

‘Beyond their own dwellings’: The Emergence of a Transregional and Transcontinental Indigenous Christian Public Sphere in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries

ABSTRACT

This article deals with a largely ignored or overlooked type of historical sources which, at the same time, are of utmost importance for a future polycentric history of World Christianity: journals and periodicals from the Global South in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries published not by Euro-American missionaries but by local Christians. At the end of the nineteenth century, indigenous Christian elites in Asia and Africa increasingly began to articulate their own views in the colonial public of their respective societies. They founded their own journals, criticised serious shortcomings, and developed non-missionary interpretations of Christianity. At the same time, they established transregional or even transcontinental networks between ‘native’ Christians from different missionary or colonial contexts. The article presents the main results from two major comparative research projects on indigenous Christian journals from Asia, Africa and the

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Black Atlantic around 1900. It introduces the concept of a ‘transregional indigenous Christian public sphere’ and highlights the role of the press in processes of religious modernisation in different cultural contexts.

Keywords: press, public sphere, periodicals, Christianity, Asia, Africa, indigenous elites, networks

‘What has Jerusalem to do with the Internet?’ was the title of a keynote given by Alexander Chow at the Yale–Edinburgh Group Conference 2021 in Edinburgh (see Chow 2023; also Chow 2022). The impact of media technologies on the history of World Christianity, and especially on the relations of the current shape of Christian communities all over the world to digital culture, has been intensively debated in recent times. While Chow’s keynote and other more recent publications (like Mitchell and Kidwell 2016 or Schlag 2022) mostly focus on electronic media and digital communication, this article deals with a more traditional medium: printed journals and periodicals, used not only by Western missionaries but increasingly also by Asian, African and African American Christians around 1900 as a means of emancipation and transregional networking. These publications enabled local Christian elites from different regions and colonial or missionary contexts to interact with each other and to establish what we suggest to conceptualise as a ‘transregional indigenous Christian public sphere’.¹ In this article we present the main findings of two research projects based at the University of Munich in cooperation with the FIT Hermannsburg (2011–17) and at the University of Bonn (2016–21).² Our goal is to draw attention to indigenous Christian periodicals as a highly important but largely neglected category of sources for the study of Christianity in the Global South. Usually overlooked or discussed only in isolated regional contexts, they open new perspectives and provide essential building blocks for a more polycentric approach to the history of World Christianity.

BOOMING PRESS AND INDIGENOUS CHRISTIAN PUBLISHING AROUND 1900

‘The present is notably an age of Negro magazines ... [A]t no time have there been so many magazines published by the race’ (*The Lagos Standard*, 5 October 1905).³ What the Nigerian *Lagos Standard* wrote in 1905 about black journals and periodicals is valid in general around 1900 for both the secular and the religious ‘native press’ in what today is called the Global South. This applies in particular also to indigenous Christian journals in the colonies and ‘mission fields’ of Asia and Africa.

Below, some of these journals from India, South Africa, West Africa and the Philippines – explored for the first time in a systematic and comparative perspective – will be presented to a wider scholarly public. At the same time, we extend an invitation to pursue further studies in this field.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, the press had been established as a central medium of communication in Europe and North America (see the regional overviews in Martin and Copeland 2003; Wiener 2017). But it was also booming in the colonial societies of the Global South. Already in 1878, an Indian newspaper printed the following assessment: ‘The age may be called the age of newspapers ... For every person that read a newspaper twenty years ago, one hundred read them now’ (*Athenaeum and Daily News*, 1 May 1878, quoted after Frost 2004: 82). An explosive growth of the press was characteristic for the development in India afterwards. ‘The circulation of Indian language newspapers rose from 299.000 in 1885 to 817.000 in 1905,’ writes Sukeshi Kamra (2011: 2) in his study of the periodical press of the country: ‘[T]here were 1.359 English and Indian languages newspapers and journals in circulation in 1905.’ ‘At the present time’ – claims the contemporary Madras based journal *The Christian Patriot* (CP) in 1907 –

the press of India is one of the greatest powers in the land. Modern India has given birth to able journalists and authors. During the ten years ending in 1901/02, the number of registered printing presses increased from 1.649 to 2.193; the number of newspapers from 602 to 708; the number of periodical publications (other than newspapers) from 349 to 575; the number of books published in English ... from 768 to 1.312. (CP, 13 July 1907: 3).

A comparable boom of the press can also be observed around 1900 in many other colonial societies. In the Philippines, for example, between 1882 and 1986 more than 100 newspapers were published in Manila, as well as in other provinces like Ilocos, Panay, Vigan and the Visayas (Cano 2018: 178). The reform discussions in China at the end of the nineteenth century largely took place in an increasingly differentiated press landscape, in which the high-circulation periodical *Wanguo Gongbao* – originally a small missionary newspaper – took on a leading role (Zhang 2007). Likewise, in Western and Southern Africa the changing conditions – the spread of the printing press, an improved postal service, the gradual development of public libraries, and especially the emergence of a Western-educated African elite – led to

the establishment of many new journals and increased circulation numbers of print media. 'If the need for a native Press was great a few years back, that need has become greater today when West Africa has sprung into unusual prominence with the civilised world,' writes the *Lagos Standard* proudly in 1902 (17 September 1902: 3; Discourses, #228). Equally remarkable was the continuously increasing number of so-called 'steamship newspapers' – the press publications that were timed to the departure times of the steamships. They helped to increase the flow of news between the colonial centres and the overseas colonies, in *both* directions.⁴ In the colonies themselves, the consumption and the 'reading' of newspapers and other print media was not limited to the white settler community or the urban, Western-educated indigenous elites. Rather, these media also found an increasingly broad interest in the countryside and the village communities. In regard to the East Africa of the 1930s, Adrian Hastings (1994: 233) writes, 'Vernacular reading circles were attended by a hundred or more listeners.' In reference to India at the end of the nineteenth century, Christopher Bayly (1996: 225) and others (for example, Kamra 2011: 2) have described the development of 'newspaper-literate village communities'. These emerged as literate members of the community regularly read from newspapers and periodicals to their illiterate compatriots. Around 1900 in South Asia, however, it was particularly the local literati who communicated with each other through periodicals and built their networks trans-regionally. Print media also played an important role in the different revival movements in Hinduism and Buddhism at the end of the nineteenth century. English language journals like *The Theosophist*, *The Buddhist* or the *Journal of the Maha Bodhi Society* were circulating between the port cities of South Asia and allowed the 'Asian literati ... [to] address their own region-wide publics of like-minded scholars, progressives or co-religionists' (Frost 2004: 87).

All these developments have recently been discussed as part of an increasingly interdisciplinary scholarly conversation. A large number of projects of digitalisation have also made available to historical research a significant part of the indigenous press of Asia and Africa that earlier was difficult to access or hidden in dusty libraries (Mussell 2012). Nevertheless, this implies the specific problem that such forms of digitalisation naturally are limited to the horizon of the archives where the digitised documents are being kept – normally the metropolitan colonial and/or mission archives. Regional collections of indigenous publications are often less visible (Hermann 2021: 205–6). In any case,

missionary journals also have been at the centre of an increasing interdisciplinary interest, not only by mission historians and historians of Christianity, but equally among area studies scholars, in the study of religion and cultural anthropology, and among historians of globalisation (see, for example, Jensz and Acke 2013).

In contrast, the development of the indigenous Christian press, written and edited by local Christians in Asia, Africa and other regions, has been comparatively neglected – despite its enormous importance for analysing those processes of emancipation without which the developments of Christian Asia and Africa around the turn of the nineteenth to the twentieth centuries cannot be described adequately.

(a) In some regions – like West Africa –, such periodicals have already been the subject of intense research and are part of a longer tradition of study.⁵

(b) In other regions, such as India, they have not really been considered until now, despite their remarkable circulation and presence in the public sphere of the time (but see now Koschorke 2019).

(c) For countries like the Philippines, they have equally been discussed and made fully available for the first time in the context of our research – despite their importance for understanding the contemporary religious and social debates that accompanied the period of transformation from the Spanish colonial administration to American modernity in the archipelago.

(d) In regard to South Africa, Les Schwitzer writes in his classic work on ‘South Africa’s Alternative Press’ that ‘[t]he African protest press was nurtured in African Christian communities’. Still, even he only has a few sentences on *Inkanyiso* – despite its recognised importance as a famous ‘protest journal’ and ‘the first independent organ of African political opinion in Natal Colony’ (Switzer 1997: 22, 25).

What is missing is a systematic analysis of this important type of historical source in a comparative perspective. The reasons for this lack of research are multiple: low circulation numbers; short lifespans; bad conservation status; scattered presence in mission, colonial and private archives; repressive actions by the respective colonial authorities and settler communities; and so on. And yet, these journals and periodicals are a unique source for making accessible the discourses of indigenous

Christian elites in different regions and colonial as well as missionary contexts of Asia and Africa around 1900. In addition, they also provide a glimpse into their mutual awareness, increasing cognitive interaction, and accelerated network building.

FUNCTIONS OF THE INDIGENOUS CHRISTIAN PRESS:
ANALYSIS OF PROGRAMATIC TEXTS

In various indigenous Christian periodicals one can often find programmatic statements about the context, aims and purpose of these journals. These 'programmatic texts' in themselves already are enormously important historical sources and allow insights into the self-understanding of the different groups responsible for these publications.⁶

Some recurring motives are central here and appear in many variations. Among these are

periodicals as the 'mouthpiece' of indigenous elites and of the 'native Christian community' as an until now marginalised group that beforehand did not possess any representation in the public sphere;

making possible (or allowing the aspiration towards) a participation in the public discourse of the respective colonial society;

facilitation of an independent access (not controlled by Europeans) to a world increasingly perceived as globalised;

networking within the respective ethno-religious diasporas;

connections to indigenous elites and local Christians in other regions (and other missionary or colonial contexts);

articulating an understanding of Christianity not determined by Western missionary dominance.

1. In any case, the launch of a self-published periodical has been perceived as an act of emancipation and is often described as an epoch-making event. 'The period when newspapers begin to live in the history of any people is an important era,' states the first issue of the *Kaffir Express* in 1870, a periodical founded in South African Lovedale (Cape region) as a bilingual monthly magazine. Under the name *Isigidimi Sama-Xosa* ('The Xhosa Messenger') it quickly developed into the 'first

independent African newspaper in Southern Africa' (Switzer and Switzer 1979: 45–6; see also Shepherd 1970: 11). But even before, the paper was de facto written by African correspondents, the majority of whom can be identified as members of the regional Xhosa elite. The *Kaffir Express* addressed the 'intelligent portion of the native community who are able to read, or have an interest in what is going on in the world beyond their own dwellings'. International reporting – for example on 'European battles and African diamonds', as already in its first issue from October 1870 – therefore was one of the characteristic features of this periodical. It saw itself as a successor to the first European newspapers of the sixteenth century that had reported on the Turkish wars of the time. The founding of the *Kaffir Express* – as perceived by its African authors – equally marked the beginning of a new era in the history of the 'native community'.⁷

2. 'We are ... tired of continually asking Europeans about the news of other nations,' we read in 1883 in a letter to the editor sent by an African reader to *Mahoko A Becwana* ('Words of Batswana'), a periodical published by missionaries of the 'London Missionary Society' (LMS) in the vernacular Setswana ('Letter to the editor', *Mahoko a Becwana* 1/1, January 1883: 2–3, reprinted in Mgadla and Volz 2006: 7). It contained a very remarkable section of letters to the editor, with numerous opinions and references to the debates of local Christians regarding diverse topics that were relevant for literate Africans (often pupils of the missionary schools). These comprised questions of missionary work, of theology, of the standardisation of written Setswana, and of European colonialism and the cultural changes induced by it. These letters to the editor offer 'a rare glimpse of conversations that took place among literate Africans during a crucial period in the formation of modern South Africa' (Mgadla and Volz 2006: xvii). Particularly the independent access to the news of a dynamically changing world – in a time in which traditional local small-scale structures of communication became increasingly irrelevant – was important for the African readers and authors of this newspaper. They explicitly welcomed it as a platform for discussion in the Tswana language, which was meant to end (or at least reduce) the reliance of the Africans on the 'newspapers of the Europeans' (Mgadla and Volz 2006: 7; see also 15: 'very happy to learn that now news of the world will be made known [sc., to us]').

3. 'To give publicity to our thoughts and opinions' – this was the leitmotif of the South African periodical *Inkanyiso yase Natal*. It proudly saw itself (not fully accurately) as 'the first Native Journal in Natal and

the second of its kind in South Africa'. Each issue contained an English section titled 'Native Thoughts' that commented on current developments and controversial issues in colonial Natal from an indigenous perspective, because 'it is the general feeling amongst Natives that their grievances are frequently not heard' (*Inkanyiso*, 12 March 1891: 3; Discourses, #120). *Inkanyiso* is addressing three different target audiences in this context: firstly, the white settlers and the British colonial administration ('our English friends' / 'Colonists') that should be made familiar with the concerns of the Africans; secondly, the missionary public, which was supposed to continue their support for central demands of the paper (such as the continuation of 'industrial education'); and thirdly (or primarily), the African readers ('our countrymen'), the interests of whom the periodical tries to represent. In doing so, *Inkanyiso* claims for itself the 'same rights' as the (mostly hostile) white settler's press: 'to bring before the light of public opinion everything that affects us as a race, as citizens, and as subjects of Her Gracious Majesty Queen Victoria' (*Inkanyiso*, 13 January 1891: 5; see also 16 December 1892: 5; Koschorke *et al.* 2016: texts 122, 121).

4. West African journals like the *Sierra Leone Weekly News* see themselves as part of a long tradition of 'native journalism in West Africa', whose earlier forerunners they partly describe in detail (for example, *The Sierra Leone Weekly News*, 6 September 1890: 5; Discourses, #222). The (sometimes critically assessed) role of earlier journalistic pioneers from the Caribbean is no more omitted than the failure of different earlier black publications, the rise and demise of which allows the writers to recognise at least two things. 'First: That the Native is anxious for information conveyed to him through his own people.' Secondly: 'that public opinion in the settlement ... is still in a state of formation ... [and] has yet to be educated' – a challenge that describes both the self-chosen mission and the goal of this periodical. This task, however, cannot be realised on a limited regional scale, but only in a pan-African horizon: 'The *Sierra Leone Weekly News* is doing its best to serve the interests not only of the Sierra Leone public but also of West Africa and the Negro Race generally' (6 September 1890: 5.; see also Koschorke *et al.* 2016: texts 223–29).

5. In India, the *Christian Patriot* (CP) – 'owned and conducted entirely by members of the Indian Christian community' – describes itself as 'mouthpiece' of the Indian-Christian community of the country. It aims to give this community a voice in the public sphere in its own right and as an autonomous subject – distancing itself both from the paternalism

of the missionaries and from Hindu-nationalist tendencies in sections of the Indian National Congress. 'Is there such a thing as [sc., one] public opinion in India?', the *CP* asks in a critical engagement with the Hindu-press that – as the *CP* argues – often tries to monopolise public debates, but in reality only represents the particular interests of specific groups (such as the Brahmin elite). In this situation, the *CP* tries to make the voice of the Indian Christians heard in the public controversies of the time, a voice that they claim deserves to be heard as a 'progressive force' in the 'regeneration of India'. The journal's goal is 'to bring together' the Indian-Christian community – 'so widely scattered over India and so sadly divided by denominational and other differences' – and to strengthen its 'communal consciousness'. This goal of a unified Indian-Christian community is a vision. But it can already now be partly realised through intensified media-based communication. The *CP* does not limit this goal to India proper, but also includes the Indian diasporas in Asia and beyond, by regular reports about the 'various Christian organisations throughout India, Burma, Ceylon, Straits and South Africa'. In 1916, it can describe itself as the 'leading organ' of the Indian-Christian community of all these regions. At the same time, it increasingly represents pan-Asian and pan-Indigenous tendencies (see *CP*, 2 January 1896: 4; *CP*, 10 January 1903: 4; *CP*, 19 February 1916: 4; *CP*, 20 February 1896: 4; *CP*, 4 March 1916: 1; see Discourses, #1, 2, 4, 47, 66).

6. In the Philippines, the *Iglesia Filipina Independiente* (IFI) imagined itself as addressing a local as well as a global public, as an analysis of its early periodicals demonstrates. The short-lived *La Verdad* and *La Iglesia Filipina Independiente: Revista Católica* allowed the IFI already shortly after its founding to raise its voice in the public sphere of the Philippines and engage in an (often controversial) exchange with other contemporary publications like the Dominican Order's *Libertas* about a large variety of topics that concerned the new church. In addition to this local importance, the IFI periodicals played a decisive role in developing the self-understanding of the new Filipino national church as part of a global Christian community.

7. The so-called 'Black Atlantic' – as a communicative space of African and African American Christians on both sides of the Atlantic – can also be analysed on the basis of such periodicals. 'African Christians learned about African American life in African-edited newspapers' (that themselves quoted African American journals extensively), as Andrew E. Barnes (2017: 2) concludes in an essay on the interrelations and

exchanges between the African and African American press. In a programmatic form, this claim is documented in the publications of the African Orthodox Church (AOC), a Black church founded in New York in 1921. Three years later it already had an offshoot in South Africa and shortly afterwards was present also in East Africa (Kenya, Uganda). Interestingly, this connection did not emerge out of deliberate efforts of evangelisation by the Black AOC headquarters in New York. Rather, it was a result of the Black press and its periodicals circulating on both sides of the Atlantic, which informed Christians in South and East Africa about the newly established Orthodox Church under Black leadership in the United States.

Here, as in other cases, personal contacts with local Christians from other countries, despite their later importance, were not the initial catalyst that led to the development of a transregional indigenous Christian consciousness. Much more significant, as a first step, was the circulation of news – initially mediated through the general (missionary or colonial) press and later increasingly also through their own journals. These periodicals were read by African and Asian Christians, and were shared, exchanged and occasionally also translated. Indian periodicals quoted Chinese and South African magazines. Chinese periodicals translated articles from Indian publications. The periodicals' local publishing offices, just like public reading rooms, often served simultaneously as distribution centres for like-minded periodicals from other world regions.

REFLECTIONS ON THE CONCEPT OF A 'TRANSREGIONAL INDIGENOUS CHRISTIAN PUBLIC SPHERE'

Our analysis of the journals mentioned here and related periodicals reveals their central importance for the formation and consolidation of indigenous Christian elites in various colonial societies around 1900. However, they enable us not only to examine their discourses on a local or regional level; they also allow us to recognise these elites' transregional and transcontinental connections. Beyond their local significance, the periodicals and newspapers edited and published by indigenous Christians also contributed to the emergence of what we conceptualise as a '*transregional indigenous Christian public sphere*'.

This term refers to the communicative space established and continuously expanded by the rapid proliferation of newspapers and periodicals since the second half of the nineteenth century. It made possible mutual awareness and manifold forms of interaction between

(formerly communicatively isolated) indigenous Christian actors and groups from different regions or continents and varied missionary or colonial contexts. As the communicative horizon of an emerging trans-regional indigenous Christian consciousness and a developing space of diverse encounters, it constitutes an independent dimension of the developing global public sphere dominated by missionary and colonial voices, as our analysis of paradigms from four Asian and African regions (India, South Africa, West Africa and the Philippines) demonstrates. Subsequently, the indirect and direct contacts established between indigenous Christian elites in distant regions could lead to stable interactions and far-reaching networking, for example between actors in India and Japan as documented in *The Christian Patriot*. It also contributed to the making of a variety of 'Christian internationalisms' (on this concept, see the last section below and Koschorke 2016: 50–1; 2018a).

In theorising this communicative space, the category of the 'public sphere' is of central importance. Jürgen Habermas first introduced his understanding of this concept into English in an article published in 1974, where he described it as 'a sphere which mediates between society and state, in which the public organizes itself as the bearer of public opinion' (Habermas 1974: 50). After the 1989 English translation of his *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (Habermas 1989), it was widely discussed in the political and social sciences. Habermas later adjusted his definition to understand the public sphere as 'an intermediary structure between the political system, on the one hand, and the private sectors of the lifeworld and functional systems, on the other' (1996: 373). In doing so, he reacted to early critiques of his concept as too normative or universalistic, based only on his study of historical developments in Germany, France and England (see Calhoun 1992). The model of a 'bourgeois public sphere' as a space of dialogue and rational debate had also been criticised for paying too little attention to mechanisms of access and to the exclusion of different sections of the populace. Habermas' thesis of a modern decline also implied that the equality and rationality of the early modern public sphere had soon been compromised by commodified public exchanges. His ideal vision of public discourse has been shown to conceal the constant presence of a plurality of publics and various forms of contestation around public space (Negt and Kluge 1972; Warner 2002). In Nancy Fraser's words, 'the bourgeois public was never *the* public' (1990: 61). Rather, on the basis of the simultaneous emergence of a variety of counter-publics, 'including nationalist publics, popular peasant publics, elite women's

publics, and working class publics', she described the public sphere as being constituted as 'always a plurality of competing publics' (61). Later revisions of the concept, therefore, led Habermas (1996: 373) to characterise the 'public sphere' as 'a highly complex network that branches out into a multitude of overlapping international, national, regional, local, and subcultural arenas'. He now saw it as differentiated into a variety of 'publics' and into 'levels according to the density of communication, organizational complexity, and range'. Despite being differentiated in these ways, however, 'all the partial publics constituted by ordinary language remain porous to one another' and can thus be bridged and extended (1996: 374).

In his detailed exploration of 'publics' and 'counterpublics', Michael Warner argued that a public does not precede its being addressed as a *specific public*, but rather it is constituted by this act itself: 'A public is a space of discourse organized by nothing other than discourse itself ... It exists *by virtue of being addressed*' (Warner 2002: 67). As a 'relation among strangers' (116), it 'comes into being only in relation to texts and their circulation' (66). This form of an anonymous but reachable public, concretely addressable by virtue of specific media, constitutes a 'modern' form of social community different from earlier 'pre-modern' forms. Warner writes: 'Without the idea of texts that can be picked up at different times and in different places by otherwise unrelated people, we would not imagine a public as an entity that embraces all the users of that text, whoever they might be' (2002: 68). As fellow members of a public, strangers 'can be treated as already belonging to our world', placed on a 'path to commonality'. In modern societies, therefore, 'strangerhood' appears as 'the necessary medium of commonality' (75).

In regard to the indigenous Christian elites that are at the centre of our interest here, this implies asking for the ways in which they actually constituted themselves *as elites* and *as a specific public* through their texts and periodicals. Locating themselves in wider local, transregional and transcontinental Christian communities, they consolidated their group identities in and through print media. *The Christian Patriot*, for example, saw its mission as representing and promoting 'the views and ... the interests of the Indian Christian community as a whole' ('Ourselves', *CP*, 10 January 1903: 4; Discourses, #2) and wanted to further 'the communal consciousness of Indian Christians, so widely scattered over India' ('The Christian Patriot', *CP*, 10 January: 4; Discourses, #4). It also stated its purpose as bringing the different

Indian-Christian organisations at home and in the diasporas in contact with each other.

Habermas' notion of the public sphere also quickly became the subject of debates about the history of public life and the limits of modern conceptions of such spaces beyond the West. In 1991, Sandria B. Freitag (1991a: 3, 6) inquired into 'the nature of "the public" in colonial South Asia' and pointed to 'important cultural differences in the ways "public" is conceived'. Taking up these questions almost twenty-five years later, J. Barton Scott and Brannon D. Ingram (2015: 358) drew on her work to call us to 'provincialise "the public"', by treating it 'less as a normative model for modern society than as a culturally peculiar notion caught up with the particular history of the North Atlantic region (i.e. "the West")'. However, despite complicating 'the public' and 'the public sphere' as analytical categories, the essays collected by Freitag in a special issue of *South Asia* in 1991 already led her to point out the ways in which local concepts have often served 'as the indigenous bases onto which western European notions of "the public" could have become grafted or, perhaps more accurately, transmuted' (1991a: 7). While notions of 'the public' might differ depending on the cultural and historical context, modern understandings were widely adopted in South Asia since the nineteenth century, and this 'easy transferability' itself presents a challenge for historians (Freitag 1991a: 6). Therefore, while Western ideas about 'the public' around 1900 might not always be very helpful analytically, 'we must nevertheless gauge the powerful appeal they exercised for people at the time' (7).

Scott and Ingram (2015: 359, 370) underscored this point, highlighting how 'the Anglophone term "public" has, since the nineteenth century, become an integral part of the South Asian scene' and, just like the concept of 'religion', should be understood as a 'central term of modern thought'. It makes sense, therefore, to not treat it as a 'Western concept' alien to South Asia for example, but as having been produced as a *global category* over the last two hundred years through processes of 'translingual practice' (Liu 1995; on this point see also Hermann 2016). This also includes the myriad ways in which print technology itself has had a decisive impact. In the 'creation of a new kind of public' (Freitag 1991a: 9) and in refiguring relations between private and public, print media were involved in 'the emergence of new and larger constitutive entities within which individuals situated themselves' (10), as we have seen in the example of *The Christian Patriot* above.

In parallel to such debates about South Asia, some authors also wondered if something like a 'colonial public sphere' emerged in those societies affected by European imperialism. As part of his investigation of 'Asia's maritime networks' in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, Frost (2004: 87) describes the 'region-wide publics of like-minded scholars, progressives or co-religionists' that Asian literati at the time could, mostly using English, address as a coherent public. For him, the 'circulation of print between readers who were scattered across and yet united by the seas created transoceanic communities of text' held together and particularly consolidated by a large variety of periodicals (87). In particular, the rapid development of postal services (Frost 2016) in the British Empire contributed to the emergence of what he terms a 'colonial public sphere', not on only a local, but rather on a trans-regional scale.

Neeladri Bhattacharya (2005: 139) has argued in similar ways in his theorising of the 'colonial public' that the 'public sphere' was not only a space for single individuals to represent themselves publicly, but rather 'a space where communities are forced to come together ... to reconstitute themselves as a public'. If it was this public space that allowed the transformation of 'community matters into public issues', public debate must be seen as a complex process:

In all these public debates, two audiences were addressed: one, the community, as it was being defined, and its constituent elements; and two, the wider public beyond the community that was implicated in the process as spectator and commentator, but as outsider ... It was a process through which the community opened itself to the outside world, just as it enclosed itself within harder boundaries. (Bhattacharya 2005: 140)

At the same time, he draws our attention to the colonial public sphere as a 'deeply segmented ... space of struggle' between a variety of actors, particularly the colonial authorities and, in his case, Indian communities (153–6). What does this segmentation amount to? Does it mean that the public sphere in colonial societies necessarily disintegrates into a plurality of segregated spaces?

If we follow Stephanie Newell's (2013) detailed exploration of native newspapers and their African editors in colonial West Africa, a more complex picture emerges. We must address, on the one hand, the segmentation inherent in the colonial context, and, on the other hand, the nature of contemporary evaluations of the emerging public spaces.

Newell (2013: 37) argues that rather than seeing the different publics in a colonial society as completely separate discourses and spaces – as described for the Indian case by Mrinalini Sinha (2001) – and thereby excluding ‘the diversity of encounters made possible by colonial rule’ by segregating ‘indigenous public spaces’ from the colonial public sphere, a more inclusive understanding is needed.⁸ She claims that in colonial West Africa, ‘newsprint made possible the imagination of a new type of public, conceived as anonymous, detached from personal and familial affiliations, and capable of expressing public opinion for the first time in the new public space constituted by African-owned newspapers’ (Newell 2013: 30). While the critique of Habermas’ concept of the public sphere laid out above is particularly valid regarding the limits of access and especially the various forms of censorship and control at work in the colonial public sphere(s), nevertheless the spread of newsprint also was a factor that made possible new imaginations of the public (Newell 2013: 33). African-owned newspapers were of particular importance here. In asserting the ideal of a public sphere as a space governed by liberties and social equalities, they adopted the utopian vision later highlighted in Habermas’ model (33) and ‘explicitly attempted to produce an egalitarian public sphere and to generate a form of civil society on paper that was activated through participation and debate and, crucially, through print’ (34). In several of the journals and periodicals discussed here, this ‘egalitarian’ character of the public was central for the self-understanding of the editors (see the discussion above of ‘programmatic texts’). The ‘colonial public sphere’ should therefore be seen as a space where a ‘plurality of encounters *between* colonizer and colonized’ was the norm (37). Despite imperial power widely governing social relations, an ‘inclusive understanding’ allows us to understand indigenous periodicals’ power of articulation as crucial (36). Their editors were engaged in ‘utopian efforts to bring into being the very public sphere that was denied to the inhabitants of colonial societies by antidemocratic imperial governments’ (42).

The ‘colonial public sphere’ as a complex space of multiple encounters is also being explored by Emma Hunter and Leslie James in a more recent article (2020). They highlight that the term ‘can imply more coherence and similarity across time and space than was historically the case’ and urge us to pay attention to ‘materiality, addressivity, performativity, and periodicity’ as four factors which shape the specific structure of particular (colonial) public spheres (Hunter and James: 3). As we have also stressed above, the impact of the material characteristics

of the various periodicals and the struggles editors faced in keeping them in print, are clearly apparent in the sources. Also, facilitating and mediating the 'creation and dissolution of publics' (6) by addressing themselves to various audiences at the same time was of special relevance to indigenous Christian journals as they navigated the complex power structures of colonial societies. 'Performativity' points us to how the journals discussed here served to consolidate (elite) identities, as well as to the various ways in which they were read, both individually and as a part of public performances (6-7). Lastly, 'periodicity' refers to how newspapers and journals as new print media were both bound to a particular temporal structure and, in communicating this temporal order to their readers, contributed to the emergence of communal self-awareness (7).

In summary, taking these debates about the concept of the 'public sphere' and particularly its relevance to colonial societies into account, the following model for describing the role of periodicals and newspapers published by indigenous Christian elites around 1900 can be formulated: the emergence of a mass media public sphere around 1900 (mostly on the basis of the press) takes place before a background of a much larger public space, which is characterised by a plurality of public arenas (as has been argued particularly in regard to the history of South Asia). In this space – around 1900 especially on the basis of periodicals and journals – different communal spheres are constituted. As our model suggests, these various spheres should be distinguished analytically (which does not preclude their overlapping in numerous historical situations).⁹ For India, for example, next to the sphere of the 'colonial class', a Hindu and an Islamic Sphere can be assumed (see below on the Hindu and Islamic press). Regarding the indigenous Christian journals discussed here, a Missionary Sphere and an Indigenous Christian Sphere should be added. Inasmuch as each of these communities had their own periodicals and newspapers in colonial languages (for example, English, French, Spanish, Dutch or Portuguese), they all participated in a colonial mass media public sphere.¹⁰ We propose to understand the colonial public sphere as the arena of debate produced and primarily maintained by print capitalism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, making use of the predominant colonial languages (English, but also French, Spanish or Portuguese).¹¹ It is flanked by and partly entangled and overlapping with other (public) spheres, particularly the communal spheres (Islamic Sphere, Hindu Sphere, Missionary Sphere, Indigenous Christian Sphere

and so on), including the vernacular publics constituted by vernacular (print) media. The degree of entanglement and overlap between the different arenas and spheres is a question that must be left to detailed regional studies. At the same time – and this goes beyond the model presented here, which until this point was mostly sketched in regard to one particular colonial society – our research also shows that a ‘global awareness’ existed not only on the side of the ‘colonial class’ (as Alan Lester (2002) demonstrates in regard to a ‘trans-global British settler identity’ on the basis of the English settler press). Rather, at the latest around 1900 in the different colonial societies this was also the case for other communities, not least the increasingly publicly visible indigenous Christian elites. As far as they are concerned, however, it is especially important to recognise (and this might be a difference to other religious communities) that the emergence of a transregional and transcontinental consciousness often takes place long before the era of the distribution of indigenous Christian periodicals between 1880 und 1915. This can be shown for several examples based on the exchange of news along missionary networks of communication already since the sixteenth century.¹²

In looking at these journals, therefore, we can recognise that the constitution and identity-formation of indigenous Christian elites was not only a local process. It has also to be understood in light of their self-understanding as part of a transregional and transcontinental community and against the background of a specific (global) audience. Ultimately, the emerging transregional indigenous Christian public sphere must be described in reference to the emergence of a global public sphere in the colonial age.¹³

PARADIGMS OF MUTUAL AWARENESS: EXAMPLES FROM
VARIOUS PERIODICALS

Already through missionary journals, but increasingly also through various indigenous Christian periodicals, ‘native’ Christians from different regions and missionary or colonial contexts learned of each other. On the one hand, this was the inevitable consequence of the missionary presentation of Christianity as a global movement, with detailed reports from the different ‘mission fields’ in Asia, Africa and Latin America. But above all it was a main topic and the specific perspective of many indigenous Christian journals. ‘It is well for us to look around and see what is being done in other parts of the world by the races recently brought into the flock of Christ’ – had been, for

example, the motto of the CP in India. It served as an introduction to a detailed report about the situation of African Christians in Uganda (11 March 1905: 5; Discourses, #96). The Ugandan church – despite its recent origins – was already presented to Indian readers as a model to be imitated (‘object lesson’) and as an example for the successful realisation of the concept of the ‘Three-Selves’.

An early and particularly impressive example for the gradual development of a transregional indigenous Christian public sphere is the global debates about Samuel Ajayi Crowther (ca. 1806–1891). Crowther – ‘the slave boy who became bishop’ – was the first native bishop from sub-Saharan Africa in modern times. In 1864 in Canterbury Cathedral, he was ordained Anglican spiritual head of British Equatorial West Africa. His remarkable career was widely regarded not only as a visible proof of the success of the Christianity–civilisation concept (as promoted by the CMS missionaries) and as a symbol of the hopes of the educated West African elite for social advancement; it also stimulated debates in other regions about indigenous leadership and the status of local Christians in their respective colonial societies. In South Africa, for example, the above-mentioned *Kaffir Express* in its first issue, of 1 October 1870, already referred to Crowther as ‘living proof of what can be done by the Gospel and education on a poor slave boy captured by one of our own cruisers on the West coast of Africa’. This took place vis-à-vis the growing racism of the white settlers who denied Africans’ capacity for civilisation and declared all educational activities of the missionaries to be useless. In the Indian press, voices were heard at the beginning of the 1870s referring to the successful work of the West African Crowther and therefore calling for a ‘native’ bishop also for the South Indian CMS district of Tinnevely. There are people – writes the *Madras Mail* in its issue of 24 March 1873 – ‘who believe that a native bishop is just now the want of the missionary cause. Bishop Crowther, they think, has done well in Africa, and a Bishop of a portion of Tinnevely would do equally well.’ Earlier, in 1871 in Madras, there was already a fierce public controversy about the suitability of Indian pastors for the episcopate after the model of Crowther. Concrete considerations in regard to a Singhalese and a Tamil bishop – also with reference to the consecration of Crowther, generally regarded ‘as a perfect success’ – are documented for colonial Sri Lanka at the end of the 1870s (detailed references to the quotes mentioned in this section in Koschorke 2011). In Canada, it was the Native American Pastor Henry Budd of the Cree nation – ordained in 1850 by the CMS as the ‘first

native missionary' of his people – who was soon compared to Crowther in the missionary press (and who in 1851 got in touch with colleagues in India via letter to congratulate them on their ordination as 'native missionaries') (see Bradford 2010). In British Guyana, Crowther was also recognised as one of two Black bishops in the global Anglican community (along with a counterpart in Haiti).

Later, after his gradual disempowerment in 1890/91 and after the nomination of a white (instead of a black) successor, Crowther's fate was interpreted in the West African press as an attack on the rights of the African 'race' in general and on 'all' educated Africans: 'It is the question of a cause in which *all* Africans are concerned. It is felt so all along the [sc., West African] coast' – writes the *Sierra Leone Weekly News* on 12 September 1891. And when finally in India, in 1912, V. S. Azariah was ordained as the first Asian bishop in the Anglican church, the *CP* saw him as following in the footsteps of his 'great African predecessor, Bishop [S. A.] Crowther' (7 September 1912: 5; Discourses, #94).

The example of Azariah in turn inspired African debates. His consecration as bishop for the newly established diocese of South Indian Dornakal in 1912 was also reported in the press on the Gold Coast, highlighting, *inter alia*, the wearing of local (instead of only European) clothing and the adherence to Indian traditions (such as entering the church barefooted). 'Should not the clergy in West Africa' – asks a journal on the Gold Coast in 1914 – 'follow his lead?' (*The Gold Coast Nation*, 2 April 1914; Discourses, #314). 'India sighs to have an Indian Church,' writes a Nigerian paper in 1916, also with reference to Azariah, 'with a form of worship that can realise Indian life and ideas ... Not a Church manufactured in England and foisted in India.' With their compatriot Azariah the Indians had also received their own bishop, while African leaders like James Johnson, Isaac Oluwole and Charles Phillips were fobbed off with auxiliary positions and treated by the missionaries as subordinates. This makes, the paper writes, the formation of a church 'movement on racial lines' particularly urgent (*The Sierra Leone Weekly News*, 22 July 1916: 10; Discourses, #315).

To a certain extent this example can be generalised. For a long time in the nineteenth century, Christian Africa served as a model in Christian Asia. Later – especially after the Crowther crisis and the first successes of the Asian ecumenical movement – the tide gradually turned and Christian Asia increasingly figured as a reference model in many African debates. But already earlier, there are repeated references in the African press to Indian models. The social reformer, women's rights activist and

Indian Christian Pandita Ramabai, for example, is celebrated in 1889 in an article in the *Sierra Leone Weekly News* as an ‘Indian reformer’ and ‘the morning star of reformed conditions for women’ (4 May 1889: 3; Discourses, #312). Under the heading ‘The New Spirit in Asia: The Astonishing Growth of Nationalism’, an article reprinted in the *Lagos Weekly Record* in 1907 informs African readers about the national church movement as well as other emancipatory aspirations among the Christians of the Indian subcontinent (2 November 1907; Discourses, #313).

Another example is Japan. It played an important role not only in the debates of Indian and Asian Christians, but also in the columns of West African newspapers. A critical Japanese Christian – Kanzo Uchimura, founder of the Mukyokai (‘non-church’) movement that still exists today – was quoted in 1895 in the *Lagos Standard* in an extensive article (reprinted from a missionary paper). In this text Uchimura dismissed ‘imposed’ American or English forms of Christianity, but also stressed the necessity to have Christianity ‘grow’, as a universal religion, in a ‘growing world’.¹⁴ The victory of the ‘oriental’ Japan over the ‘occidental’ Russia in 1904/5 was widely recognised not only in Asia, but also in the West African press, and the reasons for the superiority of the Japanese were analysed broadly, in order to distil lessons for the emancipation of the Africans. ‘This is what the Negro should emulate’ – namely, the preservation of one’s own traditions (with necessary adaptations) instead of blind Europeanisation (*The Lagos Weekly Record*, 25 February 1905; Discourses, #309). ‘Thanks to the Russo-Japanese War and the splendid results achieved by the Japanese – a coloured race – all coloured or non-European races of the world are becoming alive to their duties as men,’ writes another West African journal. A ‘spirit of progress’ has gripped the educated Africans (*The Gold Coast Leader*, 29 May 1909: 2; Discourses, #311). Additionally, the warring Japan, claims another paper, has also given ‘us Christians’ a moral lesson through its renunciation of revenge towards the defeated Russians (*The Lagos Standard*, 4 October 1905; Discourses, #310).

Another violent event – Italy’s defeat by Ethiopia in the Battle of Adwa in 1896 – also attracted considerable public attention in West Africa. The question of whether the victorious Ethiopians should be regarded as the ‘Prussians of Africa’ or the ‘Japanese of Africa’ was decided in favour of the latter variant in the *Lagos Weekly Record*.¹⁵ The ‘Christian’ Ethiopia (already mentioned in the Bible) – as a symbol of ecclesiastical (and political) independence – naturally had for a long time played

a central role in the so-called Ethiopian movement of Africans on both sides of the Atlantic. But increasingly, current news from the East African country also found its way into the West African press. This included a letter to European missionaries from the Ethiopian ruler Menelik II, the victor of Adwa, the origins and authenticity of which are admittedly controversial. In the letter he advises the missionaries not to concern themselves with the evangelisation of Africa, but to leave this to the Africans themselves. The Europeans still have enough to do in Europe. 'Teach it [sc., the Gospel] in Europe and Asia. I am having it taught in Africa' ('The Epistle of Menelik, King of Abyssinia', *The Lagos Standard*, 17 June 1896; Discourses, #305). The Ethiopians are already very familiar with the Bible without instruction by Western missionaries – 'and are still growing in the knowledge of it' ('Menelik, King of Abyssinia', *The Lagos Standard*, 17 June 1896; Discourses, #304).

Jamaica appears repeatedly as a reference model for South Africa in *Inkanyiso*. The reason given is the rapid progress of its population, which has been attributed to a particular missionary educational concept (relevant also for South Africa) – 'industrial training, coupled with Christianity' ('Native Thoughts', *Inkanyiso yase Natal*, 31 December 1891: 6; Discourses, #206). References to the Hampton Institution and the Tuskegee School in the USA (as institutions of African American education) largely shaped the debates of African Christians in the West and South of the continent since the 1890s.¹⁶ Remarkably, these experiments also found repeated attention in the columns of the *CP* in India. In an article on racism in the USA from 1897, for example, Tuskegee is described as a positive example of African American self-help, and 'the great Negro reformer' Booker Washington, the founder of Tuskegee – 'one of the most successful institutions in the United States' – is praised in an obituary as a 'champion of his race', who was concerned 'in every way for its advancement'.¹⁷

LEVELS OF CONTACT: FROM COGNITIVE INTERACTION TO
DIRECT CONTACTS AND TRANSREGIONAL NETWORKING

The international horizon of many journals led to different forms of transregional contacts, which can be modelled – in an ideal-typical way – based on the *Christian Patriot* (*CP*). Three degrees of contact can be distinguished. They are relevant both for an understanding of the formation of a transregional indigenous Christian public sphere – which can be easily observed in the *CP* – and as stages on the way to the formation of transregional (and transcontinental) networks.

(a) *Cognitive Interaction: Africa as Model*. On 18 June 1898, the *CP* reprints a longer article from a mission journal word-for-word which reports on the participation of three West African (assistant) bishops in the fourth Anglican Lambeth Conference in 1897. It also mentions the great interest with which they were welcomed there, including being received by Queen Victoria. This detailed reprint is followed by a single short sentence in which the *CP* offers its comment on this news: ‘When is India to have her own native Bishops?’¹⁸ In the background of this question are the decades-long arguments about the programme of a ‘self-governing indigenous church’ (see also Koschorke 2018b) and the search for an Indian bishop. This demand was repeatedly put forward by prominent Indian Christians and repeatedly rejected or delayed by parts of the missionary establishment (‘not yet’ – ‘the time is not yet ripe’). Especially in the last decade of the nineteenth century this debate had picked up speed again. ‘It was acknowledged by all that India is sadly behind-hand as regards the Episcopate,’ we can read in 1899 in another Indian Christian periodical: ‘no native of the soil ... has yet been consecrated bishop’ (*Indian Christian Guardian*, vol. 3, 1899).

But this reference to the exemplary conditions in West Africa does not yet lead to direct contacts with the region concerned – just as with other references to distant countries such as Uganda, for example, whose only-recently established church is, as mentioned above, repeatedly described in the *CP* as a model and ‘object lesson’ for Indian Christians. The Ugandan Christians, it is said, have already put the ideal of the ‘Three-Selves’ into practice in an exemplary way, which is still very difficult in India. Texts like these prove the mutual awareness (mediated through journals) that Christians from different regions as well as missionary and/or colonial contexts had of each other, which then becomes decisive for their own activities. A reference to the African example can now also strengthen the demands for a ‘native bishop’ in India. This mutual awareness thus represents something that we – following Dietmar Rothermund¹⁹ – understand as ‘cognitive interaction’. It forms an essential prerequisite for the emergence of early forms of Christian South–South solidarity and the development of a Christian ‘panindigenism’, as Bradford (2010) has described it in another context. Later, the circumstances were to be reversed and developments in the ‘young churches’ of Asia were now regarded as paradigmatic for African Christians. But in the beginning, West Africa set the standards, and when in 1912 with V. S. Azariah the first

Indian and Asian Christian was ordained as a bishop in the Anglican Church, the CP praised him as ‘as great a gift to India as his great African predecessor, Bishop Crowther’ (CP, 7 September 1912: 5; Discourses, #94).

(b) *Direct Contacts: A Visit of a Japanese Delegation to India.* Relations between India and Japan were of a completely different kind. Intensive connections with this country and its Christians had existed at the latest since the Russian-Japanese War of 1904/5, which gave impetus to nationalist movements and pan-Asian aspirations all throughout Asia. The events in the Far East attracted great attention in India not only in the political and Hindu press, but also in Christian journals of missionary and indigenous Christian provenance. In these publications, the phenomenal rise of Japan was widely understood as a consequence of the country’s appropriation of Western Christian modernity. In 1906 this led – ‘at the special request and invitation’ by the Indian YMCA – to the visit of a Japanese delegation to India.²⁰ Their seven-week tour took the Japanese guests through the entire subcontinent, from the North (Lahore, Calcutta) to the South (Madras) and West (Bombay). The theme of their highly acclaimed lectures was ‘What can [Christian] India learn from Japan?’ In all larger cities they were ‘officially and formally’ welcomed by the local Indian-Christian associations ‘on behalf of the [Indian-Christian] community’. In Madras, for example, ‘a general meeting of all Protestant Christians in the city’ was organised on the occasion of their arrival (CP, 28 April 1906: 5). ‘To us [Indian] Christians this visit has been of incalculable value,’ the CP concludes at the end of their visit (2 June 1906). This gave rise to great hopes for the future: ‘Their visit will unite the churches of India and Japan in the bonds of mutual understanding and sympathy’ (CP, 21 April 1906: 4; Discourses, #111).

Both sides – guests and hosts – emphasised not only their common Christian faith, but also the Asian heritage that unites them. In a letter of Indian Christians to ‘The Christian Brethren in Japan’, which they provided for their Japanese visitors, we can read that ‘[t]he people of Japan and the people of India are one in the Lord Jesus Christ.’ The latter were to be thanked for the fact that they tried to return Christ – himself an Oriental, but later taken over by the ‘West’ – to the ‘East’ (CP, 28 April 1906: 3). The Japanese, on the other hand, emphasised the special relations between India and Japan as two fraternal ‘Asian’ nations: ‘We have an especial regard for India’ (CP, 24 March 1906: 3; Discourses, #112). Contacts were also established at the local level. For example,

the community in Lahore (as well as in other North Indian cities) collected alms for needy Japanese Christians on the occasion of a famine in some parts of faraway Japan (*CP*, 26 March 1906: 3). At the same time, various ways to deepen and consolidate the established contacts were considered. Invitations and counter-invitations were issued, the visit of an Indian delegation to Japan was initiated, the posting of Indian Christian lecturers and students to the Far East and the establishment of joint Indian–Japanese lectures was discussed (*CP*, 28 April 1906: 3; Discourses, #113.).

(c) *Networking: The Tokyo Conference 1907*. The 1907 Tokyo conference of the World's Student Christian Federation (WSCF) marks a new stage of contacts.²¹ In contemporary reporting, the meeting was described as 'the first meeting of an international character ever held in our country' (WSCF 1908: 185; see Weber 1966: 69). In any case, it was the first ecumenical conference in Asia with a majority of Asian delegates. Of the 627 participants, more than 500 came from 'oriental' countries, including 443 from Japan, 74 from China, 15 from India and smaller delegations from other Asian nations (Burma, Formosa, Korea, Siam and the Philippines). In addition, speakers included representatives from the USA (prominent among them J. R. Mott), Europe, Russia (with the Russian Orthodox Archbishop in Japan) and Australia. The conference was hosted by the Japanese branch of the WSCF, one of those organisations originally founded in the West (in 1895) which, however, soon developed – like the YMCA – into a platform for Asian Christian elites. The invitation to Tokyo had been issued and accepted by the Japanese already at a previous WSCF conference in 1902 (Hopkins 1979: 314; WSCF 1908: 176). Planning and implementation were mainly in Japanese (and Chinese) hands.

'The conference will bring together, for the first time in the history of the Church, the leaders of the forces of Christianity from all parts of Asia', was the expectation expressed in the *CP* (9 March 1907: 5; Discourses, #114). Specifically, it intensified exchange and promoted pan-Asian sentiments among Asian Christian leaders from different regions. 'When in Japan ... I felt discouraged over India,' said Livilathi Singh, speaking on higher education for women. Nevertheless, she expected 'a bright future' for India (*CP*, 11 January 1908: 6; Discourses, #115). V. S. Azariah, another Indian delegate and later first Asian bishop in the Anglican church, 'came back [sc., from Tokyo] with a new vision of a great future for the Indian Church' (*CP*, 17 February 1912: 3).

RESULTING CONTACTS, EARLY TRANSREGIONAL AND
TRANSCONTINENTAL NETWORKING

The journals analysed in our research projects cover a large variety of international news. To what extent did this lead to (or intensify existing) direct contacts and networking between local Christian leaders from different regions and missionary or colonial contexts? The answer to this question naturally differs considerably according to the individual journals and the geographical areas they represent. In the following, the focus is firstly on the journals and contexts we have analysed in detail in our projects, and secondly on other, additional indigenous Christian periodicals.

India. For the *Christian Patriot*, as repeatedly mentioned, Christianity has been of central importance as a global movement and emancipatory force. Particular attention has been paid to news about the progress and developments among the 'races' and peoples of other 'parts of the world', which only recently have been 'brought into the flock of Christ' (*CP*, 11 March 1905: 1; Discourses, #96). This resulted in a variety of intensified contacts between Indian Christians across Asia. The communication structures of missionary networks played an important role, as they were increasingly also used by native Christians. But of special importance were the networks of Indian-Christian associations which were formed in India itself, as well as in the Indian-Christian diaspora in South Asia, South Africa and Great Britain. Their expansion took place in parallel to the growing spread of the *Christian Patriot* as their 'leading organ' in the regions mentioned (*CP*, 4 March 1916: 1; Discourses, #6.6.). Pan-Asian initiatives first became apparent in the context of contacts with Japan (the visit of the Japanese delegation in 1906, the Tokyo Conference in 1907) and later expanded. Direct contacts developed, above all, to the Christians and churches of Japan, on the one hand, and to the fellow Indian believers in South Africa, on the other (for details, see Koschorke *et al.* 2018: 165ff. and Koschorke 2019: 167-210).

Philippines. The early journalism of the *Iglesia Filipina Independiente*, which covers only a few years in 1903/04, already reveals manifold international contacts of the 'independent' church of the archipelago founded in 1902. These include those that resulted from cooperation (and joint distribution of the journal) with the workers' movement of the country; connections within the context of the Philippine diaspora (for example, to sympathisers in Japan); and various contacts that resulted from encounters with (and support from individual representatives of)

Protestant missionaries in the Philippines. Most important are the many attempts to establish contacts with (and through) representatives of a worldwide liberal and non-Roman Catholicism. For example, in the USA, in Switzerland (to the leadership of the Old Catholics) and – especially important – to Rome-independent churches in Asia itself (especially in Goa and Sri Lanka). Among other things, a deployment of Philippine IFI priests to Sri Lanka was discussed (for details see Koschorke *et al.* 2018: 191ff.).

West Africa. Already in the early days of the West African press, African Caribbeans (from the West Indies) played an important role and were also often featured in the press itself. At the same time, the circulation (intensified since the 1890s) and mutual citations of journals from today's Nigeria, Ghana and Sierra Leone reveal the genesis of a West African public sphere. This also demonstrates the growing networking of the so-called Ethiopian churches in the region. Many of the founders and authors of the Black press in West Africa were closely connected with mission-independent African churches and were among their sympathisers or supporters. At the same time, the columns of the West African press show a variety of relationships of exchange within the so-called 'Black Atlantic', and African American initiatives in the USA are presented as exemplary also for West Africa. The question of African American remigration to West Africa was controversially discussed. Special attention was also paid to various pan-African conferences. Some of these events, each with West African participation, are simply reported on (for example, an 'African Congress' in Chicago in 1893, the 'First Pan African Conference' in London in 1900, or the 'First Universal Races Congress' in 1911, also in London). In regard to other events, the importance of the mobilisation by the press itself becomes visible. This can be seen in the case of the 1905 project of a 'Proposed Conference of Prominent West African Natives', which – following the example of the 'American Negroes' – was to bring together representatives from the various British colonies on the west coast, but initially met with considerable scepticism (*The Lagos Standard*, 11 January 1905; Discourses, #259). 'We talk too much and do little' reads a self-critical comment in the *Lagos Standard* of 5 April 1905 (Discourses, #261; for details see Koschorke *et al.* 2018: 183ff.).

South Africa. The horizon of most of the debates represented in *Inkanyiso* is more regional and focused on Natal. However, the discussions are often relevant as a precursor to more far-reaching links at the South African level ('our people in South Africa'; *Inkanyiso yase Natal*,

31 December 1891: 6; Discourses, #206) and in a transatlantic perspective. Certain developments – such as the emergence of the Ethiopian movement – are not yet an issue in *Inkanyiso*. The subscription lists of the paper, however, demonstrate that numerous folk who later became founders of independent Black churches in various parts of the country were among its readers. The same applies to members of supraregional organisations such as the ‘Natal Native Congress’ (NNC), founded in 1900, or the ‘African National Congress’ (ANC), founded in 1912. Although these came into being later, there is evidence of personal and ideological links. We can also see this in the short-lived project of a transatlantic ‘African Christian Union’. In addition, *Inkanyiso* points to models in Jamaica and among African Americans in the USA (for details see Koschorke *et al.* 2018: 177ff.).

The African Orthodox Church. The African Orthodox Church (AOC) – founded in New York in 1921 and already present in South Africa in 1924 and a little later also in East Africa – was from the outset a transatlantic project (and still exists today). The Black press played a decisive role in this, beginning with the reporting in Marcus Garvey’s *The Negro World* and later through the AOC’s own journalism. Many factors – such as the increased social and religious mobility among migrant workers in southern Africa – were decisive for the rapid expansion of the church on the ground. Their communicative networking through the church’s own press and other Black media became relevant far beyond the region (see Koschorke *et al.* 2016: texts 434–50; a detailed analysis can be found in Koschorke *et al.* 2018: 219ff. and Burlacioiu 2015).

Contacts, as well as early transregional and transcontinental networking, can also be witnessed in additional journals from other regions. Studying them makes visible, for example, that the ‘Black Atlantic’ described by Paul Gilroy (1993) – defined as the ‘idea of a shared (imagined) community that stretched across the ocean from North America to Africa and Europe’ – was preceded by a ‘Christian version’ of such connections (Barnes 2018: 345, 346; see also in more detail Barnes 2017). It was established through the exchange of news and ideas between Black Christians on both sides of the Atlantic that the African and African American press made possible. ‘African newspapers published a continuous stream of articles about African Americans and their achievements, a good many taken from African American newspapers’ (Barnes 2018: 350). In North-east Asia, early journals published by Japanese Protestants between 1875 and the 1920s exemplified a ‘global

consciousness', reporting on transregional activities of Japanese Christians and independent missionary activities beyond their own country (Sonntag 2018). Korean-language YMCA magazines like *Kongdo* ('Equity', October 1914 to March 1915) and *Kidok ch'ōngnyōn* ('The Christian Young Man', November 1917 to January 1919) provide evidence for 'the formation of a trans-regional elite Christianity in East Asia' (Shapiro 2018: 320). Especially the second journal, published in Tokyo, 'helped link Korean Christian students to both the publics of imperial Japan and global Protestantism' (Sonntag 2018: 318).

These further examples only offer a glance into the variety of indigenous Christian journals from other regions. In the same way, one could examine analogous processes of communication and exchange in the Arabic world²² and other maritime regions, such as the Indian Ocean or the Pacific world (on the Pacific as a space of early inner-Christian interactions see, for example, Hiery 2014).

RELIGIOUS MODERNISMS AND OVERLAPPING RELIGIOUS PUBLICS

Our research sheds light not only on the largely unexplored world of indigenous Christian periodicals around 1900. It is also of far-reaching importance for other topics which have not been at the centre of the research projects presented here. This applies specifically to a future 'global history of religion' as an 'entangled history' (Hermann 2016; Maltese and Strube 2021). Journals played a decisive role in the constitution of various religious modernisms and the emergence of overlapping religious public spheres at the beginning of the twentieth century.

As outlined above in our model of a 'transregional indigenous Christian public sphere', we propose to understand the colonial public sphere as the place where indigenous Christian elites raise their voices, among other things, through their colonial-language journals, which have been the subject of this article. As indigenous *Christian* elites, they do so simultaneously as part of a 'communalist' indigenous Christian sphere alongside other spheres of this kind (such as the Hindu sphere, Islamic sphere, Buddhist sphere and so on). In addition to their participation in a colonial-language public sphere through their own journals and periodicals, over the course of the nineteenth century a vernacular language press was also already emerging (see, for example, McDonald 1968).

This non-Christian indigenous journalism – in India, for example, the Hindu press or in South Africa the press of the Indian minority – plays

just as important a role for religious modernisms of the nineteenth and early twentieth century in Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam and so on, as the indigenous Christian press does for the Christian context we have dealt with so far.

Beyond the colonial public sphere, the transregional indigenous Christian public sphere thus overlaps and partly competes with other networks of religious communication. On the one hand, it emancipates itself from already existing communicative contexts, especially the missionary press, against which it establishes itself as an independent voice. On the other hand, it does so in a world of religious modernisms and diverse cultural contexts, in which the colonial-language and increasingly also the local-language press is beginning to emerge as the basis of a mass-media public sphere. The euphoric mood carrying these developments is also reflected in the press itself. For example, *The Hindu Organ* in Jaffna, Sri Lanka, in 1899 reported on religious emancipation efforts throughout Asia as follows: 'Everywhere throughout the East there is a revival of [Asian] learning and literature ... In India, Burmah, Siam, Annam [Vietnam], Japan and even in China ... the need for religious and moral education is largely felt' (*The Hindu Organ* [Jaffna], 18 January 1899: 41; full quote in Koschorke *et al.* 2007: 85). In *The Birth of the Modern World*, Christopher A. Bayly (2004: 328) writes about this reformism: 'Across the Asian world, Hindu, Buddhist, and Confucian reformers of the nineteenth century emphasized the rational and philosophical elements in their religious inheritance, condemning superstition, mindless priestcraft, and magical beliefs.'

The missionary (and later increasingly also the indigenous Christian) press often figures as the opponent here, but at the same time it is also an inspiration and impetus for journalistic activities in other religious contexts and for the reform efforts connected with them. This can be observed particularly clearly in the context of Buddhist modernism in colonial Sri Lanka. But this observation also applies to other religious renewal movements in Asia at the turn of the century (see Koschorke 2017: 291–5). In addition, in many regions, the indigenous Christian press (in contrast to missionary journalism) was less developed compared with the religious competition. Often, articles published in the press themselves remarked on this considerable need to catch up. The press has become an enormous power, claims the *CP* in 1898, for instance, but, it complains, it is still made far too little use of by the Indian Christian community (*CP*, 2 July 1898: 4).

At the same time, however, important debates in indigenous Christian magazines took place precisely in response to and confrontation with the press of other religious communities. This can be observed, for example, in India. ‘What exactly was the attitude of the Native Christians as a community’ – and not only of some *individual* Christian activists – ‘towards the [Indian] National Congress’, was the topic of an editorial in the *CP* of 9 January 1896 (4–5; Discourses, #46). It led to a fundamental and detailed discussion of this issue. The *CP* did so in response to a corresponding request from *The Hindu*, the religious rival periodical of Madras and organ of the educated Hindu elite of South India. Here, it was not the Euro-American missionaries working in India who were asked for such an answer, but the ‘native Christians’ of the country; and their answer was given in the medium of the press through the *CP* as their mouthpiece.

Around 1900 in various regions of the world a transregional ‘print culture’ had developed. It also included the indigenous Christian press, but at the same time went far beyond it. For the Indian Ocean, Isabel Hofmeyr *et al.* (2011: 5) describe the emergence of a public sphere encompassing this space – on the basis of numerous ‘small-scale jobbing presses run on a shoe-string’ – in the course of which numerous ‘African–Indian interactions’ were established: ‘these presses operate[d] on transnational axes drawing together African, Indian, Muslim and Christian political worlds.’ Even if the focus of this particular collection of articles lies on later developments in the 1920s and 1930s, their description of overlapping transregional religious networks based on the press is of heuristic value for enquiring into earlier paradigms. As we have already seen above in regard to the inner-Asian maritime area in the second half of the nineteenth century, Frost (2004: 87) discusses the emergence of networks of ‘Asian literati’ which could address cross-regional audiences of ‘like-minded scholars, progressives or co-religionists’ across Asian port cities. According to him, these communities – ‘scattered across and yet united by the seas’ – were connected primarily through the medium of the periodical.

The ‘*Black Atlantic*’ can be cited as another example of the emergence of diverse, overlapping communication networks over the course of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The press played an important role in their development. At the same time, it offered African and African American elites a space for the formulation of their own identities. And the history of the transatlantic networks of the African

Orthodox Church and other African American churches can equally be seen in this context.

But the press also played an important role in numerous other non-Christian religious modernisms. Not only was it a decisive element in their emergence, but these movements often developed in interaction with Christian initiatives. For Hindu modernism this can be shown through different examples. It clearly is the case for some better-known cases such as the 'Tattvabodhini Sabhā' ('Truth-Propagating Society') and the 'Brāhmo Samāj' ('Brahmā Society'), whose Bengali journal *Tattvabodhini Patrikā* (1843–1931) was 'among the most widely read and influential of periodicals associated with ... the Bengal Renaissance' (Hatcher 2008: 4). Looking back to the beginnings of this modernist press, Brian K. Pennington, for example, not only highlights the importance of the Anglican CMS' *Missionary Papers* (1816–32) in popularising ideas about Indian 'paganism'. He also shows, using the example of the early Bengali newspaper *Samācār Candrikā* ('Moonlight of the News', Calcutta, 1822–53) – later the organ of the 'Dharma Sabha' ('Society for Religion') working against missionary conversion efforts – how even 'conservative' Hindu activists who did not share the reformatory zeal of the 'Brāhmo Samāj' resorted to the medium of the press and participated in a public sphere shaped by the Christian (Protestant) missions. *Samācār Candrikā* 'celebrated rational government but abhorred its interference with Hindu religious practices, promoted the publication of vernacular schoolbooks but insisted on caste segregation in the schools for which they were intended, and argued over the desirability of female education' (Pennington 2005: 139–66). At the same time, it was characterised by the desire to uphold traditional religious ideas and practices and to protect them from the rampant reform zeal – 'both western and indigenous'. And yet, it was precisely the spread of printing technology that challenged local elites to reformulate their religious traditions in ways that could be combined with their quest for modernity (Pennington 2005: 139–66).

In the 1880s, more and more Hindu-reformist societies such as the 'Hindu Sabha' (1880) or the 'Hindu Tract Society' (1887) were founded. They received an enormous boost through the influence of the theosophical movement, which had its centre in Madras since 1882 and was able to appeal in particular to the Anglophone elite of South India. *The Brahmavadin* (1895–1914), edited by followers of Swami Vivekananda – among others Alasinga Perumal, a co-founder of the 'Young Men's Hindu Association' – was also published there. It aimed

at spreading the teachings of the ‘Vedantic Religion of India’ (*The Brahmavadin*, 14 September 1895: 12a) and was closely connected with the ‘Ramakrishna Mission’ (although not as its official mouthpiece) (see Gosh 2006). In the Tamil context, such manifold interactions with Christian missions and their press can be seen in the journal *Siddhanta Deepika or the Light of Truth* (1897–1909), which acted as the mouthpiece of the ‘Saiva Siddhanta (Maha)Samajam’ founded in 1905 and wanted to introduce the Tamil public to Śivaism as their original and traditional religion, ‘actively adapting techniques displayed by Christian missionary societies’ (Klöber 2017: 192).

Similarly, the importance of the press and the complex interaction with Christian actors can be demonstrated for Buddhist modernism in various Asian countries. In Sri Lanka, such modernist reform efforts in the nineteenth and early twentieth century have for a long time been discussed as ‘Protestant Buddhism’. The term both highlights these movements as a protest against Christian missions, as well as a ‘Protestantization’ of Buddhism.²³ The press played a decisive role here as well. Between 1849 and 1861, Christian printing presses probably printed over 1.5 million treatises in Sinhala and English (with a population of about 3 million people in Ceylon at that time) (Gombrich 2006: 178). With the support of Western actors – above all the Theosophical Society – modernisers like Anagarika Dharmapala (1864–1933) in the second half of the nineteenth century worked against this dominance with publications like the *Journal of the Maha Bodhi Society and the United Buddhist World* (from 1892) – ‘announcing his hopes for drawing Buddhists into a pan-Asian community’ (Kemper 2015: 8) – and *Sinhala Bauddhaya* (1906–79). Recent studies show how Dharmapala developed his activism against the background of a global awareness of a ‘Buddhist World’ (Frost 2002; Kemper 2015; Harding 2016).

In Thailand, too, the beginnings of Buddhist modernism in the middle of the nineteenth century resulted from the press and the interactions with Christian missions. As contacts with Europeans and Americans intensified from the 1830s onwards, the Buddhist reformer and later King Mongkut (Rama IV) also maintained close contact with the local Catholic and Protestant missionaries. In the *Bangkok Recorder* (1844–46, 1865–67), published by Protestant missionary Dan Beach Bradley in Thai (and partly in English), Mongkut and other members of the Thai Buddhist elite, such as Chaophraya Thiphakorawong, held many debates with the Europeans. While Bradley represented the Western and Christian sides, the representatives of the Thai elite argued

from their traditional knowledge and thus stood up for Buddhism. Challenged by the critical assessments of Buddhist beliefs and their juxtaposition with Christian ideas as well as contemporary scientific findings published in the *Bangkok Recorder* by Bradley, Mongkut and Thiphakorawong wrote a large number of articles and commentaries, which were in turn published again in the *Bangkok Recorder*. Thiphakorawong's book *Kitchanukit*, published later in 1867, is representative of this early phase of Buddhist modernism in Thailand and can be read as a summary of these debates (Trakulhun 2014; Streicher 2021; see also Hermann 2015: 323–61).

Equally, in the context of Islamic modernism and the emergence of pan-Islamism, the press and the counterpart of Christian actors played a decisive role. Thinkers such as Sayyid Aḥmad Khān, Jamāl ad-Dīn al-Afghānī, Muḥammad °Abduh and Raschīd Ridā represent different reform movements within Islam in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century in India, the Middle East and Egypt, but all of these figures were also active in publishing (Peters 1996). In the press, they confronted Western colonialism and Christianity in their role as a counterpart to Islam. While Aḥmad Khān did not publish his own journal, al-Afghānī and °Abduh founded the journal *al-°Urwa al-wuthqā* ('The Firmest Band') in the 1880s during a stay in Europe. Due to their anti-colonial and pan-Islamic attitude, the journal was banned by the British in India and Egypt (Peters 1996: 115–16). Ridā published *al-Manār* ('The Lighthouse', 1898–1940) in Cairo, which quickly became the mouthpiece of the Islamic reform movement and was highly influential throughout the Islamic world (see Ryad 2009).

It can thus be shown that – beyond the indigenous Christian journals we have looked at in this article – the indigenous press was also of decisive importance for the general history of religion in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. A 'press history of religious modernisms' focusing on the journalistic activities of Asian, African and (Latin) American elites will therefore be an indispensable building block of any future 'global history of religion'.

Studying this extraordinarily diverse religious journalism also allows us to understand the formation of modern 'imagined communities' in a different light (see Anderson 2006). The constitution of a transregional and transcontinental consciousness of belonging to a potentially global religious community is – as the examples briefly presented here show – not only found among indigenous Christian elites, but it also forms the basis of various other religious modernisms of the time.

This somewhat contradicts the picture drawn by Anderson. For him, the period around 1900 is when national ‘imagined communities’ replace existing and much older understandings of transnational religious communities, even if religious ideas continue to have an impact as part of the ‘cultural roots’ of emerging nationalisms. He writes: ‘in Western Europe the eighteenth century marks not only the dawn of the age of nationalism but the dusk of religious modes of thought’ (Anderson 2006: 11). Even though Anderson explicitly denies that ‘somehow nationalism historically “supersedes” religion’ (12), he considers the ‘religious community’ only as a historical example. The decline of ‘sacred silent languages’ like Latin as ‘the media through which the great global communities of the past were imagined’ (12) – as a result of the European expansion, the worldwide spread of the printing market, and the increasing importance of colloquial languages (16–19) – for him also signifies a replacement of transregional religious communities by the imagined communities of the nation states. In this, he overlooks the fact that at the same time – as we have demonstrated – religious communities are also imagined anew. On the basis of a colonial-language press, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism emerge as new, global religious communities in the transregional, transcontinental and global public sphere.

The imagination of a worldwide Christian community was thus ‘modernised’ through the medium of the newspaper and periodical. No longer on the basis of a ‘sacred language’, but rather against the background of a global public sphere made possible by colonial languages, membership in a global (Christian) community was renegotiated. Global Christianity was no longer primarily the world of a shared sacred cosmos. It was now understood as a communicatively accessible community in which Christians live *in simultaneity* worldwide. In this way, the study of indigenous Christian magazines around 1900 ultimately points us to the diversity of the ‘Christian internationalisms’ of the time.

MEDIA, GLOBALISATION AND THE VARIETY OF
CHRISTIAN INTERNATIONALISMS AROUND 1910

‘The world’ has become ‘much smaller’ than it was fifty years ago, said the Japanese delegate K. Ibuku at the Tokyo Conference of the World’s Student Christian Federation in 1907. He referred to the drastically improved travel and communication technologies in the past decades. Steamboats, railways and the telegraph had cut down distances. East and

West could now meet ‘as easily as never before’ – and, at the same time, were invited to be both ‘students and teachers’ to each other. The conference itself was widely covered in the international missionary (and metropolitan) press, in Japanese media, and in regional journals published by Asian Christians. As already mentioned, Tokyo was the first ecumenical conference in Asia with a majority of Asian delegates. The central theme of the meeting was the evangelisation of Asia ‘by her own sons (and daughters)’ – India by Indians, China by Chinese, Japan by Japanese. The latter emphasised their commitment to missionary engagement also in other parts of Asia. What could be observed here was an emerging vision of a post-missionary and post-colonial future of Asian Christianities.

The Tokyo meeting in 1907 also was an important step on the way to the World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh 1910. While the Tokyo Conference served as a platform for connecting Asian Christian leaders, Edinburgh led to closer cooperation between Protestant missions and churches on a global level – including those (such as High Church Anglicanism) which had previously stood aside from united missionary and ecumenical action. Thus, Edinburgh has repeatedly been labelled as ‘birthplace’ and ‘starting point of the modern ecumenical movement of the 20th century’. At the same time, it marked a decisive step in the process of intra-Christian globalisation. Far too little attention has been paid, however, to the extent to which Edinburgh reacted to developments and debates among local Christians in the Global South. It had been the ‘awakening of great nations’ (Koschorke 2014: 275) in Asia (and Africa) which in the eyes of the conference made intensified cooperation among Western churches indispensable. Systematically-collected news from the so-called ‘mission fields’ – both from Western missionaries and local leaders on the spot – had considerable impact on the discussions in the Scottish capital. News carried by journals also played an important role. One of the subscribers of the Indian *Christian Patriot*, repeatedly mentioned in this article, happened to be J. R. Mott, the organiser of the Edinburgh conference.

But what Edinburgh – and the various global and continental communication structures resulting from this conference – inaugurated was not the only transcontinental and transregional network connecting local Protestant Christians from different regions and ‘mission fields’ in the southern hemisphere. Around 1910, there existed a multitude of such links – some of them loosely related to missionary enterprises, some quite independent, some displaying an explicitly anti-missionary

attitude; and research projects like ours are important to focus attention on this broad spectrum of Christian internationalisms at the beginning of the twentieth century. We use this term to draw attention to the fact that international links and transcontinental connections were established not only by the 'big players' in the field – such as globally operating missionary organisations, denominational Churches or established ecumenical bodies. Transregional or even transcontinental links were established also by Christian migrants, by various lay organisations or by independent missionary initiatives. In 1910, for example, Korean evangelists already had become active among their compatriots in the Korean diasporas in Siberia, Manchuria, Japan, Hawaii, California, Mexico and Cuba. This happened in the same catastrophic year in which Korea lost its political independence to Japan. Simultaneously, the Indian-Christian diaspora in South Asia had established a network of 'Indian Christian Associations' reaching from Ceylon (Sri Lanka) and Burma (Myanmar) to Singapore and from Malacca to South Africa. Japanese missionaries were sent to Korea and Manchuria, African American evangelists – and journals – crossed the Atlantic. Already in 1896, the South African 'Ethiopian Church' had joined the US-based 'African Methodist Episcopal Church' (AME), thereby forming a transatlantic Black church organisation. And in 1921, in New York the 'African Orthodox Church' (AOC) was founded, which three years later already had a first branch in South Africa, and another three years later also in East Africa (Uganda, Kenya). Such transcontinental spread of the AOC was, however, not the outcome of strategic activities of its New York headquarters. Rather, it was a result of the Black press and its periodicals, which were circulating on both sides of the Atlantic. 'Within three years the East and the West' – the *Negro Churchman* (the official organ of the AOC that still exists today in various countries) writes in December 1924 – 'have met each other in the African Orthodox Church. *Without any direct missionary agency, the glad tidings have bridged the Atlantic through the press*' (December 1924: 2; Discourses, #434.). It was only *after* this 'meeting through the press' that direct contacts between the new members of the AOC in South Africa and the African American leadership in the States were established, firstly by exchange of letters and subsequently also through personal visits and official connections. In this sense, the AOC is just another example for the necessity of a polycentric approach to the history of World Christianity in which journals and periodicals (like the ones we have discussed in this article) played a decisive role in establishing international links

and transcontinental connections in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

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NOTES

1 This article uses the term 'indigenous' as established in studies in the history of World Christianity to broadly refer to local Christians in colonialised societies, for example in regard to India in Kaj Baagø's seminal *Pioneers of Indigenous Christianity* (1969). See also Hedlund 2004. This differs from understandings of 'indigenous' as used by researchers and activists connected to indigenous peoples' movements especially since the 1970s (see Smith 2021: 6–7), where the term mostly refers to those non-elite and subaltern groups historically, and still today, dispossessed by colonialism and its legacies. At the same time, from this more recent perspective, the critical question must be asked if the groups and people whose histories we address and who were themselves (re)produced as local elites, not least through the very colonial language periodicals we are studying, are best described by the term 'indigenous'. This issue points to important open questions regarding how to conceptualise a history of World Christianity that adopts a post-colonial perspective oriented towards 'unlearning imperialism' (Azoulay 2019; see also Hermann 2021: 205), which we hope to address in further publications.

2 The two projects were funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG). Under the title 'Indigenous Christian Elites in Asia and Africa around 1900 and Their Journals and Periodicals: Patterns of Cognitive Interaction and Early Forms of Transregional Networking', PIs: Klaus Koschorke / Frieder Ludwig, the first one explored indigenous Christian journals from India, South Africa and West Africa, with a side glance to other regions. It was flanked by a smaller grant on the Philippines funded by the Fritz Thyssen Foundation (2012–13). The second project was called 'Independent Catholic Movements in Late 19th and Early 20th Century Asia: The "Independent Catholics of India, Goa, and Ceylon" and the "Iglesia Filipina Independiente" in the Context of Religious, Political, and Social Movements of Emancipation in Colonial Modernity', PI: Adrian Hermann. – An extended German version of the article at hand has been published as Koschorke and Hermann 2018, along with other project results. The main purpose of the essay at hand is to communicate the major findings of the two research projects to the anglophone academia. A documentary sourcebook with texts from the indigenous Christian periodicals analysed in both projects is available as Koschorke *et al.* 2016.

3 An excerpt of the article quoted here is available in Koschorke *et al.* 2016. It can be found as text no. 229. Further references to this collection will be given as Discourses, #<no.>.

4 Cf. Potter 2017: 282, who writes: 'By 1912, a combined total of 140,000 newspapers a week were reaching Britain from Indian, Canada, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand.'

5 See Ayandele 1966: 175, who writes: 'The church became the cradle of Nigerian nationalism, the only forum of nationalist expression until the beginnings of the Nigerian-owned press after 1879, and the main focus of nationalist energies until after 1914'. Quite generally, this is an important aspect of the whole enterprise: research traditions in one specific area (here, the Black press in West Africa) often are virtually unknown or not taken into account by scholars specialising in other regions.

6 A selection of programmatic texts from the periodicals explored in our two projects can be found in Koschorke *et al.* 2016 in the section 'A.1 Programmatic Texts' (texts 1–4, 120–7, 221–9, 315–24). In this article we also touch on other journals. The section 'A.2 Realities of Publishing' is equally instructive to understand the usually difficult context in which these periodicals were published.

7 In similarly enthusiastic words Black Christians in South Africa welcomed the journal of the African American 'African Methodist Episcopal Church' in 1895 'enthusiastically, thirsty and hungry'. They wrote: 'This has been a mystery to us, now revealed by the *Voice of Mission*' (see Burlacioiu 2018: 207).

8 In this sense, the publics produced by the journals discussed here should not be described as 'counter-publics'. Rather, following Newell, it can be argued that, for example, the 'Native Thoughts' section of *Inkanyiso* (see above) is to be understood precisely as part of a colonial public sphere and not as its counterpart. A related question, which cannot be pursued further here, is to what extent a 'counter-public' in Warner's sense might have been created through articles written in Zulu (and equally in other journals by articles written in the respective local languages, as in the IFI's periodicals).

9 See Freitag 1989; 1991b. See also Reetz 2006 in addition to the special issues edited by Freitag in 1991 and by Scott and Ingram in 2015. Reetz provides a useful model of public space in India, which we have partly adopted and combined with Freitag's

suggestions. *Public arenas* next to (and often long before) the mass media print public are public performances (for example, religious processions), locally bound publics (temple, mosque, church and marketplace), the coming together in voluntary associations, or legal and court publics. These public arenas therefore also include communal spheres not based primarily on printed mass media, like an 'Indigenous African Sphere' – that is, the public arena constituted in the context of traditional African religious practices – as well as the spheres of ethno-religious minorities in India or the Philippines.

10 With the establishment of regular periodicals, journals and newspapers, the public sphere established on the basis of earlier practices of pamphlet and book printing underwent a qualitative change. Later, other media such as cinema, radio and television, and in the twenty-first century the internet, led to additional transformations of its structure. On cinema in colonial India, see Dass 2016; on digitalisation and the internet, Seeliger and Sevignani 2021.

11 This proposal of limiting the scope of the term 'colonial public sphere' to publications in the languages of the colonisers is at odds with some other, more broad understandings, as discussed, for example, in Hunter and James 2020. We suggest this alternative model of various overlapping spheres in order to make visible asymmetric power relations in colonial societies, which some of the periodicals discussed in this article were explicitly taking into account. *Inkanyiso*, for example, apart from directing itself to 'our [African] countrymen' as the principal audience also addressed the white settlers ('our English friends') and – clearly distinguished from them – the missionary community (as expected supporters of the Africans).

12 The formation of a 'transregional indigenous Christian public sphere', as we have described it here – established and accelerated since the 1890s by the emergence of an indigenous Christian press – is thus best understood as a *qualitatively new stage* in a process of global consciousness-raising among indigenous Christians that had already been underway for some time. For earlier stages see Koschorke 2018a: 281–2.

13 On 'global publics' see Valeska and Osterhammel 2020, who draw attention to the necessity of a historical study of 'the degrees and shades of globality articulated under particular circumstances' (Valeska and Osterhammel 2020: 5), as well as the 'when and where' of imagining 'the entire population of the planet ... as a discursive community' (9). They distinguish two major forms of global publics, 'associations' and 'audiences', that is, globally operating activist networks and more ephemeral collectives tied to specific world events (17–18).

14 *The Lagos Standard*, 15 April 1896; Discourses, #307: 'We also like to have no Americanness and Anglicaninity imposed on us as Christianity.' On the other hand, 'The world is growing, and we with the world. Christianity is getting to be a necessity with all of us.'

15 *The Lagos Weekly Record*, 23 May 1896; Discourses, #303: "'Japanese of Africa' were, I think, a fitter epithet than 'Prussians'". Like the Asian nation, they have awakened to a sudden occidental civilisation, and for the future must be counted upon.' On this document see also Ludwig 2014.

16 See Barnes 2018 and various references in Koschorke *et al.* 2018: 123–7, 233–4, 251, 267, 338ff., 341ff.

17 *CP*, 11 August 1898: 3; Discourses, #119. *CP*, 27 July 1901: 4–5. *CP*, 11 December 1915: 2. On later debates about the Hampton Institute and Tuskegee Institute in the Indian public sphere and their importance for Gandhi, see Horne 2008: 114ff.

18 CP, 18 June 1898: 5; Discourses, #92. The text was reprinted from the *Church Missionary Intelligencer* 49 (1898): 425.

19 See the DFG priority programme ‘Transformationen der europäischen Expansion vom 15. bis zum 20. Jahrhundert: Forschungen zur kognitiven Interaktion europäischer mit außereuropäischen Gesellschaften’. Its programmatic foundations were partly published in Rothermund 1999.

20 CP, 21 April 1906: 4; Discourses, #111. On the visit of the Japanese delegation (Motoda, Harada) see also Koschorke *et al.* 2016: texts 111–15, and Koschorke 2015.

21 See the *Report of the Conference of the World’s Student Christian Federation held at Tokyo, Japan April 3–7, 1907* (New York n.d. [1908]) [WSCF 1908]; Extensive archival materials can be found at Yale Divinity School / Dale Library / Record Group 46. See also Weber 1966: 69–77; Harper 2000: 41–6; Hopkins 1979: 314–20. A monographic analysis of this conference is an urgent desideratum.

22 See Zachs 2005: 157, who points to the great importance of Christian intellectuals in the development of the Syrian press in the nineteenth century (‘the Beirut press [was] developed from within local society by the Christian-Arab intellectual elite’); remarkable also the following note: ‘The press was also perceived as bringing pride to local Syrian society’ (2005: 160). On the journal *Al-Jinan*, edited since the 1870s by the Syrian Protestant Christian Butrus al-Bustani and his son Salim, see Zeuge-Buberl 2016: 197–9, and most recently Womack 2019.

23 See Gombrich and Obeyesekere 1988: 202–40; Prothero 1993. Against the idea of a ‘Protestantisation’ of Sri Lankan Buddhism, however, Ann Blackburn (2010) argues that there often was more continuity with prevailing practices rather than discontinuity, both in the perception of social affiliations and in forms of intellectual style and the organisation of Buddhist monastic life. Thus, we should emphasise the agency of indigenous actors, who did not orient themselves towards Western European models generally, but rather in situation-specific and variable ways.

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