

To the missionary Schürmann
Adelaide

March 8, 1840

Beloved brethren in the Lord!

Your letter of June 19, 1839, which arrived at our place at the end of February 1840, was all the more welcome to us, as we had been eagerly awaiting news from you for a long time.

Praise be to God that He has not only kept you alive, but also preserved your courage and strength to continue and expand your professional work. Of course, our joy would have been greater if we had also received news from Brother Teichelmann at the same time. That this did not happen makes us regret that your relationship with each other is still not what it should be - a community that is not only desirable in general, but also necessary for a blessed and comprehensive effectiveness. We hope that in this regard, the (we hope to God - fortunate) arrival of Brothers Meyer and Klose, who are to deliver this letter to you, will be a blessing, and that the spirit of community, strength, and friendliness among you will grow. We will now briefly consider your letter.

Firstly, we therefore regret that your arduous expedition to Murray only yielded the negative result that the area you visited is barren and desolate. However, this experience will show you the necessity of planning future excursions more carefully, so that they will be more fruitful and you won't unnecessarily waste your energy. It would have been advisable if you hadn't ventured into unknown territory in search of discoveries, but rather only visited those areas where you could expect to find natives after gathering information.

We are very pleased with your attention to the customs and way of life of the natives, and we thank you for the news you have sent us about it. However, it seems to us that you sometimes make too hasty conclusions and draw parallels, which the concerned hunters would rather attribute to human nature in general than to a historical context. But this is just a general remark. In particular, we would like to draw your attention to a small mistake you made in describing the customs that the natives use in investigating the suspected murderers.

They compare this to the "Treuga Dei" [Truce of God] of the Middle Ages. However, this term refers to the peace of God [Pax Dei]. Instead, they are rightly thinking of the God's judgments, also common in the Middle Ages, which were called Ordalien.

Incidentally, such a procedure can only be called a God's judgment if it is truly associated with the idea of the supreme being. However, this does not seem to be the case with your natives in this instance. Rather, your description reminds us of the utterly reprehensible witch trials of the late Middle Ages and even of modern times.

With shuddering, we have read your testimonies about the natives' immersion in the horrors of lust; the most unexpected for us was the occurrence of child molestation. Since this latter, so common in antiquity, aberration is hitherto unheard of among a wild people, as it can only be considered a product of a sensuality overstimulated by luxury, we cannot help but believe that this horror was also introduced to New Holland by the Europeans. However reprehensible the matter may be, it is of no small moral interest to find out whether our assumption is correct, and we therefore ask you to occasionally endeavor to clarify the origin of this horror there.

We fully agree with your view that it is necessary to preach the Gospel to the natives in their native language, not in English, and we are pleased with your decision to undertake the arduous task of learning it for the sake of the great blessing that is expected from it. May the Lord grant you patience, strength, and wisdom, so that you may finally be able to translate the holy scriptures into one of those languages.

We are very sorry to hear that you are being hampered in your efforts due to a lack of money. However, we have made arrangements on our part to hand over two hundred and eighty pounds sterling to you by the beginning of October this year, and we will try to ensure that you always have a backup at the bank in Adelaide if you ever find yourself in financial difficulties. Don't let such troubles discourage you; often, no one can help it; and in the end, our Lord will not let you lack daily necessities if you just hold on to faith and commandments -- but we will now thank the governor in a letter for the kindness he has shown you.

We fully approve of your intention to make a trip to Encounter Bai after the mission, especially since missionary work is likely to bear fruit the further it is from the European settlement. Yes, please attend to the poor, unfortunate people there as soon as possible, who are also becoming victims of European brutality if no one opposes the work of Satan from any side. However, we must leave it to their own judgment whether the external circumstances allow for a settlement in that area. Similarly, we leave it to your discretion whether you want to make this attempt with one of the arriving brothers or with both of them; or perhaps it will suffice if only one, Brother Teichelmann, stays behind in Adelaide.

Hereby, we command you all to the further protection and grace of the Lord, and assure you of our love and intercession.

Dresden, March 8, 1840

The Committee of the Evangelical Lutheran Mission Society.