

No. 104

Received on July 9, 1845

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

Adelaide, February 2nd, 1846

Dear brethren!

I hope that long before you receive this letter, you will have received the description of the native tribes in Port Lincoln, which I sent to you a few months ago. Unfortunately, the same was not immediately delivered to Brother Klose by the friend who brought it from Port Lincoln to Adelaide, and was therefore delayed for several weeks. At the same time as I was preparing the aforementioned German description, I also drafted an English revision for Governor Grey. I hoped that this would interest him and persuade him to assist me in establishing a school for native children. Unfortunately, however, at the same time as he received my letter and yours, he was recalled by the local pastor and transferred to New Zealand, which meant that he did not attend to the entire matter. He wrote to me through his protector, Mr. Moorhouse, that he was indeed sorry about the abandonment of my position in Port Lincoln, but after careful consideration, he came to the conclusion that an undertaking like the one I proposed, namely establishing a settlement for the indigenous people, could not be carried out for less than £1500, and that an attempt with fewer resources would certainly fail and do more harm than good, as the failure of such an attempt might discourage charitable societies from similar undertakings in the future. Although this view of Governor Grey's was not sent to me in the form of an official decision, which he rather wanted to leave to his successor in the government, Major Robe, it was noted at the same time that he intended to communicate or recommend his opinion to the latter. Since then, nothing has been heard about the matter again, and on my renewed inquiry, since my arrival in Adelaide, to the Colonial Secretary, I was informed that the Governor is currently travelling and therefore no response can be given until he returns.

From the report prepared by Brother Meyer, you will see what we discussed and agreed upon in Encounter Bay. The first decision that particularly concerns me greatly disturbed me, partly because the indigenous people in Port Lincoln have a certain affection for me and I love them, and partly because I don't have overly ambitious hopes regarding my new sphere of influence. Additionally, as I've already

stated earlier, Port Lincoln has great advantages as a mission station, due to the limited extent of good land there, which inevitably means that whites will never settle there in large numbers, nor will the indigenous people fade into the background as much as in the Adelaide area, where they are increasingly disappearing and dispersing. Moreover, Port Lincoln is currently heavily populated with sheep, and the indigenous people whose livelihoods are affected by this are likely to be easily provoked into actions that would require the government to pay more attention to this settlement.

But all these and similar considerations faded away when we returned to Adelaide and found your letter, in which you advised us on the same changes and arrangements that we had also considered advisable. This surprising coincidence of views can't be anything other than a special providence of the Lord, whom we desire to serve, and I would confidently and joyfully go to Encounter Bay, which was the place that first attracted my preference after Adelaide, regardless of the government's response regarding Port Lincoln. By the way, it's not at all expected that it will be favorable, that is, that the governor will give the requested £100 to establish a settlement with natives, because he seems to want to follow his predecessor's principles in all matters. I will now travel back to Port Lincoln at the earliest opportunity to fetch my things and, God willing, I will be in Encounter Bay after a month.

At the same time as I finished the description of the original inhabitants of Port Lincoln several months ago, I intended to write to you, but I was so busy with the English revision and proofreading of both that I forgot to do it. Later, I put it off in anticipation of our meeting, which was supposed to take place at the end of last year.

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Once again, I can only report generalities, namely that I gathered the natives on Sundays, as many as were present in the city or wanted to come, and tried to acquaint them with the main parts of divine revelation, such as creation, the fall of sin, law-giving, the mission of the Son of God, and eternal judgment. The number of listeners was of course very uneven, I had as few as seven but also as many as seventy and more. They pay good attention as long as the speech is understandable and flows, but as soon as difficulties arise, they stumble, or questions become necessary, their attention is also lost. Whether it's due to the natives' weak memory or that they don't recognize the great importance of the truths proclaimed to them, I don't know. Suffice it to say, I've found that they often forget what they've been told from one week to the next. However, they understand more than one might think, especially evident from the fact that they seek all sorts of excuses when the reprehensibility of sin and vice is brought to their attention.

I have already written to you that in 1844, I planted some wheat with the natives, which I used to give to them on Sundays after the sermon. When this attraction ceased, because the wheat was all gone, I pointed out to them that it would now show whether they had come solely for the food or to learn God's Word, since I would no

longer be able to give them anything. They, however, promised to continue coming, and for a while they actually kept their word, but gradually they stopped coming. Last year, I again sowed 2 English acres with wheat and harvested over 30 sacks, which I would have distributed among them in the same way as last year, if I had stayed there. Now, however, I will try to sell it and use the proceeds to buy other wheat in Encounter Bay for the local school. Although the natives cut and threshed the wheat under my guidance and with my help, I paid them for it at the time and from the outset, I did not let them think that the wheat was intended for them. --

I have now been in Port Lincoln for five years. When I look back on this period and examine the fruits of my labor, I truly feel anxious. All I can say is: Lord, forgive what I have failed and neglected, and show mercy to Your servant in the future, so that he may enter a sphere of influence where he can invest his talents and gain something in return.

I won't dwell on what happened in Port Lincoln, nor will I elaborate on it, because the impressions and experiences that the natives may have received will soon be forgotten and blurred. Moreover, it's not of great value to compile and print a collection of words as one might imagine, because given the enormous influence of an English colony that sweeps everything before it, and the complete dependence of the indigenous people, one cannot hope that even a single Australian dialect will survive for long or become a bearer of Christian spirit and life. In Encounter Bay, as you may already know, Brother Meyer teaches the children in English, so that the native language is only useful in communication with adults.

Of the £100 intended for a settlement in Port Lincoln, which are now to be used for Encounter Bay, about £50 will remain. At the current low prices, this could be used to purchase some of what is needed for farming; however, I fear that the land in Encounter Bay, which has been allocated to the natives, is so poor that it will hardly be worth the effort to cultivate it. It consists almost entirely of sand and is also heavily forested, so it will take a lot of work to prepare it for ploughing. Although there is a section of good land belonging to the natives about 8 German miles from this land and from Brother Meyer's residence, apart from the extremely inconvenient distance of the land, it is leased for 7 years and the lease term only ends after 3 years. There will be too many external and internal difficulties in my new area of responsibility, so we will greatly need your constant intercession and strong firm faith that the Lord will ultimately establish his kingdom here and demonstrate the power of his grace to the indigenous people who are sunk in ignorance and immersed in atrocities.

The Germans who recently arrived from Bremen on the "Georg Washington" come from all regions of northern Germany, namely from Danzig, Mecklenburg, Osnabrück, and Bremen. There are kind-hearted souls among them who cannot adapt to the contentious and exclusive nature of the Kavelsh community and will therefore stick to the existing church in Adelaide. At present, they are all still busy choosing

their living quarters, moving in, etc., but it will soon become clear whether a sufficient number will unite to establish a Lutheran church in Adelaide.

We're sorry to find not a single copy of the mission news in the last arrived box, which we all would love to read, especially to learn more about the encouraging progress of the brothers in East India. It would also be desirable for our local compatriots to be able to read them.

In Christian love, I remain your devoted servant.

C. W. Schürmann