

Pietism's World Mission Enterprise

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[This is the second in a series of four essays on Pietism. *]

Pietism is hard to define. Is it a religious movement restricted to a certain time-period? Is it a general theological term, descriptive of a type of religion which emphasizes human emotions and actions rather than precise doctrinal statements? Meusel's *Kirchliches Handlexikon* prefers to restrict it, applying it primarily to a religious movement occurring in 18th century Europe, particularly Germany. The article stresses that this movement needs to be evaluated in the light of the influences which surrounded it at that particular time in history.ⁱ

There is wisdom in this approach to Pietism. If used in a general sense the word has a negative connotation. It implies some kind of extreme position. Evaluated theologically one can find a long list of doctrinal aberrations suggested by the term which sound Lutheranism will warn against. Evaluated more specifically as a movement in the light of its historical background, however, one is inclined to be more sympathetic toward its emphasis upon feelings and actions. Spiritual life within the organized territorial churches of Europe at that time was at an unusually low ebb. It was high time that somebody was getting aroused!

This spiritual malaise within the church was evident particularly in its lack of mission awareness. In 1664, for example, an Austrian baron by the name of Justinian von Welz censured the church people of his day through a series of pamphlets for spending so much "on all sorts of dress, delicacies, etc.," but "giving thought of no means for the spread of the gospel." He was denounced by leading church officials as a "dreamer, fanatic, hypocrite" and told that "it was absurd, even wicked, to cast the pearls of the gospel before the heathen."ⁱⁱ

Orthodox Lutheranism has always had the highest respect for the great 16th century dogmatician of Jena, Johann Gerhard. Incredibly naïve, however, was his concept of history and geography. At great length he attempted to prove that because the apostles had already preached the gospel to the whole world in their time this command of Christ had therefore ceased. Up to the 18th century this view dominated almost all Lutheran orthodoxy.ⁱⁱⁱ It was apparent that a positive response to Christ's Great Commission was not to be found within the established structures of 17th century Lutheranism.

Those who consider world mission outreach to be an essential part of the church's program will therefore be inclined to view the Pietist movement in 18th century Germany sympathetically. For it is generally recognized that the modern missionary movement of expansion into remote areas of the world had its beginnings with German Lutheran Pietism.

A first in modern Protestant world missions

On this fact students of mission history are generally agreed. "The modern missionary enterprise was the direct outcome of the Pietist movement which began in Germany following the Thirty Years' War," writes J. Herbert Kane, missiology's leading presentday historian.^{iv} Elsie Singmaster traces this history to Pietism's prime movers. Pointing to Philipp Jacob Spener and August Hermann Francke she writes, "To two Lutherans above all other men the world owes the impulse to modern Protestant missions."^v

Robert Hall Glover brings the efforts of Spener and Francke a step farther when he points to the school where these men brought their influence to bear: "The University of Halle...became a center of the strongest missionary influence and the birthplace of the first organized foreign missionary effort."^{vi}

John Aberly brings Denmark into the picture when he adds: "The first (Protestant foreign) mission is often referred to as the Danish Mission, because it owed its beginnings to Denmark; but because so many of its missionaries and much of its support came through Halle, in Germany, it is known generally as the Danish-Halle Mission."^{vii}

Thus we have the enterprise which world mission authorities consider to be the very first modern undertaking, the Danish-Halle Mission. It was organized in Denmark and staffed by German Lutheran Pietists, of which Rolf A. Syrdal writes: “The methods, results, and influence of the Danish-Halle Mission upon the Protestant Christian world set the pattern that has been followed by missionaries of the modern era.”^{viii}

Surely a mission enterprise deserving of closer scrutiny!

The Danish-Halle-Tranquebar connection

The name “Danish-Halle” indicates that two places of different language and location were closely associated with this notable mission venture. It is interesting to note how this rather strange alliance came about, involving two countries in Europe and a little colony on the other side of the world.

Denmark, we remember, was one of the first countries in Europe to become officially Lutheran. Already in 1520 King Christian II, unhappy with the unspiritual lives of Roman Catholic clerics as well as the disgusting sale of indulgences, turned to Wittenberg for help in reforming these conditions. Several years later Denmark formally severed connections with Rome and declared itself to be in conformity with Lutheran confessional principles. Frederick IV was king of Denmark from 1699 to 1730 and became the patron of the Danish-Halle venture.

Tranquebar, the village on the eastern coast of southern India where the Danish-Halle Mission was to begin, was originally a Portuguese colony. The Danes purchased an area of fifteen square miles around Tranquebar in 1620, built a fortress there called Dansborg, and began carrying on regular trade with this outpost. According to colonial procedures the territory was managed under a charter granted the Danish East India Company. A Lutheran church called Zion was built in Dansborg, served by chaplains sent to minister to the Danes.

History doesn’t have much to report on Frederick IV, the mission’s patron. He doesn’t seem to have been especially pious in his personal lifestyle. It was rather through his court preacher Franz Luetkens that an interest began to be taken in preaching the gospel not only to the Danes connected with the colony, but to the heathen in the surrounding area. Luetkens had previously served as a Lutheran pastor in Germany and had been associated in his work with leading Pietists Spener and Francke. When in 1705 Luetkens was commissioned by Frederick to find suitable men to send as missionaries to Tranquebar, his quest led him to two men who had studied under Francke at the University of Halle, namely Bartholomaeus Ziegenbalg and Heinrich Pluetschau. Both men accepted the call to serve in this mission undertaking to the heathen, a decision influenced greatly by the encouragement in that direction previously received at Halle.

This explains how a sponsoring mission agency in Denmark came to be associated with men trained at the University of Halle in Germany, and how these men happened to go to India as their field of labor.

Bartholomaeus Ziegenbalg

Something simply must be said about the background of the man who spearheaded this first foreign mission enterprise in modern times. He plays such an important role in this venture that the story of his life and work sets the tone for the entire undertaking.

Bartholomaeus Ziegenbalg, born June 14, 1683, in Pulsnitz, Germany, came out of very poor circumstances. His parents died when he was very young and he was taken care of by an older sister, Anna. As a youth he was very withdrawn, even considered peculiar by his schoolmates. He was troubled by the vanity of worldly things even to the point of deep depression. He found some relief in immersing himself in his studies, but again was so intent about striving for excellence that his health suffered from a nervous stomach ailment.

In his search after answers to questions which bothered him he wrote letters to men whose writings had made an impression on him, particularly Pietists Lange, Spener and Francke. Through this correspondence he was prompted to matriculate in the University of Halle in May 1703. Here he found relief from many of his

spiritual troubles and became closely attached to his chief teacher, August Hermann Francke. Here he also found a kindred spirit in his schoolmate Heinrich Pluetschau, a man seven years older than himself.

His health problems continued, possibly because he still felt that he wasn't doing enough about "converting" other people through pietistic gatherings. He discontinued his studies at Halle and became a sort of self-styled evangelist, organizing in various towns the kind of conventicles advocated at Halle. Some local pastors opposed his activities, but Ziegenbalg thrived on opposition. Other pastors found his work helpful and offered him opportunities for service in their parishes. In Pietist circles he was gaining a reputation for his tireless activities and zeal in bringing others to "true Christianity." It was while serving in a parish in Berlin that the call came to him to enter a foreign mission field.

Deeply intense, zealous almost in the extreme, yet suffering from a chronic physical ailment and bouts of mental depression—one wonders how many mission experts today would consider him a likely candidate for pioneering a world mission field! No doubt many a mission board would in its screening process for candidates have eliminated his name from consideration.

Inauspicious beginnings

Foreign mission ventures often have a way of beginning very humbly and inauspiciously. Risks need to be taken. Obstacles must be overcome. Gradually the undertaking begins to take shape and hopeful signs begin to show themselves. In this respect the Danish Halle Mission in Tranquebar is a classic example of how everything possible that can go wrong also does go wrong, and that only a miracle of God lets it survive its initial disasters.

Ziegenbalg and Pluetschau set off for Copenhagen, anxious to begin. There it suddenly occurred to the Danish church authorities that these men had not as yet been ordained. In addition to this they had had a Pietist background. The bishop of the Danish Church insisted that they be examined, and on the basis of the examination which followed both were declared unfit. It didn't help matters of course that Ziegenbalg in his examination sermon before the king took it upon himself to thunder against the lack of piety within organized Christendom. Court preacher Luetkens, however, arranged for another examination. This time the two men passed and were commissioned under the condition that their service would be limited to mission work among the heathen.

They set sail on November 29, 1705, on a ship destined for Tranquebar, India, instead of the West Indies in America as they had originally expected. The long journey was not only arduous but at times perilous. Characteristically Ziegenbalg spent much of the seven months en route learning the Danish language and trying to make "true Christians" out of captain and crew. The ship arrived in Tranquebar seven months after setting sail from Denmark.

Interesting in this connection is the observation of H. M. Zorn, who served as missionary of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod in India during the early decades of this century. He writes in 1933: "How different it [the journey at that time] was from today! Today our missionaries may board a steamer in the harbor of New York and, at average speed, land in the harbor of Colombo (India) in four or five weeks' time."^{ix} One wonders what Ziegenbalg and even Zorn would make of jet travel today, which has made it possible to reach India from Europe in less than 24 hours!

Ziegenbalg's difficulties with his commissioning as well as an unexpected sea journey of over a half year might have been enough to dampen the average person's enthusiasm for a new venture. But then imagine upon arrival being refused permission to go ashore! The ship's captain, irritated by Ziegenbalg's frequent admonitions en route, refused to arrange for the missionaries' transfer by boat to land. Finally another captain interceded and saw to it that they got ashore—only to have officials of the Danish East India Company deny them entrance through the city gate! Finally after hours of wrangling the city officials, persuaded by a copy of King Frederick IV's commission and seal, let them inside. No place of lodging was offered; the only place available for their use was a rented place among the poor, half-caste Portuguese slave laborers.

What a reception for the two men, both still in their twenties, about to begin an entirely new kind of venture! Enough to send many a young John Mark back to Jerusalem.

On with the task at hand

Some people are discouraged by continued adversity; not so Ziegenbalg. Opposing forces only aroused him to strike back with inexhaustible energy. Realizing that he and Pluetschau could not work effectively with people unless they could speak their language, he encouraged his partner to learn the Portuguese language of the people in whose quarters they were living, while he set about learning the Tamil vernacular of the Indians.

Again one simply must marvel at the dedication with which Ziegenbalg applied himself to language study. He read every Tamil book he could get into his hands. These were, of course, in manuscript form since there was no printing press in all of India. In less than two years he compiled his own dictionary of 20,000 words. He spent hours every day speaking with an informant. He committed long portions of Tamil to memory. Within three years he could speak the language fluently, and in his language study process became familiar with Indian literature, Hindu philosophy and native thought processes. The Tamil grammar which he later wrote became a standard text book.

As soon as he and Pluetschau had translated Luther's Catechism into Tamil and Portuguese, they began organizing instruction classes. In less than a year's time they baptized five Portuguese slaves. Theirs was pioneer work in a real sense. Other missionaries, both Reformed and Roman Catholic, had worked in India before them. Few of them, however, had learned the language thoroughly or bothered themselves with intensive instruction classes, contenting themselves with mass "evangelization" through interpreters and leaving no national congregations behind.

The Danish chaplains and the Danish East India commandant within Dansborg resented rather than supported the work of the two Danish-Halle missionaries, regarding them as unorthodox intruders rather than co-workers. Grudgingly they were allowed to hold one weekly German service in Zion Church. This prompted them to erect their own little church near the seashore, using mostly their meager personal funds to do so. It was called Jerusalem Church and was dedicated a little over a year after their arrival. Services were held daily in Tamil and in Portuguese, and by the end of 1707 the congregation consisted of 35 members.

A beginning had been made. The language barrier had to some extent been overcome. Basic tools for instruction had been prepared. A small congregation had been gathered.

Problems, problems

Work in foreign fields at times has a way of testing one's patience to the limit. Dr. William Schweppe, speaking out of his many years of experience in Africa, would often comment that after any kind of initial success one could almost anticipate some kind of setback to occur. After their early progress in spite of difficulties Ziegenbalg and Pluetschau had their days of severe testing as well.

One problem involved financial help. To begin with this amounted to an annual stipend of \$2,000 for both men, which was to take care of both personal and mission needs. The subsidy was to be administered through an annual payment of coins shipped in a strongbox. When the first shipment came one year after the missionaries arrived, the treasure chest was lost while being transported from the sailing vessel to shore. Five Europeans and two Indians drowned in the process, and the accident was largely the result of the ship captain's drunkenness during the entire fiasco. Ziegenbalg sent an urgent appeal along with the ship's return, but the ship suffered numerous reverses en route and got only as far as England two years later!

Even more serious was the constant friction existing between the mission and the authorities in Dansborg. From the very beginning Commandant Hassius of the Danish fortress had received orders from the East India Company not to help Ziegenbalg in any way, since the mission effort was looked upon as a troublemaking intrusion into company affairs. We have already noted how the missionaries were refused decent housing within the fortress and how they built their little church outside its confines—a situation which actually

helped with the mission's contacts in the surrounding area. But Ziegenbalg was not one to stay out of Dansborg. He frequently begged for the right to hold services in Zion Church, and his persistence was a constant source of irritation to Hassius. The fact that Pluetschau carried on mission work among the Portuguese antagonized the Roman Catholic priest in Dansborg, who happened to have been a friend of Hassius. When Ziegenbalg became involved in pleading the cause of a poor Tamil widow who brought a case against an employee of the Danish East India Company, tempers flared and Hassius had Ziegenbalg imprisoned as a troublemaker. The imprisonment lasted four months, an ordeal which for a time seriously impaired the missionary's health and halted the mission's progress during much of the second year of its existence.

Ziegenbalg's release from prison in 1709, together with the arrival of another ship with money and three new missionaries to help with the work, promised better things. Unfortunately the additional staff brought added problems. Nothing can be more aggravating than dissension within the church. When this happens within the isolated circumstances of a mission field, and between missionaries at that, the troubles can grievously stifle the whole undertaking. It is a sad fact that ever since the days of Paul and Barnabas missions have suffered not only from "conflicts on the outside," but also from "fears within."^x

Through the efforts of Luetkens in Copenhagen and Francke in Halle, additional subsidy having been granted by King Frederick, the three new missionaries sent were Johann Ernst Gruendler, Johann Georg Boevingh, and Polycarpus Jordan. While Gruendler and Jordan came out of Halle's Pietist background, Boevingh was a product of Copenhagen's Orthodoxy. Arguments which began over such comparatively little things as the use of extemporaneous prayer, in which Boevingh refused to join, led to more serious squabbles about the use of contributions of money and medicines which had come from Halle "to help the poor and underprivileged." Boevingh accused the mission of "mixing church and state" and of "misappropriation of funds." The "Hallish fund" became in Boevingh's terminology the "hellish fund." Disagreements continued and spread to such things as positions of authority within the mission and areas of activity, reaching a point where brotherly discussions and cooperation became impossible. Through this incompatibility the sending of additional manpower actually served to impede the mission's progress during these early years of development. A mission program without clearly defined principles and objectives is in for trouble, especially when its workers are inclined to be argumentative and uncooperative.

Through all of these trials Ziegenbalg also had some growing-up to do. He had to learn that it did not show good judgment to go into a new village and begin his work there by entering a heathen temple and knocking the heads off of all the idols. He also had to learn that it was foolhardy as well as counter-productive to go into any new area without the rajah's permission. His efforts toward winning converts by organizing work projects and providing employment also led to disappointments. Many a well-intentioned program like this has resulted in "rice-Christians," people whose "Christianity" amounts to whatever earthly advantage the church has to offer.

One project during this hectic time proved very worthwhile in the mission's development. Through friends in Halle a press arrived with a font in Tamil type, cast by means of copies of Tamil letters furnished by Ziegenbalg. With the press came two young students who were mechanically inclined, not only able to work the press but also to manufacture a paper-mill for the mission's own supply. Ziegenbalg at once put the press to work, producing in Tamil Luther's Small Catechism, instruction lessons, Bible story books and portions of the New Testament. Up to the present day an efficient printing press operation has proved to be an indispensable tool of every mission program, something which Ziegenbalg realized in this very first of modern ventures.

Continued friction between the Danish East India Company and the Mission convinced Ziegenbalg that matters between the two had to be settled if the Mission were to prosper, and that such a settlement could be reached only in Copenhagen. This led to Ziegenbalg's return to Denmark in October, 1713, leaving Tranquebar with the firm resolve to return after matters were adjusted.

A successful furlough

Ziegenbalg's furlough was not a routine, periodic occurrence as is the case with world missionaries today. It was a once-in-a-lifetime event, necessitated by a situation on the field which had to be straightened out. And it was a very busy affair.

On his return voyage, which again lasted seven months, he wrote a Tamil grammar. Arriving in Copenhagen in August, 1714, he immediately set about straightening out affairs between the Mission and the East India Company. This became an easier task in Copenhagen than in Tranquebar. His efforts in India, fraught with all sorts of difficulties, had aroused more interest than he could possibly have imagined. His letters to Francke in Halle and Joachim Lange in Berlin were published, and while their contents aroused the criticism of anti-Pietists, they captured the fancy of many in Germany, Denmark and England. For the first time in modern history a church and a congregation of Christians consisting of natives had been assembled in heathen India!

In Germany and Denmark missionary societies were formed within congregations to help support the work. In Britain the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge had raised the funds which helped provide for Ziegenbalg's printing needs. Although Frederick IV had become involved in a war against Sweden's Charles XIII, he continued his interest and support of the Mission. (Later in 1721, after the war with Sweden was finally over, Frederick sent Hans Egede as missionary to Greenland.) Together with other members of the royal family he now saw to it that the East India Company would no longer harass the activities of the Mission but would lend its support. Ziegenbalg was made provost of the Mission, with full authority to ordain missionaries.

In Germany Ziegenbalg was able to speak to large gatherings about his work, at the same time collecting funds for the Mission's support. In Halle his Tamil grammar was printed. He was able to have many fruitful discussions with Francke and Lange. And last but not least, shortly before his return to India he was married to Maria Dorothea Salzmänn, a relative of Dr. Philipp Jacob Spener.

On his way back to Tranquebar he stopped over in England, where he was received at the court of King George I. Here he also had a number of speaking engagements and was able to correct the report that he had been "eaten by cannibals." After an absence of nearly two years he and his wife arrived in Tranquebar in 1716, where they were joyously received. Things looked propitious for the work which still lay ahead.

Training nationals

The careful and thorough training of nationals to become actively involved in all aspects of the work is considered essential in any world mission program today. This is simply a matter of sound judgment. In Ziegenbalg's day, however, the "heathen" were often regarded as a lesser breed of humanity. One did things *for* them, not *with* them, and very few thought in terms of nationals eventually taking over the work entirely.

After Ziegenbalg returned to Tranquebar from his European trip in 1716, he immediately entered this important phase of the work by starting a seminary with eight Tamil students. His goal was the training of pastors who would be able to move about more freely among their own people and thus be better qualified than Europeans to teach and preach the gospel.

The project, however, meant starting from scratch. For most of the Tamil people there were not even elementary schools, no books or writing materials. Another problem was the caste system in India. Should his efforts be directed toward the Brahmans, the highest caste? Should he favor the Sudras, the middle class? What about the Pariahs, the outcastes? Should he flaunt time-honored traditions and openly oppose a system which brings about such deep cleavages within society?

Ziegenbalg wisely realized that extreme patience and care were needed in dealing with the caste system. His educational efforts were of necessity directed toward the Sudras. When building a new Jerusalem Church in Tranquebar in 1718—an imposing structure which still stands today—he allowed for separate seating of the Pariahs. His ministry, however, reached out to all people.

Unfortunately Ziegenbalg's early death did not permit him to bring to conclusion his seminary program and other projects which he inaugurated. In so many ways he displayed good common sense and set in motion practical methods which became models of later development programs. In his church services he retained the liturgical forms, yet allowed for native music to express itself. Ceremonies for special occasions were arranged to take into consideration local customs. He insisted on careful instruction before admission to church membership. He organized a system of church discipline which included judgment of cases by peers. In all of this he was intent on consolidating a strong congregational base at Tranquebar before reaching out too far elsewhere. His untimely death in early 1719 at age 36 prevented his own involvement in the further development of these programs, a death that could very well have been precipitated by unfair criticism from the sending agency in Denmark.

Ziegenbalg's death

It is difficult for us today to imagine how Ziegenbalg's efforts in India could have been so completely misunderstood and condemned by his own missionary board in Copenhagen. The answer simply lies in the fact that Ziegenbalg was in his mission-concepts far ahead of his time. Those at home, in their ignorance of what this kind of pioneer work involved, could not appreciate what was going on. The home board was also dominated by its executive secretary, Christian Wendt, an opinionated Pietist who was totally lacking in understanding.

Wendt in doctrinaire fashion considered Ziegenbalg's work as placing too much emphasis on material rather than on spiritual things. Not only did he feel very strongly about this; he refused to send money which Ziegenbalg had collected while on furlough in Europe for building purposes, even withholding missionary salaries. In Wendt's opinion missionaries were to bring the Word of God and nothing else, "patterning their lives after Jesus Christ, Paul and St. Francis of Assisi." Ziegenbalg's marriage was a source of irritation to Wendt, who claimed that it "distracted the missionary's attention from spiritual affairs and increased his desire for a comfortable lifestyle." Ziegenbalg's writings on Indian gods, works still quoted today by those who specialize in Hinduism, were condemned by Wendt and other Pietists as "heathen nonsense."

While Francke's correspondence during this time offered some encouragement, even help from this source began to dwindle. Apparently many Pietists in Halle were beginning to side in with Wendt's views. Contributions from Halle also ceased for a time.

When Ziegenbalg and Gruendler appealed for funds to build a paper mill, a venture which was perhaps ill-advised, Wendt seized upon this to condemn the missionaries vehemently for becoming involved in commercial ventures and neglecting spiritual things. Ziegenbalg's reply that in the circumstances they as missionaries had to be involved also in the physical and educational needs of the people, and that they also had to print literature to do their work, fell on deaf ears.

Wendt's denunciatory reply, signed by all members of the board but one, arrived in Tranquebar two months after Ziegenbalg's death. Ziegenbalg died of a recurring stomach ailment in which the "steel cure" prescribed at one time by a German doctor, whereby he was to eat steel filings for 30 days, failed after ten days of "treatment." Humanly speaking it was an unfortunate and a premature end for a faithful servant. His friends and congregation members could be comforted in that he received the Lord's Supper shortly before his death; at his funeral they sang "Jesus Christ, My Sure Defense."

After Ziegenbalg

H.M. Zorn in his excellent portrayal of Ziegenbalg's life and work entitles the final chapter in his book "The Aftermath."^{xi} What applies to the life-story of Ziegenbalg pretty well applies to the Danish Halle Mission. Its importance lies primarily in the unusual activities of one man. What happened after him was anti-climactic, depending to a great extent on how well the excellent foundation he laid was followed up.

Pluetschau, Ziegenbalg's first partner, had returned to Europe already some years prior to Ziegenbalg's death. *Johann Gruendler*, one of the young men who had been sent to India in 1709 and who had become Ziegenbalg's trusted co-worker, carried on the work briefly but died of illness a year later. Wendt's negative influence on the Danish board of control came to an end, and several capable men then succeeded in the leadership of the Mission. All were trained in Halle.

Benjamin Schulze took over the management in 1720 and was able to direct the work into several new areas. He completed Ziegenbalg's translation of the Bible into Tamil and also branched out into the Telugu and Hindustani languages. One of Ziegenbalg's students was ordained as the first national pastor in 1733. *John Philip Fabricius* was missionary in Madras from 1741 to 1791. Renowned as a scholar, he served the Mission especially as translator of hymns and in revisions of Bible translations. *Christian William Gericke* worked in the Cuddalore district from 1767 to 1803, and was noted as an evangelist. Finally, *Christian Frederick Schwartz* served the Mission from 1750 to 1797, never once returning to Europe in all those years. He was a man who combined in himself outstanding linguistic and organizational gifts. He was well versed in a number of oriental languages, including Hindustani and Persian. He began work in several new areas of Southern India, organized schools which became models of the British colonial school system, and as a close friend of the Rajah of Tanjore became one of his chief consultants in diplomatic affairs. At his funeral the Rajah followed the bier as chief mourner and later had a monument erected in Madras, dedicated to the memory of a man "whose life was one continued effort to imitate the example of his blessed Master."

At the time of Schwartz's death it is estimated that 15,000 Christians belonged to churches under the Danish-Halle Mission. After this, however, the Mission entered a period of rapid decline, to which various factors contributed. With the rise of Rationalism in Europe even the University of Halle was influenced to the extent that it became difficult to find qualified men to serve as missionaries. Those who were sent, according to historian Gustav Warneck, "admired in Jesus the sage of Nazareth, and at best sought to perfect the morality of the heathen poets." They affirmed the proposition, according to Warneck, that "missions must cease to be an institution for conversion."^{xii} Contributions dwindled. Denmark's alliance with Napoleon caused England to take over Tranquebar in 1808. The faithful work begun by Ziegenbalg and carried on by his successors was taken over in stages by the Church Missionary Society of England, the Leipzig Lutheran Missionary Society, the Evangelical Lutheran Mission in Dresden, and the American Lutheran Church.

H. M. Zorn comments in 1932: "Our own Missouri Synod's mission stations are in Southern India, not many hundred miles to the northwest and to the southwest from Tranquebar, and some of our stations are on ground which Ziegenbalg trod."^{xiii} The work of Pastor T. Paul Mitra, which our synod has been supporting since 1969, is centered in Madras, where Fabricius of the Danish-Halle Mission had served many years.

Latest statistics out of India report about 800,000 Lutherans in 8,000 congregations, most of which are located in the area originally served by the Danish-Halle Mission. This number constitutes less than 0.1 percent of India's total population, indicating that in spite of these rather impressive figures not very many of India's 700 million people have been touched by Lutheranism. In 1975 the nine autonomous Lutheran bodies joined in a federation known as the United Evangelical Lutheran Churches of India (UELCI).^{xiv}

The Halle influence in world missions

Any student of missions would be interested, of course, in the extent to which the University of Halle played a role in the development of this Mission. Did the school's curriculum include any courses which specifically prepared men for foreign mission work? Or was Halle's influence upon the students more of a general inspirational nature?

There is little to indicate that a study of subjects specifically relating to foreign mission work was included in the curriculum at Halle during the 19th century. To begin with, very little was known about such work until Ziegenbalg and his successors did their pioneering. Even work at home such as "inner missions" was still in its initial stages, and this as carried out at Halle during the 18th century consisted primarily in organizing orphanages and charitable societies for the underprivileged. Mission societies in England such as the Society for

the Promotion of Christian Knowledge (SPCK) and the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (SPG), founded at about the time Ziegenbalg was preparing to leave for India, were concerned chiefly about the Indians in the American colonies and the colonists living in other lands.

Halle's influence was therefore inspirational and supportive. It began with men like Lange, Spener and Francke, who stressed a living, personal, practical Christianity. Its emphasis on works of love and fruitfulness in good works raised concerns about those who were underprivileged, both physically as well as spiritually. As the horizons of people broadened through contacts with other parts of the world, it was but natural that they too should be included in a zeal for lost souls.

The increased emphasis upon private Bible study encouraged a greater concern for obedience to Christ's Great Commission, also among the laity. No longer was this first command of the Lord of the church obscured by all sorts of dogmatic formulations by those presumed to be theological experts. The Word itself was clear, convincing. Paradoxically out of a "conventicle Christianity" came a Christianity which embraced the whole world.

It was August Hermann Francke, a man of powerful personality, who not only conveyed a spirit of divine service to his students, but inspired within some of them a special desire to go wherever there was a need for this service. Francke was also willing to support actively the men whom he had influenced to go to strange lands. He carried on a voluminous correspondence with the men who went to Tranquebar. Until the time of his death in 1727 he published the results of this correspondence in mission periodicals and publications in order to inspire within others a desire to reach out to the heathen. He raised offerings to supplement the meager support granted by the Danish East India Company. He arranged for the printing of materials for the Mission, either through the University of Halle itself or by having equipment sent to Tranquebar.

When one considers the extent of Francke's activities within Germany itself with Inner Mission institutions, then also his duties of teaching and administration at the university itself, one is amazed that he still could find so much time to serve as the "father of the Danish-Halle Mission." As many as sixty missionaries were sent out from Halle in the 18th century to various foreign parts, including H. M. Muhlenberg who is known as the "patriarch of the Lutheran church in America."

On one of Count Nikolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf's visits to Halle in 1708, he heard daily reports in Francke's house, as he himself states, "about the spread of the kingdom of God, to speak with witnesses from foreign lands." Later in 1715 Zinzendorf "while dining at Francke's table talked with Halle missionaries home on furlough from Tranquebar."^{xv} Zinzendorf's worldwide missionary movement is without parallel in the annals of world mission activity, a movement whereby at the time of Zinzendorf's death no less than 226 missionaries had gone out from Herrnhut to places ranging from the Arctic to the tropics, and from the Orient to America's midwest. The Zinzendorf movement is a story for itself; of interest here is that its seeds were sown in Halle, in the home of August Hermann Francke.

Pietism and world missions: An evaluation

"It was the Lutheran church within which the first German mission arose; not Lutheran Orthodoxy, however, but Lutheran Pietism was its spring and its support....It was in the age of Pietism that missions struck their first deep roots."^{xvi} With these words Warneck, the recognized 19th century authority on world mission history, places Pietism over against "Lutheran Orthodoxy" as the fountainhead of 18th century missionary enterprise. Mission historians of our own century have reechoed this opinion again and again.

In the light of the historical situation out of which the Danish-Halle Mission arose one can possibly see how this evaluation originated and also gained general acceptance. Unfortunately it is a situation which puts Orthodoxy in a very bad light and Pietism by way of contrast as a saving force. One wonders, however, if this is a fair presentation of the entire matter. At the time when this missionary movement occurred, there was in force a situation when a lively, positive kind of Pietism was awakening as a reaction to a cold, intellectualized kind of Orthodoxy, better termed Orthodoxism.

That Pietism can also have its negative side as far as mission work is concerned is evident from the story of the Danish-Halle Mission in its later development. It can be seen in the attitude of a Christian Wendt, a confirmed Pietist, who interpreted “true spirituality” to mean that a missionary must receive little or no outside support, should remain unmarried lest he be tempted to live too comfortably, must busy himself with no charitable work whatsoever, ought to refrain from studying the traditions and customs of the people to whom he has been sent lest he waste valuable time. Wendt’s activities in the Danish-Halle enterprise nearly killed it at a time when it was just getting underway.

As the enthusiasm which was so much a part of Pietism began to wane, and as the influence of strong personalities like Spener and Francke passed out of the picture, nothing really solid was left to stand behind the Danish-Halle Mission. The spirit of Rationalism took over at Halle and the Mission was taken over by other agencies.

As one also observes closely the actual work of a Ziegenbalg or a Schwartz, one finds very much about it that relates to sound Lutheranism. It was neither superficially sentimental nor coldly intellectual. Ziegenbalg was concerned about building a national church upon a solidly biblical foundation. Instruction was thorough. He adhered to confessional principles. In matters relative to worship he retained old churchly forms, using a fixed liturgy with its regular occurrence of hymns, prayers and Scripture lessons. He even retained the practice of private confession, quite contrary to Pietistic usage at the time.

The practical missionary methods which the Danish-Halle men employed were neither a part of Pietism nor of Orthodoxy. They were simply the result of using good common sense. First of all, to work among people one must have a heart for them, learn their customs and their language to be able to understand them and communicate with them evangelically. Secondly, one must have literary tools to work with—Bibles, instruction materials, liturgies, hymns—written and printed in contextually understandable language. Finally, one needs to have a training program for nationals so that they from the very beginning become involved in its activities and growth. These basic objectives of mission methodology are axiomatic today. At that time they were revolutionary. It just so happened that Lutherans out of the Pietist movement were the first to put them to use effectively. In later years they have been employed just as effectively by Lutherans who do not have the Pietist label.

There is one quality which Spener, Francke, Ziegenbalg, Schwartz and others at that time had in common, and that was a sincere concern for people who were still without the saving knowledge of Christ. This concern was based upon a clear understanding of Scripture. One doesn’t need to be a Pietist to have it; being an “orthodox Lutheran” needn’t obscure it. The danger does seem to lie within Lutheran Orthodoxy to become so concerned about “purity of doctrine” that one loses sight of the responsibility to share it. One is almost afraid that in the sharing of it, it will somehow become contaminated.

When that happens, the orthodox Lutheran should take to heart the words of a hymn which is used at practically every one of his mission festivals. It was written by Pietist Karl H. von Bogatzky in Halle in 1750, at about the time when the Danish-Halle Mission was at the height of its activity. It is the hymn “Awake, Thou Spirit, Who Didst Fire the Watchman of the Church’s Youth.” When sung with meaning and fervor, it is a stirring reminder of the church of Jesus Christ’s first order of business. It closes with the prayer:

And let Thy Word have speedy course,
Thro’ ev’ry land be glorified,
Till all the heathen know its force
And fill Thy churches far and wide.
Oh, spread the conquest of Thy Word
And let Thy kingdom come, dear Lord!^{xvii}

This hymn pretty well reflects the basis, the purpose and the spirit of the Danish-Halle mission enterprise, an enterprise which does credit to the name “Lutheran” and which deserves to be emulated by Christians throughout the world.

Endnotes

* The following foreword, “The Legacy of Pietism,” was written for the series by Edward C. Fredrich.

Volume 82 of the *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly* will present four articles that will give special attention to the theological movement called Pietism. The first, appearing in this Winter issue, will be of a bibliographical nature, treating some of the major writings produced by the Lutheran Pietists of Germany [written by Martin O. Westerhaus].

Subsequent articles will center on specific aspects. There will be a study of the Pietist influence in the area of church and ministry [by Richard D. Balge]. Then the great Halle mission enterprises will be highlighted [by Ernst H. Wendland]. A final study will have the title, “Pietism Comes to America” [by Edward C. Fredrich].

Why all this attention to Pietism in 1985? It isn’t even an anniversary year. That was 1975, three hundred years after the appearance of Spener’s *Pia Desideria*, the book generally credited or blamed for inaugurating German Lutheran Pietism. But in 1975, readers will recall, the anniversary that absorbed our attention was “Grace—125.”

If Pietism had to wait for its turn while that anniversary and those of the birthdays of our country, our Confessions and our Reformer were being celebrated, then the year 1985 may not be as inappropriate as might seem for catching up.

Just 300 years ago in 1685, Pietism was getting into high gear. After ten troubled years of controversy and strife at Frankfurt-on-Main where he was located, Spener sought to rescue the infant movement from some of its worst excesses. He broke with the Frankfurt separatists, who would provide Pennsylvania with some of its colorful immigrant groups. The repudiation of the separatists was signaled by Spener’s 1685 writing, *Der Klagen ueber das verdorbene Christentum Misbrauch und rechter Gebrauch* (“Misuse and Correct Use of Complaints About the Sad State of Christianity”).

In 1685 the other outstanding Pietist leader, August Hermann Francke, was taking the first steps that would soon bring him to his leadership role at Halle. He received an advanced degree at Leipzig that year and then began the Bible lectures that attracted such attention and gave Pietism one of its important characteristics.

Whether this year’s concentration on Pietism in the *Quarterly* is timely or tardy can be debated. What is hardly debatable, however, is the value of such concentration on our part any time and any place. There are good reasons for the *Quarterly* and its readers to review periodically “The Legacy of Pietism.”

The legacy is long. It reaches across the centuries into our own time. It involves such basic and enduring theological issues as the proper relation of sanctification and justification and of law and gospel. It touches on such relevant issues as lay involvement, Bible study and theological education.

There is a danger that the average Wisconsin Synod pastor will give the whole subject the quick and easy brush-off here and elsewhere. If there is one characteristic Wisconsin Synod pastors have in common, it is a profound and congenital distaste for Pietism. The easiest way to win a debate on our conference floors is to charge the opponent with being a Pietist. On the enemies’ list of most of us Pietism stands high in third place, just behind Satan and Antichrist. Such an attitude is understandable. A church body heartily committed to the truth of objective justification cannot help being turned off by the worst vagaries of Pietism.

The antipathy can, however, overextend itself. It can lead to a closed mind that does not reflect and an open mouth that pronounces slogans. These are not assets in our work. We should not throw out the baby with the bath water. We dare not let our dislike for Pietism lead us to a personal or professional neglect of piety. A reconsideration of the flaws and faults in Pietism may help us refrain from recommitting the same blunders and errors. It need not blind us to whatever commendable uses and pluses the movement underscores. Hence, the studies in this year’s *Quarterly*.

There is a special reason why a consideration of Pietism is especially in place in 1985. The big new Lutheran Church is in the process of forming. By 1988 it is to be a reality. Many things about this church body are not yet known. But this we do know: the church body that will dominate theologically is the Lutheran Church in America and among its theological emphases Pietism has an honored place. The ancestor ministerium of the LCA was founded by Muhlenberg, an emissary of Halle. Its oldest seminary was founded by S.S. Schmucker on the proposition, “Without piety, no man can be a faithful minister.”

Even if these short-range prophecies of a larger lease on life in Lutheranism for Pietism prove false or inconclusive in the years ahead, the movement will always have its place in our concerns. The four *Quarterly* articles in Volume 82 will not by any means satiate those concerns or exhaust the subject. They may arouse a measure of interest and promote personal study.

To that end they are being presented in the 1985 *Quarterly*.

ⁱ Carl Meusel, *Kirchliches Handlexikon* (Leipzig: Naumann, 1897), Vol. V, p 320.

ⁱⁱ Arthur T. Pierson, *The New Acts of the Apostles* (New York: Bake and Taylor, 1894), p 76.

ⁱⁱⁱ Gustav Warneck, *A History of Protestant Missions* (New York: Revell, tr George Robson, 1906), pp 28–31.

^{iv} J. Herbert Kane, *A Concise History of the Christian World Mission* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1978), p 76.

^v Elsie Singmaster, *The Story of Lutheran Missions* (Columbia, S.C.: Survey, 1917), p 22.

^{vi} Robert Hall Glover, *The Progress of World-Wide Missions* (New York: Harper, 1960), p 47.

^{vii} John Aberly, *An Outline of Missions* (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg, 1945), p 51.

^{viii} Rolf A. Syrdal, *To the Ends of the Earth* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1967), p 112.

^{ix} H.M. Zorn, *Men and Missions* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1933), p 14.

^x 2 Cor 7:5, NIV.

^{xi} H.M. Zorn, *Men and Missions*, p 141.

^{xii} Gustav Warneck, *A History of Protestant Missions*, p 285.

^{xiii} H.M. Zorn, *Men and Missions*, p 4.

^{xiv} David B. Barrett, ed., *World Christian Encyclopedia* (Nairobi: Oxford, 1982), pp 370–381.

^{xv} A.J. Lewis, *Zinzendorf, the Ecumenical Pioneer* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1962), p 25.

^{xvi} Gustav Warneck, *A History of Protestant Missions*, pp 52–53.

^{xvii} *The Lutheran Hymnal*, No. 494, Stanza 4 (St. Louis: Concordia, 1941).