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Helge Wendt. *Die missionarische Gesellschaft: Mikrostrukturen einer kolonialen Globalisierung*. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2011. 321 S. ISBN 978-3-515-09864-9.

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H. Wendt: Die missionarische Gesellschaft

Mission histories have long concentrated on a single locality or an individual missionary. Only recently have historians engaged with a mission society in various regions, applying a transnational approach. cf. e.g.: Christine Winter, Looking after One's Own. The Rise of Nationalism and the Politics of the Neuendettelsauer Mission in Australia, New Guinea and Germany (1921-1933) (= Germanica Pacifica, Bd. 9), Frankfurt am Main 2012. Wendt's cultural historical thesis complements recent histories concerning protestant and catholic missionary societies. His focus lies on different European colonial powers' missionary communities in America, Asia and Africa from 1700 to 1900. To focus on missionaries' letters and reports from eight localities - Spanish Latin America, the Spanish Philippines, French and British Canada, Portuguese, French and British India, and Sri Lanka, as well as these three colonial powers' colonies in Africa - archival research in Rome and Birmingham was conducted. Primary sources in Spanish, English, French, Italian, Portuguese, and Latin were translated into German. Wendt skillfully intertwines mission, colonial and global history. He launches a debate on global history's benefits, drawbacks and initiates a new discourse in colonial mission history.

While Werner Ustorf describes the notion "missionarische Gesellschaft" as a "neologism" (p. v), Wendt explains that he draws and adapts Robert Strayer's "Mission Communities" (1978) (p. 15). Robert W. Strayer, The Making of Mission Communities in East Africa: Anglicans and Africans in Colonial Kenya, 1875-1935, London 1978. This concept is useful for Wendt's study and reminds of the sociological *life-world* often used by anthropological historians. A "missionarische Gesellschaft" is a social community in a colonial context that is under a missionary's influence. Wendt assumes that missionaries' agency had sustainable influence on their community. They created a sense of belonging, a parallel world. Consequently a shared identity space emerged. The missionary community is less of a theological, but a socio-political formation, for which religion was a basis of legitimacy. Wendt elaborates on forms and basic structures of social order in mission communities mentioned in missionary discourse. With this concept Wendt rightly expects to add value to mission history. To analyze mission communities, Wendt focuses on micro structures in colonial missions. He studies the heterogeneous and differentiated field of mission community in a diversity of voices, highlighting mission's global historical significance. Each chapter begins with depictions of impressions gleaned from primary sources. Applying a comparative approach, divergences not similarities or commonalities are outlined. Mission communities are seen as transnational societies, in which missionaries solely initiated a social development. Hence, the focus lies on the establishment, emergence, politics and sociology of a mission community. Wendt analyses this in four groups of themes: *Mission settlements as spaces of social order*, *Forms of missionary segregation politics*, *Education and Social Change* and *Indigenous Helpers and Native Clergy*.

The introduction (Globalisierung und Mission) - as the entire study - convinces through its structure and cross-referencing. The book's scheme is chronologically akin to a mission community's establishment. To gain a functional social order in a new settlement, the space's selection, the settlement's foundation and the village's establishment were necessary. Afterwards the subgrade in the form of buildings, churches and schools could be prepared. In a next step, agricultural practices helped to establish a social fabric in the mission community. As examples indicate, all mission communities directed their attention to tillage farming. Wendt subsequently describes life in existing settlements, emigration, and resettlement due to climatic and additional antagonistic influences. With a settlement of a mission community, written records started to exist. On the basis of them we can study the different indigenous groups' relations and

the relationship among indigenes and Europeans.

The last two chapters - chapters four (Erziehung und Sozialer Wandel) and five (Indigene Helfer und Nativer Klerus) - are broadly based on forms of education in mission communities. Education and sermons initiated a social change. Besides religious contents also secular elements, job training especially mechanical arts were introduced. In particular, language policy indicates the relation between mission schools and colonial states. In cases where the colonizers' language was part of the curriculum, we see that locals were Europeanized.

Chapter five indicates the mission community's development due to Christianization through a local prism. This chapter reminds of historians' studies at the Australian National University such as Hank Nelson. They showed how Pacific helpers to the Australasian Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society fostered evangelization through a prism of local identity in the 19th and 20th centuries. Considering different geographical areas and mission societies, Wendt goes back in time and elaborates on the benefit educated local helpers brought to Christianization. Each missionary determined which position the indigenous clergy experienced in the clerical hierarchy. The helpers' and village congregations' independence differed accordingly.

The global historical approach helps Wendt to dismantle unities such as localities, mission societies, confessions, nations, mission areas, and institutions. He highlights that colonial globalization's mission contained instable components. These cannot be studied in detail in his analysis of partial histories. Additionally, he illustrates that globalization was an asymmetrical net of inter-local conditions and inter- and intra-missionary societal exchange spaces between the local and the global, social roles and geographical spaces. These transformation processes are called "Mestizierung". The mission community was neither European nor local, but a new identity was established based on European and local characteristics. A "missionarische Gesellschaft" was, consequently, in all aspects, a community of exchange.

Although interesting, Wendt's study is sometimes flawed, in particular in its orthography and punctuation. Due to its scope, a people's register would have added to a higher level of reader-friendliness. If the narrative was less close to the sources' rhetoric, the elucidations would have been easier to read. At times Wendt's style is figurative, for example when he describes the "unerwünschten Bevölkerungsgruppen" on the Philippines as "eine harte Nuss für die Missionare". (p. 111) Additionally, the explanations tend to be repetitive.

The study might have benefited from a narrower focus. Examples from before 1700 could have been neglected. The thesis could have been limited to one confession, one mission society or a shorter period of time, for instance. Concentrating on one topic and less historical sources, missionary communities could have been examined from the outside, taking female and local perception into account. The insight into the communities could have been deepened. The analysis of a single topic - for example education in missionary communities - would have allowed taking additional studies from other geographical areas into account. This could have led to a more global perspective and it would have helped to postulate a global historical approach in the field of colonial mission history.

The conclusion, however, is very convincing and one wished its thoughtfulness had been applied to the entire study. The use of the concept "missionarische Gesellschaft" guides the reader in understanding. The thesis's execution specifically addressed readers with a well-founded knowledge on colonial, mission and global history. The project is innovative and an "extraordinarily scholarly, knowledgeable, well-read and -informed study". (p. vi) However, it is not as ground-breaking as Ustorf announces in his preface. Besides all this criticism, Wendt initiates a new discourse that is hopefully continued in subsequent studies.

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