

Find the Mission - Ways of Vocation

What motivates Protestant Believers, in a postmodern Germany, to become Missionaries?

Keywords of Research: **Vocation** – a calling into a purpose-driven profession; **Missionary** – a guy who goes overseas to spread the gospel; **Pietism** - spiritual movement in Germany since 1700 to renew Christian Faith by deeds of Love including educating, teaching, inventing, daily reading the bible, behaving properly, etc.

Motivation of Research:

• **Anthropologists and Missionaries**, until today, sometimes **encounter each other** in their fields. One rather describes, the other rather modifies culture. One may wonder about the other...

„**Why do they do what they do?**“

This encounter has also being called „*A Love-Hate Relationship*“ (G. Hiebert 1978) or at least „*Ambivalent*“ (D. Whiteman 2012)

• There is a spiritual culture of a rather strict and consequent faith practice within German Protestantism: „Pietism“. This is the offspring of most of the current ca. 3000 (2018) Evangelical German Missionaries.



Picture above (Wikipedia): The calling of Saul to become St. Paul, the Missionary

• **To gain understanding** of this missional culture of Piety and, thereby my personal cultural coining, **I examine...**

- **what means a call into Christian missions to an individual's life?**
- **what subcultural aspects may influence a vocational process?**
- **what could shape the worldview of a mission-interested Pietist?**

Example: The Missionary Gerhard Stamm (+ 2019) used to work as train driver at Deutsche Bahn first, then going to Papua for 30 years as a trainer of local pastors of South Seas Evangelical Church. (Source: Liebenzell Mission)

He was the spiritual Godfather to one of my female interlocutors (2019: age 34 y.) and coined her to do so as well – going as a Missionary to Papua with Liebenzell Mission. By time of his death, his nephew was following in his traces, too. But it usually starts with a sending organisation and a community at home. Below: Annual Missionfeast, Liebenzell



Actions and Methods

Picture to the right: Prayer Meeting for Missionaries near Böblinge (Source: Männergebetsbund)

04/19-01/20: Active Participation in regular activities of a missional, pious parish of Protestants at the edge of Black Forest (Participant Observation in Action)

- Interviewing Representatives of 3 Missions for their understanding of calling and what they require today from a Missionary in the Making
- Autoethnographic reflection of personal experiences in pietistic society and in missions
- Interviewing former Short-Term Missionaries
- Interviewing Long-Term Missionaries
- Interviewing people who care and pray for Missionaries
- Extraction and Analysis of the Weberian Consideration of Vocation, Pietism and German Working Culture (Weber 1921) and his current receptionists



Picture above, (Source Stadtarchiv Böblingen): Same as today - Pietists meeting for bible study in 1900

Findings:

- **Informants say, they have an inner urge to spread Love practically. Interlocutors trace this back to individual spiritual experiences and the fact that they have realized that God is existent and does love them.**
- **The Weberian spirit of capitalism is still vital** among Pietists, while it becomes a ghost in rather hedonistic secular world. Still, what Weber observed and interpreted 100 years ago, is being conserved like in a fridge as a spiritual core of Pietism. Since they cling unto the Bible as vital heavenly message box, they preserve ancient values.
- Despite individual spiritual experience, sociological aspects such as Peers, encouraging biographies and the admittance of the social environment to Evangelism back up the going of called persons into missions.
- **Going into missions is a way for pietists to experience adventure** in combination with the back up and respect of their community.
- Utility of Bourdieu's theory of capitals partly fits to explain resources of going away as a pious Protestant Missionary