

## FACES OF LUTHERAN MISSIONS IN INDIA



### Carl Manthey-Zorn

**Born:** March 18, 1846, Sterup, Schleswig-Holstein, Germany

**Died:** July 12, 1928  
Cleveland, Ohio

Lutheran missionary who fought for divine inspiration of Holy Scripture and the necessity to proclaim the Gospel around the world.



Leipzig Mission work in Poodookottai



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CHRIST SHOWED GRACE TO CARL MANTHEY-ZORN IN THE FACE OF GROWING ATTACKS ON THE integrity of Holy Scripture from Unionism and Rationalism. Born to an evangelical pastor and the daughter of the Duke Manthey of Augustenburg in Schleswig-Holstein, Carl was given the family name “Manthey-Zorn” upon the request of the Duke, who was without a son. The family fled Sterup during the Danish occupation of Schleswig and moved to Hochspeyer in the Rhineland-Palatinate in 1852, and then to Odernheim in 1856. Carl’s father sought counsel about the prevailing Rationalism and Unionism from “old Lutheran” pastor Claus Harms.

Carl was tutored privately until he was sent to Sobernheim at age 10. At age 15 he enrolled at the *Gymnasium* at Kreuznach, where he began to get into fights with other students. Rationalism was the norm and Christian doctrines were ridiculed.

After the death of his father the family moved to Erlangen. The influential director of the Leipzig Mission, Carl Graul, lived across the street. Upon graduation from the *Gymnasium* he was enrolled in the University of Erlangen and joined the *Burschenschaft Germania*, where dueling with rapiers was sanctioned. Although admonished by Franz Delitzsch about Carl’s propensity for dueling, Carl continued these sword fights until he was severely injured in 1867. Carl left Erlangen to tutor the children of a family in Mecklenburg. It was at this time, in a crisis of faith, he began to read the Gospels for the first time. Finally, seeing the silliness of his objections to the Jesus of the Scriptures he confessed that the Bible was truly the Word of God and that Jesus was his savior—the savior of sinners. Zorn then bought a copy of Luther’s Small Catechism and the Augsburg Confession.

Early in 1869 he needed to decide between four offers to further his theological education: (1) an offer from a professor in Erlangen to tutor his children; (2) an offer to go to America and be a pastor in the Missouri Synod; (3) an offer for a loan from a factory owner; and (4) an offer from the director of the Evangelical Lutheran Mission Society of Leipzig (who had come to know Zorn through professor Franz Delitzsch) to come and begin training for mission work in India. Zorn decided to begin training at the Leipzig Mission. It was in Leipzig that Zorn first met Fritz Zucker, an instructor of the younger *Gymnasium* students.

Even at the Leipzig Mission there were teachers who were “old Lutherans” and there were others who were theologians but did not believe in the historical Jesus presented by Holy Scripture. Despite the differences in belief among the instructors, Zorn faithfully continued his studies, involved in a student group that studied the Lutheran Confessions more deeply. It was in this way the group invited Director Hardeland to explain more about the Book of Concord and first heard details about C. F. W. Walther and the Missouri Synod. Zorn then read a copy of Walther’s “Church and Ministry.”

Graduating in 1870, Zorn became engaged to Mariechen Hengstenberg. He was ordained February 19, 1871, receiving special permission to be ordained in Erlangen. During the rite of ordination, both Zorn and his friend Grubert recited by name all individual Lutheran confessional documents they confessed were unadulterated explanations of the Word of God—something unheard of in that day. Subsequently Zorn was commissioned for his mission work in India June 2, 1871.

Zorn arrived in Tranquebar and was assigned to work in Poodookottai (modern-day Pudukkottai). In September 1874 Zorn and Zucker submitted conference papers on the proper unity of doctrine based on Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions. Edmund R. Baierlein, who had served as missionary in the Saginaw Valley of Michigan before becoming a missionary in India, had shared printed material from the LCMS with Zorn and Zucker. When disagreements between local Leipzig missionaries increased Zorn and Zucker appealed to the Leipzig Mission board, whose response was critical of Zorn, Zucker, Grubert, and C. F. W. Walther. Zorn, Zucker and Grubert then published their *Declaration* in a German mission newsletter. Soon after they returned their calls to the Leipzig Mission and arrived in New York City on July 4, 1876. Zorn was called to a congregation in Sheboygan, Wisconsin. He accepted a call to Zion Lutheran Church in Cleveland, Ohio, in 1881.

Zorn authored dozens of devotional books and was a vocal advocate for LCMS International Missions. He preached at the commissioning service of Theodore Naether and T. Franz Mohn at Immanuel Lutheran Church in St. Charles, Missouri October 14, 1894.

Hans Zorn. “Carl Manthey-Zorn.” *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly*. 31:3, 4; 32:1, 2; 33:1, 2 (1959–1960).

*A strong voice for mission work, Zorn fought for the integrity and inspiration of the Bible in the face of unionism and rationalism.*

## FACES OF LUTHERAN MISSIONS IN INDIA

### Carl Manthey-Zorn

- **March 18, 1846** Born to Evangelical pastor Hans and Lina (Manthey) Zorn in Sterup, Schleswig-Holstein, Germany. Given name “Manthey-Zorn” under previous agreement with Lina’s father, the Duke of Augustenburg.
- **March 20, 1846** Baptized in Evangelical congregation.
- **1848** Hostilities in Schleswig-Holstein between Danish and Prussian forces. Hans Zorn declared a traitor by Danish forces and flees to the south.
- **1852** Family flees to Hochspeyer in the Rhineland-Palatinate where Hans Zorn receives appointment at Evangelical congregation. Hans Zorn and family transferred to Odernheim in 1856.
- **1856** Carl privately tutored until he was sent to Sobernheim at age 10 for instruction in Greek, Latin and mathematics.
- **1861** Carl enrolled in *Gymnasium* at Kreuznach. Begins fighting with other students on regular basis. Taught to approach the Bible as a mythological book of morality.
- **November 10, 1862** Upon death of Hans Zorn the family moves to Erlangen, across the street from the former director of the Evangelical Lutheran Mission of Leipzig, Carl Graul, who insisted the Leipzig Mission would operate on the Bible as the Word of God and the Lutheran Confessions.
- **1864 ?** After passing final exam in the *Gymnasium* he enrolled in University of Erlangen and joined the *Burschenschaft Germania* (Friedrich August Craemer had also been a member) where he began drinking and dueling with rapiers. Only ended dueling after severe injury to his head in 1867.
- **1866 ?** Spends some time as university student in Kiel. Returns to Erlangen to finish studies at the university.
- **1867** Accepts position of private tutor for wealthy family in Mecklenburg. It was here that Zorn began to have terrors of conscience, fearing God and his wrathful judgment. Old local pastor encourages Zorn to read the Gospels. “It was the power of God, of Holy Writ, of Jesus’ Word, that overcame me ... and made me captive.” Zorn begins to read the entire Bible—and also obtains his first copy of Luther’s Small Catechism and the Augsburg Confession. Begins to reconsider his membership in the Evangelical / Union Church.
- **1869** Receives four offers for study / employment. Decides to attend the Evangelical Lutheran Mission of Leipzig and train for missionary service in India. Here Zorn becomes friends with Fritz Zucker. Joins “Philadelphia” student group. Studies the Lutheran Confessions with a few fellow students and invites Leipzig Mission Director Hardeland to give a presentation on “Church and Ministry.” Hardeland mentions C. F. W. Walther and the Missouri Synod. Zorn reads Walther’s “Kirche und Amt” and was impressed with Walther’s clarity and confessionalism.
- **1870** While preparing for final examinations Zorn begins correspondence with a “pensioner” instructed by Zorn’s mother in Erlangen: Mariechen Hengstenberg. The two write about Christian doctrine and practice, especially “closed communion.” Zorn proposes to Mariechen after successfully completing his final examinations.
- **February 19, 1871** Zorn receives special permission to be ordained in Erlangen, along with his best friend Grubert. Rationalist theologian Thomasius officiates. Grubert make it a point to pledge their allegiance to the Scriptures as the true Word of God and each of the documents contained in the unaltered Book of Concord as true expositions of Scripture.
- **June 2, 1871** (May 31 ?) Zorn and Grubert commissioned for missionary service in India by former Leipzig Mission Director Hardeland.
- **July 8, 1871** Lands at Madras and travels to Tranquebar to continue his study of Tamil.
- **February 1872** Zorn is assigned to work at the mission station in Poodookottai. Subsequently contracts dengue fever.
- **December 26, 1872** Zorn marries Mariechen Hengstenberg.
- **September 1874** Zorn and Zucker invite fellow missionaries to meet and discuss “proper unity in faith and doctrine based on Holy Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions.” Zorn and Zucker present papers. The discussion becomes a dispute about what was being taught to pastoral candidates in India. Another Leipzig Mission missionary, Edmund R. Baierlein (who had previously worked as a Leipzig Mission missionary in the Saginaw Valley of Michigan before being assigned to mission work in India), had shared with Zorn and Zucker printed material from the Missouri Synod. Zorn and Zucker finally appeal for a ruling to the mission board in Leipzig. The response is harsh and critical of Zorn, Zucker, Grubert and C. F. W. Walther. The “Zorn group” then publishes their “Declaration” in a German mission newsletter. After the Leipzig mission demands they retract their “Declaration,” Zorn, Zucker, and Grubert return their call documents and make arrangements to join the Missouri Synod.
- **July 4, 1876** Zorn and Zucker arrive in New York City. Zorn is called to a congregation in Sheboygan, Wisconsin.
- **November 1878** Twice Zorn declines a call to be pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church, Saint Louis.
- **1881** Zorn accepts a call to Zion Lutheran Church, Cleveland, Ohio.
- **October 14, 1894** Preached at the commissioning service of Theodore Naether and T. Franz Mohn at Immanuel Lutheran Church in St. Charles, Missouri
- **1907** Marie dies in 1907. Zorn retires in 1911 at age 65 and lives in the home of his son Carl.
- **October 25, 1920** Received D.D. from Concordia Seminary, Saint Louis.
- **July 12, 1928** Dies after suffering a stroke June 29, 1928.



C. M. Zorn while a student at the Leipzig Mission.

WHAT WAS SO GREAT ABOUT ZORN that we have spent so many pages telling the story of his life? It was not his precise theological learning. It was not the offices he held. It was not his many writings ... . From a purely human standpoint, Zorn was a richly gifted and blessed individual. ... In his youth he was driven by sin. His sins ... flowed from human pride, and finally led him to revolt against his God. But just as with the apostle Paul, the Lord powerfully broke into Zorn’s life and led him to know his sins. Then He poured an uncommonly rich measure of his grace and Spirit into this individual who had a unique and special combination of natural gifts ... and prepared him to suffer the scorn and misery he would endure for the sake of the Word. ... In uncommon measure, Zorn was a practical outworking of Luther’s writing, “On the Freedom of the Christian Man.”

—from a 1928 biography of Zorn’s life by August Pieper