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THE BACKGROUND AND THE FIRST TWENTY-FIVE YEARS OF THE
MISSOURI EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN INDIA MISSION
1894-1919

A Thesis Presented to the Faculty
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,
Department of Historical Theology
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Sacred Theology

by

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ABBREVIATIONS

AN	Archives of the India Evangelical Lutheran Church at Concordia Seminary, Nagercoil
CHI	Concordia Historical Institute, St. Louis, Missouri
IELC	India Evangelical Lutheran Church
MELIM	Missouri Evangelical Lutheran India Mission

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

On 14 October 1969 the India Mission of the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod will be seventy-five years old. On that day in 1894, the first two missionaries of the Missouri Synod were commissioned to begin a mission field in India. The fruit of that mission venture today is the India Evangelical Lutheran Church, consisting of 39,000 members with more than 120 pastors serving in various capacities. This church body was officially established in 1958. It continues to receive aid in finances and manpower from the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod.

The purpose of this study is to examine the first twenty-five years of the history of the Missouri Evangelical Lutheran India Mission.¹ The chief emphasis in the study is understanding the situation and conditions in which various decisions were taken. This will involve investigation of primary documents, letters, reports, and, where possible, interviews with the actual persons involved.

¹It is registered with the Indian government as The Evangelical Lutheran India Mission of Missouri, Ohio, and other States, with the amendment, Missouri Evangelical Lutheran India Mission; the amendment was added in 1968, when the writer was chairman of MELIM.

Such a study can be of value in understanding the present situation in the IELC and MELIM. For example, the present division of the IELC into three districts for geographical and linguistic reasons is a direct outgrowth of decisions taken during the period under study. Board-to-field and field-to-Board relationships, almost inevitably the source of problems in the foreign mission venture, grow out of years of experience and practice; the early and highly influential years are investigated in this paper. The present status of inter-church relationships has been molded and is informed by the precedents set during those early years. Understanding the first quarter century can thus be of value to the IELC in making responsible decisions in the last quarter.

The second chapter will attempt to supply as briefly as possible a description of the land and people of India, the beginnings of Christianity in that country, its development in the South where MELIM and IELC² are working, and a slightly more detailed description of the beginnings of Lutheran missions in South India from 1706 to 1876. The third chapter will describe the problems and setting from which Missouri's mission to India began. The fourth, fifth,

²After the formation of IELC in 1958, MELIM has continued as a distinct organization directed principally at missionary welfare matters and possible direction of efforts to other parts of India.

and sixth chapters will describe the story of MELIM from 1894 to 1900, 1900 to 1914, and 1914 to 1919, respectively. An occasional excursus will pick up subjects which overlap these time divisions. Conclusions will be dealt with in the final chapter.

Some of this material has been dealt with briefly in two previous works. E. E. Griesse submitted a study of "Lutheran India Missions" as a Master of Arts thesis to Washington University in 1945.³ This study was prepared before Mr. Griesse had gained actual experience on the India mission field. His primary sources did not include the extensive correspondence available to the present writer. Griesse's work also covered the entire history up to the time of his writing. A more intensive study of the early years was needed. F. Dean Lueking treats the beginnings of the India mission in his book, Mission in the Making, especially in chapter ten, "A Foreign Field at Last: India 1894-1915."⁴ This is a valuable look into some of the problems involved in the mission work in India; it does not, however, cover much of the material involved in the present study.

³E. E. Griesse, "Lutheran India Missions" (unpublished Master's thesis, Washington University, St. Louis, 1945), available in Concordia Seminary Library.

⁴F. Dean Lueking, Mission in the Making, The Missionary Enterprise among Missouri Synod Lutherans, 1846-1963 (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, c.1964), pp. 201-227.

Sources for the writer's investigation, in addition to books and periodicals available in the library of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, were the files of old minutes and letters in the archives of the IELC at Concordia Seminary, Nagercoil, South India. Particularly helpful were the handwritten minutes of the conferences of missionaries of the northern district between 1895 and 1900, General Conferences between 1912 and 1915, and a complete file of correspondence from mission Director Zukor to the field between 1895 and 1913. These latter documents are being turned over to the Concordia Historical Institute, St. Louis, by the writer. This institute's files of correspondence between the Board for Missions and the individual missionaries in India were of additional help, though the period between 1904 and 1919 has many lacunae. Finally, this writer has had the opportunity to interview some of the men involved in the history being written. Such reminiscences have been of value for understanding the flavor of the times rather than for getting exact detail. An interesting example was a highly informative letter received from Dr. H. Stallmann of Wittingen, dated 1 March 1969. Dr. Stallmann served in India from 1911 to 1916. A few retired Indian pastors and workers also have added reminiscences of those days.

Generally speaking, most reliance has been placed upon printed materials for exact dates; reminiscences are less

reliable for exact information, but often shed light upon the human elements of personal differences and agreements. Filed correspondence has added much to the understanding of individuals. The writer's experience in India since 1947 has helped to understand the historical information in its setting.

To conclude that the first twenty-five years of the activity of MELIM gives vivid evidence of the power of the Holy Spirit would be a statement of faith, to which the writer would gladly subscribe. It is not history, however. Rather, it is valid to conclude that after twenty-five years MELIM had displayed considerable vitality and gathered a respectable number of believers into the church. MELIM extended its activity in this period three times. It often started new areas of work without first exhausting the possibilities of the first area. Caste differences and linguistic disparity entered into the daily experience of the church. Medical missions were begun in a hesitant way. Education had a high priority and involved pupils in greater numbers than constituted the total membership of the church. Out of this array of facts, it is evident that the MELIM was aggressive in responding to calls and opportunities, but that she did not match this aggressiveness with adequate planning.

One of the strongest factors in the moves made by MELIM was its stand on the purity of doctrine. It appeared

that an appeal for the pure doctrine could open up a new field more quickly than anything else. This same stand lay behind much of the talk of theological training, though this part of the work was not formally begun until after 1919.

Personal relationships among missionaries were generally excellent. This is surprising because of the disparity of their characters, but understandable in the light of their general isolation from other missionaries whom they referred to as "heterodox." Personal relationships with the Indian Christians left much more to be desired. The distance between the white man and the brown was unmistakable and for the most part unchallenged. Only one Indian in the period under study rose to the point of "co-worker" with even a reasonable approximation of equality. Little wonder, then, that finding a truly fruitful missionary-Indian relationship remains a problem to the present day.

The heavily biographical flavor of this study grows out of the writer's experience with the sources. A small mission with a small mission board tends to deal on the personal and biographical, rather than the institutional aspect. After 1919 this flavor fades out and a more institutional flavor takes its place.

CHAPTER II

THE SETTING, THE BACKGROUND, THE ROOTS

The Setting

Generalizations about missionary life and work in India are bound to be suspect; in this study, however, they are inevitable. The following description is true of the southern part of India where MELIM has been working since 1895. The writer lays no claim to describing "life in India."

Missionaries in India between 1895 and 1919 came to a country beset with poverty, full of endemic disease and often ravaged by virulent epidemics, subject to the caprices of the monsoon rains, and served by agonizingly slow means of transportation. The continual heat sapped energy and strength; brief cool periods usually came during the rains which raised humidity to uncomfortable levels. A trip to the graveyard in Tranquebar¹ tells a mute, but vivid story of the lives and deaths of the missionary community. A husband, predeceased by two wives, lies buried between the graves of those wives and several children who died in infancy.

Health
&
Climate

¹A town in South India, 175 miles south of Madras on the Bay of Bengal, center of the work of the Danish-Halle and the Leipzig Missions.

One must treat such evidence with care. Health conditions in contemporary Europe and America were not much better. Mortality among mothers and newborn infants, as well as among others in the flower of youth, was distressingly high. Tropical diseases took their toll in India; but one must remember that a death in a foreign land was far more newsworthy than a similar death at home. The health record of the twenty-one missionaries who served in India between 1895 and 1919 is amazingly good. Only two died on the field, one died in Germany as a result of a tropical disease; these were the only three who died under fifty. At least ten lived beyond seventy. Heinrich Stallmann is still living in retirement in Germany.²

The continual sweltering heat served to wear down energy and resistance. At first, vacations in the cool climate of the mountains were taken only when the individual felt the need of it. The present rule of six weeks' annual hill leave came into effect midway in the period under study. It was found that a regular short leave would prevent attrition to health far better than longer leaves taken when exhaustion had set in. Often missionaries sent

²F. Dean Lueking, Mission in the Making, The Missionary Enterprise among Missouri Synod Lutherans, 1846-1963 (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, c.1964), pp. 343-344. This book gives the dates of service of all missionaries. Other vitae were garnered from Missouri Synod periodicals, letters, and personal knowledge.

their families to the hills ahead of themselves; this was often a necessity, but heat combined with loneliness did not help the spirits of the men concerned.

Cultural isolation was and remains a major factor in missionary life in India. The pain of separation from family and friends is quickly eased by the fellowship with colleagues on the field. Separation from children who return to the home country for education, especially when this takes place at the grade school level, is a far more difficult matter. Cultura

Within India, the missionary must learn a new language, completely different even in thought categories from his mother tongue. Understanding the customs and thinking of his Indian colleagues remains difficult throughout his days in the country. What he considers frankness is often interpreted as boorishness. Indian politeness and obliquity of speech strike him as deceit and duplicity. It takes a long time to understand that "next week," repeated two or three times, is a polite way of saying "No!" language

Western gestures of affection are often revolting to Indian society; some of the amenities of Indian society seem crude to the Westerner. The abject poverty of many in that section of Indian society which has become Christian is a further burden weighing upon a concerned missionary. It remains a continuing struggle to find one's place in this kaleidoscope of language, culture, and economics.

The religious complexion of India is so varied that only some general remarks are possible. Hinduism, the religion of 81 percent of the Indian people, manages to include in its broad tenets the crassest of idolaters and the most mystical of pantheists. Islam, with its strict and exclusive monotheism, is the religion of about ten percent of the Indian people. Jains, Buddhists, Sikhs, Animists, and others, which comprise 5 percent of the population, are so rare in South India that they need not figure in this overview. Christians currently comprise 3.6 percent of the population.³ In the census of 1921, the percentages for Hinduism, Islam, and Christianity were 69, 22, and 1.5 percent, respectively. Buddhists at that time numbered about three percent of the population,⁴ but have all but disappeared from India. The difference in the percentage of Muslims comes from the formation of the Muslim state of Pakistan. The percentage increases of Christians represent actual increases.⁵

³ Map of the World's Religions and Missions (4th edition; Berne: Kuemmerly & Frey, 1966), with insert "Christians in India."

⁴ World Missionary Atlas, edited by Harlan P. Beach, and Charles H. Fahs; maps by John Bartholomew (New York: Institute for Social and Religious Research, 1925), pp. 186-187.

⁵ A demurrer must be added on the quality of census taking. This writer was informed in November 1964 by Rev. R. Speck, missionary to tribal people in Orissa State, of frequent cases where a whole village has been counted as Hindu, Muslim, or Christian on the word of one person.

These statistics are minimally useful for the purposes of this study. The most useful observation can be made by one who has lived in these areas and can observe that in the northern field⁶ Hindu and Muslim pressures are both very strong and often come into conflict with each other, Christians sometimes being caught in the middle. In the southern areas near Nagercoil and Trivandrum more religious harmony is present and Christians, Muslims, and Hindus manage to coexist quite peacefully. This has been true, with individual exceptions since the MELIM began work in India.

Hinduism and Islam are diametrically opposed to each other on the question of inclusiveness. Hinduism will gladly accept almost any tenet into itself, as long as it does not explicitly deny the validity of other beliefs. Islam is simplistic in its exclusiveness: "There is no god but God and Mohammed is his Apostle." On the other hand, both religions so completely penetrate the social fabric of their people that conversion from either faith to Christianity is extremely difficult. Conversions from Hinduism have been more frequent than from Islam mainly because many outcaste Hindus have turned to Christianity from Hinduism which offered them so little. These people have usually built a new social fabric in their new Christian context. Since

⁶The northern and southern fields are explained in Chapter V, p. 70, footnote 7.

Muslims do not observe caste, such chinks are not to be found in the armor of Islam. Converts from Islam and from high caste Hinduism have been very few. In brief, when a Hindu or Muslim becomes a Christian in India, his conversion involves not only a turn to Christ as his Savior, but also a turning away from his former life with many of its social implications. The blame for this has often been unjustly placed upon the church and its exclusiveness; actually this loss of former connections usually arises out of the hatred of the convert's Hindu or Muslim relatives and associates.⁷

Caste and family pressures in India color the nature of the missionaries' task. "If the lower castes come to the Gospel, the higher castes will stay away," is a bitter fact that seems to militate against Christian trust in the power of the Gospel. Willingness to hear the Gospel and to express Christian love for others is so evidently affected by caste and social status, that the missionary is at a loss to know the next step. The striking similarity between

⁷These observations arise out of the writer's experience. For further general materials on Hinduism of approximately the period of this study, cf. J. N. Farquhar, A Primer of Hinduism (Madras: Christian Literature Society, 1911); W. T. Elmore, Dravidian Gods in Modern Hinduism, A Study of the Local and Village Deities of Southern India, reprinted from the University Studies of the University of Nebraska, Vol. XV, No. 1, 1915 (Madras: Christian Literature Society, 1925); Murray T. Titus, Islam in India and Pakistan, A Religious History of Islam in India and Pakistan (Madras: Christian Literature Society, 1930; revised reprint, 1960), is a standard work on Islam in India.

these problems and those in his home country is often obscured by the outward differences in customs and by the fact that few foreign missionaries have had any pastoral experience in their home countries.

During the period covered by this study, 1894-1919, India was a quiet and peaceable subject of the British crown. The great Sepoy Mutiny of 1857 and 1858 was a dim memory. The Indian National Congress, formed in 1885, had not yet gained prominence. Mohandas K. Gandhi came to India from his South African political efforts only in 1915. The real struggle for freedom would break loose later.⁸ The British were generally accepted, reasonably efficient, and mildly favorable toward missionary work. The question of obedience to the powers was hardly raised in the area where MELIM worked. When World War I broke out, missionaries who were German citizens encountered difficulties; the American missionaries were able to continue undisturbed. Getting new workers to the field, however, became difficult.

In summary, the India missionary of this period had to face somewhat increased hazards to health and vigor as well as considerable frustration in language and culture differences. His success depended heavily upon his personal impact upon the individuals to whom he brought the Gospel. His peaceful existence in the country, however, was not in serious question.

⁸Percival Spear, India, A Modern History (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, c.1961), pp. 265-354.

The Background

Christianity came to India at least by the middle of the second century.⁹ Tradition claims St. Thomas as the Apostle to India. There are two traditions. The Apocryphal "Acts of Thomas" describe Thomas' sale as a slave to build a palace for King Gundaphores in North India. Instead, he built a community of Christians, among whom were the king and his family.¹⁰ The other tradition claims that Thomas came to South India and converted several families to Christianity in A.D. 52. Several places are mentioned as his burial place, most prominent being Mylapore in Madras City, about 450 miles from the center of his principal labors.¹¹

⁹Hans-Werner Gensichen, now professor of missions at the University of Heidelberg, presented a lecture at Concordia Seminary in Nagercoil in September 1956 in which he described the statue of the Travancore king Pallivaanavar, "dweller in the church," with a cross emblazoned on his breastplate. This was accurately dated before A.D. 200. This material has not been published to this writer's knowledge.

¹⁰"Acts of Thomas," New Testament Apocrypha, edited by Edgar Hennecke and Wilhelm Schneemelcher (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1964), II, 442-513.

¹¹L. W. Brown, The Indian Christians of St. Thomas, An Account of the Ancient Syrian Church of Malabar (Cambridge: The University Press, 1956), pp. 43-63; George Mark Moraes, A History of Christianity in India from Early Times to St. Francis Xavier, A.D. 52-1542 (Bombay: Manaktalas Press, c.1964), pp. 25-45; Eugene Tisserant, Eastern Christianity in India, A History of the Syro-Malabar Church from the Earliest Time to the Present Day, authorized adaptation from the French by E. R. Hambye (Bombay: Orient Longmans, 1957), pp. 1-10.

The evidence for these traditions is very weak. To the Syrian Christians¹² of South India the coming of Thomas is an article of faith. Even with conditions of travel as they were in the first century, it is by no means difficult to imagine that his itinerary could have started in the kingdom of Gundaphores on the Indus River of North India, continued with a trip either by land or sea to Cranganore on the west coast of South India, and ended with his martyrdom at Mylapore on the east coast. Individual families in South India will claim a genealogy dating back to the time of St. Thomas.¹³ Archaeological evidence is lacking, but this is partly the result of the hot, humid weather of South India in which written materials disintegrate rapidly and of a characteristic Indian readiness to mix history and myth in story telling.¹⁴ Evidences of the North Indian Gundaphores

¹²Syrian Christians are those Indians who claim spiritual descent from St. Thomas. They are racially pure Indians and pride themselves in this. They now constitute a caste of their own, but are more liberal than many other castes in matters of intermarriage. They number about four million, and are divided among Uniate Roman Catholics, Jacobites, and Mar Thomites. The word "Mar Thoma" Christians, often used in the west, is properly used of only a small, though very active, segment of these people.

¹³In January 1948, the writer was sitting in the house of a lumber merchant in Alleppey who stated categorically that he had such a genealogy in the ancestral home of his family. He never produced it for examination.

¹⁴In July 1956, the writer came across a lily-shaped cross being worshipped by Hindus in a village near Alleppey; the reason given was a story about tearing down a church after the Portuguese left in the 17th century. All went

tradition are completely lacking. There is no Christian community left in that area, probably the result of later Hindu and Muslim control.

Christianity in India early maintained ties with the Near East. A group of Syrians under the leadership of one Thomas of Cana migrated to the Malabar coast of India, arriving in Cranganore either in A.D. 345 or 745, depending upon a strongly disputed system of dating some records. A local raja gave special privileges to such immigrant Christians in his realm about A.D. 880. Witness to this are some copper plates which are still extant and can be dated accurately.¹⁵

India appears in the early records of the church, but these references are of minimal value because at that time "India" was a term used to cover the countries south and east of Palestine, including Arabia and Afghanistan as well as India. References by Pantaenus at the end of the second century¹⁶ and by Cosmas Indicopleustes in A.D. 545¹⁷ are detailed enough to assure us that they were writing about India proper. At the end of the thirteenth century both

went well until one man pulled down the cross; he fell, vomiting blood. Thereafter, the cross was worshipped. The Roman Catholic priest who related the story considered it to be pure fiction. A picture of the cross is in the writer's possession.

¹⁵Brown, pp. 71-74; cf. picture between pp. 86-87; a similar copperplate is shown to visitors at the Paradesi synagogue in Jewtown, Cochin; this outlined privileges given to the Jews of that area; Tisserant, pp. 9-10.

¹⁶Tisserant, p. 6.

¹⁷Moraes, pp. 74-76.

Marco Polo¹⁸ and John of Montecorvino¹⁹ stopped in or near Madras and described the Christians in that place. All of these observations, however, concern coastal and port areas. No evidence is available for the spread of Christianity into the hinterland of India.

The connections of the Syrian Christians were with the Nestorian Christian community in Seleucia-Ctesiphon.²⁰ Details of this are minimal, since Persian persecutions obliterated so many of the traces of Nestorianism. Until the coming of Vasco da Gama in 1498, connections with the West were only casual and usually commercial.

Vasco da Gama's arrival was as significant for Indian Christianity as it was for the Western world. Before his time, some attempts had been made at establishing the church of the West in India, but none had taken firm root.²¹ Vasco da Gama brought Portuguese colonialism, and with it, through the padroado system, religious colonialism.²² The

¹⁸Ibid., pp. 49-51.

¹⁹Ibid., pp. 85-89.

²⁰John A. Stewart, Nestorian Missionary Enterprise, the Story of a Church on Fire (Madras: Christian Literature Society, 1929; reprinted and published; Trichur: Mar Nasal Press, 1961), pp. 77-137; Brown, pp. 70, 283-288.

²¹Tisserant, pp. 19-23; Moraes, pp. 83-105.

²²According to the padroado system the Portuguese crown had the right to appoint clergy in colonial areas in return for supporting their work. For more complete details cf. K. S. Latourette, Three Centuries of Advance, in

Syrian Christians welcomed the Portuguese as potential protectors from their Hindu and Muslim neighbors. Within a century, however, the missionaries who accompanied the Portuguese had completely taken over control of the Syrian Christian churches. In 1599, the Archbishop of Goa, Alexis de Menezis, came to the south, gathered the Syrian Christians at the Synod of Diamper, and proclaimed the hegemony of Rome over all the Syrian Christians.²³ The thoroughness with which Menezis' deputies, the Jesuits, deleted non-Roman elements in the liturgy and substituted Roman forms angered the Syrian Christians. They remained submissive, after a fashion, until 1653, when they revolted against Roman Catholic, and specifically Jesuit, control. Politically, the Portuguese power was waning and Dutch hegemony — increasing. Cochin, the place of the revolt, fell to the Dutch in 1663. After the revolt, efforts of the Roman Catholics brought a majority back to Rome.²⁴ Since that time, the Syrian Christians have had a history of repeated schism. They are now divided into four major church organizations, besides numerous smaller sects.²⁵ These

A History of the Expansion of Christianity (New York: Harper and Bros., 1939), III, 266-270.

²³Brown, pp. 28-39; Tisserant, pp. 47-65.

²⁴Brown, pp. 98-108; Tisserant, pp. 78-84.

²⁵Cf. Tisserant, pp. 187-198, which includes a table of all bishops in Malabar; Brown, pp. 132-173.

divisions are so imbedded in family and wider relationships that one suspects much more than religious conviction behind them.²⁶ The schismatic phenomenon of denominationalism is not a Protestant import to India.

Roman Catholic missionaries reached out to other parts of India. Francis Xavier brought the Gospel to thousands of fisherfolk on the southwest and southeast coasts of India, baptizing them hastily, but providing for future instruction through theological institutions for training Indian clergy. His ten years of mission activity, 1542-1552, laid the foundations of a modern Latin Catholic church.²⁷ Less fruitful were the Jesuit missions to the court of the emperor Akbar the Great, 1555-1605. This emperor decided to evolve a universal religion for India, using the best elements of all the current religions. At the height of his power he promulgated this religion, Din Ilahi, basically Islam with Hindu and Christian elements. The Jesuits whom he consulted remained in Akbar's court with his permission and made some converts. With Akbar's

²⁶This observation arises from the writer's own experience; see also Brown, pp. 167-209, a chapter entitled: "The Social Life of the St. Thomas Christians."

²⁷Julius Richter, A History of Missions in India, translated by Sydney H. Moore (London: Oliphant, Anderson, and Ferrer, 1908), pp. 45-55. "Latin" Catholic refers to non-Syrian Christian Catholics.

death, however, Din Ilahi and the openness to Christianity soon vanished.²⁸

Robert di Nobili who labored in India from 1605-1656 ✓ raised the vital issue of reaching all castes. Convinced of his own call to reach the Brahmins, di Nobili separated himself from the outcaste Christian community and adopted Brahmin dress, food, and customs. He made wide concessions to the social mores of converts and won many. In spite of local opposition, di Nobili received official papal approval for his methods in 1623. Though later condemned by another papal order in 1704, this practice has affected Roman Catholic and Protestant mission work in India to the present day.²⁹

With the decline of Portuguese power in the seventeenth century, the vigor of Roman Catholic missions faded. Rome's international character, however, made it possible to continue to send missionaries from neutral countries to carry on the essentials of the work. The successors of the Portuguese, the Dutch and the English, did little to encourage the opening of Protestant missions in the areas they controlled. French control was more circumscribed, but the areas they controlled became strongly Roman Catholic.³⁰ 174c

²⁸ Latourette, III, 256-258.

²⁹ Latourette, III, 259-262 is far more sympathetic to the work of di Nobili than Richter, pp. 58-71.

³⁰ The following pages of this study will pick up the study in 1706 when Ziegenbalg and Pluetschau appear on the scene; until that time there is little to report.

The Roots

The roots of the MELIM go back to 9 July 1706 when Bartholomew Ziegenbalg (1683-1719) and Heinrich Pluetschau (1677-1746) arrived in Tranquebar on the southeast coast of India. They were commissioned by the Danish king Frederick IV to serve as missionaries in this colony. Both men had studied at Halle with August Hermann Francke to whom Frederick, through his court chaplain Luetkens, had turned for candidates. Ziegenbalg and Pluetschau received an indifferent reception from the commandant Hassius, but set to work immediately. Pluetschau, who assumed the responsibility for working in Portuguese, remained in India only until 1711. Ziegenbalg continued to work there until his early death in 1719. Before he died, Ziegenbalg saw the completion of the New Jerusalem Church in Tranquebar, completed the translation of the New Testament and began that of the Old, and was able to leave a group of 250 baptized Christians and some 450 adherents³¹ for his successors to nurture.³²

³¹For many years the term "adherents" was used to refer to people who were interested in but not committed to the faith. In the last fifteen years it has generally disappeared as a statistical term.

³²Arno Lehmann, Es Begann in Tranquebar (Berlin: Evangelische Verlaganstalt, 1955), pp. 7-195, passim.

Between 1719 and 1840 the Danish Halle mission at Tranquebar grew, flourished, and withered away. These years are pertinent to this study because many of the challenges and problems which later came to the MELIM arise in these early years. The careers of four men are typical. J. E. Gruendler (1677-1720) was Ziegenbalg's sole co-worker at the time of the latter's death. He carried forward the work in spite of the lack of manpower and the necessity of guiding others into this task before his own death in 1720.³³ B. Schultze (1689-1760) one of those who arrived in 1719, was a man of considerable talent, but of such an independent nature that in 1726 he separated from the Tranquebar mission and established the Madras Mission.³⁴ C. F. Schwartz (1726-1798) had similar endowments and used them in the interest of the Tranquebar mission as well as in spreading the Gospel to many cities in the south of India. His familiarity with Indian royalty gained him the name Raja-Guru, "The King's Teacher." In several battles between the British and Indian forces, he served as intermediary because of the trust he had won from both sides.³⁵ J. P. Fabricius (1711-1791) prepared

³³ Ibid., pp. 192-202.

³⁴ Ibid., pp. 202-207.

³⁵ Ibid., pp. 262-273.

a translation of the Bible into Tamil which remained standard for many years and served as a basis for later revisions. Unfortunately, he displayed a trust in those who borrowed from him, even lending funds which he held for others. His two-time imprisonment for debt cast a shadow upon his justly deserved fame.³⁶

Upon a fifth man lies the onus of bringing down the curtain on the Danish Halle Mission in Tranquebar. A. F. Caemmerer (1767-1837) was the last missionary of the Danish Halle Mission in Tranquebar. Rationalism had weakened the support from Denmark and other countries of Europe. In despair, Caemmerer concluded an agreement with Bishop Middleton to hand over the mission to the Church of England. Only the refusal of the Copenhagen Mission Board to ratify this arrangement kept the entire mission from becoming officially Anglican.³⁷ By 1840, however, three years after Caemmerer's death, almost all the old stations were being served by Anglicans.³⁸

Into this apparently hopeless situation came the N.B.
Leipzig Missionary Society's first representative,

³⁶Ibid., pp. 273-281.

³⁷Ibid., pp. 290-303.

³⁸Richter, pp. 165-166.

J. H. C. Cordes (1813-1892). Cordes represented a conservative, confessional reaction to the rationalism of the mid-nineteenth century. The Leipzig Mission,³⁹ of which he was a member, represented this same theological stance among the mission societies of Europe. The Dresdner Missions-Hilfsverein was established in 1819 as a branch of the Basel Mission Society. A similar branch was established at Leipzig in 1820, but only loosely connected to the Basel Society. Both groups directed a "Lutheran plea" asking that the Basel Missionary Society take a more conservative stand. The agreement reached in the ensuing discussions kept the Basel Society intact until 1836 when the Evangelical Lutheran Mission Society was officially formed in Dresden. In 1848 the headquarters moved to Leipzig and the name was changed accordingly.⁴⁰ Its first three directors, K. Graul,⁴¹ J. Hardeland, and

³⁹The full name of this society is "Die Leipziger Evangelische Lutherische Mission," hereafter referred to as "Leipzig Mission."

⁴⁰Richard Handmann, Die evangelisch-lutherische Tamulen in der Zeit ihrer Neubegründung; Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der evangelischen Mission im 19 Jahrhundert (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1903), pp. 4-22; Gustav Warneck, Abriss einer Geschichte der protestantischen Missionen von der Reformation bis auf die Gegenwart (6th edition; Berlin: Martin Warneck Verlag, 1900), pp. 128-129.

⁴¹G. [sic] Graul, The Distinctive Doctrines of the Different Christian Confessions in the Light of the Word of God, translated by D. M. Martens (Columbus: Osgood and Pearce, 1862), passim, explains Graul's confessional position.

K. von Schwartz represented conservative Lutheranism with a strong confessional emphasis. The later splits which became the roots of MELIM involved differences among missionaries and mission leaders, all of whom were of conservative background.

The Leipzig Mission was looking for a place to send missionaries of its own. The orphan status of Tranquebar and the refusal of the Copenhagen authorities to turn over the mission to non-Lutherans were the signal for action. In 1840 Cordes arrived in India to take over the Danish Halle work. This evidently took some doing, since the Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge⁴² was in de facto control. Careful negotiations and diligent care of the faithful reestablished Lutheranism in the area. When the Danes sold their rights in Tranquebar to the British, Cordes was named head of the mission by order of the Danish king. On 18 April 1846, the mission properties were given to the Leipzig Mission and included two churches and various other buildings in Tranquebar and nearby Poraiyar. Money was made available for general upkeep and Missionsgarten, probably rice fields and coconut groves, were added to the gift.⁴³

⁴²Society for Propagation of Christian Knowledge is an Anglican society with a strong catholic tradition.

⁴³Otto Hardeland, Geschichte der lutherischen Mission (Leipzig: A. Deichert, 1894), II, 56-58; Handmann, p. 126; Richter, p. 197. Dr. H. Grafe, currently a professor in

The Leipzig Mission was apparently securely established. New men came to strengthen Cordes' hand. Among them was Eduard Baierlein (1819-1901) who was to play an important role in the contacts between Missouri and Leipzig. Originally appointed in 1846, Baierlein was prevented by health from going to India at that time. Instead, he went to Michigan and worked among the Chippewa Indians in connection with the Missouri Synod. When the call to India was renewed in 1853, Baierlein accepted. He arrived in India in 1854 and served there until 1886.⁴⁴

Whatever the reasons, Leipzig missionaries soon displayed a serious deficiency in maintaining internal unity. Between 1840 and 1894, the date of the founding of the MELIM, there were four major splits within the Leipzig Mission. In 1848 a quarrel arose over the wearing of crucifixes and ascetic practices among the missionaries.

Madras serving with the Leipzig Mission, told the writer that the proceeds of the rice fields were to be used for the upkeep of the New Jerusalem Church and of the seniorate, the former headquarters of the mission; cf. The Evangelical Lutheran Missionaries' Defense of their Position, their Proceedings, and their Doctrine, presented by J. H. C. Cordes, C. E. C. Ochs, J. M. N. Schwarz, E. D. Appelt, A. F. Wolff, C. F. Kremmer, J. C. G. Speer (Madras: for Tranquebar Mission by American Mission Press House, 1853).

⁴⁴Hardeland, II, 93; Gustav Plitt, Kurze Geschichte der Lutherische Mission (Erlangen: Verlag von A. Deichert, 1871), pp. 274-279; cf. Walter P. Schoenfuhs, "The Life and Labors of Eduard Raimund Baierlein" (unpublished B.D. thesis, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, 1954), passim.

Director Graul came to India to mediate. The dispute ended with the dismissal of one missionary and resignation of another.⁴⁵ A second dispute arose in 1858 over the problem of caste. Some missionaries contended that, prior to ordination, an Indian pastor must go through a special ceremony of breaking caste; others considered this requirement to be legalistic. Director Graul came out once more and was moderately successful in bringing peace.⁴⁶ Four men left the mission because of this controversy. Graul returned to Germany a broken man, resigned his post and died in 1864.⁴⁷ The position on caste which the mission took under his leadership was widely misunderstood as compromise with the devil of caste spirit.⁴⁸ The remaining two controversies, in 1875-1876 and in 1893-1894, are integrally tied to the founding of MELIM and will be treated in the next chapter.

The problem of fissiparousness in the Leipzig Mission of the nineteenth century was a serious one. Witness to

⁴⁵Handmann, pp. 220-235.

⁴⁶Die Stellung der evangelisch-lutherischen Mission in Leipzig zur Ostindien Kastenfrage; Mittheilung des Missions Collegiums zunaechst fuer die stimmberechtigten Vereine (Leipzig: Verlag der Ev. Luth. Mission, 1861), passim.

⁴⁷G. Hermann, Dr. Karl Graul und seine Bedeutung fuer die lutherische Mission (Halle: Buchhandlung des Waisenhauses, 1867), pp. 176-177.

⁴⁸Richter, pp. 168-173.

this is the large number of men who left the mission. Out of forty-four missionaries who came to India between 1840 and 1880, fourteen are noted as having "left the mission." In the context of the statistical list from which this is taken, "left the mission" means separating from the mission for reasons of disagreement, and not for reasons of health or appointment in a different position.⁴⁹

⁴⁹Handmann, pp. 246-250; this is an appendix which gives the vital statistics of all the missionaries who entered the Leipzig Mission India field up to 1906. Out of a total of ninety, forty-four arrived before 1880. The information provided is only moderately satisfactory; minor inaccuracies and inconsistencies are detectable.

one evening, as I remember vividly, I asked the director somewhat doubtfully, "is there a book in which one can read the right doctrine [of church and ministry]?" He answered, "Yes, Walther's The Voice of our Church [on Church and Ministry]". We didn't know who Walther was. . . . That was our first meeting with Missouri.

¹C. M. Zoro, Notwendige Rechtfertigung des Auftretens der Missionare L. Becker, A. Grubert, G. Millmann, C. M. Zoro aus der Leipziger Mission (St. Louis: Druckerei der Synode von Missouri, Ohio, u. S. Staaten, 1877), p. 7; hereafter referred to as Rechtfertigung.

CHAPTER III

THE PROBLEMS AND SETTING FOR MELIM

The Separation of 1876

Four missionaries left the Leipzig Mission in 1876. This time the break was for theological reasons, reasons very similar to those advanced for the establishment of the Leipzig Mission forty years earlier.

With the resignation of Director Karl Graul in 1860, Julius Hardeland became director of the Leipzig Mission and head of the mission institute where all the missionaries received some training before proceeding to the field. Hardeland was a man of strongly conservative convictions; he referred some of his young colleagues to Walther's writings:

One evening, as I remember vividly, I asked the director somewhat doubtfully, "Is there a book in which one can read the right doctrine [of church and ministry]?" He answered, "Yes, Walther's The Voice of our Church [on Church and Ministry]." We didn't know who Walther was. . . .¹ That was our first meeting with Missouri.¹

¹C. M. Zorn, Nothgedrungene Rechtfertigung des Austritts der Missionare F. Zucker, A. Grubert, O. Willkomm, C. M. Zorn aus der Leipziger Mission (St. Louis: Druckerei der Synode von Missouri, Ohio, u. a. Staaten, 1877), p. 7; hereafter referred to as Rechtfertigung.

Hardeland's own influence was strong among the missionaries who went out from Leipzig. Even after the separation of 1876, C. M. Zorn, the leader of the dissidents, testified to the conservative Lutheranism of his missionary colleagues in India.²

The separation from the Leipzig Mission arose out of the theological interests and protests of six missionaries, four of whom finally left the Leipzig Mission. H. E. A. Schaeffer (1842-1890) had arrived in India in 1864; J. F. Zucker (1842-1927) in 1870; C. M. Zorn (1846-1928), and H. A. Grubert (1848-1877) in 1871; and O. H. T. Willkomm (1847-1933) in 1873. L. O. Kahl (1843-1874),³ Zorn's brother-in-law and a strong influence upon him, had come to India in 1867, but died suddenly in July 1874 on the eve of the controversy.⁴

On 15-16 September 1874, at the instance of Kahl, Zucker, and Zorn, a conference met in Trichinopoly "which had the purpose of increased grounding in Scripture and

²Ibid., pp. 9-13.

³Richard Handmann, Die evangelisch-lutherische Tamulen Mission in der Zeit ihrer Neubegründung: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der evangelischen Mission im 19 Jahrhundert (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1903), p. 249. Note that the birthdate for C. M. Zorn is in error; it should be 1846, not 1836.

⁴C. M. Zorn, Dies und Das aus dem Leben eines ostindischen Missionars (2nd illustrated edition; St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1907), pp. 90-91; hereafter referred to as Ostindischen.

the Confessions."⁵ Zucker delivered a paper on Galatians, and Zorn presented an essay on "Our Stand toward the Lutheran Confessions." The former paper was accepted gladly.⁶ Zorn's essay met strong opposition when he brought in the "Missourian statement that the Antichrist has been manifested in the papacy . . . and that no further personal Antichrist could be expected."⁷

The place of Eduard Baierlein in this matter remains a puzzle. He had been in India since 1854 and brought acquaintance with Missouri and Walther with him. When this conference was convened, Baierlein was one of three who did not attend. Zorn wrote, "Only the missionaries Baierlein and Mayr absented themselves on principle, giving an invalid excuse; Handmann said that he did not have time."⁸ Shortly after the conference, however, Baierlein received a large chest of books from America and distributed the contents among his colleagues. These "Missouri" books delighted the leaders of the confessional group. They rejoiced that a leader of the stature of

⁵Rechtfertigung, p. 13.

⁶C. M. Zorn, Dies und Das aus fruehem Amtsleben (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1912), p. 2; hereafter referred to as Amtsleben.

⁷Letter by K. A. A. Ihlefeld, quoted in Rechtfertigung, p. 14.

⁸Amtsleben, p. 2; Rechtfertigung, p. 13.

Walther was in agreement with them.⁹ Zorn and Zucker sent their essays to Walther for his comments. Walther responded:

Both works have delighted me greatly. I did not imagine that so bright a light was burning in East India. In both a thoroughly biblical, evangelical, Lutheran spirit speaks forth. Doctrines, which today are set aside or at least attacked, such as those concerning justification, the Word, free will, and election, sparkle in them like crystal. Your presentation on the papacy is just about the best that I have read in recent times.

Walther then went on to offer some general criticisms of their essays, summing up his remarks,

In sum, it is my opinion that, if the old Lutheran church is to flourish in India, all the teachers there must use as a model and appropriate the simple speech of Luther and the simple modes of thought of our fathers.¹⁰

Though Baierlein was an unconscious mediary in this connection between his colleagues Zorn and Zucker and Dr. Walther, his attitude toward the dissidents remained consistently negative. Later, when Zorn and his colleagues were leaving India, Baierlein said,

I know why Zorn is leaving. It's not because of doctrine, as he claims. Zorn came to India to become a great and famous missionary and to convert thousands. Now that this is not happening, the whole business is boring and he wants to get out. So doctrine has become his excuse.

⁹Amtsleben, p. 7; Rechtfertigung, p. 15.

¹⁰Letter of 20 February 1875, quoted in Amtsleben, pp. 3-5.

Zorn answered him roughly in kind. As they parted, Baierlein sent his regards to Professor Walther.¹¹

The conference of September 1874 and ensuing discussions resulted in a polarization of opinion. Grubert, Schaeffer, and Willkomm came to the side of Zorn and Zucker. Emboldened in their unanimity, the five sent a demand to the Leipzig Mission Board. They asked that R. Handmann be removed from the directorship of the seminary in Tranquebar. They claimed that while Handmann was a dedicated man, "he lacked the proper clarity in doctrine, which is essential for the director of a Seminary." They stated their willingness to cooperate with Handmann in any other capacity in the mission.¹² The letter, dated September 1875, reached Leipzig within six weeks, for Director Hardeland's answer in the name of the Board was sent from Leipzig on 9 December 1875. It was a masterpiece of diplomacy and tact, but, unfortunately, arrived in India only after the break was complete.¹³

In the meantime, more serious trouble had arisen, Dr. C. E. Luthardt, a member of the Leipzig Mission Board, and publisher of Die Allgemeine Evangelische Lutherische Kirchenzeitung, had published highly critical remarks

¹¹ Amtsleben, p. 76.

¹² Rechtfertigung, p. 23 quotes the letter in full.

¹³ Ibid., pp. 26-31.

about the Missouri Synod. He said that the Missouri Synod "parted and separated from all who did not completely and fully agree in all details with the particular Missouri statements."¹⁴ When this article reached India in early November 1875, the dissident five felt that things had gone too far. They addressed a letter to Director Harde-land and Senior¹⁵ Cordes calling upon them to separate themselves from the Leipzig Mission, which could harbor the likes of Luthardt. The five pledged their loyalty to those two men if they would assume the leadership of a new mission with truly Lutheran principles. They sent with the letter an "Interpretation" of their stand.¹⁶ To the end of the letter they added this threat of resignation:

If you do not accede to our demand and do not wish to assent to our petition, we request and empower you to place this same letter before the honorable Board as our formal and respectful request for release.¹⁷

The five also sent a copy of the "Interpretation" to Pastor Friedrich Brunn of Steeden who printed it with a

¹⁴"Kirchliche Nachrichten" in Die Allgemeine Evangelische Lutherische Kirchenzeitung, VII. (27 August 1875), 847.

¹⁵"Senior" is the term then given to the field chairman. Before the controversy was over, Cordes went home and was succeeded by J. M. N. Schwarz.

¹⁶Otto Hardeland, Geschichte der lutherischen Mission (Leipzig: A. Deichert, 1894), II, 34; Rechtfertigung, pp. 51-54.

¹⁷Rechtfertigung, p. 54.

brief introduction in his own magazine¹⁸ and also in pamphlet form with the far more inflammatory heading:

The bitter enmity of the Luthardtian so-called Allgemeine Ev. Luth. Kirchenzeitung against the confessional loyalty of the Ev. Luth. Synod of Missouri, Ohio, a. o. sts. [sic] of North America.

A brave interpretation by five missionaries of the Leipzig Mission in East India: E. Schaeffer, F. Zucker, C. M. Zorn, A. Grubert, O. Willkomm.¹⁹ Printed by friends with the consent of the above.

Upon receipt of this letter and interpretation, Director Hardeland caught the first ship²⁰ to India to attempt to bring peace to the field. This was now the third time in thirty-six years of the Leipzig Mission's work in India that a director's peace mission was necessary.

Hardeland managed to dissuade only Schaeffer²¹ from leaving the mission. The others remained adamant, claiming that the Leipzig Mission was a church and that continuing fellowship with men of Luthardt's stripe was against Christian principles. Director Hardeland pleaded with them to reconsider; he argued that their work in India was not

¹⁸"Erklaerung" in Evangelisch-lutherische Mission und Kirche, X (December 1875), 177-181.

¹⁹Amtsleben, pp. 23-24, in which the quoted section and a longer foreword by Brunn is quoted. Zorn admitted that the heading and foreword were added without the missionaries' consent.

²⁰Hardeland arrived in India on 10 February 1876, less than three months after the letter had been sent from India.

²¹Amtsleben, p. 41, remarks that Schaeffer began to waver and adds that Cordes was his father-in-law.

affected by the controversy; even the dissidents admitted that the brethren in India were theologically sound, or at least that differences among them were not divisive.²²

The Raja of Pudukottah, where Zorn was stationed, urged him to stay. The following conversation ensued:

"Yes, but I don't want you to go, Zorn."

"But I have to go, your Excellency."

"Nonsense! I tell you Zorn; believe in your heart whatever you want to; they cannot control your thoughts. I also believe what I choose and my Brahmins can do nothing."

"Don't you try to induce me to be a liar and hypocrite, Raja!"

"Ah, Zorn, I don't want you to go."²³

When Hardeland pleaded with the brethren, Grubert, who was gravely ill, rose from his sickbed and stated his determinations:

Mr. Director, you know what a great sinner I am. If I remain in this mission, I cannot be saved. If I remain where the Word of God is so uncertain, I cannot be sure of the precious doctrine of the forgiveness of sins. Therefore, I request you to release me also.²⁴

²²Rechtfertigung, pp. 87-88; Senior [J. M. N.] Schwarz, "Gesamtbericht ueber die evang.-luth. Mission in Indien waehrend des Jahres 1876," in Achtundfuenfzigster Jahresbericht der Evangelisch-Lutherischen Mission zur Leipzig umfassend den Zeitraum 11 Juni 1876 bis 26 Mai 1877 (Leipzig: Druck von Poeschel & Trepte), pp. 23-32, covers much the same material from a pro-Leipzig, but sympathetic viewpoint.

²³Amtsleben, p. 71.

²⁴Ibid., p. 61.

The various records of this break²⁵ all show that it was a cause of deep sorrow to most, if not all, concerned. The four men had shown great capabilities and leadership. What they stood for in doctrine was respected by most of their colleagues; only their demands of separation made it impossible for the rest to go along with them.

Schaeffer, who had originally been in the group, but withdrew, continued to serve the Leipzig Mission in India and died there in 1890.²⁶ Grubert, Willkomm, Zorn, and Zucker found themselves in serious financial difficulty. Hardeland informed them that the Leipzig Mission was not in a position to pay for their repatriation. Dr. Walther had heard of the situation and sent a cable to Zorn, which arrived on 26 January 1876: "Need you money Walther Ste-louis answer six words paid." Hardeland did not consider this telegram sufficient assurance on which he could authorize the advance of funds. Upon cabled request, Walther responded by cable that he had mailed five hundred pounds to the Leipzig Mission. The money was advanced and travel was possible.²⁷

²⁵Hardeland, II, 34-35; Schwarz, pp. 23-32; also in Evangelisches Lutherisches-Missionszeitung, XXXI (1-15 August 1877), 225-236; 244-250; Amtsleben, pp. 1-83; Rechtfertigung, passim.

²⁶Handmann, p. 249.

²⁷Rechtfertigung, pp. 92-93.

The four families left India on Good Friday, 13 April 1876. They left behind them their years of work and interest, beloved colleagues, and in the case of Mrs. Grubert and Mrs. Zucker, missionary parents, the Kremmers.²⁸ They traveled to Germany where Grubert died, and Willkomm stayed as a pastor and leader in the Saxon Free Church. Zorn and Zucker proceeded to America where they entered long careers as pastor and professor respectively. Zorn, the leader and spokesman for the group, described his experiences in India and defended the defection from the Leipzig Mission in print. His defense of the defection appeared in 1877.²⁹

It should be added that Dr. Walther suggested that, if possible, two of the dissident missionaries remain in India and establish a Missouri Mission there. This letter did not reach them in India. By the time they received it, it was too late.³⁰

The Separation of 1894

After the departure of Grubert, Willkomm, Zorn, and Zucker, the Leipzig Mission had a period of peace. Other men came to India to fill the places of these four. It

²⁸ Amtsleben, p. 81.

²⁹ Rechtfertigung.

³⁰ Quoted in full in Amtsleben, pp. 68-69.

is interesting to note that J. H. C. Brunotte (1834-1901) who had come to India with the Hermannsburg Mission in 1866, joined the Leipzig Mission in 1878 and served there until 1894 when he retired. Since the Hermannsburg Mission worked in Telugu and the Leipzig Mission in Tamil, such a shift was not easily made and must have been caused by some serious difference. Franz Mohn, prominent in the following pages, was married to Brunotte's daughter.³¹

Two matters arose between 1892 and 1894 which precipitated a break in the latter year. The first concerned a young missionary, J. M. Kempff (1860-1945) who had come to India in 1885. In 1889 he became involved in a quarrel with a colleague, J. E. G. Stosch. The issues are not clear, but Kempff accused Stosch of Romanizing tendencies. Kempff was reprimanded for using the mission press, of which he was manager, to print a pamphlet against Stosch. Later, he was accused of laziness, inefficiency and continual absence from his work. Kempff pleaded illness in his family and difficulty in bearing the heat of the plains. He was then shifted to Bangalore with its comparatively pleasant climate. Here also he was frequently "out of station."

³¹Handmann, p. 250; the writer's frequent mention of these marriage relationships grows out of a conviction that the course of missions has been deeply affected by the bonds thus established. In the years before higher education was common, it appears that missionary daughters returning to India after primary education frequently became the brides of young bachelor missionaries.

He purchased a coffee plantation in the Shevaroi hills some fifty miles from Bangalore. When challenged, he explained that he was investing money for his brother-in-law. He claimed that his trips to the plantation were not extraordinarily time-consuming, for the supervision of the plantation was in the hands of another man. Whatever the doctrinal issue may have been, it was lost in the shuffle. Kempff was "pensioned" in 1893 on an income of fifty rupees a month. His case figured in the subsequent separation and he became an interested party in the formation of MELIM.³²

Even before Kempff was pensioned, K. G. T. Naether (1866-1904) and T. F. Mohn (1867-1925) had become involved in controversy with their Leipzig brethren. Naether had arrived in India in 1887, Mohn in 1889.³³ In 1892 Naether delivered a paper on the Doctrine of Inspiration to the pastoral conference in India. His colleagues refused to accept it in full, because of his emphasis upon verbal inspiration. Naether then entered into correspondence with the Leipzig Mission Board through its director, K. von Schwartz. He was admonished for having sent an article

³²Hardeland, II, 108; Aktenstuecke betreffend das Ausscheiden der Missionare Kempff, Naether, und Mohn aus der Leipziger Mission im Auftrage des Missionskollegiums herausgegeben von Missionsdirektor v. Schwartz (Leipzig: Selbstverlag der Evangelisch-Lutherischen Mission, 1895), pp. 5-60, passim.

³³Handmann, p. 251.

to the Neuen Lutherischen Kirchenzeitung without submitting it first to the Leipzig Board for censorship.³⁴

In ensuing correspondence Naether accused his missionary brethren of holding false views on the inspiration of the Scriptures.³⁵ The director accused him of being unbrotherly and reprimanded him for his actions.³⁶

Once again, the mission director came out to India to attempt to settle the quarrel. Upon his arrival in Tranquebar on 27 October 1893, he received a letter from Naether stating his position. In this letter he asked two questions:

1) Is the doctrine of verbal inspiration of the Holy Scripture, as Scripture and the Confessions teach it and as I had the joy to confess with a group of my brethren in my essay of last year, the only acceptable teaching in our mission, and is the mission determined to resist and put away all contrary and false doctrines? . . .

2) Is the honorable Board willing, in obedience to Matt. 20:25,26, to describe the church council as a brotherly council, and not an authoritative administration, as it has been until now? The above is without prejudice to the Board's administrative, executive, and disciplinary powers. By this, is the Board willing to recognize that Synod has, not only the right to question, to present doubts, and to make remarks for purposes of expansion and

³⁴Aktenstuecke, pp. 60-63. Neuen Lutherischen Kirchenzeitung, according to Naether in letter to Mission Board of 22 December 1892, "fought against our vice-president Dr. Luthardt," p. 60. It was edited by J. von Barm in Seedorf.

³⁵Aktenstuecke, p. 68.

³⁶Mission director to Naether, 19 May 1893, in Aktenstuecke, p. 71.

clarification, but also the right of confession in accordance with God's Word and of brotherly admonition of the activity of the Mission council? Or not?³⁷

Naether added that unless he received a clear answer on these two questions, he would have to absent himself from communing at the eucharistic service to be held on November 5th.³⁸ A letter from Mohn placed him in agreement with Naether's position.³⁹

The nature of the issue changed somewhat at this point. Von Schwartz demanded that Naether and Mohn rescind their refusal to commune with the brethren, assuring them that the case would be considered, but not in this attitude of separation. They were given until 31 December 1893 to change their minds. When they refused, they were dismissed from Leipzig Mission service as of 1 January 1894.⁴⁰

In both of these separations there was considerable bitterness. On the other hand, there remained a certain respect in both groups of dissidents for the basic soundness of the Leipzig Mission. Zorn and Zucker had specifically

³⁷ Ibid., pp. 80-81; in this connection Naether mentioned Kempff's case.

³⁸ Ibid., p. 81.

³⁹ Ibid., pp. 81-85.

⁴⁰ "Circular of the Mission Director to the missionaries of the Leipzig Mission in India of 8 January 1894" in Aktenstuecke, pp. 130-136.

exhorted their parishioners to remain faithful to Leipzig because there was nothing better available.⁴¹ There is no record of a similar statement by Naether or Mohn, but the fact that they were dismissed and did not resign would obviate any opportunity to have final words with their parishioners. As they returned to India in the following years to become MELIM's first missionaries, this contradiction between separation and respect would haunt them.

⁴¹Schwarz, pp. 26-27.

The Missouri Synod had resolved to open a foreign mission field in Japan. This decision was taken at the synodical convention of 1893 and provided for the election of a Board for Foreign Missions to put the resolution into effect.¹ The prime candidate for the work in Japan was Iwano Hifuno, a Japanese national who would complete his studies at Springfield in 1895. The plan was to send him and another candidate to Japan upon completion of their ordinary training.² The mission board elected at the

¹Missouri Synod, Proceedings, pp. 82-85.

²Arthur H. Strege, "A History of Missouri Synod Work Among the Japanese" (unpublished B.S. thesis, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, 1952), pp. 4-18.

CHAPTER IV

THE FIRST YEARS, 1894 TO 1900

New Men and a New Field

Naether and Mohn were dismissed from the Leipzig Mission as of 1 January 1894; by 20 January 1895 Naether was back in India as missionary of the Missouri Synod. In this time, the two of them had traveled to Germany, had gone on to America, had been examined, accepted, called, and sent back as missionaries. The speed of all of this requires explanation.

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¹Missouri Synod, Proceedings, pp. 82-86.

²Arthur H. Strege, "A History of Missouri Synod Work Among the Japanese" (unpublished B.D. thesis, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, 1952), pp. 4-18.

convention included C. M. Zorn and J. F. Zucker, the former Leipzig missionaries who had left India in 1876.³

The news of Naether's and Mohn's expulsion from the Leipzig Mission reached the Missouri Synod in time to be published in March 1894.⁴ When Naether and Mohn arrived in Germany, the brethren of the Saxon Free Church referred the matter to the Missouri Synod.⁵ The newly-constituted Board for Foreign Missions had not yet put the synodical resolution to enter Japan into effect. At a special meeting held in Fort Wayne on 1 May 1894, the question of starting in India or Japan was considered. It was decided to ask President H. C. Schwan to contact the district synods for their approval to transfer the new area of work from Japan to India. A call to the post of mission director, decided upon but not formally extended, to F. Sievers, was held in abeyance and F. Zucker was asked to take over the duties of such a directorship until the matter could be reported to the Synod. Upon favorable response from the district synods, the Board invited Naether and Mohn to America. They arrived in late summer and were examined regarding their doctrinal

³ Missouri Synod, Proceedings, 1893, p. 141.

⁴G[eorge] St[oeckhardt], "Leipziger Mission," Der Lutheraner, L (27 March 1894), 60.

⁵Thus C. M. Z[orn], "Unsere ostindischen Mission," ibid., LXVI (19 April 1910), 120.

position. The Board met with them on 12-13 October, and extended them a call to India. They accepted and were in turn accepted into membership in the Missouri Synod. The commissioning service was held in St. Charles, Missouri, on 14 October, with members of the Board for Foreign Missions and the delegates of the Western District of the Missouri Synod in attendance.⁶ Zorn preached the commissioning sermon, using Matt. 28:18-20 as his text. He explained the circumstances of this event, defending the defection from Leipzig and also the Board's decision to go to India instead of Japan:

Very well, we take them and send them back again to the Tamilians. We are certain and say clearly: This is God's will and God's guiding. . . .

We are not sending them to the territory where they can interfere with the congregations of the Leipzig Mission, much less of any other heterodox mission. On the contrary, we have instructed them to begin in a place that is as far away from Leipzig Mission stations as possible.

Regarding procedures, Zorn added:

We wish to go to the heathen with nothing but the Word, the teaching of Christ, the Gospel, knowing that nothing else can help and that this is the means which the almighty Savior has entrusted to us.

At the same time, it must not be said under any circumstances that we bring the Word to the heathen in only one way. No, this can happen in all possible ways; only one must make sure that what we bring is always the Word.

⁶Missouri Synod, Proceedings, 1896, pp. 77-79.

To speak more specifically, we do not want our missionaries to restrict themselves to public and private preaching of the Word to the heathen. We have instructed them specifically to erect schools, where possible, in which the Word of Christ may be taught along with worldly wisdom. Tamilians are eager for education. We want them, so to speak, to flood the town and environs, where they make their residence, with good, clear, and brief tracts. Tamilians are eager to read. If they perceive another means or way to bring the Word to the heathen, they should use it or follow it. But it must always be the Word and nothing else. In and with it is the almighty Lord, that is His means by which to make heathen into Christians.⁷

President Schwan then addressed the assembly and the new missionaries on the subject of the mutual responsibilities of the church and its missionaries.⁸

Both Naether and Mohn returned to Germany. Naether, after becoming engaged to Miss Johanna Naumann, left for India at the end of December 1894. His fiancée remained behind, planning to follow him later. Mohn was in poor health and, with his wife, remained in Germany until he was well enough to begin his new work.⁹

⁷C. M. Zorn, "Unsere neue ostindischen Heidenmission-- ist sie nach Gottes Wort und Willen angefangen? und wie soll sie gefuehrt werden?," Der Lutheraner, L (4 December 1894), 211-212. Italics in the original.

⁸H. C. Schwan, "Rede bei der Abordnung der Missionare Naether und Mohn," ibid., L (20 November 1894), 193-194.

⁹"Life of Missionary K. G. Theodor Naether," recorded by his daughters, translated by Martin Naumann, Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly, XXXIX (January 1967), 184.

Naether landed in India on 20 January 1895 and was met by Kempff,¹⁰ the former Leipzig missionary who had been pensioned by the Leipzig Mission and was now a planter in the Shevaroi hills. Naether sought out a station which would meet the requirements of the Board's instructions. He found it in Krishnagiri, roughly one hundred and sixty miles west of Madras and some sixty miles from Kempff's plantation. It was, and is, an area with strong Hindu and Muslim concentrations and, aside from a few Roman Catholics, no other Christians. It also lay about as far from Leipzig Mission work as one could possibly go, without leaving Tamil country. Within fifteen miles to the north and east of Krishnagiri, the changeover to Telugu and Kanarese begins.¹¹

Before Naether had settled in Krishnagiri, he was joined by another dissident from the Leipzig Mission. G. O. Kellerbauer (1868-1914) had arrived in India as a missionary of the Leipzig Mission in October 1893. On 16 March 1895 he resigned from the Leipzig Mission and went immediately to Krishnagiri, arriving there before 3 April.¹² Following

¹⁰There is some doubt on the spelling of Kempff; Aktenstuecke uses Kempf; Missouri Synod publications use Kempff. This paper uses the latter.

¹¹From the writer's own observations in India; cf. Th. Naether, "Unsere ostindische Mission, unser Arbeitsfeld," Der Lutheraner, LV (28 November 1899), 216-217; (12-26 December 1899), 226-227; 235-236.

¹²C. M. Zorn, "Unsere ostindische Mission, Des Werkes Anfang," ibid., LI (21 May 1895), 86-87.

extensive correspondence, which included a detailed statement of Kellerbauer's doctrinal stand, the Board issued a call to Kellerbauer to serve in the India mission. This call was dated 25 November 1895,¹³ but must have been something of a formality, for the fiancées of both Kellerbauer and Naether traveled together to India in October and the weddings took place in Salem on 29 October.¹⁴

Mohn arrived in India in the beginning of 1896. His health had delayed him for more than a year. There is no record of the nature of his ailment and the matter is a bit puzzling. His later record shows continuous service in MELIM until 1913 with only the usual furlough.¹⁵

The fourth and final man to come from the Leipzig Mission to MELIM was R. Freche (1862-1924). He had come to work with the Leipzig Mission in India in 1891. He resigned from the Leipzig Mission on 1 March 1897, after correspondence with the Board for Missions, in which he made clear that his reasons for leaving the Leipzig Mission were essentially the same as those of Naether and Mohn,¹⁶

¹³ Missouri Synod, Proceedings, 1896, p. 80; see also F. Zucker to field, 24 November 1895.

¹⁴ Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly, XXIX, 84; for lack of other evidence, one supposes that each man performed the marriage for the other couple.

¹⁵ Missouri Synod, Proceedings, 1896, p. 80.

¹⁶ Cf. infra, p. 59, footnote 39.

Freche was issued a call by the Board to serve in India. This call was dated 24 February 1898.¹⁷ Evidently the Board had paid him at least his living expenses during this time and Freche was active in Gospel work. He had married Miss Selma Maneck in 1893, while in the employ of the Leipzig Mission, and had a family to support. The Board even authorized money to help Freche defray some debts incurred while in Leipzig Mission employ.¹⁸

In gathering this initial force of missionaries, the Board for Foreign Missions had acted with considerable freedom. It had asked for and received approval of a switch from Japan to India; before the triennial Synod of 1896 could give its formal approval, the Board had the two original missionaries on the field, plus Kellerbauer. Freche joined the mission in the interim between the Synod meetings of 1896 and 1899. In each case, the Board's request for ex post facto approval was granted by the Synod. The Board must have taken such approval for granted, for it approved of Kellerbauer's fiancée's travel to India before a formal call had been extended to him. Freche also received support for his family and for his newborn son¹⁹ before all the formalities regarding his call had been completed.

¹⁷ Missouri Synod, Proceedings, 1899, pp. 75-76.

¹⁸ CHI, F. Zucker to field, 3 April 1897.

¹⁹ CHI, R. Freche to Board, 22 November 1897.

Karl Gustav Theodor Naether, 1866-1904

Theodor Naether was a man of dedication and devotion to his tasks. He spent his entire ministry of ten years in Krishnagiri. His reports, which were interpreted to the Synod by the editorship of C. M. Zorn,²⁰ indicate these qualities:

With few exceptions we arise between 3:00 and 4:00 A.M. and travel to some place more or less distant from our home. We preach to the people and return home, seldom before, sometimes after 9:00 or 10:00. The remaining morning hours are used for breakfast, family devotions, private study, and rest. After lunch, the time is spent in correspondence and other desk work until 3:00, when school instruction begins and lasts until 5:30. If I still have the energy, I go out in the neighborhood to speak with some heathen. Sometimes the weather prevents. Furthermore, since it becomes dark shortly after 6:00, any extended conversation with heathen is possible only on moonlit evenings. If I remain at home, I play some tunes on the violin, study, or write as long as I can, in preparation for heathen preaching. About 10:00 the day ends with evening devotions.²¹

Naether's tenacity in conversation was typical of the times, but showed a willingness to speak in the idiom of the people:

I: Are there Christians in Sulagiri?
 They: Yes.
 I: Are you Christians?
 They: No.

²⁰Zorn's articles or editions of the reports from the India missionaries appear 27 times in Der Lutheraner between 1895 and 1900, Vols. LI to LVI.

²¹"Unsere ostindische Mission; Nachrichten von unsere Missionsfelde," sent in by C. M. Zorn, quotation from Naether's September (1895) report, Der Lutheraner, LI (3 December 1895), 205.

- I: Why not?
- They: It won't work. We have employment.²²
- I: You can carry on your employment also as Christians. Christians must also work. He who doesn't work shouldn't eat.
- They: Yes, but our family won't agree.
- I: (to the speaker) Bring your wife and children along. They should also become Christians.
- He: Yes, but what about our parents and relatives?
- I: They can also become Christians. If they are in the way, whom should you love more, God or men?
- He: God.
- I: So you see! If your parents and relatives hinder you, come to us Christians, or go some place where no one will keep you away from Christianity. If possible, however, stay with your own and become an example to them, admonish them. They will also come. Caste (family relationship) doesn't disappear in Christianity any more than brown skincolor or language.
- He: All right, if God gives us understanding, we will become Christians.
- I: Through me God is speaking and giving you understanding. Usually the trouble with you is this: You don't have the will; you don't want to, even though your understanding has grasped the matter. So act before it is too late. There is no rescue out of hell. Don't be sorry afterwards, think ahead!²³

The uncertainty of life in India struck the Naether family hard. In describing the missionary families in 1900, Naether stated that though all four men were married, only Freche had children,

²²This statement refers to the fear of the servant class that they would lose their jobs if they became Christians. The fear was not ungrounded in those days. Today, such pressure is usually applied more subtly.

²³"Unsere ostindische Mission, Etwas aus Missionarar Naethers Berichten," sent in by C. M. Zorn, Der Lutheraner, LI (2 July 1895), 114-115.

I also had two children as he did. At the end of the last hot season, however, the strong winds, heating up for rain, but bringing little or no rain, nipped the tender buds within four days. Our little daughter, who came and went both on a Sunday, was truly Sunday's child--always happy, friendly, laughing. She is waiting now in her happy home with the Master of happiness. Her beloved brother, who so happily looked at the flourishes and pictures in the Weimar (Churfuersten) Bible, who prayed the Lord's Prayer so seriously and eagerly, who knew the "little God" in the manger and also Jesus on the cross, ascended to his real Father after his faithful Savior on Ascension morning. Indeed, we parents have become lonely.²⁴

Theologically Naether stood in the stream of confessional, somewhat pietistically oriented, theology. His approach to the heathen was essentially negative and condemnatory. Warning them of hell in the first encounter was apparently standard practice with him. He discussed the Christian religion not only with members of the outcaste communities, but also with Brahmins and Muslims.²⁵

His studies centered upon Bible studies, the confessions, and Luther's works. This is evidenced in the study programs of the conferences held in the first six years of the MELIM.²⁶

²⁴Th. Naether, "Unsere ostindische Mission, Die Arbeiter auf unserm Missionsfelde," ibid., LVI (29 May 1900), 167.

²⁵"Aus unsere ostindische Mission, Heidenpredigt in und um Krishnagiri," ibid., LVII (19 March 1901), 84-85; (2-16-30 April 1901), 99-101; 116-118; 132-134; (14-28 May 1901), 165-167.

²⁶CHI, "Protokoll der Konferenzen 1-29 der Missionare der Missouri-Synode in Indien, 1895-1900," Protokollanten: Th. Naether, O. Kellerbauer, passim.

Results were meager in Krishnagiri. Only toward the end of his life did Naether gain converts. These were people whom the missionaries had hired as teachers in the schools. There were only eight baptized Christians in Krishnagiri by 1902.²⁷

Theodor Franz Mohn, 1867-1925

Franz Mohn was less aggressive than his colleague Naether.²⁸ He gained a particular competence in Tamil, however, and published a book of Tamil sermons at the end of his career.²⁹ He arrived in India in 1896 and was stationed at Ambur, 45 miles from Krishnagiri on the road to Madras, 115 miles from that city. Growth came sooner here than in Krishnagiri; when Krishnagiri reported eight baptized members, Mohn, from Ambur could report fifteen.³⁰

Mohn's particular interest was tract distributions. The four men prepared a series of tracts, none of which

²⁷ Missouri Synod, Proceedings, 1902, p. 83.

²⁸ Aktenstuecke betreffend das Auscheiden der Missionare Kempf, Naether, und Mohn aus der Leipziger Mission, im Auftrage des Missionskollegium hereausgegeben von Missionsdirektor v. Schwartz (Leipzig: Selbstverlag der Evangelisch-Lutherischen Mission, 1895), pp. 60-136, passim.

²⁹ F. Mohn, Sermons on the Gospels of the Ecclesiastical Year (Nagercoil; Printed at Alexandra Press, 1914). This was published by MELIM after Mohn left India in 1913. It is in Tamil; MELIM, Proceedings, January 1912, p. 16; October 1912, pp. 55-57; January 1913, p. 90; 500 copies were printed.

³⁰ Missouri Synod, Proceedings, 1902, p. 83.

are extant, but some of the titles are recorded in minutes:

"Prodigal Son," "Wedding Feast," "Medicine," "Burden Bearer."³¹ Mohn ran into some difficulties in tract distribution and dealt with people in a direct, if rather rough method:

Here [in the bazaar] street urchins crowd around me. They all want a tract. A large number of them can read and understand a tract. But many of them cannot read, but still want a tract, for what purpose, I don't know. One grabs for the tracts in my hand, another pulls my sleeve, the third climbs on me from behind; a number of times I have had to go to the police station which is in the bazaar. But even that doesn't help anymore. Of many of them I demand that they prove their literacy by reading a few words of the tract. That doesn't help much either; many boys come along, grab a tract, act as though they will read it, then either grab it out of my hand or let it drop and then laugh. This time I took my walking stick in one hand, the tracts in the other, and said, "Whoever can read gets a tract, whoever can't gets something on the knuckles." They laughed, but this time it helped. The missionary is playing a very ignoble role, isn't he? Should he forsake distributing tracts in the bazaar for this reason? There are so many adults who take a tract and read it. One has to take the unpleasant experience into the bargain also.³²

Mohn gave some very negative estimates of the people of India. He spoke of the outcastes as almost hopeless

³¹"Protokol," e.g., pp. 75, 147, 195, 209.

³²"Unsere ostindische Mission, Ein Wenige aus den Berichten unserer Missionare," sent in by C. M. Zorn, Der Lutheraner, LIV (8 February 1898), 21.

intellectually and of the Brahmins as sly and crafty.³³ He recorded some remarkably modern arguments for the validity of Hinduism, for example, that idols are not gods in themselves, but only serve to represent God or to remind men of Him, and that all rivers lead to the ocean and all religious lead to God.³⁴

All the missionaries considered schools basic to their calling. Mohn's emphasis on this work was strong. He spent four hours a day teaching Scripture lessons, which he would not delegate to the teachers in the schools. The teachers were either non-Christians or Christians from other mission societies. By late 1899, things had progressed to the point where Mohn was able to dismiss the unsatisfactory teachers and replace them with former students.³⁵

Mohn and his wife Charlotte had three daughters, one of whom died in Ambur. The Mohn family went to Germany on furlough in 1905-1906. Mohn resigned in 1913 for reasons of his family's health.

³³"Unsere ostindische Mission, Allerlei aus den Berichten unserer Missionare," sent in by C. M. Zorn, ibid., LII (15 December 1896), 213.

³⁴"Unsere ostindische Mission, Allerlei aus den Juni-berichten unserer Missionare," sent in by C. M. Zorn, ibid., LIII (21 September 1897), 160.

³⁵C. M. Zorn, "Unsere ostindische Mission," ibid., LVI (6 March 1900), 69.

Georg Otto Kellerbauer, 1868-1914

Georg Kellerbauer is less prominent in mission reports than Naether or Mohn. He joined Naether in early 1895 and remained with him until March 1899, when he moved to Barugur, ten miles down the road toward Ambur.

He used a directness in his approach similar to that of his neighbor, Naether; as he was talking to a group of Hindus,

Two Muslims shouted as with one voice and in a real Pharaonic tone, "We do not worship idols!" "I suppose," I answered, "that you think that there is no difference between you Mohammedans and us Christians. The difference is that you do not know the true God and we do." Then I showed them that Mohammed was a deceiver who mixed three religions as he saw fit, claimed to be the prophet of God, and published ungodly commandments.³⁶

The fact that a missionary could get by with statements like this is a commentary on the high respect that white men commanded in those days. Similar remarks today would start a riot.

Kellerbauer had gifts in bringing the Gospel into the idiom of the people. Coming upon a sorcerer in the act of sorcery, he asked him where he had learned his art. When the man said that he had learned it from his father, and that this went back several generations, Kellerbauer related,

³⁶Ibid., LII (15 December 1896), 214.

I showed him that he could not call upon God with his actions of sorcery and that when men are not sure of their case from God's Word, they are easily deceived and serve the devil instead of God, just as had happened to him. . . . I told him the matter of Satan's fall . . . and how he brought sin into the world. That is the truly poisonous snakebite, through which we are all damned and would be eternally lost, if help did not come.³⁷

Kellerbauer and his wife remained in Barugur during the rest of their first term, to 1905. After furlough, they returned to Barugur in 1906 and worked there until 1911. From 1911 to 1913 they labored in Ambur. Kellerbauer went on furlough in 1913; he made a brief visit to America in early 1914 and died in Germany on 27 October 1914. The doctor who attended him at his death told Mrs. Kellerbauer, "Your dear husband was in a very real sense a sacrifice to his calling. His illness was a tropical disease and therefore the doctors here were not familiar with it."³⁸

Reinhold Freche, 1862-1924

Reinhod Freche, the oldest of the ex-Leipzig missionaries, joined the group only in 1897. He received his formal call in early 1898. In this connection, he sent a

³⁷ "Unsere ostindische Mission," sent in by C. M. Zorn, *ibid.*, LV (19 September 1899), 167.

³⁸ CHI, Louise Kellerbauer to J. Friedrich, 3 November 1914; also J. Kunstmann (President, Saxon Free Church) to J. Friedrich, 29 October 1914.

statement of his position to the Board for Foreign Missions and also discussed matters in detail with the brethren in India.³⁹

Management ability seems to have been the outstanding trait of this man. All four men were involved in building operations, chiefly in erecting schools and residences for their own families. Freche, however, was most detailed and imaginative in his reports on the matter. When he built the missionary bungalow in Vaniyambadi, he found that the local merchants were asking an outrageous price for bricks. He proceeded to make his own bricks. The first attempt failed when monsoon rains melted the molded bricks before they could be baked. On the second attempt, Freche succeeded in making better bricks for about twelve percent less than the merchants had asked, even with writing off the loss on the first attempt. During the building process he found the overseer cheating, discharged him, and took over all the details himself. Only a highly resourceful man would be able to bring this kind of a program to completion. The total cost of the building was only \$1300.⁴⁰

³⁹Freche's answers to the Board's questions were discussed. Minutes of this discussion fill six handwritten pages. "Protokoll," pp. 197-203.

⁴⁰C. M. Zorn, "Unsere ostindische Mission," Der Lutheraner, LVI (6 March-18 September 1900), 69-70, 295.

Freche was similarly bold in his mission methods.

When a man accused him of trying to destroy the religions of India, Freche responded,

He is right. And yet it is a very good thing, if we come to destroy your religion. For it is a good thing to destroy a lying religion through which the wrath of the true God comes on you and you must suffer eternal damnation. For this purpose we bring you a substitute, a different, better, the only true religion. . . . Now open your eyes. I have come to you to tell you God's Word. Leaving home, parents, and relatives, I have come thousands of miles to do this. Do you suppose that I would undertake such difficult things to tell you a lie?⁴¹

Opening schools in his area, he drew the line at taking on more work than he could handle satisfactorily.⁴² In order to obviate competition with the London Missionary Society which was operating a school in Vaniyambadi, Freche effected the purchase of the property and took over the responsibility for the operation of the school.⁴³ Several young men came to him for instruction; one of them came almost to the point of baptism, but turned away at the last minute under pressure from his family.⁴⁴ At one point Freche argued that comfortable living for missionaries must

⁴¹"Unsere ostindische Mission" sent in by C. M. Zorn, *ibid.*, LV (14 November 1899), 207.

⁴²"Unsere ostindische Mission" sent in by C. M. Zorn, *ibid.*, LV (19 September 1899), 167.

⁴³CHI, R. Freche to Board for Foreign Missions, 22 November 1897.

⁴⁴R. Freche, "Unsere ostindische Mission, Tauf und Pfingstfest in Vaniyambadi," *Der Lutheraner*, LVII (6 August 1901), 244-247.

wait until some results became evident.⁴⁵ He published a book on his life and work in India in 1914.⁴⁶ Reinhold Freche and his wife, Selma, lived in Vaniyambadi throughout their career in India.

Developments to 1900

Naether, Mohn, Kellerbauer, and Freche were the staff that carried on MELIM's work between the years 1895 to 1900. All of them came from the Leipzig Mission, all but Kellerbauer had had at least five years' prior experience in Tamil country. They came from a well-advanced field with congregations, teachers, and catechists, as well as pastors from the Indian people. The only resources upon which they could draw were the translation of the Bible and the liturgical books of the Leipzig Mission.⁴⁷ A few workers from other missions came to join them and to receive further instruction in Lutheran doctrine. Some of these came from the Leipzig Mission, but more were Christians of other organizations.⁴⁸

⁴⁵CHI, R. Freche to Board for Foreign Missions, 24 August 1898.

⁴⁶Reinhold Freche, Luthergiri, Ein Besuch im Lutherischen Pfarrhause in Indien (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1914).

⁴⁷CHI, H. Stallmann to the writer, 1 March 1969, makes a point of this indebtedness to the Leipzig Mission.

⁴⁸The documentation for this comes from questions directed by the writer to descendants of the first members of MELIM. Nothing more than generalizations can be made.

Growth came slowly. The first convert was an eighteen-year old boy, Chinnian, who was baptized on 10 March 1900 and took the Christian name, Devasahayam, "God is my help."⁴⁹ By the time the first statistics were announced to the Missouri Synod convention of 1902, a total of forty-five Christians were reckoned, fifteen with Mohn, eight with Naether, and twenty-two with Freche. Kellerbauer had not yet gained any converts in his short time in Barugur.⁵⁰ In these numbers one must include the teachers who were in the employ of the mission, probably Christians from other missions. The first converts were often the family servants of the missionaries.⁵¹ Even the above-mentioned Chinnian--Devasahayam was a teacher in the mission school at the time of his baptism.⁵²

It is easy to deprecate this type of growth as more or less refined "rice Christian" growth. The matter is not that simple; these first agonizing beginnings bore fruit in later more rapid growth in numbers. In 1900, the mission

⁴⁹C. M. Z[orn], "Unsere ostindische Mission, Die Taufe Chinnians," Der Lutheraner, LVI (15 May 1900), 150-151.

⁵⁰Missouri Synod, Proceedings, 1902, p. 83.

⁵¹E.g. Freche's servants; R. Freche, "Unsere ostindische Mission, Tauf und Pfingstfest in Vaniyambadi," Der Lutheraner, LVII (6 August 1901), 244.

⁵²Cf. supra, p. 61, footnote 48.

was small, apparently weak, and showed little promise. Its strength would become evident later.

Relationships among the missionaries were apparently excellent. Neither correspondence nor minutes show any evidence of friction among these men. This is rather surprising, considering that all four had left the Leipzig Mission under conditions of acute disagreement. Conferences included Bible study and study of confessional writings. For example, in the meeting of 27-30 May 1897, Mohn led a discussion of the third article of the Formula of Concord on Justification.⁵³

Living conditions in India were not very comfortable. At first, attempts were made to rent homes for the missionaries in the various stations. The Board hesitated to authorize erection of buildings until it was clear that the stations would become permanent places of work. The purchase of land and erection of homes were authorized one by one.⁵⁴ C. M. Zorn, who had been away from India for more than twenty years, sent a suggested plan for bungalows to be erected in Krishnagiri and Ambur. No mention is made of what was done with these plans.⁵⁵

⁵³"Protokoll," pp. 189-195.

⁵⁴Missouri Synod, Proceedings, 1899, p. 77; 1902, p. 84.

⁵⁵"Protokoll," pp. 27, 34, 139.

John Kempff proved to be a great help to the missionary quartet. He was given the status of hospes perpetuus⁵⁶ in the conference of missionaries; the distance from his plantation and his involvement there made it possible for him to attend only about one meeting out of three. Relationships between him and the four MELIM men were cordial; they included the possibility of going to his plantation to get some relief from the heat of the plains. By 1900, however, drought had turned Kempff's plantation into a losing proposition. In December of that year, the conference requested the Board to look for some wealthy person who might lend Kempff \$1000 to help him recoup his losses and get back on his feet again.⁵⁷ No information is available on what happened in this matter, but Kempff left India in 1903, stayed in Germany briefly, then served pastorates in Philipps and Town Harland, Wisconsin, and Town Freedom, Michigan, until 1926. He died in 1945. The Kempffs had five sons and three daughters.⁵⁸

Particularly during this period, but also later, the chief interpreter of the India mission venture was C. M.

⁵⁶Ibid., p. 47.

⁵⁷Ibid., p. 380.

⁵⁸"Obituaries: The Rev. John Martin Kempff," The Lutheran Witness, LXIV (13 February 1945), 62.

Zorn. His facile German pen added background to the reports of the missionaries, most of which he edited for inclusion in Der Lutheraner. In most respects, his accounts were well balanced. He did, however, play rather heavily on the sacrifices demanded of the missionaries. "Sweltering heat" is an expression that appears repeatedly in his writings.⁵⁹

There is little evidence of any friction between the Board and the missionaries on the field. This is somewhat surprising in the light of the second reason which Naether gave for leaving the Leipzig Mission.⁶⁰ The Board exercised very strong control over the field, allocating missionaries, authorizing expenditures, hill leaves, furloughs, purchase of land, erection of houses, and so on. Zorn's submission of a plan for a missionary residence was an undeniable intrusion into the normal pattern of on-the-field authority. Frictions arose later, but not at this time.

This may have been partly the result of Director Zucker's tactful dealing with the field.⁶¹ It may also be partly the result of having a small, tightly knit group of

⁵⁹Cf. foregoing footnotes in this chapter in which Zorn is frequently either editor, author, or the one who sends in the article.

⁶⁰Supra, p. 41.

⁶¹CHI, file of Board letters, written by Professor F. Zucker to the field, covering the period from 1895 to 1913, show a remarkably tactful and irenic approach.

missionaries who could consult with one another frequently and bring united recommendations to the Board. The smallness of the mission and the closeness of these four men was an undeniable advantage for building solid foundations. It remains amazing, however, that this group of four men could maintain such cordial relations with a mission board in America, composed of men whom only two of them had met and then only for a brief period.

who would enter the service of M.M.M. in the period under study. He and a number of the others were born in Germany, but received their education in the United States. Their relationships to the Board for Foreign Missions were closer, usually nurtured by contact on Furlough. A few of them were German citizens and had to leave the field during World War I.

P. A. W. Albert Huebner (1877-1947) was born in Germany, received his early education there, but studied for the ministry at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. Upon arrival in India, he joined Weether at Krishnagiri for language study. In 1902 he moved to Anbur during the time that Mohn was on leave in the hills. In 1903 he shifted to Vaniyam-badi to assume charge of that station during Fredhe's furlough.³

John F. Wroerer (1879-1950) and George A. Naumann (1877-1949) joined the mission force in 1902, with

³ Missouri Synod, Proceedings, 1902, p. 54; 1905, p. 74.

CHAPTER V

NEW MEN AND NEW PLACES, 1900 to 1914

New Men and Naether's Death

Albert Huebener arrived in India on 1 December 1900. He was the first of the seventeen American-based missionaries, sixteen men and one woman, who would enter the service of MELIM in the period under study. He and a number of the others were born in Germany, but received their education in the United States. Their relationships to the Board for Foreign Missions were closer, usually nurtured by contact on furlough. A few of them were German citizens and had to leave the field during World War I.

F. E. W. Albert Huebener (1877-1947) was born in Germany, received his early education there, but studied for the ministry at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. Upon arrival in India, he joined Naether at Krishnagiri for language study. In 1902 he moved to Ambur during the time that Mohn was on leave in the hills. In 1903 he shifted to Vaniyambadi to assume charge of that station during Freche's furlough.¹

John F. Forster (1879-1950) and George A. Naumann (1877-1949) joined the mission force in 1902, with

¹Missouri Synod, Proceedings, 1908, p. 84; 1905, p. 74.

backgrounds similar to that of Huebener's. Naumann had served as pastor in Glenwood, Wisconsin, from 1898 until the time of his departure for India. Naumann was Mrs. Naether's brother and the son-in-law of O. Willkomm who had left the Leipzig Mission in 1876. These recruits were surely needed. Their arrival made it possible for Freche to go on furlough in 1903-1904. By 1904 the field should have had a complement of seven men, though by that time Naether, Mohn, and Kellerbauer would be due for furlough.

Cruel blows came in 1904. Bubonic plague hit the area around Krishnagiri. A number of Christians were afflicted by it. When Naether heard that the plague had struck the family of a school teacher, he hurried to help. He contracted the disease and within a week, on 13 February 1904, he was dead.²

The blow to the mission was serious. In addition to Naether's death, the plague brought many losses to the Christian community. The number of baptized Christians dropped from forty-five to thirty-eight between 1901 and 1904, largely as a result of these plague deaths.³ Such misfortunes befalling a new Christian community were

²"Life of Missionary K. G. Theodor Naether," recorded by his daughters, translated by Martin Naumann, Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly, XXXIX (January 1967), 185-187.

³Missouri Synod, Proceedings, 1905, p. 73.

interpreted as a sign of divine displeasure upon these invaders of the Hindu and Muslim faiths.

Life went on. Naether's youngest daughter was born on 26 July 1904. In April 1905, Mrs. Naether went to Germany and settled there with her three daughters. She died in Germany on 15 March 1935.⁴

Naumann, less than two years in the country, assumed the responsibility for the work in Krishnagiri.

In 1905, Henry Nau (1881-1956) a particularly resourceful and aggressive individual, came to the field.⁵ Even though Kellerbauer and Mohn proceeded on furlough in 1905 to 1906, the manpower on the field was sufficient to place men in Krishnagiri, Barugur, Vaniyambadi, and in two stations in Ambur.

Growth, however, was still slow. The statistics of 1906 showed only fifty-nine baptized Christians. This must have been discouraging to these men as they saw the progress of the Leipzig Mission to the southeast of them as well as some of the mass movements coming into churches to the north and northeast.⁶ A call to the south would soon help to relieve this frustration.

⁴Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly, XXXIX, 187.

⁵CHI, H. Stallmann to the writer, 1 March 1969. Dr. Nau's later career, beyond the scope of this paper, bears out this judgment.

⁶J. Waskom Pickett, Christian Mass Movements in India (New York: Abingdon Press, c.1933), pp. 36-53, passim.

The Move to the South, 1907

Nagercoil lies four hundred miles south of the Krishnagiri-Ambur field.⁷ Work among the people here had been begun in 1816 by W. T. Ringeltaube, a German Lutheran working for the London Missionary Society. After his death, the work was carried forward by English missionaries and developed into a large church.

The London Missionary Society had strong congregational principles and espoused a rather lax type of British theology. As a result of the congregational emphasis there was an exaggerated sense of freedom in the various congregations of this mission. Chaotic arguments and schisms were almost the order of the day. A congregation would leave the mission and then regret its decision, but find itself committed to remain separate from the mission.⁸ One such congregation had a prominent member with more than usual education. He was Gnanamuthu Jesudason (1872-1952), a low caste Christian, educated to the university level, employed by a British officer, and, as such, cognizant of the developments of foreign missionary enterprises. Jesudason

⁷Hereafter, the area in which the first work was begun will be referred to as the northern field. The Nagercoil area will be referred to as the southern field.

⁸The writer has come across a number of cases of this nature. Under the episcopal system of the Church of South India of which the former London Mission Society Christians are members, control is much firmer at the top.

approached the missionaries of MELIM and invited them to take over the independent congregation of which he was a member.

The northern district conference delegated A. Huebener and Naumann to go to Nagercoil to investigate the situation. Their investigation showed that the congregation was indeed independent, and that there were many outcaste Christians to whom the Gospel was not being brought by the London Missionary Society.⁹ The records do not show the exact nature of their report, but later in 1907, Huebener moved to Nagercoil to take up this work.¹⁰

There is some evidence that this move was not unanimously approved of by the missionaries of MELIM.¹¹ Objections also arose from the authorities of the London Mission, but they were not considered valid.¹² Within the Missouri Synod, C. M. Zorn defended the move, using such statements

⁹The London Missionary Society had won many members of the Shanar or Nadar caste, who were low in the caste structure, but separated from the Panchamas or Pariahs of whom Jesudason was one.

¹⁰CHI, file of Board letters written by Professor F. Zucker, 25 May 1907.

¹¹Dr. Henry Nau, in a conversation with the writer in 1952, stated that the conference voted negatively by a narrow margin, but was overruled by the Board.

¹²G. Jesudason, "Extension of Work of the Missouri Evangelical Lutheran Mission in India," The Lutheran Witness, XXVI (17 October 1907), 157.

as "We shall remain here and build God's church,"¹³ and "We are urgently called here."¹⁴ Later he reported on the developments in Nagercoil, praising G. Jesudason highly. He also stated that when Huebener arrived, the pro tem pastor of the congregation immediately stepped aside for him.¹⁵

The part which G. Jesudason played in the move is significant. He had the culture and education to move on the level of foreigners. His English was excellent and he was able to express the desires of his people in a way which would be most telling upon the hearer. Shortly after Huebener moved to Nagercoil, Jesudason sent a report to the United States which was printed in its entirety in The Lutheran Witness. It is significant for its tact and eloquency:

Extension of Work of the Missouri Evangelical
Lutheran Mission in India

I am glad to report that the German branch of the Missouri Evangelical Lutheran Missionary Society has kindly granted permission to their missionaries . . . to start Christian work in Travancore, one of the important Protected Native States in India . . . At present the work will be confined to Vadaseri, one of the suburbs of Nagercoil, the chief station

¹³C. M. Z[orn], "Aus unserer ostindischen Mission," Der Lutheraner, LXIV (30 June 1908), 206.

¹⁴Ibid. (14 July 1908), 219.

¹⁵Ibid. (28 July 1908), 235.

in South Travancore, where an independent congregation of about 160 souls exists--I mean a congregation quite unconnected with any recognized missionary society. From here the work of the mission, it is expected, will be extended, in course of time, to the heathen Panchama villages in South Travancore.

. . . In December last, I wrote to one of the missionaries, the Rev. H. Nau, at Krishnagiri, in the Salem District, appealing for spiritual help in behalf of the heathen Panchamas of South Travancore, who according to the census of 1901, number nearly thirty thousand in six taluks [counties] . . . two of the members, the Revs. A. Huebener and G. Naumann, were deputed to proceed to Travancore with a view to finding out whether the conditions were favorable for doing evangelistic work there. On the 21st of February, they arrived at Nagercoil, I accompanied them to several heathen Panchama villages

. . . . While at Nagercoil, the pastor of the independent congregation approached the missionaries and personally expressed a desire, after due consideration with his flock, to entrust the congregation to the missionaries, in the event of their taking it up. . . . In due course, permission was granted by the latter (Home Board) to their missionaries in India to take over the independent congregation and also to commence evangelistic operations among the heathen Panchamas of South Travancore, having Vadaseri as the base. . . . The London Missionary Society missionaries in South Travancore raised objections to the Lutherans' coming there, and for the second time, the Rev. A. Huebener visited South Travancore in July last, this time for the purpose of finding out what the objections of the L. M. S. missionaries were and, if they had any real objections, how far they could be recognized. On his return to Ambur, a conference was again held in which it was finally decided to undertake work in South Travancore.

As I said above, there are nearly 30,000 heathen Panchamas there; I am confident that several thousands of these people will join the Christian fold within a comparatively short time, if the work is carried on in true Christian sympathy and love.

. . . The Rev. A. Huebener . . . has already endeared himself to large numbers of the people concerned The readers of the Lutheran Witness are earnestly requested to pray for God's

richest blessing on the new work of the Missouri Evangelical Lutheran Mission in South Travancore.

G. Jesudason

Camp Ernakulam
Cochin State, South India¹⁶

Huebener received a cool reception in Nagercoil from the London Mission Society missionaries. The word went around that none of the local Christians should rent him any quarters. He finally managed to rent a house from, of all people, the Rev. Mr. Ambrose, a pastor of the London Mission. Mr. Ambrose was severely censured for this action, but no other action was taken against him.¹⁷ Another man who offered assistance in these early days was a Muslim named Mustapha. He acted as banker, builder, expediter, and general factotum for the new men. Still living and still a Muslim, this gentleman has the amusing habit of speaking of "our mission" whenever he comes in contact with the missionary successors of those first men.¹⁸

Huebener's first colleague was Theodore Gutknecht (1883-1960). Gutknecht arrived in India in 1907 and

¹⁶The Lutheran Witness, XXVI, 157.

¹⁷Related to the writer by the Rev. Ambrose's son, Mr. A. Gunamony, retired Government official and lawyer for the IELC. The writer was not able to ask the obvious question, "Did your father receive an exceptionally high rent for his trouble?" The conversation took place in July 1967 in Nagercoil.

¹⁸Mr. Mustapha was also a prominent politician in Travancore.

proceeded immediately to Nagercoil for language study with the purpose of becoming acquainted with this new area as he studied the language.¹⁹

Two years later, Gerhard C. H. J. E. Huebener (1878-1957), the younger brother of Albert Huebener, came to India and joined his brother and Gutknecht in the new work.²⁰ One year younger than his brother, Gerhard Huebener had served parishes in Crown and Pine City, Minnesota, between 1901 and 1909.

G. Jesudason soon left his government post and became a worker and evangelist in the mission. After private instruction he was ordained as the first Indian pastor of MELIM on 13 March 1921.²¹ Born in 1872, Jesudason was thirty-five when the Nagercoil work began. Before the missionaries were willing to recommend his ordination to the Board, which held the authorizing power, his matter came up for repeated discussion in conferences.²²

¹⁹Missouri Synod, Proceedings, 1908, p. 105.

²⁰Ibid., 1911, p. 127.

²¹R. W. Goerss, "Rev. Jesudason's Ordination," The Lutheran Witness, XL (27 September 1921), 312-313; the author gives a detailed report of the beginnings of the work, but gives no vita of Jesudason.

²²cf. the rough parallel in the case of Bishop Samuel Crowther in Peter Beyerhaus and Henry Lefever, The Responsible Church and the Foreign Mission (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, c.1964), pp. 65-73.

The move to Nagercoil more than doubled the number of Christians in MELIM, adding 142 to the total. Statistics for 1907 showed that, while the northern district had an increase from 58 to 87 between 1904 and 1907, the southern district brought the total to 209.²³

Developments, 1907-1912

Further changes came into the mission in the immediately following years. F. R. Zucker (1883-1968), son of the Director of the Board for Foreign Missions, joined the southern field in 1910. G. J. Kuechle (1888-1967) arrived in the same year and was allocated to the northern district. Heinrich Stallmann (1887-) entered the northern district in 1912. Furloughs took A. Huebener away from India between 1910 and 1912, and George Naumann between 1911 and 1912. The illness of Mrs. Forster forced Missionary Forster to submit his resignation from India service in 1911.²⁴

The missionary strength of the MELIM in 1911 was eleven. In the northern district were Mohn, Kellerbauer, Naumann, Kuechle, Nau, Freche, and Stallmann (en route); the southern district had A. Huebener, G. Huebener, Gutknecht, and Zucker.²⁵

²³ Missouri Synod, Proceedings, 1908, p. 104.

²⁴ Ibid., 1911, p. 127.

²⁵ Ibid.

The work centered in two widely separated areas; the northern field consisted of stations in Krishnagiri, Barugur, Vaniyambadi, and Ambur, a string of towns situated on the Bangalore-Madras road and on the banks of the Palar River. In this very dry area of South India, both the river and the road are essential for supporting a dense population. The stations were strategically located. A few miles northwest of Krishnagiri, Tamil gives way to Telugu and Kanarese; fifteen miles east of Ambur lay the borders of the work of the Arcot Mission, a group connected with the Reformed Church of America. People to be won in the northern field were plentiful, but the work was extremely difficult. A few outcaste Hindus came to the faith; few inroads were made into the caste Hindu communities and none into the large Muslim population.²⁶

The southern district lay in the native state of Travancore,²⁷ India's southernmost state. Between 1907 and 1912, the southern district centered around the city of Nagercoil, located about twelve miles from India's

²⁶The writer is acquainted with the history and geography of this area through repeated visits and contacts with others working there. His own area of work has been the southern district.

²⁷Since independence, the native state of Travancore has ceased to exist. In 1956, the states of India were realigned on a linguistic basis. The northern district and the Nagercoil, or Tamil speaking, part of the southern district are in Tamilnad (until 1968, Madras State); the Malayalam speaking area is known as Kerala.

land's end, Cape Comorin. Up to 1916, all the missionaries working in the Tamil language of the southern area were stationed in Nagercoil and traveled ten to fifteen miles in various directions to reach the villages of their work. Only two congregations were located in the city proper.²⁸

Numerical growth came much more rapidly in the southern district. A superficial reason was the inevitable shifting of allegiance from the London Mission or the Salvation Army,²⁹ to the new mission. More important was the fact that the London Mission Christians had gone through decades of persecution from Hindu neighbors and had, finally, hewn out a modus vivendi by which they could follow their faith without undue difficulty. This benefit accrued, to a certain extent, to Hindus of the outcaste communities who wished to become Christians.³⁰ In this way, the Lutheran missionaries were able to reap the results of other's labors. This was not as much "sheepstealing" as it was finding a populace reasonably well disposed toward the Christian message.

²⁸This is true today; it may be an anachronism, since city boundaries may have been different at that time. The two congregations at that time, Vadaseri and Ganesapuram, lie about two miles apart. Nagercoil congregation came later and grew up around missionary residences, about midway between the other two.

²⁹The Salvation Army had come into Nagercoil, primarily as a medical mission, in the 1880's.

³⁰Herbert M. Zorn, "Relations between the Missouri Lutherans and the London Missionary Society," Indian Church History Review, I (December 1967), 133-137.

The statistics of 1910 were heartening. The total of baptized Christians had grown from 201 in 1907 to 350, with 127 in the northern district and 223 in the southern.³¹ The years of barren struggle were bearing fruit and results were coming in more rapidly.

A New Task and a New Language, 1912

In 1912, MELIM made a move into a new area. This move received very little notice in minutes and correspondence, which is surprising in the light of its importance. Henry Nau, who by this time had joined the southern district, received a request to begin work in the Trivandrum area, forty-two miles northwest of Nagercoil. Chief among his contacts was Masilamoni Paulose (1879-1960). This man, a member of the Sambavar³² caste, had worked as a catechist, teacher and evangelist with the London Mission. Since he

³¹Missouri Synod, Proceedings, 1911, p. 127.

³²For the purposes of this paper, a few summary remarks on caste are in order. Sambavar or Parian and Cheramar or Pullian are names given to the members of two of the lower castes which have turned in larger numbers to Christianity. The London Mission made its greatest gains among Nadars or Shanars, a caste slightly higher than those mentioned above, but still not in the generally accepted caste structure. Frictions between castes have been a major cause of disruption in the churches. It should be remembered that almost everyone in India belongs to a caste or a tribe. Exceptions are the Muslims, Anglo-Indians, and some Christians where castes were forcibly mixed. But even among them, the general saying: "They have broken caste and then become a new caste," is valid. Even an outcaste has his own caste.

was of a lower caste than the majority of the London Mission Christians, he felt that his chances and those of his caste were poor for an adequate ministry and for the advancement of education and other benefits. After discussing the matter with a missionary of the London Mission, Paulose made his request to Nau.³³ Paulose later became the first ordained Malayalee pastor of MELIM.³⁴

The move to Trivandrum was taken chiefly on the initiative of Henry Nau. It receives passing mention, but chiefly as a fait accompli.³⁵ One reason for this lack of attention to the action is that the London Mission had probably concluded that there was little point in objecting again, since their objections had failed in 1907. Henry Nau, in addition to being a capable man, was also one of strong will and a conviction that the Lord approves of aggressive action. He informed the Board of his action after the fact.³⁶ The correspondence at this time does

³³In 1953, Paulose reviewed the above story to the writer. He admitted very frankly that the initial interest in the Lutheran Mission was not doctrinal, but the desire for better opportunities for advancement. Only later did the realization of true and false doctrine come.

³⁴A. Rasch, "Ordination of M. Paulos at Trivandrum," The Lutheran Witness, LI (30 August 1932), 307.

³⁵Jul. A. Friedrich, "Ein Weihnachtsgrusz von unserer juengsten Missionsstation in Indien," Der Lutheraner, LXVIII (24 December 1912), 409-410.

³⁶Reminiscences of Dr. Nau to the writer in 1952; his activities as a missionary to the Muslims from 1951 to

not show any dissatisfaction on the part of the Board, but in 1913, Director Friedrich wrote to Nau:

I plead with you, my dear brother Nau, as your friend and as a friend of our beloved mission, try with God's help to be more restrained in your writing. Such explosions are an excessive burden to me and to other friends of mission work. Just as I, while eagerly awaiting your answer, had built up a singular enthusiasm--even a previously unimaginable foolhardy enthusiasm--for Trivandrum, your stream of cold water came! If this matter had not already been decided, I doubt whether it would have come through in its present form.³⁷

Nau later wrote a book describing life in Travancore.³⁸

The move to Trivandrum was significant for two reasons. It was a move which began to involve the MELIM in the problems of caste. This was not immediately evident, though the implications were present. At the time of the move, Paulose, his father-in-law, one Arulanandam, and several other men, demanded that the Lutheran missionaries agree to work exclusively among the Sambavars for the first fifteen years. The request must have puzzled the missionaries, for in the group was one J. Canchanam, a man of mixed caste. The missionaries refused to agree to this demand; they did begin work among the people who had invited them,

1953 bear this out; letter from H. Stallmann to the writer, 1 March 1969.

³⁷CHI, J. Friedrich to H. Nau, 10 April 1913.

³⁸Heinrich Nau, Vanji Bhumi, Einiges ueber Travancore und seine Bewohner (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1913).

however.³⁹ It is probable that the men who made the demand took the missionaries' refusal as a pro forma act, since their reasons for refusing would have been based upon Scriptural quotations; the fact that the missionaries were still ready to serve them, however, would have been interpreted as a tacit form of half assent.⁴⁰ During the period of this study, missionaries controlled the church organization completely; caste difficulties were submerged. The difficulties of more recent times, however, have their roots in this period.⁴¹ The difficulty of caste would have come into MELIM sooner or later, anyway. The move into the Trivandrum area merely brought it sooner.

The other problem was the significance of moving into a new language, Malayalam.⁴² Tamil and Malayalam are sister

³⁹Two Indian pastors supplied this information: the Rev. W. Ferdinand, a pastor of another caste, in 1953, and the Rev. J. C. James, son of J. Canchanam, in 1953, but at a different time.

⁴⁰This interpretation grows out of the writer's experience with Indian village ways. It is frequently understood that you cannot agree to a condition in so many words, but if you take the action to which the condition was appended, you have committed yourself to a degree. Strong protestations to the contrary usually mean little or nothing.

⁴¹Recent church election struggles in the southern districts, both in Tamil and Malayalam speaking areas, have been strongly colored by caste considerations.

⁴²Tamil is spoken today by about fifty million people and Malayalam by about twenty million. Along with Telugu and Kanarese, they are classified as Dravidian languages. Malayalam has a greater admixture of Sanskrit than Tamil.

languages, but there are very distinct differences between them. Each has a highly developed form and grammar and boasts an extensive literature. They use separate alphabets and are not mutually intelligible except to those people who live in the border areas; even there, the resulting mixture is a patois with no standing among the purists of either language. The Tamilians of Nagercoil and the Malayalees of Trivandrum had only minimal difficulty in understanding each other. This could not be said for the Tamilians of the northern district, however. They understood no Malayalam and even had difficulty with what was often pejoratively called, "Nagercoil Tamil." The implications for future theological training are obvious.⁴³

Henry Nau moved to the capital of Travancore, Trivandrum, to begin work in this new area. He was soon joined by F. R. Zucker, who had begun the study of Tamil but turned his efforts to Malayalam. They were joined by J. C. Harms (1889-1965) in 1912 and O. Ehlers⁴⁴ in 1913. A. J. Lutz (1889-1948) joined the Nagercoil staff in 1912.⁴⁵

⁴³The writer has studied and has a reasonable competence in Malayalam. He teaches at Concordia Seminary, Nagercoil in a combination of Malayalam, Tamil, and English. Roughly forty percent of the students are Malayalees, sixty percent Tamilians. The lingua franca for IELC meetings is English.

⁴⁴According to M. Paulose, ca. 1949, Ehlers was the missionary most competent in Malayalam. He left the mission in 1923 and became a salesman in Cleveland, Ohio. His dates are not available.

⁴⁵Missouri Synod, Proceedings, 1914, p. 102.

In the statistical report of 1913, MELIM counted 675 Christians, an increase of 350, almost one hundred per cent, from 1910. Of these, 162 were communicant members. They were being served by fifteen missionaries in seven stations. The 1913 contributions of the Indian Christians totaled Rupees 693, annas 5, pice 11, approximately \$331.⁴⁶

This increase in missionary staff increased the business of MELIM. Personalities clashed and the needs of districts conflicted with one another. Correspondence from the Board to the field indicated that there was a serious rift between the northern and southern district in 1910 and 1911. Since the correspondence available does not include answers from the field, one can only surmise that the issue was the allocation of missionaries. A cable sent from the field to the Board with one word, "Peace," was received with joy in the United States in early 1912.⁴⁷ The matter of Ehlers' allocation was originally to the northern district but later changed to Trivandrum.⁴⁸ It was a bone of contention, although later than 1911.⁴⁹

⁴⁶Ibid., pp. 108-109.

⁴⁷CHI, file of Board letters, passim; 10 February 1912.

⁴⁸MELIM, Proceedings, February 1914, pp. 110-123.

⁴⁹CHI, A. and G. Huebener to Board in 1912 and 1913, passim.

Kodaikanal Hill Station

A source of considerable help and comfort to the mission staff was the purchase of property in Kodaikanal, an important hill station roughly midway between the northern and southern districts. The property, purchased from a Scottish resident, Mr. McNair, was called Loch End. It consisted of three acres of land with two double residences for the use of vacationing missionary families. The cost of the property was Rupees 27,000 or \$9,000.⁵⁰ Immediately after the purchase of the property, the missionaries requested Rupees 6000 or \$2,000 for building an additional vacation residence.⁵¹ The money for this residence came from a Walther League society through the good offices of Pastor O. Kaiser of Milwaukee.⁵² The purchase of Loch End compound provided regular opportunity for missionaries to leave the heat and pressure of work on the plains and to enjoy rest and relaxation. Previously, rented quarters had been used for hill leave; the advantage of owning the property lay in providing places where mothers could come to get additional relief for their children who would often be covered with prickly heat and boils during much of the hot season.

⁵⁰ MELIM, Proceedings, October 1912, p. 46.

⁵¹ Ibid., January 1913, p. 87.

⁵² Ibid., February 1914, pp. 123-124. Pastor Kaiser reminded the writer of this in a conversation in February 1955.

With the purchase of this property, the question of allowable duration of hill leave arose. In 1899, the rule was a three-month leave every three years at the missionary's own expense.⁵³ In 1912, when the time had come for a new policy, the missionaries on the field suggested a leave of two months every two years.⁵⁴ In 1914, the Board was again considering a new policy; this time the missionaries requested a leave of six weeks every year.⁵⁵ This liberalization of hill leave rules, which is roughly the general rule in India now, was the result of a number of factors. Among them was the wear and tear on missionary health of long, unbroken periods on the tropical plains. Another factor was the slowly increasing convenience of travel. Previously, the trip to the hills alone was so arduous that few ventured it unless assured that a two or three months' rest lay ahead. Dr. Nau described it as follows:

At night we went to the backwaters dock in Trivandrum and boarded the boat that would be poled up to Quilon. It took all night to make that fifty mile trip. The next morning we took the train from Quilon to Kodai Road; that took all day for one hundred thirty miles. We got off the train and onto a bandy (oxcart) for the twenty-five mile trip to Periakulam; that took

⁵³CHI, file of Board letters, J. F. Zucker to field, June 17, 1899.

⁵⁴MELIM, Proceedings, October 1912, p. 50.

⁵⁵Ibid., February 1914, pp. 138-143.

all night. Early the next morning, coolies came along and took our luggage on their heads, and others took Mrs. Nau and the children in palanquins and carried them up the mountainside. They would have taken me, too, but the swaying of the palanquin always made me sick, so I walked. As we walked up the mountains, the weather would become cooler. At five in the evening we would be in Kodai.⁵⁶

In 1912 trains and buses were replacing boats and oxcarts to bring people to the foot of the mountains. Promises were made that a motorable road would soon be opened up,⁵⁷ replacing the ten mile "coolie ghat"⁵⁸ trip.

Kodaikanal was on top of a range of mountains, 7000 feet above sea level. The mountains, known as the Palni Hills, are geologically old and resemble the Appalachian mountains of the eastern United States. "Hill station" sounds like a misnomer, but in the land of the Himalayas, 7000 feet elevation is not great. Similarly, "the plains" are incorrectly named. For example, Krishnagiri is on the slope that rises onto the Deccan plateau of South India, and Nagercoil, though at sea level, is surrounded by hills of between 1500 and 2500 feet elevation. In Indian

⁵⁶Quoted from memory from story told by H. Nau in 1953 at writer's home.

⁵⁷O. A. Ehlers, "Kodaikanal Home," The Lutheran Witness, XLI (28 February 1922), 76, describes the newly-opened road.

⁵⁸"Coolie" refers to hired servants, though actually meaning wages. "Ghat" means mountain, but is often used to mean mountain road.

missionary English, the point of demarcation between "hills" and "plains" is one of climate, not elevation.

Next point on the agenda after the purchase of the hill station was the matter of a school for missionary children. Naumann and A. Huebener, whose children were of school age, prepared a particular plea to the Board to supply house parents who could take care of the younger children and give them their early education.⁵⁹ At this time, there is little indication that the request intended to go beyond primary education, since the belief was strong that the tropics, hill station or plains, were particularly dangerous to the health of children.⁶⁰ The matter attracted some attention in the United States, but by the time anything could be done, World War I broke out and travel was impossible. Besides, the missionaries with school age children, for the most part, were repatriated to Germany.⁶¹

Visitation by Director Friedrich

Julius A. Friedrich (1862-1958) became the director of the Board for Foreign Missions in May of 1912.⁶² Shortly

⁵⁹MELIM, Proceedings, February 1914, pp. 127-137.

⁶⁰CHI, cf. P. F. Heckel to F. Brand, 2 February 1928, in which he quotes a colonel of the India Medical Service who argued that no European child should be in India beyond the age of six.

⁶¹CHI, J. Friedrich to field, 20 October 1915, stated that C. M. Zorn had found a suitable couple for this task.

⁶²CHI, F. Zucker to field, 23 May 1912.

after assuming this post, he made a visitation of the India field. He arrived in September 1912 and remained until March 1913.⁶³ He visited all the stations in the northern and southern districts as well as Kodaikanal. Two conferences of missionaries were held during his stay, 5-9 October 1912, and 5-8 January 1913.⁶⁴ His chief purpose was to become acquainted with the field and with the men laboring there. He exercised restraint in giving directives or judgments. Friedrich's willingness to listen and to carry the case back to the church in America won him the respect and admiration of the missionaries.⁶⁵ His written reports appeared in Der Lutheraner during his stay in India,⁶⁶ but very few original reports appeared from his pen after his return. Did the complexity of the mission dawn upon him after he had been there a time, and deter him from writing so freely?

At the time of Friedrich's visit, Franz Mohn resigned from mission service. He was due for furlough, his second

⁶³Jul. A. Friedrich, "Aus unserer Mission in Indien," Der Lutheraner, LXVIII (26 November 1912), 377-378.

⁶⁴MELIM, Proceedings, October 1912 and October 1913, passim.

⁶⁵Dr. H. Nau, orally to the writer, March 1953.

⁶⁶Friedrich, Der Lutheraner, LXVIII, 377-378; Jul. A. Friedrich, "Die zweiten Allgemeine Konferenz unserer Missionare in Indien," ibid. (10 December 1912), 394-395; Friedrich, ibid., LXVIII (24 December 1912), 409-410.

since his arrival in 1896. At the conference of missionaries held in Ambur in January 1913, the following supplement was added to the minutes:

Since brother Mohn feels himself compelled by family reasons to leave mission service after twenty-five years' service, a brief farewell celebration was held on the evening of the last day. An address, signed by the brethren in attendance at the conference and by the esteemed mission director, and a golden cross with the inscription: "India, 1889-1913," were presented.⁶⁷

Mohn went to the United States, and settled in Chicago. In late 1914 he accepted a call to Wauboy, South Dakota. This evidently did not work out, for in 1916, acting Director Kretzschmar wrote to a district president stating that the Board could not assume the expense for Mohn's support and added:

How sad that no one can find a position for Pastor Mohn, a faithful and capable man only forty-nine years old! Yet the harvest is great and workers few. Isn't this an ominous sign of the times?⁶⁸

Mohn later served congregations in La Porte and Decatur, Indiana. Illness forced him to resign in 1923; he died in 1925.

⁶⁷ MELIM, Proceedings, January 1913, pp. 92-93.

⁶⁸ CHI, R. Kretzschmar to Pres. Ehlen and Bro. Hempel, 18 December 1916.

Following Friedrich's visitation three more recruits joined MELIM. R. W. Goerss (1889-1941) entered the southern district and J. J. Williems (1884-1943)⁶⁹ the northern district in 1913. Miss Louise Ellermann also came in 1913, the first woman worker and the first person trained in medicine.

Beginnings of Medical Missions

Medical missions had a hesitant and step-sisterly beginning in MELIM. In early correspondence between 1907 and 1911, the possibility of sending a medical worker, in each case a woman, was mooted in letters from the Board to the field.⁷⁰ Nothing came of this correspondence, until Director Friedrich returned to America after his visitation in 1913. Shortly thereafter, Miss Ellermann came to India. She started a small dispensary in Barugur, with only the simplest of equipment.⁷¹ While her primary purpose was to serve the Indian people, she was frequently asked to

⁶⁹Jean Jacques Williems, which changes to Jean James Williams over the years; e.g. Williems to Friedrich, 22 May 1914, is signed "Williems," Williams to Friedrich, 29 July 1914, is signed "Williams." But this is not consistently carried out.

⁷⁰CHI, file of Board letters, 18 November 1907; 10 October 1908; 2 January 1910.

⁷¹In the obituary for Miss Ellermann in AN, Sattia Satchi, XXXVIII (April 1958), 101; Miss Ellermann died, after marriage to J. Sundermann, in 1958.

help out as midwife for missionary mothers, traveling to Nagercoil and Kodaikanal for that purpose.⁷² She consulted closely with Dr. Ida Scudder of Vellore Hospital, and made arrangements for Dr. Scudder to visit the more seriously ill patients from time to time.⁷³ In later years, Miss Ellermann turned almost exclusively to work among Indian women, practicing her medicine only on the side.⁷⁴ This change came at least partly out of disappointment over the lack of support which she received from her colleagues.⁷⁵

In his sermon at the commissioning of Naether and Mohn, C. M. Zorn had made no reference to medical missions, except for conceding the possibility that the missionaries might find new ways to communicate the Word.⁷⁶ MELIM was inclined to be defensive on this matter, emphasizing that medical work must never be a hindrance to other work:

- 1) Such medical work will answer a crying need of the populace and will be a great blessing for our mission work and will open many doors.

⁷²CHI, L. Ellermann to R. Kretzschmar, 20 November 1917.

⁷³Jul. A. Friedrich, "Kurze Nachrichten aus unsern Missionen," Der Lutheraner, LXX (21 July 1914), 238.

⁷⁴CHI, L. Ellermann to F. Brand, 9 April 1924.

⁷⁵CHI, L. Ellermann to Friedrich and Board of Directors, 15 March 1915.

⁷⁶Supra, pp. 46-47.

- 2) Such medical mission, will, however, involve much time and money. We can expect little from the natives, even if they agree to pay for their own treatment.
- 3) The medical mission must in no case take precedence with us, if because of it strength and finance for our other work is reduced.⁷⁷

In 1914, Director Friedrich wrote:

Medical missions are not in themselves mission work, but a means to an end, a handmaid to win the trust of the heathen for mission workers and to open the doors of the houses. Thus the mission workers may have the opportunity to speak God's Word, especially to women and girls.⁷⁸

Small wonder that it was years before the task of the healing mission of the church assumed a truly integral role in MELIMI

MELIM was flourishing as Europe hovered on the brink of war. Christians numbered about seven hundred; sixteen ordained missionaries and one nurse were in MELIM service. The work was heavy, but it seemed to lie within the capabilities of the staff. Some casual talk had arisen over the training of nationals, but this was mostly carried on by each missionary in his place. The test of war would be cruel, but helpful for MELIM.

⁷⁷MELIM, Proceedings, January 1913, pp. 78-79.

⁷⁸Jul. A. Friedrich, "Unsere Heidenmission in Ostindien," Der Lutheraner, LXX (31 March 1914), 110.

R. Kretschmar dated 24 July 1930.

R. Nau to R. Kretschmar, 1918-1930, passing this correspondence supplied the Board with information about the former missionaries.

CHAPTER VI

WORLD WAR I, SHOCK, GROWTH, AND RETHINKING, 1914 TO 1919

War and its Effect on MELIM

World War I brought immediate difficulties to MELIM. Kellerbauer and Nau were on furlough in Germany with their families and were unable to return.¹ Mrs. Freche had left for furlough with the children some months before Freche himself was to leave. Two men were thus immediately cut off from the field and the third found himself in an impossible position.

Kellerbauer died in late 1914. Nau served as a hospital chaplain in Germany during the war.² After the war, he served as principal correspondent between the missionaries from Germany and the Board.³ He expressed his willingness to return to India, but the British government refused to permit Germans to return to India for

¹Jul. A. Friedrich, "Kurze Nachrichten aus unsern Missionen," Der Lutheraner, LXX (4 August 1914), 270.

²CHI, cf. vita sent to the Secretary of State by R. Kretzschmar dated 22 July 1920.

³H. Nau to R. Kretzschmar, 1918-1920, passim; this correspondence supplied the Board with information about the former missionaries.

at least two years. Nau and his family went to America in 1920 where he served as professor in New Orleans and Greensboro, as well as missionary in Africa and, after his retirement, as missionary to the Muslims in India from 1951 to 1954. He died in 1956 in the United States.

Freche's case was more complicated. Mrs. Freche and the children had gone to Germany in 1914. Freche asked the British government for permission to go to America and wait for his wife to join him there, since at the time America was neutral. He was over fifty at the time of the outbreak of the war; as such, he was not normally liable to internment and repatriation. Freche was granted permission to make the trip by the British consul in Madras. He sailed on 2 June 1915 for San Francisco via the Pacific. When his ship put in at Hong Kong, however, the British authorities took him off the ship and interned him, refusing to honor the commitment of the British authorities in India. The authorization had been given in India by a man of consular rank; the Hong Kong authorities demanded authorization from headquarters in Delhi.⁴ Various representations finally made it possible for Freche to proceed

⁴J. A. Friedrich, "Nachrichten aus unserer ostindischen Heidenmission," Der Lutheraner, LXXI (20 July 1915), 285; L. F[uerbringer], "Aus unserer ostindischen Mission," ibid. (12 October 1915), 402.

to the United States. He arrived in San Francisco some-
time before 28 October 1915.⁵ His family joined him
shortly after that. After a brief ministry in Friedenbergl,
Menfro, Missouri, Freche became the editor of Concordia
Magazine in 1920.⁶ He died in 1924.⁷

All the disabilities of German citizenship fell upon
Albert Huebener. He had studied in the United States but
had not taken out citizenship, as had his brother Gerhard.⁸
On 10 November 1914 Albert Huebener was interned in Fort
St. George, Madras; Mrs. Huebener and the children were in
the Kodaikanal hill station.⁹ Within a month Huebener was
shifted to an internment camp at Ahmednagar in north India.
During the next year, first his family and later Huebener
himself were repatriated to Germany. He remained active in
Germany, at times deeply involved in theological arguments.¹⁰
He died in Germany in 1947.

⁵CHI, Cf. J. Friedrich to R. Freche, 22 May 1915;
Freche to Kretzschmar, 28 October 1915; Kretzschmar to
Freche, 13 November 1916.

⁶CHI, R. Freche to R. Kretzschmar, 29 June 1920;
12 November 1920.

⁷No obituary appears in either Der Lutheraner or The
Lutheran Witness; Sattia Satchi, XXIV (July 1944), 86-88.

⁸Probably because he came to India immediately after
his Seminary training, while Gerhard served a parish in
America for eight years.

⁹Jul. A. Friedrich, "Nachrichten aus unsern Missionen,"
Der Lutheraner, LXXI (5 January 1915), 8-9.

¹⁰CHI, cf. "Das Wesen des rechtfertigenden Glaubens

The other man whose missionary career was cut short by the war was Jean Jacques Williems. This man's woes were complicated by doubtful citizenship and a fiancée waiting to join him in India. He was born in Alsace, which made him a German citizen in the eyes of the British government. In late 1914, he was detained for a week in Bangalore and then shifted to Ahmednagar. Conditions in Ahmednagar camp were good and the opportunities for Christian fellowship ample.¹¹ When the British attempted to repatriate Williems, however, his Alsatian citizenship left him without a country. He spent the war years in Zeist, Holland, unwanted by the Germans or the Allies. His offer to fight in the American forces was declined.¹² During the war, he worked as an electrician. In the meantime, his fiancée, Miss Paula Gerbing, was vainly trying to join him. Her travel plans to India in 1913 and 1914 were changed and delayed repeatedly.¹³ At one point she asked

uns sein Verhaeltnis zum Gebrauch der Gnadenmittel, Gebet um Vergebung der Suenden zur Meditation usw.," an undated eight-thesis tract with the initials "A. H." in Huebener's file near letters dated 1919; A. Huebener to R. Kretzschmar, 30 November 1920.

¹¹CHI, quoted in letter from Paula Gerbing to J. Friedrich, 9 February 1915.

¹²CHI, J. Williems to R. Kretzschmar, 19 May 1917.

¹³CHI, P. Gerbing to J. Friedrich, 3 November 1914; J. Williems to J. Friedrich, 5 March 1914; J. Friedrich to J. Williems, 30 November 1914; 30 June, 1915.

the Board to advance the money to bring Williems back to the United States; she felt that her encouragement had prompted him to accept the call to India and to fall into these difficulties. She offered to pay the money back to Synod in installments.¹⁴

Williems' war experience embittered him considerably. In 1920 he broke his engagement to Miss Gerbing.¹⁵ In 1921 F. Brand expressed concern about his situation fearing that he had made "shipwreck of the faith."¹⁶ By 1922, Williems came to the United States, married a Miss Emma Luker, and served congregations in Alpha, Minnesota, Glenwood City and Boyceville, Wisconsin. He died in 1943.

Heinrich Stallmann was the most fortunate of the German citizens among the missionaries. He explained the situation:

I did not go to the concentration camp in Ahmednagar, as was the case with many other German missionaries in India. For that I am indebted to the "Collector" of the Madras government. This man came to Ambur occasionally for inspection purposes, sometimes with his officers. Once he had car trouble near the mission house in which I was living. I invited him in to tea and we became friends. When the war broke out in 1914, I turned to this high official with the request that I be permitted to carry on my work at my mission station. I promised him that I would not indulge in any war propaganda for Germany. This was not easy, since

¹⁴CHI, P. Gerbing to J. Friedrich, 5 December 1914.

¹⁵CHI, J. Williems to R. Kretzschmar, 27 October 1920.

¹⁶CHI, F. Brand to H. Stallmann, 8 April 1921, asking Stallmann to visit Williems in Holland.

Mohammedans were continually posing as friends of Germany and came to me to find out something about the progress of the war. But I was careful and attempted to remain politically neutral. Thus I remained undisturbed until the fall of 1915. When the German submarines sank so many English ships, however, the precautionary measures of the English government against the Germans in India became sterner. Finally all Germans in India were repatriated on two round trips of the 7000-ton ship Golconda from Calcutta and Bombay to London and then over to Holland, Vlissingen (Flushing) to Germany. On Christmas day we crossed the equator on the west coast of Africa and arrived in our German homeland in January or February.¹⁷

Upon arrival in Germany, Stallmann entered upon the study of medicine. He had been impressed by the tremendous opportunities for medical work. With the concurrence and assistance of the Board, he completed almost all the theoretical training for his medical degree by the end of the war. His hopes for returning to India were shattered, however, when the British government refused to grant German citizens entrance to India even after the war was over. Finally, in 1921, Stallmann asked for and received a release to serve in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Saxony.¹⁸ Stallmann is still living (1969) in retirement in Wittingen, Germany, with the title, "Altpraeses."

¹⁷CHI, H. Stallmann to the writer, 1 March 1969.

¹⁸CHI, *ibid.*; P. Loeffler, President of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Saxony to Board for Foreign Missions, 6 April 1921; F. Brand to P. Loeffler, 18 May 1921.

November 1947.

¹⁹CHI, A. Kretschmar to G. Saumann, 12 February 1917.

Two other losses struck MELIM during the war years. T. Gutknecht, who had arrived in 1907, proceeded on furlough in 1914, burdened with chronic illness.¹⁹ He resigned from mission service, served parishes in Nashua, Campbell, and Swanville, Minnesota until 1922, when he returned to India for further service.²⁰ George Naumann went on furlough in 1916. The poor health of one of his children forced him to resign.²¹ He accepted a call to Osseo, Wisconsin in 1917. Naumann tried to return to India in 1917, but travel for a family in wartime was impossible.²² He later served a congregation in Spring, Texas, until his retirement in 1945. He died in 1949.

The War Years

Only a skeleton staff was left in MELIM. The four pioneers, Naether, Kellerbauer, Mohn, and Freche were gone. Their five immediate successors were also gone: Albert Huebener, Forster, Naumann, Nau, and Gutknecht. Gerhard Huebener with six years' experience was a senior man on the field. Kuechle and Zucker were close behind him with

¹⁹CHI, J. Friedrich to A. Huebener, 2 October 1913.

²⁰AN, Sattia Satchi, I (May 1922), 64.

²¹Conversation with Gerhard Naumann, son of George, November 1947.

²²CHI, R. Kretzschmar to G. Naumann, 12 February 1917.

five years' background. Stallmann and Williems had come and gone. Harms, Lutz, Goerss, Ehlers, and Miss Ellermann were just completing their language study. Two new men, Henry Hamann (1889-) and Erich Ludwig (1893-1919) joined the staff in 1915.²³ The greater part of the war period, then, found the following distribution of missionaries: the northern field included Kuechle, Hamann, and Ludwig. The Tamil section of the southern field had G. Huebener, Lutz, and Goerss. Zucker, Harms, and Ehlers served the Malayalam section of the southern field. Miss Ellermann carried on medical work in the northern field. An analysis of this strength must take into account the limited experience and language facility of the younger men. Thus, each district had one experienced missionary and two others in various degrees of language study and orientation.

The war also affected much of the planning that would normally have been part of the mission venture. The urgent plea for boarding parents in Kodaikanal hill station simply disappeared from discussion.²⁴ The difficulty of getting

²³F. Dean Lueking, Mission in the Making, The Missionary Enterprise among Missouri Synod Lutherans, 1846-1963 (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1964), p. 344.

²⁴It appears that a lay couple by the name of Lorey was stopped from entering India in early 1916. CHI, H. Lorey to Board, 15 December 1915; W. A. Leonard, American Consul, Colombo to R. Kretzschmar, 21 February 1916; it is the couple referred to in J. Friedrich to field, 25 May 1912.

new people into India was the main factor in taking this matter off the agenda. The first boarding parents came out only after the war in 1922.²⁵

Surprisingly, these difficulties do not show up in losses in growth. On the contrary, the young mission grew with astonishing rapidity.

The statistical figures as presented to the Missouri Synod at its conventions in 1914, 1917, and 1920 give some idea of this growth.

<u>Statistical Year</u>	<u>1913</u>	<u>1916</u>	<u>1919</u>
Missionaries	15	9	5
Baptized members	675	1378	1681
Communicants	162	230	318
School enrollment	1717	2315	2657
Baptized schoolchildren	193	429	310
National helpers			
Christian	58	81	127
Non-Christian	38	47	52
Contributions	Rs. 693	no record	Rs. 4150

The drop in the number of baptized school children between 1916 and 1919 is puzzling. No records are available to explain this. It is possible that a school was closed in an area where a number of Christian children of other missions attended. This would hardly explain the

²⁵L. F[uerbringer], "Zur Kirchlichen Chronik, Aus unserer Synode," Der Lutheraner, LXXVIII (24 January 1922), 25.

²⁶*ibid.*, October 1899, p. 341.

discrepancy, however. The number of schools increased from forty-nine to sixty-eight in those three years; it seems doubtful that many schools would be closed, even if other Christians attended them.²⁶

Most significant in these statistics is the sharp increase in national helpers. Although Indians had served as teachers in schools from the beginning of MELIM, the essential nature of their services became clear during the war years. G. Jesudason was an evangelist in the Nagercoil area. Others were serving as congregational workers as well. By 1919, there were two evangelists and thirty-two catechists in MELIM service.²⁷

The question of setting up a theological training program had been mentioned from the early days of MELIM. Mohn had expressed fear of unionism if the missionaries would cooperate in producing a Tamil Preachers' Magazine;²⁸ he also reported to the early conferences on his efforts at giving teacher training to the men working in his schools.²⁹ A meeting of MELIM in May 1915 discussed the requirements

²⁶Missouri Synod, Proceedings, 1914, pp. 109-110; 1917, p. 77; 1920, pp. 143-144.

²⁷Ibid., 1920, p. 143.

²⁸CHI, "Protokolle der Konferenzen 1-29 der Missionare der Missouri Synode in Indien, 1895-1900," Protokollanten, Th. Naether, O. Kellerbauer, December 1898, p. 289.

²⁹Ibid., October 1899, p. 341.

for teachers and catechists, but committed the matter of how to reach these requirements to a committee.³⁰ In 1919 H. Hamann prepared a paper entitled, "Tentative Plan for the Establishment of a Seminary in the Northern District," and submitted it to the MELIM for study.³¹ The founding of the Seminary had to wait until 1924.

The increase in the membership of MELIM indicates more than growth in individual congregations. New preaching places sprang up and the mission was invited to move into new areas. Frequently, these invitations came through relatives of members of MELIM. These relatives lived in a neighboring area and would invite missionaries to serve their villages as well. Such moves were usually within the castes being served in the original congregations.³²

Vadakkangulam, 1916

A further move into caste work began in 1916. Two castes, Nadars and Vellalas,³³ lived in uneasy proximity

³⁰CHI, MELIM, Proceedings, May 1915, pp. 197-199.

³¹CHI, in file of correspondence from H. Hamann to Board, dated 18 January (1919?); it is inserted among letters of early 1919.

³²The writer speaks from six years of experience in serving a number of congregations and inquiring how they were established.

³³Vellalas are members of the Sudra caste. Large numbers of people in the Tamil Evangelical Lutheran Church, the descendant of the Leipzig Mission, are Vellalas.

in the town of Vadakkangulam, about seventeen miles north-east of Nagercoil. Many of them were members of the same Roman Catholic congregation. The peace between these two castes was maintained, in part, by dividing the church down the center by a low wall. The Nadars sat on one side, the Vellalas on the other. In 1915 a new priest came to the village and decreed that the wall must be removed. The majority of the Vellala Christians withdrew from the church rather than enter into closer contact with their Nadar "brethren," whom they considered to be a cut below them in caste. After remaining separate for some time, the Vellalas invited the Lutheran missionaries from Nagercoil to come to Vadakkangulam to minister to them. This left the missionaries in a quandary. To become identified with casteism was not right; yet, to permit these people to remain without spiritual care or to return to Rome was also not right. After long discussion with the people of Vadakkangulam, the missionaries agreed to begin serving this group on the sole condition that God's Word would be the guiding principle for all of them. In this way, the missionaries did not have to agree to the casteism involved and the Vellalas did not have to disavow their caste feelings explicitly. A. J. Lutz took up the work in December 1916.³⁴ The approval of the Board was given with some

³⁴CHI, cf. lengthy report by A. J. Lutz of 14 February 1919 in correspondence file under his name.

reluctance on grounds of inadequate manpower.³⁵ In mid-1918, Lutz pleaded for a new missionary to be stationed in Vadakkangulam to pursue the work there. Shortly thereafter, he himself was stationed there.

The move to Vadakkangulam was significant because it brought the caste problem into the Nagercoil district. Up to that time, the work had been almost exclusively carried on among the Sambavars. There was a difference, however, between this situation and that in Trivandrum. The Trivandrum area had congregations of different castes worshipping in reasonable proximity; in some cases, several castes came together for worship in one congregation. In Vadakkangulam, the Nagercoil area added a caste group that was separate on grounds of organization and also of geography. Five miles of rugged country separated Vadakkangulam from the nearest Lutheran congregations. For the time being, the difference in castes would cause no trouble to the co-existence of these Christians. As years went by and the distances became less significant, the intermingling of castes would come. This became the occasion for perhaps the most serious controversy in MELIM's history, the caste

³⁵L. F[uerbringer], "Aus unserer ostindischen Mission," Der Lutheraner, LXXIII (5 June 1917), 79.

controversy of 1927-1928.³⁶ The seeds for this were sown in these days.

MELIM in 1919

In 1919, twenty-five years after the commissioning of Naether and Mohn, the MELIM stood at a dangerous low in missionary manpower and at an amazing high in growth. Erich Ludwig died on 31 March 1919, the victim of three attacks of malaria and typhoid.³⁷ His fiancée, Miss Ima Kempff, daughter of the former Leipzig missionary and coffee planter, was en route to the West Coast to board a ship to join him, when she heard the news of Ludwig's death.³⁸ She volunteered to proceed to India to take up work among women; but this did not materialize.³⁹

The five men remaining on the field were Hamann in the northern field, Lutz and Goerss in the Tamil southern field, and Harms and Ehlers in the Malayalam area. G. Huebener, Zucker, and Kuechle were on furlough. Tempers

³⁶AN, MELIM, Proceedings, 1927-1929, passim. Several hundred pages of essay, minutes, protests, etc. comprise this matter; A. J. Lutz presented his position in "The Church and Caste," Concordia Theological Monthly, XVII (September 1947), 679-696.

³⁷CHI, L. Ellermann to R. Kretzschmar, 17 April 1919.

³⁸CHI, I. Kempff to R. Kretzschmar, 11 April 1919; 21 April 1919.

³⁹CHI, H. Hamann to R. Kretzschmar, 16 June 1919, quoting I. Kempff to H. Hamann, 17 April 1919.

wore thin, and a bitter quarrel arose between the men in Nagercoil and those in Trivandrum, which Hamann mediated and settled, apparently. The reason for the quarrel is not clear.⁴⁰

Growth also brought renewed contacts with other Christians. The very problem which the founders of MELIM had hoped to avoid by beginning work in the comparatively isolated area of Krishnagiri had returned to haunt them. The requests of other Christians to join the MELIM were becoming so common that the matter came up for conference action:

What is our duty toward those of heterodox missions desiring to join our Church? . . .

- a) We must distinguish between the cases of laymen and theologians applying for reception into our Church. The reception of laymen is a matter for the respective congregation, while that of a theologian concerns the whole church body.
- b) In the case of theologians or other men desiring employment in church work, we must distinguish clearly between reception into church membership and employment in church work. The latter must never precede the former, but may coincide; and the former must be preceded by a renunciation of earlier, or last previous, church allegiance. These two cannot coincide.⁴¹

This problem was actually part of the greater problem of comity which had been behind the original selection of the Krishnagiri area in 1894. In 1915, the matter of comity

⁴⁰CHI, H. Hamann to R. Kretzschmar, 10 June 1919.

⁴¹AN, MELIM, Proceedings, October 1919, pp. 4-5.

became a prominent one in India when the standing committee of the National Missionary Conference presented a "Statement on Comity Among Missions in India." This statement called for a sweeping system of comity, even to the extent of transferring members as soon as they crossed the boundaries set by comity decisions.⁴²

Reporting on the action of MELIM to the "Statement"

O. A. Ehlers writes in The Lutheran Witness:

Our position with regard to church union, fellowship, cooperation, and comity has often been misunderstood. We, therefore, had even before this felt the need of making our position clear in an official statement of our own. . . . submitted to the conference a "Declaration of Our Principles on Church Union and Church Fellowship." After making a few slight alterations, the conference adopted this statement, and it was made the first part of our reply to the "Statement on Comity" received by us. In our reply the reasons are set forth why we cannot join hands and ally our forces with those of heterodox bodies, and also the reasons why we cannot accept the "Statement on Comity" in its entirety. As the readers of the Witness are familiar with these reasons, it will not be necessary to state them here.

The second part of our reply is to contain our answer to each of the paragraphs of the "Statement" separately. Some of the paragraphs we accepted, others we rejected, and still others were accepted with reservations.⁴³

⁴²AN, in Bulletin of the National Missionary Council of India, July 1915, pp. 11-16.

⁴³Eighth Annual General Conference of the Missouri Lutheran Mission in India, " The Lutheran Witness, XXXVII (11 June 1918), 183.

In connection with this study, H. Hamann prepared a paper entitled, "The Place of Creeds and Confessions in the Mission Church."⁴⁴

As the first twenty-five years of MELIM closed, the questions of comity and relationships with other missions were entering a formative stage. The problems would break out with considerable virulence in the next two decades and require patient work and negotiation.⁴⁵

The matter of schools was also coming up for close scrutiny in MELIM. In 1919 MELIM was operating 68 schools with 2657 pupils;⁴⁶ in effect, there were over fifty per-cent more children in the schools than there were baptized members in the congregations. These schools were under the control of MELIM, but the government gave the mission a certain amount of money as grant for running the schools.⁴⁷ The government was being pressured to add a "conscience clause" which would exempt children attending private schools from taking otherwise compulsory religious education. The conference in 1917 debated the matter and the general feeling was reported that,

⁴⁴CHI, in Hamann correspondence file without date, but probably 1918.

⁴⁵Herbert M. Zorn, "Relations between the Missouri Lutherans and the London Missionary Society," Indian Church History Review, I (December 1967), 133-137.

⁴⁶Missouri Synod, Proceedings, 1920, pp. 143-144.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 144; in 1919 the amount was Rupees 5733.

If, however, the number of the applicants for exemption increases, and the school is in danger of losing its character of a Christian mission-school, then the pupils who refuse to take part in the religious instruction must be told that they cannot continue as pupils of the mission-school, but should seek admittance to another school. If there is no other school in the neighborhood, the agitators should be told to agitate for another school, even if the building of another school entailed the loss of the Government grant and recognition to the mission-school.⁴⁸

This matter also became a more serious problem in later years. MELIM ceased to accept government grant in 1924.⁴⁹ Only after the founding of the IELC in 1958 did this practice begin again. In today's India, religious instruction is normally forbidden during school hours in any school which receives government recognition. Since only recognized schools can send their pupils on to higher education, this is an effective bar. The usual procedure in most mission schools is to give religious education before school hours.

A final note should be added on the life of the missionaries. During these twenty-five years, furloughs had been taken as needed. A missionary usually stayed on the field eight or ten years before receiving a furlough. In the

⁴⁸O. A. Ehlers, "Eighth Annual General Conference of the Missouri Lutheran Mission in India," The Lutheran Witness, XXXVII (11 June 1918), 183.

⁴⁹R. P. Sieving, "Secretary O. H. Schmidt Attends India General Conference," ibid., LXIII (12 September 1944), 303.

closing years of the quarter century, this policy came under criticism for its lack of foresight. In 1915, MELIM resolved:

We believe that our experience has shown us that the rule, that a missionary should receive a furlough only after eight to ten years' service, does not serve the mission as well as it might. We request that . . . it be reconsidered, and on the basis of the following materials be revised to meet the current needs.⁵⁰

By 1917, the conference resolved to request furloughs after seven and one-half years of service, giving as reasons:

- 1) According to expert medical opinion, no foreigner should remain in India for eight years even.
- 2) The experience of other missions, as well as our own, bears out the opinion of the doctors. Our missionaries have almost invariably gone home before their furlough became due, because the state of their health or that of their families made it imperative that they should go.
- 3) Prevention is better than cure.
- 4) If missionaries are granted home-leave after seven and one-half years, it may be less difficult to secure new missionaries.⁵¹

Missouri's mission in India was learning the implications of being a church organization in this vast country among other such organizations. The show period of struggling growth was past; ahead lay the task of organizing, building up an indigenous ministry, and finding a place for this young church among the people of God in India. The

⁵⁰CHI, MELIM, Proceedings, May 1915, p. 223. The "following materials" are missing.

⁵¹O. A. Ehlers, "Eighth Annual General Conference of the Missouri Lutheran Mission in India," The Lutheran Witness, XXXVII (14 May 1918), 153.

Lutheran emphasis on solid grounding in doctrine would stand the young church in good stead. Caution in inter-church relations would often seem like stubbornness to those outside.

These problems and challenges would all come later. The roots of MELIM-IELC's preparation lay in these first twenty-five years.

It is evident from the background that Christianity in India, from its earliest beginnings, has been varied and plagued by divisions. Long before Protestant missions came to India, the tendency to schism was strong. The first Protestant missionaries were Lutherans of the Danish-Norwegian Mission who came to Tranquebar in 1706. This effort thrived through the greater part of the eighteenth century; by 1840, however, it had lost its vigor and most of the converts were in the process of being absorbed by Anglican mission organizations. Leipzig missionaries who arrived about 1840 brought the Christians back to Lutheranism and established Lutheran emphasis firmly in India.

Leipzig missionaries were involved in frequent inter-denominational quarrels. Between 1840 and 1894, at least four serious controversies resulted in the loss of no less than ten men from Leipzig ranks. The latter two of these controversies were closely connected with the establishment of the MELIM.

The controversy of 1875-1876 involved the issue of confessionalism and strict Lutheran teaching. It resulted

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSIONS

The writer has reviewed the background and the first twenty-five years of the history of the Missouri Evangelical Lutheran India Mission, MELIM.

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The controversy of 1875-1876 involved the issue of confessionalism and strict Lutheran teaching. It resulted

in bringing two future mission leaders to the Missouri Synod and one to the Saxon Free Church. The controversy of 1893-1894 concerned verbal inspiration and the problem of the relative authority of the mission board and the mission field. This controversy and related developments brought four men into MELIM from the Leipzig Mission by 1897.

MELIM was founded on strict confessional principles. During the first twenty-five years there is no evidence of any serious controversies arising out of doctrinal differences within the mission.

The founding principles of MELIM also included a strict avoidance of interfering with the work of other mission societies. This principle remained intact until 1907, when a call from an independent congregation with a promise of challenges among non-Christian outcastes brought MELIM into an area with a history of one hundred years of mission work by another mission society. By the end of the period under study, MELIM was actively working in areas previously occupied by other missions.

Growth came with agonizing slowness for the first twelve years of MELIM's history. The move south to Nagercoil, and the later move to Malayalam area brought large numbers into MELIM. The effect of growth reports upon mission enthusiasm of the Missouri Synod is a potentially fruitful subject for future study.

most exclusively by correspondence.

Problems of caste were familiar to the former Leipzig missionaries. Most converts in the northern district of MELIM were from the outcaste community; therefore caste did not constitute a significant problem in the early years. With the move to the south, however, the issue of caste arose, especially with the second move into Malayalam territory. MELIM grasped the nettle of caste by the hand in moving to Vadakkangulam. Caste controversies in the late twenties, another fruitful area for further study, have unmistakable roots in the decisions of this period, particularly in the southern districts.

Relationships among missionaries were generally good, a significant change from the previous Leipzig Mission experience. Differences of opinion arose, but the polarization of individuals, which had wreaked such havoc in the Leipzig Mission, evidently did not develop. Some polarization did arise after the period under study. The omen that this would happen was the occasional serious difference of opinion between the northern and southern fields over manpower allocations.

The issue of board autocracy does not arise in the period under study. The tact of the directors and acting directors, Zucker, Friedrich, and Kretzschmar, may have been largely responsible for this. Friedrich's visitation was of particular benefit in building understanding. Otherwise, contact between the Board and the field was made almost exclusively by correspondence.

Missionary morale was generally high. The purchase of the Kodaikanal hill station property and the liberalization of hill leave rules probably contributed to this morale. During the period under study, there were only three resignations for reasons not connected with the war, and these were for reasons of health. Losses for health reasons were undoubtedly increased by the unimaginative furlough policy, which allowed for a furlough only after eight or ten years on the field. World War I reduced the staff drastically, leaving only five men and one woman on the field in 1919. It is particularly interesting to note that the growth of the Christian community and the number of missionaries on the field have little correlation during this period. The church grew at a steady rate throughout the war period.

MELIM's reactions to challenges and problems were often imaginative; seldom, however, did such reactions indicate prior planning. From the beginning, schools were considered valid vehicles for the Gospel. Yet, there is little evidence that schools were opened, operated, or closed on the basis of the careful planning and estimate of potential resources. Medical work began hesitantly and apologetically; such plans as were drawn up came only at the last minute. Moves to new areas were undertaken three times on the basis of challenge. The implications of cost in manpower and money were not carefully studied in advance, or even when

the move was being made. Challenges were often answered with the Deus vult of the crusader. A further study of budgeting procedures in those years might shed further light on this matter.

The relations between missionaries and their Indian colleagues is a subject which seldom arises in the reports and correspondences of this period. The "poor heathen" syndrome of mission parlance, so common in that day, was just as common in MELIM. Paternalism, well-meant, but still paternalism, was the order of the day. A few things were being said about training Indians for the ministry and other positions of service in the mission, but nothing more than a "suggested plan" resulted before 1919.

The writer chose 1919 as the limit for this study, not only because it marked twenty-five years of MELIM history, but also because it appeared that 1919 marked the end of one era and the beginning of the next. While this remains his conviction, the writer sees that many of the seeds of the next era of MELIM lie in the happenings during World War I. A study of the following period would have to reach back into this period for the background of many of the challenges and problems to be considered.

This study, admittedly, has a serious deficiency inherent in the nature of the case--and of the writer. It is written by one who has missionary experience in India. Of tremendous value would be a parallel study written by

an Indian, preferably one who has grown up in the climate of the MELIM and the India Evangelical Lutheran Church. It is probable that many of the items considered important by the present writer would be of less import to him; an Indian's interests would properly center in the Indian community and the pressures which moved them toward or away from the Gospel. Only an Indian would be able to interpret much of this thinking.

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