

# Religious Periodicals and Publishing in Transnational Contexts



# Religious Periodicals and Publishing in Transnational Contexts:

*The Press and the Pulpit*

Edited by

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and Anja-Maria Bassimir

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INTRODUCTION

TOWARD A MEDIA HISTORY  
OF RELIGIOUS PERIODICALS

OLIVER SCHEIDING

**Religious Publishing and Print Studies**

The so-called Gutenberg Galaxy was a fairly mixed publicity space in which manuscript and print cultures—or, since the 1970s, electronic media cultures—do not replace each other but rather intersect, expand their reach, and intensify their productive capacities. This volume focuses on the global flow of religious publishing practiced in transnational environments from the early Modern period to the present. The contributions in this volume examine the roles religious publishing plays in building and maintaining communities and identities, shaping their surroundings and being shaped by them. While there were a number of studies conducted in the past that discuss religious publishing and reading consumption in the context of nineteenth-century market revolutions and the rise of mass media, especially in North America and the evolving evangelical and missionary publishing organizations,<sup>1</sup> studies of both the history and the contemporary situation of religious publishing are still lacking. In the opening pages of their volume *Religion and Culture of Print in Modern America*, Charles Cohen and Paul Boyer assert that “the history of religion in America is incomprehensible without close attention to the centrality of print materials in promoting, consolidating, defending, and sometimes attacking the cause of faith in its many manifestations.”<sup>2</sup> In addition to approaches that study the

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<sup>1</sup> See David Paul Nord, *Faith in Reading: Religious Publishing and the Birth of Mass Media in America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); Candy Gunther Brown, *The Word in the World: Evangelical Writing, Publishing, and Reading in America, 1789–1880* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2004).

<sup>2</sup> Charles Cohen and Paul Boyer, eds. *Religion and the Culture of Print in Modern America* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2008), 15.

interrelationships between the religious press and community building, some contributions stress the entrepreneurialism and voluntary activism of denominations and parachurch organizations in America. In doing so they highlight religious publishing enterprises as modern not-for-profit corporations in order to tell the “story of origins of the noncommercial sector of the American economy.”<sup>3</sup> Despite the ubiquity and dominance of studies on religious print culture in North America, critics agree that little attention is paid to the role media history plays in shaping the modern organization of religion.<sup>4</sup> In filling these gaps, scholars have entered upon numerous paths. In many cases, scholars attempted to develop Benedict Anderson’s view emphasizing the force of print in shaping a national sphere.<sup>5</sup> Such studies highlight the importance of the nineteenth-century religious press in fostering “textual communities” through an expansive network of serialized forms of media and literacy practices.<sup>6</sup> In book history and religious studies there is a growing interest in examining periodicals to determine how magazines, journals, newsletters, and newspapers meet the diverse spiritual demands of believers conditioned by an increasingly trans-local and pluralistic religious landscape in modern America and beyond. In this context, more recent publications in the field of the history of the book produce new insights into the multilayered nineteenth- and twentieth-century publishing enterprises as well as regarding the numerous actors behind them, often crossing ethnic, gender, and national boundaries.<sup>7</sup>

As valid as these studies are, they reiterate the grand narrative of secularization and modernization embodied by print or specific national print cultures. Motivated by central approaches in the field of the history of the

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<sup>3</sup> Nord, *Faith in Reading*, 7; see Michael S. Hamilton, “American Evangelicalism: Character, Function, and Trajectories of Change,” in *The Future of Evangelicalism in America*, eds. Candy Gunther Brown and Mark Silk (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016), 18–53.

<sup>4</sup> See the website of “The Network for New Media, Religion and Digital Culture Studies,” <http://digitalreligion.tamu.edu/>, accessed September 22, 2016; current studies on media history tend to overlook religious publishing; cf. Anthony R. Fellow, *American Media History*, 3rd. ed. (Boston, MA: Wadsworth, 2013).

<sup>5</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983).

<sup>6</sup> Candy Gunther Brown, “Religious Periodicals and Their Textual Communities,” in *The Industrial Book: 1840-1880*, vol 3 of *A History of the Book in America*, eds. Scott E. Casper, et al. (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 270–78; see Mary M. Juzwik, “American Evangelical Biblicism as Literate Practice: A Critical Review,” *Reading Research Quarterly* 49.3 (2014): 335–49.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. David D. Hall, gen. ed., *A History of the Book in America*, 5 vols. (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2000–2010).

book and print culture studies, scholars repeatedly reify print as a teleological force determining specific cultural meanings of printedness, like the “republic of letters” in early America.<sup>8</sup> Along this line of thought, certain trends can be found. Studies emphasize the embeddedness of print and religion in terms of a distribution of forms spelling out ‘biographies’ of books—the Princeton series “The Life of Great Religious Books,” for example—that show how these imprints traffic through time and space. Moreover, periodical studies propound a close analysis of single magazines reducing them to a communicative source that adds to a specific religious movement’s communal vision of adherence.<sup>9</sup> Unfolding a logic of

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<sup>8</sup> See Michael S. Warner, *The Republic of Letters: Publication and the Public Sphere in Eighteenth-Century America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992).

<sup>9</sup> In general terms, the state of the field in religious periodical studies is perhaps best characterized as ripening; see David Abrahamson and Marcia R. Prior-Miller, *The Routledge Handbook of Magazine Research: The Future of the Magazine* (London: Routledge, 2015) and the “25th Anniversary Issue,” *American Periodicals: A Journal of History and Criticism* 25.1 (2015), 39–42, esp. 26–31. Current scholarship on German church pietism and its religious press emphasizes the importance of periodicals in promoting pietistic thought and identification by founding “discursive communities”; see Rainer Lächele, *Die “Sammlung auserlesener Materien zum Bau des Reiches Gottes” zwischen 1730 und 1760: Erbauungszeitschriften als Kommunikationsmedium des Pietismus* (Tübingen: Verlag der Franckeschen Stiftungen Halle im Niemeyer-Verlag, 2006). Scholars mention the use of specific genres in periodicals such as biographies, news, and reviews. Not much is known, however, about the content, editorial procedures, distribution, or readership of periodicals, which play a central role in transnational communication networks. Existing studies frequently offer a quantitative approach, reassembling the number of correspondents and describing the extent of the network, rather than providing qualitative insights into periodical networking and entrepreneurialism. In addition, little is known about the role of rival publications, nor do we know much about their content, editorial policies, and reception. In this sense, questions to be raised also concern the periodicals’ formal, material, and visual attributes used by the editors, publishers, and religious organizations in promoting a field imaginary for a frequently highly dispersed readership. A survey by Charles H. Lippy, ed., *Religious Periodicals of the United States: Academic and Scholarly Journals* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986) is still comprehensive; for new directions in studying missionary magazines, see Felicity Jenz and Hanna Acke, “Introduction,” in *Forum: The Form and Function of Nineteenth-Century Missionary Periodicals*, eds. Felicity Jenz and Hanna Acke, *Church History* 82 (2013): 368–73; Ken Water’s work focuses on evangelical periodicals, see his “Evangelical Magazines,” in *Public Figures, Popular Press, Places and Events*, vol. 3 of *Evangelicals and Popular Culture: Pop Goes the Gospel*, ed. Robert Woods, Jr. (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2013), 195–211; sociologist Heather A. Haveman currently offers an astute analysis of religious periodicals as modernizing forces in the context of Prot-

print seen as the result of the Reformation and an emerging Western modernity, ‘print’ becomes a catch-all term for printedness, ranging from handwritten manuscripts and various textual practices to the more elevated types of books, including new forms of publishing activities in the digital age.<sup>10</sup> In this regard, the inflationary use of the term ‘culture of print’ is problematic because it suggests a deterministic logic of print privileging a specific history of communication, only to marginalize other ‘non-book’ based cultures or media techniques. The use of talking knots in China and Southern America are examples, as well as the sensory and bodily communication of (religious) artifacts—what Friedrich Kittler calls *Aufschreibesysteme* (discourse networks)—created by new technologies, and, of course, oral storytelling systems.<sup>11</sup> This is not to say, however, that the insights print culture studies offer are less valuable than others, and the chapters to follow rely on them and expand their findings. Instead, the volume’s introduction suggests a reconsideration of the reciprocal ties between religion and print culture in terms of a media history through ad-

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estant American faiths in the nineteenth-century, see *Magazines and the Making of America: Modernization, Community, and Print Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015), 142–186. Still valuable for studying the rise of the religious periodical in North America are Frank Luther Mott, *A History of American Magazines*, 5 vols. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1957); Lyon N. Richardson, *A History of Early American Magazines, 1741–1789* (New York: Octagon Books, 1966); and John Tebbel and Mary Ellen Zuckermann, *The Magazine in America, 1741–1990* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991). For more recent approaches to single periodicals see Elesha J. Coffman, *The Christian Century and the Rise of the Protestant Mainline* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013); Anja-Maria Bassimir, “The Evangelicalism Project: Visions of Spiritual Community in Evangelical Magazines during the 1970s and 1980s” (Ph.D. diss., University of Münster, 2016).

<sup>10</sup> See Elizabeth L. Eisenstein, *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change: Communication and Cultural Transformation in Early-Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979); David D. Hall, *Ways of Writing: The Practice and Politics of Text-Making in Seventeenth-Century New England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008).

<sup>11</sup> See Jason McElligott and Eve Patten, eds., *The Perils of Print Culture: Book, Print, and Publishing History in Theory and Practice* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014); Lisa Gitelman, *Paper Knowledge: Toward a History of Documents* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014); Matt Cohen and Jeffrey Glover, eds., *Colonial Mediascapes: Sensory Worlds of the Early Americas* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2014); Friedrich A. Kittler, *Discourse Networks, 1800/1900* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990); Laura Otis, *Networking: Communicating with Bodies and Machines in the Nineteenth Century* (Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 2001).

addressing specific facets that concern material and socio-economic networks necessary for producing and circulating words and images.

This introduction further develops a media history that stresses a specific history of a medium—the magazine—in conjunction with observations derived from periodical studies and findings from religious economy theory.<sup>12</sup> The religious economy theory assumes a highly competitive religious market not only in North America, but also on a global scale, given the migratory behavior of spiritual seekers and the rise of new religions. The market-oriented approach to studying religion is itself fairly reductive. In the context of North America, it explains the centrifugal conditions of the religious landscape by emphasizing three aspects: the country's religious pluralism, the separation of state and church, and the denominational or voluntary nature of religious movements. As some critics point out, however: "For each explanation that is true a multitude of qualifications is required . . . One certainly cannot appeal to the market alone as an explanation, though the market, too, has made a (?) difference—a degree of difference."<sup>13</sup> To better understand the degrees of difference, this introduction and the chapters to follow refrain from discussing religious publishing in terms of a marketplace. This volume focuses instead on the socio-economic conditions, institutional organizations, action networks, and communicative environments that shape religious publishing and its medial apparatus in transnational contexts. In doing so, the authors study the material devices, business structures, and cultural networks needed for circulating words and images that nourish specific formations of religious adherence. In this regard, we understand religion as mediation that relies upon and requires media.

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<sup>12</sup> Religious economy theory is the dominant mode of explanation to account for the transformations of religion in terms of an accelerated competition of religious choices and life-styles in modern societies and their diverse markets of faith; see Roger Finke and Rodney Stark, *Churching of America, 1776–2005: Winners and Losers in Our Religion Economy* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2005); for a critical reevaluation of the religious economy theory, cf. Jan Stievermann, et al., eds., *Religion and the Marketplace in the United States* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

<sup>13</sup> E. Brooks Holifield, "Why are Americans So Religious? The Limitations of Market Explanations," *Religion and Marketplace*, 33–59.

## From Print to Post-Print Media

Following observations made by Marshall McLuhan, Jay David Bolter and Robert Grusin contend that “a medium is that which remediates.”<sup>14</sup> While print remediates written speech, the computer, for instance, remediates the typewriter. In general terms one can argue that the religious magazine is a medium because it remediates traditional forms of oral and written religious speech, such as the sermon or the pastoral conversation. In contrast to daily periodicals, it offers a broader space for in-depth messages, content, and arguments and thus assumes an authoritative stance remediating the pulpit’s voice. A magazine is also collectible and stores information, as single issues can be bound into volumes. Having a shelf-life, the magazine remediates the archive and serves as a site of memory for communally shared thoughts and ideas on religion. In terms of its serialized content output and its fairly regular appearance, it may develop into a leading reference medium establishing an associative web of retrievable information. Reading the magazine is, however, not constitutive for being considered a medium, although reading was certainly central to the experience of religion in America.

Remediation makes the magazine partake in a network of social and material activities. Public readings or texts read aloud to members of the family or a group of friends, for example, remediate the oral environments of the church parlor or the Sunday school. The religious magazine appropriates the techniques, forms, and social significance of other media (i.e., sermons, religious tracts, newsletters, etc.) and “attempts to rival or re-fashion them in the name of the real.”<sup>15</sup> The experience of the medium is the experience of the real because the magazines remediate missionary accounts or the latest news ranging from global awakenings, conversions, revivalism, and schisms, to politics and societal affairs. In addition, ministers’ complaints about audiences who do not subscribe, but borrow magazines from their neighbors, demonstrates that this particular social practice of sharing, borrowing, and circulating constitutes the magazine as a medium of sociability and dynamic consumption, both in local and translocal settings, often exceeding denominational boundaries. In this sense the magazine as medium is superior to other types of religious prints, as one editor put it:

Magazines . . . have given rise to a new epoch in the history of intellectual improvement. They come to the purchaser on terms so reasonable, and at

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<sup>14</sup> Jay David Bolter and Grusin Richard, *Remediation: Understanding New Media* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2000), 65.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 65.

periods so regularly distant, as to render the procuring of them a circumstance unattended with inconvenience . . . they portray and transmit characters and events as they daily occur. . . . They convey information through regions which larger publications cannot reach.<sup>16</sup>

Since the concluding statement makes periodicals differ from books (i.e., “larger publications”), it is also important to note that the character of a technology such as serial publishing is articulated through collectives. Religious magazines can thus be understood as “hybrids” of social and material facts.<sup>17</sup> A good case in point are the many references in twenty-first-century religious periodicals that compare today’s designs, techniques, and paper quality with those of the past. In the first issue of *Christianity Today* (1956), the editorial declares:

In design, and typography, CHRISTIANITY TODAY, combines the classic heritage of the past with the best of the modern. The cover achieves this effect with its combination of the classic Dutch and Weiss initials. The feature articles, contemporary in interest, are set and captioned in modern types. . . . In its choice of type faces, CHRISTIANITY TODAY had the counsel of Paul Smith, a leading West Coast type designer. . . . Type is set in Washington, D.C., by the McArde Printing Company. ‘Mats’ cast from the type are rushed to Dayton, Ohio, where the McCall Cooperation, publisher of national magazines, completes the actual printing and mailing.<sup>18</sup>

As the editorial statement illustrates, magazines have peculiar ‘faces’ because they repurpose theological content by simplifying the layout and standardizing types to increase the degree of readability and understanding. Magazines also repurpose graphic design. The initial letter “C” on the first issue of *Christianity Today*’s title page appears in gothic-style letters

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<sup>16</sup> *Latter Day Luminary* (1818): iv–v.

<sup>17</sup> See Bruno Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), 117–22. Latour speaks of hybrids as “half object and half subject” to avoid speaking of social or technological networks simply. His associative sociology privileges networks of statistics, calculations, and lists in studying an organization. A network approach in periodical studies requires to move beyond the social (i.e., personnel or consumer networks) to consider, for instance, statistics of printing, tables showing the quantity of paper needed for print jobs, as well as print calculations and print industries and their technologies for writing things down; cf. J. Luther Ringwalt, ed., [1871] *The American Encyclopedia of Printing* (New York: Garland, 1981). Latour’s imperative call—follow the actors—makes it necessary to trace networks of paper knowledge that make the magazine a medium for inscription and mobilization to produce specific religious literacies and textual ideologies.

<sup>18</sup> “Editorials,” *Christianity Today* (Oct. 15, 1956): 21.

(Fraktur type). Being launched in October—the month in which Martin Luther posted his Ninety-five Theses on a church door in Wittenberg and started the Reformation—the cover page’s illuminated Fraktur letter draws upon Reformation prints and recalls a specific Protestant legacy, yet it claims to render the message in a more accessible, legible, and modern style. Marshall McLuhan argues that “the ‘content’ of any medium is always another medium.”<sup>19</sup> If the religious magazine embodies “another medium” repurposing Reformation thesis prints, it also highlights the distinction in media history between mediators and intermediaries. While mediators shape the content which they transmit, intermediaries merely act as tools of transmission.<sup>20</sup> Religious magazines shape content through an association of formal, material, and affective inscriptions that depend not only on human actors like writers, editors, subscribers, type designers, printing companies, but also—as *Christianity Today*’s editorial reveals—on non-human facts such as “40-pound egg-shell paper,” or the “Desk-Fax service of Western Union . . . , using the TWX code number WA-555.”<sup>21</sup> These numerous types of ‘agency’ encapsulated in the material form of religious magazines establish a medium through which religion matters and happens. Similar to Bible reading, religious magazines provide “a place to inherit conceptions from a shared social and theological history and . . . to take ownership of those conceptions in ways that make sense for readers’ own social scenes.”<sup>22</sup> The religious magazine thus does not simply provide conditions for expressing religion in terms of “discursive communities,” but effects religious activism and entrepreneurialism.<sup>23</sup> Launching the magazine in 1956 under the title *Christianity Today* challenges—both in form and content—the liberal Protestant mainline press and its flagship magazine *The Christian Century*; it also remediates an earlier Presbyterian reform magazine with the same title that folded in 1949. The title implies a specific Christian genealogy, indicates boundaries between what belongs in

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<sup>19</sup> Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (Boston, MA: MIT Press, 1964), 8.

<sup>20</sup> Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 37–42.

<sup>21</sup> “Editorials,” 21.

<sup>22</sup> James S. Bielo, *Words upon the Word: An Ethnography of Evangelical Group Bible Study* (New York, NY: New York University Press, 2009), 51–52.

<sup>23</sup> Haveman, *Magazines*, 5, highlights the magazine as a medium of social cohesion: “Magazines’ varied contents, relative permanence, broad geographic reach, interpretive mission, and serial nature endow them with the power to influence many aspects of social life: formal politics, commerce, religion, reform, science, work, industry, and education. In short, magazines are a key medium through which people pay attention to and understand the things that affect their everyday lives.”

the magazine and what does not, and reveals its “character” juxtaposing past and present. The cover page also positions the magazine in the religious field.<sup>24</sup> Cover and editorial let the magazine appear as a product of a network of religious entrepreneurs—here the evangelist Billy Graham, Sun Oil Company’s president John Howard Pew, and the evangelical theologian Carl Ferdinand Howard Henry—who translate their cultural capital into economic and symbolic forms.

The content of periodical media is not, however, only formal and material; it is also related to socio-economic functions such as institutional organizations, action networks, and communicative environments. Since colonial times, North America’s religious topography has been characterized by religious revivalism, immigration, and populism creating a world of choice for a large number of individual faith seekers. It also led to denominations as the dominant form of church organization. Continuous divisions and immigration waves accelerated the disestablishment of traditional churches and established religious organizations throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. This disestablishment transformed American churches into voluntary religious organizations (i.e., parachurches and non-denominational associations) that depend upon entrepreneurial operations for growth and sustenance. Religious pluralism and the rise of internal competition in schismatic groups—the battle for souls—also raises questions of mobilization and resources. Evangelic revivalism in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries laid, for instance, the foundation of missionary societies and a global spread of religious print. But on a more regional ground, disestablishment created new forms of spreadability. Itinerant clerics or circular riders served as “peddlers of faith.” They were important nodes in establishing a media system that became increasingly professional through standardized procedures of subscription and mailing lists driven by new developments in the national infrastructure (postal system, advertisement) and the energies of technology and entrepreneurship. The leaders of Methodism—the powerhouse of nineteenth-century evangelicalism—became media-savvy innovators in multiple mediums (magazines, film, television, the Internet) as well as proprietors of large publishing houses. Scholars therefore emphasize the importance of evolving religious media

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<sup>24</sup> Linking religion as a subsystem to other subsystems of society, like economy or politics, also signals changes in the magazine’s ‘character.’ Over slavery and the debates around it, for instance, numerous religious magazines assumed new titles referring to their regional character. The antislavery *Methodist Quarterly Review* suddenly had to cope with the alternative pro-slavery *Southern Methodist Quarterly Review*.

systems, both in the past and the present, “that underpin religious publicity, daily practice, and imagination.”<sup>25</sup>

Given a decentralized religious field, periodical media offer religious authorities platforms to stabilize a presence of faith among translocal groups of believers, solicit new adherents, and challenge other faiths. In doing so religious magazines rely on a number of socio-economic networks. In a sociological sense, a network is a configuration of relationship between social entities (individual persons, groups, or states, for example) where “some but not all component units maintain relations with one another.”<sup>26</sup> A network’s component units are sometimes considered technological and/or human. Existing periodical histories focus either on the impact of technology on publishing (postal system, shipping, railways) or refer to the human elements in the networks (friendship, kinship groups, editorial staff). However, if we consider magazines as hybrids of human and non-human agents, we have to take into account both object-networks and individual-networks. On the one hand, it becomes necessary to understand the institutional periodical network (editors, publishers, printers, contributors, distributors, readers). Such networks consist of personal and institutional connections and illustrate “the larger social structures upon which periodicals relied for production but which they also helped to create and stabilize.”<sup>27</sup> On the other hand, periodical studies examine material networks as textual networks. Magazines position themselves in a web of texts, linking issues to series and to other types of print media. The intertextual approach juxtaposes textual objects and examines an increasingly expansive discursive network of religious print artifacts. As printed texts, magazines develop affective relationships and connect to their readers through form, content, design, and the materiality of print.<sup>28</sup> In addition, there is a new direction in periodical studies that pays attention to “pre-discursive networks,” understood as “the technics and structures of

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<sup>25</sup> Jeremy Stolow, “Religion, Media, and Globalization,” in *The New Blackwell Companion to the Sociology of Religion*, ed. Bryan S. Turner (Malden: Blackwell, 2010), 549; see also Christopher J. Anderson, “American Methodist and Popular Culture,” in *Cambridge Companion to American Methodism*, ed. Jason E. Vickers (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013): 352–69.

<sup>26</sup> Andrew King, *The London Journal, 1845-83: Periodicals, Production, and Gender* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004): 50.

<sup>27</sup> John Fagg, Matthew Pethers, and Robin Vandome, “Introduction: Networks and the Nineteenth-Century Periodical,” *American Periodicals* 23.2 (2013): 101.

<sup>28</sup> See Oliver Scheiding and Anja-Maria Bassimir, “Religion–Schrift–Differenz: Materialität im Spiegel evangelikaler Zeitschriften der USA,” in *Materialität: Herausforderungen für die Sozial- und Kulturwissenschaften*, eds. Herbert Kalthoff, Torsten Cress and Tobias Röhl (München: Fink, 2016), 325–43.

the industry.” Scholars explore the “rich matrix” of distributed agency among the technics of the industry (printing processes, machines, and paper, etc.) and how it draws upon people in specific locales.<sup>29</sup>

Looking at the history of periodical publishing, one can also observe that the publication and production of magazines forced denominations and their affiliated voluntary societies to increase their organizational levels. This entrepreneurial dimension of nineteenth-century religious publishing and mass media has been astutely investigated by David Nord.<sup>30</sup> Although many periodical histories examine the rising magazine industry within the framework of American denominationalism and its withering gatekeepers, little attention has been paid to the digital media change and how it affects religious publishing and the periodical business exposed to the new, post-print literary media. The broad range of digital technologies advances a participatory culture that invites “the flow of content across multiple media platforms, the cooperation between multiple media industries, and the migratory behavior of media audiences.”<sup>31</sup> As we can learn from the nineteenth-century religious print market, however, new consumers and their ability to freely exercise their needs inject new vigor into magazine publishing to meet the changing demands of new audiences. The challenges of contemporary “convergence culture,” in which old and new media collide, is answered by a digital turn in religious publishing. Periodicals are remodeled and emerge as multimedia enterprises offering a mixed supply of offline and online brands.<sup>32</sup>

The print magazine has always been an intertextual node of multi-path content transfer and a variety of strategies to activate readers. In this regard, digitization only makes a difference by degree. The new digital platforms offered by Christian media companies such as *Christianity Today* and others do not liberate American evangelicalism from old constraints, but suggest that the affordances of digital media provide a catalyst for revitalizing religious life, rethinking social relations, and re-imagining cultur-

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<sup>29</sup> Laura Brake, “‘Time’s Turbulence’: Mapping Journalism Networks,” *Victorian Periodicals Review* 44 (2011): 116–24.

<sup>30</sup> See Nord, *Faith in Reading*.

<sup>31</sup> Henry Jenkins, *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide* (New York: New York University Press, 2008), 2, see also 271–94.

<sup>32</sup> For the impact of transmedia and branding on religion, see Lynn Schofield Clark, *Religion, Media and the Marketplace* (New Brunswick, NY: Rutgers University Press, 2007) and Mara Einstein, *Brands of Faith: Marketing Religion in a Commercial Age* (London: Routledge, 2008).

al and political participation.<sup>33</sup> A media history of religious publishing has not only to take into account the media companies' business networks and their organizational infrastructures, it should also explore how they use technologies like data-analysis for decision making, product engagement, marketing, the improvements of customer experience, and new designs for drawing in visitors on websites. The streaming of data traffic, content analysis in terms of top traffic drivers, and the use of search engines handled by professional editorial staffs become essential facts in understanding a post-print periodical business. It is important to learn how such companies develop different media services to speak as authorities to different customers, i.e., non-social media readers or cosmopolitan readers who are worldly oriented in comparison to those who stay within religious subcultures.

Being a "medium for the conduct of affective relationships,"<sup>34</sup> it is also important to assess the material presence of periodicals and the changes in design that go along with them. Since 2013 the print version of *Christianity Today* uses the typeface Calibri. It is considered by typographers a hyperrational letterform used for street signage. Since this typeface comes from outside the cannon of book-history, it appeals to the readers' senses surrounded by a modern world of material artifacts, signs, and colors. Interestingly, the firm Metaleap Creative (located in Atlanta), which was in charge of redesigning *Christianity Today's* material presence, belongs to a network of Christian media companies and related design firms. Metaleap Creative fashioned the website of Wheaton College, the leading Christian liberal Arts College in North America. The firm also designed the online magazine *Urban Faith* run by Urban Ministries, Inc., an independent, African American-owned-and-operated Christian media company.<sup>35</sup> Such coop-

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<sup>33</sup> Harold B. Smith, president and CEO of the non-profit media company Christianity Today, refers to the "plus-print" thinking" connecting print and digital medium "committed to creating Christian content that changes the people who change the world"; "Inside Story," *Christianity Today* (2012), <http://www.christianitytoday.org/inside-story/2012/february/harold-b-smith-bio.html>, accessed September 22, 2016.

<sup>34</sup> Fagg, Pethers, Vandome, "Introduction," 101.

<sup>35</sup> The firm's "Publication Design" states the following: "Publication design is in our DNA. It courses through our veins. It keeps us up at night. From our first-ever client until today, we continue to marvel at how much is possible within the framework of the same page, issue after issue. As the world goes evermore digital, print has to stand out to earn its keep. That's why every issue we design or redesign needs to perform above and beyond the medium in order to leave its mark on a culture that is ever changing and fickle. This is where we stand out. This is where we make our mark"; see <http://www.metaleapcreative.com/publication-design/>, accessed September 22, 2016.

erations illustrate the rich matrix of religious, socio-economic, and material agencies necessary for manufacturing and sustaining faith.

The observations above signal two aspects that must be considered in future studies of religious periodicals. Throughout its history, religious periodicals have remediated popular formats, combining old and new media technologies, and are now growing into mass-media enterprises operated on a global scale. In light of current networked religion and the digital entrepreneurialism that goes along with it, “A More-Than-Human-Media History”—to borrow a term from Michael Ziser—is necessary to understand how formal, socio-economic, and material facts affect religious life in times of post-print media.<sup>36</sup> In addition, it becomes also clear that we consider religious periodicals—both in its offline and online formats—as an ambivalent “medium of modernity.”<sup>37</sup> Religious magazines remain a medium of religious boundary-making. As such, they are both a modernizing force (facilitating translocal communities) and a bulwark against modernity (nurturing distinct local communities).<sup>38</sup>

## The Volume’s Overview and Chapter Preview

Now a few words are in order to say something about the volume’s scope. The editors would like to clarify that it is not our intention to offer a definitive approach. This volume evolved from an international and interdisciplinary conference on “Religious Press and Print Culture” held in Germany in November of 2014.<sup>39</sup> Its methodology is not diachronic—i.e., covering the full range of the religious press and print culture from early America to the present—but rather synchronic as it illustrates important stages and transitional phases in the development of religious publishing,

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<sup>36</sup> In “More-Than-Human-Literary History”, Michael Ziser proposes an ecocultural history that takes into account a profusion of things, i.e., texts, images, folkways, landscapes, and organisms; see his *Environmental Practice and Early American Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 1–22; on aspects of digital religion, see Heidi A. Campbell, “Understanding the Relationship between Religion Online and Offline in a Networked Society,” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* (2011): 1–30.

<sup>37</sup> Clemens Zimmermann, “Zeitschrift – Medium der Moderne: Publikumszeitschriften im 20. Jahrhundert,” *Jahrbuch des Frankreichzentrums der Universität des Saarlandes* 6 (2005): 15–42.

<sup>38</sup> See Haveman, *Magazines*, 74.

<sup>39</sup> For the conference report see Jennifer Adams-Massmann, “Tagungsbericht: Religious Press and Print Culture, Mainz 20.11.2014,” *H-Soz-Kult*, 27.02.2015, <http://www.hsozkult.de/conferencereport/id/tagungsberichte-5848>, accessed September 22, 2016.

both in North America and beyond its borders, that are connected by migration, cultural networks, and entrepreneurial activities. Particularly in light of both the transnational Christian and non-Christian traditions in North America, we have not organized the volume according to specific periods in the history of print/religion, i.e., early America or modernity. The volume argues instead that the religious press is characterized from the very beginning by print globalization and transnational networks of religious communication. Admittedly, the collection of essays does not address all relevant religious communities/groups and their print activities (for instance, religious movements such as the Jehovah's Witnesses and their international print and media business),<sup>40</sup> but ours is neither a handbook nor an interpretive encyclopedia. Given the volume's reliance on a small group of experts working in different disciplines, it offers fresh readings on a select number of developments that are representative of religious print enterprises germinating in specific local and translocal frameworks. In doing so, this collection of essays demonstrates how different religious groups use serial forms of media to maintain and exceed communal boundaries/identities. The volume therefore does not struggle to decide whether it is about 'America' or global religions because it is impossible to have the one without the other.

In order to give the volume a more comprehensive outlook, we have decided to organize the chapters according to religious mediascapes shaped by serialized forms of media and the socio-economic and publishing networks that pertain to them. Mediascapes is a term coined by Arjun Appadurai and refers—in a global culture economy—to crisscrossing layers of widely disseminated publication forms and media agency (magazines, Bibles, scribal publications, devotional tracts, circulars, blogs, fanzines, etc.).<sup>41</sup> In our case, these mediascapes range from globally circulated Moravian newsletters to diasporic forms of serial publications in contemporary Hinduism. As it becomes clear, North America—as a geographical space—serves only as a crossroads for the flow of religious communities and their changing print/media businesses, technologies, and audiences. Despite an increasing scholarly output on digital religion, the chapters collected in this volume refer

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<sup>40</sup> See Thomas G. Kirsch, "Ways of Reading as Religious Power in Print Globalization," *American Ethnologist* 34.3 (2007): 509–520; for charismatic magazines in Germany, see Claudia Währisch-Oblau, "Material Salvation: Healing, Deliverance, 'Breakthrough' in African Migrant Churches in Germany," in *Global Pentecostal and Charismatic Healing*, ed. Candy Gunther Brown (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 61–80.

<sup>41</sup> Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis, MI: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 32.

to the importance of print and that—despite electronic and broadcast media—religious modes of world-making are mediated through words and images. The unifying idea behind the volume and its essays is that periodical publications and the forms of circulation that go along with them design a shared language for socio-religious formations and their boundary-making endeavors.

In the context of transatlantic religious communication networks, four chapters discuss the multimedia environments of global Catholic publishing (Becker), the serial publications of transatlantic Protestant reform movements (Mettele), the creation of American Judaism in Jewish-American periodicals (Rabin), and the African American religious press (Giggie). The following chapters develop the idea of the connectivity between religious serial publications, printing businesses, and communities further by focusing on both Christian and non-Christian global movements, namely mainline Christianity (Coffman), Hinduism (Neubert), and Evangelicalism (Bassimir). The chapters in this volume are framed by two contributions (Scheiding; Brown) that echo each other by offering different perspectives on print culture studies. While the introduction proposes a media history of religious publishing following current directions in media and material studies, Brown's concluding chapter surveys past findings in the connected fields of print and religious studies to position the volume in current scholarship and to systematize the interdisciplinary approaches for future studies in religious print culture.

Rainald Becker's opening chapter, "Catholic Print Cultures: German Jesuits and Colonial North America," sheds light on the transnational dimensions of eighteenth-century Jesuit media production and the ways in which it participated in the debates about the western hemisphere and its peoples. Becker claims that the wealth of Jesuit printing production still accessible in contemporary collections provides us with detailed evidence for their media marketing. Focusing on a number of serialized eighteenth-century publications (thesis prints, maps, and newspapers), Becker raises questions about the role played by the Catholic print business in an expansive Early Modern world, and how it related to Colonial North America. He contends that southern German Jesuits created both textual and pictorial representations about North America to market Catholicism on a global scale and actively participated in religious media networking. This chapter also demonstrates how the Jesuits' media circuits and its circulatory paths create the conditions for the "production of locality."<sup>42</sup> In this sense, the circulation of prints coming out of a small town in Southern Germany is

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<sup>42</sup> Arjun Appadurai, "How Histories Make Geographies: Circulation and Context in a Global Perspective," *Transcultural Studies* 1 (2010): 9.

not subordinate to the global, but gives evidence to its reality. The case of Jesuit media circulation and connectivity allows us to understand globalization in terms of local archives in which it resides.

Gisela Mettele's "Scribal Culture in the Age of Print: Globalizing Religious Communication in Moravian Pietism" reveals another important trans-local dimension of religious communication networks in the early Atlantic world and the media traffic that occurs through such webs. The network perspective has made scholarship move beyond a theologically biased analysis of source material and instead seeks to reassess the social dimension of Protestant and pietist networking throughout the eighteenth-century Atlantic world. In doing so, recent studies examine the infrastructure on which Protestant communication and networking relied, such as postal and shipping systems, metropolitan supply centers and its cultural brokers, and the involvement of imperial and religious institutions. In addition, there are a number of studies that analyze the form and content of transatlantic Protestant communication networks. This trend in scholarship has tapped into a wide field of unstudied sources, such as letters and diaries emphasizing the daily affairs of religious life on both sides of the Atlantic. Apart from the large body of documents of life writing such as clerical diaries, missionary reports, and biographical accounts of lay people, largely unstudied resources of material culture such as administrative correspondences, postal and accountant books, as well as bills and order lists have also come to the fore. However, this approach frequently reduces the "network perspective" to a study of letters and correspondences as well as the multi-directional and mutually engaging forms of communication that go along with them. Other important genres of communication such as periodical publications or other forms of serial publications, which were central in building and maintaining the eighteenth-century pietist and Protestant network, are mentioned only in passing.

Gisela Mettele's chapter on the Moravian's use of serial forms of religious communication and their circulatory practice in distributing autobiographical texts draws attention to an expanding religious market in which periodicals play a significant role in establishing, maintaining, and organizing religious identities and differences. Mettele discloses the importance of the global circulation of handwritten media to foster group cohesion among pietistic groups in the early Atlantic world. She discusses handwritten serial manuscripts (newsletters) and explores ritualized communal reading practices that played an important role in pietistic circles, creating new forms of social and religious interaction. She argues that the communal performance of Moravian newsletters address spiritual affections and shaped religious communities as interpretive communities.

Other critics have noticed major changes in the religious field in North America since the Great Awakening by addressing the emergence of new forms of communicating religious diversity. Although much has been written about Atlantic communications in light of evangelical revivals and missionary activities, religious periodicals are still a neglected body of print even though they play a major role in shaping communal narratives and creating new forms of religious participation and differentiation. Shari Rabin's chapter titled "People of the Press: Religious Periodicals and the Creation of American Judaism" extends Mettele's observations on transatlantic religious networks and their communal print performances by analyzing the burgeoning Jewish press in the world of the nineteenth-century immigration. Rabin moves beyond existing histories of the American Jewish press in which periodicals are often treated as "colorful illustrations" for contemporary religious debates in the urban centers of immigration. By contrast, Rabin argues that nineteenth-century Jewish newspapers "played a crucial role in constructing a national religious community among far-flung Jews, including many who had no congregational ties. American Jewish newspapers served not only as records of activities and thoughts in formation, but as facilitators, regulators, advocates, and lifelines." In doing so, the chapter demonstrates how—in the context of mobility and capitalism—Jewish editors recreated religious life in the pages of their newspapers. It also delineates the growth of an indigenous Jewish press by looking closer at organizational efforts and publication businesses that made Judaism "stable, reliable, and portable throughout the nation." Based on an extensive archival research, Rabin's chapter realizes the ways in which Jewish newspapers not only recorded American Judaism, but also how they actively created it.

John Giggie's "Print Culture and Religious Identity among African Americans, 1865–1914" sheds light on the much overlooked organization and business activities of the regional African American religious press. This chapter examines the historical relationship between black sacred identity and the African American religious press in the American South from 1865 to 1914. Focusing on ex-slaves and their families, it illuminates the press as a defining force of modern black religion, one that created new opportunities for community development and expression but also fueled divisive tensions over the limits of respectable behavior and theology. Using four black newspapers, Giggie focuses on a particular serialized genre—"Letters to the Editor"—which became a staple for black readers. In every edition, one letter usually appeared above the fold on the far right column while the rest were grouped on page two. It was not uncommon for a single issue to feature over a dozen letters to the editor, ranging in

length from a twenty-word blurb to a half-page missive and usually including the name and address of the author.

Analyzing this specific section in African American newspapers, Giggie highlights three points about the black press and the making of black sacred identity. First, he shows how the black religious press played a key role in establishing denominational identity, particularly in the realm of doctrine. During the very first years of freedom, when black churches struggled to define themselves as Christian institutions, their newspapers provided space for instruction and reflection on the specific tenets of denominational faith. The second point is that the black press also helped establish a broad, trans-denominational religious identity for blacks. This more general African American sacred identity is based in the realm of lived religious experience and not so much on doctrine. Here the black press fostered a small but significant range of practices of modern consumption that tended to blur the lines of difference separating black Baptists from black Methodists in the conduct of their everyday lives. Finally, Giggie examines how the black press unexpectedly sparked a fissure among black churches and propelled the formation of an alternative black religious identity. The black press's promotion of the consumer market as one source of spiritual sustenance angered critics who bolted for the nascent African American Holiness-Pentecostal movement, which began in the 1890s in the South and promised to recapture the purity of the early Christian church.

While Giggie's chapter discusses the usage of advertisements as well as the promotion of consumption in serial publications and its impact on readers, Elesha Coffman calls for a "business turn" in studying religious media. Her chapter "Marketing the Mainline: *The Christian Century* and the Business of Ecumenism" opens up new approaches to writing histories of religious publishing by analyzing periodicals as organizations depending on specific infrastructures, such as subscriptions, financial support, patronage systems, companies, and editorial offices. From this point of view, Coffman reassesses the mainline Protestant press in the first half of the twentieth century. Though it is commonly used in studies of American religious history, the term "mainline" has an obscure history. The Main Line is the railroad line leading to the northwestern suburbs of Philadelphia. "Mainline" as an adjective came to be used in the late 1950s to designate the kind of people who lived in these suburbs: white, wealthy, old-family, socialites. Then, in 1960, "mainline" was quite suddenly applied to a subset of American Protestants. The word leapt into discourse, and it was as if everyone already knew what it meant. Coffman argues that the magazine *The Christian Century* constructed a definition and a constituency for mainline Protestantism before the term even existed. The magazine per-

formed this constructive work through its editorial content and also through its material qualities—such as images, ads, and paper stock—and through its business model. In addition to being a repository of liberal Protestant editorial content, the magazine was a product, created by professional journalists and designers that constituted taste for the religious tradition that would, after 1960, come to be called the Protestant mainline. Coffman shows that *The Christian Century*, with its many affinities with other elite, liberal journals, legitimized and reinforced the inchoate mainline identity and gave these liberal Protestants a collectively recognized expression. Through its design, through its library circulation, through its advertisements, and through other means, *The Christian Century* represented mainline Protestants in national conversations about religion, politics, and culture. In other words, the magazine aided its readers in the process of identification, of figuring out who they were and with whom they stood.

Frank Neubert extends Coffman's business analysis of the mainline Protestant flagship publication and studies the history of *Hinduism Today*, a quarterly magazine that appears in roughly 15,000 copies that are shipped to nearly sixty countries worldwide. The majority of readers are Hindus in diverse diaspora countries, primarily Singapore, Malaysia, Mauritius, Trinidad, and the United States. Its editors are monks of Kauai Adheenam who belong to the Śaiva Siddhānta Church, which is situated in Kauai, Hawaii. One of the magazine's declared goals is to foster global Hindu solidarity and educate Hindus worldwide about their religion. His chapter "From Connecting Hindus to Uniting Global Hinduism: History and Guiding Principles of *Hinduism Today*" examines the history of this magazine in connection with the Śaiva Siddhānta Church, and looks at connections between this institution and its publications. Neubert draws on the study of source material as well as on fieldwork done in Kauai in January 2014. After a short introduction of theoretical and methodological assumptions, the chapter offers the history of the Śaiva Siddhānta Church, which was founded by Satguru Sivaya Subramuniaswami. Neubert discusses the origins and development of the magazine and the websites connected with it. In doing so, the chapter analyzes the role the magazine plays for global Hindu diasporas. Neubert also studies the role of editors in the religious print business and examines the specific agenda of "Global Hinduism" as it is promoted by the editors/publishers of *Hinduism Today*.

While Neubert argues that the success of *Hinduism Today* and the central role the editors play in global Hindu discourse is due to a large extent to their early and sophisticated use of globalized media technologies, Anja-Maria Bassimir's chapter "Evangelical Magazines in a Digital Age" analyzes the digital turn of the evangelical magazine *Christianity Today*. The

flagship magazine of US-American evangelicalism first played host to *America Online*'s religion section and since 1996 maintained its own website. Other religious magazines soon followed suit. This chapter investigates what happens to the format when religious magazines go online. Focusing on a particular type of periodical—the religious periodical with no apparent loyalties to any (worldly) authority beyond the periodical and its audience—it describes the change from print publication to multimedia enterprise. It also demonstrates that the division between religion online and online religion, prevalent in research on religion and the internet, is not helpful for an analysis of religious magazines. Instead, the chapter follows recent approaches of “networked religion” in describing the transformation of evangelical magazines online, highlighting the decline of reliance on traditional authority and increasing reliance on a network of informal ties to disparate friends, organizations, and institutions. Against the backdrop of contemporary research, the author argues that in a global and digital world, periodicals like *Christianity Today* become religious authorities in themselves. The chapter further investigates how *Christianity Today* understands its own role in a digital and global environment, showing that traditional features of print magazines are both cultivated and extended to create the current “plus print format.” Whereas characteristics such as multimodality, global reach, the potential for nearly instantaneous communication, and an unmanageable abundance of information make the internet radically different from other serialized communication technologies, Bassimir shows that the magazine format was both retained and reinvented online. Religious magazines like *Christianity Today*, transformed into multimedia enterprises and through corporate design and an identifiable religious message, emerged as new authorities offering a religious worldview—and therefore identity—people can subscribe to.

Candy Gunther Brown's concluding chapter on “Print Culture and the Changing Faces of Religious Communication” identifies major approaches, insights, questions, and challenges in recent, transatlantic scholarship on the religious press and print culture. Ever since the sixteenth-century Reformation and Johannes Gutenberg's invention of the printing press, Protestantism in particular has been associated with the Word, words, and print. Brown maintains that the present generation of scholars is building upon, and unsettling, influential ideas promoted by the previous generation: that the rise of print facilitated the emergence of the public sphere and political consciousness; print culture forges imagined communities; the religious press is an engine of democratization; the transition from orality to literacy resulted in a shift from social to private reading, and then from intensive to extensive reading; the medium is the message. Much recent scholarship still privi-