

Presentation

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Intro (FoLA Newsletter May 2011):

Listening to their voices: Tracking paper trails in archives in Germany

Speaker: Gerhard Ruediger, Monday 25 July at 7.30 pm, Bethlehem House, Sudholz Pl, Adelaide

Gerhard Ruediger has been a volunteer with the Lutheran Archives - on a special assignment - for more than three years. Since migrating to Australia in October 2006, and after marrying a direct descendent of former missionary Clamor Schürmann, he became interested in the history of German migration to Australia, the German Lutherans, and subsequently the story of the four Dresden missionaries to the Aboriginal people in infant South Australia. During his last three visits 'home' he established contact, and forged strong links, with relevant agencies that are at the heart of these stories today: archives, mission agencies, church colleges and other bodies. During Gerhard's recent trip through Germany, between September 2010 and January 2011, our questions led him to Neuendettelsau and Oberursel, Herrnhut, Greiz and Berlin, as well as Leipzig and Dresden. From the Dresdeners' links with the Old Lutherans of Berlin to Teichelmann's birds in Altenburg (FoLA News 2011/1), it was a journey full of discoveries and surprises, giving a glimpse into the rich store of Australian Lutheran history held in German archives. Gerhard's talk will conclude with the plans for a Kaurna delegation to participate in the 175th anniversary celebrations of the Leipzig Mission.

Introduction

Ladies and gentlemen,

Thank you for inviting me to present some of the findings of my journey through German archives between September and December last year. Thank you, Lois, for your kind introduction.

When Lois asked me in February to summarize for you my research experience in Germany, I wondered how to respond to her request. What would have been the underlying issue to all the various questions I have addressed? I asked myself.

Of course, one is I myself. It's now close to five years ago since I first migrated to Australia from Germany, and I'll talk more about that later.

During my trip, however, I realised that I was looking not just into history, but also into history that is relevant today for people here in Australia and in Germany. History, it seems, has become alive – and for me personally in a remarkable way.

When Lyall Kupke first allowed me to have a look into the archival boxes of what Missionary and Pastor Clamor Schürmann left behind, it was like opening a coffin: No, not the bones, but still the skeletal remains of the life of a person long gone. In 2007, this was a first for me. Now I seem to be getting used to rummaging through old papers, files and books.

So, what were the common threads across the various topics that Lois Zweck and Lyall Kupke presented to me?

I came to reflect on these issues:

- These people, way back 175 years ago, have prepared the roads we travel today.
- Though long gone, their legacy still determines our present-day thinking.
- Tracking their legacy is like a patient conversation over a period of time, or like assembling a puzzle piece by piece, and eventually discovering the outline of a picture that may be quite different to what we expect.
- Amongst all the different stories I have been looking at, there is one underlying, but dominant, theme: The first encounters of the local indigenous people with the early settlers from Britain, and in our case, more importantly, from Germany.
- Expressed or not, we are talking tonight about the recent history of these First Australians.

I hope you will follow me across the globe, to a number of quite diverse places.

- In Australia:
the Adelaide Plains, Bethel near Kapunda, Encounter Bay and Raukkan, Poonindie near Port Lincoln, and the "Herrnhut" community near Tarrington in Western Victoria.
- In Germany:
Schledehausen near Osnabrück, Neuendettelsau, Herrnhut, Niesky, Dresden, Greiz, Altenburg, Leipzig, Berlin, Oberursel, Köln, Hamburg, and Wallau near Marburg where my sister lives!
- In England: London
- In the United States of America:
the Moravian settlement Bethlehem, Pennsylvania and the Franconian mission stations in Michigan
- Nicaragua in Central America:
Miskito Atlantic coast
- In Russia: the Moravian settlement Sarepta near Volgograd
- We could also include Benares, India – but I may just mention it in passing.

Personal Background

How did I get interested in all these places and related topics?

Well, as I already mentioned, I arrived from Germany in October 2006, after having married my long-time Australian partner, Liz Mibus. Some of you would know David Mibus, the organist here at Bethlehem church. He is my brother-in-law.

In 2007 I was enrolled in a TAFE course in Advanced English as a Second Language, and one of the course requirements was to write three academic level essays that discuss a topic relevant in today's Australia. As I had been in touch with the Lutheran church of Australia for professional reasons in earlier years, and had been studying churches and their societies in other countries, I became interested in having a closer look at the LCA and wrote my first paper about the relationship between the LCA and the Lutheran world family, in particular the Lutheran World Federation.

As I was reading about the history of Australian Lutheranism, I stumbled across two names that really intrigued me: Schürmann and Krumnow.

You have probably all heard of the Lutheran missionary Clamor W. Schürmann from Schledehausen near Osnabrück, West Germany. He worked amongst the indigenous communities here on the Adelaide Plains, at Encounter Bay and near Port Lincoln, and he mastered all three native languages, resulting in two sketch grammars, two extensive dictionaries and one ethnographic publication. Schürmann and his three fellow missionaries have kept me quite busy since 2007.

Less well known to you may be my other good friend, Johann Ferdinand Krumnow. In Lutheran church history writings, his seems to be a most notorious name: He was not only short of stature, with a humpback and a high voice, and a staring view – he was also ingenious and quite visionary ... only, rarely to the liking of his fellow German migrants. Krumnow was instrumental in establishing Lobethal, but more important was his visionary – and for some time quite successful – “Herrnhut” settlement in Western Victoria, the first-ever intentional commune in Australia between 1852 and 1927.

Schürmann and Krumnow had already met in Germany, and they could not stand each other. And yet their lives crossed at many places. Not only were they neighbours at Tarrington, Western Victoria, after 1852, but Schürmann had previously accused Krumnow (and through him, Pastor Kavel) of having thwarted Schürmann's love relationship with Bertha Teusler, and of being fanatical. For Krumnow, most likely, Schürmann was typical of a Lutheran pastor who was not really true to his calling, as he would have understood it. I won't go into the details of this story tonight. A book on the Krumnow story and his visionary community near Tarrington was published in 2002 by local historian Betty Huf. In 2007 I wrote my other two papers about these two characters.

I mention this background because it offers you an understanding of how I got into this research.

The legacies of Schürmann and his fellow missionaries, Gottlob Teichelmann, Eduard Meyer and Samuel Klose, became the key elements for the revitalization – or rather, as it is called: “the reclamation” – of three Aboriginal languages in South Australia: *Kurna* of the Adelaide Plains, *Raminjeri / Ngarrindjeri* at Lake Alexandrina, and *Barngala* on Eyre Peninsula.

The Krumnow story, eventually, made me aware of a parallel intentional and visionary community – the Moravian (Herrnhut) congregation at Bethel near Kapunda – now a member of the Lutheran Church of Australia. After my first visit there and a look into their history, I realised this was another unique tale. And I love this place in the tranquil Bethel valley as much as I love old Krumnow's property on the wind-swept paddocks in Western Victoria, with its spectacular view of the Grampians. —

Leipzig Mission

Well, we are still in Australia, and I hope you've been able to follow me so far on this part of my journey to get to know this country. Let's board the plane now and go to Germany.

Some of you may have been to Germany and other parts of Europe, so you would have some idea of the place and how to get around. In 2008, when I came "home" again for the first time after getting involved with this research, I realised that I already knew some of the people working today with the successors of the former sending agency of the four Dresden missionaries. The Evangelical-Lutheran Mission Society in Dresden was established on 17 August 1836 – almost 175 years ago – but they moved their offices to Leipzig in 1846 because of the academic and public support available through the university there.

My previous work with the North Elbe Lutheran Church, as the International Relationship Coordinator of one of their church districts, and its connections to PNG in the 1990s brought me a number of times to what is now called the *Leipziger Missionswerk* (the Association of Churches and Missions in Leipzig). And two of my former colleagues and friends were working there. Curious as I was, I contacted Leipzig Mission and asked if they knew anything about the four Dresden missionaries, and if I could visit their library and archives.

Other people connected with the LCA had been in touch with Leipzig Mission in earlier years, only to discover that very little was known there about the four Dresden missionaries, as important as they are for Australian Lutheran church history. This was also the case when I met with my friends and colleagues. "Australia ... hmmm, well, yessss, there was something," they said, "but we hardly have any information ourselves. What can you tell us? And we have not much more than the names of the missionaries, not even their portraits on the wall of fame in our exhibition." When I visited in October 2010 the images were still not on the wall!

While I was going through the Dresden Mission annual reports and taking hundreds of images, the retired and now volunteer librarian had a chat with me. She complained that their former archivist had passed away recently, and – even worse – their archives had been relocated to Halle. It was as if their heart had been ripped out. And yes, would I know that Leipzig Mission had just received a "*Findbuch*" from Halle. "A what? ... and from where?", was my stunned response.

Being new to this history and archives business, I had no clue what the librarian was talking about. A few minutes later the librarian came back with a big folder. Indeed, a finding aid had just been published by the new host of the Leipzig Mission archives, the Archives of the Francke Foundations at the nearby town of Halle. There they were all listed – the letters by and to the missionaries, their diaries, reports, minutes, drafts, prints, notes, and the Dresden Mission correspondence with England. Everything I could possibly need.

I was shattered! It was the last day of my three-day visit to Leipzig in 2008, and I had no idea how far Halle was from Leipzig. –

You see, I was born and bred in Frankfurt/Main, West Germany, and I am what we call today a "typical Wessi". Until the opening of the borders in 1989, the former German Democratic Republic was as far or even further away for many of us in the West than, for instance, the East Asian South Korea or West African Cameroon business – places I had travelled in the late 1970s.

My friends and colleagues at Leipzig Mission were clearly annoyed about my typical *Wessi* ignorance. It turned out that Halle was only a 35 min train ride from Leipzig, and the Halle people made me feel quite welcome. I presume, since publishing the "*Findbuch*" I was the first person to have expressed serious interest in their Leipzig Mission archival collection, and in particular the Dresden Mission part. –

Jänicke Mission School Berlin

Just to sum up its background, you need to be aware that the establishment of Leipzig Mission 175 years ago was virtually sealed by the appearance of Clamor Schürmann and Gottlob Teichelmann on their doorstep a month earlier. It was as if the missionaries had fallen out of the sky.

What was to become the independent mission society in August 1836 had been one of the far ranging mission support associations since 1819, right across what we now call Germany and neighbouring countries, and in cities like Strasbourg or Moscow, Breslau or Amsterdam, Hamburg or Frankfurt. They all responded to a religious revival following the Napoleonic wars that had devastated vast regions of Europe and Western Russia. There was also a cultural awakening regarding the recent discoveries of new continents and peoples, with all their colonial and scientific challenges.

Until 1836, the Dresden Mission Association and its network of affiliates mainly supported some of the recently established mission societies in Europe. They sent money to the Jänicke Mission School in Berlin, the London Missionary Society, a Dutch mission agency and similar ventures. They also sponsored the training of would-be missionaries at the Basel Mission.

Not least because of the bitter religious battles during the early 1830s between the Prussian King Friedrich Wilhelm III and the Lutherans in his country over the union of churches for political reasons, the Dresden Mission began looking into its own confessional stand. Church leaders of influence, like Johann Gottfried Scheibel, the former Lutheran professor at Breslau University, enforced this approach. Subsequently, several Lutheran mission students at Basel protested against what we now call an Ecumenical approach of mission, and rejected the non-denominational communion practised by the Basel Mission Society, thus causing quite some controversy between the various denominational mission agencies.

In Berlin a similar situation occurred in 1835/36, but for quite different reasons. As you may know, three of the four Dresden missionaries (Meyer, Schürmann and Teichelmann) undertook their initial training at the so-called “Jänicke School” in Berlin. Johannes Jänicke descended from a Bohemian-Czech family and was the preacher to the Lutheran Bohemians and some of the Moravians in Berlin since 1779, with close affiliation to the Herrnhut Moravians. Both the Moravians and the Bohemians had fled their Czech home country in the 17th century. Some of them settled on the land of Count Zinzendorf to establish what is now known as the Moravian Church in the town of Herrnhut in Southern Saxony, while others moved on to Berlin, the capital city of Prussia, which was at that time considered to be most tolerant in religious affairs.

Pastor Johannes Jänicke was one of the few upright and sincere Lutheran preachers in late 18th century Berlin. His younger brother had been a missionary in India, and his death prompted Jänicke to establish a missionary school in 1800, with some external funding.

If you happen to read any 19th century historical accounts of Johannes Jänicke, you will find him highly revered as the preacher for the Bohemian Lutherans in Berlin and as a missionary teacher.

The story of this first mission school is quite intriguing, and it was far-sighted. Before his death in 1827, Jänicke had trained and supplied 80 young men to be sent out by other mission agencies, like the Church Mission Society and other such agencies in Britain, the Netherlands, and initially Basel. Amongst them were famous missionaries such as Karl Gützlaff in China and Korea, Karl Theodore Rhenius in Southern India and Johann Hinrich Schmelen in South Africa and Namibia.

Jänicke was eventually joined in the management of the school by his son-in-law, preacher Johann Wilhelm Rückert. They rarely went public in their mission work, and this resulted in only sketchy information about their school and its curriculum. For a long time the Jänicke School was financially supported by receiving mission agencies such as the London Missionary Society, mission friends in *Friesland*, the North West of Germany, and small donations from parish members and local supporters.

Although in later years they obtained ongoing assistance from the royal treasury in Berlin, they were often barely able to survive. In the 1820s, an initiative to establish a proper mission society in Berlin was started by people with a higher social status in church and society. They demanded the Jänicke School to merge with them, an idea that was flatly rejected by Jänicke and later by Rückert. After many arguments and struggles, three mission societies in Berlin competed with each other for resources and personnel from the 1830s onwards, and Rückert finally lost all support and had to give up in the late 1840s.

Researching the story around the Berlin Mission School under Rückert, today, is very difficult indeed. No comprehensive account of the Jänicke / Rückert Mission School seems to exist, and the surviving files are difficult to access. My visit to the Berlin church archives and the church library produced little result, although an extensive file exists documenting Rückert's struggle to keep his mission school alive while facing the more powerful initiators of the new Berlin Mission Society and Gossner's mission initiative.

Yet, as mentioned before, three of the four Dresden missionaries went through their initial training at the Jänicke School under Rückert in the early 1830s, including Clamor Schürmann's older brother Johann Adam a few years earlier, who eventually worked for the Anglican Church Mission Society in Benares, India.

Most likely, Clamor Schürmann himself had expected to be sent to India or China, but would never have expected Australia to be his destination. In actual fact, it was only last month that we looked more closely at a small notebook in the Schürmann collection at the Lutheran Archives, which documents his achievements in the study of – well, Chinese. According to a first assessment by Sinologists, Schürmann studied a Beijing dialect of Mandarin, apparently of an archaic sort from the early 18th century, for a more 'correct' reading. We are not yet sure when and where Schürmann studied this language, but the entry of the years "1835-1836" suggests it may have been while still at the Jänicke School in Berlin. Thanks to James McElvenny in Canberra and his Sino-Dialectologist friend (who studies dialects in Chinese languages) in Paris, France for their first assessment of this document!

A similar notebook gives evidence of the Hebrew studies conducted by Schürmann and most likely his missionary fellow Teichelmann.

The few pieces of information about the Jänicke Missionary School under Rückert that I have seen so far, certainly suggest an exhaustive training of the would-be missionaries. It is indicative that at least our three friends never left Rückert for the broader and better equipped mission school established by the initiators of the new Berlin Mission Society in 1829 – perhaps because of the non-denominational principles of its initiators and ... the considerable chaos in its beginnings. –

Archives of the Francke Foundations, Halle

I have to come back to Dresden, and subsequently Halle.

As mentioned earlier, Schürmann and Teichelmann seemed to have been sent to Dresden by God, like falling out of the sky. In early 1835 the two future missionaries had been confronted with a change of policy for non-British missionaries sent via London to places like India. The local bishop there demanded that they accept the 39 Articles of the Anglican Church, thus converting from their previous faith to Anglicanism. You all know that our two friends rejected this demand and therefore had to be laid off by Rückert.

After informing the Lutheran church community in Germany of their plight, they were advised to contact the Dresdeners – who, a month later, established the independent Dresden Mission Society and offered them to continue their training as their first students.

Pastor August Kavel, who was in London at the time, negotiating with George Fife Angas about the migration of his Klemzig congregation to South Australia, also heard about the missionaries' plight and recommended to Angas that he sponsor first two, then four missionaries in infant South Australia.

As the British initiators of the new colony had already contemplated the need to make the Aboriginal people amenable to the settler community, but at the same time protecting them from their destructive influence, the arrival of the four missionaries was heaven-sent for Angas as well.

The rest is history ...

This entire story has been shut away for almost 175 years inside hundreds of files of archival documents at the Leipzig Mission archives, now hosted by the Francke Foundations in Halle. Remember, in 2008 I was still a “toddler” in this type of research. But when visiting the Francke archives, their staff seemed to be used to handling fellows like me. And I was dead lucky at the same time. While the chief archivist, Dr Jürgen Gröschl was on leave, his colleague, Antje Fasshauer was there. It was she who had finished sorting the mess of boxes of files and documents from Leipzig Mission, and produced that excellent “*Findbuch*”, the finding aid, just a couple of months earlier. She was only too happy to show me file after file. Being totally awestruck, I sent a long email to Lois Zweck and Lyall Kupke.

Many of you would know the rest through my previous reports. The Lutheran Archives, the Francke Foundations and Leipzig Mission agreed to photograph and digitise, free of charge, the whole set of an estimated 6,000 documents for future research here in Adelaide –quite a rare event for such an archives. During her travels in Germany in 2009, Lois Zweck signed a preliminary agreement with the Halle archives, and it is envisaged that the final product (probably several DVDs) will be handed over during the 175-year anniversaries of the arrival of Schürmann and Teichelmann, and then the German Lutherans here in South Australia, in October / November 2013.

Perhaps I should put this offer in perspective:

The archive, an estimated 6,000 pages of documents, is a sizeable collection. Almost all is handwritten by different authors, mostly in the style of the 19th century handwriting prevalent in Germany until the 1940s that I can hardly read. There are still a few German language volunteer transcribers and translators at the Lutheran Archives who can read this script, but their number is dwindling. And not many people born in Germany after World War II would be able to read this handwriting today.

But being able to read these documents is not the only issue – in many cases they have to be translated to be useful for further research, as only a few of the current Australian researchers of Dresden missionary history command sufficient knowledge of the German language.

And this raises another problem – how to store the electronic data appropriately. As far as I am aware, the Lutheran Archives has just started to build up a digital archive. They will therefore face another problem, i.e. the future use of digitised archival material, as it is estimated that electronic systems change considerably every ten years.

In other words, dealing with these documents that have been digitised onto DVDs will require some serious considerations, so that they don't end up forgotten in some storage box. –

The Birds at the Mauritianum Natural History Museum, Altenburg

To give you a break from such complicated issues, here is something that may be more to your liking.

When I was in Leipzig in October last year, I had planned to meet with Rob Amery, the linguist behind the Kurna Language Reclamation Program at Adelaide University. At the time he was a visiting lecturer at the English Department of the University of Köln. We had arranged to meet at Leipzig train station on his arrival by the late night train. At 2am, while sitting in a taxi on the way to our Leipzig Mission guest apartment, he told me a weird story. Just before leaving, he had received an email from his friend James McElvenny, who I mentioned earlier.

An Australian linguist, James was then a PhD student at Leipzig University. A couple of weeks earlier, he and his wife Arwen had planned to go somewhere outside of Leipzig but missed their train, so they decided to visit the town of Altenburg instead, just 50km south of Leipzig.

I knew Altenburg, as I had been there myself at an earlier stage of my research – but now I was in for a surprise. It took me a while to understand that James had visited a local Nature History Museum there – the *Mauritanum*. He had seen some birds on display in a glass cabinet with a note saying that they had been sent to Altenburg by a missionary Teichelmann in South Australia, and some other brief and obscure details.

After a few phone calls, late on Friday afternoon, I had established contact with this museum. On a rainy Sunday afternoon, Rob, James and I trekked through the deserted town centre, and eventually were shown around the museum. Sure enough, some 30 birds from South Australia were on display on a bottom shelf of a glass cabinet, with more Australian and Aboriginal artefacts in other displays.

The birds were indeed sent by missionary Teichelmann and arrived at the Museum in June 1843. In 1842, he had received considerable financial support from a “Share Holding Association” formed by members of the regional *Osterlande* Nature Research Society – “*Osterlande*” being the historic name for a large region between Thuringa and Saxony.

However, we were even more amazed when it turned out that Teichelmann and Schürmann had shipped at least 336 stuffed birds to Altenburg. *Why* did they do this and *how* were they able to do so? After all, even in 1841, barely five years after the promulgation of the colony, Adelaide was still only a settlement of tents and shacks.

The “Why” triggered a look at the published version of the Dresden Mission board’s instructions for the two missionaries. We had only received this document in July last year from a local family researcher in Osnabrück, West Germany. He found it by chance in a Google book on the Internet and remembered the recent exhibition in nearby Schleddehausen, the home of missionary Schürmann.

The instructions request the missionaries, in surprising detail, to support the mission through the collection of natural history specimens from South Australia for scientific research in Germany, with as little expense for the Dresden Mission as possible. Until then, none of us had a clue what this was all about, nor of the complaints by the two missionaries in their letters about how to fulfil this request, given the local conditions and the expenses incurred.

Suddenly, it all made sense. Only in March this year Lois Zweck discovered a letter by Teichelmann to one of the nobles in Altenburg, Hans Conon von der Gabelentz, which was also published as part of a Google book. In it, Teichelmann reports to Gabelentz their difficulties in responding to this request. After further research in the museum library and the Thuringia State archive, also based in Altenburg, it turns out that local business people, supported by the local duke, had collected some 300 Thaler – a fairly large sum for this time in 1840/41.

When I received an email from there in May this year, I was not surprised anymore to read that the archive staff had discovered, again by chance, an account of the expenses and donations for the participation of the *Osterlande* Society in Altenburg at the Teichelmann “Expedition” in South Australia. We are still waiting for a copy of this document.

It appears that this whole situation had developed because of the Dresden Mission’s response to the willingness of the local consistory – the church authority in this independent duchy of Altenburg – to ordain the two missionaries, as their ordination had been rejected previously by the consistory in Saxony. Surviving documents describe this collection of birds as one of the largest acquisitions of the *Osterlande* society, and above all, one of the most spectacular. Some time later, they also received a large collection of insects from Teichelmann, and we suspect that another collection of birds may have been sent as well.

Indeed, email correspondence with another museum in Altenburg only in the last few days indicates that more natural history specimens and Aboriginal artefacts may be held at the ducal ethnographic collection at the castle of Altenburg. These hints have to be further investigated.

While the scientific value of the bird collection at the Mauritanum Museum still has to be established, it certainly forms one of the oldest collections of natural artefacts from infant South Australia that allowed early scientific research in Germany.

In a presentation during the South Australian History Week in May this year, the Senior Curator of the SA Museum, Philip Jones, commented on these findings. The National British Museum and the colonial administration had asked their colonies to collect such items and send them “home”. This created an important hobby for many early settlers to come to terms with their new surroundings, and business opportunities for others. With the financial assistance provided from Altenburg, the two Dresden missionaries most likely secured the support of a professional ornithologist and possibly a German entomologist, who advertised services in infant Adelaide. And sure enough, an early newspaper clipping registers the shipping of one box (or crate), amongst many others, with stuffed birds shipped by Teichelmann to Germany in 1841. Thanks be to *Trove*, the National Library of Australia database of the earliest Australian newspapers, that allows such research. —

I would also like to mention here that I visited the church and state archives at the former Duchy of Greiz, where missionaries Meyer, Klose and Cordes were ordained in 1840. Again, I found generous hospitality and some interesting archival material, but for reasons of time I won't discuss it tonight. —

Sächsische Ethnografische Sammlung (SES) / Kurna Artefacts

Well, if you are still with me, come along for another ride.

Two of my destinations, requested by Lois Zweck with a short letter of reference, were the museum and the archives in Herrnhut. In the past, I have had the opportunity to travel many parts of the world, but had never been so “far East” in Germany. I had heard a lot about the Herrnhuters, because a friend of mine worked for them as a missionary at the Atlantic Coast of Nicaragua, Central America. He, of course, knew all the relevant people amongst the Moravians in Herrnhut and helped to establish contact.

Lois had given me a short quote from a publication, not then available in Australia. It stated that five Aboriginal artefacts had been sent by Schürmann and Teichelmann from South Australia to Dresden around 1840, which were now part of the Australia collection of the Ethnographic Museums in Saxony. No further details ...

After initial email contact, Dr Stephan Augustin, the Senior Curator of the Herrnhut museum, responded with the full quote and reference of this publication. And yes, somewhere here in Saxony, but not in Herrnhut, these artefacts would be found. I should contact his colleague at the Leipzig museum, Dr. Birgit Scheps, while he would try to track them down.

During one of my most beautiful train rides from Frankfurt to Dresden, I phoned Ms Scheps, and — lucky me — she answered. Yes, she would meet with me when I visited Leipzig. Both Dr Augustin and Dr Scheps spent quite some time with me to explain and show me their Australian collections and the history around them. It turned out that this shipment was the missionaries' response to a mood which was prevalent amongst the scientific and nature research community of the time.

As many scientists were not able to travel themselves, they asked professional travellers to collect items, or report observations, for further scientific analysis in Germany. In the opinion of the author of my initial reference, Dr Günter Guhr, the Australia collection curator at the Leipzig Ethnographic Museum during the time of the German Democratic Republic, the Dresden-Four made history for the German Australia scientific research in the early 1840s by providing the first-ever collection of Aboriginal artefacts in Germany.

Even more important is another issue. According to a preliminary assessment by Dr. Rob Amery, the linguist at Uni Adelaide, this collection of indigenous artefacts is most likely of Kurna origin. Having lived on the Adelaide Plains, these people lost all their material heritage, as their country is now metropolitan Adelaide. While the SA Museum holds a small collection of wooden and woven Kurna artefacts, these four surviving pieces, never on display as far as we know, are possibly the oldest surviving objects. Dr Philip Jones, Senior Curator at the SA Museum, thinks that more objects could possibly be found at other similar museums in Europe, but they are very difficult to track down. And, as mentioned earlier, there may be more early Aboriginal artefacts in Altenburg, if they have survived.

Our findings raise the question of the ownership of these artefacts, an issue many other museums in Europe have faced for some time, and increasingly important for indigenous communities around the world. It is not only the corpses and skulls, or skeletal remains of deceased Aboriginal persons that have ended up being used for medical research in European hospitals. For the Kurna people, and in particular for communities in similar social conditions, i.e. living in highly urbanised areas along the Australian South-Eastern coastline, these artefacts represent the very few worldly remains of their own past and identity. —

Missionaries as Linguists – Altenburg

Our four Lutheran missionaries were not only famous for their work with Aboriginal people and their natural history research. Some of you may also be aware that they published three dictionaries and grammars. People like myself, however, are totally puzzled that these rather young men had the ability to study languages as foreign as, for instance, Mandarin Chinese.

How did they discover, record and describe linguistically sound, and grammatical features alien to our languages – all within two years?

Obviously this has also fascinated other language researchers. A Google search, or a search of the Trove database, will reveal a long list of hits referring to the missionaries – as language experts! James, the Australian linguist who found the birds, is also most interested in finding other traces of communication between the missionaries and international linguists. The correspondence mentioned before between Teichelmann and the famous German linguist, Hans Conon von der Gabelentz, based in Altenburg, is one example that discusses language related issues. In actual fact, it appears as if the four missionaries were more popular as linguists and ethnographers in the wider scientific community than as missionaries in their own church world. —

Unfortunately, the missionaries themselves considered their mission project in infant South Australia a failure after not being able to convert one native to the Christian faith. As early as 1846 they returned their commission to their sending agency, as there were no longer any natives living on the Adelaide Plains. Both the Australian Lutheran church and the Leipzig Mission history writing acknowledge the missionaries' work, yet they denigrate their achievements as an experience from which to learn for future mission endeavours.

Mission Theological Reflection

For me personally, this has all been a weird experience. I had an eerie feeling when I first opened the Schürmann archive box in 2007. And ever since then, it's as if lifting the lid of the boxes now, allows the missionaries' voices to come alive again. But then, not only do they tell their own story; they also provide an abundance of information about the lives of the people they were dealing with, the Aboriginal communities. In particular, as Rob Amery highlights, people like the Kurna on the Adelaide Plains today rely on the retrieval of such a wealth of knowledge, and access to it. After all, they have been, and still are, the forbears of our being here.

Leipzig Mission today has acknowledged, albeit hesitantly, the survival of the Kaurna people to whom they had sent their first missionaries. A small Aboriginal delegation will travel to Germany to contribute to the 175-year anniversary of Leipzig/Dresden Mission, in Dresden on 17 August 2011, and also visit other locations of interest. I hope it will be an inspiring encounter and not disappointing. —

To me as a newcomer to Australia, it appears as if churches and missions, at least in the context of this story, are reluctant to accept the survival and re-emergence of the Aboriginal communities. But it is amazing that the work of these four missionaries is so essential to the reclaiming of language, culture and identity of the local Aboriginal communities, and for a possible healing of the relationship between the First Nation people in Australia and the settler-immigrant communities.

In the past few years, I have often wondered how to interpret this story of simultaneous failure and success theologically.

As I am speaking in a church context, I might point to the times that are in the hands of God Himself. In modern Theology we call this “Kairos”, when God acts in the times of crisis¹. I have come to think of the famous passage in the Old Testament Book of Ecclesiastes, Ecc 3:1-14 ASV:

- (1) For everything there is a season, and a time for every purpose under heaven:
- (2) a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted;
- (3) a time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up;
- ...
- (9) What do we gain by all of our hard work?
- (10) I have seen what difficult things God demands of us.
- (11) God makes everything happen at the right time. Yet none of us can ever fully understand all he has done, and he puts questions in our minds about the past and the future.
- (12) I know the best thing we can do is to always enjoy life, (13) because God's gift to us is the happiness we get from our food and drink and from the work we do.
- (14) Everything God has done will last forever; nothing he does can ever be changed. God has done all this, so that we will worship him.

It appears as if, in the missionaries' time, their charge was to prepare the foundations for God's mission 175 years later, the somewhat secular reclaiming of language and culture by the surviving Aboriginal communities. It is fascinating to hear non-church related people like Rob Amery highlight the missionaries' efforts and achievements, not only as linguists but also as pastors of the Aboriginal people they cared for personally, in prisons, as interpreters, for the children or their parents. —

Neuendettelsau

If you are still with me I will take you to two other places I visited in the German autumn last year: to Neuendettelsau, and once more to Herrnhut.

Neuendettelsau is a place name well-known amongst Australian Lutherans. Many Lutheran pastors came from this small town in Bavaria to serve the infant Lutheran church of Australia. Lyall Kupke gave me some questions to inquire about, most of which were quite unfamiliar to me.

¹ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kairos>

As many of you know, Neuendettelsau Mission was established in 1841 by Lutheran Pastor Johann Konrad Wilhelm Löhe. Loehe and Dresden Mission seem to have been in close contact; at least both missions emphasised an intentionally Lutheran mission approach.

One issue Lyall had requested me to investigate referred to one of the first pastors at Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Johann Friedrich Meischel. Born in 1812, he had an amazingly well-travelled life. Sent to the Gold Coast by Basel Mission, he soon had to return home for health reasons and worked with who were then known as the “Old Lutherans” in Breslau. As Prussia did not accept him, he applied to the Leipzig Mission for a mission post in India. There we find him taking sides with Missionary Ochs in the Caste Dispute, and he leaves five years later for South Australia. Eventually, he became instrumental in establishing the second Australian Lutheran Mission approach, in what is now known as the Finke River Mission.

Meischel maintained intensive correspondence with Loehe’s successor in Neuendettelsau, Pastor Bauer. For reasons unknown so far, he seems to have “become” recorded as one of the “Neuendettelsau missionaries sent to Australia”, and Lyall wanted to have this clarified. Unfortunately, the archives of Neuendettelsau Mission, today known as *Mission-EineWelt* (Mission-OneWorld), seem to hold little information on their involvement in early South Australia and on Meischel. But again, my visit there was quite well received and opened interest in further exchange with the Lutheran Archives.

I was also interested in a Neuendettelsau Mission experiment similar to the Dresden Mission endeavour in South Australia. Christine Lockwood, who has done extensive research on the story of the Dresden-Four, suggested to me that the Franconian mission enterprise amongst the Chippewa Indians in Michigan, USA may have been similar to that of the Dresden mission in South Australia. The local historian and former lecturer at the Bavarian Lutheran Seminary in Neuendettelsau, Dr Hans Rössler, has researched this part of the mission history, and he invited me to a pleasant early September afternoon coffee and cake on his sun-lit veranda.

Both mission attempts are rooted firmly in the Lutheran tradition. It appears that the initial idea was to establish a missionary settler community to care for the native peoples and establish indigenous congregations. What has also been a vision by the Dresden missionaries in South Australia may have been tried seriously in Frankenmuth. In both cases, the missionaries attempted to join the wanderings of their target groups for some time. However, both mission projects “failed” due to the settlers’ relentless hunger for, and their theft of, land and the lack of support of the missionaries by their fellow countrymen. The Frankenmuth missionaries baptised 34 children, but sadly they all succumbed to chickenpox contracted at the mission station, which was eventually closed down in 1850.

The Lutheran missionaries in South Australia “failed” in terms of converting Aboriginal people. On the other hand, the Dresden mission project appears to be quite unique in general mission history, as it was established by members of a cultural minority (the German missionaries amongst the rapidly expanding British settler society) for the even smaller minority of Aboriginal communities – displaced people on their own lands. However, the success of the Dresden-Four – 175 years later – through their linguistically excellent language recording, would have been “beyond their expectations” (as Rob Amery titled an article for the Friends of the Lutheran Archives in 2002). –

Bethel-Kapunda – Herrnhut

To conclude this review of my journey I would like to take you to Herrnhut.

We have already had a brief stopover there because of the Kurna artefacts, but more important was my visit to the archives of the German headquarters of the Moravian Church. As mentioned, this was my first visit and I arrived at this small, barely-lit town late in the evening. But again I experienced a very warm welcome, as friends had organised a pleasant B&B with a Moravian family. Even the Herrnhut archivist, Rüdiger Kröger, an ever-busy man, was quite supportive of this weird visitor from Australia.

Remember, two of my questions of interest were about the histories of the small Moravian Bethel community near Kapunda, and also Krumnow's "Herrnhut Community" near Tarrington, in Western Victoria. [Lois added another question regarding Anna Christiane Nehrllich, the mother-in-law to Pastor Fritzsche from Lobethal.]

Australia is a familiar topic for the German Herrnhuters and their archives. The various Moravian mission stations in Victoria have been well researched, as you would know from the recent presentation by Bill Edwards. While some studies have been done previously, the existence of a substantial collection of files about the Moravian congregation in South Australia appeared to be a mystery. My namesake Rüdiger eventually found a short reference in an archival index of the Moravian missions in Australia – "South Australia Bethel congregation – see under congregations in the Americas".

Off we went from the historical office building, across a bridge, to the state-of-the-art archival bunker – a box-type building clad entirely in rusty steel sheets, fireproof and secured by heavy doors. Sure enough, there was an archival box full of letters and reports by the three Moravian pastors at Bethel-Kapunda between 1853 and 1907. Pastor Schorndorf, the first to help establish the Moravian community out of Lights Pass, Barossa Valley, was a particularly avid writer, but then he had to face severe legal battles with his congregation over property issues.

Having become optimistic, Rüdiger suggested I should also have a look into the minute books of the Moravian Church board, the "*Protokolle der Unitäts Ältesten Konferenz*". I could start with the first few years, he suggested. I almost fell off my chair when he came back from the archive with a trolley full of handwritten minute books, four per year – about fifty for the first 12 years alone. I sat there for almost a day, thumbing through these minutes. I was lucky, though, as the Moravians seemed to have anticipated people like me – a complete index of names and places for each volume allowed me to quickly select a series of entries and to photograph them. This resulted again in several hundreds of images to be edited and converted into readable pdf files for future research.

It turned out that this tiny little Lutheran congregation, Bethel-Kapunda, has had a remarkable history. There are not many Moravian settler churches outside the Americas, Tanzania and Southern Africa – and this one was all but forgotten.

Probably the most famous Moravian settlement outside Europe was the intentionally communal colony of Bethlehem in Pennsylvania, a communistic experiment between 1741 and 1762. Given the popularity of the Herrnhuters in Germany, their communal life style had attracted many Christians, and with their global communication and the publication of their various mission and settlement projects, it is highly probable that my friend Krumnow saw it as a model for his Herrnhut community in Western Victoria.

Interestingly, according to the Moravian Elders Conference minutes, a settlement in South Australia for Moravian Germans had already been considered prior to 1848. Only a few weeks before my Herrnhut visit, the Australian scholar at Münster University in West Germany, Dr Felicity Jenz (another expert on Moravian missions in Australia), had published a paper on the Herrnhut community in South Australia. She pointed out that this settlement was suggested to the German Moravians by the Duke of Schönburg-Waldenberg in Southern Saxony as a possible alternative to a Moravian colony on the Atlantic Coast of Nicaragua.

Another circle in my life had closed – this is where my friend, who had helped me establish contact to Herrnhut, had worked as a missionary in the late 1990s.

In March this year I once again visited the Bethel-Kapunda community and was shown another box of archival evidence there. The congregation is aware of its unique historical significance, for both the Lutheran and the Moravian church. The Herrnhut archivist, Rüdiger Kröger, agreed in principle to sharing archival documents between the two archives, if an agreement could be reached. Again, we are probably talking well over a thousand pages of documents that have to be microfilmed and then printed and made accessible for further research here in Adelaide.

[Regarding the questions concerning the mother-in-law of Pastor Fritzsche, Anna Christina Nehrlich, I did not have enough time left, unfortunately. Many of you may know that Mrs Nehrlich had provided the migrants around Pastor Fritzsche with substantial financial support for their voyage and the purchase of land for what is now Lobethal. Apparently her family had done so before with grants for the Moravian Sarepta community in Volgograd, Russia, when living in Moscow in the early 1800s.

Lois first came across this story in letters by Mrs Nehrlich found in German archives a few years ago. These are being transcribed by a group of volunteers coordinated by Detlef Papsdorf, and his story would be another remarkable tale to tell! To find answers to this question and others relating to the two intentional communities in Bethel-Kapunda, SA and Herrnhut-Tarrington, VIC I had the pleasure of meeting two very interesting, and interested, Moravian historians in the nearby town of Niesky, and was given generous hospitality by the local Moravian deaconess community. —]

SELK Oberursel and Berlin

Last but not least, I would just like to mention that I also had the opportunity to establish contact with the Old Lutheran community in Germany, now known as the *Selbständige Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche in Deutschland* (The Independent Evangelical-Lutheran church of Germany, SELK). I was privileged to meet members of the Berlin Lutheran church, the church without a name at the *Annenstrasse*, virtually behind (i.e. East of) the Berlin Wall. Meyer, Schürmann and Teichelmann attended worship with the predecessors of this church, and missionary Meyer and his family were members.

Furthermore, I visited the SELK archives at their seminary in Oberursel, near Frankfurt/M, and had an extensive conversation with their faculty. They admitted that their Australian connections existed, albeit rather limited, and that they were quite interested in becoming involved in some serious research into this side of their history. The most exciting thing for me was my exchange with one of their retired lecturers, Dr. Volker Stolle, for three hours at Mannheim train station. Amongst the many knowledgeable people I had the privilege of meeting, he was certainly the most amazing: Like a magician he had dates, names, places, events, details all at hand ... and was a really nice fellow as well. I admire him. His work on Karl Mützelfeldt has been published here. —

Christmas

What followed after my journey from mid-December was — well, shovelling snow and lots of it; picking up my wife Liz from Frankfurt airport and acclimatising her to the German winter, ice and snow (she seems to have loved it — sometimes); celebrating Christmas and New Year with family and friends; crisscrossing Germany once more on the trains for more family visits; until we left for home, Adelaide, by mid-January. The journey isn't finished yet. In fact, tomorrow noon I'll be flying out again, back to Frankfurt, for the final preparations of the visit of the Aboriginal delegation at the 175-year anniversary of Dresden/Leipzig Mission. —

Funding

You may be wondering how these trips are being sponsored. So far it has been mainly privately funded, with a small amount of financial support from Germany. This new trip tomorrow is being sponsored by the University of Adelaide, the German Association of Missions and Churches, and donations. —

Summary >>

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Well, what have I learned?

- First, it all seems to be a once in a lifetime experience – I would have loved more time for a more systematic research. So I mainly acted as a door opener, trying to find out what material was available at the various archives.
- Second, with the letters of reference provided by the Lutheran Archives I experienced a remarkable welcome at all places of call, and generous support. There is willingness to engage in joint projects of further research and studies.
- Third, what is needed is a clear “ownership” of these topics. If the Lutheran Archives or the LCA would claim the initiative for further systematic studies regarding, for instance, the Dresden Missionaries, substantial support seems to be available from Germany. In October/November 2013, the LCA will commemorate the arrival of the first Dresden missionaries and four weeks later of the Kavel people 175 years ago. This occasion appears to be an ideal opportunity to establish such a cooperation, which ought to be initiated from over here.
- Finally, as Lois once “accused” me: I seem to love looking into the histories of those who are marginalised. The legacy of the Dresden missionaries, and also of the Moravian Bethel community near Kapunda, have become important elements for shaping lives today, both for the white person immigrant communities and the Australian First Nation peoples. It seems to be the time to make them fully accessible for the people who are affected and concerned.

I would like to close with a quote by the Kurna Elder Lewis O’Brien, or should I say, his full name Kauwana Lewis Yertoburka Warritya O’Brien. In an interview at the 2002 conference “Sharing Spaces – Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Responses to Story, Country and Rights”, Lewis observes that ...

History, languages and education are the tools to carry culture on to the young.

He continues:

As I walk the city of Adelaide, in particular the North Terrace precinct, I ask myself: Kurna people lived here, but where is the evidence of our histories? There are no memorials to the Kurna, [and] our Kurna names for locations on the landscape are re-placed by English ones ... Pioneers and explorers are elevated ... while the great deed[s] of our people the Kurna are silenced. ...

Ancient and powerful Kurna call Adelaide city *Tandanya*, the *site of the red Kangaroo Dreaming*. The ignorance of Kurna culture and its exclusion from the historical record creates obstacles for sharing the current political and legal spaces.

Despite the impacts of colonisation ... that forced Kurna to the margins of the past we as Kurna have survived. ... I am proud of the achievement we in the Kurna language revival movement have made ... with many Kurna, non-Kurna and non-Indigenous peoples responsible for its success ...

This collaboration is testimony to the strength of these committed peoples to see Kurna sharing the language space with English in Kurna and non-Kurna homes.

I hope this presentation, and my commitment, may be a small contribution.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the comments and revisions for this paper by Rob Amery and Lois Zweck, and most importantly by my English editor, Pam Mibus. All errors, of course, are my responsibility. Thank you for your attention.

Gerhard Rüdiger