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ARTICLE

Financing mission societies, capitalizing Protestantism: A transimperial history

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Abstract
This article examines the transimperial fundraising practices of two major continental European Protestant missionary societies—the Paris Evangelical Missionary Society (PEMS) and the Basel Mission (BM)—between the end of the Napoleonic Wars and the 1870s. It proposes a meso-level approach to global history that focuses neither on individual actors nor on abstract categories such as capitalism or religion, but instead on organizations. By analysing the PEMS and the BM, the article shows how missionary societies connected specific subregions of British India and Southern Africa with Protestant regions across the northern transatlantic world. Drawing on rarely studied financial reports, it demonstrates how these societies mobilized hundreds of thousands of donors through global financial networks spanning Europe, North America, and the colonies. In doing so, the article reframes Protestant missionary societies not merely as cultural actors but as economic institutions that helped normalize capitalist practices in both Europe and colonial settings. It thus contributes to transimperial and global history by suggesting a way to study Protestant continental Europe, the United States, and the British empire as mutually constitutive partners.

Keywords: Protestant missionary societies; fundraising; donations; British imperialism; religion; capitalism; India; Lesotho; France

Introduction

The co-evolution of Christian proselytization and modern European empires is a well-established field of scholarship.[1] This dynamic field of research has examined missionary societies as enabling a continuous circulation of knowledge, material culture, and people between imperial metropoles and colonial peripheries, highlighting the crucial role of so-called indigenous actors on themes of modernity, 'civilization', and education.[2] An implicit consensus in this literature nevertheless sees

[1]Stephen S. Francis, 'Missions and Conversions in World History: An Introduction', *Journal of World History* 1000, no. 3 (2022): 3000; Norman Etherington, ed., *Missions and Empire* (Oxford University Press, 2008); Andrew Porter, 'Missions and Empire, *c.*1873–1914', in *World Christianities, c.1815–c.1914*, ed. Sheridan Gilley and Brian Stanley, *The Cambridge History of Christianity*, vol. 8 (Cambridge University Press, 2006), 560–75; Jean Comaroff and John L. Comaroff, *The Dialectics of Modernity on a South African Frontier*, Of Revelations and Revolution 2 (University of Chicago Press, 1997).

[2]Elisabeth Elbourne, *Blood Ground: Colonialism, Missions, and the Contest for Christianity in the Cape Colony and Britain, 1799–1853* (McGill, 2002); Judith Becker, *Conversio im Wandel: Basler Missionare zwischen Europa und Südindien und die Ausbildung einer Kontaktreligiosität, 1834–1860* (Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2015); Etherington, *Missions and Empire*; Claude Prudhomme, *Missions chrétiennes et colonisation. XVIe–XXe siècle*, Histoire du christianisme (Cerf, 2004); Richard Hölzl, *Gläubige Imperialisten* (Campus Verlag, 2021); Linda Maria Ratschiller Nasim, *Medical Missionaries and Colonial Knowledge in West Africa and Europe, 1885–1914: Purity, Health and Cleanliness* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2023); Abigail Green and Vincent Viaene, eds., *Religious Internationals in the Modern World: Globalization and Faith Communities since 1750* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

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missionary societies primarily as religious and cultural organizations. According to this view, they were among the main enforcers of cultural change among colonized societies. Their activities are studied mostly within this framework, with little attention being paid to how they were able to carry them out on such a large scale.

This article proposes a fresh look at the relationship between mission and empire, focusing on the period between *c.*1815 and the 1870s, when British imperial power provided the principal framework within which Protestant missionary societies in continental Europe and the United States operated. It offers a three-pronged argument. First, missionary societies ought to be studied not only from cultural and religious but also from a financial perspective: they were among the largest and the most consequential fundraising organizations of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Second, missionary societies ought not to be examined as national, but rather as transimperial organizations. Their ambitions, strategies, and networks were global, and their historical impact transgressed the borders of nation-states and empires. Third, while most scholars focus on missionary societies' impact in the colonies, we suggest that these organizations had a significant, yet understudied, impact in Europe: besides shaping racist world-views on colonies through their publications, they also naturalized capitalist culture by inculcating habits of donations.

We examine two of the oldest continental European Protestant missionary societies: the Basel Missionary Society (BM) established in 1815, and the Paris Evangelical Missionary Society (PEMS) set up in 1822. Both founded missionary stations in different regions of the British empire, namely in India and West Africa, on the one hand, and Southern Africa, on the other hand, respectively, from the 1830s onwards. To finance their missionaries, stations, schools, orphanages, and a growing number of converts in these regions, both missionary societies needed to fundraise substantial amounts of money from individuals both through small and large donations, besides earnings from their print publications. Every single year, donations involved mostly Europeans and eventually also converts in colonies. They built a donor base of more than 100,000 people in predominantly, but not exclusively, German- and French-speaking regions. This was possible through their publications and journals which not only provided donors with a continuous flow of information through colonial images, but also inspired a sense of contributing to the grand project of evangelizing and civilizing the so-called 'heathen' world. These publications informed countless continental Europeans about the proselytizing struggles and successes of 'their' missionaries in British colonies, which encouraged lay people to do their part by donating to the wider cause of spreading Christianity in the empire. In other words, financially and culturally, both missionary societies connected large parts of continental Europe with British colonies in South Asia and Southern Africa. This transimperial configuration was most pronounced between the 1820s and the 1870s, when continental European evangelical actors operated largely within British imperial frameworks.

We ask two main questions. First, through which economic and religious networks did these two continental European missionary societies manage to become involved in British colonies? Second, how did they then mobilize Europeans to engage financially, emotionally, and spiritually with British colonies in South Asia and Southern Africa during the nineteenth century? For this, we examine sources seldom studied so far: the BM's and the PEMS's yearly financial reports.

In exploring these questions, this article intervenes in two historiographies. First, by examining the relation between fundraising and Protestant Christianity, this article contributes to histories of faith and capitalism.[3] Only recently have historians considered the large financial

[3]Julie-Marie Strange and Sarah Roddy, 'Banking for Jesus: Financial Services, Charity, and an Ethical Economy in Late Victorian and Edwardian Britain', *Capitalism: A Journal of History and Economics* 3, no. 1 (2022): 106–35; Jonathan Levy, 'Appreciating Assets: New Directions in the History of Political Economy', *American Historical Review* 122, no. 5 (2017): 1490–9; Eric Hilt, 'Economic History, Historical Analysis, and the "New History of Capitalism"', *Journal of Economic History* 77, no. 2 (2017): 1–26; Sarah Roddy, Julie-Marie Strange, and Bertrand Taithe, *The Charity Market and Humanitarianism in Britain, 1870–1912* (Bloomsbury, 2019).

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and economic operations that were required for mission societies to perform their religious and cultural roles.[4] This article contributes to literature that analyses the intersection of economics and religion as a prism into 'religious-economic practice'.[5] Fundraising required donations which impacted household budgets of European commoners, linking philanthropy and religion with economy by shaping consumption and participation in markets. Their operations also integrated converts in colonial capitalist markets.[6] However, missionary finance remained outside the purview of colonial regulation due to the former's association with charitable purposes. Therefore, mission societies benefited from the institutions, administration, and the economy set in place by colonialism, but were not accountable to governments for their fundraising and spending practices.

Second, through a comparative analysis of the PEMS and the BM as well as by studying their connections, this article contributes to transimperial history.[7] This nascent field of research has evolved alongside and in critical dialogue with global history in recent years. It emphasizes the crucial role of empires, power, and inequalities that ought to be taken into account in every study of global connections (and disconnections). Moreover, it focuses squarely on how unequal connections unfolded not only within national empires, but also across them, through networks and individuals who specialized on transgressing political, linguistic, and other borders and thereby creating the interconnected, but still unequal, world we inhabit today.[8] Our main contribution to this debate, however, is methodological. The advantage of focusing on meso-level organizations such as missionary societies instead of global individual actors or abstract global categories such as capitalism or religion, is twofold. First, it allows global and transimperial historians to not only describe, but also explain the evolution and institutionalizing of global connections. Second, it allows for a more precise reconstruction of the spatial extent of transimperial connections that cannot be described using categories such as nations or empires. As will be shown, missionary societies connected Protestant regions within multi-religious North Atlantic nations with relatively clearly defined subregions such as the Malabar Coast (BM) or the Kingdom of Lesotho (PEMS) in European colonies. While transimperial history has focused often

[4]Important exceptions are Sarah Flew, *Philanthropy and the Funding of the Church of England, 1856–1914* (Routledge, 2015); Katharina Stornig, *Spenden, retten, helfen. Das 'ferne Kind' und die Entstehung einer transnationalen Kultur des Helfens, 1830er–1930er Jahre* (Wallstein Verlag, 2024); Frederike Schotters, 'Mission und Geld: Wie das Œuvre de la Propagation de la Foi seine Mittel verteilte', *Werkstatt Geschichte* 31, no. 88 (2023): 29–42; Martin Lutz, 'Religion und Wirtschaft', in *Handbuch Religionssoziologie*, ed. Detlef Pollack et al. (Springer Fachmedien Wiesbaden, 2018), 715–40; Amal Shahid, 'The Basel Mission Weaving Establishment in Malabar: Work Discipline and Resistance *c.*1840–1910', Special Issue: Governing the Lives of Others, *Annals of the Fondazione Luigi Einaudi*, 57, no. 2, (2023): 51–72.

[5]Jane Caple and Sarah Roddy, 'Histories of Religious Fundraising: Religion, Economy, and Value in Global Perspective: Introduction', *Journal of Cultural Economy* 16, no. 5 (2023): 655–64, 656. See also Sarah Roddy, 'Spaces of Space-Making: Diaspora Fundraising by the Nineteenth-Century Irish Catholic Church', *Journal of Victorian Culture* 28, no. 4 (2023): 590–6.

[6]Jean Comaroff and John L. Comaroff, *Of Revelations and Revolution: The Dialectics of Modernity on a South African Frontier*, vol. 2 (University of Chicago Press, 1997), 119–165.

[7]Claire Louise Blaser, Monique Ligtenberg, and Josephine Selander, 'Transimperial Webs of Knowledge at the Margins of Imperial Europe', *Comparativ* 1 (2022): 32; Daniel Hedinger and Nadin Heé, 'Transimperial History: Connectivity, Cooperation and Competition', *Journal of Modern European History* 16, no. 4 (2018): 429–52; Damiano Matasci and Miguel Bandeira Jerónimo, 'Une histoire transimpériale de l'Afrique. Concepts, approches et perspectives', *Revue d'histoire contemporaine de l'Afrique*, 3 (2022): 1–17; John L. Hennessey and Janne Lahti, 'Nordics in Motion: Transimperial Mobilities and Global Experiences of Nordic Colonialism', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 51, no. 3 (2023): 409–20; Christoph Kamissek and Jonas Kreienbaum, 'An Imperial Cloud? Conceptualising Interimperial Connections and Transimperial Knowledge', *Journal of Modern European History/Zeitschrift für moderne europäische Geschichte/Revue d'histoire européenne contemporaine* 14, no. 2 (2016): 164–82; Cyrus Schayegh with David Motzafi-Haller, *Knowledge in Modern Transimperial History: Actors, Formations, Causes* (Leiden University Press, 2026).

[8]Cyrus Schayegh, *Modern Transimperial History: An Introduction* (Oxford University Press, 2026); Bernhard C. Schär, 'Switzerland, Borneo and the Dutch Indies: Towards a New Imperial History of Europe, *c.*1770–1850', *Past & Present* 257, no. 1 (2022): 134–67.

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so far on the circulation of knowledge and on the mobility of historical actors, few have studied transimperial missionary history thus far.[9]

We develop our argument in three sections. The next section justifies the choice of comparison for this article—the PEMS and the BM, with their close connections and, hence, similar beginnings. The choice of these two societies is not only to provide juxtaposition but also to stress the interconnections between mission societies, especially between the PEMS and the BM who, in respect of their political economy, shared common financing elites in their respective mission committees as well as having common strategies and approaches. By examining their links with late eighteenth-century northern Atlantic Protestant evangelical and economic networks, it explains how the BM and the PEMS established and integrated themselves into this nexus both spiritually and economically during a crucial period of British imperial expansion and liberal reform in the early 1800s. This lays the groundwork for an empirical and comparative analysis of these two organizations' fundraising strategies in the third section. It explores how different schemes and modes of donation built upon the efforts of locals in Europe and in the colonies. The fourth section discusses the use of missionary publications and their colonial imageries in mobilizing donations in Europe. The concluding section reflects on the significance of religious financing for global and transimperial histories of capitalism and religion.

The emerging North Atlantic evangelical network, *c.*1790–1830

A recurrent theme in historiographies of international economy and elite finance, on the one hand, and of Protestant Christianity, on the other hand, is that of a 'Huguenot' or 'Protestant International'. It refers to early modern religious networks which overlapped with economic ones, but rarely are they examined as two sides of the same coin. What is relevant for our purposes is to recall the expulsion of Protestants—the Huguenots—from France in the sixteenth century, which led to mass emigration into Protestant strongholds in Europe as well as the colonies of Protestant powers, most notably in the British and Dutch Americas and the Caribbean and into the Dutch Cape Colony in South Africa.[10] By maintaining their religious and family ties to fellow Protestants in important trading centres such as London, Amsterdam, Hamburg, Boston, or Cape Town in a larger transatlantic world, many of these refugees and local Protestants specialized in colonial finance and trade.[11]

Closely related to the economic factions were the religious factions of this 'Protestant international'.[12] They emerged in early eighteenth century with multiple intellectual centres in the differing linguistic regions of the Americas and Europe. But they were united in a shared refutation of the 'ungodliness' of the enlightenment and the revolutions, as well as scepticism toward state-funded churches. Instead, they pushed for a reawakening—a *réveil* in French and *Erweckung* in German—of a more sincere form of evangelical Protestantism that ought to be practiced in everyday life and to 'make disciples of all nations', as declared in the book of Matthew

[9]Fabio Rossinelli and Filiberto Ciaglia, 'Memories in Tension: The Collateral Activities of Missionaries in Southern Africa between Exploration and Exploitation in the 19th Century', *Schweizerische Zeitschrift für Religions- und Kulturgeschichte* 118 (2024): 55–67; Bernhard C. Schär, '"Thy Kingdom Come!" The Paris Evangelical Missionary Society and Transimperial Protestantism in the Early to Mid 1800s', *Monde(s)* 28, no. 2 (2025): 133–52.

[10]Mickaël Augeron, Didier Poton, and Bertrand Van Ruymbeke, eds., *Les Huguenots et l'Atlantique* (Les Indes savantes, Presses de l'Université Paris-Sorbonne, 2009).

[11]The standard work for this is still Herbert Lüthy, *La Banque protestante en France. De la révocation de l'Edit de Nantes à la Révolution*, Ecole Pratique des Hautes Études Sciences Économiques et Sociales Centre de Recherches Historiques (S.E.V.P.E.N, 1959); for an excellent critical summary of Lüthy's extremely dense and detailed study, see Damian Clavel, 'Crucial Episodes in the History of Faith and Finance', *Capitalism: A Journal of History and Economics* 2, no. 1 (2021): 234–48.

[12]Christopher Clark and Michael Ledger-Lomas, 'The Protestant International', in *Religious Internationals in the Modern World. Globalization and Faith Communities since 1750*, ed. Abigail Green and Vincent Viaene (Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 23–52.

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(28:19–20), not only among white paupers and 'vagrant' working classes, but also among millions of 'heathens' living in 'darkness' worldwide. The evolution of communication technologies allowed these groups to synchronize their thinking towards the end of the eighteenth century. They organized initially in so-called bible societies that specialized in translating and publishing bibles. Out of these bible societies, missionary societies emerged.[13]

The earliest Protestant missionary societies were founded in the early 1700s such as the Moravian Mission and the Royal Danish Mission College. But the last decade of the eighteenth century was crucial for the setting up of large societies in England in reaction to gaining access to British colonies, such as the London Missionary Society (1795) and Church Missionary Society (1799). After the Napoleonic Wars more societies were founded on the US East Coast and in continental Europe. They all interacted with each other, coordinated their global proselytizing efforts, and diligently documented their efforts in countless reports and tables, which eventually produced a particular field of missionary scholarship—namely, mission statistics.

Thus, by 1886, around eighty-two evangelical missionary societies had been founded with headquarters in the United States, Canada, and in Protestant Europe (Britain, France, Germany, Switzerland, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, and Finland). They ran a total of 2,147 mission stations in Asia (963), Africa (600), Australia (120), and the Americas (464). They employed 2,690 European missionaries who oversaw 23,346 indigenous assistants (so called catechists). Together they had built communities of over 2 million former 'heathens', Muslims or Jews who converted to Protestant Christianity. The total yearly expenses of all eighty-two missionary societies amounted to roughly thirty million German marks (approx. thirty-seven million francs).[14] By 1896 the number of missionary societies had grown to 120.[15] Their global outlook, strategy, as well as the systematic and knowledge-based approach to conversion is also clearly visible in multiple maps that they regularly published in missionary publications.[16] Map 1 indicates the home-countries of the evangelical missionary movement in Europe and the United States as well as the already 'conquered' territories in Asia, Africa, and the Americas in dark red. The Catholic competition appeared in light red, while the yet-to-be-converted Muslim and 'heathen' world was coloured in yellow and grey respectively.

Notably, the home-countries of this nineteenth-century transimperial evangelical movement coincides with the historical centres of Western capitalism: the United States and a region of continuously high economic growth in North-Western Europe that economic historians refer to as the 'blue banana'. It runs from northern Italy across Switzerland and the Alps along the river Rhine through Germany and France, into the Low Countries, southern Britain, and across to the Scandinavian countries.[17] In what follows, we will focus on the BM and the PEMS to elucidate how their proselytizing agenda was linked to Protestant capitalist networks.

[13]Andrew F. Walls, 'The Eighteenth-Century Protestant Missionary Awakening in its European Context', in *Christian Missions and the Enlightenment*, ed. Brian Stanley (Routledge, 2001), 22–44; Timothy C.F. Stunt, *From Awakening to Secession: Radical Evangelicals in Switzerland and Britain 1815–35* (T&T Clark, 2000); Kenneth J. Stewart, *Restoring the Reformation: British Evangelicalism and the Francophone 'Réveil', 1816–1849*, Studies in Evangelical History and Thought (Paternoster, 2006); Elbourne, *Blood Ground*, 26–44.

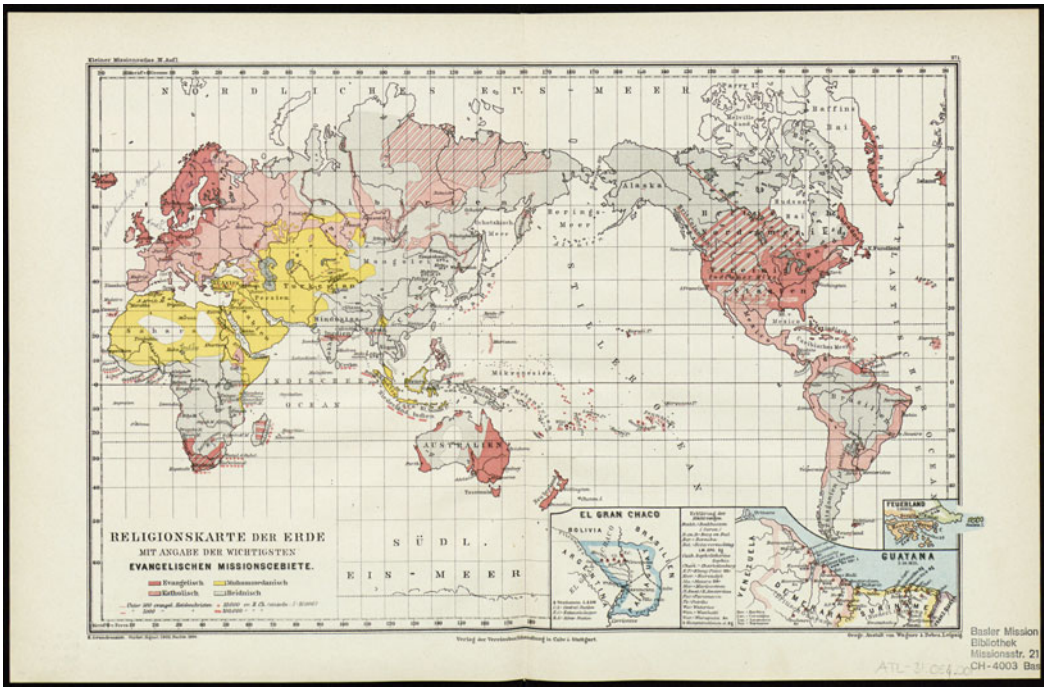
[14]Reinhold Grundemann, *Zur Statistik der evangelischen Mission* (Bertelsmann, 1886), 85.

[15]Reinhold Grundemann, *Neuer Missions-Atlas mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der Deutschen Missionen* (Verlag der Vereinsbuchhandlung, 1896), 3.

[16]Mirela Altić, 'Mapping the Missionary World: Nineteenth-Century Missionary Atlases with Special Regard to Justus Perthes's Production', *Imago Mundi* 75, no. 1 (2023): 24–44; Johanna Skurnik, 'Encountering Colonial Worlds through Missionary Maps in the Late-Nineteenth-Century Grand Duchy of Finland', in *Finnish Colonial Encounters: From Anti-Imperialism to Cultural Colonialism and Complicity*, ed. Raita Merivirta, Leila Koivunen, and Timo Särkkä (Springer, 2021), 199–222.

[17]Andreas Faludi, 'The Blue Banana Revisited', *European Journal of Spatial Development* 13, no. 1 (2015): 1–26.

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Map 1. Reinhold Grundemann, Religionskarte der Erde mit Angabe der wichtigsten evangelischen Missionsgebiete, 1904, BMA ATL-31.054.001.

A regional affair: The Basel Mission's founding figures

Located at the bend of the river Rhine in northern Switzerland and bordering France and Germany, Basel was an important trading hub governed by patrician families from the seventeenth century onwards. Their business model was to import raw silk from Italy and later from Asia, to have workers in the region produce silk ribbons, and to export these luxury goods in Europe and the Americas. Basel silk manufacturers grew increasingly rich and thereby branched out into finance and trade in colonial goods as well as the slave trade.[18] Situated in the backwaters of the French empire, the Basel 'marchand-banquiers' benefited from growing global demand for 'French' luxury goods as well as access to France's colonial ports. After the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars, Basel merchants and bankers oriented themselves more toward Britain and its colonies and the US East Coast.[19]

Basel was, however, not only one of the continent's prime finance and trading hubs, but was also host to one of the oldest universities north of the Alps. Many of its conservative and non-conformist minds, like Jacob Burckhardt, Friedrich Nietzsche, or Johann Bachofen, produced

[18]Niklaus Stettler, Peter Haenger, and Robert Labhardt, *Baumwolle, Sklaven und Kredite: die Basler Welthandelsfirma Christoph Burckhardt & Cie. in revolutionärer Zeit (1789–1815)* (Merian, 2004); Robert Labhardt, *Kapital und Moral: Christoph Merian: eine Biografie* (Christoph-Merian-Verlag, 2011); Hans Fässler, *Reise in Schwarz-Weiss: Schweizer Ortstermine in Sachen Sklaverei* (Rotpunktverlag, 2005); Thomas David, Bouda Etemad, and Janick Marina Schaufelbuehl, *Schwarze Geschäfte: die Beteiligung von Schweizern an Sklaverei und Sklavenhandel im 18. und 19. Jahrhundert* (Limmat-Verlag, 2005).

[19]Bernhard C. Schär, *Tropenliebe: Schweizer Naturforscher und niederländischer Imperialismus in Südostasien um 1900* (Campus, 2015), 61–78; Philipp Sarasin, *Stadt der Bürger: Bürgerliche Macht und städtische Gesellschaft* (Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1997).

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'unseasonable ideas'[20] with an international impact. Thus, from the late eighteenth-century enlightenment period onwards, it became a centre for the German Protestant revival movement, which was particularly pronounced in the bordering region of Wurttemberg. Most Basel patrician families had members who belonged to either or both the economic and financial Protestant international and the evangelical revival movement. In 1815, members of these families founded the BM.[21] Among the founding figures and powerful members of the board were pastors from three of the wealthiest Basel trading dynasties: Simon-Emanuel La Roche, Emanuel Burckhardt, and Adolf Sarasin. The BM committee board's economic elites consisted of merchants Samuel Merian-Kuder and Bernhard Socin-Heusler.[22] The names of La Roche, Burckhardt, Sarasin, Merian, and Heusler are, to this day, closely associated to the rise of Basel and Switzerland as international finance and pharmaceutical centre.[23]

While the seats on the BM committee board were reserved for the city's tight-knit patrician families, managing the daily business of the mission was usually the responsibility of a director hailing from neighbouring Wurttemberg. The German and Swiss evangelical and merchant elites behind the BM shared close ties to trading partners as well as 'brothers in Christ' in the imperial metropoles of London and Rotterdam. The first generation of BM students went on to serve for the Church Missionary Society (CMS) and the Rotterdam Missionary Society.[24] We shall return to these connections later.

An international affair: The Paris Evangelical Mission Society's founding figures

While Protestants in Basel and much of Switzerland made up a powerful majority that dominated politics, economy, and culture far into the twentieth century, the situation in France was historically different. After being evicted from France around 1600, few Protestants remained, so that when religious freedom was reinstated after the French Revolution and under Napoleon's rule in the early 1800s, Protestants only made up for about 3 per cent of the French population.[25] Still, some strong Protestant pockets had remained in trading cities such as Strasbourg, Nîmes, and in the rural regions of the French Pyrenees. By 1820, 'mission friends' from these regions regularly contributed to the BM.[26] To keep their French-reading supporters informed, other 'friends' in Geneva, in neighbouring Switzerland, had launched a 'magazin évangélique' in 1819 to disseminate BM-information among Protestants in France and francophone Switzerland.[27]

The most consequential development, however, was the establishment of the PEMS in 1822 in Paris.[28] It followed an initiative of BM director Christian Gottlieb Blumhardt, who had negotiated with Missionary Societies in Rotterdam and London since 1815 to deploy German-speaking

[20]Lionel Gossman, *Basel in the Age of Burckhardt: A Study in Unseasonable Ideas* (University of Chicago Press, 2000); Christian Simon, *Natur-Geschichte: das Naturhistorische Museum Basel im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert* (Christoph Merian Verlag, 2009).

[21]Mukesh Kumar, Amal Shahid, and Ella Daisy Müller, eds., *The Basel Mission between Switzerland, Germany, and South India: Entangled Histories from Conversion to Commerce* (Leiden University Press, 2026).

[22]Wilhelm Schlatter, *Geschichte der Basler Mission 1815–1915: mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der ungedruckten Quellen*, vol. 1 (Basler Missionsbuch, 1916), 163–7.

[23]Bernard Degen et al., 'Basel-Stadt', in *Historisches Lexikon der Schweiz*, accessed 3 June 2026, https://hls-dhs-dss.ch/de/articles/007478/2017-05-30/.

[24]Schlatter, *Geschichte der Basler Mission 1815–1915*, 1: 58–64.

[25]Jean-François Zorn, 'When French Protestants Replaced British Missionaries in the Pacific and Indian Oceans; Or, How to Avoid the Colonial Trap', in *In God's Empire: French Missionaries and the Modern World*, ed. Owen White and J.P. Daughton (Oxford University Press, 2012), 215–32.

[26]Jean Bianquis, *Les Origines de la Société des Missions Évangéliques de Paris 1822–1829* (Société des Missions Evangéliques, 1930), 93–5.

[27]Schlatter, *Geschichte der Basler Mission 1815–1915*, 1:46.

[28]Jean-François Zorn, *Le Grand Siècle d'une mission protestante. La mission de Paris de 1822 à 1914* (Karthala Editions, 2012).

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missionaries in their countries' colonies. He suggested that French-speaking Protestants should organize in a similar way and was invited to Paris in 1822 to help build a new Missionary Society.[29]

A brief look at the founding figures reveals—similar to the case of Basel—the close ties between economic, financial, and religious elites. Unlike Basel, however, the Paris leadership hailed not from a local elite but was rather a manifestation of the transatlantic Protestant international. Hence, the founding meeting took place in the luxurious 'hôtel' of US trader Samuel Vryling Stoddard Wilder (1780–1865). Originally from Massachusetts and a descendent of Dutch and English colonists, Wilder had come to Paris in 1804 where he quickly became the central figure in the fledgling trade with French luxury goods to the United States.[30] He had close business and spiritual ties with other members of the international Protestant trading and finance community who flocked to France under Napoleon and would support the missionary movement. Among them was Zurich-born Jean-Conrad Hottinguer (1774–1841), whose investment bank in Paris was the first to finance US–French trade relations.[31] Other important figures were British cotton manufacturer Thomas Waddington (1792–1865), who had built some of the largest textile mills west of Paris and served as the PEMS's treasurer. Waddington's fellow countryman Mark Wilks served as the pastor for the Anglo-American community in Paris and was also a founding member of the PEMS. Other international members included the former ambassador of Switzerland in Paris, a Dutch-Danish merchant, Swiss pastors and theologians, an Alsatian linguist and former translator for 'oriental languages' in Napoleon and Louis XVIII's government, a French banker and, as the first president of the PEMS for twenty-two years, Admiral Carel Hendrik Ver Huell (1764–1845). He was a Dutch navy officer who had defected to France under Napoleon's rule and continued to serve under Louis XVIII.[32]

The composition of the founding members of both the PEMS and the BM thus clearly demonstrates the importance of both the economic-financial and the religious-spiritual networks of the Protestant international in a gradually globalizing and colonizing world. It shows that the establishment of religious networks and societies was intricately connected with financial elites, who used their political influence to provide missionary societies with a strong financial base to carry out their activities. Yet, neither the PEMS nor the BM had any access to colonies for their mission projects in the early nineteenth century. In France, dominated by Catholics, the Protestant PEMS leadership gained access to French colonies only in the 1860s despite being influential in finance and government sectors.[33] In the case of the BM, neither the German states nor Switzerland had any colonies in the early 1800s.

Imperial realignments: Mission and empire politics in London in the early 1800s

Both societies looked to London for opportunities, especially in the early 1800s when the British empire expanded its colonies in the Indian Ocean. In the case of the PEMS, the US founding figure Wilder, as well as British manufacturer Waddington and English pastor Wilks were regular visitors in London for their business dealings and visiting London's missionary societies. One of their friends was the British East India Company's managing director Sir William Taylor Monney, who visited one of the PEMS board meetings in Paris in 1823.[34] One of the themes debated among imperial circles in London at the time was how to reform colonies in South Africa and Ceylon that the empire had taken over from the Dutch following the Napoleonic Wars. In this context, in 1829, the London Missionary Society (LMS) played a key role in attempting to abolish slavery and promising to proselytize and 'civilize' Khoisan and Xhosa communities as well as 'tribes' outside the colony in accordance with

[29]Bianquis, *Les Origines de la Société des Missions Evangéliques de Paris 1822–1829*, 23–39.

[30]Sampson Vryling Stoddard Wilder, *Records from the Life of S.V.S. Wilder* (American Tract Society, 1865), 44–54.

[31]Ibid., 72, 116, 315.

[32]Schär, '"Thy Kingdom Come!"'.

[33]Zorn, 'When French Protestants Replaced British Missionaries in the Pacific and Indian Oceans'.

[34]Meetings on 24 February, 7 April, 28 April, and 5 May, 1823, in Procès Verbaux, April 1822–July 1826, 30–2, 39, 45, 54–55, Bibliothèque du Défap, Archives de la Société Missionnaire Évangélique de Paris (hereafter, Défap Archives), Paris.

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colonial interests, by transforming them into producers and consumers of British goods and loyal subjects of the empire.[35] This short period of evangelical-liberal partnership in the 1820s and 1830s was important for the wider Protestant missionary movement, as it opened up the colony for several missionary societies from Germany, the United States, and for the PEMS. Together they ran fifty-four mission stations by 1836. This number grew rapidly in the nineteenth century as missionary societies from other parts of Protestant Europe opened their own stations.[36] The French-speaking missionaries arrived in South Africa in 1830 and would set up mission stations from 1833 onwards in the Kingdom of Lesotho. These mission stations remained the largest and strategically most important for the PEMS well into the twentieth century.[37]

Similarly, the BM had extensive links with the LMS and the CMS in London. When it was founded as a seminary in 1815, the BM's call for financial aid was answered first by them. The ties with the CMS were strengthened by C.F.A. Steinkopf, a German pastor in London, who was a Wurttemberg pietist closely associated with missionary circles in Basel and Berlin, as well as a member of the LMS and the CMS. Through him, the BM leadership established close relations to their English 'brothers in Christ' and Director Blumhardt became a regular visitor in London.[38] His close links with both the *Christentumsgesellschaft* in Basel, as well as English Protestants, opened the path for BM-trained missionaries to travel abroad through the CMS, making the BM the main point of contact in mainland Europe for missionaries.[39]

During this time, the Indian subcontinent had been under the colonial rule of the East India Company since the mid-eighteenth century. The East India Company exercised political, economic, and administrative control, but its overall policy was of non-interference in society and its cultural-religious practices. However, by the late eighteenth century, political figures such as Charles Grant in Britain were demanding social reform of the Indian population and its so-called 'ignorance' through 'Christian light'. Charles Grant had risen to the rank of chairman of the EIC and was elected as a Member of Parliament in 1802 alongside liberals and abolitionists such as his close associate William Wilberforce, who was notably active in the governing body of the CMS.[40] A staunch Evangelical, Grant believed in the upliftment of Indians through the 'civilizing' influence of Christianity.[41] He thus pushed for allowing missionaries into the subcontinent, a proposal that was accepted only in 1813 upon the renewal of the EIC Charter. From then on, missionaries were allowed in India upon obtaining a licence. The same Charter Act also ended EIC's monopoly, and trade was opened up to competition which further entrenched British colonial rule in India. The CMS benefited from this provision, and the LMS was able to expand its operations. In 1833, the controlled entry of missionaries was eased further, whereby lifting of licence restrictions enabled other mission societies to enter India freely. Amongst them was the BM.

[35]Elbourne, *Blood Ground*, 233–59; Timothy Keegan, *Dr Philip's Empires: One Man's Struggle for Justice in Nineteenth-Century South Africa* (Zebra Press, 2016).

[36]'Afrique mériodionale', *Journal des Missions Évangéliques*, Onzième année (La Société des Missions Évangéliques de Paris, 1836), 112; Grundemann reports 31 stations operated by Scandinavian missionary societies, Grundemann, *Zur Statistik der evangelischen Mission*, 84.

[37]Elizabeth A. Eldredge, *A South African Kingdom: The Pursuit of Security in Nineteenth-Century Lesotho* (Cambridge University Press, 1993); Tim Couzens, *Murder at Morija: Faith, Mystery, and Tragedy on an African Mission* (University of Virginia Press, 2005).

[38]Schlatter, *Geschichte der Basler Mission 1815–1915*, 1:1–27.

[39]Paul Jenkins, 'The Church Missionary Society and the Basel Mission: An Early Experiment in Inter-European Cooperation', in *The Church Mission Society and World Christianity, 1799–1999*, ed. Kevin Ward and Brian Stanley (Curzon Press, 2000).

[40]Judith Becker, 'Europe in Mission: Justification, Strategies, and Europeanization in Protestant Mission in the 19th Century', in European History Portal, 2016.

[41]Daniel O'Connor, *The Chaplains of the East India Company, 1601–1858* (Continuum, 2012), 109–10.

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Initially the BM was inclined to settle on the east coast of India with the German missions among Tamilians, but the CMS directed them to settle on the west coast in 1834, on Malabar, where there were no German missions and Protestants were a minority.[42] Gradually, the mission stations expanded along the Malabar coast and South Canara, but so did expenses. In the 1840s, the BM had started industrial activities in India such as weaving and printing. In 1859 it established a trading company, the *Basler Handelsgesellschaft* (Basel Mission Trading Company). It was set up as a limited trading company with a capital of 200,000 Swiss francs with the BM's share amounting to 30,000 Swiss Francs (fifteen per cent). The BM's historical and historiographical peculiarity has been its industrial activities alongside proselytization.[43] However, for the purposes of our discussion, only the fundraising activities pertinent to the BM will be discussed. It suffices to note that the BM not only appointed the directors of the Trading Company, but it also shared half its profits after paying six per cent interest on shareholder capital and reserves.[44] The exact earnings from the company did not appear in BM accounts until the end of the nineteenth century.

Building transimperial fundraising networks, *c*.1830–1870s

Once established in Southern Africa and in south-west India in the 1830s, both the PEMS and BM respectively needed to fundraise large amounts of money every year to finance their missionaries, schools, housing, and mission stations. These fundraising efforts are documented in detail in the missions' yearly financial reports from the mid-nineteenth century onwards. For this article, we compiled a database with yearly revenues from every tenth year, starting from the mid-1850s to the mid-1890s.[45] These figures allow us to discuss the scope and the historical evolution of both missionary societies' fundraising efforts, the geographic provenance of these funds, and examine the mission societies' main fundraising strategies. However, we do not discuss the main objects of expenditure, which requires a detailed analysis in itself. Suffice it to say that the earnings were spent on daily upkeep of mission stations and on proselytizing activities.

Figure 1 shows how BM and PEMS nominal income evolved from 1855 to 1895, using reports from every ten years. For the BM, its income more than doubled over the course of forty years from around 480,000 to 1.3 million francs (approx. 51,600 pounds at the time).[46] With these earnings, the BM was the second-largest missionary society in continental Europe behind the much older German-Danish 'Brüdergemeinde'.[47] The largest missionary societies of the era—the LMS and the CMS in London—had annual revenues of 2.2 and 4.6 million German marks (approx. 2.6 million and 5.5 million francs, or 10,000–182,500 pounds) respectively in 1886.[48] In comparison to the BM, the PEMS's annual budget seems more modest. Its income of around half a million francs in 1895 (corresponding to 23.5 million francs in 2009) was almost on a par with the BM's in 1855. With thirty-eight mission stations in British India, Gold Coast (Ghana), and China, the BM was, however, considerably larger than the PEMS, which operated only nineteen stations,

[42]Schlatter, *Geschichte der Basler Mission 1815–1915*, 1:8.

[43]See Rudolf Fischer, *Die Basler Missionsindustrie in Indien, 1850–1913: Rekrutierung und Disziplinierung der Arbeiterschaft* (Verlag Reihe W, 1978); Heinrich Christ, *Zwischen Religion und Geschäft: die Basler Missions-Handlungs-Gesellschaft und ihre Unternehmensethik, 1859–1917* (Franz Steiner Verlag, 2015).

[44]Gaspar Chapatte, 'Les Tuileries de la Basler Handelsgesellschaft en Inde 1864–1914' (Master's diss., University of Lausanne, 2013).

[45]The PEMS finance reports are available in Défap Archives, Paris, PER 1325; the BM reports are available in the Basel Mission Archives (hereafter, BMA) and some are digitized on Digitale Bibliothek, Munchener DigitalisierungsZentrum, accessed 3 June 2026, https://www.digitale-sammlungen.de/de.

[46]Calculations based on the exchange rate used by the BM, Jahresrechnung pro 1895, 91, BMA.

[47]Paul Richter, *Die deutschen evangelischen Heidenmissionen: eine gedrängte Darstellung der deutschen Missionsgesellschaften* (Berliner Evangel. Missionsgellschaft, 1907), 214–15.

[48]Grundemann, *Zur Statistik der evangelischen Mission*, 30, 59 (calculations based on exchange rates used by BM, Jahresrechnung 1895, 89 and 91, BMA).

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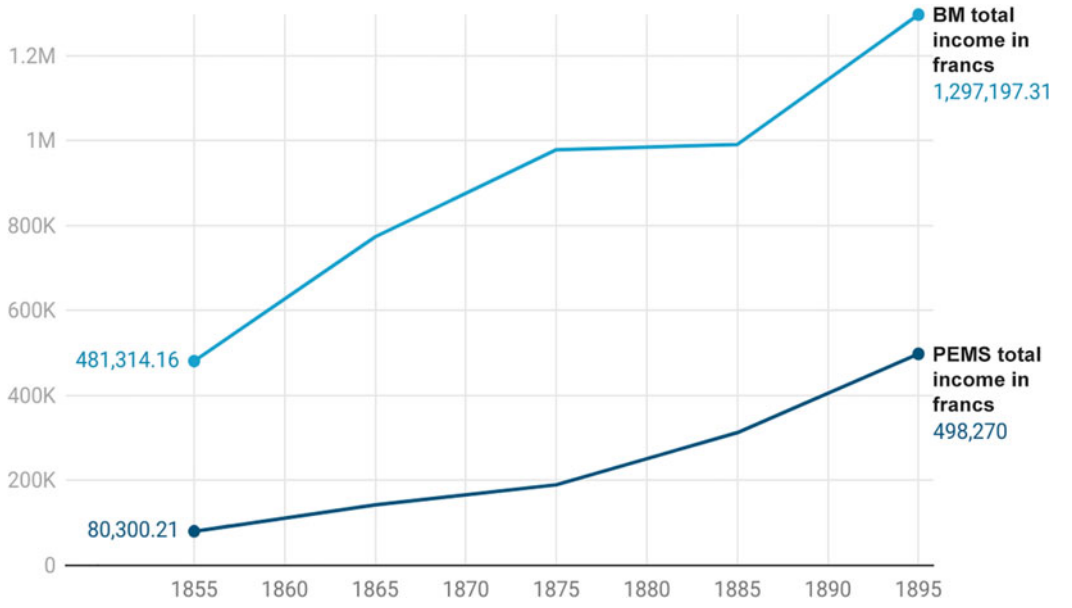


Figure 1. Total income of the BM and the PEMS in francs between 1855 and 1895.

fifteen of which were in British-ruled Southern Africa (Lesotho) and two each in France's colonies in West Africa and Tahiti.[49]

Compared to revenues from colonial trade, the missionary societies' revenues were very modest. The Dutch Colonial State recorded a net revenue of around 32 million guilders (approx. 3.2 million pounds) annually from its exports in the Dutch East Indies in the 1860s.[50] Britain recorded annual imports from India alone worth between 22 million and 52 million pounds.[51] In comparison, the BM's peak annual revenue of 52,000 pounds in the 1890s pales almost into insignificance. A more telling comparison might be that with one of the largest cotton trading companies of the era. Volkart brothers made a net profit of between 1 million and 5 million francs (40,000–200,000 pounds) annually in the early 1900s.[52] That was on a par with the BM's annual revenue at the time.

The most helpful comparison, however, is one with nineteenth-century labour salaries. A Swiss watchmaker, who was among the highest-paid labourers, made roughly 6 francs per day, or 1,800 francs per year, in the 1870s.[53] The BM's revenue in the 1870s of approximately 850,000 francs corresponded to over 470 annual worker salaries.

This comparison is important because, as we shall see, by far the largest group of donors to the BM and the PEMS had very modest incomes.

And donations made up the largest part of the annual budget by far, usually between eighty and ninety per cent. The BM's and the PEMS's annual financial reports both provide detailed information about the geographic provenance of donations, albeit in different ways. The PEMS's records contain data on individual donors' names and places of residence in Europe and in Africa. The BM's German reports only offer limited information about European donors and instead list

[49]Ibid., 20, 81.

[50]J.S. Furnivall, *Netherlands India: A Study of Plural Economy* (Cambridge University Press, 1967), 173.

[51]Dennis R. Appleyard, 'The Terms of Trade between the United Kingdom and British India, 1858–1947', *Economic Development and Cultural Change* 54, no. 3 (2006): 635–54.

[52]Dejung Christof, *Die Fäden des globalen Marktes: eine Sozial- und Kulturgeschichte des Welthandels am Beispiel der Handelsfirma Gebrüder Volkart 1851–1999* (Böhlau Verlag, 2013), 265.

[53]Industrial wages by branches, occupations, and regions 1820–1875, table 3.Gb, in *Historical Statistics of Switzerland* (2012), accessed 3 June 2026, hsso.ch/2012/g/3b.

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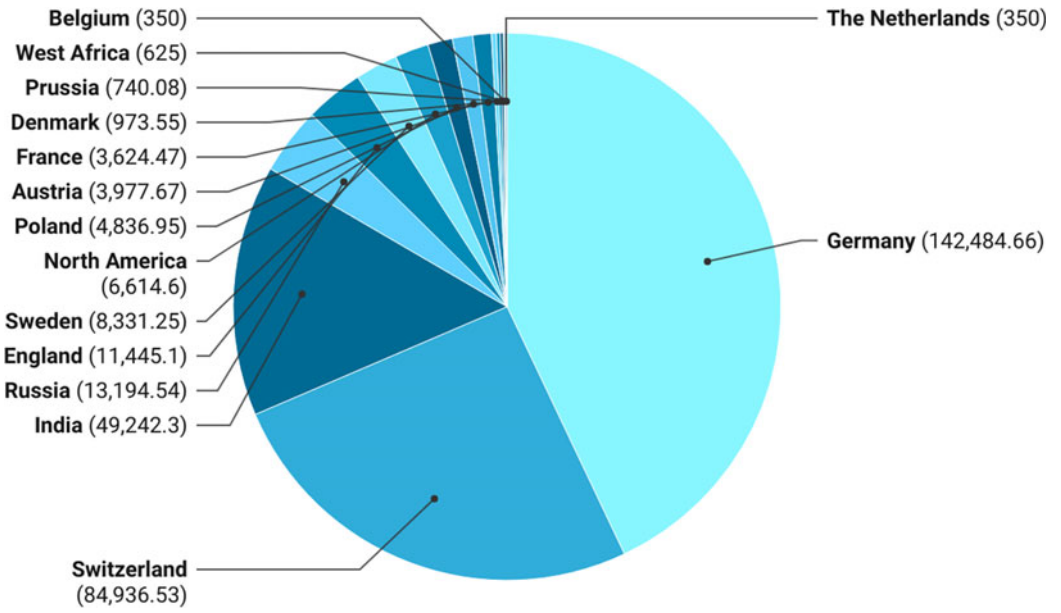


Figure 2. Provenance of donations in 1855 for the BM (from mission friends and auxiliary societies), from Financial report in the BM's *Jahresbericht* 1856, Digitale Bibliothek, Münchener DigitalisierungsZentrum: https://www.digitale-sammlungen.de/de.

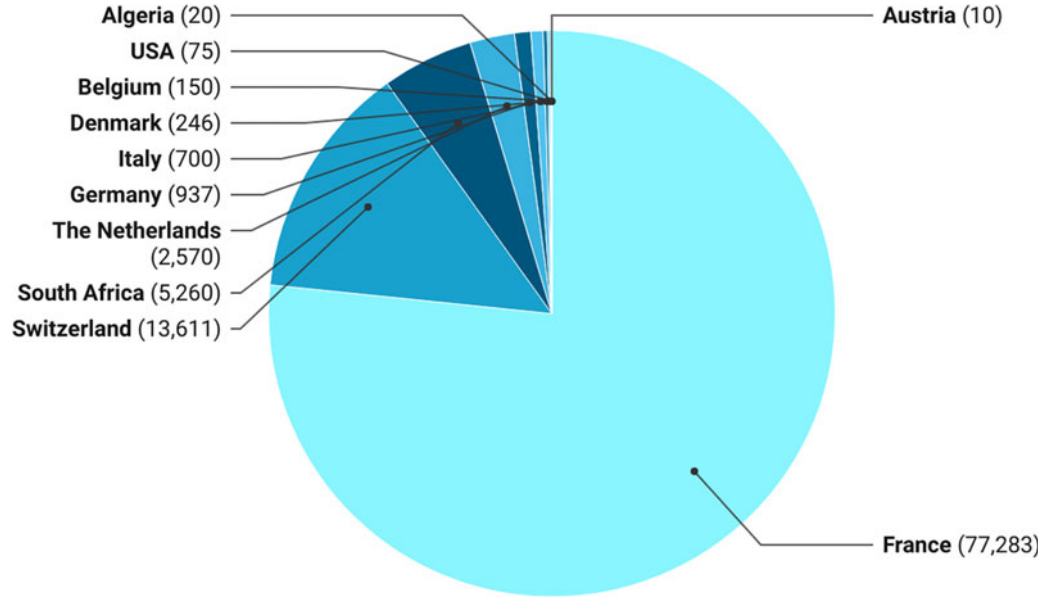
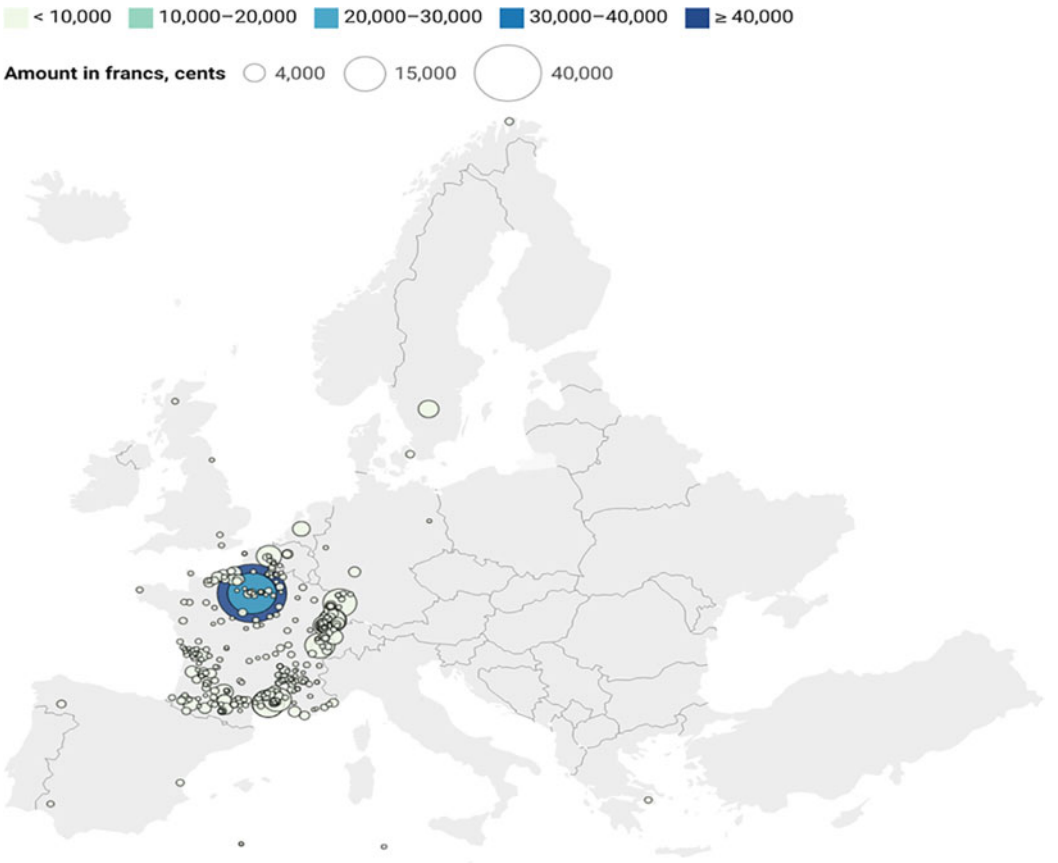


Figure 3. National provenance of donations in 1854 for the PEMS, from financial report in *Rapport annuel* 1855, Défap Archive, Paris, PER 1325.

the donations by city, but their English reports contain detailed information about donors in British India from the main mission stations and cities. Additionally, both societies provide data on donations collected by auxiliary societies, to which we will return below. Both societies received donations not only from Europe, but also from the United States and from colonies where they were stationed, as Figures 2 and 3 indicate.

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Map 2. Donations to the PEMS in 1875.

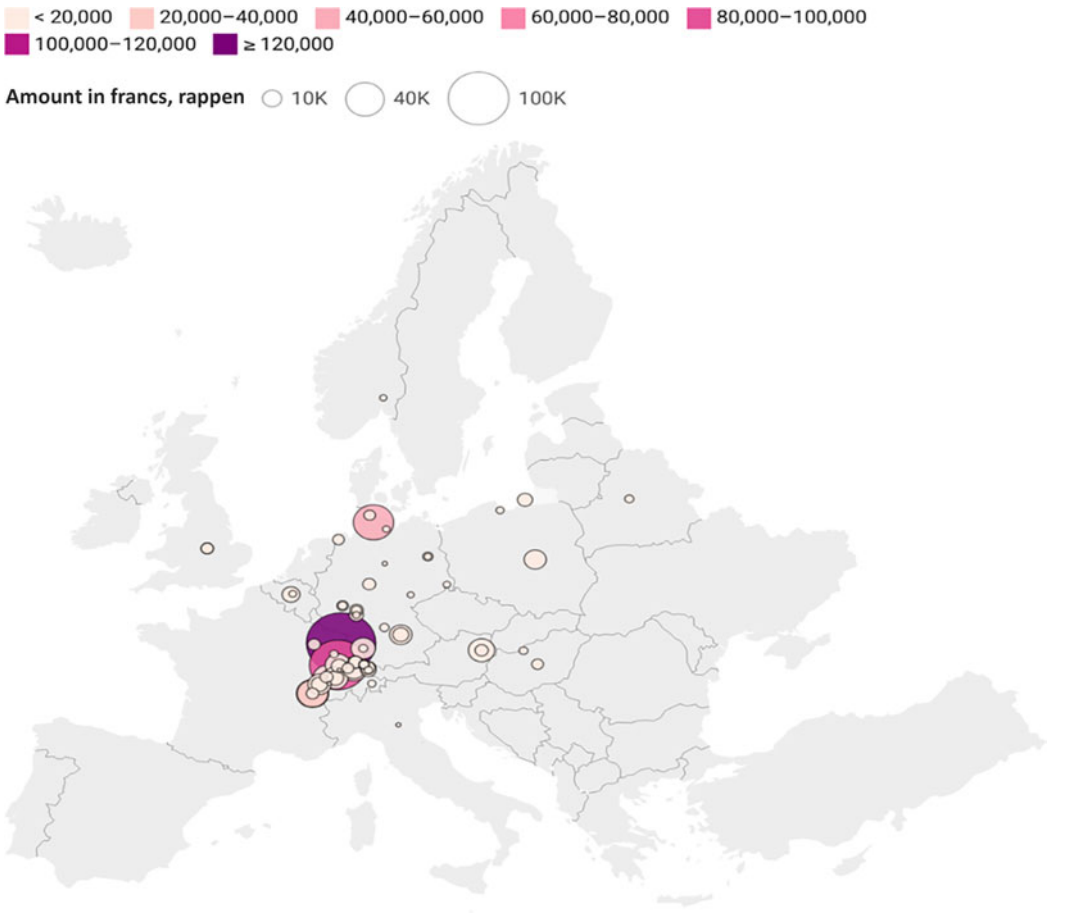
As Figures 2 and 3 indicate, both organizations received donations from all over the world, most of which came, however, from Europe. Maps 2 and 3 zoom in on Europe and show the geographic provenance of funding for 1875. This pattern did not change much between 1855 and 1895 and can therefore be seen as typical for the entire period under consideration.

Thus, the PEMS collected donations more in the French-speaking western part and the BM in the German-speaking eastern part of Northern Europe—both did so in rural areas as well as larger cities. The heavily industrialized Protestant regions of Switzerland and of the Alsace region along the river Rhine contributed substantially to both societies, as did—albeit to a lesser extent—the Protestant strongholds in the Low Countries, England, and the Scandinavian countries. In other words, seen from the perspective of their donors, neither the BM nor the PEMS ought to be seen as national organizations. Rather, as Figures 2 and 3 indicate, they were global. And, as Maps 2 and 3 illustrate, they raised money in a religiously fragmented northern continental European landscape for proselytizing in British colonies.

'Friends' and anonymous small donors

Taking the example of the fiscal year 1864–65, an uneventful year for finances for both societies, the PEMS received approximately 168,000 francs in donations which made up almost 90 per cent

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Map 3. Donations to the BM in 1875.

of its yearly revenue.[54] The BM received, in 1864, donations of around 659,000 francs, which accounted for roughly 85 per cent of its income for that year.[55] This raises the question of how many individuals, located in the regions discussed above, regularly donated to the BM and the PEMS. To discuss this question, several donor categories ought to be distinguished that both organizations had created by the mid-nineteenth century: first, donations by 'friends'. They were named in the case of the PEMS. In the case of the BM, donors in Europe and the United States remained anonymous, while the mostly European donors in colonial India were named. The second category were donations from auxiliary societies that collected donations for the PEMS and the BM in larger and smaller towns across Protestant Europe and in Southern Africa. While the first two categories targeted mostly middle- and upper-class Europeans, the last category was designed to collect donations among lower income families—workers in the industrializing regions of Protestant Europe and rural families. In the case of the BM this scheme was called *Halbbatzen-kollekte*.[56] The PEMS called an analogous scheme *sou missionnaire*.[57] A *halber Batzen*

[54]*Rapport annuel de la SMEP*, 1865, 41, Défap Archives, Paris, PER 1325.

[55]Jahresbericht der evangelischen Missionsgesellschaft zu Basel, 1865, 119–27, BMA.

[56]Beatrice Tschudi-Barbatti, 'Die Halbbatzen-Kollekte: ein Kapitel aus der Finanzgeschichte der Basler Mission' (Master's diss., University of Zürich, 1992).

[57]Extrait d'une lettre du Révérend Mark Wilks, in *Bulletin de la SMEP*, No. IX, Mars 1824, Défap Archives, Paris.

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Table 1. Estimation of donors for half-cent collections from Jahresbericht der evangelischen Missionsgesellschaft zu Basel 1865, BMA; *Report of the Basel German Evangelical Mission 1866* (Plebst and Stolz, Basel Missionary Press, 1867); and *Rapport annuel de la SMEP*, 1865, Défap Archives, Paris, PER 1325

Donations 1864/55	Named individual donors	Anonymous small donors (*sou missionnaire*, *Halbbatzen*)	Total
PEMS	2,050	10,600	12,650
BM Europe	6,100	95,400	101,500
BM India	200	4,500	4,700
Total	8,350	110,500	118,850

and a *sou* referred to the smallest coin—the equivalent of half a penny in England. Designated collectors would collect these small coins every week. After ten or twelve weeks they would send this money to their supervisors in one of the auxiliary societies who would transfer all collections from their region to the main cashier in Paris or Basel. The BM established a similar fundraising scheme in India in 1886 called the *Pie Kollekte* (pie being a denomination of an Indian rupee: 192 pies = 1 rupee).[58]

If we try to determine how many individuals donated to the PEMS and the BM for those organizations to achieve their fundraising goals, we can turn to the PEMS's financial reports. They contain the names of all mission 'friends' who constituted the middle- or upper-class donors. The 1865 financial report lists around 1,700 'friends' in France and around another 350 abroad, which is a total of around 2,050 donors. It is important to stress, however, that the actual number of donors is much higher. This is because many of these explicitly listed 'friends' collected donations from other people in their communities. In Naples, Italy, for example, a Mrs Meuricoffre collected 20.45 francs among an unknown number of Sunday school pupils. Similarly, in the small village of Chardonne, overlooking the lake of Geneva in Switzerland, a Mrs Valentine de Muralt collected 12.25 francs among boys in her Sunday school. In the Dutch capital of The Hague, Mrs Groen van Prinsterer collected 674.50 francs among her 'friends', while Reverend P. Huet from the Dutch Church in Pietermaritzburg in Natal, Southern Africa, collected 2.4 pounds (approx. 61 francs) in his parish. In Frankfurt/M in Germany, Messrs Bonnet and Schröder collected 425.30 guilders (902.90 francs) among 'French friends'. The cases all over France are similar.[59] In other words, the roughly 2,050 individually named donors for the PEMS in 1865 is to be seen as a minimum figure. A great many of them were part of larger and smaller donation circles in their places of residence, the size of which, however, is impossible to determine.

In addition to these 2,050 donors, the PEMS in 1865 collected among poorer families and individuals in France, the Netherlands, and Switzerland with the above-mentioned *sou missionnaire*. The revenue for this was 27,673 francs in the fiscal year of 1864–65. If we assume that individuals donated 5 cents (one 'sou') a week, an individual's annual donation would be 2.60 francs. To reach more than 27,000 francs this would mean that in 1865 an additional 10,600 anonymous small donors contributed to the cause. In other words, although the revenue from the *sou missionnaire* (27,673 francs) was much smaller than the revenue collected from the named 'friends' and wealthier individual donors (140,429 francs), the number of anonymous small donors was considerably larger than that of the known individual donors (see Table 1).

The BM financial records for Europe do not contain names and therefore give no indication of how many individuals donated. However, we can venture an estimate using the PEMS figures. If 2,050 named donors raised approximately 140,000 francs in the PEMS around 1865, then we can calculate how many donors were necessary to collect the roughly 416,500 francs, which the BM received in 1865 from friends and their auxiliary societies. This calculation leads to the figure of roughly 6,100 individuals. As in the case of the PEMS, this number ought to be seen as a basic

[58]Tschudi-Barbatti, 'Die Halbbatzen-Kollekte', 82.

[59]*Rapport annuel de la SMEP*, 1865, 67–8, Défap Archives, Paris, PER 1325.

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minimum, since many of these donors too were part of smaller or larger donating circles located mostly in Switzerland, the German countries, and the Netherlands, but including significant donors also in the United States, England, Australia, China, Africa, Russia, and Turkey.[60] To this number we need to add, however, approximately 200 explicitly named donors from India who are listed in the English-language annual reports.[61] While the BM's (and the PEMS's) affluent donor base in Europe was primarily among pastors, bankers, and industrialists, in British India it seemed firmly rooted in the colonial army and administration. The majority of these names were accompanied by a title of sergeant, lieutenant, captain, major, colonel, general, doctor, or esquire, implying that British officers, non-commissioned officers, and others were a significant donor base. It shows that the long arm of the British empire in India was sympathetic to causes of missionaries, on whom they relied for education and medical work. However, donations from individual indigenous 'friends' of the mission, as well as from congregations in mission stations wherein the names of Indian converts are often masked, were also part of donations collected in India. Thus the number of donors in India, of whom converts in mission stations numbered at 4,500 in 1866, for example, could potentially be many more than those named in reports.

As mentioned, the BM equivalent to the *sou missionnaire* was the *Halbbatzen-kollekte*, which collected 5 Swiss cents or 1 German Kreutzer among low-income groups in the German countries, Switzerland, and Russia.[62] In 1864, the BM received 242,840 francs from this source. If we assume, again, that an individual donates 5 cents every week, which amounts to an annual donation of 2.6 francs, we arrive at an additional 93,400 small donors contributing to the BM. This figure seems not implausible since the extraordinary success of the *Halbbatzen-kollekte* is a recurrent theme in the BM sources and was stressed also by BM inhouse historian Schlatter in 1915. He mentions a figure of 40,000 small donors in the year of its inception in 1855 already and that the number of donors increased steadily from then on.[63]

If we add the number of named individual and anonymous small donors of both organizations together, it is safe to claim that in 1865 a minimum of 8,150 more-or-less affluent individuals donated to the PEMS's and the BM's proselytizing efforts in Southern and Western Africa and British India, respectively. Most of these donors were in continental Europe as indicated in Maps 2 and 3. A significant number, however, hailed from the United States, Russia, West and Southern Africa, India, and China. Many of these named donors collected additional donations from people around them, in church parishes, Sunday schools, army barracks, factories, and elsewhere. It is, however, impossible to know how many people contributed in total to these individual donations. Yet, it is certain that both organizations together relied on a much larger number of anonymous small donors who contributed to the *sou missionnaire* and the *Halbbatzen-kollekte*. These donations came from probably 106,000 additional donors around 1865, as Table 1 indicates. In total, in 1865 a minimum number of 118,850 people, the vast majority of which lived outside Britain and its colonies, donated for the PEMS's and the BM's proselytizing campaigns in British India and Southern Africa.

The mission archives contain very little sources that allow us to delve into the identities and motivations for tens of thousands of continental Europeans donating regularly to proselytizing efforts in British colonies.[64] From the available sources it becomes clear, however, that the BM's and

[60]Jahresbericht der evangelischen Missionsgesellschaft zu Basel, 1865, 119–22, BMA.

[61]For example, see *Report of the Basel German Evangelical Mission Society for 1866* (Plebst and Stolz, Basel Missionary Press, 1867).

[62]Jahresbericht der evangelischen Missionsgesellschaft zu Basel, 1865, 124–5, BMA.

[63]Schlatter, *Geschichte der Basler Mission 1815–1915*, 1:224.

[64]For indications of the 'home mission' of other missionary societies, see Rebekka Habermas, 'Colonies in the Countryside: Doing Mission in Imperial Germany', *Journal of Social History* 50, no. 3 (2017): 502–17; Patrick Harries, *Butterflies & Barbarians: Swiss Missionaries & Systems of Knowledge in South-East Africa* (James Currey, 2007); Alexandra Przyrembel, 'Der Missionar Johann Hinrich Wichern, die Sünde und das unabänderliche Elend der städtischen Unterschichten um 1850', *Werkstatt Geschichte* 57 (2011): 53–67.

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the PEMS's fundraising efforts were a crucial part of a broader civilizing mission launched by significant segments of Europe's industrial, financial, and Protestant religious elites who gathered in a broad range of philanthropic societies—the missionary societies being one of them.[65] The PEMS's and the BM's interconnected leaderships articulated this very explicitly from the very beginning. The opening article in the PEMS journal explained in 1826 that, until recently, 'the hard-working craftsman, the humble farmer, and even the child' remained 'ignorant, inactive and abandoned'. The new post-revolutionary era, however, with its new associations, such as missionary societies, now 'provided both the manner and the means of involving in the propagation of the religion of the cross those classes which until then had seemed destined exclusively to receive and never give'.[66] The Swiss PEMS vice president and former ambassador to Paris, Philipp Albert Stapfer, who was one of the main links between germanophone and francophone evangelism had articulated this idea a few years earlier in a lengthy address at the 1824 annual conference. According to the book of Peter in the New Testament, donating even the smallest of coins to the mission was joining a sacred cause:

> Workers and artisans [thereby] remember that ... they are the chosen race, that they are priests and kings, the holy nation, the acquired people, so that they themselves may proclaim, and may help to proclaim to every being created by God, the virtues of Him who has called them from darkness into His wonderful light.[67]

This view was not merely theoretical but seems to have informed both organizations' collecting efforts among the poorer strata of Protestant Europe. In the case of the PEMS we have evidence from one of the organization's wealthy co-founders, the US merchant Wilder who managed almost all trade between France and the United States. He bought goods for several million francs annually from French producers thereby 'giving regular employment to up to twelve hundred persons', according to his biographer. This gave him 'such an influence over hundreds of workmen and their families, who depended for employ on his orders' that they were willing to receive 'Bibles, tracts and good words of advice' and, most likely, were also willing to donate regularly to PEMS.[68] In the case of the BM we have similar evidence. One of the most influential figures in the BM leadership, who launched the above-mentioned *Halbbatzen-kollekte* in 1855, Karl Sarasin, was simultaneously one of the largest factory owners in southern Germany and the Basel region, as well as a leading philanthropist and politician in Switzerland. He started this collecting scheme by collecting among his workers and servants.[69]

As mentioned earlier, both organizations' yearly revenues increased steadily until the end of the nineteenth century. This raises the question of how both organizations managed to mobilize growing number of people across Protestant Europe and beyond to donate every year. The missionary societies' main instruments for this were auxiliary societies and ladies' committees, besides the use of their own magazines and journals.

Fundraising by auxiliary societies and ladies' committees

Auxiliary societies, or *Hilfsvereine* in German, were societies that fundraised locally and sent the money to the headquarters, in this case Basel or Paris for the BM and the PEMS, respectively.

[65]Thomas David and Ludovic Tournès, 'Introduction. Philanthropy: An Object of Transnational History', *Monde(s)* 6, no. 2 (2014): 7–22; Jürgen Osterhammel, 'The Great Work of Uplifting Mankind. Zivilisierungsmission und Moderne', in *Zivilisierungsmissionen: imperiale Weltverbesserung seit dem 18. Jahrhundert*, ed. Boris Barth and Jürgen Osterhammel (UVK Verlag, 2005), 363–426.

[66]'Introduction', *Journal des Missions Évangéliques* 1 (1826): 7–8 (translated from the French original).

[67]Procès verbal de l'assemblée générale des la Société des Missions Évangéliques chez les peuples non chrétiens, 29 Avril 1824, Premier Anniversaire, 36, Défap Archives, Paris (translated from the French original).

[68]*Records from the Life of S.V.S. Wilder*, 49, 73.

[69]Tschudi-Barbatti, 'Die Halbbatzen-Kollekte', 59.

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They were instrumental in implementing the schemes discussed above, as well as gathering individual donations. For the BM, they started almost immediately after the seminary was formed in 1815, the first auxiliary being set up in Leonberg in 1816. A second aid society was formed in Stuttgart. A third was started then in Krefeld by the end of 1816. By the end of 1819, there were fifteen auxiliary societies whose main purpose at the time was to educate missionary pupils for the BM. Schlatter mentions at least nine societies in Switzerland, four in France, and countless others in Germany.[70] They later expanded to contacts globally.

The growth of these auxiliary societies was astounding for the PEMS. By 1828, they had 149 auxiliary societies in France and another 21 of them in Switzerland, Germany, and the Netherlands collecting regularly for the cause. After a structural reorganization in 1879, the PEMS counted twenty-six auxiliary societies in France and Alsace, and an additional six abroad in Switzerland, the Netherlands, Italy, and Southern Africa by 1881.[71] As mentioned, these auxiliary societies reached deep into their surrounding regions by organizing regular collections in churches, Sunday schools, prayer meetings, mission festivities, or lectures from returning missionaries.

Closely related to the auxiliary societies were the ladies' committees. They ran a parallel network within the missionary societies. In the case of the PEMS, a ladies' committee was founded in 1824 in Paris to coordinate collecting activities of their 'sisters in Christ' who were organized in similar ladies' committees in the French provinces and abroad.[72] These committees would gather several times a year at the exact same hour of the same day to be united in prayer and then manage a whole range of collection activities for the mission. For instance, in 1854 the ladies from the port city of Le Havre would benefit from their husbands, fathers, or brothers' colonial trading business and acquire rice and coffee at a modest price to send to Paris where their 'sisters' could sell these goods with a nice profit for the mission. The sisters in Marseille sent 300 francs worth of tuna, olives, and anchovies. Ladies from other regions would send luxury chocolates, apple sugar, textiles, and other high-quality regional goods to Paris, while yet other regional ladies' committees would organize their own sales and only send the profits to Paris. For instance, the ladies in Nîmes, Bordeaux, and Montpellier all sent substantial amounts of more than 1,000 francs. Women in Neuchâtel and La-Chaux-de-Fonds in Switzerland contributed more modestly between 200 and 250 francs, but one needs to consider that Swiss donors also supported the BM. Through collecting all the profits from these regional sales and through organizing their own sales in Paris, the central ladies' committee was able to fundraise more than 10,000 francs for the PEMS in 1854, which was about 12 per cent of the annual funding revenue.[73]

The BM financial reports do not mention ladies' committees as detailed in the PEMS reports. We know, however, that a first auxiliary society of young women emerged in Bern in November 1818 and that the BM headquarters in Basel had its own ladies' committee.[74] Moreover, as Tschudi-Barbatti has shown, much of the *Halbbatzen-kollekte* was carried out by women serving as local collectors.[75] Since the Paris ladies' committee's annual reports regularly mention 'sisters' committees' abroad it is very likely that their efforts were responsible for the donations to Basel which, however, only appeared anonymously.

[70]Schlatter, *Geschichte der Basler Mission 1815–1915*, 1:45–6.

[71]Tablau générale de toutes les sociétés auxiliaires … Août 1828, Défap Archives, Paris; Zorn, *Le Grand Siècle d'une mission protestante*, 657.

[72]Camille Aubert, 'Femmes et mission, de la France au Lesotho. Statuts, rôles et engagements au sein de la Société des Missions évangéliques de Paris, de 1825 aux années 1910' (Master's diss., University of Paris, 2012), THE 00534, Défap Archives, Paris.

[73]Rapport du Comité de la Société auxiliaire de femmes de Paris, 1855, 35–40; Tableau général des Comptes, 41, in *Rapport annuel de la SMEP*, 1855, Défap Archives, Paris, PER 1325.

[74]Schlatter, *Geschichte der Basler Mission 1815–1915*, 1:38ff.

[75]Tschudi-Barbatti, 'Die Halbbatzen-Kollekte'.

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It is important to stress, however, that these female fundraising activities were in addition to the private donations from these women. In other words, not only in terms of organizing and managing fundraising operations but also in pure quantitative terms, the PEMS and the BM most likely relied more strongly on women than on men who, however, held all the leadership positions within the organizations.

Maintaining the donor base through missionary publications

To inform and maintain their donor bases' loyalty, both organizations covered continental Europe and parts of the United States and Russia with a relentless stream of stories about their proselytizing efforts in British India and Africa.[76] Starting in 1815, the BM published annual reports on the progress of their missionaries in Asia, Africa, and the Americas in three languages: German and French for their continental European donor base, and English for their donors in the United States, the British metropole, and their colonies. A monthly 'heathen messenger' (*Die Evangelischer Heidenbote*) provided popular stories in German from 1828 onwards, while a more intellectual 'mission magazine' (*Missions-magazin*), launched in 1816, targeted more educated German readers. Additionally, calendars, pamphlets, children's books, and the like were used in (Sunday) schools and among less literate populations. These publications were distributed via pastors, bookshops, or trading companies between Berrysburg near Philadelphia in the west, Moscow in the east, Trieste in the south, and Hamburg and St Petersburg in the north. Most sellers were in germanophone Europe, which at the time included Prussian trading cities in eastern Europe such as Danzig (now Gdanks in Poland).[77]

The PEMS published in French only. Their flagship journal *Journal des Missions Évangéliques* de Paris was launched in 1826 with a monthly circulation of 1,500 copies. In 1849 they started a *Petit messenger* for children. Like the BM, they also published illustrated calendars, pamphlets, and books for a broad readership.[78]

These journals and pamphlets created and sustained an evangelical discourse about 'heathens' in British India and Africa that seemed to have shaped European PEMS and BM donors' self-perceptions and world-views quite significantly. Through the above-mentioned auxiliary societies, ladies' committees, Sunday schools, church parishes, regular prayer-meetings in factories organized by evangelical capitalists, and other means, they not only followed the fates of 'their' missionaries and the societies they tried to convert over the course of several decades. They also seemed to have grown emotionally attached to them. We see in the financial reports of both societies that local communities donated not only to the organization, but also to specific mission schools in particular regions which they read about regularly in mission publications. For example, in 1855, donors in Zurich dedicated 1,100 francs to be used specifically for purchase of land in India by the BM. Additionally, 500 francs each were designated to the education of 'Hindu children' and for an orphanage in Tellicherry, while 150 francs were to be used for church building in Udupi. A 'noble friend from Germany' donated more than 4,000 francs for a college to train catechists in Balmatta (Mangalore) while 'friends' from Odessa in the Russian empire, France, and Alsace wanted to see their donations used for specific churches, girls' schools, and buying additional land. 'English friends' in India, finally, donated for specific purposes in line with their colonial interests, among them a Tulu translation of the Bible and an English-language school in Mangalore.[79]

[76]For a detailed study of missionary publications and propaganda, see Felicity Jensz and Hanna Acke, eds., *Missions and Media: The Politics of Missionary Periodicals in the Long Nineteenth Century* (Franz Steiner Verlag, 2013).

[77]Jahresbericht der evangelischen Missionsgesellschaft zu Basel, Basel 1859, 18f., Digitale Bibliothek, Munchener DigitalisierungsZentrum.

[78]See e.g. Financial Report 1864–5, 41, in *Rapport annuel de la SMEP*, 1865, Défap Archives, Paris, PER 1325.

[79]Jahresrechnung der evangelischen Missionsgesellschaft zu Basel für 1855, 128–30, in 41. Jahresbericht der evangelischen Missionsgesellschaft zu Basel, Basel 1856, Digitale Bibliothek, Munchener DigitalisierungsZentrum.

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In the case of the PEMS, we see a similar pattern. One of the most active auxiliary societies was the one in Geneva, the members of which followed very closely the careers of individual pupils and students in the mission schools in Lesotho through newsletters that they received regularly from the Swiss head of the Lesotho mission stations.[80] Most Geneva donors therefore made several donations, one for the organization as a whole and one for specific individuals and projects, such as the mission school in Morija, for a missionary couple stationed in a particular village, or for a project in the newly opened mission in Senegal.[81]

What stories did the BM and the PEMS convey to their European donors through their multiple publications and auxiliaries? Of course, the discourse changed over the course of the nineteenth century and cannot be analysed in detail here. However, three features are key. One, French- and German-speaking evangelicals largely followed their English-speaking peers in organizing around abolitionism and denouncing the 'barbarity' of slavery in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, and then moving toward denouncing the 'barbarity' of supposed 'heathen' practices such as witchcraft, headhunting, or superstition.[82] With this they legitimized their claims to 'save' Africans and Asians supposedly living in 'darkness of death' and in desperate need of the gospel toward their European donors who were willing to assume their Christian responsibilities.[83] In the colonies, this stance put missionary societies in a tense relationship with colonial governments: they shared the overarching goal of 'civilizing the natives', but often also defended 'their pupils' against excessive economic exploitation and colonial violence. Two, even if they converted, former 'heathens' were never seen as fully equal to Europeans. They remained 'childlike', and were never promoted as missionaries equal to Europeans or became part of mission committees. This hierarchy is clearly visible in both missionary societies' archives to this day. While they contain a wealth of biographic documents on the European missionaries, documentation on the numerically much larger group of Asian and African 'assistants' is scarce, if not absent. Three, the missionary discourse evolved from one of enthusiasm for the mission cause in the early nineteenth century to one of growing frustration toward the end of the nineteenth century in light of growing demands for autonomy from converted communities.

Some examples may serve to illustrate these claims. In 1826, the newly founded PEMS launched its flagship journal with a long programmatic opening article that rallied support from French-speaking Protestants to join their English, Dutch, and US 'brothers and sisters'. The task of bringing Christianity to 'ferocious tribes who slaughter their own children as soon as they emerge from their mother's womb and devour the flesh of their companions sacrificed to their vengeance', was not a national one, but one for all Protestants. Together they were to proselytize among 'the barbarian hordes of Africa', to attack 'the castes of Hindustan' in India, and to preach to the 'cruellest Indian tribes [in the United States], waving the peaceful olive branch amidst the fearsome tomahawks and scalpels still dripping with the blood of the unfortunate whose skulls they had split open'.[84]

A few decades later, the tone had changed. In 1885, one of the most experienced missionaries in Lesotho, which by then had become a protectorate of the British empire, published a long study

[80]Léa Boldo and Bernhard C. Schär, 'Vous nous aimes sans nous connaître. Genève, centre financier, intellectuel et émotionnel de la mission française en Afrique britannique australe, ca. 1830–1900', in *Genève (post)coloniale. Les ambivalences d'une ville suisse et internationale*, ed. Marie-Luce Desgrandchamps and Damiano Matasci (Georg, 2025), 70–93.

[81]Liste des Souscripteurs & donateurs. Exercise 1869–1870, 99, in *Rapport annuel de la SMEP*, 1870, Défap Archives, Paris, PER 1325.

[82]Catherine Hall, *Civilising Subjects: Colony and Metropole in the English Imagination, 1830–1867* (University of Chicago Press, 2002); Thomas David and Janick Marina Schaufelbuehl, "Swiss Conservatives and the Struggle for the Abolition of Slavery at the End of the Nineteenth Century', *Itinerario* 34, no. 2 (2010): 87–103; Damien Tricoire, 'Natural Rights in the Early Modern Atlantic World: Religion and the Emergence of Antislavery in Enlightenment France', *Slavery & Abolition* 46, no. 1 (2025): 59–83.

[83]*Evangelische Missions-magazin*, 1857, 4–5, Digitale Bibliothek, Munchener DigitalisierungsZentrum.

[84]'Introduction', *Journal des Missions Évangéliques* 1 (1826): 5–15.

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that was published in ten issues of the PEMS's journal over the course of two years. Its title was 'Some of the main obstacles for progress in evangelizing the Basutos'. It acknowledged that 'the Basutos are not as they were 50 years ago when the first missionaries arrived'. 'Civilization' had changed them, but not—as anticipated and hoped for—into fully Christianized subjects. They were becoming 'spoiled children—for lack of a better word—the Basutos have not stopped being an infantile people'. The reason for this, according to the author, was an innate inability to understand and a reluctance to fully engage with the depth of Protestant religion. To illustrate his point, he gave plethora of examples of how their faith was supposedly superficial and grounded more in emotion than in rationality; that they abused church songs by not using them to engage with God but, rather, to pass time during manual work; although their language was colourful and poetic, it lacked artistic depth and was merely an expression of habit, etc.[85]

The BM's *Die Evangelischer Heidenbote* and *Evangelische Missions-magazin*, two popular journals, shaped German-speaking European minds in similar ways. Figure 4 is an example taken from *Die Evangelischer Heidenbote* in 1869. It shows 'Hindu' knife sharpeners, sitting on the ground and working with a manually operated wheel, while another, holding a hand-woven basket, watches him. This image was published as part of an article reporting on the influence of the BM on the life of Hindus.[86] The author, a missionary in Mangalore, wrote how, in India, technological advance was limited to the printing press of the mission. He painted an image of Indians as laborious but who worked with 'little craftsmanship' and technology. He argued that missionaries worked to break Indians from their old ways and to teach new skills, because 'what they have once learned or gotten used to, they do mechanically until they are taught something else'. Moreover, the author reported that during a visit to a printing press run by an Indian, being an orderly European himself he was horrified at the disorder that prevailed in the press. He implied that Indians needed direction for work and had to be taught by missionaries how to work independently.

Such reportage on representations of indigenous work, labourers, and their occupations showed them as crude and rudimentary practices. Printing them for the European public achieved two main goals. One, by presenting the Indians as in need of missionary intervention, they justified their presence in the colonies. Two, by giving the reader the impression of a vast task at hand for the missionaries to civilize the indigenous into habits of work, they legitimized the need for continuous financing of their overseas operations. In this sense, the content of these publications simultaneously upheld both the value of missionary work as well as the inculcation of technological advancement in colonies and the efficiency of capitalist ways of work. In contrast to these portrayals in publications, BM missionaries in the field encountered heterogenous populations and had a more nuanced approach in order to gain converts. The exchange of knowledge regarding technology, environment, society, and political structures was possible due to a dialectical encounter in the mission field, a picture which contrasts with the simplistic stories published to arouse lay interest and encourage donations in Europe. Nevertheless, the BM's perspective remained positive about British colonization, as was exemplified by its partial reporting of the 1857 uprising in the subcontinent.[87] It also praised the English language, Western Christian education, and the introduction of railways for its civilizing impact on India by destroying 'national paganism'.[88]

Therefore, in sum, the culture that both missionary societies created through their publications, and sustained among their vast network of donors, positioned even small donors among the

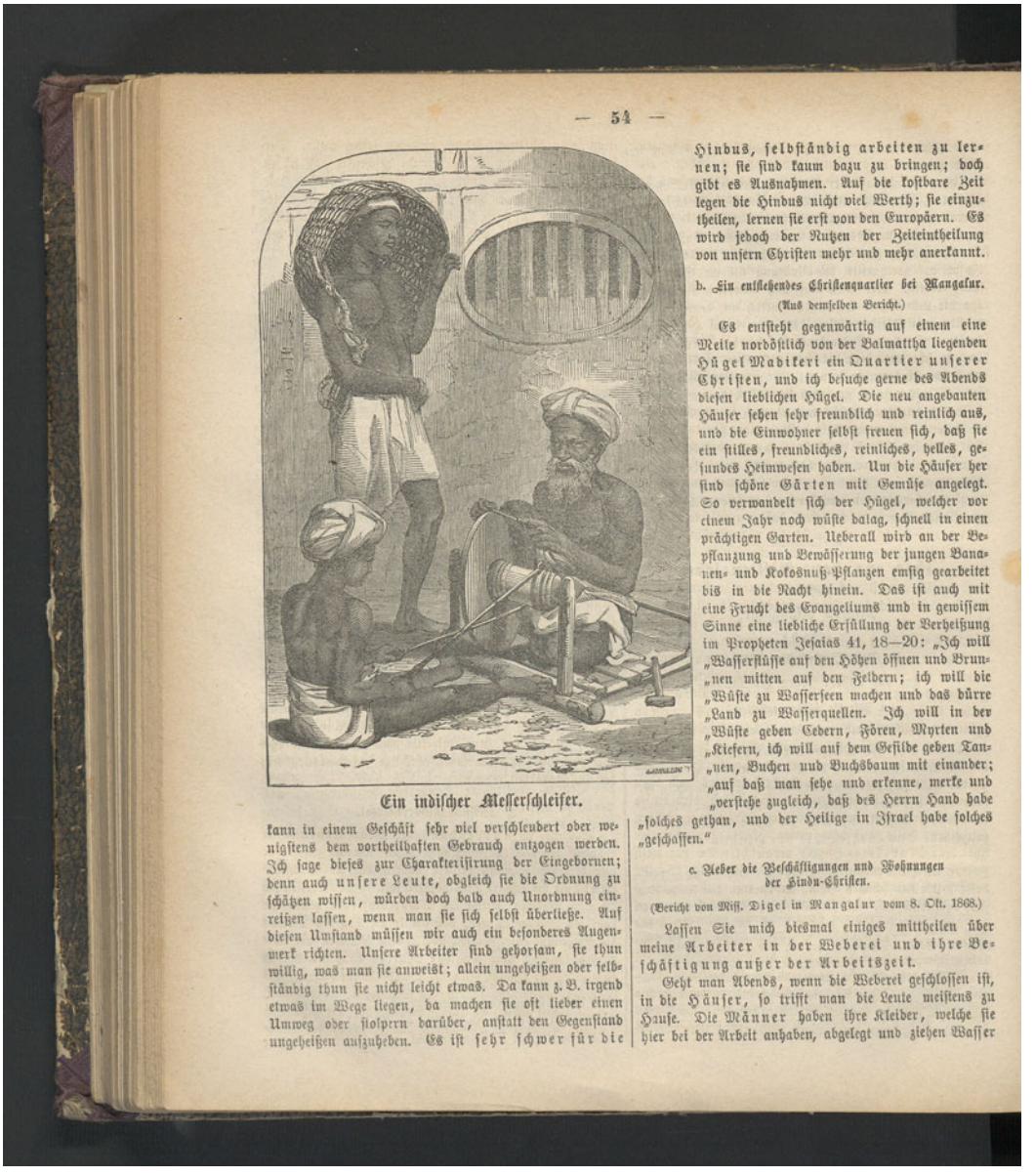
[85]Louis Duvoisier, 'Quelques-un des principaux obstacles aux progrès de l'évangile parmi les Bassoutos', *Journal des Missions Évangéliques* 60 (1885): 23–4.

[86]*Die Evangelischer Heidenbote*, no. 4 (1869), 53–4, Digitale Bibliothek Münchener DigitalisierungsZentrum.

[87]*Evangelisches Missions-magazin* (Mission-Comptoir Publishing House, 1857), 401–8. Accessed 20 September 2024, Digitale Bibliothek, Munchener DigitalisierungsZentrum.

[88]*Evangelisches Missions-magazin*, 1868, 410.

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— 54 —

Hindus, selbständig arbeiten zu lernen; sie sind kaum dazu zu bringen; doch gibt es Ausnahmen. Auf die kostbare Zeit legen die Hindus nicht viel Werth; sie einzutheilen, lernen sie erst von den Europäern. Es wird jedoch der Nutzen der Zeiteintheilung von unsern Christen mehr und mehr anerkannt.

b. Ein entstehendes Christenquartier bei Mangalur.
(Aus demselben Bericht.)

Es entsteht gegenwärtig auf einem eine Meile nordöstlich von der Balmattha liegenden Hügel Madikeri ein Quartier unserer Christen, und ich besuche gerne des Abends diesen lieblichen Hügel. Die neu angebauten Häuser sehen sehr freundlich und reinlich aus, und die Einwohner selbst freuen sich, daß sie ein stilles, freundliches, reinliches, helles, gesundes Heimwesen haben. Um die Häuser her sind schöne Gärten mit Gemüse angelegt. So verwandelt sich der Hügel, welcher vor einem Jahr noch wüste dalag, schnell in einen prächtigen Garten. Ueberall wird an der Bepflanzung und Bewässerung der jungen Bananen- und Kokosnuß-Pflanzen emsig gearbeitet bis in die Nacht hinein. Das ist auch mit eine Frucht des Evangeliums und in gewissem Sinne eine liebliche Erfüllung der Verheißung im Propheten Jesaias 41, 18—20: „Ich will „Wasserflüsse auf den Höhen öffnen und Brunnen mitten auf den Feldern; ich will die „Wüste zu Wasserseen machen und das dürre „Land zu Wasserquellen. Ich will in der „Wüste geben Cedern, Fören, Myrten und „Kiefern, ich will auf dem Gefilde geben Tannen, Buchen und Buchsbaum mit einander; „auf daß man sehe und erkenne, merke und „verstehe zugleich, daß des Herrn Hand habe „solches gethan, und der Heilige in Israel habe solches „geschaffen."

Ein indischer Messerschleifer.

kann in einem Geschäft sehr viel verschleudert oder wenigstens dem vortheilhaften Gebrauch entzogen werden. Ich sage dieses zur Charakterisirung der Eingebornen; denn auch unsere Leute, obgleich sie die Ordnung zu schätzen wissen, würden doch bald auch Unordnung einreißen lassen, wenn man sie sich selbst überließe. Auf diesen Umstand müssen wir auch ein besonderes Augenmerk richten. Unsere Arbeiter sind gehorsam, sie thun willig, was man sie anweist; allein ungeheißen oder selbständig thun sie nicht leicht etwas. Da kann z. B. irgend etwas im Wege liegen, da machen sie oft lieber einen Umweg oder stolpern darüber, anstatt den Gegenstand ungeheißen aufzuheben. Es ist sehr schwer für die

c. Ueber die Beschäftigungen und Wohnungen der Hindu-Christen.

(Bericht von Miss. Digel in Mangalur vom 8. Okt. 1868.)

Lassen Sie mich diesmal einiges mittheilen über meine Arbeiter in der Weberei und ihre Beschäftigung außer der Arbeitszeit.

Geht man Abends, wenn die Weberei geschlossen ist, in die Häuser, so trifft man die Leute meistens zu Hause. Die Männer haben ihre Kleider, welche sie hier bei der Arbeit anhaben, abgelegt und ziehen Wasser

Figure 4. An Indian knife sharpener. *Die Evangelischer Heidenbote*, no. 4 (1869), 54, Münchener DigitalisierungsZentrum.

poorer segments of European societies as the 'chosen race' contributing towards the cause of evangelization. They were provided with literature that shaped ideas among European adults, encouraging them to assume their Christian responsibility to help their childish 'brothers and sisters' in Africa and India who, even if converted, would remain immature and in need of guidance.

Besides encouraging donations, the sale of these publications brought in revenue as well. For instance, *Die Evangelischer Heidenbote*'s price in 1870s was 1.20 Swiss francs per year, with a subscription at post offices in other areas costing 1.70 Swiss Francs. Similarly, the *Evangelische Missions-magazin* cost 5 Swiss francs in Basel and Germany, and was sold by various distributors at a slightly higher price in other parts of Switzerland and Germany, as well as in France and Italy.

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This income, however, does not appear as a separate earning in the annual reports, but as part of either miscellaneous income or 'contributions' and other income.

Conclusion and outlook

This article offers a fresh look at the relationship between mission, empire, and finance by focusing on the understudied fundraising efforts that missionary societies undertook to enable them to pursue their well-studied proselytizing, cultural, and social efforts in the colonies. Focusing on the period between the end of the Napoleonic Wars and the 1870s—when British imperial power provided the principal framework for continental European and US evangelical mobilization—it suggests a more integrative reading of one of most consequential developments of the nineteenth century: analysing the massive expansion of Protestantism into Africa and Asia as a result of intense collaboration among multiple missionary societies with home-bases in a northern transatlantic world that operated, however, in a global and transimperial space. By benefiting from and reinforcing capitalist fundraising practices, they shaped spiritual cultures and daily life in the colonies just as much as they did in Europe.

This insight is rooted in a methodological proposition for the fledgling debate on the relationship between global and transimperial history. We believe that adopting a meso-level approach that focuses on supra-individual organizations, such as the still understudied large missionary societies that did not operate in neatly delineated national or imperial spaces, has several advantages. First, it allows us to examine how missionary societies were among the main creators of transimperial connections between hundreds of thousands of donors in a large northern transatlantic space, on the one hand, and converts and other colonized subjects, on the other hand. Examining donation practices and functioning of organizations allows us to not only describe, but also to explain how these connections relied on private organizations to become durable and institutionalized over time. Second, it allows us to examine the emergence of spaces that were never coextensive with nations and empires. Neither PEMS nor BM ever operated in the entirety of France, Switzerland, Germany, the United States, British India, or the Cape colony. Rather they created their own Protestant geography connecting evangelical subregions in all those spaces. This insight allows us to undersrtand how transimperial organizations created alternative spaces alongside and cutting accross nations and empires.[89] Third, focusing on these organizations offers a framework to step outside of the Anglo-centrism evident in much of the research literature. US and continental European missionary societies and similar transimperial organizations integrated large swaths of Europe and the US into British imperialism and vice-versa. They brought the realities of British colonialism even to the most remote hamlets in the Alps or the Pyrenees who followed 'their' missionaries in journals, calendars, and Sunday schools. Fourth, it pays attention to multiple inequalities and forms of power during the time of empire. The missionary society leadership was deeply embedded in and benefited from imperial finance networks connecting trading centres on the US East Coast to Paris, Basel, Frankfurt, Amsterdam, Copenhagen, Odessa, London, and elsewhere.

Their fundraising strategies were, moreover, deeply embedded in the patriarchal, colonial, and capitalist culture of the time. Hence, all leadership positions were trusted to men from the closely connected and often intermarried spiritual, financial, and industrial evangelical milieus who ran the organizations. The actual fundraising work was left, to a large degree, to ladies' committees in the organizations' headquarters in Paris and Basel, as well as in the multiple auxiliary societies spread out across the northern transatlantic Protestant space. Numerically, the vast majority of donors remained anonymous and hailed from poorer working-class and rural backgrounds. Their weekly donations of half a coin were quite significant given their salaries at the time. From

[89]This is discussed this more extensively in Bernhard C. Schär and Mikko Toivanen, eds., *Integration and Collaborative Imperialism in Modern Europe: At the Margins of Empire, 1800–1950* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2024).

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the perspective of the missionary societies' evangelical and capitalist leadership, collecting these small donations was seen as an instrument for 'civilizing' lower classes by giving them the opportunity to assume their responsibility as Christians and thereby position themselves as 'adults' vis-à-vis the childlike 'heathens' or converts in the colonies, who were portrayed as being in desperate need of Christian guidance. It was also a way of naturalizing evangelical-capitalist culture by inculcating habits of donations.

This article, however, also has some important limitations that call for further research. We have only focused on fundraising and income, but expenditure too would require a full-fledged inquiry. A comparison with Catholic mission societies' fundraising methods and finances would further enrich our understanding of how missionaries contributed to capitalist practices. Most importantly, colonized and converted Asian and Africans too were gradually incorporated into the missionary societies' transimperial donor networks. Their donations, however, do not appear separately in the annual financial records. Their absence therefore ought to be examined. Similarly to their European donors, converts and the surrounding societies in the mission fields too were gradually integrated into a cultural sphere produced by missionary publications in their respective Asian and African languages. How these publications shaped converts' conceptions of self and the world also remains to be studied.

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