauge: His Life and Message* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1979), 18-22.

³ Robert Duplessis, *Transitions to Capitalism in Early Modern Europe (New Approaches to European History)* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 66-140, cf. 259-302.

⁴ Agricol Perdiguier, *Mémoires d'un compagnon* (Moulins: Cahiers du Centre, 1914), see especially pages 54-67, 246-48.

career as an artisan was not particularly exceptional, even if the outcome of his life was. The same holds true for Hauge.

An artisan typically began his traveling career after first completing an apprenticeship and severing his ties with his mentor. Hauge's relationship with Pastor Seeberg was in many ways an apprenticeship in radical religion that in the end erupted into conflict as the apprentice sought to escape the master's dominance.⁵ Seeberg's fall into disfavor with the established church provided both an opportune and necessary moment for Hauge to break with him. Hauge seems to have felt compelled, perhaps even duty-bound, to confront his mentor. He introduced his first book, *The World's Folly*, with his letter to Pastor Seeberg, which accused the pastor of having sought to "push himself forward with his power and self-righteousness, spiritual pride and overstepping the law of God and King."⁶ It is not clear from the letter what specific actions by the pastor Hauge had in mind, but the point of contention appeared to have been personal, as he went on to state that Seeberg's "lack of love," even for his own friends, had made him impossible to tolerate any longer.⁷ This was not merely the act of an orthodox apologist for Lutheran faith against an apostate priest. Rather, the letter indicated that Hauge was severing his ties with his mentor in order to form his own space.

But Hauge's relationship with Seeberg was not as oppositional as the introduction to *The World's Folly* might suggest at first glance. Already in his second book, *God's Wisdom* (1796), Hauge regretted having so severely attacked his mentor, and he stated that it had not been his intent to "reproach" Seeberg, but only to provoke him to "look

⁵ Perdiguier describes his apprenticeship by his father and another artisan as frustrating and abusive. They were relationships he could hardly wait to shake off; see Perdiguier, 54-58.

⁶ Hans Nielsen Hauge, *Hans Nielsen Hauges Skrifter* (hereafter HNH), edited by Hans N. H. Ording (Oslo: Andakbokselskapet, 1951)HNH, Vol. I: 75.

⁷ Ibid.

within himself first” when he was “incorrectly accused.”⁸ Seeberg did not feature much in the rest of Hauge’s writings, nor was Hauge’s attacks on the regular clergy intended to include his mentor. Rather, the introduction to Hauge’s first book marked the end of his spiritually dependent relationship on Seeberg and the beginning of his independent religious career.

It appears, however, that Hauge was not at first entirely comfortable with his career choice. In a later autobiographical sketch (*On Religious Affections and their Worth*, 1817), he admitted that he had deliberated for some time over his path. He described his first journey to the printers in Kristiania in the spring of 1796 as a moment of inner conflict. According to Hauge, he had lost the transcript to his book along the road, something he did not notice until he arrived at the printer’s workshop. At first, he took this to be a sign of divine disfavor on his actions, but when another traveler entered the shop carrying his manuscript, Hauge decided the reverse must be true.⁹ This self-characterization as timid and uncertain may have been a later addition for rhetorical purposes, but it does suggest that Hauge was aware of the unusual vocation he was choosing.

Uncertainty of vocation may also explain why Hauge was a keen observer of other forms of trade and why he remained willing to meld religious and secular vocations. Hauge’s first exposure to the printing trade and paper production initiated a lifelong interest in modern industry as he learned the essentials of that occupation. His interest was consistent with an artisan’s manner in life to look for creative and sensible ideas for carrying on one’s trade. Imagining himself as an author of religious literature,

⁸ *Ibid.*, 233.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 109-121.

he was perhaps already thinking of one day doing his own printing. But Hauge did not attempt to become a guilded printer. He merely wanted to understand the industry, and his interest in crafts and industries, such as printing, served his intense religious fervor in the early stages of his career.

Hauge also added to faith and industry a typical Pietistic industriousness. His biographers usually repeat the apocryphal image of Hauge walking from farm to farm to distribute and sell his literature and conduct religious meetings, all the while keeping his hands busy knitting as he walked.¹⁰ Given Hauge's practical demeanor, this story may well be true. The image finds support in his many letters and books, which reveal an enthusiastic interest in both the industry and culture of the peasants he was seeking to influence.¹¹

It was a mark of a successful artisan to attract young apprentices and engage them in his craft. These apprentices often came from younger family members, but they also included other youth in search of a career. Hauge inspired young men and women to follow his example, remaining in contact with those who did through an active correspondence.¹² These "friends," as they called themselves, essentially formed informal - yet far-reaching - connections between peasant communities, and later they would become vital to the economic activities of the Haugeans. For example, Randi Hevle from Drivdalen began to travel from farm to farm in 1798 to conduct peasant meetings in the manner of Hauge. She was only sixteen when she began her itinerant

¹⁰ A recent study on Hauge's influence on Norwegian crafts, and in particular on knitting, is by Sigbjørn Ravnåsen: *Ånd og hånd. Hans Nielsen Hauges etikk for ledelse og næringsliv* [translates as "Spirit and Hand: Hans Nielsen Hauge's ethic for leadership and industry"] (Luther Forlag 2002).

¹¹ For example, Hauge's *On Religious Affections and their Worth*, 1817; HNH, Vol. VI, 120-48.

¹² Hauge's *On Religious Affections and their Worth*, 1817, includes a collection of letters from 12 men and 5 women who were influenced by Hauge; HNH Vol. VI, 148-217.

career. Her pastor, Ole Hegge, confronted her and forbade her to continue, but Randi refused and was encouraged to continue by Hauge himself when he visited her in 1799. In 1801, Randi traveled with another woman through central Norway as itinerant preachers.¹³

Hauge's family also became participants with the Haugeans. Although they were at first reluctant, Hauge's sister Karen and brother Mikkel eventually took leading roles in both the religious and economic activities of the movement.¹⁴ Stories like Randi's, Karen's, and Mikkel's, abound in the literature surrounding the Haugeans, but historians have not sufficiently studied the character of their relationships to decipher what they might tell us about peasant networks in the modern period.

Hauge may not have initiated these relationships. According to Sverre Norborg, Hauge appears to have benefited from pre-existing religious ties between the communities. Norborg notes that Hauge began his travels by making contact with existing Pietist groups in East Norway, usually of the Moravian variety.¹⁵ This suggests that Hauge used his earlier contacts through Pastor Seeberg to launch his career, which explains why he both distanced himself from Seeberg and yet was cautious about being overly critical of his mentor. Hauge needed the Pietist networks in the early stages of his career, and it is useful to understand the Haugeans as a consolidation and refinement, rather than creation, of peasant religious relationships.

¹³ Karsten Alnæs, *Historien om Norge: Mot Moderne Tider* (translates: "History of Norway: Toward Modern Times") (Oslo: Gyldendal, 1998), 30-31.

¹⁴ Hauge's sister, Karen, was particularly close to Hauge and his work; Alnæs, 30. Historian Hanne Sanders argues that in Sweden and Denmark peasant revivalism spread through familial ties, which was the most fundamental characteristic of the movements she studied. These ties stretched across communities both through marriage and through mobility of Scandinavian peasants in this period as new methods were opening up new land; Sanders, chapter 5 of *Bondevækkelse of Sekularisering: En Protestantisk Folkelig Kultur i Danmark og Sverige, 1820-1850* (Stockholm: Gotab, 1995).

¹⁵ Norborg, 86-87.

Hauge's approach to his new career was typical rather than radical for his time, but there was radical content in what Hauge was doing in his work. His ideas were marked by a radical opposition to the authority structures in the Norwegian peasant communities. He embraced an egalitarian ideal that crossed gender and generation barriers by encouraging young women to function as lay preachers. In promoting his message, his literary influence was more widespread than any previous author in Norway. Finally, Hauge's actions offended and upset many among those who sought to maintain hegemony over the peasants.

Although he began his first book by addressing the heterodox Seeberg, Hauge's deeper aim was to challenge the religious monopoly of the Lutheran priesthood in the peasant communities. To do this, he appealed to Martin Luther's early idea of "the priesthood of all believers." However, Luther had moderated this notion in 1525 when faced with the radical peasant rebellions in Germany commonly known as the *Peasant Wars*.¹⁶ After Luther rejected peasant radicalism, it was evident that the magisterial forms of Protestantism would not reduce the distance between laity and priests. Preaching and the administration of the sacraments (i.e., baptism and Holy Communion) would remain the two sacred functions of the office of the Lutheran priests. And to imagine that there could be mutual edification between a parish clergyman and members of his flock seemed preposterous. Yet, Hauge wanted to change that.

Hauge's first two books attacked the priesthood. He riddled his diatribe with the typical Pietist concern for immoral activities among the peasants (e.g., dance, card games, drinking, idleness, etc.), but it was the failure of Lutheran priests to warn the

¹⁶ On the relationship between Luther and the Peasant Wars of 1523-25, see James M. Stayer, "The German Peasants' War and the Rural Reformation" in *The Reformation World*, Andrew Pettegree, ed. (New York: Routledge, 2000), 127-145.

peasants of their moral failings that lay at the core of the problem for Hauge.¹⁷ He realized that “both lay and learned will oppose me, because I am not suited; but I cannot bury my talent in the ground ... so I thought to author this writing to convince [others] of the condition of Christendom.”¹⁸ The “condition” was serious, according to Hauge, because priests behaved as hirelings who only worked “to receive a good wage on account of Christ,” and worse, were “children of the Devil” because they participated in the very behavior they claimed to oppose.¹⁹ Hauge thereby linked the moral and economic role of the local priesthood in defining the “condition” of the peasants.

But the problem went deeper, according to Hauge; the moral and educational failure of the priests was eroding the social structure of the peasant world. Drawing on the Biblical imagery of the Pharisees as the opponents of Christ, Hauge argued that the priests’ monopoly on Christian faith, together with their failure to properly proclaim the faith, weakened the commitment of the peasant both to the Christian faith and to the social order of peasant communities.²⁰ Addressing the priests, Hauge stated, “You have the key of knowledge and with it you bar the Kingdom of Heaven for others, and do not even enter yourself.”²¹ Priests had failed to stir up religious fervency and sentiment in the parish, which resulted in a lack of love for the divine, for the king, and for ones’ neighbor. Such diatribes mirrored those of the ancient Hebrew prophets as well as the attack of Jesus Christ on the religious leaders of his day. Hauge’s was casting himself in a similar role for the Norwegian people.

¹⁷ HNH, Vol. I, 88-96.

¹⁸ Introduction to *The World’s Folly*, Ibid., 78.

¹⁹ Ibid., 185-186.

²⁰ Ibid., 148.

²¹ Ibid., 96.

Hauge's condemnation of the priesthood, both conservative and radical in its character, lay at the core of the dialectical tension in his idealism. He was in essence arguing that Lutheran priests were not contributing positively to the peasant communities, but instead they were allowing the essential social ties between God, king, and peasant to deteriorate. In his first chapter of *The World's Folly*, titled "Concerning our Gracious King, who of God's good and gracious foresight rules the land," Hauge showed that he was deeply rooted in the peasant worldview as he expressed their understanding of the social order. In this perspective, the priest was to "explain God's will" to the peasants on behalf of "good King Christian," the ruling Danish monarch.²² Priests were responsible to speak on behalf of God and king, and in the peasant mind the two would seldom be in conflict. According to Hauge, the failure of Lutheran priests to uphold this ideal justified his call for peasants to take up the exhortative aspects of religion. He sought an army of prophets like himself, who would defend the social structure that was in his opinion rooted in faith and loyalty. This was a conservative ideal. But in order to conserve and defend the social order, Hauge believed that peasants had to advocate a radical departure from the contemporary religious structure. This was a radical ideal.

Hauge's attack on the religious structure was appealing to many peasants, but, of course, threatening to the religious elite. Although a reader today may find Hauge's writings to be rather tedious and overly moralistic, Norwegian peasants of his time could relate to Hauge's message. Historian Magnus Nodtvedt has argued that a radical reformist character wrapped in a "milder nature" drew many peasants to Hauge.²³ Although statistical analysis is not available to support Nodtvedt's claim, and we might

²² Ibid., 83.

²³ Nodtvedt, 217; HNH, Vol II, 34.

be suspicious of Hauge's claims of gatherings in the hundreds of peasants, there is little doubt that both peasants and the authorities were beginning to take note of Hauge by the end of the eighteenth century. Hauge's books introduced him as "a little learned farmhand," "a son of a peasant," or "a humble peasant son," who was in league with the king against abusive bureaucrats, particularly the priests.²⁴ But for all his humility, his books went through two or three editions within the first few years of his travels, and historians agree that about a quarter of a million of his books sold to a Norwegian population of about 800,000 in Hauge's lifetime.²⁵ It would have been hard for the ruling literati to ignore Hauge's growing presence, if only through his books.

As for the peasants, however, Hauge's attack on the clergy appealed to their fears and bitterness. It was not hard for the Norwegian peasant to agree that the priest was a significant contributor to the oppressive system they lived under, since the priest was responsible for collecting the parish tithe from the peasantry, making him the most visible expression within the local community of their tax burden.²⁶ Hauge's characterization of the priests as hirelings merely in search of a "good wage" expressed this bitterness. Added to this, the priest was quite unlike the local sheriff, who was usually a member of the local community. The priest was rarely from the region and was usually trained in either Germany or Denmark, and thereby considered an outsider to the community, representing the repression stemming from the ruling Danish government. When Hauge attacked the priesthood, peasants were interested in what he had to say, which was evidenced by their continuing invitations for him and his followers to come to their

²⁴ Some examples in HNH, Vol I, 62, 135, 251; Vol II, 31.

²⁵ Norborg, 173.

²⁶ Nicolas Hope, *German and Scandinavian Protestantism, 1700-1918*, Oxford History of the Christian Church, eds. Henry and Owen Chadwick. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 276.

homes for religious gatherings. That Hauge was able to travel from one farm to another for eight years indicated that there were peasants who invited his presence, even as opposition from the authorities increased.

His charismatic persona was particularly attractive to young peasants, both men and women. He stood about 170 cm tall, with light brown hair, a well-kept chin-beard, and piercing blue eyes. His forehead was high, and his narrow lips seemed to portray unwavering determination and self-confidence. His active lifestyle of traveling by foot in the summertime, and on skis in the winter, placed him in good physical condition, and he was, after all, unmarried. Historian Karsten Alnæs gives three examples of young peasant women who were affected by Hauge's presence in their community; Randi Hevle from Oppdal, Sara Ust from Vingelen in Østerdalen, and Karen Odland from Hemsdal.²⁷ Each of them spoke of a personal encounter with Hauge as the decisive moment when they chose to enter work as lay preachers. When Hauge was questioned about Sara Ust's unconventional religious activity, he asked, "Is she capable and diligent in her earthly call?" When the answer came, "She stands above the others," Hauge simply replied, "Then don't hinder her from speaking."²⁸ Romantic and sexual attraction to Hauge may have played a role in the women's decision to preach. Karen Odland expressed such sentiments following a visit by Hauge; "After he corrected the confusion that had spread over the fields, he left us and my heart was crushed to pieces."²⁹ Each of three women eventually married Haugeans and often surpassed their husbands as popular lay preachers in the communities they visited.

²⁷ Alnæs, Vol. III, 30-36.

²⁸ Ibid, 33.

²⁹ Ibid., 35.

Although Hauge remained celibate during these early years, he was aware of the blurred lines between religious enthusiasm and sexual attraction that drew people to one another. He expressed his concern with a predictable Pietistic dualism, “We must take care, especially with the opposite sex, that we do not finish in the flesh what we began in the spirit (Galatians 3:3), as the flesh battles the spirit, so that when spiritual love is ignited in the heart, the flesh craves and would snuff out the spiritual, which are often very close to each other.”³⁰ Rumors of his interest in what remained for him the “weaker sex” never went very far.

Perhaps women were also attracted to Hauge because of his willingness to give them a conspicuous role and voice that was largely indistinguishable from that of the young men in the lay movement. But for all his apparent proto-feminism, Hauge upheld the chauvinist and pietistic prejudices of his age, even as he invited women to join him.

Now God will prove Himself mighty among the weak, strong in the feeble, and bring to nothing what is something and make something of what is nothing. When it then pleases the Lord to call the weakest sex as his servants and someone opposes this, then he opposes God’s ordinance. If God chooses to build His church and be lifted up by the least, then I will not withhold my consent, but pray that God’s grace will be with their numbers, who are alone nothing in themselves, [but if they] follow Jesus’ Words and deeds, then we will not be led astray.³¹

The last phrase implies a role for women as leaders in the movement. And to speak of “God’s ordinance” (*forordning*) was strong language in a day when the notion of ordained women for religious service was virtually unheard of in Lutheran circles. It implied a validation of women that was indeed radical for its time.

Young men were also attracted to Hauge. His closest “friends” who formed the inner circle of the Haugeans were all under the age of 35 in 1800, and most of them were

³⁰ Hauge, Vol. III, 383.

³¹ Hauge, Vol. III, 363.

younger than Hauge. Of the thirty-one Haugean males closest to Hauge, nine were older than him, two were his age, the rest were younger.³² The youngest, Christopher Grøndahl, who later became Norway's foremost printer and publisher, was only sixteen years old in 1800 when he joined the Haugean inner circle. Correspondence between the Haugeans during these early years provides a considerable body of evidence for the profound impression Hauge made on his "friends" both in person and through his writings;

When he began to preach God's Word, my heart was moved with great wonder over his love and gentle manner, as I had never heard anyone speak like him.

Finally, I received my wish to see and speak with the one famously known as Hans N. Hauge ... and in speaking with this thoughtful man, I discovered much greater enlightenment.

When I arrived at the reported place, I was able to speak with the man whom I so long had yearned for; I was greatly strengthened through his exhortation, which he demonstrated both in teaching and example to lead the weak and convince those who resist ... when I traveled with him to Bergen, I received direction and strength through his charitable demeanor.

In a few months, Hans N. Hauge came to us; I was happy and thought him to be many times more than any other person ... he was friendly and mild, wanting to be the humblest among those who have encountered grace.

After some time passed, Hans Nielsen Hauge arrived; my father and I traveled together with him and many others ... he was especially friendly towards all, even the most humble, so it appeared clearly to me that he must have been given the mind of Christ, as I had never seen such a person before.³³

Even many of Hauge's detractors found him irresistible in person. Bishop Johan Christian Schönheyder, was concerned about this unusual peasant who was reported to

³² Norborg, 185-6.

³³ These extracts from the correspondence between the Haugeans can be found in Hauge, Vol. VI, 154, 156, 169, 198, 214.

have disrupted parish life throughout Norway. The bishop read Hauge's books and followed the reports of his travels. He called on Hauge, trying to persuade him to stop holding private gatherings of peasants. Years later, Schönheyder recalled this meeting and told of how he had been so impressed with Hauge that he offered him a position as a school teacher and encouraged him to continue in that capacity in order to exhort peasants to the pious life. Hauge's response had been to declare that he preferred his current career, and would continue to turn people from their irreligious behavior. Schönheyder may have sensed this subtle attack on the priestly duty to uphold religion in society, for he responded that it was not practical for any one person to fully accomplish such an enormous task. The two men parted on friendly terms, and Hauge later believed he had won the bishop to his cause.³⁴

Part of Hauge's charisma was rooted in his ability to meld religious and earthy language in familiar metaphors and stories that expressed peasant concerns. He was like the peasants in many ways, and yet had experienced aspects of the diverse peasant life in Norway like no other peasant before him. In the words of Sverre Norborg, "He knew the fall rains from Jæren, the gray weather of Smålene, the fall colors along Mjøsa, the summer sun of Sognefjorden, the white loneliness of the Hardanger mountains, and he bore thousands of visions of the country in his clear mind."³⁵ Later he would flesh out many of these images in detail when he recorded his experiences in 1817, but in these early years his varied experiences fed his sermons with numerous stories that had been brought from the very soil the peasants worked;

³⁴ A summary of this encounter can be found in Kullerud, 156-157.

³⁵ Norborg, 184.

I remained also for some time with them in their farm chores and field work, while teaching them to make use of those tools that I have seen in my travels and taken note of for their practical usage.³⁶

Hauge spoke as a peasant who remained committed to their way of life, even as he brought new ideas into their narrow world.

His broad appeal holds true in Hauge's religious discourse as well. He often included autobiographical sketches as a narrative to illustrate spiritual awakening.³⁷ But he made no effort to outline a method of conversion, because he claimed that conversion was a unique and personal encounter with the Divine that should not be dictated by another's experience.³⁸ This omission reflected his individualistic perspective regarding religious experience, but Hauge's personal narratives also expressed a collective crisis that many peasants shared.³⁹ For example, in his first book, *The World's Folly* (1796), he portrayed a spiritual crisis through several accounts of having nearly drowned during childhood. The fullest account was as follows;

In my thirteenth year, I came into great danger in the river along with my father and two others. While we were transporting hay, one of those with us fell into the water. When he grabbed the side of the boat where my father and I sat, while the second person lay on top of the hay, we all fell into the water.

All that day, I had an omen that I was about to encounter danger, but I was not able to avoid falling in the water with the others. I searched for something to hold on to, but there was nothing other than those persons who had fallen in with me. While the others began to call for help, I thought, 'Why call for help? There is no salvation here.'

³⁶ Hauge, Vol. VI, 22.

³⁷ The term "spiritual awakening" is the one chosen by most of Hauge's biographers (see Sverre Norborg, 1966, and more recently Dag Kullerud). While Hauge used this phrase himself, he was more apt to use the term *omvendelse* which expresses more the sense of a turning around, a repentance, and a return to where one came from. The British and North American varieties of dissent preferred the term "born again", but this was too strong for one who wished to maintain that his religious efforts were within Lutheran orthodoxy. When Hauge did use the term *vekkelse* (awakening) it was usually with the prefix *op-* which expresses a sense of a rising up to action from a dormant state.

³⁸ See quote by Hauge in Dagfinn Mannsåker's introduction to HNH, Vol. 1: 71.

³⁹ It is a mere 450 lines in length.

Then my thoughts overtook me. First, I thought about my mother who is so greatly affected by terrible events, and now that my father and I were to die in these circumstances, the sorrow will be too much for her. Then I thought about the few pieces of clothing that I possessed. Such things will go to my brothers, but it will be difficult to leave these few possessions as I have such love for them, even though death was now threatening.

To think that when one has placed all one's desire, wants and joys in the temporal, then it will no doubt be as Christ said in the twelfth chapter of Luke of the one who had amassed his fortune, 'You fool! Tonight I will demand your soul from your hand; what then will be of all that you have?' I cried to God to show me mercy for the sake of the Lord Jesus Christ, of whom I thought I had sufficient book knowledge to hold me in the faith. However, a hellish angst gripped me and I began to fear the darkness of hell, because I had not loved God as I ought.

At last death's dark fear threatened me so terribly, that when I think of this event my heart cries out, because the physical pain of death was nothing in comparison to the fear I experienced in my soul. I longed for the Light, but everything became dark and I lost all feeling. Wherever my spirit went is now hidden from me.

Those who were with me told me that I was floating without movement in the water, while the current brought me to the shore. My brother found me as though I were dead, since they could not see any signs of life in me. My father prayed that God would show my soul mercy. Meanwhile they worked me over and my spirit returned, so that in about a half a day my health returned by God's great mercy. I immediately took to reading, as is now my custom, and began to ponder this event, which has resulted in many thoughts.⁴⁰

The construction of this account may or may not accurately reflect actual events, but – as the final sentence indicates – the narrative served a didactic purpose. It was a story that could be repeated and understood in farms around Norway by other lay preachers, serving as a model for similar constructions.

What is most significant in this account, was that Hauge wrapped his message in an imagery common to peasants. This drowning incident used a variety of symbols that spoke to the crises in personal life that, according to Hauge, required a religious solution.⁴¹ For example, the dominant symbol in the narrative was water. Water is

⁴⁰ HNH, *Løbebanen*, Vol 1: 109-110 (my translation).

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 110, 112.

usually a Christian symbol of initiation and entrance; according to the central Lutheran dogma, salvation comes by “faith alone” (*sola fide*), but faith is appropriated through water baptism, through which the individual enters the Christian community.⁴² However, in this narrative Hauge chose to use water in a completely different sense, but in a manner familiar to the peasant world, as water could also represent a personal crisis. Norway rarely experiences draught, for it is surrounded by water and the warmth from the Mexican Gulf Stream assures that there is always plenty of rain. Water, for Norwegians, represents raging rivers, the North Sea, dark damp forests, foggy mountain terrains, and swampy bogs, all common images of danger in the peasant world. The struggle for life in the raging river speaks to the individual’s seemingly futile struggle for life. Rural Norwegians could readily recognize and relate to this symbol. In such formulations, Hauge was able to portray religious awakening as primarily an individual matter that could not be addressed by family, church, government or community.

There was, however, a progression in these water narratives from the individual to the communal. In another narrative, Hauge fell into the river along with some other peasants. This time he did not succumb to fear, but instead became aware of the person struggling next to him. Hauge tells how he calmly instructed the peasant to call on God for the salvation of his soul. This was a self-portrait of being in possession of an assurance rooted in knowing how to respond to the danger and how to bring hope to others caught in the moment of crises. The story conveyed the message that once the individual had taken care of his own condition, he could – and should – immediately turn to his neighbor’s equally desperate situation. It is evident that these water narratives

⁴² Luther’s Small Catechism, part IV, “Holy Sacrament.” in *Luther’s Little Instruction book: The Small Catechism of Luther*, translated by Robert E. Smith (Champaign, Ill: 1994). Internet resource: <http://www.netLibrary.com/urlapi.asp?action=summary&v=1&bookid=200902>

served as Hauge's justification for his religious activity: he had faced the crisis and had arrived at a solution, which he then was compelled to offer his contemporaries.

The other images in the narrative further explained the crisis which peasants faced. For example, another important symbol in this narrative was hay. Gathering hay was one of the most universal acts of a Norwegian peasant, regardless of the geographical location or the type of farm, with the exception of Northern Norway. Haying symbolized gathering and preparing for winter survival, as hay was vital to generate food, animal labor, and fertilizer. Less hay meant fewer essential resources for the long winter months ahead. Through this symbol, Hauge was drawing his reader's attention to central aspects of his ideology. Most important was the immediacy and vulnerability of the potential crisis; that is, disaster could strike during the most mundane moments in a peasant's life, and nothing could prevent such catastrophe. The image of a load of hay disappearing down the river depicted how easily a peasant's future could be lost, stirring stirred up a sense that something terrible and unavoidable was taking place. Peasants could sense the depth of despair that this symbol portrayed, since it appealed to an inner angst that many experienced as they fought for survival in the midst of the increasing demands that the Danish authorities placed on them. Peasants were aware of how helpless they were during times of crisis, when they were at the mercy of a seemingly merciless government. They knew that unless there were some significant changes, their future was grim.

Several symbols in the drowning narratives further represented peasant vulnerability. The grieving mother or widow was one such symbol. Hauge portrayed his troubled mother as a symbol of the despair that his and his father's passing would bring on the family, as she was ill prepared for their premature death. Furthermore, the peasant

community was also unprepared to take care of widows and orphans.⁴³ Symbolizing the legitimate object of good deeds and love for one's neighbor, they represented the potential vulnerability of peasant culture when crisis would strike.

Clothing represented the ephemeral quality of earthly possessions and the personal identity attached to them. According to this narrative, attachment to material possessions was meaningless in the face of inevitable fate. For Hauge, clothing was directly related to identity; having to turn over his clothes to his brothers was to surrender the meager personal identity he had thus far managed to amass. Clothing was a recurring symbol of identity throughout his writings. In the earlier years, Hauge contrasted the trend of the urbanites to wear the latest continental fashions with the simple peasant attire.⁴⁴ For him, continental clothing symbolized acceptance of continental ideas, which he primarily associated with the French Revolution and the Enlightenment. Although this seems to have been a rather shallow association, it may not have been so to many peasants. After all, the raw materials used for clothing by Norwegian peasant were wool, leather, wood and metal. Continental fashions, which evolved parallel to the developing cotton industry and imports of silk from China, were a potential threat to the peasant's clothing industry. For Hauge, distinctive peasant clothing represented peasant culture; the loss of his clothing spoke of the loss of distinctive cultural identities.

Enveloping darkness was yet another symbol of peasant vulnerability. This image was particularly potent in a geographical landscape that experienced long periods of darkness during the winter months. Darkness exposed peasants to many unsuspected

⁴³ At Eiker, the first Haugean industrial center, widows and their children were invited into the community to be cared for and to function as productive members of the industries, along with the mentally challenged. We should note also that Hauge's younger brother, Jens, suffered from a psychological disorder.

⁴⁴ Descriptions of peasant clothing are found throughout Hauge's account of his travels in *Descriptions of Hans Nielsen Hauge's Travels, Important Events, and Occurrences*, HNH, Vol., VI: 1-93.

dangers; whether from wild animals at night, unpredictable storms on the open seas, unsuspected attacks from the neighboring Swedes, or the sudden appearance of Danish troops to stamp out peasant unrest, the peasant readers experienced many forms of looming darkness that unsettled their existence.

There was one symbol, however, at the root of Hauge's narratives that represented the profound crisis that Hauge and many youth of his day faced: it was the image of losing his father. Hauge fused the impending death of Niels Mikkelson to his deep sense of despair, hopelessness and personal death. Without an inheritance of property, what would become of him? He would be at the mercy of his older brothers, which could mean a lifetime of service that would yield nothing in terms of property. A propertyless peasant experienced a kind of death in a culture that placed the highest material value on land ownership. As long as his father was alive, Hauge would enjoy the benefits of a son, but with the death of Niels, the property would go to Ole, the eldest, and leaving Hauge and his brothers empty-handed. This threat was real, not imaginary, for even if the family farm succeeded to the point where partition would be viable, Hauge would not benefit because of his place in the family. In the past, disease and war might have increased his chances, but such was rarely the case by end of the eighteenth century. Peasant sons and daughters in his position had a bleak economic future.

Hauge's relationship to property and inheritance was therefore fundamental to his profound appeal to Norwegian peasants, particularly peasant youth. Earlier scholarship has argued that a religious value system corresponds to "the useful and necessary behaviors typically practiced by individuals."⁴⁵ This notion has been developed by

⁴⁵ A variety of scholars of religious movements have made this sort of argument. See Ernest Gellner, *Muslim Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981); Ann Swidler, "Culture in Action:

Rosemary Hopcroft in her valuable study of sixteenth century land systems in Northern Europe.⁴⁶ She discovered that there was a relationship between the receptivity of radical religious ideas and individual property rights in five European countries during the formative years of Protestantism.⁴⁷ The level of individual property rights among rural peasants versus the level of communal control over property correlated to the level of receptivity of individualistic versus communal forms of Reformation ideology.

Hopcroft's study invites scholars to carefully consider the values embedded in a culture that guides the life of individuals. Values may find a reflection in the religious ideas of that culture. For example, one of the common characteristics of Protestant-style movements in both the late medieval and early modern period was an elevation of the authority of scripture. The Enlightenment added the notion of individual competency and responsibility in rationally interpreting the Scripture, which was an idea that ultimately threatened clerical authority. Most Protestant doctrines took on a primarily individualistic rather than communal character; for example, Calvinist covenant theology became a contract between God and the individual, and individuals rather than groups were believed to be elected for salvation. The moral character of Protestantism also tended to focus on the individual's moral journey towards heaven, such as in John Bunyan's *Pilgrims Progress*, rather than on the role of the community in ethical matters. According to Hopcroft, values of individual competency, accountability, frugality, and

Symbols and Strategies" in *American Sociological Review* 51 (1986):273; Paul DiMaggio, "Classification in Art" in *American Sociological Review* 52 (1987):440-455; Harrison C. White, *Identity and Control: A Structural Theory of Social Action* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 139.

⁴⁶ Hopcroft, "Rural Organization and Receptivity to Protestantism in Sixteenth-Century Europe" in *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 36 (June 1997) 2: 158-182.

⁴⁷ Hopcroft's study looks at England, the Netherlands, France, Germany and Sweden. Many of the features she describes relate strongly to the Danish kingdom that is situated in the geographical center of her study, though she does not deal with it. For an overview of Norwegian peasant society, Magnus Nodtvedt provides several excellent chapters in *Rebirth of Norway's Peasantry* (Tacoma, Washington: Pacific Lutheran University Press, 1965).

ethical behavior corresponded to the rising individualistic paradigm of freehold peasants in the rural regions that were most receptive to Protestant doctrine.⁴⁸

Hopcroft argues that regions where Reformation ideology succeeded also tended to be less communal and more individualistic in relation to property rights. In her study of the Netherland Low Countries, she found that in less communal regions, forty-five percent had substantial religious reform, and the remaining fifty-five percent had at least some reform. In regions of the communal open fields, sixty percent had no reform, while the remaining forty percent had some reform.⁴⁹ Hopcroft found similar evidence in England, France, Germany and Sweden during the same period.⁵⁰ In the majority of cases of Hopcroft's study the greater freedom that a rural peasant had in relationship to property, the greater the likelihood that he would receive radical religious ideas. If this freedom was threatened, there was a possibility that a radical ideology would develop. The sixteenth century had a rural population of approximately eighty percent, so Hopcroft's thesis proves to be important in understanding the early reception and growth of the Reformation in rural areas, or areas on the periphery of social centers, such as Norway.⁵¹ Her study implies that changes in fundamental values, such as property rights, may be related to the character of religious sentiment of a region.

⁴⁸ Hopcroft, 158ff; Hopcroft draws some of her research from Alastair Duke's study, *Reformation and Revolt in the Low Countries* (London: The Hambledon Press, 1990), 178; and Hugo de Schepper's "The Burgundian Habsburg Netherlands" in *Handbook of European History 1400-1600*, 1 (1994): 512.

⁴⁹ Hopcroft, 166-167.

⁵⁰ No such research has been conducted for Norway to my knowledge.

⁵¹ The question arises whether Hopcroft's thesis can be applied to the growth of dissenting religious voices after the sixteenth century. She notes that the import of her study is significant for two reasons, the countries in her study were approximately eighty percent rural during the Reformation period and the rural areas particularly demonstrated a large degree of receptivity to radical religion, often prior to the acceptance by the higher orders. She thus identifies the rurality of a culture as an important characteristic in the methodology of her study.

Hopcroft's study also helps to explain why so many peasants found Hauge appealing. Norway remained nearly ninety percent rural well into the nineteenth century.⁵² The peasantry in the eighteenth century, similar to many of the north European peasants in the sixteenth century, had gained ownership of their land in increasing measure. The mostly absent aristocracy financed their extravagant lifestyle at the Danish court by selling off their land, and bit-by-bit peasants gained ownership of their property.⁵³ The Danish government also had initiated a vigorous program of clearing wooded land to meet the growing markets for agricultural produce on the continent. For these reasons, peasant properties did not fragment with each generation as was the case in France and in New France. However, Norwegian peasants who sought new farmland had to leave their place of birth, which further reduced communal control and familial cohesion over individual peasants and their property, and further enhanced their sense of independence.

The Norwegian setting is important to consider since it had a semi-literate peasant culture, which allows historians to explore how values concerning property interacted with religious sentiment in ways not possible in the study of sixteenth century peasantry. Hauge, in particular, having left behind eight volumes of published works, offers the historian a unique window into the formation of peasant religious sentiment and how such ideas related to concerns about property and individualism.

Increased independence did make the peasants more vulnerable to fluctuations in the agricultural markets and other forms of social crisis. With an increased demand for

⁵² Breistein provides the following figures; in 1769 the combined Norwegian urban population was 64,747, a mere 8.9% of the total. By 1801 this had risen to 77,642, 8.8% of the total. However, during the Napoleonic wars, urbanization diminished; Bergen lost 6.5% of its population. Breistein, 15.

⁵³ Nodtvedt, 26-37.

grain products in Europe during the eighteenth century, the price of grain rose and countries such as Norway struggled to produce an abundant crop due to its cooler climate and shorter growing season. Peasants, finding it difficult to keep up with the local demand, became dependent on trade to supply the shortfall. A disruption in trade, a crop failure, or a widespread epidemic could have a devastating effect in Norway. Therefore, a sense of vulnerability was part of a peasant's everyday reality.

Hauge's father, Niels Mikkelson, was one such peasant. He had moved to a new region and purchased a farm suitable for his family. However, by the end of the eighteenth century, opportunity for gaining new land was declining, precipitating the crisis facing Hauge. Dag Kullerud, one of Hauge's most recent biographers, portrays him as an ambitious young man trapped in the restrictions of peasant life and wishing to break free.⁵⁴ However, it is important to recognize that Hauge was not alone in this dilemma; when he spoke in metaphors that reflected his own fears, other peasants listened.

The symbolic imagery of the drowning narratives is just one example of how Hauge appealed to his class. Enlightenment priests held Bible readings, Pietist sectarians gathered in small groups to experience mystical truths, but Hauge simply used their language to stir the peasants. Sverre Norborg speaks of Hauge taking a "bypass" around contemporary religion. He claims that prior to Hauge, "the psychology of the common people lacked a nationwide lower class identity that had the power to raise the banner for social justice."⁵⁵ Norborg portrays Hauge romantically as the unintentional voice "who

⁵⁴ Kullerud sees Hauge's initial religious activity as spawned by a clash of hubris between the mentor and the disciple, Seeberg and Hauge. Seeberg's antinomianism stepped beyond the conservative bounds of traditional peasantry and removed, to Hauge's understanding, the necessary social restraints. The young disciple sought to usurp his mentor with a more conservative, and yet more winsome, doctrine of religious action. Kullerud, 77-79.

⁵⁵ Norborg, 297.

to his amazement discovered that he had arrived just in time with a liberating divine word ... as though the people had been waiting for him.”⁵⁶ This may overstate the case, but it does seem that Hauge’s success was rooted in his firm grounding in peasant culture.

Eventually, Hauge also attracted attention from the authorities. In the previous chapter, we saw the confrontation with Pastor Urdahl near Hauge’s own home. This was to be the first of many such conflicts, as the clergy were apt to show up unannounced at a farm gathering. On Christmas Eve 1797, Hauge was arrested at a the peasant gathering in Glemminge parish that Pastor Feierman attended with a local lieutenant and two soldiers.⁵⁷ Hauge reacted furiously, and shortly after his release, he authored *The Acknowledgment of Truth*, an attack on the clergy even more forceful than his earlier publications. According to Hauge, this book was meant “to explain the false spirit of lies, which expect or falsely finds comfort in the power of God’s Word; and also to teach how true Christians using God’s Word and Spirit can and should drive back the evil one.”⁵⁸ He sought to arm his “friends” with invectives against the clergy, portraying his enemies as quarrelsome baby lizards, hypocrites, blind guards, dumb dogs, and greedy men who had returned to the papal path, selling indulgences through death sermons, parish commands, and confessions. In addition to the typical anti-papal rhetoric, Hauge was learning to mix religious and radical language, thereby beginning to articulate peasant demands for change, beginning with the most local expression of authority, the church.

One of the problems that confronted Hauge’s radicalism was the administration of the sacraments. To deny baptism and Holy Communion would place him in the Anabaptist camp and outside orthodox Lutheran faith. If he attempted to administer

⁵⁶ Ibid., 292.

⁵⁷ Nodtvedt, 223.

⁵⁸ HNH, Vol. II, 31.

sacraments without ordination or outside the parameters of the state church, he would be identified as a sectarian, as had been the case with his former mentor, Pastor Seeberg. But if he upheld the Lutheran doctrine of the sacraments, stressing their central importance to Christian life, he would also inadvertently be emphasizing the central role of the Lutheran clergy, who alone could administer the sacraments. Hauge's solution was simply to ignore the sacraments as much as possible.⁵⁹ Andreas Aarflot has argued that Hauge did not see the sacraments as necessary for Christian faith and that Hauge frequently warned against their misuse.⁶⁰ This seems to be an accurate assessment, but Aarflot has missed the subtle anti-clerical implication that Hauge sought in downplaying the importance of sacraments. He could not stress them without granting a traditionally vital role to the priest, so he simply laid the emphasis for Christian activity elsewhere (on moral behavior, good works, love for one's neighbor, being industrious, etc.). Although this may appear to be an attempt to "de-sacramentalize" peasant religion in Norway, Haugeans continued to attend the state church in order to receive the sacraments as part of their religious culture, even while they displaced these rituals from a central spiritual role in their dogma.

This kind of radicalism engendered both friends and enemies for Hauge. On the one hand, likeminded peasants were drawn into the Haugean network. On the other hand, the local priests and sheriffs also became aware that they would eventually have to deal with this peasant and his followers. Initially they had hoped to ignore the young "fanatics" (*sværmere*). But open confrontation and accusations of fanaticism became a

⁵⁹ HNH, Vol. III, 245, 100; Vol. IV, 299-303

⁶⁰ Andreas Aarflot, *Hans Nielsen Hauge: Liv og Budskap* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1971), 205.

regular occurrence in some of the communities Hauge visited.⁶¹ For this reason, he carried a copy of the Conventicle Act of 1741 with him at all times to defend his activity and claim that he did not violate the direct wording of the law. In addition, the authorities resurrected the 1754 vagrancy law against the Haugeans. The original intention of the vagrancy legislation was to prevent the movement of peasants from community to community without State Church approval, although the government had not enforced the law for a generation prior to Hauge.

Nevertheless, to apply this statute against Hauge and his followers implied that they were nothing more than vagrants and jobless drifters.⁶² It meant that the Haugeans did not contribute positively and productively to society and ought therefore to be sent back to their communities or forcibly contained. This situation became intolerable for Hauge and his “friends”, threatening their personal and material existence. During the summer of 1800 they were experiencing an increased opposition against them. Hauge received letters from his followers regarding the intense opposition from local clergy and sheriffs wherever lay preachers were active. The authorities had incarcerated several of them for weeks and months at a time, and two of Hauge’s own family members, Karen and Mikkel, were among those who had experienced first hand the fury of the authorities

⁶¹ Biographers have exhausted the topic of Hauge’s persecution by religious and local authorities, particularly as it serves to present Hauge as a martyr of elite power. It is not my intention to repeat this information, as it is one aspect of Hauge’s life that few scholars would contest. For example, this theme provides the heart and bulk of Kullerud’s biography of Hauge; see his chapter, “With God in the heart, an thorn in the flesh and the sheriff and priest on the heels” in *Hans Nielsen Hauge* (1996), 83-178.

⁶² Dagfinn Breistein records sample letters from priests and bishops who demand the implementation of the old law against the Haugeans; Breistein, 270. He also provides a discussion on the history of this law; *Ibid.*, 240-241. See also Nodtvedt, 74. The Conventicle Act, 1741 and the later Vagrancy law, 1754, were aimed primarily at curbing sects from roaming the countryside. By the late eighteenth century it had fallen into disuse, though it remained on the books until 1814.

against lay preachers.⁶³ A new strategy had to be struck. Hauge became preoccupied with the problem of how he could continue to travel freely to promote his movement and his books. He was compelled to consider how he might reshape his identity—and that of his followers—to prove to the authorities that the Haugeans were productive and useful members of society, not vagrants.

⁶³ Hauge's brother, Mikkel, and another lay preacher, Torkel O. Gabestand, had refused to stop their religious activities and as a result served two and a half years in the House of Correction; Nodtvedt, 137-38.

Chapter Four:

A Businessman in Bergen, 1800-1804

Accusations of vagrancy and fanaticism propelled Hauge into a new stage of radical activity that lasted from 1800 until his arrest in April 1804.¹ The context was the opposition from authorities, to which Hauge responded by developing a doctrine of “good deeds,” defined as a practical, rationalized expression of Christ’s command to “love your neighbor.”² During these four years, Hauge attempted to legitimate his radical religious activities by advocating and establishing cooperative and commercial ventures through his peasant networks, purportedly aimed at benefiting the rest of society. While adopting a “this-worldly” commercial and economic radicalism, Hauge tempered it by advocating an austere Pietistic lifestyle for those who participated in forming a new identity for the Haugeans. He called his followers to become increasingly “this-worldly” in their daily activities, even while being “other-worldly” in their religious life. This was not a form of Gnostic dualism that so often reemerges in Christianity, denigrating the material realm. Rather, it was a dichotomous worldview that did not neatly separate into distinct realms of existence; this new identity was to be rooted in a positive pragmatic relationship between the economic, social and religious realms of

¹ One example of accusation was published in Oslo’s journal, *Intelligent Notes (Intelleghents-Sedlerne)*, in late 1799, by an anonymous clergyman from Eiker, where Hauge incidentally was arrested for the last time in April, 1804. The author ridiculed the Haugeans as vagrants and claimed they were guilty of many crimes and vices. Other clergymen replied with further accusations against the lay preachers of drunkenness and brawling; see Nodtvedt, 137; Breistein, 248.

² Matthew 22:34-40.

peasant life. A naive idealism moved Hauge and his followers toward commercial ventures during the first few years of the nineteenth century.

Initially, Hauge sought for anything practical that might help cultivate a new identity. He instructed his followers to assist in the seasonal chores on the peasant farms they visited, as had been his own custom. Apocryphal stories that featured him as the ideal example of Christian charity accompanied such admonitions. Hauge was said to have joined in the spring and summer haying, that he had accompanied fishermen on their morning runs, and that he had assisted printers in their work, presumably on his books. As this doctrine of “good deeds” evolved, Hauge also instructed lay preachers to become agents of innovative agricultural ideas. Since many of the communities that the Haugeans visited did not have much contact with the outside world, this was a sensible and practical activity for them to undertake. Like Hauge, the extensive travels of the lay preachers set them in good stead to both gather and distribute information that would be useful for rural Norwegians. Also, the network of “friends” would serve to spread practical information through the lay preachers. They spread information about new agricultural methods such as forms of crop rotation used elsewhere, fertilization methods using seaweed, innovative tools developed for agricultural purposes, and the development of special breeds of cattle, sheep and horses suited for the rugged northern landscape and climate.³

Hauge’s turn to industry and commerce was a product both of his creative imagination and his drive for legitimacy. By offering useful information and help to the

³ B. H. Slicher Van Bath, *The Agrarian History of Western Europe, A.D. 500-1850* (London, England: Edward Arnold Publishing, 1963), records the new crop rotations developed in the middle of the eighteenth century which significantly improved the productivity of agrarian lands. This information was slow in arriving into the northern peasant society, but became part of the agricultural dialogue that accompanied the lay preachers: 249-258. See also Breistein, 160-165, on Hauge’s interest in agricultural innovations.

peasant community, Hauge hoped to demonstrate that he and his followers were contributing to the welfare of communities through their travel, which would then in turn validate their religious activity. They were to be artisans of practical actions and ideas of an earthly and heavenly quality. As letters describing the mounting opposition to the lay movement arrived in the summer months of 1800, Hauge traveled to Denmark to publish more books and visit a Christian industrial community run by Danish Pietists. Their industry and communal life deeply impressed him. Their idea of blending religion and industry showed promise, and Hauge wanted something similar for his peasant friends in Norway.

Hauge first outlined his new ideas in an open letter to his “friends” while he was still in Denmark. The letter accompanied *Christian Foundational Doctrine concerning the Conflict, Trouble and Work of the Christians*; a book that offered Hauge’s solution to the troubles he and his followers were facing.⁴ Although he believed that trouble was inevitable, he argued that the “friends” needed a new strategy to lessen their hardships as much as possible;

You know that it is more blessed to give than to receive, and how we should work according to the spiritual gifts and physical strength primarily to enlighten all towards God’s path and to spread His word. Following this, we must remember that the Lord drove our first parents out to till the soil, so we must give consideration to what means we can best honor God and strengthen our brothers, supplying according to God’s will what is needed for clothing and food, so that we can also give to our enemies and excite them with Christ’s love to deny themselves. This is my foundational teaching and I ask that you will, together with me, build correctly on it and provide for it a correct understanding so that we, by God’s grace, will ever increase in strength to complete the race and harvest the fruits of our efforts.⁵

⁴ HNH, Vol. II: 217.

⁵ This letter is entitled, “Beloved family and coworkers in Christ’s Congregation who battle here on earth”. Hauge instructed that the letter must be read, copied and passed on from community to community through

Hauge assumed that engaging in industry and business would pave the way for them to demonstrate their material value and abate any further abuse from the authorities. A practical and aggressive doctrine of good deeds and love for one's neighbor was therefore to be the "foundational teaching" of the Haugeans.

Historians might see parallels between Haugean enterprises and the utopian socialism that emerged later in the nineteenth century. Admittedly, there was a similarity between the Haugean ideal and utopian socialists such as Robert Owen (1771-1858).⁶ Owen too believed that a visible demonstration of his ideals would ultimately convince the rest of society that he had correctly discerned the best social, political, and economic structure for the modern world. Hauge appeared to be making such a claim when he stated that he wished to "excite" his "enemies" toward Christian charity. And like many utopian socialists, Hauge perceived the community of "friends" as radically egalitarian. He rooted his doctrine of "good deeds" in a neo-primitivist application of Christian scriptures. He imagined that the Haugean community would be radically communal in character in accordance with a passage in the *Book of Acts* that describes the early Christian church in Jerusalem in radical economic terms;

All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had. With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and much grace was upon them all. There were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned lands or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales and put it at the apostle's feet, and it was distributed to anyone as he had need.⁷

the network of friends. HNH, Vol II: 212-216. I am of the opinion that following this resolution Hauge's writings become considerably less disjointed and more concise in their purpose. It seems that this doctrine became a unifying idea for Hauge, into which he was able organize his thoughts.

⁶ Ian L. Donnachie, *Robert Owen: Owen of Lanark and New Harmony* (East Linton, Scotland: Tuckwell Press, 2000).

⁷ Acts 4:32-35

Hauge argued from this passage that future industries and properties of the “friends” were to be held in joint ownership by those who lived in a given community, regardless of their social status.

Unlike these utopians, however, Hauge did not believe that a separation from society was necessary to form the ideal community. Rather, he wanted his followers to live in plain view of those who had attacked them. He wanted them to be active at the economic level and to blend their religious ideology with a social-economic practice that would visibly demonstrate their social value. He used religious metaphorical language from the Hebrew prophet, Isaiah, to make his point; “Ephraim’s jealousy shall subside, and Judah’s enemies shall be removed, Ephraim shall not be jealous toward Judah, and Judah will not be dependent on Ephraim.”⁸ He elucidated this passage by stating that Haugeans must be “mild and entice with the good” and thereby “win over through love all who are evil,” in particular “the poor of Ephraim” who “long for the good.”⁹ Like Joseph, the Hebrew Patriarch, Haugeans must learn how to harvest “for the needs of the body” in prosperous times, and to provide plenty for all in troubled times.¹⁰ Hauge was not interested in withdrawing *from* society in order to create a model of reform. Instead, he wanted to participate directly *in* society in order to demonstrate the correctness of his beliefs and to silence – perhaps even convert – the opposition.

There was a tension in this strategy between Hauge’s radical ideal for economic activity and his conservative intent to protect and preserve the community of believers. The new “job description” of the peasant lay preachers called them to have more than religious role in the communities. They were not to separate from the rest of the

⁸ This quote is from Isaiah 2:13; HNH, Vol. II: 212.

⁹ Ibid., 213.

¹⁰ Ibid., 214.

community as a special caste of religious leaders, as was the case with the Lutheran clergy. Rather, they were to be engaged in the temporal realm thus confirming their activity in the religious realm. This furthered the ongoing tension between radical and conservative impulses, which lay at the heart of the Haugeans in their formative years.

Hauge's first effort to practice the doctrine of "good deeds" was to apply himself to the temporal realm and then draw in his network of friends. He acquired a merchant's license in the city of Bergen, purchased a frigate and a local farm with the help of his friends, and then used his rural connections to engage in legitimate trade.¹¹ This commercial enterprise became the home base for Hauge and his friends to trade agricultural products and fish as they traveled throughout Norway. Twenty-nine Haugeans, that is twenty-three men and six women, were appointed to serve as commissioners for these commercial ventures.¹² The commissioners would act as representatives for Hauge in the outlying communities. Their job was to gather peasants together and call on them to participate in the venture by selling their goods to the Haugeans when their frigates arrived in the local ports, rather than taking the goods to commercial centers such as Bergen to sell to merchants there.¹³

Through this network, Hauge naively thought they would be able to stop the accusations of vagrancy and joblessness, and establish instead an image for their movement of material contribution to society. Apocryphal stories circulated that Hauge

¹¹ "Legitimate trade" was an idea developed in Britain at the end of the eighteenth century as an argument for ending the African slave trade and exploiting that continent through capitalist ventures. There is a parallel with Hauge here, but it is important to recognize that Hauge and his followers were a part of the peasant class they hoped to engage in legitimate trade. For a recent discussion on "Legitimate Trade" see a collection of essays in Robin Law (editor), *From slave trade to "legitimate" commerce: the commercial transition in nineteenth-century West Africa: papers from a conference of the Centre of Commonwealth Studies, University of Stirling* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

¹² Although these networks have not been adequately studied by historians, Norberg does some basic details of names and locations of the commissioners in the early years of the Haugeans; Norberg, 232.

¹³ For a fuller description of their economic duties and relationships, see Breistein, 51-63.

would trade much needed grain to starving communities for barrels of pickled and salted fish, even at a loss to himself. When one of his frigates arrived in port, the place of lodging became a temporary center of economic and religious innovation. Those in attendance at a gathering led by one of these lay preachers and traders would find that not only were their religious sensibilities aroused, but also their economic and cultural interests were inspired and informed.¹⁴

As the network of Haugeans took on this economic dimension, Hauge recognized a need to give their evolving relationships further definition. In 1802, he published *Ground Rules*, which was a set of guidelines for his followers consisting of seven chapters. Each chapter contained “articles” arranged in no apparent order, but rather appear to have been constructed extemporaneously. They were a blend of commands and faith claims, and they moved erratically between moral, economic, and religious directives that Hauge wanted his followers to heed. The broad message he wanted to convey was that Haugeans must remain faithful to Lutheranism, if not to the Lutheran hierarchy, and that they must conduct their business with integrity, albeit not within traditional commercial forms.

Hauge did not touch on the themes of Lutheran priests and the sacraments in his discussion in *Ground Rules*, but his religious radicalism was not absent in its pages. Rather, he sought to expand the definition of a “true Christian” outside the strict realm of the State Church;

Just as God is called by various names, so also are His children. Just as one uses various names to refer to God, or [to speak] about Him, so also do His children call themselves, siblings in the Lord, church, community,

¹⁴ Kullerud notes that some of the more rigid religionists among the Haugeans would complain that the peasant gatherings often became more commercial and less devotional; no doubt there was a tension between the sacred and the profane in such circumstances; see Kullerud, 223-230.

assembly, Christian believers, etc., which in fact have one common purpose, even if all the names are not equally comprehensive.¹⁵

While Hauge remained a member of the State Church throughout his life, his definition of a Christian contained a pluralistic tenor that departed from the hegemonic religious structure that had been in force for centuries in Europe.

Although religious themes were present in *Ground Rules*, Hauge prioritized economic themes.¹⁶ This is evident in the first article of the first chapter, where Hauge sought a divine justification for the use of material means that would focus on a solid work ethic for his “friends”; “Those who deny the use of earthly goods, neither know the Creator’s will nor believe in him.” He went on to state that those who rejected this rule were lazy and “not willing to use the world to do good”; or perhaps it was that they “loved the world too much.”¹⁷ It was clear from the very beginning of *Ground Rules* that Hauge’s worldview was a departure from the Pietistic dualism. He believed there was much good in the material world, and that the Christian should make good use it to improve their lot and that of their neighbor.¹⁸

Although his economic admonitions were usually pragmatic and marked by an optimistic progressivism, Hauge expected disappointments and frustrations to be common for his followers. The third article of the first chapter reads, “We must use many situations, even if some are merely chaff.”¹⁹ He hoped that his followers would be

¹⁵ HNH, Vol. VI: 171.

¹⁶ Typical Pietist themes are riddled throughout this work. Suffice to say, Hauge wanted his followers to remain faithful to Lutheran doctrine. The second and fourth articles in the first chapter emphasized the essential Christo-centric Lutheran doctrines that must be “protected in humility, lest we waste our senses on the good we have accomplished”; Ibid., 105, 109.

¹⁷ Ibid., 105.

¹⁸ Hauge did not suggest that this was a unique responsibility of the Christian. In the articles he readily admits that non-Christians were just as capable of doing “good deeds,” but he was arguing that for Christians this was an essential responsibility.

¹⁹ Ibid.

motivated by the necessity of doing “good deeds” and not be distracted by seemingly futile or frustrating results. Carrying on the biblical metaphor of wheat and chaff, he stated that “the one who harvests well, will have the most chaff.”²⁰ The twelfth article declared that discouragement and difficulties would confront their efforts of “word and deed,” but that the followers should prepare themselves “in [times of] progress for opposition” and “in [times of] opposition for progress.”²¹ He believed that good would ultimately win the day.

But Hauge also had fears for his “friends” as they moved in this new direction. He pointed out that opposition might not always come from the outside, but might also be internal; “Doubt is the hardest to suppress for true Christians ... the many kinds of doubt and how to find what is right.”²² According to Hauge, doubt and uncertainty were a necessary and daily experience for the faithful, and the most difficult kind of doubt to face was in knowing the Divine will;

But doubt concerning God’s pleasing will is, if we should wander one place or another to declare His Word, if we should be engaged in current commerce, factories or other work, one place or another, more or less, and give explanation for such action; [doubt concerning] being cheap in business, and in gathering materials for human advancement, [and] if – as much as is in our power – we should present ourselves as strict in self-denial and rejection of all that often harms the soul’s refinement.²³

Hauge was expressing the angst and uncertainty he felt over knowing how to employ temporal properly means to accomplish good in this world, and yet maintain integrity of faith. He feared that there were many dangers in the direction he had chosen and that Haugean activities might lead to conflicts among the “friends” and with others in society.

²⁰ Ibid., 105.

²¹ Ibid., 109.

²² HNH, Vol. V: 106.

²³ HNH, Vol. V: 106-107.

More important was Hauge's admonition that the Haugeans needed to be cautious so that they would not offend their detractors by their economic innovations. For this reason, he stressed in *Ground Rules* that a radical egalitarianism must pervade all Haugean relationships, whether with each other or with those outside their network. "Indifference toward others" was intolerable, and those who "rule over their neighbor, show that they do not know themselves."²⁴ This was a tall order aimed at leveling many social relations;

The best example we can give of good conduct in business and power to resist the evil enemy is when our actions are conducted in such a way that the other does not lose bread, but instead is sustained by it. When Christian believers engage in business or other professions to such a degree that the unbeliever loses his essential needs, then – even if others outside the peasantry benefit thereby – hatred is so provoked that good is hindered. On the other hand, if we conduct our business so that each one earns a benefit – especially if we till the soil, forest or other production, whereby many earn their bread – then the foolish can recognize and will not be misled by the envy and hatred of proud souls, who cannot stand what is good, but resist the Light, whose evil is so great.²⁵

Economic and religious agendas were to work hand in hand. The goal was to use agriculture, commerce, and industry to extend the religious goals of the Haugeans and gain approval for them.

During the first four years of commercial ventures, Hauge extended his vision for the peasant network. He traveled to North Norway, where his keen observation of the landscape, together with his rational outlook and idealism led him to imagine further potential projects that might assist the peasant economy. He encouraged friends to invest in various industries, such as paper mills, tile factories, salt plants, food processing plants, and printing presses, as well as to acquire large farms to function as agricultural and

²⁴ Ibid., 110.

²⁵ Ibid., 161.

manufacturing establishments. Such centers then could serve as nuclei for a religious awakening.

The purchase of the first Haugean industrial center at Eiker, which became fully functional by August, 1801, fulfilled several of Hauge's aims.²⁶ It placed Haugeans face to face with their detractors. Although this west-coast community was not Hauge's initial choice for an industrial plant, it was at Eiker that Hauge had faced opposition from a local clergyman, Dr. Fredrik Schmidt, and the local sheriff, Jens Gram. Hauge had been arrested there in 1800, but had managed to be released after just three days.²⁷ Since it was Gram who arrested Hauge on October 25, 1804, which marked the start of his decade-long incarceration, one might be tempted to see heroics in this choice of location. But Eiker was primarily a practical choice; given Hauge's desire to disarm his detractors; he wanted this particular clergyman and sheriff to be able to directly observe the Haugean efforts to do good in their community.

Another aim that the purchase of the Eiker mill fulfilled was to provide Hauge with an opportunity to bring other peasant lay preachers into economic activity. He convinced six "friends" to invest in the mill and the surrounding property. One was his brother, Mikkel, who only a few months earlier had been released from a two and half year term in the House of Corrections for his lay preaching activities. Bringing his brother to Eiker was more than just nepotism; it was done to gain approval for Mikkel's ongoing religious activities.

²⁶ Hauge originally had discussed with some of his followers the possibility of purchasing a mill in Ådalen and establishing a cooperative community. They were unable, however, to obtain a license to conduct business in this area and the plan was scrapped; Kullerud, 193-195. A full description of the Eiker cooperative can be found in Breistein, 126-132.

²⁷ Breistein, 248-249; Kullerud, 134, 142-143.

The mill at Eiker also included a large property on which to grow a community around a productive economy. Haugeans added several other industries to the original plant: a stamping mill, a bone-grinding mill, a flour and fanning mill, a tanning mill and a foundry for casting church bells.²⁸ The plant also functioned as a communal industry that employed the poor, widows and their young, as well as the mentally ill.²⁹ Most peasants who participated lived within the center itself, and they often reinvested their earnings into raw materials for the plant, thus becoming part-owners of the goods they produced. This economic strategy created an internal economy among “friends,” an economy that was later to arouse the suspicions of outsiders.

The Eiker cooperative became the model for other industrial and agricultural centers led by the Haugeans. These industries included another paper mill at Fennefoss in Hornnes (1804), a tile factory at Eeg near Kristiansand (1804), a print shop in Kristiansand (which is today one of Norway’s largest printing companies) (1800), and an agricultural center at Svanøygodset in Sunnfjord (1804). There was also Hauge’s own agricultural and trading center in Bergen (1800) and another center at Strudshavn (1803), just outside of Bergen.³⁰ Furthermore, the Haugeans attempted to purchase a copper mine in Vingelen in North Norway (1804), and a flour mill at Gravdal, but they failed to get authorization from the government. Except for the Bergen operation, Hauge did not personally own any interest in these ventures, but functioned merely as a motivating and inspirational voice for the peasant owners and their communities. It seems that Hauge did not have sufficient resources to engage in all of these cooperatives and industries

²⁸ Nodtvedt, 140.

²⁹ Breistein, 127-129.

³⁰ For a detailed description of the industrial centers at Eiker, Kristiansand, Fennefoss, Gravdal, Svanøe and Strudshavn, see Breistein, 120-159. Breistein provides a sympathetic view of communal life at Eiker.

himself, but perhaps he also foresaw that his direct participation might lead to trouble in the future, and so decided to keep some distance.³¹

What Hauge had not foreseen was that his eight years of intense activity from 1796 to 1804 had resulted in a movement that now threatened not only the religious elite, but also the economic elites in Norway. Following complaints from priests and bishops concerning the lay preachers, the printer's guild in Bergen launched a complaint in August, 1801, that peasants in their city - namely Hauge and his friends - had violated their privileged position as the King's printers. Hauge had not brought his religious works to them to be printed as he had with the printers in Kristiania. Instead, he had assumed that since these books were his, he and his friends had the right to print them and bypass the printer's guild.³² The printers saw this move as a significant loss of potential income, since Hauge's books were gaining a wide readership. The case went to court and Hauge lost. He was fined, but continued to print or have his books printed elsewhere, such as in Kristiansand and in Denmark.³³

Then merchants in Bergen complained. In early 1802, they accused Hauge of forming a monopoly over the movement of agricultural products. In the past, peasants would trade their products of dairy, meat, and cured fish on the docks of Bergen. This pattern of trade dated back to the height of the Hanseatic League, which had made Bergen the largest commercial city in Norway.³⁴ But Hauge and his friends in Bergen traded virtually at the peasant's doorstep through a growing fleet of frigates and their

³¹ When trouble began in 1804, Hauge immediately instructed his followers to clear up all debts to each other and dispose of property that might be attributed to him. This suggests that he was aware of the possible implications of his leadership among the "friends."

³² Hauge argued that the law protecting the printers, was to protect their right to print, not their right to monopolize printing; Breistein, 68

³³ Breistein, 66-68.

³⁴ Ernst Pitz, *Bürgerreinigung und Städteeinung: Studien zur Verfassungsgeschichte der Hansestädte und der deutschen Hanse* (Köln: Böhlau, 2001); and Rolf Hammel-Kiesow, *Die Hanse* (München: Beck, 2000).

network of commissioners and lay-preachers. In order to prevent the peasants from capturing their business, the merchants aimed their attack at Hauge's brother-in-law and manager, Johann Loose, accusing him of operating without a proper merchant's license. This was in fact the case, but Loose defended himself by insisting that he was merely acting on Hauge's behalf. Once again, Hauge was fined, but in time he was able to establish a circle of peasants around himself who could carry out his share of the movement's economic activity while he traveled.³⁵ In just a few short years it was evident to outside observers that Hauge's unconventional commercial activities were upsetting the status quo, just as his religious activities had done in communities throughout Norway.

Both court cases against Hauge suggest that he and his followers were naïve in matters of trade customs in Bergen. Their defense showed that they were ignorant of some aspects of the law and of common business practices. However, for a time, this naivety seems to have benefited the movement economically. Dagfinn Breistein has shown how often transactions between Haugeans were done with a minimum, and at times no, paperwork.³⁶ Simple trust in the word or promise of a "friend" was thought to be sufficient. They readily shared and pooled their economic resources, without the usual banking and legal fees that burdened the regular merchants.

In addition, the austere life of the Haugeans puzzled the Bergen merchants, who were astonished by the rapid success of these "fanatics" who nevertheless insisted on living modestly. The image of the simple lifestyle of the Haugeans in Bergen may be apocryphal as it usually focuses on the sensationally humble; spoons had to be borrowed

³⁵ Breistein, 68-72.

³⁶ Breistein devotes a full chapter to "Accounting" in his analysis of Haugean business practices; Breistein, 94-103.

since cutlery was scarce, beds were bare and even Hauge himself supposedly slept under a single blanket. The Haugeans wore plain shoes and clothing and maintained customary peasant styles and habits. They neither lived like nor looked like merchants.³⁷

The “real” merchants in Bergen were reluctant to accept Hauge as a competitor, much less an equal. Surviving transactions by merchants consistently refer to him as “a peasant in Bergen,” even though Hauge for a short time tried to pass himself off as “a merchant in Bergen” in the title of some of his religious literature. Thus he tried to abandon his earlier designation as a “peasant” or “son of a peasant.”³⁸ However, Hauge was to learn that success does not always breed respect.

In Hauge’s case, success bred jealousy, envy, and suspicion, which ultimately led to his incarceration in October 1804. Rumors circulated that the Haugeans shared “a common purse.” The fear was that these radical religious peasants were engaging in a conspiratorial secret society aimed at gaining a monopoly over the Norwegian agricultural and industrial economy. The notion of a “common purse” was that somewhere, somehow, these peasants had created a pool of money that financed a sudden flood of commercial enterprises in Norway. This competition was something that the ruling and commercial elite would not endure for long. Several bishops and merchants launched complaints against Hauge to the authorities in Copenhagen. Not wanting to repeat the conflict of the Lofthus affair, the Danish government decided to act first and judge later. They issued an order to arrest Hauge on October 30 1804. But Hauge already sat in jail at Hokksund when the order reached Sheriff Jens Gram. Gram had arrested Hauge at Eiker on October 25, which was to be Hauge’s last of ten arrests in his

³⁷ Ibid., 92-93.

³⁸ Ibid., 64-74; see examples of titlepages in HNH, Vol 1: 251; Vol. 2: 31, 163, 217, 309.

eight years of activity. He was then transferred to Kristiania. This time the incarceration lasted a decade.

Following his arrest, the Danish government appointed a commission to investigate Hauge's case. The first task for the commission was to decide whether to lay a charge against Hauge based on his religious activities, his economic activities, or both. They consulted Johan Nordal Brun, Bishop of Bergen and pastor of *Maria Kirken* (Mary's Church) where the Haugeans had faithfully attended services during their four years of operation in Bergen.

Little can be said about the relationship between Bishop Brun and Hauge. Brun was a respected conservative Lutheran clergyman with strong pietistic leanings. He had authored a number of religious and nationalist songs, such as Norway's first national anthem. Both he and Hauge barely mention each other in their writings, even though Hauge attended Brun's services whenever he was in Bergen. This illustrates both the disparagement that Brun felt toward these fanatical peasants, as well as the deep-seated anticlericalism that made it difficult for Hauge to acknowledge his own pastor.³⁹ Brun, nevertheless, acknowledged that the Haugeans ranked among the most faithful and active members of his congregation. He seemed to have admired their religious fervor, if only at a distance.

Bishop Brun had an authoritative and influential voice in Hauge's case; his letter to the commission set the charge against Hauge.⁴⁰ In his report, Brun dismissed the Haugeans as simpletons, ignorant peasants who knew nothing about doctrine, and even less about business. However, he recommended that the investigators should focus their

³⁹ Dag Kullerud provides a chapter on Hauge and Brun's elusive relationship, 121-132.

⁴⁰ A copy of the letter is included in Breistein, p. 279-280, and is translated in my Appendix.

attention on the economic dealings of Hauge and his friends rather than their religious activities. Brun may have surmised that if the investigation could prove that Hauge's economic success was due to fraudulence (*sværmeri*), then by implication his religious activity would reveal Hauge to be generally-speaking a fraud (*sværmer*), since Hauge had meshed his religious and economic ideals. Furthermore, Brun also spoke for his peers, the economic and ruling elite in Bergen, which was another reason to look for evidence of "a common purse" and evidence of economic fraud, rather than bringing a charge of religious fanaticism.

The Danish government followed Brun's advice and laid their charge against Hauge on economic grounds. It read that he, Hans Nielsen Hauge, peasant from Smålene, had ventured beyond his allotted social station and engaged in mercantile activity through a network of peasants, whom he simply called "friends." These peasants, the charge continued, were in fact a fanatical religious sect with a common purse controlled by the accused in order that he might personally profit from the decrepit state of the peasants whom he had deceived and swindled of their meager capital.⁴¹

It is noteworthy that the charge laid against Hauge did not directly mention anticlericism, nor any religious ideas, nor the violation of the Conventicle Law of 1741. These accusations had initiated the investigation of Hauge's affairs, which had led to the order for his arrest. But the charge did make clear that Hauge was a *sværmer*: a fanatical and troublesome deceiver of the peasant population.⁴²

⁴¹ Breistein, 179.

⁴² Both ideas of fanaticism and fraud are contained in the Danish-Norwegian word *sværmer* and its derivative *sværmeri*. These terms translate into English as "dreamer, visionary, fanatic, zealot, and enthusiast." But the terms also evoke two pejorative images: a mass of insects (similar to the English term "swarming") and a snake (similar to the English term "squirring"). The insect image implies impending destruction by a tumultuous swarming of undesirables and suggests the effect that uncontrolled fanaticism and fraud would have on the rest of the peasant population. The snake is usually a metaphor in Protestant

Hauge's effort to reconfigure the identity of his peasant movement failed to curtail the accusations of vagrancy and fanaticism that haunted the Haugeans during the four years leading up to Hauge's arrest. Instead, their economic efforts to avoid the accusation only added further accusations of fraud and deception.

imagery of satanic-like activity, usually characterized as being deliberately deceptive and possessing guile. By using the terms *sværmer* and *sværmeri*, the Danish government could easily shift between accusations of excessive religious affection and deliberate economic deception. Once having been labeled a *sværmer*, Hauge's charge proved to be malleable. When the charge of economic fraud was dropped in 1814, the Danish government justified their protracted imprisonment of Hauge and subsequent large fine on grounds of fanatical anti-clerical remarks (i.e., *sværmeri*) in his religious writings. See the Danish-English dictionary by Herman Vinterberg and C. A. Bodelsen, *Dansk-Engelsk Ordbog*, vol. 2 (Copenhagen: Gyldendalske Boghandel, Nordisk Forlag, 1956), 529.

Chapter Five:

Incarceration, 1804-1814

Hauge's arrest in 1804 removed him from his network of friends, and this loss led to a crisis for the Haugeans. The "friends" had to carry on the religious and commercial activity without their leader's inspiration and enthusiasm. They were left only with his writings and letters, as there was little contact between Hauge and his "friends" for the first half of his incarceration. His absence from Norwegian society gave rise to the image of a martyr.¹ But for Hauge, the alienation also led to moments of despair and self-doubt. He had, in fact, little contact with anyone during the first three years in jail. Historians and biographers typically portray this period of his life as a moment when he was physically – and perhaps psychologically – crushed. Perhaps so, but in spite of the severity of his imprisonment, evidence suggests that Hauge retained much of his idealism. Only after he emerged back into society in 1814 did his radicalism subside and a more reactionary impulse emerge.

Hauge's biographers have variously interpreted this period of incarceration. The hagiographical model, as exemplified by Jacob B. Bull's novel, *Hans Nielsen Hauge* (1919), offers a sympathetic perspective. Bull stresses the severe physical and mental impact that isolation had on Hauge, the time in prison representing a shift in Hauge's life

¹ Already in 1810 a biographical sketch of Hauge's life appeared in Norway and Germany, even though few persons other than family members had any access to him. The sketch was published in J. M. Schröckh, *Christliche Kirchengeschichte set d. Reformation* (Stuttgart, 1810), 640; cited in the bibliography in HNH, Vol. VII: 295.

from activist to sage. According to this novel, Hauge returns to society as a hero to the faithful, a living martyr. In effect, Hauge is dead after 1814. That is, according to this biographical model Hauge's life essentially ends either in October 1804 or in December 1814. An extreme example of this approach is Jan Halvorsen's book, *Hans Nielsen Hauge and the Spirit's Power* (1996), which unabashedly skips the decade of incarceration without making more than scant mention that Hauge was imprisoned.² Also puzzling is Sverre Norborg's critical and psychological interpretation in *Hans Nielsen Hauge: A Biography* (1966). Norborg for some unknown reason chose to end the biography with Hauge's internment in 1804.³

Another model of interpretation takes a more critical tone, and tends to focus on the legal wrangling of the Danish government over what to do with Hauge once they imprisoned him. This approach has validity when it places Hauge in a larger European context and complicates the dynamics around his protracted trial and sentencing. However, authors who adopt this model also tend to move Hauge to the periphery of the narrative after 1804, while they bring a variety of Danish and Norwegian officials to center stage. Hauge becomes a middle-age peasant quietly sitting in the background while various individuals stake their claim in his fate. Eventually justice, or at least partial justice, wins the day and the peasant is released to return to normal life. However, this portrayal is unconvincing. Given the tumultuous times of the Napoleonic era, a peasant trial in Norway would scarcely have been of central concern to the Danish government. Hauge's trial was significant, but not that significant. Furthermore, such an approach ceases to be Hauge's story after 1804.

² Jan Halvorsen, *Hans Nielsen Hauge og Åndens Kraft* (Trondheim: Hermon Forlag, 1996).

³ Norborg published his study in 1966 through a Haugean press known as Cappelens Press in Oslo.

An example of this model is Dag Kullerud's insightful and popular-styled book, *Hans Nielsen Hauge: The Man who Awakened Norway* (1996).⁴ Kullerud pays a great deal of attention to the trial, extrapolating dialogue from a number of interviews and court documents to lend a sense of courtroom drama to his narrative. Outside of a few pages where Kullerud places him on the witness stand, Hauge seems to fade from the narrative during this period. Furthermore, the recounting of the past through witnesses at Hauge's trial tends to remove the immediate experience of these years from the story and only serves to reemphasize Hauge's earlier years.

On the other hand, Magnus Nodtvedt's study, *Rebirth of Norway's Peasantry* (1965) offers an evenhanded perspective of Hauge's experience during this period. His chapter entitled "Hauge's Imprisonment and Trial" looks at both the legal and political dynamics involved in the case, as well as Hauge's own reflections on the experience.⁵ Furthermore, Nodtvedt adopts a respectful but critical tone in his analysis of Hauge that humanizes his subject. The narrative is sympathetic, and yet Hauge becomes neither a saint nor a sage. Moreover, the peasant is not silent or without agency; Hauge is engaged in his situation and yet crushed by the severity of his surroundings.⁶ In the end, he comes out of these years changed and more enlightened, according to Nodtvedt.

The years of incarceration were a time in Hauge's life when tensions and contradictions became more evident and doubts began to surface. Reflecting back on this experience in 1817, Hauge interpreted these as years when he was overcome by thoughts of "many things concerning one's self, and how to benefit from one's many mistakes and

⁴ Kullerud, 259-315.

⁵ Nodtvedt, 172-185.

⁶ As examples of agency, Nodtvedt draws attention to three petitions for his release that Hauge and his brother Mikkel drafted in conjunction with their friend, Chief of Police Wulfsberg; Nodtvedt, 178-179.

be more careful.” He added that it was also a time when “many temptations tormented me both inwardly and outwardly ... inwardly with evil thoughts and doubts concerning the Truth ... outwardly I was burdened by feelings to just see a brother and a friend, even if not to speak openly with them.”⁷ Hans Ordning, a descendent of Hauge and the editor of his works, described this as a period when, “[Hauge’s] memory was affected and his spiritual life with God was impaired so that he showed a declining interest in the simple Christian writings of his childhood as well as in the Bible.”⁸

Conversely, Hauge penned these verses during the early years of confinement,

Happy in the faith I will be
And always have a cheerful mind,
Yielded and taught to be free
For every form of virtue well inclined.

Which with love’s great gifts
With the Highest moral power
Poured out on him who ever lifts
New life from God’s Word’s dower⁹

This simple poem expressed both faith and hope during a time of “trial.” However, that Hauge produced contradictory statements during these years need not suggest an unstable mind, but rather, such statements likely reflected the internal struggle which took place as Hauge had plenty of time to re-examine his life.

Nodtvedt attempts to read into Hauge’s disparate statements a gradual shift toward more enlightened values and ideals. But his interpretation goes too far, both because Hauge already had displayed a good measure of enlightenment and rationalism earlier in his life - captivity did not give him this - and because there is no evidence that he was “more enlightened” after 1814 than he had been in 1804, unless “more

⁷ HNH, Vol. VI: 145.

⁸ HNH, Vol. I: 37.

⁹ Nodtvedt, 177.

enlightened” simply means that Hauge was less certain about his earlier ideas. But self-doubt is hardly a mark of the Enlightenment in the nineteenth century.

A less convoluted interpretation of the impact of the incarceration would be that Hauge simply wanted to get out of jail, and was willing to do whatever was necessary to achieve this goal. To suggest that Hauge was capable of pragmatic action in the face of trouble is entirely consistent with the Hauge of 1796 who found a practical way to enter an unconventional career. It is also consistent with the Hauge of 1800 who wanted to avoid further trouble for himself and his friends and at the same time generate a livelihood by adopting a comprehensive strategy of industry and commerce. Hauge had no moral point to prove by remaining confined, nor did he have any reason to become a “living martyr.” To suggest that Hauge was capable of sensible acts that might lead to his freedom is itself a sensible interpretation given Hauge’s earlier life history.

The conditions of his incarceration were deplorable, which was reason enough for Hauge to look for practical ways to achieve his freedom. Granted, Hauge’s cell was nothing like the horrid prisons in England and France during this same period, as described in the studies of Michel Foucault and Michael Ignatieff.¹⁰ But Hauge’s room was neither comfortable nor inviting.¹¹ Between 1805 and 1808, Hauge petitioned the Danish government three times for his release. These first three years of incarceration were the most trying. According to his autobiography, Hauge’s guards took him out into fresh air only three times in the first two years, and no visitors were permitted to see or speak to him. He was forbidden to have writing material of any kind. When he first

¹⁰ Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, translated by Alan Sheridan (New York: Pantheon Books, 1977); Michael Ignatieff, *A Just Measure of Pain: The Penitentiary System in the Industrial Revolution, 1750-1850* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978).

¹¹ The following information is gathered mostly from Nodtvedt, but I use his information to make a slightly different argument about Hauge’s pragmatism; Nodtvedt, 172-185.

entered his cell, he had only two *riks*-dollars with which to buy his food, and once these were exhausted he had to live on a daily ration of four shillings, insufficient to purchase basic sustenance, even for an inactive man. In order to “re-educate” him, the authorities provided Hauge when he asked for reading materials with rationalist books and pamphlets to read, such as Voltaire’s writings.¹² The prison experience therefore assaulted Hauge on multiple levels, threatening both his health and his religious sensibilities. He knew he needed to get out.

Furthermore, there is evidence that Hauge was willing to concede a great deal in order to gain his freedom. One such piece of evidence is seen in his 1806 statement to the investigating commission in which he conceded that he would be willing “to refrain from conducting devotional meetings” if that was the will of the king.¹³ Nodtvedt again interprets this as evidence that his Enlightenment thinking was gaining ground and his religious fervor was receding. But for Hauge to give up his independence on the grounds of a royal directive could hardly have been an Enlightenment action. Instead, such action is better explained in the context of the religious sensibilities that called Hauge to “obey those in authority over you” and peasant beliefs that idealized the peasant-king relationship by trusting that a king would ultimately act in favor of his peasants, if his meddling officials would just get out of the way.¹⁴ Given the extremity of his circumstances and the pattern of his past actions, Hauge had good reasons to obey the king, especially if it would expedite his release. Unfortunately, this attempt failed.

When petitions proved futile, Hauge looked for other opportunities to gain his freedom. Such a chance finally came in the winter of 1808-09 as famine arose in

¹² HNH, Vol. IV, 144-146.

¹³ Legal declaration quoted by Ording in HNH, Vol 1: 39.

¹⁴ Romans 13:1-4.

Norway, following the bombardment of Copenhagen in 1808 and the start of the French and English contest to shut each other out of the North Sea. With the sources and supplies cut off, starvation ensued and there was a desperate need to find ways to preserve meat and fish to transport into interior regions of Norway where the effects of the embargo were most severe. Recognizing this opportunity, Hauge wrote to the government commission responsible for solutions to the crisis, offering his services to secure salt-cooking plants along Norway's southern and western regions. All he needed, he said in a letter dated January 1809, was his freedom and a small loan. This time his effort paid off. He was released indefinitely to employ his mythical genius and extensive social network to establish much needed salt plants and help prevent famine from spreading further. With a little help from his "friends," Hauge established salt-cooking plants in Moss, Vallø, and Lillesand, all in the span of eight months.¹⁵ He is probably best remembered for this action by Norwegians today.

After these eight months, the investigation commission called him back while his trial continued. But Hauge had not wasted his freedom. In this short span of time, he had not only established the salt-cooking plants he promised, but had also set the wheels in motion to purchase a farm outside of Kristiania with the help of his brother Mikkel, and there he built a flour mill along an adjoining river. On the farm he planted trees and a garden. It is curious that during this period of freedom the court actually rendered its first guilty verdict on four counts of the accusations levied against Hauge on May 5 1809. The Judge who issued this verdict, Judge Collett, was later dismissed for incompetence, but the confusion over Hauge's trial and temporary release was merely representative of the broader confusion taking place in Northern Europe in 1809, especially in Norway.

¹⁵ Nodtvedt, 179-181.

Hauge's pragmatic and thrifty action shows that he was able to take advantage of such turmoil, if only for a limited time until the chaos abated.

For ten years the investigating commission erratically carried on its work while a public debate over this peasant from Smålene spread throughout Norway and Denmark in the midst of the turmoil of the Napoleonic wars. According to Dag Kullerud, the commission interviewed over 600 witnesses, which may well make it the largest trial in Norwegian legal history.¹⁶ During the period of incarceration, the authorities also arrested other Haugeans, but left most of them alone to carry on both their religious and economic activities with varying success.

By 1814, Denmark's ill-fated alliance with France had led to Norway becoming a vassal state of Sweden. A brief rebellion arose to establish a separate kingdom under the direction of Crown Prince Christian Fredrick of Denmark, but this dissipated when the new Swedish rulers negotiated a peace settlement with their Norwegian subjects that permitted the establishment of a semi-autonomous Norwegian parliament. Just seven months before Hauge's final sentencing, representatives from the various regions gathered at Eidsvoll on May 17, to adopt a national constitution and form a national constituent assembly for Norway. Among the representatives from the peasant class were a few "friends" of Hauge; apparently the Haugeans were beginning to gain political status in Norway.¹⁷

¹⁶ Kullerud recreates the commissions work in journalistic fashion; Kullerud, 259-315.

¹⁷ One-third of the representatives were peasants (37), though they represented 87 percent of the population. Twenty were from the army and navy, and all of the remaining were "odelsbønder," peasants who had inherited their land as the oldest son. At least three of these peasants were prominent Haugeans, and in later assemblies more were elected to represent their regions. It is important to recognize that several Haugeans elected to parliament were no longer ranked as peasants, but as merchants and industrialists. The peasants formed an official party and in 1836 became the majority in the parliament (*Storting*) at which point many innovations were introduced into the state church, and freedom was guaranteed for religious dissenters. See Nodtvedt, 232-243.

In the final year of Hauge's incarceration, several of the bishops and sheriffs resubmitted assessments of the Haugeans, who now appeared as a positive and stabilizing force for the struggling populace during difficult times.¹⁸ Even Hauge's old enemies at Eiker, Dr. Schmidt and Johan Collett, declared that the Haugeans had made themselves "rather well-deserving by many useful works, industry, crafts, and willingness to put in place whatever the official authorities required."¹⁹ This turn of opinion may have been late in coming for Hauge, but it was all part of what led to his eventual release in 1814.

But freedom was not to be assumed. A year before all allegations of economic fraud were dropped the authorities were still haggling over whether to imprison him for life or grant him freedom. The preliminary judgment on December 4 1813, was to fine him heavily and give him two years of forced labor for economic fraud. There was, after all, an element of truth in the charge of fraud against Hauge. As the "chief" of the Haugeans, he did utilize his connections and his reputation among the peasants to establish commercial and industrial works. Author Dagfinn Breistein, himself a Norwegian court judge, has reexamined Hauge's case. He notes that the finances for the Haugean enterprises did come from wealthier peasants or peasants who managed to assemble a sufficient fortune through friends and family to become part of one or more of the enterprises. Some of these ventures failed, resulting in the complete loss of peasant fortunes, as Hauge himself experienced. Furthermore, there never was a common purse, although the effect of mutual trust between "friends" did in many ways serve the same function. Perhaps trust based on personal bonds was even more powerful than a common purse.

¹⁸ Nodtvedt, 226.

¹⁹ Cited in Breistein, 297. Many of the letters submitted in favor of Hauge have been republished in his collected works; see HNH, Vol. VI: 52-64.

On the other hand, Hauge himself did not gain economically from his efforts, but lost his entire fortune to the government, which had repossessed his properties in Bergen and never returned them or adequately compensated him for them.²⁰ Hauge survived his incarceration by selling knitted wares and receiving some financial help from family and friends. Only during his brief release in 1809 to establish salt-cooking plants did Hauge's ingenuity bring him any financial gain. He was not a fraud or deceiver, but he did construct a community of "friends" whose activities all too often were deemed undesirable and fanatical by those outside.

It is difficult for scholars to access Hauge's state of mind and how he came to reevaluate his life and work during the years of incarceration. He did not write much during this period. At best, we can see in his actions much of the same ambitious drive that was present in the younger Hauge. He still believed in the economic and industrious vitality of his "friends" network, and was swift to take advantage of it when the opportunity arose in 1809. His farm was purchased with the help of his brother Mikkel and paid for by 1811, well before he was officially released.²¹ He remained respectful of the government, as he had been prior to his incarceration. At yet there is no evidence to suggest that his religious ideals had softened during these years, nor do his writings in the years immediately following his release permit one to draw such a conclusion.²²

²⁰ After 1814 the government returned a small sum of money for the repossession of his *gård* in Bergen, but this was paid in the new Norwegian currency and amounted to less than a third of the original purchase price. No other compensation was made to Hauge. The fine for his anticlerical writings and the cost of paying for the entire trial completely bankrupted him. However, his friends came to his rescue, paid the fine and provided loans to purchase his new *gård* at Bakke. It is apparent that Hauge's economic strength lay in his relationships more than in his pockets.

²¹ Kullerud, 308-312.

²² About a third of Hauge's writing were written following his release in 1814. These writings are primarily religious in content.

Whatever impact the decade of incarceration had on Hauge, one cannot claim that Hauge's radicalism had been stayed.

According to the authorities, Hauge still remained something of a threat. The only accusation against Hauge they used to justify their protracted deliberations was that he was guilty of religious fanaticism expressed through anticlerical remarks in his writings. As already noted, this accusation was not part of the original charge against Hauge. Nevertheless, several of Hauge's writings were clearly anticlerical in tone and intent, and he never publicly recanted them. The judgment on December 23 1814, included a heavy fine and required him to pay the costs of the trial, but the threat of forced labor was dropped and Hauge was free to reestablish himself in society as he pleased. Having lost his farm and fringes with little compensation from the government, he once again sought help from his "friends," and returned to peasant life.

Chapter Six:

The “Chieftain,” 1814-1824

In his last decade, Hauge married and returned to a traditional peasant livelihood. For much of Europe, these years marked the so-called “Restoration Period” that followed the Congress of Vienna (1814-15), where Austria, Russian, Prussia, Britain, and later France, set out to reestablish and reaffirm monarchical supremacy and restore a balance of power among the nations. Hauge’s life parallels this shift away from radicalism toward a conservative and even reactionary outlook. He retreated from radical ideals that he had avidly promoted among his friends from 1796 to 1804, into a religious piety largely devoid of the social and economic radicalism of his earlier years. Although Haugean enterprises, collectives, and social activity continued, they did so without direct linkage to the original religious motivations of the movement.

Hauge was not so much a broken man who no longer could resist the authorities in the way he had earlier in his life, but rather someone who came to see his friends as either unwilling or incapable of carrying on a radical program for reform in the peasant’s religious, economic, and social world. Therefore, Hauge turned his attention inward to distil the religious fervor of his friends and the movement, in the process abandoning his radicalism.

If they treat this part of Hauge’s life at all, historians and biographers have tended to portray his conservative turn as the result of the physical debilitation brought on by his

lengthy prison term. The image of a broken man is based on statements Hauge made in letters to his friends shortly after his final release in 1814, in which he claimed that his health was such that he would not be able to endure further judgment or imprisonment.¹ Hauge did not wish to fight his case any further, but stated that he preferred to accept “the results of this unique case which was so radically altered from its inception to its final ending.”² This image of a bent and worn-out peasant too tired to fight was immortalized in Jacob Bull’s popular novel, *Hans Nielsen Hauge* (1919) and then again in a 1936 dramatic film of Hauge’s life produced by Leif Sinding.³ For the most part, the secondary authors used in my study accept this portrayal of Hauge’s condition after 1814 as an explanation for his less radical and more sedentary and conservative life.⁴

The image of a frail peasant is not entirely accurate. One should keep in mind that Hauge’s statements to his friends followed shortly after the final judgment was handed down on December 23 1814. It is not surprising that Hauge would give such an expression of relief, given his ten year ordeal with the authorities. Moreover, Hauge may no longer have been able or willing to travel as he had in his earlier years, but his life was hardly sedentary. His farm at Bakke, where he had been permitted to remain under house arrest after 1811, was a beehive of activity and people. Up to twenty-three persons needed to be fed daily and directed in the business of the farm. When “friends” and clergymen came to visit the famed “chief” of the Haugeans, they were received with generous hospitality.⁵ Hauge and his friends discussed new plans for mills and printing

¹ Kullerud, 313.

² Cited in Nodtvedt, 185.

³ Jacob B. Bull, *Hans Nielson Hauge*, 245; “*Hans Nielson Hauge*” produced by Leif Sinding, 1936.

⁴ Kullerud, 313, Nodtvedt, 185, Halvorsen, 142,

⁵ Hauge was himself impressed by the influx of people to his farm; “I flatter myself to enjoy respect and friendship with the fatherland’s most enlightened and respectable men”; HNH, Vol. VI: 51.

presses up to the year of his death, and a few of these plans were attempted. In addition to his daily responsibilities and chores, Hauge authored a third of all his books during this period and also participated in writing a new translation of the Norwegian Bible. In the end, because the farm at Bakke proved to be too small for the hustle and bustle of Hauge's life, he felt compelled to purchase a larger property at Bredtveit in the spring of 1817, which only increased the economic and physical strain of his life. Throughout this time, Hauge struggled to stay solvent, failing at several enterprises involving his two farms.⁶ The magic of 1800 to 1804 may have been gone, but Hauge was rather energetic during the last decade of his life for a supposedly tired-old peasant.

But peasant life did bring him a bitter mixture of familial affection and tragic loss. He married his housekeeper and Haugean convert, Andrea Andersdotter, on January 27 1815. Their son was born on November 12 of that same year, but Andrea died just seven days after giving birth. Hauge's friends at the Eiker community had sent a young helper, Ingeborg Maria Olsdotter, to the Bakke farm a few weeks prior to the birth of Andreas Hauge. She remained at Hauge's farm to care for the child, and then married Hauge on January 22 1817. Together they had three children, all of whom died before Hauge himself passed away in 1824. It is evident that life after imprisonment brought much strain and disappointment, and it is not accurate to point merely to the years of incarceration to show that Hauge's life was arduous.

Turning then to the question of Hauge's politics, his writings during this period suggest that Hauge was de-radicalized by his perception of what was taking place within his circle of "friends." Material greed, disunity, and fanaticism were gnawing at the

⁶ Breistein provides a detailed description of the economic and social life of the two Hauge farms in Breistein, 317-324.

fibers that had once held them together, and Hauge searched for ways to reconnect and redirect his followers toward the ideals he imagined they once had shared. The mythical image that had emerged around him during his prison years gave him great respect among the Haugeans. However, he struggled to persuade them to follow him in the direction he thought they should go and spent the remaining years of his life focused on the internal dissensions and moral failures of his “friends.” During this period, reactionary impulses overcame radical ones as Hauge realized that his own followers were just as flawed in their promotion of religious renewal as the Lutheran clergy he had earlier so vehemently attacked, and they were as capable of corruption in their defense of their own economic status quo.

For this reason, from 1815 onward Hauge directed his pen toward his followers, rather than toward the broader Norwegian citizenry. The prophet turned on his own devotees, as the utopian vision faded. Hauge wrote doctrinal statements and published collections of sermons and songs, affirming traditional Lutheran dogma and calling on his followers to remain loyal to the state church and not be sidetracked by sectarianism.⁷ The sacraments remained largely undeveloped in his thought, as did any direct reference to the clergy; it appeared that Hauge did not wish to reawaken the animosity of the authorities when there was so much internal housekeeping that needed to be done. He wrote a history of the Church in 1822 to give his followers a sense of continuity with the historic past, beginning with the apostolic period of the first century and ending with the

⁷ Nodtvedt provides a chapter that examines the orthodoxy of Hauge’s theology, and concludes that although he held some notions of Arminian legalism and lacked in a systematic development of doctrine, Hauge affirmed most of Lutheran doctrines and consistently called his followers to remain loyal to the state church; Nodtvedt, 194-213.

rise of the modern missionary movement in the early nineteenth century.⁸ This history, predictably anti-Catholic in tone, idealized the meaning of the Reformation period and the rise of Lutheran Pietism as a force against corrupting tendencies within the Church. Hauge also added sections on Christianity in the north, which contained a good measure of nationalist sentiment in describing the Christianization of Norway, where he concluded with Scandinavia's essential role in the rest of the world through participation in the missionary movement.

What was absent from these writings, however, was any further development of Hauge's doctrine of good deeds. Several of the Haugean collectives and industries had survived into the post-Napoleonic period, and Haugeans could also be found among the members of the Norwegian Parliament from 1814 onward. His movement had gained respectability. It is, therefore, curious that Hauge no longer gave any significant practical attention to his "this-worldly" ideal, what he had called his "foundational teaching." But he had not changed his mind about doing good to one's neighbor: rather he believed that what he had feared in his 1802 publication, *Ground Rules*, had come true: Haugeans had allowed materialism and a rise in social status to curb their religious fervor. For Hauge, religious sentiment and fervency remained the absolute priority.

Two documents illustrate Hauge's preoccupation with "reconverting" his followers and his shift toward conservatism. The first was a publication titled, *A Short Excerpt of the Famed Doctor Tauler's Conversion History*, which Hauge had translated from German to Danish already in 1797, and then republished in 1821 together with a selection of writings by Johann Tauler (1300-1361). Tauler was a late medieval Catholic mystic from Strasbourg, who, in spite of his universalism (that all humanity will one day

⁸ HNH, Vol. VIII: 1-229.

be saved and none shall perish), was a favorite author of Pietists. His emphasis on free will suited Hauge's purposes for those "friends" who were straying from the path. The Catholic mystic had stressed three vital births for the Christian to celebrate; the birth of Christ, the spiritual birth of believers through the death of Christ, and the spiritual rebirth of the individual through the exercise of free will.⁹ The latter of these three permitted Hauge to stress the need for individuals to exercise their will to maintain religious fervour, both their own and that of their neighbors. It was not coincidental that Tauler's conversion was instigated, according to Hauge's narrative, at the hands of a common layman, thereby stressing the point that religious renewal could – and perhaps would – come from the spiritual fervency of the laity, if they were willing to remain faithful to spiritual goals of their movement. Hauge intended this publication to set personal conversion as a priority for the Haugeans and to inspire them to lead others toward conversion. There was none of his earlier radicalism in this document.

Another significant publication during Hauge's last decade was a small tract he authored in 1822 titled, *Hans Nielsen Hauge's Testament to His Friends*. This tract was intended to be his parting words;

As it may soon happen that my hourglass will run out, especially as I am much weakened by the great exertions and many sufferings, particularly in the body, I have decided ... to make known my last will, which you friends, on account of the friendship, faithfulness, and love that you have shown me, are asked and exhorted with gravity to carry out after my death.¹⁰

⁹ Johann Tauler, *Signposts to Perfection: A Selection from the Sermons of Johann Tauler*, Elizabeth Strakosch, ed. (St. Louis: Herder, 1958). Tauler had also been a favorite author of Martin Luther, which explains the authoritative character that using Tauler's biography would have in a Lutheran context.

¹⁰ HNH, Vol., VIII: 241.

According to Ingolf Kvamen's introduction in Hauge's collected works, Hauge's older brother, Ole, assisted him in writing this document that few others saw until it was published after his death in 1824.¹¹

The tract was distinctly conservative in intent. It laid out ten of Hauge's concerns for his followers, showing that he was anxious about what was to become of them after his death. The ten points can be summarized as follows,

1. That the "Spirit of grace and holiness that has rested on me" may continue to rest upon the friends and future converts.
2. That God's Word be held by the friends as their "most holy and beloved treasure above all other things in this world."
3. That the "friends" read Christian literature with "wise reservation," evaluate everything for its doctrinal soundness, and "teach correctly to use the spiritual and physical gifts."
4. That the "friends" be reluctant to "recommend any new or unknown books" and warn those who write books and devotional literature to first consult with the Haugean elders for approval of their ideas.
5. That the "friends" "hold to the genuine Augsburg Confession or the state religion" and thus avoid becoming sectarians. They should "attend Church, receive the sacraments, be married by the minister; likewise at funerals and in all other things have regard for good order."

¹¹ HNH, Vol., VIII: 234.

6. That the “friends” be particularly zealous in guarding against tepidity, security, and discord, which threatened their fellowship. They should humbly acknowledge these traits in themselves first and then in others.
7. That the organizational structure of the Haugeans must continue to be informal, “without signs or ceremonies.” Their relationships should be maintained “only through discussions, activities, and in part recommendations” in order to hold the trust of each other.
8. That the “friends” must make every effort to preserve their fellowship from succumbing to those who teach falsely: power-hungry intellectuals who “lord it over the Lord’s inheritance,” narcissistic sentimentalists, and hypocrites with feigned humility that veils their true motivations.
9. That traveling preachers and teachers must be tested and mature before the “friends” should invite them into their homes. A lay preacher must not be a neophyte in gifts and experience, and the elders must attend to the problems of discipline that arise among the lay preachers.
10. That the “friends” must deal leniently and tolerantly with those outside the fellowship and freely give to them willing-service and hospitality; “God can have many who love Him whom you don’t know ... therefore deal kindly with every person.”¹²

¹² Ibid., 241-249.

The document was marked by an ambiguity that suggests not only how much the Haugeans had changed in the post-Napoleonic period, but also how much Hauge himself had changed. The central point was a call for the “friends” to imitate the life of the Chieftain, whose authority had been earned by his martyr-like experiences. This point parallels Hauge’s 1816 *Travels* where he outlined his spiritual experiences in details he had been unwilling to provide in his earlier years.¹³ It was clear that Hauge wanted his life to serve as a model for his followers to imitate. However, “who” were the Haugeans to imitate: the younger Hauge, whom they knew through his early writings and expansive mythology, or the older Hauge who appeared in the pages of his *Testament*? The answer to this question was unclear.

Several characteristics of Hauge’s tract stood in marked contrast to his earlier writings. As already mentioned, his “foundational doctrine” of good deeds and the employment of material means to generate legitimacy for the movement is absent. At best, the idea had only an ambiguous presence in the *Testament*, as seen in points 3, 7, and 10. Gaining legitimacy was no longer a priority, and so Hauge had moved his “foundational doctrine” to the periphery of his concerns.

Another noteworthy characteristic of the tract was the absence of Hauge’s earlier egalitarianism. In spite of his claims that the movement would remain informal, rooted in mutual trust, and loyal to the State Church, Hauge’s *Testament* also advocated and authorized a hierarchical structure for the lay movement, as seen in points 4 and 9. He commissioned the “elders” at the top of the hierarchy with the duty to preserve doctrinal vitality and purity, monitor new publications and lay preachers, and especially keep a close watch on each other.

¹³ *Description of Hans Nielsen Hauge’s Travels, Important Experiences, and Events*, HNH, Vol., VII, 1-93.

The eldest must not shut their eyes to the guilt of their fellow elders in any kind of vice, but punish them properly as well as any other who has acquired the respect of the faithful and wants to be a good Christian. Such persons should be closely watched. Do not let them get used to flattery or softness, but let them endure even the distasteful food of sharp admonitions.¹⁴

The coercive potential of such a system may be obvious in hindsight, but to Hauge these were necessary measures to correct the “tepidity, security, and discord” that had become pervasive among the Haugeans (point 6). Since the hierarchy was situated outside of the State Church, Hauge was quite right to be concerned with sectarian tendencies among his “friends” (point 5). But he failed to recognize how the ambiguities of his vision for the “friends” expressed in this document also led toward sectarianism.

Embedded in Hauge’s *Testament* was the ironic implication that the young Hauge of 1796 to 1804 would not have endured the leadership of the older Hauge of 1814 to 1824. Hauge had become so concerned about his followers steering away from the course that he failed to see how he himself had departed from the course of his earlier years. Take, for example, his restriction on the publication of new books;

None of you should write or have printed your own or anyone else’s writings, nor recommend new or unknown books before they are tested in the Christian fellowship by the elders. Should any of our fellow believers set against this, then the elders together with the younger who have received God’s light should test the published books. If you find them beneficial, then talk to the person who has published them and find out why he didn’t consult with the rest of you. Refrain from recommending them and otherwise helping him to profit from them.¹⁵

A young Hauge never would have been able to launch his career under such restrictions that seemed designed to gain a virtual monopoly on printed material among the “friends.”

¹⁴ HNH, Vol. VIII: 248.

¹⁵ Ibid., 203.

This became even more obvious when Hauge asserted his eighth and ninth points on restriction for lay preachers;

Therefore, you must advise everyone, especially would-be teachers, that they themselves must first be wholeheartedly converted. I will also advance my heartfelt admonition in the name of the Lord that you true fellow believers, especially the oldest and most gifted in each place, keep a sharp watch over those who would edify others ... the one who would teach or instruct others, especially one who travels with that purpose, should not be a recent convert. Yet, with the supervision of the eldest, this might be allowed.¹⁶

Had his former Pastor and mentor, Gerhard Seeberg, applied such restrictions on him in 1796, Hauge would have been shut out of the Pietist network that he used to launch his career.

These contradictions and ambiguities were not mere ramblings of a tired old man, for Hauge was only fifty-one years old at the time he wrote his *Testament*. Rather, the ten point program contained contradictions that fear had produced in Hauge as he observed changes taking place among his followers. Such anxieties had wrought changes in the Chieftain as well; Hauge's earlier radicalism had finally succumbed to conservative and reactionary impulses.

¹⁶ Ibid., 207-208.

Conclusion

Two years ago, my family and I were heading east along a correction line in Alberta that connected two Scandinavian towns in the Canadian prairies: Camrose and Viking. Over the years this longitudinal adjustment in the prairie landscape had evolved into Alberta's Highway 16. Our destination was the centennial celebrations of Parkland Lutheran Church, located about half-way between the two towns, where my wife's family had its roots. Just a few miles outside of Camrose, we passed the old school house, where evidence of the weekend celebrations were still apparent, and then came the country store where my wife's family had their start in Canada three generations ago. Soon the Parkland Lutheran church appeared on the south side of the correction line. In the past, the building had always been deserted when we came to leave flowers by the family graves. Now cars, trucks and campers lined the edge of the graveyard. With new paint and a new roof, the old building appeared to be flourishing once again.

We were late. The small auditorium, where grey hair clearly predominated, was packed. The kids ran downstairs to check out the food, while I positioned myself carefully among the latecomers who filled the foyer. I had never been inside Parkland Church before, and what I saw caught me by surprise. This did not look like the Lutheran state churches I had grown accustomed to in my childhood growing up in western Norway. The pulpit was much too small and too low. It brought the speaker uncomfortably close to the congregation. The altar, less than a quarter the normal size,

was virtually devoid of the customary carvings and paintings. Only a simple picture of Jesus knocking on a door hung centered at the back of the narrow altar.

While the pastor rambled on about how weakness becomes strength, I leafed through a brochure on the history of Parkland Lutheran Church. In the first paragraph of the brochure I discovered that the church had its roots in the Norwegian Haugean revival lay movement of the early 19th century. I knew enough about this movement to explain why the church was located only twelve miles from the heart of western Canadian Lutheranism, why the auditorium was so simple, and why the Messiah Lutheran men's chorus sang only evangelical songs, with the exception of the mandatory singing of Luther's "A Mighty Fortress".

Standing in the foyer, I thought about the place of this Lutheran congregation within the large cultural landscape of that elusive notion called "Canadian identity." A few weeks earlier, I had been told that this identity is best described in the broad terms of "multiculturalism." But this statement was from a musician who was seeking to define the Canadian musical landscape.¹ What was before me was neither music nor art, but religion. Certainly religion has also contributed to the pluralistic quality of the Canadian dominion, but Parkland Lutheran Church is only a minuscule chip in the enormous abstract puzzle of "Canadian identity." This fragment of identity was birthed in the social turmoil of the nineteenth century Norwegian peasantry and was transported across the Atlantic to Canada by peasant immigrants who had left one peripheral culture to set up a new peripheral culture on the Canadian prairie.

¹ This is a definition taken from Sonja Boon's presentation at a Master of Arts, Liberal Studies, conference at Maastricht University, Maastricht, The Netherlands, May 2003.

This experience impressed me deeply as I was at that time only a few months into my study of Hauge's life. Questions were beginning to surface about my own life that seemed strangely linked to my reading of Hauge's. My father and great grandfather were both preachers whose work and ministry was deeply marked by the traditions of the lay preacher movement in Norway. Within myself, I have recognized a deep affinity with forms of egalitarianism and with the implied bitter "anticlericalism" directed at "priesthoods" of our contemporary society, including "priesthoods" of which I had been a member in recent years. I have pondered how deep this identity must lie. Then there is my marriage: neither Tracy nor I were raised as Lutherans nor did we meet in a Lutheran or Scandinavian environment. So was it fate had brought us together, or was there a shared culture rooted in our separate families that we subconsciously recognized in each other? If so, have we transferred that culture to our children? What other aspects of this cultural identity do I still not recognize? What are its pride and conceits - which all identities must necessarily possess - that are so carefully cloaked with a self-perception of humility, simplicity, vague egalitarianism, and passive demeanor? Are there radical and reactionary impulses that guide the attitudes of my life of which I need to become more aware? I had to admit that Hauge's life has disrupted mine and was calling for greater reflection. Biography can have such an affect, and can be a deep source for self-exploration.

But Hauge's story is about more than just the individual. It belongs to that large ambiguous category of religious dissent, or radical religion as it is also sometimes called. Religious dissent continues to exist in various Norwegian communities today. A demand for disestablishment persists, as Norway has one of the few remaining state churches in

the western world, where Lutheran pastors continue to function as representatives of the state. Added to the call for disestablishment comes a plea for less clerical control over the church and greater pastoral and ministerial responsibility delegated to responsible laypersons. These seemingly traditionalist and conservative groups of predominantly lower-middle-class families descend from a historical tradition of radical religious movements in the late 18th and early 19th century, which attempted to carve out an identity that was thought to be an antithesis to the religious, state and economic “priesthoods” of Norwegian society. The Haugean lay movement was the first nationwide social movement in Norwegian history, and perhaps also in the history of the Germanic countries in the modern era. Widespread radicalism in Northern Europe found an early expression through religious sources among Norwegian peasants.

Scholars of religious dissent debate the relationship between the historical context and the played by ideology in the formation of radical religious movements and their subsequent influence on society and culture. Colin Bonwick argues in *English Radicals* (1977) that it is social context that directly and primarily forms the various expressions of radical religion. This notion belongs to a school of thought rooted in Hanna Arendt’s *On Revolution*, (1963) and E. J. Hobsbawm’s *The Age of Revolution* (1962). For the most part, they are dismissive of role of Christian ideology in the formation of the revolutionary movements in North America and France. Other scholars have argued the contrary; such as David Levine in *Religion and Political Conflict in Latin America* (1986) and James E. Bradley in *Religion, Revolution and English Radicalism* (1990). Levine and Bradley argue that religious ideology can strengthen and promote

revolutionary and radical movements, and that radical religion is a product of the dynamic interplay between contextual realities and ideological developments.

While I am prone to agree with the latter position, my study of Hauge favors the former position; as the contextual realities were changing, so did the Haugean movement, eventually moving from radicalism toward a conservatism similar to other European peasant movements in the nineteenth century. My study is not conclusive, but Haugean religious dissent appears to have been a vehicle for radicalism in its early stages, but became increasingly reactionary after 1814, and this turn was brought on by changes inherent within the religious movement as it moved into the modern era.

There have been some obstacles to carrying out my study. One such obstacle is rooted in the awareness that neither ideology nor context is static. The dynamic quality of both demands a continual rethinking, reshaping and redefining of the identity that the two form together. The study of Hauge is particularly challenging because the period in which he lived and functioned was a highly dynamic post-revolutionary era; a period that saw the birth - or some might say conception - of Norway as an independent nation. But he also lived in a period of reactionary conservatism following the Napoleonic wars. These were two very different historical contexts, even in Norway, and Hauge's life and ideology reveal the dichotomy of being caught in their inherent contradictions.

A further problem is the dreaded matter of relevance. In the end, Hauge remained a peasant for most of his life in a country that would seem to be both peripheral and of little consequence to the larger western world. Hauge's story may not be directly relevant to the central concerns of Europe during this period; neither was it significant to the concerns of the Danish government, even though Hauge may have held a central

place in the minds of the Norwegian peasants for a brief period in time. So why should we bother with this peasant, beyond personal interest? How does his life inform a student of liberal studies in Canada?

To study Hauge's life is to study that seemingly strange and sometimes abstract space called religious faith, a space which consists of neither pure reason, nor pure sentiment. At the same time, faith is rarely devoid of either reason or passion. Faith is one of the windows through which many people interpret their world, and the world they see also provokes a re-interpretation of faith itself. Hauge's life illustrates the dynamic interaction between the voices of faith, reason, and passion. Faith is all too often missed or ignored in our liberal studies, and when it is recognized we tend to see it as peripheral or in a dichotomous relationship to reason and passion. My case study of Hauge suggests that faith, reason and passion maintain a dynamic interaction in the life of the religiously inclined and the religiously curious.

But a study of Hauge has further relevance. Early modern popular movements have been of considerable interest to social and political historians, but their study has serious limitations. Popular culture of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries consisted of lower classes that were predominantly illiterate. This meant that radical ideas had to reach peasant culture through other channels than purely literate ones: popular readers and promoters of radical ideas who worked on the local level interpreted these ideas for peasants. It is therefore difficult for a twenty-first century observer to enter early modern peasant minds as they adopted radical ideas; the subject always arrives through the third person.

Nineteenth century Norwegian peasant society, however, provides a useful study for those wishing to explore this question of the popular receptivity of ideas as society was changing from pre-modern to modern. The population of Norway during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, well over ninety percent rural, lagged behind much of the continent in the process of urbanization and industrialization. Indeed, one could argue that rural Norwegians during the time of Hauge shared more in common with the sixteenth century continentals than those of the eighteenth and nineteenth century, with the one exception that the Norwegian peasantry was semi-literate. By studying Hauge and his “friends” – who have left behind a vast supply of literary documents - we can begin to explore peasant perceptions as they experienced a period of transition from pre-modern to modern society.

Hauge may have only been a passing dot on the historical landscape of Norwegian peasantry: a petty radical religious lay leader who stirred up a number of local peasants to both religious and economic action. Perhaps he would have been entirely ignored, had it not been for many of the fears of the reigning authorities of a possible revolution in a time when the small Danish empire was facing so many external pressures in the political turmoil of the European states. However, in order to expedite Hauge’s trial and unravel the many accusations against him, it became necessary for the government to extend the proceedings to a long drawn-out investigation into one of the largest cases in Norwegian legal history.

Many witnesses were called on by the investigating commission. Norwegian peasants were asked to make up their mind about the nature of Hauge’s religious and economic activity, as well as that of his “friends.” This had the effect of forcing the

peasantry to form an opinion on the movement and its leader, thereby placing Hauge in the imaginative and symbolic center of peasant frustrations with the ruling elite during a crucial period of change. Caught in a paradox of individual liberty and the mounting needs of a society entering the modern era, this radical religious movement in Norway, under the example and ideology of their leader, Hans Nielsen Hauge, carved out a dissenting identity that gave voice and resolve to the peasants' frustration over the inequities and disarray they experienced.

In sum, Hauge's story illustrates an individual life living in the middle of large historical forces that rapidly change and shape the world. Such a study may not be directly instructive to our present situation, but it does provide clues as to how ideology and action interacted on the most basic level in periods of great flux. Hauge's life mirrored, if only partially, the changing social and ideological landscape in Europe at the turn of the nineteenth century. The shift from the 1789 revolutionary era to the era of restoration following the Congress of Vienna in 1815, informs a narrative of how the radicalism of the earlier years developed, was arrested, and then was tempered. Hauge's story legitimately belongs within the broader continental experience of this period, as his early radical years yielded to later conservative impulses to protect, preserve, and correct the religious community that had once been formed by the radical impulses of its founder.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Hauge's Second and Third Near-drowning Narratives, 1796.¹

When I was sixteen, I reaffirmed my baptismal covenant, and thought that I should hold to that which I greatly feared to trespass; I had heard much of God's Word from my teachers, such as Mr. Hammer and my father, and it had impressed itself on my heart, but the desires of this world gained the upper hand. A little while later I came into danger in a river that I had fallen into, and called out until my sister came and rescued me. This time, my body suffered even more than it had in the previous time in the river.

Once more I was in danger in water. It was in the river at Sannesund, and it was in my opinion life threatening, since it was as though a knife went through my heart and soul and lasted a few days. I did as other people of the world would do, and prayed to God when the danger arose, and could also thank him once the danger passed. Nevertheless, in all these dangers, I continued my affair with this world and sought to increase my temporal properties in every way, as I noticed that the one who has something receives honor in this world. Many appreciated [my effort], so I wanted more, but then wondered if it was pleasing to God. It was at this time I came into many dangers. ... Among many things, I became close to a man who wanted to befriend me, and so I was with him. He was very prone to dishonesty, cursing, and drunkenness. The last of these two I addressed and he relented a good deal when we were together; but the first [continued], which was his greatest vice, and which I also warned him of. When it

¹ HNH, Vol I, 110-111.

was apparent that this was to no avail, I made excuses for what he would say, which one must mostly use for evil persons, but it is not right before God. Once, together with this man and another person, I came into noteworthy danger: we took an oak boat and placed a cow in it to row over the river. It was winter and there was much ice. We layed [the cow] in the bow and went out onto the river. The cow began to stir so that the boat was about the tip and water came over the sides. Death threatened and I prayed to God with my whole heart that He would help us, since at that time I had greater trust in Him than in the previous dangers. I thought; I need not be afraid. But then fear overcame me, and the two others began to shout even though it was not possible that anyone could save us. When they saw that hell threatened, they too prayed to God, as so often happens in times of need with the fear of a slave. But when we, by God's grace, came over to the other side, I said to them; "Why were you so afraid? As the heart is, so the mouth speaks." My friend replied, "One does not consider death, while one walks in his sin." It became such that God provided an opportunity for repentance.

Appendix B: Hauge's Anticlericalism, 1796²

You honor the self-righteous, but God looks to the heart; so what is great to man is an ugly thing to God, as Jesus tells us in Luke 16 and Matthew 7. But guard yourselves for false prophets who come in sheep's clothing, who inwardly are vicious wolves. You shall know them by their fruit. Can one pick grapes from thorns or figs from thistles? ... Since teachers or those who would be priests have always deceived, in a little time, as it is already; they stand as Pharisees, proud and greedy, and it would be best if there were not such now. After Christ's time, the great Popes were raised up and called themselves Christ's Statesmen, who offered scriptural proofs that they could forgive the sins of the people, if such [proofs] exist I do not know, but I believe they will not find scriptural proofs before they are dead, so in its place they can claim for a sum of money that the soul is with God, as they all need a good wage for the sake of Christ, regardless of what they do.

A defense against accusations made against my writing.³ 1) That I should not have included the letter [to Seeberg] in my introduction, for it was a rapprochement. Far from it! But if [Seeberg] has been incorrectly accused, then he could be free and God honored. All I have asked is that each one should look within themselves first, and then to others. 2) That I offend teachers and claim that the true Gospel does not move forward, that I emphasize the law and self-righteousness, and upset religion. What I have written about the teachers everyone can affirm is unfortunately all too true. And that these

² From *God's Wisdom* (1796), HNH, Vol. I, 185-6.

³ At the time of writing, Hauge had only one previous book published, so he must be referring to criticism he received over his book, *The World's Folly* (1796). In this section he defends his right to attack the priesthood for their failure to uphold the moral and social order of the peasant communities; from *God's Wisdom*, HNH, Vol. I, 233-235.

righteous ones can not tolerate my words, but when one beats the dogs every once and a while, then the one who has been hit will pine. How can I ask someone to repent before I first tell him where he has gone wrong, or teach him to do right before he is persuaded that he has done something wrong. ... 3) That my whole work, and in particular my autobiography, was very poor. This is true, according to the wisdom of this world ... but where are the wise? Who is well-learned? Has not God made the wisdom of this world to foolishness? ... In my story I prided myself in my times of danger and adversity. Paul and other men of God did the same, and that was intended to be a warning to others. But my own conversion and experience of the Spirit I could not write about, for such sacredness should not be cast before dogs, and as conversion is not the same for each person, it is not useful to describe it.

Appendix C: Bishop Nordahl Brun's Letter Concerning the Haugeans, 1804⁴

To the humble declaration before the Highest Court, of the 30th of the previous [month] concerning H. N. Houge [sic] and his followers, I have hereby the honor to state what I have experienced in this diocese for seven years. Their books concern penitence, repentance, and strict seriousness of soul. I do not view this as fanaticism. Not cursing, lying, or carousing characterizes them. I would not dare to make such a claim. They could certainly be a kind of hypocritical Pharisees, but if they are such they stand under God's judgment. Their books are the most miserable and disjointed, but marked by always appealing to the Bible for its proof. They misinterpret the Bible here and there. But where is the enlightened learned one, who has not at one time or another said the same? And does not the state tolerate those who write in opposition to the Bible, directly against our positive religion? They are wretched speakers and only win over the simplest and not even them, when the priest preaches according to the Bible and lives according to what he preaches. So has their gatherings in the city of Bergen disappeared by themselves. There are none of them here now. Here they live peaceably, communicating as others do, and faithfully attend church. I do not believe that cowardliness is the word to characterize their speakers with, either in their purpose or in their activity. It is truth that by inappropriate hanging of the head and a clinging voice they affect a kind of piety specific to them and become rather worse than better, but do not hypochondriacs do the same? Is it surprising if the sick, who have without success sought a doctor, finally put their trust in a quack? The cultivated world uses suicide. Such is not heard of among them. Nearly all of them are effeminate wretches, the least powerful portion of the nation, and can therefore never be a danger to the state. Both temporal and spiritual

⁴ Taken from Dafinn Breistein, *Hans Nielsen Hauge: Kjøbmand i Bergen* (1955), 279-280.

authorities have permitted themselves to treat these in such a way that no one else would have tolerated unprovoked. Hans Nielsen Houge [sic] has been arrested more than once because of incorrect accusations, [he] is declared free and released, but always without compensation. Enormous accusations have come to me from priests in the Bergen diocese, [which I] investigated and have not been alone in finding them to be incorrect; but nevertheless I have a few times needed tact to not let the complaints fall too far away. On the other hand, I believe their mercantile enterprises should be brought to the attention of the government. Hans Houge [sic], no less, a bookkeeper of a so-called common purse and between all of them there is to be kind of communal rule. In recent times, in a half a year they purchased Svanøen for 12,000 Riksdollars, Strudshavn with its church for 11,000 Riksdollars, a ship for 3000 Riksdollars, in addition to a number of frigates, which travel along the coasts of Norway for their control. No one knows where all this money comes from. They have no rich members among them here. True, Houge [sic] has become a citizen of Bergen; but it seems to me that the change of step of he and his followers could lead to land deals, and that although he may not wish to deceive, also one fears also to bankruptcy of the sort where many gullible will lose. If our gracious government can prevent this, I humbly appeal.

That there will be found wolves in sheep's clothing in a corporation as numerous as this one, that foolish and poor vagrants wander among them, is not surprising. But this will be the case in any religious fellowship.

Appendix D: Hauge reflects on the French Revolution, 1798⁵

Some fear that it will go here as [it has been] in France, if we progress further; but they do not correctly discern the matter; that revolution, war, pestilence, and grave times will not come, as we love God and carry forward His honor to our neighbor's benefit, if [our neighbor] will recognize it. But as to sin's evil business, France has reached its goal in various places, which is why God's just punishment has come on them and seemingly hangs over the whole world which remains in evil (John 1; Ephesians 5; Colossians 5:19). Nevertheless, God's goodness and rich patience toward us and other countries entices us to repent; those who reject this, gather God's wrath for the day of revelation, especially since God has currently so clearly exhorted you through his Word and servants, that you should not take God's grace for granted. And just as warriors do not strike again alone after they have been slain, but also fall upon their superiors, while we who are true Christians conversely pray blessings on [our superiors] and persuade through Christ [those] who persecute us: Have I spoken ill, then prove that it is evil; have I spoken justly, why do you strike me (John 18, 23: 5)? The worldly claim that each should remain in their calling, just as he is called, according to [the Apostle] Paul's word in 1 Corinthians 7:20, and the priests say [that] they are installed by God and king to preach God's word. But if they were installed by God, then he would have taught them (John 6) and they would have without guilt, just as they would have provided guiltlessness (Matt 10), preaching in season and out of season, punishing and exhorting.

⁵ From "The Simple's Learning and the Powerful's Strength," HNH, Vol. II, 71-72. I have chosen this passage of many passages, as it illustrates many characteristics of Hauge's thoughts and writings in the pre-incarceration period. It shows how he interpreted large continental events in terms of the local struggles against authorities. It shows how he meshed a language of resistance with Biblical metaphors. And it also illustrates the kind of pervasive anti-clerical sentiment in his writings that eventually led to his arrest. This passage continues and eventually leads to a complete denial that there is such a thing as a special priesthood.

Yes! If they had the mind of Christ, then they would sorrow day and night over evil. But now they have become the great whore who is seated on the many waters (Revelation 17) or people and crowds. This woman, whose evil goes whoring with purple, precious stones, holds a gold chalice in her hand with all kinds of ugliness. ... The beast gives to her papal powers to threaten all around her, who learn by daily experience that, for many, hate for priests is more to be feared than God. They [the priests] battle against the Lamb, but the Lamb shall defeat them (Revelation 14). The ten horns is the law written on the hearts of all humanity, which the beast also has; these shall hate the whore and make her to be naked and eat her flesh, and consume her with fire. When those who strive against Jesus defends these evil ones, then the authorities must punish their greed and invented words, according to God's command (2 Peter 2) so that their conscience is torn from the lust of their flesh. The one who has wisdom should take heed to this.

Appendix E: Hauge's Testament to His Friends, 1822⁶

As it may soon happen that my hour glass will run empty, especially since I am so weak from the great exertions and manifold sufferings, mainly physical, I have decided, in the name of God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, with prayer for His enlightenment and leadership, to set forth here my last will which you friends with the friendship, confidence, and love you have reciprocated are herewith earnestly asked and admonished to execute after my death.

1. That the Spirit of grace and holiness, which has rested upon me, and which you have received, may that Spirit still rest upon you and upon all those who hereafter receive Him and believe God's holy Word.

2. The holy Word of God, Jesus' teachings first, then the writings of the Apostles and the Prophets, inasmuch as they concern the soul's essence, faith, and morals, be for you the most holy treasure above all other things in this world.

3. All other writings which have knitted together the contents of the Holy Scriptures, also your catechism and the many books you have tested and accepted as good, these read with an open and believing heart. Read other untested writings with a certain reserve, so you don't set your heart's confidence in them before you have accurately tested them. This test should not be a matter of rumination, nor imagination, but a prayer to God for the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit, also by seeing whether these books conform to the Sacred Scriptures, especially in these points: If they teach the true belief in Jesus Christ, who redeems from sin, death, and the kingdom of Satan, so that they who believe do not live in the kingdom of sin and Satan, but serve God righteously,

⁶ This translation is partly my own from HNH Vol. VIII, 241-249, and partly adapted from Joseph M. Shaw's translation in *Pulpit under the Sky*, 201-210.

innocently, and blessedly. They are not, then, their own, but are His people who from their love for Him are very assiduous in good deeds. Also, that they in instructing do not neglect to teach the Father and the Holy Spirit as well as the Son, so that none of the Triune entity is left out or one put higher than the other, for all three are One. True doctrine insists that we acknowledge the depth of sin in us, together with conversion or regeneration, loving God and one's neighbor as one's self, so that a many denies himself to follow in Jesus' footsteps.

Finally, if they teach as Jesus did regarding the narrow gate and the straight road, about temptations and the patience to suffer always, as long as we are living here, about staying awake, praying, and having to some degree a fear of falling. If we learn, we stand fast, working out our salvation with fear and trembling, never imagining that we have grasped it perfectly, but always hastening forward on the road of life we began. There is a violence we should apply to God's kingdom. Those who use violence take it by force. Thus security and luke-warmness are to be regarded as great sins. Also, it is the duty of every Christian to confess God's name in words and deeds according to each one's talent and power, so that all are striving together to assemble the people of God.

I recommend the books which follow the above-mentioned points with Bible passages substantiating the teaching. Such books must not strive against God's order in the realm of nature, but correctly teach the use of spiritual and physical gifts with thanksgiving, guarding against the scruples of reason which seek to instruct about spiritual things not understood by the teachers themselves. Such teachers also let their doctrine soar beyond the light given from God, thereby making it indistinct and dark.

4. None of you should write or have printed your own or anyone else's writings, nor recommend new or unknown books before they are tested in Christian fellowship by the elders. Should any of our fellow believers act against this, then the elders together with the younger who received God's light should test the published books. If you find them beneficial, then talk to the person who has published them and find out why he didn't consult with the rest of you. Refrain from recommending them and otherwise helping him to profit from them. However, use the good Word of God to the enlightenment of others. On the other hand, if you find the published books inferior, then not only talk to the publisher about it, but inform also those who might have obtained the books about the wrong teaching. Also write to others so they will not have anything to do with the books.

5. You know, friends, that to this day we have closely hold ourselves to the evangelical teaching in accordance with the true Augsburg Confession, the official religion of the State. Yet some have regarded us as a sect, for which they have absolutely no ground other than our detesting the vices with which many have dishonored the Christian Church. On the other hand, we have applied ourselves to all good virtues in accordance with the Word of God. If we should be called a sect, then let us show in our lives that we ought to be called the virtuous sect or, indeed, the godly sect, and demonstrate by spiritual and bodily actions that these are like the virtues of Jesus. Therefore, it is my last will that you henceforth, as before, fully hold yourselves to our State religion, so that you receive from the appointed teachers all that pertains to their offices. You will, then attend church, receive the Sacrament, be married by the minister. Likewise, at funerals and in all other things, have regard for good order.

6. There lie on my heart especially two fears which have been with me and will continue with me until my last day, namely: tepidity or security, and discord. I fear lest these should force their way in among the believers. Therefore, it is my fervent admonition that you above all things guard against these dangerous enemies, that they do not gain entrance, as they certainly have their root in other sins. Security stems from pride and imagining that one is fully developed. Luke-warmness (i.e., tepidity) is nourished partly by the unstable mind which tires of the pure Word of God which fails to tickle the senses, partly from his failure to receive enough esteem and glory, partly from a lazy nature, and the love of the world or the flesh which does not find its delight in God's will. Discord has its greatest source of strength in pride; a man will not admit his sin, but wants to rule over his fellowmen. Secondly, in that a man is jealous of those who are better. Thirdly, that he has a singular hate against people, and also, in part, that he demands too much from his neighbor and little or nothing from himself, beholding the speck in his brother's eye, but not perceiving the log in his own eye.

You must, therefore, always keep watch over yourselves and keep an eye on others, so the enemies of your salvation do not break in. Bear in mind that where two become divided, each pulls his own way, and very soon you can destroy the glory with which the rays of God's glory now adorn you. If you notice any dissension or estrangement against one another, which most often comes out in unreasonable and groundless accusation, aspersion, and slander in a greater or lesser degree, then sacrifice everything in order to control this yourself, or ask for help from others whom you think better qualified than yourself to do so. Point out to those people who dispute what a great evil they are committing against God and their neighbor as well as themselves.

Investigate, and if they are equally guilty, punish both equally without distinction. If one has more guilt, then punish him harder and exhort to unity, but also remind the less guilty or innocent (which is seldom the case) that he must forgive. Use all means toward harmony, because of the better one we demand the most also here, and yet the truth must not suffer by the liar. If neither will listen to your admonition and appeal, regard them both as infidels or as those whom you do not regard as brothers in the faith and will have no fellowship with, all in accordance with the word of Jesus in Matthew 18:7. Strive to arouse the indifferent and let the self-secure own up to his sin.

You know, fellow believers, that occasional dissensions have no doubt appeared during these twenty-five years, but by the grace of God, they have been quelled and most of them settled. At least, they have never spread to parties that have left the way and ignored the voice Jesus has let us hear. For either the guilty person has confessed and repented of his sin, or else he has fallen into vices and left us. But many along with me have feared that when I, with the instruments of my tongue, pen, and deed have left you, dissensions might arise, so one will go this way and another that way. Guard against this, for nothing is more important than harmony.

7. We have never had any formal church discipline among us, just as we have never kept any record, so neither I nor any of you know exactly how many there are who profess the mutual faith, disposition, and friendship, although through letters and personal visits we can know about the places where there are few or many, partly through personal acquaintance, and partly by reports about many, especially those who distinguish themselves in godly living. You know also that we have absolutely no signs or

ceremonies among us. For only through conversations, actions, and partly through recommendations is that we have come to have confidence in one another.

These things ought not especially concern us henceforth, either, but we have had a church discipline unnoticed by many. Because all those who have practiced any vice and haven't soon repented and mended their ways have been reduced in our esteem and confidence. If their vices have ruled them for a longer time, we have had nothing to do with them, whereas they themselves have felt that they are separated from us and have partly avoided us. Such church discipline remains and will continue in the future, yet in such a way that when the fallen person repents of his sin and hears God's Word, we then will accept him according to the circumstance.

8. In the Apostle Paul's farewell to the Ephesians we find written, in Acts 20:29, 30, "I know that after my departing grievous wolves shall enter in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things." I earnestly hope better at this time, yet I want to warn you with verse thirty-one, "Watch!" For I have know some among us who have made several remarks which are not in accord with the teachings of Jesus, and who have been drawn toward their own way after their fancy. Still worse, there may arise false brethren who indeed might have great intellect, but use it with cunning to lead the simple minded astray, exerting control over the Lord's inheritance. That is, they pursue their own glory and advantage and dominance. The want to be love without loving God and their fellow men in Him. Such persons will lead you to submit to them by means of wisdom and learning which does not nourish your soul. Others step forward in grand conceit, want to make themselves important with their spirituality, speak about their feelings; these train themselves to

speaking about their inward condition, a mixture of imagination and qualms of reason, so they at first affect maturity, but it can soon be noticed that their words are an empty sound. They lack life and the presence of the Spirit. They dazzle, but fail to give light, for they reach after higher things than are given them. Possibly they have once been on the way to truth, but have gone off from it, yet can still talk about that which they at that time experienced and now falsely give themselves credit for. Some go about with a feigned crestfallenness, speaking in a broken voice. Others are cheerful. Both borrow from the Scriptures words that they, according to their knowledge and natural gifts, teach to others without heeding their own hearts, and without themselves becoming converted. For they are recognized by their fruits and their inexperience in spiritual things; also that they fail to employ the whole Word of God in their teaching. Be on your guard against all such people.

I have reason to hope that as long as you eldest or true children of God are living, that you will not allow debauchers to have free command, but that you will convince and punish them while warning the simple-minded about their seductiveness. You know that one blind person cannot lead another; they both fall in the ditch. Therefore you must advise everyone, especially would-be teachers, that they themselves must first be wholeheartedly converted. I will also advance my heartfelt admonition in the name of the Lord that you true fellow believers, especially the oldest and most gifted in each place, keep a sharp watch over those who would edify others; for it behooves them to demonstrate preeminence in their faith, in godly lives, and in good works. A teacher must have a firm knowledge of God's Word so it can be shown that he is strengthened by the Spirit of our Lord Jesus to be as sound and pure in doctrine as in life. If you find the

opposite to be true, admonish him in private. If that is of no avail, then let two more listen. If the deviating person will not correct himself, then tell him of his error in the hearing of those he assembles with. If you yourselves have not power enough at the place where he is, asked help from others who are stronger in Christ or have received more gifts than you. If he leaves you, then find out where he went, write to that place or try to visit it in order to stop him from deceiving the hearts of simple minded people who are not evil, but who have not as yet received enough power from God to put a stop to the deceivers.

9. The one who would teach or instruct others, especially one who travels with that purpose, should not be a recent convert. Yet, with the supervision of the eldest, this might be allowed. But no one should teach others without it being proved that he himself is indeed converted and has shown in his life the worthy fruits of conversion. Let him remain under the supervision and close testing of the elders, that he may daily decrease in himself so he feels deeply not only his sins, but his own impotence, that he is also tested in temptations and various trials, and has a good foundation in and consistent explanation of God's word.

Where several are together of those who have received gifts to edify others, then be agreed or accept the decision of the eldest that only two or three of them speak, one after another, and that in such a way that no offense is taken. If someone goes astray or there is something at fault in someone's speech or conduct, convince that one as you have been told before regarding those who will edify others and not conform themselves. If he does not convert himself, tell it to the congregation and call him an unbeliever, according to Jesus' word in Matthew, chapter eighteen.

The eldest must not shut their eyes to the guilt of their fellow elders in any kind of vice, but punish them properly as well as any other who has acquired the respect of the faithful and wants to be a good Christian. Such persons should be closely watched. Do not let them get used to flattery and softness, but let them endure even the distasteful food of sharp admonitions.

A person once converted from darkness to light who has since been drawn back to darkness and has wronged someone, coming by the property of others unjustly – if such a one later has come to repentance and wants to turn to the believers, yet doesn't right his wrong-doing, he ought not to be accepted among the believers or given your heart's confidence, much less be allowed to confess the name of God and speak to edify others before he has completely made amends and compensated the injured party.

10. As to those with whom you have no acquaintance, or those who have conceived ideas about religion other than yours, bear with them and judge as leniently as the truth of God's revealed Word permits. For many can be brought up in a strict external concept, and also be taken in by an incorrect presentation of God's Word, yet believe and seek for truth, since God can have many who love Him whom you don't know. Consider the Lord's answer to Elijah and what it signifies. Therefore deal kindly with every person. Show willingness to serve and hospitality according to your ability, and keep peace with everyone, as far as you are able or as long God's truth does not suffer in your so doing.

Fellow believers, give heed to these points and those taught you in daily experience. Then you will see by the gracious assistance of God that the wicked and the false, like the self-deceived, can accomplish nothing against you. But by the power of

God our Savior, you will by your word and example win many souls to His kingdom, to the abundant increase of the fruits of your own faith and joy and to the praise of the triune God.

This is my wish, my prayer, and only desire, that you will aspire to that infinitely glorious grace which I feel assured God through the Holy Spirit and for the sake of His son Jesus Christ will bestow upon us who remain faithful to the end – the supreme benefit, finally, to be gathered into the eternal happiness at the close of day. Amen!

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