

# darum-journal



Evangelical Mission in Solidarity



Dear Readers, what you see here is the last issue of **darum-journal**. As of next year, the Evangelical Mission in Solidarity will publish its own magazine for its donors, friends and all interested parties.

It goes without saying that we will continue to post reports from EMS member churches and mission societies. Our colleagues in the world-wide EMS association will have a greater

share than before in writing, photographing and editing. Read more about this on page 2.

You can continue to receive the magazine in print free of charge or you can download a copy in either German or English from our website: [www.ems-online.org](http://www.ems-online.org)

Look forward to the first issue – which will appear in good time for Easter!

# Every 20 years, it seems the time is ripe for something new

## The "darum" Magazine – Review and Outlook

The first issue of "darum" (German for 'therefore') was published on 15 January 1983. The editor in chief at the time, Klaus Zöller, wrote the following in his editorial: the aim is to provide our readers with "news and reports from member churches and overseas partner churches of the Association of Churches and Missions in South Western Germany".

Up until that time, the EMS had filled seven pages in "Das Wort in der Welt" (The Word in the World) of the magazine published by the Association of Protestant Churches and Missions in Germany (EMW). But according to Zöller it turned out that "an association such as the EMS cannot manage without its own magazine for its members and friends." The Hamburg-based "Wort in die Welt" became "Die Weltmission" (The World Mission), a magazine that the EMS regarded as a "supplement to what we want to offer in "darum" to congregations and Christians in South-West Germany.

"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age," it says in Matthew 28:19-20. This was the moment the name of the magazine was born, wrote Klaus Zöller at the time. "There's no better name. 'Therefore' (darum) there is no alternative for the Mission."

In the following years, the "darum" appeared in the form of a small booklet six times a year for 20 years until December 2002. Then came the news: "Starting in 2003, six mission societies will join forces to produce a magazine – this is an idea of European proportions."

From then on, our next larger-size magazine was called "darum" and contained 36 pages, later expanded to 44 pages. It was compiled by a collaboration of mission society editors from Neuendettelsau, Hermannsburg, Hamburg, Basel, Vienna and Stuttgart and appeared six times a year to begin with. Later, this was reduced to four times a year. The other mission societies called their magazines names like "EineWelt" (OneWorld), "Mitteilen" (Sharing) or "Aufbruch" (Awakening) – and dedicated their regional sections to their own members as they wished, just like the EMS. At the beginning, the regional EMS section, which has been called the "darum-journal" ever since, contained 16 pages. Since 2012, it has featured news from the EMS association on eight pages.

At the end of 2020, again almost 20 years later, the editorial collaboration now comes to an end. Starting in 2021, the EMS will again publish its own magazine. The 39th year of the new publication will begin with the first issue at Easter. After the new EMS constitution created an association of members with equal rights in 2012, one of our main aims for the future is "internationalisation". This will be the focus of our new publication. The first steps have already been taken to setting up an international editorial team for the new magazine – a new name will also reflect this development.

We sincerely hope you will remain loyal to us on this path. And please tell us what you like or don't like about "darum" or what you want to see less of or not at all. We look forward to seeing you next year!

Regina Karasch-Böttcher





# Mission in a time like this

Corona: Not only a crisis, but also an opportunity

**At a time like this, the fear of Covid-19 has engulfed humanity. The world will never forget this pandemic. Often in times of crisis such as this, a living theology emerges and offers the community hope through faith in Jesus Christ. Here, I would like to take a look with you at the passage in Esther 4:13-14 as it contains two aspects that are relevant in our present situation.**

## Understanding the signs of the time

This passage reflects an extraordinary time, a “kairos” moment. In our time, human life has also become vulnerable. We have lost control over our lives. In the global context, Covid-19 spares no-one, neither rich nor poor, neither south nor north. It affects all continents and races. A true equality and ecumenical infection! And many ask where is God?

This virus also has consequences for the position of the church. The pride of institutional and denominational churches has been crushed. All of a sudden, new forms of worship have developed beyond the bounds of previous practice.

As a church, how do we use the opportunities we are presented with? Today, the church has a prophetic duty to fulfil: to invite people to practice peace, courage and hope, and to empathise and sympathise with those who are suffering and in pain.

## What are we called to do now? What is our mission?

Mordecai reproached Esther for turning down the chance to raise her prophetic voice out of fear for her life. We, too, should not remain silent. Instead, we must try to overcome these difficult times together.

Many ask the question, is Covid-19 part of God’s plan? It is my personal belief that the God I experience is not the one who is causing a pandemic to make people sick and kill them. The God I believe in is not a God of control. The God I believe in is working to overcome the pandemic with love. And God needs our help to do this. God needs the best medicines, the best commitment and ministry to those infected to preserve their dignity.

Solomon Paul Benjamin

## EMS side notes

### Matthew at the end



EMS/Waiblingen

„Bei dem ist Matthäi am Letzten.“ (Literally “With him Matthew is at the end.”) I have known this German saying since I was a child. It

meant “He’s done for!” But for a long time, I never really understood what it really meant. Until at some time or other I learnt that the saying originally came from Martin Luther’s catechism. There it says, “Since our Lord Jesus Christ speaks to Matthew at the end: Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” (Matthew 28:19). So “Matthew at the end” originally meant nothing more than “at the end of the Gospel of Matthew”.

The present name of the EMS “darum” magazine refers to this verse: “Go therefore ...”. This issue is really “going” to end when it comes to the name of “darum” – but not the magazine itself, and definitely not the whole world either. People who interpreted a proverbial doomsday prophecy from Luther’s words “Matthew at the end” obviously didn’t read the gospel to the end. The last verse in fact takes it one step further: “And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” So, in fact, in the end, Matthew is merely the start of a new story. If ever people say “Matthew at the end” to a person, they should not forget to mention this promise in the same breath. “Remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age!” This sounds more like support and encouragement in the same vein as the entire “Great Commission” which calls Jesus’ disciples to go out into the world and spread his teachings. By the way, the same goes for “darum”. We are now looking forward to a new lease of life for the EMS magazine – with a new name.

*Dieter Feichmann*



Chriemhild/Pixabay

# He who harvests twice is grateful

Climate change damages agriculture in Indonesia

Speechless, Efendi Ma'mi (64) gazes at the fields of the Christian Church in South Sulawesi (GKSS) in the highlands of Buluballea Malino. The long period of drought has withered all the vegetable plants – all the tomatoes and carrots have died. This happens more and more often, says Ma'mi. Over the past ten years, there has been a radical change in the weather. Before, farmers could plant at any time of the year and it even rained during the dry season. Compared to now, because the dry season is getting longer. “Before, we had three harvests a year. Now, we are grateful if we can harvest twice.”

Ma'mi's colleague Hendrik Baco (45) explains that, in the past few years, farmers have no longer been able to rely on weather forecasts. And due to a lack of knowledge and good agricultural methods, the situation has become even worse. “Trees are simply cut down to make way for new arable land. Areas that were formerly forests are now barren land. As a result, the spring has dried up. And although the sloping area is prone to landslides, the local authority keeps on growing plantations,” says Baco.

In the face of the persistent drought, the farmers at the church farm have to rely on water from the nearby river. However, commercial plantation owners also draw water from the river to irrigate their farms with the result that the river is slowly running dry. Baco adds, “This is why our harvests at the church farm are so poor.”

Farmers in Soppeng in the Liliraja district are also complaining. Paddy fields belonging to the GKSS and cultivated by the congregation of Sisaromase Pacongkang are also drying up. “The irregular rains mean that we can no longer cover our wa-



EMS/Handayani

ter needs. That's why it's so difficult for farmers to choose the right time to sow and plant,” says Saenal Abidin who is a member of the congregation in Pacongkang.

There was not enough water to plant rice until the beginning of 2020. When the weather is good, farmers can harvest twice a year and so earn an income of four to five million Rupiahs. The money is used to complete the tasks of the GKSS. Farmers must adapt to the uncertain weather conditions,” explains Saenal Abidin: “As there is not enough water to plant rice, farmers are turning to maize.”

## Water cycle

Hartanto, head of the Meteorological, Climatological and Geophysical Agency (BMKG) in Maros, South Sulawesi, has an explanation for the extreme weather in Indonesia:

The spread of plantations and industrial plantation forests (HTI) in the water catchment area utilises so much water for

irrigation that it disturbs the normal process of water circulation. The government should adopt long-term measures by reforestation or restoring the forests that were destroyed or transformed into plantation land. Extreme weather will continue over the next few years. This is why a long-term policy is needed.

“Massive deforestation is a major problem, especially in developing countries striving for economic growth, such as Indonesia. Economic growth is regarded as the yardstick to measure the success of a country. However, rapid economic growth can also create new problems, such as high consumption which is the expression of greed. Ultimately, this culture of inefficiency and wastefulness also destroys the environment,” explains Hartanto. When forests are cut down to introduce new industrial farming and animal rearing and to build factories that pollute the air with carbon dioxide, it damages the balancing function of nature. This, says Hartanto, endangers





EMS/Handayani

the survival of human beings and other creatures that keep nature in balance.

“Indonesia has been feeling the effects of extreme weather resulting from climate change,” emphasises Hartanto. “Climate change is a fact that is affecting the whole world, not only Indonesia. The country’s leaders must adopt measures on the basis of climate change to prevent or restrict the damage caused to nature.”

### Start with the young generation

A number of countries are already feeling the effects of climate change in the form of extreme weather phenomena – in some cases with enormous material damage and losses in human life. Nonetheless, 18 percent of Indonesians – a higher percentage than in most countries of the world – believe that global warming is actually happening, but don’t believe that human activity is responsible for it. One reason lies in the lack of information on environmental issues in schools.

In view of this situation, the Meteorological, Climatological and Geophysical Agency (BMKG) invites young people to care for the environment and lead a lifestyle that is in harmony with the environment. The Adiwiyata programme of the Indonesian Ministry of the Environment is supporting

schools in activities that promote environmental protection, for example by planting trees and ornamental plants in their local area, by teaching them how to handle waste and by showing them ways to encourage them to save energy. (See also page 8.)

Sriyanto Alwina Handayani (GKSS)



EMS/Karasch



## EYVP: Farewell in times of Covid-19



### Sarah, India: “I am happy for this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity”

Due to the coronavirus pandemic my time in India came to an end four months earlier than planned – and it came as a complete surprise for me. At first, it seemed I would have to leave the place of my mission, the “Holy Cross” girls’ home in Nandyal, on the same evening. But luckily my departure was delayed by one day. I spent that day mainly with the girls and their carers Bhagya and Keziah. In the evening, Bhagya even managed to organise a function to give me a “fitting” farewell. Despite this it was very difficult for me to say good-bye to India. I flew back to Düsseldorf via Dubai on one of the last international flights.

What remains are the unique memories and experiences that I gained in Nandyal and on my trips through the country. I got to know a totally foreign culture and I had to grapple with the realisation once again that I am extremely moulded by my own culture. I have learnt a lot, starting with how to eat rice with my hand, how to read Telugu, through to bookkeeping with real books. I have developed a totally new way of looking at many things.

At the moment, all this is still overshadowed by the sadness that I was unable to carry out many of the plans I had. But despite all this, I am happy most of all that I had this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity and that I was able to spend six months in India, some of which were challenging.

### Arne, Jordan: “It was a great time despite everything”

They said the coronavirus crisis would not spread so fast in Jordan – the borders were closed and there were more or less no cases in Jordan – so we would continue to live our everyday lives as normal. At least, that’s what I thought at the beginning of March. That was before all the schools in Jordan were closed down for two weeks – one of the many measures that Jordan has meanwhile imposed to contain the coronavirus.

Nothing to do at the Theodor Schneller School (TSS). No language lessons. And less than two weeks later came the news: Jordan would stop all air traffic on 17 March. One day later came the call: “Get your things packed. You’ll probably be flying back to Germany today.” Less than 24 hours later, I was standing in Frankfurt airport – without any of the souvenirs I had planned to buy and – even worse – without having said good-bye to the children or teachers at the TSS because the school was closed.

In retrospect I must admit that the EMS’ decision to fetch us back was the right one. Even though my volunteer service was shorter than I had anticipated and I wasn’t able to do or experience all the things I wanted to, I still had a great time in Jordan. Another three months would have been even better as my Arabic was slowly reaching the stage when I was able to hold a real conversation. But you can’t always pick and choose in life. Especially when a global epidemic gets in the way.



EMS/Krüger (2)

# Help that gets there

## EMS coronavirus appeal shows success

In May 2020, the Evangelical Mission in Solidarity (EMS) launched its donation appeal “Living. Solidarity. Worldwide. Together Against Corona”. So far, we have been able to provide €325,000 to projects of EMS member churches. Thank you so much for your generosity!

### India

The Church of South India (CSI) has been finding it more and more difficult to keep up its struggle against the pandemic. But the plight of many people has been relieved thanks to the EMS Coronavirus Fund. It has provided food and medical supplies to the residents of the “Mercy Home” for the elderly. Another part of the funds went to a CSI project to allow women to set up their own micro-enterprises to sew coronavirus masks and sell disinfectants.

### Indonesia

In Indonesia the fund provided help to all nine EMS member churches.

The focus here was on paying the salaries and health insurance contributions of pastors and church co-workers. Many other projects were also supported.

For example, the Protestant Church in South East Sulawesi (GEPSULTRA) received funds to cover the running costs of the orphanage in Lambuya. The assistance given to the Christian Protestant Church in Bali (GKPB) covered the daily requirements of food and hygiene products for more than 900 families. The GKPN was also supplied with personal protective equipment for medical staff.

### Middle East

Thanks to the EMS Coronavirus Fund the Theodor Schneller School (TSS) in Jordan



GKPB

and the Johann Ludwig Schneller School (JLSS) in Lebanon were able to continue their work. For example, the TTS was able to create digital teaching offers and pay teachers' salaries. The JLSS was able to hire additional educators. Further funds were provided to the National Protestant College in Lebanon and the Princess Basma Centre for children with disabilities in Jerusalem.

### Africa

Covid-19 has caused a drastic collapse in earnings at the Moravian Church in South Africa (MCSA) as the ban on worship services has stopped all collections. The MCSA also used EMS funds to pay for the salaries of their pastors and so maintain church life. The Presbyterian Church in Ghana (PCG) received funds in help in the distribution of personal protective equipment and materials to schools and congregations throughout the country. The church was also able to help young people to start their own businesses. The EMS aided internally displaced people in South Sudan

through the Basel Mission German Branch (BMDZ). They were supplied with food and everyday consumer goods.

Sadly, it was not possible to meet all the requests. For example, some of the requests submitted failed to meet the criteria for support. However, the main reason was in the limited funds available in the EMS Coronavirus Fund. Further support ultimately depends on the receipt of additional donations.

Georg Meyer, EMS Coronavirus Fund Coordinator

We kindly ask for your prayers and donations for the EMS Coronavirus Fund. We will do our utmost to send your donations to where they are most urgently needed.

#### Donation account:

Evangelische Mission in Solidarität e.V.  
Evangelische Bank eG  
IBAN: DE85 5206 0410 0000 0001 24  
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Purpose: “Together Against Corona”



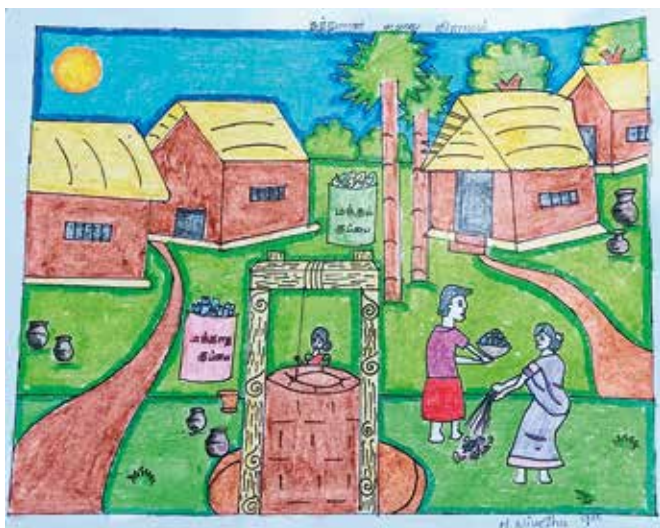
# “Green School” programme

Children in India draw their “clean village”



CSI/Packiaraj (2)

**Moses Packiaraj, who teaches botany at the CSI Girls' Higher Secondary School in Pasumalai, is Green School Programme Coordinator in the Madurai-Ramnad diocese and is one of the 1,270 “educational multipliers” of the programme for sustainable ecological education.** Together with the children and young people in “his” schools, he works out in a very practical way how to save energy and water, utilise rainwater and avoid waste. Producing “seed balls” is one of the ideas for making green farming popular in schools and villages and among families. The small balls made of dung and mud unleash their strength during the next rainy season when they sprout small neem or fruit trees.



In Packiaraj’s lessons 9th grade students drew their ideas for a “Clean Village”.

The Church of South India (CSI) is the only Church in India which has mentioned Ecology as a mission in its Constitution and in its Mission statement. Since 1992, the CSI has focused on several environmental protection programs and projects.

The “Green School” programme was introduced in 2015. The students learn to think critically, live sustainably and pass on this knowledge to their families and communities. So far, more than 2,100 schools have taken part in the programme. Schools can only call themselves “Green Schools” if they reduce water consumption, optimise their energy efficiency, produce less waste, collect and recycle water and offer a healthy learning environment.

In 2018, the Church of South India approved “A Guideline of 12 Points for the CSI Dioceses to develop Green Congregations” (Green Protocol for Green Discipleship). All 15,000 congregations in the 24 dioceses were called upon to implement the strategy paper. It provides background information and practical methods for new projects and new ways for greater sustainability.

“Dear darum-journal,  
For many years, I’ve loved reading your magazine but now I’m a little sad that the time has come to say good-bye. It was always exciting to read the reports from all around the world of the EMS. I’m looking forward very much to the new magazine and I’ll definitely be featured in it from time to time. Affectionately yours, EMSO.”

