

1/2020

# SCHNELLER

MAGAZINE ON CHRISTIAN LIFE IN THE MIDDLE EAST



## ABSTINENCE AND DEVOTION

### WHY CHRISTIANS, JEWS AND MUSLIMS FAST



EVS Evangelical Association  
for the Schneller Schools

## WHY CHRISTIANS, JEWS AND MUSLIMS FAST

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Dear Reader,

Fasting does not play a major role in the world of Protestant belief. Although the “Seven weeks without” movement has been popular in Germany for several years, each person decides for himself or herself what he/she wants to abstain from during Lent. It may alcohol or sweets or even computer games or social media. So, fasting covers quite a wide spectrum. But we can learn quite a lot from our Oriental, Orthodox and Catholic brethren who regard regular fasting as a duty. For them, fasting is actively turning to God.



The feature articles in this issue come from wonderful authors in the Middle East and Germany. Their personal contributions clearly explain that periods of fasting are not only times of abstinence but times of intensive prayer and inner reflection.

Fasting is not unique to the Christian faith. This is why we asked Joshua Ahrens, Rabbi in Darmstadt, to explain to us the meaning of fasting in the Jewish faith. The Shi'ite Sheikh Sayyed Fadi Sayyed from Lebanon also describes the belief principles of fasting in the Islamic faith. It is refreshing to see how very similar the monotheistic religions are to one another. By the way, we managed to win a Schneller alumnus in the person of Sheikh Sayyed to write an article. The fact that he still maintains close ties to Schneller work shows the special service that Schneller schools provide in the Middle East.

The work has a long tradition and this year, we are celebrating it in a special way: Johann Ludwig Schneller would have turned 200 on 15 January. At the age of 34, he emigrated with his wife Magdalena to Jerusalem and started the Syrian Orphanage. This laid the foundation stone for a work that still has a wide-ranging impact in Lebanon, Jordan and throughout the entire region.

On behalf of the editorial team, I hope you will benefit from the thoughts in this issue to accompany you during your fast.

Yours

Katja Dorothea Buck

## TURNING YOUR ATTENTION TO GOD

I love food. I love shopping for it, especially on the market. I love preparing food, trying out new recipes and I love eating the finished dish: Lebanese, Italian, Indonesian, Japanese, not forgetting Swabian – old favourites as well as new recipes.

I am often astonished at the sheer variety of food that is available to us. Whether in winter or in summer, there is a wide choice of the most delicious foods from the whole world. For me and my generation, it's quite normal that everything is always available. What luxury! But I must remind myself of this very often – something I should not forget. Such abundance has never happened at any time before us but it still is not the case today for many people in most countries of the world.

**„And whenever you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces so as to show others that they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward.“**

*Matthew 6:16 (NRSV)*

This is why I fast from time to time, mostly during Advent and Lent. Very often it is things that I like very much, such as alcohol during the last Advent, for example. No “Glühwein” (mulled wine) at the Christmas market, no sparkling wine at the Christmas party and no red wine for the festive Advent Sunday lunch.

Sometimes, it's not so easy. Why should I abstain at all? It would taste so nice and it's there anyway.

**„Yet even now, says the Lord, return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning.“**

*Joel 2:12*

My friend is stricter in her fasting – twice a year, during Advent and Lent, she abstains from food and drink until 4 o'clock in the afternoon. She says she always eats so much and she doesn't actually need to. Living with less food helps her to live more consciously. This is how she describes her experience: Every time she feels hungry on the days she fasts, she directs her attention back to God, says a short prayer and places God at the centre of her day where he belongs. During these times, she reads good, entertaining, spiritual books to feed her spirit. Her fasting days are some of her happiest.

Many traditions know fasting. The Orthodox faiths have four periods of fasting when they eat no animal products, although this varies from tradition to tradition. The Muslims have their fasting month of Ramadan. The Jews have several days of fasting, for example before Purim, Pessach or at Yom Kippur. Fasting and asceticism are also an important part in the lives of devotees of Jainism, Hinduism and Buddhism.

**„But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that your fasting may be seen not by others but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.“**

*Matthew 6:17-18*

Fasting has been lost in the Protestant tradition, but in the past few years, it has made a minor come-back. Perhaps it's a good thing there is no obligation. But it's well worthwhile to do it voluntarily so

that you can live your life consciously and realise what you really have. And to direct your attention to God, place him at the centre and thank him.

Lent will soon be upon us. Why not give it a try this time?!?

*Reverend Susanne Gölz is member of the board of the German Schneller Association.*



Susanne Gölz

After fasting, you appreciate the delicacies of this world more consciously.

## A QUESTION OF LIFESTYLE

### Fasting in the Assyrian Church of the East

**The Holy Apostolic Catholic Assyrian Church of the East is an Eastern Christian Church. It developed during the first century A.D. and so is one of the oldest in the world. To this day, fasting is one of its important traditions.**

**T**he Assyrian church has many rituals, traditions, and customs. There are many occasions to fast according to the canons of the church, which are mainly obligatory and divide the year into several sacred seasons and I personally observe most of them. People must abstain from meat and from everything that is animal (milk, fish, butter, and eggs). Only vegetable food and vegetable oil may be eaten and meals are served once a day.

In the Assyrian Church, we must observe the Eucharistic fast every Sunday and this involves taking nothing before receiving the Eucharist during mass. Wednesdays and Fridays are days for fasting too, because these two days are a mourning period, since Christ was sentenced to death on Wednesday and on Friday, he was crucified.

The concept of fasting is a lifestyle. In this blessed period preparing for Christmas, fasting lasts twenty-five days (called "Soobara") and is not required by the Church yet recommended. On the first day of the Christmas fast, the custom is for the children to dress up like the legendary patron saint of Assyrian children, "Somikka". Children go from door to door and demand a blessing. People give

them such trifles such as coins and candies.

On Christmas night, I attend the "Shaharta" which means prayers to prepare for the midnight Mass, then celebrate mass to break the fast afterwards. I rush back home to eat the special bread and dish we prepared a few days in advance.

Fasting for Christmas and Easter ends by eating this special bread, called "Kadeh" that can be plain, round and thick, marked with different designs, sometimes with a cross on top, and can be served with a dish made out of yoghurt mixed with coriander, parsley, onions and possibly with a bit of garlic, too. "Kulai-cheh" is also served, which are small cakes stuffed with different fillings, or coarsely ground walnuts and dates mixed with sugar, or "Mortokha", which is a thick paste made of flour and butter. It must be cooked for a long time and constantly stirred. Finally, a bit of water and salt is added. Mortokha tastes simply delicious!

I also fast three other obligatory days – the fast of Nineveh also called the "Rogation of the Ninevites" (two weeks before the Easter fast). Bishop Mar Surisho instituted it in the sixth century after a great plague took thousands of lives in the cities of Nineveh, Kirkuk and Ashur (today North Iraq). Bishop Mar Surisho took up the story of Jonah and commanded people to abstain from food for three days and ask God for forgiveness. On the fourth day, the plague stopped.

The first food eaten to break Lent (not





Brakhya

The author (centre in pink dress) together with relatives and neighbours around a large pot of Mortokha.

eating anything for three days) must be rolls made of the flour of seven different kinds of grain (wheat, barley, sunflower seeds or chickpeas, red lentils, corn, white beans with peanut or almond) called “Pokhen”.

The fifty days of Lent are the Great Fast of the Lord. In general, no weddings or other festive events are scheduled during the fasting period before Easter. In case of sickness, the faithful request exemption from the head of the church so that they do not have to fast. However, when they have regained their health, they must fast, if possible, for double the number of days they have missed.

Finally, many Saint fasting days are also important, in particular the Virgin Mary Fast that is popular and lasts for fifteen days and ends on August 15. In our church we also have what is known as the Apostle Fast that can last up to 50 days. It starts at Whitsun and ends on Sunday “Nusardil” when the holy summer time begins. This time is dedicated to honour the lives and teachings of the holy apostles.

Personal sacrificial disciplines are in fashion now, such as abstinence from sweets, cigarettes or other things, but this kind of fasting is not praised by my church. A fast is a season for reflection and preparation before the celebrations and to focus on spiritual growth to glorify the Lord and to take our eyes off the things of this world.

*Viviane Brakhya lives in Beirut and is member of the Assyrian Church of the East.*

## “GOD DOES NOT PUNISH ME IF I DON’T FAST”

**When mother and son fast in different ways**

**As the son of a Syriac Orthodox family that emigrated to Germany, our author was confronted at an early age with different concepts of fasting. In the end, it is always a matter of seeking God and practising humility.**

I must have been eight or nine when I asked the priest of the Catholic parish in my district whether I would go to hell. Just before the end of a fast, I had eaten a piece of chocolate that I had received as a gift after evening mass. The priest looked at me with a furrowed brow, but then smiled suddenly and asked me, “Why do you think that God punishes His own child? Our God is a loving Father and you are His child. Even if you made a mistake, and I don’t think you did, He still

loves you. But if you actually did something wrong, then simply ask your Father for forgiveness. He will forgive you. Because,” the priest added, “the God we believe in is not a punishing God. He loves His creation like His own family.”

This did the trick. As a member of the Syriac Orthodox Church that stresses God’s absoluteness, I went into an inner conflict. On the one hand, I heard my mother’s warning words to really respect the fasting period. On the other hand, I heard the words of the Catholic priest who praised God as a loving and forgiving Creator, thus removing the straitjacket from the religious obligation to fast.

The same evening, I spoke to my mother about this. My mother, a tho-



Both believe that fasting is important: Simon Jacob and his mother Seydi Jacob



roughly loving and God-fearing woman, looked at me with surprise. She took a few seconds to take in what she had heard. I used the pause and again stressed that God, whom we call Father, in Aramaic “Abun”, could not possibly punish His own child. Consequently, it was impossible for me to burn in hell. It would cause pain and no parents in the world would want that.

My mother looked at me earnestly and asked me, “And the priest said that to you?” I answered with a definite “Yes”. “If a priest of the Catholic Church said that to you, then he’s right.” That’s all she said.

Then I understood that there were different approaches to fasting. And today, many years later, I understand why observing Lent is so important to my mother. Mama fasts strictly according to the rules of Orthodoxy – combined with prayers and the idea that fasting brings her closer to the Creator, the loving Father.

There was another time when I asked her about the incident. She explained to me that for her, fasting was important for many reasons. Firstly, it stands for an inner cleansing so that she is open to prayer, faith and spirituality. At certain times, she prays ten times a day. In addition, this internal cleansing and abstinence from animal products, especially in the weeks before high religious holidays, help her to cleanse the body to keep her in good health. At over 60 years of age, my mother is proud that she has had none of the typical industrial sicknesses.

Besides inner and outer cleansing, there is humility – the realisation that we have been given so much and that we live in abundance. My mother finds it terrible how much we waste the gifts of God, who

forgives our sins. For example, as a child who grew up in a difficult environment, bread was always sacred to her. It shouldn’t be thrown away or allowed to fall on the floor. When we abstain from eating for a period of time, especially before religious holidays, we not only cleanse ourselves from sins. We also appreciate the gifts of Nature.

Today, I personally include fasting times in my daily routine to practise abstinence and to cleanse my “inner” being and my “outer” being. This helps me to realise the madness of my/our personal consumer habits and I practise humility for all the gifts of the Creation. God must love us humans very much; and despite all the harm that we do to Mother Nature, we are still alive.

Mama continues to fast in her way and I will continue to do so in my way. We both fast out of love for the Creation and love of the Father.

*Simon Jacob is a freelance journalist and lives in Augsburg. He is co-founder of the Central Council of Oriental Christians in Germany and initiated the project “Peacemaker Tour”.*

## WHEN YOU FAST, YOU PRAY MORE INTENSELY

### Why Copts fast on 200 days of the year

“Fasting is a source of strength, spirituality and vitality in the Coptic Church,” says Bishop Damian, representative of the Coptic Christians in Germany. In this interview, he explains how the strict rules of fasting are integrated in people’s everyday lives and what fasting means in a secular society.

#### How and when do Copts fast?

We Copts eat vegetarian or vegan food on 200 days a year. We fast with vegan food on Wednesdays and Fridays. On Wednesdays, we remember the condemnation of Jesus and on Fridays, his crucifixion. However, this fasting rule does not apply during the 50 happy days between the Resurrection and Whitsun when we are allowed to eat everything, even on Wednesdays and Fridays. Otherwise, we fast with only vegan food 54 days before Easter. During the other periods of fasting – two weeks before Assumption in August, twelve to 35 days before the Martyrs’ Days of Peter and Paul on 12th July and 25th November up to our Christmas Festival on 7th January – we are allowed to eat fish; however, not on Wednesdays and Fridays.

#### What else must be observed during Coptic fasting?

Every day should contain a certain time when we do not eat or drink. The length of time differs depending on the individual and is determined for each person by the Father confessor. For example, a beginner does not eat or drink until 10 o’clock. Others fast until 12 o’clock. On days when a worship service is celebrated, we only

start to eat and drink after the service and this may be at 14.00, 15.00 or 16.00.

#### Are there any exceptions?

The sick, pregnant women and little children are exempt from fasting. All in all, we are not so rigid or obsessive when it comes to fasting rules. What is important to us is that fasting is individual and above all humane.

#### Do you often feel hungry when you fast?

When I’m busy doing other things, I forget my hunger. My body adapts quickly. Outside the fasting times, I may possibly become restless if I haven’t had my coffee by eight o’clock in the morning. But on fasting days, I can’t stand the smell of coffee.

#### Schmeckt das Essen in den Fastenzeiten anders?

When you have fasted and prayed together, food really tastes very delicious and eating is a pleasure. As monks, we are supposed not to eat too fast and never more than our hunger. The old rule applies: we eat to live and not we live to eat.

#### Why is fasting important?

The first sin of mankind has to do with eating. Eva and Adam ate the apple. Through our fasting, we want to adjust people’s conduct and we think of people who do not have as much to eat as we do. From a physiological point of view, fasting helps to detoxify the body. Nowadays, more people die from illnesses linked to overweight than undernourishment. By

the way, fasting also helps concentration. After eating, blood flows to the digestive system and people become tired and start yawning. You can't pray on a full stomach. But when you approach God with a fasting body and in great humility, your prayers are more intense.

### **Fasting is therefore very important for the worship service.**

Fasting helps you to concentrate better on the worship service. At the same time, remember that our worship services often last three hours. If you eat or drink beforehand, you'll have to excuse yourself at some time or other.

### **What meaning does fasting have in the Coptic Church?**

Fasting alone is not a virtue or a goal in itself. It must be accompanied by prayers, donations, meditation, work or visits to the sick. Contemplation also plays a part.

### **Is it more difficult to fast in a secular society than in Egypt?**

Quite the opposite. I often meet people who have no relationship to God and they tell me they live a vegan lifestyle. They

learnt long ago that it is much healthier to live vegan. I can learn a lot from them.

### **Is fasting just as normal for young Copts in Germany as for their peers in Egypt?**

It all depends on their upbringing and whether their parents set a role model. I often meet children and young adults who keep very strictly to their fasts. For example, whenever I distribute chocolate after a service, there are many children who check very carefully what day it is and whether it is a time of fasting or not.

### **What do you say to young Copts who find it difficult to fast?**

It's not only young adults who have difficulty here. Adults also ask me for advice. I tell them to base themselves on nutritional science and they should ask around in their classes or their friends. There are certainly some who live a vegan lifestyle and who have no relationship to God. If they can keep to these rules that are compulsory in our denomination, then they should be ashamed if they think it is not important. But basically, every case needs to be carefully examined and an appropriate solution should be found for rules that will show the way.

*Katja Dorothea Buck conducted the interview.*



**Bishop Damian**

## WHEN ALL THE OTHERS FAST

### The voluntary and compulsory sides of fasting in the Middle East

My father was a Catholic (Syriac) and my mother an Orthodox (Syriac). Our home in Aleppo was near to a Protestant Church (Reformed). So, when I was a child and in my teens in the 1980s, I gladly attended the Sunday school, youth meetings and the regular Sunday service. From the beginning, I realized that people in the Protestant Churches do not fast, while other churches do, such as the Catholic and Orthodox churches.

There is a significant variety of Christian existence in the Middle East and in Aleppo in particular. As a child, I realized that people in the Protestant Churches do not fast, while other churches do (Eastern Orthodox, Oriental Orthodox and the Catholic churches in the East). Fasting for Orthodox churches is important and plays a great role in their

spirituality. Human virtues for them are not isolated from the human body (soma). Therefore, practice is important. Many Catholics, such as Maronites and Melkites, cross their foreheads with dust during mass on Clean Monday, the first day of fasting before Easter, as some Christians do in the West on Ash Wednesday. Although Orthodox people and Protestants do not have such ritual, we all insist on the meaning of fasting, which is repentance, humility and self-examination. Ash is a reminder that a human being comes from dust and will return to dust. It is a reminder that we are nothing and what we have is by the sheer grace of God.

Fasting is also connected to almsgiving in our society and to social activities. Fasting is not a personal spiritual exercise, but a meal that I should share with someone. In that sense, fasting becomes a



Myriam Zilles/Pixabay

Fasting before Easter begins in Catholic Churches by crossing the forehead with ash. Orthodox and Protestant Christians do not practise this custom.

departure from the ego. When I eat, I see myself but when I give my food, I see the other. Certainly, Protestants in the Middle East are not against the meaning of fasting that is so important for other churches. However, Evangelicals in general pay no attention to rituals. In fact, they sometimes criticize them. And yet they don't turn fasting into an obligation or a church discipline. This is because the Bible does not regulate fasting with fixed rules and does not specify dates for it. That's not to say that Protestants reject the idea of fasting absolutely only because the Bible doesn't prohibit it, but they leave it as a personal decision.

Yet, I remember several times that we as Protestants prayed and fasted for a sick person or for a church community in distress (e.g. "pray and fast" for peace in Syria or the situation in Lebanon). I should also say that since my church ministry in the Protestant Church in Hadath - Beirut (2008 – 2019) and before in the Armenian Evangelical Church since 1998, I was among the few Protestant pastors who used the lectionary regularly. In other words, I encouraged people in Lent to think seriously about fasting and integrate it into our social life, particularly social justice (Is. 58:6: "Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loosen the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke?").

On a practical level, as we come from Oriental Christian traditions, my family kept the Great Fast (Lent), to a certain extent. So, they removed meat on the day preceding the Great Fast on Shrove Sunday. On the second week of Lent, abstinence from eating fish was observed. Eggs and dairy products (cheese, butter,

yoghurt, etc.) were removed. The day preceding Dairy Fast is called "Cheesefare" Sunday (in Arabic, "Marfa' al-jben"). On this day, all dairy products are removed. There is also a folk celebration, similar to "Fat Tuesday" in the West, preceding Lent. This day is called "Khamis al-sakara" (drunks of Thursday), since on Thursday before Lent, many people celebrate by consuming lots of alcohol and meat.

I think it is good and helpful to fast. Not in the sense of maintaining a good diet to enhance our fitness, but to connect it with charity and removing injustice. Therefore, it is an "ascetic exercise". It also brings Christians to more understanding of the Muslims when they fast in Ramadan and connect it to "Zakat" in Islam (alms-giving, literally: purify). For both Christians and Muslims do not fast for themselves, but to seek the face of God. And hence, fasting fills the hearts with prayers; it empties the self from food to fill it with the Word of God.

*Nabil Maamarbashi is Pastor of the National Evangelical Church in Beirut and has lived in Horb since 2019 where his wife is pastor.*

## „WE HOPE THAT GOD COMFORTS US“

**Fasting in the Jewish faith involves long prayers in the synagogue**

**Fasting or asceticism is rather atypical in the Jewish tradition. But when fasting is observed on Yom Kippur, “it is forbidden to eat, to drink, to wash, to anoint oneself, to put on sandals, or to have intercourse,” according to Rabbi Yehuda ben Betzalel Loew, also known as the Maharal of Prague, in the 16th century.**

There’s a good Jewish joke: A religious teacher asks a pupil to summarise the Jewish holydays. The pupil answers: “They wanted to annihilate us; we survived; let’s go out eating!” In actual fact, there’s a lot of truth in the joke, especially when it comes to eating. Normally, every Jewish holyday has its symbolic meal and Jews eat well and a lot. Fasting or asceticism are not so typical in the Jewish tradition.

But there are exceptions. The best known is Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement. It is the only day of fasting mentioned in the Torah (3rd Book of Moses, 23:27) which is, in the Jewish perception, directly ordained by God. We also read in the Bible that fasting took place in times of mourning, emergencies, fear or agony (cf. 2 Samuel 12:16; Joel 2:15 et seq; Jonah 3:5). In post-Biblical times, the Rabbis also introduced days of fasting and mourning which are mainly linked to national tragedies, such as the loss of the Jewish state. No other day symbolises this better than Tisha B’Av, the 9th day of the Hebrew month of Av, when the temple in Jerusalem was destroyed, according to Jewish tradition.

Although the procedure for fasting on Tisha B’Av and Yom Kippur is identical, there are two different aspects. On the 9th day of Av, the focus is on mourning. We mourn the loss of the Temple and at the same time, we are urged to improve our ethical and moral behaviour as they were ruined by people’s destructive behaviour at the time of the Temple.

Besides fasting, mourning is expressed when certain passages in the liturgy are read and included in the main daily prayer, “O Lord, hear us on our day of fasting and penance as we are in great distress. Do not turn away from us or hide your face, and do not take away your mercy of granting us our entreaty. Please hear our supplication so that your love comforts us...” We hope that God will comfort us.

On Yom Kippur, the focus is on ritual purity and spiritual closeness to God. The Maharal (Rabbi Yehuda Loew of Prague, 16th century) writes that all the commandments that God gave to us on Yom Kippur are supposed to remove us from the physical and the material until we attain the level of an angel. The Maharal refers to five things that are prohibited on Yom Kippur (Mishnah Yoma 8:1): “[On] Yom HaKippurim it is forbidden to eat, to drink, to wash, to anoint oneself, to put on sandals, or to have intercourse.”

The rules of fasting apply for 25 hours, from sunset on the eve of Yom Kippur until after sunset on the Holy Day. On the eve before, the family eats Se’uda Mafseket (Hebr. the last meal before the fast) about an hour before dusk. Then the fast begins.



All work is forbidden. Eating and drinking are prohibited. Even touching food should be avoided.

However, only healthy adults should fast, i.e. sick people may eat, albeit smaller portions if possible. Children under nine years of age should not fast. Older children should be allowed to fast for a few hours to accustom them to it before girls

are obliged to do so at the age of twelve and boys at the age of thirteen. Any kind of washing is prohibited and creams, cosmetics and perfume may not be used. Shoes or other items of clothing (belts) made of leather or with leather soles may not be worn. Shoes made of other materials (e.g. plastic) are permitted. It is usual to wear white clothing for the whole of Yom Kippur since white is the colour of purity.

People are at the synagogue praying almost the whole time of Yom Kippur. Personally, these hours of prayer coupled with fasting have the effect that a spiritual dynamic develops on its own and this state is difficult to feel during everyday liturgy. After breaking the fast, it is the custom to stay at the synagogue together with other worshippers.

*Jehoshua Ahrens is Rabbi of the Jewish community in Darmstadt and member of the Conference of Orthodox Rabbis in Germany.*



Uwe Gräbe

**A worshipper praying on the fasting day of the 9th day of Av in the Jewish quarter of Jerusalem**

## “FASTING IS PARADISE”

### The philosophy of fasting in Islam

**In the Islamic faith, fasting has similar aspects to fasting in the Christian faith. Besides abstinence from material things, the focus is on strengthening the relationship with God in humility and devotion.**

Allah the Almighty decreed His creatures to worship Him only because it should benefit every individual and the community in this world and in the hereafter without exception. The important deeds of devotion include the obligation to fast in the holy month of Ramadan. This is what the Almighty says about this: “O you who have believed, decreed upon you is fasting as it was decreed upon those before you that you may become righteous.” (Surah 2:183). Here, we would like to explain this great Islamic ritual so that people can learn something about the philosophy of fasting, its aims and demands. In her sermon, Fatima Al-Zahra (translator’s note: daughter of the Prophet Muhammad), peace be with her, says: “Fasting is an implantation of devotion.”

Fasting strengthens the loyalty of the servant to his Lord, the Almighty. It is a test for believers, whether they are devoted to their Creator and are obedient to Him. Whereas prayer is the basis of devotion, fasting obtains its high meaning through its connection to prayer. So it is written: “And seek help through patience and prayer!” (Surah 2:45)

Fasting is a mark of righteousness and patience is the right path. So said the Messenger of Allah, Allah’s blessing and

peace be upon him: “Allah, the Exalted and Majestic, says: ‘Every deed of the son of Adam is for him ... with the exception of fasting. For this is Mine and I shall reward you for it. Fasting is Paradise.’” Fasting has two aspects: the outer and the inner. The outer aspect is a matter of abstinence from eating and drinking and all other things that break the fast. The inner aspect deals with the relationship between the believer and his Lord. No other creature knows of this relationship since it is based on the inner devotion of the believer.

The consequences of this submission are devotion. And we find the following from Imam Al-Sadiq, peace be with him: “The Prophet, may Allah’s peace and blessing be with him and his family, said: ‘Fasting is a paradise, it is like a veil that conceals the evil of this world.’” Here, the meaning is clear to us – fasting means that the soul can curb cravings and stop the dangers of demons.

Through self-humiliation, the sick soul, who does not wish for food or drink, hopes at every moment that it will recover from the sickness of sin and the inner soul be cleansed from dishonour, inattention and darkness that keeps it from improving his relationship with Allah, the Almighty, and separates him from the important virtue of submission. In an interpretation of the word of Allah the Almighty, it says: “Fasting is Mine and I am proud of it.”

This means that Allah’s servant allows his own desires and natural yearning to die for the sake of the heart’s serenity and the purity of his organs, to build himself up inside and outside in gratitude for bles-



Uwe Gräbe

**When it is permitted to break the fast in Ramadan after dusk, the people on the street are often joyful and noisy, as here in the Old City of Jerusalem.**

sings, charity for the poor and to increase humility and awe.

Piety is the primary aim of fasting. And the Prince of believers, may peace be upon him, said: "The Messenger of Allah addressed us on that day and said: 'O people, the month of Allah has fed you with blessings and mercy and forgiveness. For Allah, the month is the best month, its days are the best days, its nights are the best nights and its hours the best hours. It is a month in which you are invited to enjoy the hospitality of Allah and, by Him creating you, you are the people of Allah's magnanimity.

In this month, your breath becomes a blessing, your sleep a worship, your work finds appreciation and your prayers are heard.'"

It shows the magnanimity of Allah the Almighty, and His love for His servants, that He decreed fasting in the month of Ramadan so that you are encompassed by His mercy and goodness. This generous

decreed grows in a person when he goes about his work, observes deadlines and contracts and maintains friendships. It makes out of him a good person for society and develops in him a sense of goodness, giving, forgiving and love towards others.

*As a child, the Shi'ite Sheikh Sayyed Fadi Sayyed was a pupil at the Evangelical Johann Ludwig Schneller School in Lebanon and still maintains close ties to the school.*

## FASTING IS WHAT WE HAVE IN COMMON”

About Christians, Muslims and Jews in Jerusalem

**Fasting rituals are known to Judaism, Christianity and Islam. The Old City of Jerusalem is the ideal place to observe the similarities and differences between the three religions.**

**I**n the middle of the Old City of Jerusalem is where you experience the sheer intensity of human distress more existentially: on the one hand, in daily strife between the conflicting parties under the (prevailing) political conditions and on the other hand, in the unavoidable coexistence of the three monotheistic religions. Indeed, it is coexistence, not togetherness. In such a confined space, we share the same streets that take us to the different holy places, but that does not mean we actually talk to one another. Nevertheless, we still have several things in common. The most perceptible is the practice of fasting, even though we have different methods and aims.

For several years, we have made it our duty to assist pilgrim guests at the Austrian Pilgrim Hospice of the Holy Family in Jerusalem to fast on the high Lenten days of Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. For us it is difficult to understand why we should serve Viennese schnitzel or chocolate cake to pilgrims who flock to us after pious prayer along the Via Dolorosa and after they have accomplished their task. Especially on these days. I'm sure you've guessed it by now: our good intentions also meet with consternation. Not everybody understands why one's pious inner reflection through prayer should actually influence one's deeds.

In our Western European society, fasting has been reduced to a slimming method – a far cry from any spiritual abstinence from avoidable surplus for the benefit of another person. The excess pounds drop off (perhaps) but spiritual life stagnates. Orthodox believers in the streets of Jerusalem take their fasting more seriously. Their period of fasting before Easter lasts longer and not only excludes meat – all animal products are prohibited, including butter and eggs. Quite a few of my co-workers in the hospice keep to this. It almost gives us Catholics a bad conscience as we are lax in maintaining our tradition and then only half-heartedly.

The “rivalry between religions” also goes this far: not merely who possesses the sole beatific truth, but rather who is stricter or even more frivolous in their sanctimonious conduct displayed “*coram publico*” (Latin: in public). A mindset of competition has set in.

This leads me directly to Ramadan which cannot be overheard on our street. Night turns into day and quietness gives way to a fairground atmosphere. Between sunrise and sunset, eating, drinking, smoking and sexuality are banned without exception. But this in turn means that before and afterwards, everything is gluttonously devoured in a non-stop party. Our Muslim friends invite friends and relatives to “breakfast”, i.e. breaking the fast, every morning and every evening. Many of the older generation have to battle with health problems when their eating and medical care habits are so completely mixed up.



Good Friday procession on the Via Dolorosa

If the fasting month of Ramadan takes place in high summer – with a lunar calendar, the months differ by two or three weeks every year – the obligation also becomes a challenge for younger adults. To face this, it is better to remain awake at night indulging in gluttony and sleep during the day without staying awake because of the pangs of hunger. This seems logical but it becomes very irksome for Christian neighbours who cannot get enough sleep at the end of a working day to face the needs of pilgrims when the cock crows.

But still, the seriousness and verve with which our Muslim neighbours go about their customs deserve consideration. Admittedly, the social disrespect that a transgressor of the prevailing obligation receives from his fellow believers is a little reminiscent of past days in Europe when

faith and society were still one – and this perhaps leaves behind a feeling of nostalgia. For no reason, in my opinion. Not everybody keeps to this, either now or in the past, and some sublimate their fasting to the only relevant question of what the definition of godly behaviour should be. One's answer may be subjective but at the very least, it comes under the sign of the presence of God in one's thoughts.

Even Jews who shun their own tradition take part in the Jewish fast at Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement. Public life comes to a standstill. The streets are empty. And the international airport is closed. This would be unthinkable in any other country – and so it is beyond comparison. Much closer to our Via Dolorosa is the fast on the 9th day of the month of Av. It is the pious and Orthodox Jews who commemorate the destruction of the



Temple and fast out of mourning and pain. In His clairvoyance, the Lord had compassion in advance with His children in view of the fact that tradition has taught us that both destructions – by the Babylonians and by the Romans – took place on exactly the same day. This is surely very dubious historically, but it has an extremely profound meaning theologically. There can only be one presence of God and the Jews' flight and expulsion is beyond any numerical or quantifiable evaluation. The emptiness and loneliness could not be any deeper. It is a heart-wrenching tragedy of being forsaken by God.

I ask myself: at that moment when Christ – abandoned by God as He proclaimed Himself – gave up his life on the cross

(for whom, actually?), the veil was torn in that very temple and night and darkness came upon the world. Did at least everybody fall silent at that time? Or was there a theologian who knew how to interpret this without being asked?

We should promote silence and stillness; envisage the fear and the shock, gauge the intensity, surmise the drama. God. As it is all about Him, it is neither harmless, nor half, but the whole in itself. Fasting is a reminder along this path.

*Markus St. Bugnyár is a Roman Catholic priest and has been Rector of the Austrian Hospice of the Holy Family in Jerusalem for many years.*



Empty streets in Jerusalem at Yom Kippur



# WE LOOK FORWARD TO WELCOMING NEW MEMBERS!

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 at events, the EVS provides information about churches and Christians in the Middle East.

The **Schneller Magazine** is published four times a year. The EVS provides it free of charge to all readers. Buying the magazine does not automatically mean you are a member of the EVS. **We would be delighted if you decide to become a member of the EVS. In this way you not only support the Schneller schools but also the work of the editorial team.**

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 and organisations. 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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for the Schneller Schools**

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## A SPECIAL LETTER OF CONGRATULATIONS

2020 is the bicentenary of the birth of Johann Ludwig Schneller

*Dear Director,*

May I warmly congratulate you on the bicentenary of your birth. It is truly an exceptional blessing that a work with such a long history still remains strong and vibrant today and that we are allowed to contribute towards it in the Evangelical Association for the Schneller Schools (EVS).

As a young man you gathered a group of war orphans in the Lebanese mountains

and with them founded the first Schneller school in Jerusalem, namely the “Syrian Orphanage”. Would you still recognise the region today where these children came from? Once again, the region is in turmoil. The people in Lebanon are rising up against the government’s corruption and misuse of power. A few weeks ago, I visited the region with a small delegation and observed it with my own eyes – people in protest tents conducting open debates, demonstrating before the central bank against economic injustice and sharing their food with those who have nothing left. Everything is overshadowed by economic hardship – it even affects the school in Lebanon that is named after you, dear Johann Ludwig Schneller.

Despite all the violence that has happened, the people on the streets refuse to bow down any more. Did your work have anything to do with this, dear Director? Admittedly, you were not the only person who founded a good educational establishment in the Middle East. Your work is part of an excellent tradition of church educational work. But you were perhaps one of the few who combined an education for peace for members of all religions so systematically with an establishment for orphans and for others on the fringes of society: “So that they can eat their bread in dignity.” A person growing up in such spirit does not simply take things lying down any more.



Landeskirchliches Archiv

Johann Ludwig Schneller (front centre) with his wife Magdalene (right) and his four grown-up children in Jerusalem in about 1890

Today, your Syrian Orphanage no longer exists and one is always wiser in retrospect: if you had continued this work as an employee of the work from the neutrality of Switzerland which originally sent you to Jerusalem instead of founding a German association for it – we would not have lost the Orphanage seventy-five years ago. But then again, there should finally be an end to the interminable talk of the “expropriation” of the building by the Israelis. We are wiser today. The church sponsors of the establishments transferred by the German Government to Israel as part of the Reparations Agreement between Israel and West Germany in 1952/1953 received compensation to the tune of 3.85 million German Marks. The lion’s share of 63 percent was paid for the Syrian Orphanage – much less than the property was apparently worth. But at the beginning of the 1950s, this was a lot of money. Whatever the case, it was much more than many others, who had lost everything during World War II and the Shoah, could even hope for. And it was good starting capital for a new beginning. In actual fact, holding onto the term of “expropriation” only shows that many authors have not made their peace with the State of Israel to this day.

One consequence of losing the Syrian Orphanage was that the Schneller schools today are no longer German establishments but are under the sponsorship of local churches. Our Lebanese and Jordanian friends who bear this responsibility work with enormous commitment in an infrastructure that is crumbling in so many places after all these decades. In Lebanon the carpentry workshop is in danger of collapsing to such an extent that it can no longer be used – and donations



Wedding photo of Johann Ludwig Schneller and his wife Magdalene, née Böhringer, shows the young couple before emigrating to Jerusalem in 1854.

for an urgently needed new building lie frozen in Lebanese banks which are unable to disburse the money due to the economic crisis. At the Theodor Schneller School in Jordan, some water pipes are in such disrepair that they no longer work very well in many places. Dear Director, you would probably have simply started building work and then sent the invoice to your Association Executive Committee in Germany. It’s a good thing that we do things differently nowadays, otherwise my hair would probably turn a lighter shade of grey!

You would certainly have been pleased at what is happening at the Schneller schools today: the vocational programmes at the Johann Ludwig Schneller School for Syrian refugees and early school-leavers, the new vocational courses at the Theodor Schneller School in hospitality, hairdressing, car electrics and finally remedial clas-

ses for children with learning disabilities. These things may perhaps not be major achievements. But they are clearly intended to support the weakest among young adults who would otherwise never be able to find a job. "So that they can eat their bread in dignity," – that has remained our guiding principle and mission to this day. Mr Director, we have you to thank for this guiding principle. Thank you for this and may God bless your work on the bicentenary of your birth!

*Best regards, your Reverend Uwe Gräbe,  
Executive Secretary of the Evangelical  
Association for the Schneller Schools*

## EXHIBITION

On 29 March, an exhibition entitled "Johann Ludwig Schneller – Educationalist and His Work in Jerusalem" opens in Sonnenbühlstrasse 10, the birthplace of the founder of the Syrian Orphanage and Schneller Schools in Basel and Jerusalem. The exhibition will start with a concert at 10 o'clock. Dr Jakob Eisler will then hold the inauguration speech. The exhibition is situated in the Ostereimuseum and will be open for six months.

**POSTPONED DUE TO  
THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIA**

## SAVE THE DATE

### **EVS General Meeting 2020**

This year, the Evangelical Association for the Schneller Schools (EVS) invites its members to the General Meeting at the Church of St Paul (Paulus-Kirche) in Stuttgart-West on 8 November. The keynote speaker will be the Evangelical Lutheran Bishop Rev. Ibrahim Azar who will be travelling from Jerusalem.

## SVS AND EVS INTERESTED IN JOINT PROJECTS

**Basel (EVS/SVS).** “If I had to live at one of the two Schneller schools and I knew I would never be able to return to Switzerland, I would still feel at home there,” said Ursus Waldmeier, Chair of the Swiss Association for the Schneller Schools (SVS) at the joint meeting of Executive Committees with the Evangelical Association for the Schneller Schools (EVS). The meeting took place in Riehen near Basel in the middle of January. Every three or four years, the Executive Committees of the two associations meet to discuss support for the two schools in Lebanon and Jordan. The two associations are very interested in collaborating in joint projects, such as a joint stand at the Church Congress in Frankfurt in 2021.

Reverend Khaled Freij, Director of the Theodor Schneller School (TSS) in Jordan, also came to Riehen and reported about

current developments and events at his school. For example, Her Royal Highness Princess Basma bint Tala of Jordan visited the TSS at Christmas. He also spoke of challenges. For example, the TSS is currently struggling with acute water problems. Many water pipes are old, leaking and require complete modernisation.

Uwe Gräbe, Executive Secretary of the EVS, also talked about his visit to the Middle East in December. He reported about the schools and described his impressions of the demonstrations in Lebanon and the economic and political situation there. Gräbe praised the good work accomplished so far by Khaled Freij. Both associations promised Freij their support in solving the water problem.

The venue for the meeting in Riehen was not selected at chance. The deaconess house dates back to Christian Friedrich Spittler who made an attempt to set up a pilgrim mission school there in the middle of the 19th century. In 1860, Spittler commissioned Johann Ludwig Schneller to establish the Syrian Orphanage in Jerusalem and is regarded as the prime initiator of the idea behind the Schneller schools.

The next joint meeting of the Executive Committees of the two associations is scheduled for 2023. The SVS was founded in 1892 and was then called the Schweizer Hilfskomitee (Swiss Committee for Relief). Today, it has 75 members. For more information about the SVS, go to

<http://www.schnellerschulen.org/>.



From left to right: Uwe Gräbe, Bernd Apel, Kathrin Zybach, Tobias Hoenger, Christian Kissling, Simon Pfeiffer, Martina Waiblinger, Silvan Eppinger, Martin Ninck, Musa Al Munaizel, Khaled Freij, Martina Waiblinger, Reinhold Schaal, Kerstin Sommer, Felix Weiss, Ursus Waldmeier, Christian Kurzke



## A LITTLE BIT OF HOME

### Personal impressions during a visit to the Schneller school

**Eight years since his volunteer year at the Johann Ludwig Schneller School (JLSS), Felix Weiss returned to the location of his assignment and discovered many reminders of the time he spent there.**

I have fond memories of Lebanon and my assignment at the JLSS. You can imagine how much I was looking forward to my official trip to the Middle East and my visit to the JLSS. I was curious to find out what had changed at the school after all these years.

The first thing I noticed during my first walk around the campus was the spectacular new football field called the Martin Ruopp field. When I was first there, the field was also used to play football. But then, it was a dried-out pitch pitted with potholes. Before playing, we used to pick up all the stones to make sure that none of the children could injure themselves. Today, the grass field could compete with any football stadium. I took the opportunity to play a round of football with some of the pupils and students and this turned out to be one of the highlights of my visit. The first time I was there, the ground floor of the school building did not have a billiard table or tables for table football and table tennis. Now, the young adults invited me to play a frame of billiards.

And I was really surprised by the new organ in St Michael's Church. At the start of our visit, George Haddad, the school director, called the whole school to evening prayers and played this wonderful instrument. I remembered the past when

I enjoyed the regular evening prayers and the short moment of peace before work resumed.

Despite all the changes, it was the things that hadn't changed that I noticed and these memories suddenly came flooding back. Immediately after I arrived, I sat on my favourite bench under the trees in front of St Michael's Church. I always used to wait there until the children came back from classes in the afternoon. I walked all over the grounds, through the Biblical Garden, sat on the stands of the basketball field, let my gaze wander over the Bekaa Valley, met staff and children I still knew from the past and dug up my knowledge of Arabic that I thought was long forgotten. Right from the start, I again felt as I did the first time. I felt at home. In fact, I can safely say that this is what Lebanon and the JLSS will always be for me – a little bit of home.

*Felix Weiss has been assistant at the Secretariat of the Evangelical Association for the Schneller Schools and the EMS Middle East Liaison Desk for one year.*



## ALUMNI REMEMBER

What would be the Schneller history without the memories of all those who once lived for a while at one of the schools in Lebanon or Jordan? In future, “Schneller alumni” will recount how formative this time was for them.

### MAX LEVIN, AT THE JOHANN LUDWIG SCHNELLER SCHOOL (JLSS) IN 2002/2003

Compared with school, the period of civilian service was a school for life, a separate phase of my life. At that time, we were a very harmonious international group of volunteers from Germany, the USA, Canada, New Zealand and South Korea. Each of us shared part of our culture and origins with the other volunteers, pupils and staff at the JLSS. My assignment was to support the educators in my residential group and work as helper in the bakery.

At the age of 20, I was still very young without any form of educational training. My language barrier stayed high during the time there. That’s why I mainly helped with household chores in “Family One”. For example, at night I boiled the eggs for breakfast very slowly on the tiny gas cooker and made the dreadful sweet tea.

I experienced everything, from the highest ups to the lowest downs. For example, the American invasion in Iraq cast a shadow on our stay and forced our American colleagues to leave the country in a hurry. The particularly terrible circumstances under which Palestinians had to live in Lebanon also made me realise how privileged I really am.

But all in all, the positive impressions far outnumber the negative ones and I received far more than I gave. The best memories are the encounters with so many wonderful people there, the really beautiful countryside, Lebanese culture and hospitality and the great food! We experienced many mad moments, travelled the country, hiked a lot, went skiing while overlooking the Mediterranean, enjoyed the night life in Beirut and much more. Sadly, my personal contacts have as good as gone. But once you’ve lived there, you will never forget Schneller and Lebanon!

*Max Levin is 37 years old, father of two daughters, lives near Munich and is a pilot.*



Max Levin

**18 years ago: Max Levin (left), ecumenical volunteer together with Schneller pupils**

## BANKRUPT BANKS AND OVERPRICED TOOTHPASTE

Impressions of Lebanon during the revolution

**Lebanon is in economic turmoil. At nearly 150 percent of gross domestic product, the national debt is one of the highest in the world. The economic situation is becoming increasingly unbearable. How can the Schneller school survive?**

**I**t has become unbearable for those who already had very little before. In the meantime, many family fathers have committed suicide because they were no longer able to pay their debts or feed their families. Products imported from abroad are offered at horrendous prices. A colleague from the congregation in Beirut converted the price for us of a tube of toothpaste – the equivalent of nine euros.

Officially, the Lebanese central bank is trying to peg the exchange rate to about 1,500 Lebanese pounds to the dollar. However, the banks no longer have the foreign currency reserves to meet demand at this rate. They only allow withdrawals of a few hundred dollars a month from a foreign currency account and meanwhile, the banks have also restricted withdrawals in Lebanese pounds.

How can an establishment such as the Johann Ludwig Schneller School in the Bekaa Valley in Lebanon exist at all under such conditions? Most of the children from poor or broken families live here in the residential home and attend the school and the training workshops.

Only a small minority can pay the school fees. The establishment is dependent on foreign donations – but they are held in a bank account to which the

school has extremely restricted access at present. How is it possible to feed the 200 people living on the campus – in addition to the roughly 100 children who attend the day school? “We’ve started to produce some of our food ourselves,” explains Reverend Georg Haddad, head of the establishment. They have now joined forces with a farmer who supplies the milk which they use to produce their own curd cheese in the school kitchens.

On the road from Beirut to the Schneller school, we saw large crowds of agitated people. And between them, military armoured vehicles and policemen in protective equipment. Some came to defend the concerns of the revolution, others to oppose them in a bid to protect their president. The security forces separate one from the other. We drive through the crowd unmolested. Shortly after, the road is blocked with burning tyres.

It appears that the great majority of demonstrators are on the side of the revolution. It appears that, for the first time in ages, people of different religious backgrounds are gathering together under the Lebanese flag: Shi’ites, Sunnis, Druze and Christians from the Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant churches. They are fed up continuously having to be separated by religious background. But there are also forces who are critical of the revolution. They mainly include party members of the Christian Maronite president and members of the Shi’ite “Party of Allah”, the Hezbollah. They would have too much to lose if the present system was removed. Shi’ite hit squads have tried many times



EMS/Gräbe

### Arabic graffiti in Beirut city centre says it all: Revolution!

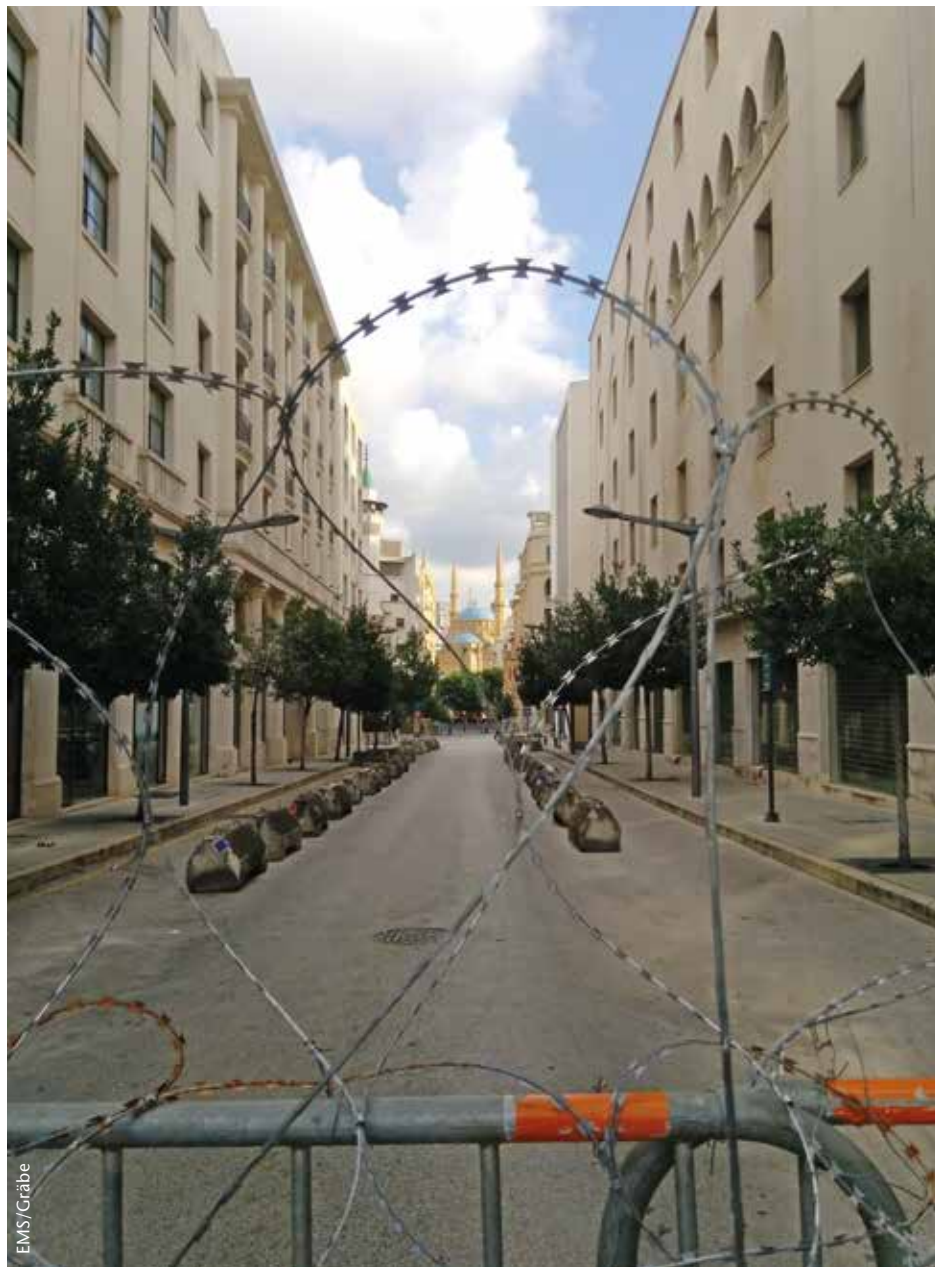
to bomb demonstrations, resulting in many injured and in some cases even deaths. But in general, this nightmare quickly petered out.

A week after the start of the revolution, Christian church leaders already adopted most of the demands made by the demonstrators, especially demands for an end to corruption and the resignation of the people responsible. This was a sensational, even prophetic declaration by the churches. But the paper omitted one particular demand: church leaders were unable to envisage an end to proportional representation of the denominations. The risk was too great that precisely the smaller Christian communities would lose their chances to participate in society if they were not guaranteed a certain amount of political representation. "The confessional system that has been built up over decades can only be abolished in a transitional process that will take many years," explained the leader of one church to us.

For many brethren living abroad, this is too little; they resolutely blame their Lebanese partners for their apparent diffidence. But is it really possible to put oneself in the situation of those who are

trying to keep their communities together under extremely difficult conditions? And wasn't it those who were so quick to express criticism and heap praise on the Lebanese system as a model of Christian-Muslim coexistence until shortly before the revolution? The debate within the local Christian community is even more complicated anyway: the dioceses and organisational units of most churches cover Lebanon and Syria; many Syrian Christians live or study in Lebanon. "This is how it all started among us," say some of them. "And in the end, there was the Syrian war and the devastation in our country."

Syrian students at the Near East School of Theology (NEST) in Beirut, a Protestant educational institute, also regard the revolution with scepticism. Of course, one of the accompanying issues may also be the possible impacts on non-Lebanese in the country if the entire country euphorically rallies under its national flag. In addition, many Syrian Christians believe that the Assad government will protect them. At the same time, the Assad government is supported among others by forces from Lebanon who are officially against the revolution here. You can well imagine that



Many streets in the centre of Beirut are cordoned off with NATO wire.

in the meantime, the debates between Syrian, Lebanese and international students at the NEST go right under your skin.

Could it all culminate in another civil war? A high-ranking German diplomat in Beirut does not agree. The mere fact that the revolution has more or less been peaceful for many months is a sign that this will not change in future. Let's hope he's right!

*Uwe Gräbe*

## NEW BISHOP ELECTED

**Stuttgart (EVS).** The Anglican member church of the Evangelical Mission in Solidarity (EMS), the sponsoring church of the Theodor Schneller School in Amman, will soon have a new archbishop. On 30 January 2020, the former dean of St George's Cathedral in Jerusalem, Reverend Hosam Naoum, was elected Bishop Coadjutor of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem and the Middle East. As coadjutor, Reverend Hosam will be familiarised with all the duties of a bishop over a period of eighteen months. He will then take over from the incumbent Archbishop Suheil Dawani.

Hosam Naoum has been dean of the Jerusalem cathedral since 2012. Previously, he studied theology in South Africa and in the USA and was congregational pastor in Nablus, Zabadeh (West Jordan) and Jerusalem for a long time. Ecumenism and the interreligious relations of his church are issues that are particularly close to his heart. His many visits to the Theodor Schneller School in Jordan have made him well acquainted with the school. He places great store on the school as a special duty of his church towards children on the fringes of society.

The EMS and the Evangelical Association for the Schneller Schools would like to warmly congratulate Reverend Hosam Naoum on his election. May God's good Spirit strengthen him in his new ministry and the path that lies before him!





# JOIN US IN HELPING THEM! THE SCHNELLER FOUNDATION

The Schneller Foundation is committed to Christian peace education as practised today at the two Schneller schools in Lebanon and Jordan. The focus here is on tolerance and peaceful coexistence between different religions and traditions.

For many years, the Evangelical Association for the Schneller Schools (EVS) has supported disadvantaged children and young adults in the Middle East. On 11 November 2007, the Evangelical Association for the Schneller Schools (EVS) founded the Schneller Foundation – Education for Peace to secure the future of the two schools with foundation earnings and finance important projects and measures not covered by donations. The business of the foundation is managed free of charge by the Foundation of the Protestant Regional Church of Wuerttemberg.

You can contribute to the Foundation at any time to increase its capital and earnings. We look forward to your donation! Contact us!

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EVS Evangelical Association  
for the Schneller Schools

**135th Year, Issue 1, March 2020**

Publishers: Evangelical Association for the Schneller Schools (EVS) in the Evangelical Mission in Solidarity (EMS).

Editors: Katja Dorothea Buck (Chief Editor),  
Dr Uwe Gräbe, Felix Weiss

Translations to English: Chris Blowers

Photos: Front cover EMS/Gräbe // p19 EMS/  
Waiblinger // p33 EMS/Gräbe // Rear cover  
EMS/Buck

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Registered office of the Association:  
Stuttgart, Germany.

Layout: B-Factor GmbH  
Printers: Kohlhammer Druck  
Circulation: 12,300

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The Schneller magazine is published four times a year. The price is included in the EVS membership fee and in the SVS annual fee.

The Schneller Magazine is also available in German and can be read online

<https://schneller-schulen.ems-online.org>

# SCHNELLER

The Evangelical Association for the Schneller Schools (EVS) is a member of the Evangelical Mission in Solidarity (EMS).

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The Schneller Schools are dependent on your donations.

We look forward to your support for the work of the Schneller Schools.

Please visit us on the Internet at <https://schneller-schulen.ems-online.org/en/>

“I believe; help my unbelief!”

Mark 9:24 (NRSV)



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