

Creation of The Church of India - CIPBC

By The Parliament in 1927

The Church of India - CIPBC (formerly the Church of England in India) is the original Anglican Church in India. The Anglican presence in India dates back four hundred years ago to 1600, when Queen Elizabeth I was still on the throne of England. From that time until within living memory British chaplains and missionaries arrived in ever-increasing numbers, and were the first to minister to the expatriate British community, and later to bring the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the Indian people themselves.

The Diocese of Calcutta was promulgated in 1814; its territory included not only India but also those countries known today as Pakistan, Bangladesh, Burma (Myanmar) and Ceylon (Sri Lanka), and also from 1824 to 1836, Australia as well. With the foundation of the Diocese of Madras in 1835 and the Diocese of Bombay in 1837 the Indian Church was formed into a Province, with the Bishop of Calcutta being Metropolitan ex officio.

For the next ninety years, that is until 1927, the Church of India was a Province of the Church of England, under the authority of the Crown and the British Parliament.

On the 22nd of December 1927, The Parliament of England passed an enactment known as the Indian Church Act of 1927 ([Indian Church Act 1927](#)). The Indian Church Act, 1927 (17&18 Geo.5, CH.40) makes the provision incidental to and consequential on the dissolution of the legal union between the Church of England and the Church of England in India, and the Church of England in Ceylon. By means of the Indian Church Act 1927 the Province of The Church of India, Burma and Ceylon came under the administration of Indian Church Act of 1927. Hence in 1927 a new, independent Church was formed - the Church of India, Burma and Ceylon. Until 1927 the Province of India was the 3rd Province of the Church of England with its Metropolitan establishment at Calcutta.

Arising from the enactment of the Indian Church Measure and the Indian Church Act for the dissolution of its legal connection with the Church of England, the Church of India, Pakistan, Burma and Ceylon is governed by its own very comprehensive “Constitution, Canons, and Rules” commonly called *the Canons*. *The Constitution, Canons and Rules* are binding on all members of the Church of India - CIPBC, that is all the clergy and lay people as well.

The Church of India - CIPBC continues to receive a measure of legal protection under the terms of the Indian Church Measures of 1927 ([Indian Church Measure 1927](#)), and the Indian Church Act of 1927. On the basis of the proclamation made by the English Privy Council concerning the India Church Act of 1927, and the Independence Act 1947, the ownership of the Indian Church properties has been examined by the competent Indian Government authorities, and are rightly held in trust by the Indian Church Trustees as the absolute owners of all such Church properties in India. The Church of India - CIPBC is seeking to effect control and administration over all its Church properties and the General Council is regularly holding its meetings under the provisions of the CIPBC *Constitution, Canons and Rules*.

The Anglican remnant remaining in India were in trouble as the foreign missionaries were leaving India after the British granted India independence in 1947. Opportunists illegally

occupied many of the Anglican properties in the years following. And, the subsequent formation of the Church of South India and the Church of North India, an amalgamation of various Protestant church groups, resulted in a great erosion of traditional Anglican practice in India.

In the year 1978 following the Congress of St. Louis, ([*Affirmation of Saint Louis*](#)) the news of the Anglican Catholic Church reached India. The Indian Anglicans appealed for a spiritual affiliation in the Anglican Catholic Church Original Province. As a result, in 1983, Bishop John Asha Prakash was consecrated in California in United States. And subsequently in the year 1984 Bishop Samuel Peter Prakash son of John Asha Prakash along with Bishop Gideon from Calcutta and Bishop Rao from Amritsar. The consecration took place in WMCA, New Delhi. With these four dioceses the Province of India was restored and established as the Second Province of the Anglican Catholic Church. In 1989 The Diocese of Bombay consecrated Bishop Anselm Ranganadhan, and in 1996, the Diocese of Nagpur was restored and Bishop Francis Sylvester consecrated there.

Sadly, following the illegal Deerfield Beach Consecration incident, the Titular Bishop of Calcutta and Metropolitan of India, Archbishop Louis Falk, defected to the so-called American Episcopal Church in 1991, the Bishop of Delhi and Lucknow, John Prakash, and his son, Samuel Prakash, defected as well, together with a number of clergy and congregations associated with Anthony Clavier, who had also been active in India. They formed the sect known as the “Anglican Church of India”.

From 1991 until 1995 the late Archbishop William Lewis held office as Acting Metropolitan of India succeeded by Bishop James Bromley. Bishop Bromley appointed Fr. John Augustine as the Archdeacon and the Metropolitan's Commissary to the Province of India. Bishop Rommie Starks succeeded Bishop Bromley as acting Metropolitan. In 2003 the Right Reverend John Augustine was elected and consecrated Bishop of Lucknow. In 2005 the Calcutta Diocesan Council and the House of Bishops elected the Right Reverend John Augustine as the Bishop of Calcutta and Metropolitan of India. The Most Reverend John Augustine was enthroned as Metropolitan of the Church of India-CIPBC on 24th February, 2005 at Christ Church, Lucknow.
