

Impact case study (REF3)

Institution: Liverpool Hope University		
Unit of Assessment: Liverpool Hope University		
Title of case study: Recovering cultural memories and rejuvenating Tamil Christian Minorities		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: Since 2008		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s): Prof Daniel Jeyaraj	Role(s) (e.g. job title): Professor World Christianity and Director of Andrew Walls Centre for the Study of African and Asian Christianity	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI: Since 2008
Period when the claimed impact occurred: August 2013–31 July 2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? No		
1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words) This research impact promotes interreligious harmony and social cohesion between Tamil Christian minorities and dominant 'Hindu' communities in Tamil Nadu, India. It has enabled the Tamil Lutherans Christians in Tranquebar, Tanjore, Trichy and Chennai to meaningfully engage with their non-Christian neighbours. It inspired the formation of an NGO <i>Grace Endearment Mission Services</i> (2010) in Guntakal, Andhra Pradesh. It has recreated afresh an Indo-German relationship and led to the establishment of <i>The TELC Ziegenbalg House: A Museum on Intercultural Dialogue</i> (2017) in Tranquebar. It has influenced more than 175,000 people in and outside of South India in reclaiming their cultural memories.		
2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words) Jeyaraj has been at Liverpool Hope University since 2008 as Professor of World Christianity and Director of Andrew Walls Centre for the Study of African and Asian Christianity. His research continues to play a role in shaping the way many Lutheran Christians in South India, Germany, Denmark and the USA think of their origins, identities and works. Tamil Hindus frequently accuse Tamil Christians of destroying Tamil culture. Jeyaraj's research has since 1991 identified the lack of textual evidence for this accusation; it has provided a body of texts, accessed by both Christians and Hindus, which recover and preserve their linguistic, socio-cultural and religious memories. Jeyaraj retrieved these memories from representative archival documents of 18 th century Christians, written in Tamil, German, Latin, Danish and Portuguese. Works cited build on other major textual outputs such as the German and English editions of the <i>Genealogy of the South Indian Deities</i> (2003, 2005) and <i>A German Exploration of Indian Society</i> (2006). Jeyaraj studied the formation of an indigenous Christian worshipping community in Southern India and the life and works of Bartholomäus Ziegenbalg, the first Protestant Lutheran missionary to arrive in South India, at the Danish port of Tranquebar (1706). Research findings (R1-6) demonstrate how writings by Christians have preserved the unique socio-cultural, linguistic, religious aspects of Tamil communities in early eighteenth century south Indian. They also illustrate the positive dynamics interaction between the values of German Lutheran Pietists and of the Tamil <i>bhakti</i> adherents. These interactions defined their socio-cultural interdependence and religious distinctiveness. For example, Jeyaraj produced the first English version (annotated) of <i>Grammatica Damulcia</i> (R2); composed by Ziegenbalg, this was the first Tamil grammar printed outside of India, to teach Tamil to his contemporaries in Europe. Jeyaraj's English translations of		

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99 letter-reports received by Ziegenbalg from Tamil sources retrieve the voice of the Tamil people and provide insight into everyday habits in early 18th century India (R3).

To extend the reach of his research, in 2014 Jeyaraj made the decision to publish Tamil texts within Tamil Nadu, in recognition that European publication imprints may not be affordable. In this way his research has reached a much wider Tamil population (in particular, R4, *Earliest Tamil Christian Spiritual Songs*, and *Tamil Christian Ethics* [Tanjore: Tamil University, 2017]).

Jeyaraj's work on *Thirukkural* (200–500 CE) (R5, R6), the moral Bible of the Tamils, shed new light on the earliest references to it in German literature, revising current scholarship and giving important insight into how Tamils in the early 18th century used it. Retrieving memories of *Thirukkural* from Christian missionary writings in German (1712–1714) strengthened the claims of *Thirukkural* possessing universal moral appeal. Scholars on *Thirukkural* invited Jeyaraj to share his discoveries with other *Thirukkural*-enthusiasts in Nagercoil, Tamil Nadu in 2017, in Liverpool/UK (June 2018) and New Delhi (September 2019), and regularly invite Jeyaraj to share his archival findings with other experts. For example, on 26 September 2020, he shared with them hitherto little- or un- known information about “The earliest German translations of Tamil Ethical Works in 1708 and the First Tamil Teachers in Germany in 1711” (<https://youtu.be/qpModo2e7wc>).

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

R1) Jeyaraj, Daniel, *Bartholomäus Ziegenbalg, the Father of Protestant Mission: An Indian Assessment*, New Delhi: ISPCK, 2006.

R2) Jeyaraj, Daniel, *Tamil Language for Europeans: Ziegenbalg's Grammatica Damulica (1716): Translated from Latin and Tamil, Annotated and Commented by Daniel Jeyaraj (With the assistance of Sister Dr. Rachel Harrington SND)*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2010.

R3) Jeyaraj, Daniel and Young, Richard Fox (transl. eds.), *Hindu-Christian Epistolary Self-Disclosures: 'Malabarian Correspondence' between German Pietist Missionaries and South Indian Hindus (1712–1714)*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2013.

R4) Jeyaraj, Daniel: *Ōlaiccuvaṭikaḷiḷ toṭakkakālat tamilkkiristava irainerippātalkaḷ (1714): Mūlamum viḷakkamum* [in Tamil: Earliest Tamil Christian Spiritual Songs – 1714 – from a Palm Leaf Manuscript: Original Text with Explanation], Chennai: Āciyaviyal niṟuvaṇam (Institute of Asian Studies), 2014.

R5) Jeyaraj, Daniel: “Earliest References to Thirukkural in German Literature,” *International Conference [17–19 May 2017 in Nagarkovil, Tamil Nadu, India] on Thirukkural: Thirukkural as an ethical corpus of universal appeal*, Chennai: Institute of Asian Studies, 2017, pp. 164–178.

R6) Jeyaraj, Daniel: “‘World Poetry for World Reconciliation’: Graul and Pope as Translators of Tirukkural in the 19th century Germany and England”, *Thirukkural Beyond the Frontiers of Tamil India, Second International Conference on Thirukkural [held at Liverpool Hope University, Liverpool from 27 – 29 June 2018]*, Chennai: Institute of Asian Studies, 2018, pp. 91–104.

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words).

The impact of Jeyaraj's research outputs has been described as “transformative” (1iv). Tamil Lutheran Christians constitute a minority and there is a tendency for them to be blamed for the destruction of local cultures; Jeyaraj's research refutes this perspective with textual evidence of how written Christian records have preserved early 18th century Tamil socio-cultural memories. These memories, “not available anywhere else”, are identified as ‘empowering’ (1.iv).

The primary impacts of Jeyaraj's research are described under three headings: (1) Renewed Self-Understanding of the Tamil Evangelical Lutheran Church (TELC), (2) Establishing of New National and International Institutions, and (3) Creating New Learning Materials.

1. Renewed Self-Understanding of the Tamil Evangelical Lutheran Church (TELC): The authentic relevance of Jeyaraj's research has enabled the Tamil (and Telugu) Christians at grassroots level to address questions about identity, role and status; it has provided them with new tools for meaningful exchanges of ideas with their Hindu neighbours in Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh (1, 2, 3).

According to the Bishop of the *Tamil Lutheran Evangelical Church* (TELC) (1i), Jeyaraj's research has impacted "more than 150,000 communicant members" in the States of Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Kerala, Pondicherry and Andaman Nicobar Islands. They have become aware of how the European and Tamil founders of their Church engaged with the socio-cultural and religious world of the Tamils and worked toward their religious, socio-cultural, educational, emotional and economic wellbeing. Jeyaraj's research has given them the necessary textual data, insights and vocabulary to meaningfully interact with their Hindu neighbours about diverse themes of mutual interest.

Additionally, the TELC members "changed their former hagiographic understanding about the [European founders] of the TELC" and began appreciating the role of Tamil Lutheran leaders such as the first Tamil Lutheran Pastor Aaron" (1.i). The Aaron Family, besides naming a ninth-generation descendant after Jeyaraj, has come forward to renovate a heritage building in Tranquebar for community purposes. The Bishop also notes the positive impact of Jeyaraj's research on rural communities: "They have gained new insights into their history and Lutheran identity. Particularly, they motivate their children, especially the girls, to pursue studies; in our contemporary situation, these countercultural practices benefit the downtrodden greatly" (1i). The Bishop further states that some pastors have also developed their Tamil-Lutheran identity by drawing into their sermons insights from Jeyaraj's publication of the worship songs and 397 Tamil ethical maxims (1.i).

Members of the TELC (1.ii; 3), who earlier attributed the origin of their church solely to European missionaries, now understand them as catalysts for change; the main actors are understood as the Tamil people, who embraced Lutheranism and interpreted it within the socio-cultural and traditions of the Tamil-*bhakti* movements and village spirituality (*gramadevata*). A pastorate chairperson, who hosted Jeyaraj's book releases and public lectures, was inspired by Jeyaraj's research to build twenty churches and three community halls as centres of socialisation for Christian and non-Christian neighbours, stating that the research showed him the significance of church and community buildings for "a sense of identity, unity and empowerment" (1.ii). One of these halls in Trichy has become the home for a rallying point of gypsies, who have now begun to send their children to schools. This pastorate chairperson reported how Jeyaraj's research has helped his congregation members to gain "new awareness and deeper understanding" of the TELC and its shared culture, deepened their sense of belonging and loyalty to each other, and thus shaped their attitudes and behaviour patterns significantly (1.ii).

2. Establishing of New National and International Institutions: In 2010, the NGO *Grace Endearment Mission Services* (GEMS) was established in Guntakal in Andhra Pradesh, with the research of Jeyaraj cited as an influence (1iii); they train school teachers and local leaders in rural and tribal villages. GEMS has used Jeyaraj's recovery and interpretation of socio-cultural memories from historical texts as a means to empower neglected people groups in several rural and tribal villages, for example in the Arakku Valley. GEMS representatives have helped the

oppressed Dalits and tribal peoples to reclaim their dignity as human beings and to assert their identity. They do it by developing a fresh respect for their unwritten tribal languages, life-affirming ancestral customs and making life-transforming choices to think and live differently. The Founder-President connects this directly to Jeyaraj's research, as a means "to foster new thinking"; he states that the recovered texts "preserved the socio-cultural memories of the Tamil Christians, who belonged to similar *Avarna*-groups", and the narrated stories "encouraged them to form a better opinion about themselves and to negotiate a better social standing" (1.iii; see also 1.iv). On a personal level, the Founder-President notes that engaging with Jeyaraj's research "leads me to appreciate the key role of native agents in bringing about positive societal transformation" (1.iii).

Secondly, *Ziegenbalg House: A Museum on Intercultural Dialogue* was jointly established in Tranquebar in 2017 by leaders of the Francke Foundations (Halle, Germany), the TELC, two German mission agencies and relevant officers of the Government of Germany. The Head of Mission and Ecumenics at UTC, Bangalore, attests that Jeyaraj's research "concretely...paved the way" for the museum's establishment (1.iv). The museum fosters new forms of Indo-German exchange of visitors, volunteers and artists. It shapes the regional history of the Tamil people by demonstrating to them German perceptions and representations of and contributions to the Tamil people, language, literature, culture and religions.

The Curator describes the museum as "the most tangible impact" of Jeyaraj's research, mediating insights on "inculturated Christianity and interreligious encounters" in the 18th century (1vi). The research shows how the Tamil in Tranquebar "encountered German Lutheran understandings of God and human beings; likewise, German readers in Germany, Denmark and England were dazzled to engage with the Tamil views of God and human beings". These "models of intercultural and transnational learning" help visitors expand "attitudes towards people outside of their daily encounters" and learn "complementary ways of being human" (1vi). The museum's permanent panel exhibition and artefact descriptions contain "insights ... gleaned from Prof. Jeyaraj's research publications" (1vi). The museum staff also utilize Jeyaraj's translation of Ziegenbalg's *Grammatica Damulica* to teach school children and visitors: this reciprocal knowledge means that "invariably, they express astonishment and happiness about the impact of their Tamil language on Germans since more than 300 years" (1vi).

The Director, Francke Foundations, concurs on the important role of the "fusion and cross-fertilization of socio-cultural ideas" in Jeyaraj's research for "our concrete attempts to rejuvenate our Indo-German relationships that remained dormant for nearly a century"; his insights are used at the museum in the education of "local, national and international visitors" about Indo-German relationships (1vii).

Jeyaraj also led a day workshop at the museum for non-specialist audiences on the theme of retrieving cultural memories from Tamil palm leaf manuscripts in September 2019, which was attended by some forty people (1iv): archivists, librarians, curators, students, teachers and members of the public (1vi). The Curator describes this sharing of knowledge with "rural and underprivileged students as much as with scholars [of renowned institutions]" as a "breakthrough" (1vi).

3. Creating New Learning Materials: Lamp Post Media prepared the 68 minute television documentary entitled *Beyond Empires: the hidden tale of Bartholomäus Ziegenbalg*, completed for distribution in 2014 with an interreligious and international production team (2i). It is entirely based on Jeyaraj's research (2ii). The producer gives an account of its showing (1v), often with Q&A sessions, at local theatres, international conferences, universities and churches, in the USA, Australia and New Zealand. In November 2014, the USA-based RBN cable television aired it to their 3 million subscribers; it was also released to ACCTV (cable Christian channel) in Australia

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and UK/New Zealand affiliates and broadcast on a Tamil TV channel in India. The film has been purchased as a perpetual license DVD by 23 colleges in the USA and is used by the producer/director at Excelsia College in Sydney, Australia, to teach integration of Christian theology into daily life. In addition, this documentary inspired two Australian producers to interview Jeyaraj for their educational videos “How Missionaries Changed the World?” (Public Christianity, Australia, 2018) (2iii) and “What Indian Christianity Teaches us Today” (Global Church Project, Australia, 2018) (2iv).

Jeyaraj’s research findings have also inspired Tamil Christians to come up with newer ways of disseminating knowledge. For example, a Tamil teacher used them to write a drama entitled *The Life of Ziegenbalg* to enthuse Tamil Christian youth for greater public service and social harmony. On 25 August 2019, the TELC Adaikalanathar Church in Purasawalkam, Chennai hosted this drama. As the photos of this event show, about 1500 people viewed it (3). Thus, the ripple effects of Jeyaraj’s research findings continue to facilitate recovery of socio-cultural memories and rejuvenation of Tamil Christian minorities in South India.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

1. Seven comprehensive impact reports from:

- i) 27 Dec 2019: The Bishop, Tamil Evangelical Lutheran Church, Trichy, Tamil Nadu, India
- ii) 03 Jan 2020: Pastorate Chairperson, Tamil Evangelical Lutheran Church, Budalur, Thanjavur
- iii) 23 Jun 2020: Founder-President, Grace Endearment Mission Services, Guntur, Andhra Pradesh
- iv) 04 Jul 2020: Professor of Mission and Ecumenics, United Theological College, Bangalore, India
- v) 27 Jul 2020: Producer of the TV documentary on *Beyond the Empire: Why India Celebrates Bartholomaeus Ziegenbalg*
- vi) 18 Aug 2020: Curator, The TELC Ziegenbalg House: A Museum on Intercultural Dialogue, Tranquebar, Tamil Nadu, India
- vii) 25 Aug 2020: Director, The Franke Foundations, Halle (Saale), Germany

2. The documentaries:

- i. *Beyond the Empire: Why India Celebrates Bartholomaeus Ziegenbalg*
<https://vimeo.com/channels/beyondempires/108023677>.
- ii. Gilbert, Christopher, “Beyond Empires – Film Project a Two Week Odyssey in India”, *chris gilbert – thinking story*, <https://cgilbertlpmedia.wordpress.com/2010/09/02/beyond-empires-film-project-a-two-week-odyssey-in-india/>.
- iii. “How Missionaries Changed the World?” (Interview with Jeyaraj at ‘33” and 7’:43’)
(<https://www.publicchristianity.org/how-missionaries-changed-the-world/>)
- iv. iv) “What Indian Christianity Teaches us today”
(<https://theglobalchurchproject.com/daniel-jeyaraj-indian-christianity-teaches-us-today/>)
(full-length interview with Jeyaraj).

3. Photos of *The Life of Ziegenbalg* (25 August 2019)