

The Burke Library Archives, Columbia University Libraries,
Union Theological Seminary, New York

Missionary Research Library Archives: Section 3

Finding Aid for

“A Church Is Born” Records, 1947 – 1948
Church of South India Inauguration



“Consecration of one of the new bishops,” *Church of South India*, Accessed 8 January 2013
<http://www.csisynod.com/images/history2over.jpg>.

Finding Aid prepared by: Kristen Leigh Southworth, January 2013. Updated by Brigette C. Kamsler in May 2013.

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Summary Information

Creator: Foreign Missions Conference of North America India Committee
Title: “A Church Is Born” Records
Inclusive dates: 1947-1948
Bulk dates: 1948
Abstract: Contains three film strips and commentary entitled “A Church Is Born,” about the 1947 inauguration of the unified Church of South India. Produced by the India Committee of the Foreign Missions Conference of North America.
Size: 1 box, 0.25 linear feet
Storage: Onsite storage
Repository: The Burke Library
Union Theological Seminary
3041 Broadway
New York, NY 10027
Email: burkearchives@library.columbia.edu

Administrative Information

- Provenance:** Originally part of the independent Missionary Research Library, these records were moved with the MRL to the Brown Memorial Tower of Union Theological Seminary in 1929. In 1976 the records were accessioned to the Burke Library archives with the closure of the MRL.
- Access:** Archival papers are available to registered readers for consultation by appointment only. Please contact archives staff by email to burkearchives@library.columbia.edu, or by postal mail to The Burke Library address on page 1, as far in advance as possible. Burke Library staff is available for inquiries or to request a consultation on archival or special collections research.
- Access Restrictions:** The collection is unrestricted to readers. Certain materials, however, are in a fragile condition, and this may necessitate restriction in handling and copying.
- Preferred Citation:** Item description, MRL 3: "A Church Is Born" Records, box # and folder #, The Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary, Columbia University in the City of New York.

History

The Foreign Missions Conference of North America (FMCNA) was a voluntary ecumenical association through which foreign mission boards consulted with one another in planning, united action, and the administration of joint projects. The activities of FMCNA were carried out through committees that were primarily organized around specific geographic areas.

Discussions concerning a union amongst Protestant denominations in India began in 1919 at a conference in Tranquebar (now Tarangambadi), but the union was not completed until after India gained independence from Britain. After nearly twenty-nine years of negotiation among Anglican, Wesleyan (Methodist), Reformed, Presbyterian, and Congregationalist church leaders, the Church of South India was inaugurated on September 27, 1947.

The Church of South India is currently the largest Protestant church in India, with twenty-two dioceses, its own prayer book, and its own communion service that draws from several denominational sources. The reconciliation it reached between Anglicans and other denominations on the doctrine of apostolic succession is often cited as a landmark in the ecumenical movement.

Sources:

"About Us: History." *Church of South India*. 2010. Accessed 8 January 2013 at <http://www.csisynod.com/history.php>

Collection Scope and Content Note

This film and commentary, presented by the India Committee of FMCNA, provides a brief overview of the history of Christian missions to India, explains the appeal for unity amongst Protestant denominations in India, and shows the inauguration of the Church of South India.

Processing

Metal clips and staples were removed from materials and folded items were flattened. Materials were placed in new acid-free folders and boxes. Acidic items were separated from one another by interleaving with acid-free paper as needed. Film strips were preserved in 2013 and became a digital exhibit.

Further Sources

This collection became an online exhibit with all images scanned and available for viewing on the web. It is available here: <https://exhibitions.cul.columbia.edu/exhibits/show/church>.

The Burke Library Archives holds 68 boxes of Foreign Missions Conference of North America Records from 1894-1968. The finding aid for these records can be accessed online at http://library.columbia.edu/content/dam/libraryweb/libraries/burke/fa/mrl/ldpd_4492658.pdf

Other archival collections available at The Burke relate to the Church of South India and to missions in India generally. These are to be found in section 3 of the Missionary Research Library Archives. More information on what is available can be found online at: <http://library.columbia.edu/indiv/burke/archives/mrl.html#series3>

Contents list

Box	Folder	Contents
1	1	Film Commentary by scene, 1948
1	2-5	"A Church Is Born" film strips (3), 1947-1948
1	6	CD Copies