

Franckesche Stiftungen zu Halle

Brief von Thomas Quinton Staw, William Giles und John Eggleston an das Komitee der ev.-luth. Missionsgesellschaft Dresden

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Adelaide, 02.11.1841 - 10.11.1841

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To Mr. Tschelmann's questions I find
 it not quite easy to give an answer
~~entirely~~ ^{entirely} satisfactory to myself. - The institution
 if attempted, must be but an experiment.
 So far as such places have been adopted
 in New Holland, they have failed, except
 the one at Port Phillip conducted by the
 Wesleyans, and which is still under trial,
 and respecting which I have not as
 yet heard any thing decidedly encouraging.
 The wandering habits of the native
 their voluntary entrance and continuance
 on a stationary location very doubtful and
 I fear unlikely. If some of them were
 brought under the power of truth they
 might be induced to locate themselves;
 but I fear otherwise the expenditure would
 be all a risk. -

The cost of such an undertaking is not
 overstated at £1000. Besides which I fear
 that instead of a source of ~~support~~ ^{support}
 to the missionaries, there would be an annual
 expense, judging from the very heavy
 annual cost of the Wesleyan Station
 in Port Phillip.

The Government contemplated locating
 the natives somewhere in the country.
 It would be better to wait and see
 if there could be turned to missionary
 purposes. -

Thos. Linton Esq.

Fully coincide in the above
 statement William Giles
 Manager and Agent
 of the South Australia Company

Adelaide 2nd Nov 1841

After reviewing the correspondence laid before me and Mr. Fiechelmann's questions, I am induced respectfully to offer the following remarks as the result of personal conviction.

The Station the furthest removed from the general influence of the colonists would be the most promising. I should prefer a Tribe that had not been in the habit of regularly visiting Adelaide.

The Plan of forming a Settlement on which to induce the Natives to locate is one the most congenial to the success of the enterprise. - The Missionary must either accommodate himself to their roving habits and thus give up the idea of any systematic efforts and be next to useless in their midst or he must hold out some inducement to lead them to abandon their former habits and settle with him where he would have the opportunity of instructing the children regularly and of bringing the adults under the regular teaching of the Word.

Such a Plan will doubtless in the first instance incur considerable expense it is not overrated in Mr. F.'s calculation. The Missionaries should have their minds relieved from temporal anxieties so far as the supply of their personal wants is concerned. The Natives should have as valuable a temporal inducement to locate with the Missionaries as is afforded in their intercourse with other Europeans - spiritual considerations are as yet unknown to them and unless they have the prospect of temporal advantages they have nothing to curb their roving dispositions and induce them to settle upon the location.

It would be beneficial to such a Settlement to have a Christian family or two who would by example and instruction attempt to induce the Natives to attend to agricultural and other employments. It would leave the Missionaries at liberty to attend more exclusively to their legitimate work especially with reference to the instruction of the children and under their superintendence three persons might prove an important auxiliary to the Mission.

The measure of support to be derived from such an establishment would greatly depend upon the success of the Evangelical labours of the Missionaries. The land brought under cultivation would furnish certain stores that would ease the expense of providing food for the Natives &c. It would not be safe to calculate extensively at first upon the results of Native labour. The Gospel must affect the heart before a savage will apply himself industriously and perseveringly to the arts of civilized life and especially before a wandering Australian will feel disposed to till the ground for his own support. No Mission could promise left in this respect than one established within the precincts of any Colony on this Continent. The migratory mode of procuring food renders the Natives disqualified for Missionary efforts unless they abandon their former means of subsistence and the habits of steady industry which are requisite for obtaining food in a civilized way need a long period to acquire. The tilling of the land by a number of Europeans in order to obtain a profit by the sale of the produce might in course of time make a return which would relieve the necessities of the Missionaries having remittances from home but it would give the Mission a mercantile character which I apprehend the Committee would not be prepared to patronise and which has never been found to promote the success of Missionary operations.

Every Missionary Society will of course be prepared to use means at any price which the circumstances of the case may demand. The main calculation will be How can the best means be most efficiently used at the least possible expense? In mercantile operations there is risk and we make experiments. But in using legitimate means for the spread of the Gospel our outlay and efforts cannot be said to bear the character of risk or experiment. Every portion of expense every effort made is the discharge of duty. Duty in such a case is ours however expensive or laborious results must be left to the Great Head of the Church. The adoption of the plan referred to in the communication of the Dresden Society would be attended with expense but it appears to my mind the one best calculated to promote their great design if not the only one that has promise of speedy success. If success should crown it the expenditure of millions would not be worthy of mention in comparison. It should not succeed according to their expectations they will have the gratification of consecrating their substance to the Lord in the discharge of a Divinely enjoined duty and of making a benevolent attempt to rescue the South Australian Natives from the darkness and degradation of heathenism to the light and glory of Christianity.

John Eggleston

Adelaide 10th Nov. 1841.