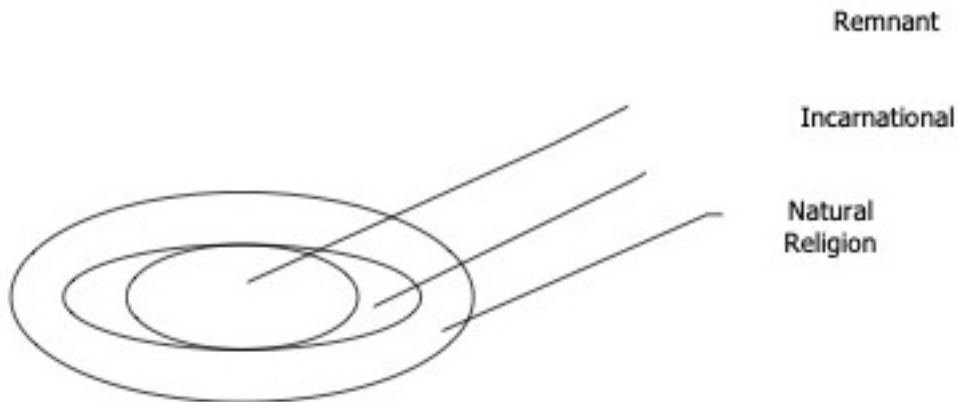


The Theology of the Remnant

Martin Thornton in *Pastoral Theology: A Reorientation and*
later republished as *The Heart of the Parish: A Theology of the Remnant*



Notes on Remnant from M. Thornton, *Pastoral Theology*

The Remnant, far from being an amputated segment – the clique detached from the whole – is at the centre of the parochial organism and of power extending beyond it. It is the very heart which recapitulates and serves the whole; the heart of the Body of Christ in microcosm, and its relation to its environment is the relation between Christ and the twelve, to their world. This palpitating heart pumps the blood of life to all the body as leaven leavens the lump or salt savours the whole. ¹/₄ There is nothing so contagious as holiness, nothing more pervasive than Prayer. This is precisely what the traditional Church means by evangelism and what distinguishes it from recruitment. ... The Remnant concept is more than the “nice little nucleus” backed by a comfortable theory. True representation, real vicariousness, the whole process of Christ’s redemption of creation by the redeemed in him, is to be ascetically achieved.

It is interesting that whereas Sunday services are thought of in terms of numbers, an element of the vicarious is often imputed to the weekday Office of the priest. Yet Anglican theology insists that the creative channel of Grace in the world is not the priesthood but the Church; thus there is a most vital distinction between the priest alone and priest plus Remnant of one. There is no such particular distinction between priest plus one, and priest plus two, sixty, or six thousand. Those who are worried over lack of support might substitute ascetic for arithmetic. There is nothing so contagious as holiness, nothing more pervasive than Prayer. This is precisely what the traditional Church means by evangelism and what distinguishes it from recruitment.”