

Speaking Truth to Power

A Critique of the Church of South India Episcopacy
(Governance) of the 21st Century

Joseph G. Muthuraj

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Globethics.net Focus

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface	13
1 Introduction	17
1.1 <i>Is CSI Episcopomethodipresbygationalist?.....</i>	17
1.2 <i>The Scope and Purpose of the Book.....</i>	22
2 The Other Side of The Episcopacy In CSI.....	29
2.1 <i>The Shiny Side of the Episcopacy: the Historic Episcopate in Constitutional Form</i>	30
2.2 <i>Rough Side of the Episcopacy: Episcopacy in the 21st Century... 34</i>	
2.3 <i>The Historic Episcopate in Constitutional Form is Distorted.....</i>	35
2.4 <i>The Historic Episcopacy in Second Century Form.....</i>	41
2.5 <i>The Historic Episcopacy in Martyrological Form.....</i>	43
2.6 <i>The Historic Episcopacy in Constitutional Reform</i>	45
2.7 <i>The Moderator Elevating Himself to a Position of Political Supremacy and Control</i>	53
2.8 <i>Can Leaders be Affected by Sociopathy?</i>	56
2.9 <i>The Protestant Radicalism: Speaking Truth to Power</i>	57
2.10 <i>Speaking to the Western Church</i>	59
2.11 <i>S. Kierkegaard and his Message to the Church of his Time</i>	61
2.12 <i>The Play-Christianity of the Priests</i>	63
3 A Critique of the Former Moderator’s Farewell Address	65
3.1 <i>Theologians of Combat not Theologians of the Arm-Chair</i>	65
3.2 <i>Bishop Kadasham’s Speech as the Incoming Moderator.....</i>	67
3.3 <i>The Speech as the Outgoing Moderator.....</i>	69
3.4 <i>CSI Christians Living Abroad</i>	76

<i>3.5 Bishop Kadasham Warns the Land Mafia in the CSI.....</i>	<i>78</i>
<i>3.6 Is Episcopacy Exercised as a Biblical Office in CSI?</i>	<i>79</i>
<i>3.7 Moderator Calls for Reading only the Books Published by the CSI Synod</i>	<i>80</i>
<i>3.8 The Paul Commission.....</i>	<i>81</i>
<i>3.9 The Abel Commission.....</i>	<i>82</i>
<i>3.10 Priorities for the Mission of the Church (1982).....</i>	<i>84</i>
<i>3.11 Priorities for the Mission of the Church for 2011-2020</i>	<i>85</i>
<i>3.12 Is the United Church Functioning as a Uniting Church?</i>	<i>87</i>
<i>3.13 Is CSI an Integrated Church or an Organically United Church? .</i>	<i>88</i>
<i>3.14 “We Commit Not to Go Wrong Again”</i>	<i>89</i>
<i>3.15 The Moderator Wants the Church to Fight Against Corruption in the Nation.....</i>	<i>90</i>
<i>3.16 ‘The Bishops Should Declare Their Assets’, Says Bishop Kadasham.....</i>	<i>96</i>
<i>3.17 Bishop Kadasham Continues the Journey on a Wooden Rocking Horse. Talk about Transparency.....</i>	<i>97</i>

4 The Lord Opened The Mouth of The Donkey... (1).101

<i>4.1 Theological Barrenness and Poverty in the CSI Today</i>	<i>103</i>
<i>4.2 The Rough Side of the Episcopacy in the 21st Century</i>	<i>103</i>
<i>4.3 The Historic Episcopate in Constitutional Form is Distorted.....</i>	<i>105</i>
<i>4.4 The New Moderator will be Performing a ‘One-man Show’</i>	<i>106</i>
<i>4.5 There is a Real Danger of Bye-Laws Losing the CSI Smell and Flavour that Have Made us Unique among Churches</i>	<i>107</i>
<i>4.6 Let us Rewind the Messages of the Moderators to See Who and What they Thought they were</i>	<i>108</i>
<i>4.7 The CSI Moderator Cannot and Will not Have Pastoral Oversight of the WHOLE CHURCH</i>	<i>111</i>
<i>4.8 Is the CSI Leadership Affected by Sociopathy?</i>	<i>113</i>

<i>4.9 Unconstitutional Leadership?</i>	115
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5 The Lord Opened the Mouth of the Donkey ... (2) 121

<i>5.1 Who is the New Moderator? : He will be the Pontiff of the CSI</i>	123
<i>5.2 Primacy of the Moderator in a Pyramidal Type of Authority.....</i>	124
<i>5.3 The Constitutional Amendments and Bye-laws Strike the Death Knell for the Tranquebar Manifesto, the Navigating Map of CSI</i>	127
<i>5.4 Who is the Deputy Moderator? - A Performer of Duties Assigned by the Moderator</i>	129
<i>5.5 Who is a Bishop? - He/she is Working under the Control and the Check of the Moderator.....</i>	129
<i>5.6 The Synod Court is Formed to Function as the Moderator's Kata-Panchayat.....</i>	130
<i>5.7 The Moderator has the Whip Hand in a Dumb Synod</i>	135
<i>5.8 The Assistant Bishops: A New Order of Dignified Chaplains to the Bishops</i>	137
<i>5.9 The Voluntary Retirement of a Bishop and the Compulsory Resignation of a Bishop</i>	138
<i>5.10 Visions of CSI Episcopacy</i>	139
<i>5.11 Final Remarks</i>	143

6 The Lord Opened the Mouth of the Donkey... (3) ... 145

<i>6.1 Scholarly Interpreters</i>	148
<i>6.2 Theological Education is Desacralized</i>	149
<i>6.3 Seminary Education is Wedded to Church Politics.....</i>	150
<i>6.4 Institutional Sclerosis.....</i>	151
<i>6.5 Institutional Sanction of Corruption?.....</i>	151
<i>6.6 Is Our Faith Strong Enough to Define Corruption?</i>	152
<i>6.7 Assets Declaration of Bishops and Synod Office-bearers: A Constitutional Challenge</i>	153

<i>6.8 15 Council Members are just Enough to Bring Charges Against a Bishop, and Three in the Court are Enough to Pass Judgement ...</i>	154
<i>6.9 People are Made to Swallow Authoritarianism.....</i>	155
<i>6.10 The Trivialization and Demonizing of Others.....</i>	155
<i>6.11 The PLEDGE (A Gentlemen’s Agreement).....</i>	157
<i>6.12 Conclusion</i>	163

7 Epilogue 165

Appendices..... 173

<i>A1) The Tranquebar Manifesto (2 May 1919).....</i>	173
<i>A2) The Reports from the Joint Committees on Church Union, South India (1920-1944, Excerpts).....</i>	177
<i>A3) Constitution of the Church of South India CSI (2003) on the Episcopate</i>	206
<i>A4) Order of Service 1947.....</i>	209
<i>A5) Response of Bishop Daniel to the Epistles.....</i>	230
<i>A6) Consultation of the People Synod on the Future of Episcopacy (Bishop Governance) in the Church of South India CSI (17 Oct 2015)..</i>	234
<i>A7) Constitution Bye-laws (08.04.15)</i>	238
<i>A8) Amendments to the Constitution (08.04.2015).....</i>	285

*“ Do not lie to ingratiate yourself with those who have power.
Do not prevaricate to protect yourself from those who have power.
Do not remain silent to avoid confrontation with the powerful.
Do not exaggerate to gain the attention of the powerful.
It is not an easy thing, to speak truth to power.
Power rarely hears truth.
Power hears what it wants to hear, and would make that the truth.
Those who persist in speaking truth to power rarely prosper.”¹*

¹ [http://www.democraticunderground.com/discuss/duboard.php?az=view_all&address=389x3076052]

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PREFACE

This book is a critical prophetic voice, an academic historical analysis, an ecclesiological concept as well as a call for accountability and action. The large and powerful Church of South India (CSI) stands to be the subject of this case study of 2015, but the relevance of the topic is global interest. Let me explain:

Political Governance is a modern term for Responsible Leadership in Politics. It is of high relevance for the credibility of political leaders and governments, e.g. when it comes to respecting the constitution or changing it for the extension of mandates of state presidents.

Corporate Governance is a key topic in business since bad governance means high reputational and financial risks, and therefore can destroy a business, whereas good corporate governance leads to success.

Church Governance is for churches as relevant as governance is for politics and business. Searching for the leadership of the community of Christians which would correspond to the vision of the mandate of Jesus is as old as Christianity. From early house churches to the church as a world power, the various Christian denominations differ mainly in their leadership models. Episcopal traditions emphasize the top-down leadership and unity, Presbyterian traditions emphasize the bottom-up

14 *Speaking Truth to Power*

and participatory approach; Congregational traditions the autonomy of the parishes, Pentecostal and Charismatic traditions the Holy Spirit of the individual leader.

The Church of South India (CSI) is a unique church since it is the pioneer of a united and uniting church since 1947, uniting the Anglican, Methodist, Presbyterian and Congregationalist denominations of the missionary churches. With over 4 million members, more than 2000 schools, hundreds of hospitals, many universities and colleges and huge land resources (one of the largest land owner in India), it is a powerful church even though Christians in India represent a small minority.

The process of a constitutional reform is currently debated in CSI which – according to the author of this book and other critical voices such as the People Synod, a ‘church from below’ – would change the character of this church from a united to an episcopal church with an accumulation of power in the role of the moderator. The controversy about this reform is linked to ongoing criticisms about corruption², nepotism and mismanagement in many of the CSI-related institutions. Corruption cases in court, bishops in jail and secretive property transactions led to a climate of mistrust in leadership on various levels. CSI is taking measures, but conflicts continue. On this background, church governance becomes a hot issue of power, power control and accountability, and above all, of the faithfulness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the credibility of the community of believers.

The book is an academic historical analysis, developed in chapter 2. The author has a proven long term academic record as Professor of New Testament at the United Theological College UTC in Bangalore in

² See Christoph Stückelberger: *Corruption-free Churches are possible*, Globethics.net Focus Series no 2, Geneva 2010, on CSI pp 66-74, with 35 practical recommendations on pp. 163-192. Download for free from www.globethics.net/publications. Also available in French and Tamil.

South India, one of the best biblical scholars in India and author of various detailed books on the history of CSI.

The book is an ecclesiological concept. The trend of centralisation of power in church hierarchy (“The Moderator as Pontiff of CSI, chapter 5.1), the emphasis on ordained pastors and less on laity and the trend to episcopal structures also in protestant churches, can be observed worldwide. This book calls for the role of laity and of synodal and presbyterial control and balance of leadership power in episcopacy. The author does it with a special reference to the unity of the church in the united Church of South India, referring in detail to the founding convictions and ecclesiology of CSI as a result of over twenty years of careful and painful processes to get unity (1919-1947). In this sense, the book is also a contribution to the Ecumenical movement: Can we still envisage a future of united and uniting churches or will they again break out in denominations? And what about post-denominational churches such as the China Christian Council which becomes one of the largest protestant churches in the world: is it at the stage of becoming pre-denominational again with the atomisation of Chinese Christianity? The history of CSI is of great interest to study, the book gives careful current insights in chances and challenges of Church Unity.

The book is a critical prophetic voice. With the book title “Speak truth to the power”, the author warns about abuse of power by religious leaders and calls for accountability and servant leadership. From the Old Testament prophets and Jesus’ critique of the Pharisee leaders throughout church history, church Reformers raised this voice. The prophet Ezekiel was one of them, saying: “Woe to the shepherds of Israel who only take care of themselves! Should not shepherds take care of the flock? ³ You eat the curds, clothe yourselves with the wool and slaughter the choice animals, but you do not take care of the flock. ... For this is what the Sovereign LORD says: I myself will search for my sheep and look after them.” (Eze 34:2,3,11)

The book is a call for accountability of church leaders. In chapter 3, the author analysis the programmatic speech of the former Moderator of CSI and compares it with the speech at the end of the mandate and actions in between. One may or may not agree with the analysis, but it is an example for holding church leaders accountable. Governance in politics, business and NGOs and international organisations is measured by strategy, work plans and measurable impact. Even though it may sometimes sound bureaucratic or a business management style, churches and other religious organisations want and need to be reliable, accountable and measurable for the intended impact.

I thank the author for this analysis, for his love to the church and the courage to speak. Contributing a preface does not mean that I have to agree on everything with the author and the opinions stated in this book don't necessarily reflect those of Globethics.net. This book as a contextual case is relevant not only for the Synod, leadership, pastors and lay persons of CSI, but of other churches, mission and ecumenical partners and the ecumenical movement around the world. May this book contribute to an open debate and the search for solutions on church leadership and governance, on episcopacy, transparency and accountability?

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Professor of Ethics, University of Basel, Switzerland

INTRODUCTION

‘The C. S. I. is the first adventure in union of this kind. It is a reminder, a bow in the cloud, a challenge, an irritant, an embarrassment, a vanguard into the future, a kind of first-fruits of the coming great Church.’

– D. Webster

We must remember that churches in most parts of India are powerful and prosperous social institutions whether or not they appear in the eyes of the State in India in the form of institutions of minority religion. The first Christians settled in India in Kerala already in the first centuries. Then the Protestant Christian Missions of the Western missionaries which lasted for three centuries were turned into a Church of India and for India. This was a unified Church called the Church of South India. What is the phenomenon called Church of South India?

1.1 Is CSI Episcopomethodipresbygationalist?

It is a simple narrative history to say that the Church of South India is a union of four different denominations, namely the Anglicans, Methodists, Presbyterians and Congregationalists. In other words, it is a union between episcopal and non-episcopal churches, a first time of union of its kind to happen in the world. This new Church of one million

Christians was inaugurated on 27 September 1947 at St. George's Cathedral in Madras (now Chennai) after about 28 years of negotiations sorting out various doctrinal and ecclesiastical problems through love, understanding and prayer. The union was regarded not as a *fait accompli* but a process of growing together of various church traditions in the unity of ministry and purpose through the years. What is important to note are the principles of union, rather than a historical outline of the united church. —

A. A. H. Legg, Moderator of the CSI (1962-66), maintained that the Church Union in South India 'was not a mere administrative reorganization', nor the 'fitting together of elements from the different traditions as though they were pieces in a jigsaw puzzle', nor the 'absorption by one tradition of all the others'.³ Hence the CSI is definitely not "Episcopemethodipresbygationalist". In the CSI, one dies to denominationalism and the divisions fostered by it. It is not a piecing together of various traditions which stood and worked against each other in the history of the Church in the West, but the working out of a comprehensive church through synthesis and compromise for the sake of achieving unity and for the sake of preaching the good news to the large country India.

B. This was to fulfil the prayer of Jesus in John 17 when he prayed, 'That They May All Be One'. The experience of 'oneness' is not through forming a co-operative action, federation or intercommunion but by entering into a corporate union. Bishop Newbigin describes it thus: 'As the Body of Christ, the church is an organism "joined and knit together by every joint with which it is supplied when each part is working properly"' (Eph. 4:16). Its

³ Cited by M. Gibbard, *Unity is Not Enough: Reflections after a Visit to the Church of South India*, London: A. R. Mowbray & Co, 1965, p. 41.

unity is therefore properly described as organic.’⁴ Every union of churches should have organic union as its goal. But these days there are no takers for organic union.

- C. It all began in Tranquebar, a little town in Tamil Nadu where the first Protestant missionaries landed in the year 1706. 31 Indian ministers of the Anglican Church in India and the South India United Church (a united church of Presbyterians and the Congregationalists) met in Tranquebar in May 1919 to plan and discuss uniting together as one church. They drew up a common Manifesto, a road-map for uniting organically into one church. This first meeting led to forming a Joint Committee for Union which met 20 times over a period of 28 years and finalised the Basis and a Scheme for Union based on which the united Church founded itself.⁵
- D. As Bishop E. J. Palmer, the Bishop Bombay (1908-1929), rightly observed, ‘The Principle that the basis of union is spiritual underlies the whole Scheme ... the united Church will, therefore, desire to bring together all the different types of spiritual experience represented in the uniting churches.’⁶ The new spirituality in turn forms the basis for a new ecclesiology combining together four types of theology and different experiences of living as a church.
- E. The Fourteenth Session of the Joint Committee on Church Union in South India which met in Madras (Chennai) issued a call to union to all Christians in South India with the following words: ‘The work of Kingdom of God requires the united service of Christian men and women. Division means duplicate organisations, rival churches, competing institutions; and the one

⁴ “Organic Union”, *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement* (Nicholas Lossky, José Míguez Bonino, et al.; Geneva: WCC Publications): 1991, p. 1028.

⁵ See *Appendix I*.

⁶ *Watersmeet*, Westminster: Church House, 1929, pp. 38ff.

Body of Christ is rent into many sects. Disunion is sin in the sight of God, a denial of Christ, a frustration of His Holy Spirit, a stumbling-block to the faithful and the mockery to those without. We see the terrible fruits of disunion in many lands; we in India dare not remain as we are'. This was another firm principle which guided the churches in South India towards unity.

- F. The Church of South India brought together Christians of many castes into one united community. B. Sundkler in his book *Church of South India: The Movement Towards Union 1900-1947*⁷ rightly comments, 'The Anglican Nadar in Tinnevely, or the Baptist Madiga in Ongole, or the Wesleyan Mela in Medak were all, in their province, convinced that *their* church was the best of all churches... but it did bring people from Medak and Ongole and Tinnevely together in a way which had been unknown hitherto...' Sundkler, a non-Indian historian of the Church did not hesitate to register his objective observation on the history of the formation of the CSI by underlining the contribution made by Tinnevely Nadars, both as pew members emigrating to different places and also as leaders working for the cause of unity of the churches in South India. He wrote: 'The Tinnevely Christians, mainly belonging to the Nadar community, were to play a central role in the whole of the union movement with which we are concerned in this book. Converted to Christianity about 1800, they showed a deep interest in Western education. Many of them were attracted to the institution founded by Scottish Presbyterians in 1837, later to be called the Madras Christian College. Through this influence some Tinnevely Anglicans were assimilated with Presbyterian mission work and became Presbyterians. They went to Madura where they became Congregationalists or to Trichinopoly and there

⁷ London: Lutterworth Press, 1965.

became Methodists or Lutherans. They went south to Travancore and there they joined London Missionary Society groups. V. S. Azariah is an example of a Tinnevely Christian, born in Mengnanapuram, who went north as a missionary to Dornakal, where he built an Anglican community. In Madras these men were referred to as “Tinnevely Christians”... The Rev. Samuel Joseph, who himself was born in Tinnevely and became a leading Congregationalist in the Madura district, estimates that fifty per cent of the leaders in South Indian Church Union Movement had this origin. This may be an overstatement, but through interviews with a number of leading Indian Christians the author has formed the opinion that the influence of this community has been outstanding.”⁸ The Church has a long way to go to improve in living above caste considerations, as caste lifts its ugly head particularly during the elections and in the race for power.

The Church has grown in many ways; particularly the membership of the CSI has increased four-fold since its formation in 1947. According to statistics furnished by Bishop M. Azariah, the Church of South India after 60 years of its existence had in total 2,103 schools, 2 medical colleges, 3 engineering colleges, 51 polytechnics, 104 hospitals and clinics, 512 boarding homes and hostels, and 22 homes for the aged.⁹ At this time the number of Christians was 2.8 million, dioceses 21, with 10,114 congregations, 2,244 pastors, 1,930 schools, 38 colleges and 2,103 lay workers.¹⁰ No detailed statistics for the current period are available except that some members quote a figure of 4.5 million as the total number of CSI Christians today. This makes the CSI the leading

⁸ Sundkler, *Church of South India*, pp. 30-31.

⁹ *Dream and Reality: CSI after 60 Years*, Madras: CSI, 1997, p. 12.

¹⁰ S. Suryaprakash, “Church of South India Marches Ahead”, *The South India Churchman*, September 1997, p. 3.

Protestant Church in India, and population-wise it is the second largest next to the Catholic Church in the country. Then what is the problem?

1.2 The Scope and Purpose of the Book

The earlier works of mine *We Began at Tranquebar*, vols. I & II,¹¹ were on the origin and development of Episcopacy in CSI by tracing its various phases from the time of the introduction of Protestant Christianity in India (1706) through to the appointment of the first Anglican bishop in India (1813) until the consecration of first bishops of the united Church (1947). My previous work *...That They May also Be Sanctified in Truth*¹² was a critical response to a paper presented by the former Moderator of the Church of South India the Rt. Rev. Devakadasham on the theme ‘Wider Revitalization and Renewal of the Church of South India’. The book revealed the paper’s shallowness in thought and content, its flawed logic and false arguments. It further showed how the renewal idea was totally conceived by him as merely a human and an institutional affair. The paper was marked by a severe lack of knowledge about the past history of the formation of CSI. Further, there was a total absence of repentance over institutional sins and there was no call to turn to the Word of God. The institutional capability to respond to and implement the revitalizing aspects of renewal particularly in Episcopacy were wanting.

This book, which is a sequel to the above, carries the theme of episcopacy to the 21st century to critically analyze its developments. It is divided into three parts. Part I is a critique on the episcopacy as it is understood and exercised in CSI today and a critical analysis of the farewell address delivered in the Synod of 2014 by Bishop Devakadasham, the former Moderator of CSI.

¹¹ Published by the ISPCK, New Delhi. 2010.

¹² Published by the Tuticorin-Nazareth Diocese and the ISPCK, New Delhi. 2012

Part II which is the third chapter consists of three Epistles written to the present Moderator of CSI, the Most Rev. Dyvasirvadam urging him to desist from re-writing the CSI Constitution by imposing the arbitrary Amendments and new Bye-laws running to 38 pages. There have been widespread oppositions for these anti-people and anti-constitutional Amendments and the new Bye-laws and they are being rightly challenged in several courts of law in South India. Yet, contrary to the temporary injunctions issued by the courts against implementing them and defying the outburst of anger and protest shown by several committed and well-meaning individuals and groups, the General Secretary of the CSI has written a letter dated 16 November 2015 (without his signature) to all the bishops and the Moderator's Commissaries of the dioceses that all 'the amendments shall come into force from the date of this communication, that is today the 16th day of November, 2015, as being the law of the Church and shall be given full force and effect in the letter and spirit thereof.' The opposition has grown stronger since this communication and swift legal measures are afoot to block the introduction of the Amendments and the new Bye-laws. The battle is not over yet!

Part III consists of three Appendices. Appendix A1 has excerpts from the Reports of the Joint Committee on Church Union in South India on the discussion of episcopacy in CSI. Appendix A2 has the complete texts of the liturgy used on 27 September 1947 in the Service of the Inauguration of CSI and also of the Consecration Service of the first bishops for CSI held on the same day at St. George's Cathedral, Chennai. They are rare documents; the present leadership in CSI has forgotten them, and the present generation of CSI does not know them. These supplement our knowledge of CSI Episcopacy, its true nature and form. Also these liturgies can be observed around the world by churches seeking union. The Appendix A3 is a letter of reaction written by one of the CSI bishops while the rest of the twenty bishops including the

Moderator did not choose to respond to my epistles. The letter seems to convey the typical episcopal reaction to my epistles to the Moderator. Hence, it is added to this book with the reply sent by me (Annex 3). In Part I, I decided to put my hand to the plough again. These days, bishops of the CSI write little or next to nothing on matters of faith, worship, history or theology. The institutional hierarchy of CSI is dictating whether or not theological opinions to be held in the Church should flow from the theological colleges and theologians. Some people are being taken advantage of by the hierarchy which gives the impression that they are ignorant, and not trustworthy and dependable. There is increasingly an absence of a sense of obligation to be honest with the people, and they seem to hold their own moral beliefs which permit them to do what they want. All these are observed by people but no one wants to intentionally intervene. Christian people have lost the sense of indignation at the sight of injustices committed with a display of courage of conviction. Many people of CSI have no courage to object to the moral wrong that they observe. They are content to remain passive if they thought that the lack of moral responsibility is commonplace in society and so in the church also. Many people wish to excuse themselves by saying that it is none of their business to view the problem in a more critical fashion which demands purposeful actions. Persons can intentionally fashion their responsive actions as per their capacities without any apprehension over the intolerance of criticism and dissent found among the hierarchy.

I read critically the farewell speech made by the Bishop Kadasham at the end of his tenure of the office as Moderator of CSI (2012-2014). The farewell speech is not a significant event, however it cannot be slighted because the bishops rarely write on theological and ecclesial matters, despite speaking on them very occasionally. I find that the speech by Bishop Kadasham requires a critical reading and a serious response from those who love the Church. A rebuttal response to this ordinary speech reads the address in some sections in between the lines. It is not an

attempt to find fault with the speaker's opinion, style, method, or expression, but to analyse the truth and untruth behind it all. It is not a polemical response with a view to destroy or hostilely refute someone else's previous speech or written statement. But there is a serious intent challenging what was said or not said, calling for a serious rethinking on what the former Moderator was claiming as success by turning a blind eye to the failures of the CSI as an institution to live in accordance with the minimum values and requirements of God's kingdom. Nor is the present critical response a jeremiad, a long mournful complaint in a sermonising fashion or an angry harangue predicting the downfall of the CSI. There is *Stürm und Drang* in my heart over the power and governance of the CSI ending up in the hands of one individual or an oligarchy.

The farewell speech is read in the light of the induction speech made by Bishop Kadasham when he assumed the office of Moderator in January 2012. A big agenda was laid out and far-reaching claims and promises were made in the opening speech, but there were few or no results to show in the farewell speech after two years. So there is very little to impress us as he escapes tackling serious problems that needed to be faced, let alone solved.

It is noted that the speech points out no solution leading to the necessary reforms which he spoke about during his tenure. The robust self-complacency and the revolutionary rhetoric has hardened into hypocrisy and institutional self-righteousness. In some places, the question might be asked whether the speaker is lying through his teeth or making absurd and nonsensical statements. Some persuasive generalizations are offered which will explicate the functioning of leadership in the CSI today. There is a large gap between revolutionary rhetoric and the commitment shown by the hierarchy.

Part II contains the three epistles written to the present Moderator of the CSI, the Most Rev. G. Dyvasirvadam in recent months, disputing the

uncharacteristic nature of the proposed Amendments and the new Bye-laws (32 pages) in comparison to the principles and procedures enshrined in the present Constitution of the CSI. Questions arise provocatively when one starts with reading what the present Moderator is determined to do, namely inserting the Amendments and new Bye-laws into the current Constitution of the CSI. Fervent appeals were made repeatedly, with strong arguments pleading him not to go ahead in implementing the Amendments and new Bye-laws which are detrimental to the ecclesial convictions of the CSI. The amendment promising the change of retirement age from 65 to 67 should not be a crude fish trap to attract diocesan council members, presbyters and bishops to go for it without realizing the deadly implications which the host of other Amendments and Bye-laws hold for the church.

This critique should not be misunderstood to be anti-CSI on my part, but I stress that the possibilities for open-mindedness and innovative thinking are almost non-existent among the CSI hierarchy. The same stale mindset has prevailed, particularly since 2012. My present work demands tangible actions to genuinely tackle corruption and deal with the realities of godless and tyrannical leadership which is pernicious to the Church. The response to the farewell address can be made from several perspectives, but what the present critical reading touches on are the ethical and episcopal dimensions in his speech. I hope that the points of view of the response will be seriously pondered by readers and observers.

This book is not an academic work though it contains historical information about the CSI, past and present. It is not aimed to produce a neutral and detached piece of writing, restraining comments and criticisms which might appear subjective. It might seem in some places that the author is expressing his own opinions and assessments on the condition of the church. Those who have not spent their lives as members of the CSI and have had no opportunity of closely seeing and hearing about the activities of the CSI hierarchy might have a different

estimation of their performance. There may be some feelings of sympathy towards them if one is freshly hearing about them. I wish that I could join them, but we must respect the perception of those whose daily lives and profession are directly under the rule and power of the episcopal hierarchy and of those who have observed the leadership qualities of the Synod officials and bishops in a direct experience of personal meetings or encounters with them. The people in the pews have heard their preaching and seen their personal lives and their ministry (or no ministry) year after year, and it is they who will have a truthful account of their leaders' character and work, though there are some exceptions.

This book is not the result of investigative journalism of any kind, digging into the personal lives of the leaders so as to attack them. Apart from the people's perception which should be respected and listened to, attention is drawn to a few other sources of information about the alleged misdeeds and misbehaviour of those in higher authority, particularly the former Moderator the Rt. Rev. Devakadasham and the present Moderator the Most Rev. G. Dyvasirvadam. They are public servants of the Church and are elected not only by the votes of the people but supposedly also by their prayers. Further, prayers are offered by the worshipping community Sunday after Sunday in the churches for the Moderator and the bishops 'that they may set forth God's true and living Word', 'that with a good heart and a pure conscience they may accomplish their ministry', and 'that every member of the holy church in their vocation and ministry may truly and justly serve God'. It is from the depth of these prayers for truly and justly serving God by all members of CSI including the Moderator and the bishops that arise the courage of conviction to speak truth to power.

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE EPISCOPACY IN CSI

'... we stress the fact that the ministries of leadership must act continually in collegiality, solidarity, and fellowship with all other ministries in the Church... "prophets" and "teachers" in the Church have had a special importance which cannot be superseded by the ministries of leadership. Prophets and theologians in particular are at the service of truth in the Church.'

– Hans Küng

If a church has grown four-fold in 68 years in terms of membership, what could be said as going wrong with that church? This growth has little or no connection with the condition of leadership in the CSI today. Despite a poor and decadent episcopal leadership in CSI, the Church has multiplied by the work of the faithful within it. The non-Episcopal churches which are part of the organic union of the Church of South India agreed to accept the system of governance by bishops to guide the Church in evangelism, to safeguard the unity and to maintain the purity of faith and sacraments. But the Episcopacy is sliding into those negative images that made prelacy disliked and abominable throughout the history of the Church. Such leadership is witnessed in the life and ministry of at least two bishops, the former Moderator and the present Moderator (whose function has been restrained by a court in South India

at the time of writing this book) are the main concern of this book. The book also addresses the concern that drastic and unwise steps are being taken that the Moderator of the CSI is turned into an office of an Archbishop or a Metropolitan exercising authority over the fellow-bishops and the Church as the whole. A new and distorted version of episcopacy is being grown in the garden of the CSI which has nothing or little to do with the four constituent church traditions. Episcopacy is succumbing to cultural forces such as despotism and feudalism. This is a major worry for some of the historians and theologians in the Church.

2.1 The Shiny Side of the Episcopacy: the Historic Episcopate in Constitutional Form¹³

The CSI episcopacy preserves *Historic Episcopacy in Constitutional Form*. The starting point of it all happened in May, 1919 in a town called Tranquebar in Tamil Nadu where the first Protestant mission in India began. 31 Indian ministers met under the leadership of Bishop V. S. Azariah of Dornakal Diocese to deliberate on the union of churches in South India, and their ideas concerning the united church were drafted in the form of a *Manifesto*¹⁴ which became the foundation for the United Church in South India. It had a clear description of what episcopacy ought to be in the united church, and this is what they had to say:

“In seeking union, the Anglican members present stand for the one ultimate principle of the historic Episcopate. They ask the ‘acceptance of the fact of episcopacy and not any theory as to its character’. The South India United Church members believe it is a necessary condition that the Episcopate should reassume a constitutional form on the primitive, simple, apostolic model.

¹³ See my *We Began at Tranquebar: The Origin and Development of Anglican-CSI Episcopacy in India (1813-1947)*, vol. II, New Delhi: ISPCK, 2010, pp. 192-275.

¹⁴ For the full text of the *Manifesto* see *Appendix I*.

While the Anglicans ask for the historic Episcopate, the members of the South India United Church also make one condition of union, namely, the recognition of spiritual equality, of the universal priesthood of all believers, and of the rights of the laity to their full expression in the Church. They ask that this principle of spiritual equality shall be maintained throughout at every step of the negotiations.”¹⁵

The first Joint Committee of Church Union which met in March 1920 almost finalized the core of CSI episcopacy. It decided: “That believing that the principal of the historic episcopate in a constitutional form is that which is more likely than any other to promote and preserve the unity of the Church, we accept it as a basis of unity without raising other questions about episcopacy. That by a historic and constitutional episcopate we mean:

- a. that the bishops be elected by representatives of the diocese and approved by representatives of the province;
- b. that the bishops shall perform their duties constitutionally in accordance with such customs of the church as shall be defined in a written constitution;
- c. that continuity with the historic episcopate be effectively maintained, it being understood that no particular interpretation of the fact of the historic episcopate be demanded.

That after union all future ordination to be presbyterate (ministry) would be performed by laying on hands of the bishops and presbyters (ministers) and that all consecrations of bishops would be performed by bishops, not less than three taking part in each consecration.”

The Tranquebar Manifesto Impacted Ecumenical Thinking and Action in 20th Century

¹⁵ See *Appendix I* or the full text of the *Tranquebar Manifesto*.

These views of leadership in the CSI influenced the formulation of episcopacy in any future united church. The Report of the second world conference on faith and order held in Edinburgh in 1937 stressed that in the united church of the future Episcopate, the Councils of Presbyters and the Congregation of the faithful must find appropriate places in the constitution of the church as these three systems were essential to the order of ministry in the early church. This is the underlying principle in accepting the 'historic episcopate in constitutional form'. It means that the historic episcopate is *structurally and inherently* linked with the Presbyterian and Congregational systems without existing or functioning on its own. The Historic Episcopate is a constitutional part of the church with the Presbyters and Congregations.

But this was expressed eighteen years earlier at Tranquebar in 1919, in clear and radical terms, by stating 'all three elements, no one of which is absolute or sufficient without the other'. The implication is that the 'Historic Episcopate' is constitutionally bound with the Council consisting of Presbyters and Congregations. The Tranquebar Manifesto further clarified that the unity of the three elements is not compromising assimilation or absorption for the sake of peaceful co-existence, but the integration of the three represents the comprehensive truth about the body of Christ, the Church, which has all three, not one elevated above and the other two subjugated below.

It is very apt to remember the words of D. Rea when he commented, '... CSI acceptance of episcopacy is far removed from mere compromise. They purport to state that Orders have a content of vocation and of positive divine grace, and are not merely bureaucratic value for organization or unity. Many fear that the united churches accepted the principles of episcopal ministry as a façade simply to conciliate Anglican convictions and non-conformist scruples. Such a compromise would rightly be considered scandalous ...'¹⁶

¹⁶ *The Church of South India and the Church*, no publisher, 1956, p. 33.

'Historic Episcopate assuming a Constitutional Form' began to be reflected in several church plans and documents on unity. The Lambeth Conference 1920 echoed this concept in its *Appeal to All Christian People* that 'we greatly desire that the office of a Bishop should be everywhere exercised in a representative and constitutional manner'. M. Warren has explicated the meaning correctly when he wrote, 'Now by constitutional is to be understood an episcopate which is exercised not apart from but in conjunction with other forms of ecclesiastical authority, especially the authority resident in the presbytery, and the yet larger and more fundamental authority that resides in the Church as a whole as guided by the Spirit of God.'¹⁷

Ecumenical plans and negotiations for union in different churches around the world also were attracted to this new character of episcopacy. The statement from the Free Churches in England 1922, for example, supported the idea that episcopacy should be 'representative and constitutional' in a United Church. The Federal Council of the Evangelical Free Churches in 1922 reiterated the same idea. The Joint Conference of Anglican and Free Churches 1925 approved it. The Church in Nigeria in 1950s was also planning to follow the *Historic Episcopacy and Constitutional Form* in its newly planned United Church.¹⁸

It is the Church of South India which adopted this bold and novel form of episcopacy and made it ecclesiastically realizable. Just to summarize the phrase *Historic Episcopate in a Constitutional Form*: the bishops shall be elected by the church and shall act in accordance with a constitution which defines the functions of the episcopate. The bishop is a teacher, evangelist and shepherd, having the oversight of the ministry his diocese. He is associated with the bishops, presbyters and laity in

¹⁷ *The Whole Church: An Anglican Consideration of the South India Church Union Scheme*, London: SPCK, 1943, p. 13.

¹⁸ G. K. A. Bell, *Documents on Christian Unity 1920-1930: A Selection from the First and Second Series*, London: Oxford University Press, 1955.

decision-making. It means that the pattern of episcopacy in the CSI should function in a context of synodical structure.¹⁹ This is the shiny side of the cricket ball!

2.2 The Rough Side of the Episcopacy: Episcopacy in the 21st Century

Fifty years ago, Bishop H. Sumitra, a Moderator of the Church of South India (1954-1962), and perhaps the longest serving Moderator in the history of the CSI Synod, assessed the CSI bishop as not a pompous and an authoritarian ruler. The office of the bishop was understood as a humble office, though not a weak one certainly. In his own words, ‘A bishop of C. S. I. has no authority ... the Constitution speaks of his functions and is silent about his authority. He is the President of the Diocesan Council and has the right “to take part in the proceedings of any Standing Committee, Board or Council of the diocese”. Neither as bishop nor as President of the Diocesan Council has he any controlling authority over the finance of the Diocese.’²⁰ Further he underlines two specific functions of a bishop on which a CSI bishop spends considerable amount of time. Those two functions are: a bishop is a teacher of the Word of God, and he is also a Father-in-God to his children, the members of the Church. Episcopacy in CSI has worn out during the following fifty years, and perhaps it is going through an inner deterioration and disorientation in the 21st century. It has created a rough side to CSI episcopacy which can dislodge and shatter the episcopal stumps.

¹⁹ For more details, see *Appendix I*.

²⁰ “What is a Bishop in the CSI?” In *CSI-Lutheran Theological Conversations, 1948-1959*, Madras: CLS, 1964, p. 160.

2.3 The Historic Episcopate in Constitutional Form is Distorted beyond Recognition

A Statement of the Consultation organized by the *People Synod* at Vellore, Tamil Nadu, on 17th October, 2015 on the topic “The Future of Episcopacy in the Church of South India” observed:

“It is well recognized now that the CSI is in a state of deep crisis. Issues relating to transparency and accountability in administration, autocratic and unresponsive leadership and wide spread allegations of corruption reported in the media, have begun to exercise the minds of a large number of members. In the matter of management of movable and immovable properties of the CSI, supposed to be the responsibility of the Church of South India Trust Association (CSITA), a Company registered under the Companies Act (of India), serious shortcomings have come to the attention of the Ministry of Corporate Affairs and the Department of Income Tax of the Government of India. The CSITA is literally reeling under investigations and show-cause notices for serious violations of the laws of the land. The threat of an investigation by the Serious Fraud Investigation Office of the Central Government is looming large. First Information Reports (the first step for criminal investigation) have been filed against several bishops in Police Stations of South India.

“The most unfortunate thing is that the Episcopal leadership not only refuses to acknowledge the crisis and to take remedial action, but is embarking on a systematic attempt to distort the basic principles on which the CSI Constitution was framed. While the Governing Principles found in the CSI Constitution clearly affirmed that the Episcopal, Presbyterian and Congregational elements are necessary in the life of the Church in a well- balanced manner, an undisguised attempt is made to

make the Episcopal element, represented by the Bishops, more dominant, side-lining the presbyterial and congregational elements. To give constitutional legitimacy to this distortion, a set of amendments and byelaws is sought to be thrust on the people, vigorously pushed through by the Bishops led by the Moderator himself to get the ratification of the Diocesan Councils.”

This summarises in broad and general terms the condition of leadership in the united church today. The statement aptly concluded by rightly commenting, ‘The historic Episcopate in a Constitutional form accepted by the Uniting Churches for the sake of Unity is being distorted beyond recognition.’

2.3.1 CSI Bishops and the Scandals

It seems that the members and church-goers are less worried about the personal lives and misbehaviour of the bishops. It is almost becoming a commonplace now to hear of corrupt practices and sex scandals, and some bishops survive and have gone on to become more popular than before; the reasons are: i) they put on a brave face, not looking stressed or anxious and give a look of a nice guy, morally clean and of a holy servant suffering assault from the enemies of the church; ii) they do ‘business as usual’ as if nothing untoward had happened; iii) they religionise the issue as a matter of disobedience on the part of the subordinates; iv) they demonise and blame the victims as mentally deranged; v) they know that the media will be careful not to publish the truth because they are leaders of the minorities which need sympathy and favour; vi) they attend functions with their wives so that people do not suspect marital infidelity; and vi) political wives and benefit-seekers help bishops to keep their jobs.

Many voters are not concerned about the personal lives of the bishops, and some spiritualists would say that the erring bishops will

give account to God on the Day of Judgment. Many members of the church pretend to show embarrassment over the news of scandals as if they are gentle people and won't talk ill about others; it becomes an excuse for them to support and respect the person more. So the scandals do not explode but fizzle out. The religious explanations are: the bishops are ordained by God and so we refrain from criticizing them. This becomes a convenient shelter for the wrong ones to remain in their evil acts. 'Rethinking episcopacy' becomes a subject of reform for some time or from time to time and some energies are spent on it passionately. However, due to the lack of support they meet a premature death in the hands of the powerful.

2.3.2 News from Afar

The Bishop of Limburg, Franz-Peter Tebartz-van Elst, dubbed the "bishop of bling" by the media in Germany, offered to resign when the scandal of over-spending broke. Pope Francis has repeatedly expressed his disapproval of senior clerics whose lifestyles seem too lavish. The bishop was also under fire for a first-class flight to India for the cause of visiting the poor. The bishop resigned. A Catholic bishop in Norway resigned a few years ago after admitting he had molested a child about 20 years earlier. Bishop Walter Mixa, Bishop of Augsburg and an outspoken and influential Bishop, had to resign as Bishop resignation for financial irregularities in church accounts violence against children (many media articles April-July 2010) The world's first female Lutheran Bishop, Maria Jepsen aged 65, resigned and said in a press conference, "My credibility has been called into question, therefore, I am no longer in a position to continue the duty I promised to God and to my congregation when I was ordained and when I was elected as a bishop." Bishop Margot Kässmann in Hannover, who drove three times the red signal over the legal limit, resigned voluntarily from the office of bishop taking moral responsibility for the wrong (Media 24 Feb 2010).

2.3.3 News from Close at Hand

On 27 June 2014 one of the leading English dailies in India called INDIAN EXPRESS reported that the present Moderator of the Church of South India and a supposed leader of 4 million Protestant Christians was allegedly involved in a case of sexual misconduct. The news reads:

'The Suryaraopet police registered a case against ... the Moderator of the Church of South India (CSI) and Bishop of Krishna-Godavari Diocese of the CSI here Thursday. He was booked under the IPC Sections 354 (intent to outrage the modesty of a woman) and 506 (criminal intimidation).' [Indian Express, 27 June 2014]²¹

The Moderator already has many court cases (scores of them according to one source) registered against him, his son, daughter-in-law and her parents²² including for cheating, fraud and misappropriation of

²¹ Also see "Cops Book Bishop for 'Harassing' Woman", *The New Indian Express*, 27 June, 2014; www.virtueonline.org, 27 March 2013.

²² 'Both Benedicta (daughter-in-law of the present Moderator) and Sunil (the nephew of the present Moderator) were entrusted with funds and were also paid in the order of Rs. 80,000 to Rs. 90,000 per month in addition to other emoluments including luxury cars for official use. "Nearly Rs. 7.5 crore meant for building houses for displaced fishermen, buying fishing nets and boats were siphoned off in this manner," the officer said.' See *Times of India*, A. Selvaraj, 'Lady doc. held for swindling Rs. 7.5cr tsunami aid fund', 19 October 2009. 'Episcopal Relief and Development (ERD) said the CSI had also defaulted on its obligations under the Foreign Contributions Regulation Act as it had failed to furnish information about the acceptance, source, manner and utilization of foreign contributions from 2001 to 2004. But ERD was not informed about these defaults, its President said, seeking a direction to the CSI and its trust to return Rs. 18.77 crore with interest at 24%.' (See e-paper, *Times of India*, 18 November 2009); 'The Episcopal Relief Development (ERD), a corporation incorporated under the New York Not-For-Profit Corporation Law of the State of New York, USA, has moved the Madras High Court with a civil suit praying for a direction to the Church of South India (CSI) to pay back Rs. 18.78 crore together with 24 per cent interest given towards tsunami relief fund.' (See "Direct CSI to refund tsunami funds", *The New Indian Express*, 18 November, 2009). Also see, *The Times of India*, "American NGO wants CSI to return tsunami relief funds", 18 November, 2009; "CSII comes under IT dept scrutiny

tsunami relief funds. But he had scruples to ordain about 12 persons to Christian ministry in the Karnataka Central Diocese in a worship service held at St. Mark's Cathedral, Bangalore on Saturday 28 June, 2014. Not a single word of protest was raised at the worship questioning his episcopal propriety. There are many different ways members of CSI react to alleged sex scandals of the ordained ministers, particularly the bishops. Not a sign of remorse was shown or a word of explanation was given by the Bishop who was happily going around doing 'business as usual'. He is currently the acting Bishop of at least five dioceses of the Church of South India, and he rules several dioceses through his henchmen of bishops. He has now made the office of Moderator to be the supreme controlling authority over the Church and made the people believe that wherever he is, there is Church.

It has been reported that under various sections of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) the following First Investigation Reports (FIR – a complaint lodged with the police by the victim of a cognizable offence or by someone on his or her behalf) were filed against the Rt. Rev. G. Devakadasham, the former Moderator of CSI, in several Police stations in South India. Only three are listed here: FIR no. 1/15 filed on 11. 5. 2015 at the Crime Branch CID, Nilgiris Division; FIR no. 18/15 filed on 23.3. 2015 in Coimbatore Police Station; FIR no. 23/13 filed on 6.3.2013 at Kunduru Police Station, Machulipatnam for crimes of fraud (IPC 468), forgery (IPC 465, 471), criminal conspiracy (IPC 120B) misappropriation of money (IPC 403), dishonesty in sale of properties (IPC 477), criminal breach of trust in respect of that property (IPC 406, 408) dishonest and fraudulent execution of deed of transfer containing false statement (IPC 423, 424) cheating and dishonestly inducing delivery of property (IPC 420), forgery for the purpose of cheating (IPC 468) and illegal selling of undivided property (IPC 1567-3).

over tsunami relief fund", *The Christian Messenger News Desk*, 22 February, 2011.

Two bishops including Bishop Kadasham have had First Investigation Reports registered against them by the Coimbatore Crime Branch Police on charges of cheating (*The Times of India*, 24 March 2015.). Quite recently three bishops including the above have been registered under a FIR filed by the Crime Branch CID (*The Hindu*, 13 May 2015) on a charge of syphoning off Rs. 7.95 crore from the CSI Coimbatore Diocese. There is further a criminal case against Bishop Kadasham, the details of which can be seen in a website source.²³

I feel that the world Christian community should also take note of such bishops who are still functioning as bishops and Moderators in the midst of such occurrences listed above. They want people to take the news reports as saintly marks inflicted by their enemies for the good and dedicated services which the Moderators have rendered to the people. The facts have so far failed to convert themselves into a popular revulsion against the leadership in the CSI. Public opinion is fickle. Revolution should bite into the real experience of the people, and thoughts of change should grip the popular imagination and consciousness. These are yet to happen on a large scale.

2.3.4 The Voters' Irrationality

The decadent leadership of the church and the voters' irrationality are probably responsible for corrupt leaders gaining ground. There is a growing awareness among members of churches which has begun to ask some important and at times embarrassing questions on the true nature of the church and the quality of its leadership. The leadership in all levels is losing its credibility which spends most of its energy in retaining and staying in power and sidelining or eliminating others who are real or imaginary contenders for power. Yet there are still a remarkable number of people who are apathetic and choose to remain silent and cynical by maintaining a decent distance from the issue. The

²³ <http://indiankanoon.org/doc/67396278/>

crises will not disappear simply by talking about them or feeling sorry for them. There lurks an illusion in the heads of the majority that things will change by themselves or that someone else will do it for them. Acknowledging the problem and seeing it clearly by identifying it is an essential requirement for overcoming the problem. Simply to deny its existence is to display the ostrich-like mind set. Corruption will not stop automatically, and improper and irresponsible leadership will not change if congregations are not prepared to challenge it. It first of all requires a radical reappraisal and a tough-minded outlook. We find ourselves in a situation in which depraved leadership, the choice of wrong candidates as leaders and individual profligacy do not matter. The church's perdition is its silence on these matters.

2.4 The Historic Episcopacy in Second Century Form

The *Tranquebar Manifesto* (1919) envisioned an episcopacy of a 'primitive, simple, apostolic model'. How could it be understood and realized in the 21st Century? We go to the history books again which tell us what making the episcopal vocation into a primitive, simple and apostolic model is like. Bishop Palmer of Bombay diocese used to say that the bishops of the CSI should be adopting the second century model of apostolicity before the bishops are regarded as the administrative heads of the Church. V. Bartlet of Mansfield College, Oxford stressed the importance of going back to the time of the third century when episcopal Order came to be fully recognized in the Church in order to construe the meaning of the formula 'Historic Episcopate in Constitutional Form'. He wrote, 'The phrase "historic episcopate in a constitutional form" surely sets aside and guards against certain developments of an autocratic tendency which began to grow up from the third century onwards, while it implies restoration of the more

balanced type of episcopate which prevailed before that date ...²⁴ It means that the CSI episcopacy is to be defined by what the elders/bishops did in the second century. If so, how could the bishops of the second century be shaping the episcopacy of today? Here are some excerpts to help us to give a vocational content to the CSI episcopacy in the 21st century.

Simeon, the second Bishop of Jerusalem: 'After the Roman emperors Nero (54-68 AD) and Domitian (81-96 AD), we have also been informed, that in the reign of the emperor Trajan (98-117 AD), there was a partial persecution excited throughout the cities. In this we have understood, also, that Simeon died as a martyr, who was appointed the second bishop of the church at Jerusalem ...'²⁵ Ignatius was the third bishop of Antioch in Syria, and was condemned to be sent to Rome to be killed by the beasts in the Amphitheatre. He was martyred in 108 AD. 'About this time flourished Polycarp in Asia, an intimate disciple of the apostles, who received the episcopate of the church at Smyrna, at the hands of the eyewitnesses and servants of the Lord. At this time, also, Papias, well known as bishop of the church at Hierapolis, a man well skilled in all manner of learning, and well acquainted with the Scriptures. Ignatius, also, who is celebrated by many even to this day, as the successor of Peter at Antioch, was the second that obtained the episcopal office there. Tradition says that he was sent away from Syria to Rome, and particularly to Polycarp, who was bishop there; whom he designates as an apostolical man and as a good and faithful shepherd, commends the flock of Antioch to him, requesting him to exercise a diligent oversight of the church.'²⁶

Ignatius wrote in his epistle thus: 'From Syria to Rome, I am contending with wild beasts by land and sea, by night and day ... I know what advantage it will confer. Now I begin to be a disciple. Nothing,

²⁴ Sundkler, *Church of South India*, p. 249.

²⁵ Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, Book III, pp. 117-18.

²⁶ Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, Book III, pp. 120-121.

whether of things visible or invisible, excites my ambition, as long as I can gain Christ. Whether fire, or the cross, the assault of wild beasts, the tearing asunder of my bones, the breaking of my limbs, the bruising of my whole body, let the tortures of the devil all assail me, if I do but gain Christ Jesus.’²⁷ ‘... but the martyrs we deservedly love as the disciples and imitators of our Lord, on account of their exceeding love to their king and master. Of whom may we only become true associates and fellow-disciples. Such is the account respecting the blessed Polycarp, who, together with the twelve from Philadelphia, was crowned a martyr.’²⁸ ‘The blessed apostles having founded and established the church, transmitted the office of the episcopate to Linus. Of this Linus, Paul makes mention in his Epistles to Timothy. He was succeeded by Anencletus, and after him Clement held the episcopate, the third from the apostles. Who, as he had seen the blessed apostles, and had been connected with them, might be said to have the doctrine of the apostles still sounding in his ears, and what they delivered before his eyes. And not only he, but many others were still left, who had been taught by the apostles.’²⁹ ‘Polycarp of Smyrna was buried at Ephesus, both bishop and martyr. Thraseas, also, bishop and martyr of Eumenia, who is buried at Smyrna. Why should I mention Sagaris, bishop and martyr, who rests at Laodicea’.³⁰

2.5 The Historic Episcopacy in Martyrological Form

The Narratives of the historic bishops’ Trial and Death³¹: *Polycarp (Bishop of Smyrna)* “As Polycarp entered the Amphitheatre, a voice

²⁷ Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, Book III, p. 121.

²⁸ Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, Book III, p. 146.

²⁹ Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, Book III, p. 185.

³⁰ Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, Book III, p. 208.

³¹ Excerpts from H. Musurillo, *Acts of the Christian Martyrs* (1972). These accounts were used in the Christian liturgy of the early Church. They are mostly eyewitness accounts, dating from 100-400 AD, with some traces of apocryphal

from heaven said, 'Be strong, Polycarp and have courage'. The Governor tried to persuade him to recant saying, 'Swear by the Genius of the Emperor ... Swear, and I will let you go. Curse Christ!' But Polycarp answered, 'For eighty-six years I have been his servant and he has done me no wrong. How can I blaspheme against my king and saviour? ... Listen and I will tell you plainly: I am a Christian. And if you would like to learn the doctrine of Christianity, set aside a day and listen'. The Governor said, 'I have wild animals, and I shall expose you to them if you do not change your mind.' And Polycarp answered, 'Go and call for them.' As Polycarp's hands and legs were bound, he prayed, 'O Lord, omnipotent God, I bless you because you have thought me worthy of this day and this hour, to have a share among the number of martyrs in the cup of your Christ ...' When he uttered his Amen and finished his prayer, and the men in charge of the fire started to light it ... And he was within it not as burning flesh but rather a bread being baked, or like a gold or silver being purified in a melting-furnace."

Carpus (his name is mentioned in II Timothy 4: 13. He became the Bishop of Thyatira): "The Proconsul took his seat and said: 'What is your name?' Carpus answered, 'My first and distinctive name is that of Christian: but if you want my name in the world, it is Carpus ... I am a Christian ... Do what you like! It is impossible for me to worship these demons ...' The proconsul became angry and said: 'Sacrifice to the gods and do not play the fool.' Carpus said, 'It is impossible for me to sacrifice, I have never sacrificed to idols before.' Immediately the proconsul ordered him to be hung up and scraped (to tear or scrape with claws). While he was being scraped, he kept screaming, 'I am a Christian!' But after being scraped for a long time he grew exhausted and was no longer able to speak."

elements and legendary colouring. Nevertheless, the following are the trustworthy narratives of the early Christian historians.

St. Cyprian: “Bishop Cyprian said, ‘I am a Christian, and a bishop. I recognize no other gods but the one true who made the heaven and the earth, sea and all that is in them. This is the God to whom we Christians pay homage; night and day we supplicate him for you and for all mankind (*sic*), as well as for the health of the Emperors.’ The Proconsul Paternus asked, ‘Would you be willing then ... to be exiled ...?’ Cyprian answered, ‘Yes, I shall go.’ The Proconsul said, ‘The emperors have also given orders that no meetings are to be held anywhere ... if anyone does not observe this very sound order, he will receive the capital penalty.’ The Bishop Cyprian replied, ‘You have so ordered.’ When Cyprian returned from exile, the Proconsul Maximus said, ‘The most reverend emperors have ordered you to perform the religious rites.’ The bishop Cyprian said, ‘I will not’. The Proconsul said, ‘You have set yourself up as an enemy of the gods of Rome and of our religious practices. Thus since you have been caught as the instigator and leader of a most atrocious crime ... Thascius Cyprian is sentenced to die by the sword’. The Bishop Cyprian said, ‘Thanks be to God’. After the sentence, the crowd of his fellow Christians said, ‘Let us also be beheaded with him!’ Cyprian was led to execution. There the Bishop removed his outer cloak, he spread it on the ground so that he could kneel on it. Next he removed his dalmatic (The wide-sleeved garment worn over the alb by a bishop, or abbot at the celebration of Mass – a surplice) and gave it to his deacons; then he stood erect and began waiting for the executioner. The blessed Cyprian then bound his eyes with his own hand, but when he could not tie the ends of the handkerchief himself, the priest and the deacon fastened them for him. So the blessed Cyprian went to his death ...

2.6 The Historic Episcopacy in Constitutional Reform

What is needed for renewal and re-vitalization is not addressed by the Moderator the Most Rev. Devakadasham in his paper ‘Wider

Revitalization or Renewal of the Church of South India' presented on 23 July 2012. Any constitutional change should aim to benefit the four million CSI Christians and bring assurance to them particularly with regard to the protection of the one lakh crore worth of church property, which are symbols of their religious identity and witness. Although the renewal concerns are well taken, the paper seems to miss the mark as the main problems faced by the church are kept in hidden mode. Reform can only happen if we speak truthfully about ourselves and are willing to change by feeling the need for repentance. The majority of the people who love, serve and support the CSI earnestly seek and pray for renewal in the areas of the corporate life and administration of the church mentioned below.

1. Many bishops in the last two decades have proved themselves poor administrators and have been found extremely wanting in demonstrating problem-solving capacity, and some even fell short of character and qualities that are necessary, according to the Scriptures, for those who seek the office of *episcopos* in the church. This has brought stigma and erected barriers to the effective witness of the church. Such a phenomenon is almost at its peak at the present time that CSI is compelled to hang its head in shame in international circles. Hence, it is proposed that the following paragraph should be added to the existing Constitution under chapter V 'The Ministry of the Church' A. The Ordained Ministry – I Bishops.

Administration - *The office of the bishop involves administrative responsibilities at all levels of fulfilling its functions. Administrative powers and responsibilities are assumed and exercised in accordance with the rules and statutes laid down by the Constitution of the CSI and of the respective diocese a) to conduct the affairs of the diocese faithfully without favour or ill-will and b) to manage efficiently educational institutions, medical services and other establishments that*

are meant to serve the community at large without distinctions of caste, creed and confession. As every power and authority comes from God, the administration therefore is seen as a divine vocation, which commits itself to maintain Christian integrity and witness. The bishops, on behalf of the church, are responsible stewards to use, build, protect and develop the properties and other resources of the diocese in order to serve the larger goal of the mission of the church and vow not to use them or allow them to be used unwisely and inappropriately for private gain.

2. The process that is at work in elections at all levels (from congregational to the synod) requires complete revamping. Democracy is good, and its main pillar, elections, is a better support system (despite their weakness and vulnerabilities) that we should uphold unless we discover that there is even a better system that can be put in place. We should learn to respect election results in all cases and in all situations and not open avenues to foul the election results to serve the self-interest of someone whose status cannot survive an electoral testing process. The selection of candidates for bishopric should not be done by a system of casting lots as suggested by some individuals. It is fatalistic and highly irrational. Even this has not been proved as a 'fool-proof' method in the selection of the candidate in one of the CSI dioceses. Were the retired Principals of the theological colleges who now talk about renewal elected by the lots system?

Elections: Conducting and overseeing elections are integral parts of the life and administration of the diocese, and bishops play a key role by working towards ensuring that a free and fair poll is conducted throughout the diocese without involving the mobilization of caste, region, language and communal identities to secure votes. The bishop of the diocese is not to offer patronage directly or indirectly to any

individual or group and he/she admonishes that its members use their franchise not for money and other material gains but exercise it without fear or favour to attain a just outcome. To achieve these goals, the bishop of a diocese is empowered to appoint in consultation with the appropriate committee of the diocese and Synod a body of competent persons analogous to the election commission in India who can supervise and administer the electoral processes in the diocese in accordance with the rules laid down by the diocese and Synod and as per the governing principles of the church.

3. The standards of living by the majority of bishops and lay members who are in positions of power are too high and they adhere to the rich. They are identical to, if not above, the standards of the modern consumer society because they indulge in living expensively by the money given by the people and the resources yielded by the movable and immovable properties of the church. Some excessive spending over bishops' travels and over other VVIP life-style necessities and comforts and members of bishop's family enjoying monetary benefits and privileges from the diocesan/synodical resources may all be justified on the grounds of committee approvals. Such things should be classed under 'white corruption' as they were practised under the cloak of 'official decisions'. The enjoyment of privileges and drawing salary over and above the financial capacity of the dioceses will be termed immoral even if they may have 'official' backing.

A matter that causes a lot of anger and resentment among the people in the pew is that the family members and the kith and kin of the bishops are beneficiaries in many ways of what the Establishment is meant to offer to wider sections of the Christian community. Some of them are even closer to the treasury and they have direct and indirect involvement in the decision-making of the diocesan/Synod administration. Sometimes we are given to doubt whether long-term tenure for bishops

is contributing to such occurrences. It is, therefore, suggested that the tenure of bishops should be not more than five years. This may be added to the last sentence under V. 12(a) which may read like this:

Duration of appointment: ... A bishop shall retire on completion of his/her 65th year of age OR his/her tenure as bishop of the diocese will come to an end after five full years of service. His/her pastoral responsibilities may continue after his/her contractual relationship with the diocese for a maximum period of five years as its chief administrator and overseer ceases. After fulfilling five years of service as bishop, he/she will cease to be a member of the Synod and Bishops Council.

Finance: The bishop of the diocese shall have an oversight of the financial administration of the diocese ensuring integrity and accountability in receiving and disbursing of the funds. Bishops shall not have unilateral and independent operation with regard to the finances and management of the property of the church.

4. The section on ‘The Ministry of the Laity’ under the fifth chapter in the Constitution entitled ‘The Ministry of the Church’ needs some attention. Whatever the functional differences that exist between the ordained and the lay, the ministry of the laity cannot be viewed as a third-rate vocation as compared to the ordained ministry. The ordained and the lay together constitute the central core and the organism of the church. Hence, one cannot seek to undermine and overpower the other through constitutional and extra-constitutional means. Members of both sections are ‘disciples of Christ’ first, and it is on this identity they secured the membership/leadership of the church. It is on this very basis they should work respecting each other’s functional roles for the well-being of the church. The lay members who are placed in positions of responsibility in the administration ought to be showing the same commitment and the spirit of service as the presbyters and bishops are expected to demonstrate. Therefore

the following sentences should be added after no. 32 of the section on 'The Ministry of the Laity':

Administration: Administrative powers and responsibilities are assumed and exercised in accordance with the rules and statutes laid down by the Constitution of the CSI and of the respective diocese a) to conduct the affairs relating to the positions of responsibility occupied in the diocese faithfully without favour or ill-will. As every power and authority comes from God, the administration therefore is seen as a divine vocation, which commits itself to maintain Christian integrity and witness. The laity, on behalf of the church, are responsible joint-stewards along with the bishops and presbyters to use, build, protect and develop the property and other resources of the diocese in order to serve the larger goal of the mission of the church and vow not to use them or allow them to be used unwisely and inappropriately for personal and private gain.

Elections: The laity plays a key role by working towards ensuring that a free and fair poll is conducted throughout the diocese and in the elections held in the Synod without involving the mobilization of caste, region, language and communal identities to secure votes. The laity holds a joint responsibility with the ordained ministers of the church that no member of the church is denied franchise unfairly or prevented to exercise his/her franchise through intimidation or made to use his/her franchise for money and material benefits.

5. The members of the CSI who love, support and serve the church are deeply disturbed about the trend that is in vogue in almost all dioceses, i.e. the cases filed in the courts over the conduct and results of elections. Most cases have been made for wrong reasons with a view to dampening and disrupting the activities of the dioceses. The Church has become caught in a web of such electoral court cases that are hoisted to sabotage the smooth functioning and the peaceful atmosphere of the church. So much church money is spent over the cases that are filed merely to

serve the sharpened egos and undying ambitions of individuals and groups in power and out of power. It is therefore proposed that ways and means should be found to institute an independent Church Electoral Commission, which will operate on the basis of its own laws and by-laws. Those laws and by-laws will have to be incorporated into an appropriate Act of the Indian Government so that there is always a high degree of free and fair elections taking place and that severe legal avenues become available to curb and expose electoral malpractices.

6. The church authorities have kept the four million Christians in the dark over matters relating to the management of church property. This unfortunately has been the case ever since the formation of CSITA in 1947. Many are quite unaware of the existence of the Trust Association, and pastors and most bishops have no knowledge of the Memorandum of the Trust Association of CSI and the laws that govern its operations. It is not realized that CSITA is a registered body with the Government of India and the implications of it are not well understood. This situation has set up a convenient playing field for the office-bearers of CSI and for the dozen members who serve on the CSITA committee to keep their decisions and activities away from the public's view. We propose that a website for CSITA is launched which has every piece of property entered bearing all the details including the ownership. Any change in the status of the property should also be available for the notice of the church. The following sentence is proposed as an addition to the section on CSITA in page 79 of the Constitution under 'Powers of the Synod'.

CSITA: The management of the properties including the sale, purchase, lease and mortgage ought to be in accordance with the rules for the Movable and Immovable Properties approved by the Synod. The overall

dealing on matters of property should be free from irregularities and must fall in line with the guidelines of the Articles of the Memorandum of the Association of CSITA and the rules of the Companies Act 1956 under which the CSITA is registered.

The entire administrative system of the CSI is beset by power struggles that are detrimental and destructive to the growth and interests of the church. Personal agendas are bringing much harm to the development of the richer resources of the church. Destructive and adversarial relationships against one another are witnessed during elections and even in pre- and post-election scenarios. The formation of coalitions and the dealings of power bargaining are seen as the true ways to leadership positions. Power politics and its manifestation in various forms within the life and administration of the dioceses/synod have made several resourceful men and women as victims and have rendered many insignificant and useless. Power conflicts and indiscriminate bureaucratic politics are damaging the witness for the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Our power, which means not control but influence, should be directed to the realization of the common objective and good of the church. Bureaucratic infighting, parochial politics and destructive power conflicts are seen among the bishops and other ranks of those in power and this is deeply disturbing to the members of the Church of South India. Acquiring power, staying in power through any means and wielding power even after stepping out of power have become compulsive behaviour of the leaders today. Leadership exhibits instinctive actions and reactions homologous to animal predators. The winner in a church election is not a semi-god or a special person blessed by God, and the one who lost in election is not a semi-demon, rejected, and one discounted by God.

Cronyism, opportunistic groupings and communal bigotry are scandals that destroy the *koinonia* of the church. There are many who play agents jockeying for positions for others at a great bargaining rate

to acquire privileges and favours. Electoral pacts are made and unmade not in terms of spreading the mission and values of God's kingdom but for tapping the resources of the church through all sorts of lawful and unlawful means. God is calling to the CSI: 'Where are you, CSI?' The CSI should come out to face God and not hide away from God's presence. It should face the call of God and not flee away from Him. If we are keen on renewal and re-vitalization, we then ought to be developing and sustaining an organizational culture that leads to envisioning management changes. Let not private interests apply obstructive tactics to new measures of renewal and re-vitalization. It is the earnest and passionate prayer of many that those who are at the top rank of the CSI repent and mend their ways. There is no fear of God, but there is plenty of fear of losing votes!

2.7 The Moderator Elevating Himself to a Position of Political Supremacy and Control

The CSI shares the features of the Catholic Church in creating a hierarchical supremacy of the Moderator over above the bishops of the dioceses. The activities of the Moderators of CSI are moving into the direction of functioning on a monarchical constitution. There is an unwritten and unexpressed law in operation in the CSI today that the Moderator has primacy of jurisdiction over the whole church. A conscious and an unconscious 'patriarchal absolutism' is gradually on the rise which does not augur well for the united church. Moderatorship is not a divine right though every Moderator goes through expensive electioneering by graft and bribes and an expensive election and selection process to come out victorious over the rivals. Such a victory is claimed to have emerged out of the will of God and therefore the Moderator is sanctified as a God-chosen official which no human power can confront or criticize. These conditions are exploited to enforce the

personal ambition of ruling over as many dioceses as possible if not the entire CSI.

For more than twenty years now, qualified candidates for the bishopric have been turned away precisely for political reasons. Not because they were found unsuitable but because they were seen as a threat to the *status quo* by those who wished to benefit from the *status quo*. A 'sub-culture' of corruption is ruling in the synod.

Harassing opponents in subtle ways is the way of episcopal power. 'Innocent until proven guilty' should not be used as a shield for the corrupt to hide behind. Many justify corruption in private as it is seen as the necessary condition for winning elections. These are the causes, patterns and consequences of corruption. The Synod should by now must have evolved a strategic framework for combating corruption and put in place an anti-corruption programme. Challenging corruption should become a high priority. There is no sense of urgency shown by the Moderator's statement to evolve anti-corruption policies and to make anti-corruption initiatives so that an appropriate reform agenda can effectively begin. The CSI should bring together the champions for anti-corruption for confronting corruption and delivering practical solutions. The risks of challenging corruption are very high. Those who raise their resisting voice are often made a target by the authorities to tear their life apart. The Moderators equate whistleblowing with sinning, disobedience and anti-church activity. They try to find a way out of trouble each time when they are allegedly involved in an illegal sale of property rather than finding an enduring solution to the CSITA issues.

As Newbigin observed, the wrong kind of leadership in the Church has played a terrible role in history. "Nothing is clearer in our Lord's teaching than his repeated warning that leadership among his people is not to be modelled on the pattern of leadership in the world. Yet how constantly we have forgotten or ignored it! Probably we shall think immediately of the lordly prince-bishops of the Middle Ages. There are still many in our Church who hanker after something of the same kind,

and who love to be able to call the bishop my lord. People hanker after it, because the love of bossing other people is even greater than the distaste for being bossed oneself. If the Bishop is big prelate who bosses over his clergy they in turn can be little bosses in their own congregations, the committee members can boss the rest and everyone is happy except the sexton who has nobody under him to be bossed ... We all forget the simple word of Jesus: it shall not be so among you.”³²

He further adds, “Leaders are not formed by educational institutions; pastors and elders cannot expect to attain the qualities of genuine church leaders by ‘going to seminary’. Schools can contribute to the personal and intellectual growth of their pupils, but leadership development takes place in society, in the group, in the life of the church. This line of criticism leads to the further point that the standard type of seminary training aligns the leadership of the church with the privileged elements in society instead of with the poor and the marginal. It thus serves to perpetuate an improper alliance between the churches and the ruling classes in society.”³³

Ambitions create fantasies for control. Techniques of different types are used to make the other mentally a meek conformist. The modern Moderators represent erosion of the CSI value system in episcopal dealings. Rival and combatant – from ambitions to nemesis – strive to achieve and maintain power. Drive is embedded in the human spirit. Overweening ambition yearns for power over his own colleagues, region, community and over the Church. Lust for power blinds him – to steal powers away from his contenders more gifted than he. This desire corrupts him because unbridled ambition is a dangerous quality. The negative connotation of self-interested and calculating individuals exists because of the few bad eggs that use unethical tactics in their pursuits.

³² J. E. Newbigin, *The Good Shepherd: Meditations on Christian Ministry in Today's World*, Oxford: Mowbray, 1977, p. 54.

³³ L. Newbigin, “Theological Education in a World Perspective”, *Churchman* 93, 2 (1979), p.107.

Power is not a dirty word provided it is acquired and employed through acceptable means, and in order to use power for achieving positive results for the church Bargaining and compromising are part of human instincts in the pursuit of seeking power and influence. We are naturally selfish and self-obsessed, with no natural altruistic tendencies. The natural traits of caste, region are also part of the human drive for power. Man's nature is predisposed not to take an active interest in others. Politician can also mean to deceive, manipulate and "stab" others in order to serve the ego. Man is also a 'pack' animal and seeks to derive benefits by being part of group, caste, regional configurations. The CSI Constitution and system of administration must control the ambitions of power-hungry leaders. Pragmatists would say, 'Who hasn't encountered at least one manipulative, dishonest or back-biting colleague?'

2.8 Can Leaders be Affected by Sociopathy?

Sociopaths³⁴ have no conscience and they can hurt others when they are in rage. 'If you were to catch him out in a lie, he would neither win, nor be in control. So he will do anything that he can do, to win the game, and control the game.'³⁵ They have no ability whatsoever to feel shame, guilt, or remorse. They can do anything to hurt others without feeling any guilt. They all work together as a group; they never let each other

³⁴ Stout, M. (2005). *The sociopath next door: The ruthless versus the rest of us*. New York: Broadway Books. Walsh, A., & Wu, H.H. (2008). Differentiating antisocial personality disorder, psychopathy, and sociopathy: Evolutionary, genetic, neurological, and sociological considerations. *Criminal Justice Studies*, 2, 135-152; also McAleer, K. Sociopathy vs. Psychopathy, <http://blogs.psychcentral.com/forensic-focus/2010/07/sociopathy-vs-psychopathy>.

³⁵ "The sociopath will always accuse YOU of what they are guilty of themselves", <http://datingasociopath.com/2013/06/08/the-sociopath-will-always-accuse-you-of-what-they-are-guilty-of-themself>.

down. One of the chief characteristics of sociopathic leaders is a kind of glow or charisma that makes them more charming or interesting than the other people around them. We then fall prey to this image and become vulnerable to seduction. We elevate them to a status of heroes consciously or unconsciously because they can purchase victory in elections through any means and they can hurt deeply their opponents or eliminate them if they came to power. At this state, we lose our power to speak truth to them and begin to support haplessly such power system. If we use unholy means to achieve the sacred end, it will turn into an unholy office.

2.9 The Protestant Radicalism: Speaking Truth to Power

O Pontiffs, worthy of this venerable sacrament of orders! O Princes not of the Catholic churches, but of the synagogues of Satan, yea, of very darkness! We may well cry out with Isaiah: “Ye scornful men, that rule this people which is in Jerusalem” (Isaiah 27: 14); and with Amos : “Woe to them that are at ease in Zion, and trust in the mountain of Samaria, which are named chief of the nations, to whom the house of Israel came!” (Amos 6: 1.) What disgrace to the Church of God from these monstrosities of sacerdotalism! Where are there any bishops or priests who know the gospel, not to say preach it? Why then do they boast of their priesthood? Why do they wish to be thought holier and better and more powerful than other Christians, whom they call the laity? What unlearned person is not competent to read the Hours? Monks, hermits, and private persons, although laymen, may use the prayers of the Hours. The duty of a priest is to preach, and unless he does so, he is just as much a priest as the picture of a man is a man. Does the ordination of such babbling priests, the consecration of churches and bells, or the confirmation of children, constitute a bishop?

Could not any deacon or layman do these things? It is the ministry of the word that makes a priest or a bishop.³⁶

In another place Luther said, "... although our superstition now imputes it as a great crime to the laity, if they touch even the bare cup, or the corporal ; and not even a holy nun is allowed to wash the altar cloths and sacred napkins. When I see how far the sacrosanct sanctity of these orders has already gone, I expect that the time will come when the laity will not even be allowed to touch the altar, except when they offer money. I almost burst with anger when I think of the impious tyrannies of these reckless men, who mock and ruin the liberty and glory of the religion of Christ by such frivolous and puerile triflings. Let every man then who has learnt that he is a Christian recognise what he is, and be certain that we are all equally priests; that is, that we have the same power in the word, and in any sacrament whatever; although it is not lawful for anyone to use this power, except with the consent of the community, or at the call of a superior."³⁷

Martin Luther had power to speak truth to the power when 'Luther's enemies pressed upon him (Luther) with new violence; they commanded him to retract his heresies in the name of the Pope and the Church; they threatened him with the punishment of the heretic. Then the reformer, once more confronting the hostile emperor, the persecuting bishops, the frowning Spaniards, and the papal priests, said, in a bold and resonant voice: "Unless, your majesty, I am convinced by the plain words of the Scriptures, I can retract nothing. God be my help. Here I take my stand."³⁸

Lawrence further adds, 'It was the voice of awakening reason; the bugle-note of modern reform. Never since the days of the martyrs and the apostles had that noble sound been heard. Never had the right of private judgment been so generously asserted; never had the apostolic

³⁶ *Three Primary Works of Luther*, pp. 234-235.

³⁷ *Three Primary Works of Luther*, p. 235.

³⁸ E. Lawrence, *Historical Studies*, NY: Harper and Brothers, 1876, p. 96.

doctrine of conscience been so distinctly proclaimed. Luther's bold words have since that time been ever on the lips of good, great men. Latimer and Cranmer repeated them in the midst of the flames. Hampden and Sidney followed in his path. The freemen of Holland and America caught the brave idea. The countless victims of the Inquisition, the martyred foes of tyranny, the men who died for human liberty at Gettysburg or Bunker Hill, a Warren or a Lincoln, have said in their hearts as they resolved on their path of duty, "God be my help. Here I take my stand".³⁹

2.10 Speaking to the Western Church

How to share with the Western Churches both the shiny side and the rough side of CSI Episcopacy? The West knows probably a little or none of both sides. The question is how to create awareness about the problems of episcopacy in the CSI among the ecclesiastical authorities in the West and seek their help and prayer when the Moderators are taking the CSI away from its original core. It is not easily admitted by the CSI leaders when they visit the Western churches that there are conflicts in the church over graft, corruption, bribery, nepotism etc. The reasons will be many as to why the West may even refuse to listen to the stories of corruption and the challenges they bring to the CSI. This is because the Western Christians and bureaucrats themselves are preoccupied with their own problems relating to the steep fall in the attendance in the church services, loss in permanent membership and hence a downfall in financial contribution to the church, problems of sexuality and dangers from secularism and individualism that pose threat to religion.

³⁹ Lawrence, *Historical Studies*, p. 97.

Moreover, the theologians of the church do not seem to pick up issues of leadership as this might affect their relationship with the Church leaders who might be the Chairmen of their College Board. Even the radical ecclesialogists in the West tend to downplay the sins and errors found in the church. The stalwarts and theologians of the Church like H. Küng and J. Gustafson go soft on the leadership issues that shake the very foundation of the Church. Küng speaks of the Church continually learning to live in errors even in matters of faith or morals. The purpose of theology is to step aside from the faults and failures of the Church and to lead the people not to the Bible and tradition but to God and Christ in whom God is revealed.⁴⁰ He writes, ‘If sin could become a “happy fault” (*felix culpa*), might not error also (in itself much less serious) become a “happy error” (*felix error*), since the truth of the gospel shines out all the more brightly through the Church’s errors?’⁴¹

This mixed-bag “church” in which we live and which forms us is for us irreducibly the *textus receptus* with which we have to work. The church we know, with all the scars of its redaction and corruption showing, is the only church to which we have access. And it is simultaneously both visibly and invisibly “The Church.”⁴² “Thus, any attempt to speak of church must take seriously the problem of describing church through images that are frequently unchaste and unchastened and must understand that this is not an unfortunate theological accident ...”⁴³

⁴⁰ *The Church – Maintained in Truth*, p. 66.

⁴¹ *The Church – Maintained in Truth*, p. 67.

⁴² *Ecclesiology in Postmodern Context*, p. 48.

⁴³ *Ecclesiology in Postmodern Context*, p. 49.

2.11 S. Kierkegaard and his Message to the Church of his Time

The incident which was responsible for opening S. Kierkegaard's violent attacks on the official men of the church was that Martensen, a Professor in Theology, described Mynster, the Bishop of Zealand as 'true witness to the truth'. This characterization did not fit Mynster, according to Kierkegaard, and he called Mynster "a time-server"⁴⁴, a man of the world, a clever and successful ecclesiastical politician, who had 'had the pleasure of declaiming in "quiet hours" on Sundays, and then covering himself with worldly shrewdness on Mondays'.⁴⁵

*"Verily there is that which is more contrary to Christianity, and to the very nature of Christianity, than any heresy, any schism, more contrary than all heresies and all schisms combined, and that is, to play Christianity. But precisely in the very same sense that the child plays soldier, it is playing Christianity to take away the danger (Christianity, 'witness' and 'danger' correspond), and in place of this to introduce power (to be a danger for others), worldly goods, advantages, luxurious enjoyment of the most exquisite refinements – and then to play the game that Bishop Mynster was a witness to the truth ..."*⁴⁶

Goldschmidt began by being a great admirer of Kierkegaard, and in fact described *Either/Or* as an "immortal work."⁴⁷ "In cartoons, lampoons and satirical articles they ridiculed Kierkegaard, especially his personal appearance – his spindly legs, his trouser legs of different sizes,

⁴⁴ It means 'a person whose behaviour is adjusted to the pattern of the times or to please superiors' (*Free Merriam-Webster Dictionary*) and 'One who conforms to the prevailing ways and opinions of one's time or condition for personal advantage' (*Free Online Dictionary*)

⁴⁵ *Kierkegaard's Attack Upon "Christendom"*, tr. by W. Lowrie, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1946, p. 9.

⁴⁶ *The Fatherland*, p. 8.

⁴⁷ *Spiritual Wanderings*, p. 54.

his large nose, and the way he wore his hat down on his ears. They parodied the intensity of his style and his many pseudonyms, made fun of his belief that he was a voice crying in the wilderness ...”⁴⁸ The magazines succeeded in making Kierkegaard a ‘public figure of fun’. There is no Danish writer more earnest than he, yet there is no one in whose way stand more things to prevent his becoming popular.⁴⁹

*“And this end has been attained, has been best attained, indeed completely, in Protestantism, especially in Denmark, in the Danish even tempered, jovial mediocrity. When one sees what it is to be a Christian in Denmark, how could it occur to anyone that this is what Jesus Christ talks about: cross and agony and suffering, crucifying the flesh, suffering for the doctrine, being salt, being sacrificed, etc.? No, in Protestantism, especially in Denmark, Christianity marches to a different melody, to the tune of “Merrily we roll along, roll along, roll along” - Christianity is enjoyment of life, tranquillized ...”*⁵⁰

On 26 January, 1855, Kierkegaard wrote, “O Luther, thou hadst 95 theses – terrible! ... This case is far more terrible: there is only one thesis. The Christianity of the New Testament simply does not exist. Here there is nothing to reform; what has to be done is to throw light upon a criminal offence against Christianity, prolonged through centuries, perpetrated by millions (more or less guiltily), whereby they have cunningly, under the guise of perfecting Christianity, sought little by little to cheat God out of Christianity, and have succeeded in making Christianity exactly the opposite of what it is in the New Testament.”⁵¹ He adds, “... we perform artful tricks to conceal the difference, tricks to support the appearance that it is the Christianity of the New Testament –

⁴⁸ *Spiritual Wanderings*, p. 55.

⁴⁹ *Spiritual Wanderings*, p. 56.

⁵⁰ “Salt”, pp. 34-35.

⁵¹ “A Thesis” *The Fatherland*, 32-33.

so long as this Christian criminal offence continues, there can be no question of reforming,

2.12 The Play-Christianity of the Priests

Kierkegaard described ‘the official, state-churchly, or national-churchly Christianity of “Christendom”’. He made a sharp distinction between ‘New Testament Christianity’ and ‘official Christianity’. The constant question that one has to ask is ‘what does it mean to be a Christian?’ It is a question which cannot be slighted and assumed to be something that is already answered by the priests and state authorities. One has not the name of ‘Christian’; it is not something permanently fixed on a member or a minister of stately church, but it is something to be constantly worked for and striven after. New Testament Christianity has the marks of “true Christianity” and there has to be constant inquiry as to how one can reflect those qualities. He was highly critical of the amalgamation of church and state and the priestly ministry subjected meanly to state control and priestly office as a means to achieve social position and make a career. He wrote, ‘In “Christendom” the situation is a different one. What we have before us is not Christianity but a prodigious illusion, and the people are not pagans but live in the blissful conceit that they are Christians.’⁵²

He called his readers to ‘think then first for an instant of what Christianity is, what it requires of a man, what sacrifices it demands, and what sacrifices also have been made for it’.⁵³ He urged them to think of living in such a way and not to think of one’s advancement and earthly advantage. ‘... Christianity, which came into the world as the truth men

⁵² *Kierkegaard’s Attack Upon “Christendom”*, tr. by W. Lowrie, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1946, p. 97.

⁵³ *Kierkegaard’s Attack Upon “Christendom”*, p. 87.

die for, has now become the truth upon which they live, with family and steady promotion – “Rejoice then in life while thy springtime lasts”.⁵⁴

When this Christian criminal offence is needed to be exposed without any trick of diplomacy, then reformation sets in. Christianity is not a matter of material and social advantage. The dictum is that the pursuit for leadership can easily justify efforts to freeze out potential competitors for power. A theological school is not a place where the apprentices are trained with ‘the skills of the clerical trade’ to serve the purpose of the establishment. It bears the responsibility for a special intellectual activity that percolates through the church in the form of sharing the knowledge with love.⁵⁵

We conclude with the words of W. Brueggemann who understood the work of Jeremiah, the prophet, as an embarrassment to the priestly establishment of his time. In his words, ‘Jeremiah was in conflict with the kings, the prophets (legitimizers of establishment), with citizens, with God. But that was the nature of his call, to be aligned against the power of the earth ... If we do not experience the pain, rage, and disease that goes with such disequilibrium, we may be missing out our call.’⁵⁶

⁵⁴ *The Fatherland*, p. 42.

⁵⁵ R. Niebuhr, *The Purpose of the Church and Its Ministry*, p. 108.

⁵⁶ *Hopeful Imagination: Prophetic Voices in Exile*, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986, p. 23.

A CRITIQUE OF THE FORMER MODERATOR'S FAREWELL ADDRESS

‘Speaking the truth to power is no Panglossian idealism: it is carefully weighing the alternatives, picking the right one, and then intelligently representing it where it can do the most good and cause the right change.’⁵⁷

- E. Said

3.1 Theologians of Combat not Theologians of the Arm-Chair

We open this book with quotes from the Reith lectures of E. Said delivered in 1993. The title of one of his lectures was ‘Speaking Truth to Power’⁵⁸ in which Said describes the role of the intellectual/writer/theologian not as ‘principally serving and winning rewards from power’ but choosing risks and addressing issues of public policy. Such a dedicated intellectual, he wrote, “is moved neither by rewards nor by the fulfillment of an immediate career plan but by a committed engagement with ideas and values in the public sphere.”⁵⁹

⁵⁷ E. Said, *Representations of the Intellectual*, New York: Vintage Books, 1994, p. 102.

⁵⁸ Said, *Representations of the Intellectual*, pp. 85ff.

⁵⁹ Said, *Representations of the Intellectual*, p. 57.

Their commitments go beyond their narrow professional goals of academic achievement within a particular academic speciality, 'a relatively narrow area of knowledge'. 'Today's intellectual is a closeted professor, with a secure income, and no interest in dealing with world outside the classroom. Such individuals write an esoteric and barbaric prose that is meant mainly for academic advancement and not for social change.'⁶⁰

In the lecture 'Speaking Truth to Power', Said has defined the theologian and theological vocation for us. He has touched on an important characteristic of the theological thinker, scholar and an intellectual. In his words, 'Nothing in my view is more reprehensible than those habits of mind in the intellectual that induce avoidance, that characteristic turning away from a difficult and principled position which you know to be the right one, but which you decide not to take.'⁶¹ He further criticizes the mindset of the intellectual who might surrender his/her principled life for achieving 'mundane, careerist and materialist gains.' He observes, 'You do not want to appear too political; you are afraid of seeming controversial; you need the approval of a boss or an authority figure; you want to keep a reputation for being balanced, objective, moderate; your hope is to be asked back, to consult, to be on a board or prestigious committee, and so to remain within the responsible mainstream... For an intellectual these habits of mind are corrupting *par excellence*.'⁶² Such a description fits the theologians of careerism and opportunism who are careful not to criticize or oppose the power. Theologians of Combat do not conduct research to 'subtly compromise judgment and restrain critical voice'. It is in this spirit the problems of leadership in the CSI are approached.

⁶⁰ Said, *Representations of the Intellectual*, p. 53.

⁶¹ Said, *Representations of the Intellectual*, p. 100.

⁶² Said, *Representations of the Intellectual*, pp. 100-101.

3.2 Bishop Kadasham's Speech as the Incoming Moderator

Let me present some excerpts from the speech made by Bishop Devakadasham when he assumed office in January 2012. The speech was mixed with statements of assurances and promises. The Moderator was almost promising heaven to the listeners and to the four million Christians of the Church of South India.

He spoke thus: "I thank God for the way He has guided his Church all these years as a united Church through the great leaders who nourished the Church with the Word of God and with sacramental spirituality. I am privileged to stand in the row of illustrious Moderators who upheld the Church in great esteem."⁶³ We are not dreaming about an ideal Moderatorship for the CSI but what it was and is and how it could actually become by aligning its character and function in accordance with obedience to Christ and to the laws of the Church. A Moderator can only be justified by the fruits of his work, not by his words of promise and statements of self-glory.

The following sentences glitter in his speech as the new Moderator.

"The Church of South India is passing through a time of crisis in the eyes of the public. We assure to make an introspection of the present state of affairs in the church and undertake corrective measures to cleanse her."

"I commit to respect the sentiments of all, respect the right of everybody, while extending preference for the last and least."

"Never ever use our position in the church or God given gifts for self-glory and personal gain."

"Let us seriously think how we relate to our high calling."

⁶³ "Greetings by the Most Rev. G. Devakadasham, Moderator, CSI", in *South India Churchman*, vol. XI, no. 2, February 2012, p. 23.

“The Pastors and Preachers and Church leaders ... should look at John the Baptist and our Lord Himself ... as role models.”

“I seriously commit and relate to the mission and ministry of the church as mandated in Holy Scriptures and in the Constitution of the Church.”

“I assure a transparent CSI.”

“We commit to serve all, particularly those whom God loves the most, the oppressed, the dispossessed, the afflicted and the marginalized.”

I pray that we learn to look at one another with the eye of Jesus Christ.”

“All are welcome to bring to the notice of the leadership any kind of unconstitutional or unbiblical things happening in the Church.”

“Mission and Ministry are the foundations on which the life of the Church revolves.”

There are promises of cleansing the church, extending preference to the last and the least, vowing never to use the office for self-glory and personal gain, becoming a pioneer and a fearless moral critique like John the Baptist, seriously committing to follow the Holy Scriptures and the Constitution of CSI, assuring to make a transparent CSI as to how it decides and implements decisions, serving to uplift the oppressed and the marginalized, welcoming any act to expose the unbiblical and unconstitutional happenings in the church etc. These were his heroic claims and blind promises which he intended to keep and fulfil while in office. Did the Moderator live up to those promises? Some people may approve of this pretentious stand by calling it a “clever, entirely reasonable and indeed appropriate politics”. Anyone who observed him during his tenure as Moderator and followed his actions will say,

“Kadasham was making all these claims and promises which he could not and did not keep.”

Church politicians, and particularly those who aim to win at any cost, make empty claims and promises to project a messianic image of themselves but their actions are quite the opposite. The Moderator's words are fatally shallow and they do not have roots in the things which can transform ecclesiastical order because they lack convincing goals and strategies for renewal and revitalization. They fail to be inward-looking and are content with soothing and complacent words coupled with the use of some modern and outdated theological jargons.

3.3 The Speech as the Outgoing Moderator

It is interesting to read his farewell speech at the end of his two years tenure (2012-2014), which began with all these glittering promises and empty assurances.

3.3.1 The Theme of the Speech Has no Relevance to the Contents

The Moderator titles his speech ‘God of Justice, Give us Peace’ which has hardly any point of contact with the contents of the speech. He claims that the Church of South India is drawing inspiration from this theme but he never indicated what those inspirations were and how those inspirations were translated into actions affecting the growth of CSI. It has become all-too-common to use such themes of international forums to give weight to one's speech, but they remain as velvety rhetoric to camouflage his inadequacies and inefficiencies in his office. Did the CSI experience him during his tenure as the Moderator who stood and worked for God justice and peace? How did he see that power at work in his own ministry as the bishop of a diocese and chairman/President of various committees?

It is a clear untruth when Bishop Kadasham claimed that “The Church of South India, the Synod, has partnered with the struggle of Dalit Christians, in their right to get their Scheduled Caste rights ...” This has never happened, and no initiative was taken by him as there has been no report of such events happening in his time as the Moderator in the publication of the Synod magazine *CSI Life*. There have been several protests organised in New Delhi by Dalit Christians demanding equal rights of Scheduled Caste status, the Moderator or the Synod officers never made their presence felt in such occasions. A participant reported that on one such occasion, Bishop Kadasham spent half an hour and then left the meeting place.

On the human rights violations in Sri Lanka, nothing did he manage to do during his time in office and now he speaks about it as a future activity of the Church by saying “*Our Church also needs to take a clear position on this issue*” (i.e. human rights violations in Sri Lanka). It is ironic that the former Moderator now speaks about the ‘God of Justice’. Another front in which the people of CSI have witnessed neither justice nor God was in the selection of candidates by the Synod committee headed by him. He unabashedly claimed that “*During this Biennium, the Selection Board appointed by the Executive Committee only based on eligibility, credibility, merit and ministerial contribution selected nine Bishops. No other consideration played any role in this exercise.*” The congregations look for proper evidences to these claims made by the former Moderator from each of the nine cases of the selection of bishops.

3.3.2 Self-Description of Himself by the Moderator

At the beginning of the critical response, we should closely look at the ways in which the former Moderator understood himself at his office. The Moderator began his speech with a quotation from a hymn of Charles Wesley “O for a thousand tongues to sing/ My great Redeemer’s

praise/ The glories of my God and King/ The triumphs of His grace ... The triumphs of His grace”, and he said, ‘I feel the same way, as I stand before you’. During the two years of his office at the Synod Secretariat of the Church of South India, the Moderator felt the same way as Charles Wesley who composed the hymn in 1739. But the hymn was written to commemorate Wesley’s first anniversary of his conversion on 21 May 1728. The conversion experience was summed up by his brother John Wesley who had a similar conversion experience after three days of his brother’s in the following words:

“In the evening I went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate Street (in London), where one was reading Luther’s preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, *I felt my heart strangely warmed.*” When Luther’s message in his commentary on Romans was read to Wesley, he *felt the warmth* in his heart.

This was Rev. Wesley’s conversion experience, and this revolutionized the character and the method of his ministry. It is rare to hear these days ordained ministers experiencing conversion because ordained ministers feel that they no longer need to seek conversion experience or acknowledge publicly that they went through a special experience by the working of the Holy Spirit even after ordination. That warmth which Wesley felt glowed worldwide 6,000 times more if you measure the intensity of the flame that warmed his heart by the number of hymns he composed.

If the former Moderator Kadasham had felt God’s mercy gently leading him through many experiences, we as members of the CSI wish to hear them. Perhaps he could tell the members what his ‘conversion experience’ was if he, as the Moderator ever had the same experience as that of Charles Wesley. What change he felt in his life and what was the Aldersgate experience apparent in the life and ministry of the

Moderator? It was Søren Kierkegaard who said that it would be difficult for someone who was ‘accustomed’ to Christianity to become a Christian. The ordained ministry acts as if conversion is irrelevant to it and no longer compatible to it. The clerical vestments shelter them from acutely feeling the need for the conviction of sins and the need for repentance.

3.3.3 Reading the Preamble of the CSI

The Moderator was ‘forever reminded of the Preamble of CSI’ and he talks about the corporate community, the church should be ‘the sign and instrument of peace and reconciliation in the many conflicts around us’. The questions that immediately pop into our minds are: What did peace and reconciliation mean for the people of the Tuticorin-Nazareth diocese, Medak diocese which had their bishops suspended? Was the Moderator a peace-maker and reconciler in these situations and also in the situation of his own diocese, marked by maladministration and divisions? How did he lead the church into peace-making and reconciliation during his tenure as the Moderator? Did his approach, method and the handling of the problems of these dioceses and others bring people together or divide them and make them more bitter enemies than before? What was his performance as the President of the United Theological College? During his time there, the Home Ministry of the Indian Government suspended the license of UTC to receive foreign funds. He never touched on the malpractices in the UTC administration of finance that led to the suspension. The UTC cannot receive money from overseas because the administrators channeled the foreign funds to unauthorized accounts.⁶⁴ Was he as its President responsible for the unfortunate decision by the Government?

The lines quoted by the Moderator from the Preamble of the CSI Constitution have dropped two very important statements. It reads: “We

⁶⁴ See <http://mha1.nic.in/fcra/fcraorder16022014.pdf>

pledge to follow and uphold the Governing principles of our Church and provisions of this Constitution, for the glory of God, the good of the Church and the welfare of all people.”⁶⁵ Were these pledges fulfilled in the ministry of the Moderator during the four years including his two years as Deputy Moderator at the secretariat? The people have neither witnessed nor experienced any fruits of his plans and actions as being intended for ‘The good of the Church and the welfare of all people’.

3.3.4 Re-reading the Preamble

Bishop Kadasham was not reminded of a more apt and noble declaration from the preamble of the CSI. The Moderator quotes incompletely the final paragraph in the Preamble of the CSI and describes it as the guiding force in his ministry as he was constantly reminded of it. This makes us in the pew wonder why he was reminded of this particular paragraph during his Moderatorship. If he is to be taken seriously on this experience of his, the following questions arise: How did he enable CSI to realize the need to be continually renewed by the Holy Spirit? How was the Church a sign and instrument of peace and reconciliation? What was Christ’s way that was followed during his time of administration?

Let us look at this most important sentence in the whole Preamble. It states, ‘The Church of South India recognizes the participation of the people at all levels of Church government, but, as members of the Body of Christ and servants of the Servant Lord, we remind ourselves that power and authority should be considered a means of service.’⁶⁶ The Moderators should be reminded of this clause ‘Power and authority should be considered a means of service’ before they can quote any part of the Preamble.

⁶⁵ *The Constitution of CSI*, 2003, p.2.

⁶⁶ *The Constitution of CSI*, 2003, p.2.

Bishop Kadasham was a member of the recent Constitution revision committee formed by the present Moderator and helped the committee to produce a very controversial document which subverts the whole of what is counted very precious to its life and expression of faith. The decision to change the Constitution of CSI at the initiation of the present Moderator produced a 32 page document questionable in many respects in comparison with the Basis of Union drawn by the early visionaries of the CSI. The Constitutional changes are imposed on the councils of the 24 dioceses compelling them to pass decisions in approval of the entire Amendments and new Bye-laws. A complete critique of this on various key elements of this ill-conceived attempt to change the whole character of the united church formed after 28 years of negotiation, deliberations and prayer was sent to the present Moderator.⁶⁷

3.3.5 The Former Moderator Claims to Have Become the Mouthpiece of God

The Moderator thus spoke: ‘As the official head and representative of the Church, and in different contexts of interaction with other Churches and organizations, I was careful to be the mouthpiece of God and of His most Holy church.’ When bishop Kadasham called himself ‘the official head and representative of the church’ it is highly acceptable but when he claimed to have become the ‘mouthpiece of God’, there is a deeper problem here. He seems to claim divine sanction for all those things he said and acted upon during the time in office of the Moderator with a divinizing epithet ‘mouthpiece of God’ which even the Old Testament prophets never used for themselves. There is more blasphemy in this statement as he says that he was ‘very careful to be the mouthpiece of God’ as if to suggest that through his own human attempt he will secure such a status when no other prophets in the Bible had ventured to make a claim to have become such divine

⁶⁷ See Chapter III on Epistles to the Moderator.

instrumentality through their human efforts. The prophets of the Bible used the expression, 'The Mouth of the Lord has said this' (Deut. 8:3; II Chr. 36:12; Is. 1:20; 34:16; 40:5; 58: 14; 62:2) rather than that they themselves were acting as the mouth of the Lord as if it were something within the reach of any mortal man to become. If he is the Moderator, a man of highest authority in the Church, then he probably thinks that God has to automatically choose him as his mouthpiece. Is God hopelessly confined without any choice to the electoral victories of the Moderator? He is only a servant of the Church and he has to render an account to his master who appointed him.

He admitted that 'he tried his best to clean up the church' though he relentlessly promised 'to undertake corrective measures to cleanse the church'. What are his achievements in this front? Did he even give a try to cleanse the church or did he make it dirtier by his crisis-ridden tenure?

3.3.6 The Overseas Trips Benefitted Individuals and not the Church

His status as the official head was staged up in attending to the overseas engagements such as attending EMS Mission Council, Anglican Consultative Council, the enthronement ceremony of the Archbishop of Canterbury, WCC Assembly, meeting Pope Benedict XVI and interacting with the Moderators of the Presbyterian Church of Korea. At the end of all these visits during his time as the Moderator of CSI, according to him, brought 'positive results' to the church. In his own words, 'On the whole, the engagement by the Officers of the Synod with World Churches and World Bodies has brought positive results for the church.'. The reader/listener was eagerly looking for those positive results the Moderator's trip overseas brought to the church of four million Christians. The positive result cited by the Moderator was that Mr. M. M. Philip, the General Secretary of CSI was elected to the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches. An individual

who was about to step down from the position of Secretary of CSI Synod in a slender two months' time was proposed to function as a member of the WCC Central Committee by using his status as the General Secretary of CSI. The former Moderator along with the former General Secretary exploited the situation through lobbying and grabbed the opportunity for achieving a personal gain at the far end of his tenure as the General Secretary of CSI. How can this to be accepted as a positive result for the CSI, the whole people of God?

3.4 CSI Christians Living Abroad

The Moderator spoke extensively about CSI Christians living abroad in countries like the USA, Canada, Australia and Gulf nations which he visited frequently during his tenure. He now predicts that 'the time is now ripe for Synod to think intensely about an Overseas Diocese towards the formation of which the North American Council and the Churches in Gulf are inclined.' Already there is a council of CSI congregations that was formed in North America. Attempts are now being made to form a council in Gulf countries. The Moderator has entered into negotiation with these churches so that there would be an Overseas CSI Diocese. This was a concern not reflected in one of his promises and assurances. Probably this plan struck him after he assumed the office of Moderator.

But this raises the question whether CSI churches represent a denomination or the CSI congregations are congregations belonging to following 'united and uniting' ideology which means that the congregations should become part of the fellowship of the existing church or churches in the land they have chosen to live. CSI as a movement is not to get stuck within the walls of regionalism, casteism and linguistic communalism leading to denominationalism. Can the CSI be frozen into a solidified entity called a denomination so that CSI Christians form a CSI diocese wherever they go and settle? Are they to

regard themselves as a community seeking to preserve in a spirit of unity to join the ecclesiastical fellowship of the host country? When this debate is on one side, the former Moderator attempted to introduce another controversial measure in appointing bishops to the overseas dioceses.

3.4.1 Bishops to Overseas Dioceses Will be Appointed Unconstitutionally

The Moderator speaks of a strange action with regard to the CSI diaspora which is clearly unconstitutional. He thus spoke: “After careful consideration, the Synod allowed ... *if they desire to keep their identity and fellowship with the Church of South India, they may continue their identity as members of the Church of South India by organizing themselves into congregations recognized as such by the CSI Synod Executive Committee/Working Committee. The Moderator of the Church of South India or Diocesan Bishops appointed by him shall have Episcopal oversight of such congregations.*”⁶⁸

The bishops to the overseas dioceses in North America and Dubai will be directly appointed by the Moderator. This is an unacceptable practice in the CSI. This will create an occasion for bribery and nepotism if the Moderator without following the CSI Constitution takes the power in his hands to appoint bishops directly by his own volition and decision. All bishops should be appointed in accordance with the CSI Constitution by following the procedures outlined in the Constitution. The attraction for foreign trips and the rich resources they promise to offer will tempt the Moderator to declare himself as the bishop of the overseas diocese as he has the right to appoint bishops to overseas dioceses. Then the same method will be followed openly in the appointment of bishops in the country. It is this spirit of Moderator-centred CSI that the Amendments and the new-Bye-laws of 2015 are

⁶⁸ Italics his.

aiming to inject into CSI. This has been vehemently criticized in the three epistles to the Moderator found in the third chapter.

3.5 Bishop Kadasham Warns the Land Mafia in the CSI

The former Moderator professed that ‘CSI Synod, the CSI Trust Association, and the Officers during the couple of biennia took the firm decision not to sell any Church property or lease out on unconditional terms. The moratorium of land deals has saved the precious resources of land for future generations. All the Dioceses and respective leaderships were encouraged to protect, develop and utilize the landed property optimally. For a long time, the Church has been critical of the prosperity Gospel that has ruined the intrinsic spiritual values of the Church. Of late the *property* Gospel has emerged powerfully in the Church that property, political and power mafia to encroach the property of the Church ... I call upon the faith community to be beware of this dangerous mafia, intruding into the Church in any form and valiantly fight against it. The Synod should appreciate the efforts initiated by the Officers who retrieved the property, which was out of our control and developed the same to generate income.’

He added, ‘I sincerely feel that it is the opportune time for the growing Church to update its functioning with the most suitable procedures that would be in keeping with the best modern practices.’

Bishop Kadasham was warning CSI against the land mafia which is fixing their eyes on the properties of the church. He spoke of ‘property, political and power mafia’ encroaching into the property of the church. He did not elaborate on it. It is not clear WHOM he was talking about as ‘land mafia’. He further said, ‘I call upon the faith community to be beware of this dangerous mafia, intruding into the church in any form and valiantly fight against it.’ Shall we first identify the land mafia before fighting against them valiantly? He then made a congratulatory remark that the officers of the Synod ‘retrieved the property which was

out of our control and developed the same to generate income'. Again, Kadasham did not support this statement with facts. The 'officers' obviously refers to the Moderator, Deputy Moderator, General Secretary and the Treasurer. When did we see them restoring church properties and developing the same to generate income during 2012-2014? Can Kadasham document those instances? How about the sale activities during his Moderatorship? No records are accessible to the people of the CSI about the sale proceedings of the valuable Church properties. Any fringe activity of stopping a few minor cases of the sale of Church lands cannot be considered a big achievement. The situation can be compared to a doctor who saved one person from illness but killed nine others.

Once again, the call for 'updating the functioning of the Church with most suitable procedures' particularly in the matter of managing properties is made to the future leadership of the Church. The former Moderator has not done anything let alone reflected over it during his tenure.

3.6 Is Episcopacy Exercised as a Biblical Office in CSI?

In his farewell speech, Kadasham sees episcopacy as a 'biblical office'. How can the nature and character of sociopaths be accepted as representing biblical episcopacy? The Episcopal ministry is a noble task, according to Scripture. The character of the *episcopos* (an overseer) is outlined in I Timothy 1: 1-3 which reads, 'Here is a trustworthy saying: Whoever aspires to be an overseer desires *a noble task*. Now the overseer is to be above reproach, faithful to his wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money.' Let the leaders stand in front of this mirror to set themselves right!

The Moderator claimed in his speech 'With God's strength every challenge during the term was transformed into a ministerial opportunity

to move forward.’ The Moderator did not make any mention of those ‘ministerial opportunities’ and the ‘forward’ steps that were taken by him as the Moderator. The claim that the Moderator converted ‘every challenge’ into an opportunity for ministry’ is also not explained anywhere in the speech.

3.7 Moderator Calls for Reading only the Books Published by the CSI Synod

The former Moderator’s concern is that the people of CSI should not read unauthoritative books because those books according to him were written by the disgruntled and disappointed. He attaches evil motives to the works of others by saying that the authors lie outside the power ring of the Synod and they seek to malign the church by writing books out of frustration and disappointment. Again the tendency of the church authorities is to demonise the individuals who painstakingly make efforts to write books on the history and tradition of CSI. He identifies three books as productions of the CSI Synod but he lists four books. They are:

- 1) *Renewal and Advance: Integration and Joint Action* – 1963
- 2) *CSI after Thirty Years: A Report on the Life and Work of the Church* – 1979
- 3) *Priorities for the Mission of the Church* – 1982
- 4) *Priorities for the Mission of the Church for the Decade 2011-2020*

Out of the four the first two are self-critical and self-examining type of works to probe into the policies and functions of the church. It is not enough to say that these books are the most authoritative ones compared to others and what these books say matter. It is important that the former Moderator is recommending to others for reading these works which have plenty to say for right courses of thinking and action in CSI today.

If and when he reads them, he should read the following sections of these works.

3.8 The Paul Commission

Renewal and Advance, a Report of the Commission appointed by the Synod and chaired by R. D. Paul, the General Secretary of the Synod, made 171 recommendations as checks and balances which should affect the way the CSI works. How many of those suggestions put forward by the Commission have been absorbed by the Synod administration in reforming itself and setting it in the right course of reflection and action?

There is an interesting proposal made by the Commission that the Moderator of the CSI ought to leave his diocese under the responsibility of a Commissary and be available for a full-time work as the Moderator.⁶⁹ But the present CSI is in a situation that the Moderator not only keeps his own diocesan bishopric even after becoming the Moderator but also takes over the bishoprics of several other dioceses. The present Moderator Dyvasirvadam has appointed himself as the bishop of five different dioceses. All the dioceses in the metropolitan cities, Hyderabad, Chennai (Madras), Bangalore and the all their rich institutions are being ruled by him. His predecessor Devakadasham had three dioceses under his authority and held the chairmanship of many institutions. The present Moderator has five and the future Moderator, somewhere down the line, will aim for more than five if he would be a man with unbridled ambition. The Moderators in the present century are showing themselves to be the most ambitious men in the church who could outwit a secular politician in the pursuit of power! Power-grabbing techniques are primary requisites for winning and occupying episcopal positions in the church.

⁶⁹ *Renewal and Advance*, p. 56.

The Paul Commission pointed out the lack of integrity of character in the CSI. In its own words, ‘Another matter touching integrity is the frequency of false-witness among us and the tolerance with which it is regarded. In petitions to church authorities, in cases before church courts and in the law-courts, both in written submissions and in oral evidence, we find instance after instance of misrepresentation or of downright lying. For *some church members*, means seem not to matter as long as the end can be achieved.’⁷⁰ This summarises pretty well the continuing trend in CSI. The phrase ‘some church members’ has to be corrected today to read as ‘the CSI hierarchy’.

3.9 The Abel Commission

In the year 1978, a seventeen member committee was set up with Dr. M. Abel, an eminent Educationist, Administrator and Christian Leader as the Chairman, and produced a Report *The Church of South India after Thirty Years* which made another 111 recommendations to ensure to bring renewal in the church life in all levels. Have these voices been heard by the Synod which thinks and acts in a manner that it is essentially the ‘church’? The Abel Report, for example, demands a fresh understanding of the responsibilities of bishops. It reads, ‘In order to ensure that only really competent and godly persons are chosen to this responsible position and to see that they give more of their time and energy to the spiritual welfare of their dioceses, the following measures are necessary: a) The Bishop should not be the Chairman of any committee except the Diocesan Council, the Executive Committee and the Ministerial Committee. There should be a constitutional provision to this effect; b) The administrative responsibilities hitherto performed by the Bishop should be transferred to a ‘Diocesan Administrator’... d) The designation of the Bishop may be changed as ‘Prathana Sevak (main servant)’. The bishops, it was recommended, should exercise authority

⁷⁰ *Renewal and Advance*, p. 51. Italics mine.

in such a manner 'capable of getting voluntary and spontaneous acceptance and support from the people for their decisions and actions.'⁷¹ It was further stressed that the 'diocesan courts, the court of the Synod and other bodies as well as their procedures should be streamlined in order to reflect people's acceptance support.'⁷² Have these recommendations been enacted? If they were, the people would not have lost faith in the church courts and queued up in secular courts. in order to reflect people's acceptance support

What is a bishop? The Abel Commission observes, 'At present the bishops are chosen from the senior clergy and their greatest strength is their experience in pastoral ministry. The bishops of the churches are expected to be theologians, leaders and administrators. Training in administration, management, group dynamics, etc., will be helpful for their successful ministry. Further, sabbatical leave for theological study and refresher courses to keep them abreast with Biblical and theological scholarship must also be provided. While administrative and managerial skills are part of the professional skills needed for the bishop, this is not the major role of the bishop. A new type of leadership, where the models of 'father in God' and 'servant of the people' become dominant, is needed.'⁷³

'And as for bishops, presidents and institutional heads, they are no exceptions. They want to cling on to power as if it was their private investment. They have tasted it and are sometimes so intoxicated that they are not aware of being overcome by their lust for power. They do not want to lay down office. They would have served long enough but would not quit. This is a true picture of the situation today and it is in this light that we must search for a deeper inner life.'

On the matters of casteism and corruption practised in the church, it was strongly recommended that the Synod should 'constitute regional

⁷¹ *CSI after Thirty Years*, p. 74.

⁷² *CSI after Thirty Years*, p. 75.

⁷³ *CSI after Thirty Years*, pp. 43, 70.

vigilance commissions' in each diocese.⁷⁴ Where are they? It is not acceptable to pride ourselves on producing such reports as authoritative sources without implementing even 1% of the key recommendations?

The Commission goes on to observe, 'Along with corruption, malpractices, the desire for power, the present tendency to go to legal courts to seek redress of our grievances, creates an acute problem for the spiritual life of the church ... We desperately need a deeper spirituality to understand each other, to love each other and to endeavour to solve our differences within the household of God or within the family of Jesus Christ ... Bishops, presbyters and the laity must be spiritually revitalized. The formalized religion must be replaced by a *personalized religion* ... Every Christian must be a committed Christian and the Church must consider this as its first priority and go all out in this direction ...'⁷⁵ The mood of self-reflection and self-criticism is now given up by the Synod, as the last two books indicate. The books and the journals from the CSI synod have departed from the thrust of criticism. Their ears are not tuned to hearing critical remarks of their own actions. They are some reflections on the priorities for mission of the church but not mission in the church. The CSI Synod has become outward looking to remain comfortable with familiarities rather than relentlessly becoming inward-probing.

3.10 Priorities for the Mission of the Church (1982)

If the Synod treats these works as authoritative ones and if the Synod had followed the proposal that is coming particularly from the *Priorities for the Mission of the Church* (1982), property management would have been carried out with transparency and accountability. The report recommended, 'Property consolidation (selling off unwanted

⁷⁴ *CSI after Thirty Years*, p. 72.

⁷⁵ *CSI after Thirty Years*, pp. 43-44.

lands/buildings) and property development should normally be meant for supporting service programmes to the community and *not* for administrative purposes. Administrative expenses especially salaries must be met from “current receipts” and not from investment income. Otherwise, administration will be unrelated to the aspirations and abilities of the people.⁷⁶ The cleansing of the CSI Trust Association which manages all the properties of CSI estimated as 1,000 crores of rupees has been a major challenge which the former Moderator never accepted. He never executed plans or took necessary action to bring the activities of the Trust Association in line with the new India Companies Act of 2013. A detailed report of the sale activities of the CSITA during his time in office is not available for the people of CSI. They are all secretive documents kept in the lockers of the Synod office (hopefully)!

3.11 Priorities for the Mission of the Church for the decade 2011-2020

It should be noted that our priority should be that church administration is related to the aspirations and abilities of the people of the CSI. Things will go wrong where administration takes least consideration of the people's wishes and aspirations and functions on the basis of few self-interested and self-serving groups and individuals. The matters relating to episcopacy and corruption are no longer receiving any attention. As the fourth book *Priorities for the Mission of the Church for the Decade 2011-2020* indicates, the discussions at the Synod level will not be dealing with the problems that have damaged the image of the church. In its firm opinion, no one can attain perfection and

⁷⁶ R. Guruswamy, “Methods of Planning Programmes of Action in terms of the Financial and Other Resources of the Church”, *Priorities for the Mission of the Church: A Report of the Consultation*, Babu, D (ed.). Madras: The Synod of CSI, 1982, p. 67.

no church in the world is perfect, and hence we should tolerate imperfections in whatever form in the CSI.

In this book, another former Moderator S. Vasanthakumar observed, 'The image of the Church is at its lowest possible. No organisation can be effective if its image is dented by allegations. Image of the Church has been dragged into the streets by means of filing criminal complaints, instituting civil cases, publishing allegations in the print and electronic media, circulating anonymous pamphlets, sending scurrilous and false statements through e-mails. These have destroyed the image of the Church. Even the foreign media have picked up these reports and published the same in their own newspapers and magazines. Needless to say, our own people who remain incognito are behind all these attempts in destroying the image of the individual leaders but in the process, they are destroying the image of the Church itself. We are on the road to self-destruction. If our involvement in mission has to be effective then the image of the Church has to be restored to its past glory. This I fell should be the first priority for the Church ... In fact no church is perfect and I must say no organization on earth is perfect. Every organization including the Church has its failures and pitfalls. All that I am saying is that where there are mistakes and shortcomings we should be ready and willing to rectify them. But that has to be done within the framework of the Church structures.'⁷⁷ The final sentence is the problematic one as the mistakes and shortcomings are committed within the framework of church structures and the superstructure itself is aiding them. Mistakes cannot be rectified within the structure of the church when the abuse of power lies with the structure itself.

'Nobody is perfect' cannot be used as an excuse to do wrong. If CSI has the right to be imperfect, how much imperfection can be allowed in the church? Who should enjoy the freedom to be imperfect? Are we

⁷⁷ S. Vasanthkumar, *Priorities for the Mission of the Church: For the Decade 2011-2020*, Madras: CSI Synod, 2010, pp. 24-25.

proud of our wrongdoings? Holy living is a fundamental demand placed on every Christian. What do we mean when confess Sunday after Sunday 'We believe in One, *Holy*, Catholic and Apostolic Church'?

3.12 Is the United Church Functioning as a Uniting Church?

Bishop Kadasham makes reference to '*Serious attempts*' from the CSI side for making '*partnerships*' with other regional churches. This is not to be construed as sincere attempts for union. The Communion of churches in India is a fellowship of church leaders of CSI-Church of North India and the Marthoma Church. A message from the Executive Secretary of Communion of Churches acclaims, 'The Communion of Churches in India (CCI) has been constituted as the visible organ for common expression of the life and witness by the founding Churches, the *Church of North India (CNI)*, the *Church of South India (CSI)* and the *Mar Thoma Syrian Church (MTC)* which recognise themselves as belonging to the one Church of Jesus Christ in India, even while remaining as autonomous churches, each having its own identity of traditions and organizational structures.'" They are regarded as churches not seeking union with one another but as autonomous churches; their leaders meet together once in four years for fellowship and some discussion any matters of common concern. One of their achievements is that there is a common liturgy to be followed by these churches once a year. In some places there is an interchange of pulpit ministry between the CSI and the Marthoma churches and there is talk of common witness, but nothing more than these efforts. The speech claims that 'The Communion of Churches is a 'living example' of continuing dialogue with churches. No dialogue is held in this Communion to attempt to journey together towards union. And it is not definitely moving towards 'organic Union' and indeed almost all churches in India have given up that concept of union. The Communion of Churches is not

even ‘partnership’ as claimed by Bishop Kadasham as the emphasis is more on the autonomous existence of each church respecting each other’s heritage and tradition by remaining separate. It does not think any more about union of churches. The Communion of Churches in India cannot be a great enterprise to express oneness in Christ to fulfil the prayer of Jesus ‘that they may also be one’.

3.13 Is the CSI an Integrated Church or an Organically United Church?

The former Moderator said, The Church of South India is the integration of the erstwhile Uniting Churches, assimilating the essentials of each one of them.’ The Moderator was criticised for a similar statement made in his ‘Renewal and Revitalization’ paper in 2012. This necessitated a longer discussion in my previous work ...*That They May Also Be Sanctified in Truth* (2012) stressing that the CSI was the outcome of the ‘organic union’ of churches and not ‘integration’ of the churches.

“The first movement toward church union in India arose from a suggestion made in 1863, that the various Presbyterian bodies attempt to get together. In 1865 the Northern India Synod of the American Presbyterian Church appointed a committee to further this movement, and in 1871 a general conference on union was held in Allahabad. Delegates were present from the Church of Scotland, the Free Church of Scotland, the American Presbyterian Church, the Reformed Presbyterian Church, and the Reformed Church in America. Though the delegates were agreed that an all-Presbyterian union was desirable, they decided that at present it was impracticable, and suggested periodical conferences of ministers and elders for the purpose of consultation and co-operation. In 1873 an Indian Presbyterian Confederation was formed, which, two years later, became the Presbyterian Alliance in India, to meet in council once every three years. The first council of the Alliance

was held in 1877. In the meanwhile the desirability of organic union was being urged by some of the governing bodies at home. The alliance, in 1889, took the first definite step to bring about such union, but the movement was unsuccessful and it was not until 1901 that the meetings of the Alliance were resumed.”⁷⁸

In 1905, the Congregationalists in the Indian sub-continent joined together to become ‘United Congregationalists’. Then the Presbyterians and the United Congregationalists united together to form the South India United Church (SIUC) in 1908. In 1919, the first meeting of ministers of SIUC and the Anglican Church in India met in Tranquebar brought the necessary flame to bring the three churches together in an organic manner.

‘Integration’ does not adequately describe the formation of CSI as the word predominantly means combination, amalgamation etc., it does not convey the idea of ‘organic union’. ‘Integration’ of churches has been taking place around the world but not ‘organic Union’, particularly of episcopal and non-episcopal churches. This understanding is crucial for continuing unity plans and actions with more churches in India. When the CSI was just formed, one of the missionaries commented, ‘At first I feared I might lose my own tradition in a united Church; now I find it has been given back to me enormously enriched.’⁷⁹ This is the experience of organic union of churches in South India.

3.14 “We Commit Not to Go Wrong Again”

Where has CSI gone wrong? Where did the leaders lose their way? The hierarchy commits not to do wrong again. What type of wrongs are meant here? That feeling of wrong is not enough to determine what

⁷⁸ C. G. Manshardt, *Movements towards Church Union in South India*, 1924 (Reprinted from the University Of Chicago Abstracts Of Thesis, Humanistic Series, Volume II, printed in the USA), pp. 493-94.

⁷⁹ C. Graham, *The Church of South India*, Madras: CSI, 1956, p. 18.

change in action should be reflected upon. The simple word ‘mistake’ is used to cover multitude of sins. Crimes cannot be called as mistakes in order to get away from them. A mistake is not a wrong guess or a slip-of-the-tongue type of error-making. It is not such a casual mistake but a gross violation.⁸⁰ The Moderator does not seem to be saying that he is willing to take responsibility and consequences for the wrong actions.

3.15 The Moderator Wants the Church to Fight against Corruption in the Nation

The Moderator spoke, “One of the reasons for denial of fuller life in India is the evil of corruption in public and private life. Everyone speaks of corruption, against the other, but no permanent solution for the eradication of the same has been offered. Anna Hazare’s campaign against corruption evoked good response, which made the Government of India to place the Lok Pal Bill in the Parliament, which has been passed with the support of both the ruling as well as the opposition parties. The Church needs to be the conscience keeper of the faith-community and the nation in doing away with corruption.”

The Moderator is calling the church ‘to do away with corruption’. It is ludicrous that he himself has a court case launched against him for corrupt actions. Why does the Moderator look for a formula to end corruption? The message from Anna Hazare is, ‘Do not do it’. That is the solution. What is needed is seeing it as a sin and running away from it. The Moderator cannot stay in corruption and demand others for solution to get out of it.

Why the wait for a permanent solution? Is it ‘business as usual’ until a permanent solution arrives from somewhere? There is no list of temporary and permanent solution categories against corruption. Any simple solution that is permanently repeated to curb graft will be termed a permanent solution. We do not wait for someone else to offer the

⁸⁰ <http://legaldictionary.thefreedictionary.com/Mistake+%28criminal+law%29>

attractive package of solutions for the eradication of corruption that the Moderator is waiting for. We do not watch for someone like Anna Hazare to take the risk of fighting against corruption including going to jail and fasting rigorously for twenty days at a stretch while the church leaders watch the happenings from outside. The Bible and the pastoral staff are powerful reminders of the accountability towards God, people and law. Every individual including the Moderator is the solution if and when he/she behaves resolutely to remove corruption.

How can the church itself become the 'conscience keeper' when it is incapable of or unwilling to be fighting against corruption within its ranks? If the church is not ready to admit corruption what moral right has it for acting as the keeper of the nation let alone teaching the nation about corruption? Don't we have to live like a community which possesses the golden saying, 'Why do you see the speck in your neighbor's eye, but do not notice the log in your own eye? Or how can you say to your neighbour, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' while the log is in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your neighbour's eye.' (Matthew 7: 3-5). We should not show ourselves to the world that we address the nation by sitting on a moral high ground. The church may say that it launches one campaign with the same aims and principles for eradicating corruption both in the church and in the nation. Strengthening the grievance redressal system to address issues of corruption in the church will send a strong signal to the nation as a whole. We do not need to preach to the nation. There are those church officials who were honest – neither in the recent past nor in the distant past but may be about three decades ago. Some of the Moderators of the past were honest and corrupt and those of the twenty first century were and are 'definitely corrupt'. They are not only 'definitely corrupt' but have the propensity to shield corrupt persons. The Church of South India

ought to create an independent ombudsman agency like Lokayukta⁸¹ to investigate corruption charges against both lay and ordained church servants. The Synod and diocesan courts are functioning at the direct influence of the top officials of the Synod/Diocese. The judgments are rather biased and always in favour of those who worship power.

A choice between toleration of corruption, or resigned acceptance, appears to be the order of the day. The authorities have up to now failed to chalk out adequate anti-corruption policies and methods.⁸² It is often swept under the rug or covered up to avoid embarrassment. Toleration of such misconduct is definitely “corruption.” All failed to aggressively and effectively rein in church corruption. We possess a culture that promotes corruption and a culture that tolerates leaders’ misconduct and corrupt administration. The proposed reforms must be designed to create effective oversight structures and a culture of honest service within the administrative network. But the system is made corrupt when the leaders are marked by deliberate deceptiveness especially by pretending to have one set of feelings but acting under the influence of another which is often given to deceitful scheming and double-dealing.

This is the plight of the 21st century episcopacy in the CSI. It should be remembered that the Moderator is a Bishop and as argued he is not above the class of bishops outranking them. We showed that the Moderator is an administrative term as it is conferred upon through special ordination/consecration and not an Archbishop in the sense of a chief Bishop of a superior rank. Nor is the Moderator like a Metropolitan who would have the entire CSI under his control as if it constitutes a one single province in which all the 24 dioceses fall under the domain of his authority. A lot of political vendetta was unleashed

⁸¹ Lokayukta means “appointed by the people” which is an anti-corruption ombudsman organization operating in the Indian states.

⁸² On solutions see Christoph Stückelberger: Corruption-free Churches are possible, Globethics.net Focus Series no 2, Geneva 2010, 66-74 on CSI, 163-192 on 35 practical recommendations. Download for free from www.globethics.net/publications. Also available in French and Tamil.

against some bishops who were either terminated or suspended under the guise of making administrative decisions. There have been reports of other bishops who were equally bad in comparison to the three who were axed but managed to stay in their offices as they were in the good books of the Synod authorities.

Actions of the episcopal heads, particularly the Moderators, are secretive, duplicitous and quasi-constitutional. A strong will against bribery and graft on the part of the Church leadership is what is needed. CSI Christians are deeply ambivalent about it, resigning themselves to it, or lamenting about it or even at times justifying it. We are either willing or unwilling participants in corruption at every turn. Christians are painfully aware of the damage that corruption is doing to the church and they acknowledge corruption as a worst enemy, but they have been unable to fight against it let alone stop it. Corruption is kept hidden under a religious blanket. The aspirants for power just want to fit in within the system and go along well with everyone knowing that it is corrupt. People have the impulse to be part of a group particularly in an accepted social group which has the power and wields power or a group which has the good prospects of soon becoming one. Anyone who keeps away from group identities will have to suffer for recognition in society even though at election time they might become hotcakes for the contenders for winning their votes.

Position in the Synod hierarchy are being used as tools to create wealth and power. We cannot and should not manipulate the truth to curry the favour of persons in power. Enemies of the truth and overambitious persons are occupying positions of power. It should be recognized that corrupt leaders in the church often hide their assets under the names of their relatives, spouses, friends and other individuals. The declared information on assets should be subject to public disclosure as the level of perceived corruption is high among people. How can the leaders bring forth the spiritual man and not the carnal man

in their dealings? According to one definition, 'Corruption is the abuse of entrusted power for private gain'. From the position of public responsibility, he and his family/regional/caste groups are benefitted mightily. The Moderators diplomacy is to strong-arm their opponents and reward their cronies/supporters. Some Church leaders hide behind the plausible deniability even if a large number of their questionable practices are brought to the open.

There is popular discontent over the leadership of the church. The people should talk openly about corruption in the church. This book is not meant for those who are not upset about church administration and to those who seem to worry that corruption and abuse of power are becoming normal and standard practices in the church administration today. Corruption is pervasive and to accept that it is culturally acceptable is a complete absence of Christian spirit. The Synod lacks the will to change. The recent Moderators' signature contribution is thug type politics. The Moderators are epitomes for corrupt politician-type lifestyle which engages in nepotism at every slight opportunity. Mafia style tactics consist in decimating the contestants for power through a pretentious show of love or by arm-twisting tactics and this systemic corruption of power must be rooted out of the system. The Moderator's speech implies that corruption done by Bishops and Moderators and lay leaders does not defame the church, but that exposing such corruption does defame it. Leaders facing criminal or corruption charges should not be appointed to preside over Christian institutions, theological colleges and other project oriented establishments.

"Corruption has destroyed the country ... For some, it has become a way of life. This disease has to be banished, we have to get rid of this sin," exclaimed Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The corrupt process through which persons are elected or selected to leadership positions ought to be of great concern to all of us. It is the sole responsibility of the people of God not to show emotional outbursts or reactionary feelings which die down quickly once the conscience compels them to

take a public stand against corruption. Persons are promoted to higher ecclesiastical offices despite corruption charges and adverse reports against them. The Synod authorities bulldoze such public outcry by refusing to see the facts.

The people of God are fed up with the pervasive corruption in the church. The people have a right to know about what is going on in the CSI Trust Association. It is the property of the worshipping community. We should develop a spirituality that transforms itself in a work culture which demands that the high and mighty cannot get away with wrongdoings and are held accountable for their actions of favouritism and vindictiveness. This is a great advantage for the ambitious lot who employ all illicit means to satiate their personal lust for power. CSI Christians seem to nourish and nurture the tolerance for corruption.

Who has ever heard of a Moderator who is the bishop for five dioceses and the President/Chairman for a countless number of rich institutions? If the Moderator post is tenured for four years perhaps the entire CSI would have been brought under the direct control of one individual who was initially consecrated to be a bishop of one diocese. This is a violation of episcopal vocation. It is also an abuse of constitution. The system of an administrative committee set up to run the affairs of the diocese in the place of a bishop chosen by the people should be discouraged.

Recent developments in the practices of Episcopacy seem to be based on wrong notions and flawed understanding of the same, which even invited disciplinary action on some Bishops. It is lamented by Bishop Kadasham that once upon a time we had wooden chalices but golden bishops! The people used to look upon the Bishop as a simple man of God who focused more on the teaching of God's Word, practicing spiritual values and leading a simple lifestyle. The cardinal principles of chastity, purity, humility and poverty were regarded as salient features of Bishops of the past. Sadly recent manifestations have

swerved towards worship of Mammon and other demons of materialism. Bishops considering themselves either as pompous property owners or as corrupt chairmen of a company fill people with contempt and derision. Material considerations and luxurious lifestyles attached to the office of the Bishop demean the credibility of the office. No wonder many among us demand to have a critical review of the Episcopacy. And a revisit to scriptural episcopacy is the felt-need of the hour. But such a re-visit sits on paper and that gets into the Synod locker!

3.16 ‘The Bishops Should Declare Their Assets’, Says Bishop Kadasham

But the former Moderator corrects himself by saying that it is applicable to the newly selected. He is not included in it. He says, “One of the requirements for the newly selected, appointed, consecrated and installed Bishops was that they should declare their assets in the first Executive after Consecration and declare their assets at the time laying down their office. I am confident that this practice will purify this holy office from wrong intentions and woeful practices. I am happy to share with this august body that a few of the Bishops have declared their assets to me, which is available in the Synod office”. This is a statement from a self-righteous man.

Bishop Kadasham thinks that he is righteous and has not committed any sin in relation to his personal assets and that the declaration of assets is applicable only to the newly selected bishops. He has no need to declare anything from his side! He further says that a few of the bishops have declared their assets to *him* which means *he* is a clean man with respect to corruption and he has not accumulated wealth for oneself while serving in ecclesiastical office. What has he done with those few bishop’s assets statements? They have been safely locked in the Synod office. People are not informed of them. The Moderator at first said that the newly elected bishops should submit the details of their assets in the

first Executive Committee of the Synod after their consecration but he now says that a few have submitted to *him*. Why were not they encouraged to submit to the Executive Committee? All this a hypocritical act to show that he is a clean individual as far as handling of money and property of the Church are concerned.

The former Moderator says, "Transparency in the persons holding this sacred office shall cleanse the image of the Episcopacy. The exercise of revisiting Episcopacy should continue to redefine, reform, renew and remodel this office to imbibe in people confidence in this essential office of the Church." Did the speaker maintain this during episcopal office? We do not expect the office of episcopate renewed but liberated. Can he respond to all the First Investigation Reports filed in several Police stations? Can he explain to people who are made to pray for him every Sunday about the criminal proceedings for cheating, fraud, forgery, misappropriation of properties etc. going against him? There is too little transparency to know the truth on any matter connected to Church.

3.17 Bishop Kadasham Continues the Journey on a Wooden Rocking Horse. Talk about Transparency

Today's leaders are raised from the dust to dignity and they amass power in their own hands. The hypocrisy is most stunning. They wail and say 'those who are critical of the institutional church are against the Church' and so institution must destroy them to keep the image of the church clean. This is an oft-repeated complaint of bishops in power that those are critical of the functioning of the episcopal authority are 'enemies of the church'. Moderators are not shadows of God on earth to command the obedience of men and women. Nor has God sold or leased the church to them to serve their self-interests up to any number of years. God cannot be bought nor can truth be silenced by electoral victories. Electoral outcome cannot be turned into a divine

authentication. Churches should be true to the prophetic calling. Moderators cannot promote themselves as mouth-pieces of God. Divine workings are not bound to electoral manipulations and their outcomes. The Moderators cannot claim messianic status, and their every pronouncement is not God's word. A Moderator is chosen to be faithful in word and actions. He is a hired servant appointed to accomplish certain task with a sincere heart and a pure conscience by serving the people of God. He is a steward and a house-keeper in the household of God. A bishop or Moderator should feed the Church but not feed on the Church.

Primus inter pares: the first among equals *or* first among peers (servants) is a Latin phrase describing the most senior person of a group sharing the same rank or office of an episcopate. But he is looked upon as an authority of special importance though he is formally equal. The Moderatorship is not an office that is divinely superior to that of bishops. The question then is that whether the title Most Reverend signifies superiority of the office above the bishops. This is the ambivalence. On the one hand, we have the title taken up by the Moderator as soon as he is declared elected through voting or unanimity a religious title such as the Most Reverend. There is not religious service and there is no one to effect a consecration as in the case of an Archbishop or Metropolitan so that the CSI Moderator can be acclaimed as a religious order above the Bishops. He reverts to the title of Right Reverend soon after the expiry of the period of his Moderatorship. The CSI Constitution is silent on the status of the Moderator except to say that he presides over the Synod.

Bishop Kadasham is riding in his wooden horse when he talks about extending the union with other churches. Having not done a thing towards continuing conversations with the Lutheran and Methodist Churches, he pushes the unity endeavors into a distant future. He spoke that the CSI 'should continually seek to widen and strengthen the fellowship towards the goal of the full union in one body of all parts of

the Church of Christ.' Another 'should' statement followed. He added, 'Therefore, the Church's journey should continue and extend beyond the Communion of Churches in India. Dialogue shall be initiated with other reformed traditions in India for much broader fellowship.' None of these vital efforts took place during his time in the office of the Moderator.

'The Ministry of the Church' is defined in the CSI Constitution thus: *The ministry of the Church expresses the servanthood of Jesus Christ.* What is servanthood? The Constitution goes on to say, 'This ministry in its *priestly, pastoral, prophetic and service* aspects is received from the ministry of Jesus Christ, manifested during his earthly life and continued as the risen and ascended Lord.'⁸³ There are *four dimensions* to Christian ministry according to the CSI. How were these four aspects operating in the life of earthly Jesus and now through the presence of the risen Christ? Every section of ministry should be revealing what the earthly Jesus did and the risen Christ is continuing to do. The work of the former Moderator is a clear example to show that a proper wisdom and understanding of servanthood is lacking in the Church of South India today.

What is the portrait of a 'servant'? As J. D. Crossan has pointed out, the Gospels contain nine parables in which servants figure prominently: the watchful doorkeeper (Mark 13:33-37/Luke 12:35-38); the evil overseer (Matt 24:45-51/Luke 12:42-46); trading with the talents/the pounds as faithful servants (Matt 25:14-30/Luke 19:12-27); the servant trying to usurp power of the throne claimant (Luke 19:12b, 14-15a, 27); the unmerciful servant unable to show forgiveness (Matt 18:23-28); the unprofitable servant doing only his responsibility (Luke 17:7-10); the wicked tenants who murdered the heir to the property (Mark 12:1-11; Matt 21:33-44; Luke 20:9-18); the unjust steward showing shrewdness to repent of his misdeeds (Luke 16:1-8); and all servants receiving equal

⁸³ *CSI Constitution*, p. 33.

100 Speaking Truth to Power

payment (Matt 20:1-13).¹ A new understanding of servanthood of Christian office is the need of the hour.

THEN THE LORD OPENED THE MOUTH OF THE DONKEY... (1)

*The First Epistle to the Moderator
of the Church of South India, 25 Sept. 2015*

“The bishop may become a dictator, or he may become a rubber stamp for the tyranny of cleverly manipulated majorities.”⁸⁴

Dear and Respected Moderator,

Greetings in the Name of our Lord Jesus who is the Head of the Church.

The clause ‘Then the Lord opened the mouth of the donkey ...’ is taken from Numbers 22:28, and the story of prophet Balaam riding on the donkey is well-known to all of us. A donkey is the meanest and weakest animal and unfit to speak but it could not tolerate and had to react to the beating to go forward in accordance with the engrossed desire for the gain of the rider. I consider myself as part of the donkey, the church that carries the Synod hierarchy. In one of your emails to me you had asked me to keep quiet and mind my own business which meant ‘do not do what is none of your business’. The former President of the

⁸⁴ L. Newbiggin, “Episcopacy and Quest for Unity”, unpublished paper, pp. 1-3.

United Theological College UTC in Bangalore used to warn me openly and indirectly many times that I confine myself to the teaching at the college and not write about the church. Once a mere mention of CSITA [the Trust Fund of the Church of South India CSI. Ed] by me fired him up to swear at me in an indecent manner.

These days, the life of a theological educator is a pretty paranoid existence in theological colleges. I, as a theological educator, have to shunt from class room to court room to keep my worldly appointment intact. I am so far successful as both the lower court and high court in Bangalore gave orders in my favour. UTC is subsumed under the CSI Synod politics. When the Synod gets a cold, UTC begins to cough and vice versa. As a result there is a new dispensation to breed a new class of theological educator, i.e. every theological educator nowadays grooms himself/herself to be a sycophant of some bishop or an office-bearer of the Synod to ensure a safe present and prosperous future. Sycophancy is an irrational, timid, shameful and opportunistic behaviour opposed to a dynamic, radical, liberate and prophetic ministry which the church and society are really in need of. The Executive Committee of UTC which met on 11 April 2015 decided to advise the faculty 'to facilitate more looser ... involvement with the church in India'. The minute writer meant 'looser relationship'! This means that a faculty member should, like a loose tooth, maintain a shaky and a touch-and-go relationship with the church (seeing but passing by) by turning their eyes away from the difficult issues.

But the Lord is opening the mouth of the donkey everywhere in the CSI these days. Let me repeat, the Lord is opening the mouth of the donkey (the people of God) both within and without. I hope that you and your colleagues are listening ... to the braying voice.

4.1 Theological Barrenness and Poverty in the CSI Today

There is a theological barrenness and poverty in the CSI today, even as the Synod hierarchies do not have adequate knowledge about the history and theology of the CSI. It is not enough to hold a higher degree in theology; what is important is how theological considerations are permitted to pervade through and determine the day-to-day decision-making in the church. The former Moderator spoke of the CSI in his paper on 'Renewal and Re-vitalisation of CSI' as a mere federation of four denominations. I have pointed this out in detail in my book, '*... That They May Also Be Sanctified in Truth*' (2013). This is probably the result of the anti-intellectualist legacy which we received from the western missionary world. We need to develop a creative theology that can help the CSI build religiosity of its own, and such a creative theology has to come from biblical foundations. By gagging the mouth of the theologians (both lay and ordained), the CSI is experiencing a theological paucity which will eventually lead the church to decay and corruption.

4.2 The Rough Side of the Episcopacy: Episcopacy in the 21st Century

The Canadian clergyman E. Harrison wrote in 1967 in his book *A Church Without God*, thus:

'If the church were seriously accepted as "the people of God", then all their feelings, reactions, and thoughts would be represented in its teaching. But this has not happened. Instead, the people have, either willingly or under duress, passed their right to make decisions into the care of smaller groups. These groups, having taken the initiative and claiming to speak for the rest, come to like the high status that flows from their leadership. They seek to maintain it not only for themselves

but for their children and for those who can receive inheritance as children (referring to priests and bishops). So in the course of time, the church comes to mean not the people of God but a small coterie which finds the means to impose its will on the rest ... that only the occasional rebel can raise questions.' He adds, 'The church so described is clearly not the whole people of God, nor even a majority of them, but a small group that is supposed to know best ... It is difficult to understand how they could reconcile their drive for power and their ruthless use of it with their Christian piety.'(pp. 2-3) In many cases, these are not reconciled, but they are blissfully ignorant of the contradiction between their religious faith and political life. The political leaders avoid coming to terms with power supervened by the Christian piety of calling and discipleship.

I would like to consider here another scholar K. R. Bridston, who in his book *Church Politics* (1969) observes rightly that 'the political pathology of church leaders is an unexplored field' (p.11). This is very true in CSI today. You may say that there is no politics in church life. But politics is necessary for organising, promoting and developing the life of the Church. 'Power' is not a dirty word, nor does it always have negative connotations, but when 'power is considered part of that untamed brutish element of life which is unredeemed' (p. 85) then it stands to be condemned. 'Church politics failed more grievously to meet professed standards of human conduct' (p.9). The political leaders' power should be open 'to rational correctives of theological criticism as well as spiritual disciplines of authentic piety whereby it might be channelled in a constructive way for the edification of the communal structures and the common life' (p. 86). It is this type of power which is necessary to be in operation in the church today.

Synod is not the place from where orders can be issued in the manner of an army headquarters or a business management to the local dioceses. The Moderator of the CSI is called 'the Most Reverend' indicating a rank different from and higher than the Right Reverend

Bishop. Ministerially, the Moderator takes a leading role in the service of the consecration of the bishops by first laying his hands on the Bishop-elect. But the Moderator in the CSI does not outrank a bishop by his title 'Most Reverend' because he gives this up once he ceases to function as Moderator. Between these two truths a delicate and difficult balance has to be maintained, as was often said by Bishop Newbigin.

That the Moderator sits at the top this conception of authority has penetrated into the thought of the Church of South India, and this is sufficient evidence of the depth of the distortion of the whole understanding of the nature of the Church which has been created by a wholly unbiblical conception of 'control.' These lead us to most serious and fundamental questions about the nature of episcopacy. Questions are raised that are widespread and deep. Some of them I outline here.

4.3 The Historic Episcopate in Constitutional Form is Distorted Beyond Recognition

The office of the Moderator has not been expounded anywhere in previous CSI documents. We know that the nature of the office comes from the Presbyterian tradition. It refers to 'a member of a group who is officially on the same level as other members but who is in fact has slightly more responsibility or power'. This principle should be maintained always in the CSI government. The Moderators should be careful and wise to function within the domain of 'slightly more responsibility or power'. This means that Moderator's powers will have severe limitations, and no effort should be made to broaden that special status so as to include the entire church with over-sweeping powers conferred on him. It is not the Moderator who is found from start to finish in all the administrative conundrums. He cannot have direct jurisdiction over the CSI as a whole. Here is the wisdom of the Presbyterian Church government which we in the CSI should rework and redefine.

I do not mean, at the same time, that the CSI Moderator should be a weak person, unable to take decisions and having no courage to face genuine opponents of the Church and the enemies of the Gospel of the Kingdom of God. All your dynamism must work within that principle of ‘first among the equals’ so that the Moderator is not metamorphosed into a dictator with the help or without the help of a written Constitution.

4.4 The New Moderator will be Performing a ‘One-man Show’

It is not clear to me what is the genesis of the Constitution amendments and particularly the answer to the question, ‘Where do they spring from?’ – from people? or from the heads of the Moderator or Synod officers? The Minutes of the Synod Executive Committee held on 20-21 October 2014 say, ‘The Moderator explained the need for updating the bye-laws in order to fill the certain lacunae and also to ensure that the Constitution and Bye-laws of all the Dioceses are in line with the Synod Constitution and Bye-laws.’ Is this the aspiration of the people? What special procedure was adopted to secure the opinions and views from the people of the CSI? Where does the stimulus to revise the Constitution come from? Are there real lacunae in the CSI Constitution? What are the credentials of the people on the Constitution Revision Committee? Why were only five members picked for this important job from 4.5 million Christians? Why were they given a short time of a few months (between two Executive Committee meetings) to work on them? The answer to all these questions is that the Moderator in his wisdom had worked a draft already and was seeking official channels to push them through.

4.5 There is a Real Danger of Bye-Laws Losing the CSI Smell and Flavour that Have Made Us Unique among Churches

The most important clarification required is, are the amendments going to be inserted among the existing ones? Or, are the portions of original text to be deleted? Are the original texts going to be altered? Or, are the original texts to be intact? My first comment is that the proposed amendments and new Bye-laws will run into problems with several existing rules and bye-laws which have arisen out of the vision of the founding fathers of the CSI and which have worked well for us in the last 68 years. In Ch. IX of the CSI Constitution, it reads, ‘The Synod is the supreme governing and legislative body of the Church of South India and the final authority in all matters pertaining to the Church’ (13). Again, it says, ‘The Synod has power to frame its own rules of debate and of procedure, subject to provisions of this Constitution’ (19), and on the role of the Moderator it is stated thus: ‘The Moderator shall be the presiding officer of the Synod and the Chairman of the Executive Committee’ (9). Now the new bye-laws will eject these profound laws which characterise the very nature of the CSI. If you drop or delete or modify these rules, then you kill the CSI altogether!

According to the new Rules, ‘All office-bearers of the Synod become automatically members of the Boards and Standing Committees of the Synod.’ This will pave the way for hegemony of the Synod hierarchy and would deeply undermine the voices that come from the other members of the committee who live in constant touch with the people.

4.6 Let us Rewind the Messages of the Moderators to See Who and What They Thought They were

The Constitution is not mere set words that require obedience from us. It is a historic and ecclesiastical act. The Constitution should be read always with interpretation related to the historical past. Adherence to the original intent of the Constitution enactors is necessary at this present moment of our life.

I wanted to see how the first Moderator was chosen/elected and also went through all the moderators' addresses delivered in the past. The Minutes of the First Synod (1948) reads: 'Election of Moderator and Deputy Moderator. Without nomination and discussion and voting by ballot, the Synod elected the Rt. Rev. A. Hollis, Moderator and the Rt. Rev. C. K. Jacob, Deputy Moderator. Resolved that the name "Moderator" itself was adequate for use when addressing the Moderator.' Even the first Moderator was worried about what was happening in the church at that time. In the second Synod, he spoke thus: 'Quarrelling and litigation, self-seeking and lust for power seem to them perfectly ordinary incidents in the life of a Christian' (*Minutes*, p. 31). After he was chosen for the second time as the Moderator, he wrote in a letter dated 17 Feb. 1952. 'I must first say what a very great honour it is that I have been again chosen by the Synod as the Moderator (second time); it is not a responsibility which anyone would seek' (*South India Churchman*, March 1950, p. 2). The dream of many in theological colleges today is that they should become Moderators of the CSI one day, nothing less than reaching that pinnacle of power will do.

In the third Synod (1952) Bishop Hollis mentioned in his Moderator address, '... the church will, I believe survive, not only by the elaboration of its organization or the number of the institutions but by the spiritual life of its village Christians' (*Minutes*, p. 69). In the 4th Synod, he said, 'I pray that you will choose rightly and that God's blessing may be with the man of your choice' (*Minutes*, p. 53). What a

graceful way of bowing out! Bishop C.K. Jacob who declared the formation of the CSI from the altar of the CSI Cathedral in Chennai in 1947 said in humble terms, 'All my life I had no ambition to become great or rich. Truly speaking, I was below average ... I had only one desire, and that was, service and self-effacement' (*South India Churchmen*, Feb. 1958, p.12). A simple thought was left to the CSI community by the Moderator Bishop H. Sumitra who concluded his speech in the 8th Synod (1962), 'In conclusion, let us rejoice with the Lord, because we are His flock, His people' (*Minutes*, p. 38). The statement made by the Moderator A.H. Legg in the 9th Synod (1964) makes us wonder at the level of competition for securing the post of Moderator. He said, '... responsibilities of Moderator was unexpectedly thrust to me two years ago' (*Minutes*, p. 11). The following must be the prayer of every Moderator as he steps down after two years of service of the church. Let me quote the words of the Most Rev. P. Solomon who, I think, was a Moderator for six years, and who spoke thus in the 11th Synod, 'Finally I should like us all to remember the people whom we represent in this Synod. Whatever we say and do here, let it be for the welfare of the people and the Glory of God. We have come here to spend five days in fellowship with one another and with the Lord of the Church. Let us hear His voice and together perform the tasks that are set before us' (*Minutes*, p. 71).

Let me quote from the Moderator the Most. Rev. Ananda Rao Samuel (whom you have known well) because he spoke of the humility that the Moderator ought to show at times. 'Servants of the Servant Lord' was the theme of the 11th Synod in 1970. Ananda Rao Samuel spoke on this occasion: 'This type of thinking has to seep through the congregations. When people catch a vision of their own ministry of the Servant Lord radical changes are bound to happen' (*Minutes*, p. 71). Just see the affectionate words of Ananda Rao Samuel uttered towards his fellow-bishops in the 14th Synod, 'I thank ... the brother bishops who

have at all times extended their utmost co-operation and help in the affairs of the Synod. I am grateful to my brothers and sisters throughout CSI' (*Minutes*, p. 56). It is he who always stressed the Bishop-in-Council idea for episcopacy. He said, 'The bishop is not an autocrat and he cannot act as such. He has no veto except in matters of faith and order in which he can only suspend decision until the Synod gives a ruling. The Council and the bishops always have to interact'.

You have known, I am sure, that the Synod office was opened only in 1958 in the diocesan office buildings of Madras diocese. It is interesting to read what was said by the Moderator Bishop H. Sumitra who spoke at the 6th Synod (1958) held in Nagercoil thus: 'The Working Committee has felt that the work of the Church is severely handicapped by the absence of a central office. The officers are men with heavy duties of their own, living in different parts of South India. Although they can have some clerical help in their own places, a central office, where most of the copying and mailing can be done, and where church records can be preserved will be a very valuable help. The CSI Trust Association is also in very bad need of a person who can give a whole time to its work. There is therefore a proposal to establish a central office for our church in the buildings of the Madras Diocesan Office, with a small staff.' (*Minutes*, p. 55)

Now, how are you, Synod office? Trying to centralise everything and bring everybody under Synod administration. 'Synod is the Church' – that is what the Synod hierarchy seems to convey to us through their speeches/silences and actions/inactions. The Synod officers may be called 'representatives' of the church but with high caution. In some respect, 'yes' but not to the extent of understanding that the church has to exist in them and it cannot exist without them. The former Moderator has bragged himself as 'the mouth-piece of God' (See his Farewell Address in 2014). Even OT prophets never claimed that status for themselves. He has gone a few steps further to divinise himself. It is a pagan thought and a blasphemy!

Don't try to bring every diocesan Constitution in line with Synod Constitution. What do you mean by this? As Synod officers you are seeking to centralise power so that every diocese is a mere branch or an off-shoot of the Synod and every bishop must learn to be a henchman of the Moderator. The Synod exists for the dioceses and not the other way round! Preserve the diversity of Christian faith and tradition reflected by each diocese. Don't wipe out those diverse heritages! If bishops are not obedient to the Moderator remember what happened in Medak and Tuticorin dioceses. Remember what is not happening to the bishop in Kanyakumari diocese. The Synod hierarchy interferes with the local politics of each diocese and they run a parallel/alternative administration with their own puppets/stooges. What damage it causes to Christian fellowship and witness! The Synod office-bearers can de-stabilize any diocese within a matter of weeks if the bishop fails to maintain the 'cordial' relationship with the Synod officers. The Synod administration has produced cronies, sycophants and flatterers. The amendments and changes in the bye-laws will add fuel to the fire that is already burning!

4.7 The CSI Moderator Cannot and Will not Have Pastoral Oversight of the Whole Church

According to the proposed amendments, the title 'Moderator' is made into a pastoral overseer of the entire CSI who will have authority to have his/her hand on everything in every diocese. If so, the Moderator will be usurping the dignity of the pastoral office held by the diocesan bishops and presbyters. The Metropolitans used to claim such powers in the olden days of the Metropolitan of the Calcutta diocese during the colonial period, but the CSI rejected the Metropolitan system. The CSI Moderator is definitely not an Archbishop (highest of all bishops), and the CSI as a whole is not an Archdiocese of the Moderator. The expressions 'the Moderator will be the Chairperson', 'the Moderator will appoint', 'the Moderator will nominate': these run through the new

Bye-laws. It means that the new CSI Moderator will be a ‘Super-man’ who will have excessive control over the diocesan bishops and all the committees and Boards with his three other office-bearers.

If such an all-powerful and all-knowing every-where-present Moderator is running the church then why do we not add this following bye-law to the duties of the Moderator: that ‘He shall represent the Synod/church in all legal proceedings and shall sue and be sued on behalf of the Synod/church’. Why should the poor man (a presbyter or a lay) who is the minute-writer for the Gen. Secretary bear this responsibility? Why should the General Secretary be the scape-goat to bear the sins of the Synod hierarchy?

See how the new Moderator of CSI envisaged by you will spread his powers into every diocese. The Amendment reads: ‘He (The Moderator) shall have the right to attend meetings of a Diocesan Council ‘...How can this be tenable with the powers of bishops who shall be ‘President of the Diocesan Council ...’? The new Moderator will be claiming his participation or intervention in the function of the diocese as his RIGHT to do so. You may say that it will be with the consent of the local bishop. But which bishop can say ‘no’ when the Constitution says that the Moderator has right to attend the diocesan Councils?

Please look at the bye-law which says, ‘He (Moderator) is the visible symbol of unity in the church and shall have the general oversight of the whole church.’ This is highly unacceptable to the CSI and is against the views of Christian leadership. If the Moderator is the symbol of unity (centralising and centralised power?) what will happen to the status of diocesan bishops who, according to our present Constitution, will maintain the spiritual unity and function like a shepherd?

Now read this new rule that is going to be inserted and which gives an indication how the CSI Synod is moving towards making the body to function under a one-man show. As the present Moderator you have five or more dioceses under your belt and you have several bishops acting in implicit obedience to you. The future Moderator, somewhere down the

line, will aim for more than five if he is perhaps be a man with unbridled ambition. Moderators in the present century are showing themselves to be most ambitious men in the church who could outwit a secular politician in the pursuit of power! Power-grabbing techniques seem to be the primary requisites for winning and occupying episcopal positions in the church. Now if you give the Moderator pastoral oversight over the entire CSI you then are turning all the diocesan bishops into your deputy or suffragan bishops. Pastoral oversight sums up all the functions of the bishops, and they will be taken over by the Moderator or at least kept subject to the Moderator's Pastoral oversight. Can he touch the money box of each diocese? Yes, someone may try to do that at some stage.

These statements in a picturesque way paint the plight of episcopacy in the CSI. Quite rightly so. It should be remembered that the Moderator is Bishop, and as argued already he is not above the class of Bishops. We showed that Moderator is an administrative term as it is not conferred through special ordination or consecration, and he is not to be thought of as an Archbishop in the sense of a chief Bishop with higher rank. Nor is the Moderator like a Metropolitan who would have the entire CSI as if it constitutes a province, therefore with all the 22 dioceses falling under the domain of his authority.

4.8 Is the CSI Leadership Affected by Sociopathy?

The procedure you have outlined runs contradictory to the provision in the existing Constitution which affirms, 'All the Officers of the Synod shall be elected by ballot of the Synod ...'. The Bishops' Council cannot have powers on their own to nominate or elect the Moderator. Numerically, such a system is more convenient to suit wallets and other types of give-and-take or I-owe-you deals. It is 'ballot' and not 'wallet' that should determine the election of the Moderator. If he is to function as the presiding officer of the Synod, the entire Synod should decide on the appointment of the Moderator, which would also give freedom to all

senior bishops an opportunity to contest for Moderatorship. Further, we should do away with the simple majority system and always require a two-thirds majority for elections and decision-making.

I would like to remind you of the words of Bishop Newbigin who wrote about 55 years ago, and whose words could be guidelines for Constitutional revision today. He wrote, ‘There are a few matters on which amendment has been found necessary, but none of them touches any of the fundamental features of the Scheme. Perhaps the one point at which the Constitution as it stands seems to be rather remote from what has actually happened is in the sections dealing with the relation of the Bishops to the Synod ... But in fact, partly because the Synod has never proceeded by the method of majority voting on any vital matter, and partly because there has been from the beginning a relation of mutual trust and affection between the Bishops and the rest of the Church, there has never been any occasion when it was felt necessary for the Bishops to act separately over against the Synod ... The Bishops sit and speak as part of the Synod. They do not always take the same side in a debate! But they are always listened to with the respect due to their office. And they, with the other members of the Synod, have always been able to come away from the meetings with a real conviction that they could say together: “It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us ...”.’ – (L. Newbigin, *The Reunion of the Church: A Defence of the South India Scheme*, 1960, pp. xxvii-xviii).

At some point, I wish to write to you about the four grand Church Councils that met, debated, discussed and arrived at decisions as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles. Remember, it was Synod/Council which made decisions each time on behalf of the church, and no powerful individual in the name of leadership steam-rolled the council and pushed his own agenda. I) The council that met to select Matthias to replace Judas (Acts 1): in this council they presumably did not write the same name in both the lots! II) The famous Jerusalem Council narrated in Acts 15: please see particularly how debates were conducted and that

disagreements/differences were allowed to be expressed, and that ultimately it was a decision about which they could all proudly say, 'It seemed good to US and to the Holy Spirit'. I request you to find references to two other councils in Acts and see how they functioned and operated internally.

4.9 Unconstitutional Leadership?

I am sorry, I am bit harsh here. But let me explain. We in the CSI have one beautiful admonition (which is a law!) under 'Conduct, Business and Committees' (ch. 9: 18-27) that everybody has to follow in the meetings of the Synod. This law stands at the top of the rules for conducting business in the Synod or in Committees. It is found in the 18th section of ch. IX of our Constitution. It reads, 'In all its work the Synod should take time to wait upon God and listen to his voice, both in order that it may receive His guidance for its administrative work, and also that He may speak through it to the whole Church and make His will known to it for the strengthening of its spiritual life and for the perfecting of its witness and service.' Now, I am afraid, this has to be sacrificed in favour of the 16 provisions you have worked out focussing on the central control procedural mechanism to be exercised by the Moderator alone in the proceedings of the Synod. The place of God has been taken over by the Moderator, who is visibly in control determining who is to speak? For how long? And how many can speak?

The very first provision in the new Bye-laws says, 'The control of the business of the Synod shall be in the hands of the Moderator who shall have full discretion to give such rulings as are necessary on any matters not covered by the Constitution.' Isn't this a complete self-indulgence on the part of the Moderator who puts himself in the place of the guidance of the Spirit? The 16 provisions you have outlined to be followed in the conduct of business in the Synod make my head spin as you are trying to create so many strictures and obstructions with the

chief intention of resisting and avoiding a full-scale debate on any issue. Motions, voting, and adjournment, resolving into committees, points of order: all these are weapons to annihilate the true spirit of debate and discussion happening in the Synod. You show intolerance of criticism and dissent. Look at no. 15 under the Rules for the Conduct of Synod Business in your proposal which reads, 'Normally no member will speak for more than five minutes on any subject or resolution except the mover of the resolution. The Moderator shall have discretion to limit the time allotted to any subject or to any member who wishes to speak on any subject or to indicate how many speakers may be permitted.' The despotic behaviour of the Moderator is quite apparent here. The Synod is to conduct business or pretend to conduct business according to the script of the Moderator to fulfil his wishes who is only a presiding officer. All possible and impossible tactics are followed by the Moderator to prevent democratic proceedings so that the Moderator can achieve his agenda with the help of a few men who are willing to do service to him on the floor of the Synod.

The word democracy combined the elements *dêmos* which means people and *krátos*, a force or power. Democracy is to be the rule of public opinion in the form of individual and self-determination. The Constitution must advance individual and ecclesiastical potential and not to curb or subvert them. Gandhiji elucidated that 'My notion of democracy is that under it the weakest shall have the same opportunities as the strongest.'

Please read the final clause 16 under the new 'Rules for the Conduct of Synod Business' which eats up all the previous 15 bye-laws. It reads, 'A Rule or Order may be suspended for the time by unanimous consent.' It not only defeats everything what was said before but most importantly it makes a mockery of rules and regulations that the same Synod which has to abide by them can silence them or make them inoperative and ineffective either temporarily or once too often. Finally, the power to look to is the Moderator!

Your conduct of business reflects the proceedings in a Moghul court in the medieval period in India where a despotic ruler would function autocratically under the label 'democracy'. Even the high Anglicans changed their views on bishops, we are told. In one of the articles in *South India Churchman* (April 1948) W. Elphick wrote, 'But in the Anglican view, the Rt. Reverend Father-in-God is not an autocrat whose every word is law and whose judgment and decision cannot be gainsaid' (p. 120). I hope this is true in practice.

How long must a process for constitutional revision take? Not less than a year. Don't you think, the people of the CSI (40-45 lakhs people and 22 bishops as per today, and it was only 10 lakhs Christians in the year 1958) and the first Protestant Church in India in such a large number should be given more time to understand the merits and demerits of these proposals before preparing themselves to decide upon them? Why did Medak diocesan Council (I am told by your pastors who are my students) which you chaired decide on only two amendments, namely the change of age of retirement from 65-67 and the matter of triennium? Do you think that if those two years are given to you and to the former Moderator then you can both (as you both often do) push the rest of the Bye-laws and amendments down the throat of the Church in the two-year period?

I am about one year younger than you, sir. I have heard in the last two decades of your dynamic leadership, particularly in handling persons in making them enemies or winning them as friends to fulfil tight agendas in the church. You clearly won big elections, influenced committee decisions of high order, elevating or down-grading individuals of high office whom you liked or disliked. As a result, your very name struck terror in the thoughts of CSI members throughout the world. Although, at times, I admired your courage and straight-forwardness, I hope you realise that many of us are saddened that your name was associated in the last two decades with several criminal cases,

court proceedings, FIRs and other types of scandal on which the Head of Church, the chief Shepherd will have to conduct an enquiry should the earthly courts fail. I have a message for you, sir! Please retire gracefully by March next year. Your partner bishop will also go with you. Why do you propose a new Bye-law ['Duties of Officers' 1 (h)] that retired bishops can be asked to take care of the CSI when all the bishops are out of the country? Do you hope to get back to the thick of things even during your retirement days?

I was so shocked to hear that you are mentally preparing yourself to push the amendments and the new bye-laws through even if two-thirds of the diocesan councils do not accept the proposals. You are also contemplating, I hear, to create a situation that there can be no election for the new Moderator in 2016 so that the present team can continue as it is. These two will land the CSI in a huge crisis and cause irreparable damage to the life of the Church. Please withdraw the Constitution revision draft in its present form and content. Let the CSI live!

Request to other Readers: There are some who shout at me over the phone that I should not attack the bishops in my writings by using harsh language. That is not my purpose. I am asking such persons to read the second volume of my book, *We Began at Tranquebar* (2013) to know about the origin and development of CSI Episcopacy. My book, I am confident, will defend, protect and nurture episcopacy at least for 50 years to come, if everybody reads it. There are also those who may not like the fierce criticism I have been making in this email against the Moderator (their idol and hope of living) and against the Synod proposals of Amendments and new Bye-laws. They may try to increase my pain at UTC! All the best to them! I have taken the liberty of expressing some opinions in a forthright manner to the Moderator by taking advantage of my facile acquaintance with him during the seminary days.

Please, readers, do not vote for accepting the Amendments and Bye-laws in their present form and content. Your uncritical acceptance will

demolish all that we as a church has achieved in the last 60 years or so. Hold a placard everywhere, 'Say NO to Synod Amendments' outside every diocesan council meeting hall. Demand ballet-box voting on the issue. Don't give blanket acceptance by yielding to the pressure from Synod agents.

This is already 6000 words. I intend to write to the Moderator on other aspects of the Amendments and the new Bye-laws in my subsequent writings again as a 'donkey' who does not see a bright future for the CSI with the current proposals from the Synod.

Yours sincerely.

Joseph Gnanaseelan Muthuraj

Professor in New Testament and a Presbyter of CSI

(Sent by email dated 24 September 2015)

**THEN THE LORD OPENED THE MOUTH
OF THE DONKEY ... (2)**

*The Second Epistle to the Moderator
of the Church of South India, 12 Oct. 2015*

***A Purple Revolution! Educate! Agitate!! Unite!!! A Prayer
to all the Faithful in CSI***

Dear and Respected Moderator,

Greetings in the Name of Jesus Christ, the Corner-stone of the Church.

The Amendments and the new Bye-laws to the present Constitution of the CSI were passed in a special session of the Synod held on 8th April, 2015. We are given to understand that the 32 pages of the proposed amendments and bye-laws were passed without any serious study and discussion. The former General Secretary of CSI wrote that the 8th April, 2015 was a Black Day in the history of CSI when democracy was murdered. Now the dioceses are under duress to accept the entire draft or part of it, particularly the change of retirement age from 65-67 which is a baitfish many will like to bite.

- 1) Gather every atom of rebellion towards revolution into an intelligently ordered silent action for an insistent demand to say NO to the Amendments and new Bye-Laws. By faith, the walls of Jericho ...
- 2) It will be a fatal pooling of contradictions if all these bye-laws have to be written into the existing Constitution. The new ones will expunge the old ones inherited from the early visionaries and leaders of CSI.
- 3) Don't sit on the side-lines! Don't watch it from the Distance!! Don't allow yourselves to become habituated to the role of spectator!!!
- 4) The hasty, passionate and unwise Amendments and Bye-laws are detrimental to you and to your people. The Constitution is pro-establishment, anti-people and totally unrelated to congregational life which is the lifeline of the CSI. CSI is a genuine 'People's Movement' not merely an institution ruled by the Moderator and his colleagues in the Executive Committee and Synod.
- 5) No longer do we wait for things to change by themselves. Don't mourn, unite and organise!
- 6) You are called to create history! Save the future church!!
- 7) Checkmate the move to impose the Amendments and new Bye-Laws
- 8) A few bishops united together can bring a big change in the destiny of the people.
- 9) The imposition of changes to the Constitution should be opposed as they eat into the vital features of our present Constitutional Laws and Bye-laws & Basis of Union.
- 10) If we don't use our power we will be stuck with the present mess which the Moderator is putting CSI in. Let us support and encourage each other in the pursuit of freedom of expression and independent thought.

5.1 Who is the New Moderator? He will be the Pontiff of the CSI

- 11) I have touched on this new Bye-law already in my first Epistle. The bye-law reads, ‘The Moderator is the visible symbol of unity in the Church, according to the new Bye-laws, and shall have the general pastoral oversight of the whole Church’. This is the great leap of change in the ministry of the CSI which will heavily alter the whole nature of CSI, its life and its government. This not only goes against the grain of CSI’s Basis of Union, but contradicts the very essence of Protestant faith as it distinctly reflects the teaching of the Catholic Church on the Pope, the Bishop of Rome, who is believed to be the visible Head of the Church. I am not suggesting that the Roman Catholics are wrong but that CSI, a church belonging to and emerged from the Reformed traditions, must eschew all temptation to convert the office of the Moderator into a Pontificate.
- 12) The Anglicans see the episcopate as a symbol of Unity, i.e., a ‘unifying force’ in space and time ‘rather than in its ability to enforce discipline’. Some Anglicans say that it does not denote absolute power but should be exercised within a synodical structure of bishops, presbyters and laity.
- 13) In the book *Luther and Papacy* (1981) it is remarked that Martin Luther had ‘challenged consistently the argument that the church needed a SINGLE VISIBLE HEAD.’ The author further added, ‘For Luther the danger of tyranny always outweighed the advantage of one visible symbol of unity, and he stuck by that position even after witnessing the breakup of Protestantism.’ Luther maintained that the Church could survive without the papacy as the visible head of unity.

5.2 The Primacy of the Moderator in a Pyramidal Type of Authority

14) What the Moderator means by visible symbol of Unity of the Church can be gathered from the 'Duties of the Moderator' as outlined in the new proposal draft approved by the Special Synod held on 8 April 2015.

- i) The present Constitution says, 'The Moderator shall be the official representative of the Church during his term of office in all business with other Churches and organizations'. Whereas the new Bye-law is, 'The Moderator is the official spokesperson of the Church on its policies and visions.' Can someone else have vision about CSI? Can a lay member have vision about CSI? Will that be termed unofficial by the human institution of the Synod?
- ii) The new Moderator as 'the presiding officer of the Synod' will take further his role to 'give leadership in the discharge of the collective responsibility of the officers and administrative bodies of the Synod.' The presiding officer of the Synod proceedings thus becomes the controlling leader of all the functions of the officers and the administrative Bodies of the Synod in the new Bye-laws.
- iii) The new Moderator will have the 'right' to attend meetings of a Diocesan Council which would mean that in order to have the approval of the next set of proposals for Constitutional change, the Moderator himself will be present at the each Church Council to push decisions in his favour.

- iv) On flimsy grounds, the new Moderator can take over the administration of a diocese by appointing his Commissary when the Diocesan bishop is 'unable to act'. What does 'unable to act' mean? Not carrying out the Synod office-bearers instructions or showing indifference to them?
 - v) According to the new Bye-laws, a retired bishop will be eligible to act as Moderator in the absence of all CSI bishops out of the country. So retired bishops, keep fit!
 - vi) The new Moderator will be the Chairman of 'all Synodical Boards/Councils.'
- 15) The new Constitution allows the Moderator to stretch his long arms of power and control to touch any side or nook and corner of CSI machinery so that everyone should be confined within his shadow. Whether that happens wittingly or unwittingly, CSI will lose its historical roots and uniqueness and all the hard work done by the early founding fathers over the period of 28 years in Joint Committee Meetings (1919-1947) will be side-lined. Again, the existence of 68 years of CSI will also be brought to an end when the episcopacy was at least constitutionally upheld as 'Historic Episcopacy in Constitutional form'. If the Moderator errs on this, history will not forgive him. The Constitutional amendments reflect a conscious and systematic effort to centralise the administration under the visible unity of the Church, the Moderator.
- 16) The non-episcopal elements of CSI are allowed to dry out and wither away in the context of an ascending primacy of the Moderator. There is a subtle sense of infallibility attached to the Moderator's functions.

- 17) The whole life, government and administration of the CSI are based on the principles of Basis of Union which stands as Appendix I in the CSI Constitution (2003). CSI believes in the 'priesthood of all believers' which means that every member of CSI should regard himself/herself as symbolising the unity in Christ and in the Church. Every congregation is a visible symbol of unity, and the Church as a whole is a visible sign of Unity reflecting the invisible Head of Unity, the Christ.
- 18) 'The gifts He gave (to the Church) were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ' (Ephesians 4: 11-13). Everyone called by God should be 'making every effort to maintain the Unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace' (Eph. 4: 3). Everyone who leads a life worthy of the calling is an effective symbol of Unity in the Church.
- 19) Congregations, creeds, councils, elections, liturgy, bishops, presbyters and the laity – all of them have a unifying role and are major factors for unity, and it is not laid on one single office visibly symbolising the unity of the Church.
- 20) The Most Reverend is put into the office of Moderator and is put out again after two years making the title to be passed on to the next Moderator. He can be considered as the first among the equals as he plays a key role in the consecration of a bishop. He has some special powers and influence prescribed by the Basis of Union and the Constitution. But these cannot be magnified into a huge orbit of power within the boundaries of which the Church has to find its self-expression. Moderatorship is still a ministerial position subject to the demands of all the episcopal duties of

preaching, teaching, evangelising, shepherding, ordaining and serving as a father-in-God. The new Constitution is a recipe for intolerable ecclesiastical tyranny by one single person which the dioceses are already experiencing in the matter of accepting/rejecting the new proposals.

5.3 The Constitutional Amendments and Bye-laws Strike the Death Knell for the Tranquebar Manifesto, the Navigating Map of CSI

- 21) At the important gathering of ordained men in Tranquebar on 15 May 1919 they discussed unofficially their plans and dreams for union thus marking the birth of CSI. Their revolutionary ideas for establishing an Indian Church, a church which did not want to be ingrained in denominational and doctrinal differences imported from the West, were written down as a Manifesto which became the guiding force for bringing about union among the churches in South India in 1947. I have written extensively on the historic importance of the Tranquebar Manifesto in the second volume of my book *We Began at Tranquebar* (2012). The Swedish historian whose book *Church of South India: The Movements Towards Union 1900-1947* (1954) is still a major source for reading the history of CSI, makes the following comment on the Manifesto that ‘America, England, and other lands are praying, talking, discussing and desiring such a union. India alone can act’ (B. Sundkler, p. 107). The Manifesto paved the way to ‘bridge the gulf between the episcopal and non-episcopal churches.’ ‘The Tranquebar Manifesto was “a challenge, a moving appeal to union which stirred the hearts of men” ’ (Sundkler, 104).
- 22) The Tranquebar Manifesto envisioned a unifying and a comprehensive church with its constituent parts tolerating and

accepting one another. On this basis, CSI unified different denominational elements, which could not be synthesised in the West, to achieve Union on Indian soil. Every aspect of our life in CSI is to be guided by this unifying vision. The Manifesto calls us 'to mourn past divisions and turn to our Lord Jesus Christ to seek in Him the unity of the body expressed in one visible Church'. It does not say that we turn to the Moderator who is the symbol of unity in the united Church. It is a church in which all three scriptural elements (Episcopal, Presbyterian and Congregational) are conserved. None of these should try to overpower or extinguish the others. The present proposals from the Moderator silence all constituent elements of CSI and take the church to an unknown destination headed and led by one supreme person, the Moderator who alone is the visible symbol of unity, who alone has the authority to promulgate the policies and visions of CSI, who alone has discretionary powers to give rulings in Synod and who alone has power to constitute courts and decide the course of judgement.

23) *History will not forgive us if we put into practice all the changes that the Moderator is proposing. They breathe an alien spirit into the life of CSI firmly founded on the Tranquebar Manifesto. The brand of episcopalianism that the Moderator is envisaging and seeking to enforce in CSI is an unknown entity, probably a distorted form of Anglicanism coupled with medieval Catholicism. Part of what he is introducing in CSI arises out of the instincts of Indian feudalism which means that a class of landlords (ex-officio of CSITA) will always rule over a class of servile peasantry (congregations).*

5.4 Who is the Deputy Moderator? - A Performer of Duties Assigned by the Moderator

24) According to the existing Constitution, 'The Deputy Moderator shall preside at the Synod and its Executive/Working Committee and perform the other duties of the Moderator during the absence, illness or other incapacity of the latter.' Now his status is taken far below this standard. The new Bye-law reads, 'Deputy Moderator shall perform duties as may be assigned to him by the Moderator under the Constitution'. If the Constitution has allotted certain duties for the Deputy Moderator why does it require the Moderator's action of assigning to his Deputy to do or not to do certain things? Once again the element of control is seen being exercised by the Moderator so that the subordinate nature of the Deputy Moderator (who will be a bishop of a diocese like the Moderator) is made quite apparent.

5.5 Who is a Bishop? - He/she is Working under the Control and the Check of the Moderator

25) A bishop's function includes pastoral oversight, evangelism, teaching, supervision of public worship, ordination and authorization of ministers and oversight of discipline. These functions cannot be usurped by the Moderator while there is a legal bishop in each diocese elected by the people of that diocese.

26) Resist the Archbishop/Metropolitan system emerging in CSI. Bishops should not be functioning as suffragans, deputies and Assistants to the Moderator.

27) The Moderator's status as Bishop is confined only to his diocese. He should not hold any right to sit in the diocesan councils of another diocese when there is an elected bishop in-charge of the diocese. There cannot be two Pastoral overseers in your diocese. Every bishop is the

President of their respective Diocesan Council. The Moderator must respect this system rather than meddling with it.

28) The rottenness of those who are in high places in the Church was pointed out by Luther in forceful language. Luther charged the leaders of the Church of his time 'with the crime of godlessness and Despotism'. Such leaders accused others of heresy because they disregarded the arrogance of the leaders.

29) God is beyond our manipulative control. God cannot be manipulated by mortal human beings.

30) 'The C.S.I. will be just one more denomination. Surely if that happened one would have to say that a great and God-given opportunity (for unity) had been wasted' – Bishop Newbigin.

5.6 The Synod Court is Formed to Function as the Moderator's Kata-Panchayat

31) Bishops should not be living with the danger of being drawn at any moment into the Synod (Moderator's) Court; *katta*-Panchayat (an intentionally biased enquiry) is another name for it.

32) Isaac Newton Said, 'Plato is my friend – Aristotle is my friend – but my greatest friend is truth'.

33) There are 24 new rules added to the present existing system of the Court of the Synod. One should very carefully test them before saying 'yes' to them. It is called the Court of the Synod but it is constituted and operated by the Moderator.

34) It is a great surprise that the Trial of Bishops is given such a huge prominence and importance, an indication that every bishop's episcopal status is cut down to a size much smaller than the Moderator's so that there is one super-Episcopate under whom the rest work. Down-sizing

the other episcopates is a necessary step for maintaining the supremacy of the Moderator.

35) The 24 rules in the new Bye-laws have to be closely looked at. The 24th rule states that ‘The aim of these rules is to follow the principles of natural justice “as far as possible”.’ First of all, we should ask the Moderator, ‘what is natural justice?’ I do not think, he is aware of its principles and its demand for justice and fairness.

36) ‘Natural justice ... requires fairness in all the circumstances’, and ‘procedural fairness, properly understood, is a question of nothing more than fairness’- Natural justice is a rule against bias and it emphasises one’s right to a fair hearing.

37) Fair hearing and unbiased judgement are the two watchwords of natural justice. The Moderator is committing that the Synod Court will follow them. But the 23 new bye-laws on ‘Trial of Bishops’ do not reflect this commitment and they do not even come close to ensuring a fair trial, conducting an objective enquiry and delivering impartial justice which are the hallmarks of natural justice.

38) The Synod Court does not begin the proceedings in an open-minded way. For example, the charges are given in writing against a bishop (i) to the Secretary and the Secretary passes them on (ii) to the Moderator and the Moderator (iii) consults the rest of the bishops about the seriousness of the charges and almost immediately (iv) the Court ‘frame’ charges against the accused bishop expecting that all bishops should agree to the seriousness of charges. The procedure outlined seems to give a lot of loopholes for the conduct of a biased inquiry. It is only after framing the charges that the accused is asked to submit his explanation to the charges, and not before!

39) The new Moderator decides if the Court can be constituted. The Moderator selects a person who is an expert in law to sit with the court

and advise it. He/she will have no role in decision-making, despite having known the law better than others in the Synod court. This will result in a one-sided, biased presentation of an issue, trading on emotional appeals and a wide range of rhetorical devices in order to override critical receptiveness and objective assessment. It is only after the accused bishop pleads not guilty that evidence is collected by the Court. It is piece of unprofessionalism in law that the oral reports are taken as evidence equal in weight and importance to the written.

40) The accused bishop can be allowed to speak only when he pleads guilty. And this only to speak towards the mitigation of the sentence and not to give occasion to deny the charges with proper evidence from his side.

41) The Court is not reviewing the evidence in a fair-minded manner before drawing conclusions/charges. The Court should show a determination to avoid bias. A biased view arising out of favouritism, corruption, misplaced loyalty or electoral rivalry will distort inquiry because wrong factors have entered in that inquiry system undermining a fair examination.

42) The present Constitution says, 'In the trial of a bishop, the whole Court shall decide on the truth or otherwise of the charges brought against him...' In the new Bye-laws 'the majority' will enforce a decision on judgement. But how many are conducting the proceedings of the Court? The presence of FIVE validates the proceedings of the court. What a small number! It reads, 'The proceedings of the Court shall be valid only if the President (Moderator or Deputy Moderator), two bishops, one presbyter and one lay member are present'. But how many constitute a majority? Only THREE. Three members of the court out of five are sufficient to pass judgement on the accused bishop who was elected by 200 council members and selected from four highly competent candidates as the worthy candidate. But his episcopal life comes to an end in the hands of *three* deciding on him.

43) But what does 'as far as possible' mean? This is where the main hitch is. It is a relative phrase and may be used as an excuse not to move beyond a particular level of inquiry/investigation. It may mean walking only few yards when one can or should run a mile which does indicate a failure to attempt the highest degree of possibility in the scale of natural justice.

44) Deliver us from the evil of oligarchy. The oligarchy that rules CSI wants to be unassailable. The first priority of an oligarchy is survival, and then to maintain its autocratic control by any means.

45) 'Nobody is perfect' cannot be used as an excuse to do wrong. If CSI has the right to be imperfect, how much imperfection can be permitted in the church? Who should enjoy the freedom to be imperfect? Are we proud of our wrongdoings?

46) It is a coterie which retains in its hands most of the money and property of the Church.

47) According to J. Moltmann a scientific theologian is a member of the gathered congregation and he/she expresses the pain and joy of the congregation in theology. Many theologians in India ignore part of their task in ecclesiology.

48) 'Episcopal churches find their bishops functioning more and more as general administrators than as pastors and spiritual leaders in their dioceses... The desire for social power as a means of ego satisfaction may be expressed by ecclesiastical officials just as it is among others.' – J.M. Gustafson

49) In the centre of programme and administration in the congregations, the rallying point of loyalty is an individual, an ecclesiastical officer, or an electoral party in power or out of power, and thus the church is off-centred from Christ and his teachings.

50) 'This means a constant effort to bring every part of church life and practice to the test of conformity with the Gospel' Bishop Newbiggin.

51) 'At the last meeting I put a large Bible on the table and pointed out that our constitution was already there, and we were only making local rules. I intend to have it there at every meeting as a reminder.' *A South India Diary* (1951) p. 52.

52) 'If tonsures, sacraments, anointings, clothes made priests and bishops, Christ and the apostles would never have been priests or bishops' Martin Luther.

53) Appointing ad hoc committees: a matter of the Moderator's convenience and administrative control.

54) All human beings are created equal rather than fixed to find our identity around a hierarchy.

55) The Synod office-bearers, Moderator, Deputy Moderator, General Secretary and Treasurer do not represent people any more once they win the elections. From the date of elections, they remain entrenched in their office and serve party loyalties. Immersed in a distinct culture and world of their own, they are insulated from the realities of the congregational lives and they give their attention and energy to themselves for their survival and self-perpetuation.

56) Church government has become the privilege of the few and for the few. Members of the church look so tiny that they are most times non-existent. The bishops are distant from the needs of the church. At times they see people as a nuisance and trouble, getting on the way of their busy pursuit of wealth and power.

5.7 The Moderator Has the Whip Hand in a Dumb Synod

57) The new bye-laws affirm that the business of the Synod will be carried on by the process of debate. But NO ONE SHALL SPEAK except to a motion or point of order.

58) No member without the permission of the Moderator shall SPEAK MORE THAN ONCE ...

59) The Moderator will curtail the Speeches in the Synod. In fact, speeches by the members of the Synod will be made as a rare occurrence; when it happens, it is muzzled in a manner denying freedom of speech and expression. According to the new Bye-laws the Moderator is the one who runs the Synod gathering by permitting members to speak or not to speak and limiting the time of individual's speech. The tactics the present Moderator uses to choke the voice from the floor of the Synod are listed in the new Bye-laws.

60) First of all, NO motion will be allowed when a subject-matter is under debate which means that what the people debate cannot be converted into a motion leading to decision-making based on the proposals from the people.

61) But a motion is allowed if it is to 'adjourn' the meeting because when the public voice is getting stronger, it should be silenced. Mercilessly kill the discussion and debate by adjourning the meeting.

62) The second tactic is to 'postpone' the consideration of the issue to a later meeting, which will come, according to new bye-laws, only after three years. A cruel denial of freedom to express opinions and disagreements.

63) The third tactic is to throw the matter to a Committee consisting of, maybe, 3-6 members. Ad hoc committee formations are to stave off people's voices. They are a new form of oligarchy. When there is public

enthusiasm or an outcry for conversation and debate, the Moderator will deny that prospect to the people by immediately naming and appointing a committee consisting of his supporters which would kill any public opinion from building up.

64) The fourth tactic is to immediately 'amend'. But amend what? To amend the provisions of the Constitution? Here, there can be only proposal for amendment and there cannot be amendment to the amendment, the Bye-law says. It means that there should be no move to correct the amendment first proposed. Critical voice will have no place in the Synod.

65) The fifth option is to 'allow voting' on the issue immediately. This sounds democratic. But this is the last option to be considered by the Moderator. The other four options will have priority over this and if the Moderator feels that the voting may defeat his agenda, he will not allow the Synod to come down as far as the fifth option of going to a vote. In the new CSI Constitution, the democratic option is not tried at all and is given the last place in the bench.

66) When it is decided to go for voting, again the members should not speak and **DEBATE WILL BE INADMISSIBLE** because such an open discussion will alter the minds of certain members. 'Don't think' when you go to attend the Synod and 'don't speak' when you are in the Synod is the message the new Bye-laws are telling the church.

67) The Moderator cannot accept any motion, voting, discussion and decision to go against his wishes and the plans he has set for himself and his supporters. If and when it does, undemocratic ways of dealing will be followed to scuttle those developments. If any individual is directly or remotely responsible for crossing the Moderator's path he or she will be severely reprimanded or denied opportunities to serve the church.

68) **NO DEBATE OR REMARK SHALL BE ALLOWED** after the Moderator has begun to take the vote.

69) All motions in relation to priority of business, shall be decided WITHOUT DEBATE.

70) The motion to postpone or to commit ... shall PRECLUDE ALL DEBATE of the main question.

71) NORMALLY NO MEMBER SHALL SPEAK for more than five minutes on any subject or resolution. There is a ration on the number of those who should speak, and how long one should speak for is set by the Moderator.

5.8 The Assistant Bishops: A New Order of Dignified Chaplains to the Bishops

72) The new proposals to the Constitution introduce a new category of Episcopate called Assistant Bishops. Thus brings more confusion into the notion and function of episcopacy. Already there are problems, noticeably in understanding the relationship between the Moderator and a diocesan bishop. Now a group of men/women called Assistant Bishops will be around to compound the problem. They are to work under the orders and control of the Diocesan Bishop who may, when necessary, and at his/her discretion (not by any constitutional right) share or delegate to the Assistant Bishop some of his/her duties, whether spiritual or administrative, either permanently or from time to time.

73) They will have no jurisdiction,, with no constitutional rights and duties, and it is a post of a more dignified Chaplain to the Bishop. Already he/she has to pass through a difficult and cumbersome election and appointment procedure. The election method and procedure are similar to those of the election of the diocesan bishop. The procedure is rather extensive and elaborate and a highly competitive affair, and having gone through all those tunnels of competition and rivalry they serve in a post which is at the discretion and mercy of the diocesan bishop. They cannot automatically succeed as the diocesan bishop in the

event of the senior bishop's absence, resignation or death. Who wants to share power these days when the trend is to rule over a half-a-dozen dioceses by a single Episcopate?

74) Then the future of the Assistant Bishop is also not a secured one either, and there are a variety of jobs one can be pushed into including returning to do *Presbyter's* duties. The only gain seems to be that he/she will retain the *Rt. Rev.* title.

75) A further burden to bear is that the Assistant Bishops can become diocesan bishops only by going through the normal election procedure adopted for the appointment of bishops. The Assistant Bishops will have to have plenty of money to spend on securing the post of Assistant Bishop first and later to be elected and selected as diocesan bishop. Then they may have to spend more to become the Deputy Moderator and the Moderator.

5.9 The Voluntary Retirement of a Bishop and the Compulsory Resignation of a Bishop

76) The voluntary retirement of a bishop and the compulsory resignation of a Bishop have been expanded with new entries in the revised Constitution. Even the voluntary retirement procedure centres around the Moderator (which is not the case with the present Constitution) and his Executive Committee and compulsory resignation seems to be a kind of trap which can be set up by the all-powerful Moderator unless the bishop is careful to do what is expected of him/her from the hierarchy. It is the Moderator who is throughout the main operator of the procedure, and this can be manipulated to suit the personal will and circumstances of the Moderator.

Why should the first among the equals (the Moderator) have such enormous power over his equals (Bishops)?

5.10 Visions of CSI Episcopacy

The following quotes speak for themselves. I request the readers to read them individually and in groups to understand the nature of CSI episcopacy as envisioned by our forefathers.

77) ‘The Roman Church presents us the system in its highest form in the Pope. The Greek and Oriental Churches give us an early stage in the Patriarch. The Church of England presents us the still earlier stage in the Archbishop... The Presbyterian Church goes farther back to the parochial bishop. What Church is there that goes back to the earlier form of government as it appears in the New Testament with a bench of parochial presbyter-bishops under apostolic oversight? Not one... At what stage, then, shall we take our stand for Church Unity? What is the essence of Historic Episcopate in which all can agree?’ (C. Briggs, 1909)

78) ‘... no permanent and world-wide Church Union can be built upon any other foundation than a ministry unified under the historic Episcopate... It is described as ‘historic’ because what is intended is not the modern episcopate, for instance, of the Methodist Episcopal Church, but that which has come down through centuries of history. The Bishops will exercise those functions which they have always exercised, they will be consecrated in the historic way – by the laying on of hands of at least three Bishops – which rule has been observed in all the historic churches since the Council of Nicea (A. D. 325). It is called ‘constitutional’ Episcopate, because the Bishops exercise their function not as absolute monarchs, but in accordance with the Constitution laid down by the Church, in due cooperation with the Presbyterate and the Congregation of Christ’s faithful people in the ordering of the church’s life’ (V. S. Azariah)

79) ‘C. S. I. is not a denomination. It does not represent a particular type of Christianity like Methodism and Anglicanism. It claims to be nothing

except a part of the Universal Church and has nothing to teach except the Universal Church.’ (E. H. M. Waller)

80) ‘The three historical forms of church government that prevail in the West are now being followed in India ... namely the Episcopal, the Presbyterian and the Congregational’ (I. Cannaday, 1919)

81) ‘We want bishops but no “Lord Bishops”, an episcopal form thoroughly evangelical ... We do not want sacerdotalism, not dead ritualism; but bishops chosen by the Church, and their powers carefully defined and limited by it; in other words, a primitive, simple, and spiritual Episcopacy’. (G. S. Eddy)

82) ‘... they (CSI bishops) are far more like the second century bishop than is the modern bishop in the Anglican Communion in the West ... Again, the bishops in the Church of South India ... in a special sense the bond of union, in a way that would have delighted the heart of Ignatius of Antioch. It is the bishop who primarily unites the various traditions in his diocese.’ (A. Hanson).

83) ‘What we need is not Apostolic Succession but Apostolic Success.’ (Bishop Abraham of Travancore)

84) ‘It is the Westerner that considers the divisions of the Church as important... We have no argumentativeness and obstinacy in this matter as the Westerner. Our forefathers shed no blood for these Church divisions as theirs did... Several reasons might be given why we ought not to accept episcopacy. It may be said that such a large responsibility should not be placed on a single individual. My answer is we do not create an autocratic episcopacy at all. It will be a constitutional episcopacy... There will be councils, synods, the general assemblies that will direct, advise and help the Bishops... We need not go into a disputation over what that means. The Episcopacy we accept is that which has come down from the primitive Church that dissociated from

all doctrine. *We Indians want such an Episcopacy.*' (V. S. Azariah, 1936)

85) 'But further a Constitutional Episcopacy is stipulated. That means a written Constitution, with bishops chosen by the Church and their powers limited and defined by it... Christ guides the 'whole Church as in the Council at Jerusalem. We conceive that the Bishop is the spiritual executive of the Church. The Church holds the legislative power. The whole plan may be thoroughly constitutional and democratic.' (G. S. Eddy, 1920)

86) 'A fear is seriously felt that Bishops may turn out to be autocrats, a careful attempt is made in the (CSI) Scheme to graft on to episcopacy all the valuable elements in Presbyterianism and Congregationalism and a bishop works in spheres whose limits are carefully guarded by Presbyterian and Congregational influences.' (Bishop A. J. Appasamy, 1930)

87) 'The non-Episcopal churches would not be willing to agree to theories of higher orders, which are associated with prerogative, pride, ambition, tyranny and despotism ... they should put such checks upon episcopal authority as will prevent any of those evils from which the Church suffered so much in the past.' (C. A. Briggs, 1909)

88) "Every endeavour is made in the Church to elect and appoint persons to that high office who are felt to be equipped for their responsible duties by their long experience, sound judgement, deep learning and fervent piety: only men exceptionally endowed in intellect and in Spirit are chosen.' (Bishop A. J. Appasamy, 1930)

89) 'Episcopacy is absolutely an office of our creation and that we can determine it at our pleasure and create it again if we wished.' (C.B. Hill) In response, H Sumitra well remarked, 'But this attitude does not in the least bring us nearer to other churches. It is easy to set up bishops

of our own, consecrate them and call ours an Episcopal Church. But if our bishops are not recognised as such by other churches we shall not have helped the cause of union.

90) With regard to whole question of episcopal powers we have all along in our joint sessions resisted the idea that bishops have any inherent powers. They may have had certain powers by wide and long continued customs, but it must lie with us to say precisely which of these powers are to be exercised in the united Church. This is what we mean by a Constitutional Episcopacy.’ (J. H. Maclean, 1931)

91) ‘... the General Assembly (of SIUC) has shown that its acceptance of the term “historic episcopacy” is on the ground that this term means “that from the end of the second century episcopacy has been a form of Government that has persisted in the Church and is in that sense entitled to be described as ‘historic’.” The SIUC do not believe in any doctrine such as is implied in “apostolic succession”... The Assembly recognises, however, that this episcopacy must be made thoroughly Constitutional and Spiritual.’ (1931)

92) ‘In conceding Episcopacy, the non-Episcopal Communion are making a greater and more far-reaching sacrifice of their special tradition, for the sake of a better future for the whole Church in South India...’ (V. Bartlet, 1931)

93) ‘In the sense of the original definition, that the episcopacy may fitly be called historic on the ground that it has existed in the church from early times, the Episcopacy of the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Church of Denmark, the Church of Finland and the Moravian Church, could be called historic... But to speak of “continuity with the historic episcopate” as applied to these churches is meaningless, since they do not claim or value an unbroken succession. “Continuity with the historic episcopate” is confined to that one particular form of episcopacy which has its essence in unbroken continuity... The High Anglican standpoint

demands that all bishops of the new church should be consecrated by at least three Bishops in unbroken succession, and all ordinations should be performed by a Diocesan Bishop also in true succession.’ (H. V. Martin, 1943)

94) ‘The Bishops of the United Church in India must go with the clergy and the Laity and cannot form themselves into an exclusive body for any purpose.’ (P. J. Devasahayam, 1929)

95) ‘And that no Bishops nor any ecclesiastical governors may at any time exercise their government by their own private will or pleasure, but only by such rules, canons and constitutions ... and that sufficient provision be made to secure both both ministers and people against the evils of Arbitrary Government in the Church.’ (C. A. Briggs, 1909)

5.11 Final Remarks

After I had sent to you on 24 Sept. 2015 my first Epistle with copies to supporters of CSI, the Principal of United Theological College, Bangalore put up a notice of appeal (as usual, someone else wrote it for him) to the UTC community on the Notice Board to identify those who sent SCANDALOUS EMAILS and to resist them by showing solidarity with each other. He particularly mentions that it is the work of someone, a disgruntled element, *who is about to be sacked* from the College (he gives enough clues to guess who the person is). I checked the English dictionary to get the meaning for ‘disgruntled’ and it gives the following synonyms: Dissatisfied, discontented, aggrieved, resentful, fed up, displeased, unhappy, disappointed, disaffected. Yes, I am experiencing all of these over the Amendments and the new Bye-laws. One dictionary gives the meaning ‘restless longing’ which sums up not only my feeling but the feelings of many in CSI. The Principal’s notice reinforces what I wrote about the connection between the Synod hierarchy and the present UTC administration as the latter is seeking desperately for a cover to

hide all the financial mismanagement, illegal money dealings and other systemic failures. It is sycophancy at its worst in choosing my emailing as an occasion to register (slavish) personal loyalty to the power wielders so that one may receive (covetous) rewards from the (eternal) Moderator to sit in high positions in new Bishoprics!

The Moderator is seriously trying to push the draft through by browbeating and pressurising the members of the diocese (even chastising them) to bend and support him. It is my plea that the remaining dioceses should decide on the merits and demerits of the new proposals rather than yield to pressure with the only consideration of helping the present Moderator to do all the damaging antics for another two years and that you enjoy as a supporting diocese something in compensation.

Thank you for patiently reading my second epistle to the Moderator. If I have so far written anything scandalous about ‘the Church of God that He obtained with the blood of his own Son’, I am ready to apologise for my sinful mistakes.

CSI HAS THE MODERATOR BUT THE MODERATOR DOES NOT HAVE CSI.

Best wishes,

Joseph Gnanaseelan Muthuraj

Professor in New Testament and Presbyterian of CSI

(Sent by email dated 12 October 2015)

THEN THE LORD OPENED THE MOUTH OF THE DONKEY... (3)

*The Third Epistle to the Moderator
of the Church of South India, 22 Oct. 2015*

***Was this the face that launched the Church of South India and burnt
the topless towers of divisions?***

Dear and Respected Moderator,

Greetings! I have altered the first two lines in a poem written by Christopher Marlowe (1564-1593) on the beauty of Helen of Troy who was the 'peerless dame of Greece'. The lines are: *Was this the face that launch'd a thousand ships, / And burnt the topless towers of Ilium?* It was because of the charm of her beautiful face that a thousand ships were launched into battle (in the Trojan war) and the sky-high towers of Ilium (the city of Troy, ancient Greece) were brought down.

Likewise there is a beautiful face that brought about the launching of the Church of South India, and a face that burnt the tower-like tall divisions, which have remained until today piercing the sky throughout the world. Shall we look at that beautiful face? This is what the third epistle is all about.

To begin with, there are no better words to describe the beauty of the CSI (our Helen of Troy) than those of D. Webster, who in his *What is this Church of South India?* (1955) wrote:

'The Church of South India was born on September 27, 1947, in St. George's Cathedral, Madras. It had three parents, a curiously mixed ancestry, and twenty eight years pregnancy during which the Holy Ghost had preserved it from many miscarriages. It was a difficult child; there had never been anything quite like it before. Its relations were in many different moods. Some were delighted; others were horrified; many had feelings of surprise, fascination, perplexity. But it was born, it did live, and it is becoming more and more interesting as it gets older. Now it is seven and remarkably vigorous. It is being watched attentively all over the world by friends and critics and by those who cannot make up their mind.' *'The C. S. I. is the first adventure in union of this kind. It is a reminder, a bow in the cloud, a challenge, an irritant, an embarrassment, a vanguard into the future, a kind of first-fruits of the coming great Church.'*

What is it that has made us 'a reminder, a bow in the cloud, a challenge, an irritant, an embarrassment, a vanguard into the future, a kind of first-fruits of the coming great Church'? It is a high time we thought about it before breaking up the Constitution and trouncing the Basis of Union.

Sir, let me say it again, you cannot have the present Amendments and the Bye-laws standing alongside the Basis of Union. You will have to give up one to keep the other. Your proposed amendments contradict the principles enshrined in the Basis of Union as I have been pointing out in my last two epistles.

Just to summarize, your Amendments go against the following propositions:

"The Uniting Churches recognize that Episcopal, Presbyterian and Congregational elements must all have their place in the order of life of the united Church."

This we have argued over and over again as the most central element of the CSI union. But what follows is quite important too:

“...and that the episcopate, the presbyterate and the Congregation of the faithful should all in several spheres have responsibility and exercise authority in the life and work of the church, in its governance and administration, in its evangelistic and pastoral work, in its discipline, and in its work.”

How far are the proposed amendments and bye-laws framed within this proposition? The whole Constitution is going to be tilted and rested upon one prime post, namely that of Moderator. Here is another concern:

‘... every local group of the faithful ... as a congregation or pastorate within the fellowship of the diocese, represents in that place the same one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church’.

The Synod hierarchy represents the Church in a very limited way. Representation does not mean that the people are automatically made powerless either to speak or act during the two years the hierarchy is in power. The messages conveyed silently are: ‘we rule and you are the ruled’, ‘We are the proprietors and owners of the properties of the church buildings’ and ‘You respect and obey the authorities’. The message should be ‘We have won the elections to do the work of service and therefore we are responsible to protect and maintain the church properties’. I was shocked that the General Secretary of CSI (he being the Director of CSITA) was introduced by a pastor in a Sunday morning worship service who said that their huge church building belongs officially to the General Secretary. Is that the perception one ought to have about Synod posts, that they are official owners of the church buildings?

The people’s voice should continue to echo through the corridors of power in the Synod office. The poor theologians are part of the fellowship of the people in congregations. I remember what Pope

Francis recently said, that priests should *be 'shepherds living with the smell of the sheep'*. The shepherds should carry the smell of the sheep wherever they go. Many leaders grow weary and disinterested with this and they indulge in the pursuit of power and more power so that they become detached from congregational life and worship. Being with the congregations becomes a ritual, mechanical and routine affair, and what matters for them is mobility in the power ladder. They then begin to serve their self-interests and the well-being of their supporters and relatives. 'Extinguish the opposition!' 'Banish the challengers!!' are the war cries of the corrupt leaders of the CSI today.

It is no surprise that you have not bothered to respond to my two emails. However, this disregard from you does not douse my enthusiasm, and I have ventured to write to you my third (and final) piece reminding the hard hearts and stiff minds of something so precious and beautiful as the face of Helen of Troy. All I have said is that you and your supporters are grasping and compressing the throat of an old man of 68 years that he would stop breathing. In Ezekiel (3:7), God told the Israelites that they were not willing even to listen to Him. Bishop K.G. Daniel's advice to me to confine myself to praying for the future of CSI and not indulging in writing betrays his cruel piety that mocks at prayer. It clearly reveals the iron-like neck muscles and bronze-like forehead spoken about in Isaiah 48:4 as signs of stubbornness and obstinacy. The bishop is in effect saying, even in the case that God spoke to us in response to your prayer we would not listen. He devalues the power of prayer by thinking that it does not have any effect on the Moderator's decision to move ahead with the Amendments and new Bye-laws.

6.1 Scholarly Interpreters

Let me seek to clarify as a theologian by making a few of my observations on the role of the Church in theological education. Recently, I read this from the *Basis of Union of The Uniting Church of*

Australia which honours the mission and ministry of scholarly interpreters to the growth and witness of the Church. I say ‘interpreters’ in plural. There is a host of them in CSI today! UCA’s basis of union has a place of ministry for the scholars and it is believed that God speaks to the Church through scholars, the lay and the ordained.

“The Uniting Church acknowledges that God has never left the Church without faithful and scholarly interpreters of Scripture, or without those who have reflected deeply upon, and acted trustingly in obedience to, God’s living Word. In particular the Uniting Church enters into the inheritance of literary, historical and scientific enquiry which has characterised recent centuries, and gives thanks for the knowledge of God’s ways with humanity which are open to an informed faith... The Uniting Church thanks God for the continuing witness and service of evangelist, of scholar, of prophet and of martyr...”

6.2 Theological Education is Desacralized

Let me elaborate on this point, though I have alluded to it in my previous email. Theological education in India and for India is not a free and an independent enterprise. It is caught up in the clutches of the authoritative/hegemonic institutional system of the church. Current church leaders are the least qualified and in most cases ill-equipped to be Presidents/Chairmen of apex committees of theological colleges. There is a competition noticeable among the bishops of CSI to become Presidents of theological institutions and networks without any commitment to build an ethos meant for communities engaged in theological learning and teaching. The political culture and party hatred and vindictive spirit prevailing in the churches find a conduit into theological institutions in the episcopal magnets of the churches. Even the members of the hierarchy who were once theological faculty members have lost the *persona* of theological guides by being caught in the web of communal politics and vestiges of cronyism. Theological

educators have no *locus standi* in the Indian church unless one is in the limelight of the politics of the church and/or doing things pleasing to the power wielders. Theologians are not only paid lower salaries compared to the ordained ministers in diocesan ministry but also are losing their place in the decision-making even in theological institutions which are dominated by the low-ranked and highly placed church members with their genuine ignorance and deep prejudice about theological calling and vocation.

6.3 Seminary Education is Wedded to Church Politics

The result is that theological education is forced to serve as the handmaid of the church authorities. Church politics and theological scholarship cannot exist together. A theological scholar cannot master both. It is difficult to be a critical, research-oriented and empirically grounded theological educator in India today and at the same time to find a place in the good books of the church authorities. The persons who choose the former will have to fight a battle of isolation and loneliness. Those who occupy leadership positions in theological colleges such as the Principals and Directors are swamped under the political wave of the churches and are prepared to act as ‘yes-men’ being careful not to speak a word critical of the powers and authorities of the church. Theologians have no voice in the mainstream of the power installations of the church. It is not a very pleasant scenario. All these have a negative influence over the goal-setting of a theologian’s life and drive him/her to become an opportunistic and power-seeking person. Theological educators affiliate “to parties that demand loyalty to political line and do research to subtly compromise judgement and restrain critical voice.” The result is that a theological career spanning two or three decades becomes a long pointless grind. Finally, it leaves the church theologically barren without the input of theological reasoning and enrichment, as I pointed out in my first epistle.

6.4 Institutional Sclerosis

The road to revolution lies ahead of us when we pull them up by their bootstraps. A.R. Vilder, an Anglican priest and a theologian, in his *The Church in an Age of Revolution* (1962) has shown how the churches in the last three centuries beginning from the French Revolution until the ecumenical age were reluctant to change and ‘how blind or short-sighted in the days of visitation, how deposed to stone or silence or jettison would-be prophets or the prophets in their midst (particularly the lay)...’ Our corrupt life is disguised by hypocritical piety and institutional sclerosis towards evangelism, holy life and Christian witness. L. Tolstoy, the Russian thinker and journalist, in his book *The Kingdom of God is Within You* (1894) came down heavily upon hypocritical life in Christian religion. “Not without good reason was Christ’s only harsh and threatening reproof directed against hypocrites and hypocrisy. It is not theft nor robbery nor murder nor fornication, but falsehood, the special falsehood of hypocrisy, which corrupts men, brutalizes them and makes them vindictive, destroys all distinction between right and wrong in their conscience, deprives them of what is the true meaning of all real human life, and debars them from all progress toward perfection.” Dead conscience leads to vindictive and brutal behaviour to achieve one’s ends. This book inspired Gandhi in his search for truth and fight for freedom.

6.5 Institutional Sanction of Corruption?

Why do the Amendments and Bye-laws not deal with corruption in the church? So much has been spoken and written about corrupt practices in the church. When the Amendments are keen on and are concerned with the retired bishops becoming eligible to take over office when the bishops are out of the country, why can’t they touch on this issue of corruption which has brought down the image of the CSI in the

eyes of the world in the last two decades? Can you believe that our Constitution is silent on matters of graft, bribery and other forms of corruption? Does it mean that the Synod hierarchy approves corrupt practices in appointments and note-for-vote in elections?

6.6 Is Our Faith Strong Enough to Define Corruption?

Corruption is the abuse of entrusted power or public office for personal gain. It is ‘a systemic use of public office for private benefit’. The integrity among those in positions of responsibility should not use the official positions to obtain any kind of financial or other advantages for themselves, their families or supporters, and this should be required by the Constitution. Corruption damages the fabric of Christian life and has placed self-righteous frauds in leadership positions in the church.

There is a broad *range of definitions of ‘corruption’*. Ecclesiastical corruption is ‘a manipulation of policies, institutions and rules of procedure in the allocation of resources and financing by ... decision makers, who abuse their position to sustain their power, status and wealth.’ Corruption is dishonest or fraudulent conduct by those in power, typically involving bribery. Corruption is wrongdoing on the part of an authority or powerful party through means that are illegitimate, immoral, or incompatible with ethical standards. Corruption often results from patronage and is associated with bribery.

Corruption is ‘when institutions, organisations, companies or individuals profit inappropriately from their position in the operations and thereby cause damage or loss. This includes giving and receiving bribes, extortion, favouritism and nepotism, embezzlement, fraud, conflict of interest, and illegal monetary contributions to political parties.’

Corruption is actions which violate ‘the norm of impartiality, or in any other way represent the exercise of power in the grey zone between legal and directly illegal behaviour.’

One can go on adding to these definitions. I am not saying all of these practices are found in the CSI. But there is such strong evidence and so many witnesses of corrupt practices prevalent in church administration that it has become the fabric of our social and political life as Christians. We have come to a situation in the church in which we find somewhat more accepting attitude towards corruption.

6.7 Assets Declaration of Bishops and Synod Office-bearers: A Constitutional Challenge

It is disturbing to hear consistently news of corruption involving church leaders in the CSI. Assets declaration by the bishops, lay leaders and Synod office-bearers could be a powerful tool to prevent or combat corruption and promote accountability and transparency. Public disclosure of the information is not followed in the CSI even when the congregations hear of FIRs filed against bishops in police stations, criminal suits launched against them, and news of various scandals published in journals and media.

How many ordained men had bank accounts in their names when they began their BD or ministerial studies? How many bank accounts (personal and binami) have they had during and after they occupied (and enjoyed?) VVIP positions in the church? CSI Christians are quite hospitable and generous for they do not demand from their former Moderator and the present Moderator and declaration of the amount of wealth they have added to their names and to the names of their family members and relatives. Nor do they ask how they won the votes in their favour during elections and from what source they draw money to spend on (winning or wriggling out of) their court cases. The corrupt leaders

feel safe, and it is easier for them to shrug off when the populace believe that such leaders will render accounts to God.

Corruption cannot be rooted out by one sweep as it is secretive and complex. At the same time, we do not suggest that everybody is corrupt. Can there be new bye-laws on standards and procedures so that corruption can be kept under check? How can we develop anti-corruption aspirations? How can CSI be resistant to corruption and fraudulent acts? Our Constitution should speak on this venom which destroys Christian responsibility towards God and human beings.

6.8 15 Council Members are just enough to Bring Charges against a Bishop, and Three in the Court are enough to Pass Judgement

This is a new Bye-law. Shall we have a corollary that 15 members of Synod are enough to bring charges against the Moderator, Deputy Moderator, General Secretary and Treasurer? The Bye-laws don't have this. Unless a bishop keeps 200+ members of his Council in good humour and satisfaction, they can bounce back taking the bishop to the synod court. It can be engineered so easily by outsiders (such as synod officers) as it should always be possible to spot 15 council members (members from one family or two or a political party) and encourage them to rally against the bishop. Whenever charges are filed, they are framed by the court against the accused bishop. Bye-laws do not say what happens to those members when their charges are found false. Charges against bishops cannot be brought by people of the congregations, presbyters, deacons, and sextons according to the new Amendments.

I have already pointed out that a majority of the Synod court members, which is three, are enough to pass a judgement on the alleged misdeeds of the bishop. The hard-fought episcopal seat installed with ceremonial prayers at the Consecration service etc. can easily be lost,

particularly by a bishop who might be non-cooperative to and critical of certain actions of the synod hierarchy. And there is always the practice of setting up an administrative Committee over a diocese (to render a bishop or a council powerless) which will consist of the caucus of the Moderator. And so, the new Moderator will be such a powerful man, he can do something which even a Prime Minister cannot do in India against a State.

6.9 People are Made to Swallow Authoritarianism

Traditional and conventional behaviour are the traits found among churchgoers who are gullible believers and who can swallow any amount of authoritarianism. This is taken advantage of by the hierarchy of the church. In such an ecclesiastical context, those who show critical awareness can easily be ignored or sidelined or even punished.

It seems that there is an arrogant individualism inherent in today's leadership with an act of general dumbing down of everything which makes one say to the other 'keep your mouth shut' or 'mind your own business'. There is also a tendency to make personal welfare and interests one's primary or only concern, sometimes at the expense of others.

I Corinthians 12: 18+20-21: But in fact God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. 20 As it is, there are many parts, but one body. 21 The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I don't need you!' And the head cannot say to the feet, 'I don't need you!'

6.10 The Trivialization and Demonizing of Others

The strategy of a self-centred leadership is to fabricate the images of others as an enemy (of the church) to be put down or the demon to be

destroyed. The trivializing mind-set immediately springs to action, neglecting or despising, setting aside or rejecting in order to demoralize the enemy, imaginary or personalized, so that one's authority remains inviolate and beyond any challenge from others. It is keen to promote the idea that others are enemies and what they do or write have destructive objectives. The purpose is to justify retaliatory measures against them as so simple and easy.

Zachariah 3: The Renewal of Priesthood: 3 Now Joshua, the priest, was dressed in filthy clothes as he stood before the angel. 4 The angel said to those who were standing before him, 'Take off his filthy clothes.' Then he said to Joshua, 'See, I have taken away your sin, and I will put rich garments on you.' 5 Then I said, 'Put a clean turban on his head.' So they put a clean turban on his head and clothed him, while the angel of the Lord stood by... When priesthood is re-clothed this way the LORD Almighty says, 'and I will remove the sin of this land in a single day.'

A change in clothing for the priest Joshua meant that cleansing, reinstatement and recommissioning of those who are ordained and consecrated are an extremely important mission which the Holy Spirit alone can carry out if we are prepared to accept. Because the ordained and the consecrated are the signs and witnesses of the present and the coming age. They have to be constantly renewing themselves and rededicating themselves to their call and vocation. When this happens, the change for good occurs in a single day.

As in the days of Zachariah, it is also the need of the hour today. The priesthood is to be renewed and re-established today. Psalm 132: 9 says, 'Let your priests be clothed with righteousness.'

6.11 The PLEDGE (A Gentlemen's Agreement)

Now I have come to the main theme of this epistle. Let me begin with Bishop Newbigin whom I like and regard as the master interpreter of CSI history and theology. He wrote, 'The union is not the creation of a new "merger" by independent groups. It is the return to a broken unity. The united Church will be within the historically continuous succession of episcopal ordination and consecration. The non-episcopal Churches concerned in the union will be brought into that succession, outside of which they have hitherto lived. The union will thus seek to express not merely the desire of the uniting bodies to be one, but the fact that their unity is a unity of the whole Body of which Christ is Head, the unity of the whole building which has apostles and prophets for its foundation stones. The union is not the creation of something new, but the restoration of something which had been broken.' (Newbigin, *The Reunion of The Church: A Defence of The South India Scheme*, London: SCM Press, 1960, p. 108). *I am telling you and Bishop Kadasham a secret, by the way. Anyone who reads the writings of Bishop Newbigin with delight cannot be an enemy of the Church of South India.*

How did South India manage to bring together episcopal and non-episcopal churches when churches around the world are struggling and failing to find suitable medicine for uniting episcopal and non-episcopal churches?

The simple answer is: PLEDGE, a great South Indian recipe for uniting churches that could not be united. No other nation tasted it!

The PLEDGE, a gentlemen's agreement, is its full text: 'The uniting Churches recognize that the act of union will initiate a process of growing together into one life and of advance towards complete spiritual unity. One essential condition of the attainment of such complete unity is that all the members of the united Church should be willing and able to receive communion equally in all of its churches, and it is the resolve

of the uniting Churches to do all in their power to that end.’ Why is it called a ‘gentlemen’s agreement’?

PLEDGE: The Freedom of Opinion on Debatable Matters and Respect for Large Differences of Opinion and Practice

“But they are convinced that this can only take place on the basis of freedom of opinion on debatable matters, and respect for even large differences of opinion and practice, such as exist at present, for example, with regard to forms of worship or the conditions regarded as necessary for the valid celebration of Holy Communion. They believe that this freedom and mutual respect can be safeguarded not by the framing of detailed regulations but by assurances given love.

“They therefore pledge themselves and fully trust each other that the united Church will at all times be careful not to allow any over-riding of conscience either by Church authorities or by majorities, and that it will not in any of its administrative acts knowingly transgress the long-established traditions of any of the Churches from which it has been formed. Neither forms of worship or ritual nor a ministry, to which they have not been accustomed or to which they conscientiously object, will be imposed upon any congregation; and no arrangements with regard to these matters will knowingly be made, either generally or in particular cases, which would either offend the conscientious convictions of persons directly concerned, or which would hinder the development of complete unity within the united Church or imperil its progress towards union with other Churches.” (Newbigin, *Reunion of the Church*, pp. 115-116)

PLEDGE: No Majority Steam-rolling of Minority Opinions

Newbigin: “Unfortunately the Pledge has sometimes been misunderstood because its real nature was forgotten. The promise not to transgress the long-established traditions of any of the Churches might –

manifestly – be so interpreted as to prohibit all development of unity in the Church, and to constitute in effect a contradiction of the basis of union. To meet such misunderstandings the Joint Committee in 1934 sought to make plain again what its intention was. The following is the minute of the meeting of that year as slightly amended in 1935:

“That in view of questions which have arisen, the Joint Committee thinks it right to state what is in its judgment the meaning of the provisions generally referred to as the Pledge.

“This Pledge applies to the period following the inauguration of the union when the members of the three Churches, then united in one Church, will be growing together; and the uniting Churches pledge themselves to do all in their power to assist the united Church in its advance towards complete spiritual unity, and towards the time when all the members of the united Church will be willing and able to receive communion equally in all its Churches.”

PLEDGE: Anything that Congregations Conscientiously Object to Shall not be Imposed on Them

“Further, they pledge themselves that because of the *union no congregation shall be deprived of forms of worship or a ministry to which it has been accustomed, but every honest endeavour will be made by the authorities of the united Church that neither forms of worship or ritual, nor a ministry, to which they have not been accustomed or to which they conscientiously object, shall be imposed upon any congregation.* But the Committee does not understand the pledge to imply minister of the united Church has previously been a minister of either an episcopal or a non-episcopal Church, will, in itself, debar him from appointment to or working in any congregation of the united Church where that congregation desires it.”

PLEDGE: No Infringement on Liberty of Conscience

“Further, the intention of the uniting Churches is that there shall be *no infringement of the liberty of conscience which every worshipper and every minister now enjoys*, and that in the united Church all alike shall be free to worship and to teach according to their conscience, only so that nothing done to break the fundamental unity of the Church.”

PLEDGE: Mutual Respect for Differences of Opinion

“The Joint Committee wishes further to urge upon the negotiating Churches that while the purpose for which these provisions have been inserted in the Basis of Union will not be fulfilled unless the real scope and effect of the pledge be understood by all parties, that purpose will be entirely defeated if detailed interpretations of the pledge, and precise statements as to its application to particular future and hypothetical cases, are demanded; and it appeals to the negotiating Churches to act in this matter in the full spirit of the declaration that *freedom of opinion on debatable matters and mutual respect for differences of opinion and practice can be safeguarded, not by the framing of detailed regulations, but by assurances given and received in a spirit of confidence and love.*” (Newbigin, *Reunion of the Church*, pp. 116-117)

6.11.1 The Lambeth Conference Rejected the PLEDGE as a Basis of Union and Hence CSI was Pushed out of the Anglican Communion

The Lambeth Conferences of 1948 and 1958 rejected the act of uniting together by the principles of PLEDGE quoted above as a basis for the union of Anglican churches with non-episcopal and free churches anywhere in the world. PLEDGE was put in place in South India to evade the question of re-ordination or supplemental ordination of non-episcopal ministers by Anglican bishops and Anglican ministers by non-episcopal leaders. CSI believed in equality of ministers and ministries. One denomination cannot unchurch the others because they do not possess episcopal/non-episcopal ordinations. Lambeth insisted that if

some form of re-ordination (though that word will not be used) by an episcopal minister was not done in CSI union, the new child CSI would not be in full communion with the Anglican churches. The Committee on 'The Unity of the Church' of the Lambeth Conference 1948 stated that 'we find in the proposed scheme (of church union) a conception which is bold and new'. The Conference thanked the Anglican dioceses in India, Burma and Ceylon for their courage and wisdom for accepting negotiations for union at various times from 1919 to 1947. However, it was decided that "those dioceses (of the Church of India, Burma and Ceylon) will therefore not be Anglican dioceses in which we are asked to recognise elements foreign to the Anglican system; **THEY WOULD GO FORTH FROM THE ANGLICAN COMMUNION** in order to make their own distinctive contribution to the faith and order of the new united Church." Also it stated that 'the united Church in South India will not be part of the Anglican Communion.'

The birth of CSI did not wait until the Lambeth Conference of 1948 gave approval to the union. The child was born on time in good health on 27 September 1947. The Anglican churches in South India paid the price.

PLEDGE: No Re-ordination but Mutual Commissioning on the Day of CSI Union

The Scheme for Union introduced *prayers of commission* in the place of supplemental ordination, and this is the uniqueness of the union of churches in South India. For this, we received the compliment of being sent out of the Anglican Communion for thirty years. Whereas the Scheme for Union in Ceylon and also the Church of North India had included an act of 'laying on of hands' mutually between Episcopalians and non-Episcopalians so that each one received some additional gifts and grace over their previous ordinations. The non-Episcopalians received what they did not possess, but the Anglicans received the additional authority which they lacked due to separation. But 'laying on

of hands' makes the difference, and this was not done in the CSI Union. Anglicans were happy that Anglican bishops laid hands on the non-Episcopal presbyters which is symbolically closer if not equivalent to (re)ordination. CSI had none of this except a prayer of commissioning mutually done. All this because of the Pledge which prohibited 'supplemental ordination' in any form.

The Lambeth Conference in advising negotiators in West Africa to abandon the South Indian pattern and follow that of Ceylon whose proposed plan for union had 'supplemental ordinations' for non-Episcopalians. The Nigerian church planning union was told that if they had to follow CSI without introducing some form of supplemental ordination, they would be cut off from the full communion status with the Anglican churches. Nigerian church hesitated and went back on its proposal.

6.11.2 The Spirit and the Letter of PLEDGE must Run in the Veins of CSI

Nowhere in the world did churches contemplating union have the courage and wisdom to follow the path of 'Pledge' which we have trodden. Through the Pledge we unified ministries by avoiding re-ordination or supplemental ordination. It attracted the attention of the certain influential members of the Anglican-Methodist Unity Conversations. In an *Open Letter Concerning the Anglican-Methodist Conversation* (February 1964) addressed to the Archbishops and the Bishops of Canterbury and York, it was urged, "We would not oppose a provision, corresponding to the Church of South India 'Pledge' to safeguard the consciences of those to whom the ministry of such would not be acceptable". The negotiators were not fully convinced. In this connection J.I. Packer wrote that 'there will be no more hope for the South India pattern anywhere in the world'. South India stood bold where others would capitulate!

Sweet Helen, make me immortal with a kiss... Come Helen come, give me my soul again!! (Christopher Marlowe).

My poem is:

Sweet PLEDGE make CSI immortal with a kiss! Come PLEDGE come, give CSI its soul again

*Let there be Freedom of Opinion on Debatable Matters
and Respect for large Differences of Opinion and Practice*

*Let not Authorities Gathering a Majority
Suppress the Opinions of the Minorities.*

*Let not Anything that Congregations Conscientiously Object to
be Imposed on Them*

Let there be no Infringement on Liberty of Conscience

Let there be Mutual Respect for Differences of Opinion

The way the Amendments and Bye-laws were drawn and the manner in which they are being imposed on dioceses are contrary to the Spirit and Letter of the Pledge, a gentlemen's agreement. Even if the bishops cannot be Fathers-in-God, Shepherds of the Church, faithful Stewards and Evangelists, let them be Gentlemen. May the legacy of PLEDGE in the CSI Union prevent the authorities from imposing the Amendments and the new Bye-laws.

6.12 Conclusion

Leonard Boff, a Brazilian theologian and a Catholic priest, has this to say which form my concluding words. He wrote in his book *Church: Charism and Power: Liberation Theology and the Institutional Church* (1985), "There are no passive members in the Church. Each person, within the body, exercises some function. Therefore, every Christian is charismatic. 'Paul says, "each one has his own gift from God, one this

and another that” (I Cor. 7: 7); “To each person the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good” (I Cor. 12: 7). Peter confirms this in the same way: “As generous distributors of God’s manifold grace, place your gifts at the service of one another, each in the measure he has received” (I Pet 4: 10)’.

“It is true that there must be order, discipline and obedience (in the church); but this can also be found in the army. The Church is not an army, organised to learn to kill; but rather is organised to love God and all persons.”

May the Spirit of God guide you and your colleagues; with best wishes,

Yours sincerely,

Joseph Gnanaseelan Muthuraj

Professor in New Testament and a Presbyter of CSI

(Sent by email dated 22 October 2015)

EPILOGUE

“Not the hostility of the unbelieving world, but the clerical parsonic ecclesiasticism has ever been the greatest enemy of the Christian message and of brotherhood rooted in Christ.”

– Emil Brunner

We have seen the different textures to the two sides of the episcopacy in CSI. The following comments, observations, criticisms and suggestions are in order for episcopacy not to move towards an unknown path and destination. We are living at a time in history at which there is intense attention in matters relating to church and its leadership. Covetousness and carnality dominate religious offices. Disorder has crept into the Synod. Bishops themselves are heinous transgressors of discipline, so how can they enforce it in the leadership positions under their control? Moral corruption is prevalent among the clergy of all ranks. This is a gross abuse. The widespread incapacity of episcopacy to effect peace-making and problem-solving must be pointed out. The bishops expose themselves to the mockery and disrespect of their hearers as they exhibit their shallow knowledge of the Word of God and the mysteries of the Gospel. It has become common for a priest or a bishop to supplement his/her ample income through legal and illegal means. The CSI has to tolerate impoverished and self-seeking bishops, and they neglect God’s service.

We ought to address the ecclesiastical demoralization as many leaders have fallen from all devotion and godliness. Indignation and disgust at ecclesiastical abuses are waning. The Moderators have forgotten their divine commission. They have become manipulators capable of winning elections or any electoral proceedings, controlling the choice of membership in committees and maintaining the minute books with the inaccurate details of decisions made. The episcopate must preach the gospel and not to play proud prelates. Adorning the ecclesiastical office by a blameless life, John Knox signed himself as 'the minister of the holy altar'. John Knox was 'a potential controversialist as well as a heroic reformer'. The church is above the bishops; they exist for the people's good, and not the church for their good. A policy of repression instead of dialogue and understanding is being followed in the name of administration.

Claiming superiority to mask their own indiscipline and transgression of norms and procedures and self-arrogance are becoming firm habits. The people are worried about the emergence and the institutionalization of bloated self-indulgence on the part of bureaucratic leaders. Thereby a vital component of Christian value has disappeared, namely humility. Now it is self-projection, the 'behold a giant am I' mentality which prevails. The degenerate sentiment derived from a shallow bureaucratic self-importance would have been due to the trickle-down attitude of transient self-importance and false indispensability. There is a growing breed of politicians or self-proclaimed VVIPs. The VIP phenomenon is evident in practically every sphere of our daily lives. Who are these VIPs after all? Folks who are supposed to be servants of the Church? Are VIPs the modern 'Brahmins' of a new caste system, or are they modern overlords of neo-feudalism in the Church? The VIPs ask us to bend; we prostrate ourselves. It is another kind of apartheid by our own *episcopoi* prevalent in our own churches in the twenty-first century.

On the Constitution and government of the CSI none have written with great ability and searching erudition. The Church needs to be set free from prelatiic hierarchy. In the present crisis, we are urgently pressed to a renewed examination of the apostolical and primitive polity of the Church and its governance. Let us fall back on the Christianity which Christ and his apostles taught. Most members have been content with blind acquiescence to the abuses of power in the Church. We need a government administered in every part particularly by the Scripture, Law and Constitution.

Do we meekly accept corruption as part of the life in the world? Is ecclesiology an institutionalized discipline? It cannot be an arm of the institutional church which seeks to survive and maintain the status quo. Institutions are shaped in accordance with the goals pursued by the political actors and the way those persons want to structure power relations among themselves, privileging some and putting others at a disadvantage. The Moderators' definitions of their own interests are framed into formal attributes of church laws, the Amendments and the new Bye-laws. To break free from their guiles and reestablish truly Christian priorities, to clean up the church and inject obedience to faith is possible only by means of setting out a truly Christian framework.

We need to 'revive a theological understanding of episcopacy and restore it to a genuinely pastoral ministry'.⁸⁵ Bishop Newbiggin urges each bishop to be aware of 'the true dimension of his task'. One such task is to look for opportunities of Christian witness in areas where it is lacking.⁸⁶ He adds that bishops should lead their people in challenging the dominant powers and lead themselves a life of renunciation, commitment and continual renewal. A bishop should accept and

⁸⁵ G. Bennett, "Religious and Ecclesiastical Factors that Have Shaped Episcopacy", *Today's Church and Today's World with a Special Focus on the Ministry of Bishops*, London: CIO Publishing, 1978, p. 221.

⁸⁶ "The Bishop and the Ministry of Mission", *Today's Church and Today's World with a Special Focus on the Ministry of Bishops*, p. 245.

acknowledge other ministries and ‘help those who are gifted in different ways’.⁸⁷ John Macquarrie stressed the need for bishops in constant dialogue with the theologians and doing theology together which he calls, ‘co-theologising’.⁸⁸

We have now created an atmosphere in which episcopal leaders could get away with graft. We can’t stretch the power of the Moderator beyond legal or constitutional limits. Defenders of graft say, ‘everybody does it’. There are people to stonewall the persons in power for pure vested interests. Synod members are inexcusably negligent or naïve and they do not care. Corruption is a moral problem. Do we have laws designed to discourage corruption? What about the church’s teaching on it? Can we observe at least a week as anti-corruption week with suitable lessons for each day including the Sunday and make each congregation reflect on the evil nature of graft and bribery? A dedicated Churchmanship is an answer to abuses of power and corruption. A thoughtful and responsible community can challenge tyranny. Greed for money and greed for power are two types of corruption. People are losing faith in ordained ministry, particularly in episcopacy.

In the ‘Declaration of Independence’ drafted by Thomas Jefferson and made by the thirteen united states of America on 4 July 1776, it is written, ‘Mankind (sic) are most disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government ...’ In the sphere of Church life, it is easy to grow and maintain such a mindset through Scriptural teachings. There are appropriate verses to quote to demand patience and submission from the

⁸⁷ Newbigin, “Bishop and the Ministry of Mission”, p. 243.

⁸⁸ “The Bishop and Theologians”, *Today’s Church and Today’s World with a Special Focus on the Ministry of Bishops*, p. 253.

people to the authorities by stressing that such virtues will bring reward to them in heaven. We can also draw a lesson for the Church as it has further declared that when a system has reduced us under absolute Despotism it is our right and duty to throw off such system, and to provide new guards for the future security of the Church. We are well-adjusted to corruption, manipulation and arrogance of the leadership. How are we going to turn tables on them? How do we transplant biblical and theological values into the life and administration of the Church?

The CSI, a united and uniting church, ought to grow in experience of 'sanctification in truth' (John 17: 19). The earlier work, which was a response to the Moderator's paper on 'Renewal and Revitalization', was concerned with this theme. Jesus who prayed for the unity of the disciples also prayed in the same breath that the disciples have to be 'sanctified in truth in the world'. First of all, it is important that the journey of unity should continue in order to achieve 'complete oneness' which does not indicate 'uniformity' and 'everybody agreeing with each other on all matters'. Jesus thus prayed, '... that they may become completely one' (John 17: 23) 'Complete unity' means that the denominational unity ought to flow through cultural spheres of life, such as family, clan, caste, language and region. 'Sanctified in truth' also means that the church has to be truthful about itself, about its wrongs and failures without pretension. The church should be guided by a self-understanding that sanctification implies a new image of the church as a 'set apart' community for service and witness. Finally, the church which includes the mega power structures should be open to truth from wherever and whomever it comes. That will be the fitting way to fulfill the wish of Jesus which he agonizingly prayed for.

Both the Moderators had such an intolerant spirit that they always thought that the other side is not allowed to have any view. The policy that exists in CSI today is that the Moderator can do no wrong. Speaking truth to power just means saying something which those in authority

don't want to hear. The powers treat agitation is the lowest form of Christianity. The powerful treat with contempt those who resist, react and agitate, and they are condemned as enemies of the church. This merely reveals the moral and intellectual backwardness of our leaders at the top. We are amazingly naïve at peacemaking, nonviolence or Biblical pacifism. To use Noam Chomsky's terminology, we must aspire 'to be moral agents not servants of power'. 'Criticism that comes with truth and challenge is considered as a negative reaction to power and therefore is condemnable. But if you join with other people, you can make changes. Millions of things are possible, depending on where you want to put your efforts.' (Noam Chomsky)

The voters want to be spectators, not prepared to be participants in making change. They're supposed to show up every couple of years to ratify decisions made elsewhere, or to select among the representatives of the dominant sectors in what's called an 'election.' Elections are helpful, because they have a legitimizing effect. Its goal is to make people as stupid, ignorant, passive and obedient as possible; they are well sustained by clever propaganda, well designed, well crafted, with plenty of thought behind it. Investment theory of politics is followed in Synod elections. To participate in the political arena, you must have enough resources and private power to become part of such a coalition. The investors who join together form a coalition to share power. One support to the hilt the other and his fortunes, both in power seeking and power maintaining. This is a business-run society.

It is not possible to reshape the culture of CSI politics overnight. The CSI Synod Secretariat is not a divinely sanctioned paradigm to demand all dioceses to fold under it. These days, episcopal authority with an insatiable appetite of human ambition for achieving power will take one to the position of Moderator. Episcopacy is suffering from politics of voracious human ambition to possess unaccountable power because episcopacy is seen merely a socially elevated administrative office. The

chair of the Moderator should be predominantly a place of moral leadership.

The Western Church forgets its obligation to the Universal Church. The real face of CSI episcopacy should not be overlooked by the Western church leaders, partnership agencies and grant-making bodies in their dealing with the hierarchy of the CSI. Western bureaucracy prevents the Western churches from raising moral and ethical questions when funds are allocated for activities of the various programmes and initiatives of the CSI. It is not suggested that the West should blackmail the CSI, but it should use the occasions of sharing of resources to emphasize the need for correction and reproof. The Western churches in communion with the CSI are pretentious when they silently and at times reverently pass by the corrupt leadership in CSI. 'It is their internal matter' say Western church bureaucrats; and the CSI Moderators say, 'it is our internal problem', 'the enemies of the church are throwing mud on bishops' 'they are disgruntled elements'. These are the statements often made by the Indian church officials in the safe closet of the Western Church official meetings. No one Church needs to be morally superior to tell another the grave concern about corruption activating the church and motivating the decision-makers. The Western churches particularly must take a serious view when critical voices are suppressed and even punished in a partner church. They should even be prepared to be attacked as 'Western colonialists!'

APPENDICES

A1) The Tranquebar Manifesto (2 May 1919)

We, as individual members of the Anglican Communion and the South India United Church, having met at Tranquebar in the first Ministers' conference on church union, after prayer, thought and discussion, have agreed on the following statement concerning the union of the Anglican Church with the South India United Church.

We believe that the union is the will of God, even as our Lord prayed that we might all be one, that the world might believe. We believe that union is the teaching of Scripture. "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as also ye were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in all."

We believe that the challenge of the present hour in the period of reconstruction after the war, in the gathering together of the nations, and the present critical situation in India itself, call us to mourn our past divisions and turn to our Lord Jesus Christ to seek in Him the unity of the body expressed in one visible Church. We face together the titanic task of the winning of India for Christ – one-fifth of the human race. Yet, confronted by such an overwhelming responsibility, we find ourselves rendered weak and relatively impotent by our unhappy divisions – divisions for which we were not responsible, and which have

been, as it were, imposed upon us from without; divisions which we did not create, and which we do not desire to perpetuate.

In this Church we believe that three Scriptural elements must be conserved: (1) The *Congregational* element, representing “the whole Church”, with “every member” having immediate access to God, each exercising his gift for the development of the whole body. (2) We believe it should include the delegated, organized, or *Presbyterian* element, whereby the Church could unite in a General Assembly, Synods or Councils in organized unity. (3) We believe it should include the representative, executive, or *Episcopal* element. Thus all three elements, no one of which is absolute or sufficient without the other, should be included in the Church of the future, for we aim not at compromise for the sake of peace, but at comprehension for the sake of truth.

In seeking union, the Anglican members present stand for the one ultimate principle of *the Historic Episcopate*. They ask the “acceptance of the fact of episcopacy and not any theory as to its character”. The South India United Church members believe it is “a necessary condition that the Episcopate should reassume a constitutional form” on the primitive, simple, apostolic model. While the Anglicans ask for the Historic Episcopate, the members of the South India United Church also make one condition of union, namely the recognition of *spiritual equality*, of the universal priesthood of all believers, and of the rights of the laity to their full expression in the Church. They ask that this principle of spiritual equality shall be maintained throughout at every step of the negotiations.

Upon this common ground of the Historic Episcopate and of the spiritual equality of all members of the two churches, we propose union on the following basis:

- 1) The Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, as containing all things necessary for salvation.
- 2) The Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed.
- 3) The two Sacraments ordained by Christ Himself – Baptism and the Lord's Supper.
- 4) The Historic Episcopate, locally adapted.

We understand that the acceptance of the fact of the Episcopate does not involve the acceptance of any theory of the origin of episcopacy nor any doctrinal interpretation of the fact. It is further agreed that the terms of union should involve no Christian community in the necessity of disowning its past, and we find it no part of our duty to call in question the validity of each other's orders.

Fully recognizing that we do not commit our respective bodies to any action, we individually and unofficially agree upon the following plan of union. After full deliberation, let the South India United Church, if it desires union, choose from its own members men who shall be consecrated as bishops. In the consecration of these first bishops it is suggested that three or more bishops of the Anglican Church shall lay their hands upon the candidates, together with an equal member of ministers as representatives of the South India United Church.

As soon as the first bishops are consecrated, the two bodies would in inter-communion, but the further limitation of existing ministers with regard to celebrating the Communion in the churches of the other body might still remain. In accordance with the principle of spiritual equality we desire to find some means to permit ministers of either body to celebrate the Communion in the churches of the other body. As one possible solution, we would suggest that a Special Service of *Commission* should be held. All ministers of both bodies desiring authority to officiate at the Communion throughout the whole Church should present themselves to receive at the hands of all the bishops of the United Churches a commission for such celebration of the

Communion. Ministers of either body not desiring to officiate at the Communion in the other Church would be under no obligation to present themselves. Full liberty would be claimed for individuals on the extreme wing of each body to maintain their present views and practices.

While not committing our respective bodies, we, unofficially and individually, with the blessing of God, agree to work toward union on such basis.

Those present were:

Anglicans

The Rt. Rev. The Bishop of Dornakal, Rev. S. G. Maduram, Rev. J. B. Gnaoalivu, Rev. A. Devadas, Rev. A. Savarimuthu, Rev. A. Ezekiel, Rev. D. Koilpillai (7).

South India United Church

Rev. V. Santiago, Rev. M. S. Taylor, Rev. Thangam Gabriel, Rev. P. Asirvadam, Rev. Y. J. Taylor, Rev. G. Vedanayagam, Rev. N. Gnanasigamani, Rev. Y. D. Samuel, Rev. Meshach Peter, Rev. P. Arivanandam, Rev. M. L. Jivaratnam, Rev. Benjamin Thomas, Rev. L. I. Stephen, Rev. G. Gnanmuthu, Rev. P. Thangamuthu, Rev. E. W. Thayil, Rev. M. Simon, Rev. D. C. Hutton, Rev. S. Soans, Rev. S. Ambatt, Rev. P. Zacharias, Rev. N. Edapalan, Rev. Ch. Herman, Rev. S. Paramanandam, Rev. H. A. Popley and G. Sherwood Eddy (26).

A2) The Reports from the Joint Committees on Church Union, South India (1920-1944, Excerpts)

1st Joint Committee on Union of the Church of England and the South India United Church, March, 1920, (A. M. Lenox Press, Pasumalai, 1921)

First Preliminary Report:

As representatives of the Anglican and South India United Churches, after prayerful deliberation for two days, we accept the following as a preliminary statement of matter on which we found agreement...

- 5) A. "That believing that the principal of the historic episcopate in a constitutional form is that which is more likely than any other to promote and preserve the unity of the Church, we accept it as a basis of unity without raising other questions about episcopacy.
B. That by a historic and constitutional episcopate we mean
 - (a). that the bishops be elected by representatives of the diocese and approved by representatives of the province;
 - (b). that the bishops shall perform their duties constitutionally in accordance with such customs of the church as shall be defined in a written constitution;
 - (c). that continuity with the historic episcopate be effectively maintained, it being understood that no particular interpretation of the fact of the historic episcopate be demanded.
- 6) That after union all future ordination to be presbyterate (ministry) would be performed by laying on hands of the bishops and presbyters (ministers) and that all consecrations of bishops would be performed by bishops, not less than three taking part in each consecration.'

Equality of ministers and ministries 'The SIUC maintains the principle of confining the administration of the communion and ordination to ministers (presbyters) alone. The SIUC therefore, makes it

a condition of union that all its present ministers (presbyters) shall after union be recognised as ministers (presbyters) without re-ordination.’

2nd Joint Committee Meeting, December 14-16, 1920, Bangalore

Persons consecrated Bishops or ordained Presbyters as contemplated in I (6) of the findings of March, 1920, will have all the rights and privileges of Bishops and Presbyters respectively in the Churches now in communion with the Church of England.

‘Arrangements will be necessary with regard to those ministers of the uniting churches who were ordained before the union and are working in either Church at the time of union. In the sections which follows “the area affected by the union” means the dioceses in south India which will be formed to include the members of the two uniting Churches.

The Conference suggests that these arrangements be as follows:-

1. All such ministers shall be equally eligible as members of all Councils in the Church in the area affected by the union and as delegates to any Council to which the Church in that area sends delegates.
2. Any such minister shall be at liberty to ask of the bishops of the Church in the area affected by the union a fresh commission such as would have enabled him to minister in the Church to which he did not belong before the union.
3. All ministers working in either Church at the time of union together with those subsequently ordained in the Church after union shall form the ministry of the Church in the said area’.

3rd Joint Committee Meeting, June 1921, Madras

Third committee speaks about the formation of the governing bodies (Pastorate committee, The Local Council, The diocesan council, the Provincial Synod. Though it does not deal with ministries, it speaks about the participation of the lay people in the administration of the Church.

Powers of the Bishop

1. The Bishop shall be President of the Diocesan Council and have a right to visit any permanent committees and councils in the Diocese.
2. Location of clergy shall be carried out by the Bishop in accordance with the rules formulated by the diocese. It is highly desirable that the Bishop should conduct or arrange for the conduct of the service at which the minister is inducted to his charge.
3. Ordinations. The diocesan council will approve and communicate to the Bishop the names of candidates selected for Ordination, in accordance with the rules formulated by each Diocesan Council.

The Bishop will enquire concerning their fitness and if he approve them he will ordain them in the form prescribed. If he does not approve of a candidate he will inform the Diocesan Council of the fact and they may at their discretion take steps to enquire further into the fitness of the candidate but the Bishop cannot be compelled to ordain a man whom after careful enquiry he does not approve as fit.

4. The spiritual care of ministers and workers would be the Bishop's special responsibility.
5. Licenses to officiate and preach. In accordance with rules laid down by the Provincial Synod the Bishop would give formal licences to clergy to officiate and preach in the Diocese.
6. Discipline of the Church members. The facts of cases requiring discipline should be tried by courts authorised to do so by the Provincial Synod. Any sentence which involves excommunication, greater or less, will require the approval of the Bishop.
7. Discipline of clergy: Charges against the clergy will be submitted to the Bishop in the first instance and he will proceed to deal with

each case in accordance with rules to be formulated by the Provincial Synod.

8. Veto: As Chairman of the Diocesan Council he would have a veto on resolutions concerning certain classes of subjects prescribed by the constitution. This veto could be the subject of appeal to the Provincial Synod, whose decision would be final.
9. Finance: The bishop would not have control over finance or any arbitrary powers not conferred by the constitution.
10. Worship: While the utmost freedom should be allowed in public worship it will be the duty of the Bishop to advise the Churches in this matter and to cause to be prepared special services and prayers as they may be required from time to time. He should also be empowered to take notice of any grave irregularities if they should occur in public worship. It will be of great benefit to the Churches if the Bishop receive reports from them as to the usefulness of different services.

The Ministry of the Church

‘The Conference considered the interpretation of the resolution passed at the first session that ‘after union all ordinations shall be by bishops’ in relation to the position of ordained ministers who might after the union, offer to enter the ministry of the Church as ordained ministers without desiring further ordination in the united Church and in relation to the missionary societies and the Churches which support them; but as the days allotted for the Conference had passed it was resolved that the conference dissolve and appoint a sub-committee to consider the subject further and report to the next meeting.’ (The Sub-committee by two conveners, Bishop of Dornakal and Dr Banninga)

Statement by the Bombay Branch of the English Church Union on the Report of the Joint Committee on Union, November (printed) 1921.

‘In the scheme of Conciliar Government which is now being provided for the Province of India and Ceylon in the Constitutions of the Diocesan and Provincial councils the principle that the ultimate decision on matters of faith and doctrine must rest with the Bishops has been clearly laid down, but this is matter which the SIUC is not at present prepared to accept. The bishop of Bombay writes in his “The Negotiations for union with the SIUC”, this was a matter on which we failed just as the last to get agreement.’ The Bombay Diocesan Council after discussing this point passed the following resolution:-

‘In any scheme of reunion that may be drawn up as the result of the proposals it is essential that the Faith and Doctrine of the Church should be maintained and for that purpose the authority of the Episcopate in such matters should be safeguarded.’

‘The possibility, hinted at above, of the introduction of a permanent non-episcopally ordained ministry is most serious as it raises the question how far the Church of England, as a branch of the Catholic Church, has power to introduce a new form of ministry, and also how far she will, by so doing, endanger the possibility of reunion with the rest of the Catholic Church whose insistence on episcopal ordination is undoubted’ (W.B. O’Brien, S.S; J.E. Chairman, Bombay Branch, E.C.U.), E.C.U. Office, Bombay, on November 1921, p. 3).

The Church

‘The SIUC Assembly had used the words, “The resultant Church shall be an autonomous and independent entity”. As soon as we met on the first occasion, the Anglican members began by placing before the Joint committee our apprehensions about the implications of these words. We could never be parties, we said, to founding a new Church. There was only one Church and one Founder. The smaller Churches within that church were untrue to the Great Church and the Founder, if, in any absolute sense, they claimed to be “independent entities”. A

Church could be relatively independent. For instance, it could be independent of the State. That we wished the Church in India to be. It could also be independent of any legally enforceable or otherwise mandatory control by foreigners or foreign societies. That we wished the Church in India to be. It could however never be independent of the past and the Saints who lived in this world once and still form part of the Church, living in another and better world. Nor could it be independent of contemporary Christianity. Any partial reunion and still more the universal union of Christendom meant the actualisation of a fellowship which must necessarily impose – like any actual fellowship among men – restrictions on individual independence. The fellowship of Churches in a reunited Christendom must mean that none could consider itself as an absolutely independent entity. It would be very earnest about preserving the fellowship and gladly accept the consequent limitations of its own independence. We instanced the autonomy of the churches which compose the Anglican Communion as illustrating in actual modern Church life this point. Neither the Archbishop of Canterbury nor the English Convocations have any power to dictate to the Bishops and Conventions of the American Church, not to the Bishops and Synods of Japan, nor to the Archbishop of Cape Town and the Provincial and Diocesan Synods of South Africa. Yet these churches feel a very real obligation to order their actions in such a way as to preserve the Fellowship of the Anglican Communion.’ (Edwin James Palmer, *The Negotiations for Union with the SIUC*, 1921 SPG Mission Press, Ahmednagar, 1921, pp. 2-3).

The Church Order

‘On the subject of Church Order we started with the common acceptance of a constitutional Episcopate. We agreed at the third Conference that if we are to have Episcopacy at all, we must have the real thing. An important section (third report, Res I (3)) embodies this decision in detail. For my own part, I believe that it is satisfactory. The Conference dropped the idea of Colleges of Bishops without discussion.

The SIUC was understood to be against it, and so is the Bishop of Dornakal. When we came to the position of the bishops in the General Assembly or Provincial Council (whichever it may be called), we failed just at the last to get agreement. The Anglican members were surprised to find that the SIUC did not wish to have anything to do with voting by Orders, which amongst us is considered as the sheet anchor of the liberties both of the clergy and of the laity. I am not sure that the SIUC members are not right. The system of voting by Orders is one which may lead to deadlocks. But we could not get assent, even when we proposed that in any of the matters which had been assigned to the bishops as their special administrative duties, no resolution of the Assembly should be carried, unless it commanded a majority of the Bishops as well as of the Assembly. I admit that I feel myself that it is essential to the idea of the Episcopate, that, in its own particular administrative sphere, it must be persuaded by the Church to make changes, and that it must not be liable to be overborne by a majority of any Assembly. This is no question of exposing the Church to the self-will or unwisdom of a single bishop. It is a question of the responsible judgement of a majority of Bishops, who have commission to administer certain things and have experience in administering them. It is quite true that they are more permanent than any other members of the Assembly, and therefore it is urged that they might be a dead-weight in favour of conservatism. But their very permanence adds to the responsibility which their consecration impresses on them. They must go on suffering, and suffering more than anyone else, from a false step. I cannot but think that our proposal about the position of the Bishops in the General Assembly or Provincial council is so reasonable in itself and so moderate, that it will win consent when its novelty to the minds of the SIUC members has worn off. It is worth recording that the chief spokesman of the SIUC Indian members said at the close of the Conference, "We Indians wish to have Episcopacy and we shall have it". (Palmer, *The Negotiations for Union with the SIUC*, pp. 5-6).

The Church of India

‘It was always our hope and desire that the union in South India would pave the way to a real Church of India, in which Indians would more and more feel at home. Mr. Paul has this ideal at heart. He wishes now to dissuade his countrymen (who have not yet accepted it) from accepting episcopacy. It seems to him that it would bind them to a piece of Western organization. Against this view three things must be remembered. The first is that the majority of Indian Christians already accept Episcopacy. The most Indian of all the Church in India are those on the Malabar coast. It is impossible to think of a real Church of India which will not eventually include those who are now called the Syrian Christians and the Roman Catholics. The acceptance of episcopacy in its historic sense brings nearer the union of all Indian Christians. The second point to be remembered is that it is quite untrue to say that episcopacy is a piece of Western organization. It has existed both in the East and in the West from the very earliest times. It takes very different characters according as Easterners or westerners use it. Indian Bishops will use it very differently from English bishops. They will probably share to the full Mr. Paul’s abhorrence of administration and organization, or as Mr. Paul and other YMCA Secretaries to do all that for them! And this would be in accordance with ancient President. In antiquity much of the administration and organization fell to the Deacons who formed a staff of special assistants to the Bishop, with the Archdeacon as the chief of the staff. With this help and with the small extent of many diocese the Bishops had time and opportunity to give the church advantage of all these natural and personal gifts which Mr. Paul hopes that Indian Bishops of the distant future will have. The third point is that it is not on natural and personal gifts that the Church depends for its general ministry, including its Bishops. Mr. Paul sketches a Church which will try to “live on prophets”. As I have said elsewhere, this attempt is in the nature of things foredoomed to failure. The supply of prophets is variable, and they have special qualifications which do not

by themselves fit them for the work of the general ministry. But till Mr. Paul would depend on the prophets. That is why he regards as impracticable and absurd the proposal, that, as he puts it, the Church should “proceed to find perpetually from South India twelve men with the qualifications indicated” by the duties assigned to bishop in our proposals. On the contrary he says, “If left to itself... and Indian communist, if constrained with a general desire to become Episcopalians so as to be in the line with some of the great Churches of the world, would probably decide to elect the consecrate as its bishops its most outstanding spiritual leaders, irrespective of their capacity as administrators or organizers It would probably limit their maximum number, say to five, so as not to be tempted to lower the standard” These observations touch a real point, the point which S Paul express in the Words, “who is sufficient for these things?” They neglect another point as real, or indeed more real Consecrations does not mean appointment by the Church: it means enablement by God The Church believe that God wants Bishops, and if it prays to Him devoutly for good Bishops, as it does at every consecration service and at every Eucharist, He will make men, who apparently have no outstanding personal gifts, “sufficient” or adequate as Bishops This is the real belief of the Church It is a continual surprise to us to hear our notion of consecration called mechanical or magical It is only one case of the belief that God puts forth His power in accordance with his will, when men exercise their privilege or prayer in accordance with the same will.

The laying on of hands signifies, amongst other things, that the power to be a good bishop is not in the person consecrated, but comes to him from without, that is from God, at the prayer of His Church.

Let me repeat that we have no wish whatever to perpetuate in India the Anglican character of Episcopacy as it is in England. We know that India will accept Episcopacy, as other lands have accepted it, as one of god’s gifts to men through the Church. All nations have used this gift more or less according to their national temperament. Those who are

temperamentally organizers, have had Bishops who have discharged their functions by organization. These who have little or no tendency towards organization, have had Bishops who pursued very different methods. The duties of the bishops have been the same. They have been concerned with the teaching and maintaining of the Truth, the due administration of the Sacraments, the guarding of the purity of the life of the Christian community and the preservation of peace and unity in it. They have been Shepherds under the Chief Shepherd and Bishops of our Souls. In all this there is nothing, national, nothing western. It is God's provision for needs which are common to all humanity.

“The Anglican system” not to be imposed. It seems very difficult for any Free Churchmen who have not been in these conference, and rather difficult for some who have, to believe that we are not trying to impose “the Anglican system” on the India Church. Yet the facts are patent that we have not asked for the English prayer Book or the Thirty Nine Articles to be adopted by the future Church. If any things are typical or Anglicanism, these are. We have never knowingly insisted on anything which is not part of the continuous tradition of the historic Church from very early times. They will inevitably impart some national character to them as they use them.’ (Palmer, *The Negotiations for Union with the SIUC*, pp. 7-8).

4th Joint Committee Meeting April 4-7, 1923, Pasumalai, Madurai (printed at the AM Lenox Press, Pasumalai, 1923)

The Bishop of Madras presented the following resolution of the provincial council of the Anglican Church.

The Committee, ‘requests the Metropolitan to appoint a Committee to continue negotiations with the object of drawing up and presenting to the two churches a formal statement of the cardinal points on which a scheme of union should be based’.

Dr Banninga read the following resolutions of the General Assembly and the Church council of the SIUC.

‘That the general Assembly place on record its opinion that the SIUC should be willing for the sake of doing what it can to forward the cause of union in the Christendom, to accept a Constitutional Episcopacy as defined in its resolution of September, 1919; and at the same time

That it express its position that the SIUC cannot enter a union which will cut off from those Churches with which it is now in full communion. It treasures its present catholicity too highly to take any step that would diminish or destroy the fellowship which it now enjoys with Evangelical Christendom’.

Resolutions Adopted by the Joint Committee

SIUC expressed the following feeling

‘The Resolutions of the General Assembly and the various councils of the South India United church reveal a very strong dissatisfaction with the proposals of the Joint committee on Equality of Ministry. The continuance of what was virtually a dual ministry in the united Church, with the limitations which it has imposed upon non-episcopally ordained ministers, seemed to militate against the attainment of that real unity for which alone it seems worthwhile to make the readjustments and the sacrifices which are involved in any union. Accordingly the Committee were led to a proposal which they had at first rejected viz. a mutual commissioning of ministers.’

The Joint Committee therefore

Resolved that the suggestion should be laid before the Churches that there should be a form of commissioning which should be so framed as to be acceptable to practically all the ministers in our two Churches...

The ministers of both Churches would take part in such a service.

5th Joint Committee on Union of the Church of England in India, the South India United Church, and the South India Provincial Synod of the Wesleyan Methodist Church at Sullivan’s Gardens, Madras, 10 am, Tuesday, February 17, 1924

First meeting for the Wesleyans

Resolutions passed by the Episcopal Synod on 27 Jan 1924 (This was presented by V. S. Azariah)

‘That the Episcopal Synod is thankful to learn that the two churches are drawing nearer together and rejoices in the great advance that has been made towards agreement on fundamental points, including the acceptance of the constitutional episcopate’

Resolutions of SIUC

‘Dr Banninga made a statement for the South India United Church reporting the action of the General Assembly of August 1923. Since then the Madura Church Council had approved of that General Assembly’s resolution and those of the Committee on Union as reported to the Assembly in August 1924, while the Arcot Council has disapproved of laying on of hands in the Commissioning service.’

Wesleyans want to enter into union on the basis of Lambeth Appeal;

Agreement

1. We are agreed

- 1) That the only union which Christians should aim at is the union of all who acknowledge the name of Christ in the Universal Church which is His Body: and that the test of all local schemes of union is that they should express locally the principles of the great Catholic unity of the Body of Christ. Our only desire, therefore, is so to organise the Church in India that it shall give the Indian expression of the spirit, the thought, and the life of the Church Universal. (Agreed)
- 2) That the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments contain all things necessary to salvation and are the rule and ultimate standard of faith. (agreed)
- 3) That we accept the Apostles’ Creed and Nicene Creed as containing a sufficient statement of the faith of the Church for a basis of fellowship.

This was accepted; but the Wesleyans would record the opinion that they would prefer to add to this some such statement as the following: - We acknowledge the Apostles Creed as a very early baptismal confessing of belief and the Creed commonly called Nicene as a statement of Christian faith upon certain fundamental truths, and while claiming a reasonable liberty of interpretation, we heartily accept the substance of the teaching contained in both these venerable symbols.

- 4) That the two sacraments, Baptism and the Supper of the Lord are to be ministered with unfailling use of Christ's words of institution and of the elements ordained by Him. (agreed)
- 5) A. That believing that the principle of the historic episcopate in a constitutional form is that which is more likely than any other to promote and preserve the unity of the Church, we accept it as a basis of unity without raising other questions about episcopacy.
B. That by a historic and constitutional episcopate we mean:-
 - a) that they bishops be elected by representatives of the diocese and approved by representatives of the province.
 - b) that the bishops shall perform their duties constitutionally inn accordance with such customs of the Church as shall be defined in a written constitution; and
 - c) that continuity with the historic episcopate be effectively maintained, it being understood that no particular interpretation of the fact of the historic episcopate be demanded.
- 6). a. That after union all future ordinations to the presbyterate (ministry) would be performed by 'laying on of hands' of the bishops and presbyters (ministers) and
 - b. That all consecrations of bishops would be performed by bishops, not less than three taking part in each consecration.

(Recorded that the Wesleyan delegation, feeling that constitutional episcopacy is the only means of union approve of (5) and (6 -1) and that (6-2) be left for future discussion.

7) a. that the church of India must be free from any control, legal or otherwise, of any Church or Society outside of India;

b. that the Church in India must be free from any control, legal or otherwise, of any Church or society outside of India;

(Agreed)

c. that while the Church in India is free from such control it would regulate its acts by the necessity of maintaining fellowship with other branches of the Catholic Church with which we are now in communion.

A Message from the Joint Committee on Union to the Anglican, South India United, and Wesleyan Methodist Churches in South India and Ceylon

‘India, in common with the rest of the world, seeks after God, and the Church exists to bear testimony that he has made Himself known in the one Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Nothing could be simpler, yet how bewildering is the spectacle of divided Churches, whether called catholic or protestant, all professing the same object, and how much is taken from the force of their witness by their multiplicity and separateness. We crave some evidence plain to all the world that Christ’s people are one in Him.

In the West numerous Christians who are loyal to their own Churches are painfully conscious of confusion and weakness caused by Church divisions, while vast numbers less loyal are turning away from organised religion altogether. In India, while non-Christians are turning their thoughts towards Christ as never before, the existing Church does not attract them in the least, largely because it is divided, and its very divisions are foreign. Indian Christians within all the existing Churches

are longing for some simpler, more unified, more Indian expression of what a Church was meant to be. We are all surer than ever that Jesus Christ is the one hope of the world and of India, yet we are not sure that our Churches, divided as they are, are bearing to Him' (p. 42 by Secretaries Harry, W E Garman, John J Banninga).

6th Joint Committee Meeting, Feb 24-28, 1926, Woriur, Trichinopoly,
Minutes of the previous meeting

Week of prayer was observed on August 23 and 30, joint services, interchange of pulpits, and similar fellowship

Resolutions on Union

The Committee proceeded to consider the previous reports from the point which it had reached in the Fifth meeting.

“The Wesleyan delegation proposed an amendment ‘that bishops be elected by representatives of the province from a panel nominated by representatives of the diocese’ instead of the proposal that ‘the bishops be elected by representatives of the diocese and approved by representatives of the province’”

Agreed: ‘That while the Church in India is free from such control it would regulate its acts by the necessity of maintaining fellowship with other branches of the Catholic Church with which we are now in communion.’

Commissioning Service

SIUC was favourable, but the Anglicans were not favourable.

‘The Committee decided to hold separate sessions of the delegates of the Churches to consider the matter.

The SIUC also presented a statement of their inability to bring forward fresh proposals in view of the fact that their General Assembly had approved the proposals of the Fourth Meeting and pointing out that the views of the Episcopal Synod had not yet been officially communicated.’

“The Anglican representatives having learned that the proposed Commissioning Service had raised doubts and objections in their own Churches owing to its ambiguity and on the vital point of whether it would constitute an ordination or not, and was not likely therefore, to effect a solution of the vital question of the ministry of the churches during the first years of union made two alternative proposals, ie a commission by episcopal ordination, or recognition without ordination; but they asked that the reasons which led them to make these proposals should be placed on record not with a view of requiring their acceptance by the members of the joint committee or by the Churches, but rather as an explanation of reasons that lay behind the proposals.

Resolved that the Joint Committee unanimously recommends that in order to secure the full mutual recognition of the ministries of the uniting Churches the existing ministers of the three Churches be accepted as ministers of the Word and of the sacraments in the Church after union, with the distinct understanding that no minister ordained before the Union shall minister temporarily in any church or congregation without the consent of the parish minister and the congregation, or shall be transferred to any new congregation without the consent of the congregation and the bishop.

7th Joint Committee Meeting, 29 June – 4 July 1928, Bangalore
(Printed by A. M. Lenox Press, Pasumalai, 1928)

Resolutions adopted

I. General Principles of the Proposed Union

The statement of matters agreed upon as general principles of the proposed union, originally accepted at the First session of the JC , and reconsidered at later sessions, especially in view of the addition of delegates from the Wesleyan Church to the Committee, was again considered, and adopted in the following form:-

1. That the only union which Christians should aim at is the union of all who acknowledge the name of Christ in the Universal

Church, which is His body; and that the test of all local schemes of union is that they should express locally the principles of the great catholic unity of the Body of Christ. Our only desire, therefore, is so to organise (end of page 3) the Church in India that it shall give the Indian expression of the spirit, the thought, and the life of the Church universal.

2. That the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments contain all things necessary to salvation and are the rule and ultimate standard of faith.
 3. That we accept the Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed as containing a sufficient statement of the faith of the Church for a basis of fellowship.
 4. That the two sacraments Baptism and the Supper of the Lord, are to be ministered with unflinching use of the Christ's words of institution and of the elements ordained by Him.
 5. A. That believing that the historic Episcopate in a constitutional form is the method of Church Government which I more likely than any other to promote and preserve the organic unity of the Church, we accept it as a basis of union without raising other questions about episcopacy.
- B. That by a Historic and constitutional Episcopate we mean:-
- a) that the bishops shall be elected. In the election both the diocese considered and the province shall have an effective voice;
 - b) that the bishops shall perform their duties constitutionally in accordance with such customs of the Church as shall be defined in a written constitution;
 - c) that continuity with the historic Episcopate be effectively maintained, it being understood that no particular interpretation of the fact of the historic episcopate be demanded.

- That after union all future ordinations to the Presbyterate (ministry) would be performed by laying on of hands of the bishops and presbyters (ministers)
- That all consecrations of bishops would be performed by bishops, not less than three taking part in each consecration.

N.B. – It is suggested that in the inauguration of the Union, at the first service of consecration of bishops, the laying on of hands shall be successively by groups of ministers severally representing the SIUC and the Wesleyan Church, as well as by Anglican bishops, thus conserving for the united Church the traditions held by each of the uniting bodies. (This note will ultimately to put into its suitable place in the whole scheme. On this subject, see also below)

6. a) That the Church in India ought to be independent of the State.
- b) that the Church in India must be free from any control, legal or otherwise, of any Church or Society outside of India
- c) That while the Church in India is free from such control, it would regulate its acts by the necessity of maintaining fellowship with other branches of the Catholic Church with which we are now in Communion.

(In connection with the above, the Continuation committee was asked to arrange for the drafting of ordination and consecration services, including the inaugural consecration service such as will be acceptable to all the uniting Churches, and to report at the next session of the JC)

II. The Ministry of the United Church

The resolutions on this subject of the Sixth session of the JC were reconsidered, in view particularly of the resolutions in connection there with passed by various Church councils of the SIUC and by the General Council of the Church of India, Burma, and Ceylon and the following resolutions were adopted: -

1. That the JC unanimously recommends that in order to secure the full mutual recognition of the ministries of the uniting Churches, the existing ministers of the three Churches be accepted as ministers of the word and of the Sacraments in the Church after union, with the distinct understanding that no minister ordained before the union shall minister temporarily in any church or congregation without the consent of the parish minister and the congregation, or shall be transferred to any new congregation without the consent of the congregation and the bishop.

The great object of complete spiritual unity within the church will never be attained till all the members are willing and wishful to receive communion equally in every church, but the attainment of this object will only be retarded if authorities or majorities in the united Church make arrangements which have the effect of forcing those who have conscientious objections to receiving communion from ministers not episcopally ordained to do so or else to forego communion. It is therefore agreed that

- a) Arrangements existing at the time of union by which Anglicans in any particular place enjoyed opportunities of receiving communion at the hands of an episcopacy ordained ministers will not be terminated after union against their will by the Church authorities, and
- b) Any congregation accustomed to an episcopally ordained ministry will not either temporarily or permanently be placed in charge of a non-episcopally ordained minister unless all the communicant members of the congregation have been informed of the suggested appointment and no one has signified his objection to such an arrangement.

2. It is the intention and expectation of those who enter into this union that eventually every minister exercising a permanent ministry in the Church will be an episcopally ordained minister.

It is agreed that the thirty years succeeding the union, the ministers of any Church whose missions have founded the originally separate parts of the united Church may be received as ministers of the united Church, if they are willing to make the same declarations with regard to the Faith and Constitution of the united Church as are required from persons about to be ordained or employed for the first time in the united Church.

After this period of thirty years, the Church will consider and decide the question of such exceptions to the general principle of an episcopally ordained ministry.”

9th JC Meeting, November 12-15, 1930, Madras (AM Lenox Press, Pasumalai, 1930)

The committee records the death of Rev. V. Santiago.

‘The Episcopate, the councils of Presbyters and the Congregation of the faithful all had their place in the constitution of the early Church: and all these have been the basis of the government of great communions in Christendom,. The preservation of these three elements in its organisation is essential to the good order of the Church. The uniting Churches will bring their experience of these systems, learned in separation, into our common life and we believe that in the fellowship of the united Church these elements will each find their proper and effective place and be a permanent enrichment of its life. They will, of course, necessarily modify one another by mutual interaction, by together will make for a full and more effective organization that each can be in isolation’

‘The uniting Churches, recognising that the episcopate, the councils of the presbyters and the congregation of the faithful must all have their appropriate places in the order of life of the united church, accept in

particular the historic episcopate in a constitutional form as part of their basis of union. But this acceptance does not bind the united church to the acceptance of any particular theory concerning episcopacy, either as a qualification for the ministry, or as a determining factor in its relations with others churches.’

‘Every ordination of presbyters shall be performed by the laying on of hands of the bishop and presbyters and all consecrations of bishops shall be performed by bishops, not less than three taking part in each consecration. The uniting churches declare that in making this provision it is their intention and determination in their manner to secure the unification of the ministry, but that the acceptance of this provision does not involve the denial of the validity or regularity of any other form of ministry’.

‘The bishop of the diocese has the general pastoral oversight of all the Christian people of the diocese, and more particularly, of the ministers of the Church in the diocese. As the chief shepherd under Christ of his flock in that part, he is responsible for doing all that he can to foster the true spiritual unity of the diocese, by entering as far as possible into personal relation with every member of the flock; especially by ministering, as occasion may serve, the rite of Confirmation or by presiding, when desired, at other services in which admission is given into full membership of the Church.

His office is also essentially a teaching office and it is his duty by all means in his power to instruct the ministers and congregations over whom he has oversight, concerning the truths of the Christian faith.’

10th Joint Committee Meeting, June 15-18, 1932, Bangalore (A M Lenox press, Pasumalai, 1932)

‘But this acceptance does not bind the united church to any particular theory concerning episcopacy or concerning orders of the ministry, and the united Church shall not require the acceptance of any such theory as

a necessary qualification for its ministry, not make it a determining factor in its relations with other churches’

‘After this period of thirty years the united Church must determine for itself whether exceptions to the rule of an episcopally ordained ministry shall continue to be made or not, and if so, of what nature, giving in their consideration full weight to the fundamental principles of the union, viz., that the ministry of the united Church must be a fully unified ministry, and that at the same time, full fellowship and communion must be maintained by the united Church withal those branches of the Church of Christ with which the uniting Churches now severally enjoy such fellowship, and that the fellowship must continually be widened and strengthened ; provided that the status of those at that time already received as ministers in the united Church shall not be affected by any action which the united Church may then take.’

11th Joint Committee Meeting 29 November – 3 December 1932, Madras (typed)

There were visitors from Tamil Evangelical Lutheran Church, Church of Sweden Mission, Danish Missionary Society, Andhra Lutheran Church etc.

Basis of union:

The new draft of the Basis of union was considered in detail.

Changes in the Constitution:

Section 6. line 4. For “bishops, presbyters and laity” read “the episcopate, the Presbyterate and the Congregation of the Faithful”.

Governing principles, section 10, page 25

Insert a new sub section iii, renumbering present iii as iv. “iii. Continuity with the historic episcopate will be effectively maintained in the church of South India, it being understood that no particular interpretation of the fact of the historic episcopate is thereby implied, or shall be demanded from any minister or member of that Church”.

Basis of union, section 8.

It was agreed that the first part of the Section should read as follows:
- ‘The uniting churches agree that presbyters are specially called and commissioned by god to be dispensers of His Word and Sacraments, to declare His message of pardon to penitent sinners, to build up the members of the Church in their most holy faith and to administer.....’

Basis of union, sec. 9 and Governing principles, sec. 10

On behalf of the delegation of the Methodist Church, Rev. W E Tomlinson withdraw the proposal that is should be the rule that in the consecration of bishops representative presbyters should join with the bishops in the laying-on-of-hands, such dioceses as so desire being permitted to have the laying-on-of-hands of bishops only.

On behalf of the SIUC delegates it was reported that they heartily concurred in this and were entirely ready that the section should stand as drafted. Members of the Anglican delegation expressed their deep gratitude for the sympathy and kind understanding with which the delegates of the other Churches had received the difficulties felt on the Anglican side.

The Anglican delegates stated that they would gladly see it provided in the proposals for the inaugural service of the union that there should be a solemn commissioning of the existing bishops for their ministry as bishops of the united Church by the laying-on-of-hands with prayer by representative presbyters of the Methodist Church and of the SIUC. The Methodist and SIUC delegations received this suggestion with deep appreciation.

On behalf of the Anglican delegation the suggestion about a possible note to Section 10 of the Basis of union was withdrawn.

Dr. Appasamy raised the question whether the Governing principles of the Church should be set out as a separate documents from the rest of the Constitution; discussion of this was postponed.

Basis of union, Section 1. Para 4

The last sentence to read, “They trust, therefore, that the united Church, conserving all that is of spiritual value in its Indian heritage, will express under Indian conditions and in Indian forms the spirit, the thought and the life of the Church universal”.

12th Joint Committee Meeting, Madras, 13-17 February 1934

Alterations in the Basis of Union and the draft Constitution of the United Church

3. The Uniting churches accept the historic episcopate in a Constitutional form as part of the basis of union. There are within the uniting churches differing views and beliefs about episcopacy, which have been frankly recognised throughout the negotiations. For example, some regard episcopacy merely as a form of church government which has persisted in the church through the centuries and may as such be called historic, and which at present time is expedient for the church in South India. Others believe that episcopacy is a divine appointment and that episcopal ordination is an essential guarantee of the sacraments of the Church. Some again, hold various views intermediate between the two. The acceptance of episcopacy by the uniting churches is thus differing in their views and beliefs concerning it and concerning Orders of the ministry, is not to be taken as committing the united church to the acceptance of any particular interpretation of episcopacy, and no such particular interpretation shall be demanded from any minister or member of the united Church.

The Joint Committee suggests that if this be accepted, the S. I. U. C. may not find it necessary to append their present note on the word ‘historic’.

- b) That subsection (III), lines 3ff read as follows:

‘it being understood that, as stated above, no particular interpretation of the historic episcopate as that is accepted in

the united church is thereby implied or shall be demanded from any minister or member thereof.

9 (a) that the following should be substituted for the first paragraph:

‘The Church of South India accepts and will maintain the historic episcopate in constitutional form. But this acceptance does not commit to any particular interpretation of episcopacy or to any particular view or belief concerning orders of the ministry, and it will not require the acceptance of any such particular interpretation or view as a necessary qualification for its ministry.’

It being understood that, as stated above, no particular interpretation of the historic episcopate as that is accepted in the church of south India, is thereby implied or shall be demanded from any minister or member of the church.

10 (b) ‘The Church of South India believes that in all ordinations and consecrations the true Ordainer and Consecrator is God, who in response to prayers of His Church and through the words and acts of its representatives, commissions and empowers for the office and work to which they are called the persons whom it has selected.

‘In the service of consecration of a bishop in the CSI, the person to be consecrated shall be solemnly presented to the bishops who are taking part in the consecration by two presbyters of the diocese to which he is to be appointed, and these two presbyters shall join with the bishops in the laying on of hands, if however, the Diocesan Council concerned specially so determine, hands shall be laid by the bishops only.

11. ‘After this period of thirty years, the Church of South India will determine whether there shall continue to be any exceptions to the rule that its ministry is an episcopally ordained ministry, and generally under what conditions it will receive ministers from other churches into its ministry’.

15. The bishop of a diocese shall remain bishop of that diocese until he resigns, or accepts the duties of his office or until he die.

13th Joint Committee Meeting, Madras 26 February – 2 March 1935

‘They all agree in their desire that the relation of the bishop to his people should be that of Chief Pastor and Father in God; and that he is called to feed the flock of God, taking the oversight thereof as shepherd, not as Lord either in act or title, but as an example to the flock.’

15th Joint Committee Meeting, 23-25 February 1938, Madras (The Diocesan Press, Madras, 1938)

Regret the death of Rev. H. Gulliford

The Joint Committee has met under a deep sense of the urgency of the need of the Churches for union, and of the difficulties that yet remain to be faced.

The Joint Committee considered Resolution IV D of the General Assembly: -

‘Resolved further that, as a confirmation of the mutual recognition of the Ministers of the Word and Sacraments in the three negotiating Churches, so clearly expressed in the different ways in the Basis of Union and in the Governing Principles of the Church, the General Assembly urges the Joint Committee to take steps to secure the adoption of the practice of Inter-Communion and Inter-Celebration between the three negotiating churches before union. The Assembly believes that, if this is done, one of the chief obstacles to union would be removed.’

After informal discussion, it was agreed that the following statement might be communicated to the General Assembly as (p. 7) indicating the present position in this matter, and advice as to what further action may be taken, as occasion arises: -

- i. The joint committee recognizes that there is a strong and growing desire in the three churches for much greater liberty in matters of communion that at present exists. This desire is itself due to the progress of the negotiations for Church union and has been intensified by the very long delay in bringing to consummation a

union the Scheme for which has so long been virtually complete. The only full answer to the desire for inter-communion is the consummation of the Union itself, which is now the task of the Churches to hasten by all means in their power.

- ii. There is in the Churches a deep division of opinion on this subject. Some hold that inter-communion is one of the chief and natural means by which the spirit of union is developed and strengthened, others that it should be the expression only of a unity in faith and order already achieved. This being so, it is impossible to expect and unwise to ask that all Churches should accept general inter-communion and inter-celebration before Union as their official policy.
- iii. The present position in South India is that the Methodist Church and the SIUC have adopted the practice of welcoming to the Communion members of the other Churches who are in good standing in their own Church, and inter-celebration by ministers of other Churches. The Anglican Church, which does not by its formularies permit either inter-communion or inter-celebration, has allowed exceptions to its rule in certain circumstances. The Lambeth Conference of 1920 passed the following resolution (12 A. In view of prospects and projects of reunion – ii):-

‘The Bishops of the Anglican Communion will not question the action of any Bishop who, in the few years between the initiation and completion of a definite scheme of union, shall countenance the irregularity of admitting to Communion the baptized but confirmed communicants of non-episcopal congregations concerned in the scheme’.

The Episcopal Synod of the Church of India, Burma, and Ceylon, has definitely ruled that the Scheme for Church Union in S India comes under the terms of the resolution. The Episcopal Synod further in 1932 (agreed)

‘Not to all in question the action of any who feel impelled, in view of the agreement already reached and in confident expectation that full agreement will be attained, to join in the Lord’s Supper celebrated by ministers of the other uniting Churches at meetings of the Joint Committee and Retreats organised directly by it’.

- iv. At this time it would seem right not to press for any official action by any church further than that already taken, but by the arrangement of Retreats and Conferences under the direction of the Joint Committee to use more widely the existing opportunities.
- v. The Joint Committee is however assured that when once the three Churches have voted to enter into Union, every effort will be made to secure the adoption of full inter-communion immediately.

17th Joint Committee Meeting, October 1-3, 1941 (Methodist Hall, Madras)

Resolved

‘Whatever differences there are, however, all the uniting churches are agreed that as episcopacy has been accepted in the Church from early times, it may in this sense fitly be called historic, and that it is needed for the shepherding and extension of the Church in South India’.

18th Joint Committee Meeting, November, 1944, Madras (The Diocesan Press, Madras, 1944).

‘The Joint Committee has carefully considered the suggestion of the G A of the SIUC for an alternative arrangement in place of the 30 years period, but is of opinion that the existing provision is to be preferred to the alternative suggested, and therefore does not recommend any change in this section of the Scheme; as requested by the Assembly it agrees to affirm that the provisions of the Scheme (as summarised in Note 6 on p.22) cover the case of a minister of a Church with which any of the

uniting Churches is in communion who comes to the area of the united church for a specific and temporary period of service.’

“History of the Establishment of the Church in India” by E. J. Palmer, p.88

‘Nothing seemed more strongly to have seized the imagination of the Assessors that that the enlarged Synod would be a powerful expression of unity of the Church. All orders in the Church would by it gain a voice in its counsels. There was to be no distinction of race: the best men were to be chosen without regard to their nationality. Yet the fact that the church’s primary mission was the formation of a society which should be permanent in India – a truly India Church – would be emphasized by the creation of the Synod. There was no doubt that the Indian Christians welcomed the unity which the Synod would give them. They have no desire to be kept apart according as their fathers were the converts of one or other missionary society. Again many Assessors considered that the creation of the Synod would prove helpful in facilitating the steps towards union with Christians of other denominations – an end which all desire’ (Extract from letter of the Bishop of Madras to the Bishop of Bombay, May 14th, 1923, p. 88).

‘We had another Union meeting. The SIUC have now gone bald-headed for the mutual communion, and these things seems far more hopeful: but on the question of inter-celebration we have only recorded a statement of theirs. We have no mandate to agree to non-episcopal celebrations (on rare occasions by visitors) which they ask. The actual occasions would be few, but it cuts across principles which it seems difficult to adjust. So this matter waits for further thought, but the progress was not inconsiderable, when we thought at first we had met only to part finally on the ministry question’. (Harry Madras)

A3) Constitution of the Church of South India CSI (2003) on the Episcopate

'The Episcopate in the united Church' as it is printed in the final version of the BASIS OF UNION which is part of the present Constitution of the CSI.¹

The uniting Churches accept the historical episcopate in a constitutional form as part of their basis of union. They all agree in their desire that the relation of the bishop to his people should be that of chief pastor and father in God; and that he is called to feed the flock of God, taking the oversight thereof as shepherd, not as lord either in act or title, but as an example to the flock. There, however, within the uniting differing views and beliefs about episcopacy, which have been frankly recognized Churches throughout the negotiations. For example, some regard episcopacy merely as a form of church government which has persisted in the Church through the centuries and may as such be called historic, and which at present time is expedient for the Church in South India. Others believe that episcopacy is of divine appointment, and that episcopal ordination is an essential guarantee of the sacraments of the Church. Some, again hold various views intermediate between these two. The acceptance of episcopacy by the uniting Churches, in which there are such differing views and beliefs concerning it and concerning orders of the ministry., is not to be taken as committing the united Church to the acceptance of any particular interpretation of episcopacy and no such particular interpretation shall be demanded from any minister or member of the united Church.

Whatever differences there are, however, all the Uniting Churches are agreed that, as episcopacy has been accepted in the Church from early times, it may in this sense fully be called historical and that it is needed for the shepherding and extension of the Church in South India.

¹ *The Constitution of the Church of South India*, Madras: CSI, 2003, pp. 122-23).

Any additional interpretations, though held by individuals, are not binding on the united Church.

The meaning in which the uniting Churches thus officially accept a historic and constitutional episcopacy is that in the united Church;

- (i) The bishops shall perform their functions in accordance with the customs, of the Church, those customs being named and defined in the written constitution of the united Church. They shall include those of the pastoral oversight, of the teaching, of the supervision of public worship, of ordination of ministers and authorization to ministers to officiate and presch, and of the oversight of the discipline of the Church. A bishop will, if required assist other bishops in the consecration of persons duly elected or appointed to be bishops;
- (ii) The bishops shall be elected, both the diocese concerned in each particular case the authorities of the united Church as a whole having an effective voice in their appointment;
- (iii) continuity with historic episcopate shall both initially and thereafter be effectively maintained, it being understood that, as stated above, no particular interpretation of the historic episcopate as that is accepted in the united Church is thereby implied or shall be demanded from any minister or member thereof;
- (iv) every ordination of presbyters shall be performed by the laying on of hands of the bishop and presbyters, and all consecrations of bishops shall be performed by the laying on of hands at least of three bishops. The uniting Churches declare that in making this provision it is their intention and determination in this manner to secure the unification of the ministry but that the acceptance of this provision does not involve any judgement upon the validity or regularity of any other form of the ministry, and the fact that other Churches do not follow the rule of

episcopal ordination shall not in itself preclude the united Church from holding relations of communion and fellowship with them

The following two paragraphs are found in THE GOVERNING PRINCIPLES OF THE CHURCH in the Constitution of the CSI (p. 14)

‘The Church of South India believes that in all ordinations and consecrations the true Ordainer and Consecrator is God, who in response to prayers of His Church and through the words and acts of its representatives, commissions and empowers for the office and work to which they are called the persons whom it has selected.

‘In the service of consecration of a bishop in the CSI, the person to be consecrated shall be solemnly presented to the bishops who are taking part in the consecration by two presbyters of the diocese to which he is to be appointed, and these two presbyters shall join with the bishops in the laying on of hands, if however, the Diocesan Council concerned specially so determine, hands shall be laid by the bishops only.

A4) Order of Service 1947

**Order of Service
for the Consecration
of the First New Bishops of
The Church of South India**

in St. George's Cathedral, Madras,
on ,Saturday 27th September 1947
at 9.30 a.m. ²

² Transcribed version of the original text document.

THE FORM OF CONSECRATING THE FIRST NEW BISHOPS OF THE CHURCH OF SOUTH INDIA.

The Bishop presiding (the Rt. Rev. C. K. Jacob) shall be assisted by two other bishops of the Church of India, Burma and Ceylon (the Rt. Rev. A. M. Hollis and the Rt. Rev. G. T. Selwyn), by three presbyters of the South India United Church (Rev. Meshach Peter, Rev. A. Streckeisen and Rev. Dr. C. R. Wierenga), and by three presbyters of the Methodist Church (Rev. W. Perston, Rev. John Bastian and Rev. D. Thambusami).

The Bishop presiding shall announce the hymns.

Processional Hymn. (Tune, *Nicœa*.)

Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty !
Early in the morning our song shall rise to Thee;
Holy, Holy, Holy ! Merciful and mighty !
God in three Persons, blessed Trinity !

Holy, Holy, Holy ! all the saints adore Thee,
Casting down their golden crowns around the glassy sea;
Cherubim and seraphim falling down before Thee,
Which wert, and art, and evermore shalt be.

Holy, Holy, Holy ! though the darkness hide Thee,
Though the eye of sinful man Thy glory may not see,
Only Thou art holy; there is none beside Thee
Perfect in power, in love and purity.

Unison.

Holy, Holy, Holy ! Lord God Almighty !
All Thy works shall praise Thy name in earth
and sky and sea;
Holy; Holy, Holy ! Merciful and mighty!
God in three Persons, blessed Trinity ! Amen.

REGINALD HEBER (born 1783;
Bishop of Calcutta, 1812–1826;
died at Trichinopoly, 1826).

*The Bishop presiding shall begin the **Communion Service** by saying the Lord's Prayer, the congregation kneeling and keeping silence.*

Our Father, Which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name; Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done; in earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. Amen.

Almighty God, unto Whom all hearts be open, all desires known, and from Whom no secrets are hid, cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of Thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love Thee, and worthily magnify Thy holy name: through Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

The Bishop presiding shall say the Ten Commandments, and the people, still kneeling, shall ask God's mercy and grace.

Bishop. God spake these words and said: I am the Lord thy God; thou shalt have none other gods but Me.

People. Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law.

Bishop. Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven image, nor the likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, or in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down to them, nor worship them.

People. Lord have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law.

Bishop. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.

People. Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law.

Bishop. Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath day. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all that thou halt to do; but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God.

People. Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law.

Bishop. Honour thy father and thy mother.

People. Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law.

Bishop. Thou shalt do no murder.

People. Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law.

212 *Speaking Truth to Power*

Bishop. Thou shalt not commit adultery.

People. Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law.

Bishop. Thou shalt not steal.

People. Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law.

Bishop. Thou shalt not bear false witness.

People. Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law.

Bishop. Thou shalt not covet.

People. Lord, have mercy upon us, and write all these Thy laws in our hearts, we beseech thee.

Bishop. Let us pray.

Almighty God, Who by Thy Son Jesus Christ didst give to Thy holy apostles many excellent gifts and didst charge them to feed Thy flock; give grace, we beseech Thee, to all bishops, the pastors of Thy Church, that they may diligently preach Thy Word, and duly administer the godly discipline thereof; and grant to the people, that they may obediently follow the same; that all may receive the crown of everlasting glory: through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

O God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, our only Saviour, the Prince of Peace, we give Thee humble thanks for Thy goodness to us Thy servants in uniting us this day in one Church. Take away all hatred and prejudice, and whatsoever else may hinder us from godly union and concord, that, as there is but one Body, and one Spirit, and one hope of our calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all, so we may henceforth be all of one heart, and of one soul, united in one holy bond of truth and peace, of faith and charity, and may with one mind and one mouth glorify Thee: through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

O God, Who hast made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on the face of the earth, and didst send Thy blessed Son Jesus Christ to preach peace to them that are afar off and to them that are nigh, grant that all the peoples of the world may feel after Thee and find Thee; 'and hasten, O Lord, the fulfilment of Thy promise, to pour out Thy Spirit upon all flesh: through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

For the EPISTLE, a presbyter of the South India, United Church, Rev. Paul Raj Thomas, shall read Acts n. 17-35, the congregation being seated.

And from Miletus Paul sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church. And when they were come to him, he said unto them,

"Ye yourselves know, from the first day that I set foot in Asia, after what manner I was with you all the time, serving the Lord with all lowliness of mind, and with tears, and with trials which befell me by the plots of the Jews: how that I shrank not from declaring unto you anything that was profitable, and teaching you publicly, and from house to house, testifying both to Jews and to Greeks repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there: save that the Holy Ghost testifieth unto me in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me. But I hold not my life of any account, as dear unto myself, so that I may accomplish my course, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.

"And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I went about preaching the kingdom, shall see my face no more. Wherefore I testify unto you this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I shrank not from declaring unto you the whole counsel of God. Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, in the which the Holy Ghost hath made you bishops, to feed the church of God, which He purchased with His own blood. I know that after my departing grievous wolves shall enter in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them. Wherefore watch ye, remembering that by the space of three years I ceased not to admonish every one night and day with tears.

"And now I commend you to God, and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you the inheritance among all them that are sanctified. I coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel. Ye yourselves know that these hands ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me. In all things I gave you an example, how that so labouring ye ought to help the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how He said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.' "

HYMN. (Tune, *Aurelia*.)

O Word of God incarnate,
O Wisdom from on high,
O Truth unchanged, unchanging,
O Light of our dark sky,
We praise Thee for the radiance
That from the hallowed page,
A lantern to our footsteps,
Shines on from age to age.

The Church from her dear Master
Received the gift divine,
And still that light she lifteth,
O'er all the earth to shine;
It is the golden casket
Where gems of truth are stored;
It is the heaven-drawn picture
Of Christ, the living Word;

It floateth like a banner
Before God's host unfurled;
It shineth like a beacon
Above the darkling world;
It is the chart and compass
That, o'er life's surging sea,
'Mid mists, and rocks, and quicksands,
Still guides, O Christ, to Thee.

O make Thy Church, dear Saviour,
A lamp of burnished gold,
To bear before the nations
Thy true light, as of old;
O teach Thy wandering pilgrims
By this their path to trace,
Till, clouds and darkness ended,
They see Thee face to face. Amen.

WILLIAM WALSHAM HOW (1823–1897).

The congregation shall remain standing.

The GOSPEL, John xxi. 15-17, shall be read by a
presbyter of the Methodist Church, Rev. T. R. Foulger.

So when they had broken their fast, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, lovest thou Me more than these?" He saith unto Him, "Yea, Lord; Thou knowest that I love Thee." He saith unto him, "Feed My lambs."

He saith to him again the second time, "Simon, son of John, lovest thou Me?" He saith unto Him, "Yea, Lord; Thou knowest that I love Thee." He saith unto him, "Tend My sheep."

He saith unto him the third time, "Simon, son of John, lovest thou Me?" Peter was grieved because He said unto him the third time, "Lovest thou Me?" And he said unto Him, "Lord, Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love Thee." Jesus saith unto him, "Feed My sheep."

THE NICENE CREED, said by all, standing.

I believe in one God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible: And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of His Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, Very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by Whom all things were made: Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, and was made man, and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate. He suffered and was buried, and the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures, and ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of the Father. And He shall come again with glory to judge both the quick and the dead: Whose kingdom shall have no end. And I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord, the Giver of life, Who proceedeth from the Father and the Son, Who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified, Who spake by the prophets.

And I believe one holy catholic and apostolic Church. I acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins. And I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Sermon. Rev. J. S. M. Hooper.

Presentation of the Bishops-elect.

The sermon ended, the Bishop presiding shall be seated in his chair near the communion table. Each Bishop-elect shall be presented to the Bishop presiding by two accredited presbyters of the Church to which he has previously belonged, saying together:

Right Reverend Father in God, we present unto you this godly and well-learned person to be ordained and consecrated bishop.

The Bishops-elect shall be presented by the following presbyters:

- Rev. A. H. Legg, to be Bishop in South Travancore,
by Rev. A. J. Arangaden and Rev. J. A. Jacob.
- The Ven. T. G. Stuart Smith, to be Bishop in Cochin and Malabar,
by the Ven. P. C. Kora and Rev. D. R. Bazely.
- Rev. J. E. L. Newbigin, to be Bishop in Madura and Ramnad,
by Rev. G. P. James and Rev. S. Ponnurangam.
- Rev. S. Kulandrau, to be Bishop in Jaffna,
by Rev. B. C. D. Mather and Rev. Thomas David.
- Rev. E. B. Thorp, to be Bishop in Trichinopoly and Tanjore,
by Rev. G. S. William and Rev. A. S. Johnson.
- Rev. P. Gurushanta, to be Bishop in Mysore,
by Rev. M. Mehta. and Rev. F. W. Spencer.
- Rev. F. Whittaker, to be Bishop in Medak,
by Rev. M. Samuel and Rev. C. G. Early.
- Canon Bunyan Joseph, to be Bishop in Anautapur and Kurnool,
by the Ven. F. F. Gledstone and Canon T. Sather.
- Rev. H. Sumitra, to be Bishop in Cuddapah,
by Rev. Arthur John and Rev. B. Samuel.

The Bishop presiding shall demand the instrument of election and appointment of each Bishop by the Central Body. This shall be presented by one of the four representatives on that body of the Church to which he previously belonged: for the Church of India, Burma and Ceylon, by Dewan Bahadur K. Matthan; for the South India United Church, by Mr. Devaraj G. Paul; and for the Methodist Church, by Mr. P. K. Monsingh.

Having received these instruments, the Bishop presiding shall require of each Bishop-elect the following assent to the Basis of Union and Constitution of the Church of South India:

I,, chosen Bishop of the Church of South India in the Diocese of, do give my assent to the Basis of Union and accept the Constitution of the Church; and do promise conformity and obedience to the principles and rules contained therein. So help me God, through Jesus Christ.

Commendation.

The Bishops-elect having severally put their signatures to the Declaration, the Bishop presiding shall move the congregation to pray, saying unto them:

Brethren, it is written in the Gospel of St. Luke that our Saviour Christ continued the whole night in prayer before He chose and sent forth His twelve apostles.

It is written also that the apostles prayed before Matthias was chosen to be of the number of the twelve. Let us therefore, following the example of our Saviour Christ and His apostles, again give ourselves to prayer to Almighty God, before we admit and send forth these persons to the work whereunto, we trust, the Holy Spirit hath called them.

Then shall be said this Litany, led by the Ven. J. White:

Minister. In peace, let us pray to the Lord.

People. Lord, have mercy.

Minister. For the peace that is from above, and for the salvation of our souls, let us pray to the Lord.

People. Lord, have mercy.

Minister. For the peace of the whole world, for the welfare of God's holy Churches, and for the union of all, let us pray to the Lord.

People. Lord, have mercy.

Minister. For our bishops and all other ministers, for their succour, maintenance, peace, health and salvation, and for the work of their hands, let us pray to the Lord.

People. Lord, have mercy.

Minister. For the servants of God now to be consecrated bishops and for their salvation, let us pray to the Lord.

People. Lord, have mercy.

Minister. That our God Who loveth mankind will grant them to exercise the episcopal office without stain or blame, let us pray to the Lord.

People. Lord, have mercy.

Minister. For the rulers of our country and for all in authority, let us pray to the Lord. *People.* Lord, have mercy.

Minister. For this city, and every city and land, and for those who with faith dwell therein, let us pray to the Lord.

People. Lord, have mercy.

Minister. That He will deliver us from all tribulation, wrath and necessity, let us pray to the Lord.

People. Lord, have mercy.

Minister. Succour us, save us, have mercy upon us, and keep us, O God, by Thy grace.

People. Lord, have mercy.

Minister. Let us pray.

Almighty God, Giver of all good things, Who by Thy Holy Spirit hast appointed ministers in Thy Church, mercifully behold these Thy servants, now called to the work and ministry of bishop; and so replenish them with the truth of Thy doctrine, and adorn them with innocency of life, that, both by word and deed, they may faithfully serve Thee in this office, to the glory of Thy name, and the edifying and well-governing of Thy Church: through the merits of our Saviour Jesus Christ, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the same Holy Spirit, world without end. *Amen.*

Examination.

Then, the people being seated, the Bishop presiding shall Sit
in his chair and shall say to those who are to be consecrated:

Brethren, forasmuch as the Holy Scripture commands that we should not be hasty in laying on hands, and admitting any person to government in the Church of Christ, which He hath purchased with no less price than His own blood; before we admit you to this administration, We will examine you in certain articles to the end that the congregation present may have a trial and bear witness, how you are minded to behave yourselves in the Church of God.

Bishop. Are you persuaded that you are truly called to this ministration, according to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the order of this Church?

Each Bishop-elect shall answer separately for himself:

Answer. I am so persuaded.

Bishop. Do you believe in Jesus Christ, God Incarnate and the Redeemer of the world? And in accordance with the revelation of God which He made, do you worship one God in Trinity and Trinity in Unity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit?

Answer. I do so believe and worship:

Bishop. Are you persuaded that the Holy Scriptures contain all things necessary to salvation through faith in Jesus Christ? And are you determined to do all in your power for the edification of the ministers and Congregation's over whom you shall have oversight, by instructing them out of the same Scriptures concerning the truths of the Christian faith?

Answer. I am So persuaded and determined, by God's grace.

Bishop. Will you then faithfully exercise yourself in the Holy Scriptures and call upon God by prayer for the true understanding of the same, so that you may be able by them to teach and exhort with wholesome doctrine and to withstand and convince the gainsayers?

Answer. I will so do, by the help of God.

Bishop. Are you ready, with all faithful diligence, to banish and drive away from the Church all erroneous and strange doctrine contrary to God's Word, and both privately and openly to call upon and encourage others to do the same?

Answer. I am ready, the Lord being my Helper.

Bishop. Will you deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world, that you may show yourself in all things a an example to them that believe, in word, in manner of life, in love, in faith and in purity, that the adversary may be ashamed, having nothing to say against you?

Answer. I will so do, the Lord being my Helper.

Bishop. As a chief shepherd under Christ of His flock committed to your charge, will you maintain and set forward as much as shall lie in you, quietness, love and peace among all men, and will you do all that you can to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, endeavouring to foster the true spiritual unity of all your people in the one Body of Christ?

Answer. I will so do, by the help of God.

Bishop. Will' you be faithful in ordaining, appointing and laying hands upon others?

Answer. I will so be, by the help of God.

Bishop. Will you do all in your power to foster and promote the preaching of the Gospel to all the people, both in your own diocese and beyond its borders? And will you continually recall both ministers and people under you to their duty of witnessing to others in accordance with the command of our Saviour?

Answer. I will. so do, the Lord being my Helper.

Bishop. Will you diligently acquaint yourself with the various forms and methods of worship used in your diocese, and so advise the ministers and congregations committed to your charge that this Church may offer such worship as will be worthy of God's majesty and love, and a witness to those around them?

Answer. I will so do, by the help of God.

Bishop. Will you faithfully administer discipline in accordance with God's Word and the order of this Church, endeavouring to exercise the authority committed to you both for the maintenance of Christian standards of living and for the restoration of those who have gone astray?

Answer. I will so do, by the help of God.

Bishop. Will you show yourself gentle and be merciful for Christ's sake to the poor and needy?

Answer. I will so show myself, by God's help.

The Bishops-elect shall then kneel, the congregation standing; and the Bishop presiding shall stand and say:

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, Who hath given you a good will to do all these things, grant also unto you strength and power to perform the same, that, He accomplishing in you the good • work which He hath begun, you may be found perfect and blameless at the latter day: through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Prayer, and Consecration of the new Bishops.

After this, the congregation shall be desired, secretly in their prayers to make their humble supplications to God in behalf of those to be consecrated bishops: for which prayers there shall be silence kept for a space. All shall kneel in silence, the Bishops-elect kneeling where they stood for examination.

Then shall be sung *Veni Creator Spiritus*, all still kneeling:

Come, Holy Ghost, our souls inspire,
And lighten with celestial fire.
Thou the anointing Spirit art,
Who dost Thy sevenfold gifts impart.

Thy blessed unction from above
Is comfort, life, and fire of love.
Enable with perpetual light
The dulness of our blinded sight.

Anoint and cheer our soiled face
With the abundance of Thy grace.
Keep far our foes, give peace at home:
Where Thou art guide, no ill can come.

Teach us to know the Father, Son,
And Thee, of Both to be but One.
That through the ages all along
This may be our endless song:
Praise to Thy eternal merit,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

The Bishop presiding shall say:

Let us pray.

Bishop. Lift up your hearts.

People. We lift them up unto the Lord.

Bishop. Let us give thanks unto our Lord God.

People. It is meet and right so to do.

Bishop. It is very meet, right, and our bounden duty, that we should at all times, and in all places, give thanks unto Thee, O Lord, Holy Father, Almighty, Everlasting God, Who of Thine infinite goodness hast given Thy only and dearly beloved Son Jesus Christ to be our Redeemer and the Author of everlasting life; Who, after that He had made perfect our redemption by His death, and was ascended into heaven, poured down His gifts abundantly upon men, making some apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to the edifying and making perfect of His Church; grant, we beseech Thee, to these Thy servants, such grace, that they may evermore be ready to spread abroad Thy Gospel, the glad tidings of reconciliation With Thee; to offer unto Thee sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving and to use the authority given them, not to destruction; but to salvation; not to hurt, but to help; so that as wise and faithful servants, giving to Thy* family their portion in due season, they may at last be received into everlasting joy: through
 • the same Jesus Christ our Lord, Who, with Thee and the Holy Spirit, liveth and reigneth, one God, world without end. **Amen.**

Then the Bishop presiding, the two other Bishops, and the three Presbyters from each of the other two uniting Churches, shall lay their hands upon the head of each Bishop-elect, kneeling before them, and the Bishop presiding shall say:

Receive the Holy Spirit for the office and work of a Bishop in the Church of God, now committed unto thee by the imposition of our hands: in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Then the Bishop presiding shall deliver to each a copy of the Bible, saying:

Remember that thou stir up the gift of God, which is given thee by the imposition of our hands; for God hath not given us 'the spirit of fear, but of power, and love, and soberness. Give heed unto reading, exhortation, and teaching. Think upon the things contained in this Book. Give thyself wholly to them, that the increase coming thereby may be manifest unto all men; Eat by so doing thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee. **Amen.**

222 *Speaking Truth to Power*

Then the Bishop presiding shall give into the hands of each newly consecrated Bishop the pastoral staff, saying:

Be to the flock of Christ a shepherd, not a wolf; feed them, devour them not. Hold up the weak, help the sick, bind up the broken, bring again the outcasts, seek the lost. Be go merciful, that you be not too remiss; so minister discipline, that you forget not mercy; that when the chief Shepherd shall appear, you may receive the never-fading crown of glory: through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Then the Bishop presiding shag proceed in the Communion Service.

I will offer in His dwelling an oblation with great gladness; I will sing and speak praises unto the Lord.

HYMN. (Tune, *Unde et Memores.*)

And now, O Father, mindful of the love
That bought us, once for all, on Calvary's tree,
And having with us Him that pleads above,
We here present, we here spread forth to Thee,
That only offering perfect in Thine eyes,
The one true, pure, immortal sacrifice.

Look, Father, look on His anointed face,
And only look on us as found in Him;
Look not on our misusings of Thy grace,
Our prayer so languid, and our faith so dim:
For lo! between our sins and their reward
We set the passion of Thy Son our Lord.

And then for those, our dearest and our best,
By this prevailing presence we appeal;
O fold them closer to Thy mercy's breast,
O do Thine utmost for their soul's true weal;
From tainting mischief keep them white and clear,
And crown Thy gifts with strength to persevere.

And so we come: O draw us to Thy feet,
Most patient Saviour, Who canst love us still;
And by this food, so awful and so sweet,
Deliver us from ev'ry touch of ill:
In Thine own, service make us glad and free,
And grant us never more to part with Thee. Amen.

WILLIAM BRIGHT (1824–1901)

During the hymn, the thankofferings of the people shall be received.

Let us pray for the whole state of Christ's Church.

Almighty and everliving God, Who by Thy holy apostle hast taught us to make prayers and supplications and to give thanks for all men, we humbly beseech Thee most mercifully to accept our alms and oblations, and to receive these our prayers, which we offer unto Thy Divine Majesty; beseeching Thee to inspire continually the universal Church with the spirit of truth, unity and concord; and grant that all they that do confess Thy holy name may agree in the truth of Thy holy Word, and live in unity and godly love.

We beseech Thee also to lead all nations in the way of righteousness and peace; and so to direct the hearts of all Rulers that they may truly and impartially minister justice, to the punishment of wickedness and vice, and to the maintenance of Thy true religion and virtue.

Give grace, O heavenly Father, to all bishops and ministers, especially to Thy servants the ministers of this Church of South India, that they may both by their life and doctrine set forth Thy true and living Word and rightly and duly administer Thy holy Sacraments.

Guide and prosper, we pray Thee, those who labour for the spread of Thy Gospel among the nations, and enlighten with Thy Spirit all places of education and learning; that the whole world may be filled with the knowledge of Thy truth.

To all Thy people give Thy heavenly grace, and specially to this congregation here present, that with meek heart and due reverence they may hear and receive Thy holy Word, truly serving Thee in holiness and righteousness all the days of their life. And we most humbly beseech Thee of Thy goodness, O Lord, to comfort and succour all them who in this transitory life are in trouble, sorrow, need, sickness, or any other adversity.

We also bless Thy holy name for all Thy servants departed this life in Thy faith and fear; and here we give Thee most high praise and hearty thanks for all Thy saints, who have been the chosen vessels of Thy grace, and lights of the world in their several generations; and we pray that, rejoicing in their fellowship and following their good examples, we may be partakers with them .of Thy heavenly kingdom.

Grant this, O Father, for Jesus Christ's sake, our only Mediator and Advocate, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, world without end. *Amen.*

The Bishop presiding shall say:

Ye that do truly and earnestly repent you of your sins, and are in love and charity with your neighbours, and intend to lead a new life, following' the commandments of God, and walking from henceforth in His holy ways, draw near with faith, and take this holy sacrament to your comfort, and make your humble confession to Almighty God, meekly kneeling upon your knees.

All shall kneel and say:

Almighty God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Maker of all things, Judge of all men, we acknowledge and bewail our manifold sins and wickedness, which we, from time to time, most grievously have committed, by thought, word and deed, against Thy Divine Majesty, provoking most justly Thy wrath and indignation against us. We do earnestly repent, and are heartily sorry for these our misdoings; the remembrance of them is grievous unto us; the burden of them is intolerable. Have mercy upon us, have mercy upon us, most merciful Father; for Thy Son our Lord Jesus Christ's sake, forgive us all that is past; and grant that we may ever hereafter serve and please thee in newness of life, to the honour and glory of Thy name: through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The congregation still kneeling, the Bishop presiding shall say:

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, Who of His great mercy hath promised forgiveness of -siris to all them that with hearty repentance and true faith turn unto Him, have mercy upon you, pardon and deliver you from all your sins, confirm and strengthen you in all goodness, and bring you to everlasting life: through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.* Hear what comfortable words our Saviour Christ saith unto all that truly turn to Him: "Come unto Me, all that travail and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you." "So God loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, to the end that all that believe in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

Hear also what Saint Paul saith: "This is a true saying, and worthy of all men to be received, That Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners."

Hear also what Saint John saith: "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and He is the propitiation for our sins."

Bishop. Lift up your hearts.

People. We lift them up unto the Lord.

Bishop. Let us give thanks unto our Lord God.

People. it is meet and right so to do.

Bishop. It is very meet, right, and our bounden duty, that we should at all times, and in all places, give thanks unto Thee, O Lord, Holy Father, Almighty, Everlasting God. Therefore with angels and archangels, and with all the company of heaven, we laud and magnify Thy glorious name, evermore praising Thee and saying:

People. Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of hosts, heaven and earth are full of Thy glory. Glory be to Thee, O Lord most high. *Amen.*

The Bishop presiding shall continue:

We do not presume to come to this Thy table, O merciful Lord, trusting in our own righteousness, but in Thy manifold and great mercies. We are not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs under Thy table. But Thou art the same Lord, Whose property is always to have mercy. Grant us therefore, gracious Lord, so to eat the flesh of Thy dear Son Jesus Christ, and to drink His blood, that our sinful bodies may be made clean by His body, and our souls washed through His most precious blood, and that we may evermore dwell in Him, and He in us. *Amen.*

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, Who of Thy tender mercy didst give Thine only Son Jesus Christ to suffer death upon the cross for our redemption; Who made there (by His one oblation of Himself once offered) a full, perfect and sufficient sacrifice, oblation and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world, and did institute, and in His holy Gospel command us to continue, a perpetual memory of that His precious death, until His coming again, hear us, O merciful Father, we most humbly beseech Thee, and grant that we receiving these Thy creatures of bread and wine, according to Thy Son our Saviour Jesus Christ's holy institution, in remembrance of His death and passion, may be partakers of His most blessed body and blood: Who, in the same night that He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He brake it, and gave it to His disciples, saying,

"Take, eat, this is My body which is given for you: do this in remembrance of Me." Likewise after supper He took the cup, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying, "Drink ye all of this; for this is My blood of the new testament, which is shed for you and for many for the remission of sins: do this, as oft as ye shall drink it, in remembrance of Me." *Amen.*

The Bishop presiding shall first receive the Communion and then proceed to administer the bread and the wine. When the minister delivers the bread to any one he shall say:

The body of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was shed for thee, preserve thy body and soul unto everlasting life. Take and eat this in remembrance that Christ died for thee, and feed on Him in thy heart by faith with thanksgiving.

And the minister that delivers the cup to any one shall say:

The blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was shed for thee, preserve thy body and soul unto everlasting life. Drink this in remembrance that Christ's blood was shed for thee, and be thankful.

The administration ended, all shall say the Lord's Prayer led by the Bishop presiding:

Our Father, Which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name; Thy kingdom come;. Thy will be done; in earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses,, as we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil: for Thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

The Bishop presiding shall continue:

O Lord and heavenly Father, we Thy humble servants entirely desire Thy fatherly goodness mercifully to accept this our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving; most humbly beseeching Thee to grant that by the merits and death of Thy Son Jesus Christ, and through faith in His blood, we and all Thy whole Church may obtain remission of our sins, and all other benefits of His passion. And here we offer and present unto Thee, O Lord, ourselves, our souls and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy and living sacrifice unto Thee; humbly beseeching Thee that all we who are partakers of this holy communion, may be fulfilled with

Thy grace and heavenly benediction. And although we be unworthy, through our manifold sins, to offer unto Thee any sacrifice, yet we beseech Thee to accept this our bounden duty and service; not weighing our Merits, but pardoning our offences: through Jesus Christ our Lord, by Whom and with Whom, in the unity of the Holy Ghost, all honour and glory be unto Thee, O Father Almighty, world without end. *Amen.*

Almighty and everliving God, we most heartily thank Thee for that Thou dost vouchsafe to feed us who have duly received these holy mysteries, with the spiritual food of the most precious body and blood of Thy Son our Saviour Jesus Christ, and dost assure us thereby of Thy favour and goodness towards us, and that we are very members incorporate in the mystical body of Thy Son, whith is the blessed company of all faithful people, and are also heirs through hope of Thy everlasting kingdom, by the merits of the most precious death and passion of Thy dear Son. And we most humbly beseech Thee, O heavenly Father, so to assist us with Thy grace that we may continue in that holy fellowship, and do all such good works as Thou hast prepared for us to walk in: through Jesus Christ our Lord, to Whom, with Thee and the Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory, world without end. *Amen.*

Then all, still kneeling, shall say,

Glory be to God on high, and in earth peace, good will towards men. We praise Thee, we bless Thee, we worship Thee, we glorify Thee, we give thanks to Thee for Thy great glory, O Lord God, heavenly King, God the Father Almighty.

O Lord, the only-begotten Son Jesus Christ, O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us. Thou that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us. Thou that takest away the sins of the world, receive our prayer. Thou that sittest at the right hand of God the Father, have mercy upon us.

For Thou only art holy; Thou only art the Lord; Thou only, O Christ, with the Holy Ghost, art most high in the glory of God the Father. *Amen.*

The Bishop presiding shall continue:

Most merciful Father, send down, we beseech Thee, upon these Thy servants Thy heavenly blessing; and so endue them with Thy Holy Spirit, that they, preaching the Word, May not only be earnest to reprove, beseech, and rebuke, with all patience and doctrine; but also may be, to such as believe, a wholesome example in word, in conversation, in love, in faith, in chastity, and in purity; that, faithfully fulfilling their course, at the latter day they may receive the crown of righteousness, laid up by the Lord Jesus, the righteous Judge, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the same Holy Spirit, one God, world without end. *Amen.*

Lord, Who hast taught us that all our doings without charity are nothing worth, send Thy Holy Spirit, and pour into our hearts that most excellent gift of charity, the very bond of peace and of all virtues, without which whosoever liveth is counted dead before Thee; grant this for Thine only Son Jesus Christ's sake. *Amen.*

Go before us, O Lord, in all our doings, with Thy most gracious favour, and further us with Thy continual help; that in all our works, begun, continued and ended in Thee, we may glorify Thy holy name, and finally by Thy mercy obtain everlasting life:through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

The Blessing.

The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be amongst you and remain with you always. *Amen.*

Recessional Hymn. (Tune, *Crüger.*)

Thy hand, O God, has guided
 Thy flock, from age to age;
 The wondrous tale is written,
 Full clear, on every page;
 Our fathers owned Thy goodness,
 And we their deeds record;
 And both of this bear witness,
 One Church, one Faith, one Lord.

Thy heralds brought glad tidings
 To greatest, as to least;
They made men rise, and hasten
 To share the great King's feast,
And this was all their teaching,
 In every deed and word,
To all alike proclaiming
 One Church, one Faith, one Lord

Through many a day of darkness,
 Through many a scene of strife,
The faithful, few fought bravely
 To guard the nation's life. " "
Their gospel of redemption,
 Sin pardoned, man restored,
Was all in this enfolded,
 One Church, one Faith, one Lord.

And we, shall we be faithless?
 Shall hearts fail, hands hang down?
Shall we evade the conflict,
 And cast away our crown?
Not so: in God's deep counsels
 Some better thing is stored;
We will maintain, unflinching,
 One Church, one Faith, one Lord.

Unison. Thy mercy will not fail us,
 Nor leave Thy work undone;
With Thy right hand to help us,
 Thy victory shall be won;
And then, by men and angels,
 Thy name shall 'be adored,
And this shall be their anthem:
 One Church, one Faith, one Lord. Amen.

EDWARD HAYES PLUMPTRE (1821–1891).

1947.

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A5) Response of Bishop Daniel to the Epistles

The three epistles in chapter III were not responded to by the Moderator. No other bishop reacted to those emails (until 21 Nov 2015, date of finalizing this publication) except one, the Rt. Rev. K. G. Daniel, the Bishop of East Kerala diocese of the Church of South India. His email and my response to it are printed below. The bishop's email in many ways is a sample of what many other bishops including the Moderator would have written to me. Hence this email from the bishop is very important.

Email Note of Bishop K. G. Daniel to Prof. Joseph Muthuraj, 12 Oct., 2015

What you are trying to say is against the same thing you said in your article. You want to control the thinking that you only have wisdom and truth. CSI is formed with four churches, not one church and the policy of one church. So stop all these and really pray for the church. The Marxcian way is not the way for the church.

Email response of Prof. Joseph Muthuraj to Bishop K.G. Daniel 13 Oct 2015

Dear and Respected Bishop Daniel,

Let me thank you for the brief response you have made to my email with the subject "Then the Lord Opened the Mouth of the Donkey (2)". I appreciate that you responded at the end of your busy schedule for the day and I am sending you a brief reply urging you to read very carefully what I wrote. Kindly read my letters one more time.

First of all, I feel that you should have shown some etiquette in addressing me by my name and concluding your letter by printing the name of yours. A bishop, a servant of God, should learn to respect and greet another member of CSI. As a bishop with a cross around your

neck, you must learn to be polite with others. Still, I express my gratitude for your brief words. , though I wish you were more explicit in your comments.

You write: *"What you are trying to say is against the same thing you said in your article."*

I am unable to respond to this statement as I do not know which article of mine you are referring to. I am willing to accept if there was any contradiction in what I wrote and what I am writing now if you can give me further details. I hope that you do not think that I was part of what the Christians in North Kerala wrote about your involvement in an illegal land deal when you were the Moderator's Commissary there.

You write: *"You want to control thinking that you only have wisdom and truth."*

I do not understand exactly what you write and mean here. I can see that you are asking me whether I think of myself as the only person who has wisdom and truth. I shall deeply think about this to find an answer to for myself. But I am glad that my writing has aroused spurred you to question and challenge me. My request is that you maintain the same spirit of by turning around and retorting particularly to your colleagues, and asking them 'Are you the only one?' in places like the Bishop's Council and the Executive Committee of the Synod. When the Moderator claims that he is the 'visible symbol of unity', and that he has the discretionary powers to give rulings in Synod and that he decides on the course of judgement at the Synod court, please ask him, 'Are you the only one?' Tell the Synod office-bearers, 'Do you think, that are you alone the Church? We must stress that all those who have wisdom and truth should use them for the building up of the church.

You write: *"CSI is formed with four churches, not one church and policy of one church."*

It is a union (not a trade union type) of four not just churches but scriptural interpretations of ministry and four different conceptualisations of what church is. All four church denominations have a scriptural basis to justify their concepts and practices of ministry of in the Church. The present CSI ought to maintain them in harmony with one another although they may seem to be contradictory at times. The CSI is a witness to the world that it is the first one to achieve such balance of comprehension and harmony. This is precisely what I am saying in my letter. The problem is that we are now deviating from all the four and fashion a different type of church life and administration falling in line with some feudalistic and despotic practices of leadership. A strange kind of episcopalism is taking over the CSI which does not have any scriptural and or traditional basis. Can you tell me that the amended CSI Constitution of CSI will have the features of episcopal and non-episcopal ecclesiologies weaving woven together in a creative and dynamic manner maintaining the uniqueness of the CSI union?

You write: *"So stop all these and really pray for the church."*

Two things are said here. A command to me to stop all these! What all these? Which ones? This is the sad state of the leadership in CSI today which becomes paranoid over criticisms from the members of the Church. The leadership expects the church to be quiet and obedient so that it can comfortably engage in the business of their own in doing disservice to Christ and His Church.

Another command is to really pray for the church. I do not agree if you see prayer as opium to keep one from asking questions. It will then be a convenient tool for those in power, particularly to those who abuse power and exploit religion. Prayer is not a substitute for action, nor should it be an excuse for inaction. We must pray and act at the same time with the wisdom and sense of truth that God has given to each one of us.

Yes, I would like to pray for the church along with you. May I invite you that we both spend some time in East Kerala or in Bangalore praying together for the CSI? No debate, no discussion, just praying for the future of the CSI. I will be happy if all bishops do the same thing in their respective dioceses.

You write: "*The Marxian way is not the way for the church.*"

Do you mean a Marxian (Marxist) or Marcion? I am none of them!

Thank you for your letter any way. Please continue to read my works and share your comments and critical thoughts with me. Please say NO to the Amendments and new Bye-laws.

Best wishes, JG Muthuraj

A6) Consultation of the People Synod on the Future of Episcopacy (Bishop Governance) in the Church of South India CSI (17 Oct 2015)

The following text shows, that the author is not alone with the issue of CSI governance, but the recommendation of the People's Synod for a new constitution goes beyond the intention of the author.

The Future of Episcopacy (Bishop Governance) in the Church of South India. Consultation organized by the People Synod at Vellore, Tamil Nadu, on 17th October, 2015. Report and Resolution

A Consultation was organized by the newly launched People Synod, in cooperation with the Abundant Life Movement, Vellore, on 17th October, 2015 at Vellore, Tamil Nadu. The Consultation was attended by about 100 CSI members, both clergy and laity, from all the regions of the Church of South India.

Background of the Consultation

It is well recognized now that the CSI is in a state of deep crisis. Issues relating to transparency and accountability in administration, autocratic and unresponsive leadership and wide spread allegations of corruption reported in the media, have begun to exercise the minds of a large number of members. In the matter of management of movable and immovable properties of the CSI, supposed to be the responsibility of the Church of South India Trust Association (CSITA), a Company registered under the Companies Act, serious shortcomings have come to the attention of the Ministry of Corporate Affairs and the Department of Income Tax of the Government of India. The CSITA is literally reeling under investigations and show cause notices for serious violations of the laws of the land. The threat of an investigation by the Serious Fraud Investigation Office of the Central Government is looming large. First Information

Reports (the first step for criminal investigation) have been filed against several bishops in Police Stations of South India.

The most unfortunate thing is that the Episcopal leadership not only refuses to acknowledge the crisis and to take remedial action, but is embarking on a systematic attempt to distort the basic principles on which the CSI Constitution was framed. While the Governing Principles found in the CSI Constitution clearly affirmed that the Episcopal, Presbyterian and Congregational elements are necessary in the life of the Church in a well-balanced manner, an undisguised attempt is made to make the Episcopal element, represented by the Bishops, more dominant, sidelining the presbyterial and congregational elements. To give constitutional legitimacy to this distortion, a set of amendments and byelaws is sought to be thrust on the people, vigorously pushed through by the Bishops led by the Moderator himself to get the ratification of the Diocesan Councils. Alarmed by this development and considering the protests that have emanated from various quarters, the Consultation was called to consider the future of episcopacy in the CSI. The participants listened to various speakers who analyzed the dangerous implications of the new amendments and byelaws, updated the present state of affairs on the attempts to expose the maladministration and corruption in the affairs of the CSI TA and the role of the People Synod in organizing groups of people to coordinate the protests of the people against the present dangerous trends in all aspects of the life of the Church. Members shared their experience of the autocratic and undemocratic functioning of the Bishops stifling the voices of the clergy and laity. The principles on which the CSI was formed as stated in the Basis of the Union, later incorporated in the Chapter on the Governing Principles of the Church were reviewed. The role of the Bishops, Elders and Pastors in the administration of the early Church and their equivalence and differences were considered. The fact that the CSI Constitution is unregistered making it difficult for people to legally challenge ongoing constitutional

violations was highlighted.. After a detailed discussion, the Consultation came to certain conclusions.

Conclusions

1. There is indeed a deliberate attempt to make the CSI fully Episcopal with the vested interest of centralizing power and authority in Bishops for personal gains, eclipsing the presbyterial and congregational elements
2. The historic Episcopate in a Constitutional form accepted by the Uniting Churches for the sake of Unity is being distorted beyond recognition. Instead of the Bishops performing spiritual oversight while presiding over the diocesan council, bulk of the administrative responsibilities have been taken over by them.
3. The usurpation of powers by the Bishops coupled with the practice of issuing Power of attorney to the Bishops is the underlying cause for widespread corruption
4. The new amendments and byelaws should be rejected out of hand as they go against the pledge that was given at the time of Union that a) the United Church does not mandate any particular interpretation of Episcopacy and no such particular interpretation shall be demanded from any minister or member, b) the CSI needs the heritage of each of the Uniting Churches (Anglican, Methodist, Presbyterian and Congregational) and each of those Churches will not lose the continuity of its own life but preserve that life enriched by the union with other traditions and c) that there will not be absorption of anyone of the traditions by the other traditions. In the light of the discussions and the conclusions arrived at, the following Resolutions were passed.

Dr. Jayakaran Isaac, Major Victor, Dr. John Dorai, Mr. Noble, Adv. Arokiadoss, Jacob Rev. Belly, Dr. Jagadish Gandhi, Adv. Kumarasami.

Resolutions. Resolved

1. that the People Synod should support and coordinate the resistance that is being shown in different parts of the CSI against the dangerous trend that is emerging in the CSI as stated above;
2. that we whole heartedly support the attempts that are being made by Associations like the CSI TA Beneficiaries Association and individuals to expose the maladministration of the CSI TA and to seek the assistance of Statutory bodies to set right the affairs of the CSI TA in accordance with Companies Act 2013 and to bring to book the perpetrators of corrupt actions (Nehemiah needed the help of a non-Jewish King to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem);
3. that the People Synod should take the initiative, on behalf of the People of God, to prepare a complete and comprehensive new Constitution in the form of a Scheme for administration and governance of the CSI reflecting both the intentions of the original founders of the CSI and the hopes and aspirations of the present members of the Church;
4. that Partner Churches who are representatives of the Churches involved in the Union negotiations be apprised of these developments and the compelling circumstances which are forcing the people to take this step and seek their counsel;
5. that in pursuance of Resolution 3, a process of consultation with all stakeholders be expeditiously started, and that once such a Constitution/Scheme is ready, it may be placed before the people for their acceptance and support and the People Synod should explore ways and means of the possibility of getting legal status for it through registration under appropriate law of the land.

Dr. R. Jayakaran Isaac

Rev. Jacob Belly

For and on behalf of the People Synod

A7) Constitution Bye-laws (8 April 2015)

C.S.I. CONSTITUTION

Bye-laws

Chapter IV: Membership

IV.1 (a) Baptism: The Church of South India believes in one baptism, Baptism in the Church of South India shall be administered with water by immersion, effusion or sprinkling in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, the one triune God.

In 'effusion', water is poured on the head of the candidate.

IV: 1 (a) The following categories of persons shall be deemed to be within the fold of the Church.

- (i) infants whose parents intended to have them baptized but could not, for some reason.
- (ii) Adults who are under instruction for baptism or attend worship in the Church.
- (iii) Persons who have been excommunicated from the Church but have expressed their desire to return to the fellowship of the Church.
- (iv) Those coming under categories (ii) and (iii) above shall not be eligible to participate in the government of the Church under IV.4

IV: 2 Age of Confirmation: Baptized children shall be confirmed after they have attained the age of 12 years, and preferable before attaining the age of 16 years.

Believers receiving baptism after attaining the age of discretion may be confirmed on the same day that they are baptized, provided they have undergone the required instruction for confirmation. Prior approval of the Bishop should be obtained in all these cases.

IV : 4 Membership in Different Congregations

- a)
 - i. A person shall hold primary membership in only one congregation.
 - ii. A person shall transfer membership from one congregation to the other only through transfer certificate from his/her Church, CSI or from a Church in communion with CSI.
 - iii. A person may hold associate / adjunct membership in another congregation where he/she resides. Such associate / adjunct membership shall entitle only ministerial and pastoral care but not participation in governance.
 - iv. A person shall exercise his/her right of voting at elections in the congregation where he/she holds primary membership.
- b) A member of the Church of South India may become a member of another Church in communion with the CSI, when in the area of his/her residence there is no CSI congregation. By doing this he/she does not sever his/her connection with the CSI or lose his/her right to enjoy the privileges of membership.
- c) The Church has a responsibility to persons who have been excommunicated from the Church or whose communicant status has been suspended by disciplinary action. The Church will so exercise its responsibility as to seek to bring them back to full communion.

CHAPTER V: The Ministry of the Church

10. Finance

- a) In order that the Bishop should have a general oversight of the financial administration of the Diocese, the Treasurer of the Diocese shall keep the Bishop duly informed of all financial transactions of the Diocese.
- b) The Bishop shall have the power to call for adequate information with regard to any financial transaction of Churches and Institutions of the Diocese from the Diocesan Treasurer.

12 (b) Voluntary Retirement of a Bishop

- a) A Bishop who intends to opt for voluntary retirement after completing ten years of service as a Diocesan Bishop shall request the Moderator to let him/ her take voluntary retirement, at least six months in advance appraising the Moderator of the circumstances leading to his/her decision.
- b) The Moderator shall discuss with the Bishop various options for a future course of action, and also the terms of retirement.
- c) The Moderator, after being convinced shall then place the matter before the Synod Executive Committee with recommendations, and the Executive Committee shall finalise the modalities, terms and conditions of the Bishop's retirement or employment in a different capacity.

13. Compulsory resignation of a Bishop – Special Commission

- a) The Moderator in consultation with the officers of the Synod and the Bishops council shall recommend to the Executive Committee to appoint a Special Commission consisting of a

Senior Bishop, a Medical Doctor, and an outstanding lay person, preferably knowledgeable in legal matters. (V.13).

- b) The Commission shall inform the Bishop concerned of the reasons which the Moderator believes are good enough to secure his resignation, and give the Bishop an opportunity to be heard.
- c) If the special commission is satisfied that the Bishop is mentally incapable of responding to the proceedings of the commission or intentionally refuses to co-operate with the commission, it may proceed without further reference to the Bishop. The Commission may, if it considers it necessary, have the Bishop medically examined.
- d) While making investigations, the Commission may visit the Diocese concerned and may meet with members of the Executive Committee of the Diocese.
- e) The Special Commission shall submit its report to the Synod Executive Committee with its recommendations.

15. Rules for Selection and Appointment of Asst. Bishop

A. The Synod or the Executive Committee of the Synod shall not begin to act unless.

- 1. The Synod/ the Executive Committee of the Synod is convinced of the necessity of an assistant Bishop in a particular diocese.
or
- 2. The Bishop of Diocese and the Diocesan Council desire the appointment of an assistant Bishop;
- 3. There is a resolution of the Diocesan Council that the necessary financial provision has been or will be made; and

4. That the question of bifurcating the Diocese has been duly considered by the Executive Committee of the Diocesan Council and that it has not been possible to bifurcate the Diocese into two viable Diocese.

B. If the Synod or the Executive Committee of the Synod consents to the appointment of an assistant Bishop, it shall appoint a board of appointment consisting of the Moderator and six other members, 2 Bishops one of whom should be the Bishop of the Diocese concerned, 2 Presbyters, 2 lay persons of the Executive Committee of the Synod.

Principles:

1. The election of a panel, consisting of not less than two names and not more than four names from which the appointment will be made, should be by the Diocesan Council of the Diocese concerned.
2. The Diocese (acting through the Diocesan Council) and the Diocesan Bishop should have an effective voice in the appointment. The appointment will however be made by the Executive Committee of the Synod.

Method of Election and Appointment

1. When the consent of the Synod or its Executive Committee to the appointment of an assistant Bishop in a Diocese (under Rule 15, Chapter V of the Constitution of the CSI) is received by the Secretary of the Diocesan Council of that Diocese, the Secretary shall give due notice of a Special meeting of the Diocesan Council for the purpose of electing a panel consisting of not less than two names and not more than four names from which panel the appointment of an assistant Bishop may be made; and shall also call for nominations for election to the panel, which should be made in writing, and should reach the

Secretary fifteen days before the date fixed for the meeting of the diocesan Council. No nominations shall be received within the 15 days preceding the meeting. The date fixed for the meeting of the Diocesan Council shall not be earlier than 30 days from the date of the notice.

2. The notice to the members of the Diocesan Council shall be sent by registered post or under a certificate of posting.
3. No person shall be nominated unless he is already a Bishop or a Presbyterian of the CSI and has attained the age of fifty years.
4. The nominations shall be signed by proposer and a seconder both of whom shall be members of the Diocesan Council and shall also contain the signature of the person nominated in token of his consent to be nominated and of his willingness to work as an assistant Bishop in the Diocese.
5. The names of the nominated persons shall be notified by the Secretary to all the members of the Diocesan Council at least seven days before the date fixed for the meeting of the Executive Committee.
6. If only two persons have been nominated a ballot shall be taken, each member being allowed if he so desires to vote for both nominees, to ascertain whether both nominees are supported by 50% or more of the votes cast.
7. If three persons have been nominated a ballot shall be taken, each member being allowed if he so desires to vote for all three. If only one person received 50% of the votes cast a second ballot shall be taken on the remaining two names, each member being allowed to vote for both if he/she so desires.
8. If four persons have been nominated a ballot shall be taken each member being allowed to vote for all four if he/she so

desires. If only one person received 50% of the votes cast a second ballot shall be taken on the remaining three names. But if in the first ballot no person received 50% of the votes cast, the nominee receiving the lowest number of votes shall be eliminated and a second ballot taken on the remaining three names.

9. If more than four persons have been nominated a ballot shall be taken, each member being allowed to vote for not more than four names. If only one person receives 50% of the votes cast a second ballot shall be taken on the three names receiving the highest number of votes cast excluding the one who has received 50% each number of votes cast excluding the one who has received 50% each member being allowed to vote for all three if the member so desires. But if in the first ballot no person has received 50% of the votes cast, a second ballot shall be taken on the four names receiving the highest numbers of votes cast, each member being allowed to vote for all four if the member so desires, and if necessary a further ballot may be taken according to Rule 9 above as though only the four persons receiving the highest numbers of votes in the first ballot had been nominated.
10. When in any ballot, or in successive ballots taken together, not less than two persons have received 50% of the votes cast, voting shall cease and the persons who have received 50% of the votes cast shall from the panel.
11. When names are to be eliminated a choice between persons receiving an equal number of votes shall be made by casting lots.
12. No ballots additional to those prescribed above shall be taken.

13. If through the voting prescribed above a panel of at least two persons each receiving 50% or more of the votes cast has not been made up, a report including the number of votes cast for each person at each ballot shall be sent to the General Secretary of the Synod through the Diocesan Bishop. The General Secretary shall place the matter before the Executive Committee of the Synod which shall place the matter before the Executive Committee of the Synod which shall pass such orders as it thinks fit, provided that it may not proceed to make an appointment unless and until a panel of at least two persons has been formed by the Executive Committee of the Diocese.
14. If through the voting prescribed above a panel of at least two persons each receiving 50% or more of the votes cast has been formed, the Secretary of the Diocesan Council shall send to the Moderator through the Diocesan Bishop a report including the number of votes cast for each person at each ballot. The Moderator shall have the persons elected to the panel by the Diocesan Council examined for their physical fitness to do the duties of an assistant Bishop. The Moderator shall place this report before the Board of appointment by the Synod Executive Committee according to B. Above and the Board will recommend a person from the panel for appointment as Assistant Bishop.
15. On receipt of the recommendation of the Board of appointment, the General Secretary of the Synod shall communicate the recommendation to all the members of the Synod Executive Committee for confirmation. After obtaining confirmation from a majority of the members the General Secretary shall get an appointment order signed by the concerned who shall in

consultation with the Moderator and the concerned Diocesan Executive Committee arrange for the consecration of the person appointed.

16. In case the recommendation of the Board of appointment is not confirmed by a majority of the members of the Synod Executive Committee, the Executive Committee shall consider the matter in a meeting and may take such action as it thinks fit, provided that if the Executive Committee does not confirm the recommendation of the Board, it shall refer the matter back to the Board for further recommendation.

Functions of the Assistant Bishop:

- (1) The functions of an assistant Bishop shall be primarily to assist the Diocesan Bishop in his/her Episcopal functions. He/she shall work under the orders and control of the Diocesan Bishop, who may, when necessary, and at his/her discretion, share or delegate to the Assistant Bishop, some of his/her duties, whether spiritual or administrative, either permanently or from time to time.
- (2) The assistant Bishop of Diocese shall continue in his/her office in that Diocese, until he/she reigns; or is elected an appointed in the same or another Diocese as Diocesan Bishop; or is appointed to another Diocese as its assistant Bishop; or departs permanently from the Diocese; or is sentenced by the Court of the Synod; or is adjudged by the Executive committee of the Synod to be mentally, physically or otherwise incapable of discharging the duties of his/her office; or is appointed to some other work (e.g. theological training); or has attained the age of retirement for Bishops.

- (3) In the event of a Diocese, where there is an assistant Bishop, being reduced in size by bifurcation or, if for any other cause the post of an assistant Bishop becomes unnecessary in that Diocese, the Executive Committee of the Synod may appoint him/her assistant Bishop in some other Diocese where is need for an assistant Bishop, provided that the Bishop of that Diocese and the Executive Committee of the Diocesan Council of that Diocese agree and make the necessary financial provision.
- (4) If his/her services are not required in any other Diocese as assistant Bishop, he/she shall revert to Presbyterial duties, or synod may use him/her on other duties, though Episcopal status and the title 'The Right Rev'; and continuing to be capable of confirming, and ordaining candidates under the directions of the Diocesan Bishop.
- (5) All the rules relating to the election and appointment of Diocesan Bishops shall be applicable to an assistant Bishop, if he/she is at any time nominated for election, as a Diocesan Bishop.

Chapter V- Rule 16- Administration of Vacant Diocese

- a) The Moderator may appoint as commissary a Bishop or a senior Presbyter of the Diocese to administer the vacant Diocese on his behalf till a new Bishop is appointed and installed, or till the Moderator makes alternatives arrangements.
- b) The Commissary shall send a report to the Moderator with a copy to the General Secretary about the working of the Executive Committee, every month.

- c) The Administrative Committee appointed for any Diocese shall consist of 12 members from within the Diocese and it may also have up to 3 members from outside the Diocese.

17. Council of Bishops

Rule 17 – Council of Bishops

- a) The General Secretary and Treasurer of the Synod may be invited to the meetings of the Council of Bishops when necessary but shall not be considered members of the Council.
- b) The Moderator shall convene the meetings of the council, but the General Secretary shall be responsible for the arrangements of the meetings.
- c) The Moderator shall appoint one of the Bishops as Secretary of the Bishop's Council who shall keep a record of the proceedings of the council. A copy of the record of the proceedings of the council. The Secretary of the Bishops' Council shall hand over the file to his Successor.
- d) The Council may discuss matters of faith and doctrine of the Church and their application to the problems of the time. However, when a statement is to be issued on such matters as envisaged in Ch. V Rule 3, para 2, the Council shall hold consultations with representatives of the Presbyter and the laity. These representatives shall be the General Secretary and Treasurer of the Synod, the convener of the Theological Commission, the Convener of the Socio-Political Questions Committee and two presbyters and three lay persons chosen by the Moderator for their expertise.
- e) The Bishops Council may take cognizance of allegations against a Bishop and enquire into them if placed before it by the Moderator. The purpose of the enquiry shall be to uphold

the honour of the Bishop if he/she is innocent, to try to settle matters within the fellowship of the council of Bishops and above all to preserve the integrity of the Church. To this end in view “ appropriate action envisaged in Rule 17 shall mean one or more of the following;

- (i) Advice the Bishop concerned to reconsider his/her actions that gave rise to the allegations and suggest ways of correcting the wrong actions.
 - (ii) Ask the Bishop to go on leave for a period subject to the confirmation of the Executive Committee.
 - (iii) Refer the allegations to the Court of the Synod for trial of the Bishop, if the Council’s suggestions are not complied with the Bishop concerned.
- f) The Council of Bishops shall not have any administrative power in the Church other than what is mentioned in this Rule.

20. Selection, Training, Ordination and Authorization of Ministers

- a) Persons offering themselves for ministry in the Church should be conscious of a call from God for that work which is evident to the Church through their possession of gifts appropriate to their calling.
- b) While recognizing that no educational qualification can be considered too high for the ministry of the Church, normally a pass in the plus two or equivalent examination shall be regarded as the minimum qualification for ministerial candidates.
- c) Candidates accepted for training should serve for a period of not less than one year of practical training under the immediate supervision of a Presbyter, before being sent for theological training.

- d) The candidates selected for the ministry shall undergo a minimum of four years theological training at a recognized church based theological institution. The recommendations of the Theological institution on the general progress and fitness of the candidates, as well as the successful completion of the examinations taken by him/her, shall be considered by the Ministerial Committee of the Diocese before finally recommending the candidate to the Bishop for ordination.
- e) After such a period of training there shall ordinarily be a period of not less than a year in probationary service (as a Deacon or in any other capacity) under the supervision of an experienced presbyter, before ordination to presbyterate. During this period further training to supplement the training in the Theological institution may be given, especially in the customs and practices of the Diocese concerned, in management and administration, accounting, public relations and communication.
- f) The Ministerial Committee of the Diocese shall peruse a candidate's conduct, character and commitment to the ministry, while selecting a candidate for training or before taking the final decision for ordination to the Diaconate or Presbyterate.
- g) Every candidate for the ministry should undergo a thorough medical examination prior to his/her ordination.
- h) The Diocese shall arrange to announce for the information of all the congregations, the names of the ordinands, at least a week before the ordination.
- i) The Bishop shall have the right to suspend the ordinate of a candidate even at the last minute, if he/she has come to know of circumstances that need investigation.

Ordination

- a) A Bishop shall ordain a person either as Deacon or a Presbyterian only with the sanction of the Ministerial Committee and the Executive Committee of his/her Diocese.
- b) A Bishop shall not ordain as Deacon or Presbyterian a person belonging to a congregation outside his/her Diocese, without the expressed written sanction of the Bishop or Bishop in-charge responsible for that Diocese.
- c) The Moderator, Deputy Moderator or a Bishop of the Church of South India (either in active service or retired) shall not be a consecrator of a Bishop or Presbyterian in Church which is not in communion with the Church of South India, without the permission of the Executive Committee of the Synod.
- d) A Bishop who violates these rules shall be liable for disciplinary action, and persons ordained / consecrated in violation of these rules shall not be allowed to minister in any congregation of the Church of South India.

Ministers in Other Service

- a) A Presbyterian or Deacon shall not accept appointment in a Diocese other than his or hers, or in any organization without the permission of the Bishop / Executive Committee of his/her Diocese.
- b) A Presbyterian or Deacon shall not undertake any responsibilities that may come into conflict with his/her work.
- c) A Presbyterian / Deacon serving in a Diocese other than his/her own, or in an ecumenical organization shall continue to be a Presbyterian / Deacon of the CSI provided he/she is not under Church discipline at that time. However a Presbyterian / Deacon

deputed to other Ecumenical institutions under Autonomous Societies/ Trusts shall not be deemed to be Presbyter in active service in the Diocese for the purpose of rule 2 (c) of Chapter 8.

Admission of ministers / Presbyters from other Churches

- a) Ministers of Churches with which the Church of South India has relations of full communion, who are willing to give the same assent to the Governing Principles of the Church and the same promises to accept the constitution of the Church as are required from persons ordained in the Church of South India, may be received as ministers of the Church and given the Bishop's authorization.
- b) Other Ministers of such Churches and ministers of Churches with which the CSI has relations of fellowship, may be invited to preach as visitors subject to the discretion of the Bishop.

Ministers/Presbyter from Churches with which CSI is not in Communion

- a) Ministers from Episcopal Churches with which the CSI is not in communion may be received as ministers of the CSI provided:
 - i) they accept the doctrines of the CSI. (This may involve their renouncement of doctrines not acceptable to the CSI.)
 - ii) they affirm sincere belief in the Governing Principles of the CSI, and declare their acceptance of the Constitution of the CSI and of its rules of discipline.
- b) Before such ministers are accepted, they shall be examined by a committee appointed by the Ministerial Committee of the Diocese that intends to receive them, to ascertain the sincerity of their intentions. The Ministerial Committee shall send their

recommendation to the Executive Committee of the Diocese for its approval.

- c) Such ministers shall be received into the Church at a service of induction to be arranged by the Bishop.
- d) Before their induction the decision to receive them into the Church shall be announced in all the congregations of the Diocese concerned.

Honorary Presbyters / Presbyter in Honorary Service

- a) Honorary Presbyters (full-time and part-time) shall not be deemed to be Presbyter in active service for the purpose of rule 2 (c) of Chapter 8.

Voluntary Retirement of the Presbyter:

- a) A Presbyter who intends to opt for voluntary retirement on completing a minimum of twenty five years of service or an attaining the age of sixty shall request the Diocesan Bishop to let him/her take voluntary retirement, at least six months in advance apprising the Bishop of the circumstances leading to his/her decision.
- b) The Bishop, being convinced shall then place the matter before the Diocesan Executive Committee with recommendations, and the Executive Committee shall finalise the modalities and conditions of the Presbyters retirement and shall arrange to pay full retirement benefits.

Chapter VI- Election, Appointment Consecration and Installation of Bishops

Chapter VI-Rule 15

The word “published” in this Rule shall mean the exhibition of the final list of nominations on a notice board at the office of the diocesan head-quarters.

Rule 24 Balloting

- a) If no person or persons get a minority in the first two ballots or even in the third ballot, balloting should not be stopped. If no one gets a majority in the fourth ballot also, balloting should be stopped.
- b) If one or more persons get a majority in the first ballot, and even if no one gets a majority in the second and third ballot, balloting should not be stopped. If in the next ballot also no candidate is added to the panel balloting should be stopped.
- c) If at any stage of the balloting the number of persons nominated is equal to the number required to be elected or if the number falls below the number required to be elected the names of such persons or persons shall be voted upon, and the person or persons securing a majority of votes shall be added to the panel.
- d) Illiterate or handicapped persons shall be allowed to vote, with the help of the Chairman or any other member of the Diocesan Council in whom they have confidence.
- e) The results of each ballot, along with the number of votes obtained by each candidate, shall be announced by the Chairman immediately after the counting of the votes.
- f) To determine the total number of “those present and voting” all the official ballot papers deposited in the box provided shall be counted. Blank ballot papers shall be treated as invalid. A person shall be deemed to have exercised his/her vote if he/she has deposited in the box the ballot paper given to him/her.
- g) No one shall be present at the counting of the votes except the members of the sub-committee and the election observers if any.

- h) In circumstances where the rules for balloting mentioned in the constitution and these bye-laws cannot be made applicable, the sub-committee conducting the election shall have the discretion to take such steps as they consider fit for the smooth conduct of the election. In this they shall consult the election observers appointed by the Synod.

Election Observers

- a) The Moderator shall depute two or more of the members of the Panel of Observers to observe the process of election in a Diocese. They shall not be members of the Diocese concerned.
- b) The Observers shall function independently.
- c) They shall not interfere with the process of the election at any stage, except giving advice to the Chairperson of the Lay Sub-Committee.
- d) They shall submit to the Moderator a confidential and objective report, with emphasis on any unfair means or malpractice adopted by candidates or their supporters in the process of election, adducing evidence wherever possible.

CHAPTER VIII-Diocesan Councils

- a) Each Diocesan Council shall adopt a Constitution for the Diocese which shall be in conformity with the constitution of the Church of South India.
- b) Amendments made from time to time in the Diocesan Constitution shall be communicated to the Synod for the approval of the Synod Executive Committee.
- c) Procedure to elect Diocesan Treasurer.

The Bishop shall constitute a Search Committee consisting of two clergy and three lay persons (of whom at least one should

be a woman) for the Treasurer. The Search Committee will bring a name before the council for the post of the Treasurer. The Following are the desirable qualification for the post of Diocesan Treasurer.

- 1) A Person should have sufficient educational and administrative qualifications.
- 2) A person should have adequate knowledge of accounts.
- 3) A person should have been a member of the diocesan Executive Committee for at least one term.
- 4) A person should have integrity and Churchmanship.
- 5) Any other qualifications deemed fit along with experience.

The Diocesan Council will then elect the Diocesan Treasurer by an affirmative vote.

If the person nominated to the post of the Diocesan Treasurer does not get majority affirmative votes in the Diocesan Council, then the search committee shall bring another name for affirmative vote.

- d) If convening the diocesan council is delayed for any reason, then each member of the diocesan council shall sign a declaration that such council shall be function only for the reminder of the term.

CHAPTER IX: The Synod

2. Membership in the Synod

- a) Diocesan representatives are freshly elected for every ordinary meeting of the Synod. Those who attend shall sign the Synod membership register. Only those who sign the register are fully enrolled members and competent to vote and serve on the Executive Committee.

b) 2(d) For calculating the number of persons under 35 years of age, and the number women to be elected to the Synod, the following table shall be followed.

Dioceses having:

1	2 Presbyters and 4 lay persons	At least one woman and one Presbyter or lay person under 35
2	3 Presbyters and 5 lay persons	At least one woman and one Presbyter or one lay person to be under 35
3	4 Presbyters and 6 lay persons	At least two women and one Presbyter under 35 one lay person to be under 35
4	5 Presbyters and 7 lay persons	At least 2 women and & At least 1 Presbyter under 35 2 lay persons under 35
5	6 Presbyters and 8 lay persons	At least 2 women and & At least 1 Presbyter under 35 2 lay persons under 35
6	6 Presbyters and 9 lay persons	At least 2 women & At least 1 Presbyter under 35 2 lay persons under35
7	6 Presbyters and 10 lay persons	At least 3 women & At least 1 Presbyter under 35 3 lay persons under 35
8	3 Presbyters and 11 lay persons	At least 3 women & At least 1 Presbyter under 35 3 lay-persons under35

Note:

- 1) It is made clear that the intention of the rule is that the representation of women and youth (persons under the age of 35) should be ensured. However women under the age of 35 may be counted as youth also for satisfying the purpose of this rule.
- 2) The members elected under the category of persons under the age of 35 should not have completed the age of 35 years on the 1st day of January of the year in which the Synod is held.
- 3) The list of Synod members elected by the Diocese council should be communicated to the General Secretary of the Synod in the form prescribed under signature of the Secretary of the Diocese Council.

5. Rules of the Conduct of Synod Business

(Approved by the Synod 1970)

- a) The conduct of the business of the Synod shall be in the hands of the Moderator who shall have full discretion to give such rulings as are necessary on any matters not covered by the Constitutions. Bye-laws or Rules for the conduct of Business, except that the Moderator may refer any such matter to the Synod Reference Committee and shall do so if requested by a majority of the members present and voting.
- b) Except as approved in Rule 14 below, the business of the Synod shall be carried on by the process of debate. Accordingly, no one shall speak except to a motion or a point of order.
- c) If any member deems that the constitutions of the Synod of the rules governing the conduct of meetings are being infringed he

may rise and raise the matter on a point of order. A point of order must always be given immediate hearing and the ruling of the Moderator given before any business is processed with, unless the Moderator decides to refer the matter as provided in Rule 1.

- d) Every motion must be seconded and afterwards repeated, or read aloud from the chair unless it is already in writing in the hands of the members, before it is debated; and every motion and amendment shall ordinarily be reduced to writing.
- e) The mover and seconder of a motion may withdraw it before debate has commenced on it, but not afterwards, except with the permission of the Moderator.
- f) Except the mover who shall be allowed to reply, no member shall without the special permission of the Moderator, speak more than once on the same motion or amendment.
- g) An amendment may be made to any motion, and it shall be decided before the original motion. It may in its turn be suspended by an amendment to itself, which must first be considered and decided. An amendment to an amendment cannot be further amended.
- h) When a subject is under debate, no motion shall be received except:
 - (i) to adjourn;
 - (ii) to postpone consideration to a certain time;
 - (iii) to refer to a committee
 - (iv) to amend, or
 - (v) to take an immediate vote, which motions, shall have precedence in the order here stated.

- i) When a motion to take an immediate vote is made and seconded, until it be decided all amendments and debate shall be inadmissible. If the vote be in the affirmative, the original motion shall be immediately put to a vote without further amendment or debate. But if there be an amendment or amendments pending at the time, the vote shall first be taken on such amendment or amendments in their proper order without debate. If the vote be in the negative, the debate shall continue as before.
- j) A subject shall not be called up or reconsidered at the same session of the Synod at which it was decided unless by consent of two thirds of the members present, and on the motion of someone who voted for it.
- k) After the Moderator has begun to take a vote, or the Secretary to call the roll on a division of the house, no debate or remark shall be allowed.
- l) A motion of adjourn, or to lay on the table, and all motions in relations to priority of business, shall; be decided without debate. The motion to postpone or to commit, if it prevail, shall preclude all debate of the main question.
- m) The Moderator shall have the casting vote in case of tie.
- n) For the free discussion of any subject the Synod may, by vote, resolve itself into Committee, in which case the ordinary rules of debate debarring members from speaking twice shall be abrogated. Under this rule, it shall be open to the Synod when in Committee to divide on a proposition in order to ascertain the opinion of the meeting, but no resolution so approved shall be binding unless confirmed in the Synod voting formally.

- o) Normally no member shall speak for more than five minutes on any subject or resolution except the mover of the resolution. The Moderator shall have discretion to limit the time allotted to any subject or to any member who wishes to speak on any subject or to indicate how many speakers may be permitted.

Rule -7- Procedure for the Election of the Moderator

- a) On the first day of the ordinary session of the Synod or earlier, the Bishops shall meet as a Council for nominating a candidate for the office of the Moderator. They shall nominate one from among themselves (who is not due to retire during ensuing term) either unanimously or by a 2/3 majority.
- b) This name shall be presented to the Synod and if the Bishop thus nominated gets the affirmative votes of the majority members of the Synod he/she shall be declared as Moderator.
- c) If the Bishops council fails to propose one name, or if the Bishop nominated does not get majority affirmative votes in the Synod, the Bishop's Council shall choose two names by secret ballot among themselves, and the Synod elect one of the by a simple majority of votes.
- d) Moderator shall hold office till the close of the next ordinary meeting of the Synod.

Procedure for the Election of the Deputy Moderator

- a) The Deputy Moderator shall be elected by the Synod by the same process as that of electing the Moderator.
- b) The Deputy Moderator shall hold office till the close of the next ordinary meeting of the Synod.

Procedure for the Election of the General Secretary and the Treasurer

- a) The Synod *Executive Committee* shall constitute a *Nomination Committee* consisting of one Bishop, one clergy, three lay persons (of whom one should be a woman) for the posts of the General Secretary / the Treasurer. The *Nomination Committee* will bring *name(s)* before the Synod for the said posts.

- b) The following are the desirable qualifications for the post of General Secretary:
 - (i) A person should not be less than 45 years.
 - (ii) A person should have sufficient educational qualifications.
 - (iii) A person should have sufficient administrative experience.
 - (iv) A person should have capacity to relate to the partners and agencies of the World Ecclesial communion.
 - (v) A person should have integrity and Churchmanship.

- c) The following are the desirable qualifications for the post of Treasurer:
 - (i) A person should not be less than 45 years.
 - (ii) A person should have sufficient financial administrative experience
 - (iii) A person should have sufficient knowledge of accounts, commerce and taxation laws.
 - (iv) A person should have sufficient legal acumen to deal with the Companies Act, FCRA and taxation regulations.

- (v) A person should have been a member of the Synod / diocesan Executive Committee for at least one term.
- (vi) A person should have integrity and Churchmanship.
- d) If the Nomination Committee brings in a name, the Synod will elect the General Secretary / the Treasurer by an affirmative vote.
- e) If the person nominated to the post of the General Secretary / the Treasurer does not get majority affirmative votes in the Synod, the *Nomination* Committee shall bring another *name(s)* for affirmative
- f) If the Nomination Committee should bring in more than one name, then the person getting majority votes will be elected to the posts of the General Secretary / the Treasurer.

Duties of the Officers

All officers of the Synod shall be ex-officio members of all Boards/ Councils and Standing Committees of the Synod.

In addition to this, and other duties of the officers mentioned in the Constitution they shall perform the following duties:

(1) Moderator

- i. Moderator is the visible symbol of unity in the Church and shall have the general pastoral oversight of the whole Church.
- ii. Moderator is the official spokesperson of the Church on its policies and visions. Moderator shall be the official representative of the Church during his/her term of office in all business with other Churches or organizations.
- iii. As the Presiding Officer of the Synod and the Chairman of its Executive Committee. Moderator shall give leadership in the

- discharge of the collective responsibility of the officers and administrative bodies of the Synod.
- iv. Moderator shall have the right to attend meetings of a Diocesan Council or visit a Diocese officially when invited to do so by the Bishop of the Diocese.
 - v. When the Moderator receives information from a Diocesan Bishop about his absence from the Diocese for more than 30 days he/she shall have the right to examine the propriety of the absence and if necessary make a report to the E.C. of the Synod.
 - vi. Moderator shall be the authority to receive letter of resignation or requests for voluntary retirement from Bishops, and also letters of resignation of other officers of the Synod for action by the Executive Committee.
 - vii. If the Bishop of a Diocese is absent from his Diocese for more than 30 days without assigning any reason or being in the Diocese is unable, for any reason to act, the Moderator shall appoint a commissary for the Diocese in consultation with the officers of the Synod and the Diocesan Executive Committee.
 - viii. In the event of a Moderator's commissary in a Diocese being nominated as a candidate for the Episcopal election for that Diocese, the Moderator shall terminate that appointment and appoint a new commissary.
 - ix. In the event of all CSI Bishops being out of country for any reason Moderator in consultation with the officers of the Synod shall appoint an Episcopal Commissary from among the retired but physically and mentally fit Bishops of CSI.

- x. Moderator shall appoint the directors to Synodical departments and councils, following the procedures of selection in consultation with the officers of the Synod.
- xi. Moderator shall be the chairperson of CSI SEVA and all Synodical Boards/Councils.

II. Deputy Moderator

- i. Deputy Moderator shall perform duties as may be assigned to him by the Moderator under the constitution.
- ii. In case of both Moderator and Deputy Moderator are unable to preside at the meeting of the Synod or the Executive Committee of the Synod, the body concerned shall elect a President pro term from amongst the Diocesan Bishops present.

III. General Secretary

- I. The General Secretary shall be Chief Executive Officer of the Synod.
- II. He/She shall be in charge of the administration of the Synod Secretariat and the Establishment.
- III. He/She shall be the appointing authority for all the staff of the Synod Secretariat except the Directors of the Departments/Council in consultation with the officers of the Synod.
- IV. He/She shall be responsible for the discipline of the staff and shall have power to take disciplinary action against them.
- V. He/She shall represent the Synod in all legal proceedings and shall sue and be sued on behalf of the Synod.
- VI. He/She shall be the Chief Executive of all CSI Boards/Councils. He shall co-ordinate the work of the various

Departments/ Boards / Councils and shall hold periodic meetings with the Directors/ Secretaries.

- VII. He/She shall correspond with partner Churches and organization on behalf of the Synod.
- VIII. He/She shall represent the Church of South India at national and international gatherings when deputed or invited.
- IX. He/She shall prepare the minutes of the Synod, the Executive Committee and the Working Committee and send them to the concerned members and shall be responsible for executing the resolutions taken at the Synod, Executive Committee and the Working Committee.
- X. He/She shall be responsible for notifying the dates of the meetings of the Synod, the Executive and Working Committees in consultation with the Moderator.
- XI. He/She shall try to visit all the Diocese especially on special occasions like Diocesan Councils, consecration and installation of Bishops and special functions and celebrations.
- XII. He/She shall be the Business Manager of “CSI Life”

IV. Treasurer

- I. He/She shall operate the bank accounts of the Synod jointly with the Generally Secretary or persons according to the decision of the Synod Executive Committee.
- II. He/She shall present to the Synod Executive Committee an audited statement of accounts along with the budget for the ensuing year prepared in consultation with the other officers of the Synod, after presenting them before the Finance Committee.

- III. He/She shall be the custodian of all financial documents and books of accounts concerning the finances of the Church.

Rule 8

- (a) When the E.C. fills up a vacancy as per Rule 8, soon after the meeting of the E.C. the circular to members of the Synod asking for their approval of the decision of the E.C. shall be sent under the certificate of posting.
- (b) Members of the Synod shall indicate in writing their willingness or otherwise to approve the decision of the E.C. within 14 days from the date of receiving circular from the Synod, failing which it shall be presumed that they approve the decision of the E.C.
- (c) Any vacancy in these offices shall be filled by the Executive Committee of the Synod. The persons chosen by the E.C. to fill the vacant office shall be entitled to start functioning with immediate effect, subject to the ratification of the majority of the Synod members in a circular ballot.

Chapter X: The Worship of the Church

Liturgy Committees

- a) The Synod shall have Liturgy Committee for the Church of South India.
- b) Area Committees should be appointed by the Synod for Tamil, Telugu, Kannada and Malayalam.
- c) Each Diocese should appoint a Liturgy Committee to deal with liturgy question within the Diocese.
- d) Each language area committee shall consider preparing alternative Indian lyrical forms for worship.

- e) The above committees shall work within the limits prescribed in Chapter II, Section 12, and Chapter X of the Constitution.
- f) Each Diocese should refer to the Synod Liturgy Committee any services which may be drawn up for general use in the Diocese.

CHAPTER XI

Discipline of the Churchy

One of the conditions of membership in the CSI is that those claiming it are willing to abide by the rules and customs of the Church. It rests with the Synod and the Synod Court, the Diocesan Councils and the Diocesan Courts to formulate, interpret and apply these rules. Those who refuse to accept the decisions of the Synod and of the Diocesan Councils and of the Synod and Diocesan Courts have no right to share in the privileges and obligations of membership.

The Moderator of the Synod or the Bishop of Diocese may withhold the right to participate in the governance of the Church at all levels of the person who has disregarded Chapter XI Clause 3.

Definition of Offences:

The Following are offences, which render any member of the Church of South India, lay or ordained, liable to the discipline of the Church.

- a. Belief in, and teaching or preaching, any doctrine which contrary to the Governing Principles of the Church of South India.
- b. Causing Schism in the Church; separating oneself from the community of the Church, acquiring membership in another Church without due permission; acquiring membership in a body which follows tenets inconsistent with those of the Church of South India; engaging in worship repugnant to the Christian faith.

- c. Any criminal, dishonest, immoral or disorderly acts, habit or conduct.
- d. Wilful violation of the Constitution and Rules of the Church of South India and the Diocese concerned.
- e. Misuse or misappropriation of the funds or properties of the Church or its institutions.
- f. Withholding of Church records and properties and refusal to hand them over when so directed.
- g. Willful disobedience and defiance of authority.
- h. Any offence not mentioned above which, under the constitution and Rules of the Church of South India / Diocese / Institutions is a ground for disciplinary action.

Offences by ordained ministers and Bishops

In respect of ordained Ministers and Bishops of the Church the following also shall be considered offences.

- a. Any act, conduct or habit which has given just cause of scandal or offence to the faithful, or which is unworthy of an ordained person and likely to bring the ministry of the Church into disrepute.
- b. Habitual irregularity or neglect in the performance of ecclesiastical pastoral duties.
- c. Exercising any profession or occupation which in its own nature or in the manner in which it is exercised, is inconsistent with his/her calling.
- d. Disrespectful or disobedient conduct (on the part of a Deacon or Presbyter) towards the Bishop of the Diocese in matters in which the Bishop is constitutionally entitled to require obedience.

Sentences

The sentences pronounced by the Courts in the Church of South India shall include :

- a. Admonition
- b. Censure
- c. Imposition of fine
- d. Payment of compensation
- e. Inhibition from preaching
- f. Debarring from Church privileges
- g. Restrictions on exercise of office
- h. Withdrawal of Bishop's authorization for a period
- i. Suspension from a charge or office for a specified period
- j. Termination of benefits provided
- k. Removal from office
- l. Suspension from Holy Communion
- m. Ex-communication
- n. Deposition
- o. Depriving of charge

Explanation

- a. Debarring from Church privileges includes debarring from holding any office, membership in Committee/Board/Council or any other body.
- b. When a person is suspended from holding a charge or office he/she shall not be entitled to claim any salary, allowance or other monetary benefits which he/she received by virtue of such charge of office during the period of such prohibition. However the sentences of prohibition may state whether he/she

will be given all or any of such salary, allowance or other monetary benefits.

- c. Deposition means permanent withdrawal, from a Bishop or Presbyter, of all authority to exercise his/her sacred calling.

The Court of the Synod

1. Original Jurisdiction

The Court of the Synod shall have original jurisdiction for the following:

- a. Trial of Bishops
- b. Enquiry into objections about the election of a panel for Bishopric, under Chapter VI, Rule 29.

2. Advisory Jurisdiction

Advice to the Moderator in respect of sentence of deposition on a minister by the Diocesan Court, under Chapter XI Rule 20.

3. Appellate Jurisdiction

The Synod Court shall hear appeals from a Court of the Diocesan Council.

4. Composition of the Court

For trial of Bishops, the Court of the Synod shall consist of the Moderator as President (or if the Moderator is unable to act, the Deputy Moderator) and five Bishops, two Presbyters and two lay persons. When the Court sits for all other purposes it shall consist of the Moderator (or Deputy Moderator if the Moderator is unable to act), two Bishops, two Presbyters and two lay persons.

Trial of Bishops

5. A Charge may be brought against the Bishop of a Diocese by:
 - a. Not less than 15 members of the Diocesan Council
 - b. Not less than one-third members of the Executive Committee of the Diocesan Council.

- c. The Council of Bishops
 - d. The Executive Committee of the Synod.
6. a) The charges shall be given in writing to the General Secretary of the Synod who shall be the **Presenting Officer**, but not a member of the Court. **B) One among the members of the Court shall be the Secretary of the Court.**
7. As soon as possible after receiving the charges/ allegations against a Bishop, the Secretary of the Court shall forward them to the Moderator (or the Deputy Moderator if the Moderator is the Bishop against whom the charge is brought) who shall consult with all the Bishop of the Church if he rules that the charges are serious. After consultation the Moderator or Deputy Moderator himself shall be responsible for deciding if a court shall be constituted. However, if the charges are forwarded by the Council of Bishops he need not consult the Bishop again.
8. The Court Shall frame charges against the accused Bishop and they shall be communicated to him by the Secretary of the Court, giving him 30 days either to plead guilty or to submit his explanation to the charges, in writing.
9. In case the accused pleads guilty, he shall be given an opportunity to be heard in mitigation of sentence.
10. If the accused does not plead guilty the Court shall proceed to take evidence. It shall be competent for the Court to take evidence, oral or documentary. A list of witnesses proposed to be examined and copies of documents to be relied on should be submitted to the Court by the parties concerned.
11. The deposition of witnesses shall be taken down by the president of the Court or a person appointed by him.

12. The proceedings of the Court shall be valid only if the President, two Bishops, one Presbyter and one lay member are present. *The change of persons at different sittings* shall not invalidate the proceedings of the court. However, the whole court as prescribed in rule 4 shall pass and pronounce the judgement on the truth or otherwise, of the charges, subject to the restrictions in Chapter XI, Rule 27 of the constitution of the CSI. In every judgement the decision of the majority shall be enforced.
13. If the accused is found guilty he shall be entitled to be heard in mitigation of the sentence.
14. The Court shall also have the right to pass interlocutory orders and also appoint commissions for gathering evidence.
15. The Court shall have power to order that the accused Bishop shall not perform his functions as Bishop of the Diocese, pending the proceedings in the Court.
16. The Court may on application or on its own accord amend its own orders for correcting any inadvertent errors or omissions.
17. The Judgement of the Court shall be final. However, the accused may within ten days of the pronouncement of the Judgement petition the court for a review of the judgement on grounds of fact, law or with reference to sentence. The court shall consider the petition and dispose of it as expeditiously as possible.
18. The court shall upon pronouncing its judgement, give a copy of it to the accused.
19. Full minutes of the proceedings of the court along with all the documents shall be sent to the General Secretary of the Synod for safe custody.
20. A register shall be kept in the office of the Synod in which particulars of each case shall be recorded.

21. The court shall have power to condone the delay in, or to extend the time for the filing of any petition, statement or appeal, or taking any other action, for sufficient cause.

22. The aim of these rules is to follow the principles of natural justice as far as possible. Hence no proceedings shall be considered invalid merely on technical grounds. The Court shall have the inherent power to take such steps or lay down such guidelines as it deems fit for meeting the ends of justice, in matters not specifically covered by these rules.

Enquiry by the Court of the Synod under *Chapter VI, Rules 29 and 30*

1. When a meeting of the Court of the Synod is summoned by the Moderator for enquiry into objections to the election, whether in respect of the validity of the election or in respect of the character, conduct or teaching of the persons elected to the panel, the Moderator shall place before the Court all the objections received.
2.
 - a. If the objections are in respect of the election, the Court shall at first examine whether there is any error in the conduct of the election apparent on the face of the record and shall take a decision without further investigation.
 - b. If a decision cannot be taken on a examination of the records, the Court shall issue notice to the Chairman of the Sub-Committee that conducted the election, the complainants, all the candidates elected to the panel, and any other person the court considers necessary, directing them to make their representations before the Court in writing.
 - c. The Court shall summon the records of the case.
 - d. The Court may take evidence, oral or documentary.

3. The Court shall notify the parties concerned the place and date for hearing the case and may take evidence, oral and documentary. It shall hear arguments from the parties concerned and decide about the validity or other wise of the objection.
4. The Complainants and the person/persons against whom objections are made shall appear in person, and not through any counsel or other representative.
5. a. *If the objections are in respect* of the character, conduct or teaching of any person or persons elected to the panel, the Court shall issue notice along with the allegations to such person or persons directing them to appear before the Court and to defend themselves.
 - a. The Court shall verify on the truth of the matter and decide accordingly.

Advice to the Moderator in respect of Sentence of deposition on a minister by the Diocesan Court

1. The Moderator shall present all the records of the case which he has received from the Court of the Diocesan Council to the Synod Court.
2. The Court shall summon the accused minister and the Bishop of the concerned Diocese to appear before it.
3. The Court, besides examining the records, shall hear oral representation of the accused as well as that of the Bishop of the Diocese.
4. The Court may advise the Moderator to confirm the sentence of the Diocesan Court or not to confirm it or to direct the Court of the Diocesan Council to give a lesser punishment.

5. The Moderator shall give his decision within six months of the date of receiving the communication or otherwise of its sentence of deposition.

The Court of the Synod in Appeal (Ref. Ch. XI Rule 23)

1. Any minister who is sentenced by the Court of the Diocesan Council may within 30 days of the pronouncement of the sentence prefer an appeal to the Court of the Synod.
2. The Memorandum of appeal shall contain the names and addresses of the parties to the case, a statement of the facts of the case and the grounds on which the judgement of the court of the Diocesan Council is challenged.
3. The appeal shall be presented to the General Secretary of the Synod who shall be the Secretary of the Court but not a member of the Court, either in person or by registered post with as many copies as there are parties to the appeal and seven other copies. A copy of the appeal should be sent to the Moderator.
4. On receipt of the appeal the Secretary of the Court shall call for, from the Court of the Diocesan Council, the records of the case.
5. The Secretary of the Court shall have the records of the case translated into English, wherever necessary.
6. The Secretary of the Court, on receipt of the appeal, informs the Moderator of the receipt of the appeal and requests him to constitute a court of the Synod to hear the appeal.
7. On instructions from the President of the Court, the Secretary shall send notices to the parties of the appeal along with a copy of the memorandum of appeal, informing the parties of the

date, time and place of hearing the appeal, and directing them to appear before the court.

8. The proceedings of the Court shall be valid only if the President, one Bishop, one Presbyter and one lay member are present.
9. The Court shall proceed with the appeal, irrespective of the absence of one or more parties.
10. The Court may take fresh evidence if it considers necessary.
11. After hearing the appeal the court may allow the appeal setting aside the judgement of the Court of the Diocesan Council, dismiss the appeal or modify the judgement of the Court of the Diocesan Council. It has also the power to remand the appeal to the court of the Diocesan Council for fresh disposal.
12. Upon pronouncement of the Judgement in the appeal the General Secretary shall sent to the Bishop of the Diocese concerned, a copy of the judgment. The Bishop shall implement the judgement of the Court of the Synod.
13. A copy of the Judgement shall be given to all the parties concerned.
14. The records of the case shall be kept by the General Secretary of the Synod.

Model Rules (Ref.Ch XI Rule 22)

Procedure (Court of the Diocesan Council)

1. The Court of the Diocesan Council shall be constituted as provided in Chapter XI, Rule 12.
2. Charges against a minister shall be dealt with in accordance with the provisions in Chapter XI, Rule12-22 of the Constitution of the Church of South India.

3. Under Rule 13, the Bishop shall be entitled to initiate, on his own disciplinary proceedings against a minister. Before referring the charges against a minister to the Court of the Council, the Bishop may, in his discretion, cause a senior Presbyter or such other person as he may think fit, to make a preliminary investigation into the charges. As part of the preliminary investigation the Presbyter shall be informed in writing of the charges and given an opportunity to submit his explanation.
4. The Bishop or the Presbyter commissioned by him shall preside over the Court.
5. The President of the Court shall appoint the Secretary of the Court. Such Person shall not be a member of the Court but shall perform such duties as may from time to time be defined by the Court.
6. If the Secretary of the Court is learned in law he may sit with the Court as may and advise it. If he is not learned in law, the President of the Court may direct some other person learned in law to sit with the Court and advise it.
7. The Court shall sit and frame charges which shall be communicated, in writing by the Secretary of the Court to the accused, giving him fourteen clear days either to plead guilty or to submit his/her explanation to the charges in writing.
8. In case the accused pleads guilty he/she shall be given an opportunity to be heard in mitigation of sentence.
9. If the accused does not plead guilty the Court shall proceed to take evidence.
10. It shall be competent to the Court to take evidence, oral and documentary, a list of the witnesses proposed to be examined

as well as copies of documents intended to be relied on should be submitted to the court by the parties. Each party shall give a list of witnesses and copies of documents to the other party, at least four clear days in advance. Each party shall have the right to examine, cross-examine or re-examine witnesses. The deposition of witnesses shall be taken down by the President of the Court or such other persons appointed by him.

11. The Proceedings of the Court shall be valid only if the president, one Presbyter and one lay member are present. The change of persons at different sittings shall not invalidate the proceedings of the court. However, the whole Court shall hear the final arguments and pronounce the judgement. The decision of the majority of the Court shall be enforced subject to the restrictions in Rule 14 of Chapter XI of the CSI Constitution.
12. If the accused is found guilty he shall be entitled to be heard in mitigation of the sentence.
13. The Court shall have the right to pass interlocutory orders and also appoint commissions for gathering evidence.
14. The Court may on application or on its own accord amend its own orders for correcting any inadvertent errors or omissions.
15. The Court shall upon pronouncing its judgment, give copy of it to the accused. If the sentence is of deposition or permanent withdrawal of all authorization to exercise his/her sacred calling the Court shall transmit all the records of the Case to the Moderator for confirmation or otherwise of the sentence.
16. The Court may order the complainant to pay compensation to the accused, if the accusation is found false and made malafide.

17. Full minutes of the proceedings of the Court along with all the documents shall be sent to the Secretary of the Diocesan Council for safe custody.
18. A register shall be kept in the office of the Diocesan Council in which particulars of each case are recorded.
19. Condonation of delay or extension of Time: The Court shall have power to condone the delay in or to extend the time for the filling of any petition statement or appeal, or taking any other action, for sufficient cause.
20. The aim of these rules is to follow the principles of natural justice as far as possible, hence no proceedings shall be considered invalid merely on technical grounds. The Court shall have the inherent power to take such steps or to lay down such guidelines as it deems fit for the needings ends of justice, in matters not specifically covered by these rules.

Arbitration

1. These rules are of procedure and are intended to be a guide to those who desire to have their disputes with the Church and its institutions settled, the method being conciliation and arbitration as the case may be and are also intended to assist those who are not learned in law to function as arbitrators.
2. Dispute means all differences between a member of the Church and the Church or its institutions (which shall include projects and programmes undertaken by the Church). It shall not normally include disputes between members of the Church. However, disputes between members of a congregation may be settled by the Pastor and the Pastorate committee.
3. When a complaint is referred for arbitration, the complaint shall submit before the Arbitration Board his/her claim

statement in writing, with as many copies as there are opposite parties and as many members there are on the Arbitration Board.

4. The Chairman of the Board shall send notices to the parties to the dispute along with a copy of the claim statement, informing them of the date, time and place of hearing, and directing them to appear before it.
5. The party against whom the claim statement is filed shall be required to file his/her written statement of defense on the date fixed for the appearance, with enough copies to be served on the parties concerned and the members of the Arbitration Board.
6. The Proceedings of the Board shall be valid only if the President and both the members are present at any particular sitting. The decision of the majority of the members of the Board shall be enforced.
7. The parties shall be entitled to adduce evidence, examine witnesses and to have records called for.
8. Any written communication shall be deemed to have been received if it is delivered to the addressee personally or at the place of business, habitual residence, or mailing address or sent to his/her address by registered post with acknowledgement due, or by any other means which is considered satisfactory by the board.
9. If a vacancy arises in the membership of the Board the vacancy shall be filled by the person who originally nominated the member. The change of persons at different sittings shall not invalidate the proceedings of the board.

10. If a party refuses to comply with an interlocutory order passed by the Board, the Board may come to the inference that party has no bonafides and may pass an award without further hearing of such party that did not comply with the order.
11. The Award of Arbitration Board shall be accepted by the parties to the arbitration.
12. The Arbitration Award shall state the reasons upon which it is based. The Award shall state the time within which the terms of the Award are to be complied with.
13. The Arbitration Board shall have the power to order that any amount due to or many become due to party to the arbitration from the Church or its institution be appropriated towards the amount recoverable under the Award.
14. The Chairman of the Arbitration Board shall issue a copy of the Award to the parties concerned and to the authority who referred the dispute for arbitration, as soon as the Award is passed.

Chapter XIII : Alterations in the Constitutions

Consequential amendments

When an alteration or addition to a rule of the Constitution adopted under Chapter XIV, Rule 2 requires consequential alteration or addition to another rule or rules, such consequential alteration or addition may be adopted by the Synod by a two-thirds majority without further reference to the Diocesan councils.

Procedure relating to amendments

As regards Chapter XIV : (1) and 2(1) it will be accepted as a rule of procedure that no such resolution for alteration of or addition to the Constitution will be taken up by the Synod unless notice of such

proposal had been given to the General Secretary of the Synod and had been communicated by him/her to the different Diocese.

**Interpretation of “two-thirds majority of the Synod”, Chapter XIII:
2(b)**

Two-thirds majority in this rule must be interpreted to mean two-third of the Synod members present and voting and not two-third of the Synod as constituted. (Synod 1976).

English Version of the Constitution

The authoritative edition of the Constitution shall be the English version of it. Translations thereof into Indian languages made by the various language committees of the Synod are produced for the purpose of helping those not well-versed in English in the day to day working of the Constitution.

When does an amendment come into force

Amendments passed by the Synod should be circulated to the Dioceses for ratification by the Diocesan councils. The Diocesan Councils shall either ratify or reject the amendments and report the matter to the General Secretary of the Synod within two years of the date of circulation of the amendments. The Diocesan Councils have no right to propose any change in the wording of the amendments. If a Diocesan Council fails to take any action on the amendments sent to them for ratification within the prescribed time, it shall be presumed that the Council has ratified the amendments. In the meantime, if the ratifications from the required number of Diocesan Councils are received, the Synod Executive Committee / Working Committee shall authorize the General Secretary to declare that the amendments shall come into force from the date of such communication.

Certificates

- (1) Ordination
- (2) Suspension from membership
- (3) Excommunication of a member
- (4) Restoration of membership
- (5) Confirmation

Statements by the Synod

- (1) Infant Baptism
- (2) Church and the Ministry
- (3) Athanasian Creed
- (4) Relations with St. Thomas Evangelical Church
- (5) The Episcopate in United Church
- (6) Agreement with the Tamil Evangelical Lutheran Church

A8) Amendments to the Constitution (8 April 2015)

CHURCH OF SOUTH INDIA SYNOD

(Constitution Amendment resolutions proposed and passed at the Special Session of the Synod held on 8th April 2015 at Chennai)

for ratification by the Diocesan Councils under Chapter XIII Rule 2(c) of the Constitution

Chapter IV Rule 1(a) :

EXISTING	PROPOSED
1(a) The Church of South India, affirming the standard and ideal of membership in the Church of Christ which it has declared in its fourth Governing Principle recognizes as its members those persons who, being resident in its area, namely, the four Southern States of India- Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala and Tamilnadu- and also Jaffna* in Sri Lanka.	1(a) The Church of South India, affirming the standard and ideal of membership in the Church of Christ which it has declared in its fourth Governing Principle, recognizes as its members those persons who, being resident in its area, namely, the five southern states of India - Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala Tamilnadu and Telangana- and also Jaffna* in Sri Lanka.
* Jaffna ; For this purpose of the clause, persons residing in Jaffna shall include those who moved from Jaffna to other locations in Sri Lanka and their descendants. This will not be applicable to the congregations in Sri Lanka outside Jaffna which will remain as part of the Jaffna Diocese.	<i>*Jaffna shall include, those residing in Jaffna, those who moved from Jaffna to other locations in Sri Lanka and those who have been living in other parts of Sri Lanka and are members of the Jaffna Diocese.</i>

Chapter V Rule 12(a) :

EXISTING	PROPOSED
12(a) Duration of Appointment – The Bishop of a Diocese shall remain Bishop of that Diocese until he resign, or accept the charge of another Diocese, or depart permanently from the	12(a) Duration of Appointment – The Bishop of a Diocese shall remain Bishop of that Diocese until he resign, or accept the charge of another Diocese, or depart permanently from the

Diocese or be deprived of his charge by sentence of the Court of the Synod, or be adjudged by the Executive Committee of the Synod to be mentally, physically or otherwise incapable of discharging the duties of his office. A Bishop shall retire on completion of his 65 th year of age.	Diocese or be deprived of his charge by sentence of the Court of the Synod, or be adjudged by the Executive Committee of the Synod to be mentally, physically or otherwise incapable of discharging the duties of his office. A Bishop shall retire on completion of his 67 th year of age.
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Chapter V Rule 26 :

EXISTING	PROPOSED
	26. ADD A Presbyter shall retire on the completion of 67 years of age.

Chapter VI Rule 9:

EXISTING	PROPOSED
9. No person shall be nominated unless he is a Bishop or a Presbyter of the Church of South India, or a Minister of equivalent standing in a Church with which the Church of South India is in fellowship; and has attained the age of fifty years.	9. No person shall be nominated unless he is a Bishop or a Presbyter of the Church of South India <i>who has a minimum of 10 years of ordained ministry</i> and has attained the age of fifty years <i>at the time of filing the nomination and has a minimum of five years of service at the time of nomination.</i>

Chapter VII Rule 6,12 :

EXISTING	PROPOSED
	6. ADD <i>The term of the Pastorate Committee shall be Three Years</i>
	12. ADD <i>The term of such circles, districts, or other groups of pastorates shall also be three years.</i>

Chapter VIII Rule 5c :

EXISTING	PROPOSED
5c. The Council shall encourage the formation and functioning	5c. The Council shall encourage the formation and functioning

<p>within the Diocese, of organizations like Laity Association, Youth Movement, Women's Fellowship, Socio-economic institutions, Centers for study and dialogue and Movements for Justice, Peace and ecological concerns.</p>	<p>within the Diocese, of fellowships like <i>Men's Fellowship, Youth Fellowship, Women's Fellowship, Senior Citizen's Fellowship, Christian Education</i> Socio-economic institutions, Centers for study and dialogue and Movements for Justice, Peace and Ecological concerns.</p>
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Chapter VIII Rule 9:

EXISTING	PROPOSED
<p>9. Subject to the provisions of this Constitution a Diocesan Council has power to frame, amend or alter its own Constitution, provided that no Diocesan Constitution or any alteration therein shall be of force it the Synod shall rule that such Constitution or alteration therein is at variance with anything contained in this Constitution.</p>	<p>9. Subject to the provisions of this Constitution a Diocesan Council has power to frame, amend or alter its own Constitution, provided that no Diocesan Constitution or any alteration therein shall be of force it the Synod <i>or the Executive Committee of the Synod</i> shall rule that such Constitution or alteration therein is at variance with anything contained in this Constitution.</p>

Chapter VIII Rule 10 :

EXISTING	PROPOSED
<p>10. Every Diocesan Council shall appoint an Executive Committee, and may appoint Other Committees / Boards and may delegate to them such of its functions and duties as it may think fit, provided that it may not delegate to its Executive Committee the alteration of its own Constitution.</p> <p>In all such Committees at least 25% of the total membership (excluding Officers of the</p>	<p><i>10. Every Diocesan Council shall its first meeting elect an Executive Committee, and may delegate to it such of its functions and duties as it may think fit, provided that it may not delegate to its Executive Committee the alteration of its own Constitution. Other Committees / Boards shall be appointed either by the Diocesan Council at its first meeting or by the Executive Committee at its first meeting, as stipulated in the Diocesan Constitution.</i></p> <p>No Change</p>

<p>council) shall be youth under the age of 35 years and 25% shall be women.</p> <p>The Bishop of the Diocese shall be the president of the Executive Committee, Ministerial Committee, Finance Committee and Property Committee. For other boards and Committees the Executive Committee shall appoint suitable clergy or lay members of the church as chairpersons.</p> <p>The Bishop shall have the right to take part in meetings of any Board or Committee. If the Bishop is present he may preside at such meetings if he so desires.</p> <p>The Bishop may refer any decision of a Board / Committee to the Executive Committee whose decision shall be final.</p>	<p>The Bishop of the Diocese shall be the president of the Executive Committee, Ministerial Committee, Finance Committee and Property Committee. <i>For other boards and Committees the Bishop shall appoint suitable clergy or lay members of the church as chairpersons.</i></p> <p>DELETE</p> <p>No Change</p>
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Chapter VIII Rule 12 :

EXISTING	PROPOSED
<p>12. The term of the Diocesan Council shall be determined by each Diocesan Council in its Constitution and shall begin from the date it is convened and constituted after an election.</p> <p>At its first session it shall elect its Officers, the Executive Committee and other Committees and they shall function until a new Council is duly convened and constituted. The Officers shall function from</p>	<p>12A. The term of the Diocesan Council shall be three years. The Diocesan Constitution shall also state the month in which the term of the Council would normally begin, so that elections to the Diocesan Councils from the pastorates and</p>

<p>the close of the Council at which they are elected till the close of the new Council.</p> <p>They shall have no right of voting at the new Council and shall not be eligible to be elected to any office unless they have been elected or nominated as members of the new Council or are ex-officio members.</p> <p>The council shall meet at least once every two years.</p> <p>At least six months before the expiry of the term of the Council, the Executive Committee shall set in motion the arrangements for electing a new council. In case the new Council cannot be convened within 3 months from the expiry of the term of the Old council, the Bishop / Officers shall report the matter to the Synod which shall take steps for the proper administration of the Diocese.</p> <p>No person shall hold any elected office in the Diocesan Council for more than two terms consecutively.</p>	<p>other constituencies can be arranged accordingly. If for any reason the convening of the Council after fresh elections is delayed, such delay shall not prolong the life of the Council beyond the time stipulated in the constitution, subject to Clause (c) under this rule. The new Council shall function only for the remainder of the term.</p> <p><i>12B. The Officers of the Council shall be elected by Diocesan Council. The number of the Officers of the Council, their qualification and the manner of electing them* shall be specified by each Diocesan Council in its constitution. The Officers elected by the Diocesan Council shall function till the end of the term of the Council subject to rule 12.D.</i></p> <p><i>However, the Officers shall have no right of voting in the new council and shall not be eligible to be elected to any office, unless they have been elected or nominated to the new council or are ex-officio members.</i></p> <p><i>12. C The Council shall meet once in every THREE years for its ordinary meeting. Council shall meet at least once in between the ordinary meetings to discuss the life and work of the Diocese.</i></p> <p><i>12.D At least six months before the expiry of the term of the Council, the Executive Committee shall set in motion the arrangements for electing a new council. In case the</i></p>
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	<p><i>new Council cannot be convened within 3 months from the expiry of the term of the Old council, the Synod shall take steps for the proper administration of the Diocese.</i></p> <p>12. E No person shall be elected as officer of the Diocesan Council for more than two terms consecutively.</p>
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** Other than the Treasurer*

Chapter IX Rule 3 :

EXISTING	PROPOSED
<p>3. Every Diocesan Council shall hold a fresh election of ministerial and lay representatives of the Diocese in the Synod for each ordinary meeting of the Synod.</p> <p>In case the council has not elected fresh representative, the existing representatives shall represent the Diocese in the Synod for one more term.</p>	<p>3. Every Diocesan Council shall hold a fresh election of ministerial and lay representatives of the Diocese in the Synod for each ordinary meeting of the Synod.</p> <p>DELETE</p>

Chapter IX Rule 7 :

EXISTING	PROPOSED
<p>7. All the Officers shall be elected by ballot of the Synod, the Moderator and the Deputy Moderator being elected from among the diocesan Bishops of the Church.</p>	<p>7. The Moderator and Deputy Moderator shall be elected by ballot of the Synod, from among the Diocesan Bishops of the Church. <i>The General Secretary and the Treasurer shall be elected by the ballot of the Synod.</i></p>

Chapter IX Rule 8 :

EXISTING	PROPOSED
<p>8. All the Officers shall be elected during each ordinary meeting of the Synod, and shall hold office from the close of that meeting till the close of the next ordinary meeting of the Synod. 'Provided that if any vacancy occurs, the Executive Committee shall fill up such</p>	<p>No Change</p>

<p>vacancy subject to the approval of majority of the members of the Synod which approval shall be obtained by circular vote. They shall be eligible for re-election for only one more term of 2 years consecutively.</p>	<p>No person shall be elected as officer of the Synod for more than two terms consecutively.</p>
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Chapter IX Rule 16 :

EXISTING	PROPOSED
<p>16. The Synod has in particular power to determine the number and boundaries of the diocese and to form new Dioceses in the Church. It has also power to determine whether any provision in the Constitution of any Diocesan Council is at variance with the provisions contained in this Constitution, and if it finds such variance to rule that such part of the Diocesan Constitution is of no force.</p>	<p>16. The Synod has in particular power to determine the number and boundaries of the diocese and to form new Dioceses in the Church. <i>The Executive Committee which is the ad-interim committee of the Synod</i>, has also power to determine whether any provision in the Constitution of any Diocesan Council is at variance with the provisions contained in this Constitution, and if it finds such variance to rule that such part of the Diocesan Constitution is of no force.</p>

Chapter IX Rule 20 :

EXISTING	PROPOSED
<p>20. An ordinary meeting of the Synod shall be held once in every two years at such time and place as the Executive Committee may determine. Special meetings of the Synod may also be summoned by the Executive Committee.</p>	<p>20. An ordinary meeting of the Synod shall be held once in every <i>three years</i> at such time and place as the Executive Committee may determine. Special meetings of the Synod may also be summoned by the Executive Committee.</p>

Chapter IX Rule 28 :

EXISTING	PROPOSED
<p>The Executive Committee of the Synod shall consist of the Officers of the Synod (who shall be the Officers of the Executive Committee), all the Diocesan</p>	<p>The Executive Committee of the Synod shall consist of the Officers of the Synod (who shall be the Officers of the Executive Committee), all the Diocesan</p>

<p>Bishops and one Presbyter and two lay persons of whom one shall be a woman elected from among the representatives of each Diocese in the Synod by those representatives. In addition, not more than one presbyter and two lay persons shall be nominated to the Executive Committee by the Moderator from among the members of the Synod.</p>	<p>Bishops and one Presbyter and two lay persons of whom one shall be a woman elected from among the representatives of each Diocese in the Synod by those representatives <i>and the President of Women's Fellowship of the Church of South India.</i> In addition, not more than one presbyter and two lay persons shall be nominated to the Executive Committee by the Moderator from among the members of the Synod.</p>
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Speaking Truth to Power

A Critique of the Church of South India Episcopacy (Governance) of the 21st Century

The demand for a better power control and accountability in the Indian Christian Churches underlines the issue of transforming traditional leadership models. The Church of South India (CSI) is a unique church since it is the pioneer of a united and uniting church since 1947, uniting the Anglican, Methodist, Presbyterian and Congregationalist denominations of the missionary churches. With over 4 million members, it is a powerful church even though Christians in India represent a small minority. The process of a constitutional reform is currently debated to change the character of this church from a united to an episcopal church with an accumulation of power in the role of the moderator. The controversy about this reform is linked to ongoing criticisms about corruption in many of the CSI-related institutions. On this background, church governance becomes a hot issue of power control and accountability, and above all, of the faithfulness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the credibility of the community of believers.

The Author

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