

FACES OF LUTHERAN MISSIONS IN INDIA

Bartholomäus Ziegenbalg

Born: July 10, 1682 (?)
Pulsnitz, Germany

Died: February 23, 1719
Tranquebar, India

Pioneer Lutheran Missionary, Linguist and Educator who established the first Protestant mission for the people of south India.



Barthol. Ziegenbalg

CHRIST SHOWED GRACE TO HIS FAITHFUL SERVANT BARTHOLOMÄUS Ziegenbalg in the face of constant opposition and hardship. He persevered through the difficulties of learning the unwritten Tamil language, the challenges of reaching Hindus and Muslims, and colonial interests from Denmark who opposed his missionary methods as too “worldly” and threats to their fiscal investments. He persevered to create a written Tamil language and printing press, founded churches and schools. Ziegenbalg, although ordained and called to mission work by Denmark’s King Frederick IV, grew up in Saxony and attended university at Halle under pietist A. H. Francke. Ziegenbalg gave his life to learning not only the Tamil language (he published the first Tamil Dictionary and Grammar) but also the culture and religious life of the people with which he was called to share the Gospel. He established congregations, schools, a seminary and was the first to publish Lutheran hymns, Luther’s Small Catechism, and the New Testament in Tamil on presses shipped from Europe. He continued to work for Christ and the Gospel until his death before his 36th birthday. He is buried in New Jerusalem Church in Tranquebar.

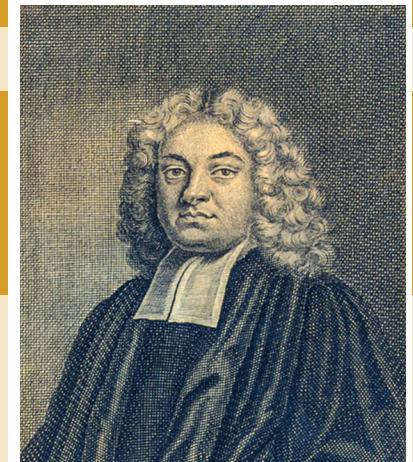
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- **June 14, 1683 (?)** Born in Pulsnitz, Germany (outside of Dresden in Saxony)
- **October 1, 1705** Finishes interim pastoral work in Berlin after attending classes in Halle. Accepts missionary call from Denmark (along with Plütschau).
- **October 15, 1705** Arrives in Copenhagen with Plütschau after 8 day trip. Examined (twice), ordained on November 11 and commissioned as royal missionaries to the Danish colonies.
- **July 6, 1706** Arrives at Tranquebar.
- **September 2, 1706** Begins to learn Tamil by attending children's classes taught by local schoolteacher Watthiar.
- **September 16, 1706** Begins catechizing locals in Portugese. Starts constructing a Tamil dictionary.
- **May 12, 1707** Baptizes first candidates (indentured slaves of employees of Danish East India Company) after instruction and examination.
- **August 14, 1707** Dedicates Jerusalem Church and first preaches in Tamil.
- **September 5, 1707** First Tamil candidate baptized after instruction and examination.
- **May 21, 1711** Completes his translation of the New Testament into Tamil.
- **August 1712** Arrival of printing press, with English and Latin type (a gift from the British East India Company and the SPCK). Second press arrives from Halle in 1713.
- **October 26, 1714** Travels back to Europe in effort to gain greater support. Writes Tamil Grammar. Marries Maria Dorthea Salzmänn. Both leave for India on December 2, 1715.
- **October 23, 1716** Begins seminary instruction of 8 Indian students.
- **February 11, 1719** Receives the Lord's Supper; dies after failed treatment for stomach illness.

AFTER MORNING PRAYERS I BEGIN MY WORK. FROM SIX TO SEVEN I EXPLAIN Luther's Catechism to the people in Tamil. From seven to eight I review the Tamil words and phrases which I have learned. From eight to twelve I read nothing but Tamil books, new to me, under the guidance of a pandit who must explain things to me with a secretary present, who writes down all words and phrases which I have not had before. From twelve to one I eat, and have the Bible read to me while doing so. From one to two I rest, for the heat is very oppressive then. From two to three I conduct catechism class in my house. From three to five I again read Tamil books. From five to six we gather for prayer. From six to seven we [Ziegenbalg and Plütschau] confer together about the day's events. From seven to eight I have a Tamil writer read to me, as I dare not read much by lamp light. From eight to nine I eat, and while doing so I have the Bible read to me. After that I examine the children and converse with them. Constant practice in this way has given me great freedom and confidence in the use of the Tamil language. —Letter dated August 22, 1708

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