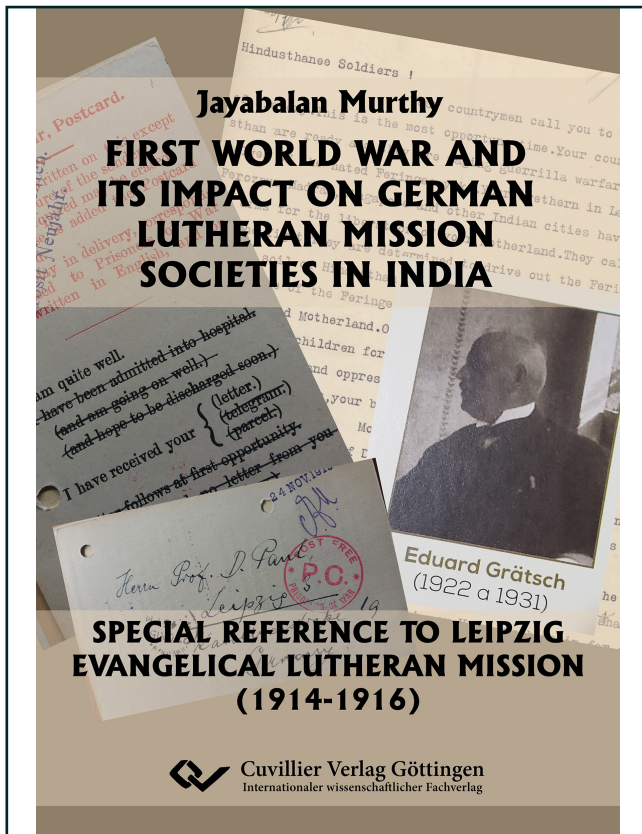




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First World War and its Impact on German Lutheran Mission Societies in India.

Special Reference to Leipzig Evangelical Lutheran Mission (1914-1916).



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Chapter one

1. Introduction:

One day, I received an urgent email from my daughter's school administration in Göttingen. The content was quite frightening, as I was asked to pick up my daughter before 1 pm. The authorities had found an unexposed bomb of the World War close to where my daughter attends her school. The content of the email describes the officers stationed at my daughter's school in their attempt to defuse the bomb. I quickly told my wife that since I was far from my daughter's school, she went to pick my daughter up at school. On my arrival home that day, my daughter broke not only the news but also expressed a lot of her emotions about bombs and World War. Although more than a decade has gone by since the World War, society still experiences its ripple effects. My research is not about the direct historicity of the World War, but elements of the World War could not be escaped in this research. My research is about the First World War and its impact on India's German Lutheran Mission Society.

Interestingly, many articles and mission journals report on German Lutheran missionaries' struggles in India. However, the stories were not presented well by world Christianity. Of course, it is only natural sometimes how mission journals report about the struggles of the missionaries and the poor condition of the natives, with the view of soliciting support from their mission partners.

This chapter begins with a literature review. Here, I expound on numerous kinds of literature on the First World War and European Church History. I engage with publications on the Great War and the German Lutheran Mission in India. Next, I explain my main research questions and analyse the sources of the research questions. In what follows, I examine the method used for his transcribed data, such as handwritten archival materials.

1.1. Literature Review:

In the late 1960s, a sequence of articles appeared in the Federal Republic of Germany. In the Mid-1980s, these articles analysed and explained why theologians, priests, pastors, and church officials had a religious responsibility for backing the First World War. ¹ These collections of documents and studies focused on war sermons, manifestos, and theological war apologies by renowned Christians. They also highlighted the theological-political turning points from important political-military events, such as those in 1917 and 1918/19. ² According to Gerhard Besier, the authors are primarily theologians. Often, they were not revealed as an expression of moral consternation and followed a predominantly ethically critical approach. They wanted to show how Christian belief allowed itself to be exploited and how easily seduced the clergy and believers from various denominations by power and ideology. ³ Further, the writers want to explain how these people have forgotten Christianity's Peace and Reconciliation core message and are committed to following their religious leaders' opinions of war and conflicts. However, this was challenged mainly by the present publications even though they expressed that "its altogether frightening abandonment of the substance of Christianity in the church approach to the First World War". ⁴ Interestingly, these publications undermined particular theological questions and did not consider enough of who disobeyed the national

¹ See also Heinrich Misalla, *Gott mit uns. Die deutsche katholische Kriegspredigt 1914-1918*, (München: Kösel 1968); Karl Hammer, *Deutsche Kriegstheologie 18790-1918*, (M: Kösel, 1971); Günter Brakelmann, *Der deutsche Protestantismus im Epochenjahr 1917*, (Witten: Luther Verlag, 1974); idem *Proteantische Krieger Theologie im ersten Weltkrieg*/Reinhold Seeberg als Theologe des deutschen Imperialismus Bielefeld: Luther -Verlag 1974. See also Gerhard Besier, *the great war and Religion in comparative perspective*, in *Contemporary church History* 28 Jahrgang/volume-28 Heft 1/Issue 1/ 2015, 30.

² Cf. Martin Greschat, *Der deutsche Protestantismus im Revolutionsjahr 1918/1919*, (Witten: Luther-verlag, 1974). See also Gerhard Besier and Katarzyna Stoklo, *The Great War and Religion in Comparative Perspective: why the christian culture of war over religiously motivated pacifism in 1914*, in *Kirchliche Zeitgeschichte*, 28 Jahrgang/Volume 28 Heft 1 / Issue1/ 2015 (Heidelberg: Old Media), 30

³ Gerd Krumeich, *Gott mit uns? Der erste Weltkrieg als Religionskrieg*; in *Idem /Hartmut Lehmann (Eds), Gott mit uns Nation Religion und Gewalt im 19 und frühen 20 Jahrhundert*, (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 2000), 273-283

⁴ Martin Greschat, *Die zwei Weltkriege und die Kirchen*, in: Katharina Kunter/Jens Holger Schorring (eds), *Europäisches und Globales Christentum. Herausforderungen und Transformationen im 20 Jahrhundert*, (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011, 107. See also Martin Greschat, *Der Erste Weltkrieg und die Christenheit, Ein globaler Überblick*, (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2014), 48 (eine erschreckende Preisgabe der christlichen Substanz in den Voten der europäischen Kirchen)

religious intoxicated zeal.⁵ Even though they were many individuals from the circles of Revivalist Protestantism, these groups were not focused on theologians. There were mainly two significant churches, State Protestant Church and Roman Catholic Church. Although there were free churches and other religious denominations, apart from these two significant churches, all other denominations were kept outside the field of study.⁶

English Church historians and theologians have published many articles on this same line. For example, the research of Alan Wilkinson, an Anglican theologian, had a similar view of the German Church historians in his book *The Church of England and the First World War*.⁷ Albert Marrins' *The Last Crusade: The Church of England in the First World War* describes the church's attitude during the war, inside conflicts, the role of the clergy in continuing the war effort, the position of careful objectors and the debates regarding reciprocal measures at the end of the war.⁸ Linda Parker deals with the role of the Anglican army chaplains and acknowledges that their pastoral activities were weak.⁹ Michael Snape explores the significance of the military chaplains for the religious commitment of the British soldiers. Later, he presented the historical development of the Royal Army chaplains' department from the early 18th century to the Cold

⁵ Cf Wolfgang Huber, *Kirche und Öffentlichkeit*, (Stuttgart: Klatt, 1991), 98; 135-219.

⁶ Cf Elmar Spohn/Christof Sauer, *War Zeal, nationalism and unity in christ; Evangelical Missions in German during World War I*, in *Studia Historiae Ecclesasticae XXXV* (2009), 323-336; Elmar Spohn, "Durch Blut und Eisen, Zeitgeist und Hermeneutik im I. Weltkrieg", in *GBFE Jahrbuch 2011/12*, 313-330; see Gerhard Besier and Katarzyna Stoklo, *The Great War and Religion in Comparative Perspective: why the christian culture of war over religiously motivated pacifism in 1914*, in *Kirchliche Zeitgeschichte*, 28 Jahrgang/Volume 28 Heft 1 / Issue 1/ 2015 (Heidelberg: Old Media)

⁷ Wilkinson justified his decision given the wealth of resource material that his own church had to offer, and presumed a similar attitude from the free churches, which is questionable together with the virtual total silence on the part of the Roman catholic church. Unlike, most of the German church historical representations of the first world war in the general cultural, social, and societal context of the time. He expresses the ecumenical aspirations among members of the church leadership and enquires into the effects of the bloody slaughter on soldiers' sense of religious belief.

⁸ Albert Marrins, *The Last crusde: the Church of England in the first world war*, (Durham: Duke University, Press, 1974). See also Gerhard Besier, 32

⁹ Linda Parker, *The whole Armor of God. Anglican chaplains in the Great war*, (Solihull: Helion & company, 2009), see also Stephen H. Loudon, *Chaplains in conflict, The Role of Army chaplains since 1914*, London: Avon Books, 1996, esp. 43-68. Using diaries and letters written by six padres during the war five Anglican and one Roman catholic journalist Michael Moynihan wrote a book in 1983 about *British Army chaplains God on our Side. The British padre in world war I* (London: Secker & Warburg 1983), see Gerhard Besier, 32

War era.¹⁰ He published another article on Catholicism and British Patriotism in 2002. It emphasises that the Roman Catholic Church, perceived by many as a foreign institution, seized its chance to show their national loyalty and hoped it would be seen as an institutional religion.¹¹ In 2018, I had the privilege to present a conference paper in Rome on the effects of World War I on the Christian churches in Europe between 1918-1925¹².

Michael Snape, one of the keynote speakers, also presented at this conference from the perspective of Europe. Edward Madigan considers the predominantly negative picture of Army chaplains between the wars largely a myth.¹³ John Wolff devoted just a chapter to Empire and War in his study. Wolff established that war and revolution represent a significant challenge for churches; it impedes religious consciousness in the population and plunges the church authorities into crisis. These leaders are forced to recognise how little their institution has to say to society.¹⁴ Arlie J. Hoover's book *God, Germany, and Britain in the Great War: A Study of Clerical Nationalism* explored the role of religion and spirituality in arousing the emotions of war.¹⁵ Also, in the book *Great War and Holy War*, Philip Jenkins explains how belief created and extended the First World War. He reveals the robust religious dimensions of this modern-day crusade. This period marked a deplorable crisis for Western civilization, with effects that resounded throughout the rest of the twentieth century.¹⁶ French religion research in the First World War rarely began until the 1990s. From the

¹⁰ Michael Snape, *The Royal Army Chaplains Department 1796-1953*, (Woodbridge-Rochester (Ny): The Boydell Press, 2008) see also Gerhard Besier and Katarzyna Stoklo, 32

¹¹ Michael Snape, *British Catholicism and the British Army in the First World War*, *Recusant History: A Journal of Research in Reformation and Post-Reformation Catholic History in the British Isles* 26 (2002), 314-358

¹² <https://www.hsokult.de/event/id/event-85646> accessed on 10.10.2018.

¹³ Edward Madigan, *Faith Under Fire Anglican Army Chaplains and the Great War*, (Basingstoke New York: Palgrave Macmillan 2011).

¹⁴ John Wolfe, *God, and Greater Britain: Religion and National Life in Britain and Ireland 1843-1945*, (London: Routledge, 1994); Kester Aspender, *Fortress Church: The English Roman Catholic Bishops and Politics 1903-63*, Leominster, Herefordshire: Gracewing, 2002.

¹⁵ Arlie J. Hoover, *God, Germany and Britain in the Great War: A Study of Clerical Nation*, One Madison Avenue: Praeger, 1989)

¹⁶ Philip Jenkins, *The Great and Holy War: How World War I Became a Religious Crusade*, (New York: HarperCollins, 2014)

outset, it focused mainly on perceptions of cultural, secular and religious patriotism, the broad emotional involvement, its motives, and the religious-cultural constructed enemy stereotypes.¹⁷ According to Gerhard Besier, not least because of their close collaboration with German historians, notably Gerd Krumeich, this approach aimed to achieve a comparative German French perspective but a European perspective.¹⁸

Gerhard Besier's article *The Great War and Religion* presents an overview of the European and US American history of research. It investigates the causes behind the sudden turning point in Europe from a moderate Pacifist-Ecumenical Culture-Christianity-atmosphere to a religious culture of war. It shows how the respective mainline churches imposed a quite unequivocal interpretation on the community's still quite uncertain state of agitation regarding the early stages of the conflict and subjected the community to concrete patterns of interpretation in the ongoing course of the war.¹⁹

As we have seen above, there were many kinds of research and publications on the First World War and the corresponding responses of churches from Western perspectives. According to my knowledge, no research or publications were done on First World War and Christian Mission Societies in India. Even though plenty of sources were available in the archives, several types of research were done from colonial perspectives. Few writings were being published here and there. For example, D. Paul Fleischer published a book, *Hundert Jahre Lutherische Mission* 1936. In this book, there is a chapter called *Indien und der Krieg*. Here, he writes about the return of the Leipzig missionaries and how the Swedish Mission helped them keep the mission field in India. There is no detailed information about the *SMS Emden* attack in Madras. So, these publications are

¹⁷ The first issue of the journal 14-18 Aujourd'hui 1: pour une histoire religieuse de la guerre, Paris 1998

¹⁸ Jean Jaques Becker/Srephane Audion- Rouzeau Les Societes Europeanness et la guerre de 1914-1918, Nanterre: universite Pair X Nantre 1990 Jean Jacques Becker /Jay M winter/Gerd Krumeich/Annette Becker/Stephane Audion Rouzeau (eds), Guerre et cultures 1914-1918, Paris: Armand Colin 1994 see also Gerhard Besier and Katarzyna Stoklo, 34.

¹⁹Gerhard Besier and Katarzyna Stoklo, 2

colonially driven. Paul H. Von Tucher's work, *Nationalism: Case and Crisis in Missions*, accounts for the German Missions in British India during World War II and observations concerning Christian missionaries within and outside the internment camps. He said it was the test of their faithfulness to God, their homeland, and fellow Christians. He focused mainly on Second World War and Christian missionaries within and outside the internment camps.²⁰

Dhamodharan Christu Das' book *Lutherans in Kerala: Mission Perspective Towards Subalterns and Their Socio-Religious and Secular Context* deals with comprehensive coverage of one hundred years of history of Lutherans in Kerala. The First World War in 1914 created problems and difficulties for the Lutheran Missionaries. Great Britain and Germany were arch-contenders. Most Lutheran Missionaries were German citizens and were subject to captivity or repatriation. While in 1914, it was a force of fifteen men on the field. By 1920, this number had dried up to four. Despite many various efforts, it was impossible to send out new workers. Eighteen new workers were sent out in three years when the ban was lifted. So, the author's focus is not on war. He didn't provide any valued argument in this area. According to Christu Das, the existing staff were burdened with heavy work. The new missionaries who came just before the outbreak of the War suffered for want of linguistic competence. The missionaries worked day and night.²¹

The burden of the War was too heavy on Travancore. The Maharaja was forced to pay a massive amount as a War Fund as a partner. This affected the economy of the State. People who were working in Malaysia and Singapore came back to Travancore. There was large-scale unemployment in the State. The country was suffering in the throes of famine and poverty. During this time, the missionaries, though limited in number, met their fold, extended alms to those in

²⁰ Paul H. von Tucher, *Nationalism Case and Crisis in Missions: German Missions in British India*, (Erlangen: Buchdruck, 1980)

²¹ D.Christus Das, *Lutherans in Kerala: Mission Perspective Towards Subalterns and their Socio-Religious and secular Context*, (Delhi:Christian World Imprints, 2019)

need and consoled those who suffered because of the War. MELIM Missionaries stood with the people during this time and won their appreciation. According to the author, even though the difficulties of the War were severe, they did not hinder the growth of the mission. During this war period, the task was growing.²²

Richard Pierard wrote two notable articles: "*The Preservation of Orphaned German Protestant Missionary worked in India during World War I*". This article's core idea was to show the struggle of the German Mission Societies in India and the ecumenical movements that helped them overcome the battle.²³ The second article also had the same line in *World War I, the western Allies' German Protestant Missions*. In this article, the foreign mission primarily influenced the development of the twentieth-century ecumenical movement. He analysed how the national feelings took the upper hand over the spiritual, and according to him, the mission endeavour suffered mightily because of this.²⁴ The latest publication of Ulrich Gäbler published the biography about his grandfather Hermann Gäbler *Ein Missionars leben Hermann Gäbler und die Leipziger Mission in Südindien (1891-1916)*. This book is the biographical writing of Hermann Gäbler, who worked in a southern part of India. This book is one-sided as it glorifies Hermann Gäbler. Naturally, the grandson always wants to celebrate his grandfather. I met him a few years back at Gurukul Lutheran Theological College, Chennai. During our conversation, I noticed he recorded his disappointment with the Tamil Evangelical Lutheran Church, which glorifies missionary Kabis as a contemporary of Hermann Gäbler. He expressed that the native Christians and the Leipzig Mission Society did not acknowledge his great-grandfather's work. But this book's interesting aspect related to my research; Gäbler played a vital role in

²² Christus Das. D, *Lutherans in Kerala: Mission Perspective Towards Subalterns and their Socio- Religious and secular Context*, (Delhi: Christian world imprints, 2019) 73.

²³ Richard V. Pierard, *World War I, The Western Allies, And German Protestant Missions*, in *Mission und Gewalt: Der Umgang christlicher Missionen mit Gewalt und die Ausbreitung des Christentums in Afrika und Asien in der Zeit von 1792 bis 1918/19*, (Verlag: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2000), 366

²⁴ Richard V. Pierard, *The Preservation of Orphaned German Protestant Missionary Works in India During World War I*, in *Mission und Gewalt: Der Umgang christlicher Missionen mit Gewalt und die Ausbreitung des Christentums in Afrika und Asien in der Zeit von 1792 bis 1918/19*, (Verlag: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2000), 497

the mission field while the British Government had interned the other Leipzig missionaries. But this commendable service is presented as a mere report to the mission societies.

For example, the *SMS Emden* attack underestimated the date of the attack was mis dated *SMS Emden* attack happened on 22nd September 1914, but the author mentioned it as 18th September 1914. It was a big mistake because the *SMS EMDEN* was the root cause of interning the German missionaries in India, particularly the few Leipzig missionaries suspected as spies. ²⁵

In Panikos Panayi's *The Germans in India: The Elite European Migrants in the British Empire*, the author assigned a separate chapter to the impact of the Great War. He shed light on the struggle of the Germans in India during the time of the Great War. In this chapter, he allocated a section about Christian brotherhood. He gave a glimpse of the struggle of the Christian missionaries. The author had limited information about the German Lutheran Mission, leading him to miss quotes. For example, on page 214, he mentioned Carl Paul as inspector of the Basel Mission in Tiruvallur, but both are wrong. Carl Paul was the director of the Leipzig Mission Society, and he never worked in India, particularly in Tiruvallur.²⁶

When I referred to the primary source, Missionary Kannigser was stationed in Tiruvallur and was not informed about his deportation by British officials. Second, no word about the *SMS Emden* attack mentioned in his book, of 286 pages. It surprised me because this attack was one of the main reasons for the deportation of the Germans from India. Finally, the author says that the period of the Germans in India ended. He argues that the Government of India tried to make this permanent by attempting to prohibit the entry of further Germans into the

²⁵ Ulrich Gäbler, *Ein Missionarsleben: Hermann Gäbler und die Leipziger Mission in Südindien (1891-1916)*, (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2018) 327-351.

²⁶ Panikos, Panayi, *The Germans in India: Elite European migrants in the British Empire*, (Manchester: Manchester Press, 2017)

country for up to another five years. After the peace, a policy reflected the desire to thoroughly cleanse the Empire of all enemy aliens. According to him, the First World War was, therefore, a big turning point for the position of the Germans in India. After that, the missionaries worked earnestly as scholars, businesspeople, etc.

The Great War completely changed their position. Partially I agree with his opinion because as soon as the First World War broke out, the Germans were not disturbed by the British, especially missionaries. When the *SMS Emden* attack happened, the Germans were suspected as spies.

Panikos Panayi's research recounts how the war affected the German Christians Missionaries. One discrepancy in his account is that he says that The German Christians' Mission work ended during the First World War. But that is incorrect, for the German missionaries returned to India after the war. The first German missionary after the War sent to India was Dr Froehlich in 1925. The Leipzig Mission had a firm partnership with the Tamil Evangelical Lutheran church.²⁷

In 2018 there were many conferences for the 100th-year commemoration of the First World War. I presented a paper at two international conferences in Rome and Hermannsburg, Germany. The Rome Conference mainly focused on the impact of the First World War on European Churches. My paper was on the First World War and its implications for Swedish Mission Societies in India. The Hermannsburg conference was a sequel to the Rome Conference. There is another essential publication on the First World War as a Turning point: The impact of 1914-1918 on Church and Mission (focusing on the Hermannsburg mission), edited by Frieder Ludwig. This publication examines the impact of the war on churches and missions in various regions, especially in Africa and Asia. I contributed an article to this publication under the title First World War and its

²⁷ Ibid.,

impact on Lutheran Mission in India with particular reference to Leipzig Evangelical Lutheran Mission. I opened the article by summarising the common understanding of the British Government regarding German missionaries during World War I with the statement that "Every German is a potential spy". That was a "wrong ideology" and was the root cause of the suffering of the German missionaries who faced untold problems in their mission fields. During the Great War (1914-1918), missionary activities were interrupted entirely in India, especially the Leipzig Evangelical Lutheran Mission. In April 1916, all German Missionaries were interned and sent back. The Leipzig Evangelical Lutheran Mission (LELM) and its properties in Tamil Nadu were transferred to the Church of Sweden Mission. Even though the Swedish Mission took charge of the work of the LELM, it was not too easy for them to look after the whole field and establish an administrative body recognised by the government. The War interrupted the organic constitutional development. On 14th January 1919, the Danish-Halle and LELM established Tamil Lutheran Congregations, which were managed and tended by Swedish and German Lutheran Missionaries. With the help of Indian Pastors formed the Tamil Evangelical Lutheran Churches.

As an Independent body, with the help of the National Mission Council, this Church got its constitution in 1921 and a Bishop as its head. But if you look back, T.E.L. C did not function as an independent body because T.E.L.C. was under the control of Swedish missionaries. We saw above that the bishop was the head of the church, so he had all the power. If you look back at the history of T.E.L. C, the first Indian bishop was Rev. Dr Rajah Busanam Manickam (1956-1967). The first three bishops were in Sweden. It raises the question of whether T.E.L.C. had no native leaders to take the leadership position and function as an independent body. Because of the page limit, I could not write many things. It developed a lot after I presented my paper and published the article.²⁸ I realised

²⁸ Frieder Ludwig ed, *The First World War as a Turning Point: The impact of the years 1914-1918 on church and Mission* (with Special focus on the Hermannsburg Mission), (Berlin: LIT, 2020).