

**In Search Of A Liturgy Of Remembrance Which Addresses
The Demands And Beliefs Of Civil And Implicit Religions
Whilst Maintaining The Pastoral And Doctrinal Integrity
Required By Apostolic Religion.**

Revd. Simon P Springett

December 1996

**In Search Of A Liturgy Of Remembrance Which Addresses
The Demands And Beliefs Of Civil And Implicit Religions
Whilst Maintaining The Pastoral And Doctrinal Integrity
Required By Apostolic Religion.**

Contents:

Introduction	2
Beliefs About Death: Apostolic Christianity	4
Old Testament Background To Christian Beliefs	4
The Resurrection Of Jesus	5
The Nature Of Our Resurrection	6
The Concept Of Remembrance	9
Beliefs About Death: Implicit Religion	14
Older Implicit Beliefs	15
Putting On A Good Show	15
An Element Of Inconvenience	15
... To Be (A Little) Uncomfortable	17
Making Merit	17
The Status Of The War Dead	18
Remembrance Poppies	19
Post Modernist Implicit Beliefs	20
Beliefs About Death: Civil Religion	21
A Religious Dimension To Civil Life	21
A Political Reinforcing	23
The Spiritual And Eternal Status Of The War Dead.	23
Political Power	24
Conflicts Between Different Religions	25
Conflict Between Civil And Apostolic Religion	25
Conflict Between Implicit Beliefs And Apostolic Religion	27
Conflict Between Implicit Beliefs And Civic Religion	31
Some Conclusions For Better Remembrance	32
Bibliography	36

Introduction

My training incumbent was away for all three Remembrance Sundays of my first curacy, and I recall the sense of curiosity when briefed that, although services in the parish were normally quite informal, this one Sunday had to be correctly choreographed. I understood a little more when, as Rector of Rayne, in Essex, amongst the villagers was Reg Carder, who had seen thirty of his older school friends line up on the village green and depart for the trenches of Flanders. Twenty never returned. The Scouting organisations and many villagers who did not normally attend Church turned out on Remembrance Sunday. The Chairman of the Parish Council came, and might read a lesson. Now, in my ministry as a Royal Navy Chaplain, Remembrance Sunday is a “compulsory attend”. Judgements about the Chaplain’s ability and the Church’s credibility hang on such high profile events.

Preparing a Remembrance service involves much more than planning a sermon, hymns and readings;¹ questions of ceremonial and implied teaching must be tackled. What time is the service to be, and should both the Last Post and Reveille be sounded? Is it appropriate for the Commando to march on to the parade ground? Should the Unit Colours be “On Parade” also? The Remembrance of those who died in war has great opportunities for its own conflict. Nationally each year there is controversy about white poppies, and in the past two years there has been debate about whether restoring a silence on the eleventh day will somehow take away from Remembrance Sunday. Why does this issue generate so much heat when it is so long since the vast majority of those

commemorated died? Why is Remembrance not about to wither away with the last of the Old Contemptibles?²

Clearly Remembrance is an important aspect of military and civilian life. At least three religions: apostolic Christianity, civil religion (of the state) and the implicit religions of the group involved may wish to control it. Who should manage this rite?³ It is important that apostolic religion addresses the hopes and fears of those who attend Remembrance services, and avoids the irrelevance it fell into during World War One when it was ‘too nervous of folk religion’⁴ to deal with the spirituality of those it attempted to serve.

This dissertation will examine apostolic, civil and implicit beliefs about death, death in war and Remembrance, in the belief that Remembrance services should recognise and speak to civil and implicit religion without compromising apostolic religion. I will seek to discover ways in which Remembrance can be both doctrinally sound and pastorally and evangelistically effective. Many of the issues addressed are relevant also to bereavement ministry, and I have drawn some insights from literature on that subject, but questions of pacifism and Just War theory are beyond my scope here and (perhaps surprisingly) irrelevant, and are not addressed.

Beliefs about Death: Apostolic Christianity

¹ The emphasis in Jones, Remembrance Sunday.

² Chadwick, Armistice Day, p. 328, argued that “by the law of history the commemoration of Remembrance Sunday will slowly die”, and Robin Denniston, The Death and Birth of Remembrance, p. 413, speaks of the “death of Remembrance”, but if anything more is now made of Remembrance than in 1976 and 1981 respectively when they wrote.

³ The question Wesley Carr asks of all rites of passage, Brief Encounters, pp 25ff, where he argues that the Church is not able to control the process: the rite belongs to the congregation.

⁴ Wilkinson, p. 196.

In contrast to the extensive Christian literature on the subject of salvation there is relatively little concerned with the fate of the (physically) dead. I will begin with the beliefs of Judaism.

Old Testament Background To Christian Beliefs

Badham is uncontroversial in pointing out that the Old Testament probably does not contain an explicit belief in life after death. There was, from early times, a belief in “Sheol”, a shadowy world of the dead, but this was not a precursor of Christian belief in an afterlife, nor did it develop into such a belief. Rather, the concept of Sheol needed to (and did) die out in the light of the Hebrew insistence on the corporeal nature of the human being. From this flowed a belief in the finality of death: when you are dead, you are dead, and you do not even go to Sheol. This belief had its inadequacies, however, and in particular failed to accommodate both the justice of God and the injustices of the world: the success of the wicked and the short lives of the godly. Belief in some form of survival beyond death became important. Some Psalms, and (probably) Job, come close to grasping this in the realisation that a person’s eternal destiny is bound up with his or her personal relationship with God. By the time of Jesus there was a wide spectrum of views amongst Jewish teachers, from beliefs in extinction to beliefs in the immortality of the soul; from a resurrection, but not of the present body, to belief in the resurrection of the present body at the end of time.⁵

The Resurrection Of Jesus

⁵ Badham, Christian Beliefs, p. 39.

The resurrection of Jesus is of central importance in this area, and there is a wide variety of views on offer concerning the nature of that resurrection, only some holding it to be physical. Nor can the question be solved by biblical scholarship, since views of the New Testament evidence about the Resurrection are closely connected to views of what is “essential to personal identity and necessary for personal existence beyond the grave”.⁶ This is clearly seen in the debate between Professors Lampe and McKinnon: Lampe rejects a physical interpretation of Jesus’ resurrection at least partly because he believes it is impossible for a modern Christian to expect his own corpse to be raised to new life.⁷ Pannenburg does have such an expectation, and puts great stress on the empty tomb.⁸ Badham himself follows Lampe, but he does so at expense of rejecting the New Testament evidence of the physical nature of Jesus’ resurrection.⁹ Personally I believe that the resurrection was a physical event, but the problems with this view must be recognised. Badham says that resurrection narratives that might support a physical resurrection are internally incoherent in describing the nature of the raised body of Jesus. To appear in a locked room the body would have to dematerialise, thus losing its material continuity with the body laid in the tomb. Further, what of Jesus’ clothing? If the resurrected Lord were not naked, then his clothing too would have to change its nature. I do not find it easy to discard the prima facie evidence of the Gospels. The denial by modern science of totally different natures for matter and energy, suggests that it is not necessarily inconsistent for a body to be both physical and spiritual.

⁶ Badham, Op Cit, p.43.

⁷ Lampe and Mackinnon, The Resurrection, pp. 59-60.

⁸ Section headed “The Significance of Jesus’ Resurrection”: Pannenburg Jesus - God and Man, pp. 66-87.

There are additional problems. Jesus' resurrection is said to be the first fruit of human resurrection,¹⁰ but it is argued that a physical resurrection on the first Easter day would be so different from ours, because He did not see corruption, that this connection is denied. Further, resurrection seen as the triumph of personality or soul over the death of the body can become a basis for our hope for life after death. This is clever, but unnecessary. As the first fruits, Jesus' resurrection is different to ours: ours will be like his,¹¹ not identical to his. There is no need for a triumph of personality over physical death to become our basis for hope.

The Nature Of Our Resurrection

We move on therefore to various theories about the nature of our resurrection. Hick suggests that we may think of the resurrected body as being created identically to the original body at the moment of death. It is then healed in the new creation.¹² Badham replies that this would need medical facilities we cannot conceive of.¹³ I have to say that I find this discussion almost completely pointless, and lacking in any concept of a God transcending time and space. My own belief is that heaven adds an extra dimension to our world, avoiding the limitations of space and time while still allowing the body to be a physical body. Badham does at one point suggest a similar idea, though with the important qualification that although there could be a spatial heaven where our personalities are re-embodied, there is no possibility of "a material continuity between

⁹ If Jesus did eat fish this "smacks of a supernatural conjuring trick of the kind he abjured during his life" says Badham, pp. 37-38, possibly lending a phrase to Bishop David Jenkins.

¹⁰ 1 Corinthians 15:20, 23.

¹¹ Romans 6:4ff, 1 Corinthians 15:49 etc.

¹² Hick, Death and Eternal Life, p. 294.

our earthly and heavenly bodies”.¹⁴ Ultimately however he defends the concept of the soul, as distinct from the body, surviving physical death.

Robinson claims that Paul’s theology of the body is such that Christ’s resurrection body is the Church. Christians experience new creation in Christ,¹⁵ but the final transformation of our existing body will not happen until the End. On our death (assuming that we die before the *parousia*) we are left “naked”: at least temporarily disembodied. But we already participate, at least partially, in the resurrection body in our participation in the Church community, which is Christ’s body. Thus for St. Paul, the resurrection of the body is not about surviving the moment of death as an individual self, but about survival in eternity in solidarity with the recreated universe in Christ.¹⁶ The moment of death is important only in that it means for the individual a period of nakedness: the only events that matter are baptism and the *parousia*. In between is the process - short or long, and (presumably) more or less effective - of being transformed.¹⁷ There is individual survival, but this is not so important as Western thought makes it. Robinson’s beliefs were to lead him eventually to universalism,¹⁸ but it is not necessary to follow him in this to agree with the thrust of his argument here. What he does not do, however, is to discuss the questions Badham finds so puzzling: the location of heaven and the exact nature of the connection between the body of flesh and the resurrection body: how molecules, possibly recycled through several individuals are sorted out by God.

¹³ Badham, *Op Cit*, p. 87.

¹⁴ Badham, *Op Cit*, p. 93.

¹⁵ 2 Corinthians 5:17.

¹⁶ Robinson, *The Body*, p. 78.

¹⁷ Romans 12:2ff.

¹⁸ Though these beliefs are not found in *The Body*.

A recent publication by the Church of England's Doctrine Commission addresses these issues briefly. The Commission affirm the importance of resurrection as the ground of the hope that sustains the people of God, but point out that resurrection is, for 'the wicked ... to judgement'.¹⁹ They do not discuss in detail the connection between the stuff of the resurrected body and the stuff of the dead body, but they do affirm that 'it is essential that the material of the resurrected body is not the same as that of the old', since if this were so we would continue to grow old in heaven.²⁰ The only clue to the bodily reality (of the "spiritual body" of 1 Corinthians 15:50) is the glorified body of the risen Lord.²¹

Finally, and usefully, many authors point to the element of mystery in this area. Hick warns that it is one of great uncertainty, full of possibilities for "a process of speculation that we cannot profitably pursue".²² Davies makes a similar point and moves to its valuable concomitant, namely that Christian priesthood demands "a kind of spiritual incompetence"²³ in the area of death, notwithstanding the popular demands for certainty. Richard Bewes, writing for enquirers, says that "we are not sure about the exact nature of the resurrection body",²⁴ This is helpful as it allows us, in dealing with Remembrance, to work with the uncertainty. It must be relevant that an evangelistic book, written for a non-committed audience, has insights useful when dealing with Remembrance, with its similar congregations.

¹⁹ Doctrine Commission, The Mystery of Salvation, p. 190.

²⁰ Doctrine Commission, Op Cit, p.191.

²¹ Doctrine Commission, Op Cit, p.192.

²² Hick, Death and Eternal Life, p. 295.

²³ Davies, Priesthood, p. 50.

²⁴ Bewes, The Resurrection, p. 40.

The Concept Of Remembrance

And so we arrive at the concept of Remembrance. What is the Church doing when we formally remember the dead? Remembrance has no great biblical history,²⁵ although remembrance is present in the New Testament and it is possible to learn from the biblical usage of the word. The Last Supper is a remembrance which is “constitutive of identity and community, and determined conduct in the present”,²⁶ and remembrance may be a recollection and warning: “Remember Lot’s wife”.²⁷ A modern Remembrance event will certainly include an element of recollection and warning, and will itself help to constitute identity and community, and affect present conduct. What else is happening at a more obviously spiritual level on a Remembrance Sunday? The answer will depend on our concept of what lies beyond death. If we believe in a form of heaven to which all go we will differ in our Remembrance activity from those who believe that only committed Christians reach heaven. Different beliefs about the nature of the life of heaven will be reflected in differing Remembrance.

Chidester discusses the resurrection and early Christian burial practices.²⁸ He says that the dead were buried in mass graves, preferably close to a saint or martyr, as what was important was the general resurrection at the end of all time. If this is still important then Remembrance is a reminder of the future resurrection and a spur to hope. The early view of general resurrection that Chidester contrasts with ideas of the individual judgement of

²⁵ Though see Denniston, The Death and Birth, for suggestions of some Old Testament parallels.

²⁶ Verhey, Remembrance, p. 669.

²⁷ Luke 17:32.

²⁸ Patterns, p. 202.

each person after death seems similar to Robinson's stress on the resurrection as being in solidarity with Christ rather than any very individualistic event.

The bible does not consider death in war differently from any other death. Martyrdom was. For the early Church, an especially blessed death,²⁹ but for the early Fathers, if only because of their general rejection of military service, death in battle was of no particular interest. It seems to have been the slaughter of World War One that led to the growth of a belief that those who died honourably in war, perhaps saving others, must be included in heaven. Thus Donald Hankey wrote of those who 'had hardly ever been to Church, let alone to Communion ... (but) are surely members of the Church', and says of an Army Captain killed attempting to rescue his men that 'he lives ... those who went West have seen him ... Some One³⁰ said "well done, good and faithful servant"',³¹ The Church committee which examined soldiers' beliefs concluded that there was a widespread belief in life after death, but that the cross meant sacrifice, not atonement.³² Fatalism then, as now, meant more to soldiers than Christianity³³

The Church's views of death became irrelevant in the light of the scale of killing³⁴ and the immense suffering.³⁵ This led to changes in Church belief and practice, in particular the growth of the practice of saying prayers for the dead, uncommon in 1914, but

²⁹ See, e.g., Chidester, *Op Cit*, pp.198ff.

³⁰ Hankey's capitalisation.

³¹ Hankey, *A Student in Arms*, p. 70, quoted by Wilkinson, *The Church of England*, p. 119.

³² Wilkinson, *Op Cit*, pp. 160-161.

³³ A young officer who spoke to me recently about the fatalism seen amongst soldiers and civilians in Bosnia, who would walk, rather than run, across a "Snipers' Alley", because "if a bullet has your name on it there's nothing you can do". The difference between "a mechanical inevitability and a sense of trust in God" (Davies, *Priesthood*, p. 47) is a key theme for clergy to address.

³⁴ Approximately 10% of British men aged 18-45 were killed in the war.

widespread by the end of the war even amongst liberals and evangelicals.³⁶ Many went further. Wilkinson claims that Bishop Winnington Ingram, Cardinal Bourne and others explicitly claimed that it was sufficient to die as a soldier facing the enemy for immediate access to heaven.³⁷ The evidence he adduces does not quite bear this interpretation,³⁸ but there can be little doubt that popular sentiment did hold this view and would not easily hear any qualifications of it. Heaven, moreover, was reinterpreted in the public mind, from the presence and experience of God to a reunion of the dead,³⁹ and the doctrine of death itself may well have become more dualistic: the insistence on the unity of body and soul being more painful in the light of the physical ravages of war than a doctrine of the release of a soul from the confines of a now unneeded body. But there was no overall picture: the practice, introduced during the First World War, of blowing Reveille after the Last Post at a funeral is a distinct symbol of a ‘general hope, or even of resurrection’.⁴⁰

It is not easy to discover any agreed meaning for Remembrance in Christian writing. Early Remembrance events looked back to “greet the fallen”,⁴¹ and this theme was taken up by the Churches with “gratitude for the great deliverance” according to the Baptist Times.⁴² Remembrance also looked ahead, with a determination that “they did not die in

³⁵ “What did the Resurrection of the Dead mean to soldiers who cleared the rat eaten pieces of flesh from the barbed wire?” asks Wilkinson, *Op Cit*, p. 174.

³⁶ Wilkinson, *Op Cit*, p. 176.

³⁷ Wilkinson, *Op Cit*, pp. 180-182.

³⁸ Wilkinson does not, I think, give sufficient weight to the qualifications Winnington-Ingram gives about being “in Christ”.

³⁹ Wilkinson, *Op Cit*, p. 185.

⁴⁰ Wilkinson, *Op Cit*, p. 193.

⁴¹ Sir Percy Fitzpatrick, quoted in Chadwick, *Op Cit*, p. 322.

⁴² Quoted by Jones, Remembrance Sunday, p. 9.

vain”,⁴³ and the question “what can we do about the future”.⁴⁴ The archbishops, alongside the recollection of those who died and of our duties towards the future, requested prayer for international and industrial peace, flowing from justice and brotherhood.⁴⁵

Following the change, in 1946, to Remembrance Sunday the SPCK published an authorised text for the service. This includes prayers for peace and for virtually all the dead.⁴⁶ There is an act of commitment to serve God⁴⁷ and to work for earthly justice and peace. The service attempts to achieve Chadwick’s requirements of Remembrance: the reassertion of “values of infinite moment” and a reminder of “the realm of spirit”,⁴⁸ and to express “hope for the future” in maintaining the “collective memory of the past”.⁴⁹ A note often included in Remembrance liturgy, is of penitence and a readiness to accept the Grace of God in the light of mankind’s warring nature.⁵⁰

Of interest is the deliberate⁵¹ omission of any concept of mourning. This is surprising, especially when it is remembered that the bodies of those killed in both World Wars were buried abroad, if indeed their bodies were ever found.⁵² Alongside this omission is the unrealistically heroic view of death in war and the resulting parallels drawn with

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Chadwick, Op Cit, p. 323.

⁴⁵ From the Church Times, quoted by Jones, *Remembrance Sunday*, p. 9.

⁴⁶ “Those who died in war, all we knew and whose memories we treasure, and all who lived and died in the service of mankind” are commended to God’s sure keeping. Denniston says that Remembrance was “perhaps necessary to dodge the awkward ban on prayer for the dead”, *The Death and Birth*, p. 413.

⁴⁷ Though not of commitment to God

⁴⁸ Chadwick, Op Cit, p. 328.

⁴⁹ Denniston, Op Cit, p. 411.

⁵⁰ From the *Church Times* in 1976 (Jones, Op Cit, p. 10). *The Times* noted a shift towards penitence in August 1968 (Wolffe, *The Religions of the Silent Majority*, p.325).

⁵¹ Flags were not to be half masted for Remembrance: Chadwick, Op Cit, p. 324.

⁵² Many thousands were not.

Christ's sacrifice for the world. Searle is almost unique in pointing out that those who fought often had no choice,⁵³ and any study of the realities of war will conclude that men die perhaps for their colleagues, more often because of muddle and confusion, but very rarely in glorious bravery.

I therefore conclude that Remembrance, rather than being a basic Christian activity, is a Christian response to a cultural awareness of the tragedy and waste of war. As such, though rooted in Christian doctrine, it has changed over its short history, and will continue to be as variable as the culture that provokes it. It is for this reason that the conflicts to be discussed later are not to be regarded as enemies; the unfortunate signs of a lost or beleaguered Church, but as friends; the birth pangs of new and more appropriate Remembrance, or perhaps the pains of pearl-producing grit. I will suggest in the final paragraphs what elements of Remembrance I believe may most usefully be emphasised in Remembrance services today.

Beliefs about Death: Implicit religion

If the previous discussion of the views of apostolic Christianity reveals a wide variety of beliefs, this is as nothing to the variety of beliefs about Remembrance that are present in individuals and groups today. Edward Bailey gives three possible meanings for the term "implicit religion" and seems to come down in favour of the concept that contemporary (secular) society and culture express a form of religion which can be examined.⁵⁴ His research suggested to him that there was an implicit religion to be found in

⁵³ Searle, Remembrance Sunday, p. 26.

contemporary society of which one element was a belief in Christianity which is in reality a commitment to a way of life or value system “given the portmanteau title of *Christianity*”.⁵⁵ It is a “commitment to the human”, or “sense of the sacred” rather than an “encounter with the holy”.⁵⁶ In this essay I shall follow Bailey in taking it as a rough equivalent of folk religion, although it is possible to define differences between the two terms: folk religion being much more overt, and probably easier to access.⁵⁷

What elements of implicit religion, then, apply to Remembrance? I can offer no objective evidence for what follows. It is simply a reflection of my experience of ten years in parish ministry and five years in service Chaplaincy. As with Towler’s analysis of the responses to John Robinson’s Honest to God, I have sought to uncover primarily not “what people believe, but what types of religiousness exist”.⁵⁸ I would characterise two types of implicit religiousness, which I will refer to as “older” and “post modernist” implicit beliefs.

Older Implicit Beliefs

Putting on a good show

⁵⁴ Bailey, “Implicit Religion”, p. 486.

⁵⁵ Op Cit, p. 494.

⁵⁶ Op Cit, p. 495.

⁵⁷ See Bailey, A Workbook, pp. 3-4 for a discussion of the differences between the terms “Folk”, “Implicit” and “Popular” religion. The terms are however often used interchangeably, e.g. in Martin Coombes article in the Workbook, pp. 56-57.

⁵⁸ Towler, Certainty, p. 15.

The first characteristic of older implicit beliefs about Remembrance is belief in the importance of putting on a good show.⁵⁹ Across the country elderly ex-servicemen will put on a suit and ensure that they are well turned out. Royal Marines, not normally known for enjoying “bull” will quite happily get out their blues (the Number One Dress uniform). Conversely when the service is held in “green rig” - berets, combat jackets, green barrack trousers and boots - there were some complaints. The Chaplain might argue that combat gear puts us closer in spirit to those who die on active service, but this is not the gut feeling of the Marines.

An element of inconvenience

Second, there is a desire that there should be an element of inconvenience. In his brief history of Remembrance, Owen Chadwick records that there was considerable concern before the first Armistice Day silence⁶⁰ about the effect on public transport and daily life. King George V “did not want anyone to go out of their ordinary path or vocation, but merely to pause and think”.⁶¹ But the authorities were out of touch with the national mood which did not mind the inconvenience, and insisted on the commemoration being an annual event. Chadwick points to the change, after World War II, to holding Remembrance services on the Sunday nearest to the 11th as making Remembrance “more Christian and less national”.⁶² What he does not comment on, but is relevant here, is that it also became less disruptive of daily life. The restoration of the two minutes’ silence on

⁵⁹ Closely related to the “sense of rightness, order and safety” mentioned by Mark Silversides, Folk Religion, p. 4. Implicit religion is notoriously difficult to pin down; dogma and creed are not marks of its faith; and it is both impossible and pointless to systematise.

⁶⁰ At this stage to be for one year only, on November 11th.

⁶¹ Chadwick, Armistice Day, p. 324.

the 11th day has been very popular. It is possible to dismiss this as “mere sentimentality ... the enemy of the Kingdom of God”,⁶³ or to be wary of it as the thin end of a wedge which will eventually destroy the Sunday commemoration, but although both these concerns may well be true, they do not take account of the fact that such a Remembrance seems appropriate to the general populace at a deep level, where putting up with inconvenience is a reminder of the importance of the event. In a post modernist world where shopping has become the new overall value, anything that stops shopping in its tracks, if only for two minutes, can be seen as at least a co-belligerent with the Church in affirming the importance of values other than financial and material ones.

... to be a little uncomfortable

Third, and related to the second, is a wish to be (a little) uncomfortable, to share in a small way the trials of those who died in war. Thus one senior⁶⁴ Royal Marines officer said that the Remembrance service should not only be held outside, but preferably on a rainy and windy day. The idea of being justified by works is prevalent in the popular mind, and this may be another element of that belief. Nor need the works be voluntary: The Remembrance Service in my unit⁶⁵ is compulsory for all ranks except the man on

⁶² Chadwick, *Op Cit*, p. 327. At the same time the service “began to be associated with the pacifist strand in English thinking”: but this association has not lasted.

⁶³ John L Kent, *The Call*, p. 24.

⁶⁴ But comparatively young: i.e. under 40

⁶⁵ 40 Commando Royal Marines.

the gate, and the Headquarters Company was told this year that the failure to purchase a poppy “for at least a tenner” would attract an extra day’s weekend duty!⁶⁶

Making merit

Both the preceding themes may be included in the concept of making merit, where merit is a “kind of moral meaning, helping (us) interpret life’s events, and a vital component in an overall scheme of cause and effect”.⁶⁷ At a simple level this may be seen in the views of a Royal Marine Commanding Officer who demanded a full turnout for Remembrance Sunday because it would help men to fight better if they knew that, should they die in battle, they too would be remembered. Issues of transcendence did not come into it. This is the religion Towler calls *exemplarism*: religion which looks to Jesus, and “what Jesus would have done”.⁶⁸ This element of the belief leads to its definition of the role of the minister. Professor Douglas Davies says that the congregation at such an event will be looking to the minister, as a ‘natural priest’,⁶⁹ to “explain how merit works, to foster its positive and restrict its negative powers ... (to) understand the fate of the dead and assist their passage into other worlds”.⁷⁰ I suspect that only the first half of this statement is widely true as questions of eternal destiny are not of great interest in this form of belief.

The status of the war dead

What, then, is the status of the war dead in these older implicit beliefs? It is often claimed that those who attend Remembrance Day services want reassurance that all who

⁶⁶ No extra duties were actually awarded, but the pressure was there.

⁶⁷ Davies, *Priesthood*, p. 45.

⁶⁸ Towler, *Op Cit*, pp. 19-37.

died in war are in heaven. I suspect that this is no longer, even if it was once, true, at least of the majority. There is a general agnosticism - a “belief in thingummy”⁷¹ - that militates against any sharply defined expectation. Anthony Balmforth says “Many times I have been asked: *Rector he will be all right with God, won’t he?*,”⁷² but he writes of the 1960’s. My own experience of ministry to the bereaved, and at Remembrance, in the 1980’s and 1990’s has been very different and that question has scarcely ever been asked. Henry Scott Holland and the “Footprints” poster, with their pleasantly undefined warm fuzzies, are the flavour of today.

What can be discerned, especially since the 50th anniversary commemorations and celebrations of D-Day and VE Day over the last few years, is a desire to honour those who died in war. In this context what grates is any statement that the war dead might not be in heaven. This is not, however, any different qualitatively from the feeling that Michael Foot should not have worn a duffel coat to the Cenotaph service, and that it is unfair that some war pensioners should have their social security payment reduced because of their State pensions. It is seen as mean spirited of the Church not to give all it can to the war dead. Nor does it mean that those who would feel cross about such a statement have any clear doctrine, expectation or hope of heaven.

Amongst the older generation, however, there is, sometimes, a more definite belief in spiritual realities, but this does not translate into great outrage at clergy who fail to affirm the spiritual destiny of the war dead. The members of the British Legion in my

⁶⁹ i.e. a focus of ultimate values: Davies, *Op Cit*, p. 48.

⁷⁰ Davies, *Op Cit*, p. 49.

⁷¹ Coombes, pp. 56-57 in Bailey (ed.), A Workbook.

parish who asked each year, without success, for the hymn “O Valiant Hearts” *knew* that their friends’ spiritual destiny was secure. If the Rector chose not have the hymn, well it said more about him than their friends - and in any case they have seen several Rectors through the village, and would certainly see this one through also! As for Martin Coombes’ country parishioners, time was on their side.⁷³

Remembrance poppies

A final feature of these older implicit beliefs is the attachment of emotions and value to the Remembrance poppies.⁷⁴ The original poppies of the fields of Flanders were seen as quasi-magical in the First World War, and although memories of this have died the traditional poppy is still highly significant, as seen when attempts to introduce white poppies are made. What has happened is that the symbol has assumed too great an importance, obscuring the value which originally lay behind it. This “hidden” value is not often verbalised, and thus the symbol has become untouchable - an essential part of the event.⁷⁵ The red poppy should be important for what it symbolises: blood, sacrifice, respect for the dead and, possibly, resurrection and life from disaster. Instead it stands for those things: there can be no respect for the dead without a poppy!

Post Modernist Implicit Beliefs

⁷² Funerals, p. 29 in Bailey (ed.), A Workbook.

⁷³ Coombes, Belief in Thingummy, p. 56, in Bailey (ed.), A Workbook.

⁷⁴ Reed The Dynamics of Religion, Ch 5, speaks of the importance of “symbolic activity” in human mental processes, and points to religion as providing a context within which this can take place. (Per Silversides, Folk Religion, p.17.)

⁷⁵ Effectively a transitional object - so is Remembrance really about dealing with grief?

There are no creeds in implicit religion, and there is an overlap between its varieties, but it is possible to discern a separate form of implicit belief we might call Post Modernist. Its key theme would be that of choice, and of the lack of objective truths by which beliefs may be judged. Remembrance here involves recognising the personal integrity of those who fought, on whatever side, and bypasses questions of whether the cause was right. Those who hold such beliefs are likely to approve of the restoration over the last two years of the original two minute silence on the eleventh day of the eleventh month, as a simple silence imposes no external meaning on participants but allows each to supply his or her own. Remembrance becomes a very personal activity, and the role of the minister simply to provide space for each one to use as an individual. The colour of a poppy, for example, is irrelevant, since a person's activity imposes no meaning on any other person.

Grace Davie provides an interesting picture of this form of implicit belief in her examination of the responses to the Hillsborough football tragedy in April 1989. She warns of the need to recognise that civil, apostolic and implicit responses to the disaster were intertwined and difficult to separate, and of the need to recognise that all such reactions are individual and particular. This said, the elements of choice and individually determined meaning described above can be seen in the spontaneous mourning which saw over one million people file through the stadium over the following days. There were counsellors, but not only was counselling optional, people could select the type of counsellor they wished: not just clergy and social workers, but also professional footballers were available. Alongside scarves, flags, banners and caps were placed

mascots, souvenirs, wreaths rattles and a plastic Madonna from a Christmas crib.⁷⁶ In other words, although a large crowd came, they did not come together: each came as an individual and expressed grief in his or her own way.⁷⁷

Beliefs about Death: Civil Religion

A Religious Dimension To Civil Life

I turn now to the topic of civil, (or perhaps better civic)⁷⁸ religion. Bellah looks at civil religion in America, and, in the face of the separation of Church and State points to a religious dimension to American civil life.⁷⁹ He uses as an example Kennedy's inaugural address, containing clear references to God, but it would be possible to point to more current instances too, such as President Clinton's prayers with Dr Billy Graham after this year's presidential election. Bailey argues that this "religious dimension" of life goes beyond a semblance of piety, even though it does not have any clear doctrine, and indeed need not be Christian, or even relate to one of the mainstream religions.⁸⁰ It may be summarised as "the obligation, both collective and individual, to carry out God's will

⁷⁶ Davie, Religion, p. 90.

⁷⁷ This is my analysis: Davie would disagree, saying that the city was united in grief (Op Cit, p. 90).

⁷⁸ Bailey argues for a distinction between these terms, in which Remembrance would be an example of civic religion: it is "nation-wide, as well as central", is "consistently formal and official, in ideology, ethos, ritual and organisation". Bonfire Night, on the other hand, is an example of a "local instance of a possible civil religion". Bailey, Readings, pp.404-5.

⁷⁹ In Bailey, Readings, p. 74ff.

⁸⁰ As, for example, in the case of Hillary Clinton's much publicised contacts with astrology and "new age" religion.

on earth”,⁸¹ and would include the national desire to promote (an American model of) freedom throughout the world.

The situation in Britain is very different. Close links between Church and State are seen in the establishment of the Church of England, but the links go much more deeply than a simple listing of state events at which the Church plays a role. In the past they went deeper still, and it is still partly true today that religious and civil loyalties are so linked that “to be English, Scottish or Welsh is also, in some sense, to be Christian”.⁸² The study of civil religion teaches us that to an extent they stand or fall together. Fuelled, possibly, by the troubles of Northern Ireland, there is a feeling that “Religion and Nationalism have caused enough trouble in the world, and it is time we moved on”.⁸³ Thus in Post Modernist Britain there is little recognition of, or respect for, the State or the Church. The Church, notwithstanding efforts such as the decade of Evangelism, may be seen in some ways to collude with, or to accommodate itself to a weakening of religion. The State makes no such accommodation with this spirit of the age, and the pressures of regional nationalism are normally resisted.

A Political Reinforcing.

It is in this context that the state may find wars of great use,⁸⁴ and Remembrance of political value. Remembrance services and events may provide a political reinforcing, not

⁸¹ Bailey, *Readings*, p. 77.

⁸² Daniel Jenkins, *The British, their Identity and their Religion*, in Bailey, *Readings*, p. 395ff. The exclusion of Northern Ireland is deliberate.

⁸³ Jenkins, *Op Cit*, p. 397.

⁸⁴ The Falklands, for example, which in general united the nation, *contra* Suez, which divided it

just of those who profit (financially or otherwise) by war⁸⁵ but of the State as a whole. Indeed Remembrance has always claimed to be an event uniting the nation, and often affirming the nation. Thus Arthur Cowan's Remembrance sermon for 1949 says that Remembrance reminds us with "satisfaction of Britain's great nature".⁸⁶

The Spiritual And Eternal Status Of The War Dead.

It is probably in civil religion that we find the strongest beliefs about the spiritual and eternal status of the war dead. We have seen that by the end of the First World War the implicit belief of the majority of the general population - and probably of those in the Churches too - was that those killed in the devastation could not be condemned by God. Such feelings have become entrenched: in 1948 Arthur Cowan could write: "We feel sure that gallant hearts which gave themselves ... have not perished, but must have been promoted",⁸⁷ Those who held such views were those who planned and participated in the first Armistice Day commemorations and the first Remembrance Day services. I suggest that their implicit beliefs became fossilised into the civil religion, and imported into the Christian liturgy of Remembrance that we see today.⁸⁸ At the same time the liberalism of the 1960's has moved the Church's thinking away from simplistic or

⁸⁵ Chadwick speaks of "much cynicism" surrounding early Remembrance events because of this: *Op Cit*, p. 326.

⁸⁶ Arthur Cowan, *A Dish of Fruit*, p. 26.

⁸⁷ Arthur Cowan again: *Remembrance Sunday*, p. 23.

⁸⁸ Hence the fact the Andrew Jones can find "no single published order of service for Remembrance Sunday which can be recommended unequivocally". *Remembrance Sunday*, p. 17.

jingoistic beliefs about war and death in war.⁸⁹ It is here that we have the roots of conflict between Church and State over Remembrance.

Political Power.

Civil religion is also concerned with political power. Mark Silversides points to its interest in conferring status, and in particular “superior status or authority”.⁹⁰

Remembrance is one occasion when clergy are not necessarily masters of their own house. The service may be held outdoors, and even if in Church there is likely to be a considerable weight of tradition. The Mayor may always read a lesson; the local Sea Cadets may always present a wreath. In the Order of Service for the Drumhead service on Southsea Common commemorating the D-Day landings the political leaders present are carefully listed by their importance, and at the annual Cenotaph service in London wreaths are graded in size according to the status of the people laying them. Poppies are worn like medals, with the greater personages wearing larger and more elaborate poppies. It may even be significant that red was the colour of empire. In my Church at Rayne I inadvertently offended the civil religion’s mores by asking someone who had not served in the armed forces to read the village list of war dead:⁹¹ I was seen to be offering him a status he did not deserve. Power and tradition add up to a further way of reinforcing a sense of national identity. Remembrance, for civil religion, in its unvarying

⁸⁹ David Peel’s writing that we must remember “lest we forget those who died for God and with God and now live in God” (*Lest we forget*, p.18.) is quite untypical of the 1980s. Oliver O’Donovan’s thoughtful sermon in the wake of the Falklands War (*Remembrance Sunday*) is much more typical: carefully questioning simplistic ideas of victory as God’s vindication of “our” side.

⁹⁰ Mark Silversides, *Folk Religion*, p. 5. The book covers issues of civil religion without distinguishing them from the folk religion of the title.

form, and with its uncritical view of war and those who died in war, is a stable comfort, when so many things constantly change.

Conflicts Between Different Religions

Conflict Between Civil And Apostolic Religion

There are considerable opportunities for conflict between civil and apostolic religion. Some of these were notably seen in the issues that arose over the service⁹² at St Paul's Cathedral on July 26 1982, after the Falklands War, and in particular the Archbishop's sermon at that service.⁹³ It is interesting that the complaints about the service, though strongly felt, were not accurately targeted. Julian Amery was said⁹⁴ to have complained that there "was no thanksgiving for the liberation of British subjects (and that the sermon was) pacifist", but in fact the sermon began with the words "The first note in this service is thanksgiving", and there were thanks that the "armed invasion has been thwarted".⁹⁵ The reason for the inappropriate reaction may be an unrecognised conflict between civil and apostolic religion. The greatest reaction was to the recognition of the brutal reality

⁹¹ He wasn't even a *scout leader* - which was acceptable two years later! At the D-Day Commemorations the Order of Service is careful to describe the reader of the New Testament lesson as "Mr Kenneth Baker ... who took part in the Normandy Landings": i.e. he is qualified to read.

⁹² Defined by the Archbishop as at least in part a "Remembrance" service. Lord Runcie actually said: "We must not forget: our prayers for remembrance will not end this day", (Hastings, Runcie, p.184) but although I think he meant "of remembrance", "We must not forget" is a clear link to Remembrance literature and liturgy: "lest we forget"

⁹³ Written in large part by the "inexperienced ... Richard Chartres" (Carpenter, Robert Runcie, p. 261), and printed in full in Hastings, Runcie, pp.183-6.

⁹⁴ Though only by *The Sun*, (quoted in Carpenter, Runcie, p. 257), so his views may have been misquoted.

⁹⁵ Hastings, *Op Cit*, p.184. It is true to say that these feeling could have been expressed in a more definite way: the service for the 50th anniversary of VE Day, for example, speaks of our "thanksgivings ... for the victory ... and for the liberation of so many from the cruelty of occupation and oppression".

of war and the suffering of the Argentineans, and the Archbishop was surely correct in contrasting the attitude of those who fought “without rancour”,⁹⁶ with that of those spectators who, remaining at home, were “most violent in their attitudes and untouched in their deepest selves.”⁹⁷ But this was not simply a case of the press making a story. There was a real head of steam behind the outrage, and I suggest it lay in what were seen as sins of omission: a failure to confirm the renewed self confidence that the success of the war had endued the State with and a soft-peddling of any assurances about those who had died in the conflict. Issues of justice and violence were, for the politicians, bound up with the other issues important to civil religion: political power and a political reinforcing of the State. The Archbishop’s refusal to collude with the views of civil religion in these latter two issues was the harder target, and therefore his balanced approach to the appropriateness of the use of armed force and the justice of the conflict became the focus of the complaints. It is fascinating to contrast this sermon with the Archbishop’s words at the memorial service after the Zeebrugge disaster. At the Falklands service he did not say that all who died in the war went to heaven, nor did he pray for the dead (although the Roman Catholic Cardinal Hume did).⁹⁸ At the Zeebrugge service five years later he would say that those who died “did not die deserted by God, abandoned by him ... they are truly in God’s loving hands, ... there also his right hand

⁹⁶ Hastings, *Op Cit*, p.184.

⁹⁷ Hastings, *Op Cit*, p.186, considered to be a reference to the tabloid press and in particular *The Sun* for its “GOTCHA” headline after the sinking of the Argentinean Cruiser BELGRANO with the loss of over 800 lives.

⁹⁸ Mantle, *Archbishop*, p. 157.

shall hold them in death as in life.”⁹⁹ There was much less at stake politically, so although that service too was widely reported, there was no controversy over it.

Conflicts between the views of civil and apostolic religion are not, of course, seen only in national events. At village and Unit level questions such as who should give out which wreaths in Church or at a memorial, and who should read the names of the war dead or the words of Remembrance are bound up with questions of political power. Clergy may wish to take the service in ways which emphasise our equality in death, and in the Kingdom of Heaven. This is likely to conflict with the rigid structure evident in the use of ranks and titles, and in civic dignitaries taking part in services.

Conflict Between Implicit Beliefs And Apostolic Religion

There has, in my own experience, rarely been overt conflict between implicit beliefs and apostolic religion over Remembrance services. There is a great gulf fixed between their understandings of Remembrance, but there can be collusion between them resulting in an apparent agreement disguising the differences. There is no open conflict, but neither is there any real meeting of minds. In effect, two different services are held under the same form of words. Those who attend are happy, because they are able to affirm their implicit beliefs: remembering the dead with due ceremony, inconvenience and discomfort, possibly thinking of them as in heaven, ascribing merit to the war dead, and gaining merit for themselves. The minister is happy because the service was well attended and appreciated. He may have preached a sermon addressing issues of peace

⁹⁹ Hastings, Runcie, p. 189.

and justice, or death and eternal life. But he has not managed to create a meeting between the apostolic gospel and those at the service. I think most clergy would recognise the feeling that this has occurred,¹⁰⁰ and may have preached sermons which were biblically correct and challenging, but did not engage with the implicit beliefs of those present. Thus the two Remembrance Day outlines suggested by Hutchins,¹⁰¹ where Remembrance is used as the peg on which to hang a normal Sunday sermon, are quite unsuited to a military or civic congregation. They would go down well enough, but would not be understood in the way intended. In the first, for example, a Distinguished Service Order medal is used as an illustration of discipleship and the challenge to respond to God in obedience. It would not be understood in that way. Davies says that the congregation at such an event will be looking to the minister, as a ‘natural priest’,¹⁰² to “explain how merit works, to foster its positive and restrict its negative powers ... (to) understand the fate of the dead and assist their passage into other worlds”.¹⁰³ Instead of reinforcing apostolic truths, the use of a military award for bravery as a key focus for the sermon would be heard as affirming the implicit beliefs in the merit gained by attending the service and the merit of those who died in war.

Nor is it necessarily easy for the minister to deal with the problem by challenging the implicit beliefs of those attending. The difficulty here is that he may not make sufficient effort to discover just what these beliefs are, and may instead simply address those issues

¹⁰⁰ Wesley Carr (Brief Encounters, p. 11) speaks of occasions when, during the occasional offices, the clergyman “will find an increasing sense that his words and interpretations are neither being heard nor resisted (and) he may become angry with the people, ... with himself or with God.”

¹⁰¹ Preaching, pp. 23-24.

¹⁰² i.e. a focus of ultimate values: Davies, Priesthood, p. 48.

¹⁰³ Davies, *Op Cit*, p. 49.

that are of greatest importance to his own theology. This will almost certainly lead to an emphasis on the spiritual status of the war dead, and I have suggested above that this is not an important issue for many. There will indeed be conflict and division if he takes this approach, but the conflict will not flow from the theological issue he is considering. Rather, he or she or she will be seen to be allocating demerit to those who died and refusing to allow merit to those who are there at the service.¹⁰⁴ Once again the congregation are likely to interpret what has been heard within the structure of their implicit beliefs.

Wesley Carr considers the same problem in dealing with funeral ministry when he says that instead of the Church imposing its own story on those attending, our task is to “enliven and interpret the fragmentary, half perceived presented story from (our) experience of God, Christ and human life.”¹⁰⁵ Carr goes further than saying simply that we must start where people are,¹⁰⁶ and implies that to make liturgy truly evangelistic we should turn it around, so that it starts from the implicit beliefs of the congregation.¹⁰⁷

One problem with Remembrance is that the pressures of civil religion, impose a traditional form on the service that is irrelevant to and cannot address the implicit beliefs now current in our society. If the price of addressing them is the loss of some of the civil religious elements of Remembrance there will be further conflict ahead, and clergy may end up pleasing nobody! The Last Post and Reveille, for example, are important to civil religion, as they reinforce national identity and are seen as expressing a universal hope of

¹⁰⁴ Davies, *Op Cit*, p. 46.

¹⁰⁵ Carr, *The Occasional Offices*, in Bailey, (ed.), *A Workbook*, p. 30.

¹⁰⁶ Though this seemingly obvious lesson is in itself valuable and often ignored in such ministry.

¹⁰⁷ A biblical example might be Paul’s impromptu ministry in Lystra: Acts 14:8ff.

Resurrection. It can be argued that they should be omitted, in order to correct a theological emphasis, but unless it is also made clear that such an omission is done also to address directly issues of merit and equality there is every chance that this will be misunderstood by those holding either form of implicit religion, as much as it will be resisted by those with an interest in maintaining civil religion.

Silversides says we surround fairly simple ceremonies¹⁰⁸ with empty symbols, which can be filled with whatever meaning is desired by the audience, and we fail to convey a context of grace, which will clear a way for the central symbolism of the event.¹⁰⁹ This is often true, but by central symbolism he means the Christian symbolism, and I have argued that Remembrance is not specifically Christian: it is an aspect of human experience with roots in all religions and cultures.¹¹⁰ This means that we must practice a Christian form of Remembrance which recognises and accepts that others will use it for their own purposes. In this context the recent restoration of the two minutes silence on the 11th day may provide a useful focus for civil and implicit religion, so that we can avoid the problems Chadwick says arose in the original move to a Sunday commemoration.¹¹¹ In this way Remembrance services can remain Christian without becoming seen as less National, or even subversive. Silversides says that we must remove pressures of tradition as far as possible, but in the case of Remembrance we can not remove them very far! He does, however, recognise the problem when he says that

¹⁰⁸ Such as Remembrance clearly is, since in origin it is a simple two minute silence, with no overt or specific religious or political content.

¹⁰⁹ Silversides, Folk Religion, p. 20.

¹¹⁰ It is unfortunate that Chidester's wide ranging study of death and dying in different cultures and religions does not directly address the issue of Remembrance.

¹¹¹ Chadwick, Armistice Day, p. 324.

we must “proclaim the message of Christ and indicate its relevance to the ... ceremony”.¹¹²

Conflict between Implicit Beliefs And Civic Religion

Finally, there will be areas of conflict between implicit beliefs and civic religion. The religion Towler calls *exemplarism* has no place for an objective life after death, but as the name implies will be happy with Remembrance, since it is essentially remembrance that is at the heart of its spirituality: this is the religion which looks to Jesus, and “what Jesus would have done”.¹¹³ But it looks primarily to Jesus’ life, not his death,¹¹⁴ and so will always be in tension with civic religion, when that looks to a particular form of death as achieving a place in heaven.

A further area of difference and potential conflict between Post Modernist implicit beliefs and civic religion lies in the way that civil religion is a community based activity, with its strong reinforcement of national identity, in contrast to strongly individualistic Post Modernist implicit beliefs. The annual arguments over white poppies reflect this with the adaptation of a symbol treasured by civil and traditional implicit religions in a way that is seen to deny much of the traditional meaning of Remembrance: the white poppy speaks of pacifism and a strong anti-nationalism, and is essentially an individualistic symbol.

¹¹² Silversides, Op Cit, p. 21.

¹¹³ Towler, Certainty, p. 28.

¹¹⁴ Towler, Op Cit, p. 29: “The life of Christ means everything to me and not his death”, though Towler is not totally consistent: contra p. 19, where he says exemplarism sees in Jesus’ “life and death ... an example...”.

Some Conclusions For Better Remembrance

Given the many areas of difference and potential conflict identified above, the minister attempting to make Remembrance services theologically valid and coherent might seem to be in an impossible position, but this is so only if he is unaware of these problems. Knowing about them he can realise “his Christian ministry within the demands and inclinations of ... folk religiosity”¹¹⁵ and of civil religion. Remembrance, it seems, is here to stay, and Chadwick’s desire that a generation which is “not very religious” may be “touched by eternity and reminded of a realm of Spirit”¹¹⁶ can be achieved.

One key theme that can be used to integrate the service is that of mourning. As well as being missing from Remembrance, this has been identified by several authors as missing from much funeral ministry. Thus Balmforth says that death “did not fit the triumphal pattern” of the 1960’ s era,¹¹⁷ and Carr suggests that belief in the Resurrection may, oddly, assist the minister in colluding with the bereaved in the denial of death.¹¹⁸ The institutionalised nature of civil religion is rife with the denial of death in the jingoism of militaristic triumphalism and political reinforcement.¹¹⁹

Remembrance poppies and wreaths may provide one way to overcome that denial. Both civil and implicit religions hold poppies to be important, as (at least) symbols of blood, sacrifice, respect for the dead, resurrection and political status and power. Rather than

¹¹⁵ Davies, Priesthood, p. 53.

¹¹⁶ Chadwick, Armistice Day, p. 329.

¹¹⁷ Funerals, in Bailey, (ed.), Workbook, p. 29.

¹¹⁸ Carr, Brief Encounters, pp. 111-112.

¹¹⁹ Hence the refusal to allow injured servicemen to parade to the Falklands service and the agonising over the mention of casualties.

downplaying wreaths, perhaps because “the important thing is people”, or because they are “really only a money raising activity for the Haig fund” it would be better to use the poppy as a key element of the service, pointing to its original meanings of death, and of the hope of resurrection beyond (but not obscuring) death. Mark Silversides points out that although the recital of the salvation history behind Christian symbols, at times such as baptisms or funerals, should help to redeem folk religion it does not, because those addressed do not look to that salvation history.¹²⁰ In the case of poppy wreaths, however, and especially in the last few years since the 50th anniversaries of the Second World War, people do look to, or are at least ready to hear, the history of those remembered,¹²¹ and it is possible to present that history in a Christian form, sensitively imposing a Christian central meaning to the event.

After adding an emphasis on mourning to Remembrance clergy will also do well to remove, or at least treat with care, any emphasis on the self sacrifice and bravery of those who died in war. This fits uneasily with the recognition of the horrors of war and the need for penitence in the light of war. It unhelpfully tends to reinforce implicit beliefs in merit, and it is not true to the reality of military life. If this is dealt with it is better done so from the angle of the boredom of most military life, and the muddle and confusion of battle. Sensitively handled this can be used to lead on to the doctrine of salvation by grace, rather than by works.

¹²⁰ Silversides, Op Cit, p. 20.

Silversides says that we must do all within a “dynamic of Grace”,¹²² and Carr speaks of the “Priority of Grace”.¹²³ If understanding the gospel involves an appreciation of the difference between “a mechanical inevitability and a sense of trust in God” mentioned above¹²⁴ then this difference must be witnessed to by the form, as well as the words, of the event.

This priority is necessary because “the demands of people present a threat to the identity of the Church and the gospel”.¹²⁵ This is *a fortiori* true of Remembrance as we face the pressures from civil and implicit religions. It is necessary to be aware of the potential for conflict and to open up the real issues, especially when these are issues of power.

Without grace we will simply respond with anger, instead of allowing conflict

to provoke Christian development of Remembrance services which will allow those who attend to find themselves “not far from the Kingdom of God”.

¹²¹ Remembrance is valuable “to maintain the collective memory of the past” says Denniston (The Death and Birth, p. 413.), and Carr’s point about Baptism, that “the story we are handling is not exclusively Christian property” is more true still of Remembrance (Op Cit, p. 37.).

¹²² Silversides, Op Cit, pp. 16ff.

¹²³ Carr, Op Cit, Chapter 4.

¹²⁴ Note 34.

¹²⁵ Carr, Op Cit, p. 35.

Simon Springett, December 1996.

9,950 Words (Excluding Table of Contents and Bibliography)

In search of a liturgy of Remembrance which addresses the demands and beliefs of civil and implicit religions whilst maintaining the pastoral and doctrinal integrity required by apostolic religion.

Bibliography

- Paul Badham, Christian Beliefs about Life after Death, (Hardback, The MacMillan Press, London, 1976, 174pp)
- Edward Bailey, The Implicit Religion of Contemporary Society: some Studies and Reflections, (Social Compass, Vol. 37 No. 4, 1990, pp. 483-497)
- Edward Bailey, Implicit and Civil Religion: A Selection of Readings.
- Edward Bailey, (ed.), A Workbook in Popular Religion, (Paperback, Partners Publications, Dorchester, 1986, 69pp)
- Richard Bewes, The Resurrection - Fact or Fiction? (Paperback, Lion Publishing, Oxford, 1989, 48pp)
- H Carpenter, Robert Runcie, (Hardback, Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1996, 401pp)
- Wesley Carr, Brief Encounters, (Paperback, SPCK, London, 1985, 143pp)
- Owen Chadwick, Armistice Day, (Theology, Vol. 79, 1976, pp. 322-329)
- David Chidester, Patterns of Transcendence, (Paperback, Wadsworth Inc., Belmont California, 1990, 317pp)
- Arthur Cowan, A Dish of Fruit on Remembrance Day, (The Expository Times, Vol. 61, 1949, pp. 24-26)
- Arthur Cowan, Remembrance Sunday, (The Expository Times, Vol. 60, 1948, pp. 22-24.)
- Grace Davie, Religion in Britain since 1945, (Paperback, Blackwell, Oxford, 1994, 226pp)
- Douglas Davies, Natural and Christian Priesthood in Folk Religiosity, (Anvil, Vol. 2, No. 1, 1985)
- Robin Denniston, The Death and Birth of Remembrance, (Theology, Vol. 84, 1981, pp. 411-413)
- Doctrine Commission of the Church of England, The, The Mystery of Salvation, (Paperback, Church House Publishing, London, 1995, 225pp)
- Drumhead Service on Southsea Common to commemorate the D-Day Landings, (Portsmouth City Council, 1994)
- Robin Gill, A Textbook of Christian Ethics, (Paperback, T. & T. Clark Ltd, Edinburgh, 1985, 571pp)
- Adrian Hastings, Robert Runcie, (Hardback, Mowbray, London, 1991, 221pp)

- David Hay, Religious Experience Today, (Paperback, Mowbray, London, 1990, 114pp)
- Professor John Hick, Death and Eternal Life, (Hardback, Collins, London, 1976, 495pp)
- Charles H Hutchins, Preaching on Special Occasions, (Grove worship series No. 89, July 1984, 24pp)
- Andrew Jones, Remembrance Sunday, (Grove worship series No. 99, April 1987, 25pp)
- John L Kent, The Call to Remembrance, (The Expository Times, Vol. 66 No. 1, October 1954, pp. 23-25)
- Jonathan Mantle, Archbishop, (Hardback, Sinclair-Stevenson, London, 1991, 360pp)
- Oliver O'Donovan, Remembrance Sunday, (Third Way Vol. 6 No. 10, November 1983)
- Wolfgang Pannenburg, Jesus - God and Man, (Paperback, SCM Press, London, 1968, Fifth impression 1980, 427pp)
- David R Peel, Lest we forget: a sermon for Remembrance Sunday, (The Expository Times, Vol. 101, 1989, pp. 18-19.)
- William Purcell (ed.): Professor G W H Lampe and Professor D M McKinnon, The Resurrection - a Dialogue, (Hardback, A R Mowbray, London, 1966, 112pp)
- A Service For Remembrance Sunday, (SPCK, London, 1984)
- John AT Robinson, The Body: A Study in Pauline Theology, (Paperback, SCM Press, London, 1952, reprinted 1953, 95pp)
- John D Searle, Remembrance Sunday: 6th Sunday before Christmas, (The Expository Times, Vol. 100, 1988, pp. 24-27.)
- Mark Silversides, Folk Religion: Friend or Foe?, (Grove pastoral series No. 25, February 1986, 25pp)
- Robert Towler, The Need for Certainty, (Hardback, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1984, 130pp)
- A Suggested Service For The 50th Anniversary Of VE Day, (in News of Liturgy, Issue No. 243, Grove Books Limited, March 1995)
- Allen Verhey, Remembrance, (In Anchor Bible Dictionary, Vol. V, pp. 669ff.)
- Alan Wilkinson, The Church of England and the First World War, (Hardback, SPCK, London, 1978, 370pp)
- John Wolffe, The Religions of the Silent Majority, (In Parsons, (ed.), The Growth of Religious Diversity, Vol. 1, Hardback, 335pp, pp. 305-331)
