

The German Protestant Church in Colonial Southern Africa

The Impact of Overseas Work
from the Beginnings until the 1920s

Edited by
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on behalf of the Sponsors and the Academic Advisory Council
of the Study Process on the Role of the German Protestant
Work Overseas in Colonial Southern Africa

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The Sponsors of the Study Process on the Role of the German Protestant Work Overseas in Colonial Southern Africa

Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD)

Evangelical Church in the Rhineland (EKiR)

Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hanover

United Evangelical Lutheran Church of Germany (VELKD)

Association of Protestant Churches and Missions in Germany (EMW)

Berlin Mission (BMW)

Evangelical Lutheran Mission in Lower Saxony (ELM)

United Evangelical Mission (UEM)

Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa (Cape) (ELCSA-Cape)

Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa (Natal-Transvaal) (ELCSA-N-T)

Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa (ELCSA)

Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (German Evangelical Lutheran Church) (ELCIN-
GELC)

Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia (ELCRN)

Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN)

Preface

Praeses Nikolaus Schneider, Chair of the EKD Council

“Who is seeking reconciliation, must be willing to seek for truth...” These are the words of a statement chosen by Bishop Wolfgang Huber, the former chair of the EKD Council, at the memorial in August 2004 to commemorate the Herero genocide.

This sentence also describes the objective of the “Study Process to Deal with the Role of the German Protestant ministries abroad in Southern Africa”, the results of which are published in this book. This process was commissioned by the EKD Council in 2007. The council resolved that it be a scientific and unbiased study process in which historians and church historians would investigate the beginnings of German Protestant ministries abroad and missionary work, as well as the role of this work within the colonial contexts of Namibia and South Africa. Regional churches and missions, their partner churches, and the EKD partner churches in Namibia and South Africa were invited to be involved in this process spiritually, personally, and financially. Fortunately they all accepted the invitation and not only took part in administering and encouraging the Study Process as sponsors, but also reflected on preliminary work and interim results at several conferences and offered helpful advice for further work. This contributed to more intense engagement with their own painful and guilt-laden history, as well as establishing a trust and openness among the sponsors that helped them to overcome the separations and reservations of the past.

I would like to thank everyone who contributed to the success of the Study Process and the publication of its results: the German regional churches and missions and the Lutheran churches in Namibia and South Africa that were involved as sponsors; the generalist historians and ecclesiastical historians in the Academic Advisory Council, who supervised the scientific aspects and provided encouragement and support; the many authors from southern Africa and Germany; and the members of the Coordination Committee, who organised the process. I am also grateful to everyone for committing to the three years of the process on a largely voluntary basis, especially Dr Thorsten Altena, Dr Hanns Lessing, Julia Besten, Dr Christian Hohmann, Dieter Schütte, and Dr Ruth Gütter from Germany, and Prof. Lize Kriel and Prof. Tilman Dederling from South Africa.

Of the scientific nature of the results presented here the readers can get their own impression.

I cannot and do not wish to anticipate the conclusions that the sponsors of the Study Process will draw from the results presented here. Such conclusions require precise attention to, and fundamental reflection on, the results.

My great wish as Council Chair of the EKD, however, is that dealing with the colonial past will help all participants, as members of the Church of Jesus Christ, to better understand the past, to acknowledge guilt – ours and our forefathers’ – and to request and grant forgiveness. As Christians we live by the grace of God, who helps us in our guilt and our

responsibility. We can be a model to others in the way in which we come to terms with the shadows of our history to heal the wounds of the past. We will then be free to face the challenges of the present as Christians in our churches with a new perspective. We at the EKD are glad of all of the steps towards reconciliation between the various Lutheran churches in southern Africa, and we will continue to encourage and support the processes on the path to unity to the best of our ability, without reverting to colonial attitudes.

On that note, I hope that not only will this book find many mindful readers, but that it also contributes to strengthening the various church partnerships between Germany and southern Africa. May it link these relationships together so that they are even more tightly interwoven.

The Study Process, from the perspective of the sponsors

Bishop Martin Schindehütte

Bishop for EKD Ecumenical Relations and Ministry Abroad

The present volume contains the results of a Study Process to deal with the role of the German Protestant work abroad in colonial southern Africa. The results are extremely exciting, as is the process itself. Women and men have come together from many different fields to work on it: from general history and church history, from the churches and the missions, from southern Africa and from Germany.

We would like to extend our sincerest thanks to everyone involved.

The various geographic, cultural, and subject-specific perspectives of the process yielded a result that was exciting and fruitful not only for science, but also for church policy, so the origin and evolution of the Study Process will first be described from the point of view of the sponsors and members from the German churches. Descriptions from the perspective of the churches in southern Africa will follow.

The early history of the Study Process

Much of the impetus for carrying out the Study Process came from initiators in the Evangelical Church in the Rhineland (EKiR) and the United Evangelical Mission (UEM). The two organisations put on several events in 2004 to commemorate the centenary of the Herero and Nama genocide, including a memorial worship service, a conference with the Namibian member churches, and a remarkable exhibit. Also in 2004, the regional synod of the Evangelical Church in the Rhineland and the United Evangelical Mission owned up to their historical responsibility in the Namibian genocide. They invited the EKD to own up to its responsibility as well and suggested that a study process be carried out to come to terms with the colonial past.¹ The chair of the EKD council at the time, Bishop Wolfgang Huber, declared in a radio address and press release in 2004 that the churches had also been guilty in that era because of their collaboration with the colonial authorities, and noted that the German Protestant churches had already admitted their guilt, and asked the Namibian people for forgiveness, when Namibia had become independent in 1990.² “When seeking reconciliation, we must first be willing to seek the truth” – this sentence from the radio

1 Synod resolution of 2004 (in German), <http://www.ekir.de>.

2 See press release of 2004 (in German) at http://www.ekd.de/aktuell_presse/news_2004_08_14_1_rv_rbb_hereros.html. The chair of the EKD Council and the praeses of the EKD Synod also asked a Herero representative for forgiveness in Magdeburg in 2004. See http://www.ekd.de/synode2004/grussworte_magdeburg2004_herero.html.

address can already be interpreted as an invitation to the Study Process, and formulates the goal and hope that the sponsors consider to be combined in this process.

Another impetus for carrying out the Study Process came from the discussions that were initiated by the Mainz Working Group on Southern Africa (MAKSA) when they called EKD to cancel their contracts with the “white Lutheran apartheid churches”. In these controversial discussions, it was also suggested that further research could be conducted into the history of how the “settler churches” and “mission churches” came into being.³ But the intention remained to link the Study Process to ecclesiopolitical demands. For example, a memorandum for a council resolution from 2006 declared that “the historical work should have the perspective of a call to action. For example, it should portray South Africa and Namibia in terms of how the partnerships between Germany and southern Africa can be formed in the future by looking critically at colonial history.”⁴ In its meeting of 21–22 April 2006, the EKD Council agreed in principle to carry out a study process to come to terms with the role of the Protestant churches in southern Africa’s colonial past, but made it clear in the process that it could only commission an independent scientific review and would reject an intermingling of historical and ecclesiopolitical matters.⁵

A memorandum was finally worked out through discussions between the EKD Church Office and the initiators. This provided the foundation for an “independent, scientific, and unbiased”⁶ research process.

The resolution by the EKD Council in 2007

Once this consensus had been achieved, the EKD Council agreed at its meeting on 11–12 May 2007 to carry out such a process. Since the process was to deal with sensitive content that was politically controversial within the church, the council also resolved to ensure the broadest possible participation among all of those who had been affected by the colonial history. A Coordination Committee was set up to direct the Study Process and was tasked with attracting the following churches and missions as sponsors and members for this process:

- Evangelical Church in the Rhineland (EKiR)
- Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hanover
- Association of Protestant Churches and Missions in Germany (EMW)
- United Evangelical Mission (UEM)
- Evangelical Lutheran Mission in Lower Saxony (ELM)
- Berlin Mission (BMW)
- Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa (Natal-Transvaal) (ELCSA [N-T])
- Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa (Cape) (ELCSA [Cape])
- Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (German Evangelical Lutheran Church) (ELCIN-[GELC])
- Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa (ELCSA)
- Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia (ELCRN)

3 See Council bill 21/22.4.2006, AZ 0232/2, vol. 1, 5–7.

4 See memorandum attached to Council bill 21./22.4.2006, AZ 0232/2 vol. 1, 2.

5 See Council bill.

6 Ibid.

- Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN)

Fortunately, all of the churches and missions invited were willing to join the Study Process as sponsors and members. In 2008, the United Evangelical Lutheran Church of Germany (VELKD) also came on board as a sponsor and member.

The EKD declared that it was willing to absorb 50% of the costs; the remaining 50% would be divided among the other sponsors.

In order to ensure that the Study Process would be carried out in an independent, scientific, and unbiased fashion, a Academic Advisory Council was set up that would take responsibility for the specialised work, attract authors, and verify the scientific nature of the results.

The following experts were asked to take part in the Academic Advisory Council:

- Thorsten Altena (Executive Director)
- Rudolf Hinz, Emeritus Member of the High Consistory (University of Kiel)
- Prof. Jürgen Kampmann, (Church History, University of Tübingen)
- Prof. Klaus Koschorke, (Church History, Ludwig Maximilian University Munich)
- Prof. Christoph Marx, (History, University of Duisburg-Essen)
- Prof. Reinhard Wendt, (History, FernUniversität in Hagen)

Here too, we were fortunate that everyone who was asked agreed to become involved. Prof. Lize Kriel and Prof. Tilman Dederling from South Africa were associated with the Academic Advisory Council and coordinated contact with the authors from South Africa and Namibia. The Academic Advisory Council dedicated a great deal of their time and expertise on a purely voluntary basis and made an essential contribution to the success of the Study Process. They met several times a year between 2007 to 2011, as well as preparing and holding several conferences. Some members even travelled to southern Africa in order to communicate with authors and sponsors. All members of the Academic Advisory Council deserve our thanks and recognition for their great dedication.

A Coordination Committee was set up to organise the process and coordinate the objectives of the sponsors. Dr Hanns Lessing worked as the chair of this committee; Julia Besten (Archives and Museum Foundation of the UEM) was the executive secretary. The other members were Dr Christian Hohmann (Ev. Church of Westphalia), Dieter Schütte (ELM), and Dr Ruth Gütter (EKD Church Office).

The members of the Coordination Committee worked closely with the Academic Advisory Council and regularly took part in its meetings.

We owe a debt of gratitude to the members of the Coordination Committee for all of their pro bono efforts on behalf of the Study Process.

The kick-off conference in Hofgeismar in 2007

As a prelude to the Study Process, a “kick-off conference” was held in Hofgeismar from 30 October to 1 November 2007. Representatives from almost all of the sponsor organisations attended, as did the members of the Academic Advisory Council and the Coordination Committee. There the group of sponsors and members was officially constituted. The sponsors and members exchanged information about their dealings with colonial history and their expectations for the Study Process. The researchers gave an initial introduction on the

state of the research. At the end, agreements were reached on the mandate, structure, and timetable of the research project and set forth in a "Hofgeismar Declaration", which read: "The following goal has been resolved: the Study Process will undertake an independent and unbiased investigation of the form and effect of the German Protestant work abroad during the colonial period in the region of southern Africa. The basis for this investigation is the memorandum submitted to the EKD Council. [...] The results will be presented at a public symposium and published in an appropriate fashion [...]. The Study Process will investigate the colonial interlinkages of Protestant churches and missions from Germany or of German origin in southern Africa and in the process will pay special attention to the rule and significance of the work of Protestant churches, missions, divisions, and associations in the organisation of German settlers from the beginnings of settlement until the establishment of the German Evangelical Church Federation in 1922 [...]. The Study Process will be on a participatory basis."⁷

Noteworthy at this kick-off conference was the great candour as well as the trusting and sensitive attitude that people displayed when confronting a subject that touched on a painful and dark side of their own past. This is all the more remarkable in light of the fact that the communication among some of the sponsors and members had been rare in years and decades past, and had not been without its problems. These good spirits at the kick-off conference fortunately also influenced further Study Process conferences.

The research phase

A research phase followed from November 2007 until late 2010. The Academic Advisory Council compiled a list of topics,⁸ attracted authors, supervised their work and held several workshops and conferences where the board could discuss the state of the research with the researchers and the sponsors. In October 2008, a workshop took place in Pretoria, South Africa, with researchers from the School of Graduate Studies at the University of South Africa (UNISA) and the history department of the University of Pretoria (UP). This workshop was very important in order to present the Study Process locally, gain a better understanding of the debates in southern Africa on dealing with the colonial past, and integrate these into the Study Process. The workshop also had a significant impact on attracting authors from southern Africa.

In May 2009, an interim conference took place in Hanover for the members of the Academic Advisory Council and the representatives of the sponsoring organisations, where the current state of the Study Process was presented and discussed. In addition, the sponsors agreed on how they wished to acknowledge the results of the Study Process and how they intended to present and promote these to the public. A resolution was passed to first discuss the results at an internal specialist conference in 2010 before the results would then be presented at a public conference in 2011 and would be published in a German- and English-language collection.

How much the sponsors identified with the Study Process can also be seen in the fact that all of them were willing to spend the time on the costly proceedings of internal and public final conferences and were also willing to bring together the additional funds needed

7 Hofgeismar Declaration of 31 Oct. 2007, AZ 5192/9, vol. 1, 2.

8 There is more on this on the introduction by the editors and the Academic Advisory Council.

to do so. Because the book's reception in southern Africa was so near and dear to everyone, they also unanimously agreed to collaborate on meeting the additional costs of producing an English edition of the final volume.

The final sponsor conference

On 2–4 July 2010, the concluding internal conference took place in Wuppertal for the sponsors, the members of the Academic Advisory Council, and the majority of the authors from Germany and southern Africa. All of the sponsors and members were present, and most of them in fact sent two representatives each. Members of the Academic Advisory Council introduced each chapter, and some of the authors presented their articles, which generated intense discussion from the whole hall.

The sponsors and members got a look at the complexity of the relationships that the settler communities, mission churches, mission societies and the Committee of German Evangelical Churches (DEKA) maintained with the colonial authorities of the time. In those days, the proximity and distance to the colonial system and the colonial way of thinking varied, not only among the different actors but even within the respective churches and mission societies. If almost all of them felt clearly superior to the African population, the transitions from a benevolent paternalism to an aggressive and unthinking racism were often fluid. The theological idealisation of the empire and imperial rule exacerbated this attitude. The colonial system led to a multitude of distressing injustices, including genocide, and it contributed to a disastrous inferiority complex among the "black" African population and to a form of "mental slavery" that had serious consequences.⁹ More or less all churches and mission societies were interwoven into this unjust system, but the proximity to the colonial authorities was unquestionably especially pronounced for the Committee of German Evangelical Churches and the settler churches, particularly in Namibia.

Outlook

The various sponsors and members must each determine for themselves what coming to terms with these dark pages of their own history means to them, how they each choose to interpret it and what conclusions they draw from it. This question was also addressed at the final Study Process conference in September 2011, where the German edition of this volume was first presented to the public.

A number of hopeful developments show that coming to terms with the past can actually facilitate reconciliation.

The Study Process has reinforced people's willingness to face up to the dark side of their own past. The pain has been articulated and recognised as a part of their own history that is not to be denied. Our openness and trust in one another has grown. This gives us hope that the Study Process will also contribute to strengthening those forces that would overcome the divisions that still exist between the Lutheran churches in South Africa and Namibia that originated within the colonial system.

All of the sponsors have expressed an interest in continuing the process of dealing with the past and of working together, after the Study Process on the colonial past is over, to come to terms with the history of apartheid, which is even more painful because it is still

9 See article #29 by Paul John Isaak.

very much present. If it is in fact decided to carry out such a follow-up process, may the good spirit of the process that has just finished continue, and may it stimulate the process to come.

The centenary of the Christuskirche in Windhoek – once the symbol of German colonial supremacy and power in Namibia – was commemorated on 16 October 2010. The celebration not only involved many guests from Germany and South Africa, but also of course included the bishops of the three Lutheran churches in Namibia. These three Lutheran churches – two former “mission churches” and one former “settler church” – formed a united church council in 2007 that is working on overcoming the separations of the past. Dr Zephania Kameeta, the bishop of one of the former “mission churches”, gave an impressive sermon for the occasion that had an unmistakable message of reconciliation. The EKD representative, Dine Fecht, declared in her opening remarks that the EKD intended to soon return the ownership of the Christuskirche (which they had inherited after the colonial era as the legal successors of the Committee of German Evangelical Churches) to the Christuskirche congregation in agreement with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia. The EKD Council, she said, did this in the hope “that the Christuskirche will soon become the church of all Lutheran churches, where the praise of God will be jointly sung.”

In these few developments, which here have only been outlined in brief, we can already see that the hopes expressed at the beginning of the Study Process are beginning to be fulfilled.

“The Study Process is connected to the hope that coming to terms with the colonial past will help all participants, as members of the Church of Jesus Christ, to better understand the past, to admit guilt, to request and to grant forgiveness, to heal wounds, and to tackle the challenges of the present with a new perspective as churches and missions.”¹⁰

10 Flyer for the Study Process kick-off conference in 2007, AZ 5192/9, vol. 1.

Zephania Kameeta
Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the
Republic of Namibia

Since 1652 Christianity plays an important role in the history of Southern Africa. Most of this time was severely marked by colonialism and its legacy. Till today the structures of our Lutheran churches in the region mirror the colonial divisions. Our congregations are still divided according to race and ethnicity. Even the international links to our partners in Germany carry the signs of the colonial landscape: While the churches that emerged from mission activities still foster the contact to their respective mission societies, the German-speaking churches still maintain special relationships with the Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland (EKD).

In Southern Africa we see the impact of colonialism everywhere we look. We remember the time of colonisation. People of that time believed that they were doing something good. But they nevertheless committed atrocities in the name of civilisation, especially Western civilisation. We look at the history of apartheid in Namibia and South Africa and also find here crimes that were done in the name of Christian Western civilisation. We recollect the history of the struggle for the independence of Namibia, where atrocities were committed on both sides. And even today the distribution of land, the opportunities in life that most of our people have are as influenced by the colonial past as the ways in which we socialise and speak are.

But when we today remember this often troubled history, we do this from a very special perspective: This history of separation and injustice is not an immovable fate that will keep us in the trappings of colonialism forever. In South Africa and Namibia we have experienced what it means to be liberated. In both countries we now have the chance to develop our societies to make sure that people will never again be discriminated against, because they belong to the “wrong” “race”, to the “wrong” ethnic group, to the “wrong” political party or to the “wrong” class. After experiencing 20 years of liberation, we now can proudly say: We have achieved a lot.

But this liberation is still at risk. The abolition of oppressive laws and the election of democratic governments should have brought more social justice and equality for all. We are thankful that the process of change didn't end up in chaos. We thank God that more than 350 years of separation, more and more people jointly take responsibility to surmount the legacies of colonialism and apartheid. Without the determination that we bear a joint responsibility we cannot maintain the achievements of liberation.

I see the Study Process on the Role of German Protestant Work Overseas in Colonial Southern Africa as a very important example of our determination to bear responsibility jointly. I therefore commend the researchers for their efforts to explore the history in order to help us to overcome its impact on our lives today. It cannot be appreciated highly enough that we as churches after so many centuries of division are now able to work on our history together. We are determined that the commemoration of our painful past will not divide us again. We are resolute to abide to the commandment that as Christians we ought to bear

another's burdens (Gal 6:2) and we therefore won't allow the memories of our painful past to divide us again.

Of course, many of us are still wounded by painful memories, some are angry about the many injustices that are not corrected until today. But we try to understand that we can only overcome the past if we do not use our memories to refuel old divisions. If we use the commemoration for accusations and political gain we again withdraw in the camps created by colonial.

We believe that the Christian faith can never be content with camps, with boundaries, with separation and division. When our faith takes up the challenge given to all humanity by the death and the resurrection of Jesus Christ, we should transgress boundaries as the apostle writes in Hebrews 13: "Therefore let us go forth to him outside the camp and bear the abuse he endured. For here we have no lasting city, but we seek the city which is to come" (Hebrews 13:13). We can overcome the colonial divisions, when we leave the old "camps" and start sharing our wounded memories. Our idea of a liberated society strives for a world where difference exists, but cannot be exploited for political gain.

We have to remember the colonial past, but for this we need the spirit of reconciliation. The liberation of our countries can only flourish, when people from different groups come together, listen to the others' pain and join hands in the challenge to overcome the impact of the past, wherever we see it.

I wish that this book will become a well-used resource in the life of our churches. In daily life we tend to forget what is really important and keep ourselves busy with superficial things without exploring their depth. The ground we step on is still fragile, because 20 years after our liberation some of the forces of the past are still active and alive. I therefore hope that the study process will call us together in order to foster what our countries and our churches have achieved. When in Namibia in 2004 we remembered the atrocities of the colonial war of more than 100 years ago, Christians from the different churches came together in one spirit. The commemoration was characterised by solidarity, compassion and the commitment to change something. I would like to see people studying this book in this spirit.

I also appreciate that churches and mission societies in Germany have taken the initiative to work through the colonial history together with the churches in the South. For decades our relationships were marked by structures that originated in colonial times. The Study Process is an opportunity to tackle the questions of partnership with a new historical awareness. We have been agents of division for much too long. Let us now become ambassadors of liberation who take up the responsibility to correct the impact of the colonial past, in the spirit of the New Jerusalem, which is to come.

The Study Process from the sponsors' perspective

Nils Rohwer

Chairman of the Board of the
United Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa

The member churches of the United Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa (UELCSA) took great interest in collaborating on the Study Process as sponsors. It was important to us that the distinctly different motivations and reasons that people have for their actions be perceived and understood during the process of coming to terms with the historical events. History in the broader sense of the term goes beyond enumerating facts, creating a chronology of events, or even accumulating genuine quotations. In truth, what it also means is to perceive the actors in "their" respective situations, who in turn have been influenced by their early history, their faith, their worldview, their historical scientific knowledge, and their perception of their environment.

From the beginning, our churches have emphasised the necessity of an independent, scientific, and unbiased execution of the Study Process, and we are grateful to the Academic Advisory Council and the authors for their consistent adherence to this principle. We have succeeded in laying a sound historical foundation, but by doing this we have also demonstrated the open-ended nature of historical processes. There is no one way of looking at things; not every initial motivation must lead to a specific end result. Each situation has manifested very different characteristics, which by definition has cancelled out many long-cherished, sweeping judgments.

May the continuing process itself, and especially this publication, contribute to a deeper understanding of the past and thereby of the present as well. May we comprehend the consequences of our decisions and, in our honest observation of these decisions, may we not only reveal our mutually culpable actions, but experience reconciliation through this process too.

If by dealing with the historical processes we succeed in building bridges of understanding and reconciliation for a common future, we will indeed have achieved the goal of this Study Process. May the Lord of all history bless us in this endeavour.

Introduction by the Editors and the Academic Advisory Council¹

I. History: A short overview of the history of the German Protestant Work Overseas in colonial southern Africa until the end of the 1920s

There has been a German-language minority in southern Africa for more than 300 years. The first Protestant congregation of German emigrants was founded in Cape Town in 1780.² Unlike in other areas of migration (the United States, for example, or Brazil or Australia),³ the German-language emigrants in the area of what today is South Africa and Namibia did not assimilate into the majority culture, but rather have maintained a consciousness of discreteness that is founded on the German language and culture and extends into the present.⁴

During the time period studied here, this pursuit of an identity found an important institutional expression in the German-language Protestant church congregations and the German school associations that in many places were closely associated with them.⁵ While many German synods and congregations in the United States lost their contact to Germany

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- 1 This volume has been edited on behalf of the Academic Advisory Council by Hanns Lessing, Julia Besten, Tilman Dederling, Christian Hohmann and Lize Kriel. The Academic Advisory Council for the Study Process is comprised of: Rudolf Hinz (University of Kiel), Jürgen Kampmann (University of Tübingen), Klaus Koschorke (University of Munich), Christoph Marx (University of Duisburg-Essen) and Reinhard Wendt (University of Hagen). Lize Kriel (University of Pretoria) and Tilman Dederling (University of South Africa) were appointed as adjuncts to the Academic Advisory Council from South Africa. We are also grateful to Thorsten Altena, who supported the work of the Academic Advisory Council as executive director from 2007 to 2010.
 - 2 Because of the language policy of the United East India Company (VOC) and the confessional monopoly of the Reformed church, worship services in this era were still held in the Dutch language. This practice was criticised in the first half of the 19th century by new immigrants from Germany. This finally led to a first German-language worship service in the St Martini church in 1861, and the Martini congregation was established as the first German-language Lutheran congregation on the Cape (on the history of the German Protestant church congregations in and around Cape Town see articles #13, #18 and #19 by Georg Scriba, Christian Hohmann and Lizette Rabe in this volume ; on the Dutch language policy see Jan and Leo Lucassen, *Niederlande*, in: Klaus J. Bade, Pieter C. Emmer, Leo Lucassen and Jochen Oltmer (eds.), *Enzyklopädie Migration in Europa. Vom 17. Jahrhundert bis zur Gegenwart*. 3rd ed., Paderborn 2010, 95–101) and article #11 by Reino Ottermann).
 - 3 On the German immigration to Brazil see Roland Spliesgard, „Verbrasilianierung“ und Akkulturation. *Deutsche Protestanten im brasilianischen Kaiserreich am Beispiel der Gemeinden in Rio de Janeiro und Minas Gerais (1822–1889)* (StAECG, 12), Wiesbaden 2006; on immigration to the United States see Christian Chmel, *Die beschleunigte Assimilation der deutsch-amerikanischen Minderheit als Folge des von Weltkriegen, Nationalsozialismus und Propaganda geprägten Deutschlandbildes in den USA (1914–1945)*, Munich 2008.
 - 4 On the various periods in the development of the identity of the German immigrants see article #14 by Gunther Pakendorf.
 - 5 On the history of the congregations in South Africa see Note 2; On the history of the congregations in the region of what is today Namibia see articles #9, #10, #16 and # 17 by Martin Eberhardt, Lothar Engel and Rudolf Hinz; On the history of the German-language schools see articles #14 and #24 by Gunther Pakendorf and Dorothee Rempfer.

very early on and often decided to use English as the language of their worship services and congregational life,⁶ the German-language congregations in southern Africa had been under the consistorial supervision of the German Landeskirchen (regional churches) since pastor Christian Heinrich Friedrich Hesse was despatched by the consistory of the Lutheran Church in Hanover in 1800 – and therefore long before the beginning of German colonial rule in 1884 in the region of what is today Namibia.⁷ Until today, many of the German-language pastors working in southern Africa are despatched by the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD), which also offers financial support for the work of local congregations in the region.

In Germany itself, the so-called “Auslandsdiasporafürsorge (provisions for the diaspora abroad), the ecclesiastical services that had been provided to emigrants of German origin since the end of the 19th century, developed into a central focus of the efforts at unification, which were an attempt to give a national structure to the German Protestantism that at the time was fragmented across over 30 regional churches.⁸ Through the services provided to the emigrants, the Protestant church gained a national political profile and in this way was able to make its own self-confident contribution to the contemporary discourse.⁹ As the only German settler colony, German South West Africa was thereby the focus of attention. The church congregations founded there were supported by church and state authorities and until 1914 were also generously sponsored by the imperial family.¹⁰ The ecclesiastical provisions to the colony were regarded as a national duty, by means of which Germany intended to express its scientific, cultural, and religious superiority at the international level.¹¹

The development of the German-language minorities in southern Africa

Through these close relationships to Germany, the development of church life in the German-language minorities in southern Africa acquired a sustained influence by the

6 As early as 1786, the *Synod and Ministry of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the State of New York and Adjacent Parts* officially relinquished the obligatory use of the German language (Edmund Jacob Wolf, *The Lutherans in America. A Story of Struggle, Progress, Influence and Marvelous Growth*, New York 1889, 312). These and other similar decisions resulted in fierce conflicts (Albert Henry Newman, *Der Protestantismus in Nord-Amerika*, in: Carl Werckshagen (ed.), *Der Protestantismus am Ende des XIX. Jahrhunderts*, Berlin 1902, 1113–1148, 1187). As a consequence, English did not gain general acceptance in the Lutheran churches of German origin in America until the years after the Second World War.

7 Until 1961, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in southern Africa (the Cape Church) was a district of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hanover.

8 On the history of the attempts at ecclesiastical unity see articles #1 and #2 by Britta Wellnitz and Jürgen Kampmann.

9 Of particular interest: the debates over the presentations by Johannes Lepsius, Friedrich Naumann and Karl Rathgens at the conference of the Evangelical Social Congress in Karlsruhe in 1900 (for more details, see article #5 by Hanns Lessing).

10 On the ecclesiastical relationships between Germany and German South West Africa see articles #2, #10 and #17 by Jürgen Kampmann, Lothar Engel and Rudolf Hinz.

11 In article #14, Gunther Pakendorf compares the development of Lutheran and Baptist congregations of German origin and indicates that the German immigrants probably would not have been able to preserve their cultural individuality for such a length of time without the institutional support of the churches and the German nation.

German regional churches, church associations, and missions beginning in the 18th century. Many congregations could not have been founded without personal and financial support from Germany. From an ideological standpoint, the integration into the global network of German-language Protestant work overseas, especially in the heyday of German nationalism in the years before the First World War, was experienced as membership in a “greater German Empire”, as Kaiser Wilhelm II called it. Germans all over the world were to be consolidated into one powerful unit constituted through economic, cultural and religious ties.¹²

This strong national and ecclesiastical bond to Germany put long-lasting tension into the relationships that the German-language minority in southern Africa had with the immigrant groups from other European countries as well as with the African societies in their surrounding environment. In the settlement areas, the national identity that since the founding of the Empire in 1871 had been ever more strongly claimed by Germans abroad¹³ fostered the creation of culturally closed-off societies.¹⁴ The pride in the global significance of German business, technology, science and culture also established a feeling of superiority in many places – not only with respect to the African societies and their culture, both of which were usually considered inferior, but also in contacts with the Afrikaner culture and even in relation to the competition from British imperialism. The awareness of these tensions shaped daily dealings with the local people and intensified into colonial conceptions of the world that legitimised the political decision-making processes.

On the basis of this national imperialism, the German settlers in German South West Africa developed the vision of an exclusively German settlement area as early as the end of the 19th century and propagated the complete subjugation of the African population.¹⁵ At the beginning of the colonial war of 1904–1908, important representatives of the German settler community called for the complete annihilation of the hostile African peoples. The so-called *Eingeborenenverordnungen* (Native Ordinances), formulated with the active collaboration of the settler community, were an attempt in the years between the genocide and the First World War to transform the African population into proletariat without any rights,¹⁶ whose only justification for existence was their “usefulness to the settler economy”, as theologian Paul Rohrbach put it.¹⁷ Huge tracks of land were expropriated towards

12 On the nationalist imperialism of Wilhelm II see the article #4 by Hanns Lessing.

13 On the complicated evolution of German citizenship legislation see Rogers Brubaker, *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1992; and Dieter Gosewinkel, *Einbürgern und Ausschließen. Die Nationalisierung der Staatsangehörigkeit vom Deutschen Bund bis zur Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, Göttingen 2001.

14 On the importance of the German language for the constitution of the German settler communities see article #14 by Gunter Pakendorf.

15 Helmut Bley, *Kolonialherrschaft und Sozialstruktur in Deutsch-Südwestafrika 1894–1914*, Hamburg 1968, 112.

16 Gesine Krüger, *Kriegsbewältigung und Geschichtsbewußtsein. Realität, Deutung und Verarbeitung des deutschen Kolonialkriegs in Namibia 1904 bis 1907*, Göttingen, 1999, 177.

17 Paul Rohrbach, *Deutsche Kolonialwirtschaft. Kulturpolitische Grundsätze für die Rassen- und Missionsfragen*, Berlin 1909, 20. Rohrbach held the position of Settlement Commissioner in German South West Africa from 1903–1906 (on Rohrbach see articles #6 and #22 by Jens Ruppenthal and Hanns Lessing).

this purpose; the African population was subjected to a blanket obligation to work.¹⁸ The vision of a German settlement area in southern Africa developed a charisma that reached all the way to South Africa: many South Africans of German origin relocated to the colony of German South West Africa in the years before the First World War.¹⁹

In many areas, however, this exclusive national self-identity was in clear discrepancy to the opportunities that were actually available to the German emigrants on the ground. The German settler economy was integrated into the local and regional economic cycles and therefore relied on functioning trade relationships with the other groups of settlers and with the African population. In addition, the colonial economy was based on unimpeded access to a black workforce. The idea of a purely German settlement area in practice, therefore, turned out to be purely fiction. This is why Martin Eberhardt, adopting a term from Helmut Bley, characterises the German settlers as “dependent masters” in his article.²⁰

Neither was a German cultural hegemony ever achieved in southern Africa. Even in German South West Africa, for example, it was never possible to implement the German language as a general lingua franca. The national-minded Pastor Anz, from Windhoek, complained shortly after the turn of the century that as early as their first trip inland, the German immigrants were in danger of exchanging their High German for a lingua franca shaped by Cape Dutch.²¹ The Allgemeine Deutsche Sprachverein (General Association for the German Language) that he directed fought against any form of linguistic or cultural assimilation and advocated a purely German identity, without ever being able to completely prevail with these demands at a local level.

Naturally, the significance of the German language and culture was even lower outside the colony. In the area of what is today South Africa, the immigrants from Germany were never able to gain a political or culturally dominant position. The German influence was therefore limited to the sphere of German-language families, church congregations and associations. And even here, the immigrants dealt selectively with the guidelines propagated from Germany. As a consequence, actual daily life differed significantly from the models of a greater German identity that the protagonists of a globalised “Germanness” pretended.²²

The relationships between the settler communities and Germany in the era of imperialism

The tensions in these relationships were also reflected in the development of the political and ecclesiastical institutions into which the German settlers were organised and which

18 See article #9 by Martin Eberhardt.

19 This migration movement, mentioned only rarely until now, is described by Pastor J. Grassmann on 28.2.1908 in his annual report to the Evangelical Supreme Church Council in Berlin on the church and moral life of the German Protestant congregation in Johannesburg for the year 1907 (Evangelical Central Archive in Berlin: EZA 5 /3049, EOK: File pertaining to the ecclesiastical affairs of the German Protestant congregation in Johannesburg in the South African republic of the Transvaal. June 1907 – December 1913, 7).

20 Article #9 (see also Brigitta Schmidt-Lauber, *Die abhängigen Herren: Deutsche Identität in Namibia. Interethnische Beziehungen und Kulturwandel. Ethnologische Beiträge zu soziokultureller Dynamik*, vol. 9, Münster 1993).

21 Wilhelm Anz, *Deutscherderber in Deutsch-Südwestafrika*, in: *Deutsch-Evangelisch. Zeitschrift für die Kenntnis und Förderung der deutschen evangelischen Diaspora im Auslande*, 1903, 153–164.

22 On this discrepancy see article #15 by Lize Kriel and Maren Bodenstien.

represented their interests abroad. Martin Eberhardt describes the pronounced “subsidy mentality” of the German settlers.²³ For the settlers, a national consciousness was not an end in itself, but rather was strategically deployed in order to attain support of all kinds. This is why the Landesrat (regional council) constituted in German South West Africa in 1910, the variety of German associations, and the Protestant synods created after 1895²⁴ were not simply understood as subordinate organs of a worldwide “Germanness”, but rather also made aggressive attempts to represent their local interests on occasion. Instructions from Germany were not simply accepted by these bodies; instead, the settlers questioned the suitability of such guidelines as solutions to regional problems. In their contacts with Germany, representatives of the settler community presented themselves as the true experts on the African situation; guidelines from the homeland were sometimes sharply rejected.

Under these requirements, the institutions of German self-government in German South West Africa and, in lesser measure, in South Africa, where other political levels had to be considered as well, were the result of a complex exchange of interests between the various groups of settlers on one side and the responsible authorities in Germany on the other. The established national legal system was continually pushed to its limits outside of Germany. The relationship between the settler community and the ecclesiastical institutions in Germany had only rudimentary legal regulation and had to be continually renegotiated on the ground. For example, the Preußische Evangelische Oberkirchenrat (Evangelical Supreme Church Council of Prussia – EOK) and the German-language congregations in German South West Africa had very different ideas for the development of the Protestant church in the colony. In the years before the First World War, the EOK presented itself in negotiations with the congregations as the centre of a global German-language Protestant Christianity, and based on this identity strived to affiliate the congregations to the Prussian regional church. The local church congregations were critical of this development; they proceeded with the establishment of an independent synod, from which they foresaw an independent Protestant regional church in the colonies emerging.²⁵

The establishment of ecclesiastical structures was made more difficult by the fact that neither the ecclesiastical law of the regional churches nor the constitutional law on state-church-relations could be easily applied beyond the imperial borders of 1871. The institution of state sovereignty over the church limited ecclesiastical jurisdiction to the area of the respective regional sovereigns. German regional churches could thus only work outside of these borders if foreign congregations subjected themselves to the supervision and formally requested “affiliation” to the regional church. Contemporary observers saw in these affiliation relationships parallels to the declarations of the protectorates and the protection treaties that the German empire used in an attempt to make its influence international.²⁶

23 Article #9.

24 On the history of the synods see articles #13 and #18 by Georg Scriba and Christian Hohmann.

25 On the differing interests between the EOK and the congregations in the colony see article #2 by Jürgen Kampmann.

26 On this see Carl Mirbt, *Die Preußische Landeskirche und die Auslandsdiaspora*, in: *Deutsch-Evangelisch im Auslande. Zeitschrift für die Kenntnis und Förderung der Auslandsgemeinden*, 1907, 53–68, 101–123, 118f; Britta Wellnitz, *Deutsche evangelische Gemeinden im Ausland. Ihre Entstehungsgeschichte und die Entwicklung ihrer Rechtsbeziehungen zur Evangelischen Kirche in Deutschland*, Tübingen 2003, 85.