

Advent Tidende

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Religious publications like the Millerite *Signs of the Times*, *The Midnight Cry*, *The Day-Star*, and others were powerful tools in the Second Advent Awakening in the 1840's along with preaching to share the message of the soon coming Lord. After the great disappointment, the Sabbatarian Adventists saw a need to publish their own paper, and *The Present Truth* (1849) followed by *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* (1850) became the official paper to be shared among its adherents and interested people. They were all in English, so to reach the growing Scandinavian immigrant population in north America, *Advent Tidende* was published as the first foreign language Seventh-day Adventist mission paper in America.

Advent Tidende (*Advent Herald*) was a Danish language monthly periodical that was circulated between 1872 and 1883. It was published by Syvende-Dags Advent Trykkeri Selskab (Seventh-day Adventist Printing Company) in Battle Creek, Michigan.¹ The editor was [John Gotlieb Matteson](#), a pioneer Adventist worker among the Scandinavian people in the North Midwest states of America² and later a pioneer missionary in Scandinavia.³ The purpose of the journal was "to encourage to practical Christian religion, explain the prophesies, and defend God's commandments and the faith of Jesus." The price was one dollar a year, always in advance. However, it was distributed free for poor people.⁴

John G. Matteson, a Danish settler in Minnesota, became an Adventist in 1863 shortly after the organization of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. Being a powerful Baptist preacher before his conversion to Adventism, he shared his new convictions enthusiastically with Scandinavian emigrants and saw the need for a regular publication in Danish that would support the Advent message. Many of the emigrants lived in Scandinavian communities and were not too familiar with the English language. In their churches, they would sing in Danish, Norwegian, or Swedish and listen to a Scandinavian sermon or Bible reading by a Scandinavian preacher. The official church paper *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* had been published since 1850⁵ but did not have much impact on the non-English speaking population. Matteson believed that a Danish-language journal would make a difference, so in January 1872, the first issue of *Advent Tidende* was published as a 24-page monthly periodical. This publication was created despite some resistance from the publishers in Battle Creek to an Adventist publication in a language other than English. In the second year of its existence, the journal was expanded, and the number of pages in each issue became 32.⁶

In the first issues were articles on the Second Coming of Christ, God's Kingdom (the prophecy in Daniel 2), Messiah (the life of Jesus), and the Law of God. The articles were well documented with Bible texts. There was also an article on the mission of women, a Bible lesson series, and reports from workers in the field and the progress of the work.⁷ Later columns on health and the home were included. Soon, letters to the editor were added, and one could follow how *Advent Tidende* was also received in Denmark and Norway having been sent "home" by family in America. Although the primary target group was the Danish-Norwegian speaking population in America, the new publication opened the way for the Advent message in the old Nordic countries. Copies were shared and requests for the paper to be sent direct were received by the editor. As the Sabbath truth was shared in the paper, people responded and began to keep the Sabbath. A lady from Denmark wrote in 1874, "I am pleased to learn that *Advent Tidende* gives information about the Lord's Sabbath and our Savior's soon coming."⁸ A man from another place in Denmark wrote, "I have started keeping the Sabbath, and agree with you on the teachings that are emphasized in your papers... I long for a Missionary to come here and help us start sharing the truth among our fellowmen."⁹ In 1875 from another place: "Here are some dear friends in this area who want to exchange lies for truth, and some want to read *Advent Tidende*. Here are also some who love the Lord and have begun to keep the Sabbath holy."¹⁰ In 1877, there were 260 subscribers to *Advent Tidende* in Denmark in addition to the many in North America. That same year, clubs were organized in America for the distribution of *Advent Tidende* as well as other magazines.

In March 1877, one of the interested readers wrote, "I hope that the Lord in his mercy will allow his workers to visit Denmark, so that souls also here may be won for the Lord."¹¹ It was after receiving several such letters from different parts of Denmark and Norway that Matteson wrote to James White, the president of the General Conference, asking for permission to leave his work in the U.S. and take up missionary work in his native country of Denmark. Permission was granted, and on June 6, 1877, John G. Matteson arrived in Denmark as a pioneer SDA worker to all the Scandinavian countries.¹²

After his arrival in Denmark, he continued as editor of *Advent Tidende*, and in numerous articles reported on the progress of the work in this new mission field. Within three years of his arrival, the first conference outside America was organized in Denmark in 1880 with seven local Adventist churches. This was soon followed by the organization of the conference in Norway, also partly due to the distribution of the Advent message through *Advent Tidende*.

The journal continued until 1883, when it was replaced by its successors, *Tidernes Tegn* (*Signs of the Times*) and *Sandhedens Tidende* (*Herald of Truth*).¹³

SOURCES

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NOTES

1. Øivind Gjertsen, "The Seventh-day Adventist Church in Norway," in Sigimund Skard (ed.), *Americana Norvegica: Norwegian Contribution to American Studies* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1969), 78.
2. John Gottlieb Matteson, ed., *Advent Tidende* (Battle Creek, Michigan: Syvende-Dags Advent Trykkeri Selskab), January 1872, 1.
3. Yvonne Johansson Öster, "Matteson, John Gottlieb (1835–1896)," *Encyclopedia of Seventh-day Adventists*:
<https://encyclopedia.adventist.org/article?id=5CPX&highlight=Matteson>.
4. John Gottlieb Matteson, *Advent Tidende*, January 1872, 1.
5. "Review and Herald," *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia* (1966), 1075.
6. John Norton Loughborough, *The Great Second Advent Movement* (Washington D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association 1905), 414.
7. John Gottlieb Matteson, *Advent Tidende*, January 1872, 1.
8. John Gottlieb Matteson, *Advent Tidende*, August 1874, 254.
9. Ibid.
10. John Gottlieb Matteson, *Advent Tidende*, November 1875, 349.
11. "Denmark," *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*, 1996, mdcccxc.
12. Ibid., Yvonne Johansson Öster, "Matteson, John Gottlieb (1835–1896)," *Encyclopedia of Seventh-day Adventists*:
<https://encyclopedia.adventist.org/article?id=5CPX&highlight=Matteson>.

13. Information provided by the Historical Archives of Seventh-day Adventists, Denmark (HASDA).

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