Klaus Koschorke

"Owned and Conducted entirely by the Native Christian Community"
The 'Christian Patriot' and the Indigenous Christian Press in Colonial India around 1900

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Foreword

The subject of this study is an early journal of Indian Christians: 'The Christian Patriot. A Journal of Social and Religious Progress' (Madras/Chennai 1890–1929). "Owned and conducted entirely by the Native Christian Community", the periodical saw itself as the "mouthpiece" of the Indian Protestant community of South India "as a whole". Its aim was to make their voice–as independent actors–heard in the colonial public sphere of the country. In doing so, the journal distanced itself from both the paternalism of the Euro-American missionaries and Hindu fundamentalist tendencies in parts of the Indian national movement. 'The Christian Patriot' was widely circulated and also attracted attention in South Asia, South Africa, Europe and the USA. At the same time, the 'Christian Patriot' reflects a wide range of transregional networks between local Christian elites from various regions in Asia and the global South. Thus, this study contributes significantly to a new understanding of Christian globality around 1910, beyond Western missionary activities.

One of the key problems for any future polycentric 'History of World Christianity'– which seeks to respond to its contextual, denominational and cultural plurality– remains the issue of sources. How do we gain access to the voices of "indigenous" Christians in the former "mission fields" and colonial societies of the southern hemisphere? They are usually not, or only marginally, documented in the respective missionary, ecclesial or colonial archives on which, however, most classical accounts of the history of Christianity in the Global South are still based today. This problem has been addressed by various initiatives around the world since the 1960s. One major source corpus, however, that has been largely overlooked (or often analysed only in isolated regional or academic contexts) are the journals and periodicals of indigenous Christian elites from the South. As an act of emancipation, these journals experienced a veritable boom in various colonial societies in Asia and Africa around the turn from 19th to 20th centuries. They have been the subject of a research project carried out between 2012 and 2015/2017 at my former Chair of "Early and Global History of Christianity" at the University of Munich LMU. This project dealt with periodicals from India, the Philippines, South Africa, West Africa and the Black Atlantic[1]. In some way, the ‚Christian Patriot' served as a starting point for the entire research project. The present monograph has been published first in German in 2019[2] and is a slightly updated version of the German original.

There are many people I have to thank for advice and support. This applies first to my colleagues and collaborators in the research project mentioned above, and to vari-

1 For the title and the most important publications resulting from this research project, see: chapter II Note 9.
2 Title of the German edition: Klaus Koschorke, "Owned and Conducted entirely by the Native Christian Community". Der 'Christian Patriot' und die indigen-christliche Presse in kolonialen Indien um 1900 (StAECG 34), Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz 2019 (ISBN 9 783447 1123741).

ous contributors to the Munich-Freising conferences related to this project. Especially I would like to mention Adrian Hermann (Bonn), Frieder Ludwig (now Stavanger), Ciprian Burlaciou (Munich), Phuti Mogase (Stavanger), Paolo Aranha (Rome), Andrew Barnes (Arizona) and David Daniels† (Chicago). Important informations on individual aspects of the present study were provided by Daniel Jeyaraj (formerly Liverpool, now Chennai); Vincent Kumara Doss (Chennai); Richard Fox Young (Princeton); Gudrun Löwner (Bangalore); Andrew Walls† (Liverpool / Accra); Chandra Mallampalli (Westmont); Brian Stanley (Edinburgh); Dana Roberts (Boston); Angus Crichton (Cambridge); Mira Sonntag (Tokyo); Michael Shapiro (Kyoto); Rudolf Gerhard Tiedemann† (Shandong); Kevin Ward (Leeds); Sebastian C.H. Kim (Claremont); Prabo Mihindukulasuriya (Colombo); Muthuraj Swamy (Cambridge). Technical support for the English version of this book has been provided by Philipp Kuster and Maria Burlacioiu (both Munich). Special thanks go also to the team members of the Open Publishing Section of the Munich University Library (LMU) where this book is being published both in a digital and print version.

Parallel to, and connected with, the work on the English version of this book has been the preparation of the digital edition of the ‚Christian Patriot', which has gone/ is expected to go online by the end of 2025 (Link: https://discover.ub.uni-muenchen.de/chrispat). Many thanks for the excellent cooperation go here to the members of the Digital Services of the Munich University Library (LMU) for making this digital edition accessible to a wider public. The continued support from the members of the Yale Divinity School Library Day Missions Collection (and especially Martha Smalley) which provided the main microfilms of the ‚Christian Patriot' was also very helpful.

Journals and print media published by local Christians from Asia, Africa and other missionary or colonial contexts around 1900 still represent a largely untapped resource. One of the aims of this study is to awaken them from their slumber and to provide impetus for a systematic research in other regions as well.

Munich, September 2025
Klaus Koschorke

Chapter 1

1 Christian Madras around 1890/1900

Towards the end of the 19th century, Madras–today's Chennai–was the centre of a small but influential elite of Indian Protestant Christians. This group included lawyers, teachers, administrators, doctors and other socially upstanding and financially independent individuals. They formed their own associations (such as the *Madras Native Christian Association* founded in 1888) and established links with analogue societies of Indian Christians inside and outside the country (for example in Malacca, South Africa and Great Britain). They launched numerous initiatives (such as the interdenominational *National Church of India*, which was founded in 1886) and published their own journals and periodicals, which critically commented on the religious, social and political development of the country. One of these journals–'*The Christian Patriot.* A Journal of Social and Religious Progress' (founded in Madras in 1890)–will be the subject of this study.

Madras as a Colonial Metropolis

Around 1900, Madras was indisputably the political, administrative, commercial and cultural centre of South India. Like other British colonial cities in India, the metropolis owed its existence to the trading activities of the *English East India Company*, which had first established a small factory here in 1640[1]. This was soon expanded into the fortress of St George and developed into the core of colonial Madras, which subsequently experienced a rapid upswing, including the non-European and partly older settlement areas. Less than two decades after its foundation, Madras was already the most important British settlement and the headquarters of the British East India Company in eastern and southern India, which was constantly expanding its sphere of influence. With the transition from trade to political rule by the British in the 19th century, the rise of the colonial metropolis continued to accelerate. The harbour made the city an important hub for trade between India and Europe at an early stage. With the introduction of the railway in the 1840s, the hinterland also became increasingly accessible and Madras was connected to other important cities such as Bombay and Calcutta. The population also increased significantly. It rose from around 250,000 inhabitants in 1800 to around 400,000 in 1871–the year of the first organised Indian census–and to around 520,000 in 1911[2]. This made Madras the third largest city on the subcontinent and the fifth largest in the British Empire.

1 Literature on the following: Alexander (2006), "History of Madras"; Kumara Doss / Alexander (2012), "Protestant Elite"; Muthiah (2004), *Madras Rediscovered*; Suntharalingam (1980), *Nationalist Awakening*; Frykenberg (2008), *Christianity in India*, chapters 9–11; Houghton (1983), *Impoverishment of Dependency*, passim; Mallampali (2004), *Christians and Public Life*, 6–12 ("The Madras Presidency and its Christian Elite"); Balachandran, A. (2000), "Early Colonial Madras".

2 Wikipedia: Art. Demographics of Chennai (accessed 25 November 2015): 1891: 397,552; 1881: 404,848; 1891: 452,518; 1901: 509,346; 1911: 518,660–According to the 1901 census, 80.6% of these were Hindus, 11.3% Muslims, 8.0% Christians, 0.05% Jains and 0.02% Buddhists (Census of India, 1901–Madras, 46ff). In 1911, the proportion of Christians was 8.1%.

Madras was a cosmopolitan city and the population was very heterogeneous in its composition. This was partly the result of a deliberate policy by the British, who had encouraged the settlement of foreign traders–such as the Portuguese, Armenians and Jews–early on. In the 19th century, the colonial economy was increasingly dependent on the influx of labour from other parts of the country. Migrants flocked to Madras in growing numbers from a wide variety of regions. Members of merchant castes from neighbouring Tamil Nadu and Andhra were drawn to the city. Migrants from Kerala and Karnataka settled in the metropolis, attracted by the tantalising prospects and diverse job opportunities. Adventurers and fortune seekers came from far-flung areas like Maharashta, Rajasthan, Gujurat and Punjab. They all belonged to different socio-economic classes, castes and language groups. In addition to Tamil, Telugu, Urdu (Hindustani) and Hindi were among the most commonly spoken Indian idioms in Madras. A particularly important role in the colonial economy was played by regional merchant groups who were able to adapt to the changing conditions under English rule. Without their inner-Indian connections and supra-regional networks, British trade would not have been possible.

Western education, the emerging market economy and the modernising influence of colonial institutions favoured the *formation of new indigenous elites*. Researchers such as R. Suntharaligam distinguish between the successive emergence of a modern *commercial* elite (in the 1850s), an *administrative* leadership group trained for service in the colonial administration (in the 1860s)–which was mainly recruited from graduates of the Madras High School–and a *professional* elite (from the 1880s). The latter included lawyers, teachers and journalists[3].

At the same time, *new forms* of *political articulation* and self-organisation beyond traditional caste structures developed. In 1852, for example, the 'Madras Native Association' and the 'Hindu Progressive Improvement Society' were founded. Among other things, the former sent petitions to the British Parliament in which the rule of the East India Company was repeatedly sharply criticised. Even though the 'Madras Native Association' largely ceased its activities in the 1860s, it is nevertheless significant as the first real attempt to establish a Western-style political association in South India[4]. The 1880s saw a new wave of the formation of numerous societies. These included socially oriented reform associations such as the 'Hindu Widows Remarriage Association' (1882) and political organisations such as the 'Madras Mahajana Sabha' (1884). This forum of moderate nationalists saw its task as "to bring before our rulers the views of the public, and to correctly represent to the Government what our needs are and to suggest remedies"[5]. This period also saw the formation of communal associations such

3 Suntharalingam (1980), *Nationalist Awakening*, passim.
4 Suntharalingam (1980), *Nationalist Awakening*, 45–57; Washbrook (1976), Madras Presidency; Mallampali (2004), *Christians and Public Life*, 13f.
5 Suntharalingam (1980), *Nationalist Awakening*, 209. 207ff; Jones (1989), *Socio-religious Reform Movements*, 162ff.

as the 'Anglo-Indian Association' (1879), three Muslim associations (1876–1886) and the 'Madras Native Christian Association', which was founded in 1888. In 1887, the third session of the 'Indian National Congress' (INC), founded two years earlier in Bombay, was held in Madras. Members of the 'Madras Mahajana Sabha', who were increasingly extending their political activities beyond the boundaries of the province, played an important role here. Also in a national context and in close connection with the Indian National Congress, the 'National Social Conference' was founded in Madras in 1888.

Transregional Press Centre

One sign of the "vibrant intellectual climate"[6] in Madras at the end of the 19th century was the very lively press landscape. "The age may be called the age of news papers", stated the journal Athenaeum, which was published in Madras, as early as 1878: "For every person that read a newspaper twenty years ago, one hundred read them now"[7]. Another twenty years later, around 1900, 60 English-language journals were counted in Madras alone[8]. There were also a large number of regional language publications. They all represented different political, social and religious groups.

The earliest newspapers in Madras were the weekly 'Government Gazette', the 'Madras Gazette' and the 'Madras Courier'. They reprinted news from European journals and informed readers about debates in the British Parliament with a six-month delay. The earliest Hindu periodical was probably the 'Crescent', first published in 1844 and discontinued in 1868. It was the counterpart to the 'Record', a missionary journal, and functioned as the mouthpiece of the aforementioned 'Madras Native Association'. It was followed by 'The Native Public Opinion' and (later merged with it) 'The Madrasee'. All these papers disappeared in the course of time. Among the colonial papers with a primarily European readership, the 'Madras Times', founded in 1850 (and primarily intended for traders and settlers), and the 'Madras Mail', founded in 1857, are particularly noteworthy. This newspaper existed until 1981 and for a long time was primarily the mouthpiece of the colonial establishment. The many-voiced missionary journalism, in which the (originally Methodist and later interdenominational) 'Harvest Field' and the 'Madras Christian College Magazine' stood out around 1900, is dealt with elsewhere. The same applies to the beginnings of the indigenous Christian press. The weekly journal 'The Hindu', which was founded in 1878 and "which, by, 1890, had become India's first Indian-run, Indian-owned, English language newspaper"[9], developed into a counterpart to the 'Madras Mail' and a mouthpiece of moderate Indian nationalism. This was complemented by 'Swadesamitran', another successful sister publication in Tamil. 'The Hindu' contributed significantly to the politicisation of the Western-educated middle class of South India and was closely linked organisationally with the 'Madras Maha-

6 Kumara Doss / Alexander (2012), "Protestant Elite", 117.
7 *'Athenaeum and Daily News'* 01.05.1878.
8 Frost (2004), "Asia's Maritime Networks", 8ff.
9 Frost (n.d.), "Madras, City of Theosophists", 1.

jana Sabha', founded in 1884, the Madras section of the Indian National Congress and various initiatives for the Hindu revival in the region. Both the 'Madras Mail' and 'The Hindu' are often quoted in the CP. The journalism of the Theosophists also gained considerable influence in the 1890s, who–in addition to their flagship 'The Theosophist'–distributed a further 22 journals for Indian readers[10]). "The power of the press in India is acknowledged", stated a missionary voice around 1900. "The readiness with which any party or any new movement establishes its organ for the advocacy of its views is patent to all"[11] We will later analyse the exchanges and controversies of the 'Christian Patriot' (CP) with these and other journals in more detail[12].

Hindu Revival, City of Theosophists

The old faith was dying out–this was an assumption often voiced in missionary circles around 1880. It was also partly voiced within the Hindu community itself. At the very least, there was a religious vacuum in the Western-educated Indian intelligentsia, which was known for its scepticism and disinterest in the cultural traditions it had inherited. "Many educated men are without a religion, having given up their heathen gods and worship, but not embracing Christianity"–according to a missionary voice of the time[13]. On the other hand, there had already been strong defensive reactions to the activities of the missionaries in the 1850s, and in the 1880s there was a proliferation of revivalist societies such as the '*Hindu Sabha',* founded in 1880, or the '*Hindu Tract Society*', founded in 1887. The latter set itself the goal of "to spread Hinduism and to defend it against the attacks of its opponents". At the same time, it sought to promote "the cause of morality and sound learning"[14]. The revival of Hinduism was given an enormous boost in particular by the Theosophical movement, which had its centre in Madras since 1882 and was particularly appealing to the Anglophone elite of South India. With its thesis of the compatibility of Western modernity and ancient Indian traditions, it led the representatives of the traditional faith out of the defensive. Hindu literature, knowledge and religion were no longer regarded as backward, but as the basis for a glorious future for the country. This made it possible for many Hindus to feel not only equal but even superior to Europeans. "The relationship between Theosophy and Hindu revivalism… was a direct and intimate one"[15]. There were numerous ideological, personal and organisational links between the two movements and the early national movement in South India. Of all the Indian branches of the Theosophical Society, Madras had the largest number of members and the highest organisational density. Marc Frost described the metropolis as the "city of the Theosophists" in a forthcoming monograph on religious

10 Frost (2004), "Asia's Maritime Networks", 8ff. 15ff.
11 Decennial Missionary Conference Madras 1902–*Report*, 92.
12 See chapter II p. 39ff.
13 ABCFM–*Annual Report 1888*, 57.
14 Suntharalingam (1980), *Nationalist Awakening*, 305.
15 Suntharalingam (1980), *Nationalist Awakening*, 302.

developments in South India towards the end of the 19th century[16]. On the other hand, scandals and setbacks were inevitable, and the Theosophists soon broke with other Hindu revivalist movements such as the 'Arya Samaj' and 'Brahmo Samaj'[17].

Forms of Christian Presence

At the same time, Madras was the centre of India's modern indigenous Christian elite. "This group of Protestant Christians included a number of remarkable men who were mostly lawyers, teachers, bureaucrats and in other professions. Dominated by a very small number of upper and middle class Christians, this new leadership was vocal in articulating its views on many issues that effected the Christian community as a whole"[18]. Between 1851 and 1900, the number of Christians in India had increased tenfold. In the Madras Presidency area alone, there was an increase of more than 300% in the last two decades of the 19th century. Around 1900, the Christian community there made up 8.1% of the population (according to the 1901 census), according to other figures[19] around 10%. This was primarily the result of the so-called mass movements among the underprivileged and marginalised groups of South Indian society[20]. At the same time, however, this development boosted the indigenous Christian elite of South India, which claimed to represent the "largest Christian population" in the country, pointing in particular to the high level of education of the Christian community and its "steady and solid progress in numbers and education".[21] The latter, in turn, was a consequence of the intensive missionary presence in the region, where–after the pioneering beginnings of the Tranquebar Mission in the early 18th century–a large number of Protestant missionary societies had become active in Madras in the course of the 19th century, the "great century of Protestant missionary advance" (Latourette).

It is well known that South Indian Christianity can look back on a long history. Its beginnings date back to the third, if not the second century[22]. Since then, there has been a continuous Christian presence in the region in the form of the so-called St. Thoma Christians, who were divided into various communities in the 19th century. In the 16th century, a Catholic branch of Indian Christianity had formed as a result of Portuguese missionary activities. Even in the 19th century, Catholics made up the majority of the Christian population of South India in purely numerical terms. However, they played a subordinate role in the public debates and controversies of the time. Hindu revival and modernist religious reform movements (such as the 'Brahmo Samaj') were primarily related in their positive and negative statements to Anglo-Saxon missionary Protes-

16 Frost (n.d.), "Madras, City of Theosophists" (unpublished study, chapter IV).
17 Frost (n.d.), "Madras, City of Theosophists", 7. 23; Jones (1989), *Socio-religious Reform Movements*, 162ff.
18 Kumara Doss / Alexander (2012), "Protestant Elite", 117.
19 Seal (1971), *Indian Nationalism*, 96.
20 Jones (1900), *South India Protestant Mission*, 60.
21 NCI–*Collection of Papers*, 47ff.
22 Frykenberg (2008), *Christianity in India*, 91–115. 130ff. 244ff; Neill (1984), *Christianity in India I,* 26ff. 191ff. 310ff; Neill (1985), *Christianity in India II,* 59ff. 236ff.

tantism, but not to Roman Catholicism, which was hardly recognised. The prominent Brahmin social reformer N.G. Chandavarkar (1855–1923), for example, even spoke of "Hindoo Protestantism" in a positive sense in the 1890s[23]. Quite analogous observations can be made at the same time in neighbouring Sri Lanka, where researchers such as Gananath Obeyesekara and Richard Gombrich described the Buddhist revival as "Protestant Buddhism"–both as a protest against and at the same time an imitation of the embattled model of missionary Protestantism. The 'Christian Patriot' also initially identified Protestantism and modern Christianity as a matter of course. "Though Christianity has been in India for nearly a century"–reads an article in the CP of 10 July 1897–"it is only within the last 15 years that any practical steps have been taken to weld together into a homogenous whole the varying elements that constitute the so-called Indian Christian Community". The much older tradition of Catholic and, above all, Syrian Orthodox Christianity initially barely featured in the world view of the indigenous Protestant elite of South India that articulated itself here. This only changed around the turn of the century, parallel to the "awakening" of the "ancient" community of Syrian St. Thoma Christians in Travancore (in present-day Kerala), which had long been ridiculed as backward. But now, in the context of intensified nationalist discourses, it was gradually rediscovered as a representative of a type of pre-colonial Christianity that was "worthy of veneration" and "untainted" by Western interference.

At the turn of the century, eleven Protestant missionary societies were active in Madras City alone. They came from different countries and represented six different denominations: Anglicans, Methodists, Lutherans, Presbyterians, Baptists and Congregationalists[24]. The strongest denomination was the Anglicans (SPG and CMS) with a total of 3,273 parishioners. They were followed by Lutherans (1,064), Methodists (882) and other groups[25]. If we look at southern India as a whole, the picture becomes even more complex. J.P. Jones was able to list over 25 Protestant missionary societies in an overview of the current status of the "South India Protestant Missions" written in 1900 "at the beginning of the new century". In addition to the different national origins–England, Scotland, USA, Canada, Germany, Switzerland, Denmark, etc.–these also revealed the breadth of the denominational programme[26]. At the end of the 19th

23 "It is, I know, the fashion in some quarters to cry down the Missionary… If today there is an awakening among us on the subject of religion and society, that is a great deal due to the light brought by him… To the Christian Missionary… is due to a great extent the credit of the religious and social awakening of which the school of 'Hindoo Protestantism' of the present day is the fruit" (quoted from: ODDIE [1978], *Social Protest in India*, 3f).

24 The analysis of the situation by K. Krishna Rau, editor of the CP, in his lecture to the 'Madras Missionary Conference' on 19 August 1906 entitled "The Indian Church in Madras" (printed in CP 25.08.1906 p. 5f; CP 01.09.1906 p. 5f; CP 08.09.1906 p. 6) is revealing.

25 Ibid, with reference to the 1901 census.

26 JONES (1900), *South India Protestant Missions* (p. 8ff) lists in detail 25 Protestant societies active in South India at the turn of the century, including the 'Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge' (SPCK; Anglican); 'Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts' (SPG; Anglican); 'London Missionary Society' (LMS; "nonconformist"); 'Church Missionary Society' (CMS; Anglican); Wesleyan Methodist Missionary

century, a total of 10 different Baptist, 13 Presbyterian, 2 Congregationalist, 6 Anglican, 7 Lutheran, 3 Methodist and 3 Herrnhut societies were active in India. The largest of these was the Anglican 'Church Missionary Society' (CMS), both in terms of the number of congregations, indigenous Christians and European and Indian missionary personnel. Regionally, the centre of gravity of Indian Protestant Christianity was clearly in the south of the country[27].

However, this diversity of Western missionary activities was also increasingly recognised as a problem. In times of rising Indian nationalism, Indian Christians were increasingly confronted with the charge of "denationalisation", i.e. the accusation of being unpatriotic and lacking solidarity with their predominantly non-Christian compatriots. And where could the "foreign" character of missionary Christianity be more clearly seen than in ist multitude of competing organisations, many of which already bore the identification of their "foreign" origin in their names? Why should an Indian Christian belong to the "Church of England", the "American Lutheran Mission" or the "Danish Mission"? Much earlier than in the churches of the West, the search for church unity and overcoming the imported denominational differences–criticized as "sectarianism" of the Euro-American missionaries–was among the demands of Indian Christians.

The Protestant missionary movement not only led to the establishment of denominationally separate (and numerically quite modest) missionary congregations. Above all, it was also present in the public sphere in a variety of ways–through its journalism, its social (and socio-political) activities, the introduction (and utilisation) of new technologies and its involvement in the medical and educational sectors[28]. Missionaries were often perceived as pioneers and multipliers of Western modernity. Take, as

Society (WMMS); Basel Mission (BM); American Madura Mission (Congregationalist); Church of Scotland Mission (Presbyterian); Free Church of Scotland Mission; American Baptist Telugu Mission; Leipzig Mission and four other Lutheran missions; American Dutch Reformed Arcot Mission; and various smaller societies.

27 *India as a whole*: The Protestant missions in India presented a fragmented picture. In 1890, 10 different Baptist, 13 Presbyterian, 2 Congregationalist, 6 Anglican, 7 Lutheran, 3 Methodist and 3 Moravian societies were operating there. They came from Great Britain, the USA, Canada, Australia, Germany, Switzerland and Sweden. Of the societies active in India around 1890, the Anglican Church Missionary Society (CMS) was the largest, both in terms of the number of congregations, local Christians and foreign and Indian missionary personnel. Other important individual societies were those of the American Baptists, the Anglican SPG, the Congregationalist London Missionary Society, the Gossner Mission, the Basel Mission and the American Methodists. In order of denominational affiliation and number of local Christians, the Anglicans were, as expected, in first place. They were followed by Baptists, Congregationalists, Lutherans and Methodists (detailed list in: STATISTICAL TABLES OF PROTESTANT MISSIONS IN INDIA, BURMA AND CEYLON 1890, 52ff). Number of "Native Christians" among the Anglicans. 193,363, Baptists: 133,122, Congregationalists: 77,460, Lutherans 62,838, Methodists 32,381 (ibid.).–*Regionally,* the Protestant presence in India was very unevenly distributed. The centre of gravity was clearly in the south, in the province of Madras, for which 365,912 "native Christians" were recorded in 1890 (ibid.). Bengal, where the British had gained the earliest foothold, was in second place (with 108,901 native Christians), the north-west in third. In the other parts of the country, there were often only isolated Christian communities, with different emphases in the individual missions. For example, the Baptists were mainly represented in north-east India and the Presbyterians in the Punjab.

28 Cf. GIBBS (1972), *Anglican Church in India*, 317–333 ("Education, Womens Work and Medical Mission").

example, the printing press[29]: "In the early 19th century Christian missionaries owned and operated most privately run presses in Madras"[30]. At the same time, they triggered counter-movements, and organisations such as the aforementioned 'Hindu Tract Society' followed the example of the Christian 'Madras Religious Tract Society'.–Social issues such as the question of caste, child marriage and other "social evils" in Hindu society were not only issues of concerned deliberations at numerous missionary conferences. They also became the subject of public campaigns and approaches to the colonial government. Although the latter usually did not respond directly to individual missionary initiatives, it did react to the changing public opinion under its influence[31].–Medical missions–i.e. the operation of hospitals and dispensaries, the deployment of doctors and the medical training of local helpers–were a central aspect of the work of American societies in particular. "No department"–as J.P. Jones summed up in 1900 with regard to the eighteen hospitals run by missions in southern India–"is more capable of being utilized as an evangelising agency"[32]; and the all-India missionary conference held in Madras in 1900 recommended the strong expansion of this branch of missionary activity.

The influence of the missions was particularly far-reaching in the field of education. Although the golden days of the first half of the 19th century were over, when the missions did not hold a monopoly but enjoyed particularly in South India a dominant position in the operation of educational institutions[33]. Since then, they have been exposed to much greater competition, with state institutions–such as Madras University, which was established in 1857–as well as schools founded by Theosophists increasingly which caused a stir from the 1880s onwards. Nevertheless, the missions maintained their strong position in the education sector, and the Indian-Christian community could boast of having the highest level of literacy, especially in South India, directly after the traditional Brahmin elite and despite its heterogeneous composition. A prestigious institution like the 'Madras Christian College'–founded in 1837 for the upper Hindu classes and proudly labelled "the largest mission institution in India" in 1900[34]–acted as an elite training ground not only for the majority of Hindu students, but also for future

29 Alexander (1994), *Attitude of British Missionaries*, 30; Muthiah, *Madras Rediscovered,* 245–249: "Printing comes to India".
30 Alexander (1994), *Attitude of British Missionaries*, 30 fn. 43; cf. Kumara Doss (1997), "Hindu Tract Society".
31 For example, in the case of the law passed in 1891 to raise the minimum age of marriage, which was preceded by a campaign by the missionaries in Madras, among others; on this and other socio-political initiatives by the missionaries, see Oddie (1978), *Social Protest,* 96ff ("The Age of Consent Controversy") and passim.
32 Jones (1900), *South India Protestant Missions*, 43f.
33 Ghosh (1998), *History of Education,* 58: "The missionary activities in education varied from province to province and were most remarkable in areas like Madras where the Company's initiatives in the field were negligible. By 1853…. missionary work in education certainly exceeded the official enterprise".
34 Jones (1900), *South India Protestant Missions*, 42.

Christian leaders[35]. Other colleges run by the missions also enjoyed above-average enrolment.–The successes in the area of female education were particularly phenomenal. Christian women in Madras had the highest level of education. "By the middle of the century missionaries in Madras were educating nearly 8000 girls, most of them Christian"[36]. The resulting leadership role in the field of female education was soon to become one of the core characteristics of Christian progressiveness among Indian Christians.

"Prospects of Christianity" around 1890 in a Missionary Perspective

What expectations did Indian Christians and Western missionaries have for the future? How did they see the "prospects of Christianity" in India in 1890–the year the CP was founded? If we first go through the annual reports and other publicised statements of the Protestant missions in India around 1890, we are struck by their unbroken optimism. Admittedly, the 1891 census was not quite as exhilarating as many missionary friends had hoped. In particular, the growth rates for the "native Christian community" in India had been somewhat lower than expected. "High expectations have been formed", summarised a study commissioned by the Calcutta Missionary Conference of 1892, "and there cannot be a doubt that the result… falls considerably below some of the more sanguine forecasts"[37]. Nevertheless, the future prospects for Christianity in India were considered good. The power of the old faith–a view often expressed in missionary circles–had been broken. Conversely, the conversion of at least significant sections of India's leading classes often appeared to be only a matter of time. "There is an apparent move towards Christianity", summarised the 'Oxford Mission', which was primarily active in education, in its 1891 annual report for Calcutta. Numerous indications seemed to confirm this finding. Overall, the "real progress of Christian influence" was unmistakable.[38] "At many places"–as we learn from the report of the Basel Mission in Southwest India for the year 1890–"where our preachers at first had met with the most stubborn resistance, the opposition gradually died away and the missionary is looked for as a necessary accompaniment of the fair"[39]."We are on the eve of the rising of a great wave of native feelings", reported the high-church Anglican 'Society for the Propagation of the Gospel' (SPG) for 1889. "This is said not by one nor by two, but by

35 Among others, V.S. Azariah, later the first Indian bishop of the Anglican Church, and K.T. Paul, a prominent ecumenical activist from the north of the country, studied here.

36 Kumara Doss / Alexander (2012), "Protestant Elite", 116; Alexander (1994), *Attitude of British Missionaries*, 305, with reference to Forbes (1996), *Women in modern India*. Not coincidentally, the first Indian woman to be admitted to the Madras Medical College in 1878 was a local Christian named Krupabai Sathianadhan. She later achieved considerable renown as an educator and writer. She was also the first Indian woman to write an autobiographical novel in English.

37 Statistical Tables of Protestant Missions in India, Burma and Ceylon 1890, xiii.

38 Oxford Mission to Calcutta–*Annual Report* 1891, 16f.

39 Basel Mission in South Western India–*Report* 1890", 23.

many"[40]. "There seems to be"–as the annual report of the Congregationalist 'American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions' (ABCFM) for the year 1890 reflects a widespread impression–"a growing anticipation on the part of the people that Christianity is to conquer, and that at no distant day"[41].

"Most of the native pastors and helpers", according to another report from this society, "are able to report that the general feeling among those who still adhere to their old forms of heathenism is that their religion is false, and that Christianity is true". Other reports emphasised less the examples of active conversion to Christianity. Instead, they refered to the decline of the old faith, whose influence is constantly waning, especially among the educated. Many found themselves in a religious vacuum or an intermediate state between a "pagan" past and a possible Christian future. Open opposition to the preaching of the Gospel, which used to be widespread, is clearly declining. This seemed true even if there were also numerous examples of ongoing discrimination against indigenous Christians, especially in rural areas. Furthermore, unmistakable signs of a completely new quality of religious resistance in the south of the country could be observed. In the region around Madras in particular, there have recently been increasing indications of a revival of traditional Hinduism. Although such bad news were carefully registered in missionary journals, they tended to be interpreted as a last gasp of the old faith. They were seen more as evidence of the unstoppable progress of their own cause "Open opposition to the truth has greatly increased", reported the missionary physician Dr Hastings from Batticotta in the annual report of the ABCFM in 1890, "but we do not look upon this as an unfavourable sign. The enemies of Christ would hardly feel the necessity of opposing if they did not see that the truth were making progress"[42].

Indian Christians as a "Progressive Community"

Christianity as the "*wave of the future*"–this was also the expectation of large sections of the Protestant intelligentsia of Madras, respectively of the "educated native Christians" of South India, as they used to call themselves, in line with the colonial jargon of the time. In doing so, they clearly expressed their independence from both the Euro-American missionaries and Indian Hindu nationalists. "A great ferment of thought is taking place, which shows itself in the native Christian community in every department of public, social and religious life"–thus remarkably early the analysis of the 'Christian Patriot', which in turn was also carefully registered in the missionary press[43]. Although representing only a minority within a minority (as the majority of

40 SPG–*Report* 1889, 21f.
41 ABCFM–*Annual Report* 1890, xvi.
42 ABCFM–*Annual Report* 1890, 61.
43 For example, the CP is quoted in the Anglican '*Church Missionary Intelligencer*' (Vol. XXIII NS, December 1897, 909)–see KUMARA DOSS/ALEXANDER (2012), "Protestant Elite", 117 note 30. This "ferment" (or "leaven") theory is central to understanding the optimistic predictions of the future in the CP.