3. Insular Eminence: Cardinal Moran (1830–1911) and the Pacific islands

Patrick Francis Moran is a major figure in the story of the worldwide spread of Catholicism consequent upon the outpouring of Irish migrants in the nineteenth century. That is, he is prominently located within one of the two major, and occasionally converging, ethnic strands within the overall Church-building process of the period.¹ French Catholics, keen to compensate for the assault on the Church in their homeland by the votaries of the Revolution, may have led the Catholic missionary outreach to indigenous peoples in Africa, Asia and Oceania. But it was mostly from among the Irish, carrying their religion with them, that the Church was planted in the colonies that were built around settlers from the British Isles. Australia offers a case in point. There, Moran, Archbishop of Sydney from 1884 to 1911 and a cardinal from 1885, was concerned both to construct a strong ecclesiastical structure and, as a further triumph of Irish apostolic achievement, to identify the Church there in a particular way with the emerging nation. In Moran’s view, a not uncommon one, Catholicism not only transcended, but might subsume, any other religious and intellectual tradition. At the same time, while being open to all peoples and cultures, in advancing its sway it was also deemed to have accorded an edge of pre-eminence to the Irish.²

Various manifestations of Moran’s mythic beliefs are already well-known. For example, he was an enthusiastic Australian patriot and, in 1897, stood—albeit un成功fully, but not embarrassingly so—for election to a federal convention designed to draw the several colonies into a single country. He wished to take a lead in forming a ‘union for the common good, [whereby] Australia, under the blessing of God, will work out its destiny, not as a group of colonies, but as a nation’. And he prophetically envisaged a national ‘Parliament clothed with splendour and beauty like one of our cathedrals of old, the guarantee of freedom for Australia’s sons, “strong as a fortress and sacred as a shrine”’.³ Politically, Australia was to be an improved, alternative, liberated Ireland. Here, he rejoiced in 1885, ‘we shape our own destinies and make our own laws’.⁴ Within that nation he hoped to see the secure social and economic integration of Catholics. Consequently, he was a prominent supporter of the trade union movement and

of the emergent Labor party, both of which already tended to claim the loyalties of most of his co-religionists. Furthermore, he believed it was the destiny of that nation to provide for ‘this southern world a bulwark of civilisation and a home of freedom’; indeed, it was to ‘be the centre of civilisation for all the nations of the East’. As a seminary student Moran had himself aspired to be a missionary in China and, from the time of his arrival in Australia, he harboured a plan to found a college to train missionaries. With reference to the heroic history created by the Irish missionaries of the sixth century, it was to be called St. Columba’s and would, he hoped, become a new Iona, ‘the spiritual lighthouse of the southern world’.

That scheme was never realised, but something may be deemed to have been salvaged from it through his support of religious missionary congregations. Thus, he not only encouraged the Marist Fathers, whose province extended from the Solomons to Samoa and who had set up a ‘Procure’ house in Sydney in 1845; but in 1885 and 1900, respectively, he also assisted the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart and the Society of the Divine Word to establish similar bases in Sydney from which to service their newly founded missions in New Guinea, where they eventually established a strong indigenous church. Indeed, there is a Pacific islands dimension that pervades various closely related facets of the cardinal’s career. It occurs in his pastoral, political and polemical activities, but it is not just on this account that it warrants systematic study. It is also significant within the larger story of the complex and enduring engagement between Australia and its Oceanic neighbours.

Moran was born on 16 September 1830 at Leighlinbridge, Carlow, Ireland. He was the youngest of five children of Patrick Moran, a businessman, and his wife Alicia. His parents died while he was still young so, in 1842, he was placed in the care of his mother’s half-brother Paul Cullen, a highly regarded Catholic priest who was rector of the Irish College in Rome. In 1849 Cullen, who became a cardinal in 1866, was reassigned to Ireland. His task, in which he succeeded firmly, was to reorganise the Catholic Church there after two centuries of English and Protestant oppression, and to resist a rising threat from secularism. By determining episcopal appointments he also extended his influence, with its emphasis on religious discipline and order, to Irish migrant communities worldwide. His nephew followed closely in his footsteps. Moran was ordained


to the priesthood in 1853, and himself taught at the Irish College. He was a capable scholar who, fluent in several European languages, both modern and classical, also wrote numerous substantial books on Irish church history that were based on archival research. In 1872 he was appointed Bishop of Ossory in Ireland and proved to be an energetic administrator and a formidable apologist. From there he went out to Australia where, on returning from Rome in 1885 not only as a cardinal but with the authority of Apostolic Delegate, or Papal envoy, he immediately set about strengthening, reordering and updating Church operations and discipline. To this end, orchestrating his own federal movement, he summoned three plenary councils of bishops in 1885, 1895 and 1905, and three national Catholic congresses in 1900, 1904 and 1909, each attended by upwards of 700 delegates. And his sway extended beyond Australia. In 1901 a French Marist missionary in New Zealand, the symphoniously named Theophile Le Menant des Chesnais, extolled him as ‘the highest representative of our Holy Father in the Southern Hemisphere’.

Moran stepped rapidly onto his expanded stage. Early in 1886, assisted by a free pass on the railways obtained through his unrelated namesake the bishop of Dunedin, who was also a protégé of Cardinal Cullen, he made a triumphal monument-launching tour of New Zealand. In the course of two months he blessed St Joseph’s Cathedral at Dunedin, St Patrick’s College in Wellington and St Patrick’s Cathedral in Auckland, laid the foundation for Mount Magdala convent in Christchurch and spoke of Ireland and the faith at numerous well-attended receptions. Consequent on his position and public visibility, he was also enjoined to intercede on behalf of others. Thus, the Irish diocesan clergy, led by Bishop Moran, hoped through his influence to have Dunedin declared the Metropolitan See (archdiocese) while, in 1887, the Catholics of the Hokianga besought him to have their pastor, James McDonald, appointed Prefect Apostolic (bishop) for the Maoris. In neither case were the petitioners’ wishes gratified, but Moran’s offshore role remained undiminished. For instance, he visited New Zealand again in 1905 and in 1908 and was only prevented from coming in 1900

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to lay the foundation stone of the Christchurch cathedral by the emergency
that arose when his secretary, Monsignor Denis O’Haran, was named as co-
respondent in the famous Coningham divorce case.12

Meanwhile, other islands also beckoned him. The first, through the connection
with the Marists, was Samoa. Political turmoil, generated by shifting alliances
within the two main indigenous groupings (Malietoa and Tupua) and erratic
British, German and American interventions, had been intensifying there since
the 1870s. Here Moran’s sympathies were unambiguously directed towards
the devoutly pious chief Mata’afa Iosefa. He was the nephew of Fagamanu
who, at the request of chief Lavelua of the Catholic-aligned island of Wallis
(Uvea), had welcomed the Marist missionaries to Samoa in 1845. Forsaking a
loose attachment to the Protestantism of the London Missionary Society, which
tended to have Malietoa sympathies, he had himself been baptised a Catholic
in 1868, at the age of 46. He was also an adroit and forceful contender for
power. A senior titleholder of the Tupua faction, but being also able to draw on
substantial Malietoa links for support, Mata’afa had established a firm claim to
be regarded as Tupu or ‘king’ of Samoa in December 1888. But he was deprived
of the fruit of a military victory over his Tupua rival Tamasese—in a battle in
which 16 German marines were killed—by resolute German opposition (and
despite his having been supplied with arms by British and American settler
factions).13 Then, in March 1889, Samoa was devastated by a hurricane in which
six German and American navy ships were sunk (with the loss of 155 lives) in
Apia harbour. Moran responded to reports of starvation by sending food and
other supplies to Samoa via the Marist procurator in Sydney, Henri Couloigner,
for distribution among the needy. Mata’afa, signing himself Tupu, replied to
this gesture with a letter of thanks in which he commented:

I have been particularly gladdened by the fact that [the Marists, who
distributed these gifts], have not made any distinction between people
in need, but, on the contrary, have helped those who were neither of our
party nor of our faith. What sorrows me is that I cannot reply to your
kindness with similar generosity.14

Such even-handedness very likely strengthened Mata’afa’s popular support
among the Samoans, but it did not impress his foreign opponents. In June the
Germans brought another of his rival claimants, Malietoa Laupepa, back from
exile in the Marshall Islands and had him installed as Tupu instead. Following
an outbreak of conflict between those two in 1893, it was Mata’afa’s turn to

13 J. Darnand, Aux îles Samoa: la forêt qui s’illumine, Lyon, 1934, pp. 90–111; R.P. Gilson, Samoa, 1830–
14 Mata’afa to Moran, 19 July; Suatele to Moran, 20 July; Remy to Moran, 22 July 1889, Moran
Correspondence, Marist Fathers, 1885–1930.
be exiled. He returned in September 1898, only to find his ambitions again being resisted, this time by supporters of Malietoa Tanumafili, the son of the recently deceased Laupepa. Predictably, fighting between the historic factions again broke out. And it continued spasmodically until May 1899 when, in the face of a coordinated initiative by the European powers, all parties agreed to find a diplomatic solution to the Samoan imbroglio.\textsuperscript{15} To mark this achievement, Moran wrote to Mata’afa, sending him some personal gifts, congratulating him on the restoration of peace and identifying himself with

the very many in Australia who deeply sympathised with you and your brother chiefs in the unjust warfare which was forced upon you, and which has been accurately described as one of the most grievous wrongs ever perpetrated in the name of civilisation. We rejoiced at the forebearance and humanity [notwithstanding the decapitation of German marines in December 1888?] which despite every provocation you constantly displayed. We now congratulate you on your prompt compliance with the Commissioners’ decree, and we trust and pray that your self-denial and sacrifice for your country’s good may be the harbinger of very many blessings to you.\textsuperscript{16}

Apart from his personal regard for Mata’afa, Moran professed to explain his interest in Samoa on the grounds that the Samoans were, as he told his audience at the opening of the Christian Brothers’ high school at Waverley, ‘regarded as the noblest and most intelligent race in the South Pacific Islands’. The grand sweep of this utterance is characteristic of Moran’s rhetorical style. So, too, is his expedient resort to authority—any authority—to affirm his belief. In this case it was Lloyd Osbourne, the stepson of another fervent admirer of Mata’afa, Robert Louis Stevenson: ‘The Samoans are, without doubt, the finest race of half-civilised people in the world’.\textsuperscript{17} But such sentiments were not the only reason for Moran’s concern, as he explained at the opening of a fundraising bazaar at Erskineville in May 1899. ‘It struck him how little weight the opinions of the people of New South Wales and the other colonies had in regard to the Samoan controversy, which was of vital interest to the Australians’. If only the colonies were federated, as occurred in 1901: ‘They would [then] have voice and influence in all matters affecting their interests, and nothing would be done without consulting them’.\textsuperscript{18} He feared that the United States, which seemed to regard the Samoans as the Turks did the Armenians, was ‘bent upon making the

\textsuperscript{16} Moran to Mata’afa, 28 June; Mata’afa to Moran, 6 Aug. 1899, Moran Correspondence, 1899; Estienne to Aubry, 3 July 1899, Archivio Padri Maristi (Rome), OSS 208.
\textsuperscript{17} \textit{Freeman’s Journal}, 24 Jan. 1903.
\textsuperscript{18} \textit{Sydney Morning Herald (SMH)}, 8 May 1899.
Pacific Ocean a new American lake’. Consequently, he was disappointed when in November, in return for imperial concessions elsewhere, Britain, careless of any civilising mission, allowed Samoa to be divided between Germany and the United States. As he lamented in 1903, ‘thus the whole Samoan group, the gem of the Pacific, has been permanently withdrawn from the influence of the new Australian Commonwealth’.

Meanwhile, in 1891, in a flurry of correspondence between ecclesiastical authorities in far-flung places—New Guinea, Issoudun in Belgium, Rome, Fiji and Sydney—Moran had been drawn into another matter of more explicitly pastoral concern. That is, the evangelisation of the Solomon Islands, which lay within the domain of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. Were they, he asked, ‘going to be occupied by Catholic missionaries before Protestants got established there?’ Bishop Couppé of Rabaul in German New Guinea had announced that he did not have the resources to undertake the task, but suggested that the Marists might help, possibly by working within the British ‘sphere of influence’ that had been established over much of it by the Anglo-German Agreement of 1886. Subsequently, Julien Vidal who in 1887, after 14 years in Samoa, had been appointed the first vicar apostolic (bishop) of Fiji, declared that he was willing to take over the whole of the Solomons group, some of whose people he had already met as migrant plantation labourers, if the Marists were given sole jurisdiction over it. To this end he approached Moran for support—and received it. The two men, who were already acquainted, were well matched. Builders and organisers, they were also energetic, enterprising and assertive. His Lordship of Suva, who annoyed the governor by hoisting the tricolour over his house and by flying the Marist banner above the British ensign, was of the same cloth as His Eminence of Sydney who, in 1903, denounced the allegation of a Wesleyan clergyman that he, Moran, had apologised to the Admiralty for saying that British ships had wilfully shelled Catholic property in Samoa in 1899 as a ‘thumping Saxon lie’. Rather, he claimed, certain Protestant mission ‘agents’ had asked for this to be done, but the captains had declined. ‘Sometimes’, Moran explained to an appreciative audience, ‘lies were stupid, sometimes lies were barefaced, but a thumping Saxon lie combined both a malicious and a barefaced lie’. As for the Solomons, where pioneer Marists had been killed in the 1840s, the common cause of the two prelates bore fruit. In 1897 the group

19 Ibid., 1 May 1899.
20 Freeman’s Journal, 21 Jan. 1903.
was divided along the imperial ‘spheres of influence’ line and, over the next two
years, Marist missionaries from Fiji and Samoa, respectively, occupied first the
southern half (British) and then the northern half (German).24

In 1901 Moran was again prominently associated with the Solomon’s mission.
This came about when a Marist, Pierre Rouillac, arrived in Sydney on 23
April after a masterly 19-day voyage from Guadalcanal in his damaged 19-ton
schooner Eclipse, accompanied by an inexperienced crew of four Fijian mission
helpers, plus four young Solomon Islanders. The vessel had been driven onto a
reef by the koburu, a strong north-west wind that blows in the Solomons from
November to March, and needed extensive repairs. In May, at the laying of the
foundation stone of the Christian Brothers school at Lewisham, Moran cited
Rouillac as illustrating the ‘intrepid … spirit which pervades the men in the
mission’.25 And, over the next three months, he was further involved in what
became a well-publicised exploit. A four-page broad sheet reprinted admiring
newspaper reports. For his part, Moran baptised the Solomon Islanders at
Blessed Peter Chanel church in Woolwich; he gave a large donation to an appeal
organised by the Catholic Press; he identified the remains of the martyred Bishop
Epalle (recovered by Rouillac from the island of Ysabel, but which had first been
drawn to Moran’s attention by a local trader as early as 1891); and, in July, he
presided at a Grand Concert. This latter was designed both to raise funds for
Rouillac and, conveniently, to outclass a recent event arranged by the Orange
Lodge. Unfortunately for the mission, the Eclipse was lost on a reef shortly after
Rouillac’s return to the Solomons, and could not quickly be replaced. When it
was, though, in 1909, with the 30-ton Jeanne d’Arc, it was with a vessel financed
from France but built in Sydney and ceremoniously blessed by Cardinal Moran.26

Moran also performed other noteworthy services for the Pacific missions. He
interceded with colonial authorities on behalf of the Sacred Heart missionaries
in the Gilbert Islands, where they had begun operations in 1888. He backed
Marist lobbying for the beatification of Pierre Chanel, who was martyred on
Futuna, near Tonga, in 1841; and he donated the altar for the chapel there built

24 Martin to President de la Propagation de la Foi, 17 Feb. 1897, Archivio Padri Maristi, 5SM 145; Hugh
11–22, 35–38. The British share of the Solomon Islands was increased in 1899, subsequent to any ecclesiastical
arrangements.
25 Freeman’s Journal, 11 May 1901.
26 Wolff to Moran, 19 Oct. 1891; Hollingdale et al. to Moran, 13 July 1901, Moran Correspondence, Sydney
Archdiocesan Archives; Baptism Register, Villa Maria, 2 June 1901, Marist Archives, Hunter’s Hill, Sydney;
Reports in Connection with the Rev Father Rouillac’s Heroic trip from the Solomon Islands to Sydney in his 19 ton
craft ‘the Eclipse’, also an appeal to all sympathisers for subscriptions towards then cost of repairing his beloved
schooner, Sydney, (incl. Town and Country Journal, 4 May 1901; Freeman’s Journal, 11 May 1901; Catholic
Press, 25 May 1901); New Zealand Tablet, 27 June 1901; Pierre Rouillac, ‘Missionary Work in the Solomon
Islands’, Australasian Catholic Record, vol. X (1904), pp. 218–237; L.M. Raucax, In the Savage South Solomons:
in anticipation of that eventuality, which occurred in 1889.\textsuperscript{27} Indeed, in 1903 he hoped to lead a pilgrimage cruise to the Pacific which would include a visit to Futuna and also to Suva for the opening of Vidal’s cathedral, but it was not to be as he was called to Rome for a conclave following the untimely death of Pope Leo XIII. Another such tour, planned for 1909, also had to be abandoned, this time because of the aging cardinal’s poor health.\textsuperscript{28}

Extensive as they were, direct pastoral responsibilities were not the limit, nor the most conspicuous, of Moran’s connections with the Pacific islands. With respect to the island of Santo in Vanuatu (formerly the New Hebrides), he also acquired a clear measure of prominence—and notoriety—as a would-be contributor to the general history of Australia. That is, by allowing his eagerness to establish a preemptive claim for Catholicism to override scholarly caution, he challenged the orthodox view that the land claimed by the Spanish explorer Pedro de Quiros on 14 May 1606 in the names of ‘Jesus Christ, Saviour of all men … and of his Universal Vicar, the Roman Pontiff’ was not connected to Santo but was, in fact, Australia. While drawing on newly published papers from Spanish archives, Moran did not deny that Quiros might have visited Vanuatu.\textsuperscript{29} Rather, he simply contended that the bay Quiros had named after St Philip and St James, and in which he made his grand proclamation, was not ‘Big Bay’ on Santo but was Port Curtis on the Queensland coast, later the site of the town of Gladstone, nearly two centuries before the British landed at Sydney.

Following (but not citing) an assertion by the Spanish missionary Rosendo Salvado in 1853, Moran first presented this claim—and made it his own—in 1895 in his massive compilation \textit{History of the Catholic Church in Australasia}.\textsuperscript{30} Not surprisingly it was rejected by the recognised commentators on Australian history and geography such as Ernest Favenc and George Collingridge, who published authoritative refutations of it.\textsuperscript{31} The parochial editor of the \textit{Gladstone Advocate}, in contrast, was complaisant about accepting a putative accolade for his town. Visiting there in 1899, Moran was presented with an address which was


\textsuperscript{28} Winter Excursion to the Islands of the Western Pacific, 1903, Sydney, pp. 30; \textit{Australasian Catholic Record}, vol. IX (1903), pp. 242–248; Knox, \textit{Voyage of Faith}, p. 68.


\textsuperscript{30} Rosendo Salvado, \textit{Memorias Historicas sobre La Australia}, Barcelona, 1853, p. 3; Moran, \textit{History}, Sydney, [1895], pp. 13–14.

\textsuperscript{31} Ernest Favenc, review of address by Moran to Royal Society of Australia, \textit{Australian Journal of Education}, Sept. 1904, p. 5; George Collingridge, \textit{The First Discovery of Australia and New Guinea: being the narrative of Portuguese and Spanish discoveries in the Australasian regions, between the years 1492 and 1606, with descriptions of their old charts}, Sydney, 1906, pp. 84–122.
described as more than a testimonial of welcome but as ‘a mark of appreciation of the Cardinal’s work as an historian, his valuable work having established for Gladstone the foremost place in the annals of Australia’. After all, in 1756, the distinguished French geographer Charles de Brosses—whom Moran cites—had placed Quiros’s presumed continent Australia del Espiritu Santo on the then hypothetically drawn eastern boundary of New Holland. But then, soon afterwards, the explorer James Cook had shown it to be otherwise. In 1774, after charting the east coast of Australia in 1769, he had located the bay of the two saints firmly offshore in the island of Santo. Moran, though, simply believed Cook to be wrong on that point, and continued to say so, verbally and in print until at least 1908. For instance, he did so twice in the *Australasian Catholic Record*, a quarterly journal he founded in 1895, and in a 40-page pamphlet that he published in 1906. In 1901, during Rouillac’s visit, he was also pleased to link his claim to support for the mission in the Solomon Islands.

It is a happy coincidence that the Marist Fathers who have charge of this group of islands in which Holy Mass was first celebrated in the South Pacific [in 1568] have during the past few weeks received the great pastoral charge of the Gladstone district in Queensland, the site where Mass was first offered in Australasia on its discovery by Quiros.

In urging his case, in this as in other matters, Moran was a resourceful apologist. Thus, in explaining away the significance of an eight degree difference in latitude between Santo and the more southerly Gladstone, he divined a subterfuge. That is, he claimed that by citing the position of the former, 15°S, but not that of the latter, Quiros was deliberately trying to conceal the location of his Australian discovery from Spain’s rivals. As for discrepancies between Quiros’s accounts of the Bay of St Philip and St James and actual descriptions of Big Bay, Moran made no allowances for literary exaggeration or for lack of technical precision or for any promotional intent in the documents. Instead, he postulated a literal coincidence between what they reported and the features of Port Curtis. For instance, Quiros said he had discovered a continent, but Santo was not a continent. Besides, the bay there was smaller than Quiros had said it was. As for the two great rivers that he had named the Jordon and the Salvador, there was only one river and several small streams running into Big Bay whereas Port Curtis could boast the Boyne and the Calliope. Then there was a matter of artefacts. Quiros said the people he saw had the bow and arrow. But

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32 Quoted in Freeman’s *Journal*, 28 Oct. 1899.
35 See Appendix for list of Moran’s writings on the topic.
36 *New Zealand Tablet*, 27 July 1901.
the Aborigines did not have that weapon. Therefore, said the cardinal, on that point the Spaniard must have been mistaken.\textsuperscript{37} Weak as such arguments are, even more effrontery was required to dismiss the evidence against Port Curtis implicit in the memorial of Quiros's second in command, Pedro de Torres.

After spending 41 days in the Bay of St Philip and St James, Quiros sailed away and did not return. Torres waited there for another 15 days before deciding to carry on with the voyage of discovery. To this end he left the bay and sailed sufficiently far down the west coast of Santo to decide that it was an island. Continuing, he then sailed several days south-west to a latitude of 21 degrees before turning to the north-east and then sailing due west, en route to Manila, through the strait that runs between Australia and New Guinea, and which bears his name. The ostensible problem for the cardinal with this voyage is that if Torres had sailed south-west from Port Curtis he would have been sailing inland, across Australia. But Moran was untroubled. Resourcefully, he dismissed the difficulty by interpreting the record to mean that Torres sailed along the coast south from Port Curtis to—and this figure is quite gratuitous—31 degrees latitude. By this contrivance the Spaniard was at length given a south-west bearing, if only just for two degrees south of Byron Bay, the easternmost point of Australia. It was from that point, near present day Kempsey in northern New South Wales, that Torres then made his turn to the north-east, and headed for home. At least, that is what the cardinal told an audience of distinguished guests at a ceremony held at St John's College at Sydney University on 14 November 1906 to celebrate the tricentenary of 'the discovery of our Australian Continent'.\textsuperscript{38} The logic seems to have been \textit{decret est, ergo erat} ('it is fitting, therefore it was'). This might be a theological principle of some limited application, but in history it is pernicious, despite finding favour among the structuralists, post-modern revisionists and ‘tradition inventors’ of later times.

Tendentious as they were, Moran’s arguments about the discovery of Australia were politely, but consistently, refuted—and then largely disregarded. They generated a modest corpus of dissenting comment, but no heat.\textsuperscript{39} It was different with the criticisms of Protestantism that became a staple of his oratory during the 1890s. They attracted vigorous public responses, only to be met with more


of the same. For Moran there could be no surrender and no retreat, as shown by his rhetoric as he presided over a decade of extraordinary growth and expansion, one that was prodigally garnished with the laying of foundation stones and with the dedication of buildings and with celebratory assemblies. For these occasions he drew much of his verbal ammunition from the Pacific, mostly from Fiji. The first clear instalment of such intelligence was probably that received from his ally Vidal in 1892, reporting anti-Catholic utterances by a Methodist missionary named J.P. Chapman, a former horse dealer. To an audience at Nacula village, in the Yasawa group, Chapman had quoted the apostate No-Popery lecturer Charles Chiniquy to sustain allegations of immorality that he was making against priests and nuns. As a result he was subsequently tried for slander and libel, but, after a hearing that lasted for nearly three weeks, the charge was dismissed. In the case of *Nicouleau and Others v. Chapman* it was held, in a fine legal ruling, to be not proven that the offending words had been directed explicitly at the three Marist complainants. This evasion was abetted by the defence claim that Chapman had used the words Vanua Levu (literally, ‘great land’) not in reference to the Fiji island of that name but to America. Chapman, though, was scarcely vindicated by the decision. For the judge not only denied him costs in the matter but described him as a ‘most dangerous and mischievous’ man. His colleagues and the editor of the Australian *Methodist Review*, on the other hand, defended him without demur.40

Moran did not immediately react to this episode or to a controversy that erupted in Fiji in 1893 (and again in 1896) after the senior Methodist missionaries there, Frederick Langham and Henry Worrall, alleged that the Marists were obtaining converts through bribery.41 (In particular, they cited an allegation, firmly rejected by his neighbours, of a man named Timoci Masira of Lokia village in Rewa province).42 Such incidents were, though, steps on the way to sectarianism, and the shot that was to ignite a prolonged public conflict was fired by Moran on 17 June 1895. In a lecture on the ‘Reunion of Christendom’, moved by a recent letter of Pope Leo XIII on the subject, he discoursed on the weaknesses of Protestantism and the inadequacy of its achievements—and advised its adherents to turn to Rome. Predictably, there was an outcry. The most notable protest came from George Brown, the best known Methodist missionary in the Pacific, who regaled a public meeting with severe criticisms of his Catholic competitors. A week later, on 2 July, the cardinal returned to the attack. To ‘repel the envenomed charges’ of failure that Brown and Langham had recently made against Catholic missions,

41 *Fiji Times*, 8, 18 Mar., 12, 24, 29 July 1893, 15, 29 April 1896; *Australian Methodist Missionary Review*, 5 June 1893; *Advocate*, 25 April, 2, 9 May 1896.
42 *Fiji Times*, 18 Mar. 1893, 15, 18, 22 April 1896.
he addressed a large public meeting on the subject of ‘The Mission Field in the Nineteenth Century’. There, attended on the platform by various consular and clerical representatives, including (surprisingly) Langham, newly retired to Australia after 38 years in Fiji, he told a stirring story of worldwide Catholic progress through heroic self-denial and charity. Then, with scant regard for empirical evidence, he concluded by asserting that in the Protestant-dominated islands of the Pacific the native populations were dying out, whereas in those where the Catholics prevailed they were thriving. Brown, in turn, took issue with these claims with an audience of his own, which he also advised that ‘the priests of the Roman Catholic Church have never given the people one chapter of the sacred Scriptures in the native tongue’. Vidal, in contrast, responded gratefully to his eminent patron. ‘The Catholic Mission of Fiji’, he wrote a few months later, in a letter advising Moran of affairs there, could ‘rejoice at having found an able advocate’. He then went on to blame Wesleyanism for an alleged decline of morals in Fiji.\footnote{SMH, 3, 31 July 1895; Vidal to Moran 5 Sept. 1895, Marist Fathers, Archdiocesan Archives, Sydney.}

An endorsement of that claim, along with allegations of superficial Christianity prevalent among its indigenous devotees and of Eucharistic blasphemy among its ministers—artfully illustrated by anecdotes from a kindly observer such as Constance Gordon-Cumming—was again offered by the cardinal in a long letter to the \textit{Sydney Morning Herald} in July 1899, during another flare-up in the campaign.\footnote{SMH, 26, 27 July 1899.}

Moran, meanwhile, in a long-remembered jibe, had also touched deep sensibilities about the cult of temperance, which had prevailed among Nonconformist Protestants, and especially the Methodists, since the 1880s. As an aside during his ‘Missions’ address in 1895 he had charged their close allies, the Congregationalists of the London Missionary Society, with carrying liquor aboard their ship. He referred to ‘the John Williams’s “spiritual cargo”, in the sense of whisky, wine and rum, much more than in the number of Bibles’, and was ‘cheered to the echo’ for it. The authority for this insolent statement was a mistaken report in the \textit{Sydney Morning Herald} of 27 March 1880 that had included some of the cargo of another vessel, the \textit{Au Revoir}, with that of the \textit{John Williams}. The paper had subsequently corrected the error, but Moran, although aware of that correction, had still drawn on the original report. When the error was pointed out to him he was, though, (encouraged by notes in his files reporting liquor in the general cargo of various mission ships, including the \textit{John Williams}, during the 1860s and 1870s) far from contrite. Indeed, he again got a laugh from the same joke (and thereby provoked a Methodist protest meeting at the Town Hall) in 1899, and was equally insouciant. As he told a
reporter, ‘the Parthian arrow which I fired seems to have remained fixed, and I have no intention of withdrawing it’. In 1903, at the annual meeting of the Hibernian Society, the joke was aired a third time.

Clearly, the tensions that surfaced as acrimonious conflict in 1895 did not soon abate. Undeterred by a denial from Vidal during a visit to Australia, Langham introduced the Fiji ‘conversion by bribery’ issue to Sydney in April 1896. Again the newspapers feasted off sectarian conflict, even though Langham’s informant of 1893 had already been discredited and the putative briber, Emile Rougier of Nailalili, was exonerated. Again the matter brought Moran’s name into the news in what for Langham, at least, was an exhilarating contest. As he reported to Worrall:

5 June ‘went for the Cardinal a while ago’.

1 July ‘gave an address on “Romanism in the Pacific”, and another to the Balmain Orange Lodge. I went into them very lively … made the priests squirm’.

12 August ‘You will be delighted to read the scorching Cardinal Moran has been getting in the Telegraph’.

Nor did Moran tire easily. The Samoan imbroglio became the focus of acute sectarian animadversions, as well as of political concern, in 1899, especially after Moran claimed that Protestant missionaries had attempted to persuade Captain Leslie Stuart of HMS Tauranga to shell Catholic establishments in Apia. Indignant public denials of any such overtures or intentions, though, brought no retraction of the charge.

Even stronger passions were aroused in 1903 after it was reported from Fiji that, in February, Rougier had publicly burned 238 Methodist-distributed Bibles in his lime kiln at Naililili. One story had it that a ‘brass band had played selections’ during the auto-da-fe, and there was even talk of sending a British gunboat to Fiji to quell feared disorder. The Methodists cried blasphemy, and at their annual conference in Sydney they denounced Moran as a traducer and cheered a missionary from Fiji who vowed to have ‘no peace with Rome’. For his

46 SMH; Freeman’s Journal; Daily Telegraph. Late Feb./Mar. 1903. CHECK.
47 SMH, 1, 9 April 1896; Fiji Times, 15, 18, 22 May 1896.
part Moran, advised by Vidal, dismissed the story—the first versions of which were based on hearsay—as a hoax. Certainly, the reality was more prosaic. In 1902 the inland people of Namoi, led by their chief Matanitobua, had rejected Methodism for Catholicism. The reasons were political rather than religious. Unlike most other chiefs, Matanitobua was sympathetic to a proposal for Fiji to federate with New Zealand and, on that score, had been denounced by a Methodist minister as being disloyal to Britain. Consequently, he sought an alternative denomination, and the Marists were not reluctant to oblige. Rougier and his confrère Jean de Marzin visited Namosi to collect their windfall. Whilst so doing they gathered up various religious books surrendered by the former Methodists and took them back to Naililili, where most of them still were in June. (The figure of 238 was a fabrication). What Rougier had done on 12 February, as more careful enquiry revealed, was to dispose of two small boxes of worn and tattered volumes from among them in an appropriate and respectful way, at least according to Catholic ritual, by burning them. In so doing he inadvertently provoked an outcry in Australia, and elsewhere.50 Perhaps sadly for the press, for these disputes had been a journalist’s delight, this proved to be the last episode in an eight-year long boilover of sectarian animadversion.

Moran was a tall, spare, aloof figure who tended to attract respect rather than affection, even within his own Catholic tribe. When he died on 16 August 1911 at the age of 81 he left behind a Church that was institutionally solid, but pragmatic in its style of operation and still at odds with the society of which he had once hoped it would be the leaven. It was shaped by the historic conflict with Protestantism and by distaste for the secularist legacy of the French Revolution (and why not, contra O’Farrell, since these were still potent and contrary forces?), but at least it was Antipodean.51 Moran might have been building on Irish foundations, but his vision, like his rhetoric, was emphatically not inwards and backwards to Ireland; rather it was forward and outwards, to a Church which realised its being within a strong and independent Australia—and in the Pacific islands. Despite his disappointment over Samoa, he accepted the growing importance of the United States in Pacific affairs and, while supporting the creation of an Australian navy, he also welcomed the US fleet when it visited Sydney in 1908. Like the trading firm of Burns, Philp and the Presbyterian mission to the New Hebrides and the Methodist mission to


51 O’Farrell, Church and Community, p. 296.
New Guinea, Moran did much to lay the foundations of an awareness of the Pacific islands within Australia. One commentator estimates that ‘he was ahead of his time in visualising Australia as a new Pacific nation’.\footnote{Murtagh, Australia, p. 183.}

Within his own denomination, this disposition bore particular fruit, which was followed by a strong continuing interest, in 1930. That occurred when an American Marist named Thomas Wade of the North Solomons (principally the island of Bougainville) became the first English-speaking Catholic bishop appointed to any of the islands missions. Wade chose to be consecrated not in his home town of Providence, Rhode Island, as might have been expected, but at the Marist church of St Patrick in the archdiocese once presided over by Cardinal Moran.\footnote{Freeman’s Journal, 16, 30 Oct. 1930; Hugh Laracy, ‘Imperium in Imperio: the Catholic Church in Bougainville’, in Anthony J. Regan and Helga Griffin (eds), Bougainville Before the Conflict, Canberra, 2005, p. 134.} Decet erat.

\section*{Appendix}

\textbf{Moran’s writings on the Quiros ‘discovery’}

1895

\textit{History of the Catholic Church in Australasia,} Sydney.

1900

‘The Discovery of Australia by the Spanish navigator de Quiros in the Year 1606’, \textit{Australasian Catholic Record}, vol. 5 (June), pp. 153–172.

1901

\textit{Was Australia Discovered by de Quiros in the Year 1606?}, Sydney. ‘A paper presented to the Royal Geographical Society of Australia by Cardinal Moran, Archbishop of Sydney, 1 May 1901’.

1906

\textit{Discovery of Australia by de Quiros in the Year 1606}, Sydney.

1907

‘Discovery of Australia by de Quiros in the Year 1606’, \textit{Australasian Catholic Record}, vol. 13, pp. 1–41.
1908

*Discovery of Australia by de Quiros in the Year 1606*, Melbourne. Australian Catholic Truth Society, pamphlet, no. 5.

Note: for an extended bibliography covering the debate on this matter, see Celsus Kelly, ‘The Narrative of Pedro Fernandez de Quiros’, *Historical Studies Australia and New Zealand*, vol. 9 (May 1960), pp. 192–193, note 54.