

Jubilee-Worship-Service „50 Years Ausbildungshilfe – Christian Education Fund“ in the Chapel of the Haus der Kirche Kassel on Aug 28th, 2010

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

The watchword for the forthcoming week, dear sisters and brothers, seems to be just meant for the jubilee we celebrate today. It is not only to be commemorated during this one particular week, but could rather be the motto for 50 years of existence of the Education Fund:

“Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.” Matthew. 25, 40

With that we touch the core question of solidarity and responsibility of the Christian congregation.

Whether the parable of the final judgement stood behind the people in Kassel to found the “Ausbildungshilfe – Christian Education Fund”? – I doubt it. Rev. Wilhelm Jung can report much more adequate about the beginnings some 50 years back, than I can.

However: the hint to the final judgement at the end of times shows with all its significance the severity the discipleship of Jesus asks for. But it would of course be too much calculating to base on an institution of love for one’s neighbor. Those, whom Jesus praises in the parable, on the contrary are those who acted without any calculation, just in an immediate reaction born out of a dire need.

To realize the need is the most decisive. That lead to early beginnings of the Education Fund. Let us try to remember the year 1960: it was the times of final decolonization. Regions, partly for centuries under colonial rule and exploited, achieved liberty. India was already liberated in 1947. In the early 60-ties the African Continent gained liberty. I can recall the pictures in the newspapers of that time, how people saluted independence in Kenya, Tanganjika, Cameroon. But colonial heritage was still a heavy burden on the new republics – partly till today. Namely in the very beginnings well educated personnel in administrations, in artisanry and schools were missing. Julius Nyerere when founding his party in 1954 was one of the two Tanganjicans with a University degree. A support for education upgrading was the demand of the hour more than ever before.

Of course there were other agencies to be founded these days, such as “Bread for the World” a year earlier – one of the most renowned brands of protestant churches nowadays. Ausbildungshilfe never wanted to compete with such a big organization. Our own approach was much more humble, but hardly less effective: young people were to be educated well with the help of a scholarship and were enabled to earn their own living as well as to train others. This way Ausbildungshilfe became a specific form of development aid.

When we talk about development, the respective ministry of our government or other NGO’s may come to our minds. But in relation to our Education Fund I would rather think of development in a more focused sence: God has given us many gifts and talents, be it in Germany or Asia or Africa. They do not always de-velop immediately but slumber in us. We have to develop them that they may be displayed and serve the community, the public sector as well as the church. But how can a young person, boy or girl, develop Gods given gifts? A respective education will help to discover those gifts and talents!

