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Conceptions of Humanity in Nineteenth-Century German Protestant Missions

What do missions have to do with humanitarianism? In some circles, the mission movement was and is interpreted as being mainly humanitarian, both in looking back to its beginnings and with regard to the present when mission has become mostly social work and mission institutions work alongside other NGOs in areas of crisis.[1] However, as the substantiating arguments in favour of missions have changed considerably over the years, so have the definitions of "humanity" or "humanitarian". When reading the publications in the Basel periodical *Der evangelische Heidenbote* ("The evangelical heathen-messenger") with regard to India in the first 25 years of the Basel India mission (1834–1859), it is striking that the terms "humanity", "humanitarianism" or some derivative are not used once. How, then, did German missions in the nineteenth century understand humanity and in what respects was the concept of humanity a foundational and substantiating element in these missions?

After a short introduction to the major nineteenth-century mission theologian Gustav Warneck, this study will focus on the Basel Mission, the largest and most important of the German-speaking mission societies in the early nineteenth century. The study will draw on their periodical *Der evangelische Heidenbote* and on manuscript sources, mainly applications by future missionaries in which they elaborated on their motives, as well as letters and reports from missionaries, mostly from South India.

The first section on Warneck will illustrate the broad theological outlines of the missions' religious argumentation. Of course, Warneck cannot stand for all missions, not even for all German-speaking missions. But his was an important voice, heard by all and reacted to by all. Furthermore, his attitudes were shared by most mission societies and also by the Basel Mission.

1 These approaches are discussed in most newer overviews over mission history, see e.g. Dana L. Robert, *Christian Mission. How Christianity Became a World Religion* (Blackwell Brief Histories of Religion Series, Chichester 2009); Jeffrey Cox, *The British Missionary Enterprise Since 1700* (New York 2008); id., "Master Narratives of Imperial Missions", in Jamie S. Scott/Gareth Griffiths (ed.), *Mixed Messages: Materiality, Textuality, Missions* (New York 2005), 3–18. An overview over contemporary approaches to conceptions of humanitarianism offers e.g. Lynn Festa, "Humanity Without Feathers", in *Humanity* 1:1 (2010), 3–27. See also Michael Barnett/Janice Gross Stein (ed.), *Sacred Aid. Faith and Humanitarianism* (Oxford 2012).

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In the later sections, foundational aspects of humanity in the viewpoint of the Basel Mission are discussed. They can be grouped according to three features: humanity as humaneness ("Menschlichkeit"), as unity and equality, and as relief from (spiritual and physical) poverty. Finally, I will draw some conclusions as to the importance of humanity for German missions in the nineteenth century.

1. Gustav Warneck's *History of Protestant Missions* and Humanity

In 1882, the doyen of (German) mission studies, Gustav Warneck, published the first edition of his voluminous *Outline of the History of Protestant Missions*.[2] In his introductory chapter, after some general remarks on Christianity and missions, he gave an overview over the history of Protestant missions from the Reformation. To him, the nineteenth century was the real century of missions and he explained why this had become possible: besides geographical explorations and technical inventions, ideas and attitudes in the West had changed. Following the American and French Revolutions, political freedom came to the fore, as did "a certain philanthropy and humanity"[3] that found its main expression in the abolition movement.[4] While distancing himself from "political party fervour and doctrinal enthusiasm",[5] Warneck claimed that this ideological development helped to rouse interest in the well-being of "black" people and thus strengthened the mission movement.

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2 Gustav Warneck, *Abriß einer Geschichte der protestantischen Missionen von der Reformation bis auf die Gegenwart. Ein Beitrag zur neueren Kirchengeschichte* (Leipzig 1882). On Warneck and his time see Dieter Becker/Andreas Feldtkeller (ed.), *Es begann in Halle ...: Missionswissenschaft von Gustav Warneck bis heute* (Erlangen 1997).

3 Ibid., 42: "eine gewisse Philanthropie und Humanität".

4 On this question see Seymour Drescher, "Trends in der Historiographie des Abolitionismus", in *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 16 (1990), 187–211; Herbert S. Klein, "Neuere Interpretationen des atlantischen Sklavenhandels", in ibid., 141–160; Howard Temperley, "The Ideology of Antislavery", in David Eltis/James Walvin (ed.), *The Abolition of the Atlantic Slave Trade. Origins and Effects in Europe, Africa, and the Americas* (Madison, WI 1981), 21–35; Derek R. Peterson (ed.), *Abolitionism and Imperialism in Britain, Africa, and the Atlantic* (Athens, GA 2010), 129–149; John Stauffer, "Abolition and Antislavery", in Robert L. Paquette/Mark M. Smith (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Slavery in the Americas* (Oxford 2010), 556–577. For an overview over the most important sources cf. e.g. John Oldfield (ed.), *The British Transatlantic Slave Trade*, vol. 3: *The Abolitionist Struggle: Opponents of the Slave Trade* (London 2003). Cf. also Stanley L. Engerman, "Some Implications of the Abolition of the Slave Trade", in David Eltis/James Walvin (ed.), *The Abolition of the Atlantic Slave Trade. Origins and Effects in Europe, Africa, and the Americas* (Madison 1981), 3–18; Seymour Drescher, *Abolition. A History of Slavery and Antislavery* (Cambridge 2009); id., *Econocide. British Slavery in the Era of Abolition* (Chapel Hill, NC 2010).

5 Warneck, *Abriß* (1882), 42: "politischer Parteieifer und doktrinäre Schwärmerei".

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This, as he repeatedly stated, was not the purpose of the liberal movements and revolutions, which were instead used by God to be put in the service of missions.[6] Warneck underlined that God was the author of everything that happened in the world and that he used worldly events or human endeavours in ways that humans did not expect. The omnipotence of God and his active intervention in the world were among Warneck's main beliefs.

In the ninth edition, dated 1910, shortly before his death, Warneck was more outspoken about the relation between ideas of humanity and human rights on the one hand and mission on the other: again, he underlined the difference between revolutions and political and liberal ideas of humanity on the one hand and the Christian religion on the other, and then explained how these ideas had opened the way for Christian missions.[7] He was of the opinion that these ideas and practices, together with Rousseau's ideal of nature, had led to a new esteem for "non-Christian and non-civilised humankind" and that this had made it easier for Christians to put into practice the right of all people to hear the Gospel.[8]

The last aspect was his main point: Christianity was a universalistic religion and taught universal salvation.[9] Warneck taught the unity of all humankind as created in God's image and that all humankind was of the same blood.[10] This means that it shared descent from Adam and Eve and was meant to be saved by the love and blood of Jesus Christ. Warneck claimed

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6 Cf. e.g. Gustav Warneck, *Abriß einer Geschichte der protestantischen Missionen von der Reformation bis auf die Gegenwart. Mit einem Anhang über die katholischen Missionen* (Berlin [9]1910), 208: "[…] die menschlicherseits keineswegs in der Absicht geschehen sind und noch geschehen, dem Christentum zu seiner Ausbreitung Türen zu öffnen, die aber die weltregierende Hand Gottes heute geradeso in den Dienst der Mission stellt, wie in der apostolischen Zeit die jüdische Diaspora, […]". Cf. also ibid., 259: "es ist nicht Missionsaufgabe, die Türen der Welt aufzuschließen, sondern dahin zu gehen, wo sie bereits aufgeschlossen sind. Unter dem vorsehungsvollen Leiten Gottes öffnet der Wissenstrieb und der Erwerbssinn durch Entdecker, Kaufleute und Kolonialpolitiker die Türen der Welt und diese Türöffnung ist der Missionsbeitrag, den die Welt meist unwissentlich und selbst unwillentlich leistet."

7 Warneck belonged to the conservative wing of Protestant theologians and to the Pietist/awakening movement. Members of other groups within Protestantism would have argued in a very different way. Also, for Warneck like for the awakening movement, destruction of order was seen as endangering life, world and religion. Therefore, they opposed all kinds of revolution.

8 Warneck, *Abriß* (1910), 81: "So revolutionär auch jene Ideen auftraten, und so wenig die Forderung allgemeiner Menschenrechte religiös begründet wurde, so leisteten sie der Missionsbewegung dennoch dadurch Wegbereiterdienste, daß sie in Verbindung mit den Rousseauschen Naturidealen einen Umschwung in der Schätzung auch der nichtchristlichen und nichtzivilisierten Menschheit herbeiführten, und daß sie den christlichen Kreisen die Geltendmachung des Rechts aller Menschen auch auf das Evangelium wesentlich erleichterten."

9 Ibid., 1.

10 On the reference to the same blood cf. also: Felicity Jensz, "Reporting From the Religious Contact Zone: Missionaries and Anthropologists in Nineteenth-Century Australia", in Judith Becker (ed.), *European Missions in Contact Zones. Transformation Through Interaction in a (Post-) Colonial World* (Göttingen 2015), 125–141.

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that God had had, from the beginning, the plan to save all humankind and that he had made this plan more and more visible until the time of the present Christian missions. The idea of a universal mission made Christianity a world religion, according to Warneck.[11] The doctrine of justification, the centre of the Protestant faith,[12] taught "a universal want for salvation, a universal grace of salvation and a universal condition of salvation". It followed, to Warneck, that there also needed to be a universal offer of salvation and thus mission to the whole world.[13]

That is how he defined humanity or humankind.[14] All humankind shared an origin and a goal – and had the same problems to solve, the same faults, the same sins and the same, the only path to salvation. In his religious perspective, all humankind was one.

Opinions such as those of Gustav Warneck were very common in the nineteenth-century mission movement. They were not seen as contradicting the ethnological differentiation between races, the religious differentiation between cultures as influenced by religions, or the evolutionary differentiation between stages of development in particular countries and cultures. But all these differences, however important in daily life, were traversed by the religious conviction of a fundamental unity.

The relief that mission could bring was mainly interpreted as spiritual relief from the danger of eternal death. Still, the progress of the book makes clear that Warneck also believed in relief from physical distress. With regard to David Livingston, he underlined that his explorations all "ultimately served humane ends: the abolition of the slave trade, the opening of roads for legal trade, the introduction of a healthy culture and principally the spread of Christianity".[15]

Warneck also believed in the civilisational benefits mission could bring and in different stages of development attained by peoples in Africa, Asia, Europe and America. This development, he believed, was intimately linked with their religiosity. Warneck, like most parts of the nineteenth-century

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11 Warneck, *Abriß* (1910), 2.

12 Eberhard Jüngel, *Das Evangelium von der Rechtfertigung des Gottlosen als Zentrum des christlichen Glaubens. Eine theologische Studie in ökumenischer Absicht* (Tübingen 1999).

13 Warneck, *Abriß* (1910), 3: "So haben wir in der Lehre von der Rechtfertigung durch den Glauben ein *universales Heilsbedürfnis*, eine universale *Heilsgnade* und eine universale *Heilsbedingung*. Mit logischer wie mit dogmatischer und ethischer Notwendigkeit folgt daraus eine *universale Heilsanbietung, d.h. die Sendungsveranstaltung durch die ganze Welt* (Röm. 10, 4–17)."

14 Warneck himself spoke of "Menschheit". When talking about liberal and political ideas of humanity he used the Latin term "Humanität". I translate "Menschheit" with "humankind" in order to maintain the distinction.

15 Warneck, *Abriß* (1910), 319: "Alle seine Entdeckungen haben als letztes Ziel humane Zwecke: Beseitigung des Sklavenhandels, Straßenöffnung für gesetzlichen Handelsverkehr, Einführung gesunder Kultur und hauptsächlich Ausbreitung des Christentums."

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mission movement, interpreted all cultures as permeated by religion and since, to them, Christianity was the only religion that could open the path to God and eternal life; only the Christian religion could bring forward real progress and development.[16] Furthermore, even when converted to Christianity, people had to grow in faith and in "Christian" standing before becoming "adult" Christians. Warneck, like others, and interpreting St. Paul, compared the development of Christians to children growing up.[17] In the actual interpretation of when new converts were to be considered "adult", he differed from others like the British Church Missionary Society, which elected the African Samuel Crowther as bishop in the mid-nineteenth century.[18] However, he did not doubt that in the end, in the eschaton, all people would be the same.

Criticising the development in North America, where black slaves had been liberated but were not accepted as equal members of society, Warneck wrote that the church had become their social centre and that they put their efforts and sacrifices into churches and schools in order to build up their own, independent communities. They wanted to have churches with black ministers that were entirely independent of white staff. Implicitly, Warneck praised their religious endeavours whilst calling white Americans to account for their neighbours' sense of independence, which he saw as contradicting the idea of a united Church.[19] It was also in the sense of the unity not only of the Church but also of all humankind that Warneck interpreted the success of Protestant missions in India, mainly among the lower castes. In a worldly perspective, he saw that members of lower castes were attracted by the prospect of improving their social standing through conversion. He emphasised that Christianity did "everything in order to elevate them".[20] In a religious perspective, he compared this development to the first centuries of Christianity, when the Christian faith had been adopted mostly by lower class people, too, and saw in this a proof of the right way of evangelising in accordance with the plan of God.

Civilisation was, according to Warneck, no prerequisite of Christian missions. If mission relied on a preexisting civilisation, if mission even tried to

16 The doctrine of development in successive stages was very popular at the time. However, the evangelicals also taught that progress was not linear but always interrupted by setbacks, declines of belief, "falling asleep" (thus the awakening) or even turning away from God. Warneck illustrates this in his overview over the history of Protestant missions from the Reformation to his present. On the development by stages cf. also Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte* (Frankfurt/M. 1970).

17 Cf. 1 Cor. 3: 1–4.

18 Warneck, *Abriß* (1910), 271. On the CMS see Kevin Ward/Brian Stanley (ed.), *The Church Mission Society and World Christianity, 1799–1999. Studies in the History of Christian Missions* (Grand Rapids, MI 2000); Eugene Stock, *The History of the Church Missionary Society. Its Environment, its Men and its Work*, 3 vols (London 1899, vol. IV: London 1916).

19 Warneck, *Abriß* (1910), 234.

20 Ibid., 365.

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civilise before evangelising, it was doomed to failure. Warneck saw the proof of this theory in the Church Missionary Society's attempt to evangelise in New Zealand from 1814.[21] Mission might well follow civilisation by others and it would certainly be followed by some kind of civilisation but (European) civilisation was not necessary for the success of missions. However, in order to further the growth of Christians in faith, Warneck found an enhancement of the moral, spiritual and social life of the whole society to be necessary.[22] Still, he declared "the commingling of Christianisation and Europeanisation or Americanisation" to be one of the main dangers that threatened missionary success.[23]

Warneck interpreted humankind as united by origin, object and goal, by creation and the eschaton, by sin and the need for salvation. In this sense, humanity became a substantiating element in his mission theory: all people had to be missionised or at least acquainted with the Gospel because they all needed it. It was the duty of those who were already converted to God to spread the "good news", for the sake of the others and to further of the Kingdom of God.

2. Humanity as Humaneness

Who is a human being? And how should he or she be treated?[24] In India, the Basel missionaries found these to be relevant questions.[25] They did not always agree with the Indians about the definition of who was to be considered a human being and what place this person took in society or in relation to animals. The definition of humanity itself was contested. Furthermore,

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21 Ibid., 503f. On civilisation and humanitarianism in British missions see e.g. Richard Price, *Making Empire. Colonial Encounters and the Creation of Imperial Rule in Nineteenth-Century Africa* (Cambridge 2008), on the differences between the earlier missions described in this study and later nineteenth-century missions see Robert Eric Frykenberg, *Christianity in India. From Beginnings to the Present* (Oxford 2008), 339, on double-bound approach to culture and civilisation of evangelical and pietistic missions see Jeffrey Cox, "The Missionary Movement", in Denis G. Paz (ed.), *English Religious Traditions. Retrospect and Prospect* (Westport, CT 1995), 197–220. On colonialism see e.g. Harald Fischer-Tiné/Michael Mann (ed.), *Colonialism as Civilizing Mission. Cultural Ideology in British India* (London 2004); Catherine Hall, *Civilising Subjects. Metropole and Colony in the English Imagination, 1830–1867* (Oxford 2002).

22 Warneck, *Abriß* (1910), 510.

23 Ibid., 511.

24 Cf. e.g. Joanna Bourke, *What It Means to Be Human: Historical Reflections From the 1800s to the Present* (Berkeley, CA 2013).

25 On the Basel Mission see Wilhelm Schlatter, *Geschichte der Basler Mission 1815–1915. Mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der ungedruckten Quellen*, 3 vols (Basel 1916); Paul Jenkins, *Kurze Geschichte der Basler Mission* (Basel 1989); on the Basel Mission in India see Judith Becker, Conversio *im Wandel. Basler Missionare zwischen Europa und Südindien und die Ausbildung einer Kontaktreligiosität,* 1834–1860 (Göttingen 2015).

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the Basel missionaries discussed, on a more sophisticated level, how humans were to behave and what made "competent" or "good" humans.[26] In this debate, they did not distinguish between male and female humans.

The first opposition was that between humans and animals. When Herrmann Mögling, one of the most influential Basel Indian missionaries, first arrived in Mumbai[27] in 1836 and accompanied his Scottish colleagues Wilson and Mitchell on occasion of their visit to an animal hospital, he was shocked to see that animals were treated better than some humans. Taking into consideration the Hindu doctrine of reincarnation, he could understand that animals were regarded as equal to humans, but that animals should receive better treatment than humans was beyond his comprehension. The argument that humans could ask for help whereas animals could not did not convince him; he thought that humans who did ask for help were often not heard.[28] The contrast between the treatment of animals and of certain groups of humans, certain castes, again and again disgusted the missionaries. They had not the slightest sympathy for the esteem in which Hindus held certain animals – not when taking their treatment of humans into account. A fundamental difference between the Indian and the European definition of life appeared. It was based on different religious systems, the Hindu doctrine of incarnation on the one hand and the Christian belief in a linear history that would result in eternal life or damnation on the other. These differing beliefs had informed Indian (not only Hindu) as well as European (mostly Christian) attitudes towards life and towards the definition of humanity. While in Hinduism the boundaries between human and animal were fluent, in European Christianity they were regarded as stable.

But the definition of humanity was debated not only in relation to animals like cows or monkeys. It was also contested with regard to humans themselves. And here, though Indian notions concerning certain castes or groups of people were sometimes adopted, the Basel missionaries' definitions and attributions as to who was considered human and who could be perceived as "animal" differed considerably from those of their Indian counterparts. And within the Basel community, different approaches can be found between the missionaries in India and the publishing and commentating editors of

26 Cf. e.g. Heidenbote 1837, 96. Cf. BMA, C-1,2 Mangalore 1836, no. 12, H. Mögling, 15.9.1836 for an more extensive description and the names and affiliations of the colleagues who welcomed the newcomers. Heidenbote 1846, 55.

27 As far as they are still recognisable, I use the official modern names of places in India. Only in cases when names have changed entirely and the towns are too small to be widely known have I retained the contemporary names. This decision was facilitated by the fact that the names were current in the nineteenth century, too, and their spelling differed considerably from one letter to the other, or even between reports in the *Heidenbote*. However, I am aware that the naming of many places is contested nowadays, too.

28 Quoted in Heidenbote 1837, 31.

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their letters, the mission inspector and later the editor of the *Heidenbote*. Generally speaking, the people living in Europe were more ready to adopt Indian descriptions of certain groups as "savage" or "animal-like" than the missionaries in India.

In his annual report for 1844, inspector Wilhelm Hoffmann reported on the newly begun mission among the Nayadis "who up to now had led a savage and wretched life in the woods and on the streets […]. They rambled around nearly naked like wild animals".[29] The main reason for this ascription as "savage" and the comparison with animals lay in the people's lack of sedentary ways, its clothing and dietary habits.[30] Sedentariness, to the Basel missionaries, was a main indicator of Christian development and faith.[31] Nevertheless, it was the mission inspector in Basel, not the missionaries in India, who wrote in this pejorative way about the people. The Christians' goal was, according to the inspector, to "educate these unfortunate people humanely".[32] Their goal was to form them as humans as opposed to their present life like "animals". To this end, education and schooling in Christianity were considered necessary, as was a fixed residence. The *stabilitas loci* was one of the few persistent motifs when the Basel Mission discussed Christianisation in relation to civilisation or humanisation.

Two years later, Hoffmann distanced himself from the Hindu perception of the Nayadis as animals. Though he had adopted the ascription in the years before, he now declared that their "progress in learning, in work and in Christian moral or civilisation" proved "that they were not tigers or hyenas as the Hindus think".[33] ("Hindu" in this context meant principally "Brahmin".[34]) The interesting point is that Hoffmann opposed "animal" not to "human" but

29 Heidenbote 1844, 62. Cf. also Heidenbote 1845, 13.

30 Cf. also the remarks in the annual report of 1845: Heidenbote 1845, 85. In Heidenbote 1844, 44. Johann Michael Fritz reported on the joy of the Nayadis when he had given them clothing so that they could, as he quoted the Nayadis, dress in a proper Indian way and thus appear as humans: "Ich hätte Ihnen und manchen vaterländischen Freunden es wünschen mögen, die Freude wahrnehmen zu können, die sich im Gesicht und Geberden dieser armen Leute kund that, als ich Abends jeglichem von ihnen ein Stück Zeug gab, mit dem sie sich nach indischer Weise ordentlich bekleiden konnten und wodurch sie, wie sie sich ausdrücken, nun in Stand gesetzt sind, als Menschen erscheinen zu können."

31 Cf. Judith Becker, "'Gehet hin in alle Welt …'. Sendungsbewusstsein in der evangelischen Missionsbewegung der ersten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts", in *Evangelische Theologie* 72 (2012), 134–154.

32 Heidenbote 1844, 62. Another stated goal was to "save" them from Muslim missions.

33 Heidenbote 1846, 74.

34 The Basel Missionaries followed the general European trend to identify Brahmin and Sanskrit traditions with "Hinduism". As an introduction see Gavin D. Flood, *An Introduction to Hinduism* (Cambridge 1996); Axel Michaels, *Der Hinduismus. Geschichte und Gegenwart* (Munich ²2012). On the entanglement between Hindu and Christian approaches see Hugh Pyper, "The Battle of the Books: The Bible Versus the Vedas", in C. L. Crouch / Jonathan Stöckl (ed.), *In the Name of God. The Bible in the Colonial Discourse of Empire* (Leiden 2014), 169–187.

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to "Christian". It was their progress in education, civilisation and Christianity that proved the Nayadis' humanity.[35]

The definition of "Christian" as "human" was also behind the description of Brahmins as animal-like. In 1839, the charismatic Samuel Hebich was referred to as suffering from "very hard work with the grand Brahmins". He wrote: "If our dear ones at home could see the fight with these wild animals for one hour only they would recognise, I am sure, that more favourable intercession for us and our work is needed."[36] What turned Brahmins into animals in Hebich's view was their persistent opposition to Christianity, a resistance not only on their own part but also, in the missionaries' perception, engaged in keeping others from converting.[37] – On the other hand, Brahmins could also refer to the Europeans as belonging to the "race of monkeys" and thus assert their own superiority.[38] Both sides referred to their religious-political opponents as "animals", an ascription which was used in both directions and functioned, of course, on a very different level from the discussion about the humanity of lower castes.

After visiting the animal hospital in 1836, Mögling saw some Hindu holy men, accompanied by his colleagues Johannes Layer and Heinrich Frey. He found the holy men to be disgusting and "hardly resembling humans". Another holy man was, he thought, even more abhorrent. The man showed the dead fingers of a hand in which he held a green flower. According to Mögling, he boasted of his indifference towards his body.[39] The Christian message, however, was considered as relevant to the body as to the soul. This degree of asceticism was too much even for the ascetically inclined Mögling.[40] In his view, the holy man no longer behaved like a human being and voluntarily neglected his body, a gift from God. A different definition of asceticism as well as of humanity informed the missionaries' and the Hindu perception of these saints. Not only was the "right" connection of body and soul contested, but also the definition of body and of physical pleasure or, in this case, suffering.

Yet the missionaries' assessment of the Indians was not unidirectional. The same missionary could voice very different opinions. In 1846, the

35 Their regular prayers and their request for "Christian" names had already been quoted in the first reference to this new mission in 1844, thus elevating them above animals.

36 Heidenbote 1839, 89.

37 In a similar vein, Christian Müller reported on a Hindu festival where drunken Hindu guests became like "wild animals". Heidenbote 1846, 27f. Here, too, an opposition to values, practices and religion informed the attribution as "animals".

38 Heidenbote 1841, 68f.

39 Heidenbote 1837, 31.

40 Mögling's attitude towards ascetics can be seen in his attempt to live like one of his Indian converts or audience and those were mainly from lower castes. His motif, however, was not ascetics but imitation of St. Paul; cf. 1 Cor. 9:20.

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Heidenbote quoted several pages from Heinrich Albrecht's diary from 1844, when Albrecht had been in India for two years. He complained about "the Hindu" and enumerated "his" negative character traits, concluding with a reference to the ancient proverb about the Cretans: "They are always liars, evil beasts, slow bellies."[41] A few pages later, the same Albrecht praised "the Hindus" for being better than "our white people at home" and thus closer to the Kingdom of God.[42] Depending on the context, the attitude towards and estimation of the Indians could change considerably, particularly if the Indians were Hindus. Muslims were generally seen more negatively, less susceptible for evangelisation, but on the other hand they usually were not compared to animals, either. Catholic Indians, if they did not prove open to conversion, were seen even more negatively, but most certainly as humans.[43]

The assessment of the Indians depended on their attitude towards the missionaries and on their practices towards the evangelising men and women. It was, therefore, a religious assessment. On the same page as the last quotation, Albrecht explained the goal of his mission: "to speak a word of truth, whereby vicious people shall become good people". He explained to his audience that all men were bad, without any exception, and that only faith could make them good and keep them from living in sin.[44] In this perception, conversion and faith were what made men human.

This opinion underlay the missionaries' notion that they could actually see who was a Christian and who was not. They repeatedly reported on external features in which they thought they saw the degree of "Christianness". This mostly referred to the faith, but sometimes also to posture or deportment. Of course, actions, keeping to "Christian" values and practices, were perceived as a more or less objective indicator, but features and posture also came up fairly often.[45] An open face, a "free" look indicated the Indian's inner beliefs, or so thought the missionaries. An additional feature was joy spread over the face.[46] When they could not see the "likeness of a disciple", they became suspicious of the person.[47] As in other respects, external features

41 Heidenbote 1846, 49. Cf. Titus 1:12.

42 Ibid., 55.

43 On Syrian Christians in India see Paul Verghese (ed.), *Die syrischen Kirchen in Indien* (Stuttgart 1974); George Oommen, "Strength of Tradition and Weakness of Communication – Central Kerala Dalit Conversion", in Geoffrey A. Oddie (ed.), *Religious Conversion Movements in South Asia. Continuities and Change, 1800–1990* (Richmond 1996), 79–95. Cf. also Matthias Frenz, "The Illusion of Conversion. Śiva Meets Mary at Vēḷāṅkaṇṇi in Southern India", in Richard Fox Young/Jonathan A. Seitz (ed.), *Asia in the Making of Christianity. Conversion, Agency, and Indigeneity, 1600s to the Present* (Leiden 2013), 373–401.

44 Heidenbote 1846, 55.

45 Cf. e.g. Heidenbote 1841, 67; 1843, 65f.; 1852, 65, 68. Most of these general remarks were written by the editor of the Heidenbote in Europe.

46 Heidenbote 1836, 81.

47 Ibid., 81.

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became indicators of inner processes and of faith itself. This contradicted the awakened missionaries' concept of conversion as personal *metanoia* but became increasingly important in India, where they had to evaluate a person's standing in faith, both in view of their reports to Europe and in view of the question of baptism.[48] With regard to the appearance of a person, his or her features decided whether they were to be considered human, because humanity was directly linked to faith and thus the individual's relationship to God.

This also became visible when the missionaries wrote about new converts and Indian (and European) congregations. Reporting back to the mission committee and their supporters in Europe, they had to count the converts and the members of congregations and Christian communities.[49] They did not count "persons" or "people", they counted "souls". What was important about their mission was bringing souls to God. This means that what defined people was not their being humans – walking on their feet, having a *ratio*, having speech etc. – but their having souls and turning them to God. Although the body was not to be neglected, the soul was the main feature of being human.

3. Humanity as Unity and Equality

Like Warneck, the missionaries were convinced that, fundamentally, all people were equal. This meant first and foremost that all people were equally sinners.[50] They were all descended from Adam and Eve, created in God's image, but had been included in the fall of humankind.[51] Therefore, they were all sinners. As difficult as it was to convey this doctrine to the Hindu and Muslim Indians who had a very different concept of sin, the missionaries held it to be fundamental to the Christian faith and did not deviate from it. It enabled them to accept the Indians as equal and to receive them into an imagined community of sinners, to build a unity of humankind in which Europeans, Asians and Africans were alike.[52]

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48 Cf. Becker, Conversio *im Wandel*.

49 Cf. e.g. Heidenbote 1836, 83, 86.

50 Heidenbote 1842, 86; 1844, 39.

51 In 1844, Mögling explained by use of reproduction and lineage the unity of humankind: "Der Beweis für die Einheit der Menschen, daß aus der Verbindung irgend welcher Menschenracen Kinder geboren werden, daß aber eine Rabe und ein Papagei etc. keine Junge hecken können, verschaffte einen vollständigen Sieg." (Heidenbote 1844, 48).

52 Of course, the missionaries would not have denied the hierarchies that existed in the colonial situation, nor would they have wished to overturn them entirely. But they added another aspect to the picture and, from a religious and eschatological perspective, they accepted the Indians as equal. On mission and colonial situations see Becker (ed.), *European Missions in Contact Zones*. One of the fundamental postcolonial approaches to missions is Jean Comaroff/John

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In the missionaries' view, all humankind was not only alike in sin but also in the need for redemption. They were convinced that all religions, too, searched for redemption.[53] In their missionary disputes with Indians, the missionaries often referred to themselves in order to illustrate the need for redemption – and its possibility. They explicitly placed themselves on the same level as the Indians.[54] The goal in this case was to convince the Indians of the truth of their evangelisation. The comparison was to convince the Indians by putting Christian teaching into practice before their eyes. At the same time, it underlined the equality of all humankind, an important point particularly for members of lower castes.

Comparisons and references to equality were drawn not only with regard to Indians but also in view of the European audience, which the missionaries addressed directly from time to time. In these cases, the references served a different goal: They were to plead for understanding for and acceptance of the difficulties Indians had in embracing "Christian" values and adopting "Christian" (i.e. European) practices. Examples of sins that could be found everywhere, including among the missionaries, were haughtiness and conceitedness, as Hermann Gundert explained in 1846.[55] All other deviations that were highly reproachful to the Basel community were referred to, as well.

However, the missionaries were convinced that all the Indians, too, even the most disadvantaged ones, were of "God's house",[56] which is to say that there were elements in them that referred back to the creation of all and that "God's law was written into their hearts" – the old theory of natural theology[57] –, which enabled them to hear the message and eventually return to God. They were, in short, part of creation and part of the redeemed people. This, too, entailed the perception of all humankind as equal.

L. Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution. Christianity, Colonialism, and Consciousness in South Africa* (Chicago, IL 1991).

53 Heidenbote 1841, 30.

54 Heidenbote 1846, 44: "daher auch ich gekommen sey, sie zu laden, und sie bitte, diese Gnade anzunehmen, daß sie dem Zorn entrinnen möchten. Sey ich doch Sünder wie sie, Fleisch von ihrem Fleisch, Blut von ihrem Blut: aber gläubig worden und darum beschenkt mit Sündenvergebung und heiligem Geist, so daß ich dürfe nun als Zeuge von diesem Allem dienen." This approach was adopted by the Indian catechists, cf. Heidenbote 1849, 41. On missions and colonialism in India see e.g. Jeffrey Cox, *Imperial Fault Lines. Christianity and Colonial Power in India, 1818–1940* (Stanford, CA 2002); see also Chad M. Bauman, *Christian Identity and Dalit Religion in Hindu India, 1868–1947* (Grand Rapids, MI 2008); and Becker, Conversio *im Wandel*.

55 Heidenbote 1846, 31.

56 Heidenbote 1838, 8.

57 See as an introduction Walter Sparn, "Natürliche Theologie", in TRE 24 (Berlin 1994), 85–98.

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Most importantly, Christ had died and risen for all humankind, including those who were still "heathens". He was "the saviour not only of the Franks and the English but the saviour of the world".[58] Because his death had, in the Christian faith, been for all, all people were or would be equal and united in him.[59] This Christian teaching became fundamental to the missionaries who lived among people of other faiths, cultures and traditions. They believed that eventually all would be one.

The notion of the equality of humankind was strengthened by the conviction of the unity and equality of all Christians. It was illustrated in India by the unity of "black and white" Christians in one church, particularly in Kannur where Samuel Hebich worked among Indian and European Christians alike and where he insisted on the unity of both congregations, on communal services and feasts and where people from very different backgrounds assembled regularly.[60]

Once an Indian had converted, he or she was to be accepted into the community of Christians and (officially) regarded as equal. This, of course, was a statement of faith. In reality, Indians were not always treated as equal. Yet, the factual inequality could head into two directions.

Firstly, in accordance with the theory of stages of development, Indian converts were often regarded as junior to European Christians.[61] They were treated with what the missionaries thought was love and respect, but they were also often treated like children. The Indian convert Hermann Anandrao Kaundinya, a Brahmin, had been educated in Basel as missionary and worked as a regular missionary in India from 1851.[62] Officially, he worked on equal terms with his European colleagues, but not all of them accepted him as equal and he repeatedly complained about his treatment. At the same time, he was best friend and confidant to Hermann Mögling, who did not make any distinction between Kaundinya and his European colleagues. Meanwhile, the missionary who opposed Kaundinya most, Samuel Kullen, had been educated alongside and sent out with Kaundinya. It later turned out that Kullen was a paedophile and that Kaundinya had tried to warn the Basel committee of him. This personal antagonism may also have influenced Kullen's treatment of the Brahmin convert missionary colleague.

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58 Heidenbote 1846, 56.

59 Heidenbote 1838, 30.

60 Cf. e.g. Heidenbote 1843, 69.

61 See e.g. for an approach influential at the time Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte*.

62 On Kaundinya see Katrin Binder, "Herrmann Anandrao Kaundinya", in Albrecht Frenz/Stefan Frenz (ed.), *Zukunft im Gedenken. Future in Remembrance* (Norderstedt 2007), 419–424; Mrinalini Sebastian, "Mission Without History? Some Ideas for Decolonizing Mission", in *International Review of Mission* 93 (2004), 75–96.

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Secondly, Indians were quite often depicted as model Christians and used to illustrate to the European audience what a Christian life should be.[63] In this case, the Indians were held up as superior to the Europeans. Both attitudes can be found in the mission periodicals as well as the manuscript sources, sometimes on the same page. The reason for this was the conviction of the fundamental unity and equality in the Christian faith.

When they tried to convey this conviction to the Indians, it acquired what was, to the Europeans, a new sense: as opposition to caste divisions. At the same time, this opposition was used to illustrate the Christian belief in the unity and equality of all humankind in contrast to the perceived Indian tradition.[64] The missionaries promoted the idea that it was opposition to the caste system that underscored the superiority of the Protestant faith over Indian traditions. When confronted with the South Indian caste system, the missionaries insisted that castes were made by humans (or the devil acting through them), and that God opposed castes.[65] They repeatedly declared that there was only one caste, the caste of humans. When one of his pupils, on being asked by a Hindu in 1841, stated that they were of the Christian caste, Georg Friedrich Sutter interrupted the conversation by stating that "they are of the human caste".[66] He then added that, therefore, he himself belonged to the same caste. The unity of humankind in one caste was not to be divided by races or cultures, at least not in theory.

People who wanted to convert had to leave their caste, or better: had to transgress caste boundaries, eat and drink and pray together.[67] There was no way back for those converts, because their former caste members would not accept them back once they had eaten with members of other castes. This made conversion appealing to members of lower castes and daunting to those of higher castes.[68] For the missionaries, this approach had not only the advan-

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63 See Judith Becker, "'Dear Reader, Remember This': Mission Reports as Paradigms for Revival in Europe. The Barmer Missionsblatt and Basel Evangelischer Heidenbote in the Nineteenth Century", in Christian Soboth, Pia Schmid with Veronika Albrecht-Birkner, Hartmut Lehmann, Thomas Müller-Bahlke and Udo Sträter (ed.), *"Schrift soll leserlich seyn." Der Pietismus und die Medien. Beiträge zum IV. Internationalen Kongress für Pietismusforschung 2013*, 2 vols (Hallesche Forschungen 44/1+2), Halle 2016, vol. I, 149–162.

64 The Hindu conception of castes had been adopted by Islam, Syrian and Catholic Christianity in India, see e.g. David Mosse, *The Saint in the Banyan Tree. Christianity and Caste Society in India* (Berkeley, CA 2012).

65 Heidenbote 1844, 70; 1845, 53.

66 Heidenbote 1841, 26. Cf. also Heidenbote 1846, 51.

67 Only in rare cases and against their conviction the missionaries allowed caste divisions, cf. Heidenbote 1844, 38.

68 See e.g. Rowena Robinson/Sathianathan Clarke (ed.), *Religious Conversion in India. Modes, Motivations, and Meanings* (Oxford 2003); Bauman, *Christian Identity and Dalit Religion*; Walter Fernandes, *Caste and Conversion Movements in India. Religion and Human Rights* (New Delhi 1981).

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tage of illustrating Christian unity in daily life but also of denigrating other Indian religions. It was mainly a religious, not a political statement, but since religion and politics could not be separated in India at the time, it had social and political consequences in an attempted breakup of the caste system.

Still, the conviction of the unity of all humankind was not only applied within India, but also in addressing the European audience: The missionaries in their reports repeatedly referred to the "beauty" of Indian people.[69] Since people who were considered internally bad were also depicted as bad-looking, the references to the beauty of the Indians illustrated their inner beauty, their (possible) faith and their humaneness.

And even if the Indians were not yet obviously equal in faith they could soon become so. Herrmann Mögling, in a mission sermon to an English audience in 1838, reprimanded those who looked down on Indians "as a lower species of humankind". "Whoever does this throws away the gemstone whose brilliance is still hidden beneath the rougher crust". Mögling counted on the future to demonstrate the value of the Indians. He also thought that friendship with Indian converts was possible and that it "would one day be more delightful than anything".[70] This was a sermon preached in his first years in India. When looking back twenty years later, Mögling claimed that he had not thought real friendship with Indians possible but that he had experienced it with Kaundinya and others and had seen that communion was not dependent on tradition or on race but only on faith.[71]

That he could imagine such a community at the beginning of his work in India and that his colleagues voiced similar opinions on unity and equality was based on the conviction that all people would be one at the end of days.[72] Even if the unity was not lived at the time and might never be fulfilled on earth, all Pietistic missionaries were convinced that in the eschaton, they would experience full unity. This would also be shown in communal meals.[73] When stressing this aspect, the missionaries adapted their eschatological conviction to what concerned Indians in light of their culture.

69 Heidenbote 1839, 45.
70 Heidenbote 1838, 29.
71 BMA, C-1.26 Kurg 1860, no. 38, H. Mögling, 21.7.1860.
72 Heidenbote 1844, 39.
73 Heidenbote 1841, 83.

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4. Humanity as Poor Relief: Humanitarianism

"I know that love of the saviour and love of the heathens are the first virtues of a missionary",[74] wrote Basel inspector Joseph Josenhans in 1852. To love one's neighbours was an important concept that motivated young men and women to become missionaries. It played a major part in the future missionaries' applications to the Basel institution. They founded it in the love of God and in the double commandment of love.[75] It is present in many applications from 1820 to 1860.[76] The future missionaries explained that they loved the "poor heathens" whom they saw as their neighbours.[77]

In this way, albeit maybe involuntarily or even unconsciously, they introduced a hierarchy between themselves and their "neighbours". This hierarchy was, in the first place, spiritually defined and pertained to Indians as well as Europeans.[78] When a collegial missionary was found to have acted in a deviant manner like Christian Greiner, who was found to have had an long-standing extramarital affair in Mangalore in 1856, they interpreted this as proof of his not having really been converted, not really believing in God and not living in tight connection with God. The colleague and brother became the "poor Greiner". Correspondingly, when an Indian converted and became a missionary colleague like Kaundinya, he was not only no longer a heathen but was also no longer considered "poor"; he became the "dear brother", the "dear Kaundinya". "Poor" and "dear" were mainly spiritual attributes. The "neighbour" was, from a religious perspective, everyone.

Many candidates defined love as compassion, and this compassion was, again, mainly spiritually informed. It was also based on their own experience of conversion and of being a sinner and needing justification and grace. They thought that every sinner who did not know the only way to salvation, conversion to "real" faith, needed compassion – and mission. The missionaries

74 Heidenbote 1852, 70.

75 Matth. 22:36–40 parr.

76 Cf. BMA, BV. The applications were been analysed in in ten-year intervals, supplemented by the applications of those who were later sent to India.

77 Cf. e.g. BMA, BV 139 (Christian Leonhard Greiner), Lebens-Geschichte [1830], 2v; BV 252 (Christian Jakob Bomwetsch), [Lebenslauf, 1840], 4; BV 590 (Johannes Weiblen), [Lebenslauf], 23.11.1859, 1.

78 As a matter of course, the missionaries also believed in the concept of European superiority over other peoples and cultures. This theory became more widespread and more pronounced during the nineteenth century, and most members of the missionary movement adopted it in one way or the other. Still, except for single exceptions, they never adopted it entirely. The evaluation of people from a spiritual perspective continued to exist. Cf. e.g. Jeffrey Cox, *The British Missionary Enterprise Since 1700* (New York 2008), 114–144.

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later compared themselves to those to whom they were sent and thus created a feeling of unity and equality.[79]

The mission candidates expressed compassion for those who had not yet heard about God's saving grace and who therefore, in their view, still lived in "darkness", under the power of the devil.[80] What they intended to do, was "saving souls"[81] as their own souls had been saved by their conversion. To the glory of God, they wanted to share with others the gifts that God had bestowed upon them. And they wanted, at the same time, to further the imminent Kingdom of God. They were convinced that the eschaton was soon to come.[82]

Of course, all these ideas of the candidates were very idealistic and far removed from any reality because all they had to help them imagine what life in a foreign country was like and how the "heathens" lived was their Pietistic education and, as the century progressed, a growing number of missionary publications. Once they arrived in the missionary contact zones their attitudes changed considerably. The "poor heathens" became real people and their problems, too, became real. As a result, the definition of "poor" was modified. To be sure, the spiritual definition persisted, but it was complemented by a secular definition. People in Asia and even more so in Africa were "poor" not only on a spiritual level but also socially and economically. This pertained to slaves and former slaves among whom the Basel missionaries worked in West Africa and it was also true for the lower castes in India, Basel's most important Indian converts.

At the same time, the idea of the power of the devil, not only over the souls of people but also within cultures, was substantiated, too. The missionaries became convinced that they experienced the devil at work, particularly in cultures that were – as they saw it – permeated by religion and that were

79 Heidenbote 1853, 103.

80 Cf. e.g. BMA, BV 138 (Joh. Christoph Friedr. Schmidt), letter to C. G. Blumhardt, 13.1.1828, 2r. The difference between darkness and light was also a favoured topic in mission conversations, Heidenbote 1841, 26.

81 Cf. e.g. BMA, BV 611 (Friedrich Wilhelm Schnepf), Kurzer Ueberblick über meine Jugendjahre [1860], 7. Heidenbote 1835, 29. The love of neighbours, too, was fundamentally meant as a love of their souls. Heidenbote 1841, 80.

82 On this, cf. e.g. the debate published in Ernst Staehelin, *Die Christentumsgesellschaft in der Zeit von der Erweckung bis zur Gegenwart. Texte aus Briefen, Protokollen und Publikationen* (Basel 1974), 209–325. This is only one example of the expectation of the imminent return of Christ. Cf. on the mission's historical conception and consciousness also Judith Becker, "Die Christianisierung fremder Völker – ein Zeichen für die nahende Endzeit?", in id. / Bettina Braun (ed.), *Die Begegnung mit Fremden und das Geschichtsbewusstsein* (Göttingen 2012), 183–204; Judith Becker, "Zukunftserwartungen und Missionsimpetus bei Missionsgesellschaften in der ersten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts", in Wolfgang Breul / Jan Carsten Schnurr (ed.), *Geschichtsbewusstsein und Zukunftserwartung in Pietismus und Erweckungsbewegung* (Göttingen 2013), 244–270.

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highly developed like Hinduism.[83] It was the duty of a Christian to fight against this and rescue people from the power of the devil.

In one of his first reports from India, Johann Christoph Lehner deplored how "deeply sunken" the people were, a condition that was also considered to be a kind of poverty. This was, of course, a religious judgement. But Lehner filled the statement with references to spiritual as well as secular matters: On a spiritual level, he found "blindness", "idolatry" and "sin" everywhere, also "poverty" that could be interpreted in a religious as well as a secular way. He explained this with the "imperiousness" of the priesthood, yet another sign of "sunkenness", although it went along with high social standing and mostly also with wealth. Lehner contrasted the condition of the lower people with India's natural wealth and beauty and with the possibilities they offered.[84] The extreme discrepancies between possibilities and the practice and life they perceived in India induced the missionaries to broaden their conception of poverty, compassion and their duties towards their neighbours and to include secular relief as an important aspect of their mission.

Although conversion and the "saving" of souls remained at the centre of the mission programme – and particularly of the reports about it –, poor relief had been, from the beginning, an important part of the work of the missionaries.[85] It became even more pronounced because they thought they could set themselves apart from the Hindus who, as the missionaries perceived it, did not necessarily help their neighbours if they were poor and from lower castes.[86] Poor relief as a traditional pastoral duty of Christians was elevated in India to an indicator of "true" faith, increasingly perceived as a means of not only helping the poor but also of converting. This was the case not only in India, but also in Europe. In Europe, too, poverty was defined spiritually as well as socially, and social poverty was often seen as an external expression

83 Heidenbote 1847, 65.

84 Heidenbote 1835, 27f: "Aber um so schauerlicher wirkte der schneidende Kontrast auf unser Gemüth, denn der Anblick eines tief versunkenen Menschengeschlechtes um uns her auf unsere Seele machte. Fülle und Armuth, Hoheit und schmutzige Verwerflichkeit stellen sich im stärksten Gegensatze hier dem Blicke des Fremdlings dar, und während das Auge mit Wohlgefallen auf der Pracht und dem reichen Überflusse der Natur ruht, wird das Herz tief verwundet über der unsäglichen Versunkenheit, Blindheit und Armuth eines Volkes, das in den Fesseln eines rohen Aberglaubens und einer herrschsüchtigen Priesterschaft liegt, und unter dem Fluch der Sünde zu schmachten scheint. An allen Straßenecken wird man eine Schaar dieser unglücklichen gewahr, welche auf dem Boden umher liegen wie Schafe, die keinen Hirten haben […]". This can be contrasted with Lehner's own report of his journey to India in which he stated that he wanted "to be useful to our poor heathen brethren." Ibid.

85 The impact of poor relief in missions in India is illustrated e.g. by Bauman, *Christian Identity*. For an overview over poor relief and social welfare in nineteenth century Protestantism. See below, note 88.

86 Heidenbote 1835, 20.

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of inner poverty with regard to faith.[87] Generally speaking, the missionaries acted in India as their Pietistic compatriots did in Europe, on the basis of the same convictions and with the same goal.

The Basel missionaries were not willing to support paupers on a permanent basis, but they were willing to offer one-time help (particularly if they thought they had found new candidates for conversion) or to provide a living by offering new means of employment.

Furthermore, work was meant to educate people towards the Christian faith. It was used as a test of the sincerity of candidates for conversion. If they were not willing to work, they were not considered to be sincerely interested in becoming Christians.[88] The Basel missionaries were not out to distribute alms. They could not afford to do so, but alms did not fit into their worldview either. As their main motif was "saving souls" by leading people to conversion, they did not want to raise people only socially or economically. Here, the body came into the play again. It was, the missionaries thought, made by God in order to work and to maintain the soul. And if they had to choose between body and soul, they would, of course, take the soul and leave the body. Also, the body had an important impact on the soul: work was interpreted as a means against superstition.[89] As social and economic poverty was interpreted as an expression of inner poverty, so was physical work as a means of relief from spiritual poverty – as long as it was accompanied by evangelisation, of course.

Another secular motive for providing work and caring for the poor was produced by the missionaries themselves: When Indians converted to Christianity they had to leave their castes, in the perspective of the missionaries as well as in that of their fellow caste members who turned them out when they broke caste boundaries. Because castes were usually linked to specific professions, converts lost their profession and thus their income.[90] Providing for them was fundamental to the mission and they often deplored that they had not more means to support converts. This, however, was a kind of poverty that was partly created by the mission. Still, to them, the quest for the right kind of work also had a religious aspect: Many of their first converts were from among the Billava, the "toddy drawer" (makers of palm wine) caste. As alcohol was seen as potentially dangerous, the missionaries searched for

87 And it was often the same people who supported poor relief and Bible distribution in Europe and the missions. See e.g. Stähelin, Christentumsgesellschaft, 182f., 186f., 227; Martin Friedrich, *Kirche im gesellschaftlichen Umbruch. Das 19. Jahrhundert* (Göttingen 2006); Traugott Jähnichen/Norbert Friedrich, "Geschichte der sozialen Ideen im deutschen Protestantismus", in Walter Euchner et al. (ed.), *Geschichte der sozialen Ideen in Deutschland. Sozialismus, katholische Soziallehre, protestantische Sozialethik. Ein Handbuch* (Essen 2000), 867–1103.

88 Heidenbote 1843, 56.

89 Heidenbote 1845, 14.

90 Heidenbote 1853, 16.

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new forms of employment, whether the toddy drawers were allowed by their compatriots to pursue their profession or not. Christian Greiner called regular work a "means of education", meaning education to the Christian faith.[91]

Schools could also be seen as a part of poor relief, in a secular as well as a spiritual way, because their main objective was to evangelise by use of catechism and Bible lessons and by teaching how to read and write with the help of religious texts.[92] They could thus be considered as contributing to spiritual and secular poor relief, by teaching about salvation and by education that would allow people to get office jobs, for instance in the colonial administration.

In 1838, Herrmann Mögling called the poor house "a very important appendix to missions".[93] Gathering poor people became a mission strategy. They were assembled, dependent on the missionaries, were perceived as mostly grateful and thus as easy candidates for conversion – although the Basel missionaries continued to ask for "real", inner conversions and under these conditions, they could not always be sure of the motives. However, they also began to argue that conversion to Christianity and leaving Hinduism could be a first step that was to be followed by the second step of inner conversion, a concept that differed considerably from the stance maintained in Europe.

Even though addressing themselves to poor people had a concrete secular motive – it was these people who were most willing to listen to the missionaries – it was also interpreted in a religious way: In 1837, Christian Leonhard Greiner declared that preaching to the poor was a main duty.[94] This perception was based on the biblical account, according to which Jesus not only was often depicted as a teacher of the poor but also was quoted as having answered the questions of the disciples of John the Baptist if he was the messiah: "Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the gospel is preached."[95] Greiner thus depicted himself as follower of Jesus when he preached to the poor.

The missionaries' notion of slavery, too, was important in this context. In India, Layer found the people "in the devil's bonds of slavery", internally

91 Heidenbote 1841, 61.

92 The Basel India mission had been founded in order to build a school and an institution that would educate future catechists. On his first mission journey, which mainly aimed to get to know other missions and missionaries from European partner societies, Samuel Hebich visited his first school in India, Heidenbote 1835, 29.

93 Heidenbote 1838, 94: "ein sehr wichtiges Anhängsel einer Mission". Later, the Basel Mission ran its own poor house in Tellicherry, Heidenbote 1851, 40.

94 Heidenbote 1837, 3.

95 Luke 7:22.

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as well as externally.[96] That is to say that the Basel missionaries interpreted the lives of Hindus or Muslims as lives of inner slavery. Belief in what the awakened missionaries considered invented or man-made gods, living in a religious system of higher and lower gods (for the lower castes, this meant mainly lower gods) in which voluntary "possession" as they called it, or an "altered state of consciousness",[97] as it might more appropriately be called, seemed to them to be slavery of a special kind. This was based on the Lutheran Pietistic conviction that a person could only either be turned to God or to the devil.

The perception of double slavery was applied also to Indian culture and particularly to the caste system. Being born into a particular caste precluded social mobility. What is more, living within caste boundaries that were absolute and in lower castes that were interpreted as polluting higher ones was, to the European missionaries, a kind of slavery, too. In both cases, with regard to "possession" and with regard to "caste", slavery was an interpretation, an attribution of the European missionaries to Indian life and it was based on their religious convictions. It affected their actions in India and their attitudes towards Indians considerably. Liberation from this kind of slavery was perceived as an eminent goal.

Poor relief thus was not an aim in itself, it was only meant to accompany the efforts towards evangelisation. It was used as a means to attract people, it was seen as a necessary by-product of or a support for conversion. It was also seen as a "Christian" duty and central to the Pietistic system of values. Therefore, although it was far from insignificant, it was not primary purpose of the mission.

5. Conclusion: Understandings of "Humanity" and Their Foundational Role in German Protestant Missions

Humanity was a foundational and substantiating element in the nineteenth-century German Protestant missions in several respects: The Pietists thought it their duty to missionise because of the unity of humankind, they thought it their duty to help others because of the unity of body and soul,

96 Heidenbote 1841, 71. On the conception of slavery in the Basel Indian mission and the development of a contact religiosity cf. Judith Becker, "Liberated by Christ: Evangelical Missionaries and Slavery in Nineteenth Century South India", in id. (ed.), *European Missions in Contact Zones*, 65–85.

97 Masataka Suzuki, "*Bhūta* and *Daiva*. Changing Cosmology of Rituals and Narratives in Karnataka", in *Senri Ethnological Studies* 71 (2008), 51–85, on p. 54.

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and in both respects to fulfil the duty of loving their neighbours, which was considered the foremost commandment to Christians.

Once in the mission countries, they came upon further questions that made them voice their anthropological and theological beliefs with regard to other religious and cultural concepts and to ponder on and deepen their ideas of humanity in the sense of humaneness. In the contact zone, they slightly modified their anthropological views of people and entered into a discussion about who was human and about the boundaries between humans and animals and the right treatment of both. This as well as encounters with Hindu holy men made them discuss the relationship between body and soul and the duties towards both. And while they considered the soul much more important than the body, they maintained that care for the body was important, too. Ultimately, what made humans human was their Christian faith. Remarkably, the opposite of "animal" was "Christian".

In the Indian context, humanity in the sense of humanitarianism consisted mainly of poor relief. But here, too, the definition of "poor" related to the body as well as the soul. The Pietistic missionaries always wanted to help the whole person, body and soul. Poor relief without a spiritual dimension was not what they had in mind. Indeed, it was only in the mission countries that they fully realised the social and economic dimensions of poverty – even if most of them had come from lower strata themselves.

Poor relief was closely tied to mission and conversion. On the one hand, it was a mission strategy: Caring for the poor brought them into contact with the mission. Furthermore, members of lower castes were more amenable to mission than Brahmins and other upper-caste Indians. One of the main reasons for this attitude lay again in the missionaries' conception of humanity: in their emphasis on the unity of humankind. This emphasis made Christianity attractive to people from lower castes, whilst deterring those of higher castes.

Poor relief, however, only seldom consisted in giving alms (at least in the self-perception and -representation of the mission). It consisted in offering work, employment and other means of self-support to the (future) converts. The body, given by God, was to be used and it was be employed as a means of conversion itself. The Basel missionaries were convinced that work would help people on their way to inner conversion. Implicitly, this may have had civilising implications, equating Christianity with (European) civilisation. Gustav Warneck discussed this openly – and dismissed a supposedly indissoluble link between civilisation and Christianisation.

The conception of humanity that ultimately undergirded the German Protestant missions was the believed unity of humankind. Although in practice they introduced new hierarchies and superiorities and their opposition to caste distinctions may not have been only religiously founded but also

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a mission strategy, the fundamental belief that all humans were equal and united before God was one of the strongest motives to begin missions at all. It was predicated on the basic doctrines of creation, the fall, redemption and the eschatological perspective of unity in an (imminent) Kingdom of God.

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