

Commemoration by the Rev. R. Rudolf

Dag Hammarskjold, renewer of society, 1961

Dag Hammarskjold was born in 1905. He was a Swedish diplomat. He served as the second Secretary-General of the United Nations. He was the youngest person to have served in that post. He was the only one to die while in office. He was one of four people to be awarded a Nobel Prize after death.

President John F. Kennedy spoke of him as "the greatest statesman of our century."

He was born in Jonkoping. He was born into nobility. Dag spent most of his childhood in Uppsala. He was the fourth and youngest son of Hjalmar and Agnes (nee' Almquist) Hammarskjold. Hjalmar Hammarskjold was of Sweden's prime ministers. Dag received his degrees (Master of Law) from Uppsala University. Rather quickly he was recognized as a successful Swedish public servant. Among his significant accomplishments...he served as a delegate to the conference that established the Marshall Plan.

Dag Hammarskjold was elected as Secretary-General of the United Nations on March 31, 1953. He was on his way to negotiate a cease-fire in Africa. He and 15 others perished in a plane crash on September 18, 1961. There are some who would suggest that his plane was shot down...but no inclusive evidence exists.

In an interview with Edward R. Murrow, he said: (copied from Wikipedia) "But the explanation of how man should live a life of active social service in full harmony with himself as a member of the community of spirit, I found in the writings of those great medieval mystics [Meister Eckhart and Jan van Ruysbroek] for whom 'self-surrender' had been the way to self-realization, and who in 'singleness of mind' and 'inwardness' had found strength to say yes to every demand which the needs of their neighbours made them face, and to say yes also to every fate life had in store for them when they followed the call of duty as they understood it."

The ELCA commemorates (honors) Dag Hammarskjold, renewer of society on September 18.

Next week: William Tyndale as a translator and martyr - 1536