



Aarhus Church and office where Danish Bible Correspondence School was situated from 1992 to 2004.

Photo courtesy of Sven Hagen Jensen.

Danish Bible Correspondence School

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The Danish Bible Correspondence School opened in Copenhagen in 1947 to reach a wider section of the Danish people. For years, public meetings with a focus on Bible prophecy had been the primary tool of evangelism. With positive reports from other parts of the world this new initiative was introduced to supplement the spoken proclamation of the Adventist message. In this way people would have the opportunity to study the Bible at home and have their questions answered by correspondence. It proved to be a major asset for the progress of

the evangelistic work in Denmark, especially in the latter half of the twentieth century. Beginning with one Bible course, more courses were offered over the years and other features were added to raise the interest and meet the demands of students. Today most of the courses are offered online. However, with the arrival of the internet and the demand for easy and instant answers the impact of the school has lessened¹

Founding

Shortly after the close of the Second World War the leaders of West Nordic Union Conference (Denmark, Norway, Iceland, Faroe Islands, and Greenland)² heard of the success of a Bible correspondence school in South Africa. This prompted the leadership to propose to the union session in the summer of 1946 that a similar school be established in Denmark. The founding meeting took place in Odense on December 1, 1946. There was great enthusiasm for the new possibilities and an initial capital of 32,000 Danish kroner (US\$ 4,500) was collected, a considerable amount at that time, considering that a pastor's monthly wage was approximately 320 Danish kroner. L. Muderspach was elected the first principal and the school was named *Det 20. Århundredes Bibelbrevskole* (The Twentieth Century Bible Correspondence School). Two months later, on February 1, 1947, the school opened at Suomisvej in Copenhagen and offered a set of Bible lessons called *Det 20. Århundredes Bibelkursus* (The Twentieth Century Bible Course³).⁴

History

With a two-page notice in the church paper under the heading "The Church's Greatest Hour Has Come," Pastor Muderspach called upon the membership to support the new Bible Correspondence School with their prayers and by distributing handbills. "The plan calls for our sisters and brothers to spread invitations all over our country in order to enroll students in the Bible School. The distribution of our advertising bill has to be done with precision and care, so that nothing is lost, but as many as possible not only hear about this excellent opportunity to learn from the Word of God, but also enroll themselves as students."⁵ One hundred thousand handbills in two colors were initially printed to begin the distribution in Danish homes. At the summer camp meetings great interest was generated. The number of students had reached 800 and members donated generously. In the fall, another 150,000 handbills were printed, and the number of students reached 1226 by the end of the year. The first students, when visited, began to ask for baptism and membership into the Seventh-day Adventist Church.⁶

After one year, L. Muderspach was followed by his son, F. L. Muderspach, as principal of the school, and a year later, P.A. Christiansen took over for a couple of years. Then began the series of long-term principals who made strong contributions to the development of the school. In order to help with the extensive correspondence, handling of mail, and other office work many helpers were engaged over the years as part of the staff. Local church pastors and Bible workers were involved in the visitation program. By the spring of 1949, 125 Bible

students had been baptized and accepted into church membership, with many more to follow. As the number of students grew more were added by mass distribution of handbills, personal contacts, literature evangelist contacts, evangelistic meetings, and advertisements in papers.⁷

The school operated under different names. It was early known as *Håbets Budskab* (Message of Hope), then *Bibelbrevskolen* (The Bible Correspondence School), and lastly *Korrespondanceskolen* (The Correspondence School), as it also began to offer courses on health and other subjects.⁸

Pastor Mogens Bakke, principal of the school for 18 years (1962-1980) deserves special mention. He had been the secretary at the founding meeting, and his experience as an evangelist and editor gave him a good background for this special ministry. Under his leadership the school reached its golden period with many students and additions to the Church. He printed invitation cards in four colors, introduced new courses, held evangelistic campaigns especially in the Copenhagen area, took his students on trips to the Holy Land, introduced yearly weekend seminars, and scheduled time with local pastors in order to visit more promising students.⁹

Under his successor, Gunnar D. Asholm, the weekend seminars were held at regular intervals at Kikhavn Youth Camp for students in the eastern part of Denmark and at Himmerlandsgården Youth Center for students in the west. These Bible seminars were planned to give many the opportunity to make their decision for baptism and church membership. Some of the exciting stories of Bible students finding their way to Christ during these seminars and at other occasions are recorded in the little booklet *Når Ordet bringer frugt* (When the Word Produces Fruit).¹⁰

With the restructuring of the Union in 1992, it was decided to move Korrespondanceskolen to new offices at Fuglebakkevej in Aarhus. Visitation of the students got a boost when the new principal made a special effort to train selected lay workers to assist the pastors in the visitation program. Guided bus tours for the students to reformation sites in Germany was another way to get close to the students. Regional theme days arranged by the school in Adventist churches resulted in more baptisms. A quarterly newsletter *KS-kontakt*, later renamed *Kontakt*, was sent to the students. Over the next few years many new courses were written or translated to widen the offer of subjects for potential students. These included primarily Bible courses, but also courses on lifestyle, family, and culture.¹¹

In 2004 the school relocated to the Danish Union office at Concordiavej, Nærum. A new website was developed and most of the courses were gradually offered online. On March 10, 2010, Korrespondanceskolen went on TV when the first recordings of Bible courses were transmitted by LifeStyleTV. Altogether, nine Bible and family courses were recorded in conversation style from 2010-2012 and transmitted to the Scandinavian countries under the logo ORDET (The Word). Adventist membership supported the school with generous gifts through the years.

Legacy

Given the rapid development of internet and social media, correspondence courses no longer have the same attraction as before. They did, however, play an important role as a soul winning instrument for the Church in Denmark. Only the future will reveal what other effective means will replace them.

Principals/Directors

L. Muderspach (1947-1948); F. L. Muderspach (1948-1949); P. A. Christiansen (1949-1950); Frede Nielsen (1950-1962); Mogens Bakke (1962-1980); Gunnar Dam Asholm (1980-1990); Kaj Pedersen (1990-1998); Richard Müller (1998-2004); Sven Hagen Jensen (2004-2013); Robert Sand (2014-2016); Henrik Jørgensen (2016-).

SOURCES

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NOTES

1. If not otherwise stated in the endnotes the information is from personal notes, an interview on September 3, 2019, with former principal of Korrespondanceskolen, Richard Müller, and statistical materials collected by HASDA (Historical Archive of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Denmark).
2. "West Nordic Union Conference," *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1946), 141.
3. A translation of A. E. Lickey's course by the same name. *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*, second revised edition (1996), s.v. "Bible Correspondence Schools."
4. Gunnar D. Asholm, "50 år med Korrespondanceskolen," *Adventnyt*, June 1997, 8-9.

5. L. Muderspach, "Menighedens største time er kommet", *Missionsefterretninger*, No 1, 1947, 4-5.
6. Gunnar D. Asholm, "50 år med Korrespondanceskolen," *Adventnyt*, June 1997, 8-9.
7. Ibid.
8. Sven Hagen Jensen, "Korrespondanceskolen fylder 60 år," *Udfordringen* (A Christian Weekly), November 2007, 3.
9. Gunnar D. Asholm, "50 år med Korrespondanceskolen," *Adventnyt*, June 1997, 8-9.
10. Sven Hagen Jensen, ed., *Når Ordet bringer frugt* (Dansk Bogforlag, 2013), 12-38.
11. By 2013 the school could offer 21 courses in Danish and four courses in English. At least ten of these were written by Danish authors, such as *The Angels and their Services, Danish Hymns, Muslims among Christians, Creation or Evolution, The Holy Spirit, The Book of Daniel, Revelation,* and more.

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