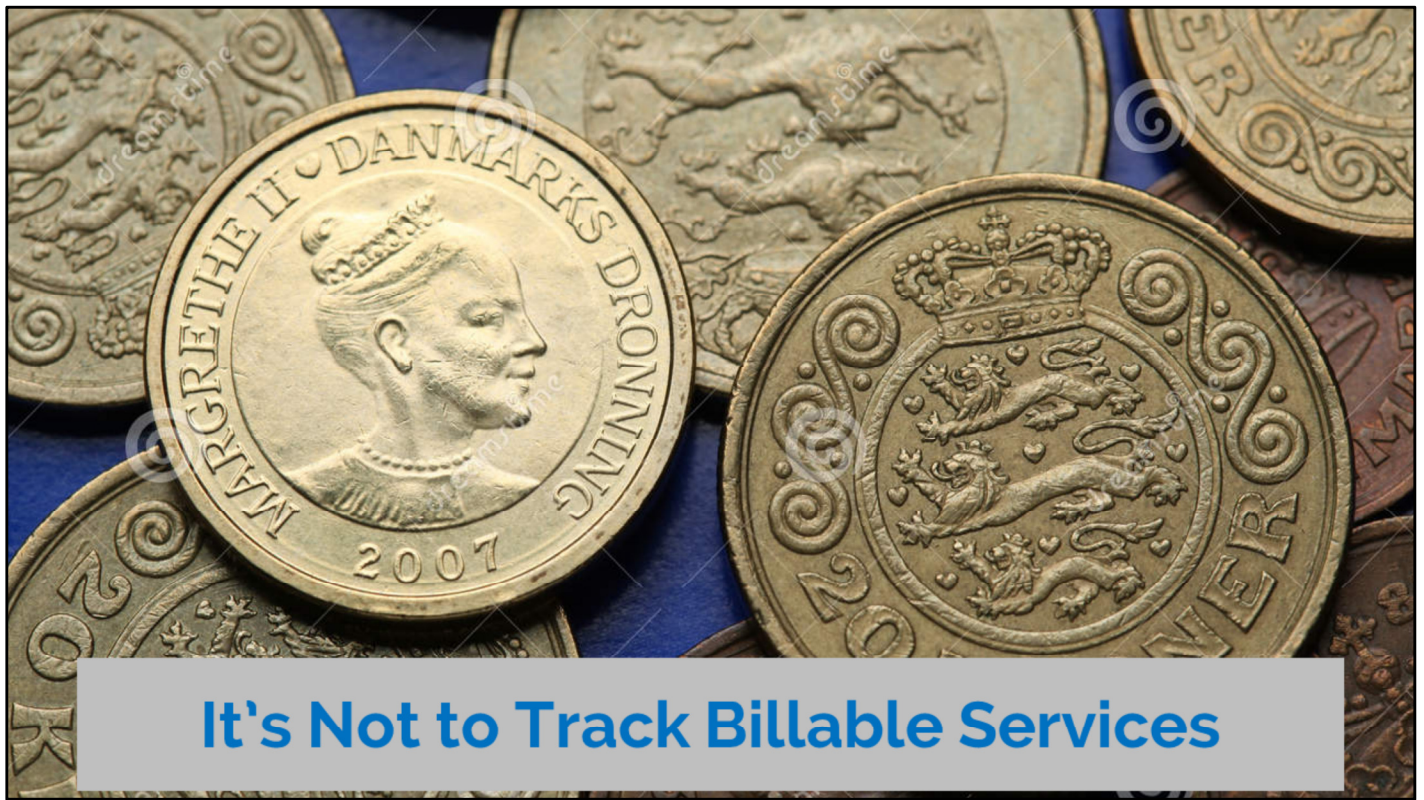




# Why We Have Church Records

In Denmark, Iceland and Norway



**It's Not to Track Billable Services**

**17 May 1646**

Christian IV sends an instruction to the Bishops:

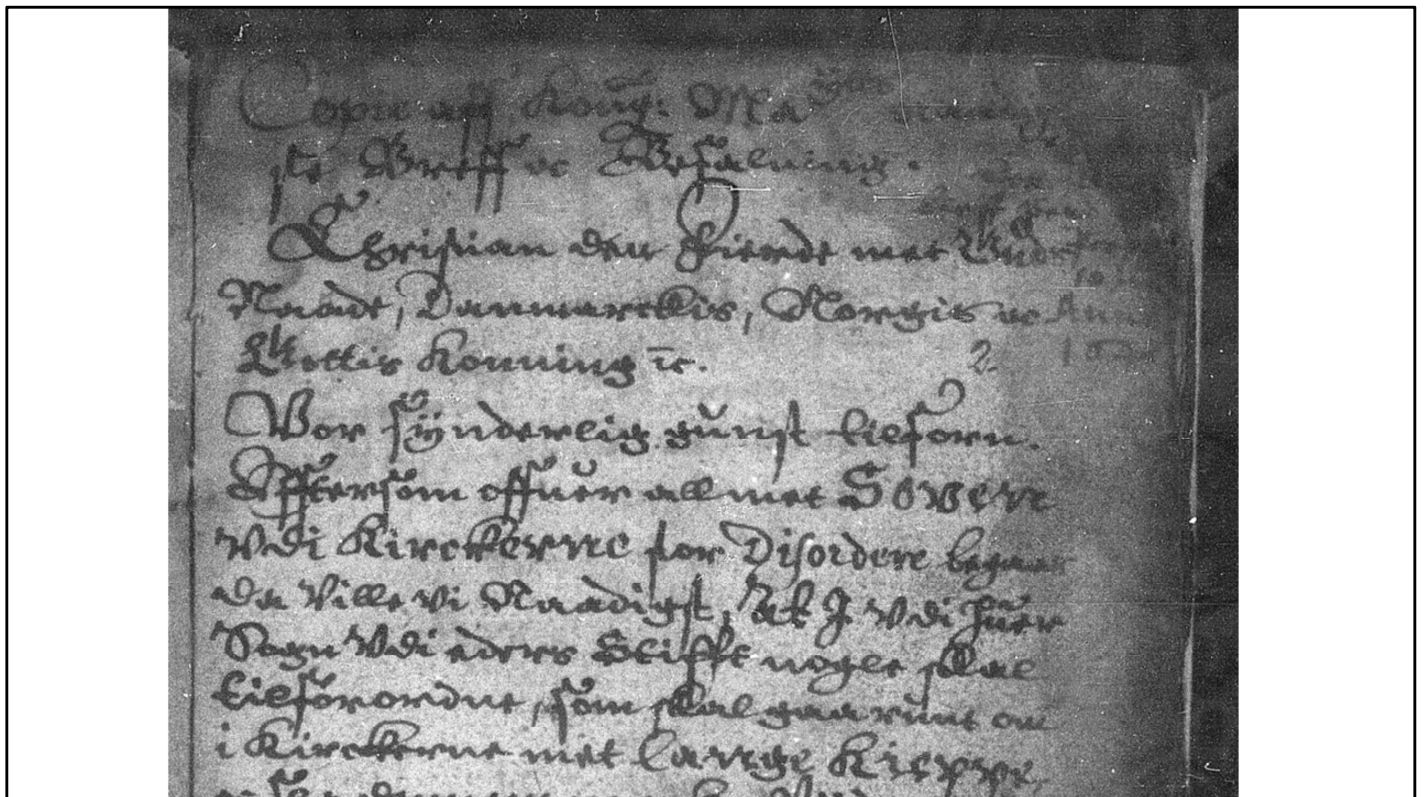
**Christian den Fierde met Guds  
Naade, Danmarchis, Norgis oc  
Gottis Konning etc, Vor synderlig gunst  
tilforn. Effttersom oberalt med soben udi kirkerne  
stor desordre begaas, da ville vi naadigst at I udi  
hvert sogn udi eders stift nogle skal tilforordne, som**



**Øse Kirke, Ribe**

Poul Jørgensen Barfod (1575-1654), priest in Øse, Ribe, Denmark





Barfød's transcription of the letter found in Øse,  
 Ribe, Denmark. Kirkebog 1 (1646-1723):1  
 GS 51582  
 DGS 7213071/6-7

"Christian den Fierde met Guds  
 Naade, Danmarchis, Norgis oc  
 Gottis Konning etc,  
 Vor synderlig gunst tilforn."

## Modern Translation

”Eftersom overalt med soven udi kirkerne stor desordre begaas, da ville vi naadigst at I udi hvert sogn udi eders stift nogle skal tilforordne, som kan gaa rundt om i kirkerne med lange kæppe og slå dennem paa hovedet som sover, og saaledes holder folket aarvaagen til at høre desto flittigere prædiken. Desligeste ville vi naadigst, at præsterne udi eders stift alvorligen tilholder at I holder rigtig kirkebog ved dag og datum paa hvor mange udi deres sogne fødes, hvo dertil fader står, og hvor mange aarligen tilsammen vies og dør. Ville vi og naadigst, at I siden skal have god indseende med, at saadant af dennem efterkommes. Saafernt nogen præst her udinden forsømmelig findes, skal han dermed have forbrudt hans kald. Dermed sker vor vilje.”

“As sleeping during church causes great disorder everywhere , We graciously request that in each parish in your diocese shall one be appointed, who can go about the church with long sticks and strike the head of anyone who is asleep, and thus keep the people vigilant to hear the sermon being preached. Likewise we would graciously request that the priests in your diocese to keep a correct church book by day with the information on how many in their parish are born, who the father is, and how many marriages and deaths occur each year. We graciously request that the record shall be correct for any future reference. If any priest displays negligence with this, he will forfeit his calling. Thus is our will.”