

Nro. 6

To the highly respected
Committee of the Evangelical-Lutheran Mission Society
in Dresden.

Adelaide, August 14, 1840

Highly esteemed and much beloved brethren in the Lord!

If you, as I assume, have received my last letter of March 23rd this year, you will have a fair idea of what we have done over the course of this year; how much success the gracious Lord of the Church has derived from our efforts, and what the general state of affairs is here in the country. The latter has remained largely the same so far. Our school is progressing, albeit slowly, but steadily, and the Sunday gatherings of both the old and the young have only been interrupted rarely, namely in cases where all the natives were absent, or a large number were too lazy to follow my invitation. Thus, the realization of the strange truth is gradually spreading among the local indigenous population, and seems to make at least temporary impressions at times, but overall, both here and in the rest of the world, there is a sluggish aversion to the *dwelling grace, and a conscious resistance to the disciplining grace of God. The future will show whether the divine seed scattered so far will sprout and bear fruit under continued care, or be suffocated by the worries and desires of this life.

Two different obstacles pose the greatest challenges to the missionary's work, namely, either the natives want to cling to their old superstitions and remain ignorant of our beliefs, or, as is the case with the majority, they approve of our statements but are just as easily and quickly swayed by the influences of the godless whites. For one trait in the character of the natives, we can't thank and praise God enough, namely that they, at least the tribes near Adelaide, do not find pleasure in intoxicating drinks. Although there have been occasional cases of drunkenness, especially among young men, these have been relatively rare. Considering the great temptation offered to them by the uncivilized English, it's surprising that not a large number of them have already become victims of alcoholism. The reasons for this, apart from God's protection, may lie partly in the climate and partly in the fact that the people still live in extreme ignorance.

However, my earlier judgment about the great sexual sins of the indigenous people has only been further reinforced by further observation. The following may serve as evidence of this.

Not only do a husband's brothers have almost equal rights to his wives, but the lending of the latter is generally considered one of the greatest favors; even more so, there is a certain game or dance, called Mattanya, among them, in which entire tribes exchange their wives with each other. That unscrupulous Europeans promote such atrocities wherever they can is beyond doubt, and it may even be that disgusting diseases were originally brought to the natives by them, but you can't imagine the indifference with which they continue to spread these diseases among themselves.

But enough about this rather unattractive chapter. I'll leave your doubts about whether child molestation among the natives is inherent for now, and just focus on the subject based on my own observations, although I haven't found the slightest reason to doubt my earlier assumptions. Overall, I'm almost of the opinion that the gap between a highly refined civilization and the most primitive state of nature isn't all that great. --

I thank you for your warning against making hasty historical comparisons, as well as for the particular improvement of the word "Trenga dei" and "Ordalia". I was unsure about the word when writing it down and soon realized my mistake, but the letter was already sealed and time did not allow me to reopen it for the sake of a single expression. A similar word error occurs elsewhere, which I have now forgotten, and you would kindly overlook it.

The happy arrival of our dear brothers will be reported by them themselves, and regarding our upcoming settlement in Port Lincoln, as well as our other distribution, I have written to Mr. P. Wermelskirch. Therefore, I would just like to add here that I have not yet accepted the position of sub-protector, but will temporarily go there for a month to see if there is an opportunity and reasonable likelihood of successful work there. If I find myself mistaken, I would move to Brother Meyer in Encounter Bay, otherwise I will stay there. I receive a free trip there, a salary, free rations there, and if necessary, a free return trip. This indulgence was needed by the governor, because I did not want to leave Encounter Bay and the neighboring tribes too easily. Apart from this important matter, I would like to add the following regarding the history of our mission.

On **May 20th**, the governor, accompanied by several gentlemen and ladies, visited our school. First, I had the children sing two songs I had composed, after which Brother Teichelmann quizzed them on the first biblical story. Those present were so pleased with the children's progress that His Excellency asked us to repeat what we had just done at the Queen's birthday celebration (May 25th). Subsequently, on the same day, a plaque was unveiled in front of the new government building, where Brother Teichelmann had the children spell and read after they had sung. However, as he was attempting something almost entirely new, it didn't turn out very well. Afterwards, I read a translation of the Ten Commandments to all the assembled natives, numbering around 300, and then translated a long speech by the governor. Both have been printed for use by the children, and one or two copies should

accompany this letter. The translation of the Ten Commandments was requested by the government and was printed at their expense. Otherwise, we might have hesitated to do it, in order to ensure greater accuracy and maturity.

The intended publication of our word collection, which I mentioned in my last letter, is progressing very slowly due to the printer's fault. Only three sheets have been printed so far, so we can't send you a copy yet, as I had hoped.

A very touching incident, which only became known this week, occurred about 14 days or three weeks ago beyond Lake Alexandrina. Namely, several whites who had saved themselves from a shipwreck and made it ashore were killed by the local tribe. The news of this reached Adelaide through the natives, and the government official sent there as a result found the bodies of 8 people, so there is no doubt about the fact. This misfortune is all the more distressing, as a large part of our colonists will suffer from it, including all the natives. --

I have corresponded with the German missionary Günther in Wellington Valley, New South Wales; his recently received response does not paint a very favorable picture of the mission there, and based on it, we cannot hope for great success in the future.

This news should suffice for now, although it could have been augmented with some additional incidents and details from the lives of the indigenous people. The arrival of our dear brothers and the handling of their luggage have taken up some time, and thus, it doesn't coincide very well with the current shipping opportunities.

We, beloved brethren! rejoice in the Lord and praise his goodness and faithfulness in the current arrival of our colleagues; I feared that I would leave for Port Lincoln before they arrived, and now it may well be that I will still find time to accompany the dear brother Meyer to Encounter Bay and introduce him to his black parishioners, who almost all know me, which will bring him some benefit and me no small joy, because I can now avoid appearing as a man of broken promises in the eyes of the Encounter Bay people.

And hopefully, our report will prompt you to rejoice with us and praise the Lord, who has brought our friends here, albeit not without trials, but happily and under very pleasant circumstances. I have seen your exhortations and your company on the ship myself and was very pleased by it. And now, brothers! We are all here, praying and hoping that Jesus Christ, the Lord of Heaven and Earth, will fulfill, to a small extent through us, the promise that the whole world should be filled with his knowledge, just as we joyfully learn that he has begun to fulfill the other promise through you: "Even the gates of hell shall not prevail against his church, Amen." Your brother in Christ.

C. W. Schürmann