CHAPTER TWO
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Administration

The early missionaries strictly followed religious rites, rules and regulations in the Church administration and parochial works for the sake of maintaining purity in the Church. They did not give baptism to everyone. They admitted Catechumens to baptism only after they had acquired the proper amount of Christian knowledge, and proved themselves by long trial extending from six months to one year. After getting the satisfactory report from the local priest, the missionaries baptised the acceptants. They did not allow the converted Christians to follow non-Christian rituals in the ceremonies. They separated the men of guilt from the Church for some time. These men had to read public confessions in the Church for re-admission. If the missionaries found anyone guilty among the congregation, they closed the church temporarily. Then they appointed a Catechist for teaching or instructing them about the regulation of the Church. The missionaries showed no hesitation to remove the standing scandals to weed the Church from impure and irregular growths. The missionaries taught the church people to contribute money for the church voluntarily. They deposited all the funds collected for the purpose of individual church buildings and repairs, weekly rice collections and voluntary levies during the harvest season in the Koil Pookkisham Fund (Church Treasury). They kept the fund separately in the Palayamkottai Head Office for each church. Thus the early missionaries

2. Narpothagam, June 1954, p-184

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carefully laid strong foundation for the future growth and sustenance of the Church. All the missionaries functioned under the control of the S.P.C.K., the C.M.S., and the S.P.G. missions. They were the administrative heads of their respective mission fields. The ecclesiastical oversight of all Churches in India was in the hands of the Church of England. In 1877, the Diocese of Madras appointed two Suffragan Bishops for the C.M.S. and the S.P.G. fields in Tinnevelly region. In 1896, the Tinnevelly Church became the Bishopric of Tinnevelly. The Episcopal supervision of Tinnevelly and Madura region was under the control of the Diocese of Madras. The Diocese of Tinnevelly is the first Diocese in India where Indians were free to express and administer themselves in the Church.

The Diocese is administered through legislative, executive and judiciary bodies. A group of Diocesan congregations formed a Pastorate. A group of Pastorates formed a circle. After the formation of the Church of South India, there were 114 Pastorates and 35 Circles in the Diocese. The Diocese of Tinnevelly was divided into North Tinnevelly Church Council, Mid Tinnevelly Church Council and South Tinnevelly Church Council. A system of Diocesan Councils and Committees governed the affairs of the Diocese of Tinnevelly. The Executive Committee of the Diocesan Council, the Pastorate Committees, the Circle Committees, the Church Councils, the Diocesan Council and other Standing and Subordinate Committees were the executive and legislative organs of the Diocese. The Diocesan Court functioned as the judiciary section of the Diocese.

7. The Indian Church Directory, 1937-1938, p 209
8. Diocese of Tinnevelly- Constitution, 1949, p 1
9. Ibid, p 103
Diocese. The Diocese selected all the members of the above mentioned organs through elections.10

The Diocese is under the control of the Church of South India (C.S.I.). The Synod of the C.S.I. is the supreme governing and legislative body of the Church of South India.11 The C.S.I sent its representatives to the C.S.I. Dioceses to examine and to study the Church administration from time to time. The Diocesan system of keeping accounts impressed him so much. H.M.Robb, chartered accountant of finance department of CSI, took with him some of the copies of Returns and Forms from the Diocesan Head Office as a model for other Dioceses in keeping accounts.12 Thus the Diocese of Tinnevelly maintained its administration well.

The Division of the Mission into Districts

Rev.C.T.E.Rhenius was the first one to divide the Tinnevelly Mission into districts. During his period, the missionaries were few in number, but the number of Christians was increasing steadily and the missionaries were not able to devote more time with the people, even to teach them and to bring them up in the right faith. So as early as 1831, Rev.Rhenius appointed inspecting Catechists to take up the work of educating the catechumens and to look after the Christians in the various villages of Tinnevelly. He divided the Mission into ten districts and appointed inspecting Catechists over these districts. Later on, the number of districts increased as more Mission stations came into being.

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10. Ibid, 1962, pp-40-41
11. Ibid, 1949, p-59
When Rev. Rhenius left the C.M.S., the C.M.S. Missionaries in Tinnevelly wanted to bring some changes in the administration. In 1837 the mission was divided into a few Missionary Districts. Palayamkottai was made the Mission Headquarters, Sattankulam and Kadatchapuram were made the Missionary Stations. The missionaries placed in these stations were independent, in that they could correspond directly with the Madras Corresponding Committee. Dohnavur also was made into a Missionary Station, but it remained under Palayamkottai. But in 1837, a Missionary Committee was appointed for the sake of the missionaries working in Tinnevelly, so that they could come together occasionally for fellowship and sharing. Thus the missionary was made in charge of the district thoroughly and everything depended on him.

This system underwent a slight modification in 1840. Till then the Mission had been divided into Missionary Sub-districts and a few large stations. But because the number of people who joined Christianity increased considerably, and as there were very frequent persecutions leading to backsliding by many, the missionaries wanted to teach and train the converts till they were established strongly in the faith and they wanted to perfect the ‘Station Missionary’ system. Large number of missionaries available at that time made the C.M.S. to enforce this policy. The Tinnevelly Mission was divided into eleven districts, each of which having approximately forty villages which were either partly or entirely Christian together with many more towns and villages which did not have any Christians at all. Each district was under the care of a missionary, who had a number of Catechists, Renders and Schoolmasters, working under his direction. The following were the Missionary Districts in Tinnevelly in 1849; Panneivilei,

13. C.M.R., 1848, p-177
Paneivadali, Surendei, Pavoor, Nallur, Dohnavur, Suviseshapuram, Mengnanapuram, Kadatchapuram, Sattankulam and Palayamkottai.

By 1848 there were sixteen ordained missionaries. By 1849 there were 373 catechists or lay agents, who were graded very elaborately. There were thirteen head catechists, five Inspecting Catechists, 105 ordinary catechists, 38 catechists readers, 41 ordinary readers, four Inspecting Schoolmasters and 107 Schoolmasters.\(^{14}\) In 1854 the eleven missionary districts were looked after by eight European Missionaries and seven Indian pastors, of whom five were in deacon’s orders. They were assisted by 65 catechists, 87 readers, besides schoolmasters and assistants.\(^{15}\) The missionaries took up this new set up to train the Indian pastors in the matters of administration. Rev. W. Clark who was in charge of Nallur district, divided his district and gave charge of the sub-divisions to Indian clergies so that they may set independently and have complete charge over their portion as far as the circumstances would allow them. He felt that this would be beneficial to the ‘Native Church’. He also took steps to teach them to manage public funds and to direct and manage their own Church affairs.\(^{16}\) By 1862, the Mission field was divided into fourteen districts, including Sivagasi and the itinerancy. At the close of 1862, there were 34,415 people under Christian instruction of whom 21,804 were baptized. The communicants numbered 4728. There were twelve European Missionaries and fifteen Indian clergymen with 225 catechists and readers. By 1864, the number of districts rose to fifteen.

\(^{14}\) Paul Appasamy, op.cit., p-99
\(^{15}\) C.M.R. 1854, p-200
\(^{16}\) C.M.R. 1851, p-244
The introduction of Station Missionary system brought in some changes in the life of the Tinnevelly Christians as a whole. They got more attention from the lay workers as well as the ordained clergy. The Christian life and their responsibility were kindled to lend a worthy, witnessing life before other people. Also, this gave the opportunity for indigenous training in matters of administration. It is very gratifying to note that the missionaries took pains to train the Indian clergy and lay workers under them to govern their own flock. When a missionary in charge of a district left either for good or furlough, it was usually given to the senior Indian clergy. This particular policy was slow to be put into effect due to many reasons, it was slowly introduced.

Rev. John Devasahayam the first ordained Indian clergy in the Tinnevelly Mission was from the beginning given the charge of a district. When the Vageikulam sub-district was formed out of the North Tinnevelly district, Rev. V. Devenayagam was given complete charge and responsibility of that district, in 1864. For some time, the missionaries were not confident whether the Indian clergy could govern the districts properly and without any malpractice, but even this doubt very soon disappeared as the Indian clergy proved capable in governing, in the things assigned to them, which led many Indian clergy to take up and fulfil self-government also.

The Church

The Christian members of the Diocese spread over 1243 villages and six main towns in the Diocese of Tinnevelly. The congregation members were being instructed, taught,

17. Tinnevelly Diocesan Council Report, 1931, p-32
shepherded, encouraged, consoled and built up through the churches. Every day, the Diocese conducted morning and evening worship services in most of the churches. Rev. Rhenius introduced this system in the Church. The Church paid much attention in the work among the youngsters by conducting catechism classes for seniors and bible classes for juniors.18

In villages, Churches were built by mud with thatched roof. In some places, the early Christians used cowsheds as their prayer houses due to their poverty. Members from the nearby congregations contributed a small sum with which a special feast was given to the new converted during the baptismal service day. This system encouraged the converts in their new faith.19 Some of the Diocesan Churches maintained Sunday Registers. The local priest, with the help of these registers, found out the irregular members and took all efforts to follow them and to bring them back.

The Church conducted Sunday Worship Service, Conventions, retreats, fasting prayer meetings and cottage prayer meetings. These all brought peace and unity among the congregations, increased church attendance and the habit of giving. The Church met all of its expenditure from the contributions from the members of the Diocese of Tinnevelly. During natural calamities, the Diocese announced special Sundays to collect offering for the relief funds.20 The churches considerably met the expenditure of the rural relief measures of the Diocese. The Diocese observed ‘Thanks-Giving Day’ every year throughout the Diocese.

18. Narpothagam, October 1976, p-440
20. Executive Standing Committee, 53rd meeting, 20th November 1947, p-1
The amount that had been collected that day was offered to the Rural Work Fund. The Diocese fixed special Sundays for collecting the Diocesan relief measures and social services.

The churches were also the centres of social work. If there was any dispute between two persons, all the male members gathered in the church after the evening service and then the reconciliation took place between the aggrieved persons. After settling the problem, they made a solemn vow in front of the members of the Church. In some village circles, all the male members of the congregation signed a document for giving up alcohol drinks. The local priests carefully settled the village disputes. After settling the problem they arranged a ‘feast of love’ for uniting them. Thus they keenly maintained the peaceful atmosphere in the Church.

In some of the village churches, cine-songs were played through Gramophone records during Christian festivals. Hence, the Bishop ordered the Church to stop this activity and asked them to use Christian song Gramophone records. Moreover, he advised the people not to disturb the neighbours by using loudspeakers. According to his advice, the churches stopped songs broadcasting 10 minutes before the ringing of second bell. He also suggested members of the Church to bring the Holy Bible with them for the worship service and he requested the parents not to allow their children to play in the Church premises during worship services. Moreover, he

21. Rural Work Standing Committee, 26th meeting, 11th March 1949, p-3
22. Narpothagam, July 1960, pp-147-148
23. Narpothagam, February 1963, p-23
advised the congregation not to take photos when the wedding ceremony was going on in the Church. These irregularities spoilt the worship service and religious atmosphere.\textsuperscript{24}

**Native Church Fund**

The 1851 Memorandum suggested the formation of a fund in the Mission fields for the maintenance of the local workers of the church. The Endowment Fund was formed in Tinnevelly in 1852, but this was not full according to the plan of the C.M.S. Committee as it was not originally intended for the support of the local workers alone. It was mainly intended to be kept as a reserve in times of emergency. So when the 1861 Memorandum proposed again the necessity to have a ‘Native’ Church Fund, the Tinnevelly Church formed the ‘Native’ Church Fund in 1862 with a view to support their own pastors and teachers. It was also called the self-support fund. In the beginning in many districts this was like one of the many funds, for which donations were made separately. But even then, Rev. Paramanandham Simeon reporting about Alvarneri district in 1864 said that in 1865 in that district collections were made for one fund instead of, for the various funds, and then distributed. The total collection for 1863 in Alvarneri District was Rs.614, 2 annas and 11 paisa.\textsuperscript{25} The missionary reports of this period do not speak much about this fund. So the information on this, at least in the beginning stages, is very scanty. From the report of Rev. John Thomas for 1867 about the Mengnanapuram district, we understand that contributions were collected for one fund and then divided for the various purposes.

\textsuperscript{24} Narpothagam, October 1969, p-207

\textsuperscript{25} Church Missionary Records, 1864, p-278
For example, that year in Mengnanapuram, the total collection was Rs.4475, 12 annas and 9 paises and out of this, Rs.2000 was set apart for the ‘Native Church Fund’ which at the time supported one pastor and fourteen catechists. The name of this central fund is not given in the missionary reports. It is also not clear how this fund was organised and maintained. In the Dohnavur district, Rs.350 out of the ‘Native Church Fund’ was paid as salary for four catechists in 1867. It seems from the report of Rev.A.Dibb on Dohnavur district in 1867, the expenses for repairing schools, churches and catechist’s houses were met from the ‘Native Church Fund’.

The 1866 Memorandum purposed to have a distinction between the ‘Native Church Fund’ and the Society’s Fund by having the administration of the ‘Native’ Church Fund under the Native Church Councils. So when in 1869 the ‘Native Church Councils’ were formed, the Council was given the charge of maintaining the ‘Native Church Fund’. After this change, there was only one fund, called the ‘Native Church Fund’ into which all the contributions were paid. The Council took itself to decide on the mode of spending from the fund. The Native Church Fund was subsided by a grants-in-aid by the C.M.S. which was proposed to be reduced year by year at the rate of 5% depending on the increase in the local collections. The formation of the ‘Native Church Fund’ furthered the growth of the Tinnevelly Church towards independence.

26. Ibid, 1868, p-239
27. Ibid, 1868, p-263


Native Church Council

The Memorandum of 1861 which went out in the name of the C.M.S. Committee emphasised the need to have a ‘Native’ Church Fund and the ‘Native’ Church. In 1860, the C.M.S. regarded the development of a ‘Native’ Church as a fundamental and regulative conception in the prosecution of its work. So the local congregations were formed and the local Church Fund was also established. The 1866 Memorandum proposed the formation of the ‘Native Church Councils’ for self government. The Tinnevelly Church was growing in self-support and the growing contribution of the people made the C.M.S. to give more opportunity for self-administration to the Tinnevelly Church. There is no evidence of any demand being expressed on the part of the Tamil people for such a development but the missionaries in the Tinnevelly area favoured the idea, except a few who felt that the time had not yet come for this Council system, which had the self-government as its aim, as people’s contribution and leadership were still in the infant stage. But the C.M.S. Committee was for the formation of Councils in Tinnevelly.

The aim of the ‘Native Church Council’ was to help the local church become an independent one managing its own affairs. It would decide on the question of salary and other matters connected with the local Church. The C.M.S. Committee felt that the formation of the Council would give the local Church the feeling, having attained manhood and capable of thinking and acting for itself. It was proposed that the place of the missionary in the local

28. Church Missionary Records, 1872, p-235
Church Council would be that of an adviser and counsellor merely and not of office bearer after the local Church becomes independent.

In response to the 1866 Memorandum’s proposal to have a ‘Native Church Council’ the first ‘Native Church Council in the Tinnevelly area, was formed at the Mengnapuram combined districts on February 12, 1869. This was followed by other districts. The Council comprised of the missionary of the district as the ex-office president, local clergymen of the district, and double the number of clergymen from the lay people who were elected by the people as the representatives of the pastorates. The number of lay representatives differed from district to district depending on the size of the district, but the minimum was three. The members had to be communicants. Usually one of the clergyman was chosen as the secretary of the Council, whose duty was to record the proceedings of the Council in both English and Tamil and to submit the record with the signature of the president and approval of the Council to the Madras Corresponding Committee. It considered all matters connected with the congregations and the administration of the ‘Native Church Fund’ was in the hands of the Council. The Church Council received the contributions of the people, and paid the local pastors, thus bringing them under its control.

The Church Council in the Mengnapuram combined districts resolved in the beginning itself to meet the salaries of the pastors and other expenses connected in providing with suitable residences. It had two missionaries, Rev. John Thomas and Rev. Davies Thomas, fifteen local clergy men and twenty five laymen as its members. It resolved to have the senior missionary of the district as its president. It also resolved to request the Bishop of Madras to appoint the senior
pastor of the district, Rev. D. Veeravagu to assist Rev. John Thomas in superintending the pastorates. It is significant to note that the Megnanapuram district Church Council decided to support its pastors and their expenses even in 1869.

The Palayamkottai Church Council was formed on April 30, 1869. The congregations were assembled that day in the Palayamkottai Trinity Church and the lay members were elected by ballot. It had as its members, Rev. E. Sargent, four local pastors and nine lay people.29 The Panneivilei Church Council was formed on May 9, 1869 with Rev. J. D. Simmons, three Indian pastors, four inspecting catechists and eleven lay people as its members.

The Nallur Church Council was formed on May 21, 1870. The communicants of the district assembled at Nallur and selected by votes. Six lay members out of all the members of the congregations, besides the inspecting school master of the district and one catechist were selected. These men, the European missionary and the pastors of the district formed the Church Council.30 The Nallur Church Council laid down the following rules for the constitution of its council in 1870:

1. The Church Council in the Nallur district shall consist of a Chairman, a Secretary and twelve members.
2. Of the twelve members, four shall be mission agents, and the other eight leading laymen were selected from the whole body of communicants.

29. Church Missionary Records, 1869, p-225
30. Ibid, 1870, p-300
3. Those members shall be elected during the first week of every year.

4. Each member shall subscribe to the caste distinction.

5. The Council shall meet four times a year. If necessary special meetings shall be held with the consent of the Chairman.

6. If any member is unable to attend the meeting, he shall inform the Secretary by letter, the cause of his absence.

7. A member absenting himself from two consecutive meetings without any adequate cause shall cease to be a member of the Council.

8. Each member is expected to take an interest in the well being of the congregation with which he is connected.

9. Each member shall endeavour, as far as it lies in his power, to promote liberality among the people. For this purpose he shall attend Sangam (Society) meetings.

10. Any matter requiring consideration shall be brought up before the Council either by letter or by any other means.

11. If any neglect or misbehaviour on the part of the Mission agents is brought to the notice by any member, it shall be his duty to inform the Council of the same.

12. The appointment, removal and dismissal of Mission agents in its employ shall for most part be decided by the Council.

13. No expenditure shall be incurred in connection with the Native Church without the sanction of the Council.
14. At the meeting which nominates members, the report of the previous year, and the statement of receipts and expenditure shall be read.\textsuperscript{31}

These in general were the rules for every Council. The rule regarding caste observance does not seem to have been carried out with full force, as even in the earliest of the Councils, the caste name appended after each member. Moreover, Paul Appasamy says that when the Council got more power than the missionary, caste prejudices began to appear in the Councils and that election were held on the basis of caste.\textsuperscript{32} The C.M.S. Committee felt that the observance of caste in the Church could never be dealt with effectively by force, but by the Christian conscience only.

A Native Church Council was established at Dohnavur in 1870. In Surendei after September 1870, steps were taken for the formation of a ‘Native Church Council’. In a report dated November 19, 1873 in Surendei district, Rev.N.Honiss, who was in charge of three districts including Surendei, expressed his satisfaction at the functioning of the Surendei Church Council which ably dealt with all matters related to the Church.

Pannikulam district got its Church Council in 1872. Rev.A.H.Dash who was in charge of that district was glad to see the active participation of the lay people which according to him would help the administration to a considerable extent. Rev.E.Sargent in his general report on the Tinnevelly Church for 1876 refers to Nallamalpuram as the first circle in Tinnevelly where a vice-president who was a local clergymen, conducted the affairs of the Church Council.\textsuperscript{33}

\textsuperscript{31} Church Missionary Records, 1872, pp-254-255
\textsuperscript{32} Paul Appasamy, \textit{The Centenary History of the C.M.S. in Tinnevelly}, Palayamkottai, 1923, pp-189 &207
\textsuperscript{33} Church Missionary Intelligencer and Record 1877, p-342
There was some change in the pattern of the Tinnevelly Church Organisation during 1870. It is not clear, as there are no clear records on this, when exactly the change took place. We heard of pastorates being formed in every district in Tinnevelly. On this also there is no clear evidence as to when the ‘Pastorate system’ came into being. In a review of ten years work (1860-1870) in the Palayamkottai district, Rev.E.Sargent speaks of the Palayamkottai district divided into a few pastorates. The new system of Church organisation had ‘Native Church Committees’, meaning the Pastorate Committees, the District Church Committees and the Provincial Council. As we do not hear of any other committee or council apart from the District Church Council from 1869 till 1878, it may be that a new system was introduced for further development in self-government. The District Church Committee in the new system might have been the same old District Church Council. It is not clear whether there existed any difference between the two and whether there was the District Committee as well as the District Council side by side.

**Native Church Committees**

The ‘Native Church Committee’, in other words the Pastorate Committee, was the lowest slab in the new organisational set up. The formations of these Committees are referred in only one report, that of the Mengnanapuram District Church Council for 1878. The report says that the Church Committees were established in every pastorate in 1878. The Church Committee of a pastorate consisted the local pastor, three lay communicants who were elected annually by the congregation, and a chairman appointed by the Madras Corresponding Committee. The functions of this Church Committee were to collect the funds, carry out the evangelistic activities and other
matters related to the Pastorate. According to the report of 1878 the Committee was subject to revision from time to time and so considered as transitional and temporary.\(^{34}\) In this report also there is no mention of the exact date of the establishment of the Church Committee on the Pastorate level and as to the number of such committees.

**Church Choir**

Every main Church had choir. The Rt.Rev.Waller newly introduced white long dress for the choir members. All the main churches began to adopt the uniform system for the choir.\(^{35}\) The Choir Master gave training to the boys every week. In some of the churches, the Choirboys maintained a notebook for writing the gist of the sermons. This system helped them to be attentive in the church. The church presented the best Choirboys with Bibles at the end of the year. Every year, the Diocese observed a Choir Sunday. The Church presented a new set of cassocks and surplices for the Alter rails with their new dresses and made vows with regard to regular and good behaviour during the service. For this purpose, they signed the pledge cards in the Choir.\(^{36}\) Thus the Church maintained an order in the church administration.

**Formation of the Church Building Society**

Towards the end of 1830, when the number of local Christians began to increase in most of the places in Tinnevelly where the missionary work was going on, the missionaries as well as

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34. Church Missionary Intelligencer and Record, 1878, p-78
35. V.Henry Packianathan, op.cit, p-26
the local Christians began to feel the necessity of having good and substantial churches for their worship. Hitherto, they were worshipping in private houses or thatched sheds or small prayer-houses. Moreover, the missionaries were determined to set before the people a worthier conception of dignity of Christian worship. Apart from these, the presence of big Hindu temples in a number of places in Tinnevelly, the substantial Roman Catholic churches, made the Tinnevelly Christians think about having substantial and decent places of worship. So they appealed to the missionaries who were working among them to build churches. The missionaries were happy when the people felt the need to have church buildings in the midst of them. But at the same time, they did not want to build churches at the expense of the Missionary Society only. The liberality of the people had already been proved by the presence of the four local societies, viz., the Religious Tract Society, the Widows Fund, the Dharma Sangam and the Poor Fund. These societies were common to the whole Tinnevelly Mission. So when the local Christians proposed to have churches, the missionaries felt that the local people should be induced to collect money for the same. We do not hear when exactly the Church Building Society was started, but as early as 1839, the Madras Corresponding Committee reported the presence of a Church Building Fund with which a substantial church was built at Pragasapuram and another one to be built at Mengnanapuram.37

The proposal to have churches amongst them, the motive behind it, and that the people were ready to contribute for that purpose are revealed in a report of Rev.G.Pettitt dated May 12, 1839 in which he talks about Alvarneri, a village some few miles away from Palayamkottai.

37. C.M.R. 1839, P-227
He says that the proposal to have a substantial church at Alvarneri came from the local Christians themselves, which they wanted to be a memorial and witness of their faith. He says that though these Alvarneri Christians were poor, they did not have any secular motive, but came forward offering Rs.100 for the building.\(^{38}\) Considering the poor condition of the people, and the amount they have raised to build a church, the enthusiasm of the local Christians, and their zeal could be very clearly imagined.

The catechists and the people of Asirvathapuram District were the first to raise a Church Building Society. They gave this suggestion to Rev. G. Pettitt who eagerly accepted it and founded a Church Building Society, for which, it was decided to contribute at the highest rate, one-day’s wages annually, which would have been a few annas only. It was further decided to spend the money for the building and repairing of churches in that district. This was reported to be of a success and now followed in other parts of the Mission also.\(^ {39}\)

The new scheme followed in the Asirvathapuram district was followed very soon by the Mengnanapuram district. Soon, other districts also fell in line with these two districts and had their own Church Building Society. The first church to be built and opened with the help of the District Church Building Society was at Tathenkulam on June 1, 1842.\(^ {40}\) The missionaries took very keen interest in this Society that they tried various methods to induce the people to donate more to the Society. Rev. S. Hobbs, who was in-charge of the Northern district, told the society that he would contribute equally to the amount contributed by the catechists and schoolmasters.

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38. C.M.R. 1840, p-214
39. C.M.R. 1842, p-136
40. C.M.R. 1843, P-125
According to the report read at the Second Anniversary Meeting of the Dohnavur District Church Building Society on January 1, 1845, the missionary induced the local Christians to donate for church building by comparing them with the Hindus and the Roman Catholics who had big places of worship, and by emphasising the necessity for Christians to have decent places of worship.\textsuperscript{41}

The contributions of the people for the different societies or funds amongst them increased considerably and seeing this, Rev. E. Sargent concludes thus in his report about Suviseshapuram district in 1843:

1. That the body of the people under instruction are not so wretchedly poor as some imagine;
2. That a spirit of interest and activity in their own improvement and support is gaining ground;
3. That they will learn in time to price these things which cost them something.\textsuperscript{42}

These observations by Rev. E. Sargent were true to a great extent. The reports by various other missionaries show the fact that the majority of the Tinnevelly Christians were Palmyra climbers, who were poor only. But it is an accepted fact that the Tinnevelly Christians at least a large proportion, learned to donate even in their poverty, which never left them at any time.

The Church Building Society proved a great success in all the districts and it helped the congregations throughout Tinnevelly to have decent places of worship. While there were 172

\textsuperscript{41} C.M.R. 1845, p-234
\textsuperscript{42} C.M.R. 1844, P-100
places of worship in 1839, by 1847 it was raised up to 274. Contributions to this society were made in different kinds like people donated sheep, fowls and even cows. The contributions of the people increased year by year and in some places the increase was remarkable. The Mengnanapuram district was outstanding in this in some years, like in 1842, the Christians contributed Rs.100 more than the previous year.  

The Church Building Society was one of the earliest attempts by the Church Missionary Society in the direction of making the Mission Fields self-supporting. One of the main reasons which were behind in forming such a society was the lack of sufficient funds with the C.M.S. The idea of spending money, which was mainly intended for evangelism, on buildings and other things was not very much liked by the Mission Boards, that if people raise buildings on their own accord, with their own money and labour, they would feel the responsibility to look after their religious matters; and the people when they were left to themselves to collect and build, it was felt that, the buildings also would be of manageable sizes, not very big and expensive ones, both in terms of structure and maintenance. Another salient feature of the Church Building Society was that it began with the initiative of the people, especially the Inspecting Catechists and catechists. Rev.Pettitt says that it began without any external motivation or pressure. It may be said that because it grew out of the people, it became a successful one and people also contributed very eagerly and liberally.

43. C.M.R. 1843, p-129
Congregation Register

Every church maintained a Congregation Register. It had all details about the church members. Maintaining the register was one of the primary duties of the presbyter. He submitted the Register at the Diocesan office by the end of April every year. The Bishop examined the details of the register when he visited the pastorates to get an idea of the congregation. The church prepared the electoral rolls with the help of the Congregation Register.44

District Council

The District Council replaced the Provincial Council formed in 1872. This was formed by consolidating several old District Councils into one central board of administration for the whole of the C.M.S portion in Tinnevelly. This was above the Circle Committees. The District Church Council was composed of all the Circle Chairman, and secretaries, not more than two pastors from each Circle, and as many laymen as there were Pastorates. The Chairman was chosen by the Madras Corresponding Committee.45

The duties of the District Council were to consider and act on the petitions submitted by the Circles on matters like the appointment of new Church workers, and the transfer of them etc., to grant money for repairs or construction of buildings under its care, to consider the salaries of pastors and Inspecting Schoolmasters, and to discuss and take action on questions concerning the

44. C.S.I. Diocese of Tinnevelly, Bishop’s Letters to the Clergy, 1984, pp-14&78
45. C.M.I. & R, 1896, P-693
policy of the Church in Tinnevelly. The decision of the majority was made as final in the District Council, but if the Chairman suspected the validity of any judgement or justice carried out, he had the right to refer the matter to the Madras Corresponding Committee.\textsuperscript{46} The Chairman of the District Council was made responsible to watch over the activities of the Circle Committees and to receive the minutes of each Circle. He was entitled to ask for any explanation for any irregularities he found in the procedure of the Circle Committee.

**District Church Committees**

The next scale above the Pastorate Committees was the District Church Committees. All pastorates in a missionary district came under this District Church Committee. The pastorates were connected with the District Church Committee by the lay representatives, sent by the pastorates. The District Church Committee consisted of a chairman, appointed by the Madras Corresponding Committee, an Indian vice-chairman appointed by the chairman, the local clergy working in the district and at least two lay delegates from each of the ‘Native’ Church Committees which were qualified to send delegates. The lay delegates had to be communicants. Moreover, not more than half of these delegates could be persons receiving payments from either the Society or the Council. A pastorate committee which contributed more than Rs.500 annually was entitled to send a third delegate and each additional sum of Rs.500 meant an additional delegate. The Chairman might exercise a right of vote, but with an appeal to the Madras Corresponding Committee. The functions of this Council were to gather funds, to disburse

\textsuperscript{46} Ibid.
salaries, to repair churches and houses, to receive reports of evangelistic and similar work performed by unordained church workers, to encourage evangelistic efforts, to arrange questions relating to salaries and allowances, to consult upon the formation of new pastorates and to recommend candidates for ministry. Except the chairman, all the others of this committee were to be local people.\textsuperscript{47}

The earlier District Church Council had the district missionary as its President, and that was an automatic one i.e., by virtue of being the district missionary, he became the District Church Council’s President. But in the new District Church Committee, the Chairman was appointed by the Madras Corresponding Committee. Though it is not evident from the sources, regarding the number of pastorates in each of the old and new District Church Councils or Committees, it seems that the new District Church Committees had a wider representation from the pastorates. There are no clear accounts from the missionaries regarding this Church Committees. Except for one account in the Church Missionary Intelligencer and Record for February 1878, there is no other account available.

**Provincial Council**

The Provincial Council was above the District Church Committees and it was for the whole of the C.M.S. portion in Tinnevelly. This was formed in 1872. It met once a year. It was only a deliberative body and was regarded as a step towards the creation of a diocesan synod.\textsuperscript{48}

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{47} Church Missionary Records, 1875, P-280
\bibitem{48} Paul Appasamy, op.cit. P-175
\end{thebibliography}
This consisted of a Chairman appointed by the C.M.S. Parent Committee, a vice-chairman appointed by the Chairman, of the European missionaries who were Chairman of the District Councils, of all Indian pastors working in the area and of as many delegates as there were Pastorates. The lay delegates were to be elected by the District Councils. The functions of the Provincial Council were to consider all questions of ecclesiastical fees, to discuss questions related to the salaries etc of ‘native’ church workers, to arrange for the transfer of local pastors from one district to another, subject to the sanction of the Bishop of Madras, to consider matters of general interest to the Tinnevelly Church, to offer recommendations to the Bishop of Madras or the Madras Corresponding Committee and to make recommendations to the District Councils as to the mode of collecting and managing funds.

During 1870, much of the administrative and financial work done by the station missionaries were transferred to the Councils. So the need for European missionaries was not felt very much and so when the old missionaries died or retired, no new appointments were made in their place. Meanwhile, Rev. E. Sargent, was consecrated on March 11, 1877 as a co-adjutor Bishop to the Bishop of Madras, to look after the C.M.S. portion in Tinnevelly. So he became the official Chairman of almost all the Councils, and leading local pastors became the vice-chairman of the Councils. During 1880, Bishop Sargent was all in all in the Tinnevelly area, and because of his long connection with the area and of his age and qualities, he was looked upon as a father. But this gave no opposition to his rule and gave to his rule an autocratic

49. C.M.I. and R. 1878, p-77

50. Paul Appasamy, op.cit. P-166

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character and this prevented the natural growth in independence and self-support and led to a staleness and inertness in the Tinnevelly Church. Such a condition made the C.M.S. Committee in London to reorganise the Church administration in Tinnevelly during the next decade. Bishop E.Sargent died on October 11, 1889, after fifty four years of service in the Tinnevelly area.

There were other places also which talked of the establishment of an autonomous church in India, even during the second half of the nineteenth century, for example the Bengal Christian. Lal Behari Day, a Bengali Christian was the first who proposed a scheme for a ‘National Church in India’, to be free from foreign control. He also fought for equal treatment and status of Indian missionaries and European missionaries. In 1868 a number of educated Bengali Christians formed ‘The Bengal Christian Association’ for the promotion of Christian Truth and Godliness, and the Protection of the Rights of Indian Christians. One of such persons Jey Govinda shome started in 1870 a newspaper, *The Bengal Christian Herald*, which later was called *The Indian Christian Herald*, which carried articles demanding Independence for the Church in Bengal and for the introduction for modified Hindu customs and festivals.

In 1887 they left their Churches to form, ‘the Calcutta Christo Samaj’ to do away with denominations and to indigenise the worship and other things. In Madras, one S.Parani Andi formed ‘the National Church of Madras’ in 1886 with the aim to gather all Indians Christians, into one self-supporting and self-governing Church. There were efforts made to free the Church, free the hands of the missions during the second half of the nineteenth century in the Madura Mission and the Marathi Mission of the American Board. All these expressions for an
autonomous Church in various parts of India also contributed for the development of an autonomous Church in Tinnevelly.

The growth of Indian Nationalism by the end of the nineteenth century was an important factor which made the Mission Boards to rethink their policy. The Indian National Congress was organised in 1885, which in the beginning asked for more Indian participation in the government and for social and economic improvement. Later on, when the leadership of the congress went into the hands of M.K. Gandhi, it stood for political freedom, and this formed the background for the Church’s life and mission by the end of the nineteenth Century. In the early days of the Indian National Congress, a number of Indian Christians actively supported it, thus identifying them with the growth of a free India. It is quite clear that God works through the secular forces, in that the National Movement caused the growth of the Indian Church.

**Independent Preachers**

The Bishop issued licences to the selected independent preachers. The licence holders were only allowed to preach in the Diocesan Churches and meetings. Every year, the local priests sent reports about the independent preachers to the Bishop. The Bishop had the power to cancel the license of any preacher if he received unsatisfactory reports about them.  

**The Bishop**

The Bishop is the head of the Diocese. The members of the Diocesan Council elect him. When the Bishop resigns or dies in harness, the Moderator of the Church of South India become

51. Narpothagam, July 1956, p-254
the head of the office. He has the right to administer the Diocese with full jurisdiction until a new Bishop is elected. During the interim period, the Vice-Chairman of the Diocesan Council conducts the ordinary business of the Diocese along with the Office Bearers. The clergymen holding the Bishop’s license have the right to become the Bishop of the Diocese.\footnote{Executive Standing Committee, 63rd meeting, 13th October 1950, p-7}

The Executive Committee of the Synod of the C.S.I. and the members of the Diocesan Council have the authority to call for nominations for the election of the Bishop. Every nomination must have the signatures of any five members of the Diocesan Council. The Chairman of the Diocesan Council appoints a panel to scrutinise the ballot. The panel includes clergymen, laymen, and members of the Diocesan Council and delegates of the Selection Board of the Synod of the C.S.I.

**Duties of the Bishop**

The Bishop, in addition to his Episcopal duties, had numerous other duties also. He addressed conferences and conventions, retreats and fellowship-meetings, and preached at Harvest festivals. He presided over the tribunals of disputes and factions.\footnote{Tinnevelly Diocesan Council Report, 1958-1959, p-5} He contacted the members of the Church through his monthly letter in the Diocesan magazine Narpothagam and expressed his suggestions to the Churches. He toured round the Diocese very often for confirmation services.
Powers of the Bishop

The Bishop was the Chairman of the Diocesan Council, the Standing Committees and Sub-Committees and the governing boards of many institutions. He was the manager of all the Secondary and the Elementary Schools of the Diocese. All the resolutions or decisions of the Diocesan Council must get the assent of the Bishop. He had the power to suspend a decision or resolution of the Diocesan Council. He had the right to nominate fifteen persons to the Diocesan Council. The Bishop alone had the power to permit visitors to the Diocesan Council meetings and the Diocesan Court. He possessed the veto power. He presided over the meetings of the Diocesan Council, Church Councils, Standing Committees and Subordinate Committees. The presence of the Bishop or his representative was essential for the quorum in the Diocesan Council meeting.

The written permission of the Bishop was necessary for making alterations or improvements in the structure of the church, and for the removal or demolition or diversion of a church building or cemetery to any other suitable place. The Bishop was the Manager of Diocesan Colleges. The Bishop had the power to seek alteration to any resolution of the Governing Boards of the Diocesan institutions. The retirement age of the C.S.I. Bishop is sixty-five.

55. Diocese of Tinnevelly –Constitution, 1949, pp-51-57
**Diocesan Council**

The Diocesan Council is a main administrative body of the Diocese. It is composed of the Bishop, all the Clergy on the regular cadre, the retired clergy working in the Diocese on light work basis, congregation representative, pastorate worker’s representatives, Circle worker’s representatives, Diocesan worker’s representatives and fifteen persons nominated by the Bishop.\(^{56}\)

The Diocesan Pastorate Chairmen sent their annual reports and statistic to the Diocesan Council at the end of the year. The members of the Council prepared the yearly report of the Diocesan Council in the Diocesan Head Office. Every year, the Diocese published Diocesan Council Report both in English and Tamil with details of the activities of various Diocesan Committees together with complete account and reports of various Diocesan Pastorate, Diocesan institutions and Diocesan hospitals with statistics and a statement for the budget of the Diocese for the year. Diocesan Council met once in two years and the Diocesan Committees met thrice a year.\(^{57}\)

**Powers and Functions of the Diocesan Council**

The Council gave first preference to the matters referred by the Synod of the Diocese in its meetings. The Council had the power to make amendments in passed resolutions.\(^{58}\) Generally, it prevented the members from speaking twice in the debates. It also allowed the members for

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57. Narpothagam, January 1955, p-3
free discussion in general committee meeting with an aim to ascertain the opinion of the members. The Bishop, Clergy and lay representatives sat together and discussed all matters of the debate separately, immediately before or after, or during the official sittings of the Diocesan Council. 59

The council allowed the laymen to vote first and then the clergymen and finally the Bishop. If the Bishop vetoed any subject or proposition, the Diocesan Council had the power to bring up the motion in another session. If the Bishop voted it again, the Diocesan Council had the power to appeal to the Synod of the C.S.I. 60

The Council offered advice to the Bishop in ecclesiastical and administrative matters of the Diocese. It appointed the Bishop’s legal adviser. It had the power to constitute the Diocesan Court. It collected the contributions from the Pastorates to meet its expenses. 61 The Diocesan Council constituted several Diocesan Standing Committees and Subordinate Committees and Boards to carry on the administration for every four years. 62

Diocesan Court

The Diocesan Court comprised a panel of clergy and laity, a clerk and an assistant clerk. The total number of the clergy and the laity in the court was ten and thirteen respectively. 63

60. Diocese of Tinnevelly- Constitution, 1975, pp-38-50
61. Diocese of Tinnevelly- Constitution, 1979, pp-50-57
63. Tinnevelly Diocesan Council Minutes, 22nd and 23rd September 1949, p-5
The main duty of the Diocesan Court was to maintain discipline among the clergy on the basis of the rules and regulations and procedures of the Diocese.64

**Pastorate Committee**

The Pastorate Committee was the lowest in the reorganised administration. A Pastorate included a few congregations. Usually the lay members outnumbered the paid church workers at the rate of two to one, in the Committee. Each congregation in the pastorate or in cases where the congregations were small, each group of congregations, was allowed to elect and send not more than three members. The number to be elected was fixed from time to time by the District Church Council, taking into consideration the size of the congregation, the number of communicants, and the amount contributed.

Some of the main duties of the Pastorate Committee were:

(1) To carry out the repairs in the church buildings sanctioned by the circle committee.

(2) To dispense one-fourth of the Sunday offerings to the poor, and three-fourths to be paid into the Native Church Fund.

(3) To receive reports of schools, open air preaching, evangelistic activities, special services etc.

(4) To apply to the Circle Committee regarding repairs in Church building and for new building.

64. Diocese of Tinnevelly- Constitution, 1979, pp-40-41
(5) To make arrangements for collecting the sangam money in the Pastorate, and to exhort the members to encourage their congregation to contribute at least one twentieth more than the previous year.

(6) To enforce any new regulation of the District Church Council.

The Pastorate Committee had very little power on money matters. The money set for distribution among the poor and the money granted for building repairs were to be controlled by it. It had no power over the Church workers, but the Committee was allowed to make representations concerning them to the Circle Committee or District Church Council. It elects its representatives to the Circle Committee.

**Circle Committee**

As a response to Rev.J.Barton’s proposal, the old missionary district system was abolished and they were re-distributed into a number of smaller and more manageable Circles, so that the administration of the Church could be convenient and in a proper way. The whole of Tinnevelly was divided into fifteen Circles, each circle having on the average three thousand Christians, three to five pastors, a few Catechists and from ten to fifteen school masters.\(^\text{65}\)

Each Pastorate was entitled to send at least two members to its Circle Committee, but Pastorates contributing more than Rs.50 to the ‘Native’ Church Fund were permitted to send three members and for each additional Rs.250 contributed, another extra member could be

\(^{65}\) C.M.I. 1891, p-393
sent. All the pastors in the Circle were members of the Circle Committee. The Chairman of the Circle Committee was appointed by the Madras Corresponding Committee, who usually was chosen from among the Pastors in the Circle. In 1895, out of fifteen, eleven Circles had Indian Pastors as Chairmen.\textsuperscript{66} One of the members, usually a lay-man, was elected as the Secretary who was in charge of correspondence and the distribution of pay to the agents.

The Circle Committee’s duties were to maintain the Church Building in the Circles, except the big central churches and pastors’ houses which came under the District Church Council, to give grants for the creation of small schools, prayer houses etc., to deal with the question of increase of pay for all catechists under its control, schoolmasters and mistresses. The Circle Committee had the power to transfer its workers, except Pastors and inspecting Schoolmasters to any place within the circle, and to fine them if necessary for any neglect of duty or breaches of rule. But it was not entitled either to appoint new workers or to dismiss old ones. The Circle Committee was responsible to maintain each year a rise in the contributions to the ‘Native’ Church Fund, to encourage evangelistic effort in the churches, to receive reports of Pastorate Committees, and to carry out the orders of the District Church Council.\textsuperscript{67}

It was felt that the comparatively, restricted small area of a Circle, as compared to the old districts, would make the Chairman and members of the Circle Committee to be thorough with the condition of the congregations in their area and do the needful in time. It gave more

\textsuperscript{66} C.M.I. 1895, p-692

\textsuperscript{67} Ibid., p-692
opportunity to develop Indian leadership among the Pastors as well as lay people.

**Executive Committee**

The Executive Committee consisted of four European Missionaries, of whom one would be the Chairman of the District Council, a second the Principal of the Preparandi Institution at Palamcottah, a third, the senior member of the Itinerancy in North Tinnevelly, and a fourth to be appointed by the C.M.S. Parent Committee, four of the fifteen Chairman of the Circle Committees of whom two to be appointed by the Madras Corresponding Committee and two by the District Church Council and eight lay members, four to be elected by the Council itself, and four to be nominated by the Madras Corresponding Committee.  

68. C.M.I. 1891, pp-594-595

The aim of the Executive Committee was to guide the District Council in every administrative detail. The salaries of pastors and other workers was considered and recommended to the Council by the Executive Committee only. In 1893, it met four times during the year and was said to have transacted many important matters regarding the Tinnevelly Church.  

69. C.M.I. 1894, p-594

**Executive Committee of the Council**

The Executive Committee of the Diocesan Council carried out the work of the Diocesan Council.  

70. Diocese of Tinnevelly- Constitution, 1949, p-66

68. C.M.I. 1891, pp-594-595

69. C.M.I. 1894, p-594

70. Diocese of Tinnevelly- Constitution, 1949, p-66
of the Church Councils, clergymen, laymen, church workers’ representatives, the Diocesan workers’ representatives including the two from the Diocesan Colleges and the persons nominated by the Bishop. Generally, all the members of the Diocesan Executive Committee were also the members of the Diocesan Council. The Office Bearers of the Diocesan Council were also the Office Bearers of the Executive Committee.  

**Power and the Functions of the Executive Committee**

The Diocesan Executive Committee met any time with the approval of the Bishop. The Bishop gave his approval after consulting the Office Bearers. The Bishop had the power to convene special Executive Committee fixed the dates of the periodical elections to the Diocesan Council and Pastorate Committees. It advised the Bishop regarding the determination or alteration of the boundaries of the Church Councils.  

The Executive Committee took decisions regarding the formation of new Church Councils. It received the report of the work of the Diocese from its Secretary. It had the power to constitute the Governing Board of any Diocesan institutions. It controlled the finance of the Diocese, and made necessary arrangements for the management of the Diocesan property. The Executive Committee of the Diocesan Council also became the managing Committee of the Self Support Society (S.S.S.) of the Diocese of Tinnevelly.

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71. Diocese of Tinnevelly- Constitution, 1962, pp-55-56
72. Diocese of Tinnevelly- Constitution, 1975, pp-57-58
73. Diocese of Tinnevelly, Constitution, 1979, pp-56-59
74. Executive Standing Committee, 61st meeting, 23rd & 24th March 1950, p-3
Vouchers (bill and receipts) regarding repair work in building or construction works with completion certificates were produced before the Executive Committee for drawing money from the Diocese. The Diocesan Executive Committee appointed High Power Finance Commission of five members to review financial condition of the Diocese. It made the following recommendations: 1. Short and long term loans should be given to the Pastorates or institutions only on extraordinary circumstances. 2. Expenses on hospitality and unnecessary expenses during Council or Committee meetings should be reduced to the minimum and 3. Telephone calls should be limited. The Finance Sub-committee accepted these recommendations.

**Standing Committees**

The Diocesan Council had special Standing Committees, Sub Committees, temporary Committees and Governing Boards to carry on the functions of the council. There were ten Standing Committees on Education, for Pastoral Work, Evangelistic Work, Women’s Work, Children’s Work, Youth Work, Scholarship, Christian Literature, Rural Work and Medical Work. There was also a Central Board on Elementary Education. The Diocesan Council had the power to create such other Committees and Boards whenever necessary. Every Standing Committee recorded its proceedings and reported to the Diocesan Council all the resolutions passed by the Committees. The Council could reconsider any resolution of the Committees. The members of Standing Committees and Sub-Committees need not be the members of the Diocesan Council. The Diocese allowed only the communicants who had paid their dues to the Church to become the members of any one of the Committees.

75. Diocese of Tinnevelly- Constitution, 1949, pp-74-87
Tamil Central Church Council

In 1896 Tamil Central Church Council was formed. The Bishop of Madras was the Chairman of this Council, and it embraced all the C.M.S. Tamil speaking congregations in the Madras Diocese, viz., those in Madras and Oota-camund as well as these in Tinnevelly. It acted to bring into focus the activities of the various C.M.S fields and as a place to share the experiences and concerns. This was a superfluous council and remained an assembly of an academical character with no real power or effective influence over the affairs of the church. It was considered later on as a prototype of the Diocesan Synod.

The proposals of Rev.J.Barton in reorganising the administration were well received in Tinnevelly and they were found to be very useful and worthwhile when put into practice. Rev.J.Barten outlined the functions of the Pastorate Committee in a more clear way, than that of the earlier period. In the old system, even the Chairman of the Pastorate Committee, while in the new one, the Pastor in charge of the Pastorate was the Chairman. The Pastorate Committee under the new system got more administrative powers than the earlier one. The Circle Committee system helped the Indian Pastors to get opportunity to administer wider areas than earlier.

The Circle Committee, because of its smaller size than the District Church Committee, was able to work well. The Circle Committee elected a lay member to be its secretary and this developed leadership qualities and administrative abilities among the Indian lay people. This kind of opportunities is not evident in the functioning of the earlier District Church Committees.

76. C.M.I. 1891, P-595
Unlike the Provincial Council which was a deliberative body only, the District Council under the new system became the central force of administration in Tinnevelly. It can be said that the Tinnevelly Church’s activities and policies were decided by this District Council, which was assisted ably by its Executive Committee.

As the Tinnevelly Church was still receiving aid from the C.M.S., the C.M.S. got the right to appoint Chairman to the Circle Committee, and the District Council, and members to the Executive Committee. But the paternalism found in 1870 and 1880, was not there under the new system. The new system developed qualities of administration in the Tinnevelly Church and helped to increase the contributions.

**Missionary Association Committee**

In response to Rev. J. Barton’s suggestion to have a central body for evangelism, the Missionary Association Committee was formed in 1892. The purpose of this Committee was to superintend and initiate the evangelistic work, in the Tinnevelly area. The Jones’ Fund, which was earlier paid to the local councils for evangelistic work, was paid to this Committee, thus preventing the misuse of the fund. The contribution from this fund to the Tinnevelly Church was reduced from Rs.4,000 to Rs.2,000 in the beginning itself, and the Committee was required to raise contributions from the congregations for its work. The report of the Tinnevelly District Council for 1893 says that the Missionary Association Committee set for four times to transact all business connected with it. There were twenty-five evangelists under its management and control. In the same year the Committee appointed a schoolmaster to work among the Todas in

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77. Paul Appasamy, op.cit. P-219
Cotacamund whose salary and other expenses were met by the Committee. Five bands composed of four or five evangelists in each band were sent in February, March and August of 1893 to preach the Gospel at certain fixed centres.\textsuperscript{78} In 1896, the Missionary Association Committee composed of seven clerical and four lay members. There were twenty-three evangelists under its control. The month of August was wholly devoted by the evangelists to preach the Gospel. Their groups were called United Preaching Bands, each consisting of six evangelists, led by a pastor. In 1896 it was reported that these Bands visited 267 villages and towns, conducting 911 open-air meeting reaching about 47,200 souls.\textsuperscript{79} The United Preaching Bands went to Surendei and Asirvathapuram circles and to the Sripuriputhur pastorate. October 8 and 9 of 1896 were set apart as quiet days for the evangelists as in previous years in Palayamkottai when special addresses and meetings were held regarding their work. This was followed with a big open-air preaching.\textsuperscript{80}

A Mission Scripture Examination was introduced in 1892 to test and improve the calibre of the evangelists. An Entrance Examination was also held from 1894 for such people. The formation of the Missionary Association Committee helped to get rid of unworthy evangelists and to combine all resources in the District for a combined evangelistic work. But at the same time, according to Paul Appasamy, the formation of the committee tended to decrease the interest and sense of responsibility for evangelism which the local council or the circle

\textsuperscript{78} C.M.I.1894, p-596
\textsuperscript{79} C.M.I.1897, p-613
\textsuperscript{80} Ibid., p-907
committees had earlier. It came to be assumed that the responsibility to do evangelism was with
the Missionary Association Committee only, as it was the official organ of the church, and as it
had the control over the evangelists in the Tinnevelly church, and this was said to have slackened
the self-propagation responsibility of the congregations.

**Tinnevelly Indian Missionary Society**

Towards the end of the Nineteenth Century, the Tinnevelly Church was fast becoming
self-supporting and self-governing, Indian leadership in the Church was also emerging. Many of
the local Church leaders, along with the missionaries felt that the Tinnevelly Church should
become a missionary Church, if it had to grow still further. During this period, at the proposal of
Rev.J.Barton, the itinerancy work was started again, along with inciting the people for direct
evangelistic work. Village Missions, Village Revivals and Village Praying Bands became the
order of the day. In 1891 a prayer group was formed in Palayamkottai for the specific purpose of
asking for divine guidance as to how the Tinnevelly Church might fulfil its evangelistic
responsibility. After twelve years of prayerful waiting and preparation, the Tinnevelly Indian
Missionary Society was formed on February 12, 1903, with Mr.V.S.Asariah (leader Bishop) as
its first secretary and Dewan Bahadur A.S.Appasamy as its first president. There were at this
prayer meeting eight clergymen and twelve lay members from sixteen places in Tinnevelly.

The society was started with the objective to fester missionary spirit in the Indian Church by
indigenous efforts and propagate the gospel in India and other countries where the gospel is still
unknown.

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81. Paul Appasamy, op.cit, pp-219-220

82. C.M.I. 1905, p-32
An executive Committee was formed, which consulted various foreign Missionary Societies working in India to select a field for the I.M.S. In December 1903 the society’s secretary went to the Telugu Century also, and consulted Rev. J. B. Panes of the C.M.S. who suggested the Manukkotta talug in the Nisam’s territory. So the Manukkotta talug was chosen and Dornakal became the Mission headquarters. The first missionary, Mr. Samuel Pakkianathan went out to the field in 1904, the second in 1905 and the third in 1906. In 1907 two young men went out as members of a brotherhood to live and labour together in the mission field. Mr. Samuel of Palayamkottai was ordained by the Bishop of Madras in 1907. The Society maintained five to seven Telugu teachers and catechists in that area.\(^{83}\) The I.M.S. has followed the pattern of missionary work set by most foreign missions in India. It requires its missionaries to learn the language of the place to which they are placed before beginning their work.

The Executive Committee of the I.M.S. at Palayamkottai is responsible for the administration of the I.M.S. to select the necessary and competent missionary personnel for the fields and to raise the required finances. In 1904 the Committee decided to appoint local secretaries to draw up a list of subscriptions and to collect offerings in the Circles. Such local secretaries were appointed in the Circles of Nallur, Surandei, Suviseshapuram and Panneivillei. They were required to pay their collections every month to the Treasurer. In 1904, the contributions amounted to Rs.1443, 10 annas and 11 paises. In 1905 it rose to Rs.3,234. There were other methods of donating to the I.M.S. apart from subscriptions. The system of a ‘handful

\(^{83}\) C.M.I.1905, p-33
of rice’ was followed for the I.M.S. also. If a family had some fruit-bearing trees, in the garden, one would be named as the I.M.S. tree, the produce of which would go to the I.M.S. treasury. So also were there I.M.S. fowls and I.M.S. sheep.84

The I.M.S. published in 1904 several small publications to explain the object of the Society and to stir up the Christians. The Narpodhagam, the Tinnevelly Church magazine carried articles and informations regarding the I.M.S. In January 1904, a paper called Suvicesha Prabalya Varthamani (the missionary intelligencer) was started by the I.M.S. to publish its own news. In 1905 the circulation of this missionary intelligencer rose from 800 the previous year to 2200.85

On August 3, 1906, twenty-three converts as the first fruits of the I.M.S. were baptised at Dornakal by the Bishop of Madras, Bishop Whitehead. Thirty three Christian also were baptised. Mr.V.S.Asariah, himself went as a missionary to Dornakal in 1909 and was ordained as the first Bishop of Dornakal in 1912. The special features of the I.M.S. were that the work started was indigenous, and independent, it aimed to work outside the district and it planned to send out Tinnevelly Men and to provide for their support from the Tinnevelly Church itself. With the formation of the I.M.S. the Tinnevelly Church became fully self-propagating.

The Tinnevelly Church was sending out gifts for missionary purpose also. The Good Friday offertories were ear-marked for the work among the Jews. It sent gifts to the Tamil Mission, among the Tamil emigrants at Durban, South Africa, for the missionary work in

84. C.M.I. 1906, P-780
85. C.M.I. 1905, P-34
Uganda, China and New Guinea. Some Tinnevelly clergy men and evangelists went voluntarily to work in Ceylon, Mauritius, South Africa and some other South East Asian countries. All these speak for themselves the life in the Tinnevelly Church and her concern for the salvation of those who have not yet heard the Gospel.

**Tinnevelly Diocesan Trust Association**

All Diocesan immovable property has been registered in the name of the Tinnevelly Diocesan Trust Association (T.D.T.A) as trustees. The Diocesan Head Office maintained a register of all Diocesan properties, with full details regarding the property. The Diocesan Executive Committee had the authority to sanction large schemes pertaining to the construction of new buildings, repair, renovation or expansion. The Diocese appointed a special officer to inspect all the Diocesan properties and to verify the account for the income from the properties.  

Funds and securities belonging to the Diocese were deposited with the T.D.T.A. The whole account was called the T.D.T.A. General Church Fund. It was under the management of the Executive Standing Committee of the Diocesan Council. The Treasurer of the T.D.T.A. administered the Diocesan Central Fund or General Church Fund under the direction of the Diocesan Executive Committee. Pastorates and institution paid their contributions to the Central Fund for their use of the T.D.T.A. buildings and lands.

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86. Finance Sub-Committee, 184th meeting, 21st March 1977, p-12
88. Finance Sub-Committee, 184th meeting, 21st March 1977, pp-12-13

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A professional auditor audited the accounts of the Diocese. Every year, the Diocese published a full audited statement of income and expenditure.\textsuperscript{89} During the time of natural disasters, the Diocesan treasurer submitted a statement in the Finance Sub-Committee about the damages caused to buildings and trees in the Diocese. Then the committee appointed a Sub-Committee, which consisted of the Diocesan Treasurer and the Archdeacon. It sanctioned special grants to all the Pastorates and institutions where the cost of damage to a single building exceeded Rs.50.\textsuperscript{90} In 1976, the Diocese created a Diocesan Relief and Development Committee of seven members for carrying out welfare and relief programmes in the Diocese.\textsuperscript{91}

\textbf{The Missionaries’ and Indian Pastors’ Comments on Self-Support}

We got an idea of the liberality of the Tinnevelly Christians only through the existing reports of the missionaries and Indian pastors of the nineteenth century which were published in the missionary magazines of the C.M.S. from London.

Writing about the Christians in the Palayamkottai district, Rev.E.Sargent said that they manifested more and more a true missionary and liberal spirit in spite of their limited means. He was under the opinion that when the local Christians feel the change that had come to them because of Christianity, they would start to support their own teachers fully.\textsuperscript{92} When Rev.W.P.Schaffter suggested to the Christians in Suviseshapuram district, to raise their

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{89} Diocese of Tinnevelly-Constitution, 1975, pp-77-80
  \item \textsuperscript{90} Tinnevelly Diocesan Council Report, 4\textsuperscript{th} March 1943, p-2
  \item \textsuperscript{91} Social and Economic Concern Committee, 84\textsuperscript{th} meeting, 11\textsuperscript{th} March 1976, p-4
  \item \textsuperscript{92} C.M.R. 1863, p-245
\end{itemize}
contributions to make the local church more independent of the foreign aid, he found the people more responsive and liberal that they used to be in the previous year, which increased their contributions by a few hundred rupees in 1862. Rev. John Thomas, who was in charge of the combined Mengnanapuram district, found after a period of three years’ absence, the local people were more liberal and ready to contribute out of Christian sympathy and charity. He found out when the combined Mengnanapuram district Christian contributed liberally for the hurricane-hit people at Masulipatam in 1864.93

Rev. Schaffter, Rev. A. Dibb also speaks highly of the people’s liberality when he speaks of the Dohnavur district. He says that the people contributed liberally, feeling the responsibility to support the local Christian workers among them. In the same year 1864, writing on Panneivilei district, Rev. J. Tucker says that the rise in prices of all thinks had decreased the contribution of the people, and Rev. N. Honiss of the Surendei district attributes the rise in prices as well as failure of the monsoon to the reduction in contribution.

As a contrast to these, stands the account of Rev. John Thomas on Mangnanapuram combined districts. He feels that the time had come for organising the Tinnevelly church on a Self-governing and self-supporting basis as the people had become aware of their duty to support their own teachers, and as the Church fund was supporting fourteen catechists by spending Rs. 1302/-. Rev. Joseph Cornelius, a local clergyman who was in charge of the south-eastern portion of the Sivagasi district says that the Christians in his area were becoming more and more alive to the principle of self-support, feeling it their duty to pay for the expenses in their church.

93. C.M.R. 1865, p-257
According to him, the Christians in his area were paying between fifty and sixty rupees in 1854, but in 1864 it rose up to Rs.600, supporting six catechists. He was under the impression that at that rate of increase in liberality, very soon the principle of self-support would be achieved.

Another Tinnevelly pastor, Rev.Jesudasan John, had this different idea because the Kadatchapuram Christians were not contributing like the Christians in other districts, like those in Mengnanapuram. Yet another Tinnevelly pastor Rev.J.Nallathambi of Pannikulas district points to the inferior soil of the area and the poverty of the people for the poor contributions, while referring also to the unwillingness of some people to contribute liberally.

He was under the impression that unless the piety of the people be increased, it would be impossible to raise sufficient amount for the Church workers’ entire pay. These reports may seem to contradict the reports of the missionaries, but it has to be made clear that from the beginning of the mission, both these districts Kadatchapuram and Pannikulam were weak in contributions, and also that the Tinnevelly Christians differed from district to district in their attitude to the independence of their Church.

The reports of the missionaries on the liberality of Tinnevelly Christians were optimistic. According to Rev.E.Sargent, the attempts made by the Tinnevelly Christians to support their own workers had impressed the non-Christians, which according to him, would bring the non-Christians to the Christian fold.

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94. C.M.R. 1869, p-296
95. C.M.R, 1867, p-275
Rev.J.D.Simmons of the Panneivilei district, and Rev.R.R.Meadows of the Sivagasi district say that the majority gave liberally, freely and heartily. The Tinnevelly Christians, before they became Christians, used to give substantially to the Hindu temples and deities, and according to the missionaries this spirit of donating was continued by them even after becoming Christians, to contribute liberally to Christian causes.

The missionaries commended another quality also, viz., if the Christians set apart anything or decide on something to give to the church; they used to donate it immediately, lest they would fall into the temptation of using them for their own good. Though the missionaries in general agreed that there was much progress in giving among the Tinnevelly Christians, it was nevertheless felt that it could and would still improve and grow. The C.M.S Committee also felt in the same way, and it was felt that once the Tinnevelly Church was given more responsibility in administration, there would be a greater desire to support their own Church.

Education

The Sanding Committee on Education exercised a general control over the higher educational institutions. The Governing Board of each college had full power to manage the concerned colleges of the Diocese. The Committee did not intervene in the decisions of the Board. It conducted surveys regarding the possibility of extending higher education to different places in the Diocese. It prepared and submitted the annual budget to the Diocesan Treasurer.

96. C.M.R.1869, p-298
97. C.M.I, 1869, P-98
It recommended the transfer of Head of the institutions, teaching staff and clerical staff to the Manager. The Manager had the power to appoint any staff of the institutions on the recommendations of the Committee.\textsuperscript{98}

The scholarship Standing Committee raised funds for scholarship for the destitute students. The Diocese invested all financial contributions and aid of the foreign missionary organisations for Diocesan schools and hospitals in General Endowment Fund and distributed the interest from the fund to the schools and hospitals.\textsuperscript{99}

**Medical**

The Medical Work Standing Committee governed the Diocesan Medical work. It made recommendations to the Bishop regarding the appointment of a Superintendent of Medical Work and Managers of hospitals. Only a Medical Evangelist was eligible to become a Superintendent. He supervised the medical work under the control of the Diocesan Council.\textsuperscript{100} Every Diocesan hospital had a Governing Board. The main objectives of the Board of the hospital was the development of a closer co-operation between the medical work and the evangelistic work of the churches in the area surrounding the hospitals and the development of a scheme of self-support and greater usefulness for the public.\textsuperscript{101} The Board encouraged medical relief to the poor. It also

\textsuperscript{98} Diocese of Tinnevelly- Constitution, 1962, pp-62-65
\textsuperscript{99} Finance Sub-Committee, 81\textsuperscript{st} meeting, 6\textsuperscript{th} December 1945, p-11
\textsuperscript{100} Diocese of Tinnevelly- Constitution, 1970, pp-72-74
\textsuperscript{101} Executive Standing Committee, 57\textsuperscript{th} meeting, 30\textsuperscript{th} March 1949, pp-15-16
administered the financial section of the Diocesan hospital. It prepared the annual report in relation to the medical progress and submitted it to the Diocesan Council. The manager supervised the evangelistic mission of the Diocesan hospitals and maintained the main purpose of the Diocesan medical service.102

The Rural Work or Social Welfare Work

The Rural Work Standing Committee carried out the rural development schemes of the Diocese. Later on the Diocese changed the name as the Standing Committee for Social and Economic Concern. It administered all the social service section of the Diocese of Tinnevelly. It drafted new schemes and recommended them to the Diocesan Council for approval. It had the power to appoint Rural Workers to supervise the rural development programmes of the Diocese.

Evangelistic Work

The Evangelistic Work Standing Committee took all measures to strengthen the evangelistic work of the Diocese. It assisted the evangelistic works of the Church Councils. It supported the work of the Indian Missionary Society. It had a general supervision over the Diocesan Evangelistic Band.103

The Pastoral Work Standing Committee advised the Bishop with regard to the appointment, location and retirement of all the clergy. It administered the work of all the clergy. It generally supervised the work of the Theological College supported by the Diocese till 1969.

102. Diocese of Tinnevelly-Constitution, 1979, p-17
103. Diocese of Tinnevelly-Constitution, 1949, p-82
It recommended the candidates for ordination to the Bishop.\textsuperscript{104} The Women’s Work Standing Committee encouraged women and girls to do Gospel work and conduct Bible Schools. The Literature Work Standing Committee encouraged the production of Christian Literature. It helped the Diocese in the publication of translation of useful books into Tamil.\textsuperscript{10}

The Children’s Work Standing Committee assisted the Diocese in the work among Children through literature. It conducted camps and annual scripture examinations for school students. The Youth Work Standing Committee also encouraged the work among the youth by publishing suitable literature and arranging special missions and camps.\textsuperscript{106}

**Narpothagam**

Narpothagam was the official monthly magazine of the Diocese of Tinnevelly. The Tinnevelly Church published the first book of Narpothagam in February 1849. It has the unique distinction of being the oldest surviving magazine in India. In the beginning, the magazine had two titles namely, ‘Friendly Instructor’ and Narpothagam. In 1920, it became the Diocesan magazine with the title ‘Narpothagam of Tinnevelly Diocese’.\textsuperscript{107}

The Bishop expressed his views and suggestions through this Diocesan magazine. He published his itinerary and main duties in the magazine to prepare the people of the particular areas during his visits. This list made the people know about the availability of the Bishop in his

\textsuperscript{104} Diocese of Tinnevelly-Constitution, 1976, pp-64-65

\textsuperscript{105} Ibid, 1979, pp-68-69

\textsuperscript{106} Ibid, 1975, pp-72-73

\textsuperscript{107} Narpothagam, February 1849, p-58

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head office at Bishopstowe, Palayamkottai. The Diocese announced the Church about diocesan Conventions, special meetings, election details, Church Ceremonies and the details regarding admission to Diocesan Teachers’ training and industrial training institutions. The Diocese published all important Diocesan events with photo figures and explanations in the magazine. From the beginning, the magazine had articles on Bible, Hinduism, Society, politics, arts, mathematics, geography, agriculture, science, world news and current news about India.

**Mambazha Sangam (Diocesan Annual Festival)**

During 1833, Cholera carried away a large number of people in Tinnevelly region. It left poor children as orphans and poor women as widows. Rathinam, a Catechist of the Dohnavur congregation decided to help the affected and needy people. He shared his burden with a Eurasian, Charles West, who was the helper of the Rev.Rhenius in his ministry at Dohnavur. They formed a ‘Friend-In-Need-Society’ in December 1833 and collected contributions from the members of the Dohnavur congregation and raised the fund for the society. From which, they helped the poor and needy especially widows. In February 1834, Rev.Rhenius extended the service of the Society to all the nine C.M.S. Pastorates. He decided to extend the service to the widows of the Catechists and teachers of the C.M.S. On 9th July (Wednesday) 1834, he formed the Tinnevelly C.M.S. Catechists’ and Teachers’ Widows’ Fund. Regarding the anniversary of the Widows’ Fund annual meetings were conducted on Wednesday close to 9th July of every year.

In the same month, large number of Christians in villages usually attended a Kurangani Hindu festival with their relatives and friends to respect their invitation and to enjoy the festivities there. It was held for ten days in the Tamil month of Aani (July). Hence Rev.Edward Sargent decided to introduce a summer festival for all the Christians mainly in villages with the sole aim to wean away them from attending the Kurangani festival and to offer an alternative to them. Therefore, he converted the anniversary day of the Widows’ Fund as ‘Mango Society Festival’ or Mambazha Sanga Vizha because it was the season of mangoes. Mambazha Sangam used to be held at the Holy Trinity Cathedral, Palayamkottai. It has been celebrated at the Centenary Hall, Palayamkottai since 1901.

The people from the villages used to come for the Sangam in bullock-carts with their family members and friends and stayed in the nearby vacant places. They themselves erected thatched sheds in the nearby vacant places. They cooked food for them and shared the food with their friends and family members. They attended the special meetings. In the evening, the church arranged Bajanai. It was the favourite programme of the Mambazha Sangam.

They believed that if they attend the festival with their vows (Nerchai), Lord Jesus Christ would bless them. Hence they prayerfully offered their offertories of cash, rice, paddy, grains, fouls and animals and small offering clay pots (Vundial Kalayam), which had the offerings saved by them for a year to fulfil their Nerchai or to thank god for their fulfilled vows, and some of them shaved the hair of their head to fill their vows.

The Diocese arranged a classical music programme called Katha Kalachepam or Bajanai Prasangam. In this programme, the prime singer explained a portion or an event from the Holy
Bible by telling stories and singing songs with musical instruments. During the period of Bishop Thomas S. Garrett, it was observed as the Diocesan Anniversary festival. Bishop Daniel Abraham introduced that third day of the ‘Mambazha Sangam’ festival as the ‘Anniversary of the Tirunelveli Church’. The Sunday previous to the festival was declared as the Diocesan Sunday. The offertory received on that day was allotted for Diocesan Reserve Fund. The festival united the people from different villages and castes and paved a way for sharing the love. Thus it had become one of the social and cultural festivals of the District of Tinnevelly.

From the beginning of the Twentieth Century, the Tinnevelly Church has been remarkably in self-support. The custom of giving away lands as gifts to the churches either by individuals or by congregations became common in the twentieth Century. This was done to increase the income of the churches so that self-support could be realized early. According to the annual letter of Rev. E.A. Douglas, Vellalanvilei congregation did it in 1900, and Mengnanapuram was also contemplating to do the same. In 1901, when the Parent Society was getting into deficit, the Tinnevelly Church Council came forward to the special grant of Rs.6500 it was receiving for the preceding five years. In the same year the Mengnanapuram circle decided to bear from 1902 all the expenses connected with the pastoral and elementary educational work of the circle. The pastoral work here refers to the administration, evangelism and other regular activities essential for the life of church. When the Parent Society sent out appeals to donate towards its deficit, the Tinnevelly Church sent £500 in 1904 as its contribution to meet the deficit. This was done at the initiative of the lay members of the council.

109. C.M.I. 1902, pp-496-497
According to the sixteenth annual report of the Tinnevelly Church Council in 1907, the Church Missionary Society’s contribution to the Tinnevelly Church Council in 1907 was Rs.5428/- whereas the expenditure on Pastoral and evangelistic work only came to Rs.50,641, 5 annas and 3 paise. This shows the growth towards self-support. According to the regulations of the District Church Council, when a Circle provides money from within itself, for the salaries of its pastors, catechists and teachers of elementary schools, and repair of its churches, schools and Pastor’s houses and for other ordinary church expenses, that Circle was called self-supporting. In 1908, Mengnanapuram and Seval Circles became completely self-supporting, and Nallumavadi Circle was on the point of becoming one.

In 1877, Bishop E.Sargent and Bishop Caldwell were consecrated as Assistant Bishops to the Bishop of Madras for the C.M.S. and the S.P.G. portions in Tinnevelly respectively. The reorganisation of the administration of the Tinnevelly Church during the 1890 helped to bring in self-government. Though this helped the Indians to take the reins of administration in their hands, yet the structure based on the Church of England stayed as such. It has not yet changed, though the leadership has changed from the English to the Indians. Can a structure suitable for the Indian situation be developed is still a question. Moreover, as the Circle Chairmen, the Pastorate Committee Chairmen, because of the system inherited from the English, are still powerful and as what they say as heads are not questioned but obeyed, the effectiveness of lay members in the various Committees is being questioned.

The Tinnevelly Church has become a missionary church with the formation of the I.M.S. What made the Tinnevelly Christians to from the I.M.S unlike the Christians in other areas of
India, who never took such a step? This may be because of the inherent concern the Tinnevelly Christians had for the non-Christians. This also may be because of the policy of the C.M.S. which talked of the ‘euthanasia of a mission’, which would have made the Tinnevelly Christian to reach-out. Another reason may be because of the dispersion of the Tamils in many parts of India. The feeling in the Mission Boards that Indian could be converted speedily to Christianity by Indians better than by foreign personnel and the prevalent political condition which did not like foreigners may be another reason. The position of the Tinnevelly Church which by 1903 had become self-supporting and self-governing to a greater extent than most of the churches in other parts of India would have made the Tinnevelly Christians to take self-propagation in other parts of India seriously. But it has to be accepted that the I.M.S. was founded on the model of foreign missionary societies and still follows the methods adopted by them.

The present day political condition in India, when the government is trying to introduce a bill regarding the flow of foreign funds to all institutions including the Christian ones, makes it imperative for the Indian Church to take the question of self-hood, including self-reliance very seriously. Their services to the cause of spreading Education added a new feather in the career of the Missions.