

Tranquebar Mission and Protestant Missionary Beginnings in India

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1. Introduction

The 16th century Reformation Movement had to infuse a new life in the field of missions. Many western countries tried to send missionaries to India. It was not just because of increasing activities oversea, but also had especially because of the changing spiritual climate in Europe itself that Protestant mission took on a very different look in the 18th century. The Protestant Missionary beginning in India and the Tranquebar Mission is synonymous as the first Protestant Mission began in Tranquebar and took its shape. There were Roman Catholics who already existed in India, but in the 18th century with the arrival of the two Protestant Missionaries in Tranquebar, did the world witness the beginning of the real mission work in the Indian soil. The Mission Work started during the Danish Settlement in Tranquebar, conceived by the Danish King Frederick IV of Denmark who sends two German missionaries. These two pious and devoted missionaries began their work at Tranquebar which was extended with the arrival of more Protestant missionaries. This paper deals with the Beginning of the Protestant mission, the Tranquebar Mission and the important contribution of the Tranquebar Mission to the Indian society.

Causes for the Origin of Mission

The first factor was the theology of reformers. They thought that the great commission pertained only to the original apostles, that the apostles fulfilled the great commission by taking the Gospel to the ends of the then known world; no churches in the later ages had taken the responsibility to send missionaries to the ends of the earth.

Secondly, the Catholic Church launched the Counter Reformation and there by regained much of the territory lost to the Reformation. The war against Rome was long and bitter and the out come was by no means certain. The 30years war reduced Germany to economic and social chaos. The protestant churches, preoccupied as they were with the problem of survival may be excused for having neither the vision nor the vigor necessary for world evangelization. The reformed and Lutheran churches joined together against a common enemy.

The third factor was the isolation of Protestant Europe from the mission lands of Asia, Africa, and the new world. Spain and Portugal both Roman Catholic countries, were the great exploring and colonizing powers of the post reformation period; they were interested in commerce and colonization.

The fourth factor was the absence in the Protestant churches of the religious orders which played such a prominent role in

the spread of the catholic faith throughout the world. When the Protestant churches, two centuries later, launched their missionary enterprises they had nothing to compare with the religious orders of the Roman Catholic Church. The largest group was the Moravians¹, one of the so called sects.²

2. Danish Settlement in Tranquebar

The spiritual forces released by the reformation would have prompted the Protestant churches of Europe to take the Gospel to the ends of the earth during the period of world exploration and colonization which began about 16th century. In the 17th centuries several European trading companies established trading posts along the coast line; eventually ousting the Portuguese from their position of sovereignty. In 1620 the Danish East India Company settled in the small village of Tranquebar.³ Tranquebar is a small town on the Coromandel Coast of Tamil Nadu in South India. It was originally a centre for business and was well known for its fishing. The Danish merchants formed the Danish East India Company to undertake the ancient viking tradition of sea voyages and maritime business and established a trading relationship with the Eastern merchants of India, China and other countries. The Danish King also supported them with capital and ships. Nine Directors were appointed to look after the affairs of the Danish East India Company in the East. They sailed to India in 1618 and began their relation with the Thanjavur Raja Ragunatha Nayak⁴ in South India and finally secured the place from him.⁵

Seventeenth century mission work was usually carried out in the wake of trade. "The Religion of truth" accompanied "the

¹ The origin of the Moravian church goes back to 1467. After 200 years this Moravian missionary commitment spread in an all parts of the world - the four main home bases in West Germany, England, Denmark and the United States. But after the Counter Reformation, under the leadership of Christian David, migrated to Saxony in 1722, this colony became the source and center of a missionary movement.

² Herbert Kane, *A Concise History of the Christian World Mission* (Michigan, Baker Book House, 2001), pp.73-74.

³ Tranquebar was a Danish Denmark colony in India from 1620-1845. It is spelled Trankebar or Trangebar in Danish which came from the native Tamil Tarangambadi, meaning "place of the singing waves". It is located in Nagapattanam district, about 100 km south of Pondicherry, near the mouth of a distributary of Kaveri River.

⁴ [http://www.trankebar.net/article/indian-express/1994-12-12_mission-\(lazar\)/making-uk.htm](http://www.trankebar.net/article/indian-express/1994-12-12_mission-(lazar)/making-uk.htm)

⁵ Daniel Jeyaraj, *Bartholomaeus Ziegenbalg: the Father of Modern Protestant Mission: An Indian Assessment*, (Delhi: ISPCK, Chennai: GLTCRI, 2006), pp.10-13.

religion of trade".⁶ The Danish East India Company established their settlement in two places that is at Tranquebar in 1620 and the Serampore in 1676. They concentrated in trade and although the Danes were Lutherans they did not emphasis on the spreading of Gospel. But with the 30 Year's War the first phrase of the Danish East India Company was not successful. The Great Northern War also weakened Denmark's trade in India during the period of 1706 - 1719. The geographical location was also a hindrance for trade. They administered with neutrality and followed the policy of religious freedom.⁷

3. Tranquebar Mission: Its Origin and Growth

3.1 The Beginning of the Tranquebar Mission

In Danish King Frederik IV (1671 - 1730), an ardent Lutheran Protestant ascended the throne in 1699. He was a very able monarch over vast dominance which covers Denmark, Norway, northern part of Germany, and southern Sweden.⁸ It was this Danish King of Denmark who initiated the evangelical missionary activities in the 18th and 19th century. It Tarangampadi (Tranquebar), a hamlet on the Coromandel Coast, and a few villages around it from the then had been his long - time ambition to spread the faith in his colonies in the East Indies, in 1620 Danish King Christian IV had acquired from Thanjavur Raja for the Danish East India Trading Company. So he started seeking for missionaries to commission them to the non - Christians of India. He appointed his court chaplain Luetkins to search for missionaries to go for mission work, not having been able to find any in Denmark, applied to his friends in Germany, and there was two young theological students *Bartholomaeus Ziegenbalg* (1682 - 1719) and *Henry Pluetschau* (1677 - 1746), agreed to go.

3.2 Bartholomaeus Ziegenbalg and Henry Pluetschau

They were the products of a rival movement called *Pietism*.⁹ One of the Pietist leaders was professor A. H. Francke under whom these two young men had studied at the University of Halle, the centre of the movement. They were brought to Denmark and ordained, not with out objection for the Lutheran bishop, together with many other clergy in the Lutheran church, was critical of Pietism. They were sent out

to Tranquebar as 'royal missionaries'¹⁰ at the personal expense of the King. So it came about that the first Protestant missionaries to India were German Lutherans sent by a Royal Declaration¹¹ and seal of the King of Denmark. They arrived at Tranquebar on the 9th of July 1706, but the authorities did not acknowledge their presence nor the Royal Declaration and seal of the King. Though German by birth, they came to be called '*The Royal Danish Missionaries*'. Thus becoming the first Protestant missionaries to arrive on the Indian sub - continent and starting the Danish - Halle Mission.

"Thus we have assumed that in the 17th century upto the arrival of Ziegenbalg and Henry Pluetschau in Tranquebar, nothing was done which could be even charitably called the beginning of mission work. Church history, therefore, holds fast to the date 9th of July 1706 as the noteworthy event, when the missionaries came to India as the first Evangelical Missionaries and that with them the mission works of the Evangelical Church begin on Indian soil".¹² The English and American literature says William Carey is the 'Father of Protestant Mission'. But it was questioned by the historians. Daniel Jeyaraj called Ziegenbalg as "*the Father of Modern Protestant Mission*".¹³ W. R. Hogg gives all credits to the Tranquebar missionaries, who were actually the Fathers of Protestant Missions', and calls Carey "the Father of the Modern Missionaries" (ecumenical foundations).¹⁴

When Bartholomaeus Ziegenbalg¹⁵ and Henry Pluetschau¹⁶ arrived in Tranquebar there already exist two churches, Roman Catholic Church and the Evangelical Zion church which has built by the Danish inhabitants for their use in 1701. The Missionaries realized that it was necessary to learn the common language to communicate to the people so immediately began to learn Portuguese and Tamil which were the common language that was used in Tranquebar. During his time, the front halls of temples served as schools

¹⁰ C.B.Firth, *An Introduction to Indian Church History* (Delhi: ISPCK, 2000), p.131.

¹¹ M.K.Kuriacose, *History of Christianity in India: Source Materials* (Delhi: ISPCK, 1999), pp.57-59. (Details of the Royal Declaration and letter of appointment given by the Frederik IV of Denmark to the missionaries in 1705 sighted in this book).

¹² E.Arno Lehmann, *It Began at Tranquebar: A History of the First Protestant Mission in India*, translated by M.J.Lutz, 2nd ed.(Chennai: CLS, 2006),p.15

¹³ Daniel Jeyaraj, his writing entitled as "Bartholomaeus Ziegenbalg: the Father of Modern Protestant Mission"

¹⁴ E.Arno Lehmann, *op.cit.*, p.16

¹⁵ Ziegenbalg was born in the village of Pulsnitz in Saxony on July 10, 1682 to poor but devout Christian parents. Studied at Halle, was ordained and arrived in India with Henry Pluetschau, on the 9th of July 1706, went home 26th October 1714 was appointed Missionary -provost and was married at home, returned at Madras 10th August 1716 died at Tranquebar on 23rd February 1719 and was buried the next day in New Jerusalem Church. (Samuel Ayyar, *History of the Tranquebar Mission in Tamil-AD1706-1955*, Madras: The Tranquebar Printing House, 1955, p.217)

¹⁶ Henry Pluetschau was born at Wesenberg in Mecklenburg, studied at Halle, was ordained at Copenhagen 1705 embarked from thence on the 29th November 1705; landed at Tranquebar in 1706, left India again 15th September 1711 and died as a Paster of Beyenflieth in Holstein about 1746. (Samuel Ayyar, *op.cit.*,p.217)

⁶A.Camps&L.A.Hoedemaker, *Missiology-An Ecumenical Introduction* (Michigan, William B.Eerdsmans publishing Company, 1995), p.225

⁷ Ibid. pp. 24-25

⁸ D. Arthur Jayakumar, *History of Christianity: selected Theme*, (Madurai, Tamilnadu Theological Seminary, 2000), p.19

⁹Pietism had begun in the Lutheran Church in Germany after the 30 years war, in the last quarter of the 17th century, stressing personal devotion as against the prevailing emphasis on correct doctrine. This movement was a revolt against the barren orthodoxy and dead formalism of the state churches of protestant Europe. Their Theology is "There can be no missionary vision without evangelistic zeal, there can be no evangelistic zeal without personal piety, there can be no personal piety without a genuine conversion experience.

and Ziegenbalg had no hesitation in taking a seat with the children to learn the Tamil from Aleppa, a native who was a polyglot. In a matter of few years they were able to master themselves in both Tamil and Portuguese language to communicate with the local people. Their Knowledge over the local language was a great advantage to their mission work. Slowly they were able to influence locals and finally a small congregation was formed and the small church was built outside the fort in 1707 and baptized nine Tamil converts.¹⁷

Ziegenbalg and Henry Pluetschau lived and worked among the slaves and mix with people. They also worked with the soldiers serving in the Danish East India Company's troop and the servants of the Europeans. They worked from their home and in the Danish Zion Church. The two labored intensively, despite opposition from the local Hindu and Danish authorities in Tranquebar, they began their works with five catechumens on May 12, 1707. They were also interested on the free Indians who were proud of their own faith. They worked with the youths, adopted Indian children who were with their guardians.¹⁸ Ziegenbalg baptized five Portuguese speak Hindus on 12th May 1707. One of the more notable converts at Tranquebar was a young man called Kanabadi Vathiar, who was baptized in 1709.¹⁹

They went through a difficult time not only with the Danish authority²⁰ but there other tremendous hardships that they faced. They had to live in the hot heat of Tranquebar. Ziegenbalg had to fight with his own health problem.²¹ On November 19th in 1709 he was imprisoned for four months (November 19, 1708 - March 26, 1709) by Danish Governor Hassius and kept within Fort Dansburg a cell just behind the kitchen. He felt that the presence of missionaries would adversely affect their trade.²² From there Ziegenbalg wrote two pamphlets "*The God Pleasing State of a Christian*" and "*The God Pleasing Profession of Teaching*". When Ziegenbalg was in prison, Pluetschau heroically looked after the congregations and schools. Although released after a little more than four months, Ziegenbalg's relationship with Hassius remained difficult and was one reason for Ziegenbalg's return to Europe in 1714 - 1716. Ziegenbalg was also married in 1716. He was also active in cooperation with the Anglican Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge, making his work one of the first ecumenical ventures in the history of Protestant missionary work.

3.2.1 The Expansion of Tranquebar Mission

King Friedrich continued the support the mission. He sent other three missionaries for the development of mission. With the arrival of three more missionaries *Gruendler*, *Jordan* and *Boevingh* at Tranquebar in 1709 the protestant

mission was able to extent. Ziegenbalg and Henry Pluetschau welcomed them. The three missionaries brought with them money and supplies for the mission. They brought with them a letter from the king, a number of books and medicine. With this money a large house and a big empty plot of land was brought for the missionaries to stay and for building three schools. When the new missionaries arrived, Ziegenbalg began to think to expand the mission centers. When Pluetschau and Boevingh questioned Ziegenbalg's leadership, Ziegenbalg wanted to leave Tranquebar, and wanted to go to another place.²³ He visited the Negapatam in the south and Madras in the north where the people received him warmly. Another reason for the spread for mission work was because of his appointment as the first Provost of the mission by king on 22nd October 1714 and ways were paved for more missions and in 1715 Ziegenbalg was conferred in the Mission Board in Copenhagen.²⁴ But the Mission Board that was set up by the king of Denmark in 1714 was not much help as expected by the first missionaries in Tranquebar though in the later period after the death of Ziegenbalg became better.

Ziegenbalg and Gruendler established a seminary at Tarangampadi on Oct.23, 1716, for training teachers and catechists. Ziegenbalg taught geography, arithmetic, botany, Portuguese, German and Latin at the seminary. New Jerusalem church was built in 1718. As in the lives of all great men, there were people who found fault with Ziegenbalg. Boevingh, a fellow missionary, wrote numerous character - assassination letters against him. Influenced by these letters, the secretary of the Mission Board in Copenhagen, a man called Wendt alarmed at the rising costs of the work, stopped grants and wrote to Ziegenbalg in 1717 accusing him of misappropriation of mission funds. Ziegenbalg, who was already suffering from gastrointestinal disease, became broken - hearted and was pushed to his deathbed. He died at Tarangampadi on Feb.23, 1719, at the age of 36.²⁵ Gruendler too died thirteen months later, leaving the direction of the Mission in the hands of three young men namely *Schultze*, *Walther* and *Pressier*.

In spite all the difficulties Bartholomew Ziegenbalg and Henry Pluetschau did not give in and continued to carry on with their learning of their languages and mission work. However Pluetschau after learning Portuguese returned to Germany after some years. He was chosen as the Royal Emissary and sailed from Madras to Europe. But Ziegenbalg stayed back in Tranquebar and became a true Tamilian and spend his entire life in Tamilnadu.²⁶ He was "*the founder of the Tranquebar Mission*" and known as "*the father of the Tranquebar church*".

3.3 Tranquebar Mission after Ziegenbalg

Benjamin Schultze (1689 - 1760) was one of the new missionary who took up the leadership after the death of the

¹⁷ C.B.Firth, *op.cit.*, p.133

¹⁸ E.R Hambye, *History of Christianity of India*, Vol.III (Bangalore: CHAI, 1997), p. 119.

¹⁹ C.B.Firth, *op.cit.*, p.135.

²⁰ Stephen Neill, *A History of Christian Mission*, revised edition, (Middlesex, Penguin Books, 1986), p.195.

²¹ E.Arno Lehmann, *op.cit.*, p.20.

²² David Packiamuthu, "The Beginning of Protestant Mission in Madras" in *Indian Church History Review*, (Delhi, CHAI Publication, XXXIV, Number.2) December 2000, p.97; Daniel Jeyaraj, Bartholomaeus Ziegenbalg, p.72

²³ Daniel Jeyaraj, *op.cit.*, p.74.

²⁴ A.P.Davis, *History of Pavanasar Church with the Story of Tranquebar Mission*, N.p., N.d., p.24

²⁵ [http://www.tranquebar.net/article/indian-express/1994-12-12_mission-\(lazar\)/making-uk.htm](http://www.tranquebar.net/article/indian-express/1994-12-12_mission-(lazar)/making-uk.htm)

²⁶ E.Arno Lehmann, *op.cit.*, p.23.

great missionary Bartholomew Ziegenbalg, but he caused crises in the Tamil Church by attacking the caste in the church. The missionaries converted people from all the caste and created caste tensions among the converts. But Ziegenbalg tended to neglect the caste tensions mainly because he did not want to bring about any additional controversy to the missionary enterprise. In the New Jerusalem church, which was cruciform, the Sudra men sat on one side of the nave and the others on the other; and likewise the Sudra women in one of the transepts and the other women in the other; at Holy Communion all the Sudras, men and women, communicated first and the others afterwards. The Missionaries themselves had made this arrangement so that everyone could worship without inhibitions. This distinction was also seen in the schools. When Schultze, who headed the Tranquebar Mission in 1720, he saw all these and tried to stop the practice of caste difference but faced with opposition and discontentment which finally made him leave Tranquebar and join the Roman Church.²⁷

After he left, Walther and Pressier came to India as missionaries in 1725 and they restored the old practice. By this time the Tranquebar Mission spread to the neighboring kingdom of Tanjore where there were many Catholics Christians and Jesuits. Many Roman Catholics attracted to Protestantism. Prominent among them was Rajanaiken, a petty officer in the army of the Rajah of Tanjore played an important role in spreading Protestantism in Tanjore area. Through him many others became Protestants.²⁸ It was this growing activity in the Tanjore country that led to the ordination of the first Indian paster named Aaron, son of a Hindu merchant of Cuddalore. He was the under the influence of missionaries became a Christian. He was baptized by Ziegenbalg on August 1718. He was ordained in December 1733 and appointed paster of the Mayavaram circle, where he ministered until his death in 1745. After him Diogo, who was a Catholic but was brought up in a mission school in Tranquebar, was ordained in 1741 and appointed to the circle of Tanjore, Tirupalatur and Kumbakonam.²⁹ Through the missionaries work the Protestantism spread in other European stations in South India such as Madras, Negoaotam, Cuddalore, Tanjore and Trichinopoly.

Christian Friedrich Schwartz³⁰ who came to India as a Danish - Halle missionary in the Tranquebar in 1750, later he became an English Missionary. Till 1762 he stayed in Tranquebar. Then he moved to Trichy for ten years. From 1772 till his death on February 13, 1798 he served in Tanjore. He was commonly called as the 'Raja Guru', 'a Prince among men', and 'honest disciple of Christ', he gained universal respect. He worked with Hindus and the

British troops of the garrison. Later he appointed as the Chaplain to the troops. He maintained good relation with the British East India Company officials. He was also appointed a Missionary of the society for promotion of Christian Knowledge (SPCK) of London. So the English Mission began with the German Lutheran missionary in 1767.³¹ He used his salary for the mission and charity works. He visited Tanjore and baptized 500 Indians in 1774 later he settled there. His impartial dealings, active involvement for peace and justice and his diplomatic agility made the British send him as their ambassador to Hyder Ali in 1779 and his son Tippu Sultan in 1783.³² He went to Madurai as a missionary in 1778. It was during his time that Tranquebar Mission reached its highest zenith and spread it to almost every corner of Tamilnadu.³³

The sacrificial life of the Ziengenbalg and other missionaries paved the way to many missionaries to work in Tamil Nadu in places like Chennai, Thanjavur, Palayamcottai etc. Hence, Tranquebar became the birthplace of many protestant missions in South India.

4. Contribution of the Tranquebar Mission

The contribution of the Tranquebar Mission to the social, political, and cultural history of India was ever memorable. From the very beginning they were trying to develop the society and people through their activities. For that they were adopted some strategies.1) *They educated the people.* They established schools because they believed people should be taught to read so that they could read the Bible.2) *They made the Bible available in the language of the people.* Ziegenbalg, by the end of his third year in India, he translated the New Testament into the Tamil language.3) *They sought to know the culture.* Missionaries learn the language and the culture of the people with whom they worked.4) *They preached for personal conversion.*5) *They advocated church indigenization* etc. The important contributions of the Tranquebar Mission are the following.

4.1 Linguistics and Literature.

Ziegenbalg realized that if he was to interact with the local population he would have to learn not only the lingua franca of the coast, Portuguese, but also the local tongue, Tamil that the Portuguese called "Malabar"³⁴. He was also amazed by the Tamil language which contained all the needed words, concepts and idiomatic usages that were essential for a good translation. He used simple words and common language to reach out to the people. Ziegenbalg had the gift of learning languages. He must have been a born linguist; he was able to use Tamil effectively within a year and begins translating in Tamil and developed Tamil language. Ziegenbalg concentrate more on the Tamil work and Pluetschau on the Portuguese.

²⁷ D. Arthur Jeyakumar, *History of Christianity in India: Selected Theme*, (Madurai, Tamilnadu Theological Seminary,2000), pp.60-61

²⁸ C.B.Firth, *op.cit.*, p.138

²⁹ *Ibid*, p.139.

³⁰ Born at Sonnenberg on 26th October 1726. Studied at Halle, was ordained at Copenhagen 17th September 1749, and landed at Cuddalore on 30th July 1750. Laboured more than 11 years in Tranquebar commenced in 1762 the mission in Trichinopoly, unmarried, settled at Tanjore (1778) and died there on 13th February 1798 after more than 47 years residence in India.

³¹ D. Arthur Jeyakumar, *op.cit.*, p.24; C.B.Firth, *op.cit.*, p.140

³² Daniel Jeyaraj (ed), *Christian Fredrick Schwartz*, (Chennai, Gurukul Theological College, 1999), p.XV

³³ C.B.Firth, *op.cit.*, pp.142-43

³⁴ E.Arno Lehmann, *op.cit.*, p.24

Ziegenbalg was also instrumental in collecting the available books in Tamil at the time. He engaged a team of Tamil scholars, poets, writers and multi - linguists completed the translation of the New Testament into Tamil making use of the original Greek which was printed in 1712. He also translated some parts of the Old Testament; he was able to translate up to the Book of Ruth, for that he used original Hebrew text. He was not able to complete the OT translation but it was completed by Schultze in 1725.³⁵ His profound Knowledge of the religious world, Ziegenbalg offers us in his book: *Genealogy of the Malabar Gods*, *Malabar Heathenism*, and *Miscellaneous Writings* containing *Needi Venba*, *kondrei Venden*, and *Ulaga Needi*. He also wrote a Philosophical book known as *Bibliotheca Malabarica*, listing the 161 Tamil books he had read and describing their content. His *prose and poetry lexicons* were completed in 1712 and the *Tamil grammar book* in Latin (*Grammatica Damulica*) was printed in Halle in 1716 was a great help to the spread of Tamil language in the European nations.³⁶

Apart from the numerous Tamil translations of Christian publications he made, he wrote several books and booklets that could be described as being Indological in nature. In 1713, in *Biblia Tamulica* he expanded this bibliography.³⁷ Ziegenbalg's writings are divided into three categories, viz. a) *unpublished writings in Tamil* – 26 sermons, Jerusalem songs, Tarmavali, Four world Religions etc. b) *Published writings in Tamil* - Circular letter, Detestable Spiritual Ignorance, etc. c) *writings in European languages* - Published and unpublished letters (1706 - 1719), Tamil Ethics, writings from Prison etc.³⁸ He translated *Tamil Luther's Short Catechism* for children and also translated short sermons, tracts and school books. What did not get printed in Tranquebar were Ziegenbalg's Indological writings. In fact, his works like *Nidiwunpa* (moral philosophy), *Kondei Wenden* (morals) *Ulaga Nidi* (civil justice), and his books on *Hindusim and Islam* were printed only 150 - 250 years later in Europe and Madras.³⁹ Ziegenbalg and Gruendler (a missionary who jointed him later), established a seminary at Tarangampadi on Oct.23, 1716, for training teachers and catechists. Ziegenbalg taught geography, arithmetic, botany, Portuguese, German and Latin at the seminary.

Apart from Ziegenbalg, there were also other missionaries who played a great role in the field of literature. Gruendler wrote the book *Malabar Medicus*, a short account of the medical principles of heathen and also of the treatment and drugs with which they cure diseases. He translated the four Gospels and the Acts of then Apostles with Ziegenbalg. He translated a short extract out of Spencer's Frankfurt Catechism in Portuguese. After him Schultze who stayed in India from 1719 - 1743 continued the work in the field of literature. He wrote the story of the resurrection and Ascension and printed it for the worshippers at the Lenten Services. He completed the work of OT translation in 1725.

³⁵ E.R Hambye, *op.cit.*, p.187.

³⁶ E.Arno Lehmann, *op.cit.*, pp. 30-36

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p.29

³⁸ Daniel Jeyaraj, *Bartholomaeus Ziegenbalg: the Father of Modern Protestant Mission.*, pp. 196-257

³⁹ [http://www.tranquebar.net/article/indian-express/1994-12-12_mission-\(lazar\)/making-uk.htm](http://www.tranquebar.net/article/indian-express/1994-12-12_mission-(lazar)/making-uk.htm), 3/10/2008

Even after leaving Tranquebar he continued with his translation works.⁴⁰ We find a list of the publications in his name. Twenty titles were listed which were published in Portuguese, Danish and Tamil. Especially noteworthy were a history of the Passion, a Thorough Instruction in Holy Communion, a second edition of the Tamil hymn book with 48 hymns entitled *Hymnorum Liber Damulica*, 1721, the enlarged Tamil Hymn book with 160 spiritual hymns, '*Hymnologia Damulica 1723*', *The Imitation of Christ* by Thomas a Kempis in Portuguese and the funeral sermons for Ziegenbalg and Gruendler.⁴¹

The chief name in the history of the madras Mission in this period is that of Philip Fabricius. His long ministry of 46 years (1742 - 1788), the frequent wars discouraged the Mission. But the fame of him rests on his literally works, especially his *Tamil translations of German hymns* (1774), his *Dictionary* (Tamil - English 1779, English - Tamil 1786), *Version of the Tamil Bible* (NT 1772, the whole Bible (1796), which became a classic greatly beloved by the Lutheran Christians. The missionaries Dal, Pressier and Walther united and did much good works.⁴² Walther worked on the revision of the Bible and continued with lexicon. In 1735 he finished and printed a church history in Tamil and writes a long conversation between a Christian and Muslim.

On all the missionaries connected with the Tranquebar Mission the best known, both in his time and since was C. F. Schwartz. He supported the British society for the propagation of Christian Knowledge and he moved out of Tranquebar to Tiruchirappally. He mastered not only the local language Tamil, but also learnt Marathi, Hindustani, Portuguese and Persian.⁴³

4.2 Education - Orphanages and Schools

The protestant mission based in Tranquebar has contributed tremendously to the development of education in Tamilnadu. They are the forerunner in the field of education than the British in many ways. The missionaries who came to Tranquebar understood the context of the place and established the schools according to the needs of the local people; they developed the curriculum keeping in mind the needs of the people. Tranquebar Mission's educational system set a trend for the modern education in Tamilnadu.⁴⁴

The earlier missionaries from the beginning were very interested in educating the children and so founded a mission schools for local children. Ziegenbalg was deeply touched by the poor living condition of the Indians and the slave system that existed in Tranquebar. The Europeans kept Indian servants and slaves and he saw many children were homeless so he opened an orphanage in Tranquebar. The

⁴⁰ E.Arno Lehmann, *op.cit.*, p.119-123.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p.120.

⁴² C.B.Firth, *op.cit.*, pp.139-140

⁴³ Solomon Doraisawmy, *Christianity in India* (madras, CLS, 1986), p.27.

⁴⁴ Bernard D'Sami, *Tranquebar Mission's Contribution to Education to Education*, Paper presented at the International Consultation on Post Modern Challenges to Christian Mission , Chennai, 6th July, 2006, p.3

children in the orphanage learned German and Tamil which was taught by a seventy year old Hindu teacher.⁴⁵

The work of evangelization and education were spread to the areas near Tranquebar. When Ziegenbalg and other missionaries opened schools in Tranquebar, Cuddalore, Madras, Tanjore and Trichy, they always had three concepts. a) the emphasis on the formation of faith and character over the acquisition of skills in reading, arithmetic and application of law. b) further the universal offer of education regardless of caste, religion and sex and c) finally the attempt to make the government responsible for the universality of education. Ziegenbalg established a school for the half - natives or mixed race children in 1707. Catechisms and Christian Education were mainly imparted in these schools.⁴⁶ In 1709 Poriayar, south west of Tranquebar a school was started. In 1720 there were five hundred students and 21 schools. Gradually training schools for catechists and Indian pastors were established.⁴⁷ Gruendler in year 1710 opened a school with one teacher in the Jerusalem Garden at Boreiar⁴⁸ and in 1715 established a new school with 70 students and three teachers and two class rooms.⁴⁹ Apart from schools, seminaries were also started. On 23rd October, 1716 the first seminary was established. Schultze also established a school for the Portuguese mixed race children and also for the Tamil children.

During the time of Schwartz, he along with the British Resident Sullivan at Tanjore established schools known as the provincial schools in 1787, which were sponsored by the East India Company (SPCK) and the Rajas of the time. The schools were English medium which acted as the ground for mutual confidence between the Indians and the Europeans. They educated and trained Indians for civil servants.⁵⁰

4.3 Printing and Publishing

Printing and publishing became an instrument of spreading ideas and thoughts. Printing came to India in 1556 by the Portuguese in Goa. One of them, Joao de Bustamente, a Spaniard, was a printer. The press was taken over and sent with Bustamente to the College of St. Paul, a seminary that still exists. Printing in India revived only in the early 18th Century. In Tranquebar the modern printing was revived, to spread throughout India. Ziegenbalg set up the first printing press in India after the Portuguese effort ground it was here too that the foundations were laid for the Protestant missionaries' contribution to education in India.⁵¹

Ziegenbalg has contributed not only to the spread of Christianity and the popularity of Tamil language but also the field printing and publishing. With the absence of printing press it was very difficult to achieve his objectives. Therefore in 1709 Ziegenbalg requested a printing press

from Denmark. The Danes forwarded the appeal to London to the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge. The SPCK sent printing machine with in 1712 with type, paper, ink, and a printer. Johann Heinrich Schloricke, 30 years old at the time, printed in Portuguese the Tranquebar mission press's first publications in 1712. With this, printing in India got its second wind and the foundations for today's thriving Indian Printing Industry were laid.⁵² By this, the missionaries translated the Bible and wrote book and printed it for all people to read.

Johann Adler and his two German printers brought the Tamil types which were cut in Halle to Tranquebar. In October 1713 the first Tamil tract was printed. The first Tamil hymnal was printed in small types and the New Testament in Tamil (Pudu Etpadu) in July 1715. Ziegenbalg's Catechism, hymns and devotional songs were also printed. Adler's type foundry was set up in Porayur, on the outskirts of Tranquebar. In 1715, he started a paper mill in the same village, the Government meeting half the costs and the Mission the rest. He then opened a printing ink manufacturing unit nearby. All three were the first printing material "factories" in India.⁵³ Not only did printing continue in Tranquebar, but it also spread to Madras, Tanjore and another Danish settlement, Serampore, near Calcutta where it flowered. This is why most Indian printers tend to think of Carey as the father of modern Indian printing. "Ziegenbalg introduced modern printing technique in South India"⁵⁴. They have forgotten the foundations of the industry laid by Bartholomaeus Ziegenbalg and Johann Adler.

4.4 Music

Ziegenbalg was a lover of music thus was able to translate many English hymns in Tamil, with Tamil way of singing, Tamilian metre and scale. The first printed hymn book was published on 24th January 1715 with 48 hymns. He also introduced Psalm singing to the local people. Schultze was also another missionary who contributed to the music of the Tamil. He learnt Tamil and translated 112 hymns and published it in 1723. After him came a great translator Fabricius whose hymns are still sung today.⁵⁵ Schwartz was also a lover of music. He nurtured the venerated poet Vedanayagam Sastriyar, the composer of hundreds of Christian lyrics with full devotion and model for Tamil prosody and Carnatic Music, the author of a great Tamil epic, 'Bethlehem Kuravanjee' a master -piece of Christian Literature. He was the court poet of Sarfojee, the king of Thanjavur.⁵⁶

⁴⁵ Brijraj Singh, *The first Protestant Missionary* (Oxford University Press, 1999), pp.25.

⁴⁶ D. Arthur Jeyakumar, *op.cit.*, p.32.

⁴⁷ E.R Hambye, *op.cit.*, pp. 119f

⁴⁸ E.Arno Lehmann, *op.cit.*, pp.132.

⁴⁹ *Ibid*, p.118

⁵⁰ Bernard D' Sami, *op.cit.*, pp.2f

⁵¹ [http://www.trankebar.net/article/indian-express/1994-12-12_mission-\(lazar\)/making-uk.htm](http://www.trankebar.net/article/indian-express/1994-12-12_mission-(lazar)/making-uk.htm)

⁵² Lalitha Jayaraman, *Tranquebar mission's Contribution to Printing & Publishing*, Paper presented at the International Consultation on Post Modern Challenges to Christian Mission, Chennai, 6th July, 2006, pp.1f

⁵³ *Ibid*

⁵⁴ Daniel Jeyaraj, "Ziegenbalg as a translator, a writer, and printer" in *Gurukul Journal of Theological Studies*, (Vol.XVII, No.2, July 2006), p.14.

⁵⁵ E.Arno Lehmann, *op.cit.*, p.121.

⁵⁶ [http://www.trankebar.net/article/indian-express/1994-12-12_mission-\(lazar\)/making-uk.htm](http://www.trankebar.net/article/indian-express/1994-12-12_mission-(lazar)/making-uk.htm)

4.5 Established Churches

After the missionaries arrival many people attracted to the Christianity. In 1707 a small mission congregation church was built outside the fort. The first Tamil converts, 9 in number, were baptized in the next month. After that the missionaries decide to build a church for the baptized Indians and started planning for Church. For this they needed money and they made a request to the Governor. Danish commandant Hassius was earlier against the missionaries, but later the situation forced him to give advance for the site of the new Church. Lt. Kroechel was employed to take care of the church construction. The building was completed on 14th October 1718 where the first baptism took place on the dedication day.⁵⁷ With the spread of evangelism Christian work spread to Poriaya, South West of Tranquebar in 1709 and in 1746 a church was built known as the *Bethlehem Church*.⁵⁸

4.6 Religious Dialogue

After the arrival of the Tranquebar missionaries, began their work by setting themselves to learn Portuguese and Tamil. Ziegenbalg was very interested to know about the local religion and their customs. As soon as he was able, he entered into religious discussions with Hindus in Tamil and began to preach them. News of him spread in the country round about and many came to see him and talk with him. They were attracted to him because he was a European who spoke Tamil fluently and was interested in the Hindu religious beliefs which was very rare at those days.⁵⁹ He learns the culture of local peoples and gave them insight about the religion and their attitude towards their religion. Later missionaries also tried to follow the methods of Ziegenbalg.

5. Conclusion

The first protestant mission, which extended over a period of almost 150years (1705 - 1847 the Tranquebar Mission began as a Danish undertaking) has come to be known as 'Tranquebar Mission' or the 'Danish Halle Mission'. These names point to important places and corner - posts of the mission. This event is not only significant for mission history and for the history of the Protestant church in India. With the heroic faith and invincible patience of the pioneering missionaries the mission in Tranquebar took its beginning and gradually extended its influence over the whole of Madras Presidency and Tamilnadu areas nearly one hundred years before the arrival of William Carey in West Bengal. All the missionaries tried to influence the local people by the learning of their culture and tradition, and translated many books into Tamil. They were established churches, printing press, schools, orphanages etc. All the missionaries that came as Tranquebar missionaries has contributed tremendously to the Tranquebar mission and also contributed immensely to the Indians in general and the Tamilians in particular through their various works and activities.

⁵⁷ Brijraj Singh, *op.cit.*, p.30.

⁵⁸ E.R Hambye, *op.cit.*, p.120.

⁵⁹ C.B.Firth, *op.cit.*, p.132.

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