

ST JAMES' CHURCH, KING STREET, SYDNEY

**AN ADDRESS BY THE REVEREND DR JOHN MOSES  
ON THE OCCASION OF A COMMEMORATION OF  
THE CENTENARY OF ANZAC**

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***Canon David John Garland: 'Architect of Anzac Day',  
Empire Patriot and Caring Chaplain\*.***

When some years ago, I was on study leave in Berlin, I attended a conference on Church resistance to communism in the Evangelical Academy. While there I was accosted by a German professor of early church history who had just returned from Turkey where he had visited the sites of great significance to early Christianity, retracing the steps of St Paul, no doubt. On the way he had passed through the Gallipoli peninsula and noticed among others the graves of some 8,000 Australian troops. -- On learning that I was Australian he demanded to know, *why, in heaven's name were Australians there in 1915 fighting the Turks?* I responded by saying that Australia was part of the British Empire and had committed troops to be deployed anywhere the Imperial General Staff determined. The German professor remained perplexed since he had no idea of either the intellectual or military history of the British Empire or of the meaning of *dominion status*. Nevertheless, the graves and monuments at Gallipoli must have sufficiently aroused his historical curiosity for him to question me. –

One needs to recall that one hundred years ago we were (and even much later) all British subjects and our young Commonwealth government fully appreciated that the security of the Pacific dominions was guaranteed by British naval power. It was also known that the German navy's East Asia Squadron had plans to destroy all shipping plying between the Pacific dominions and the United Kingdom. Commonwealth security officials had been aware for some time of the activities of a German intelligence gathering net work that was operating in Australia, coordinated by personnel at the imperial German Consulate General here in Sydney. Beyond that it was also well appreciated that the Anglo-German naval race at the time had dire implications for the exposed dominions, so support for British resistance to imperial German war-aims was an unquestioned necessity in the mind of informed Australians, not only the government.

In this address I will focus on the response of one man who as an Anglican priest did most in energetically supporting the service men and women in their calling to defend the Empire and the nation, namely Canon David John Garland, born in Dublin 1864 and died in Brisbane October 1939. Already in his time he had been designated the ‘Architect of Anzac Day’. Certainly he had done more than any single public figure to anchor the 25<sup>th</sup> April in the Australian calendar as what he called “Australia’s All Souls’ Day”. Of course, Canon Garland was addressing a far more Church-oriented population back in 1915. --We need to remember the key task of the historian is to recount the past through the eyes of the actors of that time. It will not do to impose attitudes and values of a century later on the events and personalities of the past. A number of high profile colleagues in the discipline are currently doing this in order to pursue their own political and sectarian agenda, and to persuade the general public that Anzac Day should be abolished from the Australian national calendar.

The best thing that can be done about it is to relate the facts concerning the origins of Anzac Day, in short *to tell the truth*. I found this an absorbing exercise in which I could apply especially my post-graduate training in Germany as a modern historian. It was there that back in the mid 1960’s I learned the discipline at the feet of three great liberal minded scholars who had survived the Nazi period of persecution.

So, how did a Dublin-born former Orangeman become the “Architect of Anzac Day”? “*Former Orangeman*” is the operative phrase here. The Orange movement in Ireland is still a formidable force. It upholds union with Britain, and engages often in bloody combat with *Sinn Féiners*, that is, Irish nationalists. Both sides are infamous for their extreme violence towards one another. Their hostility is of great antiquity going back to the Battle of the Boyne in 1690. And that battle is still commemorated annually in Ireland especially in Protestant Belfast with a march on 12<sup>th</sup> July which is historically the occasion of horrific sectarian violence.

But there is another side to the Orange movement and that is their Biblical fundamentalism. On the farm still owned and operated by the Garland family in County Monaghan there used to be an Orange meeting house. Here David Garland’s father grew up and worked before he left for Dublin where he found a non-academic job at Trinity College Dublin, once called the “last outpost of the Protestant ascendancy”. Orange-ism in the Church of Ireland sets great store on Biblical knowledge as a corollary to their deep hostility towards the Church of Rome. And it was in this tradition that David Garland was brought up in Dublin and to which he adhered until he arrived in Toowoomba, Queensland, in 1886, at the age of 22.

Imagine the young Garland’s surprise when he attended St James’ parish Church where the Rector was a priest named Thomas Jones, a man of the strongest Tractarian principles, an energetic Anglo-Catholic who founded many churches throughout the province of Queensland and is still remembered. Why is this significant in Garland’s

biography? It is so because Jones was able to convince the young Biblical fundamentalist that the Catholic faith had to be anchored in the Bible. The Church could only teach, as Richard Hooker had proclaimed in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, what was in accordance with the Bible and tradition; in short “Scripture, Reason and Tradition” were the three arteries of true Anglicanism. Tommy Jones was thus able to convert Garland from his fundamentalist convictions to becoming a crusading Anglo-Catholic with the crucially interesting result that the young Garland did not abandon his conviction in the importance of Biblical knowledge; he was however, able to combine this with a fervent zeal for the sacraments of the Church. So through the encounter with Tommy Jones, David Garland became a *Catholic Evangelical* or, if you prefer, an *Evangelical Catholic*. In short, to be a true Catholic you have to base your faith in what is in the Bible.

Tommy Jones had thus awakened in his young disciple a passion for spreading Biblical knowledge *and* a vocation to the priesthood. The Garland-Jones encounter was a historical moment of great consequence for Australian history, as we shall see. Jones had perceived in Garland a young man of undoubted gifts and he had been able to channel Garland’s gifts into creative directions. The result was that Garland abandoned his position in a Toowoomba law firm and trained under Jones’ direction for ordination. After a short curacy as a deacon in the then diocese of Grafton and Armidale Garland went to Perth where he was priested in 1892. There he spent ten eventful, in the last phase, stormy years. He was licensed as a missionary priest, which allowed him to revitalise run down parishes, a task at which he excelled. The bishops used him as well as a gifted administrator on the Diocesan Council where he was able to exploit his knowledge of the law to great advantage. At the same time he founded a news paper, *The West Australian*, led the Bible in Schools League and successfully campaigned to have the W A Education Act amended to allow religious instruction in schools. And during the Boer War he became a military chaplain to troops in training at Fremantle prior to embarkation.

This variegated activity was of a piece. It all had to do with his aforementioned *Catholic Evangelicalism* and his Empire patriotism. He got this from none other than the British statesman, William Ewart Gladstone (1809-1898), who was famous for his belief that the calling of the Empire was to spread Christianity wherever the Union Jack was hoisted. This was coupled with the aim to educate the peoples of the Empire to self government and finally independence. It was a version of imperialism certainly not understood by the Germans whose view was developing, especially at the time of the Boer War that they had a superior idea of Empire, namely to impose German *Kultur* on conquered peoples for their own good, by force if necessary. Well you may ask, what is the difference between the British and German views; both regarded their respective political culture as exemplary. The difference lies in the fact that the British aimed to educate each colony to self government and independence. In doing so, the former subject peoples could preserve their own culture while at the same time they

should incorporate the concept of the rule of law and parliamentary government. Canon Garland embraced this view and perceived the British Empire as having been called by almighty God to defend those nations threatened by imperial Germany.

This brings us to consider Garland's view of army chaplaincy. He regarded all volunteers as modern day crusaders for the imperial cause which he identified with God's cause. For this reason he campaigned for the Church to be pro-active in the area of troop welfare. He had reactivated his Chaplain's commission and established in Brisbane a so-called *Lavender Fund* under the motto, "Nothing is too good for our Soldier Boys". In collecting money for his cause he had the support of his Archbishop and most clergy. Other states followed suit. Garland did not want to leave troop welfare solely in the hands of the Salvation Army or the YMCA. The Church of England had to be seen to be pro-active especially in this sphere. Consequently Garland established huts in training camps such as at Enoggera outside Brisbane. There the young men of all denominations could relax but above all have sufficient writing material to keep in touch with home, a task Garland never tired of encouraging. As well, Garland spent money raised on issuing Prayer Books to the C of E boys and prepared them for confirmation before they were transported overseas.

It needs, of course, to be appreciated that since Garland had left WA for Queensland in 1902 he had taken up the leadership of the Bible in State Schools' League there, first from his rectory in Charters Towers, and then after 1907 from the Holy Trinity parish in Woolongabba, Brisbane. In that time Garland led a vigorous campaign touring the vast diocese with a lantern slide projector holding lectures stressing the fundamental importance of Biblical knowledge for school children. In this, of course, he was supported by all churches except the Roman which had a problem with so-called non-catholic school teachers delivering Bible lessons. Four stormy years of campaigning were crowned with success when the Queensland labour government actually amended the Education Act to allow religious instruction in State Schools.

This great success did not go unnoticed by the New Zealand Bishops who invited Canon Garland to lead their campaign for the same thing. There he spent from 1912 to 1915 campaigning as he had done in Queensland, but with the advent of war everything was put on hold. Garland returned home to become, first, Secretary of the Queensland recruiting committee and then at a historic public meeting chaired by the Premier in Brisbane on 10 January 1916 with the heads of churches, leading politicians and in the presence of the state Governor he was elected organizing secretary of the newly constituted Anzac Day Commemoration Committee with power to coopt.

This was the very first such committee in either Australia or New Zealand although there were tentative efforts in other state capitals to mark the event. It was Garland, however, who possessed both the organisational drive and the liturgical sense as a

priest with his unique Orange background, who could devise a form of observance that took account of the religious sensibilities of all denominations in the country. And this he conscientiously communicated to Commonwealth, State and municipal leader throughout both Australia and NZ. He knew, for example that Nonconformists did not believe in prayers for the dead and he knew also very well that RC's were officially forbidden to pray with non RCs in public. Consequently, Garland had to devise a solemn and dignified form of service that took account of these issues. That is where his idea for the two minutes silence came from. He communicated this to Westminster Abbey and it was used in the first Anzac Day Service there, with King present, in 1916. Obviously, there had to be a march of returned men reminiscent of the Orange march and there had to be liturgy of remembrance that expressed sorrow for the fallen, acknowledged their sacrifice and comforted the bereaved. For Garland Anzac Day was to be *Australia's All Souls' Day*; it was a *secular requiem*. There were to be theistic hymns but not Trinitarian, addresses by dignitaries and chaplains who spoke about honouring young lives lost in the cause of freedom, for God, King and Empire. It was to be a day of solemnity, not jubilation, and that meant, no sports, gambling, drinking or frivolous entertainment. And it was uppermost in Garland's mind and that of his committee of former chaplains that the Day should make people mindful of God and of the terrible sin war, so it had the element of repentance.

The RSL of the time contested this formula with such arguments as that the day should be one of rejoicing, not sombre, when the survivors of war could be honoured and that old soldiers could celebrate their camaraderie and combat experience. Garland's committee strove against this use of the day but in time the RSL formula for jubilation, as it was called, triumphed. Solemnity, though, is still in evidence especially at the Dawn Services throughout the country.

Anzac Day, it must be stressed, would never have become part of the Australia's and New Zealand's respective national calendars had it not been for Canon Garland's untiring efforts to get legislation through the various parliaments, both state and federal. His agitation was unrelenting until by 1930 all states and the Commonwealth had passed the necessary legislation. As an exercise in lobbying in the corridors of power Garland's one-man campaign for over a decade would have to be unique in Australasian history.

Finally, a word on Garland's chaplaincy in the Middle East from late 1917 to early 1919. How and why did a man in his 'fifties get to do this? First, Garland went on his own expense, that is he used the money he had raised in Queensland to travel to Egypt with a brief from the Federal Government to investigate troop welfare. The background to this was the number of soldiers being sent home and dishonourably discharged for having contracted VD. Garland wanted to do something about it. He also was concerned with the graves of fallen soldiers and how they would be cared for in mostly Moslem countries.

For Chaplain Garland, troop welfare was the key issue. Soldiers would not be creating mayhem in the “Fleshpots of Egypt” if they had something better to do. Australians had already won for themselves a very bad reputation for their behaviour in Cairo and elsewhere while on leave. When Garland had sized up the situation he concluded that the Church should be establishing clubs and hostels for troops on leave to keep them out of harms way in the red light districts and this he did with characteristic vigour. His concept of ministry to young men in uniform fighting over seas is neatly summed up in a sermon he gave at the Anglican Church in Cairo on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday after Epiphany, which is early in 1918. The Gospel reading was John 2:1-11, “The wedding feast at Cana of Galilee” when Jesus performed his first miracle by turning water into wine thus demonstrating that he was not against people enjoying themselves. Chaplain Garland put this to very good use, exhorting his congregation of soldiers as follows:

*My sons, think – whatever may be the invitation to pleasure and from wherever it may come – think. There are mothers, wives and sweethearts, fathers at home, praying for us, counting the weary days of separation, praying that we may be shielded from wounds, delivered from sickness and, in prayers most often unknown to us, that we may come home unscathed in soul and body. How much it would mean to them if they knew that when we visit this city on duty or on leave, when we have the opportunity for pleasure here or elsewhere the mother of Jesus is there, and both Jesus and the disciples are called to our pleasure; while we would know that when the day of our return came, we could face them with open eyes and frank countenance, because Jesus has been bidden to all our pleasures.... Think of all the joy it would bring to them ultimately, if Jesus is now the companion of your pleasures.*

There is no way of telling what impact this exhortation had on the young men, but its message is a universal one. Garland loved his soldiers and the army nurses who cared for them and did all he could to support them in their respective duties. His chaplaincy was a combination of genuine pastoral concern and practical welfare work especially in setting up hostels for Anzacs in various cities in Egypt, Palestine and Syria. As well he took time to cultivate the warmest ecumenical relations with the Greek Orthodox who were in charge of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem and he continued this ecumenical outreach to both the Greek and Russian Orthodox communities in Brisbane on his return.

On the question of hostels for returned soldiers in and around Brisbane, these were already established by Garland’s committee prior to his departure for the Middle East. The facility in Coolangatta originally named St George’s Holiday House is the only one remaining and has been vastly expanded over the years. A new multi story

building on the site at Rainbow Beach is being currently built to replace the earlier one and will bear the name “Garland Apartments”.

David John Garland’s vibrant and sometimes turbulent ministry came to a dramatic end when he collapsed after the celebration of the parish Eucharist on 8<sup>th</sup> October 1939 in his church of St Barnabas, Red Hill, an inner city suburb of Brisbane where he is remembered still with great affection. He died the next day. The exhausted old priest had time to stipulate that he wanted to be buried from the parish among his own flock, not from the cathedral, but Archbishop Wand came and celebrated the requiem. It was, however, very significant that virtually the entire Queensland cabinet also attended and the Premier, Forgan Smith, his deputy Ned Hanlon were among the pall bearers. In his panegyric Archbishop Wand assessed Garland’s remarkable career by saying that he was essentially a fighter, a fighter for the numerous causes he held dear. Although he had wanted to be buried as a simple parish priest David John Garland’s life tells a vastly different story. Certainly he had been no ordinary parish priest. As the “architect of Anzac Day” he had become the nation’s most distinguished man of God.

\* This address is based on the joint research of John A. Moses & George F. Davis, *Anzac Day Origins: Canon DJ Garland and Trans-Tasman Commemoration* (Canberra; Barton Books, 2013) pp415 cost \$40.00 plus postage from Barton Books: <info@ bartonbooks.edu.au> Copies are also available from the book stall at Christ Church St Laurence, Railway Square, Sydney.