

Welcome to the **Fall 2016 Speaker Series** of the
Indian Ocean World Centre

Speaker: **Professor Gwyn Campbell**
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5:45 pm Peterson Hall 100

***Welsh Missionaries and the Clash of Imperial Identity
in Madagascar, 1818-36***

In 1920, T. Gwyn Thomas wrote of the missionary endeavour in Madagascar:

“Y genhadaeth ym Madagascar yw’r fwaf Cymreig yn holl feysydd ein Cymdeithas. Cymry a’i cychwynnodd ac a’i noddodd ym more’i hanes, tra y mae cenhadon ymroddedig o Gymru wedi bod ymhlith y llafurwyr ymron yn ddiror am ganrif gyfan (The mission in Madagascar is the most Welsh of all the fields of our Society. Welshmen commenced and supported it at the dawn of its history while for an entire century selfless missionaries from Wales have almost continuously been amongst the workers there).”¹

The Madagascar mission was a consequence of the imperial vision of Robert Farquhar (1776-1830), first British governor of Mauritius which was captured from the French in 1810 to secure the route to India – the “jewel” of the British Empire. As Madagascar, the nearest and cheapest supplier of labour and provisions, was essential to the economy and thus security of Mauritius, Farquhar planned to establish British hegemony in Madagascar, and considered LMS missionaries to be a vital component of this. This talk examines the growing tension between Welsh and English interpretations of the meaning of the British presence in Madagascar, and argues that it inculcated in David Jones (1797-1841) and David Griffiths (1792-1863), leaders of the LMS mission there, the growth of proto Welsh national sentiments which in turn influenced them to transfer their political allegiance from the imperial British to the indigenous Malagasy authorities.

¹ T. Gwyn Thomas, *David Griffiths, Madagascar* (Llundain: Cymdeithas Genhadol Llundain, 1920), p. 44

