SCHNELLER - A MISSION IN CHANGE
DEBATE ABOUT KAIROS PALESTINE PAPER

EVS Evangelical Association for the Schneller Schools
Dear Reader,

At the Schneller schools, much today has remained the same as it has been for 150 years ago at the Syrian Orphanage. It may sound paradoxical but that is only because so much has changed. If the work was the same today as it was then, it would not be more now that it was before. At most it would be a museum piece. For example, the mission understanding, the relationship to other local churches and the relationship to Islam have undergone radical changes during these 150 years. This is what this issue is all about.

Unfortunately, we always know much too little about the early beginnings of the Schneller work. We even have the Schneller Archive which has a rather large source of data. However, it is still waiting for scientific and theological assessment.

It is much easier with the present: Ulrike Schmidt-Hesse, Deputy Secretary-General of the EMS, describes the present mission understanding of the international EMS Fellowship. EVS President Klaus Schmid explains what it means for the work of the two institutions in Jordan and Lebanon today and why both of them are indigenous institutions and no longer German – a development of which we are proud!

At the end of the tour undertaken by the Board of Trustees of the Schneller Foundation - Education for Peace, about which you can find more in this issue, Prof Dr Herta Däubler-Gmelin said she was very impressed by the spirit of partnership in this church co-operation.

But even this work needs more donors and benefactors.

On this occasion, I would like to sincerely thank all of you who have donated again recently. Come with us on our anniversary tour (see page 21) and be rewarded by the laughter of the children at the two schools!

Rev Andreas Maurer
(EVS Managing Director)
On a morning in June 1991, women and men from various churches in Africa, Asia, the Middle East and Europe gathered on the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem. They held a devotion in a large circle. There were delegates from the 27 churches and mission societies in the EMS Fellowship. What is known as the Jerusalem Forum represents an important milestone in the further development of the EMS’ understanding of mission.

"This is where God reconciled the world with itself," says Rev Mounib A Younan. "This is where God calls upon the peoples of the Earth to reconcile themselves. We are witness to the love of Christ. Christ’s love accepts others, it respects the other person’s rights, it allows dialogue on both sides so that we humans can find a way to reconciliation."

The group heard these words against the background of encounters with people in Nazareth, Gaza and other places in the Middle East. They gathered in Jerusalem to discuss the future of the EMS. "God made no difference between us" is the slogan of the EMS Forum based on the Acts of the Apostles 15. In St George’s Cathedral, the centre of the Episcopal Church in Jerusalem and the Middle East, the discussions revolve around guidelines and joint work and about the question how the difference between members can be overcome (i.e. the churches and mission societies in Europe and their partners, i.e. the churches in Africa, Asia and the Middle East).

The Forum is the central organisation for the further development of the EMS. In 1994, the EMS Articles of Association were changed and the Mission Council was internationalised. This means that all churches in the Fellowship, whether they are from Europe or another continent, now decide together about EMS matters.

The Jerusalem recommendations start with the words: "Witness is based on the resurrected Christ: "As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." Mission is the first act of God to which humanity is replying. It is all about witness in word and deed. All members of the Fellowship were requested to support each other in their witness. For this reason, Common Witness is the central concept of the Mission Statement that the EMS Mission Council adopted in 2003. Here it states, "Mission in the first instance in God’s economy (oikonomia) for the world, in the act of creation, in the history with humankind, in Jesus Christ and in the power of the Spirit. Our witness means our response and our participation in God’s compassionate and transforming love." What is characteristic for the EMS is the reciprocity of relationships. Christian women and men in Tokyo and Frankfurt, in Amman and Macassar, in Accra and Wertheim feel sympathy for each other, share with one another, learn from each other, encourage each other and challenge each other.

Have the visions and recommendations of the Jerusalem Forum become reality? At the Mission Council Conference in 2007, Habib Badr, Senior Pastor of the National Evangelical Church of Beirut and Deputy Chairman of the EMS Mission Council, asked the women and men delegates from Europe: "How can we [Editor’s note: the churches of Africa, Asia and the Middle East] become members in the EMS? How can you become our partners in Europe?" In the meantime, another change to the EMS Articles of Association is under discussion. Its wording intends to provide equal legal rights to the existing partners and members.

And what about the fact that we are partners, whether female or male? What do Christian women and men in Europe need from their sisters and brothers in Africa, Asia and the Middle East? We are often speechless when we are asked to put our faith into words or commit ourselves to justice. In this point we are dependent on our sisters and brothers. We in Europe can also learn much from the churches that have been living for many years in the presence of other religions. I am convinced that we need each other to be bearers of hope, ambassadors of reconciliation, and witnesses of God’s passionate love for the world and its humankind.

Ulrike Schmidt-Hesse took part in the EMS Forum in Jerusalem in 1991 on behalf of the Protestant Church in Hesse and Nassau. Today, she heads the Mission and Partnership department in the EMS and is Deputy Secretary-General of the EMS.
Belief in the Bible, hard work and unconditional faith in God

Johann Ludwig Schneller was both educationalist and missionary

Johann Ludwig Schneller wanted to improve social and economic conditions by providing an education in practical professions. In his opinion, only when sloth, economic poverty and need were eliminated from the people could character, morals and religious belief develop, writes Akel in his thesis and quotes the founding father from the Annual Report of the Orphanage in 1870: “However, the aim towards which we must work with all our strength and all our energy on our part is to restructure the local population here according to the gospel of God... Admittedly, we will not reach this aim by simply teaching. Work, work is above all what we must also teach this people. Why do we teach the children if we are not able to put them in a position to eat their own bread with honour afterwards? Are we educating them to become learned beggars? Why are we teaching them evangelical insight and religious exercise? Are we bringing them up to be lazy, pious gossipers?”

Schneller’s work ethic that he passed on to his pupils is largely a legacy from his origins. He was born in Erpfingen, a small village near Reutlingen in southern Germany, in 1820. His parents were poor and could not afford schoolbooks for their son. For this reason, it is said that Johann Ludwig copied them all by hand. Life on the Swabian Alb was steeped in Pietism, a reform movement of Protestantism. Accordingly, every person is responsible for leading a life that pleases God. This also included applying the gifts given to each person by God and not letting them go to waste by not using them. Nobody may daily away the day by being idle or, as they still say today in many Swabian villages, “dem Herrgott den Tag stehlen” (steal the day from the Lord).

The Syrian Orphanage is an evangelical institution where poor children are brought up and educated to become useful members of human society.” This is how Johann Ludwig Schneller formulated the aim and mission in the statutes of the Syrian Orphanage in 1869, nine years after he founded the institution. In his eyes, mission and education were mutually dependent.

Putting mission into practice without having an educational impact on people was just as unacceptable to him as educating children without preaching the gospel to them.

Schneller was not only a missionary, he was also an educationalist,” says education professor Samir Akel, who joined the Schneller school at the age of nine in 1947 and was awarded his doctorate in Tübingen in 1978 based on a thesis concerning the founding father of the Syrian Orphanage.* "He was a teacher who regarded himself as a tool in the hands of God." Schneller did not found a mission station where only preaching took place, he founded a school with a boarding home. "He wanted to open people’s minds to the word of God through brotherly love and practical Christianity," according to Akel.

A solid education in practical professions were hoped to improve the economic conditions in Palestine.

Another feature of Pietism is a strong belief in the Bible. Study of the Holy Scriptures is not only the preserve of theologians. Laypersons in home and prayer...
groups read the bible together and pray together. Each person should understand the gospel and pass it on to others.

On Sundays, everyone looked forward to meeting the "children's friend"

That was also Johann Ludwig Schneller's intention when he went to Jerusalem. He wanted to christianise the Holy Land. However, he came up against resistance from the Muslim majority in Palestine. He was more successful with the indigenous Christians who he wanted to educate in the evangelical mould. Schneller's great dream was to evangelise Palestine according to the Pietist model from Württemberg. As a result, confirmation played an important role in the Syrian Orphanage and children baptised as Christians officially became Protestants.

Religious instruction was also one of the main subjects. Besides regular prayers and devotions, Johann Ludwig Schneller called together all those present to a bible hour every Sunday, a Pietist tradition that he took to Jerusalem with him from his childhood in Erpfingen. "After evening meal on Sunday, 'everyone' looked forward to the 'children's friend' who came with a book containing 'serious and funny stories' in tune with the children's taste," writes Samir Akel. "Everyone gathered in the living room of the house parents. The hour started with a prayer. This was followed by singing, reading and showing pictures from the book. The hour finally ended with a prayer."

Schneller wanted to educate children to become Evangelical Christians so that they would later form their own community from which the entire Palestinian people would be evangelised. During hikes through the Holy Land, which he always loved to undertake with his pupils whenever he could, he encouraged his pupils to talk with the people about the Christian faith. He also kept good contacts with the Evangelical Lutheran College Talitha Kumi in Jerusalem where deaconesses from Kaiserswerth looked after orphan girls, writes Akel. The boys from the Syrian Orphanage and the girls from Talitha Kumi would one day form the nucleus for an Evangelical Palestine.

The mission ideas of Johann Ludwig Schneller seem obsolete and old-fashioned to us today. But it must be admitted that the founding father of the Syrian Orphanage had pledged his faith in Pietism and this was the driving force behind everything he achieved. His unconditional faith in God did not even waver in the face of major problems and difficulties which confronted the Syrian Orphanage many a time during the course of its history. And perhaps this is the reason why the Syrian Orphanage became a success story over the eighty years of its existence.

Katja Dorothea Buck

*Samir Akel: Der Pädagoge und Missionar Johann Ludwig Schneller und seine Erziehungsanstalten (Johann Ludwig Schneller, educationalist and missionary and his educational institute), Bielefeld 1978, Wilhelm Surbir publishers

I

The football team of the Syrian Orphanage. Training took place during free periods.

In summer, the pupils were awoken at 5 o'clock and in winter at 6. The "warden" entered the dormitory of his group and started singing a morning song; it was mostly Paul Gerhardt's song: "Wach auf mein Herz und singe" (Awake my heart and sing). As they were singing, the children started to dress. This is what Schneller wrote in his Annual Report in 1874: "How much happier and pleasant do our children get up every morning when their dormitory warden sings the song on leaving his room than if they were brusquely ordered to get up."

The children spent the time before breakfast with cleaning the rooms of the orphanage and each was allocated a specific task. At 6.45, the bell sounded for the first time; the children lined up and the dormitory warden inspected their shoes and clothes. When the bell went at 7.00 for the second time, the children walked 2 by 2 to their places in the dining room together with all the inhabitants of the house. Before breakfast, there was a sung prayer.

This was followed by a joint morning service with all the pupils and employees. It started with a song. Then came a reading from the bible, some "words of warning" and a prayer. At about 7.45, everyone went about their daily work with a song. Children from 6 to 14 years old went to school lessons, the older children started their classes in the workshops, offices or on the farm.
The understanding of mission at the Schneller schools today

Whereas Johann Ludwig Schneller wanted to found his own Protestant Pietist community, today the local sponsoring churches pay a leading role for the Schneller schools. The President of the Evangelical Association for the Schneller Schools (EVS), Rev Klaus Schmid, explains why the mission understanding had changed over the course of time.

Where does the present-day mission understanding of the two Schneller schools differ most strongly from Johann Ludwig Schneller’s understanding 150 years ago? Johann Ludwig Schneller wanted to found his own church in Palestine. He dreamt of an evangelical community based on the model of Württemberg Pietism in the Holy Land. This is unthinkable for us today. Co-operation with the local sponsoring churches is very important to us. They are largely responsible for the work at the two schools.

And what does everyday life at the schools mean today? Confirmation played a very important role at the Syrian Orphanage. For example, it converted former Orthodox Christians into evangelical Christians. Confirmation took place at the Johann Ludwig Schneller School well into the 1960s. Today, we want the Christian children at the two schools to become active Christian men and women in their particular denominations and later become actively involved in their parishes and churches.

Why have the aims changed so much over the years? This must be regarded in relation to the world-wide ecumenical movement. In 1961, the decision was made at the General Assembly of the World Council of Churches (ECC) in New Delhi that no church should entice away members of another church. Confessionalism should no longer jeopardise relationships between churches. The ECC and the World Mission Council also merged at that time.
Why not?
It is forbidden by Jordanian law to convert Muslims through missionary work. For this reason, the school avoids anything that could arouse the slightest suspicion of missionising.

Is the topic of religion completely excluded at the TSS?
No, quite the opposite. For example, everyone says grace together at table at the Theodor Schneller School. But they are formulated so that Muslims can also say them, too. Recently I saw in a residential group that each child had either a Qur’an or a Bible under their pillow, depending on which religion they belonged to. The children read their book in the evening before going to sleep.

Do Protestant pupils enjoy privileges at the Schneller schools?
Protestant Christians are a very small minority in the two countries. There are therefore few Protestant pupils at the schools and they enjoy no privileges.

Did Protestant pupils receive preferential treatment in the past?
Yes, you can definitely say that. When a pupil was confirmed at the Syrian Orphanage, he was allowed to let his hair grow and sleep in a night shirt. The others had to continue sleeping naked. This was certainly an incentive to become confirmed. At the Johann Ludwig Schneller School those who were confirmed in the early 1960s were allowed to wear a corduroy suit and a white shirt. This, too, was certainly a convincing argument for confirmation.

Independent churches that now became members of the EEC had emerged from the work of various mission societies in the 19th century. The Evangelical Association for the Schneller Schools stood behind this movement. When it was founded in 1972 as the Association of Churches and Missions in South Western Germany (EMS), it belonged to the first ten founder members of the EMS.

Are there differences today in the mission understanding of the two schools?
Yes, of course. The two schools are entrenched in different societies. At the Theodor Schneller School, the percentage of Christian pupils is lower, just as the total percentage of the Christian population in Jordan is lower than in Lebanon. In Jordan only four percent of people are Christians, but in Lebanon this figure is about one third. Christian life at the two schools has strongly different emphases. For example, it is a matter of course at the Johann Ludwig Schneller School that Christians and Muslims attend evening devotion together and also have joint religious education classes. At the Theodor Schneller School, on the other hand, they have separate classes and no Muslim would attend evening devotion.

In the past 20 years, Islamic Fundamentalism has grown in the countries of the Arabian world and has become an important political and social factor. Could this have an influence on the mission understanding at the Schneller schools?
I don’t think that Islamic Fundamentalism will change the mission understanding of the Schneller schools. Quite the contrary. We must rather expand what we are already doing, that is educating children to be tolerant and respectful to the other religion. We must still do more work so that the religions can get to know each other better. This is what our reaction to Fundamentalist current must be.

“The religions must get to know each other better,” says Klaus Schmid.

The interview was conducted by Katja Dorothea Buck.
A DAY AT THE JOHANN LUDWIG SCHNELLER BOARDING SCHOOL

Lisa Dorn came to the Johann Ludwig Schneller School (JLSS) through the EMS in autumn 2009. As ecumenical volunteer she lives in a family group together with 19 boys aged between ten and twelve years old. She describes a day at the JLSS from the viewpoint of one of these boys.

My boarding mistresses wake me up at 6.15. I’m still very sleepy and I need some time until I’ve made my bed, dressed and washed. Breakfast is at 6.30, almost always it’s home-baked Schneller bread with jam and tea. We eat together at three large tables and we say grace together before every meal. After breakfast, two of us do the washing up, others clean the bathroom and the toilets and others take the rubbish out. Quite a lot piles up with 19 children. The rest wait until we can all finally go outside to play at 7.30. At 7.50, I go twice a week to a short morning service at the church. On Mondays, the headmaster gives a talk for all pupils and teachers, after which we sing the national anthem. At 8.00, we start school.

School lasts a very long time: every day until 14.30. At least we have two thirty minute breaks. At 14.30, I go to my family group where we have lunch together. I look forward to the meals, especially if there’s pizza or hamburgers. Then I go outside with my friends. I love playing football the most. If we can’t get a ball, we kick a pine cone around. I also like playing tennis, hide and seek, jump-and-run games and whatever else we can think up. We always manage to think of something. At 16.00, it’s “study time” and I must go back to my family group again to do my homework. If I’m lucky, it only lasts half an hour but sometimes it lasts very long time. Then we can again go out to play until evening meal at 18.00. And after evening meal, we can also go out and play, paint, do handicrafts, dance or play music with our voluntary assistant, Miss Lisa.

At 19.00, the whole school gathers together for evening prayers in the church. There we sing together and listen to stories. If it’s not too dark afterwards, we can go out again for a short while until we have to wash and change for bed. At 19.50, we go to our beds. I sleep with six other boys in one dormitory.

A DAY AT THE THEODOR SCHNELLER SCHOOL

My name is Abdallah. I’m seven years old and I am in the second grade at the Theodor Schneller School (TSS) in Amman. As a rule, I am awoken at 6.20 in the morning by my house mistress and the voluntary assistant. The first thing I have to do is make my bed, pack my satchel and lay the breakfast table. After breakfast at 8.00, I go to school where I have lessons in maths, English, German, Arabic, religion and other subjects until 13.30. At 13.45, we have lunch in our family groups.

In the afternoon, the programme varies. At the moment, Caritas workers come to the school three times a week. Together we are working on a joint programme with Iraqi refugee children who also come to the school. When Caritas is not there, we have various free time activities after 15.00. For example, we play football, paint or do handicrafts in the art room, play in the billiard room, assist with the Environment study group or visit the petting zoo. At 16.30, I go back to my family group to do my homework. Sometimes I’m helped by the older boys, the voluntary assistants or the house mistresses. Twice a week, there are evening prayers in the church for the Christians among us.

After evening meal, I have about an hour’s time to do jigsaw puzzles, paint, play around with air balloons or play marbles with the other boys. Depending on the daily programme, we go to bed earlier or later, but at 19.45 at the latest.

Reported by Karoline Wagner, EMS ecumenical volunteer at the TSS since autumn 2009
The former Schneller pupil George Eid donated a memorial stone to the JLSS.

In the middle of April, members of the Board of Trustees and the Management Board of the Schneller Association - Education for Peace visited the two Schneller schools in Jordan and in Lebanon. Martin Schneller, great-grandson of the founder of the Syrian Orphanage and Chairman of the Board of Trustees, reports on the visit. "Despite all the existing problems, the situation in Amman and Khirbet Kanafar can be described as very satisfactory," he writes.

Our first day in Amman started with a talk with Prince Faisal of Jordan in Basman Palace. The Prince, who represented his brother, King Abdullah, expressed the high appreciation of the Royal Family for the work of the Theodor Schneller School (TSS) and promised continued support.

In the afternoon, Musa Al-Munaizel, the TSS education adviser, took us on a tour of the schoolgrounds, showed us the classrooms, the recently equipped rooms of the coeducation kindergarten, the boarding home and the new rooms in which girls will take up residence this year. In the day school we spoke to the headmistress and the teachers, most of whom are now female teachers. According to the headmistress, the main problem at present was the very different levels of achievement within the classes. This made the appointment of another assistant unavoidable to provide additional support to weaker pupils.

The festival service took place in the TSS church. Its interior had distinctly gained in appearance since the restoration of the church windows taken from the church of the Syrian Orphanage in Jerusalem. Finally, we visited the rooms of the Education Centre that will contribute to the further training of female teachers and childcare workers - an urgent need in Jordan and in the region. It is affiliated to the teacher training faculty of the Hashemite University and is therefore formally integrated in the Jordanian education system. Due to its regional approach with attendees from the entire Middle East, the reputation of the centre will certainly gain in stature in future.

The guest of honour at the ceremony for the 150th anniversary of the Schneller schools was the Deputy Prime Minister, Dr Rajai Muasher. Representatives of the Christian church, members of the German Embassy, journalists and friends and promoters of the TSS were also present. The Minister for Social Development, Mrs Hala Baissa Lattouf, had already arrived before the occasion and expressed her appreciation for the work of the school. To conclude the ceremony, an agreement for the erection of a hotel management school was signed. It would be equipped by the State of Jordan with support from USAID and would be built next to the TSS guest house. However, finance for construction of the building is still an outstanding issue. It would be the first joint venture in this sector between the Jordanian state and a private education institution. Here in a few years’ time, the girls who would be taking up residence in the boarding home in autumn this year could complete a vocational education.

On the second day, we visited the sensory garden, the ecological market garden and the workshops. The metalworking shop has now started production using aluminium. The woodworking shop, the training room for first year carpenter apprentices and the training workshop for metalworking professions need urgent renovations. The car mechanic workshop that was built a few years ago is facing the challenge of keeping up with the latest state of technical development. Our tour ended with a visit to the rope garden that is an impressive sight to see and offers a multitude of possibilities.
All in all, the headmaster of the TSS, Ghazi Musharbash, left us in no doubt that the core mission of the school remains to ensure that the children of disadvantaged families receive a good education, irrespective of their origin or religious affiliation. However, it would require considerable funds to realise this aim. Musharbash made it clear that, despite excellent revenues from donations from Germany, the school's own income would have to play a greater role in future. Besides the Education Centre and the Hotel Management School, the leasing of part of the TSS grounds to one of the largest bus companies in Jordan will certainly help.

Children’s appreciation of their school

We travelled by coach via Damascus to the Johann Ludwig Schneller School (JLSS) in Khribet Kanafar where we visited the school, boarding home, bakery and workshops the next day. Compared with Amman, they gave a more modern impression than Amman. This was followed by a totally successful event programme that the JLSS schoolchildren had prepared on their own for the anniversary. Short plays, short films, sports demonstrations and music performances alternated in rapid succession and offered a moving impression of the appreciation and loyalty the children and young people felt for their school. They demonstrated the excellent spirit that predominates at the JLSS under the headmastership of Rev George Haddad.

The service in the afternoon brought the entire school together as well as representatives of the churches, the German Embassy and members of the Lebanese Board of Trustees at a solemn event accompanied by musical interludes. This was followed by the handover and unveiling of the memorial stone that a former old boy of the JLSS, George Eid, had created and donated to the school on the occasion of the anniversary.

The last day of our journey was dedicated to various talks in Beirut. We met the Lebanese Information Minister Tareq Mitri, former Foreign Minister and who conducted the ceasefire negotiations with Israel in 2006. Referring to the Middle East conflict, he said it was essential for a third party (i.e. the USA) to submit a peace plan since the two conflicting parties, if left to their own devices, would be unable to compromise on their legitimate interests. America is also in demand as an arbiter (this time impartial) in the implementation of such a plan. It was not surprising that Mitri rated the Europeans with only a marginal role in the political and strategic issues of the conflict - firstly due to their own passivity and ineffectiveness, secondly since it is in the interests of both Israel and the USA to keep the Europeans out of conflict management.

During an interview with Bassem Shaab, member of parliament and the only representative of Lebanese Protestantism in parliament, he also explained the diversity of the various factions within Lebanese society. The Protestants are much too underrepresented in politics and administration, according to Shaab. This is a shame since the Protestants are intimately familiar with the so-called West and its way of thinking and are therefore predestined to build bridges of understanding. Shaab expressed himself in favour of maintaining the Christian identity of the JLSS. It should not go the way of the American University of Beirut, which was also founded on Protestant ideals but now has a totally secularised image.

Our journey ended with an extremely well-organised anniversary celebration followed by a reception at the National Evangelical Church in Beirut, the sponsoring church of the JLSS.

Dr. Martin Schneller

Accompanying the journey were:

- Prof Dr Herta Däubler-Gmelin, former Federal Minister of Justice
- Rev Andreas Maurer, EVS Managing Director
- Dr Basil Rischmäui, Former Schneller pupil
- Margit Rupp, Director of the Evangelical High Consistory in Stuttgart
- Rev Klaus Schmid, Chairman of the Mission Council of the EMS
- Kerstin Sommer, former ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany
- Dr Martin Schneller, former ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany
- Kerstin Sommer from the Evangelical Pupil Work of the regional church of Baden
- Rev Eberhard Will, Chairman of the Mission Council of the EMS

The group was accompanied by Mrs Gabriele Damasko, journalist at the SWR (public broadcasting company for the southwest of Germany).
TEACHING MATERIAL ABOUT THE SCHNELLER SCHOOLS

On time for the new school year, the LIT publishing house has issued new teaching materials about the Schneller schools. Under the German title "Schule für Frieden und Hoffnung - Zusammen leben und lernen von Christen und Muslime in den Schneller-Schulen im Nahen Osten" (School for peace and hope - Christians and Muslims living and learning together at the Schneller schools in the Middle East), the two authors Katja Baur and Michael Landgraf have devised teaching materials for use in schools and parishes. The price is Euro 19.80.

HISTORICAL ANNIVERSARY CONFERENCE

The Archives of the Regional Church in Stuttgart, the Association for Wurttemberg Church History (Verein für Württembergische Kirchengeschichte) and the Evangelical Association for the Schneller Schools (EVS) are sending out invitations to a conference entitled "150 Years of Syrian Orphanage and Schneller Schools in the Middle East" that will take place in Stuttgart on 13 November 2010. The programme includes talks about the early years of the Syrian Orphanage, the Schneller family and their relationships to the House of Hohenzollern and the present-day Schneller schools.

If you are interested, please contact the Regional Church Archives on Tel 0049 711 2149 373.

LEARNING TO LIVE PEACE IN THE SCHNELLER MISSION

The Protestant University (Evangelische Hochschule (EH)) in Ludwigsburg has an open invitation to a public study day about Schneller schools as part of Schneller anniversary celebrations starting at 13.00 on 15 July 2010. In co-operation with the EMS, the EVS and the Theodor Schneller School (TSS) in Amman, talks, group work and a podium discussion will deal with the subject of whether and how the Schneller mission can be an initiator of missionary activities as part of the peace movement in the Middle East and here in Germany.

Speakers and participant the podium include:
- Prof Dr Samir Akel (former Schneller pupil, former EH), Musa Al-Munaizel (TSS), Prof Dr Katja Baur (EH), Emina Corbo-Mesic (Muslim lecturer EH), Prof Dr Herta Düabler-Gmelin (Schneller Association, honorary professor of the EH starting the winter semester), Dr Jakob Eisler (Regional Church Archives, questioned), Rev Andreas Maurer (EVS/EMS), Ghazi Musharbash (TSS), Rev Klaus Schmid (EVS), Barbara Traub (Jewish lecturer EH) and students of the EH

Venue: Evangelical University of Ludwigsburg, Auf der Karlshöhe 2, Building C.

More information: Prof Dr Katja Baur, Tel 0049 7141 9745 -272; k.baur@eh-ludwigsburg.de or Ulrike Faulhaber, u.faulhaber@eh-ludwigsburg.de

HISTORICAL ANNIVERSARY EXHIBITION

The anniversary exhibition "In Würde leben lernen" (Learning to live in dignity) at the Archives of the Regional Church in Stuttgart (Landeskirchliche Archiv Stuttgart) is open to the public from 13 June to 31 October 2010 in Sonnenbühl-Erpfingen, the birthplace of Johann Ludwig Schneller. The exhibition, which was previously in Stuttgart, presents the history of the Syrian Orphanage and the two Schneller schools in numerous historical photos, archives, books and objects from the Schneller archive.

For example, part of the bell that was destroyed in the terrible fire of 1910 can be seen. "Einer Glocke entstamm’ ich, im Heiligen Land erklang ich, in Feuersglut erstarb ich (I came from a bell, I rang in the Holy Land, I died in the flames)" is the inscription written on a piece of olive wood. Pieces of the bell were sent to various parishes to collect donations for restoration of the Syrian Orphanage – with success. The institution received so many donations that they were not only able to rebuild the orphanage within the following six months, they were also able to purchase additional land.

Venue: Ostereimuseum, Steigstrasse 8, 72820 Sonnenbühl-Erpfingen, Tel 0049 7128 774, www.ostereimuseum.de

NEWS FROM THE SCHOOLS AND THE EVS

EVS ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2010

The business meeting of the EVS Annual General Meeting takes place on 9 October 2010 in Stuttgart, Vogelsangstrasse 66a, 70197 Stuttgart. Compared with previous years, the EVS will do without a comprehensive accompanying programme and refers to the anniversary event on 14 November 2010. All members will still receive written invitations to the two events.

VISIT THE SCHNELLER SCHOOLS!

The Evangelical Association for the Schneller Schools (EVS) invites you to participate on two tours to Lebanon and Jordan organised by Bible Reisen (German tour operator).

9 to 25 September 2010 "Multiplier Tours"
For church co-workers with a strong focus on the two Schneller schools. From the Theodor Schneller School in Amman, the trip continues via Damascus to the Johann Ludwig Schneller School and finally on to Beirut.
Tour guide: Rev Andreas Maurer (EVS)
Costs: Euro 985.-
Closing date for registration: 14 June 2010
Min. number of participants: 15 persons
If you want to go on a group tour to one of the two countries in the next 24 months, you will receive a refund of Euro 840.- from Biblische Reisen.

10 to 20 October 2010 "Anniversary Tour"
For all those interested in Schneller work. Besides the two Schneller schools, the itinerary includes numerous tourist highlights in Jordan, Syria and Lebanon.
Tour guide: Rev Klaus Schmid (EVS)
Costs: Euro 1,585.-
Closing date for registration: 5 July 2010
Min. number of participants: 16 persons
For more details on the two tours, please Tel 0049 711 636 78 -39 or visit www.evs-online.org.
Originally, Johann Ludwig Schneller had sent a pupil to Germany to learn the pottery trade. At a company called Aichele in Gschwend, near Stuttgart, he took his final apprentice examination and then went to work at the majolica and domestic range factory of Friedrich Nerbel in Mosbach to improve his skills. Back in Jerusalem, the former pupil became self-employed and was no longer available to the Syrian Orphanage as worker and instructor.

Johann Ludwig Schneller was befriended with Friedrich Nerbel in Mosbach and in 1884 he asked him to send a master potter. Gustav Haberstroh (1850-1930) was Catholic and hailed from Haslach in the Black Forest. He was married from 1874 to 1879 but lost his wife and child within a very short spate of time. Heinrich Hansjakob (1837-1916), pastor in Haslach and author of many books about the people and life in the Black Forest, wrote the following about Gustav Haberstroh in a story entitled "Bauernblut" (Farmer's Blood) in 1896: "In Haslach there were three masters of the oldest profession of humanity. All three were geniuses who had what it takes to be state councillors but instead sat in their humid workshops year in, year out and turned out their pots. The greatest genius among them was Haberstroh. His son is a potter in Jerusalem today."

Gustav Haberstroh was head of the pottery at the Syrian Orphanage. Due to his dignified manner, he was always called "Herr Gustav". In his workshop, he produced pots, corckery, drinking mugs, flower pots and vessels to store food for the institution that was continuously growing in size. What was important were the large water jars that "sweated" in the warm climate and so kept the water cool. Together with six apprentices and four journeymen, Haberstroh also produced pottery for sale throughout the country. A novelty were the modern tiled stoves that were frequently bought by Europeans in Palestine. Later a press was purchased to produce hollow bricks. The high demand for bricks for construction projects in Jerusalem led to a new department for the production of building bricks and roof tiles. All these products represented an excellent income for the institution.

Besides his work in the workshop, Gustav Haberstroh taught his apprentices technical drawing in the evenings. During his time there, the services in the chapel apparently had their effect on him and he converted to the Protestant faith. At the end of his contract period in the spring of 1889, he returned to Mosbach, then went to Vienna where he learnt new techniques. In 1893, he returned to Jerusalem. In 1910, he received the German general badge of honour during the visit of the Prussian Prince Eitel Friedrich for the many years of his work at the Syrian Orphanage.

In 1927, the 25 year old art potter Magdalene Eisenberg from Kassel came to the Syrian Orphanage in Jerusalem. She had studied at the Technical School for Art Pottery in Bunzlau, Silesia, and wanted to produce modern, painted ceramics such as coffee sets, lamp stands, jugs and flower vases. For the 52 year old and experienced potter, this meant "competition" and the associated technique produced a difficult situation. He became accustomed to the situation and soon allowed his colleague a free hand at new designs and also learned from her. The sale of this novel type of ceramic ware went very well, in particular the beautiful nativity figures at Christmas.

Gustav Haberstroh continued working, even at the age of 80. Gradually, however, his eyesight failed, his body became weaker and he had to be looked after. On 2 August 1930, the faithful Christian, a model of industriousness at the Syrian Orphanage, closed his eyes the last time and was buried on Mount Zion cemetery on the afternoon of the same day.

Arno G Krauss
KAIROS PALESTINE PAPER CAUSES WORLD-WIDE DEBATE

Palestinian Christians appeal for peaceful resistance

In December 2009, well-known Christian Palestinian women and men appealed to their sisters and brothers to do more for peace and justice in the Holy Land. The World Council of Churches (ECC) compared this appeal to a similar call from South African churches in 1985. At that time, it started the ball of the world-wide antiapartheid movement rolling and finally toppled the regime in South Africa. In line with this, the Palestinian document that bears the title of the “Kairos Palestine Paper” had led to debates in many churches – sometimes highly controversial.

Kairos-Palestine is the source of many discussions within the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD). The Executive Committee of the Evangelical Middle East Commission (EMOK) appreciates the strengths of the paper, above all the emphasis on non-violence that Palestinian resistance should exercise, rejection of any political misuse of religion and recognition of the right of existence of Israel. On the other hand, the EMOK and the council of the EKD have many questions they would like to ask the authors on various items and have expressed their reservations against many statements. For example, the EMOK asks whether the roots of terrorism are really only to be found “in the human injustice that is done to us and in the evil of the occupation”. Finally, Muslim Palestinian groupings are also fighting the state of Israel, independent of the occupation. Similarly, the EMOK stresses that the sentence “We have respect for all those who have given their lives for our nation” may not be interpreted as including the suicide bombers. In addition, the boycott of the Israeli economy proposed by the authors meets with resistance. “A general boycott of Israel reminds the churches in Germany of the appeal for “Do not buy from the Jews!” issued in 1933 and is unacceptable to us,” it says in a declaration fro the EMOK Executive Committee.

Churches in other countries are more easily capable of answering to the cry for help from Palestine. “During our struggle in South Africa we were sure of your solidarity. Now we not only stand by you in your hour of suffering but also at the moment of your success,” writes the Anglican Archbishop of Cape Town, Desmond Tutu, in a letter to the Palestinian Christians. The comparison with the situation in South Africa during apartheid invite other comparisons, says the ECC, for which Tutu is criticised by various quarters, among others the Christian-Jewish societies in Germany. According to epd information, they accuse him of supporting the dramatisation of conditions in the Palestinian regions and maintain that the ECC is “Ignorant of the historical contexts”.

Jens Nieper, member of the EKD High Consistory and Middle East liaison officer at the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD), finds the comparison with South Africa difficult. “The situations should be regarded from different points of view,” he says. “Of course I understand the South Africans if they have a different view of the situation in Palestine than we have of Germany since they were themselves affected by discrimination and injustice. We in Germany have never lived the greater portion of our lives under an apartheid regime with the associated injustices, but we should not simply embrace this point of view,” says Nieper.

After numerous talks with the authors of the Kairos Palestine Paper in Palestine, however, he asked whether people in Germany had not interpreted the document under false premises. "We discussed, analysed and commented the paper like a theological dogmatic text," says Nieper. However, the authors are primarily appealing to the Palestinians themselves not to give up hope for an end to the occupation and injustice, despite all the hopelessness. "After a long period of silence, the Palestinian Christians are now getting their voice heard and this is felt as liberating in wide circles of the society there," says Nieper. The Paper has meanwhile been discussed in numerous schools and groups. "Kairo has rather become a type of movement in Palestine," says Nieper. It is not possible to discern its extent or foresee whether this movement will last. "The Paper radiates a tangible motivation to attempt once again to go a peaceful path."

Katja Dorothea Buck
PERMITTING A CONSCIOUS HANDLING OF GOODS FROM ISRAEL

Ebersbach. The Middle East Women’s Network want to sensitise people’s awareness about buying Israeli products. "Do you know what you are buying with 729?" it says on a postcard sold by the Network. 729 is the digit combination at the start of a barcode that indicates the origin of a product. "When you buy a product with the barcode 729, you are supporting the Israeli economy that is financing and profiting from the occupation," is the explanation on the back of the postcard. The Network regards this appeal as the reply to the Kairos Palestine Paper (see from page 24 onwards) in which Palestinian celebrities are calling for a peaceful campaign.

The problem is that the digit combination 729 indicates products made in Israel as well as those produced by the settlements that violate international law, for example Ma’ale Adumin. When it was founded in 2002, the Middle East Women’s Network promoted the unique identification of goods from the occupied territories. So far without success.

For this reason, the Network is now putting pressure on the Israeli government to introduce a different digit combination for products made by the settlements. "We will continue not to buy any products from Israel until Israeli politics have changed in favour of a just and lasting peace with the Palestinian people," it says in the accompanying text.

For more details, please visit www.fraunetzwerknahost.de

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I would like to quote Khalil Gibran: 'If it were not for your guests, all houses would be graves.' At the Schneller schools, we experienced what it means to live and work in peace and tolerance with others from several religions and backgrounds. This moves me and my family very deeply and motivates us to keep ties with the children and co-workers of the school."

From 2003 to 2006, Anselm Kreh was head of vocational training at the Johann Ludwig Schneller School. Today he is instructor at the vocational training establishment in Schwabish Gmünd. Since 2007, he has been managing director of the Evangelical Association for the Schneller Schools.

CHRISTIANS AND THE MIDDLE EAST

EVANGELICAL CHURCH IN GERMANY (EKD) DEMANDS THE INTAKE OF MORE IRAQI REFUGEES

Hannover. At the end of April, the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) demanded a continuation of the intake campaign for Iraqi refugees. The background for this is the end of a pan-European programme that started last year to allow 2500 Iraqi refugees to come to Germany from refugee camps in Syria and Jordan. "The situation of Christians, members of other religious minorities and persons in special need of protection in Iraq continues to be extremely worrying," said Bernhard Felmberg, representative of the EKD Council. So far, many of the Iraqis that found refuge in Jordan or Syria have not been able to return to their homeland. The previous resettlement of Iraqi refugees to Germany went very well, says Felmberg.

The demand of the EKD receives additional weight against the backdrop of the current situation in Iraq. At the start of May, a bomb attack took place on Christian students in the Northern Iraqi town of Mossul. According to agency information, at least one person was killed and of the hundred survivors, some were severely injured. In a letter to the Iraqi government, the EKD foreign affairs Bishop Martin Schindehütte demanded that the authorities make more effort to deploy security forces to ensure greater safety and protection for Christian minorities in Iraq, the country of the two rivers, also known as Mesopotamia in ancient history.

ARMENIANS PERMITTED TO BUILD A CHURCH IN ABU DABHI

Antelias. The Ruler of Abu Dhabi, Sheikh Chalifa bin Zayid Al Nahyan, placed a 3000 square metre plot of land at the disposal of the Armenian community to build a church and a community centre. This was announced by the Armenian Catholicossat in Antelias (Lebanon) at the beginning of May. It is estimated that 3000 Armenians live in the United Arab Emirates. The majority of the them came to the Gulf for job reasons.
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SCHNELLER GENUSS
A luxurious speciality, apricot nougat from Lebanon. 10 pieces approx.160 g.
Ingredients: sugar, glucose, egg white, pistaccios, vanilla, apricots.
Order No. 42309 2.80 €

ORDER PHONE
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MAGDALENA SCHNELLER WINE, CHARDONNAY (WHITE), 2007
This Chardonnay grows at an altitude of 900 meters and is matured in young oak casks.
Magdalena Schneller was the wife of the founder of the Syrian Orphanage in Jerusalem.
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Order No. 42153 3 bottles 33.00 €
Order No. 42156 6 bottles 63.00 €
Order No. 42162 12 bottles 125.00 €

(If one vintage is sold out, we will supply the next)
Children talk about the occupation

A lot has been written about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict but there are few statements made by those who are directly affected. "Der Junge und die Mauer" (The boy and the wall) fills this gap to some extent. It contains an illustrated story that happened in one of the three refugee camps in Bethlehem, Ayda Camp. 4500 Palestinian men and women have been living there since 1948, so they are now in the fourth generation since they were expelled from their homeland when the state of Israel was founded. In 2004, the camp was separated from the hinterland by an eight metre wall. Children who grow up in close confines and without any prospects talk about their sufferings, longings and hopes in a story they have illustrated themselves. They devise various possibilities "to tell people on the other side of the wall that we are still there".

What is so impressive about the book is the description of unbearable situations linked with hope and the will to survive. In the true sense of the word, it is a wave from the fence by people who are frightened of disappearing for ever out of the world's sight. Initially, the book was intended to be written by children for children, but it also shows adults an authentic touching witness of life under the occupation.

Dieter Ziebarth

Virtual journey to the two Schneller schools

If you have not yet been to the Schneller schools in Amman or Khirbet Kanafar, you can gain an impression of the schools on your computer at home. Google Earth is a free program that can be downloaded from the web. If you enter Amman, you will quickly find yourself in the city centre. Go north east to the old airport of Marka and then slightly north to the motorway junction which has an unequal cloverleaf shape. In the top right hand corner you will find the Schneller compound. The co-ordinates appear in the bottom line of the menu: 32°00'11" North; 36°00'40" West, altitude 2401 ft /732 m.

Using the same method, search for Khirbet Qanafar, Lebanon (make sure the spelling is correct!). The Johann Ludwig Schneller School lies on the right of the road that leads to the north east in the direction of Kifraya. You can clearly see the biblical garden in the form of a fish. The co-ordinates are: 33°38'32" North; 35°43'54" East, altitude 3051 ft / 930 m. When enlarged sufficiently you can discover many details.

Arno G. Krauß

Syrian Orphanage in first place

The German Association of the Holy Land published a map of the city of Jerusalem from the year 1927 which shows 24 former German and Austrian church and secular monuments from the 19th and 20th centuries. Historical photos with explanations of the origin and purpose of the owners are enclosed as well as photos of the present state of the buildings and their addresses. Travellers to Israel can then find the monuments quickly. The largest institution in the Middle East in the past was the Syrian Orphanage.

The map "German and Austrian monuments in Jerusalem" can be ordered from the Deutscher Verein vom Heiligen Lande (German Association of the Holy Land), Steinfelder Gasse 17, 50670 Köln, tel 0049 221/13 53 78 for 5,35 Euro (incl. shipping) or online at http://www.heilig-land-verein.de/Wir_ubers/DVHL-Shop/dvhl-shop.html.

Arno G. Krauß

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Acknowledgement
We wish to acknowledge with many thanks the receipt of donations from unknown donors and those who do not wish for individual thanks as well as those whose names were unfortunately illegible.

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The Schneller Magazine is published four times a year. The purchase price is included in the EVS membership fee.

English Schneller Magazine online:
www.ems-online.org/home_en.html
Evangelical Association for the Schneller Schools (EVS),
Member of the Association of Churches and Missions in South Western Germany (EMS)

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Visit us on the web at www.evs-online.org

"For Thy mercy is great above the heavens, and Thy truth reacheth unto the skies." Psalm 108:5