

# Missionaries, Materials and the Making of the Modern World

An international interdisciplinary conference organised by the Missionary Material Heritage Network

15 - 17 September 2014  
Emmanuel College, University of Cambridge, United Kingdom

## Call for Papers and Panels

Abstracts of up to 200 words emailed to: [ga343@cam.ac.uk](mailto:ga343@cam.ac.uk)  
Deadline 29 April 2014



*Destruction of the Idols at Otaheite; pulling down a Pagan Altar, and building a Christian Church.*

While some scholars have understood the activity of overseas Christian missionaries primarily in terms of a 'Colonization of Consciousness' (Comaroff & Comaroff 1992), a range of recent scholarship has also emphasised the profoundly material dimensions of much missionary activity. While religious conversion was never unimportant historically, many missionaries have been equally heavily involved in practical projects to remake the world. Their global projects have transformed landscapes, forms of architecture and modes of dress, but have also shaped underlying narratives of modernity and modernisation (Keane 2007).

This flagship international conference will bring scholars from different disciplines together with heritage professionals to explore the global networks of exchange established by Christian missionary organisations, the materials that circulated through these, and the transformational effects these exchanges had in many different parts of the world, including Europe itself.

Papers and sessions may explore:

Missionary landscapes:

- Missionary architecture
- The archaeology of mission sites
- The establishment of missionary educational institutions
- The remaking of existing religious practices in response to missionary presence

Missionary impacts in Europe:

- Missionary collecting
- Missionaries and science
- Missionary exhibitions and displays
- Fundraising for missionary work

Missionaries and technology:

- Missionaries and the printed word
- Missionary modes of transport
- Missionary modes of dress
- Missionary and new technologies: clocks, guns etc.

Missionary memories:

- Missionary memorials and museums
- Contemporary responses to missionary collections
- Commemoration and reconciliation ceremonies
- Missionary tourism (and pilgrimage)

References:

Comaroff, J. L. and J. Comaroff (1992). *Ethnography and the historical imagination*.  
Keane, W. (2007). *Christian moderns : freedom and fetish in the mission encounter*.

### **Missionary Material Heritage Network**

This conference emerges from a UK Arts and Humanities Research Council funded Networking Grant: [Who Cares? The Material Heritage of British Missions in Africa and the Pacific, and its Future](#). It was a three-way partnership initiated by Karen Jacobs, Sainsbury Research Unit, University of East Anglia, Chris Wingfield, Museum of Archaeology & Anthropology, University of Cambridge and Chantal Knowles, National Museums Scotland.

While the focus of this network was on British missions in Africa and the Pacific, it became very clear that there were many overlaps between British Missionary networks and those established elsewhere. It was also clear that missionary activity in Africa and the Pacific was intimately connected with other parts of the world such as Asia and the Americas.

We are keen to widen the network established during the grant to include those with interests that relate to other parts of the world and other missionary networks, and to use this conference as a primary means of doing this.

Conference supported by:



McDonald Institute for  
Archaeological Research