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Early SPCK Involvement

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was scholastic. Besides catechetical work, they established charity schools for Tamil (or, Malabarian) and Portuguese children. Ziegenbalg considered these children the nursery or stock for the future church; with pride he wrote after a few years in Tranquebar: "Above all things, I must tell you, that what taketh me most, is the *Education of the Malabar Children* here."[9]

Slowly, through education and long catechetical instruction, the missionaries raised a small church among the native population. They believed that the church could have been even larger but for the opposition they faced from Tranquebar's secular and religious leaders. Not much love was lost initially between Danish Lutherans and the German Pietist missionaries; the Danish chaplains painted the missionaries from the pulpit as false prophets and on one occasion the governor jailed Ziegenbalg for over four months.[10] In 1711 Plutschau left Tranquebar for Germany, hoping to remove some of the hindrances to the mission.[11]

Early SPCK Involvement

From the beginning the missionaries sent letters home to Germany and Denmark, but the Tranquebar mission remained basically unknown in England.[12] The person responsible for translating and publishing these letters and the first promoter of the East India mission in England was Boehm.[13] He published the letters early in 1709 under the title, *Propagation of the Gospel in the East*,[14] dedicating the volume to the SPG and its president, Archbishop Tenison. Besides translations of ten missionary letters, it included "A Preliminary Discourse concerning the Character of a Missionary", in which Boehm drew attention to "the sad Fate of the Eastern Churches" in the Levant, of whom St. John had written in Revelation ii-iii, and warned the European Churches that it was of little avail "to have the Name and Form of an Orthodox Communion, without the Life and Power which should attend it". He emphasized that missionaries needed a spirit of impartial love, an ability to distinguish between the essential and accessory parts of religion, a conversation conformable to doctrine, and a spirit of martyrdom.[15] By 1718 *Propagation of*

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9 [Ziegenbalg] to a Friend at London [Boehm], Madras, 17 Jan. 1710, printed in: *PGE II* (1710), pp. 28f.

10 Ziegenbalg to Francke, Tranquebar, 1 Oct. 1709, printed in: *Alte Briefe*, p. 109.

11 Plutschau to Boehm, Cape of Good Hope, 3 Jan. and 6 Feb. 1712, printed in: *PGE III* (1718), p. 203.

12 Some of the missionary letters were published in Germany: *Merckwürdige Nachricht aus Ost-Indien* (Leipzig/Frankfurt, 1708).

13 See J.F. Foster, "The Ecumenical Significance of A.W. Boehm, 'The Propagation of the Gospel in the East'", *Oecumenica: Jahrbuch für ökumenische Forschung* 1968, pp. 117-32.

14 Boehm to Francke, London, 25 Feb. 1709 (ArFrSt C 229:64).

15 [Boehm], "A Preliminary Discourse concerning the Character of a Missionary", in: *PGE I* (1709), pp. i-xxxi.

the Gospel in the East had been published in three parts and had gone through three editions.[16]

Boehm dedicated the book to the SPG hoping that the Society would assist the mission. The SPG ordered 500 copies of *Propagation of the Gospel in the East* "to be distributed by and among the Missionaries in the Plantations and here in England";[17] however, as the secretary of the SPCK later explains, the SPG's charter "in the opinion of the Attorney General limited them to the English Plantations in America",[18] a situation which did not prevent individual members of the SPG from contributing to the support of the mission.[19] With the SPG unable to help, Boehm turned to the SPCK. In recommending the mission to Chamberlayne, he told him that since the missionaries were erecting charity schools "this work agreed all the more with the main purpose with which our Society has already been occupied for many years".[20] One week later, on 7 September 1710, the Society decided to admit Ziegenbalg and Plutschau as corresponding members and to open a subscription for the Tranquebar mission.[21] Of these developments Boehm said,

> A God-inspired mind will recognize also here the finger of God and take delight in it. Though the whole work is yet an embryo and tiny seed, from which one cannot quickly harvest ripe fruits, it already serves that by such approval of eminent people the project could be commended to others rather better and more forcibly and be made known in the whole land.[22]

A few months later Boehm reported that Archbishop Tenison himself had contributed 30 guineas and "because he is the head of the moderate party he has set thereby a good example for it".[23]

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16 Part II came out in 1710; the second editions of Parts I and II were published in 1711. In 1714 the third part was published at the request of the SPCK, consisting of abstracts of missionary letters put together by Boehm, though later the title "Part III" was dropped. (*SCM* [ME/m/3], 5 Sept. 1713, 1 Mar. 1714) The 1718 and final publication saw the third editions of Parts I and II plus a Part III completely different from the 1714 edition with thirty-seven new letters.

17 *SPG Journals*, 20 May 1709 (p. 381f) (ArUSPG). Because of this large purchase the publisher, Joseph Downing, asked Boehm to prepare another edition. (Boehm to Francke, London, 13 Oct. 1710, printed in: *ErBrief*, p. 169)

18 [Newman] to Isaac Hollis, Bartlet's Buildings, 10 May 1728 (copy) (ArSPCK, *File* 7 [Original Letters:3]).

19 SPCK, *Circular Letter* (11 Aug. 1711) (Camb., *Baumgartner Papers* 6.III.III.No.433).

20 "... so halte ich davor, daß dieses Werck destomehr übereinkomt mit dem Haupt-Zweck, damit unsere Societaet schon viele Jahre her beschäftiget gewesen." (Boehm to Chamberlayne, London, 31 Aug. 1710, printed in: *ErBrief*, pp. 161-62)

21 SPCK *Minutes* (v.126).

22 "Ein göttlich einfältig Gemüth wird auch hierin den Finger GOttes erkennen, und sich darüber freuen können. Denn obzwar das gantze Werck noch ein Embryo und kleiner Saame ist, davon man nicht flugs reiffe Früchte erndten kan, so dienet es doch schon dazu, daß durch eine solche Approbation ansehnlicher Leute das Project andern desto besser und nachdrücklicher könne angepriesen und im gantzen Lande bekant gemacht werden." (Boehm to Francke, London, 19 Sept. 1710, printed in: *ErBrief*, pp. 164-66)

23 "... und weil er das Haupt der moderaten Partei ist, hat er dadurch derselben ein gutes

The SPCK appointed a Special Committee for the Mission which directed SPCK involvement.[24] From the minutes of this Committee's frequent meetings the full extent of SPCK action is made clear. Some of the most faithful attenders included Sir John Philipps, Boehm, Slare, Ludolf, Henry Hoare, the treasurer, and Henry Newman. Boehm's influence on the Committee is apparent from the start. At the end of the 1710 edition of *Propagation of the Gospel* in the East he had appended "A Proposal for Printing the New-Testament in Portuguese". The Committee made printing this New Testament its first task and, after some delays, brought out 1250 copies for use by the Tranquebar missionaries.[25] The other major goal of the Committee was sending a printing press and printer to Tranquebar, since the missionaries had to transcribe all their translated works. Jonas Fincke, the schoolmaster at G.A. Ruperti's German school in London, was willing to go to Tranquebar as the printer, so the Committee placed him with Downing, "in order to be instructed by him in the Art of Printing".[26] Josiah Woodward, chaplain to the East India Company in London, asked the Company to grant free passage to Fincke, the press, paper, and supplies. The Company allowed the freight to be shipped free of charge and the owners of the ship granted free passage for Fincke.[27] Woodward seems to have been deeply impressed with the mission reports from East India. Even before he requested free passage for Fincke and the freight, he had already sent a letter to the directors of the East India Company, laying before them the work to bring the Gospel to the East Indies, and asking, "And on what can we lay out the Riches of this World, which will not long continue in our Hands, to such Advantage; as in handing to perishing Souls the Light of Eternal Salvation?" He proposed that "the Hundredth Part of their Gains should be appropriated to this sacred Purpose", following the example of the Dutch East India Company, and closed by saying,

> I shall therefore confide in the Candour of this Honourable Committy, to bear with Me in this sincere Discharge of my Conscience; not only recommending but pressing this most sure and profitable sort of Merchandice.[28]

After such a suggestion Woodward's request for free shipping for the cargo probably seemed insignificant to the directors. Their approval set a precedent followed by the Company for years to come.

Exempel gestellet." (Boehm to Francke, London, 5 Jan. 1711, printed in: *ErBrief*, p. 178); Boehm to Mr. de Ners., London, 2 Feb. 1711, printed in: *ErBrief*, p. 196; to Francke, London, 29 May 1711 (ArFrSt C 229:47).

24 SPCK *Minutes*, 23 Nov. 1710 (v.144).

25 *SCM* (ME/m/1), 28 Nov., 1 & 5 Dec. 1710, 16 & 22 Feb. 1711.

26 *SCM* (ME/m/1), 24 Nov. 1710.

27 *SCM* (ME/m/1), 5, 15, & 23 Dec. 1710. Woodward also gave his support to the printing of the Portuguese New Testament. (Woodward to Newman, Poplar, 30 Sept. 1710 [BL, Add.4276:209])

28 Josiah Woodward to the Secretary of the Court of Directors of the East India Company, Popler, 21 Nov. 1710 (India Office Library and Records, *Home Misc. Series* 59/9).

A few months after he set sail Fincke sent a letter to Boehm from Brazil.[29] The ship had been plundered and all the people taken captive by a French admiral. Joseph Collet, who was bound for India to serve the East India Company, ransomed the ship, including Fincke and the printing press, for £3500, giving up his son as a hostage until the money was paid. Collet's cost for the press, utensils, books, etc. was £300, but he lowered his charge to £150 out of regard for the mission and the SPCK, who later paid this part of the total ransom.[30] Tragically, Boehm later informed the Committee that Fincke had apparently fallen overboard and drowned two days after leaving the coast of Brazil.[31]

Sending books, money (£130), a printer, a printing press, and paper was not the full extent of the SPCK's involvement. A short prayer had been composed for the missionaries in India to be used at the SPCK general meetings.[32] The Society was also actively endeavouring to send English missionaries to India. In 1712 Sir John Philipps recommended "Griffith Jones of Carmarthenshire in Wales as one extraordinarily qualified to be sent upon the Protestant Mission to the East Indies".[33] The Committee concurred with Philipps' assessment and invited Jones to go to India. Jones considered the request seriously and sought some advice.[34] One of those asked to counsel Jones was Boehm,[35] who told him that God alone must convince him "by a Divine Impression" and not by "Human Persuasions"; for evidence, Boehm related the manner of his own decision in coming to England.[36] He told the missionaries at Tranquebar about Griffith Jones and the plans for the English mission in India, hoping that after a few weeks Jones could visit them.[37] But, to the disappointment of Boehm and the SPCK, Griffith Jones declined the Society's offer because of his responsibilities in Wales and thereby missed the opportunity to become England's first missionary to India.[38] Certainly Wales benefited from his decision, since later he earned himself a place in his nation's history through his successful system of circulating schools, as an early biogra-

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29 Fincke to Boehm, St. Sebastian, 20 Oct. 1711, printed in: *PGE III* (1718), pp. 1-15; cf. Boehm to Francke, London, 16 Feb. 1711 and 21 Mar. 1712, printed in: *ErBrief*, pp. 203,219f.

30 *SCM* (ME/m/1), 29 Feb., 4 Mar., and 13 May 1712. The SPCK actually remitted only £128.11.6 of the £150 ransom, because later, when Collet's son was released, one-seventh of the total ransom was not paid. (6 May 1713)

31 *SCM* (ME/m/1), 27 June 1712; "Account by Michael Smith of Mr. Finck's Life and Death", 13 July 1712 (ArSPCK, *Letters from India* [ME/CR1]).

32 Sir John Phillips to SPCK, Picton Castle, 20 Nov. 1712, printed in: Clement, p. 53.

33 *SCM* (ME/m/1), 11 Nov. 1712; on Philipps' relationship to Jones, see Shankland, "Sir John Philipps", pp. 87-93.

34 *SCM* (ME/m/1), 13 & 21 July 1713

35 *SCM* (ME/m/3), 18 Sept. 1713.

36 Boehm to Griffith Jones, n.p., 22 Sept. 1713, printed in: Clement, pp. 330-33.

37 Boehm to J.E. Grundler, London, 23 Jan. 1713, printed in: *ErBrief*, p. 234.

38 Griffith Jones to SPCK, Laugharne, 22 Nov. 1713, printed in: Clement, p. 62.

phy of Jones declared: "Wales was not to be deprived of so eminent a Minister, who proved so great a Blessing to it."[39]

"Sectarian Lutheranism"

The SPCK could not find any Anglican clergy who had the qualities of the German Lutheran missionaries. In his influential *Address to Persons of Quality* Robert Nelson wished the work of the missionaries "would excite a Spirit of Zeal and Emulation in our Universities, and especially in the younger Students of Divinity, to offer themselves to be sent forth on this glorious Expedition",[40] but his call fell on deaf ears. Newman envied the zeal of the Lutherans from Halle and called it "a reproach to the English Nation"; with no English missionaries he acknowledged that "those that are well disposed in Britain for Propagating the Gospell among the Heathen must be content to come in as Auxiliaries to other Nations since they have forfeited the Honour of being Principals".[41]

Archbishop Tenison in 1713 first raised the delicate issue of the propriety of an Anglican society providing support to a Lutheran mission. He took particular offence at the omission in the Tranquebar catechism of the second Commandment in the Decalogue against false images, which appears in the Anglican and Reformed but not the Lutheran and Catholic catechisms. This omission was brought to the attention of the Special Committee in letters from Chamberlayne and Boehm.[42] Newman told Chamberlayne that, because of the matter's importance, the Committee had sent it to the Society where a long debate ensued.

> The major part [of the Society] seemed to wish the matter had never come in Question before them. ... The Members who have solicited for charities to this Mission have thought it their prudence and Charity to avoid as much as they could putting it into the heads of the Benefactors that the Missionarys were Lutherans or Ministers not episcopally ordained, etc. because Mankind are too apt to catch at objections to save their Purses. ... They considered that, though they unfeignedly wish'd to see the Gospel in its purity propagated without any bias to the sects or opinions that unhappily divide Christians, yet that it is rather to be conniv'd at that the heathen should be Lutheran *Christians* rather than no *Christians*.[43]

The members of the SPCK were aware that these were ordained Lutheran missionaries, but evidently few of them had mentioned it when they had sought to raise subscriptions for the work. With the battles raging in the Church of England at this time over lay baptism and the validity of non-

39 *A Sketch of the Life and Character of ... Griffith Jones* (London, 1762), p. 5.

40 *An Address to Persons of Quality*, p. 132.

41 Newman to Jennings, Lewis, Stevenson, and Long, Whitehall, 22 Dec. 1713 (ArSPCK, *Letters from India* [ME/CR/1]).

42 *SCM* (ME/m/3), 16 Dec. 1713

43 Newman to Chamberlyne, Whitehall, 19 Dec. 1713 (ArSPCK, *Soc Lett* [CS2/3]).