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Mission and Colonialism: Ludwig Harms' and the Hermannsburg Mission's Romantic Approach

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Abstract: The original vision of the founder of the Hermannsburg mission, Pastor Ludwig Harms (1808–1865) was deeply rooted in the period of romantic revival in Germany in the early 19th century. Whole congregations of missionaries and colonists should be sent overseas together. Although critical of colonialism, the mission and its settlers became later part of a colonial and even racist society in South Africa. Did the vision influence the social concept six generations later in the former mission field? Did it slow down the process of indigenization, lock up in racist concepts like "apartheid"? The essay provides many hints in that direction and exposes a specific variant of the interaction of migration, colonialism and mission.

Keywords: Hermannsburg mission; Pastor Ludwig Harms; colonialism; mission; migration; South Africa

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Preliminary Remarks

The issue of colonialism and mission, as well as their mutual relationship, is widely debated. The term "colonialism" is understood in different ways and linked to the phenomenon of "imperialism." The term is applied differently from the 15th century onwards, when Europe started to expand its influence continent by continent all around the globe. Some see colonialism effective until 1800 followed by imperialism.[1] Others would identify "colonialism" as settlement movements in different continents throughout the whole time (for example in Latin America in the 16th century, in South Africa in the 17th century, etc.), while imperial strategies of ruling directly and indirectly were adopted throughout the whole period.[2] According to Hans-Jürgen Prien, the term "colonialism" seems to have been used for the first time when Spanish conquerors on the Caribbean islands discovered that state driven imperial trade and rule was expensive and gave little revenue. In 1495 they started

1 F. ex. Stig Förster, "Art. Kolonialismus," *EKL* 2 (Göttingen, 1989), 1320–1329.

2 Cf. Andrew F. Walls, "Kolonialismus," *TRE* 19 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1990), 363–369.

to include settlers in small numbers who were allowed to take land, settle, and freely exploit natural resources to their own benefit. Revenues increased. Colonialism would then be perceived as sublimely improved strategy of imperialism and not naturally linked to the migration of vast numbers of people from Europe overseas like in the following centuries.

But the amount of white settling immigrants to Latin America remained small: 150,000 in 1570. Around the year 1550, 1500 settlers from Spain lived in Ascuncion, Paraguay together with few indigenous people and many "Mestizas".[3] The role of mission is ambivalent within the political and social field of imperialism and colonialism. Missions gained advantages and protection from their imperial European powers, acting sometimes as pioneers for following European rule while sometimes as advocates for indigenous people criticizing political power.[4] The relevance of revisiting the epoch of colonialism today needs no further argument. Debates on the restitution of art from European museums to the countries of origin prove the ongoing impact.

This essay intends to study a mission movement in the period of colonialism. The Hermannsburg Mission, started in 1849 in Northern Germany, is one example. While others might be studied as well, the Hermannsburg Mission is especially interesting because of the fact that it expressively combined mission with the settlement of colonists. Terminologically, the transition from "colonists" to "colonialism" is not long. Surprisingly, colonialism was seriously criticized while Christian settlements were considered essential. Naturally, such a study will include competing perspectives – one at home and another overseas. On the side of the founder Pastor Ludwig Harms (1808–1865), a historical Romantic concept on mission can be combined with a conservative view on religious action and practice. On the side of the evangelizers and the evangelized overseas in South Africa, a feudal, colonial, and racist system came into being and seemed to coexist with the mission and it's work from the 3rd generation of missionaries after World War I. It was unquestioned for a long time.

One question will be central and closely linked to the fact that the motivating vison had to do with the prevailing Romanticism and idealism in

3 Hans-Jürgen Prien, "Das Christentum in Lateinamerika," *Kirchengeschichte in Einzeldarstellungen* IV/6 (Leipzig, 2007), 91, 99, 103.

4 Hans-Werner Gensichen, "Art. Kolonialismus und Mission," *EKL* 2 (Göttingen 1989), 1329–1331.

the beginning of the 19th century: Is the original Romantic concept with its apparently big and motivating appeal at home at least to some extent responsible for the conservative tendency to simply function within the framework of colonialism later on? Did the mission lose any critical impact because of this tradition?

Checking the history of mission, one example for settlement strategies from Latin America has been mentioned, while another one might be "reductions," shelter camps for indigenous people which were established by the Jesuits in Paraguay from 1607. These were settlements for protection against immigrant settlements that drove away the indigenous people from their land.[5] Another example may be Ludwig Ingwer Nommensen's (1834–1918) concept to found Christian villages for the newly converted Batak in order to create a Christian culture "Adat" in a mainly Muslim dominated country. This idea may have been influenced by Ludwig Harms' theories.[6]

Historically seen, the Romantic epoch follows after the period of Enlightenment at around 1800. Its terminology reflects changes in cultural history, philosophy, religion, literature, and art. Both periods had their fields of major interest, the former on experimental science of nature and critical philosophy strongly questioning traditional views, the latter on a rediscovery of medieval institutions like the Church, religion and faith, monarchy. The emphasis was more on feeling, belonging, trustworthiness and bearing traditions. It's highly controversial to identify these major tendencies by period or era. Romantic ideas show up before 1800, and critical doubt is effective after that date. So epochs cannot be understood as completely different periods of time. It's rather a change of focus and emphasis than total and exclusive diversity of times.

Wilhelm Scherer writes in his classical "Geschichte der Deutschen Literatur"[7] on the Romantic epoch: "Religious life developed itself everywhere in the 19th century in the most strict contrast to the 18th century. […] Times of

5 Prien, "Das Christentum," 188s.

6 Lothar Schreiner, *Adat und Evangelium. Zur Bedeutung der altvölkischen Lebensordnungen für Kirche und Mission unter den Batak in Nordsumatra* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1972); Jobst Reller, "Schleswigsche Frömmigkeitsprägungen bei Ludwig Ingwer Nommensen," *Interkulturelle Theologie* 35 (2009), 262–279. Nommensen visited Hermannsburg, which exerted strong influence on Schleswig-Holstein.

7 Wilhelm Scherer, *Geschichte der deutschen Literatur. Mit einem Anhang: Die deutsche Literatur von Goethes Tod bis zur Gegenwart v. Oskar Walzel* (Berlin: Askanischer Verlag, 1918), 508 (transl. by the author J. R.).

emergency had taught to pray. Piety grew in the years of shame, of rebirth, of fighting and liberation [sc. the liberation wars against Napoleon, J. R.]. Wilhelm of Humboldt [1767–1835] himself got engaged in rising up the spirit of religion." Friedrich Daniel Ernst Schleiermacher (1768–1834) shared this religious focus, when his "Reden über die Religion an die Gebildeten unter ihren Verächtern" came out for the first time in 1799. In the 3rd edition he criticized exaggerating fundamentalist judging pietists. Schleiermacher held a critical position towards both tendencies, personally linking elements from both. The Brothers Grimm discovered "popular poetics," collected popular fairy tales opposing it to "artificial" literature. Focus shifted to the nation. The medieval age was rediscovered, and conversions to Catholicism were frequent.[8] "History replaced constructive reason."[9] These aspects may be sufficient here. They give a clear impression of the atmosphere when the founder of the Hermannsburg Mission grew up in the beginning 19th century.

Pastor Ludwig Harms and the Hermannsburg Mission in Northwestern Germany

Pastor Ludwig Harms, born in 1808 in Walsrode and died in Hermannsburg in 1865 at the age of 57,[10] launched the initiative to turn the local parish in Hermannsburg into a mission community, in German called "Missionsgemeine." This 1846 initiative ended up as the Evangelical Lutheran Mission (ELM), founded 1977. Harms grew up in the times of the liberation wars

8 F. ex. the poet Friedrich Schlegel (1772–1829), the poet Luise Hensel, daughter of a Lutheran pastor, who discovered the "real" church, which Christ established in the Roman Catholic Church; cf. Ekkehard Vollbach, "Luise Hensel (1798–1876). Lehrerin – Dichterin – Romantikerin," in Ekkehard Vollbach (ed.), *Pastors Kinder, Müllers Vieh… Biographien berühmter Pfarrerkinder* (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2015), 107–115, 111.

9 Scherer, *Geschichte*, 510, 513 (transl. by the author J. R.).

10 Cf. the classical biography: Theodor Harms, *Life and Work of Pastor Ludwig Harms* (Philadelphia: The Lutheran Publication Society, 1900); Hartwig F. Harms, *Concerned for the Unreached, Life and Work of Louis Harms, Founder of the Hermannsburg Mission* (Hermannsburg: Ev.-luth. Missionswerk in Niedersachsen, 1999); Christoffer H. Grundmann, "Mission in Simplicity of Heart and Mind: Ludwig Harms and the Founding of the Hermannsburg Mission," *Missiology* 40/4 (2012), 381–393; Jobst Reller, "Harms, Ludwig, genannt Louis (1808–1865)," in Heinzpeter Hempelmann and Uwe Swarat (eds.), *ELThG* – Neuausgabe II (Holzgerlingen: SCM Brockhaus, 2019), 926–929.

against French imperialism culminating as far as Germany is concerned in the battle of Leipzig in 1813. His father, Christian Harms, served as pastor in Hermannsburg beginning in 1817, and taught his talented son in his private local school before Ludwig became an intern in Celle in 1825 to take the leaving examination at the renowned humanistic school there in 1827. Like many of his contemporaries, Harms was brought up in a spirit of Romanticism, rediscovering Tacitus' ideas about German history in the prehistoric sights in the vicinity of Hermannsburg. A hard and consequent moral code of conduct prevailed in his home based on a supernaturalistic concept of Lutheran theology. From 1827 through 1830 Harms studied sacred theology at the University of Göttingen, encountering more or less rationalistic critical concepts. His sermon for the academic exams in 1830 still reflects an eudemonistic view on Christian life and an enlightened ethical concept of duties. It's quite likely that the death of his elder brother, August Harms, in spring 1830 made him reconsider life and faith. This process ended at Easter in 1831 while Harms served as teacher in the noble family von Linstow in Lauenburg. Now a still strict moral concept and social activities were based on a faith confessing human sin and divine forgiveness because of Christ's death at Golgotha, defeating death and bestowing eternal life.[11] Harms developed widespread activities in evangelism including social welfare for workers and their families, a Sunday School, and, from 1834, foreign missions. He turned out to be a talented pastoral counselor, preacher, and networker gathering people from around Lauenburg in a mission association. His work fits in in the revival movement of these times – conflicts included. When a North German Mission was inaugurated in Hamburg in 1836, Harms ensured his local association in Lauenburg to become a member in this regional initiative, combining Lutheran and Reformed supporters from all over Northern Germany.[12]

To cut a long story short – when Harms arrived in Hermannsburg in 1843 to become a chaplain supporting his father, he was widely known in revival contexts in the region. A mission festival was started in 1846. After the death of his father and final employment as pastor in Hermannsburg,

11 See Jobst Reller, "Der junge Ludwig Harms 1830–1850," in Jobst Reller (ed.), *Seelsorge, Gemeinde, Mission und Diakonie, Impulse von Ludwig Harms aus Anlass seines 200. Geburtstages* (Berlin: LIT Verlag, 2009), 69–85, 82.

12 Jobst Reller, *Heidepastor Ludwig Harms, Gründer der Hermannsburger Mission* (Holzgerlingen: Ludwig-Harms-Haus, 2008), 103.

Harms dared to host the mission seminary of the North German Mission in Hermannsburg from 1849 onwards. Due to many reasons, cooperation stopped and the Hermannsburg mission grew independently from 1850 on, building a mission ship *Candace* in 1852/3 and sending a first group of missionaries to the Oromo in what is today Ethiopia. They finally ended up in Natal, South Africa in 1854 among the Zulu people. Later on missions among the Tswana in Africa, the Telugu in India, and the Aborigines in Australia were started during Harms' lifetime.[13] Harms' work had it's center in his parish including a mission festival close to St. Johns day in June, journalism in the form of a mission paper, evangelism in Northern Germany, as well as far-reaching pastoral care by letters and welfare initiatives[14] for dismissed prisoners, orphans, and emigrants to both the USA and Latin America etc.

Harms' Romantic Vision

Which vision made Harms to inaugurate this apparently – at least as seen with the eyes of his time – successful and worldwide expanding movement? He never had a chance to work abroad himself or to check up and revise his mission enterprise by personally visiting and seeing the life and work of his missionaries in South Africa, India or Australia – not to speak about indigenous people or newly established congregations. He had only reports, letters, and requests for funding by his agents as feedback, usually published in the *Hermannsburger Missionsblatt*. Meeting indigenous people from the mission fields never happened in his lifetime. Although he may have had some experience with a mission student from India Ramayen in the mission school in Hamburg in mind in the 1840s,[15] this student failed, so these experiences did not seem to promise anything useful in the beginning.

Harms' view on people in the mission fields in Africa was formed by eager reading of the mission papers since 1833. He shared a paternalistic view of the indigenous people – wrong religion resulted in bad moral conduct and

13 Jobst Reller and Hartwig F. Harms, *Gelebte Liebe und deutliche Worte. Der Hermannsburger Pastor und Missionsgründer Louis Harms* (Hermannsburg: Ludwig-Harms-Haus, 2008), 113, 114, 128.

14 Torben Rakowski, "Ludwig Harms' diakonisches Wirken," *LuThK* (2007), 195–247.

15 Reller, *Heidepastor*, 154.

no chance for civilization. This made mission and conversion obligatory.[16] It's interesting to notice that Harms adopted a different view on prehistoric times in Germany. As a talented storyteller on mission festivals and in his mission paper he always depicted the ancient Germans as morally seen excellent people compared to contemporary Germans.[17] The question why wrong religion did not result in bad moral conduct is only to be answered if the intention to tell the story is taken into regard – to stimulate, in this case to take action and get engaged for evangelism and mission. The answer is not to be found on the level of an overall theory, but on the rhetorical level.

When Harms was ready to start and educate missionaries in Hermannsburg in 1849, he revealed both in letters within the North German Mission and in public type of mission he intended to start.[18] Typical for Romantic approaches, he took the concept from the history of mission which turned Germany into a Christian country in the 7th and 8th century C.E. This perception functioned as raw model for his own mission. Groups of missionaries came and settled down among the pagan Saxons. They established monasteries, cultivated land, lived an exemplary Christian life in faith and love attracting the pagan people. Much about this is reminiscent of Nicolaus Ludwig Zinzendorf (1700–1760) such as concepts of unintentional life and work together with indigenous people, and waiting for their questions.[19] Later on, these missions established a system of filiation, sending a new group to another place to create a network of mission centers. When the whole pagan nation finally became Christian, the Saxons with their tradition as warriors built a Christian empire in Germany, turning it into a Christian nation. Exactly the same should happen in Africa, according to Harms. Therefore

16 Reller, *Heidepastor*, 89.

17 Jobst Reller, "Mission und Religion in der Erweckungsbewegung des 19. Jahrhunderts am Beispiel von Missionsgründer Ludwig Harms (1808–1865)," in Michael Eckardt (ed.), *Mission Afrika: Geschichtsschreibung über Grenzen hinweg, Festschrift für Ulrich van der Heyden* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2019), 153–168, 161.

18 The texts are found in Ludwig Harms, *In treuer Liebe und Fürbitte, Gesammelte Briefe 1830–1865, Teilband I. Einleitung und Briefe 1830–1859*, Hartwig F. Harms and Jobst Reller (eds.) (Münster: LIT, 2004), 260: An den Verwaltungsausschuss der Norddeutschen Mission 28. 7. 1849, 267: An das Konsistorium in Hannover 2. 3. 1850; Ludwig Harms, "Das Missionshaus in Hermannsburg," *AELKZ* (1851), 85–88.

19 Helmut Bintz, *Texte zur Mission, mit einer Einführung in die Missionstheologie Zinzendorfs* (Hamburg: Friedrich Wittig Verlag, 1979).

Harms headed for the Oromo and later for the Zulu. Both were perceived as tribes of warriors. The newcomers expected to conquer Africa and make it Christian by combining bottom up and top down mission initiatives.[20] The idea is an indigenous Christian imperialism in Africa. Fortunately, this never came true! Although in an indigenous shape, the idea had in itself some openness for imperialistic and colonial ideas. The line of thought is clearly a Romantic one turning back to national history as raw model.

Putting the Vision into Practice in a Settlers Society in South Africa

Harms assigned his missionaries whom he did not want to send out married[21] to the tasks of preaching, establishing schools, and baptizing. Instead, he intended from the very beginning to send them together with farmers who would settle and establish agriculture of European type with livestock raising (cattle, sheep, pork), gardening, and farming. He himself spoke of "colonists", i.e. settlers in Latin.[22] Johann von Hofmann (1810–1877), later on known as member of the Erlangen school of Lutheran theology, had proposed the cooperation of missionaries and colonists for the first time in 1843.[23] Harms' concept puts the key question on the table whether it is possible to differentiate between missionary colonists and colonialism.

Although Harms built a mission ship arousing fear on the British side that trade was intended,[24] he criticized colonialism as a whole and did not want to be mixed up with colonial attitudes of other European nations "robbing"

20 Reller, *Mission und Religion*, 162. The idea is borrowed from Johann Ludwig Krapf (1810–1881), a missionary in East Africa, educated in Basel and Tübingen, serving in the Church Missionary Society. Krapf datest he concept back to his time in Ethiopia 1837–1845. Gods providence assigns the role to the Oromo, called Galla in Amharic, to conquer and evangelize Africa as the Germans did in the medieval ages: Johann Ludwig Krapf, *Reisen in Ost-Afrika* (Kornthal 1858, Repr. Stuttgart 1965), 93.

21 Harms, *In treuer Liebe und Fürbitte* I, 422: An einen Vorsteher einer lutherischen Gemeinde in Preußen 25. 11. 1854, 433: An die Missionare in Südafrika 6. 1. 1855.

22 Harms, *In treuer Liebe und Fürbitte* I, 261, 268, II, 432, 434, 457; Jobst Reller, "Ludwig Harms Wirkung in Skandinavien," *Jahrbuch der Gesellschaft für niedersächsische Kirchengeschichte* 103 (2005), 125–172, 172: Reisebericht K. G. J. Sirelius 1860.

23 Georg Haccius, *Hannoversche Missionsgeschichte Erster Teil, Von der Pflanzung der christlichen Kirche in Friesland und Sachsen bis zur Entstehung der Hermannsburger Mission* (Hermannsburg: Druck und Verlag der Missionshandlung, 1909), 376.

24 Reller, "Ludwig Harms Wirkung," 156: Johann Ludwig Krapf an Waldemar Rudin 1864/5.

African people[25] or behave as educated and civilized over class teaching the uneducated pagan indigenous people and ruling over them. His missionaries should be able to care for their needs themselves. The traditional Hermannsburg self-understanding emphasized the idealistic motives of serving, living, and working together – in Latin called "conviventia."

But where should the line be drawn when the Hermannsburg Mission acquired farms on her own,[26] when Hermannsburg colonists established their farms by taking the land from more or less nomadically living indigenous people and when after Harms' death even the missionaries increasingly earned their living on their own farms? Even the fact that the kingdom of Hanover had no colonies of its own is no argument against the fact that the second generation of Hermannsburg Mission work started to become a part of a colonial system for instance in South Africa under the lead nations of the Boers and the British.[27]

Taking a look at the future development, one may state that at least the third generation of Hermannsburg missionaries shared to a remarkable extent the views of Apartheid when the congregations in Hermannsburg and Natal were split up into one for the whites and one for the others after World War I.[28] Most of the Germans, both former settlers and missionaries, were integrated into the class of the possessing people and in the feudal system that was seen internationally as a part of colonialism and imperialism. This was true in spite of the fact that there always were tendencies to resist racial ideologies even if not the colonial or feudal system in itself. Ludwig Harms perceived the newly baptized indigenous Christians as his "white and black children".[29] Baptism had, according to Harms, an equalizing effect before God

25 Hans Otto Harms, "Kandaze," in Wolfgang A. Bienert (ed.), *Hans Otto Harms, Lebendiges Erbe, Ludwig Harms, Thedor Harms und die Hermannsburger Mission* (Hermannsburg: Verlag Missionshandlung, 1980), 108–125, 109.

26 Wolfgang Proske, *Botswana und die Anfänge der Hermannsburger Mission, Voraussetzungen, Verlauf und Scheitern eines lutherischen Missionierungsversuches im Spannungsfeld divergierender politischer Interessen* (Frankfurt a. M. – Bern – New York – Paris, 1989), 132, 239–241.

27 Proske, *Botswana*, 247, 249.

28 Fritz Hasselhorn, *Bauernmission in Südafrika, Die Hermannsburger Mission im Spannungsfeld der Kolonialpolitik 1880–1939* (Erlangen: Verlag der Ev.-Luth. Mission, 1988), 168.

29 Harms, *In treuer Liebe und Fürbitte* II, 279: An Superintendent Karl Hohls in Südafrika 30. 5. 1863.

and to some extent spiritually in the congregation too. Harms fought against the impact of the caste system in India within the Christian congregation. Missionary Friedrich Fuls (1836–1907) protested against the brutal punishment of an indigenous farm worker by Paul "Ohm" Kruger (1825–1904) in Transvaal.[30] There are many additional examples of spiritual solidarity with the indigenous people throughout Hermannsburg Mission history.

The more confessional Lutheran Bleckmar Mission separated from the Hermannsburg Mission in 1892 due to the establishment of Lutheran free churches in Northern Germany after 1878. The later director of the Bleckmar Mission after World War II, Friedrich Wilhelm Hopf (1910–1982), was one of the few to cling to Harms' view on baptism influenced by the church struggle in Germany from 1933–1945.[31] He had to withstand quite strong aggressions from the side of the German farmers rooted in South Africa. But one must be aware that all this did not happen because of the idea of equal human rights for everybody beyond color, descent, nation, position in society, religion, etc. or because of empathy for either the exploited classes or the option for a change of the feudal and colonial system. It happened because of the fundamentalist biblical argument on baptism matching with the Romantic historiography. In this case this argument had a critical impact towards society.

Indigenization

The Hermannsburg tradition was one of the last Lutheran missions in South Africa to open up for independent indigenous Lutheran Churches. The conference of Hermannsburg missionaries in South Africa in 1961 still talked about "the unity of the Hermannsburg Mission Church." In 1963 the Zulu-speaking congregations broke off and entered the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the south-eastern region. A similar process started among the Tswana-speaking congregations in the same year. While the Swedish Church Mission, the American Lutheran Mission, and the Norwegian Mission society ceased corporate

30 Hasselhorn, *Bauernmission in Südafrika*, 65.

31 Friedrich Wilhelm Hopf et. al., *Kritische Standpunkte für die Gegenwart, Ein lutherischer Theologe im Kirchenkampf des Dritten Reichs, über seinen Bekenntniskampf nach 1945 und zum Streit um seine Haltung zur Apartheid* (Göttingen: Edition Ruprecht, 2011).

independent existence in South Africa in 1968/69, Hermannsburg carried on as partner of the local churches from 1970 onwards.[32]

The second generation of missionaries from the 1890s onwards might have had the chance to further self-reliance of indigenous churches with an indigenous clergy in the times of "Ethiopianism" after 1900.[33] A paternalistic view assuming and stating immaturity slowed down the process for three generations before Wolfram Kistner (1923–2006), Dieter Schütte,[34] and others took side with those who fought against apartheid. Hartwig F. Harms concludes: "As late as in 1984 the ELM (i.e. the Hermannsburg Mission since 1978) formulated a clear statement on the unity of the Church in South Africa against Apartheid."[35] Missionary Siedersleben (born 1930) told an episode[36] from 1956 when he arrived in South Africa and stayed on the farm of missionary Heinrich Fedderke (born 1912) to be introduced in the field work. One evening Fedderke was attacked by a mob and hit on the head. A wire on the porch prevented further injury and saved Fedderke's life. He was standing on the porch with a rifle in his hands asking for persecution and punishment. It's not clear what lay behind the conflict. It had something to do with the free use of lands by the indigenous people and the European idea of ownership, that the mission owned the land to cultivate it. It seems to have had something to do with indigenous religions practices too. Missionary Fedderke didn't want to tolerate them, was willing to use power and violence to prohibit and prevent them. He represents a missionary being fully

32 Heinrich Voges, "Die Arbeit im südlichen Afrika," in Ernst-August Lüdemann (ed.), *Vision: Gemeinde weltweit. 150 Jahre Hermannsburger Mission und Ev. luth. Missionswerk in Niedersachsen* (Hermannsburg: Missionshandlung Hermannsburg, 2000), 233–355, 327, 338.

33 See Jobst Reller, "20 Jahre skandinavische Forschung zur Mission im südlichen Afrika von 1840 bis zum ersten Weltkrieg," *IKTh* (2011), 111–122, 118: der Bambatha Aufstand der Zulu 1906 als vertane "Wasserscheide" zu einer indigenen Kirche (Lars Berge).

34 Dieter Schütte, "Im Schatten der Apartheid," in Hartwig F. Harms et al. (eds.), *Gottes Mission bleibt, Die Hermannsburger Mission im Südlichen Afrika auf dem Weg zum Partner in Mission* (Hermannsburg: Ludwig-Harms-Haus, 2021), 308–329; Dieter Schütte, "Kirchliche Arbeit in der ELKSA-NT (ELKSA-Hermannsburg) unter den Bedingungen von Apartheid und ihre Nachwirkungen," in Werner Klän et al. (eds.), *Mission und Apartheid. Ein unentrinnbares Erbe und seine Aufarbeitung durch lutherische Kirchen im südlichen Afrika* (Oberursel: Edition Ruprecht, 2013), 174–186.

35 Hartwig F. Harms, "Die Missionsanstalt und das Ev.-luth. Missionswerk in Deutschland seit 1959," in Ernst-August Lüdemann (ed.), *Vision*, 127–232, 160.

36 Ernst-Dietrich Siedersleben, *Mein südafrikanisches Tagebuch* (Hermannsburg, 2006, typoskript), 52.

integrated in the upper class of a feudal system using governmental means of power to preserve its own privileges, income, and religious program. Siedersleben, who served in South Africa in the 1960s and 1970s, tells the story in order to show that the Mission clung to outdated ideas.

While checking sources written by European missionaries, it is crucial to take the perspective of the indigenous people into regard. There is one episode from the very early times of Hermannsburg mission work among Zulu people, which was told from the indigenous side too.[37] It is transmitted by missionary Hans-Jürgen Becken (1926–2013), to whom a number of praise hymns telling history in a traditional Zulu way was entrusted. These hymns were handed down orally from one generation to another. Becken translated these hymns into German. The hymns tell frankly why the Norwegian missionary Hans Paludan Schreuder (1817–1882) was allowed to visit Zulu King Mpande (1798–1872). It was because of his ability to heal. Hermannsburg missionaries came in 1858 and were admitted as skilled handicraft workers. According to the hymns they built the "biggest ox wagon" in the whole region for the king including a garage and were allowed to build a mission station in the empire of Mpande. The Norwegian mission had to compete with Hermannsburg and order a bigger ox wagon from Norway to preserve its position at the king's court. In fact, the Gospel was admitted because of cultural progress, medical care, and greater celebrity of the king. Looking to the Hermannsburg sources in the mission papers nothing (except the garage) is told in this regard, neither the episode nor the exchange of gifts of this size and material benefits to start evangelism. Hermannsburg propagates the pure spiritual aspects. The only surprising fact is that the cooperation with the Norwegian missionaries is no longer mentioned. Harms mentions conflicts with the Norwegian mission in 1864,[38] but does not go into details. The Norwegian mission papers do not tell the episode but are more honest to reveal the materialistic side of communication with the Zulu. It's interesting to see that the wagon for

37 The whole story with references is told by Jobst Reller, "Missionare aus Hermannsburg und Norwegen im Spiegel des Zulupreisliedes 'Der Zulu-König und die Missionare'," in Ulrich van der Heyden and Andreas Feldkeller (eds.), ***Missionsgeschichte*** *als Geschichte der Globalisierung von Wissen, Transkulturelle Wissensaneignung und -vermittlung durch christliche Missionare in Afrika und Asien im 17., 18. und 19. Jahrhundert* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2012), 319–327, 326.

38 Reller, *Ludwig Harms und Skandinavien*, 156.

Mpande is part of the oral tradition on the side of the missionaries too. Celebrating their jubilee in 1949, they remember a small chariot donated to the old and handicapped king by Hermannsburg missionaries. No status symbol is handed over to a threatening commander in order to be allowed to preach the gospel, but a small vehicle because of the merciful helping attitude of the missionaries. King Mpande completely lost his eminence in the missionaries' memories. There is a climax in the scenes of the praise hymns. The last scene ends with the commemoration of the first Christian martyr of the Zulu nation and the place where he died saying, "The Gospel has arrived among us – in our way."

Conclusion

It's quite obvious that the plans of the founder of the Hermannsburg Mission, Ludwig Harms, came true. The cooperation of missionaries and colonists led to a rooted German population with Lutheran tradition and indigenous Lutheran churches. In a sense the Romantic concept worked out, while in another sense dividing factors like color and social class seemed to be stronger than idealistic unity in church. Conservative tendencies prevailed for a long time and preserved privileges.

Romantic historiography, to some extent fundamentalistic Bible exegesis, motives like faith and love were obviously sufficient to start, make and keep the mission enterprise going in Hermannsburg. Those who supported the mission in the parish, the network or on the mission festivals didn't put further questions and donated abundantly to the mission at least for the auditory in the parish in Hermannsburg or on the mission festivals. Harms' method of preaching and storytelling was highly motivating at home in Germany.

It's odd to see, that the fundamentalist use of the Bible had liberating aspects with regard to baptism, too, at certain times and in some regards. The Romantic mission concept had been modeled from history works in the beginning – the idea of living and working together. On the other hand, one has to face the fact that the Hermannsburg Mission became a part of a feudal, racist, and colonial system three generations later. It is quite likely that Romantic historiography linked to the story of the founder blocked mutual understanding, cemented traditional roles, and made essential what in fact was accidental. And it took another generation to rediscover the

views and attitudes of the indigenous people for whom the Mission was started, to side with them and take political action for them beyond spiritual solidarity. So both aspects are here – deep infliction of missionaries and colonists in colonialism, but also critical advocacy that was at times both weak and strong.

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