

## **Resumé**

*Bringing Children Into the Fold* undersøger betydningerne af barndom i mødet mellem danske kristne missionærer og indere i Sydindien i perioden 1864-1918. Gennem ”mikrohistoriske indgange” afdækker afhandlingen aspekter af missionærernes forestillinger om og tiltag rettet mod forskellige kategorier af børn.

Missionærerne investerede store ressourcer i at reformere reproduktive praksisser såvel som i børneopdragelse og uddannelse. Opdragelse var afgørende for børns udvikling til et kristent voksenliv, og at drage omsorg for hedenske børn var en kristen pligt. At være et godt menneske indebar blandt andet at kende og kropsliggøre sin position i sociale ordener, der var både lokalt og koloniale betingede. Opdragelsen af de forskellige kategorier af børn blev reflekterede derfor koloniale sociale hierarkier, men var samtidig med til at reproducere og rekonfigurere disse hierarkier. Ved indgangen til det 20. århundrede blev et specifikt emotionaliseret og videnskabeligt inspireret barndomsbegreb centralt, ikke bare for missionærers engagement med sydinderne, men også for deres egen kontinuerlige identitetsskabelse. Denne dansk-indiske case peger på vigtigheden af at undersøge, om den nye sentimentale barndomsforståelse, der spredte sig i Vesten på denne tid, blev udviklet delvis gennem former for transnational interaktion i forskellige imperiale kontekster. Resultaterne fra studiet tilskynder desuden til en undersøgelse af, hvilken rolle dette nye barndomsbegreb har haft for fremvæksten af en moderne, moralsk europæisk identitet.

## **Abstract**

*Bringing Children Into the Fold* probes the meanings of childhood in the encounters between Danish Christian missionaries and Indians in the Madras Presidency from 1864 to 1918. Through “micro historical entries” the dissertation examines aspects of the missionaries’ ideas about and efforts directed at different categories of children.

The dissertation documents that the missionaries invested remarkable resources in the reform of reproductive practices, in childcare, and in education. They were convinced that children’s education, in the broad sense, was crucial to their growth into Christian adulthood, and that caring for heathen children was a Christian duty. Being a good human being entailed knowing and embodying one’s position in social

orders that were both local and colonial. The ways in which different categories of children were nurtured and raised thus simultaneously reflected and contributed to the maintenance and reconfiguration of colonial social hierarchies. Towards the end of the nineteenth century and in the first decades of the twentieth century, a specific sentimental and scientifically informed notion of childhood became central not only to the Danish missionary involvement with South Indians but also to the missionaries' continual process of self-fashioning. This Indo-Danish case therefore urges us to consider whether the new emotional understanding of childhood that spread in the Western world around the same time was constituted in part through various forms of transnational interaction in different imperial settings. Furthermore, it compels us to examine the role that this transnationally produced concept of childhood played in the making of a particular moral, modern European identity.