

SCHNELLER

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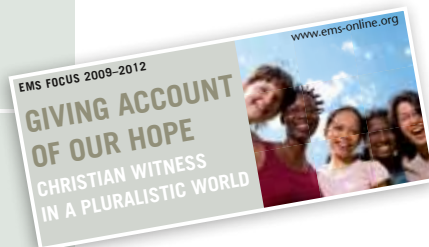
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"Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed,
for his compassion never fails." Lamentations 3:22



EVS Evangelical Association
for the Schneller Schools

1/2011

SCHNELLER

MAGAZINE ON CHRISTIAN LIFE IN THE MIDDLE EAST



EDUCATION FOR PEACE AT THE SCHNELLER SCHOOLS
PALESTINE: DAILY WAIT AT THE CHECKPOINT



EVS Evangelical Association
for the Schneller Schools

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Cover picture: Two boys from the Johann Ludwig Schneller School in Lebanon
Photo: EMS / Martina Waiblinger

Dear Reader,

Arguments are quick to flare up. But how do you make peace? This question is as old as Humanity and there have been countless attempts to create peace. Many have failed miserably, and some have been more or less fruitful. How must education be aimed for people to coexist peacefully in the long term and to become harbingers of peace to others? This question was discussed at a symposium lasting several days at the Theodor-Schneller school at the end of last year and attended by educators, theologians, sociologists, historians and political scientists from Germany, Switzerland, Lebanon and Jordan. The conference seemed to have been unique in the Middle East and all participants were unanimous in their enthusiasm. They were also touched by the co-operative exchange they experienced during the conference in Amman. In this edition we will describe the results from the conference and at the same time, we ask you to continue your support of peace education efforts at the Schneller schools in your prayers and through your donations.



In the past weeks, the Middle East has been living through upheavals of epic proportions. In Tunisia the people sent its unloved president into exile. In Egypt, nobody a few weeks ago could have thought that Hosni Mubarak would bow to the pressure of demonstrators and relinquish office. The current events are changing the Middle East at such a pace that it is almost impossible to produce reasonable up-to-date reports in a magazine that only appears every quarter. The editors have therefore decided not to deal with this subject in this edition. Together with our partners locally, however, we will continue to discuss questions such as the prospects that Christians now have in the Middle East and the challenges that people in the region are faced with. We will report on this in the next edition.

Until then we send you our best wishes.

Yours

Katja Dorothea Buck
(Editor in charge)

„,RIGHTEOUSNESS AND JUSTICE KISS EACH OTHER“

Thoughts about peace education

Somebody once said,
"Let's play war!"

Everybody joins in immediately. They play with swords, knight against knight.

They play with guns,
 cowboys against Indians.

They play with bombs
 the great world wars.

They play with laser swords Star Wars.

"Let's play peace,"
 says someone suddenly. The children just look around and ask: How does that go?

(based on Gudrun Pausewang)

Playing peace – that has always been a challenge for educators. The world is rife with dispute, conflict, violence and war. Every kindergarten child knows how fast a dispute can escalate. Educators are often speechless and helpless in such a situation. However, the search for peace is one of humanity's elementary life issues as there is hardly anybody who wishes for the cruelties of war in his life.

While humans beings develop, peace education takes place in steps. It begins with infants in working on feelings as well as in searching for simple rules of dealing with others. The causes of conflict, forms of violence, rules for resolving conflicts and children's rights can be discussed with primary school children. Intercultural and interreligious learning is initiated. With young people, the question of justice and forms of violence are dealt with – whether

in computer games or in music. The older the young people become, the more global the subject of peace can be treated and causes such as injustice can be considered. Finally they can be educated as conflict mediators or they can become active themselves by joining a civil peace service – this is what many do every year when they start off to the Schneller schools.

Peace education aims at several levels. Firstly there is the level of the individual person. Without self-perception it is impossible to perceive others. If a person cannot make peace with himself, it is difficult to make peace with others. The strengths and weaknesses of the individual must be examined. Feelings can be portrayed as coloured pictures or presented in the form of a pantomime.

The Holy Scriptures offer new perspectives

Another level of peace education is to learn what it really means to interact with others. Non-verbal communication can be trained and questions can be asked: what does the other person want to tell me with his words, gestures and facial expressions? Or the person learns about the "faux pas" in the world – the right and wrong things that may happen when greeting someone, eye-contact, clothing or even when smiling. As another person often has a different viewpoint of a conflict, an attempt can be made to see the situation from the other's viewpoint.

A third level is reflection on concepts such as peace, violence or justice. Here the words of thinkers and from the Holy Scrip-



Photo: Peace Counts

When many people extend their hands to each other, it is a sign of peace. Here, tribal chiefs in Mali.

tures offer perspectives. Young people can also formulate their own peace poems, for example in the form of a rap. It must also be considered what the consequences are of hurting words and attitudes such as "Don't put up with anything" or "An eye for an eye".. Older children can look for peacemakers – in history or in their own environment. Finally, children can search for peace symbols or create their own.

A fourth level is learning about life plans of children their own age in other places. This makes it clear to children and young people: a life can look completely different. The book "Schule für Frieden und Hoffnung" (School for Peace and Hope) was written to provide an insight into the lives of children at the Schneller schools. Besides intercultural and interreligious aspects, the book describes the refugee situation and develops peace stories. Children in Germany can learn about how children at the Schneller schools really live and how much justice really belongs to peace. It illustrates what the Biblical

vision of a world means by "Righteousness and justice kiss each other" (Psalm 85).

Michael Landgraf

The author is director of the Religious Education Centre in Neustadt. Together with Katja Baur he wrote the text book "Schule für Frieden und Hoffnung" (School for Peace and Hope) in 2010. It can be purchased from the Evangelical Association for the Schneller Schools for Euro 17,90.

INTERNATIONAL, INTERDISCIPLINARY, UNIQUE

Symposium on Peace Education at the Schneller Schools

Photo: EMS / Andreas Maurer



For five days, experts from various disciplines discussed the conditions for successful peace education in Amman.

Amman (EVS). At the end of last year, the Theodor Schneller School extended invitations to attend an international peace education symposium. From 30th November to 4th December 2010, numerous experts from Jordan, Lebanon, Germany and Switzerland met in Amman to discuss the challenges of peace education in the Middle East. Under the title "Education on global action and non-violent communication – Conflict resolution and conflict transformation in the Middle East", theologians, peace educators, teachers, human scientists, social workers and specialists from the development service worked on topics such as interreligious dialogue, violence prevention at schools and peace education. Extracts from contributions of participants who delivered papers were compiled into a trilingual publication

(Arabic, English, German). The full conference proceedings will be published in German.

The aim of this symposium, which is unique in the region because of the international and interdisciplinary nature of its contents, is to increase the profile of the Schneller schools as an example of successful peace education in the Middle East. Financially, the event was supported by the German government, represented by the Open Regional Fund for the Middle East, and the Amman office of the German Agency for Technical Co-operation.

"PEACE EDUCATION IS LIFE-LONG LEARNING PROCESS"

Interview with Uli Jäger, codirector of the Institute for Peace Education in Tübingen

Uli Jäger belongs to the leading heads of peace education. In his opinion the Schneller schools have an enormous potential for peace education. The political scientist has been researching the topic of peace education for more than 20 years. "If we succeed to harness this potential, the Schneller schools can become a reference model for international peace education," he says.

What does peace education mean?

The aim of peace education is to awaken and promote the love of peace in a person through training and education and make that person capable of acting. It involves the acquisition of skills and competencies to be able to communicate with others with as little violence as possible, for example. Peace education is made up of four dimensions. It starts with the abhorrence of war. Then it deals with reducing violence in all social relations, for example in the family, at school, in society and in politics, and with learning how to handle conflicts constructively. Finally, it is intended to strengthen ideas on how people can coexist peacefully. Peace education relates to people in all stages of their lives. It is not only aimed at children who are certainly a key target group. But nothing is achievable without adults as role models. Peace education is a life-long learning process.

Is peace education in the Arabian cultural region different than in the Western European region?

As with every education science, the his-

torical, cultural and religious framework must be considered in peace education. What is understood by violence and peace must be redefined in each context. The reference sources and the thinkers are different in every case. A transfer in the sense of a one-way street between cultures is not possible. Co-operation only works by dialogue at eye level. The methods for peace education must also be adapted to local conditions. For example, the theatre and telling stories play an important role in non-European cultures. Peace education must make use of this within this context.

Does peace education need religious justification?

Peace education is not a technique you can learn, such as mediation. It is an attitude to life with a strongly spiritual dimension. Non-violence thinkers, such as Maria Montessori, Mahatma Gandhi or Martin Luther King, all had a spiritual background. Without ethical values, peace education cannot work.

What does this mean for the Schneller schools?

In particular due to their interreligious approach, the Schneller schools have an enormous peace education potential. It is magnificent how children can experience there what peace between religions means. We need adventure spots such as these. What is excellent is that both religions are given the same importance there. Every child can find its religious identity in this way. Without identity there is no dialogue. Knowing one's own identity em-



Photo: Peace Counts

Children must learn how to deal with their own aggressions

powers a person to develop empathy and enter into dialogue.

How can this peace education potential be harnessed?

We need to ask how we can bring children together so that they can learn from each other. This must be staged and prepared. It requires learning arrangements in which all the others are included besides the children, that is to say the educators, teachers, housemasters, bus drivers and not forgetting the parents. It is not enough to educate children and young people to become conflict mediators. All those who are part of the children's lives must be aware of the value of peace education. The more levels it is possible to involve in a learning arrangement, the greater the chances of success.

This sounds like a lot of work.

It is and it is important to also be aware of the limits. Of course we want to change structures in peace education and create

a new more peaceful culture. But whether this will succeed depends on many factors. In the end, we have to walk the path of many small steps. However, the Schneller schools offer structures that are based on sustainability. And they can radiate as peace education models beyond their context if there is an overall plan. It is not enough to initiate single measures on their own.

What influence does peace education have on the lives of children?

It is hardly possible to measure this on an individual child. However, there are studies that show that the violence rate drops in certain town districts when peace education measures are carried out. It certainly also makes a difference whether a child is encouraged to be peace-loving or not. In peace education it is important that children acquire self-confidence, that they become aware of their responsibility and become empathetic.

What importance does the conference in Amman have in general for peace education?

That depends on how the results of the conference are implemented at the Schneller schools. Work is only starting now. I think that three criteria are important. The first thing to do is keep the network of those involved alive. Then the results of the conference must be documented so that other, such as peace education experts as well as educators and teachers at the two schools, can share the results. Finally, we must jointly design a peace education curriculum for the Schneller schools that includes long-term measures. If we can succeed in doing all this, then the Schneller schools could become a model for international peace education.

Interviewed by Katja Dorothea Buck.

Photo: EMS / Katja Buck



Uli Jäger became acquainted with the Schneller schools during the peace education workshop in Amman.

HOW DO YOU MAKE PEACE?

Some photos in this edition were kindly supplied to us by Peace Counts. Peace Counts focuses on the work and methods of successful peacemakers all over the world. In their peace reports, journalists and photographers from Peace Counts have documented many best practice examples of successful peacemaking from various conflict regions in words and pictures. The resulting publications have reached millions of people.

Written in a journalistic and didactical style, best practice examples are so far a little used source of inspiration for conflict parties in the crisis regions of this earth. This is where "Peace Counts on Tour" comes in. "Peace Counts on Tour" is an international programme that combines exhibition, educational seminars and journalistic contributions on the topic of peace. Since 2007 conflict regions are provided with knowledge about peace solutions gathered from all over the world. The partners here are multipliers such as teachers, media journalists and NGOs. In autumn this year, "Peace Counts on Tour" will also hold a workshop at the Theodor Schneller school in Amman.

The "Peace Counts on Tour" is supported by the Advanced Journalism Academy, the Zeitspiegel agency and the Institute for Peace Education in Tübingen, which developed the peace education workshop concept for work in conflict and war situations.

"DON'T HIT ME! WE CAN TALK ABOUT IT."

What peace education means for children at the Theodor Schneller School

Photo: EMS / Katja Buck

More than 250 children and young people, girls and boys, Christians and Muslims aged between four and 20 years old currently live at the Theodor Schneller School (TSS). They come from bitter poverty, some of them are refugee children. Some of them have suffered sexual abuse or have experienced other forms of violence. In short, they are children who live on the fringe of Jordanian society.

These children did not choose their situation of their own accord. We have to accept them as they are. With educational measures we try to convey to the children and young people that they have a dignity that is untouchable by any person, neither teachers, educators, mothers or fathers.

For example Mustafa comes from an Egyptian guest worker family. He and his three brothers have been living at the TSS boarding school for several years. At home they grew up in an atmosphere of violence. The father, who is totally unable to cope with the economic and social situation as guest worker, treated his children with extreme brutality. The mother, who suffers from a heart problem, was even unable to protect herself from him. We have worked with the family for years with the result that in retrospect the father regrets many of the things he did. The key experience was that Mustafa said to his father, who was about to hit him again, "Don't hit me, we can talk about it!"

In the meantime, a climate of greater warmth reigns in the family. There is more



A boy at the Theodor Schneller School in Amman

talking instead of violence. The father has a more positive picture of his children. He has realised that they are not to blame for the economic plight of the family. The children have acquired a better image of themselves. They learnt from us to accept themselves. They take more care of their appearance, they are more peaceful with other children and their school marks have improved. The holistic view of the child is an important condition for the success of the peace education activities at the TSS.

Peace education is based on four principles. Firstly: There is something good in every child. We have to look for this and work on it. Secondly: No child must be allowed to be lost. Thirdly: Tolerance, di-

alogue and justice are the foundations of coexistence. Fourthly: Children and young people with a negative self-image tend towards aggression and are unable to solve their problems in a peaceful way. For this reason, the peace education approach at the TSS tries to help children and young people by targeted educational and psychological counselling, by giving them warmth, a feeling of security and also through leisure activities in the rope garden, sensory garden and petting zoo, to develop their self-awareness and self-confidence so that they can reach a positive image of themselves.

Another example: Maha is a girl in our boarding school. Her mother told us that she herself was raped several times by her

husband's acquaintances. The man was able to finance his gambling addiction and alcoholism in this way. At the beginning, Maha often cried when she was with us. We didn't know why. In intensive talks it became clear that Maha wanted to be with her mother to protect her from sexual assaults. The girl had lost all trust in men. At school she was afraid of male teachers. After six months of intensive work with her, she can now accept to ride piggyback with Lucas, one of our volunteers. She eats more, washes herself on her own, looks after her clothes and does her homework. In the meantime, Maha can express her wishes, she cries less and has developed a good relationship to her female educator and to Ruth, our female volunteer. The desperate, aggressive and violent girl has become a self-confident young woman who has rediscovered her dignity.

Rediscovering one's self is the central theme of the peace education work at the Schneller school. Once a child understands that it has dignity that is untouchable, he or she treats a friend according to the same principle, whether he or she is a Muslim or a Christian.

Musa Al-Munaizel

The author is Educational Advisor to the Schneller schools and has been Director of the Education Centre at the Theodor Schneller School in Amman since the beginning of 2011.

"ISLAM REJECTS ALL FORMS OF VIOLENCE"

The peace message of the religions from an Islamic viewpoint

Photo: Johannes Lahnemann



A rainbow shines over the corridor in front of the religious study room at the Theodor-Schneller school.

Islam and Christianity both call for peace in the same way. How similar the religions are in this point is demonstrated by the Islamic theologian Hamdi Murad from the interreligious research centre in Amman. We report about extracts from his paper he delivered at the peace education conference in Amman.

In the name of God the All-Merciful, the God of all men and the God of the human family. Our common God is a God of peace. Our Prophet Muhammad describes himself as a building block in a large building within the line of prophets and messengers mentioned in the Old and New Testaments.

God created man and breathed his soul into him. He gave him reason, beauty and

peace in the Garden of Eden. He made no difference between man and woman. We are united in the divine family, whether we are Jews, Christians or Moslems. Muhammad and Issa [editor's note: the name for Jesus in the Qur'an] are children of God. Issa, born from the Virgin Mary, came to earth as a divine manifestation in the likeness of a human, as a healer, preacher, educator and reformer.

God gave Paradise to Adam and Eve as a home. For this reason we speak in Islam of the family of God. Christianity says we are children of God. In our life, in our family, we should live in peace, in joy and in safety – as Adam and Eve once did in

Paradise. We therefore conclude that we should enjoy our lives and not destroy it in disputes and violence. That is a clear message against violence, against war and the shedding of blood. God obliges us to do good. Only Satan wants the opposite from us. God is our common Creator and Father. Ultimately, the fact that we originate from Adam and Eve is indisputable for Moslems, Jews and Christians. In this respect we are all equal.

Our religions are from God. They pursue the same aim. In their core, our religions do not differ, only the details. A mosque is a holy space. A synagogue and a church are also holy spaces. Believers of all religions go to the houses of prayer and pray to the One God. All are striving towards the promised paradise in Heaven from which Adam and Eva were once driven. All pray in their own way to reach the eternal heavenly life from this temporary earthly life. After Adam and Eva came many generations of people who have distanced themselves from God. And so there were a number of prophets and messengers who were sent to change their ways.

The line of prophets is long because there was a continuous movement of people away from God and his teachings. Whereas a prophet delivers the people in his own folk an oral divine message, a messenger of God conveys a written divine universal message to humanity in addition to an oral teaching. For this reason there are much fewer messengers than prophets. Since Abraham, messengers include Moses, Jesus and Muhammad. Whereas Moses and Muhammad stem from biological parents, the birth of Jesus was the miracle of all miracles. Jesus was not selected after his birth like the other mes-

sengers, he was already destined to become a messenger in his mother's womb. God wants to reach us through the prophets and messengers, to convert us, to bring us on the right path so that we can live again in harmony and peace.

There is a growing number of splits in Islam. Strange and unacceptable interpretations and their effects are discussed all over the world and damage the image of a peaceful Islam. Since man must be viewed as God's creation, this dignity may not be violated. Islam totally forbids contempt of a person, it prohibits enmity and violence and decrees love, peace, reconciliation and tolerance. Only self-defence is allowed in Islam, however on condition that a person's life and limb is in danger. Islam rejects all forms of violence, whether it is physical, psychological, material or immaterial.

True peaceful Islam is totally different from the harmful Islam that glorifies violence that is interpreted by lay people depending on their own interests. True Islam is a religion of love, forgiveness, humanity and peace, in the same way as this is understood in Christianity.

*Hamdi Murad
(originally translated from Arabic to
German by Nazih Musharbash)*

IN THE FACE OF THE OTHER RELIGION

The challenges of Christian and Islamic religious education

Photo: EMS / Katja Buck



Children often help to organise worship service at the Schneller Schools.

How must Christian and Muslim religious education be designed so that interreligious coexistence can function? Professor Johannes Lähnemann discussed this issue during his paper at the peace education symposium in Amman. This article reports about extracts from his keynote address.

His speech is based on two basic insights that are closely inter-linked:

1. The theses that Hans Küng previously proposes in the "Projekt Weltethos" (Global Ethic Project):

- No world peace without religious peace
- No religious peace without dialogue between religions
- No dialogue between religions without

hout basic groundwork in the religions

2. The global challenges that Christians and Muslims and all "people of good will" must face and that are expressed by the "four fundamental instructions" contained in the Global Ethic Declaration:

- Commitment to a culture of non-violence and respect for all life.
- Commitment to a culture of solidarity and a just economic order.
- Commitment to a culture of tolerance and a life in truthfulness.
- Commitment to a culture of equal rights and partnership between man and woman.

The combination of these basic insights results in a comprehensive learning task. This is because Only when the younger



Saying grace at table together at the Johann Ludwig Schneller School: The words are chosen so that everyone can say them.

Photo: EMS / Martina Waiblinger

generation has respect for their fellows, feel responsibility for all living and non-living creatures, when they are sensitised against hate, violence and developments that are harmful to life and the community will they be equipped for a coexistence that will give our planet a future. It can be said unequivocally that the Schneller schools feel themselves committed to the basic ethic outlined above. However, the following fundamental truth applies: Christian and Islamic religious education are confronted with special as well as common tasks if they want to fulfil the outlined "learning target" and their global responsibility:

1. Learning their identity within the context of growing global plurality. This issue here is to be "at home" in a responsible religious tradition, so to speak,

"I recognise my religion and its value") and to discover its relevance in the present world. The questions and experiences of pupils must be taken seriously here. They should be helped to come to their own judgement based on sound knowledge. However, they should also be offered counselling and support. The social commitment that arises from faith should also be visible.

This outlines the first basic task to which Christian and Islamic religious education at the Schneller schools should devote itself. The essential thing here is that the basics of faith in one's own religion, its spirituality and its ethical convictions must be discovered in the face of the other neighbouring religion, so to speak. What is important is that both Christian and Muslim pupils can experience something

of the spiritual wealth of their own traditions in the daily, weekly rhythm of life at the school.

2. Dialogue learning with regard to the community of religions and world views.

The issue here is to approach learning by looking at others from a perspective that is not burdened with prejudice but to give others a chance to speak in such a way that they would like to be understood themselves. What should be kept in view is learning together and from each other to overcome borders in a way that is enriching for both sides. This does not exclude a critical view of restricting and intolerant forms of religious practice but includes them consciously.

In the Middle East there is a long tradition of coexistence between Jews, Christians and Muslims and this is threatened by the present political tensions and by extremists and fanatics. Here it is important not only to tolerate people of other faiths out of principle, it is also vital to know exactly what the contents of their principles and convictions of faith in order to be forearmed against the misuse of religious sensitivities.

The example from the Germany Evangelical High School in Cairo could be a role model in order to learn together, about each other and from each other. There, religious education is given co-operatively by Christians and Muslims in the upper classes - in the presence of a Christian or Muslim teacher.

3. Co-operative learning with regard to the "greater ecumenism" of the inhabited earth.

The issue here is for religious communities to work together and with all humanistic social groups towards an education whose goals are to preserve the principles of life and non-violence, justice and solidarity, truthfulness and tolerance and to be there for each other in partnership. Here the Christian and Muslim views overlap each other to a considerable extent. Orientation using the examples of role models is just as helpful as exchanges about projects for interreligious peace education. This is where the Schneller schools ultimately realise their specific mission.

Johannes Lähnemann

The author was professor for religious education at the University of Erlangen-Nuremberg until 2007. He is acclaimed as a foremost expert in the field of interreligious dialogue. The complete text of his paper is published in: Frank van der Velden (Editor): Die Heiligen Schriften des Anderen im Unterricht. (The Holy Scriptures of others in class work) Bibel und Koran im christlichen und islamischen Religionsunterricht einsetzen. (Using the Bible and the Qur'an in Christian and Islamic religious education) Göttingen 2011

Photo: JLSS



Sheikh Abbas Deebeh holds a sermon at the church of the Johann Ludwig Schneller School on the occasion of the Muslim Feast of Sacrifice.

SHIITE SHEIKH DELIVERS SERMON AT JLSS

Khirbet Kanafar (JLSS). Last year, a special example of interreligious coexistence were the celebrations on the occasion of the Muslim feast of Eid-el-Kabir (Feast of Sacrifice) held at the Johann-Ludwig Schneller School (JLSS). The Shiite Sheikh Abbas Deebeh and his wife accepted the invitation of Pastor George Haddad and his wife to celebrate the Feast of Sacrifice at the JLSS. Sheikh Deebeh held a sermon in the school church where school co-workers, boarders and teachers from the day school had gathered. In his sermon Sheikh Abbas took the idea of tolerance and the gentle way that Christians and Muslims treat each other as the central aspect in the two religions. He quoted from both the Qur'an and from the Bible

to show that Christians and Muslims were called upon to live together in love and harmony with each other. He also explained the meaning of the Feast of Sacrifice as a feast of joy, a praise and worship of God and solidarity with the poor in society.

The celebrations then continued with an enormous banquet. "The presence of Sheikh Deebeh and his wife made this a truly special celebration," said Pastor George Haddad. "We are glad and we thank God that we have found good friends of the school in you."

SCHOOL HAD TO CLOSE FOR ONE DAY

Khirbet Kanafar (JLSS). Due to a general panic, the Johann-Ludwig-Schneller School (JLSS) was forced to close for one day at the end of January. After the resignation of eleven ministers close to Hezbollah, the so-called Government of National Unity under Prime Minister Saad

al-Hariri found itself on the brink of collapse. Political instability raised fears of a new civil war among the population. "Suddenly we were asked to organise how to send home all our boarding pupils," reports Pastor George Haddad, Director of the JLSS. "In vain we tried to convince pupils and parents that the safest solution was to keep the children at school." The school staff had their hands full to calm panicking parents and children and at the same time ensure that the pupils only left the school grounds accompanied by relatives, reports Haddad. In the end, only four pupils stayed. "We are glad and thankful that nothing happened to anybody," says Haddad. Especially in times of crisis, it shows how deep people feel the fear of a new civil war.



Photo: Johannes Lähmemann

A girl from the boarding school presents Director Ghazi Musharbash (right) a pair of scissors so that he can cut the red ribbon.

Cronstett- und Hynspergisch Evangelical Foundation in Frankfurt am Main which donated EUR15,000.

GIRLS' BOARDING HOUSE OFFICIALLY INAUGURATED

Amman (TSS). At the beginning of December, the new girls' boarding house at the Theodor-Schneller School (TSS) was officially inaugurated. For the first time in the history of the school girls are now accepted in the boarding house. For Jordan a mixed boarding house is something special. Since last summer, 15 girls have been living at the TSS. Some of them have brothers who have already been at home at the school for some time.

What is known as the House of Hope that has now been completely renovated and is located a short distance away from the boys boarding house will offer space for 24 girls. Our special thanks go to the Heike-und-Horst-Hoffmann Foundation which supported the girls' boarding house with a donation of EUR16,000 and the

BELLS SILENCED

Amman (TSS). The bells of Christ's Church at the Theodor-Schneller School (TSS) in Amman are not allowed to ring any more. The bell tower of the church is in danger of collapsing. The TSS is dependent on donations to restore the building.

The bells originally came from the Syrian Orphanage in Jerusalem. After the dispossession in 1948, they were first stored temporarily in the Auguste Victoria Foundation on the Mount of Olives together with a major part of the inventory from the Chapel of the Syrian Orphanage, until 1959 when they were brought to Amman.



Photo: EMS / Martina Waiblinger

Ghazi Musharbash elected to the Jordanian Parliament.

GHAZI MUSHARBASH ELECTED TO PARLIAMENT

Amman (TSS). Ghazi Musharbash, Director of the Theodor-Schneller School (TSS) in Amman, was elected to the Jordanian parliament at the beginning of November last year. He is one of nine Christians in the Lower House that consists of a total of 120 seats. For the TSS this is an enormous opportunity to become known even more by the Jordanian public. On the other hand, Ghazi Musharbash's appointments diary is even fuller than before, even if the office of member of parliament in Jordan is not a full-time job and the number of weeks in session are limited to four months a year. Currently, consultations are underway to determine the form in which he may receive support for his obligations as Director of the school.

THEODOR SCHNELLER SCHOOL ONLINE

Amman (TSS). The Theodor-Schneller School in Amman now has its own website. The TSS now provides information on life at the school at www.tschneller.org. The large picture gallery invites you on a virtual tour of the school.

SCHNELLER ASSOCIATION APPOINTS HONORARY MEMBERS

Stuttgart (EVS). The Evangelical Association for the Schneller Schools (EVS) has called on Gil Gordon and Uwe Gräbe to join its ranks as honorary members. Gordon is an architect and town planner in Israel and in the past years, has performed intensive research about the Syrian Or-

phanage in Jerusalem since its closure in 1939. Through his contacts to Israeli authorities, he has enabled many visits to the former school grounds used by the military until a year ago. He has also made untiring efforts to classify the building of the Syrian Orphanage as a historical monument. Together with Uwe Gräbe, provost in Jerusalem, he rediscovered the marble altar of the former chapel last year. Gräbe in turn arranged for the historical altar to receive its worthy place in the Auguste Victoria Church on the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem. His great concern too is to prevent the heritage of the Syrian Orphanage from being forgotten.

ADVANCE NOTICE OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Stuttgart (EVS). This year's annual general meeting will take place in Stuttgart on 23rd October. The precise location will be announced at a later date. Mitri Raheb, Pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bethlehem will be coming to the annual general meeting. One of his topics will be his two grandfathers who were former pupils at the Syrian Orphanage. All members of the EVS will receive a special invitation.

NEW AT THE EVS SECRETARIAT

Stuttgart (EVS). Ursula Feist is the new assistant at the EVS Secretariat and at the EMS Middle East Liaison Desk. The 45 year old succeeds Ute Müller who left the EMS in September last year. Ursula Feist is a graduate from Freiburg and Münster in Slavonic studies and East European history and lived for some time in Moscow. She

is also a graduate librarian.

After her studies, Ursula Feist joined the Postgraduate Program in International Affairs of the Robert Bosch Stiftung, during which she examined professional librarianship in Russia and the Ukraine. Stations in her career include the Robert Bosch Stiftung, where she worked for three years in the section responsible for international understanding, Central and Eastern Europe, and for the Forum Region Stuttgart, where she was employed in event organisation.



Ursula Feist ist die neue Sachbearbeiterin in der Geschäftsstelle des EVS.

Photo: EMS / Andreas Maurer

IN MEMORY OF OHAN DOURIAN

Jerewan (EVS). On 6th January 2011, one of the last pupils and teachers at the Syrian Orphanage in Jerusalem, the conductor and composer, Ohan Dourian, died.

Born in the Armenian district of Jerusalem in 1922 as Howhannes Chatchadourian, he grew up with ten brothers and sisters. His father was a carpenter. At the age of six years old, he came as a pupil to the Galilean orphanage in Nazareth and received the pupil's name of Hanna Chascho. Due to his special talent, the Schneller family soon brought him to Jerusalem. There he learnt to play on the recorder and harmonium. In 1938, he was already teaching his schoolmates German, Arabic and English and he was studying the subjects of conducting, organ and composition at the Jewish Conservatory. In 1945, he conducted the Radio Orchestra in Jerusalem for the first time. Hermann Schneller sent him to Zurich to continue his studies and Herbert von Karajan helped the young man to take on conductor's posts in Berlin and Vienna. Under the name of Ohan Dourian he conquered all the famous concert halls in Europe. He worked together with a total of 110 orchestras. His special love was the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra. At the age of 80 years old, the Moscow Symphony Orchestra Stas Namin still appointed him their chief conductor. As composer Ohan Dourian leaves behind songs, orchestra works and the invention of a rhythmic system called "Universalism" which is pa-



Ohan Dourian in his young years

Photo: Dourian Archive in Leipzig

tented and has not yet been fully applied.

The foundations of this rich life were laid by the Schneller family and the teachers at the Syrian Orphanage, especially senior teacher Leonhard Bauer. They not only encouraged his talents but also taught him discipline and hard work. They also gave him a Christian education and an unshakeable cheerfulness. Ohan Dourian is buried at the Pantheon in the Armenian capital.

Anne-Kristin Mai

The Dourian Archive in Leipzig (www. anne-kristin-mai.de/dourianarchiv) cares for the memory of the musician. It collects audio and video records from his life, photos and personal letters as well as music scores of several compositions by Ohan Dourian. A visit to the collection can be made by prior arrangement with Anne-Kristin Mai (akh.mai@web.de).

LINGUISTIC PIONEERING WORK REDISCOVERED

Arabic translation of "Nathan der Weise" originated at the Syrian Orphanage

Photo: private



The play "Nathan the Wise" by Gottfried Ephraim Lessing is acclaimed in Germany as the key text for a dialogue between Jews, Christians and Muslims. Walter Koch from the

Hannah-Arendt Library in Hanover has searched for an Arabic translation for many years until he finally came across Elias Nasr al-Haddad, senior teacher at the Syrian Orphanage.

Why were you searching for an Arabic translation of "Nathan"?

As director of the Hannah-Arendt Library, it is one of my duties to search for such texts about international understanding. I started many enquiries regarding the Arabic translation of the Lessing text. Experts in Middle Eastern and oriental studies in Wolfenbüttel and Göttingen as well as German language specialists in Beirut told me that it did not exist. Even the Lessing museum in Kamenz, which even had translations of "Nathan" in Aramaic and Urdu, knew nothing of an Arabic translation.

Since when have you been searching for an Arabic translation of "Nathan"?

In 1989, the Hannah-Arendt Centre in Hanover organised an exhibition about Yemenis at which I met some Yemenis. At the same time, "Nathan" was being placed at the city theatre and I simply took them to a performance. I will never forget how

impressed they were by the ring parable. Up till then, I had only heard from Palestinian friends that "Nathan" might be beautiful words but they served no real purpose.

When did you discover the translation by Elias Nasr al-Haddad?

That was in the year 2000 when the Ballhof theatre performed "Nathan" in three languages with young people from Palestine, Israel and Germany during the world exhibition in Hanover. Each actor played his role in his mother tongue, which was very impressive. When I asked my obvious question, I found out that the theatre makers had taken the translation by a certain Elias Nasr al-Haddad for their project. They had found the translation in the oriental department of the Deutsche Staatsbibliothek (German State Library) in Berlin. Who Haddad was and why he translated "Nathan" did not interest them in the least. But that is exactly the exciting question that would help further the cause of peace and culture policy.

What do you mean by that?

Haddad translated "Nathan" into Arabic in 1932. That was a dramatic year not only in Germany but also in Palestine. On the international area the balance of power started to shift and the Jewish immigration was in full swing in the Palestine administered by the British. This situation was under the extremely critical observation of the Arab indigenous population. Ironically, it was in this situation that Haddad decided to translate Lessing's "Nathan". And in a linguistic quality that is second



Photo: Archives of the Regional Church in Stuttgart

Elias Nasr al-Haddad, the Arab senior teacher (3rd from left) and his family dressed in European style.

to none.

If it is so excellent, why was this translation forgotten?

Perhaps the Arab Christians were too modest to make a big thing out of this pioneering work. Perhaps Haddad only translated the text for his pupils in class. Perhaps it was simply too late to express the decolonisation of the Arab world with an enlightened text. Who wants to argue with the words from Lessing against Nazis and war in an epoch of fanatic racism? But that is only speculation. We know much too little about this time in Palestine. It would be very interesting to know what Arab teachers at the Syrian Orphanage thought about the political and social processes. Elias Nasr al-Haddad would be a central example which would be worth researching.

*Interviewed by
Katja Dorothea Buck.*

ZUR PERSON:

Elias Nasr al-Haddad (1878-1959) war einer der tragenden Säulen der Schneller-Arbeit. Geboren in Khirbet Kanafar (heute Libanon) war er als Kind ins Syrische Waisenhaus gekommen. Er wurde später Oberlehrer im Syrischen Waisenhaus und veröffentlichte neben einer arabischen Grammatik auch Werke zur palästinensischen Alltagssprache und zur Volkspoesie. 1910 übersetzte er „Vater Schneller“, die Biografie von Johann Ludwig Schneller, ins Arabische.

Elias Nasr al-Haddad ging nach dem Ende des Syrischen Waisenhauses in Jerusalem wieder in sein Heimatdorf und half Anfang der 1950er Jahre beim Aufbau der Johann-Ludwig-Schneller-Schule (JLSS) mit, wo er auch als Lehrer unterrichtete. Er liegt auf dem von ihm gestifteten Privatfriedhof in der Nähe der JLSS begraben. Elias Nasr al-Haddad ist der Großonkel von George Haddad, dem heutigen Direktor der JLSS.

FOUR O'CLOCK AT THE BETHLEHEM CHECKPOINT

Waiting at the border crossing between Israel and the West Bank

Every morning, thousand of Palestinians wait to pass the major border crossing between Bethlehem and Jerusalem. Ulrich Kadelbach was Ecumenical Accompanier in Bethlehem for three months and he often joined the ranks of those waiting.

We arrive at the checkpoint at 4 o'clock in the morning. Hundreds of Palestinian workers are standing in the cage-like entrance along the nine metre high wall. Nobody knows when the revolving gate would open. Every morning the same gruelling procedure, but every morning at different times and at totally different time intervals. Most of the men work in Jerusalem and have to go through these daily harassments that often last hours. Unemployment in Bethlehem is extremely high.

The only interruption to this paralysed and frustrating boredom is the early call of the muezzin. Many of the people waiting kneel down on cardboard and bow to Mecca. Suddenly unrest flares up. Apparently, the revolving gate starts to turn for the first time at the border crossing between Bethlehem and Jerusalem, that is to say between the West Bank and Israel. Prayers stop abruptly. The imprisoned queue starts to move. Everyone is caught up in the flow. Whoever comes to work late faces immediate dismissal. Everybody acts nervously and discontentedly. Our friendly words do little to calm down emotions.

At the end of the checkpoint, some Israeli women form the Machsom Watch

Organisation stand and observe what is happening. They are not allowed on the West Bank. They are dependent on the information we give them. One of our duties is also to make a reliable count of the number of workers who pass the checkpoint, as well as the women and sick people who stand in the lane for humanitarian care and hope to be processed more quickly.

The revolving gate is only opened from time to time. Nobody knows the system applied. When the gate is opened, the queue starts to push forward uncontrollably. There is a scramble just in front of the revolving gate. Sometimes, when the gate is turning steadily like a machine, it stops with a jerk. Then the last person often runs full pelt against the gate, often hitting their heads against it. After the first control point is past - that's where every person must show their pass to the guard - everyone runs, even old people and handicapped persons, climb over the railings or duck under them to get as far forward in the next queue as possible. Of the three passages equipped with metal detectors, often there is only one open, sometimes two and very seldom all three. From time to time, a brusque voice booms out over the loudspeaker. Then everything stops. Everyone is annoyed because nobody knows who is meant.

The last tough control is made up of twelve equipped passages of which only two are usually open. People must press their passes with their left hands through the pane of the guard's cabin. The right hand must be placed on a metal plate with

Photo: EMS / Ulrich Kadelbach



People are waiting densely packed to finally go through the revolving gate.

fixed screws between which each person must place his fingers in precisely the right position. All the data are compiled on the computer monitor. The colour of the control strip gives the soldiers the signal whether it is yes or no. The woman soldier in the thick glass cabin from which commands are only given by loudspeaker sits deep in her chair. A curt wave of the hand is the only generous sign that the person may pass.

On our first day at the Bethlehem checkpoint, which is called CP 300 in military jargon, almost 2,500 people were pushed through that morning. While I was still standing in the midst of this humiliating treadmill, I remembered the solution of 20th September (the day on which I learnt I was being sent to Bethlehem) from Psalm 18:30: "and by my God have I leaped over a wall." I did not know whether to laugh or to cry.

Ulrich Kadelbach

Rev Ulrich Kadelbach, former EVS Managing Director and Middle East Liaison Secretary at the Association of Churches and Missions in South Western Germany, spent three months in Bethlehem last autumn as Ecumenical Accompanier. The Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI) was originated by the World Council of Churches in 2002 at the request of the churches in Jerusalem.

"CHURCHES ARE STRENGTHENED IN TIMES OF NEED"

Despite terror threats, the Coptic churches are fuller than ever

Threats and repression are nothing new for Coptic Christians in Egypt. They have been suffering from the hate of Islamist groups for years. On New Year's Day, 23 people were killed at a church in Alexandria by a suicide bomber. However, what is new is that Copts abroad are also under threat now.

Coptic congregations in Germany, Switzerland and Austria had to celebrate their Christmas services last year under massive police protection. A death list was also published on the web

containing the names of more than a hundred Copts abroad. 14 of them live in Austria. "They are mainly priests and people who are active in our parishes," says Anba Gabriel, Coptic Bishop of Austria and German-speaking Switzerland. He suspects that the terror group obtained the names from the diocese website. "It is a new method that places names arbitrarily on such lists," says the Bishop. "They do not know much about us and do not know us personally. Otherwise they would not have also named our Father Johannes." The founder of the Coptic community in Austria has already died - a natural death.



Photo: kopten.at

Services are still as well attended as ever.

Anba Gabriel, who has been Bishop in Vienna since 2000, is little impressed by the threats. In his parish he has heard nobody who is intimidated by them. "The churches are as packed as never before," says the 51 year old. A married couple told him recently they would continue to stand next to each other in church so that they would both be hit if something happened. "Even children and young people have told me that they are not frightened by coming to church."

The thought of martyrdom, which is rather strange to western Christians, is strongly rooted in the Coptic church. According to tradition, St Mark the Evangelist is held to be the founder of the Coptic church. It is said he was the first Bishop of Alexandria in the first century and there he is also supposed to have died a martyr. During their almost two thousand years of history, the Coptic church has repeatedly experienced periods of persecution and repression. "It is our experience that, in times when life was difficult for Copts, the church was strengthened," says Bishop Gabriel. "We believe that God can always change the worst situation for us for the better. Christians become strong in times of need." This is what the Copts experienced in the past decades during which terror against them has been on the increase, resulting in many deaths. "The Coptic church has grown in the same period," says the Bishop, who was himself kidnapped for a short time as a young man. A few days after the suicide bombing in Alexandria during which 23 people died on New Year's Day and more than 70 were injured, five Copts were shot at in Upper Egypt and one was killed. "The terror goes on," says Bishop Gabriel. So far nobody with one exception has been

made accountable for killing or injuring Cops in Egypt in the past 40 years.

It was all the more encouraging to receive the sympathy and solidarity from the other churches after the bloodbath in Alexandria, in the words of Bishop Gabriel. Representatives of the Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox churches took part in the Coptic services and praised the Copts for their strong faith. "The unanimity with which we experience this solidarity and love is new," says the Bishop. "The attack and threats are bringing the churches closer together and that is a good thing."

Katja Dorothea Buck

With 12 million believers the Copts form the largest Christian minority in the Arab world. For decades, they have suffered from the terror of Islamist groups. Two million Copts live abroad. Of this number, 6,000 in Germany and about 5,000 in Austria. The fact that terror threats have been issued against Copts living abroad is regarded by many people as part of an Islamist ideology of conquering the world. It is not yet possible to predict by how far the demise of the Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak will change the situation of the Copts in Egypt. A lot depends on whether the protection of minorities is a priority in the new Egypt or not. The reproach against the previous government of not protecting Copts from attacks by militant Muslims is totally justified.

THE CRY OF HOPE SHOULD NOT GO UNHEARD

Stuttgart (EMS/EKIBA). The churches in Germany are still preoccupied with the Kairos Palestine Paper a year after its publication. In a "critical sisterly and brotherly response letter" the Protestant Church in Baden calls to prevent the "cry of hope where there is no hope" formulated by Palestinian Christians from being allowed to go unheard.

At the same time, the letter warns against a one-sided analysis of the situation. "Condemning the (Israeli) occupation is one thing, reducing the reason for the entire conflict to the occupation is another." The ideology of Hamas receives as little attention in the Kairos paper as rocket attacks on Israeli towns and assassinations. The Baden regional church expressly warns against a boycott of Israeli goods. "The call for economic sanctions and a boycott is unthinkable for many Germans as it is a reminder of the National Socialist era," it says.

On the other hand, it welcomes the urgent appeal of the Palestinian Christians to renounce fanaticism and extremism and calls for interreligious dialogue.

The Association of Churches and Missions in South Western Germany (EMS) together with Pax Christi, the ACK Baden-Württemberg and other partners in the Protestant Academy Bad Boll are inviting interested parties to a conference on the Kairos Palestine Document. From 20th to 22nd May, there will be an opportunity to discuss the paper and draw conclusions for work in Germany. It is expected that two co-authors of the Kairos Palestine Paper will be attending: the Palestinian libe-

ration theologian Naim S. Ateek and the Dean of Social Sciences at the Catholic University of Bethlehem, Jamal Khader.

For more details, visit www.ev-akademie-boll.de

The Council of Christian Churches in Germany (ACK) in Baden-Württemberg recently published a working aid on the Kairos Palestine Paper in their series "Impulse zum Gespräch" (Impulses for Discussion). "Out of solidarity with our brothers and sisters in faith, we are making this document accessible to a greater public without identifying ourselves with the contents of every individual statement in the text," as the Preface to the publication states. "It is our intention to help the call of our brothers and sisters be heard and we want to promote dialogue – even about challenging and uncomfortable statements."

The brochure (67 pages) can be purchased from the ACK Secretariat, Staffenbergstrasse 46, 70184 Stuttgart for EUR 2.00.

PALESTINIAN WOMAN AND ISRAELI SHARE PEACE PRIZE

Stuttgart (EVS). On 20th March 2011, Sumaya Farhat-Nasser and Reuven Moskowitz received the Amos Prize at the Church of the Redeemer in Stuttgart. The prize, which is worth EUR5,000 and is sponsored by a foundation, honours people who have distinguished themselves by civil courage in churches, religions and communities. For many years, the 62 year old Palestinian woman and the 82 year old Israeli have stood as "non-violent and prophetic examples of justice and reconciliation in the Middle East conflict," ac-



Lecturers from the EMS, members of the SiMO advisory board, former and current SiMO students and an international team from the EMS attended the consultation.

ording to the jury.

Farhat-Nasser headed the "Jerusalem Center for Women" and the rehabilitation centre of the Moravian Church for handicapped children and young people on Star Mountain near Ramallah. In her books and speeches she pleads for reconciliation between Palestinians and Jews. Moskowitz is cofounder of the "Neve Shalom/Wahat al Salam" settlement in which Israeli Jews and Palestinian live together. He has organised study trips through Israel during which his efforts concentrate both on Jewish-Palestinian reconciliation and also on German-Israeli reconciliation.

TEN YEARS OF STUDY IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Beirut (EMS). The study programme of the Association of Churches and Missions in South Western Germany (EMS) entitled "Study in the Middle East (SiMO)" celebrated the tenth anniversary of its existence at the beginning of February. Since 2001, a total of 37 students from Germany have taken part in the nine month programme at the Near East School of Theology (NEST). The aim of the programme is to

convey special knowledge of Islam and Christianity in the Middle East. In addition 16 students from other European countries and the USA as well as female and male pastors from the Protestant Church in Hesse and Nassau took part in the programme that was developed by NEST in co-operation with the German programme advisory board. The anniversary was celebrated with a joint consultation on the topic of "Theological training in the presence of others, between apologetics and openness". Sisuku Manabung, Dean of the Theological Seminary in Macassar (Indonesia) represented the EMS Fellowship of churches. The EMS has been dealing with this focal topic for many years.



Naim Stifan Ateek
Righteousness and Reconciliation
 AphorismA Verlag
 Berlin 2010
 292 pages
 EUR 15

"Righteousness and Reconciliation" is on the road to a Palestinian theology of liberalisation and a liberalisation of theology. Naim S. Ateek is co-author of the Kairos Palestine Paper. The author sees a misuse of the Bible in Israel's religious claim to the whole of Palestine. The cry of the begging widow (Luke 18) is the cry of the Palestinians for justice. The core is based on the story of Jonah: God's providence is also meant for the Assyrians, Israel's mortal enemies. Jesus did not choose the path of David but the path of the suffering servant of God (Matthew 5:39-41). He who appears to be powerless and oppressed also retains his dignity under Israeli occupation by taking the initiative himself.

The Palestinians need a just peace, the Israelis want a secure peace based on US Resolutions 242 and 338. Only if it is bound to truth and non-violence could the process of righteousness and peace lead to reconciliation, according to Ateek. Paul's words, "If one part suffers, every part suffers with it" (1st Cor. 12:26) wants to be realised on the ecumenical horizon and this can be achieved by us listening to Ateek's voice. The German group of Friends of Sabeel financially supported the translation into German and provided positive criticism.

Jochen Vollmer



Dieter Vieweger
Dispute about the Holy Land
 Gütersloher
 Verlagshaus 2010
 288 pages
 EUR 19.95

A text written on this topic can never please everybody. The conflict is much too emotionally charged and for many, it is clear who the aggressor is and who the victim is. In his book, Vieweger presents a comprehensive and easy to read summary which chronicles the conflict from Biblical times through to the year 2010. It becomes clear how complex and confusing the course of the conflict is and how much the two parties are both perpetrators and victims. There is no alternative to a dialogue with all parties concerned, and this also applies to Israel.

Despite the abundance of facts, the chronicle is incomplete. For example, descriptions of the consequences of Israeli actions during the second Intifada in the spring of 2002 are missing when large parts of the Palestinian infrastructure were destroyed, including the land registry in Ramallah. Little mention is given of the targeted killings perpetrated by Israel in the early years of this century or of the many years of Israeli occupation of South Lebanon, the "Geneva Initiative" or the Israeli humans rights and peace movement.

Nevertheless, with its many short biographies and a detailed glossary, it is a book that I thoroughly recommend to read. It would be desirable if it contributed towards an objectification of the discussion.

Andreas Maurer

BECOME MEMBER OF THE EVS!

The "Evangelischer Verein für die Schneller-Schulen e.V." (Evangelical Association for the Schneller Schools, EVS) supports and accompanies the work of the Johann Ludwig Schneller School in Lebanon and the Theodor Schneller School in Jordan. Its special task is to offer poor children school education and professional training at the Schneller Schools.

In its publications and events, the EVS provides information about churches and Christians in the Middle East. The Schneller Magazine is published four times a year and can be subscribed free of charge with the EMS. Speakers for lectures on topics featuring the work of the schools can be booked from the EVS Secretariat.

If you want to become a member of the EVS, we will be glad to send you an application for membership. The annual minimum fee for individuals is Euro 25 and Euro 50 for companies. By making a donation to the Schneller Schools, you are supporting the work of a recognised charitable welfare and social organisation.

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