

20th Jan 1844

To
the missionary,
Brother Schürmann,
in Port Lincoln.

and Pastor

Beloved brother in the Lord!

With heartfelt sympathy, we have heard the account of the epileptic accident that befell you on June 12th, as described in your report dated July 3rd and received by us on December 20th. At the same time, we rejoice and give thanks to the Lord, who preserved you from this seizure, as well as from that fall into prolonged illness and a sudden, unconscious transition into eternity. These reminders of our mortality in the midst of life are so salutary. With God's grace, you have already recognized their value. Therefore, strive all the more earnestly and faithfully to dedicate your entire life and work to the service of the Lord. --

Now, everything we had to note in general following your recent letters to us can be found in the general letter that Brother Teichelmann will share with you. However, in particular, we would like to express the following to you in response to your letter.

When you assumed the position of an under-protector at that time, we believed that this would not harm your missionary activities, but rather could facilitate your access to the natives under a certain public authority. We still hold this view; however, upon reading your report (which, incidentally, contains everything you had to report over a period of one and a half years -- !), we cannot help but be surprised that you did not take advantage of the good opportunity offered to you in your official authority to further and more successfully pursue your higher purpose, that is, to carry out your missionary work. There is little mention of missionary activities in your entire narrative, and even in the execution of that criminal, we do not see you sharing a single word with him, which could have led him to either serious repentance or to seeking the grace of the God he still did not know, and thus to some comfort. ~~So without a doubt, any other participating Christian, if they had such an opportunity and were reasonably proficient in the language, would have said more and better things to such an unfortunate person.~~ However, we find it so inappropriate and almost incomprehensible that you are asking the unfortunate man about the senseless views of his people in the face of his impending death, especially without enlightening him about a better perspective. But it was certainly not your duty to ask such questions in

this situation. ~~However, you didn't get the chance to question the ignorant, poor, unbelieving pagans as if you wanted to first hear and learn from them, but rather to admonish and comfort them; to teach and open the eyes of the poor savages so that they might convert from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God. This is all the more incomprehensible to us, since you are surely already familiar with the language enough to teach even a poor wretch on the verge of death the simplest concepts of repentance, grace through the Son of God, damnation, and salvation. This doesn't require much. We must truly be wary of doing such things, unfortunately we make the distressing experience of publicly sharing such matters, because it shows that there is still a long way to go in missionary activity, even though you should already be proficient in the language, as you now claim.~~ On your part, you've hardly made a start yet.

On the contrary, we constantly hear complaints about the dire conditions, which are, however, far from as bad as those Egede and the first missionaries of the Bretheren Church encountered in Greenland, and the latter also in Labrador. But you are precisely there to bring about a better situation among the natives. If, however, you are not truly filled and driven by faith and love, and do not attack the matter with fervent prayer and supplication, ~~nothing good~~ can possibly come of it. That ~~however~~ something can change, especially among the youth, albeit slowly and through much patience and effort, we have already seen. Therefore, we are not inclined to address your views on this matter or your request for a transfer at this time; at least not until you have shown yourself to be diligent, active, and capable in your current position, and when the brothers' opinion is unanimous that we must give up hope regarding the natives there. But we cannot fear that yet. And how much time, effort, and expense would be lost if you, the land and people in which you are settled, were to leave and settle elsewhere! We therefore urge you, for the sake of the Lord, in whose name you have assumed the missionary office, to patiently endure, not to abandon the trust in God, which has a great reward, and to strive through persistent prayer and faith, love, strength, and wisdom, so that you may finally become truly capable and joyfully active in your profession.

Let the love of Christ fill and warm your heart, and look upon the cloud of witnesses and predecessors who, in the fire of love that never grows weary, worked and endured under much worse circumstances, thereby laying at least a foundation and sowing good seeds, which, of course, have only partly sprouted over their graves.

We hope to hear more from you soon, especially about whether you have continued the employment of the natives that you started, and what you have achieved in the process.

Assuring you of our intercession -- for there's no other way, we must struggle for you in prayer -- we command you in God's spirit and faith, and greet you with etc.

Dresden, January 20, 1844

The Committee of the Evangelical-Lutheran M. G.

Addendum.

We cannot leave unmentioned a strange mistake in your letter; namely, that you think we believe it's possible for you to choose a wife from among the natives. How could you misunderstand us so badly? In our relevant statement, we're not talking about natives or savages at all, but only about Europeans who have become indigenous there, from whom (Germans or even Englishmen) a local missionary might well choose a wife.