

## **Jógvan F. Kjølbroy (1887–1967): A Brethren Businessman in the Faeroes**

Óli Jacobsen

Jógvan F. Kjølbroy<sup>1</sup> was an industrialist, who from a very modest upbringing, managed to build the largest business conglomerate of its time on the Faeroe Islands. He was also a devout man and was part of the Betesda [Bethesda] community in Klaksvík, which grew into the largest Brethren assembly in the Faeroes.<sup>2</sup>

Kjølbroy was born in 1887, in the then small village of Klaksvík, on Borðoy, which is one of the northernmost islands. His father, like many Faeroese at the time, was a crofter fisherman with some land, which provided some income from sheep and grass for a cow, and he was also a fisherman with a small boat. He could have taken a loan to finance the studies of his son, but he chose not to do so, which meant that Kjølbroy did not have the option of continuing his education. According to a tape recording which he made in old age, he grew up in a home where religious customs were very important. His father was the bell ringer in the Lutheran Church and was in the church almost every day there were services. His uncle was a deacon. He says,

I was very young, and I used to be in church for services. My uncle soon discovered that I had a good voice, and he wanted me to sing at all ceremonies. I can say that I grew up in the church. When my father was prevented from going, I went in his place, and it also happened sometime when my uncle was prevented. Sometimes I also read the homily from a prayer book in the church and was always on standby when they needed me. I always attended worship and neglected hardly a Sunday in church. My family was both

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<sup>1</sup> His surname is pronounced with an initial ‘ch’ (tʃ), as in ‘church’.

<sup>2</sup> This paper is based on Óli Jacobsen, *Kjølbroy Lív og Virki* (Tórshavn, 2015). All English translations in this paper are by the writer.

ecclesiastical and religious. My grandmother used to read a sermon every day including Sundays after church.<sup>3</sup>

It was the usual practice in those days that young men became fishermen, but Kjølbro had no desire to become a sailor. Instead he managed to get a clerical position at a local grocery store, Jørgen Beck & Sønner, Ltd, which was the leading company in Klaksvík at that time. The store manager spotted that the young clerk had talent, and arranged for him to attend a business school in Copenhagen for four months, with his salary paid by the firm.

### **Businessman**

Returning from Copenhagen, however, he soon started his own business. He did so together with his wife, Karin Biskopstø, who was five years older than him, and she would go on to have a major role in his business. She ran a small store, which was a branch of Jørgen Bech & Sønner. When they married in 1909 Kjølbro took over and started to develop it, primarily buying fish from local fishermen and preparing it for export.

The business grew quickly, and in 1913 it involved his own fishing vessels, which he initially bought along with local fishing captains. Fishing vessels at that time were primarily smacks, which were bought second-hand from the UK. The vessels were soon motorized, but were still very small and simple ones, seeking fishing grounds off the islands and further north in Icelandic waters. Loss of life at sea was common in those days, and this also involved vessels owned and operated by Kjølbro. The production was primarily salted and dried fish products, which were mostly exported to southern Europe. Klaksvík soon became—and still is—the leading fishing community on the islands with, at present, a population close to 5,000.

Prior to the start of the Second World War, Kjølbro's business had evolved to include larger fishing vessels such as trawlers, and a significant onshore business with stores, mechanical workshops, and

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<sup>3</sup> J. F. Kjølbro, tape recording, c.1961.

fish landing and processing facilities. The local infrastructure was not developed in those days, so Kjølbro had to build his own harbour with berths for loading vessels. He also established ferryboat connections to other islands and to the island capital of Tórshavn. There was, in the period leading up to the Second World War, a high level of trawler activity around the islands, mainly with vessels from the UK. Because of this, the local fishing suffered, and many Faeroese sold their boats. Kjølbro saw an opportunity and bought many of these vessels, a decision which soon paid off when the Second World War began and the foreign trawlers disappeared from the fishing grounds. The war meant a significant change in circumstances in the Faeroe Islands, which were part of the Kingdom of Denmark. Denmark was occupied by Germany and the Faeroe Islands by Britain, and there was no link between Denmark and the Faeroe Islands in the five years that the British occupation lasted.

With his large fleet of fishing vessels Kjølbro—and other vessel operators on the islands—managed to establish a large export of fresh fish to Britain, which had converted most of its fishing boats for war duties. Faeroese fishermen also sailed to Iceland where they bought fresh fish and transported it to the UK. This was a dangerous undertaking, which during the years of Second World War cost the lives of more than 200 Faeroese fishermen and seamen, but it was a significant contribution to the British war effort, and it created well-paid jobs on the islands.

Kjølbro's ships were also subject to attack, and he lost a large trawler, which, although the crew was rescued, meant great financial loss. Another small fishing vessel was fired upon by a German plane, and one of the crew was killed. It was, however, thought to be providential that although he had about 400 employed on his ships during the war years, 'only' one of his employees died due to the war.

The war had another consequence. Norway was occupied by Germany in April 1940. One result of this was that many Norwegian fishermen fled with their vessels from Norway, and several of these ships came to the northerly port of Klaksvík. This meant the great challenge of providing these Norwegians with shelter and



Kjølbros with four medals. The two on the left are from the King of Denmark and the one on the right from the King of Norway. The one beneath is from the local union of inshore fishermen in Klaksvík.

employment. Kjølbros was committed to this project. He housed several of these Norwegians and he fitted Norwegian fishing vessels so they could keep fishing, although security for a refund was uncertain in the beginning. For this Kjølbros was decorated by the Norwegian king after the war. During the war years, two of his daughters married Norwegians.

After the war, many vessel owners on the Faeroe Islands spent the money made on buying second-hand trawlers from other countries. This turned out to be poor business, since the vessels were inefficient. A crisis emerged on the islands, and the major bank,

Sjóvinnubankin had to be saved from collapse. Kjølbro, contrary to most of the other vessel owners, initiated a renewal of his fishing fleet, and started building new and efficient trawler vessels for fishing around Greenland, Iceland, and in the Barent Sea. The fish products were now mainly frozen fish for the European and US markets. Kjølbro also started the construction of a large onshore fish processing plant, Kósavirkið, which became, and still is, the largest fish processing facility on the islands.

From the commencement of his business, Kjølbro spent significant efforts in creating the right marketing channels for his fish products. Communication in those days was not easy from a remote location like Klaksvík, and was initially by mail only, later supplemented by telephone and telex. He overcame this by having business partners in Copenhagen and elsewhere, who could support the marketing and selling of the products. Later, the marketing of fish products from the islands was coordinated via a dedicated marketing cooperation, Føroya Fiskasøla.

Especially in the 1930s there were restrictions in the financing of the fishing operations which made it difficult to make advance payments to the fishermen and their families. In response to this, a few Faeroese vessel operators issued their own coin system with imprinted currency value, which could be used in their own stores. Kjølbro also issued his own coin series, now a collector's item. The practice was stopped in 1933 when it was declared illegal by the authorities. Kjølbro initiated many other business activities, shipping of fish products with his own cargo vessels, grocery shops, mechanical workshops, banking, whaling, and farming. His farming activities had particular importance during the war period when such products were in short supply.

One of his largest single commercial activities in addition to the fishing and fish processing, was, however, the shipyard he took over at Skála on Eysturoy, the second largest island. Here a minor shipyard existed, which had gone bankrupt. Kjølbro expanded the facility to become a large yard for vessel repair and a new building. This activity was not commercially viable and was one of the main reasons why his company in the 1960s had financial difficulties.

Kjølbro had success until the end of the 1950s, when his company began to fail. The reason was that he was getting old, and he lost the overall view of his large company which by then had more than 1,000 employees. In 1962, the conglomerate he had created had to be financially reorganized with assistance from the Danish Nationalbank, a process which was still on-going at the time of his death. Although he was still chairman of the board when he died in 1967, Kjølbro, however, had lost his position of power in the company. It was eventually reorganized with a new ownership structure, in which the Kjølbro family still has a minor share. Nevertheless, Kjølbro had played a significant role in developing the Faeroe Islands to the prosperous community which it is today.

### **Character**

He and his wife had five children, with their two sons Ewald and Poul Nolsøe who had trusted positions in their father's business. The family maintained their principal residence in Klaksvík with a summer residence on the island of Vágoy, the most westerly of the large islands, but otherwise Kjølbro dedicated his life to his business, his family, and the assembly. Karin was only 70 when she died in 1952, after years of weakness, and the following year Kjølbro married Karin's niece, Olga.

Jógvan Gerðalíð in Klaksvík, who is an important source for Brethren history in the Faeroes, states that Kjølbro had great concern for the people he employed. He did not sleep when fishing boats were fishing and it was bad weather. He could go a whole night at the harbour and wait until all the boats had returned home safely.<sup>4</sup> He certainly thought about the times the ships had not come back at all and the crew was lost. This affected Kjølbro very heavily. It was such concern that led to his evangelical conversion. At the age of 30 years, he had begun to doubt the Lutheran presentation of the Christian faith. In the tape he made towards the end of his life, he recollected:

I especially remember the winter of 1917. At that time one of the Brethren lived with us for a while. He was converted to God and he

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<sup>4</sup> Jógvan Gerðalíð, interview. 2011.

talked to me about the salvation in Jesus Christ. My wife, who was a relative of Brethren, was affected and agreed with him, but I was very much against. Around this time two converted men moved from a village to Klaksvík. They also talked to me about this matter, and it ended up that I started seriously reading the Bible. As I read, I came to the conclusion that much of what I had confidence in was not biblical, and partly it was human learning. This made me really think about where I should be in eternity. I had no certain security about my soul.<sup>5</sup>

One of the men who had come to Klaksvík was the Faeroese convert, Jens Klæmint Isaksen (1881–1964), who had moved there with his family and established a business.<sup>6</sup> His removal also led to the establishment of the assembly, Betesda, in 1917. Matters came to a head for Kjølbroy when in 1920 his ship *Kristina* disappeared in Icelandic waters with the loss of all sixteen men, and his company suffered deeply from the financial loss. He recalled:

In the end, the question of eternity came to rest heavily on me and I had to get this matter settled. I was still very sceptical, but it ended up that I should go to the meeting in Betesda, the Brethren gospel hall, to hear their message. On 17 December, I gave a brief testimony in Betesda. I stood up and said that I had been a tough opponent, but now I had to acknowledge that I have read a lot and found that there was no salvation in anything without Jesus, and he crucified, and he had saved me.

I was very happy that I had given a testimony to my Lord and Saviour. I got a lot of resistance, but not from my wife. But my siblings and parents were very much against it. I recognised God's commendation, and three weeks after I was baptized. I got a joy and peace that I now have had for forty years. And what the Lord has been for me in all these years, well, it's like the psalmist writes: it cannot be explained, it can only be experienced.

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<sup>5</sup> Kjølbroy, tape recording, c.1961.

<sup>6</sup> Tórður Jóansson, *Brethren in the Faroes: An Evangelical Movement, its Remarkable Growth and Lasting Impact on an Island Community* (Tórshavn, 2012), 116–17, 166.

I began to bear witness to the grace of God both at meetings and otherwise. I have never been in doubt that Jesus crucified and raised from the dead is enough. It is my testimony.<sup>7</sup>

After his conversion he became one of the leaders in the assembly. He was among those at the front, visible among the leaders sitting on the front bench on cushions. In the 1920s and in 1930s there was a very large increase of the Brethren in the Faeroe Islands. This was especially the case in Klaksvík. During these years, many companies went bankrupt and their workers were in danger of losing their employment, but Kjølbroy took over the businesses and saved the jobs on land and at sea. The historian Hans Andrias Sølvará writes that gratitude to Kjølbroy for creating so much employment had a great influence on people, and that was one of the main reasons for the growth of the Brethren.<sup>8</sup>

It was also a very emotional time as many fishermen lost their lives at sea. The years of Brethren increase correlate with the economic transformation of Klaksvík, as Tórður Jóansson notes in his history of the Brethren in the Faeroes, ‘as if a new economic order and new social relations went hand in hand with spiritual needs in Klaksvík [*sic*].’<sup>9</sup> Kjølbroy, who joined not long after the assembly’s formation, became a major influence in it. Jógvan Gerðalíð in an interview described Kjølbroy’s preaching: ‘he was a rather intellectual and not too intense speaker of the Gospel; but he was remarkably well informed in biblical matters and always interesting to listen to.’<sup>10</sup> However, as Jógvan Gerðalíð stressed in a later interview with the present writer, when Kjølbroy was preaching he was not ‘teaching’ from the Bible. It is possibly more accurate, then, to say his preaching was simple and avoided more complicated theology.

As a person, Kjølbroy preferred a simple lifestyle. As far as possible he kept Sunday as a day of rest. He would welcome visitors to his home, but on his door was a notice: ‘For business, I am not

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<sup>7</sup> Kjølbroy, tape recording, c.1961.

<sup>8</sup> Hans Andrias Sølvará, *Klaksvíkar Söga II* (Klaksvík, 2009), 392–3.

<sup>9</sup> Jóansson, *Brethren in the Faroes*, 131.

<sup>10</sup> Quoted in Jóansson, *Brethren in the Faroes*, 260.

available Sundays and holidays'. Kjølbro corresponded with the Scottish missionaries to Norway, Alexander McKinnon and J. J. Adam: the former came regularly to visit the Faeroe Islands and the latter lived in the islands for some years. In their letters they would thank Kjølbro for his 'love gifts', which can only mean money.<sup>11</sup> He also gave financial support to the publication of the Bible translation in Faeroese by the evangelist, Victor Danielsen. Initially this was to be printed in Norway in the early 1940s,<sup>12</sup> and Kjølbro was one of those who had helped to guarantee the cost of printing. But with the beginning of the Second World War, the plan had to be abandoned. Eventually the Bible was printed in the Faeroe Islands in 1949—still supported by Kjølbro.

When in 1928 the earliest hall in Klaksvík was replaced, the project was supported financially by Kjølbro and he gave the ground.<sup>13</sup> In addition Kjølbro gave financial support to building other small gospel halls in the smaller settlements. He also did much to help those who were in straitened circumstances. There were also many who turned to Kjølbro for help. Although he could not help everyone, everyone got at least an answer. One opportunity to help was to offer a job. Kjølbro also had a sales office, Pescadero, in Copenhagen in Denmark, where many Faeroese lived or stayed for a while. It could, for instance, be for treatment in Danish hospitals. When there was a need for help of various kinds, people applied to Pescadero, even though it was outside their area of work, and they always got assistance. If there was need of financial help, it was not a problem either. The money was always paid back when the person came back home to the Faeroe Islands.

Kjølbro operated largely through trust. On one occasion he informed one of his Brethren that because of the lack of confidence they could no longer act together. But on the other hand, Justinus Eliassen, one of the sources of Brethren history, in the Faeroes, tells

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<sup>11</sup> Letters in the Kjølbro family archive; they corresponded in Norwegian which can readily be understood by Faeroese speakers.

<sup>12</sup> Zacharias Zacharissen, *Biblian á føroyskum hálfva øld* [*Half a Century of The Bible in Faeroese*] (Leirkerið, 2000), 78, 344, 416, 430.

<sup>13</sup> This hall was expanded several times until a new and modern one was built on the same site in 2014.

the following story. His father, Klæmint, had, along with his brothers, a fish company in Leirvík, on the east coast of Eysturoy. In 1950, they needed an extension to the company building. There was an economic crisis in this period, and it was almost impossible to get loans from a bank. They then tried to get building material from Kjølbro on credit. One of his employees, however, told them that it could not be done as Kjølbro did not get credit from his suppliers, which meant that he in turn was not able to grant credit. As a last solution Klæmint asked Kjølbro himself. He replied, “If I can count on you and your brothers being as reliable as your father, I will make an exception.” They got the material and managed to create a great site in Leirvík. Needless to say, Kjølbro was paid for his material.<sup>14</sup>

### Controversies

Kjølbro was an icon of his time and was widely respected, but was also a controversial figure given the large influence he had on people’s lives.

There is no doubt that he was teetotal, and lived according to Brethren opinion in this regard. He could, however, at special occasions offer a toast with wine, as hardly any other of the Brethren would do at the time. But Kjølbro was big opponent of smoking, unlike many other Brethren at that time.

It has often been claimed that in order to obtain job with Kjølbro’s company it was a condition—or at least an advantage—to become a ‘Baptist’, as the Brethren were often called. In 1960 the Danish Home Mission published a book, *Men Gud greb ind [When God intervened]*, with reports from leading members of the Home Mission in the Faeroes. One of the contributors was Josias Matras, who was a leading member in the Home Mission in Klaksvík. He described the Home Mission’s development in the village, which initially was successful, but

now the Baptists began to ‘fish in troubled waters’. They were after the new converts to persuade them to let themselves re-baptise. And we learned with sadness that one after the other was persuaded. An

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<sup>14</sup> Justinus Eliassen, interview, 2012.

important factor was also that J. F. Kjølbro, the largest employer in the village, was a 'Baptist', and primarily provided employment for those who belonged to the Brethren. The result was that many, also for economic reasons, were re-baptised.<sup>15</sup>

But this is, at least, not the whole truth. Later in the same chapter Matras tells, that he was engaged on a trawler in 1940, which was very attractive work at that time. He does not mention the name of this trawler, but it is clear from the detailed description that this is a trawler, which belonged to Kjølbro! The reality is there were men of all denominations who sailed with Kjølbro's ships and who were working for him.

Matras also omitted another piece of Kjølbro's conduct. In 1959 Kjølbro arranged a fishing expedition to East Greenland with a large mother vessel and ten smaller ships, which were to deliver their catch to the mothership where the catch was processed. As a part of this expedition Kjølbro hired Matras's ship, which must have been very beneficial for him, as Matras was then sick. His ship was also subsequently hired by Kjølbro for fishing in Faeroese waters. After the book was published in 1960 the management of Kjølbro's company felt that the description of their business in it was undeserved, and the lease was not renewed.

Furthermore Kjølbro's granddaughter tells the story that her grandfather learned that a staff member who belonged to the Brethren got higher pay than another employee, who belonged to the Church. Kjølbro immediately gave orders that they should both have the same salary.<sup>16</sup> One cannot blame Kjølbro, however, if in some cases he gave preference to Brethren as employees if they were equally skilled as others. They were people that he knew and were puritanical in lifestyle, just like himself. It meant something for workforce stability. That Brethren were hired in preference to others may have happened in a few cases, but it was not the general policy of the company.

Kjølbro himself could be quite controversial. He could have difficulty accepting views that cut across his own interests. This was evident in the late 1930s, when the municipal authorities in his view,

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<sup>15</sup> John Munck, *Men Gud greb ind*, (Denmark, 1960), 74–5.

<sup>16</sup> Karin Kjølbro, daughter of Ewald Kjølbro, interview 2013.

were unwilling to give him room for the expansion of his business. This led to considerable controversy in the local newspaper *Norðlýsið* [*Northern Lights*]. A part of this controversy was a threat from Kjølbro to move a large part of his activity to the neighbouring island of Kunoy, if he did not meet more goodwill from the authorities in Klaksvík. This led to a sharp controversy in *Norðlýsið*, in which Kjølbro used his famous sarcasm against his opponents. But in at least in one case, one can state that Kjølbro was right in thinking he was treated unfairly. He built his own port facilities, but later the authorities ordered him to pay port charges to the public for the use of the harbours, for the building of which he himself had paid!

The most notable controversy, however, was the dispute over a Danish medical doctor who was asked to leave the hospital in Klaksvík as a result of his links to the Danish Nazi party at the beginning of the German occupation of Denmark in 1940. The dispute, which was in the period 1953–55, did not involve Kjølbro personally, but his son, Ewald. The authorities wanted to replace the Danish doctor with a Faeroese doctor, who was married to a sister of Ewald's wife. The majority of the population in Klaksvík did not want this doctor, and it led to a very antagonistic attitude to the whole Kjølbro family. The workers even took industrial action against the Kjølbro company. Kjølbro felt that he was being unfairly treated by the community for which he had done so much. The dispute ended with a Danish police force intervention in 1955.

Kjølbro was also a politician for a while. For a number of years he sat in the local council of Klaksvík, where one year he was mayor. In the years 1943 to 1946, he was also a member of the Løgting, the Faeroese parliament. He was a member of the Liberal Popular Party, which advocated an autonomous Faeroe Islands when the war was over in 1945. On 14 September 1946 a referendum took place on the future of the Faeroes. There was a small majority for an independent Faeroese government, but the result was home rule in 1948 and the Faeroes became a self-governing region within the Danish kingdom. Kjølbro, however, discovered that politics was not for him. He was used to making unilateral decisions in his company, while things happened too slowly in politics. He attempted to resign from the

Løgting, but was not permitted to. At the election in 1946 he did not stand again.

### **Tributes**

Kjølbro died on 6 February 1967. There were many obituaries both domestic and international. Poul Petersen, MP for the People's Party, Kjølbro's old political party, said on the radio the same day as Kjølbro died:

This morning we heard the news of Jógvan Kjølbro's death. He would have been 80 years in three weeks, and his force was about to disappear. Kjølbro was an extraordinary businessman both in the Faeroe Islands and the Nordic countries as a whole. He had a special ability to transform ideas into reality, and it can be seen both on land and at sea. He had no training, but this was no hindrance, also when it came to perform in English. He had a special ability to get associated with skilled employees, whose action he also appreciated.

For a short period during the war he was a member of the Faeroese Parliament. At that time the Faeroes were occupied by Great Britain. With the restrictions which were in Europe, Kjølbro was spokesman for trade with the United States. Now Kjølbro has passed away but after him stands the memory of a man who was a real pioneer. Kjølbro was a liberal man, and he had that faith in the country and people, and he had the will to make his dreams come true. Faeroese will remember him with respect and gratitude.<sup>17</sup>

Petur Háberg, a leader among the Brethren, wrote in the Brethren periodical *Lív og Læra* [*Life and Learning*]:

At the last biannual Whitsun rally in Klaksvík, Kjølbro was the last speaker at the podium. He was a big, handsome man. He was marked by age. But he had a smile in his eyes and was happy in the salvation in Jesus Christ. His major accomplishments in life were the reputation that created respect for him in all the Nordic countries. His words had weight, regardless of where and how they were made.

His speech was so genuine and emotional that we felt that this was the real Kjølbro that was talking here about what had been most

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<sup>17</sup> The Faeroese broadcasting service, Poul Petersen, 6 Feb. 1967.

important in his life. Here he was at the very source of life. Here he stood on the safe rock: The soul was saved. He had learned that everything else was worthless.

He remembered this evening the old Betesda, and he talked about Christ, the good friend, whom he had known for nearly fifty years. And as he said himself “Jesus, the friend over others,” and he added: “I loved Jesus, and I still love him, for he loved me first.” And then he read to the end Philippians 4: 8, which can be seen as an appropriate greeting from him to brethren and sisters around the country: ‘Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.’ Then he sat down and we sang ‘God be with you till we meet again’.

Now he is laid to rest. He was an important man for the assembly in many ways, and he has left a significant imprint on many areas. It is said that men reaching the highest peaks in life are lonely. But Kjølbro was not lonely, because he had this friend above all others whom he talked about.<sup>18</sup>

Kjølbro was buried on 9 February. He was followed to the grave by the largest crowd seen at a funeral in Klaksvík. Andrew Sloan, the son of W. G. Sloan, the first Brethren missionary to the Faeroes, was one of the speakers. He reported, among other things about the time Kjølbro was in Norway to take over a newly built ship, *Pride*, which at that time was the most modern passenger ship in the Faeroe Islands.<sup>19</sup> The shipyard arranged for the occasion a dinner in which the employees were also invited. Kjølbro gave a speech, and took the opportunity to tell the significance that God had had in his life as Saviour and help, as he did on other occasions.

Andrew Sloan also narrated how Kjølbro throughout his active life had been one of the most significant supports of the assembly both economically and as a preacher. Kjølbro was not afraid to confess his faith to both high and low. He took every opportunity he

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<sup>18</sup> *Lív og Læra* (Feb. 1967), 47.

<sup>19</sup> Often the Faeroese smacks kept their original names. *Pride* was replacing the British *Pride*, which originally was one of those smacks and the new boat retained the old name.

had. Kjølbro also took it very hard when his ships were in danger. The material damage was secondary, but it was much worse when there was danger to human life.

Kjølbro in many respects was a pioneer for all the Faeroe Islands, but first and foremost it was Klaksvík he served. He also wanted his company to remain after his death for the benefit of Klaksvík and the region. This, he believed, the local population had deserved. Without their efforts and cooperation he could not have built up the businesses that he did. According to the census of 2012, Klaksvík was markedly different from the rest of the Faeroe Islands in religious affiliation. It showed that almost forty per cent of the population belonged to Betesda, and in that same year the assembly also had fifteen overseas missionaries.<sup>20</sup> The Brethren have had more influence in Klaksvík than in the rest of the islands. For the last fifty years most of the mayors in the town have come from the assembly, regardless of political affiliation.

Kjølbro fits the profile of the Brethren businessman that Tim Grass gives in his history of the Brethren in Britain. Kjølbro provided finance for the growing Faeroese Brethren movement, and combined his business activities with preaching.<sup>21</sup> In addition the spirit of capitalist enterprise fitted well with his individualist spirituality by which he saw himself as responsible to his heavenly Master.<sup>22</sup>

The company he founded continues at present, and various other companies started by him continue to have a major impact on Faeroese society. So you could probably say that although dead, Kjølbro still lives!

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<sup>20</sup> Jóansson, *Brethren in the Faroes*, 129, 144.

<sup>21</sup> Tim Grass, *Gathering to His Name: The Story of Open Brethren in Britain and Ireland* (Milton Keynes, 2006), 252–3.

<sup>22</sup> Grass, *Gathering to His Name*, 315.