

Send us missionaries!¹

A message at the beginning of 1951.

First of all, I would like to express my sincere joy, that our Bleckmar mission has remained **mission of the church** and that from now on it will be carried out as a **joint mission of Evangelical Lutheran Free Churches**. Three dioceses of Independent Evangelical Lutheran Churches are behind this joint venture: The Hanoverian diocese, which established and founded this mission 59 years ago and continues to support this as her work, plus the two Hessian dioceses, who have both supported this mission for decades already. Now we are hopeful that the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Prussia (Free Church of Breslau²) as well as the Evangelical Lutheran Free Church (Free Church in Saxony) will take up our missions as theirs too and therefore help us bear the responsibility for this mission work as churches. These Free Churches in Germany are joined together with the Free Evangelical Lutheran Synod in South Africa³ in this mission partnership and joint venture. The latter consisting of German pastors and congregations has proven itself as a firm and reliable pillar of our mission ever since it was founded. Humanely speaking we would not have survived the past 15 years without their great sacrifices.⁴

May God, the Lord grant, that those congregations of the Free Churches in Germany and South Africa, who are in cooperation to support this our mission will thereby receive great joy and strengthening of their spiritual life! May the Lord grant that all the help given to uplift and build the young Christian congregations in the heathen world will be a rich blessing to those helping and supporting. Yes, may they themselves be strengthened and empowered to continue faithfully in the Lutheran Confession.

[The Church at home and the missionaries must get to know each other!](#)

Probably only the elderly members of the Hanoverian Diocese will remember us Bleckmar missionaries personally. It's been quite a while since we shook our hands in farewell. We are under the impression, that the interest for our mission has slowly declined back home in Germany over the last 15 years. The younger generation doesn't know much about us. Those congregations from the Lutheran Free Churches that have now joined our mission endeavour, know us even less. Therefore, we will have to do much more to get to know each other better. I am very hopeful, that we can introduce our missionary families and their mission stations, substations and congregations to the churches, congregations and congregants back home in Germany through reports and pictures in this our "Missionsblatt". Even if this means is by no means perfect, still it might help to tie us closer together as partners in the same confessional mission. Please pray for this mission service faithfully.

¹ This is a request by Superintendent of Lutheran Missions Christoph Johannes jr (Salem near Piet Retief, S.E. Transvaal – today Mpumalanga) in the first "Missionsblatt" edited by Rev. Dr. Friedrich Wilhelm Hopf "*Missionsblatt Evangelisch-Lutherischer Freikirchen*" 1(1951)43 Pages 5-7, which was written on the 7th December 1950.

² Today Wrocław in Poland

³ FELSISA. This was founded on the 13th September 1892.

⁴ He is talking about the ongoing support by the Free Evangelical Lutheran Synod in South Africa of the mission work even during the years of the 2nd World War, when help from Germany was cut off and the mission in South Africa depended totally on local support. That's where the FELSISA stepped in most helpfully and with great sacrifice.

[We need missionaries immediately!](#)

It is now possible once again for people in Germany to support the mission in South Africa directly either by financial transfer and also by sending out missionaries. We don't know, whether this will be possible in future too nor how long this option will exist. Even now there are the threatening clouds of another even worse war piling up⁵. The almighty God can disperse them. Should however the last days have come upon us, then He can hold back the coming threat.⁶ **In the meantime we want to do our duty.** To do this, young missionaries are urgently needed to be sent out. We can and may not wait until the present course of students in the mission house at Bleckmar reaches its goal in a few year's time. For these young brothers there will still be enough work then. We missionaries however are all well ahead in years. We're old. **Just to fill the present vacancies, we need immediate replacements.** That's why it's not just desirable, but **definitely necessary, that candidates from the various Lutheran Free Churches hear our call immediately and take up this call positively to move to South Africa, to do the work of the Lord here as missionaries.**

[Two missionaries are lacking in the mission amongst the Batswana.](#)

In the mission amongst the Batswana we have very big congregations on both stations Roodepoort and Botsabelo with their various substations. Then there is also the expanding work on the Goldfields (Johannesburg). **Brother Henning is the only missionary** for this vast area and growing task. Brother missionary Schnell is continuing to work despite his old age especially in Sophiatown and on the West Rand. However due to his age he can only preach while sitting. Brother Henning serves a congregation of 3,700 members, who are spread out over 12 substations and places, where he can preach⁷. That already takes the full-time service of a missionary, but he must serve Botsabelo too, which has 1,300 members. The native pastor can't work without the supervision of the missionary. To cooperate with him missionary Henning needs a lot of wisdom and patience. So a missionary is very much in need there. I would however like to add, that we need a second missionary for Johannesburg. Of course that brings up the issues of salary and also establishing and maintaining a suitable mission station in Johannesburg. Up to date this was just plain impossible for us due to our weak capacity. Still we can't evade this issue on the long run. In Johannesburg our members go to work and they will be lost, if we don't care for them.

[We need a young man for the Zulu-Mission too!](#)

I take care of the two stations **Esthondo** (Quellwasser) and **Mabola** from the base mission station Salem. This is not possible on a permanent basis. These two stations need to be consolidated and served by a missionary, who could take care of the 1,100 souls already members of these congregations. There is also a new task arising in this area. Many families from Mabola are moving to the Highveld. Some active people are gathering them and preaching God's word to them. Now they come to me and request that we will serve them the Lord's Supper. How am I to do this with my present load of too much work? Doubtless a younger man is required to help with this work.

⁵ Does he refer to the threats of the "Cold War" heating up and becoming another "Hot War"? I don't know.

⁶ He does not clarify, what is coming. He leaves that unsaid and refers just to "*Das Kommende!*"

⁷ "*Predigtorte*"

Three missionaries are required immediately and that is just to address the present work load and to carry this out as before. We should however not forget, that illness and death can cause even more vacancies very quickly, which would have to be filled also.

[New tasks require new and more strength](#)

We have been asked, whether our mission has **possibilities of expansion and growth** beyond our present limitations. I can mention the area of Umsinga, which belongs to the congregation Eben-Ezer. There a fully fledged mission station is to be built up. This is possible, because a friend and supporter of our mission passed away and left us with a sizable amount of money for this very purpose. This money is not available as yet, but as soon as we have it, this building project can be carried out. Then, however we will need another missionary there too. Furthermore our brother **missionary Weber**⁸ has been most active in investigating options of growth and expansion from his station in **Itshelejuba** into **S. Swaziland** and into **Tongaland**. He has written a special report about this, which will inform the mission congregation in detail. This envisioned work would also need more work force and even more money too.

A new year is beginning. Shortly our missionaries are going to send in their annual reports from their various mission stations and vocations. We will get to hear of some joyful happenings and developments, but probably also about some more depressing ones too. What else could we expect? We, who also have to stand in the fight against ourselves every day too! What greater temptations do the young Christians face, who are constantly surrounded by heathens and sectarians! Still the kingdom of God is rapidly spreading out. May HE continue to support us with His Grace!

⁸ This is Christian Heinrich Wilhelm Weber i.e. the grandson of Johann Friedrich Wilhelm Weber.