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Beloved brethren!

I have reported to you in previous letters that I had made a small start in agriculture with the indigenous people in Port Lincoln. Although I never expected great success from this attempt, especially not that it would lead directly to the permanent settlement of the natives, I nevertheless hoped to achieve two purposes with God's blessing: firstly, to awaken in the adults the desire and skill to produce their own livelihood, and secondly, to obtain funds for feeding some schoolchildren. Secondly, to provide practical proof to the doubters, especially the government, that under favorable circumstances, such as those prevailing in Port Lincoln, and with the application of suitable methods, something can be achieved with the old indigenous people, who here on land are all too inclined to regard them as incorrigible. However, both hopes have, to my regret, failed.

At the time of the harvest, a certain bean called Nondo was ripe, which people loved to eat. As a result, almost all of them left me when I used it for cutting. The few I managed to hold onto soon grew tired of the somewhat tedious work and left me with the promise to return with new workers in a few days. However, many days passed before they came back, and in the meantime, the already cut grain was badly damaged by people wandering around, threshing it halfway and consuming what they had obtained in the bush. But worst of all, one of the people had lit a fire near the fence and left it unattended when he left, which soon engulfed the nearby dry grass and then the fence, with an entire side of it becoming a victim of the flames.

Now, the grain quickly melted together, because what the natives left behind was either eaten or trampled on by the roaming horses, which were simply left to their own devices. From the entire field of two and a half acres, no more than about six sacks were saved, and this was only because I had the remaining sheaves carried by the natives into a pile and surrounded with a new fence until we had time and facilities for threshing. Without a doubt, six or seven times as much would have been harvested if everything had been put to good use. Of the six sacks, I had three milled and the remaining three earmarked for sowing; however, I heard from a ship's captain who had just arrived from Port Lincoln that the natives, in order to thwart the enterprise, broke into my house during my absence and stole flour and wheat.

It goes without saying that such results are discouraging and well-suited to deter similar attempts. Nevertheless, they have only convinced me even more of how futile it is to expect favorable results from half-measures aimed at the natives, or to put it more clearly, that the efforts of an individual are not enough to influence the people's external life. Therefore, I will hardly continue cultivating the previously worked field, even if it could be done without my own sacrifices. Because the seeds and food supplies have been taken from me.

Recently, I once again urged the governor not to just educate the children in school, which he still promises to do, but also to gather the elderly for farming, which in my opinion is more feasible in the sparsely populated Port Lincoln by whites than in any other part of the colony. He asked me for a detailed explanation of my plan, which I provided the following day, and he said he would think about it overnight and see what costs would be required. Moreover, he did not seem to think it advisable to move at least ten miles away from the city of Port Lincoln, because the government would not be able to provide sufficient protection. If, on the other hand, we stayed near the city, the government could relocate the police station there and implement the previously announced plan to employ the Adelaide-based indigenous convicts in Port Lincoln and vice versa. However, I feared that such a mixture of different purposes, especially the proximity to the city, would have detrimental effects. Whether and what will come of these views and plans is in God's hands, and we must entrust the matter to him. However, humanly speaking, I have very little faith that anything useful will come of it.

I'm almost afraid that the above will once again attract your criticism, as I'm focusing too much on the external aspects and placing too much emphasis on them. But given the current circumstances here, we must accept and deal with them, and through five years of experience, I've gained the firm conviction that the spiritual salvation of the natives is so closely intertwined with their external well-being that it's more dangerous to place too little emphasis on the latter than too much. That's why I don't think I should hesitate to keep returning to this subject again and again.

Since my last letter in November last year until my trip to Adelaide at the end of February this year, I have had quite continuous contact with the indigenous people and therefore improved my language skills considerably. For several weeks, I had two bright boys in my house, one of whom I took with me to Adelaide and still have with me now. His father is in prison here, and since the boy is allowed to visit him daily, he wants to stay here until his father is released. I was asked by the natives in Port Lincoln to intercede with the governor on behalf of this boy's father and another prisoner, which I did verbally; however, the governor said I had to submit the request in writing and through the magistrate in Port Lincoln. It's unlikely that the request will be granted in this case, though, because the local residents are too opposed to the release of imprisoned indigenous people!

I have tried to translate the Ten Commandments and the Lord's Prayer into the language of the indigenous people, in order to gain a solid foundation for occasional teachings; but this is very difficult, especially regarding the Lord's Prayer, because concepts like 'holy', 'kingdom', 'will', 'temptation', etc. are not easily translatable, and corresponding words are either not available or still unknown. Biblical narratives are the easiest and most appealing to people's hearts.

The original ideas of the indigenous people about religious objects are extremely childish and often so nonsensical that one often doubts whether they have understood them correctly. They seem to have no idea at all about the origin of visible culture in general. At least, they always respond to questions about it by saying that everything came into existence on its own, while the origin of some individual things is linked to highly ridiculous fairy tales. For example, they attribute the creation or separation of the sea from the mainland to two women who came from the far north a long time ago and, by throwing their staves (which are still used today to dig up roots), caused the land and water to separate. However, the salinity of the water is attributed to the great gull, which produced it by flapping its wings.

Their ancestors, they say, (which seems remarkable to me) had lived on an island, and were washed ashore by the sea waves onto the mainland. These were also said to have been enormous giants, compared to whom the current generation is very tiny.

A strong and beautiful spring near the city is said to have been created because one of these giants, named Yadlyalla, settled in that spot. Incidentally, this very same giant produced many other things until he was finally killed by a wild cat and an opossum.

They attribute the difference between the sexes to a small lizard, which is named differently by the different sexes.

The natives' belief in the immateriality and continuity of the soul is deeply rooted. To help me understand the former, they said, among other things, that the soul could pass through a crack. As for their views on the state of the soul after death, they seem to have changed their minds since the arrival of the whites; they now say that they will become whites after death, but also that they will reside on the neighboring islands. The latter seems to me to be the original belief, while the former is a new idea.

How deeply the belief in transformation into whites has taken hold of people's minds, an example may illustrate. Shortly before my departure to Adelaide, the boy mentioned above asked me with great urgency whether his father was really still an indigenous person, and whether he would see him again with black skin.

When I came to Adelaide, the governor once again offered me the opportunity to take over a school for the indigenous children from Murray, who often stay there, in Walkerville near Adelaide, with a salary of £70 Sterling per year. I thought I had to

turn down the offer, partly because I wasn't sure of your approval, partly because I would have had to submit to all the government's regulations regarding education, and most importantly, because I didn't want to leave Port Lincoln again, unless the company assigned me a sphere of influence in another country. After all, changing within the colony brings no benefits, but rather the disadvantage of having to start all over again. I hope I will receive your approval in this matter.

I had to comply with the governor's other request, namely to have my collection of words printed, all the more so because he offered to bear the costs, although I would have gladly delayed the printing for at least another year to perfect the collection. I'm sorry that the printing hasn't been fully completed yet, as it's unlikely that there will be an opportunity to send a few copies before the end of the year.

The joint report, which you are receiving at the same time, makes it unnecessary to address several points that I intended to discuss here. Unfortunately, the impression of it will not be a pleasant one, but it is true, and it should not be viewed as one-sided, as both the encouraging and discouraging aspects of the local mission among the brothers found representatives. May the Lord, who guides hearts, grant us and you the grace that we seek nothing good or vain, but follow His guidance with true, unprejudiced simplicity, do His will, and promote His honor. Certainly, the self-denying obedience of faith is no less necessary than the joy and courage of faith.

As for the land matter, our views are already known from the letter that the Meyer brothers, Klose, and I sent about 9 or 10 months ago, which referred to this. I don't think it's necessary to repeat here that the land was chosen, purchased, and most of the expenses were incurred before I and, to some extent, the other brothers learned about it. And since we had no right to offer external advice, as Brother Teichelmann claimed to be the sole person in charge, we naturally cannot be held responsible for any mistakes that may have been made. I conclude with a sigh, which I and all of us have every reason to pray with all our hearts: Oh Lord, cover what I have lived through, and guide me in what I will live through.

Your humble and devoted fellow brother,

C. W. Schürmann.

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

N S. Brother Klose got married to a certain Mrs. Duncan yesterday, on April 16th. Brother Lührs spent a few weeks with Brother Teichelmann in Ebenezer, but then went to Brother Meyer in Encounter Bay, where he is still staying for the time being. He says he didn't find the local conditions to be in line with his expectations, and plans to start something on his own.

For my part, I can't really blame him for that.

C. W. S.