

**THE “CEYLON CONTROVERSY”: THE STRUGGLE OF TAMIL CHRISTIANS FOR IDENTITY IN THE CHURCH
AGAINST THE OPPRESSION OF AN ANGLICAN EPISCOPACY**

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The Church Missionary Society of Ceylon

The mission of the Church Missionary Society (CMS) of Ceylon began in 1818. In the autumn of 1817, Bishop Ryder of Gloucester ordained four men to be sent to Ceylon as missionaries: namely, Samuel Lambrick, Benjamin Ward, Robert Mayor, and Joseph Knight. These four men set sail on 20 December 1817 with Mrs. Ward and Mrs. Mayor and arrived in Galle on 29 June 1818. The mission functioned smoothly and grew gradually until Dr Reginald Stephen Copleston was consecrated fourth Bishop of Colombo in 1875. After Copleston’s arrival in February 1876, differences began to occur between him and the mission, since Copleston held very high-church opinions in matters of doctrine and it created an unpleasant atmosphere in the island and around the world. It was widely discussed in England and in Ceylon, with the leading newspaper *Ceylon Observer* giving wide attention to the problem. The church was divided into two groups which backed the two parties. Bishop Copleston was a young Oxford tutor and member of the Oxford high-church movement. He and his chaplains for the English residents were fond of following high-church Anglo-Catholic theology, ecclesiology and practice, while in contrast the CMS missionaries who served the Tamils and Sinhalese followed a very simple reformed evangelical theology, ecclesiology and practice.

The CMS formed a mission wing called the “Tamil Coolie Mission” (TCM) to minister to the Tamil coolies who began to arrive from 1841 from South India to work in the coffee estates (Report, 1872, p. 25). There were also a few Tamil Christian converts from Tinnevely among them. These local Christians had their own congregations and having appointed one of their members as the pastor and teacher, met regularly for Bible study and worship. These Christians also shared their religious belief with non Christians and had their own converts. Having noticed the activities of the Tamil Christians from Tinnevely, the proprietors of the estates decided to invite missionaries to organise a Tamil mission for the Tamil Coolies in Ceylon to promote their moral and religious welfare (Tamil Coolie Mission, 1876/77, pp. 6-9). A request was made to the missionaries in Tinnevely to send Tamil catechists. Rev. Tucker and Dr. Murdoch addressed the catechists at their monthly meeting at Paneivilei and four catechists responded and were sent to Ceylon in 1854 (Stock, 1899, p. 286; Proceedings: 1954-54, p. 119). The Tinnevely mission also sent Rev. Septimus Hobbs¹ to Ceylon on 26 November 1855 to organise the TCM (Hobbs, 19/09/1861). The TCM functioned without any hindrances while maintaining its Anglican heritage. With the guidance of its local committees it grew gradually as a native mission. The scheme of the mission is given below:

“The coolies in Ceylon receive the benefit; the native Christians in Tinnevely supply the catechists; the planters in Ceylon liberally provide the salaries; the church missionary society is honoured by the management and superintendence of the whole work.”
(TCM-Annual-Report, 1872, p. 5)

The TCM was a native mission managed by a local committee appointed by the CMS, and supported by the planters. The catechists arrived from Tinnevely and the estate workers, who were mainly Tamils from Tinnevely, received the benefits. School masters too arrived from Tinnevely to educate the children of the coolies; they and the Tamil catechists were trained at the Palayamcottai Institute of the CMS for this purpose.

The Issue between the CMS and the Bishop of Colombo

The Church Missionary Society worked with three bishops before Dr Reginald Stephen Copleston was consecrated fourth Bishop of Colombo in 1875. They were Bishop Chapman (1845-1861), Bishop Cloughton (1862-

¹ Rev. Hobbs, Septimus, Age - 26, of Portsea Hants, 1838 C M College, deacon – 1841, priest – 1842 by Bishop of London, 1842 June 26th to Tinnevely, South India, 1855 Oct 20th to Ceylon to organise the Tamil Coolie Mission.

1870), and Bishop Jermyn (1871-1874). CMS missionaries never had any problem with their previous bishops until Bishop Copleston arrived. Bishop Copleston was not happy with the Tamil Coolie Mission (TCM) and its local committee because it comprised evangelical lay representatives of all denominations, such as Anglicans, Presbyterians, English Non-Conformists, Baptists and Methodists. The TCM was independent from the Church Missionary Society and the Bishop of Colombo in its local function (Trimnell, 14/01/1878).

The other issue was that CMS missionaries followed a simple reformed evangelical theology, ecclesiology and practice and revoked some of the ritual practices adhered to by Bishop Copleston and his chaplains, such as: (1) placing a cross on or above the communion table, (2) placing flowers or other ornaments on the communion table, (3) facing eastward when consecrating the elements, (4) elevating the elements, (5) mixing of the water with the wine or using the mixed chalice, (6) washing of the vessels at the table, and partaking of the water (Gleaner, 1878, p. 132). There were other issues too, such as having figures and images in the churches, and lighting candles in the church and on the communion table. The Sinhalese and Tamil Christians in Ceylon had prejudices about the English pattern of Christianity practised by the English chaplains with regard to crosses, flowers, candles, and stained glass windows with figures. The chaplains were young Englishmen who knew nothing about the native language and culture.

In several little towns there were small churches with chaplains and these churches were lent to the mission for their Tamil services at certain hours. In several of these churches, tensions arose between the people and the chaplains appointed by the Bishop regarding these ritual practices. Rev. W Clark, the senior missionary in charge, instructed the catechists to assemble their congregations in their own schoolrooms or in planters' buildings on such occasions. A case in point was when a new chancel window with images was fixed in the Kallebokka church and people refused to worship there. Rev. Clark instructed them to assemble in a coffee store for worship. Then, in Pussellawa, a banneret was installed and a cross placed on the communion table against the local people's will; local Christians transferred their service to a nearby schoolroom. In St Mark's Church Badulla, too, people opposed the figure of the Lord in the window and the service was transferred to the mission schoolroom by the catechist. The Bishop of Colombo opposed this move and ordered the catechist in Badulla to resume the service in the church (Appeal, 24/07/1876). However, Rev. Cavalier, the superintendent minister who was in charge of the Badulla station, interfered and counter-ordered the catechist to resume his duties and rejected the order made by the Bishop of Colombo (Appeal, 24/07/1876). These incidents caused a severe division between the CMS and the Bishop of Colombo. Further, the editor of the leading newspaper *The Ceylon Observer*, a great friend of the missionaries, criticised the bishop and the chaplains in the newspaper and this caused further damage.

The church in Pussellawa was built by the local Christians who raised the funds for it themselves. However, when the chaplains took control of it they introduced their rituals and practices in the church, which the native people vehemently opposed (Peter, 23 December 1877). As a result, Rev. Pakkianathan Peter decided to transfer the services into the schoolroom. The Bishop of Colombo opposed Rev. Pakkianathan's transferring of the service to a schoolroom when there was a consecrated church in that vicinity and sent him a letter of warning threatening severe action if he continued this practice. In response, Rev. Pakkianathan wrote to the bishop stating that it had always been the practice of the CMS to celebrate Holy Communion in such places irrespective of a church being there or not, and that he was obliged to submit to his mission's practices (Peter, 20 December 1876). In the Bishop's reply to Pakkianathan he noted that his intention was not to pass an injunction on unconsecrated buildings, and that it was permissible to use such buildings when starting missionary work afresh in a new place; however, it was a violation to refrain from using a consecrated church. Although the Bishop was correct in his administrative point of view, he was not aware of the situation that arose after his chaplains introduced ritual practices against the will of these Tamil Christians. The chaplains from England overlooked the conviction of these Christians and their piety. The bishops of the Church of England too didn't understand the diversity of the church and the conviction of these people, and ignored their identity. These Tamil Christians were prepared to face any persecution to defend their faith and practice, and uncompromisingly opposed the installation of crosses and images, lighting of candles, and the observance of unfamiliar rituals introduced by the Bishop of Colombo (Petiton, October, 1876), because they were taught and brought up in a different manner by the CMS in India and Ceylon.

In practice, CMS missionaries never objected to architectural features such as steeples, Norman towers and Gothic architecture (Pettitt, 27 March 1857). The steeple tower of the Palayamcottai cathedral was built by Rev. Pettitt,² the mission secretary of CMS. Having services in schoolrooms was a common practice with the CMS. In Colombo, services were held in the church and schoolroom (in the morning and evening respectively) although the Colombo church was called their cathedral. This was a normal practice in other CMS stations, too (Pettitt, 27 March 1857). In Kandy, the Tamil congregation met in a schoolroom until a new church was built, even though an English church existed, and this was the general practice in the case of the CMS (Pettitt, 27 March 1857).

The Bishop's response

Withdrawing the Licences

The tension between the Bishop and the CMS became exacerbated as both parties were firm in their convictions and refused to compromise. The Bishop, using his authority, threatened the missionaries with an episcopal ban on the society (Minutes – TCM, 12 June 1877), completely prohibited the administering of the Lord's Supper in unconsecrated places, and prohibited new converts from partaking in the Lord's Supper. He withdrew Rev. Cavalier's licence for administering the Lord's Supper in unconsecrated places (Minutes – TCM, 12 June 1877).

Bishop Copleston passed orders so that he would have direct authority and supervision over the missionaries and attempted to dissolve the organization in order to merge it with the main diocesan body. His chaplains were ordered to carry out the work among the estate workers and place hurdles before the missionaries. He also attempted to take direct control over the catechists and withdrew the licences of all twelve missionaries who refused to be disassociated with Rev. Clark: namely, John Allock, A. N. Cavalier, William Clerk, Stephen Coles, Richard T. Dowbiggin, John Ireland Jones, C. Jayasingha, W. Oakley, W. E. Rowlands, J. D. Simmons, G. F. Unwin, and D. Wood. Afterwards, eleven of them were re-licensed and Rev. Clark's licence was withheld for collecting funds for building new churches for the CMS (Minutes – TCM, 12 June 1877) through a fund called "The Tamil Christian Native Church Fund" (Arulappan, 27 September 1877). The Bishop also declined to assign any reason for the withdrawal of the licenses of the missionaries and they assumed that he desired to have direct control over the CMS (Appeal, 24/07/1876). He also appointed the Archdeacon of Kandy, Rev. Matthew, to supervise the work of the plantation workers.

Following the withdrawal of the licences of the missionaries, several letters were exchanged between the Bishop of Colombo and the CMS to mend the relationship; but the attempt was met with failure. On the one hand, the TCM was firm in its stand to maintain its independence, and on the other, the bishop was firm in his stand on church unity (TCM – Report, 1866/1877, pp. 9-14). Finally, the missionaries appealed to the Metropolitan Bishop to solve the problem. The issue was also conveyed to the Archbishop of Canterbury and was discussed at the second Lambeth conference in 1878. The problem was echoed at the CMS anniversary at St. Bridget's, where Bishop Baring of Durham condemned Bishop Copleston of Colombo and commended the Ceylon missionaries in his anniversary speech.

Letters and Petitions

Letters exchanged between the bishop and missionaries after the licences of missionaries were withdrawn

(CMS – Statements, 19 July 1876)

Date	Document	From	To
21/03/1876	Letter	W. Clerk	Bishop of Colombo
22/03/1876	Letter	W. Clerk	Bishop of Colombo
24/03/1876	Letter – Reply	Bishop of Colombo	W. Clerk
05/04/1876	Letter	W. Clerk	Bishop of Colombo

² Rev. G. Pettitt, Secretary of the mission; 1828, C. M. College; 1831, Dec, 18, Deacon; 1832, Dec, 23, Priest by Bishop of London; 1833, Jan, 26, joined Tinnevely Mission; 1847, Feb, 27, London; 1850, March, 20, Ceylon; 1855, Jan, 9, returned to England; Author of the Tinnevely Mission, 1850; Hymns and Several Tamil Tracts; Chaplain to General Hospital, Birmingham, 1888-1856; Vicar, St. Jude's, Birmingham, 1856-1872; Died, 1873; Married, Louisa Hare, Died Jan. 24, 1892, aged 87.

18/05/1876	Letter	Bishop of Colombo	W. Oakley
20/05/1876	Letter	W. Oakley	Bishop of Colombo
26/05/1876	Letter	W. H. Elton	A. R. Cavalier
01/06/1876	Letter	W. Oakley	Bishop of Colombo
03/06/1876	Letter	Bishop of Colombo	W. Oakley
03/06/1876	Letter	Bishop of Colombo	A. R. Cavalier
07/06/1876	Letter	W. Oakley	Bishop of Colombo
09/06/1876	Letter	W. Oakley	Bishop of Colombo
13/06/1876	Letter	Bishop of Colombo	W. Oakley
16/06/1876	Letter	W. Oakley	Bishop of Colombo
30/06/1876	Letter	Bishop of Colombo	W. Clerk
30/06/1876	Letter	Bishop of Colombo	Badulla Catechist
03/07/1876	Letter	W. Clerk	Bishop of Colombo
07/07/1876	Letter	W. Clerk	Bishop of Colombo
08/07/1876	Letter	Bishop of Colombo	A. R. Cavalier
09/07/1876	Letter	Bishop of Colombo	W. Clerk
11/07/1876	Missionary Conference/Letter	Bishop of Colombo	Missionaries
12/07/1876	Letter	Bishop of Colombo	W. Clerk
12/07/1876	Resolution II	Missionary Conference	Bishop of Colombo
12/07/1876	Letter	Bishop of Colombo	W. Oakley
12/07/1876	Circular	Bishop of Colombo	Missionaries
12/07/1876	Circular	Bishop of Colombo	Subscribers
13/07/1876	Resolution III		
13/07/1876	Letter	Bishop of Colombo	W. Oakley
13/07/1876	Statement and Resolution	Bishop of Colombo	Missionaries
14/07/1876	Resolution V	Missionaries	
14/07/1876	Summary of Conversation		
14/07/1876	Resolution VI	Missionaries	
14/07/1876	Letter	Bishop of Colombo	W. Oakley
15/07/1876	Letter	Bishop of Colombo	Wardens, CCGF
16/07/1876	Circular	Bishop of Colombo	Missionaries
17/07/1876	Letter	Ireland Jones	Wardens, CCGF
24/07/1876	Petition	12 Missionaries	Metropolitan Bishop
28/07/1876	Letter	Bishop of Colombo	J. Peter and P. Peter

The Issue before the Five Prelates and the Lambeth Conference

The Archbishop of Canterbury (Dr. Tait), the Archbishop of York (Dr. Thomson), the Bishop of London (Dr. Jackson), the Bishop of Durham (Dr. Lightfoot) and the Bishop of Winchester (Dr. Harold Browne) gave their opinion, advice and recommendations on this issue as follows: "The CMS have done a great missionary work among the natives for the last sixty years and there were seventy Bishops of the Church of England serving as its Vice Presidents. The missionaries have freedom to send any missionaries to any part of the country and a licence must be sought from the Bishop of Colombo to do so, and such licences cannot be withdrawn by the Bishop of Colombo without a proper reason given." The Bishops also advised the Bishop of Colombo to restore the licenses of the missionaries and to follow the policy of previous Bishops of Colombo to maintain a healthy relationship with missionaries (Prelates, 27 February 1880). The recommendations were impartial and it encouraged further missionary work among the natives. The issue was also discussed at the second Lambeth conference in 1878. The conference made a decision that every missionary should obtain a licence from the Bishop, but if a Bishop refused a licence, he should state his reason to the Metropolitan (Hobhouse, 1908, p. 30).

The Issue before the Metropolitan, the Bishop of Madras

The issue of revoking the licences of missionaries was addressed to the Metropolitan Bishop by the Bishop of Colombo and the letter of response by the Metropolitan is given below (Metropolitan, 1 August 1876, pp. 82-83):

*Ootacamund
1st August 1876*

My dear Bishop of Colombo,

Your letter of the 15th reached me five or six days ago. I cannot be but extremely sorry that in requiring the recognition of claims whether just or otherwise, to which your clergy had not been accustomed and which have not been put forward in England, you did not allow your clergy and yourself much more time for deliberation.

I should even now as a brother Bishop advise and entreat you to restore the licences and let the difference between yourself and the CMS missionaries have the full consideration of all concerned.

Some of the clergy are elderly servants of Christ, and should be treated with great tenderness, and not be required hastily to adopt new views and plans.

The missionaries and their society have laid the diocese under an obligation, and gratitude would best be shown towards them by some sacrifice or concession.

The withdrawal of a licence is a serious punishment; and the withdrawal of twelve at once from persons of piety and experience is an extraordinary measure. Had such a thing been known in our church during the last 200 years?

Also is not the punishment you have inflicted the severest that you have power to inflict upon a clergyman for any offence, even for gross immorality?

There are various other considerations which I might bring before you in favour of your retracting your step; but I refrain, and should be very thankful if you could see that the authority which you desire to uphold may be best secured by sympathy, considerateness, and a concessory spirit; and that now the restoration of the licences, involving as it does the acknowledgement of your having acted if not with a wrong aim yet in a wrong manner, is the step most worthy of a Christian Bishop, and most calculated to arrest the harm which is likely to arise out of what you have done. May the Lord Jesus Christ, by the example of His own forbearance, humility, and hiding of His power, show you the right way.

These lines, as I stated at first, I have written simply as a brother Bishop. If you should not be able to accept the advice I have offered, and the grievances of your clergy should come before me officially, I shall have to consider, when fully informed of all the circumstances, what are the legal bearings of the case; which I have avoided touching upon in this letter.

*I am,
My dear Bishop,
Your faithful brother in Christ,
Signed F. Madras*

It is evident from the letter of the Metropolitan Bishop that Bishop Copleston was a hasty and autocratic person. Thus, Bishop Copleston declined to hear the voices of the Tamils and their struggle and cry for their

identity in the church and rejected the diversity of the body of Christ. He only insisted on episcopal unity and suppressed other views and plans as the Metropolitan bishop intimated.

The Response of the Tamil Christians

The Tamil Christians started sending petitions against the Bishop of Colombo and his ritual practices, signed by their members, to the Committee of the Church Missionary Society in England (Petitions, 9th August 1876, ND, October, 1876). They give the following reasons for their stand against the oppression of the Bishop of Colombo (Petition, March, 1878):

1. Their indigenous polity was threatened.
2. The British rule had declared freedom of worship and religious liberty, but through his authority, the Bishop attempted to suppress the freedom of worship and belief.
3. Their cultural and traditional way of worship and church practices were refused and the traditions followed by the English church were forced on them.
4. The English Episcopal order and polity oppressed the native Tamil Christians and their rights.
5. Sometimes high-church ritualistic, Romanian, Anglo-Catholic, Oxford Movement bishops are installed and the theology, doctrine, indigenous nature, culture, and practices of the simple Tamil Christians are threatened and ritualistic practices are forced on them.
6. Chaplains are brought from England on purpose to suppress the belief and practices of Tamil Christians. When these Christians departed from the church and had services in schoolrooms and coffee stores, the Bishop stopped administering communion in unconsecrated places and suppressed their right of worship and participation in communion.

Although the abovementioned causes were a hindrance to the Tamil Christians, they faithfully remained in the Church of England, and fought for their freedom. Native Tamil Christians of the CMS churches had no interest in images, crosses, flowers, decorations, candles, and rituals. In contrast, they eagerly sought to worship the true God in their hearts and stood against everything which destroyed their faith and order (Tamil Church Council, 12 August 1876). The feelings of these poor Tamil Christians were expressed in an article published by them in their monthly Tamil magazine “Ntjhe;j epHza gj;jphpif” and the English translation of it is given below (*The Three Indian Bishops and England, 1878*).

The Three Indian Bishops and England

The three Bishops, i.e. the Bishop of Madras, the Bishop of Bombay, and the Bishop of Colombo, and many clergymen under them, show themselves, by their actions and teachings, to be ritualists. The Bishop of Bombay last month delivered a sermon in which he very beautifully spoke about a heroic woman of the gospels. Who was this woman? She was the mother of God. Last year, in order to show that the divine presence was in the Eucharist he, after celebration, washed the cup and drank it.

It seems that the Bishop of Colombo likewise shows this by his deeds and in many of his sermons. In order to show that the actions of the Bishop of Madras are of the same stamp, not only are images and pictures introduced into Protestant churches, but also there are changes in the altar ceremonies. Thus we see that the Bishops of England are improving in theology. They hear confessions, they observe prayers and fasting, they even make changes in the Book of Common Prayer. Though some heroic Christians raise a cry against this, yet they have no success. When we see these things, we are sure that in a short time, England will become Roman Catholic. There, many of the clergymen have assumed the dress of the Roman Catholic priests. They wear sacerdotal

vestments. They say mass, but because they have not proper ordination, they have not the Divine rescue in their worship. Therefore, all these are the signs which show us that they will come into the truth. Many seem careless about the truth, but they are only waiting for the right time to come to embrace fully the true religion. As there is an assembly of the heretical Bishops in England in the next month, May, we all ought to pray that the Holy Ghost may come on them to confirm them in the truth.

The Issue between Bishop Chapman and the CMS Secretary

This is not the first time that the CMS had problems with a Bishop of Colombo. In 1853, Rt. Rev. Chapman, the Bishop of Colombo, was invited to lay a foundation stone for the CMS church in Colombo. After receiving Bishop Chapman's letter regarding the form of service for the laying of a foundation stone for the mission church in Colombo (Christ Church, Galle Face). Rev. Pettit, Rev. Gibson and Rev. Darley wrote to him expressing concern regarding some views which were against their conviction. An extract of the letter is given below (Pettit, 1853):

"My Lord, Mr. Gibson, Mr. Darley, & myself, after reading the printed form for laying the foundation stone which your Lordship proposed to use on Friday next, feel considerable difficulty in respect to one or two passages in it, which we trust your Lordship will kindly permit us to submit for consideration ... kindly permit us to request one or two alterations in the case of our mission church ... unable to unite in a prayer (1) "that all evil may depart from the place wherein the foundation stone is to be laid" and that (2) "God would strengthen the stone" itself because as they do not believe that any evil exists in this case, or any such effect would be granted in the other, they could not offer these petitions in faith..."

Bishop Chapman wrote the following in reply (Chapman, 15/01/1853):

"... (1) Without sharing in the objection expressed to the word of the prayer – on all such holy occasions, unity of heart is essential, and this I am most desirous always to promote. To my mind, however, the context shows that the prayer for "the departure of evil from the place, etc." is not restricted (as your remark implies) to the number of square inches which the stone itself covers, but embraces the whole "house which it is the foundation to the honour and praise of God's most Holy name" & as it is the presence of the Holy Spirit alone that can sanctify either the place or the hearts of those who resort to it for holy worship, I am not of opinion that a prayer for that blessed presence, to the ejection of all that is earthly and evil can, on such an occasion, be misplaced.

(2) To the prayer for the strengthening of the stone itself; by its reference to Christ, as the chief cornerstone, the immutable foundation, immediately preceding and the petition as immediately following, that He will Himself be the beginning, the increase and the consummation of the work, shows that it is the whole work, as His for whose glory it is undertaken, for which the prayer is offered. It is not to our feeble strength we should look in such a work, but to Him who alone can give of His own both in grace and blessing to ourselves and to the work.

Such I believe to be both the literal and spiritual application of the prayer; but I have no objection to substitute another.

Bishop Chapman valued their view and conviction and altered the order of service and the differences were solved. A good relationship was maintained during his period with the CMS.

In the case of Bishop Copleston, however, he was firm in his view and never valued the views of the Tamil Christians and rejected the diversity of the church. The CMS secretary in England complained about this to the Archbishop of Canterbury (Wright, 17 March 1879, p. 202). The Archbishop of Canterbury commented on the act

of Bishop Copleston in his letter and pointed out that the CMS carried out its work without any difficulties with the previous three Bishops and under the Bishop of Madras before the diocese was founded. He also stated that he was the Vice Patron of the CMS which had 71 other bishops besides the Archbishop of York as its Vice Presidents. Therefore, he stated, that there must have been some mistake on the part of the Bishop of Colombo. The Archbishop of Canterbury's views are given below in his letter to the Bishop of Colombo:

*Lambeth Palace
March 18th 1879*

My Dear Bishop,

I have been informed by the Church Missionary Society that you have intimated to them your intention neither to receive nor ordain any members of that society. I think there must be some mistake in this matter which an explanation on your part will easily dispel.

I understand that the disagreement respecting the ritual to be observed in your Cathedral on the occasion of a conference which you have proposed to hold has been adjusted by a kindly and considerate concession on your part to the feelings of some of the Church Missionary clergy in your diocese and I am therefore the more convinced that the supposed intimation above referred to of your intention to refuse ordination and licence to members of the C.M.S. must have been misunderstood.

I find in the clergy list that there are 62 clergy in your diocese and I am told that of these 26 are missionaries of the C.M.S. and that the society has carried on its work without difficulty under the 3 Bishops who have preceded you in your See since its foundation as it did also under the Bishop of Madras before the See was founded.

The C.M.S. has the Archbishop of Canterbury for its Vice Patron and 71 Bishops beside the Archbishop of York as its Vice Presidents.

I am convinced therefore there must be some mistake in the statement that you intend to refuse ordination and licence to all members of this society. No doubt in your diocese there is diversity of opinion but I think I may say in the name of all Bishops at home that they have found it the wisest course as well as the most consistent with Christian principle not to be very rigid in attempting to control individual opinion amongst good men who have their Master's cause at heart.

I may mention as an example of this that a difficulty of a very serious kind sometimes occurs at our visitations and consecrations from some of the extreme type church clergy refusing to receive the communion at the midday celebration from the hands of their Bishops. I have myself hitherto thought it rigid to take no further notice of this very objectionable proceeding than by public remonstrance, leaving it to my clergy carefully to consider my remonstrance and act according to it as far as their own licences would allow.

I shall be truly glad to hear that the present difficulties are amicably arranged by you in the same spirit of kindness and consideration by which you seem to have put an end to the misunderstanding about the attendance of the missionaries at the conference.

*Believe me to be your dear Bishop
A. C. C.*

It is certain that no archbishops or bishops except Bishop Copleston of Colombo contended against the CMS missionaries and their views and opinions, since the Anglican heritage is diverse in its theology, ecclesiology and practice and the individual identity of this diverse Anglican culture around the world is honoured and respected. However, the Coplestonian culture still prevails in the diocese of Colombo, where the evangelicals are mocked and marginalised, and their theology, ecclesiology and practices are not recognised. Today's Anglican evangelicals who follow the same low-church tradition of CMS are still discriminated against and struggle for their identity against oppression in the church in much the same way in which the poor plantation Christians of the 19th century struggled and fought for their identity against Bishop Copleston's oppression.

A View of the CMS – the Tinnevelly Model

The obligation of the missionaries was not fulfilling their avowed principles to form a separate church. The CMS never attempted schism from the church, as some accuse. In the case of CMS, its mission was a worldwide ministry and it maintained a good relationship with the Church of England around the world. In Ceylon, CMS worked with several bishops and maintained a good rapport. The CMS missionaries and Tamil Christians sent letters and petitions to the Metropolitan Bishop and to the Archbishop of Canterbury to appoint a native bishop to oversee the native Christians in order to follow a model implemented by the Tinnevelly Christians. The South Indian Tinnevelly mission had two missionary dioceses and in 1877, they appointed their two Bishops: namely, Dr. Robert Caldwell from SPG and Dr. E. Sargent from CMS, and they were Tamil scholars and affectionate to the Tamil culture (CMS – Atals, 1896, p. 150). Although SPG and CMS had theological differences, they worked together and maintained a good relationship in Tinnevelly.

Conclusion

The idea of a native church and suffragan bishop was the foundation of any mission which does missionary work among the natives. The idea was to have their own bishops, who could ordain their own deacons and priests (Caldwell, 1881, p. 27). One hundred and nineteen (119) native clergymen received holy orders in Tinnevelly from 1830 to 1894 and the first native ordained was John Devasagayam in 1830. *In no mission, in any part of the world, has the native pastorate been so largely developed as in Tinnevelly.* Tinnevelly was sending native pastors to Madras, Ceylon, and Mauritius (CMS – Atals, 1896, p. 149). The CMS in Ceylon was attempting to implement the same model followed by the Tinnevelly mission to form a native diocese for the Tamil Christians to maintain their identity, cultural values and indigenoussness. However, it was suppressed by Bishop Copleston. Those writing from a subaltern viewpoint seek to defend the bishop and his actions instead of looking at the problem of the poor, working class, native Tamil Christians who were struggling to maintain their values and identity against an English Bishop of a high-church tradition. In contrast, missionaries defended the convictions of Tamil Christians against the bishop's actions and continued to attempt to found churches relevant to the native culture. Eventually, although theological differences persisted, the "Ceylon Controversy" came to an end after an amicable negotiation between Bishop Copleston and the mission secretary. The secretary of the mission, Rev. Wright, followed a "give and take" policy to resolve the problem and the Bishop, too, accepted some features of the mission. A great adjustment was made between the Bishop and the CMS and at last peace prevailed in the church. However, "the native church motif" in Ceylon was abandoned by the CMS due to this episcopal oppression and the church wore its European cloth and is still struggling for its identity and indigenoussness.

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