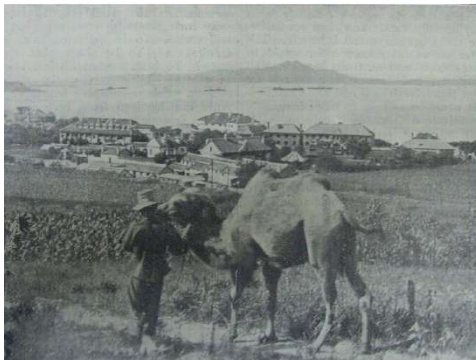




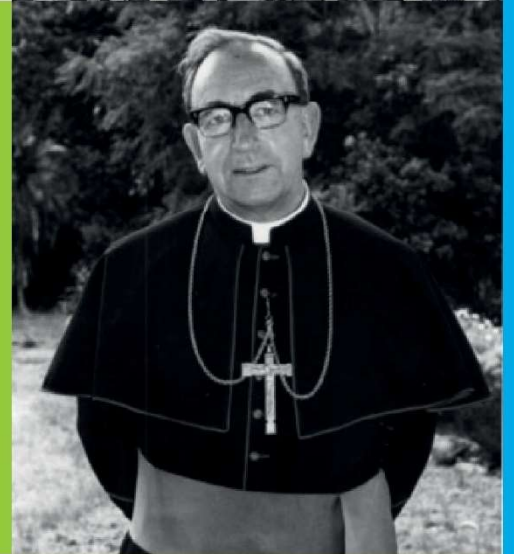
**QUEEN'S  
UNIVERSITY  
BELFAST**

## IRELAND & MISSIONS

Identity, nation  
and empire  
in the 19-20th  
Century



WILES  
COLLO-  
QUIUM



**Date:**

12-13 September 2019

**Location:**

27 University Square  
Belfast

**Support from:**

Wiles Trust and  
Queen's University



2019



*The historiography of the expansion of Christianity has noted the strength and dynamism of Irish missionary activity in the 19th and 20th Century. Ireland produced numerous missionary individuals, groups and institutions, and the latter stimulated a vibrant form of faith all around the world. Most studies on Irish missionaries have focused on a particular denomination or church, whether Catholic or Protestant (Presbyterian, Baptist, Elim, etc.). If not all traditions have been studied equally, there is by now a substantial amount of literature on the subject. It seems therefore appropriate to begin to think generally about Ireland and the specificity of its missionaries at large.*

*The colloquium wishes authors to reflect, comparatively and/or generically, on what made the Irish missionary movement singular and unique in the 19th and 20th century. Comparative questions may look at chronology, destinations (why so much focus on China and Africa?), pastoral approaches, or relation to the (making of an) Irish “imperial culture”. Generic questions could focus on the singular (singularly Irish?) aspects of a church or a congregation, its missiology, relation to the British empire, political imagination, gender, or culture.*

*The colloquium does not posit similarities between Irish missions and missionaries a priori. Instead, it poses them as a question, or hypothesis, to explore the shape and dynamism of Irish missions and to try to think generally about what is unique and specific in the history of religion on the Emerald island in the 19th and 20th Century.*

## PROGRAMME

| <b>THURSDAY 12 SEPTEMBER</b>             |   |
|--|---|
| 1,00pm.                                  | Welcome & Introduction  |
| 1,30pm – Opening lecture I               | <b>Andrew Holmes</b> , “‘Where have the Protestants gone?’ The Irish Protestant missionary experience, 1790-1914.”  |
| 2.00pm – Panel One<br>“Green and Orange” | <b>Matteo Binasco</b> , “Whenever Green is Worn: The Holy See and Irish Catholic Missionary Movement in the Nineteenth Century.”<br><br><b>Declan O’Doherty &amp; Aglaia de Angeli</b> , “From novice in Newchwang to Minister in Manchuria. A discussion of the early experiences of the Presbyterian missionary Rev. Alexander Crawford in Manchuria, 1895-1913.” |
| 4.pm – Opening lecture II                | <b>Colin Barr</b> , “The Children of the Household’: Irish Catholic Missionaries and Indigenous Populations in the Settler Empire, 1815-1914.”  |
| 4,30 – Reception                         |   |

## FRIDAY 13 SEPTEMBER

|  |  |
|--|--|
| 9,30am – Panel Two<br><i>“Great Works...”</i>                      | <p><b>Jamelyn B. Palattao</b>, “James A. Greig of the Presbyterian Church of Ireland (PCI): Mission, Humanitarianism and Diplomacy in China.”</p> <p><b>Eric Morier-Genoud</b>, “Donal Lamont. A Northern Irish Bishop in Africa?”</p> <p><b>Barry Sheppard</b>, “‘The great cannot exist without the small; nor the small without the great.’ Catholic Action in Ireland and Abroad 1932-49.”</p> |
| 11-12,30 Panel Three<br><i>“Home and Abroad”</i>                   | <p><b>Sarah Roddy</b>, “Temporary missionaries: or, how the ‘spiritual empire’ changed Catholic Ireland”</p> <p><b>Stuart Mathieson</b>, “Irish Missions, Science, and Scripture in the Holy Land”</p> <p><b>Fiona Bateman</b>, “Echoes of Irish history in Eastern Nigeria: Cultural loss and conflict”</p>   |
| 12,30 Lunch  |  |
| 2, 00-3,30 Panel Four<br><i>“Exhibition, Text and Photographs”</i> | <p><b>Denis Linehan</b>, “‘A Stuffed Gold Coast Monkey’: Exhibiting Irish-Africa in the Missionary Exhibitions in 20<sup>th</sup> Century Ireland.”</p> <p><b>Justin Livingstone</b>, “Writing Mission: Empire, Decolonisation and the Qua Iboe”</p> <p><b>Fiona Loughnan</b>, “The Album and the Archive: Migratory Photo-Objects and Irish Spiritan Missions in Kenya”</p>                       |
| 3,30-4pm Concluding remarks  |  |

# Abstracts

## Opening Lecture II

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**Andrew Holmes**, “‘Where have the protestants gone?’ The Irish protestant missionary experience, 1790-1914.”

The recent upsurge of interest in nineteenth-century Irish religious networks overseas has produced a thought-provoking literature. The narrative offered is largely, and understandably, determined by the experience of Irish Catholics. This has prompted Colin Barr and Hilary Carey to ask, ‘Where have the Protestants gone?’ This paper seeks to address that issue by reflecting upon the pastoral and evangelistic missions of nineteenth-century Protestants, particularly Presbyterians, and the interplay between emigration, denominationalism, evangelicalism, and colonialism. It outlines the overlapping and sometimes contested nature of these relationships and the need for more research into the basic chronology, geographical location, and institutional structures of the protestant missionary enterprise.

## PANEL ONE

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**Matteo Binasco**, “**Whenever Green is Worn: The Holy See and Irish Catholic Missionary Movement in the Nineteenth Century.**”

The aim of this paper is to explore how and to which extent the Holy See reacted to the global expansion of the Irish Catholic missionary movement in the nineteenth century. By focusing on the Sacred Congregation “de Propaganda Fide”, the Roman ministry founded in 1622 to oversee the worldwide Catholic missionary activity, the paper will examine how the Roman bureaucrats received and processed the flow of letters and reports written by the Irish missionaries scattered all over the globe. The paper will seek to assess the reaction of the Roman authorities to this missionary movement, but, at the same time, it will concentrate on the areas – like the Caribbean or South America – where the Irish missionaries operated, but which have been marginally considered by the historiography.

**Declan O’Doherty & Dr Aglaia De Angeli**, “**From novice in Newchwang to Minister in Manchuria. A discussion of the early experiences of the Presbyterian missionary Rev. Alexander Crawford in Manchuria, 1895-1913.**”

[Rev. Crawford was unique among those who sought to evangelise the Chinese. A theologian, academic, artist, cartographer, and linguist, he interacted seamlessly among an eclectic group of people ranging from local Chinese to Russian military officials. This paper focusses on his ministry in Kirin and sets his life against the unique historical circumstances of his time.

Selected episodes illustrate his relationships with local Chinese converts and wider Chinese society, while examining hostility between foreigners in general and missionaries in particular during the closing years of the Qing dynasty. Crawford’s changed status as husband and father is analysed to determine how these affected his work and attitudes.

Some exploration of how the Rev. Crawford sought to integrate his Christian teachings with local customs while maintaining the core message of the Christian gospel is undertaken. Interestingly,

he chose to raise his family in China among an often hostile or suspicious Chinese population and officials. It also explores how he and his family navigated the issues of British/Irish identity that were a huge factor for missionaries from Ireland in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century. He became critical of the actions of his fellow Protestants back in Ireland as the Home Rule crisis reached its crescendo. His relationships with Christian missionaries from other denominations working in China are studied as they were all competing for new converts. Ironically, most operated cordially in China, conscious of their minority status in a country that was generally hostile to their presence.

## Opening Lecture II

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### **Colin Barr, “‘The Children of the Household’: Irish Catholic Missionaries and Indigenous Populations in the Settler Empire, 1815-1914”**

Suzanne Aubert was withering in her criticism. ‘Only the Irish’, she complained from mid-nineteenth century New Zealand, ‘can renew the face of the Earth. They’re the noble and zealous battalion who’ve sallied forth from the Isle of Saints and nothing will halt them in their path – they’ll convert the whole world, provided they meet none but the sons of Erin.’ A French priest in South Africa at roughly the same time made a similar complaint: the flood of Irish priests only cared about ‘their exiled fellow-country-men’, he wrote, and thus the ‘Cape of Good Hope has been lost to the Church by the Irish.’ The pattern was the same across the whole of the settler empire and the entirety of the nineteenth-century: the second archbishop of Halifax (a key figure in Canadian Confederation) systematically ignored the indigenous Mi’kmaq. In colonial India, the Irish (unlike the French) preferred to train native clergy for native populations so as to leave the Irish free to focus on the European. The first Irish bishop in Auckland, New Zealand, significantly curtailed missionary activity amongst the Maori while the first bishop of Dunedin ended it entirely; only a handful of Irish bishops and priests in pre-Federation Australia took the slightest interest in the Aboriginal population. Everywhere the Irish preferred to focus their resources on what they called ‘the children of the household’. This programmatic disinterest in indigenous peoples stands in sharp contrast to the surge in Irish missionary activity in Africa, Asia, and elsewhere that began in earnest in the wake of the First World War. The Maynooth Mission to China (later the Missionary Society of St. Columban) began only in 1918, while the Kiltegan Fathers (St. Patrick’s Missionary Society) were not founded until 1932. This paper examines Irish Catholic missionary engagement with indigenous populations, or rather its absence, across the settler empire in the nineteenth-century, a period that saw the creation of a Catholic ‘Greater Ireland’ that had little room for the non-Irish of whatever faith or none.

## PANEL TWO

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### **Jamelyn B. Palattao, “James A. Greig of the Presbyterian Church of Ireland (PCI): Mission, Humanitarianism and Diplomacy in China”**

This paper looks into the evolving role of Dr. James A. Greig while serving as a medical missionary in China during the turbulent times of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. In particular, it examines the Russian refugee crisis from 1917 to 1920s and explores how Dr. Greig became involved in finding a solution to being appointed as a diplomatic agent of the League of Nations. The progression of the role of Dr. Greig from that of a missionary with humanitarian responsibilities, to becoming a diplomatic

representative of the League reveals another but interesting example of the overlapping tendencies of politics and religion during the height of British imperialism and in the early years of the existence of intergovernmental organisations. Surely, Dr. Greig's role as a delegate was considerably refined by his religious connections as a missionary. And as his services in China offered him relevant circumstances that honed his peaceable principles, his experiences further show that a significant part of the whole mission of the Presbyterian Church of Ireland (PCI) can also be associated to the principles of humanitarianism and liberal Christianity.

**Eric Morier-Genoud, “Bishop Donal Lamont. A Northern Irish Bishop in Africa?”**

Donal Lamont is a famous Bishop in Southern Africa who stood against the white supremacist regime of Rhodesia in the 1960s and 1970s. He wrote critical pastoral letters against the social and political situation of the country and stood in favour of a full African independence. For his stance, the Bishop stood trial and was expelled by the government in 1977, returning to his native Ireland. Because Bishop Lamont came from Northern Ireland, some scholars have speculated that his origins and experience of the Northern Irish situation could have shaped his politics in Africa. Lamont would have been a Northern Irish Bishop who transferred his Northern Irish experience and politics to Africa, standing (at time alone within the Rhodesian Episcopal Conference) against the oppressive racial government in Salisbury. Drawing from Lamont's published writing as well as his (as yet never used) private diary, this presentation explores the history of the Bishop in Rhodesia and investigates how much of his stance had to do with (Northern) Ireland. The presentation will explore in particular the social doctrine and political theology of the Bishop, with an eye for comparison with other episcopal leaders in Rhodesia and in neighbouring colonial Mozambique.

**Barry Sheppard, “‘The great cannot exist without the small; nor the small without the great’. Catholic Action in Ireland and Abroad 1932-49.”**

These words by St. Clement to the Corinthians in A.D. 96 were used by the lay Catholic organisation the Legion of Mary to highlight the need for a support ‘army’ for Irish religious orders both at home and abroad in the work of ‘crushing the head of the serpent and advancing the reign of Christ’. One of a number of ‘Catholic Action’ organisations which appeared in Ireland in the early decades of the twentieth century, the Legion of Mary contributed to a stifling atmosphere of Catholicity in the independent State. For the Legion of Mary, evangelising on the home front was as important as those engaged in missions in far off ‘pagan lands’. This paper will argue that such ‘Catholic Action’ organisations were conducting simultaneous missions on two fronts, in Ireland and abroad, where the home mission sustained the foreign one through charitable support, and more subtly through the reinforcement of religious and ethnic stereotyping which justified Ireland's position as moral provider. Focusing on the 1930s, and using contemporary newspaper reports and testimonies, this paper will examine how the pious atmosphere in the wake of the 1932 Eucharistic Congress provided the State with a renewed sense of moral standing and responsibility in the ‘Catholic world’. This new position provided the State with a platform from which it viewed missionary lands as the outposts of Ireland's spiritual empire.

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**PANEL THREE**

**Stuart Mathieson, “Irish Missions, Science, and Scripture in the Holy Land”**

Irish Presbyterians made a substantial contribution to missions, both domestically and overseas. Their position as a minority within a minority, of largely Scottish extraction but resident in Ireland, gave them a unique perspective that has been largely underexplored. This paper investigates the role of Irish Presbyterians who were involved in missionary work in the Levant, principally through the efforts of the Irish Presbyterian Jewish Mission, established in 1842. For many of its missionaries, travel to the Holy Land had a dual purpose. Not only were they evangelists; they were also intimately involved in knowledge production. The Holy Land held a particular place in the evangelical imagination, as the setting of the Bible, and missionaries were able to use accounts of their travels to bring biblical narratives to life. Further, new methods in biblical research, particularly the so-called 'higher criticism' had begun to cast doubt on the historicity of the Bible. Missionaries on the ground in Palestine were therefore at the forefront of scientifically establishing the veracity of biblical narratives by uncovering and interpreting archaeological evidence. This paper highlights the work of three Irish Presbyterians who engaged in these processes while attached to the Jewish Mission: William Graham, Josias Leslie Porter, and William Wright. Graham, its first missionary, used his experiences to promote a specific millennial eschatology. Porter, later president of Queens College, wrote extensively on the geography of Palestine. Wright spent a decade in Damascus and was instrumental in researching the Hittite Empire. Considered together, these three missionaries offer an opportunity to explore a mission field that deserves much greater attention than it has heretofore received, and to highlight Irish Presbyterianism's singular contribution to the evangelical worldview.

### **Sarah Roddy, "Temporary missionaries: or, how the 'spiritual empire' changed Catholic Ireland"**

The American historian David Hollinger's recent book *Protestants Abroad* has a striking sub-title 'How American missionaries tried to change the world but changed America'. In a similar vein, missions and missionaries surely changed modern Ireland: but how? In a chapter that I wrote for the recent Cambridge Social History of Ireland providing a necessarily brief overview of Irish missionary activity in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, I suggested that: In a country that, north and south, remained startlingly un-cosmopolitan and experienced relatively little return migration until recent decades, the roving missionary who made periodic home visits represents a potentially valuable historical witness to (as well as actor in) both changes in Ireland's relationship with the wider world, and changes within Ireland itself. This paper pivots from this suggestion to examine some of the other 'cosmopolitan clergy' who circulated around Ireland's putative 'spiritual empire'. These were men on missions that were not lifetime commitments to evangelising new territory and peoples on behalf of the Church, but briefer spells of work abroad that nonetheless conform to the more expansive definition of missionary work in operation in the late nineteenth century, in that they entailed extended periods away from the home parish for a specified religious purpose. Throughout the later nineteenth century, hundreds, if not thousands, of Irish Catholic clergy temporarily relocated overseas on lecture tours and fundraising campaigns. Using the mission diaries some of them kept, this paper will gauge how and to what extent these temporary missionaries were changed by their experiences and subsequently may also have changed the country they returned to.

### **Fiona Bateman, "Echoes of Irish history in Eastern Nigeria: Cultural loss and conflict"**

The ambiguity of Ireland's situation historically as both colonised and coloniser, led to situations where Irish men and women were ideologically and physically committed to both sides of a conflict. Missionaries are even more peculiarly located within this binary, having allegiance to another project and organisation and, theoretically at least, acting independently of any national interests.

The ‘Bible and the Flag’ is a phrase commonly used to describe the strategy by which the coloniser used religion as well as physical force to pacify the colonised. For Anglican missionaries, their complicity is relatively uncomplicated: Christianising the pagan, or civilizing the savage can be acknowledged as an element of their role as the established church, but the role of the Irish Catholic missionaries, who in their efforts to spread their religious beliefs would also pacify the native and prepare him to be a subject of the British empire, is more complex.

By the late 1950s, the process of decolonisation had changed perceptions of Africa and as the subjects of the missionary project were acknowledged to have their own history, culture and civilization, the tensions inherent in the process of conversion were revealed. The Irish missionaries began to recognise echoes of their own history in their dealings with the indigenous people. A mission that was straightforward and unproblematic when they were simply bringing light to darkness, becomes a different undertaking when the interaction is re-framed as cultural imperialism.

The late Pádraig Ó Máille (1931-2017), a Kiltegan missionary, who worked in Nigeria in the 1960s (and subsequently in Malawi), wrote in his memoir *Dúdhúchas* (1972) of his dawning realisation that Nigeria had a rich cultural tradition. In the book he makes frequent comparisons between the Irish and the Nigerian experience regarding the loss of that indigenous culture (language, oral culture, and music). As a teacher, he became critical of the British influenced curriculum which ignored the African setting, and he began to question whether the system of education enacted by the missionaries was wholly beneficial. In 1967, the Eastern Region of Nigeria declared its independence and he saw the secession of Biafra as having elements comparable to the struggle for Irish independence. Focussing on the missionaries who stayed in Biafra during the Nigeria-Biafra conflict, I will look at how Irish missionaries, influenced by the history of their own country, had their own interpretations of the war and subsequent famine, and also show that the Irish missionaries were viewed with some suspicion by the British, who suspected the Irish of promoting nationalist ideas in the schools.

## **PANEL FOUR**

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### **Denis Linehan, “‘A Stuffed Gold Coast Monkey’: Exhibiting Irish-Africa in the Missionary Exhibitions in 20<sup>th</sup> Century Ireland.”**

The Irish Catholic Missionary network was a complex enterprise. Beneath the heroic and spiritual veneer, these enterprises were filled with ambiguities. It was produced in an imperial context, but was not imperial; it benefited and indeed supported the colonial enterprise, but was not colonial. It was often keenly nationalist and Irish, but often practicing with Catholic Orders with French and Belgian origins. It was shaped unquestionably by the rules and ambitions of the Vatican, carefully managed by the Propagation of the Faith, whose accounts reached into every parish in Ireland. This makes the missionary complex a varied and mottled field of enterprise, riddled with incongruities and contradictions – a narrative sometimes made more oblique by the biographies, hagiographies and histories prepared by missionaries and mission houses, and by some of the more recent nostalgic texts and film who have rediscovered the Irish - African and Asian connection forged through the missions. Against this background, this paper will explore the development of Missionary Exhibitions held variously in Belfast, Dublin and Cork during the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. These spaces and performances offer concentrated insights into the modernity and racial ideology of the missionary enterprise and their elaborate engagements with visual culture and political spectacle that helped mobilise the imaginative and social engagement with Irish-Africa



**Justin Livingstone, "Writing Mission: Empire, Decolonisation and the Qua Iboe"**

In the nineteenth-century, and well into the twentieth, missionary societies were among the most important sources of information about the non-western world (Cox 2004). Many readers in Britain and Ireland received their impressions of distant portions of the globe from the publications that these agencies disseminated. Since the 1980s, research on the mission movement and its cultural influence has developed apace. Scholars have directed attention to the complex relationships between Christian missionaries and imperial administrations (Stanley 1990, Porter 2004), and – increasingly – to the role that missions played in shaping European understandings of racial and cultural difference (Ballantyne 2011). However, although there is considerable interest in the influence of missionary discourse, it is notable that there has been little sustained work on missions from a literary or textual perspective. Recent interventions have addressed the varied forms of missionary writing (Johnston 2004, Livingstone 2018), but research into the print culture of overseas missions is only in an emergent phase.

This paper aims to contribute to literary studies of the missionary enterprise by examining the case of the Qua Iboe Mission. The organisation, which continues today as Mission Africa, was founded in 1887 when the Irish missionary, Samuel Bill, commenced work in south-east Nigeria. The mission soon garnered interdenominational support amongst Protestant churches in Belfast and began to print publications relating to its activities in west Africa. These publications include the mission's periodical, the *Qua Iboe Mission Quarterly* (1892-1962), its annual reports, and genres such as autobiographical memoir, missionary biography, exemplary convert narratives, and institutional history. This paper will offer the first assessment of the Qua Iboe Mission's print output. Taking case studies from the early twentieth century to the 1970s, the aim is to examine how the Mission's publications registered and responded to the changing imperial scene and the experience of decolonisation. The paper, moreover, will also consider the ways in which representations of global missions – disseminated through missionary writings – participated in the construction of Protestant evangelical identity in Ireland.

**Fiona Loughnan, "The Album and the Archive: Migratory Photo-Objects and Irish Spiritan Missions in Kenya"**

Irish Catholic Evangelism in Africa has been described as an 'Irish spiritual empire' but this empire of faith firmly attached itself to the territorial reality of the British Empire. Irish missionaries emphasised their nationalist credentials at home while making full use of their status as British subjects in the mission field. These complexities are particularly evident in photographs, which capture both the intended subject and unintended details, producing densely layered images where British imperial, Irish national, religious, cultural and racial identities press against each other. While the images have a strongly institutional character and are often marked by the asymmetries of agency typical of much mission photography, they also represent a diversity of perspectives rather than a fixed disciplinary gaze.

The archives of the Spiritan Fathers in Dublin and Nairobi house a number of photograph albums, largely dating from the 1920s-1940s, that provide a material trace of Irish Catholic missions to East Africa. These albums are "distributed entities", migratory photo-objects moving across temporal, geographic and socio-cultural contexts. In Ireland, albums recording the development of mission also include images of autochthonous Kenyan culture, in particular a series of ethnographic images of the Giriama and Duruma peoples. The Kenyan archive, conversely, contains several albums suggestive of a dislocated Irish archive; these are personal albums, presumably brought to the mission field to act as mnemonic carriers of home and family.

This paper will consider the Spiritan albums not just in terms of the original context of their production and compilation, but will also consider their presence and meaning within religious archives today. These photographic artefacts in Dublin and Nairobi are subject to an equality of

neglect, displaced from their original authors and users, they now lack viewers who can activate and narrate them, or affirm their “indexical reliability”. Close attention to the material conditions of these photo-objects challenges anxieties concerning the precarious state of African archives by demonstrating that Irish Catholic archives are also subject to dislocation and entropy.

## BIOGRAPHIES

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