

PREFACE

In recent years, the preoccupation with the 19th and 20th centuries' religious phenomena that enhanced our cultural history has experienced an unexpected revival. In addition, a contemporary "return of the religions" can be noted.

Historians, geographers, folklorists and social scientists wanting to understand processes of cultural transfer have been rediscovering the significance of the histories of Catholicism, Protestantism and Judaism during the main era of missionary activity and in the period of the German Empire (1871–1918). In addition to the social, economic and political structures of social life, historical and cultural analysis have increased in importance. The "inner side of human existence", i.e. values, norms, cultural ideas and imprints, are being examined more and more frequently.

These developments can be traced in our book, which comprises mainly conference papers. In March 2006 an international conference dealing with questions of cultural history in the field of "The Social Dimension of Missions in the Orient" took place in Kaiserswerth, Düsseldorf. Missions in the Orient were, and still are, a delicate matter of religious politics, easily causing fear among Muslims, Jews and Orthodox Christians of domination, control or determinism of the East by the West. Nevertheless, dealing with missionary activities in the declining Ottoman Empire, especially in the Holy Land, demonstrates how complex and yet productive the encounter of missionaries in the Middle East was. It shows the changes that missionaries and followers of different faiths (those to be converted) experienced during in these processes of cultural encounter.

As will be demonstrated here, missions to the Orient were a result of the Age of Romanticism and the revivalist movement, but also of European imperialism, which revived concepts such as the "peaceful crusade" and the "Restoration of the Jews".

In a period of nearly 100 years numerous German, English, Scottish, French, Russian and Italian projects of different denominations had an immense effect on the indigenous populations, especially concerning education and social work.

Nevertheless, the Western bishops, priests, deacons, teachers and doctors seldom managed to achieve their original aims – to promote the gospel and achieve conversion.

In Palestine, there were on average no more than ten converts per year, and frequently there were none at all. Still, the missions left their obvious mark on the region, often, not least, very visibly in terms of buildings. The missionaries built a social infrastructure that was hitherto unknown. This is why the editors of this book and others examine the "social dimension of missions" as a significant indicator of Western Christian activity in the Middle East. This is reason enough to ex-

plore this thesis in a conference with acknowledged experts and to ask them to subject their research to this perspective.

We concentrated in particular on topics that comprise social work, healthcare, religion, education and science, which basically encapsulates the entire field of ecclesiastical, welfare and social activities. Thirty-six representatives of church and mission history, general history, gender studies and postcolonial studies, examined the socio-cultural dimensions of impact from different points of view. In so doing, they represented the current state of the discipline in 2006, and also encouraged interdisciplinary exchange in the broad field of mission studies.

It became obvious that the concepts of social Protestantism and Catholicism from the “mother countries” strongly influenced missions to the Orient, to the extent that it is justified to say that the “home missions in foreign countries” built the social infrastructure for overseas missions. Indirectly, the home missions also influenced the foreign cultural policy, or rather, the exercise of cultural imperial influence on the part of the Great Powers in the Middle East.

This volume therefore not only contributes to the historiography of missions and to the development of theories for the history of Middle Eastern missions and churches, but also develops a transnational enhancement of the history of Christianity that has remained until now largely Eurocentric (a viewpoint that is developed by Martin Greschat and Kurt Nowak).

The book starts with an instructive overview of research up to 2006 by Heleen Murre-van den Berg (Leiden), who shows how the exploration of Middle Eastern mission and church history has flourished in the last two decades. Following newer theories of mentality and milieu, Roland Löffler (Frankfurt) develops a new methodological instrument which helps to analyse the socio-religious interactions between Orient and Occident. This part is followed by three articles that deal with Catholic activity in the Holy Land: Dominique Trimbur (Paris/Jerusalem) explains the fundamental relationship between church and foreign policy, investigating the role that religious schools, parishes and research facilities played in the foreign cultural policy of the European Great Powers. Haim Goren (Tel Hai), a leading expert of German Catholic activity in Palestine, explains the school and cultural concepts of the German Association of the Holy Land, and Barbara Haider's (Vienna) use of sources enables an understanding of the Catholic “Jerusalem-Milieu” in the Habsburg Monarchy.

Four articles pay attention to Protestantism in Palestine: Charlotte van der Leest (Utrecht) examines the beginning of the Anglican school system under Bishop Gobat, who left his mark on the Anglo-Prussian Diocese in Jerusalem in the middle of the 19th century, and who focussed on educational work. Using the example of the Scottish missions to Jews, Michael Marten (Stirling) demonstrates how important healthcare was for a mission, practically as well as theoretically, and shows how postcolonial theories can be used to analyse complex historical phenomena. Yaron Perry (Haifa) deals with the medical work of the mission of Jews too, but he concentrates on the Anglican mission. He raises new questions regarding the reaction of the Arab population towards healthcare activities from missions to Jews and the motivation of medical missions. What was more import-

ant – the desire for the improvement of patients' health, or the desire for conversion? What role did the New Testament stories of healing play?

After these concrete case-studies, Jakob Eisler (Stuttgart) concentrates on a different question: "How to do missionary fundraising and motivate donators: Mission – Propaganda – Movies as a factor for the stabilisation of mentality".

The analysis of advertising and propaganda for missions is a new area of research, whereby the author provides helpful insights. Finally, Ruth Kark (Jerusalem), the "Grande Dame" of the research field, connects the preceding considerations with the results of one of her more recent research projects and asks about the contribution of missions to the identity formation of indigenous populations in Palestine, an important question for church history, as well as for social and political history.

Christine Pschicholz (Berlin/Kiel) concentrates on a geographically different field, as she deals with the German expatriate congregations in the centre of the Ottoman Empire, modern-day Turkey. The social dimension also played an important role in supporting German diaspora parishes, as seen in the work of the Kaiserwerth Deaconesses, for example. The political environment in Istanbul and Izmir was different from the environment in Jerusalem and Haifa, which is why this article reveals a very special, but nevertheless related perspective of ecclesiastical and social commitment as an example of transnational history.

Whereas the preceding essays concentrate mainly on the 19th and the early 20th century, Uwe Kaminsky (Berlin/Bochum) and Gerhard Gronauer (Dinkelsbühl/Erlangen) discuss the question of how German Protestant institutions developed after the Second World War (Kaminsky), and how the theological and political-theological discourse about Israel developed in German Protestantism (Gronauer). There were clear factions in West German Protestantism regarding Israel: both friendly and critical positions that competed with one another, depending on the context.

Nevertheless, after the post-war appropriation and compulsory acquisition of all German institutions in Israel, the question arose as to whether German activity in the Holy Land had come to an end. However, due to the ecumenical initiative of the Lutheran World Federation and the creation of the "Palästinawerk" (combining a number of different missions), transnational political networks were formed which reanimated – at least partly – the social and educational activities of German Protestants in a new form. Nevertheless, at first this only happened beyond the borders of the new state of Israel. In the context of development cooperation, the social dimension of missions continues to leave its mark in the Middle East – in different form – throughout the late 20th century.

Unfortunately, the printing of these essays took an unduly long time, other projects and delays making it impossible to publish the book any earlier. We are grateful to the authors and the sponsors, who have been very patient with us!

Such a project can only be successful if one has help and support. In the first place, we want to thank the "Gerda Henkel Stiftung" for the generous support of the conference and the anthology.

There could barely have been a better place for a conference like this than Kaiserswerth, since from the earliest days the “Kaiserswerther Diakonie” has been one of the most important bearers of German Protestant activity in the Middle East. In twelve places, from Alexandria to Jerusalem, from Beirut to Smyrna and Istanbul, Protestant hospitals, schools and community stations were founded under the leadership of deaconesses. The “Palästinawerk” was founded here too. With a mission historical conference that deals with the “social dimension of mission”, one might say that history has returned to its place of origin.

This is the reason why the “Kaiserswerther Diakonie” and the “Fliedner-Kulturstiftung” support the project ideologically as well as materially. Annett Büttner M.A. from the “Fliedner-Kulturstiftung” Archives rendered outstanding services to the management of the conference, whereas Achim Hinz from the “Fliedner-Kulturstiftung”, did the layout in his usual professional manner. Prof. Dr. Jochen-Christoph Kaiser (University of Marburg) gave important advice as a partner to the conference, accompanying the entire project.

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