

“The Death of Christ on a Cross”:  
A 19th Century Lutheran-CMS Missionary Pamphlet:  
From Published Tracts to the Internet and Social Networking Sites

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**Abstract:**

Protestant Reformers exploited the fledgling printing press to publicize their views throughout the 17<sup>th</sup> century. By the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Protestant mission agencies utilized the printing press as an important method of evangelism, publishing Bibles and tracts in a variety of indigenous languages. Within the Middle East specifically, printing presses in Malta, then Beirut and later Cairo published Bibles, tracts and a wide variety of educational texts for mission schools in Arabic, Greek, Hebrew, and Turkish. The missionary tracts, which responded to specific scriptural and theological challenges from Muslims, became the primary means for these missionary scholars to provide a “reasoned apologetic” to Muslims. These pamphlets replaced public disputes that were popular among missionaries in India. Within the Ottoman Empire public bazaar preaching or debate was illegal. Thus, the pamphlet became the main vehicle for debate with Muslims in a public manner. This paper will explore this 19<sup>th</sup> century missionary apologetic through the example of the 1878 tract, “The Death of Christ Upon a Cross,” by the Lutheran CMS missionary Sigismund Wilhelm Koelle in Istanbul. The paper will note Koelle’s responses to specific Muslim arguments denying the Crucifixion, building on the work of Karl G. Pfander in India. We will also note the continued use of this type of apologetic in the 21<sup>st</sup> century by both Christians and Muslims now through the Internet and social networking sites. The paper will then make some final comments for what we argue would be a more “respectful witness” that would involve open conversation and dialogue.