

Anglican Archives in the Lambeth Palace Library

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Across the River Thames from the Houses of Parliament is Lambeth Palace, the London home of the Archbishop of Canterbury. This is also the home of **Lambeth Palace Library** which Archbishop Bancroft founded in 1610 as a public library. Access is gained through a doorway in the long brick wall which runs down Lambeth Palace Road. The noise of London traffic and the tourist buses stopped to give their passengers views of the Palace of Westminster across the Thames are quickly left behind as you enter another world.

Lambeth Palace Library is the principal library and archive for the history of the Church of England. It is a significant resource for the New Zealand church historian. New Zealand material is found in collections such as the correspondence of the Archbishops of Canterbury, the Lambeth Conference Papers, and the Papers of Baroness Burdett-Coutts.

Baroness Burdett-Coutts was a great benefactress of the Colonial Church. Edward Coleridge, Bishop Selwyn's Eton friend and great supporter, wrote to her in 1846 dissuading her from giving support to the Church Missionary Society: 'I cannot approve of any plan for Evangelizing the world, which is not conducted on the Principles and according to the Rule laid down by the Apostles, i.e. by Priests and Deacons acting under the authority of Bishops, the former obeying and assisting the latter, and the latter guiding, correcting, and protecting the former.'

With St John's College in mind, Coleridge pointed to the recent developments in New Zealand: 'You will be glad to hear that we have raised 5000 pounds for the good Bishop of N. Zealand wherewith to turn his College of Reeds and Plants and Linen into Stone.'

A colonial clergyman from Invercargill gives a

rather different view of bishops in his letter to Archbishop Tait in 1867: 'The excessive multiplication of Bishops has caused some complication in New Zealand, where there will be a Bishop to, in one case eight, and in another instance ten clergymen, so that until the number of clergy and laity has grown up into some proportion to them, it may be difficult to know whether the decisions of synods show anything more than (sic) the Bishop's individual opinion.'

The Lambeth Conference Papers include verbatims of the speeches of the participants. They give interesting glimpses into the concerns of the New Zealand Bishops attending Lambeth Conferences. In 1867, for example. Bishop Selwyn reflected on a conversation he had with a Methodist minister before leaving New Zealand in the post Land Wars environment about the 'shattered state' of their Māori congregations and whether 'the two bodies of native converts might not be united?' Selwyn asked the Conference about the possibility of intercommunion: 'am I authorized by this Conference representing the whole Church to admit that the sacraments are duly administered by ministers of the Wesleyan persuasion?'

No answer seems to have been given to his question.

In 1897, W. Leonard Williams, Bishop of Waiapu, addressed the issue of providing ministry to people speaking two different languages: 'Clergymen have been licensed to the charge of the Māori population in a district, without reference at all to the fact of there being an English Clergyman in the same district ministering to English people. We have been obliged to act in this way, otherwise many of our people would have been deprived altogether of the ministrations of Religion.'

R. M. Neligan, Bishop of Auckland, addressed the Lambeth Conference in 1908 on the subject of 'The Moral Witness of the Church.' He indicated that he had been a member of the Christian Social Union for many years and went to New Zealand with a very optimistic attitude towards its much vaunted social legislation but his residence there had made him much more skeptical: 'New Zealand from my observation is a warning that you cannot create morality by Act of Parliament, but we are trying through the Church of England Men's Society to bring to bear upon the labour movement in New Zealand the spirit of Christ. That is how we are trying to bear moral witness in the Church.'

Correspondence in the papers of Randall Davidson (no relation!), Archbishop of Canterbury 1903-1928, on New Zealand matters covers a wide range of issues. These include the possibility in 1903 of appointing a Pakeha suffragan to the three North Island bishops, who could speak Māori and superintend 'Māori work in New Zealand.' Archbishop Davidson was not impressed with the proposal.

The return of C. W. Scott-Moncrieff to England after his short period as Warden of St John's College, 1908-1909, is recorded in the Davidson papers. Scott-Moncrieff resigned because of Bishop Neligan's displeasure over his association with the Theosophical Society.

Archbishop Davidson after meeting with Scott-Moncrieff noted that Scott-Moncrieff was a member of the Theosophical Societies and that 'he says that is not incompatible with adherence to English Church doctrine.' There was considerable disquiet in the Church over the

place of Theosophy in relation to the Christian faith and the issue was raised at the Lambeth Conference in 1920. Scott-Moncrieff made a contribution to this debate.

The Davidson papers include considerable correspondence relating to the 'General Mission in New Zealand, 1910.' Harold Anson, another former Warden of St John's acted as the honorary secretary and Bishop H.H. Montgomery (father of the Field Marshall) and secretary of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel as chairman. This Mission was a large undertaking with up to fifteen missionaries coming from England and spreading out over the whole country. In giving an advance briefing, Frederic Wallis, Bishop of Wellington concluded: 'Our people are friendly and moved by kind impulses. There is next to no antagonism to religion, or to anything else. There is no severity about us. Nothing is worth troubling about; we follow the line of least resistance. We care more for pleasure than for money-making. We flock to race-meetings and athletic sports, and there is a good deal of gambling in connection with these events.'

One might ask – 'what has changed?'

The extracts given above can only illustrate in a very small way the rich store of material housed in Lambeth Palace Library. There are subjects crying out for research e.g., the New Zealand Bishops at Lambeth, Anglicanism and Theosophy, the Church of England Men's Society, the Mission in New Zealand 1910. The Lambeth papers are an invaluable resource for anyone wanting to pursue the place of the Anglican Church in New Zealand church history.