

### CHAPTER 6

# Creating Pure Spaces: Edifices, Domesticity and the Temperance Movement

Missionaries at home and abroad identified and popularised corrupted spaces to emphasise the need for their interventions. They promised to protect and uplift people from these ostensibly detrimental surroundings by offering spaces where their ideal of purity held true in exemplary fashion. The very nature of the missionary endeavour assumed that a disorderly environment needed to be tidied up. From the point of view of the Basel missionaries in West Africa, Christians—Africans as well as Europeans—were constantly at risk of falling into heathen impurity in their profane surroundings. It was therefore particularly important to create pure spaces, in which the Christian community was shielded from undesirable influences and worldly distractions, or as the Basel missionary Johannes Müller expressed it, "one healthy apple should not lie under 100 rotten ones."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Johannes Müller, Report to the Committee, 1866, cited in: Schlatter, Geschichte der Basler Mission, vol. 3, p. 73.

#### 6.1 Architectural Means

The pursuit of creating pure spaces in West Africa materialised architecturally in the form of mission houses, hill stations, prayer halls, schools, gardens and hospitals. The question of adequate housing for Europeans constituted a central theme in discussions on tropical hygiene and frequently popped up in the Basel Mission doctors' publications.<sup>2</sup> Since natural elements such as soil, water and air were believed to be important factors that affected health, handbooks on tropical hygiene declared that finding suitable locations and building proper houses were preconditions for the survival of Europeans in the tropics. In 1895, the Committee released a decree on building in Africa, recommending that the best prophylaxis against tropical diseases was to elevate wood buildings on masonry piers and entirely surround dwellings with airy, spacious verandas.<sup>3</sup> The mission doctors popularised this building design with detailed floor plans in their handbooks on tropical hygiene.<sup>4</sup>

Missionaries, traders, explorers and colonial officials wrote extensively about how important verandas were for survival in tropical colonies. The veranda constituted a cornerstone of colonial imagery as a growing number of readers in Great Britain, Germany and Switzerland familiarised themselves with colonial literature. The word "veranda" entered the German language in the mid-nineteenth century when it was adopted from the British, who, in turn, had appropriated it in India.<sup>5</sup> Popular authors such as Rudyard Kipling exposed a broad audience to detailed descriptions of life in the bungalows and verandas of British India. In these colonial narratives, verandas appeared not only as part of health provision but also as important public spaces with good views over the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> See selectively Alfred Eckhardt, Häuserbau in Westafrika und die Station Ho, in: Deutsche Kolonialzeitung 4 (1891), p. 43-46; Ibid., Land, Leute und ärztliche Mission auf der Goldküste, p. 15-18; Hey, Der Tropenarzt, 1st ed., p. 91-104; Fisch, Tropische Krankheiten, 1st ed., p. 10-13; Ibid., Tropische Krankheiten, 4th ed., p. 29-44.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Über afrikanisches Bauwesen, Basel 1895, BMA, D-10.4.18.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> See for example Hey, Der Tropenarzt, 1st ed., p. 101; Fisch, Tropische Krankheiten, 1st ed., p. 226-229; Fisch, Tropische Krankheiten, 3rd ed., p. 212-215.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Itohan Osayimwese, Colonialism and Modern Architecture in Germany, Pittsburgh 2017, p. 205.

area, where Europeans could symbolically scan the horizon and plan further expansion.<sup>6</sup>

The Basel missionaries assumed much of the early construction work themselves but quickly proceeded to outsource the strenuous task to the West Indian Christians and later to African workers. Despite their invisibility in official accounts, African labourers did much of the arduous and perilous work of excavating, hauling and assembling materials. The Basel Mission established workshops in West Africa where missionaries, most of whom were skilled artisans, trained Africans to become specialised craftsmen such as bricklayers and carpenters. These craftsmen were much sought after by colonial governments because of their familiarity with European construction techniques and styles.<sup>7</sup>

The Basel Mission doctors' building advice not only comprised health considerations but also promulgated a specific aesthetic, including "half-timbered houses"—known as *Fachwerk* in their home towns—and edifices with "interlocking tiles" and "solid walls" made of sandstone. They emphasised that buildings ought to have a "noble" structure, believing that European architecture and geometry fascinated and had a refining influence on African people. John MacKenzie has shown that mission-aries in nineteenth-century Africa considered buildings "as books, which could convey lessons and messages as much as paper and print." Edifices were therefore supposed to inspire respect and served as a clear indictor of what Christians could achieve. Although conditions often fell far below the ideal, much attention was paid to the appearance and arrangement of mission structures. By combining strong horizontal and vertical lines,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> On the meaning of architecture, and particularly verandas, in colonial and postcolonial African cities, see Garth Andrew Myers, Verandahs of Power: Colonialism and Space in Urban Africa, New York 2003.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Osayimwese, Colonialism and Modern Architecture in Germany, p. 9; Wolfgang Lauber, Deutsche Architektur in Kamerun 1884–1914: Deutsche Architekten und Kameruner Wissenschaftler dokumentieren die Bauten der deutschen Epoche in Kamerun/Afrika, Stuttgart 1988, p. 49.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Eckhardt, Häuserbau in Westafrika und die Station Ho; Peter A. Schweizer, Mission an der Goldküste: Geschichte und Fotografie der Basler Mission im kolonialen Ghana, Basel 2002, p. 108.

 $<sup>^9</sup>$  MacKenzie, Missionaries, Science, and the Environment in Nineteenth-Century Africa, p. 120–121.

mission buildings were designed to protrude in the architectural and natural landscape of West Africa.<sup>10</sup>

The Basel Mission doctors repeatedly highlighted the key role of mission hospitals, which they assumed impressed values and behaviours of hygiene on African patients. <sup>11</sup> The hospital wards were designed to demonstrate order and cleanliness with beds in neat rows and clean white sheets while medical equipment and pharmaceuticals were thought to undermine what the medical missionaries saw as irrational healing practices. Mission hospitals were praised for their effectiveness in curative health care, their potential to gain the support of the wider population and their evangelising value. The Basel Mission's medical magazine stated that "hospitals are necessary not only for the sake of treatment but particularly to serve the main purpose of the medical mission, to win souls for the Lord."

Rudolf Fisch referred to the mission hospital in Aburi as "the place where God had revealed Himself" to him. <sup>13</sup> In addition to providing "modern medical science," mission hospitals were also "imbued with a unique Christian spirit," as David Hardiman demonstrated. <sup>14</sup> Religious rituals were part of everyday life at the Basel Mission hospitals with frequent bedside prayers and daily services. Alfred Eckhardt highlighted the importance of establishing mission hospitals in West Africa in an article in 1892 by emphasising their value for evangelisation: "All mission doctors experience that spiritual success is far greater with people who are

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> For descriptions of West African building styles, see Tarikhu Farrar, Building Technology and Settlement Planning in a West African Civilization: Precolonial Akan Cities and Towns, Lewiston 1996; Anthony King, The Bungalow: The Production of a Global Culture, London/Boston 1984.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> Hermann Vortisch, Wie kann man in Missionsspitälern evangelistisch tätig sein? in: Die ärztliche Mission 8 (1913), p. 13–17; Ibid., Ein barmherziger Samariter, in: Johannes Kammerer (ed.), Bilder aus dem Missionsspital, Basel 1912, p. 3–4; Theodor Müller, Bilder aus einem afrikanischen Missionsspital, in: Die ärztliche Mission 8 (1913), p. 35–37; Rudolf Fisch, Aus einer afrikanischen Poliklinik, in: Der Evangelische Heidenbote 79 (1906), p. 44.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> Basler Missionskomitee (ed.), Unsere ärztliche Mission. Bericht vom Jahr 1897, Basel 1898, p. 2. See further Bruchhausen, Medicine Between Religious Worlds; Hardiman, Introduction.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> Fisch, Vierzig Jahre ärztliche Mission auf der Goldküste, p. 22.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> Hardiman, The Mission Hospital 1880–1960, p. 198.

under daily spiritual influence for a longer period of time, who come to worship daily, who see Christian life daily, who experience mercy daily." <sup>15</sup>

The photograph of Friedrich Hey and his patients at the mission hospital in Odumase, however, puts the image of the mission hospital as a place of rigid Christian regime into perspective (Fig. 6.1). <sup>16</sup> It appeared in the journal for medical mission *Unsere ärztliche Mission* and in the popular monthly magazine *Der Evangelische Heidenbote* in 1898. The caption read: "Due to a lack of space, work takes place outdoors. Larger operations are also performed here on the veranda." <sup>17</sup> To generate donations, the visual message of the Basel Mission followed a binary pattern that highlighted both the urgent need for action and the achievements to date. The multitude of patients in the photograph thus provided evidence for both the success of the Basel medical mission and its constant lack of financial and human resources. Even though the picture is clearly staged and the production conditions remain fuzzy, photographs offer a glimpse into how African spaces might have been imagined by European readers.

Moreover, the ambivalent character of mission photographs revealed inconsistencies, allowing historians to question dominant narratives. The picture implied that medical treatment took place under open skies, although the Basel Mission had evidently built a hospital in Odumase. Rather than demonstrating exemplary hygiene and Christian orderliness, it suggested rudimentary medical care and improvisation. The image composition also contained mixed messages. The white, bearded mission doctor stands next to his sitting black patients and clearly stands out. He wears a white shirt, an apron and leather shoes while most Africans wear a piece of cloth. These contrasts, however, are softened by Hey's hand, resting on a patient's shoulder, and the people standing in the background. The intricacy of the photograph reflected the complex reality in West Africa, which was often unpredictable and required permanent adaptation.

A look back at the theological origins of the Basel Mission shows that Pietists had developed a particular approach to architecture and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> Eckhardt, Ein Arbeitsjahr in Odumase, here p. 9.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> Friedrich Hey, Hospital at Odumase. Dr. Hey with wounded, BMA, D-30.06.19.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> Basler Missionskomitee (ed.), Unsere ärztliche Mission. Bericht vom Jahr 1897, Basel 1898, p. 11; Anonymous, Blicke in die Thätigkeit unserer Missionsärzte, in: Der Evangelische Heidenbote 71 (1898), p. 46–47, here p. 46.



Fig. 6.1 Friedrich Hey, Hospital at Odumase. Dr. Hey with wounded, BMA, D-30.06.19

communal life. Members of the Unity of Moravian Brethren—Herrn-huter Brüdergemeine—founded the first autonomous Pietist settlement in 1722 at Herrnhut in eastern Germany. There, they implemented new ideas about religious organisation and spiritual life, for example by developing the concept of the Betsaal—prayer hall. In line with the Pietist reassessment of Christian practices, the prayer hall replaced the church as the site of religious worship, parish centre and administrative headquarters. In the nineteenth century, Gottlieb Wilhelm Hoffmann, the father of the second Basel Mission Inspector Wilhelm Hoffmann, founded two prominent Pietist settlements in Wurttemberg.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> Hartmut Beck, Die Herrnhuter Baukultur im pietistischen Zeitalter des 18. Jahrhunderts, in: Kunst und Kirche 50 (1987) 3, p. 186–189.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> Albrecht Rittmann, Vor 200 Jahren: Die Gründung der Brüdergemeinde Korntal, in: Schwäbische Heimat (2019) 1, p. 18–27; Renntisch, Mission und wirtschaftliche Entwicklung, p. 349–352; Jenkins, Württemberg als Hauptsäule der historischen Basler Mission, p. 32.

Korntal was established on the grounds of an existing town in 1819 to prevent the emigration of Pietists due to discrimination and economic hardship following years of famine. A conscious process of development guided the location, height and aesthetic of new buildings and maintained the centrality of the *Betsaal*. The entire town was surrounded by fields and orchards in which the residents pursued agriculture. Wilhelmsdorf was established five years later in 1824. Unlike Korntal, it was built according to a predetermined plan. The settlement formed the outline of a cross, in the centre of which lay the prayer hall in a prominent position. Clear boundaries defined the towns of Korntal and Wilhemlsdorf and strict edicts maintained their isolation from broader society. <sup>21</sup>

In West Africa, the Basel missionaries implemented three spatial policies to come closer to their ideal of Pietist purity. The first one emphasised the primacy of rural over urban location and was framed in terms of protecting Africans from the colonial presence along the coast. The Basel missionaries frequently alluded to the administrative and commercial towns in West Africa as dirty, corrupted and sinful places, mirroring their aversion of industrialised cities in Europe. They advocated instead for a communal life close to the soil and dedicated to God, encouraging Christian converts to build their own houses and cultivate their own land on mission grounds. For the Basel missionaries, cultivation was practically synonymous with salvation. Johannes Zimmermann, who spent more than twenty years in Krobo on the Gold Coast, reflected upon his return to Basel:

The original command to the whole of humanity is, 'Be fruitful and multiply, fill the earth and subdue it.' According to this ancient word of God, every human, by virtue of the fact that he is human, has the right to possess land, to settle on it, to build up a homestead and found a family.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> Lothar Sigloch, Zur Geschichte von Korntal und Münchingen, vol. 1: Korntaler Ansichten – Siedlungsaspekte der Gemeinde Korntal, Korntal-Münchingen 1994, p. 32.

 $<sup>^{21}</sup>$  Andreas Gestrich, Alltag im pietistischen Dorf: Bürgergliche Religiosität in ländlicher Lebenswelt, in: Die Alte Stadt 20 (1993) 1, p. 47–59.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> Johannes Zimmermann, Letztes Wort eines alten afrikanischen Missionars an sein deutsches Vaterland, in: Evangelisches Missionsmagazin 21 (1877), p. 225–245, here p. 226.

Zimmermann maintained that God had created and designed mankind to live in small rural communities, using simple agrarian technology and joining together to worship Him. The mobility of West Africans, their complex territorial arrangements and the transhumance of women during the agricultural cycle thwarted the Basel Mission's plans and offended their sense of order. The Basel missionaries thus encouraged converts to take possession of the land by investing themselves in it. They argued that the only way for parishioners to maintain a sustainable web of family, education and stable vocation, which they considered indispensable for a truly pious life, was through the creation of self-sustaining villages patterned on an idealised Alemannic agrarian model.<sup>23</sup>

Therefore, the Basel Mission's second policy consisted of establishing separate Christian settlements, referred to as "salems," for their missionaries and parishioners within rural contexts. In 1886, the Committee asked the missionaries in West Africa "whether the housing of Christians among heathens should be abolished entirely." The veteran Gold Coast missionary Adolf Mohr replied that the separation of Christians from the non-Christian population was "desirable" since Christians who lived among "heathens and their heathen relatives often have a communal courtyard, where heathen nonsense spreads without shame." He explained that the "Negro homesteads" were so close to each other that only a narrow path divided them and each room had direct access to the shared courtyard. Therefore, he concluded that "the constant noise makes quiet life or Christian devotion impossible" and that Christians were lonely and vulnerable in their communities of origin. <sup>26</sup>

Salems were established on mission land just outside existing African towns, clearly separated by fences, walls and roads.<sup>27</sup> They comprised the central mission house, a prayer hall, gardens, an outpatient clinic or hospital, schools and housing for European and African Christians.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> Paul Jenkins, Villagers as Missionaries: Wuerttemberg Pietism as a Nineteenth-Century Missionary Movement, in: Missiology. An International Review 8 (1980) 4, p. 425–432; Lehmann, Pietismus und weltliche Ordnung; Troeltsch, Die Soziallehren der christlichen Kirchen und Gruppen, ch. 2.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> Schlatter, Geschichte der Basler Mission, vol. 3, p. 72–74.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> Adolf Mohr, Annual report for 1886, 02.03.1887, BMA, D-01.45.IV.63.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup> Itohan Osayimwese, Pietism, Colonialism, and the Search for Utopia: Pietist Space in Germany and the Gold Coast, in: Thresholds 30 (2005), p. 74–79.

By physically separating converts from their communities of origin, the leaders in Basel expected that they would move away from the "dirt of their heathen environment." The underlying assumption was that new converts would be easier to supervise and would develop a deeper sense of community once united in a settlement. Apart from an interest in retaining new converts, this policy of separation also reflected concern for the spiritual health of missionaries themselves since exposure to non-Christian practices was seen as a temptation for those in the field. By staying together, Christians were expected to be more likely to live according to Pietist purity ideals, outlined in the Basel Mission's congregational rules.

The situation of the mission house at the centre of the Christian village was a third way for the Basel Mission to live up to their concept of purity. In the words of the missionary Eugen Schwarz in Cameroon, the mission house was a "green oasis in the middle of the barren, dark heathen land." Built in an Alemannic style and surrounded by gardens, the mission house formed the symbolic core of the Pietist settlement. Auxiliary buildings, including boys' and girls' schools, homes for European and African personnel, storerooms, workshops, houses for African converts and medical facilities were arranged orthogonally around the mission house. The mission house also provided space for religious worship until a prayer hall could be built. The quarters for African converts were often located on the periphery of the ensemble, implying a socio-spatial hierarchy between the mission house at the core of the village and the people on the margins. Alexander of the content of the village and the people on the margins.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup> Oettli, Gegenwärtige Missionsprobleme der Basler Mission in Kamerun, p. 39, BMA, E.28.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> Dagmar Konrad, Die Missionsstation, in: Museum der Kulturen Basel (ed.), Mission Possible? Die Sammlung der Basler Mission – Spiegel kultureller Begegnungen, Basel 2015, p. 69–75.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>30</sup> Eugen Schwarz, Eine Reise zu zweien ins Innere Kameruns. Travel report recorded in 1917, Personal File Eugen Schwarz, BMA, BV 1681.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>31</sup> On the garden as a metaphor in missionary and related contexts, see Sujit Sivasundaram, Natural History Spiritualized. Civilizing Islanders, Cultivating Breadfruit, and Collecting Souls, in: History of Science 39 (2001), p. 417–443.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>32</sup> Sonia Abun-Nasr, Afrikaner und Missionar. Die Lebensgeschichte von David Asante, Basel 2013, p. 79–108; Jenkins, The Basel Mission in West Africa and the Idea of the Christian Village Community.

Pietist settlements in West Africa shared many elements with their European counterparts in Herrnhut, Korntal and Wilhelmsdorf, including an overall separatist predilection, choice of rural over urban contexts, emphasis on communal life and mutual supervision, and the reliance on the material environment to inculcate morality. A plan of the mission station at Kyebi on the Gold Coast dating from 1876 showed remarkable similarities to the layout of Wilhelmsdorf. In both cases, the central location of the *Betsaal* represented the perceived or intended centrality of religious life. However, a closer look at the salems in West Africa reveals that they combined Pietist building styles with regional materials, designs and know-how. The Basel Mission schools best exemplify this new type of architecture emerging in West Africa.

The Basel Mission schools consisted of a series of buildings oriented to create a quadrangle. The primary structure was a two-storey building with wide verandas on both floors. Because elevation above ground level provided access to cooler, supposedly healthier air, upper levels were designated as living areas for Europeans. The ground floor was occupied by classrooms and other administrative functions. Single-storey wings on either side of the central structure housed dormitories, kitchens and workshops. The courtyard, comprising a well, school bell and work gardens, constituted the centrepiece of the Basel Mission schools, an element clearly inspired by architectural norms in West Africa. Itohan Osayimwese made the case that "the obsessive repetition of the courtyard form and bungalow type in Basel Mission building activity across the region constituted an appropriation of indigenous West African forms and building practices."

The overt symbolism of Pietist settlements represented a new perception of space and time, where Christianity could be inscribed on the landscape in order to mould human society. It is no coincidence that Europe was "discovering new worlds" during the period in which utopian thought and practice flourished. Images of seemingly unspoiled natural landscapes and humans, provided by explorers and missionaries, and circulated through travel narratives and missionary journals, offered viable alternatives if conditions at home were too confining for the active pursuit of utopian goals. Johannes Müller, who was based at Abokobi on the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>33</sup> Plan of the Mission Plot in Kyebi, 1876, BMA, D-31.4.9.10.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>34</sup> Osayimwese, Pietism, Colonialism, and the Search for Utopia, p. 77.

Gold Coast, declared that Abokobi was a "shining example" of the benefits of separate Christian settlements:

Here we have a proper, civil community of Christians. They negotiate the cleaning of the streets with neighbouring villages without the missionary, they settle disputes, they serve as local police, they fine those who fire guns or beat the drum 1 Schilling, and the pretty village with its tranquillity, order and security makes an impression, not least on the heathens.<sup>35</sup>

Salems in West Africa were frequently portrayed as role models in the Basel Mission's media. This type of account not only attested to the mission's success abroad but also held a mirror up to evangelicals at home by propagating an idealised portrayal of life in Christian settlements. To many supporters in Europe, these depictions of bucolic Pietist villages based on preindustrial economic and social conditions must have appeared as memories of a long gone past. By 1900, Basel and many other regional towns had undergone industrialisation and major social upheavals, exposing Pietists to mounting pressure from the society around them. The salems in West Africa, by contrast, were depicted as utopian spaces that promised to protect the Pietist community from corrupting influences.

Patrick Harries drew attention to the fact that "woven into the mission-aries' representation of Africa was a call for clergy and church to play a leading role in the development of European society, a role that had only recently been suppressed in Switzerland by radical politicians and the forces of secularization." Regardless of the fact that West African societies underwent similar developments to the ones in Europe, the image of African village life left a lasting impression on knowledge about the continent. The Basel Mission settlements in West Africa, ostensibly untouched by secular forces, "cold logic" and "dry materialism," served as discursive idols and safe havens to develop and debate conservative theological concepts. Firmly established on the evangelical mental map, their meaning reached far beyond the confinements of the mission area abroad and appealed to the utopian longings and political demands of devout Christians at home.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>35</sup> Johannes Müller, Report to the Committee, 1866, cited in: Schlatter, Geschichte der Basler Mission, vol. 3, p. 73.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>36</sup> Harries, Butterflies and Barbarians, p. 58.

Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler notably argued that colonies were "laboratories of modernity," places "where missionaries, educators, and doctors could carry out experiments in social engineering without confronting the popular resistances and bourgeois rigidness of European society at home."<sup>37</sup> To view the salems as laboratories of modernity, however, would be flawed as it assumes that the Basel missionaries had modernising intentions.<sup>38</sup> Most of them were highly critical of the changes in the world around them and advocated instead for a return to preindustrial modes of production and craftsmanship together with corresponding community and family models.<sup>39</sup> Their missionary endeavours in Africa were an expression of a search for pristine nature, community spirit and Pietist purity in a time of increasing uncertainty. These aspirations were not anti-modern per se, but the Basel Mission certainly did not conceive of their mission fields as laboratories of modernity.

Furthermore, the analogy presumes a uniformity of objectives and standardisation of practice among missionaries and other European protagonists in the colonies, which does not hold up to scrutiny. The Basel missionaries in West Africa undoubtedly promoted an ethnocentric agenda by creating Christian settlements modelled on Alemannic agrarian ideals, where African converts were to experience the same kind of lifestyle, marriage and household that they themselves had grown up in. Paradoxically, however, to the extent that the model they promoted for African Christians stressed economic independence from the dominant colonial economy, it very often put the missionaries directly at odds with European powers and their imperial interests.

Moreover, the concept implies that Europeans were completely free to implement their ideas of modernity in the colonies, "without confronting the popular resistances." The Basel Mission's villages in West Africa were never mere reproductions of Herrnhut, Korntal and Wilhelmsdorf. The total separation of Christian converts from their communities of origin

 $<sup>^{\</sup>rm 37}$  Stoler/Cooper, Between Metropole and Colony, p. 5.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>38</sup> For a critical view of missionaries as agents of modernisation, see Richard Hölzl, Aus der Zeit gefallen? Katholische Mission zwischen Modernitätsanspruch und Zivilisationskritik, in: Christoph Bultmann/Jörg Rüpke/Sabine Schmolinsky (eds.), Religionen in Nachbarschaft. Pluralismus als Markenzeichen der europäischen Religionsgeschichte, Münster 2012, p. 143–164.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>39</sup> Jenkins, Land und Arbeit als vergessene Werte in der Mentalität von Baseler MissionarInnen um 1900.

simply proved unviable. Affiliation to the parish and life in the salem did not exclude other associations and bonds, to the dislike of the Basel missionaries. The Christian settlements constituted places of exchange, where experiments and innovations were possible in a number of areas, from farming to medicine and religion, not in spite but rather because of negotiations between European missionaries and African people. It is questionable, therefore, whether modernisation is an adequate term for describing a process that was non-linear and often characterised by appropriation and reinterpretation.

Robert Peckham and David M. Pomfret warned that the idea of colonies as laboratories of modernity "continues to be reiterated within postcolonial studies, even though such allusions inadvertently reaffirm a colonial discourse that sought to legitimate colonial rule in pseudoscientific terms as 'experiment'." Scientists long likened colonial territories to laboratories and it was those involved in empire-building in the last third of the nineteenth century who first used this analogy. The photograph of Friedrich Hey and his patients in Odumase illustrates that the Basel Mission very much participated in presenting the European presence in West Africa as an experiment. Hey appears as a physician in a white coat, who by means of his medical chest and medicine bottle brings scientific progress to the region. At the same time, the image indicates that the Basel Mission's aspirations to implement a specific Christian spatial order in West Africa were always confined by the realities on site. <sup>43</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>40</sup> Harris W. Mobley, The Ghanaian's Image of the Missionary: An Analysis of the Published Critiques of Christian Missionaries by Ghanaians 1897–1965, Leiden 1970, p. 73–80.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>41</sup> Robert Peckham/David M. Pomfret, Introduction: Medicine, Hygiene, and the Reordering of Empire, in: ibid. (eds.), Imperial Contagions. Medicine, Hygiene, and Cultures of Planning in Asia, Hong Kong 2013, p. 1–14, here p. 13.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>42</sup> Helen Tilley has argued that the concept had heterogeneous roots and that scientists, who thought of Africa as a living laboratory, helped to challenge the very foundations of colonialism with their social criticism, interdisciplinary and transnational methods, study of interrelated phenomena and codification of new areas of ethno-scientific and vernacular research. Tilley, Africa as a Living Laboratory.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>43</sup> Friedrich Hey, Hospital at Odumase. Dr. Hey with Wounded, BMA, D-30.06.19.

#### 6.2 DOMESTIC SAFE HAVENS

The Basel Mission's aspirations to create pure spaces in West Africa did not stop at the external appearance of mission houses. At least as much time and effort was spent on designing the interior of Christian homes and propagating domestic values. Rather atypical for Basel missionaries, who planned most of their constructions from scratch, Alfred Eckhardt moved into in an existing house in Christiansborg when he began to work there as a mission doctor in 1888. According to his account, the house had been built in the second half of the eighteenth century and served as a house of a "mulatto" slave trader before the Basel Mission acquired it in the 1840s. The Basel Mission first used the historic building as a missionary home, then converted it into a boys' school before it became a mission factory from 1867 to 1887. Eckhardt, who used the house as his home and medical practice, decided that the first room to be refurbished was the prayer hall, which he described in detail:

The mission's workshop supplied a number of benches. Many colourful biblical pictures were hung on the previously bare walls. The mission factory in Accra donated a small harmonium and a few chairs for Europeans and black 'dignitaries'. A table, several hymnbooks and a chorale book were added, completing the prayer hall.<sup>44</sup>

This account illustrates that the Basel missionaries went to great lengths not only in establishing architectural structures for their evangelising ambitions but also in furnishing them. Missionaries believed, as Jean and John Comaroff have shown, that Christian homes figuratively constructed their inhabitants and that "their functionally specific spaces laid out the geometry of cleanliness and godliness."45 The furniture, Bible pictures and music instrument in Eckhardt's description symbolised the elevating refinement of the missionary home, as did clocks, books and crockery in many other reports by Basel missionaries. They were emblems of European domesticity, which promised to materialise the ideal Christian home by imparting values of orderliness, cleanliness and civilisation.

The realisation of these Christian model homes in West Africa crucially depended on the support from women in Alemannic villages and towns,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>44</sup> Eckhardt, Ärztliche Missionsarbeit in Christiansborg, p. 10.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>45</sup> Comaroff/Comaroff, Ethnography and the Historical Imagination, p. 281.

who produced and supplied household items and clothes such as bed linen, towels, cleaning cloths, hats, socks, napkins, tablecloths, pillows, mirrors, tableware and irons. The *Frauenverein zur Erziehung des weiblichen Geschlechts in den Heidenländern*—Society for the Education of the Female Gender in the Heathen Lands—which was founded as an aid organisation for the Basel Mission in 1841, served as a coordination office for all female support groups in Europe. The society pooled resources for the furnishing of mission houses and schools abroad by compiling lists of the needed items and by giving exact manufacturing instructions for the required goods:

We require fine and very uniform and tightly knit footwear. We ask the honoured associations not to get annoyed at this request because it is not based on weakness or luxury, but it is the hot, sweat-provoking climate of India and Africa that compels us to this request. Widely knitted stockings would expose the missionary to the torment of mosquito bites, which could make it impossible for him to walk.<sup>48</sup>

By producing specific goods, female supporters at home were given the impression that they could contribute directly to the success of the Basel Mission abroad. This gave them the opportunity to palpably trace the progress resulting from their generosity, creating a form of emotional attachment. 49

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>46</sup> Prodolliet, Wider die Schamlosigkeit, p. 21-23.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>47</sup> Initiated by the Basel Mission's second Inspector Wilhelm Hoffmann, the *Frauen-verein* was made up of thirteen women, seven of which were wives of Committee members and six of their friends.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>48</sup> Nachricht an die weiblichen Hilfsvereine der evangelischen Missionsgesellschaft zu Basel über die zweckmässigste Unterstützung derselben durch Naturalabgaben und Arbeiten, 14.03.1844, handwritten document, in: Prodolliet, Wider die Schamlosigkeit, p. 23.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>49</sup> Patricia R. Hill, The World Their Household: The American Woman's Foreign Mission Movement and Cultural Transformation, 1870–1920, Ann Arbor 1985, p. 95; Altena, "Ein Häuflein Christen mitten in der Heidenwelt des dunklen Erdteils", p. 87; Ulrike Sill, Wie das Harmonium in die Hängematte kam: Ein Beispiel für den Wandel im Berichtswesen der Basler Mission im 19. Jahrhundert, in: Artur Bogner/Bernd Holtwick/Hartmann Tyrell (eds.), Weltmission und religiöse Organisationen. Protestantische Missionsgesellschaften im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert, Würzburg 2004, p. 377–395.

The Committee outlined furniture regulations for both married and single missionaries, in which each item in the mission household was described precisely. 50 Even though the leaders in Basel maintained that missionaries should live modestly and surround themselves with basic amenities and unpretentious furniture, reflecting the ideal of Pietist asceticism, bourgeois living concepts clearly played an important role in the selection of home furnishings. A lot of the items in the furniture regulations such as a writing desk, a washbasin, curtains, children's beds, mirrors, carpets, wardrobes and book shelves can be attributed to a bourgeois lifestyle that would have been more comfortable than what most Basel missionaries were familiar with.<sup>51</sup>

In contrast to their staff, the Committee members were part of the Protestant bourgeoisie, who defined their class in terms of a family model based on the notion of separate spheres. Religiosity was gendered through an ideological division of men and women, the public and the private, which stipulated that men would communicate with the outside world while women would raise the young in the sheltered atmosphere of the home, inculcating in them basic moral and religious values.<sup>52</sup> People or families that did not follow this model were considered to fall out, or rather fall short, of this allegedly universal societal norm. Hence, the homes of the poor were besieged by benevolent visitors, pastors and city missionaries, all eager to judge and improve their apparently deviant private lives by the standard of the middle-class home. 53

The core of the Basel Mission's project revolved around the Christian family, in which women and domesticity ultimately guaranteed the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>50</sup> Mobiliarordnung, in: Verordnungen und Mitteilungen für die Missionare der Basler Mission, I.-XII. (1891-1900), 1901, BMA, ZS1.z.3004; Mobiliar ordnung, in: Verordnungen und Mitteilungen für die Missionare der Basler Mission, XIII.-XX., Basel 1910; Mobiliarordnung für die Goldküste, 1902, BMA, D-9.1a.5.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>51</sup> Andrea Hauser, Dinge des Alltags. Studien zur historischen Sachkultur eines schwäbischen Dorfes, Tübingen 1994, p. 154-157, 275-281; Konrad, Missionsbräute,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>52</sup> Hey emphasised that women were the "natural guardians of morals". Hey, Der Tropenarzt, 1st ed., p. 182.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>53</sup> Frevert, "Fürsorgliche Belagerung"; Weisbrod, "Visiting" and "Social Control"; Friedrich/Jähnichen, Geschichte der sozialen Ideen im deutschen Protestantismus; Przyrembel, Verbote und Geheimnisse.

perpetuation of cleanliness and purity.<sup>54</sup> Evangelicals attributed the social question in the nineteenth century to an erosion of religious piety and family values in the lower classes. They diagnosed a lack of hygiene as both cause and symptom of social ills, which they addressed by propagating morals of hygiene and a Christian family model. Women were vested with responsibility for domestic upkeep, a task newly imbued with moral status, and their family's cleanliness, health and spiritual integrity.<sup>55</sup>

The regeneration of society through what appeared to evangelicals as the restoration of the family was embraced as a key concept in both home and foreign missions over the nineteenth century.<sup>56</sup> The domestic space was increasingly construed as a religious site residing within a feminine sphere of influence. In West Africa, the leaders of the Basel Mission recognised that the stability of the Christian family was crucial to the perpetuation of Christian villages and that women were simply indispensable for the creation and sustenance of such settlements.<sup>57</sup> Missionary wives not only worked as what was seen as their natural profession as spouse, housewife and mother, but also instructed African women and became teachers and principals at the girls' schools. Moreover, they assumed the management of the mission station, while their husbands were away on travel in remote areas to gain more parishioners.<sup>58</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>54</sup> On the role of marriage, family and children within Pietism, see Andreas Gestrich, Ehe, Familie, Kinder im Pietismus. Der "gezähmte Teufel", in: Hartmut Lehmann (ed.), Geschichte des Pietismus, vol 4: Glaubenswelt und Lebenswelten, Göttingen 2004, p. 499–521. On the early modern period in Basel, see Susanna Burghartz, Zeiten der Reinheit – Orte der Unzucht. Ehe und Sexualität in Basel während der Frühen Neuzeit, Paderborn 1999.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>55</sup> Cleall, Missionary Discourses of Difference, p. 29–47; Hauser, German Religious Women in Late Ottoman Beirut, p. 114–118.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>56</sup> Many researchers have shown that Protestant missionaries devoted considerable energy to writing about domesticity and constructing model homes. See selectively Comaroff/Comaroff, Home-Made Hegemony; Grimshaw, Faith, Missionary Life, and the Family; Dana L. Robert, The 'Christian Home' as a Cornerstone of Anglo-American Missionary Thought and Practice, in: ibid. (ed.), Converting Colonialism: Visions and Realities in Mission History, 1706–1914, Grand Rapids 2008, p. 134–165; Manktelow, Missionary Families; Maxwell, The Missionary Home as a Site for Mission.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>57</sup> Predelli/Miller, Piety and Patriarchy, p. 78.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>58</sup> The Christian home thus "provided a rationale for the participation of women in all aspects of mission work, including homemaking, evangelism, fund raising, teaching and even social reform", as Dana Robert and many others argued. Robert, The 'Christian Home' as a Cornerstone of Anglo-American Missionary Thought and Practice, p. 135.

With the arrival of more and more missionary wives, African males present within the private sphere of the home, such as chefs, servants and other staff, came to pose a threat to the gender-segregated order of Pietist life. The presumed sexual threat posed by male domestic workers, which was a recurrent colonial trope, led to the training of African women to replace them. Missionary wives taught African maids to prepare food, wash, sew and wipe the veranda. These domestic tasks, including cleaning, laundry, cooking and childcare, were increasingly seen as the sole and inherent province of women. Consequently, male domestics were more likely to be viewed as transgressive, though many of them continued to work in missionary households.<sup>59</sup>

The Committee gradually embraced the idea that missionary wives were better suited to reach African women than male missionaries, believing that they could break through the perceived seclusion of African women's lives and elevate them to promoters of Christianity. In 1900, the secretary of the Basel Mission, Friedrich Würz, recorded that a total of 150 missionary wives, 100 African and Indian female teachers and 30 Bible women contributed to propagating the gospel abroad. 60 In keeping with the gendered norms, by which Christian middle-class women were sheltered in the private sphere, non-European women were increasingly viewed as the key to their families' salvation, as Warneck expounded in his seminal study on evangelical mission:

The female population is a very important factor in the Christianisation and civilisation of humanity; as housewife and mother she exerts a beneficial or pernicious influence, which cannot be appreciated highly enough, and the quality of women and mothers depends on the education of girls.<sup>61</sup>

Women were central to the conception of the civilising mission, for they were seen as vital allies in establishing new household norms, bodily practices and forms of piety. The Basel missionaries attached great importance to the specifics of women's education in West Africa because, in their view, it was their poor education and ignorance that made them adhere to heathenism. Christian women, by contrast, were believed to exercise

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>59</sup> Burke, Lifebuoy Men, Lux Women, p. 35-62; Cleall, Missionary Discourses of Difference, p. 48-73.

 $<sup>^{60}</sup>$  Friedrich Würz, Aus der Basler Frauenmission, p. 3, BMA, N.181a.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>61</sup> Warneck, Evangelische Missionslehre, p. 439.

a civilising influence on their children and thereby on future society. The Basel Mission's efforts in promoting knowledge of hygiene in West Africa, therefore, intersected with home economics and gendered forms of schooling.<sup>62</sup> These educational offers were aimed at generating new practices of domesticity and female behaviour in African communities, as this statement in the bulletin of the *Frauenverein* in 1891 illustrates:

The girls must learn to wash, iron, sew, mend and keep the whole household orderly and clean. The heathen usually wears his clothes until it falls from his body, but a Christian has to become better herein. The girls need to be educated as guardians of manners and discipline.<sup>63</sup>

The goal of the Basel Mission's girls' schools, and female education more generally, was not to produce intellectual or academic women but to tend to the formation of a modest Christian character, very much in line with the concept of conservative Protestant girls' education in Europe at the time. <sup>64</sup> There was little ambiguity in the expressed norms governing the positions of women and men among Committee members, who continually defended the "divinely inspired patriarchy" of the organisation over which they presided. <sup>65</sup> Protestant mission leaders conceived of mission stations and schools as "surrogate domestic spaces where women could exert their beneficial influence protected from the outside world," as Julia Hauser argued for deaconesses in Late Ottoman Beirut. <sup>66</sup>

The Basel missionaries' urge to tidy up the perceived disorder around them clearly manifested itself in their efforts to introduce familiar housekeeping practices. The daily routine on the Basel Mission stations in

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>62</sup> The classes reserved for female pupils at the Basel Mission schools included sewing, cooking and home economics. There is a series of pictures of these classes in Aburi in the Basel Mission archives. Although undated, they have almost certainly been taken before 1914. See Hauswirtschafts-Unterricht mit Miss Charlotte Anoofo, Aburi, BMA, D-30.67.174; Handarbeits-Unterricht, Aburi, BMA, D-30.67.175; Koch-Unterricht Aburi, BMA, D-30.67.176.

<sup>63</sup> Basler Missionskomitee (ed.), Schreiben des Frauenvereins zu Basel für weibliche Erziehung in den Heidenländern. An die teuren Hilfsvereine in Deutschland und der Schweiz, Nr. 50, Basel 1891, p. 32.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>64</sup> Hauser, German Religious Women in Late Ottoman Beirut, p. 207; Prodolliet, Wider die Schamlosigkeit, p. 52.

<sup>65</sup> Predelli/Miller, Piety and Patriarchy.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>66</sup> Hauser, German Religious Women in Late Ottoman Beirut, p. 2.

West Africa resembled that of German boarding schools, partly that of the mission seminary in Basel, and included daily home and bodily care and a more thorough clean on Saturdays. The *württembergische Kehrwoche*—the structured cleaning of communal areas—with its roots in late fifteenth century Wurttemberg, aimed to improve household cleanliness. It continued to be practised by the Basel missionaries in West Africa, who insisted for the cleaning day to take place on Saturdays just as it did in their homeland. The weekly full bath recommended by proponents of the hygiene movement was scheduled twice a week in the Christian villages abroad.<sup>67</sup>

The Basel missionaries followed the Pietist principle of a "methodisation of life" in which every minute of every day was intended for a specific task. They attached great importance to "exploiting time," meaning for instance that awaking early amounted to a virtue while sleeping in was considered a disgraceful waste of time. The mission doctor Friedrich Hey called "modern idleness" a "disgrace" and considered work "the best life elixir and health remedy to stay exempt from many modern diseases." Karl Huppenbauer, who started practising as a mission doctor in Aburi in 1914, praised the work of German missionary wives and contrasted their diligence with the ostensible idleness of English women:

For women in the tropics, it is indeed no small matter to run the household as conscientiously as it has become second nature to every German missionary wife. Only if one compares this to the position and activity of most English women in the tropics, who spend their months of colonial boredom with getting up late, reading novels and drinking tea, one fully recognises the high-value work missionary wives provide. 69

Huppenbauer's account shows that the Basel missionaries not only drew lines of differentiation between Europeans and Africans, or Christians and non-Christians, but also clearly tried to demarcate themselves from other European actors and lifestyles in the imperial arena. Because missionary designs of the Christian household were demonstrated by example, missionary wives were more likely than female colonial settlers

<sup>67</sup> Konrad, Missionsbräute, p. 292; Prodolliet, Wider die Schamlosigkeit, p. 57.

 $<sup>^{68}</sup>$  Hey, Der Tropenarzt, 1st ed., p. 185.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>69</sup> Karl Huppenbauer, Letter to Committee, 12.06.1914, Personal File Karl Huppenbauer, BMA, BV 2090.

to be considered essential personnel of the civilising mission. With their help, the Basel missionaries hoped to inculcate new models of hygiene, work and behaviour through the exemplary model of their own families, domestic arrangements and work ethic.

The struggle for what missionaries perceived as the reinvigoration of the Christian family among the poor at home and the heathens abroad was a transregional expression of Pietist purity efforts. Jean and John Comaroff notably referred to the dialectic of domesticity and suggested "that colonialism itself, and especially colonial evangelism, played a vital part in the formation of modern domesticity *both* in Britain and overseas; that each became a model for, a mirror image of, the other." These findings, however, need to be differentiated to do justice to the protracted trials of purity and domesticity taking place in the Basel Mission's West African mission areas. Firstly, the Basel missionaries maintained that their Pietist approach to domesticity, work and behaviour were inherently superior to the worldly approach of colonial governments and settlers. Secondly, existing West African notions of domesticity not only persisted but also shaped the Basel Mission's agenda.

The Basel missionaries relied on an African workforce to practise hygiene as they intended. Only half of the male missionaries were accompanied by wives—most of whom were heavily engaged in teaching, nursing and evangelising—which made African domestic workers an indispensable component of missionary households. The functioning of the missionary family crucially depended on reliable nannies. Many children born to Basel missionaries in West Africa spoke little or no German at all, as Marie Wittwer-Lüthi's letter about her son Hans demonstrates: "He speaks like the Negro children, you wouldn't understand him." The children's religious education took place in regional languages and many of them received West African names in addition to their European names. Wittwer-Lüthi, a Bernese missionary wife in Cameroon from

 $<sup>^{70}</sup>$  Comaroff/Comaroff, Ethnography and the Historical Imagination, p. 267.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>71</sup> Marie Wittwer-Lüthi's biography and letters are found in: Marie Wittwer-Lüthi, Mutter und Missionarin, 27. September 1879 bis 7. Oktober 1955, BMA, QF-10.24.01. The letter containing this quote is not dated but classified under the period "Cameroon 1904–1914".

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>72</sup> Konrad, Schweizer Missionskinder des 19. Jahrhunderts, p. 172.

1904 to 1914, reported about her daughter: "Ndolo - Love - is Hanni's black name."73

African maids, teachers, medical assistants, porters and many others played a key role in keeping missionary spaces—schools, hospitals, homes—up to hygienic standards. African teachers taught the latest hygiene guidelines to their pupils in the Basel Mission schools, medical assistants kept hospitals clean and conveyed hygienic knowledge to their patients. Porters continued to carry missionaries in hammocks, particularly women, as this was considered to be the most hygienic means of transport, despite the arrival of the bicycle. Rather than merely executing the Basel Mission's plans, however, West Africans participated in creating new values and behaviours of hygiene by merging the Basel missionaries' views of purity with their own concepts of cleanliness, as this account published by the Basel Mission's Women's Society illustrates:

On Saturday mornings, the school, veranda etc. are rigorously swept and the floor is coated with prepared cow dung, following the local method; this keeps the floor solid and prevents the white ants from digging it up. Thereupon, all Africans bathe in their bathroom by the well while rubbing themselves with a soapy mimosa fruit and then shower with water; the same also happens every Wednesday night; but on Saturdays the hair is washed as well, which is always a long business. [...] Lastly they receive fresh clothes for Sunday.<sup>74</sup>

This excerpt gives an impression of how regional ideas and practices of cleanliness in West Africa influenced the ways in which hygiene was implemented in the Basel Mission's salems. While the missionaries modelled schools, mission stations and Christian homes on their Pietist purity ideal, their aspirations had to be constantly adapted to the specific material environments and climatic conditions in West Africa, the disparity in

<sup>73</sup> Marie Wittwer-Lüthi, Mutter und Missionarin, 27. September 1879 bis 7. Oktober 1955, Cameroon 1904-1914, BMA, QF-10.24.01.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>74</sup> Basler Missionskomitee (ed.), Schreiben des Frauenvereins zu Basel für weibliche Erziehung in den Heidenländern. An die teuren Hilfsvereine in Deutschland und der Schweiz, Nr. 13, Basel 1851, p. 12.

numbers between male and female missionaries and the persistence of African notions of domesticity. <sup>75</sup>

# 6.3 COMBATTING SPIRITS

The Blue Cross movement offers another example of how born-again Christians aspired to create safe havens, where the people they sought to protect would find shelter from the harmful consequences of modern life. Awakened laypeople founded the Blue Cross Society in Basel in 1882.<sup>76</sup> Twenty-five years later, the Basel Mission doctor Rudolf Fisch initiated the first Blue Cross Society in Aburi, thereby contributing to the formation of an abstinence network in West Africa.<sup>77</sup> He hoped to mobilise the African population against what he called the "schnapps flood" or "spirit plague" with organisations known as *Anidaho*—sobriety—in Twi. Spirits had been described as obstacles to the evangelisation of West Africa since the inception of missionary efforts in the area. However, complaints markedly increased from the 1880s, blaming alcoholism in the West African "gin belt"<sup>78</sup> on growing prosperity due to the cacao boom and the massive imports of cheap spirits from Europe.<sup>79</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>75</sup> Emily Lynn Osborn, Our New Husbands Are Here: Households, Gender, and Politics in a West African State from the Slave Trade to Colonial Rule, Athens 2011; Serena Owusua Dankwa, 'Shameless Maidens': Women's Agency and the Mission Project in Akuapem, in: Agenda. Empowering Women for Gender Equity 63 (2005) 2,2, p. 104–116.

 $<sup>^{76}</sup>$  On the history of the abstinence movement in Basel, see Fabian Brändle/Hans Jakob Ritter, Zum Wohl! 100 Jahre Engagement für eine alkoholfreie Lebensweise, Basel 2010.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>77</sup> Ghartey VI, who would later become King of the Winneba, established the first temperance society on the Gold Coast upon his return from England in 1862. See Emmanuel Kwaku Akyeampong, Drink, Power, and Cultural Change: A Social History of Alcohol in Ghana, c. 1800 to Recent Times, Oxford/Portsmouth 1996, p. 73.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>78</sup> For a comprehensive history, see Dmitri van den Bersselaar, The King of Drinks: Schnapps Gin from Modernity to Tradition, Leiden/Boston 2007.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>79</sup> The most influential German-speaking evangelical prohibitionists included Reinhold Grundemann, Zwei Bittschriften an den Reichskanzler betreffend die Beschränkung des Branntweinimports in Westafrika, in: Allgemeine Missionszeitschrift 12 (1885), p. 290–299, 348–350; Franz Michael Zahn, Der überseeische Branntweinhandel. Seine verderblichen Wirkungen und Vorschläge zur Beschränkung desselben, in: Allgemeine Missionszeitschrift 13 (1886), p. 9–39; Gustav Warneck, Der westafrikanische Branntweinhandel, in: Allgemeine Missionszeitschrift 13 (1886), p. 268–280.

In 1891, Alfred Eckhardt warned the readers of his popular account about the Gold Coast that the "century-long contact with 'Christian' whites has not only not bettered the blacks, but even made them worse. The bad example of the whites and their terrible gift, spirits, have added new vices to the old heathen ones."80 Alcohol had been part of the earliest colonial expeditions to West Africa. Samuel Braun, the ship surgeon from Basel, already reported in 1624 that people on the Gold Coast "were eager" to exchange "a little firewater" with domestic goods.<sup>81</sup> It became increasingly customary for Europeans to gain the favour of Africans by offering or paying them with spirits. This approach was still popular with colonial officers and plantation owners in the twentieth century, drawing sharp criticism from members of the Basel Mission Committee.82

From the mid-nineteenth century, the flourishing European spirits industry discovered the West African market as a lucrative sales area.<sup>83</sup> Germany, most notably "synthetic wine producers" from Hamburg, became a hub for the production and export of trade spirits. The schnapps export from Hamburg to West Africa saw a fourfold increase between 1874 and 1884.84 Within a few decades, the booming West African trade consisted mainly of an exchange of African natural products with European spirits, weapons and gunpowder. By the 1890s, about 30 to 40 million litres of high-proof alcohol were exported from Europe and America to the west coast of Africa yearly. Germany was by far the market leader, accounting for 75 per cent of spirits imports in its own colonial

<sup>80</sup> Alfred Eckhardt, Die Basler Mission auf der Goldküste, in: O. Frick (ed.), Geschichten und Bilder aus der Mission, vol. 10, Halle 1891, p. 3-19, here p. 12.

<sup>81</sup> Samuel Braun, Des Wundarztes und Burgers zu Basels Schiffarten, Basel 1624, p. 72.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>82</sup> Hermann Christ, Über die Wirkung des Alkohols in den Gebieten der evangelischen Heidenmission, in: Evangelisches Missionsmagazin 39 (1895), p. 505-510; Ibid., Die Wirkungen des Alkohols in den Gebieten der evangelischen Mission, in: Bericht über den V. Internationalen Kongress zur Bekämpfung des Missbrauchs geistiger Getränke, Basel 1895, p. 156-161.

<sup>83</sup> Leonhard Harding, Hamburg's West Africa Trade in the Nineteenth Century, in: Gerhard Liesegang/Helma Pasch/Adam Jones (eds.), Figuring African Trade, Berlin 1986, p. 363-391.

 $<sup>^{84}</sup>$  Norbert Schröder, Hamburgs Schnapsfabrikanten und der deutsche Kolonialismus in Westafrika, in: Zeitschrift des Vereins für Hamburgische Geschichte 76 (1990), p. 83-116, here p. 91-92.

territories and 57 per cent in British colonies in West Africa.<sup>85</sup> The rapid expansion of spirits imports into West Africa even troubled a number of colonial officials, who typically downplayed its impact.<sup>86</sup>

Most of the captains and traders refused to drink the spirits they were exporting to West Africa due to the poor quality of the product. They suspected that the costly process of removing the harmful fusel oils had been skipped to cut production costs. The Basel missionary Christian Graf, based in Cameroon, described the imported drink as follows: "Its dark brown appearance, its acrid smell and its corrosiveness do not bode well. It is so pungent that it was impossible for me to hold a few drops in the palm of my hand. Europeans use it instead of ethanol to preserve killed snakes." He concluded that the "fire water" would purely benefit traders, governments and farm owners, eventually leading to the extinction of "the Negro" just like it had done with the "Indians of North America". Representation of "the Negro" just like it had done with the "Indians of North America". Comparisons between "native races" in different colonial settings was a common feature not only of missionary discourse but also of the emerging temperance movement, which emphasised the vulnerability of Africans and other "native peoples" to distilled spirits.

Many prohibitionist organisations, such as the Blue Cross founded in Geneva in 1877, had common roots and maintained close links with evangelical groups. The Blue Cross in Basel arose at the initiative of fervent Protestants, many of whom were involved with the Basel Mission. The Committee member Hermann Christ, most prominently, was an active

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>85</sup> Akin Olorunfemi, German Trade with British West African Colonies, 1895–1918, in: Journal of African Studies 8 (1981) 3, p. 111–120, here p. 115.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>86</sup> Charles Ambler, The Drug Empire: The Control of Drugs in Africa. A Global Perspective, in: Gernot Klantschnig/Neil Carrier/Charles Ambler (eds.), Drugs in Africa: Histories and Ethnographies of Use, Trade, and Control, New York 2014, p. 25–47.

<sup>87</sup> Christian Graf, Palmwein oder Branntwein? in: Afrika 2 (1895), p. 234.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>89</sup> Charles Ambler, The Specter of Degeneration. Alcohol and Race in West Africa in the Early Twentieth Century, in: Jessica R. Pliley/Robert Kramm/Harald Fischer-Tiné (eds.), Global Anti-Vice Activism, 1890–1950. Fighting Drinks, Drugs, and "Immorality", Cambridge 2016, p. 103–123.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>90</sup> The Christian organisation became a loosely organised International Federation in 1886. The society in Aburi was the first non-European Blue Cross Society to join the International Federation of the Blue Cross in 1907. See Francesco Spöring, Mission und Sozialhygiene. Schweizer Anti-Alkohol-Aktivismus im Kontext von Internationalismus und Kolonialismus, 1886–1939, Doctoral Thesis, ETH Zurich, 2014, p. 34.

founding member of the Blue Cross in Basel and member of the Schweizerische Zentralstelle für die Bekämpfung des Alkoholismus-Swiss Central Office for Combatting Alcoholism. 91 The Blue Cross Society is one of oldest and most radical anti-alcoholism societies in Switzerland to this day. While many other organisations focussed on information campaigns and education policies, the Blue Cross addressed the social question more broadly by engaging in poverty relief work.<sup>92</sup>

The Gesellschaft für das Gute und Gemeinnützige (GGG) became another vessel for the advancement of the prohibitionist cause. As president of the GGG and director of the Basel Bürgerspital between 1851 and 1867, the physician and popular writer Theodor Meyer-Merian led many of the early campaigns. He was a fierce advocate of the hygiene movement and argued that virtues such as cleanliness and order had a positive impact on health and prosperity.<sup>93</sup> Karl Sarasin, member of the GGG and the Basel Mission board, took on these efforts once Meyer-Merian had passed. During his tenure as the president of the Commission for the Conditions of Factory Workers in the GGG from 1878 to 1882, he launched a competition in which he called for the submission of an educational pamphlet on the subject of "gegen das Wirtshaus"—"against the pub." The winner of the competition, the Basel school inspector Traugott Siegfried, had submitted a piece on "Das Wirtshaus," which was published as a book in 1881 and distributed in working-class areas.<sup>94</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>91</sup> For a critical history of Swiss alcohol policy, see Juri Auderset/Peter Moser, Rausch und Ordnung. Eine illustrierte Geschichte der Alkoholfrage, der schweizerischen Alkoholpolitik und der Eidgenössischen Alkoholverwaltung (1887-2015), Bern 2016.

<sup>92</sup> Markus Mattmüller, Basler Blaukreuzgeschichte – ein Kapitel Basler Sozial- und Kirchengeschichte, in: Blaues Kreuz Basel (ed.), Bleibender Auftrag. Vorbeugen – helfen – heilen: 100 Jahre Blaues Kreuz Basel 1882-1982, Basel 1982, p. 4-22.

<sup>93</sup> Regula Zürcher, Gegen den "Sumpf des selbstverschuldeten Elends". Antialkoholbewegung und Armutsbekämpfung im 19. Jahrhundert, in: Josef Mooser/Simon Wenger (eds.), Armut und Fürsorge in Basel. Armutspolitik vom 13. Jahrhundert bis heute, Basel 2011, p. 123-132, here p. 127.

<sup>94</sup> Traugott Siegfried, Das Wirtshaus. Von der Gemeinnützigen Gesellschaft der Stadt Basel ausgeschriebene und gekrönte Preisschrift, Basel 1881.

Basel's temperance movement, supported by a broad coalition of patricians, scientists and Pietists, proved quite successful. <sup>95</sup> From the midnineteenth century, the city saw the creation of eating houses, where no alcohol was served, and the first completely alcohol-free restaurant *Kaffee-halle zu Schmieden* opened in the early 1880s on the initiative of the *GGG*. With growing pressure from the sobriety lobby, politicians in Basel also drafted new restaurant laws, regulating the consumption of alcohol. <sup>96</sup> These efforts, however, did not go far enough for radical prohibitionists, who began to grow in number in the late 1880s. They demanded total abstinence and accused the temperance movement of not addressing the root of the problem because it merely fought schnapps and not fermented beverages such as wine, beer and ciders. The Basel Professor for Physiological Chemistry, Gustav von Bunge, was a leading exponent of this view in Switzerland and beyond. <sup>97</sup>

The concern for alcoholism of the lower classes in Basel was mirrored in the growing apprehension of alcoholism among the people in the colonies. The Basel Mission came to play an active role in the political struggle for regulations on alcohol imports into the West African "gin belt" from 1885. Disappointed by the outcome of the Congo Conference in Berlin, the Basel Mission, together with its affiliated trading company, addressed a petition to the German chancellor Otto von Bismarck in April of 1885, asking him to take government action against the liquor trade

 $<sup>^{95}</sup>$  In 1904, 1300 people formed a cantonal abstinence association in Basel. Approximately, 6 per cent of the city's population were members of the movement by 1913 compared to 2.5 per cent in Switzerland. Brändle/Ritter, Zum Wohl!, p. 102.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>96</sup> Zürcher, Gegen den "Sumpf des selbstverschuldeten Elends", p. 128.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>97</sup> Bunge's inaugural lecture at the University of Basel *Die Alkoholfrage* in 1886 was published in several editions and various languages. It gained wide international recognition in radical prohibitionist circles. Markus Mattmüller, Der Kampf gegen den Alkoholismus in der Schweiz. Ein unbekanntes Kapitel der Sozialgeschichte im 19. Jahrhundert, Bern 1979, p. 30.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>98</sup> Historians have identified two schnapps waves sweeping through Switzerland: the first one following the Napoleonic wars in 1815 and the second one in the 1870s, when freedom of trade was anchored in the amended federal constitution of 1874, which led to a sharp increase in the number of alcohol distributors. See Jakob Tanner, Die "Alkoholfrage" in der Schweiz im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert, in: Hermann Fahrenkrug (ed.), Zur Sozialgeschichte des Alkohols in der Neuzeit Europas, Lausanne 1986, p. 147–168.

with Africa.<sup>99</sup> The *Norddeutsche Missionsgesellschaft* and other mission societies composed similar petitions a few months later and the Continental Conference of Evangelical Mission Societies in Bremen made a joint appeal to the German public in late October 1885.<sup>100</sup>

A range of Protestant missionary societies, including the Basel Mission, as well as the German Blue Cross and the German Society Against the Abuse of Spirituous Beverages, created the Commission for the Control of the African Spirits Trade, at the suggestion of the Evangelischer Afrika-Verein—Evangelical Africa Association—in 1896. The Commission reached out to like-minded groups in other European countries, such as the Native Races and the Liquor Traffic United Committee based in Great Britain, with the ultimate aim to completely ban the export of spirits to the colonies. Testimonials by missionaries about the implications of the spirits trade in different areas in West Africa were printed as a series in Afrika, the journal of the Evangelical Africa Association, and distributed to members of the German Colonial Council as an offprint. <sup>101</sup>

The Commission for the Control of the African Spirits Trade submitted several petitions to the Reich Chancellor and the Colonial Department of the Foreign Office, demanding for restrictions to be placed on the alcohol trade with the colonies. <sup>102</sup> The importance of the spirits trade for German commerce and agriculture meant that the members of the Colonial Council, among them spirits traders, initially dismissed these petitions. Over the years, however, the German government came to

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>99</sup> The petition was also printed in *Der Evangelische Heidenbote*. See Anonymous, Eine Eingabe, in: Der Evangelische Heidebote 58 (1885), p. 33–34.

<sup>100</sup> The appeal appeared in *Der Evangelische Heidenbote*. See Anonymous, Erklärung der Konferenz der deutschen evangelischen Missions-Gesellschaften in Sachen des Branntweinhandels mit den Kolonien, in: Der Evangelische Heidenbote 58 (1885), p. 90–91.

 $<sup>^{101}</sup>$  Anonymous, Der Branntwein in Afrika. Berichte von deutschen evangelischen Missionaren, Offprint of Afrika 4 (1897).

<sup>102</sup> Anonymous, Die Eingabe an den Reichskanzler, 14.08.1896, in: Afrika 3 (1896), p. 169–173; Anonymous, Eingabe der Kommission zur Bekämpfung des afrikanischen Branntweinhandels an den deutschen Kolonialrat, 26.10.1897, in: Gustav Müller, Der Kampf gegen den afrikanischen Branntweinhandel, in: Afrika 5 (1898), p. 169–178; Gustav Müller, Bericht über die Thätigkeit der Kommission zur Bekämpfung des Afrikanischen Branntweinhandels, in: Afrika 8 (1901), p. 81–83; Anonymous, Eingabe der Kommission zur Bekämpfung des afrikanischen Branntweinhandels, in: Afrika 15 (1908), p. 14–15; Gustav Müller, Bericht über die Thätigkeit der Kommission zur Bekämpfung des Afrikanischen Branntweinhandels, in: Afrika 17 (1910), p. 1–4.

rethink the role of the spirits trade in its African "protectorates." <sup>103</sup> The Basel missionaries, who were well connected to various civil society organisations through their headquarters in Basel, constituted an important source of information about the alleged destitution caused by alcoholism in West Africa. <sup>104</sup>

Articles by Basel missionaries active in the temperance and abstinence movements found their way into widely circulated anti-alcohol periodicals. The Blue Cross published a wide range of magazines, including *Der Illustrierte Arbeiterfreund* and the *Arbeiterfreund-Kalender*, which were addressed to large sections of the population and enjoyed great approval, not just in Switzerland but also in Germany and Austria-Hungary. <sup>105</sup> Most articles dealing with the alcohol situation in Africa in the *Illustrierte Arbeiterfreund* originated from missionary magazines such as the Basel Mission's *Der Evangelische Heidenbote*. They included missionary reports and photographs, told success stories of converted African teetotallers and praised education methods used by Basel missionaries in their anti-alcohol struggle. <sup>106</sup>

In 1908, the German Chancellor Bernhard von Bülow presented a memorandum to the Reichstag on "Alkohol und Eingeborenenpolitik," in which he adopted most of the positions of the Commission for the Control of the African Spirits Trade. <sup>107</sup> A pivotal argument in his reasoning was the economic concern that the spirits trade would destroy the labour force and purchasing power of the African population. The newly appointed Governor of Cameroon, Theodor Seitz, became a stout advocate of a total ban of the spirits trade in the colonies. <sup>108</sup> The

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>103</sup> Dietrich Döpp, Humanitäre Abstinenz oder Priorität des Geschäfts? Die Diskussion um die Legitimität des kolonialen Alkoholhandels in der deutschen Öffentlichkeit (1885–1914), in: Horst Gründer (ed.), Geschichte und Humanität, Münster/Hamburg 1994, p. 121–135.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>104</sup> Spöring, Mission und Sozialhygiene, p. 72.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>105</sup> Rolf Trechsel, Die Geschichte der Abstinenzbewegung in der Schweiz im 19. und frühen 20. Jahrhundert, Lausanne 1990, p. 31–45.

<sup>106</sup> Spöring, Mission und Sozialhygiene, p. 320.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>107</sup> Bernhard von Bülow, Alkohol und Eingeborenenpolitik. Bekämpfung des Alkoholkonsums in den afrikanischen Kolonien: Denkschrift an den Reichstag (817), 1908, BMA, J.77.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>108</sup> Susan Diduk, European Alcohol, History, and the State in Cameroon, in: African Studies Review 36 (1993) 1, p. 1–42.

Basel missionaries in Cameroon were now perceived as valuable allies in the struggle against alcoholism. They founded a soda water and lemonade factory, which according to the official German medical reports, contributed to the "reduction in consumption of alcoholic beverages" in Cameroon. 109

Over the next years, some Basel missionaries markedly increased their anti-alcohol activism in West Africa. They toured villages, parishes and mission schools to campaign for alcohol abstention by giving lectures and displaying slideshows on their magic lanterns. 110 Rudolf Fisch wrote a series of pamphlets in Twi to propagate prohibitionist ideas and practices among the population in Aburi and founded the Anidaho society in January of 1907. 111 After the society's initial meeting, the mission doctor met with a group of 28 male parishioners, who had come to listen to his speech on the detriments of alcohol and the emergence of Blue Cross Societies in Europe. Fisch proposed that they make abstinence vows for an initial period of four months. 112 The mission doctor was the first to take the oath, followed by pastor Korang, catechist Ofei and the parish elder Obeng, reciting:

I promise in front of my brothers that from today I will not drink any intoxicating drink for four months. So help me God. I will fight against the drinking of intoxicating drinks among my friends and brothers. The wine for Holy Communion is exempt. If I break my vows and drink intoxicating drink again, I will return my commitment card and any society badges to the board of this society. 113

<sup>109</sup> Reichskolonialamt (ed.), Medizinal-Berichte über die Deutschen Schutzgebiete Deutsch-Ostafrika, Kamerun, Togo, Deutsch-Südwestafrika, Neu-Guinea, Karolinen, Marshall-Inseln und Samoa für das Jahr 1903/1904, Berlin 1905, p. 141.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>110</sup> Veit Arlt, Christianity, Imperialism and Culture: The Expansion of the Two Krobo States in Ghana, c. 1830 to 1930, Basel 2005, p. 187.

<sup>111</sup> The first pamphlet on "Mmorosa ne n'adwuma" - "Schnapps and Its Effects" appeared in 5000 Twi copies: D-1.88.22b. More pamphlets followed, see BMA D-1.88.22h.

<sup>112</sup> Rudolf Fisch, First Annual Report on the Blue Cross Societies on the Gold Coast, 1908, BMA, D-1.88.22k.7.

<sup>113</sup> Rudolf Fisch, Zum Kampf gegen die Trunksucht, 1907, p. 4, BMA J.078c. The Basel Mission archives also hold a specimen of the certificate in Twi: BMA, D-1.88.22e.

The weekly meetings of the Blue Cross Society in Aburi had a liturgical character with church bells signalling the start, followed by an opening hymn and prayer. <sup>114</sup> Fisch composed a hymnbook for abstainers containing 32 *Anidaho* songs for this purpose. <sup>115</sup> The association's members decided to introduce a 10-penny fine for unexcused absences during assemblies and made regular donations. Despite this financial burden, more and more Africans took an interest in the organisation, among them an increasing number of women. <sup>116</sup> Concerned about the mixing of men and women, Fisch convinced the Committee to establish a separate society for women and girls, which was headed by the Swiss teacher Hanna Brugger. <sup>117</sup> Alcoholism, however, was seen as a problem affecting the male population by and large, in contrast to many other hygiene issues. <sup>118</sup>

To campaign for the creation of additional Blue Cross Societies, members of the Aburi association organised a range of *Anidaho* excursions to Apasare, Dodowa, Asantema, Mampong, Akropong, Krobo, Bama, Odumase und Akuse in the spring of 1907 (Fig. 6.2). According to Fisch, he and his fellow campaigners entered villages with "powerful singing" and in "good order" before propagating their message during a sermon. 120 At the end of 1907, Fisch reported that a total of 20 Blue Cross Societies in 18 different towns, counting 958 members, had seen the light of day on the Gold Coast. 121

Fisch attached special importance to the flag of the Blue Cross Society in Aburi, bearing the imprint "Gin ne mmorosa di owu dwuma"—"Gin and Rum are on Death's Payroll." He urged the members not to use

 $<sup>^{114}</sup>$  The statutes of the Blue Cross Society were recorded in Twi: Twi man mu anidaho feku, Akropong 1907, BMA, D.II.g.7b.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>115</sup> Rudolf Fisch, Anidaho-Nnwom Twi Kasa Mu – Hymn-Book for Abstainers in the Tshi-Language, Basel 1907, BMA, D.II.b.20.

<sup>116</sup> Fisch, First Annual Report on the Blue Cross Societies on the Gold Coast, p. 5.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>117</sup> Personal File Hanna Brugger, BMA, SV 32.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>118</sup> Akyeampong, Drink, Power and Cultural Change, p. xxi.

 $<sup>^{119}</sup>$  Rudolf Fisch, The Aburi Society visiting Apasare. The Blue Cross Society Aburi on trek with Dr. Fisch, 1885/1911, BMA, QW-30.006.0010.

<sup>120</sup> Fisch, First annual report on the Blue Cross Societies on the Gold Coast, p. 6.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>121</sup> Ibid., p. 18–19; Fischer, Der Missionsarzt Rudolf Fisch, S. 382–389.

<sup>122</sup> Fisch, First Annual Report on the Blue Cross Societies on the Gold Coast, p. 12.



Fig. 6.2 Rudolf Fisch, The Aburi Society visiting Apasare. The Blue Cross Society Aburi on trek with Dr. Fisch, 1885/1911, BMA, QW-30.006.0010

the flag as a toy or load but to appreciate it as a representation of the society's honour. Objects such as the flag helped Fisch to combine adherence to the Blue Cross Society—a demarcated, ostensibly pure space—with social prestige. Members who had kept their vows for eight months were given a label pin in form of a blue cross. This "badge of honour," according to Fisch, had to be worn visibly and was highly coveted among the people in Aburi. It rewarded the compliant behaviour of a member and symbolised their perseverance and ideological affiliation. 123

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>123</sup> Ibid., p. 6.

Fisch's fervent commitment earned him respect from eminent teeto-tallers such as his "highly venerated teacher" Gustav von Bunge. 124 However, his radical emphasis on abstinence rather than temperance placed him at odds with many of his missionary colleagues. Although a quarter of the Basel missionaries were members of the Blue Cross in 1913, they tolerated moderate consumption of beer, wine and palm wine, as well as African drinking practices during ceremonies such as obsequies. Contrary to the dominant opinion among his fellow missionaries, Fisch argued that any type of alcohol caused grievous bodily harm, reduced fecundity, increased infant mortality and decimated the population in West Africa. 126

The leadership in Basel merely recommended abstinence as an "evangelical advice" and for "health's sake" but did not make it an obligation. Nonetheless, "without taking a stand on the question of abstinence at home or somehow impairing the moral freedom of the individual," they cautioned the missionaries that "even very small quantities of spirituous beverages" would have an "impact on the nervous system in the tropics, as only occurs with larger alcohol intake in our climate." Another aspect to consider, according to the Basel Mission's regulations, was "the influence of the missionaries' example on the native personnel, communities and heathens." The consumption of spirits on the Basel Mission's premises in West Africa was therefore banned for both Africans and Europeans. The debate about alcoholism in the colonies was an arena in which competing values and visions of what it meant to be European and civilised played out. 129

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>124</sup> Rudolf Fisch, Wirkungen des Schnapshandels in Westafrika, in: Internationale Monatsschrift 5 (1914), p. 145–155, here p. 150.

 $<sup>^{125}</sup>$  In the early 1850s, the Basel missionaries had even planted vineyards in Akropong. See Spöring, Mission und Sozialhygiene, p. 73.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>126</sup> Rudolf Fisch, Die bedrohte schwarze Rasse, in: Der Evangelische Heidenbote 86 (1913), p. 168–169.

 $<sup>^{127}</sup>$  Verordnungen über die persönliche Stellung der Missionare, Basel 1914, p. 29, BMA, Q-09.26.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid.

<sup>129</sup> James H. Mills/Patricia Barton, Introduction, in: ibid. (eds.) Drugs and Empires. Essays in Modern Imperialism and Intoxication, c. 1500–c. 1930, Basingstoke 2007, p. 1–16.

With pressure intensifying from humanitarian and missionary lobbies, successive international agreements banned the production of spirits in West Africa, forbade their importation into the large zones where trade had not yet been extended, and imposed progressively higher duties in areas where the spirits trade already existed. 130 The Basel Mission introduced modules on the dangers of alcohol in their West African schools from 1907.<sup>131</sup> In a circular letter a few years later, the Committee urged all missionaries in Cameroon and on the Gold Coast to report on alcoholism in their areas and to propose appropriate countermeasures. 132

The Basel missionaries tried to prevent the dilution of their Pietist beliefs and practices by punishing transgressions with exclusion from the Christian community. They expected that the strict enforcement of parish discipline would not only improve the individual sinner but also enhance the cohesion and integrity of their congregations. Parish exclusions constituted a key tool for upholding Pietist purity in West Africa between 1885 and 1914. The parishes in Cameroon, for example, counted a total of 8,882 members in 1910, of which 421 had been expelled by the end of the year. 260 of those excluded were re-admitted as parishioners after acknowledging their wrongdoing and promising to improve. 133 The ideal of purity could only be maintained in the long run if there were spaces where it was still visibly valid. 134 Therefore, the Basel missionaries aspired to create pure spaces in the form of Christian villages, domestic safe havens and sobriety societies.

<sup>130</sup> The Blue Cross Federation, the German Order of Good Templars and ten mission societies, including the Basel Mission, founded the Deutsche Verband zur Bekämpfung des afrikanischen Branntweinhandels-German Society for the Combat of the African Liquor Trade—in 1910, which replaced the Commission for the Control of the African Spirits Trade. Fischer, Der Missionsarzt Rudolf Fisch, p. 393-396.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>131</sup> Wilhelm Rottmann, Über die Alkoholfrage in den Schulen, 13.05.1907, BMA, D-1.89.36; Committee report, 07.03.1907, BMA, Komitee-Protokoll 1907, §193; Committee report, 20.11.1907, BMA, Komitee-Protokoll 1907, § 1132.

<sup>132</sup> Circular letter to all stations on the Gold Coast and in Cameroon, 02.12.1913, BMA, D-9.2b.8a; Reports on the alcohol question, Cameroon, 1914, BMA, E-10.15.

<sup>133</sup> Walter Oettli, Gegenwärtige Missionsprobleme der Basler Mission in Kamerun, Basel 1911, p. 39-40, BMA, E. 28.

<sup>134</sup> Udo Simon, Why Purity? An Introduction, in: Petra Rösch/Udo Simon (eds.), How Purity is Made, Wiesbaden 2012, p. 1-37, here p. 4.

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