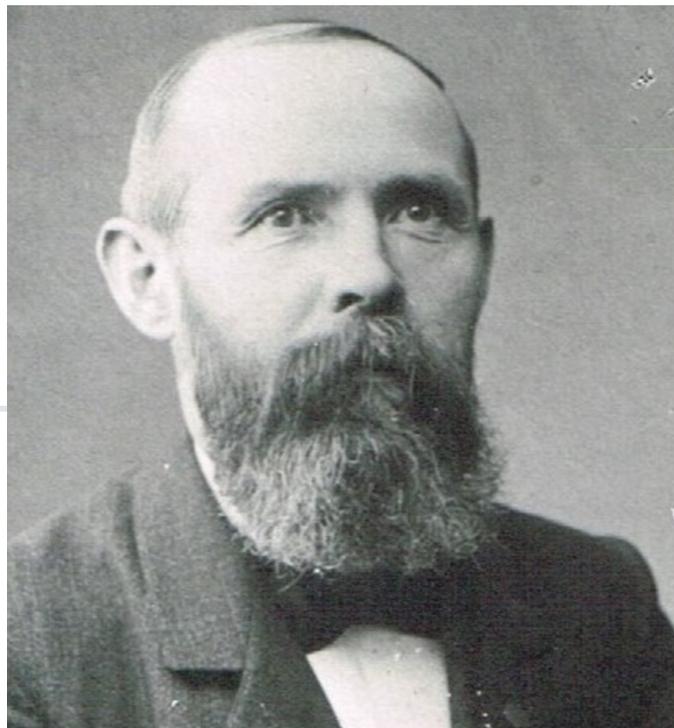


Hansen, Carl Christian (1849–1932)

SVEN HAGEN JENSEN, AND BIRTHE BAYER

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C. C. Hansen.

Photo courtesy of the Historic Archive of Seventh-day Adventists (HASDA) in Denmark.

Carl Christian Hansen, Sr. (better known as C. C.

Hansen) played an important part in the early years of the Seventh-day Adventist church in Denmark and gave of his time, effort and means to support the cause that he loved. He had a special interest in literature work and the health message, and worked as an evangelist, teacher and business administrator.

Early Life

Carl Christian Hansen was born on a small farm in Geraa, Dronninglund parish, Denmark, on April 27, 1849, into a family with 9 children, one of whom was his twin brother. From age seven until he was fourteen, he attended "almueskolen" (the local elementary school) in the winter. In the summertime he and his brother worked as shepherd boys to augment the family's income. His father was anxious to see his boys learn something in life and for a short time arranged for private teaching to educate them. When Carl was 14, his father arranged an apprenticeship for him with a dyer in the city of Aalborg, and later helped him establish his own dying business in Asaa close to his childhood home.¹

Carl grew up in a society where the Lutheran State Church was dominant. The Baptists and the Methodists were considered by many to be the most important dissenters. His mother and sister were members of the

Methodist church, while his father seemed to be tolerant of all believers. Carl had no particular religious conviction.² A turning point came in the summer of 1877 when the Baptist minister, Kristen Kristensen from Ørsø (he became later an Adventist), sold him a Bible. Hansen decided to study it and see if he could find any connection among the different views that were in circulation in his region. The same summer his wife, Junia, was converted by the Methodists. Shortly after, Carl came across Job 28:28, "And to man He said, 'Behold, the fear of the Lord, that [is] wisdom, And to depart from evil [is] understanding' " (NKJV). This text made a deep impression on him, and from that moment, he experienced a radical spiritual change and decided to serve God.³

Meeting the Adventist Message

Carl's first contact with the Advent message came when he visited a Baptist home. On the table, he saw a magazine with an article about Daniel 10, which caught his attention, and he asked the owner what kind of publication that was. The owner replied evasively: "I think it is from America, but it isn't worth anything." Then he took the magazine and put it away. However, Carl had seen that the magazine was called *Advent Tidende* and was published in May 1878 and edited by J. G. Matteson. He had already read in the newspapers that an Adventist missionary J. G. Matteson had aroused a great deal of religious stir in Alstrup and had also started a temperance movement. However, the town was 50 km away, and Carl did not get the opportunity to attend Matteson's meetings.⁴

In September 1878 one of Matteson's helpers, Knud Brorson came to Asaa where Hansen lived. Brorson sought out the Methodist minister, but when he did not find him at home, he left Matteson's 64-page tract *The New Testament Sabbath* and went on his way. Around this time Hansen visited the Methodist minister to tell him that a Baptist minister had come to his home to convince him from the Bible that people must believe and be baptized by immersion to be saved. He was concerned because the Baptist minister had further told him that he was possessed by the spirit of the Devil because he defended infant baptism. "Well," the Methodist minister responded: "The Baptists should not refer so much to the Bible because then they ought to follow it." Hansen asked, "Do they not follow the Bible?" The Methodist minister responded, "If they want to follow the Bible, they need to keep Saturday holy." Hansen, "But this is the day of the Jews." Minister, "Where does it say so?" Hansen, "In the Bible, I believe." Minister, "No, it is not in the Bible." Hansen, "But we Christians should keep Sunday as Sabbath." Minister, "Where does it say so?" Hansen, "I believe it is in the Bible." Minister, "You may believe, but it is not there. Here you take a tract, read it, and you will find that it will give you something to think about." The tract was *The New Testament Sabbath* by J. G. Matteson that Knud Brorson had left in the Methodist minister's home.⁵

For two weeks Hansen and his wife were totally absorbed, studying the tract and comparing it with the Bible.⁶ When they had completed their search, they were convinced of the Sabbath truth, and the following Sabbath Hansen closed his shop, and they began to keep the Sabbath.⁷ He said, "While people knocked on doors and

windows to come in, I sat still with faith in God and rejoiced that I had found the costly pearl and the peace that only God can give, and while kneeling with the small tract in my hands I send a prayer of thanks to God." Trials began almost immediately. His friends turned out to be his opponents, even the Methodist minister. They started to mock him and his wife and called them Jews. A few times his faith faltered, and he feared that he had made a grave mistake. For a time, he even kept both Saturday and Sunday.⁸ But Brorson came to his aid and assured him by pointing to the Bible text in Psalm 119:105, "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path" (NKJV). From that day and on, Hansen never doubted the truth.⁹

Carl and Junia Hansen had long conversations with Brorson. On May 9, 1879, they were both baptized. On August 2, 1879, Dronninglund Church was organized with 8 members. Kristen Kristensen from Ørsø was an elder (the former Baptist minister that sold Carl the Bible), and Carl served as treasurer and secretary. On May 30, 1880, the Danish Conference (the first Adventist conference outside North America) was organized with seven churches and J. G. Matteson as president, C. C. Hansen as secretary, and J. P. Madsen as treasurer.^{10 11 12}

Working for the Church

From the beginning Hansen showed a special interest in the health message. His own health was not robust, but he tried to live the new principles he learned. While he had his dyeing business in Asaa, he worked energetically to spread the health magazine *Sundhedsbladet*. This interest continued when he later entered the service of the Danish Conference.¹³

At the time there was no central place in Denmark where Adventist literature could be obtained. At the second conference meeting, September 24-25, 1881, the first steps were taken to establish a publishing work. The following decision was taken: "That we ought to have a place in Denmark, where we can have a circulation of writings, so that our members at any time can get them from there, and at the same time order *Tidernes Tegn* (Signs of the Times) and other periodicals, so that the ordering and payment for the periodicals will be easier and with less expenses. Bro. C.C. Hansen, Aså, takes over this job. So adopted."¹⁴ Hansen obtained a license for the publishing business and was responsible for producing and distributing literature for four years. He sent out books, periodicals, and tracts from Asaa, arranged for the payment, and was responsible for the accounting.¹⁵

In 1883 the church in Dronninglund saw the need for a church school to nurture their children. The church board decided that Hansen should hold school for the children in four different homes. He gathered 10 children and applied to the Ministry of Education for permission to open a school, and he got it. The children had to walk 5-11 km every day and often got blisters. He wrote in his autobiography (written in 1929): "The work succeeded to everyone's satisfaction, and there was a very good and sympathetic relationship between me and the children. I had the great joy in the following years, that they walked in the way of the Lord and stand to this day as members of God's church." The school was the first Adventist church school in Europe.¹⁶

In 1885 Hansen was invited to Copenhagen to attend one of Mrs. E. G. White's meetings. "I had an interesting conversation with Sister White where Bro. Matteson was the interpreter."¹⁷ His handwritten minutes from the meetings are kept in the archives of HASDA.

At the age of 37 Hansen was issued with a ministerial license¹⁸ and worked in Østervraa from 1886 to 1887. At the close of his 16 Bible lectures series E. G. Olsen came and held another series of eight meetings in five days "to great encouragement and blessings."¹⁹ Baptisms followed, and a new church was organized. Hansen did not receive any pay for eighteen months and presumably lived with frugality from his dyeing business in Asaa.²⁰

In 1888 Hansen attended Matteson's mission school in Copenhagen and continued to canvass in Copenhagen in the summer. In November he and his family moved to Odense, where he continued to sell literature, and since it went well, he was asked to be publishing director in 1889. He oversaw the work of four young workers. They lived and were fed in the Hansen home. Every day they studied and prepared themselves and after working hours they met again and shared the experiences and results of the day. In the autumn they moved together to Aarhus, where two more colporteurs joined them. In 1890 they were all sent to different places. In 1891 Hansen was released from this role of managing the literary work and returned to Bible work and evangelism. At the annual Danish Conference meeting at Ebenezer in Copenhagen on June 9, 1894, Hansen was ordained together with J. C. Raft and J. P. Larsen. The ordination was conducted by the conference president, L. Johnson, and S. N. Haskell and Uriah Smith from the General Conference.²¹

In 1894 the high school Frydenstrand in Frederikshavn was built and dedicated. This school served Danish, Norwegian, and Swedish students. Hansen was appointed the school's principal and business manager until M. M. Olsen could join the school staff as principal in the autumn, and Hansen continued as business manager. In 1896 Hansen was appointed elder for the church in Frederikshavn. In 1897 inventory for a new sanitarium was moved to the school building, and Frydenstrand Sanatorium opened as the first Adventist sanatorium outside the United States under the leadership of Dr. Carl Ottosen. Hansen continued as business manager for both the school and the sanatorium until the school was moved to Copenhagen.²²

In 1898 the Skandinavisk Filantropisk Selskab (Scandinavian Philanthropic Society) or SFS was established with Hansen as treasurer,²³ and the same year the society opened Skodsborg Sanatorium, north of Copenhagen, with Dr. Carl Ottosen as the medical director. In February 1900 Hansen took over as business manager for Skodsborg Sanatorium and for five years served in that capacity while continuing his work as the business manager for Frydenstrand Sanatorium.²⁴ During this time SFS also ran a health food store at Ebenezer in Copenhagen, the site of the Danish Conference office, in the name of C. C. Hansen and under his supervision.²⁵ A shop was later opened in Frederikshavn with Hansen as its manager.²⁶ That he had an active and enterprising personality was shown by his continued interest in Adventist literature and the opening of the Denmark Publishing House under the business name of C. C. Hansen & Co.²⁷

Later years and Legacy

When Hansen stopped serving as business manager at Skodsborg Sanatorium in March 1905, he bought the health store from the SFS and opened "Sana" in Smallegade in Copenhagen, where he put all his energy into promoting a healthful lifestyle and the sales of health food products.²⁸ In 1916 he handed "Sana" over to his daughter Kristine to "devote all my time undivided in the Lord's service," as he expressed it. He visited members regularly and held house meetings, enjoyed participating in the yearly Harvest Ingathering campaign, was invited to preach in different churches, and functioned as elder in two smaller churches outside Copenhagen.²⁹

M. M. Olsen wrote about him,

Bro. Hansen was quiet and earnest. He had common sense, and many sought his guidance and counsel in temporal as well as spiritual matters...His love for God's cause included all the message, the testimony of the Spirit of Prophecy and the health message as well as the more evangelistic. Often it has encouraged the churches to hear Bro. Hansen tell his experiences in talking with and convincing individual about the truth of God's word.³⁰

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