1. Introduction

1.1. Encountering Empire: An African American History

In 1927, Hastings K. Banda (c. 1898–1997), the African leader of the movement for independence in British Nyasaland and later president of its successor state Malawi, noticed an increase in his personal correspondence. "I am getting letters …" he wrote, "telling of the keen interest the people take in the AME Church."[1] Two years later, Alexander G. Fraser (1873–1962), a renowned Scottish educator of the Church Missionary Society, observed a similar trend in the Gold Coast. "Then come the growing party," he wrote to his friends, "the African Episcopal Methodists, or Zionists."[2] Both remarks echoed earlier concerns of South African administrations. In 1904, British officials began to confer about "a Church … purely under Native management and control," known as the Ethiopian movement, which they deemed connected to "the work of the African Methodist Episcopal Church."[3] In response, they enacted new immigration regulations for African Americans.[4] But there were also favorable

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[1] Letter Hastings K. Banda to E. H. Coit, December 24, 1927. SCRBC, AME CR, box 43, folder "Corr. A-B, 1927."

[2] Circular, Alexander G. Fraser to friends, May 23, 1929. Bodleian Library of Commonwealth and African Studies, Rhodes House, Oxford, Wraith Papers (MSS.Afr.s.1563), file 11, 3.

[3] *Memorandum on the Ethiopian Movement and the Attitude Toward It by the Several S. A.-Govts, 1904.* TNA, DO 119/522, no. D 42/1, 1–2.

[4] According to its own accounts, the AME Church had been granted admission under the British colonial government, while the dominion government, formed in 1910, issued the Immigration Restriction Act of the Union of South Africa (no. 22, 1913) and a general ministerial order prohibiting the entry of colored persons. Both provided ample scope for excluding AME missionaries. For the act, see Office of the International Missionary Council, *Treaties, Acts and Regulations Relating to Missionary Freedom* (London, 1923), 27. For AME staff immigration, see Charles Spencer Smith, *A History of the African Methodist Episcopal Church …* (Philadelphia,

reactions. The Colonial Office in London registered AME mission schools among those awarded government grants by local education departments with increasing regularity.[5] The membership and attendance lists of major European and American missionary organizations concerned with Africa named AME Church members to a growing extent.[6] Some of those interested in spreading Christianity to the modern world hoped that the AME Church prefigured "a really African church."[7] And newspapers of various colonies occasionally drew public attention to AME officials' "brilliant career[s]" and "wise words."[8]

The fragments above testify to the encounter that is the subject of this study: the arrival of an African American church in Africa, Britain's last empire.[9] Retrieved from the repositories of Western imperialism, these fragments suggest that this encounter involved a broad range of territories and institutions.[10] The AME Church appeared in correspondences of colonizers and their opponents, colonial border controls and funding schemes, educational and missionary statistics, Christian demographics, and public perceptions in an area stretching from Cape Town to the hinterlands of Freetown.[11] Despite their vast outreach, the paths that the AME missionaries took on the imperial stage in Africa did not reflect a linear expansion. They tell of ideological inconsistencies, contingent convergences, and systematic exclusion. African American missionaries had moved into core arenas of colonial power – British adminis-

1922), 331–36; and Lillie M. Johnson, "Missionary-Government Relations in British and Portuguese Colonies," in *Black Americans and the Missionary Movement in Africa*, ed. Sylvia M. Jacobs (Westport, 1982), 203.
5 See, for instance, Nyasaland Protectorate, *Report of the Education Department, May 1926–Dec. 1927*. CO 525/125/15. 20; *Annual General Report for Sierra Leone for 1927*. CO 267/626/18. 24–25; and Gold Coast Colony, *Report on the Education Department for the Year 1935–1936*. CO 96/733/23. 19. All TNA.
6 One particularly relevant example, which will be discussed in detail in Part II, was the AME Church's participation in the first international missionary conference focusing on Africa, organized by the International Missionary Council (IMC), in 1926. See Edwin W. Smith, *The Christian Mission in Africa: A Study Based on the Proceedings of the International Conference at Le Zoute, Belgium, September 14th to 21st, 1926* (London, 1926), 100–101.
7 William David Schermerhorn, *The Christian Mission in the Modern World* (New York, 1933), 247.
8 "The Rev. S.B.A Campbell, M. A., B. D., Ph.D.: A Brilliant Career," *Sierra Leone Guardian*, February 7, 1930, 11; and "Wise Words by the Black Bishop," *South African Outlook*, June 1, 1922, 127.
9 Roy Lewis and Yvonne Foy, *The British in Africa* (London, 1971), 1.
10 Using the archives of Western imperialism, of course, generates a number of problems in it itself, which will be addressed in Section 1.3.
11 According to an IMC survey of 1938, AME missions existed in Liberia, Sierra Leone, the Gold Coast, and the Union of South Africa, including the Basutoland and Swaziland Protectorates. In its own accounts, the AME Church reported additional activities in Bechuanaland, Southern and Northern Rhodesia, and Nyasaland. Joseph I. Parker, ed., *Interpretative Statistical Survey of the World Mission of the Christian Church …* (New York, 1938), 67 and 70; and Artishia W. Jordan, *The African Methodist Episcopal Church in Africa* (New York, 1964), 140–43.

trations, Christian organizations, and public perception – in conflicting ways and with indeterminate outcomes.

The American part of this story is different. In the United States, the AME Church was known best as the first autonomous institution founded, funded, and maintained by black Americans, thus constituting a landmark in the history of African American emancipation. Since its beginnings in 1816, the church enjoyed a large membership among the nation's most destitute and desperate, generous support from the uplifted, and close attention from refined intellectuals.[12] W. E. B. Du Bois (1868–1963), a central voice of black America throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, called the AME Church the "greatest Negro organization in the world."[13] Others praised AME founder Richard Allen (1760–1831) as an "Apostle of Freedom," the leader of the "Independent Church Movement," and the prime architect of not just a church but a "nation within a nation."[14] Such voices have remained dominant up to the present. Scholars in the United States have focused on analyzing the AME Church's enduring centrality to African Americans' social and intellectual life, often stressing its preeminent role in the formation of a black race consciousness that guided the African American struggle for emancipation from slavery to civil rights.[15]

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[12] The first account of the AME Church is in Richard Allen, *The Life, Experience, and Gospel Labours of the Rt. Rev. Richard Allen …* (1833; repr. New York, 1960).

[13] W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk: Essays and Sketches* (Chicago, 1903), accessed September 16, 2014, http://docsouth.unc.edu/church/duboissouls/dubois.html#dubois88, 197.

[14] Charles H. Wesley, *Richard Allen: Apostle of Freedom* (Washington, DC, 1935); Carter G. Woodson, *The History of the Negro Church*, 2nd ed. (Washington, DC, 1921), 71; and E. Franklin Frazier, *The Negro Church in America*/C. Eric Lincoln, *The Black Church Since Frazier*, rev. ed. (New York, 1974), 35.

[15] There is ample literature on the history of the AME Church in the United States. The following list is sorted by topic and date of publication. The most recent account by the AME Church is Howard D. Gregg, *History of the A. M. E. Church: The Black Church in Action* (Nashville, 1980). For scholarly accounts often focusing on specific periods, see George A. Singleton, *The Romance of African Methodism: A Study of the African Methodist Episcopal Church* (New York, 1952); Carol V. R. George, *Segregated Sabbaths: Richard Allen and the Emergence of Independent Black Churches, 1760–1840* (New York, 1973); Clarence E. Walker, *A Rock in a Weary Land: The African Methodist Episcopal Church During the Civil War and Reconstruction* (Baton Rouge, 1982); Will B. Gravely, "African Methodism and the Rise of Black Denominationalism," in *Perspectives on American Methodism: Interpretive Essays*, ed. Russell E. Richey, Kenneth E. Rowe, and Jean Miller Schmidt, 108–26 (Nashville, 1993); Robert Gregg, *Sparks from the Anvil of Oppression: Philadelphia's African Methodists and Southern Migrants, 1890–1940* (Philadelphia, 1993); Lawrence S. Little, "Ideology, Culture, and the Realities of Racism in the AME Foreign Agenda Toward Events and Issues in Britain and France, 1885–1905," *Western Journal of Black Studies* 22 (1998): 128–40; Lawrence S. Little, *Disciples of Liberty: The African Methodist Episcopal Church in the Age of Imperialism, 1884–1916* (Knoxville, 2000); and Larry Eugene Rivers and Canter Brown, Jr., *Laborers in the Vineyard of the Lord: The Beginnings of the AME Church in Florida, 1865–1895* (Gainesville, 2001). For works on individuals, see Calvin S. Morris, *Reverdy C. Ransom: Black Advocate of the Social Gospel* (Lanham, 1990); Stephen Ward Angell, *Bishop Henry McNeal Turner and African-American Religion in the South* (Knoxville, 1992); Annetta L. Go-

The role of AME missionaries' encounters with Africans and their colonizers has not received much attention in this previous narrative of black self-determination. What AME people did overseas is considered marginalia, at best, and negligible, at worst. This study makes the case that the histories of the AME Church in the United States and its mission in African colonies must not be regarded as divided histories.[16] It undertakes to demonstrate that the AME Church, through its missions, shaped and connected black communities on each side of the Atlantic and thus was an integral part of the much broader transatlantic entanglements that emerged in the wake of African colonization. In order to weave the outwardly distinct histories of the AME Church back together, I reconstruct the paths African American missionaries took from the United States onto the imperial stage in Africa. By focusing on their work, intellectual endeavors, and contacts, we will see that AME people were not disconnected posts sitting on either side of the Atlantic, but were agents who provided and defined a variety of links between African Americans and Africans in the period of late European colonialism.

Studying how AME missionaries made this connection will open up a new perspective on a number of well-known relations, namely, between African Americans and their presumed homeland in Africa, between white dominance and black resistance, and between race and power – the prime rule of colonial difference and black identity. Briefly put, this perspective will prompt us to think through all of these relations as shaped by the colonial encounter of African Americans, thus foregrounding a novel aspect of the history of black transnationalism. Tracing African American missionaries' colonial encounters in

mez-Jefferson, *The Sage of Tawawa: Reverdy Cassius Ransom, 1861–1959* (Kent, 2002); Albert G. Miller, *Elevating the Race: Theophilus G. Steward, Black Theology, and the Making of an African American Civil Society, 1865–1924* (Knoxville, 2003); Richard S. Newman, *Freedom's Prophet: Bishop Richard Allen, the AME Church and the Black Founding Fathers* (New York, 2008); and Nelson T. Strobert, *Daniel Alexander Payne: The Venerable Preceptor of the African Methodist Episcopal Church* (Lanham, 2012). For studies on gender, see Jualynne E. Dodson, *Engendering Church: Women, Power, and the AME Church* (Lanham, 2002); Julius H. Bailey, *Around the Family Altar: Domesticity in the African Methodist Episcopal Church, 1865–1900* (Gainesville, 2005); and Julius H. Bailey, "Masculinizing the Pulpit: The Black Preacher in the Nineteenth-century AME Church," in *Fathers, Preachers, Rebels, Men: Black Masculinity in U. S. History and Literature, 1820–1945*, ed. Timothy R. Buckner and Peter Caster, 80–101 (Columbus, 2011). A number of studies discuss AME print culture. See Gilbert Anthony Williams, *The Christian Recorder, Newspaper of the African Methodist Episcopal Church: History of a Forum for Ideas, 1854–1902* (Jefferson, 1996); Stephen W. Angell and Anthony B. Pinn, eds., *Social Protest Thought in the African Methodist Episcopal Church, 1862–1939* (Knoxville, 2000); and Julius H. Bailey, *Race Patriotism: Protest and Print Culture in the AME Church* (Knoxville, 2012).

16 My argument aligns, instead, with scholarship that understands "divided histories" as "entangled histories." This scholarship considers the separation of certain entities and their respective histories as the result of their interactions. Sebastian Conrad and Shalini Randeria, "Geteilte Geschichten – Europa in einer postkolonialen Welt," in *Jenseits des Eurozentrismus: Postkoloniale Perspektiven in den Geschichts- und Kulturwissenschaften*, ed. Sebastian Conrad and Shalini Randeria (Frankfurt am Main, 2002), 17.

Africa, I argue, reveals intersections and interactions between African American emancipation and African colonization in the twentieth century that cannot solely be explained as results of the transatlantic slave trade of the previous centuries. It emphasizes instead how the colonization of Africa itself connected the continent not only to European metropoles, but also to the presumably long disparate lifeworld of African Americans in the United States.

In the historical literature, African American missionaries have not yet been considered part of the colonial encounter. They are primarily analyzed as agents who were 'naturally' committed to Africa. According to standard accounts, black missionary activities peaked in Africa in the late nineteenth century, when North American mission boards increasingly hired blacks because of their presumed racial fitness to withstand tropical climates. During certain periods of time, African Americans comprised the majority of mission staff in Liberia and Sierra Leone and, to a lesser extent, in Angola, Congo, and South Africa. Some black missionaries even pioneered initiatives that aimed at proselytizing Africans. Major milestones were the labors of the freed slave Lott Carey in Liberia in the first half of the nineteenth century and of William H. Sheppard in the Congo in the latter half.[17] The twentieth century, by contrast, has been described by historians as an interruption of interracial cooperation in missions. The era was, as W. E. B. Du Bois famously put it, the era of a color line that "belt[ed] the world."[18] Jim Crowism, lynching, and hostility toward blacks in the United States coincided with European powers' anxieties about Africans' anticolonial upheaval, while African Americans voiced their discontent increasingly in anticolonial terms, claiming "Africa for the Africans" during the interwar years.[19] In this time, most North American mission boards refrained from hiring African Americans. Once the 'civilizing' of Africa was restored to the status of white men's business, standard accounts have it, black American missionaries "were to pass into history."[20]

The approach of this study is different. It explores African American missionaries in colonial Africa in order to argue that pan-African resistance was not the sole response African Americans had to late European colonization initiatives. Although the AME mission in Africa was numerically small, a brief look at colonial government records suggests that it flourished most conspicu-

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17 "Lott Carey," *Western Recorder*, November 8, 1925, accessed February 22, 2013, http://ezproxy.cul.columbia.edu/login?url=http://search.proquest.com/docview/126862607?accountid=10226; and William H. Sheppard, *Pioneers in Congo* (Louisville, 1925).
18 W. E. B. Du Bois, "The Color Line Belts the World," *Collier's Weekly* (October 1906): 30, repr. in *W. E. B. Du Bois: A Reader*, ed. David Levering Lewis (New York, 1995), 42.
19 Marcus Garvey, "Africa for the Africans," 1923, repr. in *The Philosophy and Opinions of Marcus Garvey: Or, Africa for the Africans*, comp. by Amy Jacques Garvey, centennial ed. (Dover, 1986), 68.
20 William Seraile, "Black American Missionaries in Africa, 1821–1925," *Social Studies* 63 (1972): 201.

ously once the colonial contest for Africa moved forward, especially in British West and South Africa. AME missionaries differed from their black predecessors in the Christian mission because they acted on behalf of an independent African American church, a condition that meant at once greater doctrinal liberty and greater financial constraints.[21] They also differed from most African American agitators of the time. Because the liberation of Africa was not their prime aim, AME missionaries established a much wider variety of transatlantic contacts than their militant contemporaries. By leaving the beaten paths of the relationship between African Americans and Africans, they did not pass into history. They rather slipped from the grasp of historians who equate twentieth-century black transnationalism with anticolonialism.[22]

Inquiring into the relationship between black missionaries and colonial Africa necessarily means asking how the color line – the organizing principle of race and power in the twentieth century – not only divided people, but also conditioned their transatlantic contacts. In order to discriminate the history of these contacts from that of the imagined pan-African compound of black people, I suggest using the phrase 'Afro-colonial encounter.' Borrowed from postcolonial scholarship, the concept of the colonial encounter serves to emphasize that African American missionaries entered environments characterized by highly asymmetrical colonial and racial power relations;[23] at the same time, it does not deny that this entrance always had an interactive and often improvised dimension, easily ignored in accounts of pan-Africanism.[24] Encountering Africa meant encountering colonizers and their subordinates, explorers and contemners, redeemers and liberators; it meant establishing a variety of contacts, ranging from ephemeral glimpses and clumsy interactions, to institutionalized relationships and interlocking understandings and practices.[25] African American missionaries, I argue, acted in a multiplicity of power

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21 Other independent black churches active in Africa were the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church (1876), the National Baptist Convention (1880), and the Lott Carey Baptist Foreign Mission Convention (1897). Llewellyn L. Berry, *A Century of Missions of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, 1840–1940* (New York, 1942), 223–29.

22 On African American anticolonialism, see, for instance, Penny M. von Eschen, *Race Against Empire: Black Americans and Anticolonialism, 1937–1957* (Ithaca, 1997); and Rupert Lewis, *Marcus Garvey: Anti-colonial Champion* (Trenton, 1988).

23 A detailed discussion of postcolonial studies lies beyond the scope of this work. For a good introduction, see Robert J. C. Young, *Postcolonialism: An Historical Introduction* (Malden, 2001).

24 Pan-Africanism is usually associated with the series of Pan-African Congresses held between 1900 and 1945. The congresses aimed to forge alliances among colonized and oppressed people in the black world. George Shepperson suggests distinguishing the Pan-African Congress movement as a political formation from pan-Africanism (intentionally lower case), by which he means the variety of cultural movements that engaged with ideas of Africa. In this study, I will use the lower-case spelling as an umbrella term that encompasses pan-African politics and culture. George Shepperson, "Pan-Africanism and 'Pan-Africanism': Some Historical Notes," *Phylon* 23 (1962): 346.

25 My concept of a contact perspective specifically builds on Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes:*

relations that surrounded the African continent. The impact that resulted from their encounters thus cannot be studied in a way that limits them to any one type of project, be it evangelical, pan-African, or anticolonial.

Finally, I analyze black missionaries' encounters to trace the sites and spaces of their interactions, rather than their impact in a predefined territory, such as the British Empire. While the AME mission focused on British colonies, AME missionaries often began to engage with the continent by reading books, visiting expositions or participating in religious or political events that concerned the representation and colonization of Africa; these encounters took place in the streets of Harlem, the convention halls of international missionary organizations in Berlin, and the offices of colonial administrators in London. In other words, a significant portion of black missionaries' contact with colonial Africa did not happen on the continent, but in a contact zone defined by their engagement with representations of Africa. Such representations concerned the othering of blacks in colonial discourse as much as the dictate of racial identity in African American and African discourses on pan-Africanism.[26] Engaging with others' representations of Africa and often also with others' representations of the descendants of Africa, black American missionaries typically fashioned themselves in relation to tensions, contradictions, and possibilities of empowerment not adequately expressed by ideas of resistance to, or collaboration with, imperial initiatives.[27] I therefore examine the self-fashioning of black missionaries as a form of autoethnography. Like Mary Louise Pratt, I understand autoethnographies as the self-descriptions others developed of themselves in response to, or in dialogue with, the terms of the colonizers and the colonized.[28] In the context of this study, this means analyzing AME missionaries' self-descriptions as resulting from the encounter between colonial others and black American selves. Their mutual engagements and representations define an idiosyncratic contact zone: they guide us beyond the color line and its rules of colonial difference and racial solidarity, and into the fragile margins of empire where such rules were only just negotiated.

By looking at how African American missionaries encountered empire, this study complements prior research that has focused on Africa as a fantasy constructed by African Americans.[29] Prioritizing the ways in which African

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Travel Writing and Transculturation (London, 1992), 7.

26 For literature on the ways in which African Americans and Africans imagined each other, see Yekutiel Gershoni, *Africans on African Americans: The Creation and Uses of an African-American Myth* (Basingstoke, 1997); and Robert Trent Vinson, *The Americans Are Coming! Dreams of African American Liberation in Segregationist South Africa* (Athens, 2012).

27 Cf. Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler, "Between Metropole and Colony: Rethinking a Research Agenda," in *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World*, ed. Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler (Berkeley, 1997), 6.

28 Mary Louise Pratt, "Arts of the Contact Zone," *Profession* 91 (1991): 35.

29 Images of Africa are a major, yet controversial, focus in the current historiography. A good

Americans imagined Africa has long been deemed plausible by scholars because "very few American Negroes since the Civil War have had any face-to-face contact with Africans."[30] More recently, advocates of transnational perspectives have noted the absence of empire and the silencing of Africa as the results of such historiographical methods.[31] They consider these lacunae to be expressions of the "automatic notion that somehow [blacks] were always striving for U.S. nationality" and of "mechanics of diasporic deafness and exclusion."[32] Whether the neglect of empire and Africa in the historiography of African Americans originates in parochial research or diasporic exceptionalism, it obscures a dispersion that remains central to our understanding of the history of black emancipation to the present: the African American struggle for self-determination has not been confined to the United States, but it has also been an undertaking of those who chose to leave the country.[33] To become a missionary in Africa was one way to make this choice. It was a means of seeking self-determination in the colonial empires of Africa as opposed to an ancient African homeland.

Time Frame

The temporal outlines of this study coincide with what is called the "interwar years" in conventional periodization. Whether we look at colonial Africa, the United States, or Europe, the sequence of two world wars bookending the crisis of world capitalism is often described as an era of global transition. Black Americans became African Americans by retrieving their African heritage as "a usable past."[34] The United States became a modern world power. Europe, once the colonial metropole, disaggregated into nation-states. And colonized people adopted nationalist ideology as a way to promote self-determination in a newly emerging, international society. Historical scholarship thus considers

account on the African American Africa image is Clare Corbould, *Becoming African Americans: Black Public Life in Harlem, 1919–1939* (Cambridge, MA, 2009); for a critique of this focus, see Tunde Adeleke, *The Case Against Afrocentrism* (Jackson, 2009).
30 St. Clair Drake, "*Negro Americans* and the Africa Interest," in *The American Negro Reference Book*, ed. John P. Davis (Englewood Cliffs, 1966), 664.
31 Spearheading these interventions are Amy Kaplan and Donald E. Pease, eds., *Cultures of United States Imperialism* (Durham, 1993); and Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge, UK, 1993).
32 Gerald Horne, "Toward a Transnational Research Agenda for African American History in the 21st Century," *Journal for African American History* 91 (2006): 291; and Laura Chrisman, "Black Transnationalisms Revisited," *Postcolonial Studies* 9 (2006): 223. See also Laura Chrisman, "Rethinking Black Atlanticism," *The Black Scholar* 30 (2000): 12–17.
33 Cf. Horne, "Transnational Research Agenda," 291.
34 Cf. Corbould, *Becoming*, 57–87.

the interwar years as a period that marked the end of the long nineteenth century.[35]

This study makes use of this periodization as a backdrop to the analysis without taking the idea of a global transition as its main trajectory. The years between 1900 and 1939 neither frame nor explain the phenomenon of African American missionaries in Africa. Rather, they witnessed the reappearance of black mission work in two circum-Atlantic transformations: the emergence of indigenization as an approach to the Christianization of Africa in the Western missionary movement, and the establishment in British African colonies of indirect rule, a form of government based on existing tribal structures and traditions. For African American missionaries, these developments constituted a crucial modification of twentieth century relations of race and colonial power. Indigenization and indirect rule opened up new ground for black missionaries to engage with the evangelization and colonization of Africa while also triggering several other developments, including the consolidation of the color line, the rise of anticolonial movements, the rapid demographic growth of African Christianity, and the formation of a hub of Africa-centered subjectivity and agitation among blacks in the United States.

From this point of departure, the study chronicles the development of the AME Church's missionary enterprise based on shifting contacts between African and African American church members, international missionary organizations, and British colonial administrations. While the circuits of these groups tended to overlap during the 1920s and 1930s, their confluence was never balanced or linear. Certain structures of interaction were inherited from the nineteenth century, while others were disrupted or irreversibly transformed by war and depression. To foreground such contacts as an explanatory factor in the formation of the black American mission, this study looks at several contemporaneous types and sites of interaction. Zooming into black missionaries' contact zones will require us to include the opening decades of the twentieth century, although the interwar era was the period when the encounter between black missionaries and the British Empire in Africa gained a new intensity and quality. This liaison ended after the Second World War, when decolonization began to erode the conditions of the contacts that are the focus of this study.

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35 For the United States, see Lisa McGirr, "The Interwar Years," in *American History Now*, ed. Eric Foner and Lisa McGirr, 125–50 (Philadelphia, 2011); and Jürgen Osterhammel and Niels P. Petersson, *Globalization: A Short History*, trans. Dona Geyer (Princeton, 2003), 99–108; for literature on the colonies, see Erez Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment: Self-determination and the International Origins of Anticolonial Nationalism* (Oxford, 2007); and Sönke Kunkel and Christoph Meyer, eds., *Aufbruch ins postkoloniale Zeitalter: Globalisierung und die außereuropäische Welt in den 1920er und 1930er Jahren* (Frankfurt am Main, 2012).

1.2. Perspectives on the Afro-colonial Contact Zone: Christian Missions, African American Transnationalism, and Colonial Africa

Historiography of Christian Missions

This study is informed by research that approaches the history of foreign missions as a history of exchange and transculturation. While this literature draws on world evangelization as an inherent idea of missions, it departs from what is often seen as its concomitant effect: the assimilation of the world to Western and usually white concepts of Christianity. Instead, it uses the genuinely global vision of Christianity to underscore the imponderability of missionary practices. In this view, missionary work developed in tandem with processes of "globalization," the term increasingly used by scholars to emphasize the complex and uneven intertwining of cultural, political, economic, and social processes that shaped the modern world.[36]

For much of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, missionary globalization followed the routes of Western colonialism.[37] The close linkage resulted from the effort to make a Christian way of life the building block of the civilizing mission that Western colonial powers claimed they were pursuing. Indeed, missionary work in colonial territories involved more than proselytizing. It usually encompassed the exploration of unknown territories, the erection of churches, schools, and hospitals, and the establishment of infrastructures for communication and transportation.[38] At the same time, as scholars of colonialism and postcolonialism emphasize, missionaries were not necessarily agents of empire. In their studies, they show that Western evangelists also were outspoken critics of imperial enterprises and, more importantly, protagonists in the processes of translation that designated the entanglement between colo-

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36 See, for instance, Dana L. Robert, "The First Globalization: The Internationalization of the Protestant Missionary Movement Between the World Wars," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 26 (2002): 50–66; Brian Stanley, "Twentieth-century World Christianity: A Perspective from the History of Missions," in *Christianity Reborn: The Global Expansion of Evangelicalism in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Donald M. Lewis, 52–83 (Grand Rapids, 2004); Sebastian Conrad and Rebekka Habermas, eds., "Mission und kulturelle Globalisierung," special issue, *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 36 (2010); and Klaus Koschorke, ed., *Phases of Globalization in the History of Christianity* (Wiesbaden, 2012).

37 As Frederick Cooper cautions us, globalization must not be understood as a general increase in worldwide connections and mobility. Colonialism, in particular, consisted of a number of enclosed networks that were again crosscut by other networks of exchange and socioeconomic interaction. As such, he argues, its globalizing effects were rather a "reorganization of space" that involved both "the forging and unforging of linkages." Frederick Cooper, *Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, History* (Berkeley, 2005), 105.

38 For a standard account, see Norman Etherington, ed., *Missions and Empire* (Oxford, 2005).