

My encounter with Missions statistics

First published: "Why bother with the numbers: My encounter with Missions Statistics." *Evangelikale Missiologie* 23 (2007) 4: 118–124.

The Significance of Missions Statistics

Due to the fact that missions statistics have served as a basis for prayer, for motivation for missionaries and their supporters, and in order to give orientation with respect to the global task, practically every outbreak of world missions is accompanied by efforts relating to missions statistics. Missions statistics overviews from those by William Carey to Theodor Christlieb and all the way to Patrick Johnstone's present day Operation World¹ have been and are excellent reference works for interested 'secular' parties. It is also no coincidence that during his lifetime Carey possessed unrivaled knowledge, in a way similar to how Wycliffe Bible Translators' *Ethnologue* provides unrivaled information about present day languages.²

Overviews of the situation surrounding world missions have accompanied Protestant missions work from the beginning, indeed even having put such efforts into motion. When William Carey presented an overview of all countries and islands of the world in 1792, the so-called 'Century of Missions' (1792-1914) began. Works by Hudson Taylor (OMF) und Charles Studd (World Evangelism for Christ, or WEC) began with their providing an overview of unreached peoples on other continents. German Evangelical missiology was closely linked to statistical overviews and comprehensive topics of prayer from the very beginning. To be mentioned here above all is the work entitled "The current State of Evangelical Missions to the Gentiles: A World Overview" by the Bonn theology professor Theodor Christlieb. It was presented and introduced at the International Alliance Conference in Basel in 1879, and it found its way into translations into English (in Great Britain, the USA, and India), French, and other languages. All editions were reprinted multiple times and revised.

1981: World Missions Conference in Edinburgh

At the 1974 International Congress on World Evangelization in Lausanne, Ralph Winter made a breakdown of various types of missions work public. They were above all aimed at clearly differentiating missions work in foreign cultures where there was no indigenous church, referring to that as missions work among 'unreached' peoples from other forms of missions work. It quickly attracted international attention.³

My first encounter with missions statistics occurred at the 'International Conference for Frontier Missions.' It had set before itself the task of bringing together all forces emerging following

¹ James R. Beck. *Dorothy Carey: A Biography*. Zondervan: Grand Rapids (MI), 1979². p. 63 also compares Carey with Johnstone.

² Comp. my review of Barbara F. Grimes. *Ethnologue: Languages of the World*. Wycliffe Bible Translators: Dallas (TX), 1984¹⁰. *Gemeinde Konkret Magazin* 4/1986: *Mission Konkret* p. 1. most recent edition: Raymond G. Gordon. (ed.). *Ethnologue: Languages of the World*. SIL Int.: Dallas (TX), 2005¹⁵, now also at www.ethnologue.com.

³ Ralph Winter. "Evangelisation in anderen Kulturen." pp. 291–338 in: *Alle Welt soll sein Wort hören*. Hänssler: Neuhausen, 1974.

Lausanne 1974, looked at which peoples of the world were then 'unreached',⁴ and how one could newly restructure missions work so that the vast majority of missionaries, both men and women, could concentrate on under-reached peoples. This was the hour of birth of the Institute for World Mission and Church Growth – German Center for World Mission (IWG).⁵ Next to its many other tasks, it for many years in association with similar research centers around the world, it supplied large missions data bases (e.g., the US Center for World Mission or WEC International for Operation World/ Prayer for the World) with data on Central Europe and data which was easier to receive out of Germany (e.g., Eastern Europe, Turkey, Northern Africa). The 'Global Network of Centers for World Missions' was started in 1981 at the Consultation for Frontier Missions in Edinburgh (with the participation of IWG). From 1980 to 1981 it was under the leadership of Ben Jennings and from 1981 to 1986 under the leadership of Darrell Dorr. After it was restructured within the framework of the 1986 Singapore Declaration⁶, Michael Jaffarin became the chairman of the network and Darrell Dorr the coordinator.⁷ The 'Europe Hidden People Study Group'⁸ was also a result of these efforts.

It has above all been this occupation with missionary statistics which prevented me from supporting the widespread pessimism found among German Evangelical Christians. The gigantic global growth of Evangelical Christianity around the world and the dramatic decline in the number of still unreached peoples (however they are defined) have left me viewing many of the problems we have as purely German or Western problems.

1985: Theodor Christlieb

I drafted my first dissertation about the practical theologian from Bonn, Germany, Theodor Christlieb,⁹ in which I demonstrated that he was one of the first, perhaps even the first,

-
- 4 Comp. Thomas Schirmmacher. "Weltmissionsstatistik: Wieviele Missionare arbeiten unter welchen unerreichten Völkern?" *Querschnitte* 2 (1989) 3 (Jul-Sept): 8; "Stadien der Arbeit an unterrichteten Volksgruppen." pp. 199-200 in: Thomas Schirmmacher. *Weltmission*. op. cit., also pp. 200-201, 203-204, 206-207; Thomas Schirmmacher. "Mission unter unerreichten Volksgruppen ('Hidden People')." In the credits of all editions since 1987 by Patrick J. Johnstone. *Gebet für die Welt: Handbuch für Weltmission*. op. cit.
- 5 "Profile: German Center for World Mission." Center Net February 1985; reprinted in Thomas Schirmmacher. *World Mission: Heart of Christianity: Essays*. RVB: Hamburg, 1999. pp. 131-133.
- 6 "Die Erklärung von Singapur des 'Global Network of Centers for World Mission.'" 2 (1989) 4 (Okt-Dez): 5-6; Reprinted in Thomas Schirmmacher. *Weltmission – Das Herz des christlichen Glaubens: Beiträge aus 'Evangelikale Missiologie.'* VKW: Bonn, 2001. pp. 222-223.
- 7 Comp. the presentation: Darrell Dorr, "A Growing Global Network of Centers for World Mission," *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 3(1986): 35-42.
- 8 Thomas Schirmmacher "An Overlooked Mission Field at Our Door." Europe Hidden People Study Group, Soest (NL), 1981. 5 pp.
- 9 *Theodor Christlieb und seine Missionstheologie*. Verlag der Evangelischen Gesellschaft für Deutschland: Wuppertal, 1985; comp. as the most significant review by Wolfgang Eichner in *Annalen des historischen für den Niederrhein*. Heft 189 (1986): 296-297 and Helge Stadelmann in *Theologische Beiträge* 22 (1991) 3: 54-55.

missiologists to teach at a university, at least in Germany. Later,¹⁰ I repeatedly pointed to Christlieb's significance for evangelical missiology, most recently in the 'Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions'¹¹ in 2000 and in the commemorative publication for Klaus Fiedler¹².

One of Christlieb's main works was a type of 'OperationWorld/'Prayer for the the World' in the 19th century.¹³ It was translated into several languages, in English as follows: Protestant Foreign Missions: Their Present State.¹⁴

The work done demonstrates that at his time, Christlieb was the leading authority on global missions in Germany. Gustav Warneck recommended the book as a standard reference¹⁵ and published years later, after Christlieb's death, a similar but by far not so comprehensive and influential a work.¹⁶ The series by the same name in the 1876 AELKZ is far behind Christlieb's work.¹⁷ Beyond that, Christlieb was also probably unrivaled in the Anglo-Saxon realm. The book achieved nine editions alone in English in three English translations in New York, London, and

-
- 10 Thomas Schirmmacher. „Theodor Christlieb als Missionswissenschaftler – eine Anfrage an die evangelikale Missiologie“. *Evangelikale Missiologie* Nr. 7: 2 (1986) 3: 3–5; Nachdruck in *Gemeinde Konkret Magazin* Sammelnummer 6/1986 – 5/1987: 9–10; vgl. die Darstellung in „Schirmmacher, Thomas: ‚Theodor Christlieb als Missionswissenschaftler ...‘ ...“ *Evangelikale Missiologie* 7 (1986) 3–6“. *Missionalia* (Vereins Pretoria, SA) 15 (1987): 138* (Nr. 607); „Christlieb contra Opiumhandel“. *Factum* 9/1989: 352–355; „Schirmmacher, Thomas: ‚Rufus Anderson und die Selbstständigkeit der einheimischen Kirchen ...‘ ...“ *Evangelikale Missiologie* (Feb. 1990) 18–25“. *Missionalia* (Pretoria, SA) 19 (1991): 48* (Nr. 231); „Rufus Anderson und Theodor Christlieb“. S. 37–48 in: Thomas Schirmmacher (Hg.). „Die Zeit für die Bekehrung der Welt ist reif“: Rufus Anderson und die Selbstständigkeit der Kirche als Ziel der Mission. Edition afem: mission scripts 3. Verlag für Kultur und Wissenschaft: Bonn, 1993; vgl. die aktualisierten Fassungen in Thomas Schirmmacher. *Weltmission*. a. a. O. S. 154–159 + S. 163–165
- 11 „Christlieb, Theodor.“ p. 188 in: A. Scott Moreau (ed.). *Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions*. Baker Books: Grand Rapids (MI) & Paternoster Press: Carlisle (GB), 2000; similarly in Thomas Schirmmacher. *World Mission*. op. cit. 117–118.
- 12 „Theodor Christlieb als Missionswissenschaftler – eine Anfrage an die evangelikale Missiologie.“ pp. 119–128 in: Thomas Schirmmacher, Christof Sauer (eds.). *Mission verändert – Mission verändert sich / Mission Transforms – Mission is Transformed*. Commemorative Publication for Klaus Fiedler. Nürnberg: VTR & Bonn: VKW, 2005.
- 13 Comp. Thomas Schirmmacher. *Theodor Christlieb und seine Missionstheologie*. op. cit. pp. 171–174.
- 14 Theodor Christlieb. „Der gegenwärtige Stand der evangelischen Heidenmission: Eine Weltüberschau.“ pp. 665–828 in: Eduard Riggensbach. *Berichte über die Versammlungen der Evangelischen Allianz im September 1879*. Basel 1879; by the same author, „Der gegenwärtige Stand der evangelischen Heidenmission: Eine Weltüberschau.“ *Allgemeine Missions-Zeitschrift* 6 (1879) 11 (Nov): 481–528 + 12 (Dec): 529–582; by the same author. *Der gegenwärtige Stand der evangelischen Heidenmission: Eine Weltüberschau*, 3rd separate duplicate 1st edition, Gütersloh 1880; 4th separate duplicate 2nd supplemented edition, Gütersloh 1880.
- 15 Gustav Warneck. „Literatur-Bericht.“ *Allgemeine Missions-Zeitschrift* 7 (1880) 4 (April): 192; Warneck, Gustav Warneck. „Literatur-Bericht.“ *Allgemeine Missions-Zeitschrift AMZ* 10 (1883) 3(March): 144; comp. Gustav Warneck. „Protestantische Missionen.“ RE-2, Vol. 10, Leipzig, 1882 pp. 33–102, here p. 76; Gustav Warneck *Allgemeine Missions-Zeitschrift* 10 (1883): 144; comp. *Allgemeine Missions-Zeitschrift* 8 (1881): 400. Furhter on the significance Friedrich Fabri. *Zum Gedächtniß Theodor Christliebs*. Bonn, 889, p.4; Eugen Sachsse. „Christlieb.“ pp. 1–4 in: RE-3, Vol. 4, Leipzig, 1898. p. 4, Albert Falkenroth. „Professor D. Theodor Christlieb.“ *Johanneums-Bote* (1929) Nr. 102 (Oct): 1–17, here p. 7 (also as an independent booklet p.7); Arno Pagel. *Professor Theodor Christlieb, Pfarrer Alfred Christlieb*. Wuppertal/Bad Liebenzell, 1983. pp. 34–35; by the same author. *Theodor Christlieb: Christus liebhaben ist besser als alles Wissen*. Wuppertal 1983. p. 212 and the review in *Berichte der Rheinischen Missionsgesellschaft* 37 (1880) No. 4: 123. Comp. in principle Gustav Warneck. „Zur Erinnerung an Theodor Christlieb.“ *Allgemeine Missions-Zeitschrift* 16 (1889) 10 (Oct): 445–448.
- 16 Gustav Warneck. *Der Stand der Heidenmission im Jahre 1892. Flugschriften des Evangelischen Bundes* 88 (VIII. Series, 4). Leipzig 1894.
- 17 *Allgemeine Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirchenzeitung* 9 (1876): 1137-1144+1161-1169+1185+1194+1209+1218, Series carrying the title 'Der gegenwärtige Stand der evangelischen Heidenmission.' Whether Christlieb or the conference knew of this title cannot be determined.

Calcutta, and it appeared as well in almost all European languages.¹⁸ The German and English editions were continually updated and expanded. The introduction made it clear that Christlieb not only wanted to give lectures. Rather, he sought to gain solid principles from the comparisons. For that reason, one finds a plethora of individual assessments regarding innumerable missionary situations and problems.¹⁹

In his introduction, Christlieb begins with the problems of such a depiction and explains how he understands the task of a “missions historian and theoretician.” In the first part he briefly outlines the history of Evangelical missions and their progress since around 1850. At the same time, he reports on the growing sense of mission in the home countries of Germany and England and newly established missions societies. He gives the number of missionaries and the donations amassed by individual missions societies, calculates the number of Christians, and gives their breakdown in individual countries. Finally, he reports on the distribution of Bibles and the 226 Bible translations of the 19th century. He portrays the moral influence of the gospel and the revivification of heathen tribes which in many locations was more weighty than the number of conversions.²⁰ At the same time, he mentioned growing difficulties. The educated Gentile peoples were harder to reach, and Islam was growing. The Catholic Church was working more intensely against Protestant missions efforts while in home countries the zeal for missions lessened and a chronic deficit among the missions societies was noted.

In the second part, he moves to home churches and mission societies. He comprehensively presents the magnitude of missionary efforts in terms of personnel and finances on the part of Christian countries, in particular of England, Holland, the USA, Germany, and Switzerland. At the same time, he observed: “If we place the services of the individual churches next to each other according to their size, a fact that I mention as a member of a state church jumps out before our eyes, and that is that large state churches are significantly surpassed by small free churches.”²¹

Besides that, he determined that there was a very unequal per capita distribution within Germany as far as missions contributions were concerned.²² As reasons for the missing interest in missions in many parts of Germany, he named, among others, reticence on the part of the pastorate, upon whom he called to give missions citizenship in missions and religious instruction.²³ He criticized

¹⁸ Comp. Gustav Warneck. “Literatur-Bericht.”. *Allgemeine Missions-Zeitschrift* 10 (1883) 3 (March): 144. The translations which I could physically locate are: English (England, USA, Indien): *Protestant Foreign Missions, Their Present State, A Universal Survey*, Authorised Translation by David B.Croom, London 18801; London 18802; 18813 (stated in the literature: 18814; 3 further editions in New York); *Protestant Missions to the Heathen, A general Survey of their recent Progress*, translated with additions by W. Hastie, Calcutta 1882 (3rd edition in this very year), other edition: Edinburgh 1882; French: *Etat actuel des Missions Evangeliques*. Translated by Ed. Barde. Lausanne, 1880; Danish: *Den evangeliske Hedningemission i Nutiden: En Verdensoversigt*. Christiana, 1881; Swedish mentioned in addition in Eugen Sachsse. “Christlieb.” 1-4 in: *RE-3, Bd. 4*, Leipzig, 1898, p. 4.

¹⁹ The basic structure of all editions and translations is always the same. The table of contents of both editions from 1879 and 1880 are in such detail that the examples are easily found. For this reason, as a general rule reference is only made to the 1879 editions.

²⁰ “Der gegenwärtige Stand der evangelischen Heidenmission, eine Weltüberschau.” *Allgemeine Missions-Zeitschrift* 6 (1879) 11 (Nov): 481-528 + 12 (Dec): 529-582, here p. 489.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 494.

²² *Ibid.*, pp. 499-500.

²³ “Der gegenwärtige Stand der evangelischen Heidenmission, eine Weltüberschau.” *Allgemeine Missions-Zeitschrift* 6 (1879) 11 (Nov): 481-528 + 12 (Dec): 529-582, here pp. 501-504.

the missing link between theological scholarship and missions, as only a few professors were getting behind missions.²⁴

In the third portion, he described Protestant missions efforts among non-Christian peoples around the world, which he sorted though at length and in a wide-ranging manner. According to reports on work among “non-cultured peoples,” he warned of the danger of cultural superiority which only wants to transplant its own culture. Missions should not denationalize but rather lead to Christianization. At the same time, he advocated the Anglo-Saxon threefold self program of self-support, self-rule, and self-expansion of the national churches. In particular, the program was promoted via a demonstration of home churches in the respective countries.

1987–2003: The German Edition of Operation World

My role model and longtime friend Patrick Johnstone embodies for me an almost ideal combination of deep Evangelical and pietistic devoutness. This is expressed in passionate prayer and an untiring industrious and intellectually candid collection and utilization of data from around the world for the benefit of prayer, missions, and home churches. Through the longtime activity my parents had on the board of WEC International in Germany and our many holiday times at the international headquarters in Bulstrode in England, it was very early on that I came into contact with WEC's efforts located there. These efforts served to ensure through a precise investigation of the situation in the respective countries that the missionaries that had been posted and were being posted were truly urgently needed in order to reach the last unreached peoples on earth. Here lies for me the reason why academic work for the benefit of missions and the active promotion of world missions are never in conflict with each other but are rather inextricably linked.

From 1987 onwards, the second to the sixth edition of Prayer for the World was edited within the Institute for World Missions and Church Growth by my wife and me²⁵, tailored for German-speaking readers and supplemented by detailed information on German-language missions societies. Surely the adaptations were one of the reasons why Prayer for the World editions experienced large runs in German-speaking areas and why Prayer for the World has been accepted as a constant companion by so many of those who pray and are German speakers. Above all, the German edition differs from the English version due to the inclusion of statistical information on German, Swiss, and Austrian Protestant mission societies and the particular emphasis on the participation of German-speaking efforts and missionaries in world missions.

For the newest edition, 2002, I was solely responsible. However, I had alongside me a translator team and team of employees. In exchange, my wife translated the companion volume for the edition.²⁶

²⁴ Ibid. S. 501.

²⁵ Patrick J. Johnstone. *Gebet für die Welt: Handbuch für Weltmission*. German adaptation by Christine and Thomas Schirmmacher. Hänssler Verlag: Neuhausen, 1987²; 1988³; 1988⁴; 1990⁵; 1994⁶ (completely revised edition); 2003⁷ (completely revised edition).

²⁶ Patrick Johnstone. *Viel größer als man denkt: Auftrag und Wachsen der Gemeinde Jesu*. Hänssler: Holzgerlingen, 1999.

1992: Gospel Recordings Language List

In 1992 I published a list of available recordings in 4,273 languages with references and indexes,²⁷ which specifically helped missionaries to activate a great treasure of long available but often unrealized tools for missions. This list has of course been superseded in the meantime since not only a lot of data has since been amassed. Due to the internet, the database has also long since been accessible on a daily basis.

In 1993, 30 representatives of mission societies from 20 countries who over the course of decades went out all over the world from Gospel Recordings Inc. (founded in 1939 by Joy Ridderhof) met in London. These missions came together to form a new international association going by the name 'Global Recordings Network' and adopted common statutes which were to regulate international cooperation. The Swiss branch 'audiogospel' is likewise a participant, as are the German branch 'Internationale Schallplatten Mission' and the Dutch branch 'Gospel recordings.' A significant reason for the association was also to produce a better overview on what has been achieved up to now and identify where there are missing recordings and prioritize them. Missions statistics were also at this point an important motor for missions work.

With the recording of an Evangelistic address in the 5000th language, the Global Recordings Network (or GRN; in Germany: Internationale Schallplattenmission e. V.; in Switzerland: audioGospel), a network which began in 1941, reached a milestone in missions history in 1999.²⁸ Independent of electricity and the progress of industrialization, independent of missionaries and, above all, independent of the ability to read – there are still 2 billion people around the world who are analphabets – people everywhere can hear the gospel of Jesus Christ on cassettes. Surely there are more spoken languages than there are written languages, for which reason with 5,000 languages and dialects that covers only about two-thirds of the approximate 8,000 recordable languages and dialects. The missing 3,000 languages and dialects have long since been tackled.

When in 1937 the American missionary Joy Ridderhof was praying for the people in the mountains of Honduras, whom she had to leave due to illness, she asked herself how she could continue to reach these people, who could neither read nor write, with the gospel. Then she had the 'saving' idea: Couldn't Evangelistic messages and songs be recorded on vinyl? After all, had she not often heard grammophones blaring English and Spanish songs in villages in Honduras! The first vinyl record in Spanish was completed in 1939, which at that time was still a time-consuming technical undertaking. The record was enthusiastically received – also by other missionaries in the Spanish-speaking world.

It did not take long before there were queries from Wycliffe Bible Translators and other missions societies as to whether there might be vinyl recordings made in other languages. Joy Ridderhof initially hesitated and did not want to lose sight of her personal missions task in Honduras. However, discussions with her co-workers gradually opened the horizon to see a global challenge which looked to enormously expand the reach of the gospel around the world. Recordings followed in several languages, and thus began the present day global mission of Gospel

²⁷ Thomas Schirmmacher (ed.). *Gospel Recordings Language List: Liste der Sprachaufnahmen in 4273 Sprachen. Missiologica Evangelica 4*. Verlag für Kultur und Wissenschaft: Bonn, 1992; comp. "Eine ungewöhnliche Liste" (on the subject of the Gospel Recordings Language List). *Factum* 9/1994: 40–41.

²⁸ Thomas Schirmmacher. "Die fünftausendste Sprache!: Evangelikale Leiter und Missionsführer weltweit nennen es einen Meilenstein der Kirchengeschichte." *ISM* Nov 1999: 1–3.

Recordings (now called Global Recordings Network)²⁹. Finally, it was clear to everyone that the actual goal of Gospel Recordings had to be to at least record the gospel in all languages in which otherwise the gospel would not be heard. Nowadays Global Recordings Network has the goal that every peoples group around the world be able to hear the gospel of redemption in Christ in a language familiar to them.

1993 / 1999 / 2001: William Carey

In 1993, the first German edition of William Carey's book *An Enquiry into the Obligations of Christians, to use Means for the Conversion of Heathens* (German title: *Eine Untersuchung über die Verpflichtung der Christen, Mittel einzusetzen für die Bekehrung der Heiden*) was published. The book was translated by Klaus Fiedler and me. In that book, Klaus Fiedler presented for the first time geographical identification of all of the locations and people groups mentioned by Carey.³⁰ A reviewer wrote the following at that time: "Finally, after approximately 200 years, this classic on missions has been published for the first time in German. As recently as seven years ago, it would have only been possible for a German biographer of Carey³¹ to get at the text of *Enquiry* via the University of London. It was not for nothing that William Carey's investigations, which he published in 1792, became famous and have remained so. He forged new paths. In his five chapters he wanted to resolutely use "every lawful method to spread the knowledge of his name." This happened primarily with the presentation of facts. The third chapter in particular is in this sense overwhelming. The thorough preparatory work and expert knowledge in *Enquiry* is revealed by a 23-page table in which he fully listed all of the known countries of the world with their dimensions, the number of inhabitants, and their religions. William Carey's honesty was as impressive as his honesty. Where he did not have reliable data, he admitted that he made estimates."³²

In the end, many years of dealing with Carey and his efforts with respect to missions statistics in order to win people for missions led to what is to my knowledge the first presentation of Carey's theology.³³

²⁹ The history of the missions society is recounted in: Phyllis Thompson. *Hört ihn, aller Welt Enden!: Ein Missionsabenteuer aus unseren Tagen*. Christliches Verlagshaus: Stuttgart, 1965 (the book can only be requested from the mentioned missions addresses); comp. also Thomas Schirmmacher (ed.). *Gospel Recordings Language List: Liste der Aufnahmen in 4273 Sprachen*. *Missiologica Evangelica* 3. Verlag für Kultur und Wissenschaft: Bonn, 1992. 116 pp.

³⁰ Klaus Fiedler, Thomas Schirmmacher (eds.). *William Carey. Eine Untersuchung über die Verpflichtung der Christen, Mittel einzusetzen für die Bekehrung der Heiden*. Verlag für Kultur und Wissenschaft: Bonn, 1993¹; 1998² (revised edition); comp. the acknowledgment in Hans Kasdorf. "William Carey. Eine Untersuchung über die Verpflichtung der Christen . . ." and "Thomas Schirmmacher (ed.). 'Die Zeit für die Bekehrung der Welt ist reif.'" *Jahrbuch für evangelikale Theologie* 9 (1995): 391–395.

³¹ Harald Schilling: *Der geistige und geistliche Werdegang William Careys bis zu seiner Veröffentlichung der Enquiry im Jahre 1792*, in: *Fundierte Theologische Abhandlungen*, Bd. 5, Verlag und Schriftenmission der Evangelischen Gesellschaft: Wuppertal, 1987.

³² Theo Wüst. *William Carey. Eine Untersuchung über die Verpflichtung der Christen, Mittel einzusetzen für die Bekehrung der Heiden*. VKW: Bonn, 1993. *Evangelikale Missiologie* 10 (1994) 4: 121.

³³ Thomas Schirmmacher. *Be Keen to Get Going: William Carey's Theology*. RVB: Hamburg, 2001; *Aufbruch zur modernen Weltmission: William Careys Theologie*. RVB: Hamburg, 2001; comp. also "William Carey's Postmillennialism and World Missions." *Chalcedon Report* No. 430 May 2001: 11–15 (excerpt) and the earlier edition of "Aufbruch zur modernen Weltmission: William Careys Missionstheologie und Eschatologie." pp. 128–163 in: Klaus W. Müller, Thomas Schirmmacher. *Mission in der Spannung zwischen Hoffnung, Resignation und Endzeitenthusiasmus: Eschatologie als Missionsmotivation. Referate der Jahrestagung 2000 des afem. editon afem – mission reports* 8. VKW: Bonn, 2000; comp. to criticism of other conceptions Thomas Schirmmacher. "S. Pearce Carey. *William Carey: Der Vater der modernen Mission*. CLV: Bielefeld, 1998." *Evangelikale Missiologie* 15 (1999) 3: 136.

The significance of the missions statistics overview in Carey's Enquiry has mostly been overlooked, although the statistical and geographical overview accounts for a large part of the book.³⁴ An exception is W. Bieder, who wrote in 1961: "Carey made the demand that Christendom be obligated to get to know the religious situation around the world. Without enough information there can be no missions! . . . Carey, with amazing accuracy, chronicled roughly correct global religious statistics and, with that, recognized the meaning of statistics for what happens in missions."³⁵

Carey submitted a proposal for an international missions conference in 1810 in Cape Town, South Africa,³⁶ so it was only proper that when the conference did take place 100 years later, it became a reality in Edinburgh.

1997ff.: Prayer Movements

In addition to the German edition of Prayer for the World, we annually produce two additional tools. They work through detailed information and missions statistics in order to encourage Christians to pray. These are, namely, booklets on the 'Global Prayer Day for Persecuted Christians' (s. more below) and the booklet, managed by my wife, from the three German-language Evangelical Alliances entitled '30 Days of Prayer for the Islamic World,' which is in part the foundation of the international edition. On the one hand, our experience with this has taught us that there is a danger of lax handling of data and facts. This is above all the case in the Anglo-Saxon world. However, on the other hand, it has taught us how strongly and motivating the link is between Biblical concerns and current information on the situation around the world.

1999–2002: The Number of Martyrs

Through my efforts for persecuted Christians,³⁷ in particular within the framework of the German and the World Evangelical Alliances, I have been intensely concerned with the question of whether the annual number of Christian martyrs can to some extent be reasonably estimated. Although I basically consider this possible, I have ultimately criticized the annually updated number from

³⁴ Jim Montgomery also emphasizes this. *Eine ganze Nation gewinnen: Die DAWN-Strategie*. Wolfgang Simson Verlag: Lörrach, 1990. pp. 101–103.

³⁵ W. Bieder. "William Carey 1761–1834." *Evangelisches Missions-Magazin* 105 (1961): 153–173, here p. 161.

³⁶ The best presentation is in Ruth Rouse. "William Carey's 'Pleasing Dream.'" *International Review of Missions* 38 (1949): 181–192.

³⁷ Comp., for example, my books *Christenverfolgung geht uns alle an: Auf dem Weg zu einer Theologie des Martyriums*. Idea-Dokumentation 15/99. Idea: Wetzlar, 1999; expanded 20012; English: *The Persecution of Christians Concerns Us All: Towards a Theology of Martyrdom*. together Idea-Dokumentation 15/99 E. VKW: Bonn, 2001; *Mission und der Kampf um die Menschenrechte*. RVB: Hamburg, 2001; as well as the annual prayer guide I have been producing and titled 'Weltweiter Gebetssonntag für verfolgte Christen' (from Stuttgart in 1998) from the German Evangelical Alliance and the documentation I have been publishing together with Max Klingberg since 1998 'Märtyrer: Das Jahrbuch zur Christenverfolgung heute'; comp. also my article "Anmerkungen zum Verhältnis evangelikaler Mission zum Kampf gegen Menschenrechtsverletzungen." *Evangelikale Missiologie* 17 (2001) 2: 65–75 and "Glauben ist ein Menschenrecht: Nachdruck aus AI-Journal 8/2000: 6–9." *Querschnitte* 14 (2001) 12 (Dec): 1–4.

David Barrett as unable to be verified.³⁸ This is due to the fact that we at the Commission for Religions Freedom at the World Evangelical Alliance have not been able to find out which data lie at the basis of the estimation and how the total number for the world is broken down according to regions or individual countries.

These experiences are reflected in my basic criticism of the World Christian Encyclopedia.³⁹ At the same time, owing to such experience with enthusiasm about the significance of missions statistics, there is also a good measure of necessary self-criticism mixed in. This is due to the fact that missions statistics do not always have to serve as exaggerated success reports on the part of certain missions works and Evangelists. Rather, there are also many numbers found in official works which experienced insiders also find unverifiable. For instance, the World Christian Encyclopedia⁴⁰ is full of unbelievably precise numbers regarding instances which cannot even be roughly estimated (e.g., how much money per country is annually misappropriated in church congregations),⁴¹ as well as being known for its publishers not letting other scholars take a look at the source of their data.⁴²

The global numbers and estimates on church and missions statistics, including the number of martyrs, is manageably put together on an annual basis by David B. Barrett and Todd M. Johnson.⁴³ The International Bulletin of Missionary Research is an ecumenically oriented voice under Catholic editorship, and the numbers do not reflect the viewpoint of Evangelical researchers. The number of martyrs also contains Christians and nominal Christians killed within the scope of what are more political conflicts and civil wars – e.g., between Muslims and Christians in Sudan. Regarding the question of the reliability of the numbers, I would like to quote from my related remarks for the World Evangelical Alliance's Commission for Religious Freedom:

“I would briefly like to bring you up to date on the status of the debate regarding the estimated number of martyrs per year of 165,000 (at present 167,000 for 2001). The number comes from the annually published table produced by the Evangelical authors David Barrett and Todd M. Johnson. It is entitled 'Status of Global Mission' in the Catholic-ecumenical journal International

³⁸ Thomas Schirmmacher. “Zur Zahl der Märtyrer,” pp. 144–146 in: Max Klingberg, Thomas Schirmmacher (ed.). *Märtyrer 2002: Das Jahrbuch zur Christenverfolgung heute*. Idea-Dokumentation 7/2002. VKW: Bonn, 2002 – also printed in the Appendix of the 2nd edition by Thomas Schirmmacher. *Christenverfolgung geht uns alle an: Auf dem Weg zu einer Theologie des Martyriums*. Idea-Dokumentation 15/99. Idea: Wetzlar, 2001²; comp. prior thereto “Jährlich 165.000 christliche Märtyrer.” pp. 18–23 in: Max Klingberg (ed.). *Märtyrer heute*. Schulte & Gerth: Asslar, 2000; “Jährlich 164.000 christliche Märtyrer.” pp. 5–7 in: ‘Märtyrer heute’ – Eine Dokumentation zur weltweiten Diskriminierung und Verfolgung der Christen. Idea-Dokumentation 16/99. Idea: Wetzlar, 1999; “Jährlich 163.000 christliche Märtyrer.” pp. 4–5 in: ‘Märtyrer heute’ – Eine Dokumentation der weltweiten Lage verfolgter Christen. Idea-Dokumentation 16/98. Idea: Wetzlar, 1998.

³⁹ “Klassiker der evangelikalen Statistik und Missionsforschung – Lexika und Nachschlagewerke.” *Evangelikale Missiologie* 17 (2001) 1: 36–38.

⁴⁰ See my review in “Klassiker der evangelikalen Statistik und Missionsforschung – Lexika und Nachschlagewerke.” *Evangelikale Missiologie* 17 (2001) 1: 36–38.

⁴¹ Comp. also the critique in the examples relating to Barrett in Klaus Wetzel. “Überlegungen zum Gebrauch von Statistiken in der Missiologie: Aus Anlass der Neuauflagen von 'Operation World' und 'World Christian Encyclopedia.'” *Evangelikale Missiologie* 18 (2002): 66–71, S. 69–71.

⁴² The following section is found in a similar Form in Thomas Schirmmacher. *Christenverfolgung geht uns alle an: Auf dem Weg zu einer Theologie des Martyriums*. Idea-Dokumentation 15/99. Idea: Wetzlar, 2001 (2nd expanded edition), Appendix.

⁴³ Also printed respectively printed in World Evangelization (Lausanne Committee) in the April edition of that same year. My inquiries refer concretely to David B. Barrett, Todd M. Johnson. “Annual Statistical Table on Global Mission.” *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 23 (1999) 1 (Jan): 24–25 [164,000]; 24 (2000) 1 (Jan): 24–25 [165,000]; 25 (2001) 1 (Jan): 24–25 [167,000] – see URL: <http://gem-werc.org/> Zeile 31.

Bulletin of Missionary Research. This table, along with many other estimates, are often quoted around the world, also by the World Evangelical Fellowship. It is, for example, the basis for most of the numbers regarding global development found in *Ideas*. I have, as have other religion statisticians, contacted Barrett in order to either take a look at database which serves as a basis for the number of martyrs or at least to receive a list of how the number is broken down among the individual countries. In the end, I – as many others – was referred to the release of the renowned World Christian Encyclopedia, which is held to contain the country by country numbers and which were unfortunately not permitted to be made public prior to publication. (Oxford University Press has not confirmed this set of facts). The release of the Encyclopedia was repeatedly postponed, for a total of 10 months. Oxford University Press sent me a complimentary copy prior to publication, in which I found many numbers relating to martyrs in past centuries, including a definition of martyrs which gives a very wide understanding of the word 'martyr'. However, there were no country lists, although for every country innumerable detailed numbers were provided. In the end, he told me that he planned to produce a book for 2002 that would include the numbers. At that, I consulted with other religion statisticians. On the basis of these experiences, I continue to consider the numbers to be rather realistic but not able to be documented. Incidentally, one has to point out the varying definitions: from the narrow term 'martyr' as Christians who are killed due to their confession or because they are believing Christians all the way to Barrett's broad term, which also includes all Christians killed in religious wars and racial conflicts.”

In the meantime, the World Christian Encyclopedia has appeared.⁴⁴ I discussed the book in *Evangelikale Missiologie* as follows (here as an excerpt): In 1968, church and missions statisticians came together for a mammoth project under the leadership of the Evangelical missiologist David Barrett. This led to the first edition of the WCE, which was published by one of the most renowned scholarly publishing houses in the world. The volume, which captured all denominations around the world, quickly gained importance beyond the sphere of Christianity. It advanced to being the Mercedes of religion statistics and yet at the same time offered unique data for many countries. The long awaited second edition which presented the state of affairs for the year 2000 left the first edition far behind, for much had changed over the past 20 years. Evangelical missiology had shaken off everything of its shadowy existence, and mission statistics have long since been recognized as the motor for planning, motivation, and prayer. The volumes at hand offer an overwhelming abundance of data on any and all questions having to do with Christian churches religions around the world. What do you want to know: How much in Christian funds is estimated to be misappropriated in Honduras annually? How many full-time Christian workers are there in Hawaii? How much money is spent annually on Christian media in Germany? How much more does a Swiss Christian give than a German Christian? Whether Islam is growing in Indonesia due to conversions or organic growth? How many charismatic and pentecostal denominations and groups are domiciled in Canada? How many martyrs are there estimated to have been over the course of history? How many Evangelicals live in Cologne, Germany? Or when was the Methodist church in Paraguay founded? In addition to comprehensive lists, explanations of terms, a list of abbreviations and bibliographical references, an address list and an atlas, the following blocks are found in the two volumes: * Tables giving an overview of the global situation (24 pp. in Vol. 1) * Presentation of the countries of the world (in addition to the statistics

⁴⁴ David Barrett, George T. Kurian, Todd M. Johnson. *World Christian Encyclopedia: A Comparative Survey of Churches and Religions in the Modern World*. 2 Vols. Oxford University Press: New York, Oxford etc., 2001. 876 + 823 pp., bound, in Vol.1 on Christian persecution: pp. 834-835, columns 56-59 (Situation per country), p. 856 “Global Map 7” (global map), p. 11 “Global Diagram 6” (Breakdown of martyrs over 2000 years according to groups persecuted).

there are texts on the human rights situation, religious freedom, and the relationship between religion and the state as well as the history and status of religions and Christianity) (800 pp. in Vol. 1) * Numbers regarding the 270 largest religions (12 pp.) * Numbers regarding 12,600 peoples and peoples groups, including the status of evangelization (230 pp.) * Data on 13,500 languages and dialects around the world, including the status of Bible translation (290 pp.) * Data on 7,000 large cities (85 pp.) * Data on 3,030 provinces of the 238 countries in the world (30 pp.).

How reliable is the data?⁴⁵ Despite the comprehensive staff list and the many literature lists (for instance per country), it is naturally impossible to cite how each number was respectively calculated. Statements regarding the question of how the data was collected are rather sparse. Also, David Barrett is known for being unwilling to exchange data with others and to enter into discussion. This is in complete contrast to the team of authors around Patrick Johnstone at 'Operation World.' The gigantic organization for data collection which Barrett has built up surely includes almost all church and religious statistics which have been produced anywhere. Also, in those cases where no data is available, arguably one has to simply follow him. Nevertheless, the claim of the foreword, which is that the volumes provide nothing but facts and no interpretations, can hardly be upheld. For instance, how can one collect the number of "Great Commission Christians," that is, the number of those who personally take the Great Commission seriously, without performing some sort of interpretation, and how can this be done when one considers that there is hardly a pastor who could provide this number for his own congregation. Since William Carey, with a missions and religion statistics book, triggered the modern phase of Evangelical world missions in 1792, mission statistics have been indispensable. However, they should not be inflated and attribute to themselves a level of truth which simply cannot be achieved in a continually changing world that cannot be completely surveyed."

⁴⁵ Comp. as well my view on the number of world religions in Thomas Schirmmacher. "Lexikon des Christentums" etc., pp. 8-267 in: *Harenberg Lexikon der Religionen*. Harenberg Verlag: Düsseldorf, 2002.