

## A PSALM OF LAMENT Revd Dr John Taylor

Why, oh why, do we never learn?

We study history in the hope that we will not have to relive it.

We hold our medalled anniversaries  
and remember the past as glorious.

We resolve to learn from it  
but in our foolishness make heroes of the uncomprehending dead.

We make those who are no longer there the guardians of our freedom  
We do not recognise that we are the Man.

We have created devastation instead of planting orchards.  
Every tree is twisted and broken, leafless and lifeless.

We wave palm branches and drag out the rescued donkey.  
We ride our tanks in serried rows of goose-stepping infantry  
a Hammer for Jesus. \*

We dig up broken swords  
That should be ploughshares.

We plant fields of memorials to unknown body parts  
To honour those whose memory still haunts us.

We hear the plaintive cry of the cracked Last Post  
And stretch out our arms to receive the folded flag,

cold comfort for a father we'll never know,  
a brother we'll never hug,  
a lover we'll never replace,  
a poppy for a breadwinner.

\* (See 2 Maccabees 10)