

# THEY WERE CHRISTIANS

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THE INSPIRING FAITH OF  
MEN AND WOMEN  
WHO CHANGED THE WORLD

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CRISTÓBAL KRUSEN



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This book is dedicated to my father,  
William A. Krusen Sr.  
He loved me with a quiet love,  
and it has made all the difference.

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# INTRODUCTION

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I WAS TWENTY-NINE YEARS OLD when I became a Christ follower. It didn't happen overnight. Early in the process, when I was reading the Bible on my own, a co-worker asked me if I was "born again." I stared at him blankly. I had no idea what he was talking about. No one had ever spoken to me before about the need to be "born again."

Looking back over my life, I certainly had many blessings, including a godly grandmother who inspired in me a sincere devotion to God. But her influence over me waned following her death when I was eleven years old. By my midteen years I believed in a vague sort of agnosticism that hardened into dark nihilism by my early twenties.

Then I traveled to Australia for a writing assignment and read the Bible as part of my research. Until that time I had wanted to be a big-shot director and writer in Hollywood—rich and successful with a woman or two on each arm. But as

I read the Bible, I began turning from a world I could see to one I could not see. I began a conscious search for truth—if truth could be found—and fell in love with a man I encountered in the pages of the Bible. The romance lasted nearly two years until I finally succumbed wholly to his beauty and gave him my all. I'll never forget the first thought that went through my mind when I made that sweet surrender to Jesus Christ: *I'll never be a filmmaker now.*

My assumption, of course, was that wholehearted faith in Christ and commitment to the Gospels would translate into a life of ministry as the ultimate outlet for self-expression and service to God. Naturally enough, I began to wonder if I might become a pastor or a missionary to some far-off land. I did, in fact, become a missionary for two years, but in time, I came to understand that service to God has manifold, indeed unlimited, expressions. In truth, if God exists, then one should expect to find those who love him in every field of human endeavor.

The twelve individuals I have gotten to know through writing this book have become personal friends. They are highly regarded today for their contributions to science and medicine, literature and philanthropy, government and diplomacy. Unfortunately, people seldom—if ever—remember them for the rich storehouses of faith that gave their lives meaning and purpose in the first place.

It's time to change that. It's time to let the record show that *They Were Christians*.

While writing this book, I found myself crying out at times to the “ghosts” of Abraham, Dag, Frederick, and the others, saying, “We'll make this part of your story known!”

I was repeatedly moved to tears as I considered how much the living God had been so much a part of their lives.

But please understand. These are not exhaustive biographies. Rather, they are more akin to profiles on what Paul Harvey might have called “the rest of the story,” specifically those Christian elements in the lives of twelve people who changed the world for the better. May their examples inspire and encourage you, as they have me, and may we all let our light so shine before others that the world will see our good deeds and glorify our Father in heaven (Matt. 5:16).



# DAG HAMMARSKJÖLD

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I remember Dag Hammarskjöld's clear blue eyes as much as anything else about him. I also recall my child's sense that he was a good man, a kind man. I was nine years old when his plane went down under mysterious circumstances in what is today the African nation of Zambia. *How terribly sad!* I thought. He had been on a peacekeeping mission for the United Nations, and it had cost him his life.

I discerned a different reaction to Dag's death from most of the adults in my world. Dag Hammarskjöld had been secretary-general of the United Nations, and to them the UN was a suspect organization, dangerously left-leaning. Some would have called it diabolical. The furthest thing from anyone's mind was that the UN might have been led by a person of sincere Christian faith. And yet it was. Unmistakably so, as was revealed in 1963 when Dag's private journal was published

posthumously—originally in Swedish, and a year later in English under the title *Markings*.

Twenty years after Dag's death I found myself in his native Sweden facing a crossroads in my life. For several years I had been on a quest for spiritual truth, a self-styled search that had led me to study Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, Islam, and finally Christianity. By that time I had read the Bible cover to cover and had concluded that the way to God is through Christ. But how does one enter Christ? For someone like me, who grew up largely outside the church, it was a mystery. All I could do was continue to read the Bible and seek the truth as best I could.

Then one fine October morning as I sat alongside the Motala River in Norrköping, Jesus's words from the Gospel of Matthew came forcefully to mind: "Unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 18:3 NKJV).

Suddenly, I began to cry. I felt like a lost child who had been transported miraculously home. All that was left for me to do was walk up to the door, open it, and enter in. When I stood up from that riverbank, I was a new creation in Christ.

I made no connection to Dag Hammarskjöld at the time—that would come later. But as I consider his life and legacy now, I realize that one of the greatest statesmen of the twentieth century (indeed, of any century) had been my brother in the Christian faith. He left me—and the world—a shining example of what it means to serve others "and so fulfill the law of Christ" (Gal. 6:2 NKJV).



PER LIND'S HEART WAS HEAVY. And how could it not be? He looked out the window of the Boeing 707, staring at the billowing clouds that appeared to float slowly past. The scene was worthy of a painting, or at least a photograph. Per knew he would produce neither one. He had made this trip many times before.

He touched the side pocket of his jacket, instinctively feeling the shape of the letter that had arrived less than two weeks ago. It had been mailed to him by Dag from Stockholm, asking him to take charge of his papers and personal belongings in New York should there be a need. Should anything happen to him . . .

Per felt a lump in his throat.

During the first three years of Dag's tenure as secretary-general, Per had served as his personal assistant and had continued to stay in close contact. He and his wife and children had become like family to the brilliant, soft-spoken diplomat, who had no wife or children of his own.

And now the unthinkable.

There was no fanfare when Per's plane landed at Idlewild Airport in New York City. No news reporters, no photographers as there had been in 1953 when he and Dag had landed at the same airport and Dag had given his first interview to the press corps. This was just another early autumn day in "the city that never sleeps."

Per was soon at work on the thirty-eighth floor of the UN Secretariat Building enlisting the help of Dag's personal secretary, Hannah Platz, and other staff members. Everyone maintained a professional attitude, which made Per's job

easier and helped the time pass. They spoke in soft, solemn tones while sorting through Dag's extensive papers, as though the former secretary-general were himself nearby, taking a nap, perhaps, and not to be disturbed.

*No, that's not quite the analogy*, Per thought. Dag was known for near superhuman stamina, working eighteen and twenty hours a day for weeks on end.

Per detected a chill and noticed that Dag's office window was cracked open. Dag had liked it that way, especially in the summer when he would open the window wider to hear the sounds of the tugboat horns and ferry whistles out on the East River. As if on cue, a tugboat released a powerful blast, and Per felt the window shake slightly in his hand. He closed it.

After sorting out Dag's affairs at the UN, Per made the trip to the weekend home Dag had rented in Brewster, New York, sixty miles north of the city. And then the final stop—Dag's residence on East 73rd Street near Park Avenue.

The apartment was just as Per had remembered. It occupied two floors and was furnished sparingly yet beautifully. A grand dining room, a living room, and a library with numerous rare books made up the ground floor. This was where Dag liked to spend much of his free time. Fluent in four languages, he was a bibliophile who enjoyed translating plays and poetry. Per recalled with a smile the dozens of offers that had poured in during those early days. Dag was constantly receiving invitations to one upper-crust New York social function after another, most of which Per was instructed to decline politely, as the secretary-general preferred entertaining in small groups, often just a guest or two, at his apartment home.

Per entered the library, his eyes settling on the empty fireplace, above which hung a mountain hiker's pick. He smiled grimly. Dag had been an avid outdoorsman and mountain climber throughout his life, and the ice pick was a gift from the Sherpa mountaineer, Tenzing Norgay. In 1953, Tenzing and Sir Edmund Hillary were the first men to scale Mt. Everest. Underneath the pick was an inscription from Tenzing that read: "So you may climb to even greater heights."

Per ascended the staircase and entered Dag's bedroom. He made his way to the window and looked at the street below. This was the view Dag had enjoyed every day. What was he thinking about before he left New York that last time? Before he boarded the plane to the world's newest trouble spot—the former Belgian Congo? Some were saying he had experienced a premonition of his death. Per was doubtful of that. It had been his secretary, Hannah, who had advised him to put his affairs in order before that last fateful trip to Africa.

Per looked slowly around the well-kept room and sighed. *So quiet. So still. What lonely hours Dag must have spent here.* Per sat on the edge of the bed. A Bible lay on top of the nightstand. Per had not known Dag to be particularly religious, though he had known and admired him as a person of unshakeable integrity. He absentmindedly opened the nightstand drawer. Inside was a buff-colored folder, well worn with age, containing what appeared to be some sort of manuscript. A United Nations secretariat envelope bearing the typewritten name "Leif Belfrage" was clipped to the outside of the folder, and on the envelope's lower left-hand corner was a handwritten word in Swedish—*Personligt* ("Personal").

Per sensed immediately that the folder contained something important—perhaps a political diary—but that was

not for him to speculate about. Leif Belfrage, Sweden's permanent undersecretary of foreign affairs, was Dag's close friend and Per's friend as well. Per would personally see that the folder and sealed envelope were taken to Stockholm and handed over to Dr. Belfrage.

Per stood up. There was much more work to do.



Dr. Belfrage removed his reading glasses and carefully set Dag's letter to one side. In the letter, Dag referred to the attached folder and the diary it contained, inviting his friend to publish the entries "if you find them worth publishing." Dag described his journal "as a sort of white book concerning my negotiations with myself—and with God."<sup>1</sup>

"A sort of white book," Leif repeated to himself. Dag was using the diplomatic term for an official government report, a position paper bound in white. Leif looked out his office window. Freezing rain was splattering against the pane, seemingly trying to get his attention. *Negotiations with himself—and with God*. Now, this was surprising. He did not know Dag to be a regular churchgoer. He looked again at the folder, fingering its edges. He did recall—albeit dimly—that Dag had mentioned something once about keeping a diary. That alone was not unusual, of course, especially for one as fastidious in his work habits as Dag. What made this document so compelling was the identity of its author, the many world figures he had known, and his sudden, untimely death. Without exactly framing the question as such, Leif had to wonder what behind-the-scenes maneuvering, political exposé, or scandal such a diary might contain.

He opened the folder. Centered on the manuscript's cover page was a single word in Swedish: *Vägmärken* ("Markings"). *A curious title*, Dr. Belfrage mused, wondering if it had some connection with Dag's love of the outdoors and the trail marks hikers leave behind to find their way home. He thumbed through the ream of paper and took a cursory look. The diary contained nearly two hundred typewritten pages, some containing just a few lines, beginning with the year 1925 (when Dag was twenty years old) and ending on August 24, 1961—three weeks before his death.

Dr. Belfrage couldn't help himself. He took a peek at the UN years.



Dag Hjalmar Agne Carl Hammar skjöld was the youngest of four children born into an aristocratic family that had served the kings and queens of Sweden since the seventeenth century. His father, Hjalmar Hammar skjöld, had been prime minister of Sweden during the First World War, steering the country on a neutral course, while his three older brothers were likewise prominent Swedes: Bo, a diplomat; Ake, a judge on the International Court of Justice; and Sten, a journalist and novelist.

By all accounts, Dag was the brightest of them all—an internationally recognized economist fluent in Swedish, French, English, and German. His highly accomplished father once said, "If I were half as smart as Dag, I might have done something in life." Dag served as secretary and, later, governor of the central bank of Sweden, cabinet secretary in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and a delegate to the Paris conference

that established the Marshall Plan. In 1951, he became vice chairman of the Swedish delegation to the United Nations General Assembly in Paris, and a year later of the Swedish delegation to the General Assembly in New York.

Despite his accomplishments and abilities, Dag's nomination to the secretary-generalship of the UN came as a complete surprise—especially to him! When friends first told him the news in Stockholm on April 1, 1953, he thought it was an April Fools' Day joke.

The Security Council had been meeting for weeks in New York trying in vain to agree on who would take the place of Norway's Trygve Lie, the first secretary-general, who had resigned in November the previous year. The Cold War was in full swing at the time, and the superpowers disagreed on seemingly every issue, including who would lead the United Nations. An acrimonious debate showed no signs of letting up until finally a compromise was reached with the nomination of Dag Hammarskjöld. Dag, who was considered a competent technocrat without obvious political leanings, seemed a safe bet not to rock the boat.

A hurriedly written cablegram from the Security Council dispelled the notion of an April Fools' Day joke. It read, "In view of the immense importance of this post, especially at the present time, members of the Security Council express the earnest hope that you will agree to accept the appointment if, as they hope and believe, it is shortly made by the General Assembly."<sup>2</sup>

Dag told them he needed to sleep on it.

Two days passed before he cabled the Security Council with his answer. After admitting to "strong feelings of personal insufficiency," he nonetheless concluded that he "could



not refuse to accept the task imposed upon [him].” What the world did not know—indeed, what most of his friends did not know—was that Dag, always an intensely private individual, had prayed years before for God to give him a life-defining task.

Confiding privately in his journal at the time of the nomination, he wrote, “When the hour strikes, He takes what is His. What have you to say? Your prayer has been answered, as you know. God has a use for you, even though what He asks doesn’t happen to suit you at the moment.”<sup>3</sup>

And then a day or two later—the date is not certain—he penned this brief entry: “Not I, but God in me.”<sup>4</sup>

On April 7, 1953, the General Assembly approved the Security Council’s nomination and elected Dag Hammarskjöld secretary-general of the UN. He was forty-seven years old.

As Dag prepared to fly to the United States with Per Lind, his newly appointed personal assistant, he wrote this in his journal: “I am the vessel. The draught is God’s. And God is the thirsty one.”<sup>5</sup>

As Dag exited the plane at Idlewild Airport on April 9, the stocky and forthright Mr. Lie welcomed his successor to “the most impossible job in the world.” In a prepared statement to the press, Dag acknowledged that in his new role, “The private man should disappear and the international public servant take his place. The public servant is there in order to assist . . . those who make the decisions which frame history . . . He is active as an instrument, a catalyst, perhaps an inspirer—he serves.”<sup>6</sup> In Dag’s case, such a “servant” was also called to follow in the steps of Christ. As he wrote in his journal at the time, “He who has surrendered himself to it knows that the Way ends on the cross—even when it

is leading him through the jubilation of Gennesaret or the triumphal entry into Jerusalem.”<sup>7</sup>

The day after he arrived in New York, Dag took the oath of office in the cavernous General Assembly Hall of the United Nations building and then made personal remarks to the representatives from the sixty member states. “I am here to serve you all,” he said simply. In a reference to Easter, celebrated five days earlier, he added, “May I remind you of the great memory just celebrated by the Christian world? May I do so because of what that memory tells us of the redeeming power of true dedication to peace and goodwill towards men?” Then, looking into the sea of faces representing the nations of Earth, he said, “We are of different creeds and convictions . . . But common to us all, and above all other convictions, stands the truth once expressed by a Swedish poet when he said that the greatest prayer of man does not ask for victory but for peace.”<sup>8</sup>

First impressions of the new secretary-general were favorable. Dag initiated a review of every aspect of UN operations and procedures, taking time to meet with each staff member personally—a task that took many weeks to complete. He established a secretariat of nearly four thousand administrators and drafted new regulations defining their responsibilities. He also found ways to trim the budget. Dag hoped to create not only a well-oiled machine but also a community of like-minded souls, men and women who would work tirelessly for peace on earth and goodwill toward all.

As to his personal beliefs, Dag spoke openly later that year in a radio interview with broadcast journalist Edward R. Murrow.

From generations of soldiers and government officials on my father's side I inherited a belief that no life was more satisfactory than one of selfless service to your country—or humanity. This service required a sacrifice of all personal interests, but likewise the courage to stand up unflinchingly for your convictions. From scholars and clergymen on my mother's side, I inherited a belief that, in the very radical sense of the Gospels, all men were equals as children of God, and should be met and treated by us as our masters in God.<sup>9</sup>

One of Dag's earliest initiatives in the political arena took place in 1954 when he offered to help ease tensions between Israel and Jordan in a dispute over water rights. Though his efforts did not directly resolve the conflict, world leaders began to take note that the new secretary-general was serious about building bridges between disparate groups and nations. The UN, with its lofty ideals and aims, was taking on a human face.

It was decidedly that human touch that Dag utilized at the end of the year when he traveled to mainland China (not yet a member of the UN) to seek the release of fifteen US airmen who had been taken prisoner during the Korean War. It was a foregone conclusion that the Chinese government would not recognize Dag's authority as secretary-general of the UN. But a personal appeal was a different matter. China had expressed its willingness to subscribe to the Charter of the United Nations, and Dag encouraged their acceptance into the world body despite strenuous objections from the United States. "If you want to negotiate with somebody," he once remarked with humor, "it is rather useful to have them at the table."<sup>10</sup>

Dag sent a personal cablegram to Chou En-lai, the Chinese prime minister, expressing his desire to meet with him in Peking for direct discussions. Six days later, Dag received an invitation to come. “I go to Peking because I believe in personal talks,” said Dag to the press shortly before departing New York City on December 30, 1954. “I can only say I will do my best.”<sup>11</sup>

Either on or close to New Year’s Day, a few days before meeting with Chou En-lai, Dag recorded in his journal the following prayer acknowledging he was under God’s hand: “And in Thee is all power and goodness. Give me a pure heart that I may see Thee, a humble heart that I may hear Thee, a heart of love that I may serve Thee, a heart of faith that I may abide in Thee.”<sup>12</sup>

The talks went well—better than expected. But when Dag returned from China two weeks later, his hands were empty. The Chinese had given him no direct response, and as new crises clamored for Dag’s attention, the fate of the US airmen, all of whom had been sentenced to long prison terms, was left in limbo. Dag, however, continued his quiet diplomacy, maintaining personal contact with the Chinese premier. And then on July 29, 1955, while celebrating his fiftieth birthday on a fishing expedition in Sweden, he received news that the US servicemen would be released soon. It was a birthday gift to him from Chou En-lai. Though the Chinese government did not credit Dag’s mediation directly, the world knew that the airmen owed their newfound freedom to the soft-spoken Swede who dared to believe in “personal talks.”

Later that night, most likely after his fishing companions had all drifted off to sleep, Dag removed from his rucksack a book that had been his constant companion for thirty-five

years, *The Imitation of Christ* by Thomas à Kempis. It, too, had been a birthday gift . . . from his devout mother, Agnes.

Dag made a brief journal entry that night, quoting à Kempis, who wrote, “Why do you seek rest? You were only created for labor.”

Three days later, reacting, one would assume, to the world-wide acclaim he was receiving for his pivotal role in the release of the airmen, Dag confided in his journal, quoting from the psalms. “Surely men of low degree are vanity, and men of high degree are a lie: to be laid in the balance, they are altogether lighter than vanity” (Ps. 62:9).

He also quoted from Psalm 115. “Not unto us, O LORD, but unto thy name give glory” (v. 1).



Dr. Belfrage looked up from the manuscript. The freezing rain had changed to gently falling snow that frosted over the edges of his office windows. *Not a mention yet of anyone by name*, he marveled. Knowing that 1956 had been a watershed year for Dag and the UN, he returned to his reading, wondering if Dag’s acute introspection would give way to at least some scrutiny of world events and the major players whom he knew so well.



Indeed, in 1956, Dag experienced the greatest challenges yet to his leadership at the UN. The primary area of contention was the Sinai Peninsula and, more particularly, the Suez Canal, which Britain and France managed jointly. Egypt’s president, Gamal Abdel Nasser, openly courted the Soviet

Union, an overture that displeased the Western powers and set the stage for a showdown between East and West. When the World Bank abruptly withdrew support for the construction of the Aswan Dam on the upper Nile, President Nasser retaliated by nationalizing the Suez Canal and imposing taxes on foreign shipping. France and Britain threatened the use of force to reassert their control over the area, while the Soviet Union came out strongly in support of Egypt.

There was talk of a nuclear Armageddon.

Dag labored ceaselessly for months to bring all parties to the bargaining table and appeared to have succeeded when a truce was implemented on October 13. Then two weeks later, French, British, and Israeli forces launched a surprise attack on Egypt and seized the canal area.

Dag felt shocked and betrayed by the invasion, but he knew where his strength lay. He turned again to the psalms. “I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for thou, LORD, only makest me dwell in safety” (Ps. 4:8).

And again, “Rest in the LORD . . . fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass” (Ps. 37:7, 8).

World public opinion was largely unfavorable to the military incursion in the Sinai, but that did not keep France and Britain, permanent members of the Security Council, from blocking every effort to achieve a peaceful solution to the crisis. Dag made it clear that, under such circumstances, he was willing to resign. A majority of member states, particularly the smaller and newer nations who knew they had a friend in Dag, disagreed. The UN called an emergency session of the General Assembly, and a resolution passed demanding an immediate cease-fire and troop withdrawal from the Suez.

Additionally, a military force was to be formed from ten of the nonaligned nations and sent to the area to keep the peace.

In view of the General Assembly's overwhelming support of Dag's position, Britain and France backed down, and the first soldiers of the United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF) arrived in Egypt in November 1956. The group eventually numbered six thousand soldiers and maintained a cease-fire in the region until all foreign troops had withdrawn from the battle zone by March 1957. UNEF soldiers continued to guard the border for another ten years.

It was a major triumph for Dag, but instead of pointing the finger at others or gloating in his diplomatic success, he reflected, "Hallowed be Thy name, not mine. Thy kingdom come, not mine. Thy will be done, not mine."<sup>13</sup>

On Christmas Eve, he remarked that "your own efforts 'did not bring it to pass,' only God—but rejoice if God found a use for your efforts in His work. Rejoice if you feel that what you did was 'necessary,' but remember, even so, that you were simply the instrument."<sup>14</sup>

Less than a year later, on September 26, 1957, Dag was reelected secretary-general for another five-year term. That same day he wrote in his journal that "the best and most wonderful thing that can happen to you in this life is that you should be silent and let God work and speak."<sup>15</sup>

Such were the private meditations of the man known to millions around the world as "Mr. UN."

He would never finish his second term, of course. In his "negotiations with God" Dag increasingly felt a sense of impending death. It was not an end to be avoided, provided it came in accord with God's will. This entry was among

his trail marks, or “markings,” during 1957: “Do not seek death. Death will find you. But seek the road which makes death a fulfillment.”<sup>16</sup>

In July 1960, a growing political crisis in the newly independent Congo, formerly a Belgian colony, was threatening to mire the superpowers in another Korean War, something almost everyone sought to avoid without knowing exactly how. It was another problem “for Dag to fix,” at least behind closed doors, even if publicly he had to endure the grandstanding of world leaders like Nikita Khrushchev, who thumped his fist on his UN desk while demanding Dag’s resignation as secretary-general.

Dag’s position was secure, of course, as Khrushchev was fully aware. The UN had nearly doubled in size from the time Dag had first assumed the helm, and its member states were overwhelmingly in favor of him staying on. Dag, too, was prepared to stay the course, though for reasons no one surmised.

The fateful moment came shortly after midnight on September 18, 1961, when Dag’s UN plane, a DC-6 with sixteen people on board, crashed in the forest roughly seven miles from the runway at Ndola in Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia). Dag had been on his way to hold personal talks with Moïse Tshombe, the leader of the secessionist Congo province of Katanga. To this day, conspiracy theories persist that several of the European powers, possibly joined by the United States, arranged Dag’s death in order to protect the fabulous wealth of their Katanga mineral concessions.

Dag had been for peace and they for war.





Dr. Belfrage pushed away the diary and rubbed his eyes. Memories of Dag's funeral ceremony came vividly to mind.

An estimated 250,000 mourners gathered in Stockholm for a torchlight procession, after which Dag's casket was transported north to the university town of Uppsala where he had grown up.

Heads of state from around the world assembled to pay their last respects.

Six pallbearers in top hats and long black coats lowered the flower-covered casket into an open grave.

The resolute voice of Lutheran Archbishop Gunnar Hultgren rang through the air. "Sleep you now in the garden of heaven. Rest in peace, Dag Hammarskjöld."

When the funeral ended, church bells rang from Malmö in the south of Sweden to Malmberget in the north, followed by an hour of silence throughout the nation.<sup>17</sup>

Dr. Belfrage walked over to his window. As far as the eye could see, the ground was covered in freshly fallen snow, pure and white. It seemed a fitting backdrop to the autobiographical "profile" of his friend, Dag Hammarskjöld. Not one word of opprobrium, not one word of complaint or bitterness toward others. No mention of names, no secrets divulged. Just the frank and unflattering self-examination of a man who had sought God's purpose in life and was willing to walk the road that fate had marked out for him.

And in that moment, Dr. Belfrage knew, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that Dag's "white book" concerning his "negotiations with [himself] and with God" was, indeed, "worthy to be published."



At the time of his death, Dag had intended to stay only a day or two in Katanga and, consequently, had left most of his travel belongings behind in the capital city of Léopoldville. On the bedside table where he had spent his last night was his copy of *The Imitation of Christ*. Inside was a bookmark—a plain card on which he had written his oath of office as secretary-general of the UN. The passage marked in the book was the following reflection on self-denial and an acceptance of God's will:

Lord, provided that my will remain true and firm towards Thee, do with me whatsoever it shall please Thee to do. For it cannot but be good, whatever Thou shalt do with me. If Thou wilt have me to be in darkness, be Thou blessed; and if Thou wilt have me to be in light, be Thou again blessed; if Thou vouchsafe to comfort me, be Thou blessed; and if it be Thy will I should be afflicted, be Thou still equally blessed . . . Keep me from all sin, and I will fear neither death nor hell.<sup>18</sup>

The analogy is, to me, inescapable: Dag's secular and spiritual identities were closely intertwined and clearly complemented one another. Or as Dag wrote in his diary, "In our era, the road to holiness necessarily passes through the world of action."<sup>19</sup>

On December 10, 1961, Dag Hammarskjöld was posthumously awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. President John F. Kennedy called him the "greatest statesman of our century." Now I know what I didn't know then. Dag Hammarskjöld had been the greatest among us because he had been the least and the servant of all (see Matt. 20:26; Luke 9:48).