

Norbert Friedrich / Uwe Kaminsky /
Roland Löffler (Hg.)

The Social Dimension of Christian Mission in the Middle East

Historical Studies of the 19th and 20th Centu-
ries

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Missions to the Middle East were and still are a highly delicate topic. For some academics, they have destroyed indigenous culture and are nothing else than the religious wing of imperialism. A new development in historiography shows a different angle: Missions have strongly contributed to development in certain regions of the world in the fields social work, healthcare, education and science, sometimes even implementing basic social infrastructure that have been neglected by local rulers for decades or even centuries. In the specific case of missions to the Middle East the “social dimension” became their trademark, because conversion did hardly take place in the “house of Islam” and also among Jews during the 19th and 20th century. This volume brings together some of the essential papers of a conference dealing with questions of cultural history in the field of “The Social Dimension of Missions in the Orient”. It not only contributes to the historiography of missions and to the development of theories for the history of Middle Eastern missions and churches, but also develops a transnational enhancement of the history of Christianity that has remained until now largely Eurocentric.