

EMS INSIGHTS

2/2022

50 YEARS OF EMS

MAIN FEATURE: FREE FOR THE FUTURE

Working towards a fellowship of equals

JESUS AND THE JUBILEE YEAR

Theological reflection from Ghana

INTERNATIONAL BIBLE READING PROJECT

Reading the Bible through the eyes of another



Evangelical Mission
in Solidarity



PROCLAIMING CHRIST AND SHARING IN COMMUNION WITH HIM

When the EMS was founded in 1972 as the “Evangelisches Missionswerk in Südwestdeutschland” (Evangelical Mission Society in Southwest Germany), the then President of the Basel Mission, Dr Jacques Rossel, gave it this guidance: “What we are trying to accomplish today is to set up structures that will allow us to do better than before on a global scale, something that inextricably belongs to mission: to proclaim Christ and to share in living communion with him.”

The structures of the EMS have changed considerably over the past 50 years. The former German mission organisation has grown into an international fellowship of churches and mission societies. This cooperation based on equal rights across three continents is to a great extent unique. What is much more important, however, is the living community that has emerged from these structures. At the Jubilee celebrations in Ghana, Lebanon, Indonesia, India and Germany, we experienced how close the bond is within the EMS.

This was most beautifully expressed by the many versions of the EMS Jubilee Song, which we also report about in this issue: “Together we are free. Together we can show the world what heaven will be.” It was sung by children from the Schneller School in Jordan and young people from Indonesia, and danced by students from South India. The Christian deaf community Sahabat Tuli shows how the message of Christ can be shared without words. When Jacques Rossel looks down from heaven today to see what has become of the EMS, he will probably be delighted and will swing gently to the rhythm of the EMS Jubilee Song.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Dieter Heidtmann".

Reverend Dr Dieter Heidtmann
General Secretary of the EMS

The Evangelical Mission in Solidarity (EMS)

25 churches and 5 mission societies in Asia, Africa, Europe and the Middle East form a network of well-established long-term partnerships – as a Christian fellowship they share resources, learn from and with one another and make decisions.

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50 YEARS OF EMS

The EMS celebrated its 50th anniversary in September with a thanksgiving service and a gala evening. Originally founded as a purely German mission organisation, it has developed into a worldwide family of churches and mission societies in Africa, Asia, the Middle East and Europe. Today, all its members have equal rights and decide together on theological, organisational and financial issues.

MAIN FEATURE

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1972



FREE FOR THE FUTURE

WORKING TOWARDS A FELLOWSHIP OF EQUALS

”

We are still very grateful for this stable network the EMS has evolved into over the past 50 years. We are grateful for this lifelong learning community that continues to grow and thrive. Together we are shaping our future. Together we ask God's blessing for the years to come.

Ernst-Wilhelm Gohl, Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Württemberg



The Evangelical Mission in Solidarity (EMS) celebrated its foundation exactly 50 years ago on 16 September 2022 with a thanksgiving service and a gala evening. The two events were the highlight of the EMS Jubilee Year, which began in September 2021 with a kick-off service and a theological conference in Ghana. The slogan of the Jubilee Year was “Free for the future”, based on the Bible verse “For freedom Christ has set us free” (Galatians 5:1).

The EMS looks back on 50 years that were marked by a plethora of change processes and constant debate on theological and organisational issues. This path was never easy, but it has been worthwhile. Today, the EMS is an international community with equal rights, in which all members decide together on projects, personnel and finances. In this form, it is almost unique.



1991

Jerusalem Forum

“We declare to you what was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands... we declare to you what we have seen and heard so that you also may have fellowship with us.”

With these words from the first letter of John, Dr Jacques Rossel began his devotion on 28 January 1972. The representatives of five regional churches in southern Germany, the Moravian Church and five mission societies had gathered in Landau (Palatinate) to establish the “Evangelisches Missionswerk in Südwestdeutschland” (Evangelical Mission Society in Southwest Germany/EMS). From the very beginning, the focus was on international cooperation. At the end of the colonial era, many independent churches had formed in Africa and Asia which the organisation now sought to win over as partners and provide them with support.

As President of the Basel Mission, Rossel (1915 – 2008) was one of the “godfathers” of the EMS. Referring to the project of joining the forces of churches and missions, he said: “So it is a matter of two things: structures that allow Christ to be

proclaimed worldwide across geographical, cultural and denominational boundaries, and structures that permit mutual participation in the wealth of living communion in Christ.”

FROM BAD BOLL TO JERUSALEM

The offices of the new mission organisation were set up at Vogelsangstraße 62 in Stuttgart – partly for practical reasons, since this was where the Basel Mission – German Branch (BMDZ) had its branch office. All founding members of the EMS brought their long-standing relationships with partners in the global South into the mission organisation. For example, the BMDZ with its traditional mission work in Ghana, India and Indonesia, or the Syrian Orphanage Association (today: the Evangelical Association for the Schneller Schools) which is committed to supporting the Schneller Schools in Jordan and Lebanon.

After a good ten years of intensive development, a first assessment was made by making a survey of the EMS member churches and mission societies in Germany and the international partner churches. But most importantly, this



2006

Vigil / Lebanon War



The EMS unites people from many different countries and continents. In this way we learn about each other and we share faith, hope and love. We weave a web of solidarity. Three cheers for all the people who have encouraged this spirit of networking and solidarity throughout the decades, and who have made it possible for us to celebrate this 50th anniversary today! And above all, thanks be to God!

Bärbel Schäfer, Dean of the Markgräflerland Church District, Protestant Church in Baden



occurred at the first EMS partnership consultation “Sharing in Obedience” that took place at the Protestant Academy in Bad Boll (Germany) in 1983. All delegates gave a positive assessment of the work of the mission society. But there still remained many tasks unfinished as well as new ones to be tackled for the future. For example, a criticism was expressed that the international partner churches were allowed to have a say in the committees but not to vote. When it came to project funding, for example, their delegates sat in the audience as guest listeners at most.

In the period that followed, more resolute thought was given to how the partners in the EMS bodies could really participate in decision-making processes on an equal footing and with equal rights. More and more, the hierarchical distinction between German “EMS members” and international “partner churches” was called into question. There was also no longer a desire to distinguish between “mother and daughter churches”, between “older and younger churches”, between “stronger and weaker” or between “givers and receivers”. The horizon was widening. The focus gradually shifted to learning from each other and with each other, as well as to common witness.

One milestone on this path was the EMS Forum which took place in Jerusalem from 2 to 10 June 1991. It convened under the theme of “God made no difference between us” (Acts 15:9) where two delegates from each of the churches and mission societies were invited to consult on how the EMS could be merged into a true fellowship. The experience of a morning service on the Mount of Olives became an encouraging and symbolic experience shared by all. “For us delegates the consultation in Jerusalem was proof of the determination of the EMS to change and become democratic in its relations with its partner churches in other parts of the world,” recalls Chris Wessels (1935 – 2018), minister of the Moravian Church in South Africa (MCSA).



Internationalisation

PARTNERS BECOME MEMBERS

Although the Jerusalem Forum had no legal mandate to make binding decisions, its recommendations set the trend for the future. In 1994, the establishment of an international Mission Council paved the way for equal participation of partner churches. The goal was to achieve full membership of all the churches in the fellowship. The situation finally shifted with the reconstitution of the EMS as “Evangelical Mission in Solidarity” in 2012: a traditional mission society became an international association of churches. No longer was a distinction made between “partner churches” in the global South and “member churches” in Germany.

The 28 members of the EMS now formed a joint association whose bodies were made up of delegates from all the organisations. Since then, the General Meeting, the Mission Council and the Executive Committee decide on the goals, the strategy and the programmes and, last but not least, how association funds are allocated. The common language is English. Essential documents are written in English and, if necessary, translated into other languages as well.

According to a statement by the World Council of Churches in 2016, there were at the time only four examples of reconstitutions of former mission societies where power and money were shared. Rev. Dr Habib Badr from Lebanon, Vice-President of the EMS Mission Council, sums it up aptly: “EMS has undergone a fantastic metamorphosis in the last 25 years, moving from being a German missionary society to an international body of churches. We representatives of non-German bodies are no longer mere objects of deliberation, but equal members of the fellowship.”



2021

Start of the Jubilee Year in Ghana

NETWORK OF SOLIDARITY

So what's next? Since 2012, the EMS has taken further steps towards internationalisation and equal rights. In these ten years, the EMS family has grown closer and closer together and has discovered that a fellowship at eye level opens up new possibilities – especially in difficult times. This was particularly evident during the coronavirus pandemic, when the exchange between member churches was virtually revolutionised by digital communication media such as Zoom.

The self-image of the EMS as a fellowship has also proven itself in project funding. A committee of representatives from the various regions of the member churches decides on the funding of programmes and projects on an equal footing. “Our member churches in Africa, Asia and the Middle East have submitted many sustainable, forward-looking project ideas for the next two years,” says Rev. Anne Heitmann, chair of the committee. “Together we have currently selected 50 programmes and projects which, with the help of our funding, will benefit women, young people and other social groups in the various regions, but also, for example, pastor training and dialogue with other religions by the churches.”

The “Free for the Future “ strategy for 2021-2026 adopted by the EMS in 2020 identifies four major challenges: globalisation, destruction of the environment, growing social inequality and a rise in the number of conflicts. They can only be tackled by joint efforts worldwide. With this aim in mind, the future strategy of the EMS relies on the power of reconciliation, on the participation of young people in particular and on global networking. An important goal for the coming years is to link the different fields of work of the churches even more strongly together. The idea behind this is that networking not only gives individual members new impulses for their work, but also strengthens the international fellowship as a whole.

JESUS AND THE JUBILEE YEAR (LUKE 4:18-19)

The EMS celebrates its 50th anniversary according to the biblical Year of Jubilee and thus follows the theological perspective of Jesus' first sermon. At the beginning of his public ministry, he refers to promises that the Prophet Isaiah had addressed to the people of Israel centuries earlier (Isaiah 61:1-3).

"The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour." With these words, Jesus announces the dawn of a new era – and not only for Israel, but the whole of humanity.

In ancient Israel, the Year of Jubilee – or year of the Lord's favour, as it is called by Jesus in the Gospel of Luke – occurred only once every 50 years, which meant that for many people, it was a once-in-a-lifetime experience. The Jubilee Year was to ensure fairness and equity in the affairs of God's people in order that everybody might have the opportunity to receive justice and relief from bondage or oppression at least some time in their lifetime. It was also a reminder that all property is owned in trust and on behalf of God, and that the poor and underprivileged in particular were shielded from perpetual misery and pain.

The Year of Jubilee calls upon us to be compassionate.

Today we understand the Jubilee Year in much broader terms – as a call to alleviate the suffering of the many who are trapped by materialism, racism, gender discrimination, nationalism and destruction of the environment. And as a call to all those individuals and structures that perpetuate the suffering of others. The EMS Jubilee Year cannot therefore be celebrated without reference to the situation in our world today, for example with regard to the serious effects of the Covid-19 pandemic. Above all, however, the lessons of the Jubilee Year are to teach us to empathise with the situation of others.

Many people experience forms of bondage in their daily lives that we find difficult to imagine because we have never experienced them. We probably don't really know how liberating it feels to receive a remission of debt unless we have had major money worries ourselves. We probably cannot comprehend the recovery of sight that Jesus speaks of unless we have been blind ourselves.

Every day can be a day of the Lord's grace.

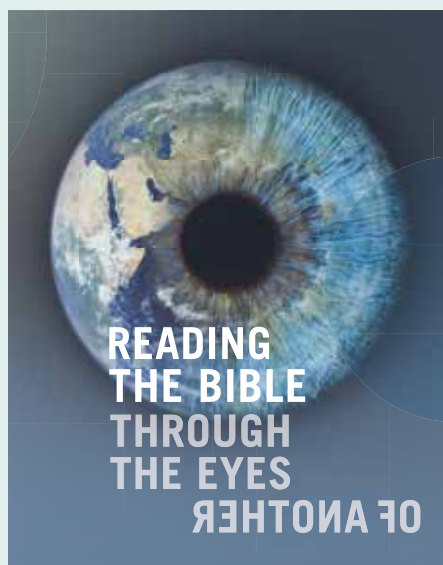
In his first sermon, Jesus completely reinterprets the biblical Jubilee Year. He turned the 50-year wait into something that is available every day. Every day can be a day of the Lord's grace. Therefore, we must also understand the Jubilee Year as a "kairos" moment – the right time to experience the grace of God. However, in order to celebrate it, the kairos moment needs to be understood in much broader terms than just economic and social. It is about the liberating grace of God that draws us to him in a special way. It should not only affect our physical existence, but also permeate our souls to bring about lasting change.

David N. A. Kpobi

Edited extract from a lecture at the EMS Theological Jubilee Conference in Ghana in September 2021.



David N. A. Kpobi is Professor of Missiology, Ecumenics and Church History at Trinity Theological Seminary, Legon, Ghana.



INTERNATIONAL EMS BIBLE READING PROJECT

The EMS will restart its international Bible reading project “Reading the Bible through the eyes of another” at the end of November 2022. This time, everything revolves around texts on the topic of “Integrity of Creation”.

How seriously do we take the Bible’s mandate to “cultivate and guard” the world around us? Are our opinions and attitudes on the subject still based on the messages in the Bible? For the past 15 years, the EMS has been inviting interested groups in its 30 member churches and mission societies to take part in intercultural Bible reading. In practice, it means that two groups in different parts of the world form a Bible reading partnership. They agree on a passage and read it first in their own group. All the results and insights from the reading are exchanged with the partner group and the Bible passage is understood anew “through the spectacles” of the other group. An international EMS project team has selected seven Bible passages for this

purpose; additional accompanying material has been prepared for each passage and an online registration form has been prepared. In general, many things are new in Bible reading. The last few years have taught us to use digital tools for international meetings, which we are happy to use as a contribution to the preservation of creation. Of course, Bible reading will continue using the tried and trusted formats of the past.

For the first time, people who belong to other, non-Christian religious or secular traditions will be invited to participate in selected Bible reading groups. Climate change and the destruction of the environment place a burden on all people worldwide. How do members of Islam, Hinduism, Judaism, Buddhism and indigenous religions think and act about this topic? How are their attitudes to the issue influenced by their religious beliefs and by their scriptures or ancestral traditions? Perhaps we can discover common paths in our care for creation and in solidarity with each other.

We have also thought of the little ones by inviting children in the worldwide EMS family to look at Noah’s Ark – especially the covenant in Genesis 9 that God makes with Noah and with all people and animals of all future generations. In the familiar environment of their worship groups, children are working on the passage, and we have already received some creative interpretations on the topic.

Our website is now open for all who are interested to sign up for the Bible reading project:

www.ems-online.org/bibleproject

Dr Kerstin Neumann



NEW EYVP VOLUNTEERS ON ASSIGNMENT

For the first time since 2019, the Ecumenical Youth Volunteers Programme (EYVP) was again able to send young people from Germany to posts within the far-reaching EMS fellowship.

Assignments abroad have already begun for the volunteer year 2022. The first volunteer left for Japan in mid-August, where she will spend six months at the Asian Rural Institute agricultural school. Three other volunteers started their ten-month period of service in Jordan at the Theodor Schneller School and at the Arab Episcopal School in Irbid. The EMS

member churches in Ghana and Indonesia were also happy to welcome young people from Germany to their assignment posts. Further volunteers have been sent to India and South Korea.

For the team that supports the young adults from Stuttgart, it is especially gratifying that it was possible to send them out again this year, despite a few bureaucratic obstacles. The last two years had to be cancelled because of the Covid-19 pandemic. It is all the more exciting to learn about the experiences the volunteers will come back with this year.

Volunteering abroad means a year of orientation and personal development. The Ecumenical Youth Volunteers Programme of the EMS supports young people on this path and hopes to inspire them for international and intercultural work and to win them for a subsequent commitment that goes beyond voluntary service.

The preparation seminars associated with the study of global contexts, colonial history, development policy, racism and human rights help the volunteers to develop their own attitudes towards these issues. They learn about different forms of society, deal with the topic of crisis management and are sensitised to intercultural learning experiences through practical exercises.

Melanie Tews



ENVIRONMENTAL AWARD TO PASTOR OF THE TORAJA CHURCH

Rev. Raseli Sinampe is the first pastor of the Toraja Church to receive Indonesia’s highest environmental award.

The prestigious Kalpataru award is presented annually by the Ministry of Environment, Life and Forestry (KLHK) to individuals and groups who have made outstanding contributions to ecology and sustainability. Rev. Sinampe was awarded the prize in the category Environmental Responsibility.

The Toraja Church (Gejera Toraja/GT), one of nine Indonesian EMS member churches, has long been committed to combating the effects of climate change which are also affecting more and more people in Indonesia. Since 2016, Rev. Sinampe has been responsible for special tasks at the Marampak Tallulolona environmental foundation founded by the church. He not only coordinates the distribution of millions of tree seeds, vegetable plants and fruit trees to communities in the region but also provides information about the ecological benefits of the various plant species and conducts training on organic gardening and the reforestation of barren hills and riverbanks. Among

other things, these measures are intended to help secure the water supply for people living in the Toraja highlands to minimise the consequences of climate change.

Rev. Sinampe is no stranger to the EMS. To mark the 70th anniversary of the Toraja Church in 2017, the EMS funded environmental protection projects in which he was also involved. The funding of this project work by the EMS gave sustained and fresh stimulus to the reforestation movement in Toraja. “I am very grateful for the help of the EMS and hope that it will continue to support us in the future so that together we can preserve the world God has given us and the earth continues to reveal the glory of God under our protection,” said the award winner.

*Mega Kamase Sambo
Pastor of the Toraja Church*

Go here to watch a video on the work of Raseli Sinampe (in Indonesian):
www.youtube.com/watch?v=CwwKlI7dauk



EMS FUTURE FUND

BETTER PROSPECTS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG ADULTS

Many children around the world are denied a carefree sheltered time at school. In the spirit of our Jubilee slogan “Free for the Future”, we therefore want to give children and young people the chance of a better future with our specially established Future Fund.

Unfortunately, going to school and being allowed to learn is still not a normal part of life in many countries around the world. Yet the right to education is one of the fundamental human rights – a right that, according to UNESCO estimates, is still denied to around 260 million children and young people all over the world. It affects 64 million girls and boys of primary school age alone.

One of the most common reasons for this is that many poor families cannot afford to send their children to school because of the costs involved for things such as school fees, books, transportation costs or school clothing. Often there is also a lack of well-equipped accessible schools or qualified teachers. Children and young people with disabilities are particularly disadvantaged as a result. Another factor is that education for girls is given little importance in some forms of society.

EDUCATION – THE BEST PROTECTION AGAINST POVERTY

The United Nations’ Global Sustainability Development Goals (SDGs) call for the global community to provide all children and youth worldwide with inclusive, equitable and quality education by 2030. Education is the best protection against poverty and offers real prospects for a self-reliant, successful life and social participation. Only through education can children and young people develop into self-confident, open-minded and strong individuals. The EMS supports projects that invest in a better future for children and young adults through the EMS Future Fund, which was set up in the Jubilee Year. By providing fair education opportunities, a child-friendly learning environment and a roof over their heads. By helping



A school for all: the Arab Episcopal School in Irbid teaches visually impaired and sighted children together.

families in need or strengthening them by inclusion. Vocational training for young people also plays a key role.

MODELS OF COMMITMENT

Here we present three projects which will be supported by the Future Fund and which stand as examples for many others.

At the **Arab Episcopal School** in Irbid, 36 blind or visually impaired children are currently being taught together with 244 sighted children. The school is the largest integrative institution in Jordan and its work is financially supported by the EMS. Visually impaired and blind children often grow up socially isolated because their disability is stigmatised by Jordanian society. A good school education is the only way to give them a chance to lead an independent life. For the past two years, blind and visually impaired children have even been able to take the high school graduation certificate at the Arab Episcopal School.

The EMS supports the **VTC Tagari vocational training centre of the Toraja Church (Indonesia)**, where young people are trained in automotive and industrial mechanics, in the IT sector and to operate driving heavy construction machinery. Young women who want to learn a profession in these traditionally male domains are encouraged in their intentions.



Gender equality in practice: the Toraja Church in Indonesia trains young women to become excavator operators.



Play instead of child labour: 58 girls have found a home at the children's home in Mulki (India).

The EMS funds **several children's homes of the Church of South India**. Many of the children housed there are orphans. Others come from broken family backgrounds. They find a temporary home in the facilities, receive schooling, medical care and psychological support. Special emphasis is placed on empowering girls.

Every Euro is an important contribution!

Your donation helps to ensure that children and young people in Africa, Asia and the Middle East have access to education. Join us in creating new life prospects and help break the cycle of poverty and unemployment. Every donation counts, no matter what the amount.

- € 5 provide a child with a warm school meal for a month.
- € 50 give an orphan a roof over his or her head for a month.
- € 500 pay for the further education of a young person from a disadvantaged background.

“The Jubilee Year should not only give us an opportunity to look back on the 50-year history of the EMS, but also to look ahead,” says Dr Dieter Heidtmann, General Secretary of the EMS. “We want to reflect about further ways to develop solidarity. Let us think about tomorrow now – about the next 50 years – and together enable future generations to have a future worth living. Every generation deserves the same opportunities to live a good life.”

Angelika Jung

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EMS Future Fund:
ems-online.org/en/about-us/50-years-ems/ems-future-fund





EMS JUBILEE BOOK PUBLISHED

The Jubilee slogan “Free for the future” is also the title of the EMS Jubilee Book that recently appeared in German and English. It was publicly launched for the first time at a reception during the 11th Assembly of the World Council of Churches (WCC) in Karlsruhe on 5 September 2022.

The book reviews fifty years of EMS history. During this time, the EMS has evolved into a “truly conciliar, post-colonial, ecumenical Christian fellowship”, writes WCC General Secretary Prof. Dr Ioan Sauca in his greeting. After a historical review by former EMS General Secretaries, one chapter expands on future visions of the EMS and includes an appeal from young people: “Now is the time to act!” based on the concept of freedom. Chapters three to five give in-depth insights into the way the EMS sees itself as an Evangelical, solidarity-based mission society.

“Our three-member editorial team considered it important to give a broad view of the EMS,” explains EMS General Secretary Dr Dieter Heidtmann. In addition to eminent theologians such as Jürgen Moltmann, a large number of national and international voices from the EMS Fellowship have their say. Altogether, more than 50 authors from three continents explore the question of what mission means in view of today’s challenges by describing what church cooperation in the worldwide ecumenical movement looks like in concrete examples.

The book includes historical pictures and documents, moving testimonies, personal reports and greetings from all over the world, documenting the path to an international community of Evangelical churches and mission societies working together as equal partners.



The book contains 284 pages and is published in German and in English. It can be ordered through the EMS Shop by giving a donation. Shipment only in Germany.

www.ems-online.org/shop



JUBILEE SONG SPARKS CREATIVITY

The song “Together we are free”, which was composed especially for the 50th anniversary of the EMS, went around the world. It inspired people in Germany, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, South Africa, Ghana, China and Lebanon to join in. A music video with a medley of the song versions submitted shows the impressive richness of mission today.

At the anniversary service in January 2022, EMS General Secretary Dr Dieter Heidtmann sent the Jubilee Song from Landau on a musical tour of the worldwide EMS network. The idea behind this is that music connects people. The Jubilee Song was intended to weave a colourful ribbon all around the world. Congregations and groups in the EMS Fellowship were invited to use their musical talents and to perform the song in their own creative way. We asked them to send us their recordings back to Stuttgart in the form of a video.

A REALLY CATCHY TUNE

The song was penned by pastor and musician Fabian Vogt. The EMS had asked him to compose and record a Jubilee Song for the EMS. The result is the song with the title “Together we are free”. The song tells a story of similarities and differences and of a world in which we are stronger together. To make it easier for interested groups to produce their own version of the song, the EMS posted the lyrics, playbacks and a karaoke version on its website. There are now a total of 20 different interpretations. They include versions by a choir

from Crailsheim (Germany), a South African brass band, Indian dancers, soloists, a tile-zoom version, children, students, adults and even a group of deaf people from Indonesia. “Every time we were sent a new interpretation of the EMS Jubilee Song, we were thrilled by the creativity and the passion that people show in making it into their song,” Fabian Vogt recalls.

RICH DIVERSITY OF A WORLDWIDE CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

The range of musical feedbacks was huge – from music videos with perfect camera angles, cuts and vocals to simple mobile phone recordings. What they all had in common was the joy and pride of enriching the EMS fellowship with their contribution. “The song has definitely cast its spell. I was particularly impressed by the idea of a young woman pastor from Indonesia to translate the song into sign language in class at the Christian deaf community ,Sahabat Tuli’,” reports Heidtmann.

All the videos and the medley are available online – it’s worth taking a look!

www.ems-online.org/service



NEW LOOK AT GHANA'S MISSION HISTORY

Carola Moser is a historian and has been researching the history of the Basel Mission in Ghana for almost two years. The results of her work have now been included in a recently created museum of the Presbyterian Church of Ghana (PCG).

In April and May 2022, Carola Moser spent six weeks as an ecumenical co-worker of the EMS in Kyebi (Ghana), which was an important centre of the Basel mission in the 19th and early 20th centuries. A separate museum is now being dedicated to the turbulent history of the indigenous Christians in the region. What makes it special is that the museum shows both African and European views of the history of mission and Christianity. The occasion for the opening of the museum is the founding of five of the total of 21 presbyteries of the PCG one hundred years ago. Today, with almost 950,000 members, the PCG is one of the largest Protestant churches in Ghana. As a member church of the EMS, it maintains close relations with the BMDZ.

“In order to learn about the European perspective, I first did research at the

Basel Mission Archive in Switzerland and evaluated a number of exciting sources, such as annual reports, handwritten letters and old photos,” says the historian. On 2 April 2022, she then travelled from her snow-covered hometown of Ellwangen (Germany) to the tropical heat of Ghana. In the first weeks there, her research work on site mainly consisted of supporting the PCG staff in their own research. Her tasks also included checking and correcting existing information – for example, foundation dates and the development of individual congregations as well as the staffing of the mission stations by European missionaries. In addition, Carola Moser travelled a lot to visit some of the oldest Christian communities in Ghana, such as Kukurantumi, Begoro and Otumi. All three places keep alive the memory of the origins of the Presbyterian congregations in the Basel Mission.

“Towards the end of my stay, I was mainly working on an essay dealing with the self-perception of the Basel missionaries on the Gold Coast in the 19th and early 20th centuries,” Carola Moser recalls. Her research confirmed what had already emerged in other studies on the subject. The missionaries came with the intention of helping and improving the lives of the population, but in so doing they set their own ideas of a good and godly life as the standard and were often little willing to show consideration for the traditions and way of life of Africans.

“Unfortunately, I will not be able to travel to the opening of the museum, which is planned in November 2022,” Carola Moser regrets. “But I am still in

contact with the Presbyterian church congregation in Kyebi and am looking forward to reading what they tell me about what is happening in Ghana!”



Carola Moser describes a visit to the historic Cape Coast Castle as one of the most impressive experiences on her trip. Built in 1637, this fortress on the Ghanaian coast played an important role in the transatlantic slave trade and still bears witness to its cruelty today.



JERUSALEM ARCHBISHOP IS GUEST AT THE SCHNELLER FESTIVAL

The Evangelical Association for the Schneller Schools (EVS) was finally able to hold its annual General Meeting in person again on 19 September 2022. After two years during which the association was only able to meet online due to the pandemic, more than 50 members from near and wide flocked to Fellbach (Germany) for the Schneller Festival.

Members from the worldwide EMS community, who had come to Germany for the 50th anniversary of the EMS, also attended the morning service to hear the sermon of the Anglican Archbishop of Jerusalem, Hosam Naoum (photo 2nd on left). The Archbishop preached on the healing of the ten lepers and emphasised the importance of cultivating an attitude of gratitude in all areas of life and faith. Rev. Khaled Freij, Director of the Theodor Schneller School in Amman which belongs to the Anglican Diocese in Jerusalem, made it clear how grateful the EVS can be for the work carried out locally at the Schneller schools. In his speech, he described how the school continued to develop even during the pandemic by utilising its own digital platform. This allowed the school to

continue reaching all students despite the lockdown and offer new training courses, make important purchases in the vocational training department and complete vital refurbishment work.

At the following General Meeting in the Paul Gerhardt Parish House, the financial report for 2021 was approved and the Executive Committee was discharged by unanimous vote. The EVS also elected a new Executive Committee for the next five years. Following a change in the constitution, the directors of the two Schneller schools are now full voting members with a seat on the association's Executive Committee. Another new aspect is that meetings will be held in English in future. The measures demonstrate that the EVS as a member organisation is consequently putting the internationalisation of the EMS into practice, even if it initially means a major change for some members of the association.

Katja Buck

DOAM

45 YEARS OF THE DOAM ARCHIVE

Since 1977, the archive of the German East Asia Mission (DOAM) has been located in the central archive of the Protestant Church of the Palatinate in Speyer. In addition to files, slides, photos, films and books, it also includes entire bequests relating to the multi-faceted work of the mission society, which was founded in 1884 in Weimar under the name "Allgemeiner evangelisch-protestantischer Missionsverein" (General Evangelical-Protestant Mission Association).

To this day, the Central Archive collects documents not only about the DOAM, but also about the Swiss East Asia Mission (SOAM) and prominent figures at the mission. For example, the archive only recently received the premature legacy of Winfried Glüer, the long-time DOAM Executive Director. Funding by the DOAM and SOAM finally enabled the completion of backup imaging and digitalisation of selected documents in 2022.

Research in the field of mission theology, cultural history or sinology also benefits from the scope of information from the founding period of the mission to the present. The archive is regularly used by researchers from Japan, China and Korea.

Dr Gabriele Stüber, former Head of the Central Archive Speyer

For more information go to www.zentralarchiv-speyer.findbuch.net



FOUR REASONS TO CELEBRATE

It was not only the Evangelical Mission in Solidarity itself that was able to celebrate a milestone birthday this year. Member churches of the international community in Germany, India and Indonesia also celebrated important jubilees.

The **Moravian Church in Germany** commemorates the founding of Herrnhut 300 years ago with numerous events taking place throughout the year. The service to kick off the official week of celebrations in June was broadcast live from the recently renovated Herrnhut church hall on television, radio and the internet. In August, young people from all over Europe were invited to come to Herrnhut for the international youth meeting “Moravian Moves Festival”. Many more concerts, lectures and meetings will take place through until December. For details, go to www.300jahreherrnhut.de.

The Moravian Church in Germany is also known as the Herrnhuter Brüdergemeine or, more rarely, as Unitas Fratrum. The town of Herrnhut in Upper Lusatia in Saxony was founded in 1722 by Moravian religious refugees. A short time later, the Moravian Brethren began their missionary work among enslaved plantation workers in the Caribbean.

Today, most of the more than 1.2 million Brethren worldwide live in Africa, including the EMS member church “Moravian Church in South Africa” (MCSA).

BEING THERE FOR PEOPLE

The **Protestant Church in Hesse and Nassau (EKHN)** celebrated its 75th anniversary with a jubilee day on 1 October 2022 at the site of its founding in Friedberg. On the occasion of the anniversary, acting EKHN church president Volker Jung spoke out against the self-centredness of the church. It is important to “always ask what our tasks are in this world and how we can be there for others and for this world”. Church must work “so that people can continue to live on this earth – peacefully and righteously”. As examples, he mentioned advocating for peace or against climate change. The EKHN was founded in 1947 in the turmoil of the post-war period. Its first church president was the Nazi resistance fighter and later pacifist Martin Niemöller. Today, the EKHN has over 1.4 million members in 1,132 congregations. In 1972, it was one of the founding members of the “Evangelisches Missionswerk in Südwestdeutschland”, now the EMS.

OPEN CHURCH IN AN OPEN WORLD

The **Church of South India (CSI)** celebrated its 75th anniversary (Platinum Jubilee) with a big jubilee year. The Church was founded as a “united and unifying church” only a few weeks after the end of colonial rule, thus expressing the dawn of a new era. The jubilee ended on 27 September 2022 with a communion service in St George’s Cathedral in Chennai and an international mission conference, to which EMS President Klaus Rieth and General Secretary Dr Dieter Heidtmann were also invited. The Platinum Jubilee was held under the theme of “Envisioning Together an Open Church in an Open World”, based on Jesus’ parable of the mustard seed. “Today’s times present us all with great challenges,” says Rev Alfred Stephen, CSI’s Jubilee Coordinator. “The Church must be like a mustard seed, rooted in the Holy Scripture, reaching out its branches so that people of all kinds can find shelter underneath and live their lives in their uniqueness.”

All 24 dioceses of the largest EMS member church with around 4.5 million believers contributed different actions and projects to the jubilee year. Among other things, they implemented programmes for disabled people and children. A special highlight was a singing competition in which choirs and singing groups from the CSI congregations were called upon to submit their interpretations of a specially composed jubilee song. In addition, the church of South India combined its jubilee with an appeal to the Indian government to stop discrimination against Christian Dalits. The minority of the so-called “untouchables” or “casteless” make up two thirds of the members of the CSI.

LIVELY AND COLOURFUL EVENT

The Indonesian **Toraja Church (Gereja Toraja/GT)** used the 75th anniversary of its foundation as an opportunity to implement a variety of social, charitable and cultural projects: a blood donation campaign, coronavirus booster vaccinations, art events and more. In addition, the Toraja Church supported the congregation of Buntu Baeng in the Mappak district with the construction of a water pipeline. Up to now, the people there had no direct access to clean drinking water.

The week of celebrations ended with a big thanksgiving service on 25 March, the day of the official foundation of the church in 1947. Thousands of church members, among them numerous invited guests of honour, had gathered for the service in the town of Rantepao (see photo). It was opened by a traditional Lettoan procession of decorated ceremonial stretchers, with groups from several regions of the Toraja Church taking part. “It was a lively, colourful event filled with wisdom and joy,” recalls Rev. Mega Kamase Sambo.

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MILESTONES IN THE HISTORY OF THE EMS

1972 Foundation of the “Evangelical Mission Society in Southwest Germany” (EMS).

1983 Partnership consultation “Sharing in Obedience” in Bad Boll.

1991 Jerusalem Forum initiates internationalisation process.

1993 Launch of the Ecumenical Youth Volunteers Programme (EYVP).

1994 New constitution establishes International Mission Council.

2003 EMS members adopt common theological guidelines.

2004 Start of project “Reading the Bible through the eyes of another”.

2012 New constitution and renaming to “Evangelical Mission in Solidarity”.

2016 Launch of EMS children’s programme YOU+ME: FRIENDS AROUND THE WORLD.

2022 “Free for the future”: EMS Jubilee celebrates the dawn of the next 50 years.

