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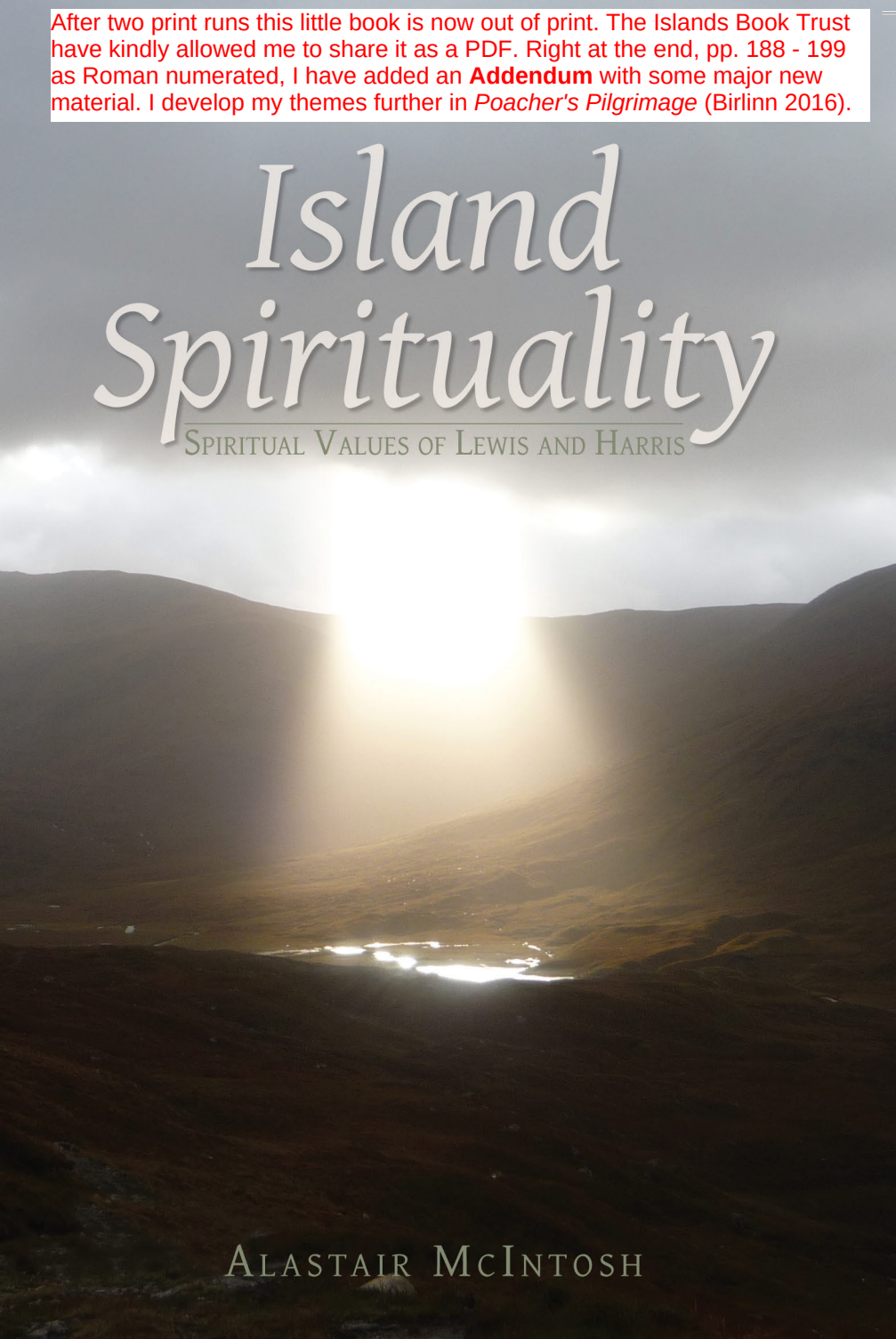
Island Spirituality

Spiritual Values of Lewis and Harris



Alastair McIntosh

This book explores spirituality through the lens of Lewis and Harris – the pre-Reformation "temples", Reformation theology, colonisation, clearances and evangelisation under the last of the Mackenzies of Seaforth. Perhaps controversially and certainly unconventionally, Dr McIntosh concludes that island religion, for all its struggled history and theological tensions, expresses a profound inner spirituality. It reveals itself in kindness that gives backbone to the community. It leads towards an ardent desire for God. It is the island's greatest export to a wider world.

Front: *Loch an Teine* (The Loch of Fire) Lewis-Harris border
Back: *Teampall Eòin* (St John the Baptist's Chapel), Bragar

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LIVING HISTORY
THE ISLANDS BOOK TRUST
URRAS LEABHRAICHEAN NAN EILEAN

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Island Spirituality

Spiritual Values of Lewis and Harris

Alastair McIntosh

The Islands Book Trust

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www.alastairmcintosh.com/islandspirituality.htm

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To the Auld Lichts, and much aulder lichts,
and for a' that an' a' that,
to lichts coming yet

---

it was God who sent us here, one said
closing his eyes

no, said another, it was the island
that was sent by God to find us

Kenneth Steven
A Song among the Stones
With kind permission, Polygon, 2012

Alastair McIntosh (b. 1955), author of *Soil and Soul,* was educated at Leurbost J.S. School and the Nicolson Institute in Stornoway. He holds honorary fellowships at the Centre for Human Ecology, the University of Glasgow and Edinburgh University's (New College) School of Divinity. A Quaker with Presbyterian roots, he often broadcasts *Thought for the Day* on BBC Radio Scotland, and has spoken at the World Council of Churches and the Holy Trinity Sergyev Monastery in Russia.

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Foreword

This publication is based on a most interesting and well-received talk given by Alastair McIntosh to the Book Trust in October 2012. He is well-known as an author and broadcaster on subjects such as religion, land reform, and community development. I am very pleased that we are able to publish this extended version of the lecture for a wider audience. This has been assisted by a grant of £500 from the Francis Camfield Trust, which supports work "engaged in witnessing to Christian and Quaker testimonies."

Alastair covers a lot of ground – from 16th century Calvinist theology in Scotland to the Clearances, the coming of evangelical Presbyterianism to Lewis, second sight, and today's materialistic world. His views about history and religion, informed by a Lewis upbringing, an international perspective, and considerable original research, are in some respects controversial. We are publishing them not because we necessarily agree with all of them, but because we believe this will help to promote discussion about island history and culture – one of the Book Trust's key objectives. Bringing together people from different backgrounds to share their thoughts and learn from each other is an important part of all our activities.

I hope that, whatever your own perspective, you will be interested and stimulated by this book. As Alastair recognises, further research is needed on many of the topics addressed. If the views put forward help, in Alastair's phrase, to "open windows" rather than "close doors", we will be delighted.

John Randall
Chairman, the Islands Book Trust
June 2013

Introduction

Sit down on a hillock by a river near any village on Harris or Lewis, survey what is all around, and it is the history of the world that flows by.

That was precisely what I did in May 2009 when I walked for twelve days from Rodel in the south of Harris to Ness at the Butt of Lewis. My stations along the way were the *teampallan* or pre-Reformation "temples", the healing or if we dare suggest, "holy" wells, and the prehistoric *bothain* or "beehive" dwellings out on the moors.

Most of this will be told in a forthcoming book, the working title for which is *Poacher's Pilgrimage*, because I carried a fishing rod, and was forced to cross the Grimersta. But much of what came out from my subsequent research was highly specific to island interests and sadly, no good for international readership. Imagine my pleasure then, when John Randall and his committee invited me to give a lecture to the Islands Book Trust in which I could present this material, and have it published in this expanded version.

The spoken version was called *The Island's Greatest Export* and was delivered to some forty people at *An Lanntair* in Stornoway on 2nd October 2012. In this context I have chosen to speak of "the island" as the single land mass that comprises Lewis and Harris.

Chapter 1 starts by exploring the island's spirituality as reflected in its sites of ancient veneration.

Chapter 2 moves to Dutch and Westminster Calvinism, exploring how the Reformation washed upon our island shores.

Chapter 3 looks at how evangelical religion came to Lewis in the 1820s amidst military conscription and clearances, and especially at the role of Lady Hood Mackenzie.

Chapter 4 celebrates the island's deep spirituality that runs beneath historical vicissitudes, and what it offers us today.

So much material of possible interest to readers came up during my research that I have made extensive use of endnotes so that it would not go to waste. However, since many of these are tangential, I recommend that most might best be read later rather than side-by-side with the main text in order to avoid a disjointed reading experience. I am also aware of the high potential for errors in a work of this nature and if readers would be so kind as to notify me of any that they might identify (mail@alastairmcintosh.com), I will place corrections in an erratum on my website.

For commenting on this manuscript I thank Catherine MacKinven of the Knapdale MacKinvens, David Thomson, retired trawlerman of Morayshire, Professor Michael Northcott of New College and the Rev John Harvey of the Iona Community. I also felt the influence of Marie MacLeod (née MacDonald) of 11 Upper Bayble, who would have taken me much more to task but for her early passing some years ago.

John Randall, Alayne Barton and their colleagues at the Islands Book Trust have been kind and patient. A thank-you also to Jennifer McCarry at the Centre for Human Ecology in Govan for proof-reading and to Mary Roslin and Christine Davis for serving as referees to the Francis Camfield Trust. My dear wife, Vérène Nicolas, has been most forbearing; describing her life while I was writing this as "like being married to Calvin!"

Preparing and expanding this lecture has been difficult. I have tried to open windows and not to close doors, but if I have caused offence through errors, ignorance or bad judgement, or from deficits of empathy and spiritual groundedness within myself, then please, as the man himself would have put it, "be accommodating."

Alastair McIntosh
Govan, Glasgow
June 2013

1

A Spiritual Place and People

The Universe and Being

I shall start with some introductory remarks about such loaded terms as God, spirituality and the religious life.

We live in a world where many of our problems – war, poverty and environmental degradation – can ultimately be traced to a loss of soul. But how can soul be called back? How can meaning be infused back into the world if we prefer to doubt the very existence of a spiritual underpinning to reality? How, when even love itself, or the beauty of music or of nature, or of an act of human kindness, get routinely explained away as chemical secretions at the synapses of the brain?

The Hebridean isles of Scotland are a good place from which to ask such questions. If you go outside on a clear night and look up, you see that you and this whole world are held in a much greater shimmering cosmological context. This poses a challenge to the nature of reality. Cold logic, on its own, would predict that there ought to be *nothing*. But amazingly, there is *something*. The universe *is!* And in this welter of *being,* I *am* and we *are!*

If we now turn the telescope around and peer into our inner lives, we see that all of this is knowable only because we are *conscious* beings. Just as our brains are able to respond to a stimulus like the starlight because it *exists*, so we must ask whether our response to less tangible qualities like love, beauty and a sense of meaning is because they somehow exist too. Could it be, for example, that people who "feel" the presence of God, are feeling something real?

God and Spirituality – Some Definitions

Let me define my use of certain terms. "God" has become a loaded word. For many people it carries negative baggage. This may be for narcissistic reasons, for egos too big to permit room for anything more than themselves in their lives. Or it may be that they have suffered from spiritual abuse. They may have experienced religious violence, including prejudice if their way of life does not conform to the expectations of others. They may have had religion forced on them in childhood. But just as rape must never be allowed to destroy the wonder of true love, so forced religion – which is a blasphemous thing – must never be allowed to destroy the potential wonder of discovering God's love (Walker 2004).

Some people believe that the spiritual world is make-believe that arises out of our material nature. Others, known as dualists, believe that spirit and matter are separate. Still others, and I am one of these, believe that reality is ultimately spiritual. The material world of energy and atoms is held in a divine hand, and as Teilhard de Chardin is credited with saying, "we are spiritual beings having a physical experience."

I do not believe that the Christian worldview has to be the only way to see these things, or to put that another way, Christ may be more cross-cultural and inter-faith than many Christians have allowed (Panikkar 1981, 2010). But for me, the Christian way is my culture and primary path. Christian theologians call what I am describing an "incarnational" worldview. This understands the Holy Spirit – the spirit of God as light and life itself – as being interwoven or infused right through the "carnal" world (Genesis 1:3; John 1:3; Hebrews 1:3; Colossians 1:15–17).

When today's theologians, speak about "God" they often invoke descriptions like "the ground of our being", "our ultimate concern" and "life's deepest motivation". These suggest that God gives cohesion to our inner conscious lives just as the material universe – "the Creation" – gives cohesion to our outer lives of flesh and bone. To speak of the Creation in this way should not be considered incompatible with the findings of

science as the geologist and pillar of the Highland church, Hugh Miller, was well aware (Miller 1857).

"Theology" is the study of God and is something that we think about. The "spiritual" goes deeper, into the realm of feeling as well as thought. Spirituality is concerned with the "interiority" of outer reality; with the *metaphysical,* where *meta* means that which is "beyond" or "behind" the physical. I therefore use the term "spirituality" to refer to the inner essence of all things. With varying nuances of meaning this is also called the quick, quiddity, quintessence, suchness, thisness or haecceity – the latter word having been coined by the thirteenth century theologian, Duns Scotus who, according to North Uist traditions, was briefly a student at *Teampall na Trianaid* – Holy Trinity Temple – the old Hebridean university at Carinish (Macleod 1997, 66). A plaque on the chapel's wall commemorates this belief.[1]

The very word, "essence", comes from the Greek *esse,* meaning "being". The Greek took it from the Proto-Indo-European root *es-,* from which we get our most basic existential word, "is". The spiritual therefore *is* that which is emanates from the innermost nature of *being* (Wink 1992). Above all, it is that which gives life, and specifically, life as love made manifest.

The Salmon and the Cabarfeidh

Why God? Why not just have a "godless spirituality"? I think the answer is that spirituality is "all about love" (Hooks 2001), and love is the paradox of freedom within the profound relationship of interconnection. Paul said that we are all "members one of another" (Romans 12:5). Jesus said that our lives grow as branches from the Vine of Life (John 15). The vine yields wine which, in Middle Eastern poetry, symbolises spiritual inebriation. The Bible is a treasure chest of many locks, the keys to which lie waiting in the human heart. Of course, some people maintain that it should only be read literally. If that is so, then Jesus at the wedding feast at Cana, added nine hundred bottles-worth of inebriation

(John 2:1–11), and that was after they'd already emptied out the cellars of the Cabarfeidh![2]

How do we know whether God is real? The *Manduka Upanishad,* a sacred Hindu sacred text said: "In the union with him is the supreme proof of his reality … He is peace and love" (Mascaró 1965, 83). In this lecture, however, I will confine myself to the Christian traditions of the Hebrides. Jesus said: "Blessed are the pure of heart, for they shall see God" (Matthew 5:8). And the Psalms (34:8): "O taste and see that the Lord is good."

It takes faith to find the courage to taste and see. "Faith" is the trust to embark upon life's spiritual journey. A simple Uig shepherd, Aonghas nam Beann, Angus of the Hills, once said that faith is like

An anchorite's retreat? This near-intact *both* is one of several *bothain* (plural) on Eilean Fir Chrothair in Loch Roag. While surveying, the antiquarian Seumas (or James) Crawford (pictured) heard a tradition from Donald "An Clapper" MacAulay that the island hosted a *taigh beannachabh* or "blessing house". Author's photo, 1995.

a salmon running up a river. At every leap it has to trust there is a higher pool.[3]

Such faith is not to be confused with blind belief. It is an instinct written in our hearts – one that we can either shun, or inwardly ask to be tuned into. When Carl Jung, the great Swiss psychologist, was asked as an old man if he "believed" in God, he said he didn't need to. *He knew!* Such is the knowledge of the salmon as it swims into the loch amongst the hills.

The Trellis and the Vine

In part our spiritual lives are a very private affair. To pray one must "be still, and know that I am God" (Psalms: 46:10). Our islands have a long history of contemplative retreat in nature, and Seumas Crawford of Garynahine – the stonemason and Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland – has carried out survey work on sites in Loch Roag. Here, for example, Little Bernera was once called *Kiallasaigh* – the Island of Cells or Temples (Maclver 1934, 31).[4] But even an anchorite in their hermitage stays spiritually connected to their community through prayer. God is love. That means having the connections of a social and even a political life, and that means sometimes having to agree on how to celebrate spiritually in collective manner. Here is where the need arises for organised religion.

The word "religion" comes from the Latin, *re-* meaning "again", and *ligare,* "to tie" – as in a "ligament". Religion deeply ties a community together, binding the spiritual to this world. If spirituality is the tree or vine and our individual lives its branches, then religion ought to be the supporting trellis. Good religion helps to lead the branches to the light. Bad religion leaves them languishing in shadows that produce a stunted spirituality, only capable of seeing a bonsai God. Sometimes when religion causes spiritual suffocation, freedom must be reclaimed by running wild along the ground. This is what many people mean today who describe themselves as "spiritual but not religious".

Wholesome religion is growth with one another up the trellis. That's what a "church" should be, and not just a bricks-and-mortar building. A true church is the collective spirituality of a religious community. The word comes from a Proto-Indo-European root, *keue*, which means "to swell". As such, a church should be the clustered buds that swell and sweeten until they burst to yield wine. A "parish" relates to what is "parochial", coming from the Greek, *para* meaning "alongside", and *oikos,* "the household". A parish is therefore the neighbourhood community. Words like "economy" and "ecology" share this same housekeeping root, and the reason why there's so much Greek is that this is the original language of the New Testament.

What makes religion challenging, and often conflicted, is that the trellis may be Spirit-inspired, but made of wood and nails by apprentice human hands. It takes constant maintenance, repair, and sometimes a complete rebuild. There is a lovely line in a song by Pink Floyd, "Love is the shadow that ripens the wine," and often religion entails wrestling with one another in precisely those shadows.[5]

The Epistle of James (4.1) made a telling diagnosis of the human condition. "Those conflicts and disputes among you, where do they come from? Do they not come from your cravings that are at war within you?" But Jesus taught that we can do better than staying stuck in this state. He called us not to any old life, but to promised "life abundant" (John 10:10).

Christians believe that Christ is the human face of God. Some believe uniquely so; others, universally so like there's many faces of the "Buddha nature". He is "the light of the world" (John 8:12). He came "to preach deliverance to the captives," to bring "on earth peace, good will toward men," and to realise "good tidings of great joy" (Luke 4:18; 2:14; 2:10). Properly speaking, an "evangelical" should mean a "bearer of good news". The root is from the Greek, *angellein* or "messenger", which gives us "angel", so give us more such evangelicals!

I believe that for all the faults of our island religion – and there are a few – we still retain a spiritual consciousness that has slipped in

many other places.[6] Our trellises may have suffered from the gales and need attention, but the vine itself is the true vine. The Outer Hebrides may seem geographically on the edge of things, but when the centre collapses, the periphery becomes central.

Some Earmarkings

We grow from our soil, and earmarks matter on the island, so let me say where I am coming from. My mother (Jean, who is with my sister, Isobel, in the audience tonight) is from Birmingham and her people were from England and Wales. She became the sister of the children's ward at the Royal Infirmary in the Yorkshire coal mining town of Doncaster. There she met my father, Dr Ian Kenneth McIntosh who had gone south to seek work after graduating from Edinburgh.

From his side come the Lewis connections, long before our move to the North Lochs medical practice in 1960. His uncle, Mr James Purvis, was the surgeon and Superintendent at the Lewis Hospital from 1924 until about 1930.[7] Half of Dad's forebears were from the Scottish Borders and the other half were Gaelic-speaking Highlanders. According to family tradition, the Borders side were descended from "the other Ettrick Shepherd," the Rev Thomas Boston (1676–1732). Boston's writings provoked critical mentions in the letters and poetry of Robert Burns.[8] By the nineteenth century his work was translated into Gaelic and his teachings would be described by many as "hyper-Calvinism".[9]

Dad's great grandfather on the Ross-shire side was Murdo Maclennan whose croft was at Jamestown next door to the seat of Mackenzie power at Brahan Castle. He was the precentor of Gaelic psalms in the ornate old style at the parish church in Contin. His father had been one of *na daoine,* "the men" of the Highland church, and his forebears further back had been cleared from their ancestral lands in the Urray area of Strathconon. According to one of Murdo's obituaries, on the Sunday after the Disruption in May 1843 he carried the Bible out of the patronage-dominated Church of Scotland and into the cemetery, from where the

service was continued under the emergent auspices of the Free Church of Scotland (Communicated, 1899).[10]

This provides another distant link with Lewis, for Stornoway's Alexander Matheson tells me that his mother maintained that we are related through this Maclennan line. That is very helpful. Should I err in my views tonight, kindly refer complaints to Sandy in his lieutenantary capacity to be dealt with as a minor family matter.

Religious Gene or *Genius Loci*?

A little while ago I was preparing for an interview in the BBC's Edinburgh studio. As the technicians waited for their equipment to warm up I was chatting about Lewis with the Sunday morning presenter, Cathy Macdonald from Earshader.

"You know," she said, "I think that the island has got a *religious gene*."

I don't think she meant it quite in the biological terms that Richard Dawkins might use when he comes to Stornoway to lecture from this platform next month, but there can be little doubt that in a cultural and environmental sense, the island does have a religious *genius loci* – a "spirit of place" that runs through the people.

Such an observation is not original. Just a century after the death of the patron saint of Iona in 597, St Adomnán, by that time the ninth abbot, wrote the *Life of St Columba*. From this we can see that the Hebrides, even then, were a magnet to spiritual seekers. People came from afar to live, as Adomnán's Latin puts it, *in oceano desertum* – in "desert" hermitages of the ocean, there to retreat and seek God in relative solitude (Adomnán 1995, 127; O'Loughlin 2007, 128).[11]

This Celtic church took root around monastic settlements scattered all along the west coast. We see their mark in place names like *annat, annait* or *annaid,* meaning a mother church or monastery. To stand before the eighth century Martin's Cross with all its swirling snakes and lions outside St Mary's Abbey on Iona is to stand before nearly two-thirds of Christian history.

There is a tradition that the Hebrides were called *Eileana Bride* – the Isles of Bridgit or Bhrìghde (Carmichael 1900, xv; Donaldson 1922, 7). While there is no convincing scholarly evidence to link this to the name "Hebrides", Harris certainly comprised the Parish of Kilbride – The Cell or Church of Bhrìghde (Macaulay 1980, 113). This name continued to be used for legal title at least until 1832.[12] Such Gaelic place names carry us back to the days of early Christianity, if not to the "Druids" before. They also connect us to the days of the "undivided church" before the Great Schism of 1054 between the eastern (Byzantine or Orthodox) and the western (Roman Catholic) churches.

As such, the Creation-centred spirituality that shines from the Martin's Cross down and through the nineteenth century oral traditions of the *Carmina Gadelica* may reflect more than "Druid" remnants; more, too, than the influence of nature-loving Irish Franciscans who re-evangelised the southern Hebrides after the Reformation (Campbell 1994). It may also carry an echo of the undivided church's Creation-centred Orthodox liturgies from the east (Telepneff 2001).[13]

Neither should we forget that on Iona Adomnán played host to the shipwrecked Gaulish monk, Arculf, who described his pilgrim visits to such Eastern Orthodox (as we might call it today) territory as Syria, Egypt and Constantinople (Adomnán 1895). The Rev Dr George MacLeod (Lord MacLeod of Fuinary) who founded the modern-day Iona Community certainly believed that the Celtic church was substantially Orthodox. Not for his ecumenism and socialism alone did he fit his critics' billing: "Half-way between Rome and Moscow!"[14]

Time has now shed a shroud of mystery around the earliest religious sites of the Hebrides. Shortly after the Great Schism the Normans swept into England and the Hungarian-born Margaret of Wessex or St Margaret began a process of Romanisation throughout the Scottish church. This brushed aside the old Gaelic liturgies and introduced the Latin formulations of European monastic orders.[15] And yet, where people always went to be still, the rocks remained.

A Sacred Landscape

St Clement – whether of Rome, Alexandria or elsewhere – is the patron saint of the Macleods of Harris and Dunvegan (Macleod 1909, 148; Macaulay 1980, 114).[16] Three pre-Reformation temple sites in the Western Isles carry his name (Macleod 1997). To stand at the top of the *Tùr Mòr* – the Great Tower of St Clement's of Rodel at the foot of Roineabhal – is a remarkable experience.[17] Here, "within living memory the corpse of the dead was borne thrice sunwise round the church" (Henderson in Macaulay 1980, 113). To gaze out across the Sound of Harris is to behold an *oceano desertum* that would have thrilled and, very likely, have been familiar to Adomnán as Abbot of Iona.

Here lies a sacred landscape once redolent with meaning – one that has known the *drùidheachd* or "Druid" lore and still sustains the standing stones and cup marks of pre-history.[18] It also knew the Celtic monks at a time when the Irish Sea, flowing into the Sea of the Hebrides, rendered those waters less of a boundary, and more the information superhighway of an otherwise "Dark Age". There also came the humble monasticism of the Culdees, the *Céli Dé* "Companions of God" until the Augustinians arrived after the reforms of Queen Margaret and her son, King David (MacAulay 1993, 4–8).

But it is the testimony of the rocks that remains … Killegray, Ensay, Pabbay … just so many of these tiny islands where stones can still be seen set purposively in the ground. Few if any do not host at least one temple, or holy well, *annat* place name, standing stone or cup-mark-incised rock, each bearing witness to some distant saint, portentous event or near-forgotten tradition of blessedness (Macleod 1997 & 2000; Haswell-Smith 2008). From Roineabhal itself one can see north-east on a clear day to the Shiants – *Na h-Eileanan Seunta* or the Enchanted or Sacred Isles – and far west to St Kilda. There, according to Kenneth MacAulay's account from 1764, is a well called *Tobar nam Buadh.* Here the people would "address the Genius of the place with supplication and prayer" (Macleod 2000, 75–77) … and I love seeing this evidence of the religious "gene" expressed so long ago.

So many Hebridean place names testify to such imbued sanctity. There is, for example, a promontory called *Am Beannachadh* or The Blessing Place a mile south of Gallan Head, and nearby, *Taigh a 'Bheannaich,* the House of Blessing. Here lie the remnants of a small chapel or temple, a spring-fed holy well, and a dozen or so cell-like structures that probably housed a monastic community (Macleod 1997, 27; Macleod 2000, 36; RCAHMS 2011).

Such *teampallan* or "temples" – I take it, as does Anglicised local custom, directly from the Gaelic to designate these mainly pre-Reformation chapel sites – have only recently been the subject of a relatively comprehensive archaeological survey (Barrowman, forthcoming). One can but speculate that they may have been repositories for icons, holy books, communion chalices, a burning candle or other devotional aids

Site and cemetery of *Teampall Mhìcheil*, the "Temple" or Church of St Michael on Little Bernera (the prominent building is a late addition). By adding sand to the thin soil those newly passed away were laid to rest amongst their ancestors, forming a hill or community of the dead. Author's photo, 1995.

to religious life, and that their role was to turn the heart not towards the outer object – for that would be idolatrous – but inwardly, towards the witness of the saints; and aided by that inspiration, through to God.

Early sources such as the Skye physician Martin Martin suggest that our temples were probably used in much the same way as can be seen to this day in the tiny antiquated chapels of rural France. These are often located on the edge of or just outside the village and in beautiful places, perhaps up in the cliffs or shouldering a cave where once the local saint lived out their hermetic life of presence, prayer and healing. Most remain in daily use for private prayer, and at designated times in the calendar become the focus of regional pilgrimages. Martin suggests that similar practices had been followed on Lewis until the clergy – Mr Daniel and Mr Morison – abolished them around the 1660s (Martin 1994, 106–108).

All that remains of most of these sites today are low walls (e.g. *Teampall nan Crò Naomh,* South Galson), a mound in a meadow (*Teampall Rònain,* Eoropie), foundation slabs exposed by coastal erosion (parts of *Teampall Pheadair,* Shader), foundations under or near more recent structures (*Teampall Bhrìghde,* Scarista and *Teampall Mhicheil,* Little Bernera), a remnant cemetery (*An Teampall Ràmais,* Lochs), a Papal indulgence and mere memory beneath sand dunes *(Teampall Mhoire,* Barvas) … or holy wells that, where we are fortunate, remain intact and locally cared-for (*Tobar Bhrìghde,* Melbost and *Tobar Mhoire,* Shader); where we are unfortunate, have been knocked in and destroyed by diggers (*Tobar Rònain,* Eoropie), and where we are lucky, have been lost but found again (*Tobar a' Gobha,* The Well of the Blacksmith, Leac a Li).[19] There may not be much left to see at most sites, but when I visited some of them on a pilgrimage through the island in 2009 I had the thought – *the less there is to see, the holier a place it be* – and that, at least, raised my spirits on a rainy day.

The preservation of ancient sacred sites and their relics is now being embraced by communities all over the Hebrides. Comments in the local press reflect a renewed sense of pride and ownership.[20] When I chanced

to attend a Free Church service on North Uist a year or two ago I asked the Rev Ewen Matheson what he made of local efforts to stabilise and restore parts of *Teampall na Trianaid*. "I just see it as a part of our long religious heritage," he said, shrugging his shoulders, but with a smile that seemed warmly receptive.

They Take Their Surname from the Rainbow

Looking back, Martin Martin says that the temples "were held in greater veneration in those days than now" (Martin 1994, 106), but veneration had not died out. He describes Lewismen going to the Flannan Isles twenty miles directly west from *Am Beannachadh* to gather seabirds for food. On arrival, they would "uncover their heads, and make a turn sun-ways round, thanking God for their safety." Believing in these isles' "inherent sanctity", one fisherman confessed "that there was none ever yet landed in them but found himself more disposed to devotion there, than anywhere else" (p. 99). In addition to this, Macaulay cites a tradition that the Flannans were "the residence of ecclesiastics in the time of the Druids" (Macaulay 1980, 110).

More noteworthy still is Martin's account of North Rona. The Barvas minister, Daniel Morison, told him how nonplussed he was on his first parish visit when the inhabitants laid on a sun-wise blessing ritual, pronouncing: "God save you, pilgrim, you are heartily welcome here; for we have had repeated apparitions of your person amongst us (after the manner of the second sight), and we heartily congratulate your arrival in this our remote country" (Martin 1994, 101, his parentheses).

They gifted him five sheepskins of barley-meal, saying: "Pray be pleased to accept of this small present, which we humbly offer as an expression of our sincere love." These saintly people later died out from a famine that was believed to have been caused by rats from a passing ship. Martin maintained that they lived "a harmless life, being perfectly ignorant of the vices that abound in the world" and knowing nothing of money or gold. Most haunting of all: "They concern not themselves

about the rest of mankind, except the inhabitants in the north part of Lewis. *They take their surname from the colour of the sky, rainbow and clouds"* (pp. 100–102, my emphasis).

When I visited the Ness museum recently I saw the curved St Ronan's Cross with three circular holes suggestive of the Trinity and its dim outline of a praying Christ, stripped of all his garments (RCAHMS 1997). Sadly it has had to leave North Rona for safety, but it is good to see it cherished within a living community.[21]

Put Off Thy Shoes

The handing down of traditions did not end, however, in Martin's time. A fine example is a powerful passage in *Crotal and White,* that songlike paean to a Hebridean crofting childhood written by the now-deceased BBC journalist, Finlay J. MacDonald of Scarista (MacDonald 1984). Here he describes a forbidden boyhood excursion to *Eilean na Caillich* – the Isle of the [Holy] Old Woman – on Loch Langabhat, South Harris, which in the oral tradition is linked to a nunnery at St Clement's.

After shakily making his way along a sub-surface causeway the young Finlay reached the islet and found the outline of a cell with a doorway and a long lintel stone. At this point his dog started to howl dementedly with its hair stood on end. "I heard a voice," he wrote, "or rather, felt a voice. It came from my ears but at the same time it came from within my head. It said, *Put off thy shoes from off thy feet for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.*"

Later his father questioned where he had been that day. The boy confessed, and the old man said: "Well, you had to – some day. I suppose the surest way of making you go was by telling you not to."

As Finlay got older he learned that others too had also made their secret pilgrimages. Each tale had its own circumstances. But, "What was interesting – and why I wouldn't go back – was that one sentence was common to all the stories. *Put off thy shoes from off thy feet for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.*"

Tobar Bhrìghde – St Bridgit's (or St Bride's) Well – at Melbost Borve, with Dr Finlay Macleod of Shawbost, author of guidebooks on the island's Norse mills, wells and chapels. Author's photo, 2009.

The Christian Significance of Holy Place

For my present purposes it matters not if Finlay MacDonald's experience might be explained away, for example, as dim memories of ceilidh house ghost stories in childhood. What matters is its testimony to the importance of spiritual experience in the cultural psyche. Offhand I can think of more than half-a-dozen Gaelic-speaking Presbyterian men and women on Lewis and Harris, aged between twelve and seventy, who regularly go to venerated spots to "commune" – if we must put it like that. The International Union for the Conservation of Nature refers to such places "sacred natural sites". It believes they

are important for the conservation of both natural and human ecology (Verschuuren et al. 2010).[22]

I was struck by this description of the Gaelic psalms that the Rev Angus Smith, formerly of Cross Free Church, gave in an interview with Fiona MacDonald (MacDonald 1994, 69):[23]

> You see, when you sing in … Gaelic you use so many grace notes and everybody can be slightly different but it all merges together into a kind of shimmer. And, to me, it's like the sounds of the sea, or the sound of the wind, or all the sounds of nature merging into one.

I was similarly struck when the Rev Dr Iain D. Campbell of Back and now Point Free Church took up cycling. Delighted by such a vivid experience of his natural environment, he wrote in the *Stornoway Gazette*: "My theology tells me that the things that are seen declare the things that are unseen: that the details of the creation declare the grandeur of the Creator" (Campbell 2010c).

Fr Gerry Hughes, a Jesuit retreat leader, once told me that in his experience, long periods of silence more than anything else help to still the world and draw the soul to God. Traditional fishing and work on the land gave many opportunities for such withdrawal inwards during prolonged spells of bad weather or winter darkness. Perhaps spiritual retreat was built in to the crofting way of life.

In mystical Christianity, Jesus expands a static notion of "holy places" or "holy ground" (such as that on which Moses stood) with a sense of incarnation where geography itself becomes incorporated into the Body of Christ (Janzen 1992). In John's gospel it is He, not Jacob's well in its more limited sense, that becomes the source of life-giving water (4:7–15); it is He, not the Pool of Bethesda, that in the final analysis offers healing (5:2–9). It is He by whom "all things were made," for "in him was life; and the life was the light of men" (1:3–4). This offers a profound redemption of nature (Isaiah 11:1–9). Sacred places are valuable as portals, as wake-up calls to consciousness, but basically the whole of the

Creation becomes holy on account of the fullness of incarnation (Job 35–38; Psalms 104; John 1:1–9, cf. Proverbs 8:22–36).[24]

This is not pantheism – the confusion of God with nature. It is *panentheism* – the position that God is present in nature – immanent as well as transcendent. This is a point that the Russian and Greek Orthodox traditions of the Eastern church have understood better than we in the west (Evdokimov 2001; Clement 1993), but in so saying, we should not overlook the panentheism of the Westminster Shorter Catechism: "God executeth His decrees in the works of Creation and Providence" (WSC 1647, question 8).[25]

We glimpse here the fullness of a Eucharistic spirituality; one where the bread and wine are consumed, to use the word employed in the Greek gospels, in *anamnesis* – "without amnesia" or in "un-forgetting" – of the divine underpinning of reality. Failure to grasp this denies the Earth its opportunity to cry "Glory!" (Isaiah 6:3). It leaves the Creation "groaning as in the pains of childbirth" (Romans 8:22, NIV). It is the driving cause behind today's ecological crisis, but also, its apocalyptic meaning. Yet Christianity is a young religion, and its third millennium is only just beginning.

Rising Early in the Morning

We can pray – which is to say, attune to God – in any place, but Christ knew the value of location. "Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed" (Mark 1:35, NIV). If utility had been all that mattered, why would he have bothered to go outside? Why did he divide his time between the multitudes in the marketplace, and down by the lake, in the garden, up the mountain or out in the wilderness, keeping company with the angels and wild beasts (Mark 1:13)?

Many of *na daoine*, the devoutly prophetic island "men" of the villages, have done likewise. The Rev Norman Macfarlane wrote of Callum the Seer of Shawbost: "he rose long before dawn, that, like his

Lord, he might hold Communion with God" (Macfarlane 1924, 143). When Angus of the Hills was "cast into the deepest spiritual concern" at the start of the great revival in the early 1820s (pp. 19–20) …

> … he went back to his native hills and spent days and nights there in prayer. Many men in Uig did the same. The hillsides were sanctuaries where prayer and confession and praise rose as incense on the air. If ever there was a spot where the angels gathered as pendant spectators it was surely there. There is a Moorish legend that Heaven was built right over the deep blue sky of Andalusia, Lewismen felt as if heaven's foundations were in the mountains of Uig.

Lewis and Harris is a patchwork quilt of such sanctuaries. I believe the island is itself a holy place, but what does that mean? Let me leave it with these lines from *Four Quartets*, perhaps the greatest mystical poem in the English language (Eliot 1959, 51).[26]

> You are not here to verify,
> Instruct yourself, or inform curiosity
> Or carry report. You are here to kneel
> Where prayer has been valid. And prayer is more
> Than an order of words.

2

Conflict, Calvinism and Constitution

Reformation, Land and Nobility

An exhibition of Pre-Raphaelite art that opened in the Tate Britain in London last month displayed a striking work by the English painter, Ford Madox Brown. Called *John Wycliffe reading his translation of the bible to John of Gaunt, i*t portrays a barefoot, bearded, Moses-like figure reading as if just down from the mountain. Wycliffe was called The Morning Star of the Reformation. He sought to make the Bible accessible in the vernacular or common tongue and thereby bypass priestly intermediaries. John of Gaunt was the 1st Duke of Lancaster – a noted forebear of Henry VIII who precipitated the English Reformation.

What intrigues me most about Brown's painting are two little "roundels" inset above the main scene. One shows a bombastic monk jealously clasping a locked Bible, and the other, a fair English maid holding open the Good Book for all to read. It is a stirring reminder that the Reformation, by which a flock of Protestant churches flew from the Roman Catholic nest, was far deeper than just about King Henry's spot of bother with his wives.

The Medieval social system was a robber baron aristocracy sanctified and kept in check by the church. Princes protected the church in this world and the church protected princes on their way to the next. It could all get rather incestuous, but the problem for the Reformation's leaders was that they too needed patronage to bring about change.

In 1520 Luther appealed to the powerful in his *Address to the Christian Nobility of the German Nation*. John Knox had to do much the same when he returned from Calvin's Geneva to Scotland to precipitate

our Reformation in 1560. Far from being democratic, the Edinburgh parliament was then run by the patriarchs of "noble" families. In *The Poor Had No Lawyers*, my compatriot in land reform, Andy Wightman, asks how it was that they agreed to such a tumultuous change in just seven days of sitting. He answers that they saw what was in it for them.

The church at that time received half of Scotland's land revenues. Knox's idea was to have this redistributed to fund a national church governed by its people, a school in every parish, and relief for the poor and unemployed. But the nobles pulled a fast one. Scotland could have its Protestantism, provided they got the land (Wightman 2010; Johnston 1999). The resulting confusion of allegiances between people, church, state and private landed power has conditioned the past 450 years of under-told Scots history.

Reformation, Rodel and Cromwell Street

In the sixteenth century power exercised from Rome or Edinburgh and the new religious ideas from Germany and Geneva hardly reached the Outer Hebrides. Dr Macdonald of Gisla portrays the status quo as "a form of Episcopacy planted on the old mixture of paganism and Romanism that stood for religion in this island" (Macdonald 2004, 249). These all eddied together at St Clement's Church in Harris, but this ecclesiastical site was to enjoy no more immunity than any of the rest from the tidal wave of the Reformation that swept across northern Europe.

In his address to the German nobility Luther had advocated the cessation of pilgrimages and saints days. He complained that they gave people excuses for taking a whole day off work and served only to enrich vainglorious local clergy. On this pretext he urged the destruction of country chapels (Luther 1520, sections 12, 18 & 20).[27]

Scotland's tourist trail of ruined abbeys and its historical haemorrhage of visual art is testimony that when the Reformation arrived here, it did so with ruthlessly iconoclastic effect. Precisely what happened at Rodel remains a black hole in the island's oral memory.[28] It may only be that

neglect set in and the roof collapsed, for the ornate tomb of Alasdair "Crotach" Macleod with all its saintly effigies and solar motif, dating to 1528, was not desecrated. Set against that observation is a white marble plaque on the wall to the left of the heavy oak door of the now-restored building. Translated from the Latin (which would have concealed its reprehending message from many) it states (MacAulay 1993, 10–13):

> This sacred edifice, the very walls of which had been scarcely spared through the fury attendant upon religious change, which in its universal pillage devastated everything, and levelling the adjoining convent of friars and nuns to the ground … was repaired and adorned … by Alexander Macleod of Herries [Harris] in 1787 AD.

All other Outer Hebridean temples suffered after the Reformation, usually from abject neglect but sometimes wilful damage (Marshall 2013, 89–92). How far had Luther's ire for corpulent German cardinals been valid for transference this far west? How far had "the reek of Patrick Hamilton" – Scotland's first Lutheran martyr, burnt as a heretic in a weak fire for six hours at the stake by the Archbishop of St Andrews in 1528 – blown this far west as it famously "infected as many as it blew upon"? These are mute questions. And how far was what wilful destruction may have happened in the Hebrides a settling of old clan scores?[29]

Rather better documented was the later Cromwellian invasion of Lewis. On the mainland Cromwell's forces had burned down churches as they forced their way north, leading Edmund Burt to remark in 1730: "The name of Oliver, I am told, continues still to be used in some parts, as a terror to the children of the Highlanders" (Burt 1998, 123). A further forty-three years later Dr Johnson made his famous observation: "What the Romans did to other nations was in a great degree done by Cromwell to the Scots; he civilized them by conquest, and introduced by useful violence the arts of peace" (Johnson & Boswell 1984, 51).

Cromwell's troops invaded Lewis in 1653. It was a shock-and-awe measure to punish the 3rd Earl of Seaforth's disloyalty to his

Commonwealth. Seaforth sent out the fiery cross, the clansmen rallied, and within a few years, the invaders were evicted from Stornoway with mutually heavy loss of life. In retrospect the Cromwellian presence, both on Lewis and elsewhere in the west Highlands, did not go unappreciated. W.C. Mackenzie says that in spite of occasions when "the exasperated Englishmen compelled their prisoners to throw dice" as a basis for punitive decimation by the rope or gunshot, and notwithstanding a massacre of Seaforth's adherents on Lewis, "their general behaviour, in view of all the circumstances, appears to have been exemplary" (Mackenzie 1903, 337–373). In the words of Dr Macdonald of Gisla (Macdonald 2004, 220):

> We behaved well under his stern Puritans, and must have picked up some good habits from them. We still retain a grim Calvinism, and a main shopping boulevard, called after the stern Protector.

The Sound of Harris and St Clement's of Rodel from the foot of Roineabhal. Photo by kind courtesy of James C. Richardson.

Whether "grim" or glorious, the Reformation thereby broke on Lewis and Harris in a series of rough landings. Like many a jaded visitor who tumbled down the gangplank of the old *Loch Seaforth,* it was soon made to feel at home.

Dort and Scotland's Dutch Calvinism

If Luther in Germany was the Reformation's keel, the Geneva-based French lawyer, John Calvin (1509–1564) was the kelson that held its ribs together with a systematic theology. In this, Calvin was the Aquinas of the Reformation. His *Institutes of the Christian Religion first* published in 1536, were to have far-reaching effect not just within the so-called "Reformed" churches that claim explicitly Calvinist roots, but also amongst Baptists, Congregationalists and Methodists.[30] Even the famous XXXIX Articles of Religion by which Elizabeth I gave definition to the Church of England in 1571 reflect an essentially Calvinist theology of predestination and election.[31]

The variant that took root in Scotland, and enduringly so in what is broadly called "the Highland church" (Ansdell 1998), has been described as "Westminster Calvinism". This finds expression through the Westminster Confession of Faith of 1646 and its associated Shorter and Larger catechisms. The Confession, and certainly many of its more populist subsequent interpretations, owes much to the Dutch interpretation of Calvinism that emerged out of the Synod of Dort of 1618–19. This was organised by the Dutch government through its Reformed Church and representatives came from as far away as Scotland, but not from France due to objections from the Catholic government.[32]

At stake was the "Remonstrance" or five points of protest of the Arminians, followers of the by then late Jacobus Arminius. Arminius had held that "justification" (or the process by which God counts a sinner to be righteous and thereby "saved") hinged on God foreseeing a person's development towards faith. This could open the door to the very point on which the Reformation was most opposed – the idea that

good works rather than faith alone could lead to justification. Dort roundly rejected Arminianism. Its core argument pivoted on a passage from Paul: "And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified" (Romans 8:30, NIV).

The resulting Canons of Dort echo the straight line that runs from Paul, through Augustine to Calvin himself. At the beginnings of time God had predestined "a definite number of particular people out of the entire human race" who "were neither better nor more deserving than the others" to be saved through Christ's sacrifice on the Cross. These "particular" people were God's "Elect", "peculiar" or "chosen" few. To elect means to choose. God acted thus, according to the Canons, "in order to demonstrate his mercy, to the praise of the riches of his glorious grace" (Dort 1619, Article 7).

Civil War and the Westminster Confession

Britain's working through of a similar but wider-ranging theology followed during the English Civil War. In 1643 the Long Parliament appointed a group of clergy – the Westminster Assembly of Divines – to meet initially at Westminster Abbey and reform the faith of the Church of England. This was mid-way between the Union of the Crowns (1603) and the Union of the Parliaments (1707). Great Britain was slowly consolidating, and representatives came from Scotland in the hope of achieving a unified Presbyterian basis of church polity (or system of church governance – and in Presbyterianism, one in which power flows from bottom up from congregations *as well as* top down from church courts). The resulting Westminster Confession of Faith was approved by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in 1647 as well as by the parliaments of England and Scotland, but it was revoked at the Restoration in 1660 when Charles II restored episcopacy (or polity by bishops).[33]

In Scotland's Lowland and Border areas this interference led to popular outrage and to the Killing Times of the 1680s – the gruesome civil war between Presbyterian Covenanters and Episcopalian Royalists.

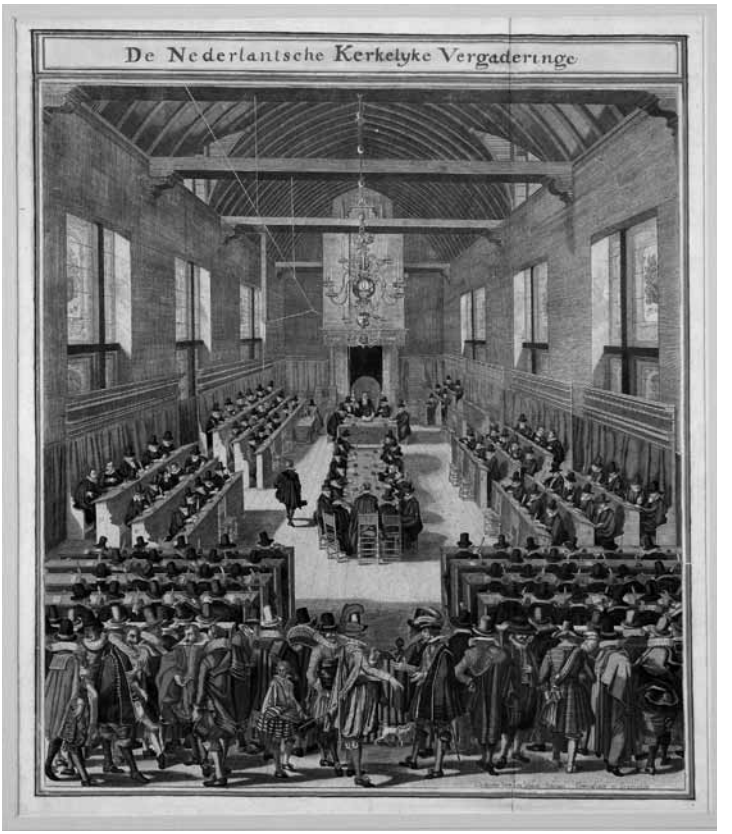
The latter become known as *Jacobites* after James II & VII rose to the throne on Charles' death in 1685 (James being *Jacobus* in Latin). Britain's Presbyterian faction reached breaking point and urged William, the Prince of Orange, to intervene. He duly set sail from Holland and invaded England in 1688. What was a foreign conquest to some was deemed the "Glorious Revolution" to those who came to write our history. It was from this point onwards that Britain's present Protestant constitution took shape, and it is to these times that we might look to appreciate such lines in the National Anthem as: "Send him [or her] victorious/ Happy and glorious/ Long to reign over us/ God save the King."

While the English chose not to restore the Westminster Confession, the Scots Parliament had William promptly re-ratify it in 1690, and this act has never been repealed (Daiches 1984, 135). Episcopalianism was thrown out and clergy, if they were to continue practicing, were required to take an oath of allegiance to William and Mary, to recognise their legal right to the throne, to publicly pray for them by name, and to subscribe to Presbyterian polity and the Westminster Confession of Faith (Ansdell 1998, 6–17).

The Scots psyche still carries the sectarian scar from these painful times and it is perfectly possible for many of us simultaneously to feel Jacobite (Episcopalian and Catholic) sympathies out of ancient clan predilection, and Covenanter ones out of respect for the dogged valour of such likes as the "auld lichts".[34] It is also, as I have found in preparing tonight's lecture, very difficult to speak about our Calvinistic traditions without feeling pulled in radically different directions – a kind of inner Calvinist twist, as it were – arising out of this much-fought-over history. In his 1927 novel, *Witch Wood,* John Buchan brilliantly explores this sense of being divided within ourselves. Best of all, he completes the triptych of the Scots psyche by adding, in the nectarous form of the laird's greenwood-loving daughter, an invigorating dash of fittingly sublimated nature spirituality!

Within island Protestantism this history has left us with plethora of schismatic offshoots[35] – both a bane of sadness and the brunt of humour.[36]

Little of it would be of wider interest were it not that the causes that provoked the Reformation, and its subsequent consequences, have historically played out so big in the political development of former Dutch and British colonies such as Indonesia, the United States, and as we shall see in a redemptive example later, the Republic of South Africa.[37]



The Synod of Dort, Netherlands, 1618–19. Watercolour by Gerard van Hove. Courtesy of Museum Catharijneconvent, Utrecht.

Westminster and its Five-Point TULIP Simplification

What is Westminster Calvinism? Short of working through all thirty-three chapters concluding with the Last Judgement, many evangelicals, especially of the American Bible Belt and some parts of the Highland church sum it up with an acronym drawn from the bulb-fields of Holland: TULIP (e.g. Spencer 1979). Such is the influence of TULIP that as I prepared this lecture the bestselling book on Amazon when searching under "Calvinism" was an exposition of these "five points" (Steele, Thomas & Quinn 2004).

Island evangelicals display a range of opinions as to TULIP's value. Principal Donald Macleod of the Free Church College sees it, like many "isms", as a "ridiculous" simplification of the compendious systematic theology that Calvin actually laid out; one that issues only from a negative response to the agenda that the Arminians raised at Dort (pers. com. 2012).[38]

Writing in the *Stornoway Gazette* Iain D. Campbell, currently the Moderator of the Free Church, shares Principal Macleod's concern. He concedes that "even if we were to confine ourselves to Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion* we would have to include many, many more 'points.'" That acknowledged, he still finds that TULIP "has helped many to recall the central theses of Calvinism." It sets out "a logical order that is brilliantly conveyed." In conclusion: "TULIP is embedded in our psyche, and a good thing too. It provides us with a convenient, working, biblical summary of what the Reformation was all about" (Campbell 2006). Let me attempt a summary.

1. ***Total depravity*** … means that all of us are "fallen", our particular sins being a continuation of Adam's original sin from having eaten of the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden. Some suggest that this dire condition merely means that every part of human nature is *tainted* by sin. After all, we speak of the "good" and not the "totally depraved" Samaritan. Jesus told the Pharisees that the woman with the precious oil had "wrought a good work for me" (Mark 14:6, KJV). However, the

Westminster Confession takes no hostages. Human beings "are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil" (WCF 1647, 6:IV).

2. ***Unconditional election*** … means that the Elect are chosen by God without having to fulfil conditions such as good works or pious thoughts to justify their separation from the Damned. As Westminster words it: "By the decree of God, for the manifestation of His glory, some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life; and others foreordained to everlasting death," this having been determined "before the foundation of the world was laid" (WCF 3:III & V). Such is Calvin's explicit doctrine of "double predestination". God sends souls *either* to Heaven, *or* to Hell, and nothing they can do can alter that fate one iota.

This doctrine is so central that it should be reiterated in Calvin's own words from the *Institutes*. "All are not created on equal terms, but some are preordained to eternal life, others to eternal damnation; and, accordingly, as each has been created for one or other of these ends, we say that he has been predestinated to life or to death" (Calvin 1559, 3:21:5). Anything short of this would be merely "single predestination" by which God might save but not damn, and thus a variant of the Arminian heresy. It would throw in question God's eternal sovereign omnipotence and omniscience, rendering Hell a merely voluntary option.

3. ***Limited atonement*** … means that because God has already decided, the benefit of Christ's saving intercession on the Cross is limited to the Elect alone. The Damned are, quite literally, the godforsaken. This is because Adam's sin has left God, in the words of the *Institutes*, "armed for vengeance" (2:16:1). Calvin's "penal substitution" theory of the "atonement" is that Christ on the Cross "undertook and paid all the penalties which must have been exacted … he endured the death which is inflicted on the wicked by an angry God" (2:16:10).

The Westminster Confession is equally clear. "Neither are any other redeemed by Christ … but the elect only" (WCF 1647, 3:VI). But of the rest: "God was pleased … for the glory of his sovereign power over

his creatures, to pass by, and to ordain them to dishonour and wrath for their sin, to the praise of his glorious justice" (WCF 3:VI–VII).[39] Equally clear from a street-eye-view of the possible implication is the lyric *Gloria* by Patti Smith, America's *Godmother of Punk*: "Jesus died for somebody's sins, but not mine."

4. ***Irresistible grace*** … means the "effectual calling" (or inner convincement) by which the Elect invincibly turn to Christ "made willing by His grace," having been "quickened and renewed by the Holy Spirit." If God means us to be saved, nothing will stand in the way. However, this is not a licence for laxity. "Much less can men, not professing the Christian religion, be saved in any other way whatsoever … and to assert and maintain that they may, is very pernicious, and to be detested" (WCF 10:I–IV).

5. ***Perseverance of the saints*** … means that once the subject of election, there is no deselection. The chosen, which is to say, the "saints" both living and dead, can never "totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace" (WCF 17:I). Election is the ultimate spiritual insurance policy. The Elect take their place within the Communion of the Saints evermore to "grow in grace, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (13:III).[40] However, perhaps mindful of where they needed support from, the Westminster Divines were at pains to deny any imputation of socialism. "Nor does their communion one with another, as saints, take away, or infringe the title or propriety which each man has in his goods and possessions" (26:III).[41]

Westminster's Constitutional Status Today

To this day Article II of the constitution of the Church of Scotland states (C of S 2012): "The principal subordinate standard of the Church of Scotland is the Westminster Confession of Faith approved by the General Assembly of 1647, containing the sum and substance of the Faith of the Reformed church." Subordinate means second in authority only to the

Bible. This principle is constitutionally bolted in to the fabric of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Our system of governance, in theory at least, is a "Westminster system" in terms both political and religious.[42] As the late Professor Hugh Cartwright of the Free Church College wrote, albeit from what his critics called an "arch-constitutionalist" position (Cartwright 2009):

> In accordance with the terms of the Union between Scotland and England, previous Acts of the Parliaments of each kingdom, and the constitutional basis upon which the monarch occupies the throne of the United Kingdom, the faith to be upheld by the state, represented by the monarch in Parliament, is that of the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Thirty-Nine Articles, or Calvinistic Protestant Christianity.

This may seem arcane, but not so in Northern Ireland.[43] We still retain (at the time of writing) a constitutional settlement under which Prince William was free to marry his Protestant fellow student, Kate Middleton from Berkshire, but he could not, without abdicating to Harry, have popped the question to the Roman Catholic singer from West Lothian, Susan Boyle.

That said, the Kirk mitigates the full force of Westminster through Article V in its constitution – the so-called Articles Declaratory. Office-bearers and members are bound to the Westminster Confession but "with due regard to liberty of opinion in points which do not enter into the substance of the Faith" (Church of Scotland 2012). In practice, what constitutes such "substance" allows for considerable latitude of opinion.

Ecclesia reformata, semper reformanda

In 1986 the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland went a step further and formally "dissociated itself" from the Confession's clauses that are prejudicial towards Roman Catholics. These include a passage that describes the Pope as the "Antichrist, that Man of Sin and Son

of Perdition" (WCF 1647, 25: VI) and another that holds "the Popish Sacrifice of the Mass" to be "most abominably injurious" (29:II). The version of the Confession currently hosted on the Kirk's website still contains the disowned passages, but relegates them with a preamble that states (WCF 1647, 1991 edition, 1):

> There has been much debate in the Church recently, some believing that this document is now too "time conditioned" to function adequately in the way required while others consider the Confession to be a vital bulwark of the Church's faith and indeed of its identity … The General Assembly has agreed that ministers, deacons and elders at ordination have to assent to the Confession and its role, but, at the same time, it is made clear that this is a "subordinate" standard (to Holy Scripture) and therefore open to challenge on the basis of further study of Scripture.

This saving grace was possible because a key maxim of the Reformation was the principle *Ecclesia reformata, semper reformanda* – "The Reformed church is always reforming itself." A warmly worded modern creed now takes pride of place on the Church of Scotland website.[44] Furthermore, many of its clergy now "accommodate" their Calvinism.[45] One hears them say, "We're all Barthians now," though how adequately the Swiss theologian Karl Barth succeeded in tackling Calvin's view on the "atonement" remains open to question.[46]

It gives me joy to see such preparation of new skins for new wine. The pleasure is not mine alone. As I worked on this text I had an email from a *Sgitheanach* friend who had been asked to sing a modern Gaelic spiritual song and play *piobaireachd* on his pipes during a Sabbath day Reformed church service in Hungary. He concluded:

> This is a church in a hard pressed community with poverty and serious social problems and divisions. And yet here is a church which seems to recognise that spiritual nourishment

> of congregation and community is the living heart of Christianity, not the endless pursuit of theological purity. It has given me a wonderful new understanding of the potential of Presbyterianism.

For myself, I am a Quaker by convincement of Presbyterian upbringing.[47] This is not as rare as it might sound. Quakerism's greatest and virtually only systematic theologian, Robert Barclay of Gordonstoun (1648–1690), also had a Presbyterian background and used it as a springboard to advance a theology of "universal atonement" (Barclay 1991). It behoves Quakers to seek in others "the true light that enlightens every man" (John 1:9).[48] This is how the discernment of truth by seeking beauty in the movement of the Spirit is carried forward.[49]

Today, the more liberal Reformed churches no longer hold to the doctrine of limited atonement even though the Kirk upheld it as recently as 1829.[50] However, it retains a place within the Highland church, and to understand this better I paid a visit to the Free Church College on The Mound in Edinburgh, and the supposedly-retired Principal Donald Macleod.

A Visit to the Professor

My question to Donald Macleod was simple: "Do you believe in the doctrine of limited atonement that follows from predestination?"

Calvin sidesteps most of the early church Fathers as traditional sources of authority.[51] He leans heavily on St Paul and, to a degree that stretches the Protestant principle of *sola scriptura* – "by scripture alone" – on St Augustine, who he cites some three hundred and seventy-five times in the *Institutes*.[52] His doctrine of predestination and election is substantially Augustinian, predestination being in his words "useful, necessary, and most sweet" (Calvin 1559, 3:21:0).

As a Quaker, I would suggest that Jesus never promised us the letters attributed to Paul. Jesus never even promised us the gospels! He

promised us the Paraclete – the guiding movement of the Holy Spirit (John 14–16; Acts 1–2) – and that should be our primary authority in discerning what to select, interpret and emphasise from the scriptures.

In the back of my mind as I posed my question to the professor was a line from one of Iain D's columns: "Limited atonement was always considered in the best Calvinistic formulation to be the foundation of a genuine Gospel call" (Campbell 2010b).

His opening line of reply was to suggest that it can be debated whether or not Calvin actually taught limited atonement. There are other Calvinistic formulations.

Whether he did or not, I retorted, the Westminster Confession, is unambiguous: "Neither are any other redeemed by Christ … but the elect only."

The professor had long been an occasional but generous teacher to me. My hope was that he might have a resolution that could shed light on something that is, otherwise, more conducive of heat.

"So, do you believe that God wishes to save all, or only some?"

His answer was to cite Thomas Chalmers, the first moderator of the Free Church. Apparently Chalmers had said something like – "We ought never to have asked that question" – as if the question itself was *ultra vires* – that is, beyond our remit and competence.

His answer reminded me of the late *Ceiteag* or Mary Kate Maclennan of Seaforth Head – "Katie" she asked me to call her. I had raised with her a similar point a year ago. It was the kind of question that you can only really ask in the mythic mode of discourse possible in the seminary of a Hebridean croft. I'd asked: "Do you think that in the end God might save the Damned, and *even the Devil himself*?"

It was a question with a history that goes back to Origen. Put another way, "Are all things redeemed in the *apocatastasis* of which Peter spoke in Acts 3:21 – *the times of restitution of all things*?"

She gave me a wiry look, all of eighty-six years but live as electric, and she squeezed her answer out through pursed lips. "That would be *His* business," she said, resolutely putting me in my place.

I came back to the professor. "But do you *personally* believe in limited atonement?"

He had allowed me to scribble notes. I was well aware that I might be pitting something in his humanity against the confessional basis of the church in which he was ordained.

He spoke it slowly. "If you are asking me the question that Chalmers said ought never to have been asked, then I would have to say … *yes*."

To me it felt more than merely masterful. It felt Spirit-led.

If I understood correctly, he was saying: *If you insist on framing the question in those cripplingly limited terms, then I would have to answer in a cripplingly limited affirmative.*

I had asked him a rational question, thinking I was playing Calvinism at its own game. He batted back the mystery of God, trumping me at mine.[53]

Luther and Calvin in a stained glass window (1886), Evangelische Stadtkirche Church, Wiesloch, Germany.

"Tartan Noir" and *The Black House*

And yet, we are left with a problem. The island is consistently pushed into a corner for its religious views and this can inhibit its capacity to breathe and grow. The media fuss over Richard Dawkins' impeding visit is one example.[54] Another is the *Lewis Trilogy* of novels by the French-domiciled Glasgow writer, Peter May, co-creator of the Gaelic soap opera, *Machair*.

May writes in a genre that the American crime writer, James Ellroy, has called *tartan noir* – "black tartan". I first encountered his books advertised on railway billboards in the south of England. "Evil lies within" is the banner caption on *The Black House*. "Disturbing the past can destroy the present" proclaims *The Lewis Man*. The advance cover for *The Chess Men* warns: "Look back with regret. Look forward with fear."

The power of May's portrayal is all the greater because he deals with truths but in half truths. In *The Black House* the church looms as a Gothic hulk of evil. Describing a drive up the west coast of the island, "long stretches of empty road linked bleak and exposed settlements huddled around churches of various denominations … Each one was a division of the one before. Each one is a rallying point for hatred and distrust of the other" (May 2011, 66). The very architecture of the church drips with dreich oppression: "Tall, plain windows. No colourful stained glass in this austere Calvinistic culture. No imagery. No crosses. No joy," and so, concludes Fin, "I think sometimes there are folk who take an unhealthy interest in death … I remember only black and grey" (pp. 369–370).[55]

Behind this lies the irony of the author's own *tartan noir* interest in death. It troubled me that the island underwent its first real-life murder for several decades shortly after these novels started to appear. May's motifs drifted through my mind as if they'd been prophetic phantoms prefigured in the sensitivity of the artist's unconscious. They spoke as like a fissure rent across the island's psychic field: as if a scar had opened up exposing some dread undercurrent seething there within.

"Look back with regret. Look forward with fear." Perhaps. But more the need to look at unfinished cultural business.

Boston and the Thermostat of Hell

We are looking, then, into Hell, which, like Heaven, is presumably "all around" or "within" (Luke 17:21); and the question about Hell is not whether we have treated it too heavily, but whether we have adequately grasped its depth.[56]

In the *Institutes* Calvin spoke about "the severity of the divine vengeance on the reprobate … as if torn by an angry God, pierced through with deadly darts, terrified by his thunderbolts and crushed by the weight of his hand … throughout eternity" (Calvin 1559, 11:25:12).[57] My reputed relative, Thomas Boston, ramped the spectacle up to shuddersome dread as if from out of the Hammer Church of Horror (Boston 1852, 318–320).

> They shall be cast into the lake of fire, as death and Hell are, to be shut up there without coming forth again any more … Yea, and to bind them in bundles for the fire of God's wrath, that companions in sin may be companions in punishment … and there shall be weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth. The curse shall enter into their souls, and melt them like wax before the fire; it shall sink into their flesh and bones, like boiling lead, and torment them in every part … No pity, no compassion to be shown any more, but fireballs … *Lastly,* the curse shall lengthen out their misery to all eternity.

This imagery passes on the strength of scripture proofs, but fails the deeper scripture proof of love. To try and understand I looked to Boston's childhood. Both of his parents were Covenanters and he himself, a child of the Killing Times. As a small boy he'd spend the nights in Duns prison to accompany his father, John, imprisoned for his faith. As an adult, Boston buried six of his ten children and nursed the mental illness of his much-loved wife, who attempted suicide. Often his body was vexed to excruciation by "the gravel" – presumably untreated kidney stones. His hyper-Calvinist theology was treated with suspicion by the High

Calvinists of the Kirk in his time. Here was a dearly caring man, thrawn with physical, emotional and intellectual pain (Boston 1899; Thomson 2004), and to think of him brings to mind a passage by Principal Macleod (Macleod 2001):[58]

> Any judgement on the moroseness of the Covenanters must take account of the trauma which had overwhelmed them, just as the modern Israeli intransigence must be seen against the background of Nazi terror. Even fanatical intolerance might be understandable in the light of the corporate horror which had engulfed them. The devout peasantry of Scotland were subjected to a reign of terror as fiendish as Ceausescu's oppression of Romania.

Psychologists have pondered the significance of Luther's harshly disciplinarian parents. His Geneva counterpart lost his mother in childhood, yet a major recent biography states: "Calvin did not consider his childhood as psychologically formative; it was a brief and brutal preparation for adulthood associated primarily with ignorance, volatility and waywardness" (Gordon 2011, 2).[59]

What of the young Thomas Boston? To what extent did the terrors of the times storm the vaults of his unconscious and whirr across the lantern of his youthful psyche? In 1685 when he was just nine, two women who refused to recant their Covenanter faith were tied to stakes and left to drown as the tide rose on the Solway Firth.[60] What stories was the boy hearing, what was he seeing, and did their projections haunt his dreams at night? Did they play out on the screen of his later theology?

And more than that. How far did Boston's hellfire preaching owe its traction to the truth of bitter experience amongst those "devout peasantry of Scotland"? How much was the binary worldview of Damned and Elect their consolation, their pledge of justice, precisely because it set the reprobate so far apart from those who suffered? "O Lord, how long, shall I cry … even cry out unto thee of violence?" (Habakkuk 1:2). How long has this been going on?

The Eternity of Hell and Fire of Love

So what is Hell? For example, when Jesus said in Luke 12:49 – "I have come to bring fire on the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled!" – did he mean the fire of Hell, or the fire of love? "The fire of hell," said Olivier Clément, one of the great Russian Orthodox theologians of the twentieth century, "is the fire of love that gives remorse a terrible clarity" (Clément 1993, 303). We of the Western church see our tradition as too much limited to the Old Firm dichotomy of Catholic versus Protestant. We have not noticed the mystical theology of Hell in the Eastern church that is spread through those oriental and North African regions of the Mediterranean, Aegean and Black Sea that were Christianity's original hub.

In the end, say the Orthodox theologians, all is redeemed when time itself is redeemed in the fullness of eternity – in the *apocatastasis* or "restoration of all things" (Acts 3:21). This can also be described as the *parousia* or "second coming" of Christ (Evdokimov 2001, 201). The principle has not escaped the notice of some Protestant as well as Catholic theologians. In a wonderfully mystical chapter in *City of God* St Augustine wrote: "You shall be as gods … not by deserting Him, but by participating in Him … for we shall be full of Him when He shall be all in all" (Augustine 2012, XXII:30:4; cf. Psalms 82:6 & 2 Peter 1:4)?

Paul Evdokimov, who was probably the greatest twentieth century interpreter of Russian Orthodoxy to the west, suggested taking a deeper look at such passages as John 12:47 and 3:17 – "For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved." He wrote that "Hell is nothing else but separation of man from God," and "it is simply unacceptable to imagine that from all eternity God prepares hell as a destination for his creatures." As such, "sin is a sickness to be healed even if the cure is the blood of God," and this is why "the Eastern church remains a stranger to every penitential principle" (Evdokimov 2001, 28–34; cf. 2 Peter 3:9).[61]

This is why Orthodoxy stresses that it is a church of the resurrection, "and resurrection begins here and now" (Clément 1993, 307).[62] Similarly so with some of the old teaching stories about Hell from Catholic Hebridean isles.[63] Hell is neither the failure of salvation, nor the vengeance of God, but part of the redemptive process. In consequence (Evdokimov 2001, p. 191):

> The only message which could reach atheism today is that of Christ descending into hell. As deep as the hell in which we find ourselves, it is even more profound to find Christ already there waiting for us … We can only fall into God and it is God who never despairs. St Anthony the Great says that hell surely exists, but only for himself, which is to say that hell is never "for the others".

Hell cannot burn the spirit that is God-given. Hell cannot desiccate the sap that courses through the Vine and presses from the grapes to make the Eucharistic wine. Hell can only burn off the encrustations of ego; only that which was never truly us in the first place.

3

Land, Gospel and the Hooded Lassie

Internal Colonisation & the Mackenzies of Kintail

Having glimpsed from the tower at Rodel how island religion might once have been, and then analysed the forces of the Reformation that later came to break upon our shores, I now want to explore how these played out on the island.

We can start our exploration of this psychohistory on familiar territory. In 1598 James VI passed an *Act Regarding the Lewis Adventurers* that permitted "gentlemen adventurers" from Fife to set about the "conquering of the Lewis … by rooting out of the barbarous inhabitants, occupiers of the same of before, void of all religion and humanity." Such colonisation carried pecuniary hopes. It would impart "a singular benefit to his majesty in augmenting of the rent of his highness's patrimony and crown" (RPS 1598).

The island historian W.C. Mackenzie surmised: "By their King, they were directly incited to accomplish the process of 'civilisation,' much in the same manner as the early settlers in Australia 'civilised' the aboriginal black-fellows" (Mackenzie 1903, 180).

When the Fife Adventurers encountered armed resistance it only reinforced James' prejudice that the *Leòdhasaich* were "wicked and rebellious … void of all fear or knowledge of God." In 1599 he granted Lennox and Huntly a commission to enforce law and order by "slaughter, mutilation, fire-raising and other inconveniences" (Mackenzie 1903, 187–188; Roberts 1999). But the islanders scarcely recognised the Lowland Crown's presumption of suzerainty. The Macleods' guerrilla tactics won the day and the covetous Adventurers, routed.

Above: Colonel Francis Humberston Mackenzie (Deaf Mackenzie), by William Dyce, The Highlanders' Museum.

Above left: Mary Elizabeth Frederica Mackenzie (the Hooded Lassie), by Sir Thomas Lawrence, Fortrose Town Hall.

Left: James Alexander Stewart-Mackenzie, by Martin Archer Shee (courtesy of Groam House Museum, Rosemarkie).

With the Union of the Crowns in 1603 James headed off to grant the English a Protestant succession to Elizabeth. He washed his hands of Lewis in 1610, giving the whole island to Kenneth, the first Lord Mackenzie of Kintail, in a swap for the woods of Letterewe.

Kintail was similarly empowered with a Commission of Fire and Sword against the intractable Lewis folk. He built his stronghold at "Sithphort" (as the 1854 Ordnance Survey map has it) at the head of Loch Seaforth.[64] From this seat of power his dynasty took the name that would endure for 234 years: *the Mackenzies of Seaforth* (Paul 1910).

The Pressing of the Seaforth Highlanders

Feudalism was a robber-baron system under which land was held *cum nativis* – "with the natives" (Johnston 1999, 168). An appraisal carried out in 1595 evaluated that mainland Lewis was capable of providing seven hundred men at arms (Mackenzie 1903, 583). In 1753 a dispatch went to the Lowlands from one Captain Barlow, who seems to have commanded the Redcoat soldiers stationed throughout the islands in the aftermath of the 1745 Jacobite rising. Their part was to rout out weapons, eradicate the Highland dress (being a marker of identity), and hunt down Roman Catholic priests. Barlow wrote (Mackenzie 1903, 598–602), and the emphasis here is his:

> *The whole of this Island are Papists … I have got a List of the Priests* and am determined to lay hold of them or make them Quit the Country. I am told they have already done that, upon the first coming of the Troops among them.

The Mackenzie proprietor of the time was Kenneth Mackenzie, *Coinneach Mòr,* a Jacobite sympathiser (Macleod, NRAS 4336/1/6/x). He impressed on Barlow his supposed loyalty to the British state, this by now having become a union of both crowns and parliaments. Barlow continued in his dispatch:

> Mr. McKenzie told me he could raise three Thousand men in this Country; how far this may be true I know not, but I must doubt the Veracity of his Assertion. They say they are all well affected to His Majesty, and our happy Constitution; they have no Arms nor do they at any time wear the Highland Dress. What I have seen of them are a poor wretched People and meer [sic] slaves to Violence and Oppression.

Moving down the lineage to 1793, that earlier grandiloquence about martial capacity was put to the test. War had broken out between Britain and post-revolutionary France. Colonel Francis Humberston Mackenzie was called Deaf Mackenzie from a disability caused by childhood illness.[65] He told his London peers that he could raise what would become the 78th (Highland) Regiment of Foot, the Seaforth Highlanders (Chichester 2004).

At first he tried it the nice way – by advertisements posted throughout Ross and Cromarty (Mackenzie 1894, 335):

> SEAFORTH'S HIGHLANDERS to be forthwith raised for the defence of his Glorious Majesty, King George the Third, and the preservation of our happy constitution in Church and State.
>
> All lads of true Highland blood willing to show their loyalty and spirit, may repair to Seaforth … where they will receive high bounties and soldier-like entertainment.
>
> The lads of this regiment will live and die together… Now for a stroke at the Monsieurs, my boys! King George for ever! Huzza!

When this failed on Lewis, Deaf Mackenzie sent in waves of press gangs. The island's men fled to the hills. Some were captured by deception, such as at Swordale, where they were lured into the parish church only to be seized by an awaiting militia (Macleod NRAS 4336/1/9/1). In Uig the men laid low out on the moors in their summer pasture sheilings. After

some days of cold and hunger, and with the persuasion of the parish minister, a deal was brokered. The recruiting sergeants could have their way provided each family was left with at least one son to work the croft.

In Ness there was no such parley. There, at Knockaird, the women were held back with bayonets to their breasts while all of their menfolk, aged between sixteen and thirty, were marched off as "volunteers". Only one ever made it back alive. His name was Iain Buidhe, and he returned to find that Seaforth's men had evicted his father and taken over their land (Macdonald 1990, 116–120).

Barbados and the Clearances

Such, however, was not the official history. In his otherwise authoritative account, W.C. Mackenzie, coolly recorded that: "Recruits were obtainable in most cases without difficulty" thereby establishing a military tradition "of which the British nation is deservedly proud" (Mackenzie 1903, 489–90).[66]

In 1800, Britain rewarded Deaf Mackenzie's loyalty with the governorship of the Barbados.[67] There he introduced the death penalty for murdering slaves – a crime that previously had attracted just a fifteen pound fine, rarely applied (Chichester 2004). Mackenzie's weakness was gambling. From this West Indies outpost, in an effort to replenish the family coffers, he succumbed to ordering the first tenant clearances, making way for commercial sheep ranching in the south of what was to become the Eishken Estate (Robson 2011; Macleod NRAS 4336/1/1/14).

The Napoleonic Wars were looming. The price of wool for trench coats was set to soar. Less and less was the land to be valued for how many people it could support. More and more its value was to be a commodity, bought and sold to the highest bidder. War, as described by General Sir Rupert Smith, was undergoing a conceptual and technological shift with Napoleon "forging the paradigm of interstate industrial war" (Smith 2006, 67). In this brave new world of magnificent men and their killing machines it was artillery that counted. War with France and its Catholic

threat necessitated the continuing consolidation of Great Britain and what Michael Hechter called the "internal colonisation" of the "Celtic fringe" (Hechter 1999; Colley 1992; Tully 2001).[68]

What this meant for the nineteenth century Highlands was *landlordism*.[69] Those of us who were told in our youth that "the Clearances hardly touched Lewis" should mark the remark of Angus "Ease" Macleod of Calbost – "Very little of the history of the land struggles in Lewis was ever written, and I feel that is a great pity" (Macleod, NRAS 4336/1/1/14 (b)).

The 1745 Jacobite rising and its nemesis in Culloden had been the last gasp of the tribal way of life. What had energised the risings (or "rebellions" as the state saw them) was less the question of religious affiliation. It was more about allegiances to the old clan (or extended

Clearance ruins at Ceann Chrionaig, Loch Bhrolluim, Pairc. Colonel Francis Humberston Mackenzie was governing the Barbados when these were evicted in 1802. Two centuries later the land remains combed by the *feannagan* of their raised bed cultivation.

family) chiefs in contrast to the new-fangled "loyalty, royalty and Balmorality" imposed from Edinburgh and London.

The post-Culloden "pacification" process that was still happening in Deaf Mackenzie's youth was both an internal and an inner colonisation – simultaneously territorial, psychological and spiritual. Robert Burns described its desolation in *Strathallan's Lament,* his elegy for what Culloden took away.

> Ruin's wheel has driven o'er us;
> Not a hope that dare attend,
> The wide world is all before us,
> But a world without a friend.

The oppressed, by now duly desensitised, could join in the oppression of far away lands (Whyte 2012). The Empire's doors were open. As for the impact of the Mackenzies on Lewis, W.C. Mackenzie would conclude of his forebears, and perhaps reasonably given the norms of the times: "Their sway, if despotic, was on the whole, beneficent" (Mackenzie 1903, 494). There was, however, another looker-on more fulsome in his praise:

> And who in the land of the Saxon or Gael,
> Might match with Mackenzie, High Chief of Kintail?

The Hooded Lassie and the Fall of Kintail

Those lines, from Sir Walter Scott's *Farewell to Mackenzie, High Chief of Kintail,* were written in 1815 and they conclude with the following direct address (Scott 1833, 494–495):

> And thou, gentle Dame, who must bear, to thy grief,
> For thy clan and thy country the cares of a Chief,
> Whom brief rolling moons in six changes have left,
> Of thy husband, and father, and brethren, bereft;
> To thine ear of affection, how sad is the hail,
> That salutes thee the Heir of the line of Kintail!

The dame in question was Kintail's eldest daughter, Lady Mary (or some sources have it, *Maria*) Elizabeth Frederica Mackenzie, a.k.a. Lady Hood, having married Vice-Admiral Sir Samuel Hood in 1804 while her father, Deaf Mackenzie, was stationed in Barbados (Mackenzie 1894, 345). Which names and spellings are correct is a complex issue, but here I shall refer to her as *Lady Mary.*[70]

Twenty-one years his wife's senior, Sir Samuel died in December 1814 while commanding the British East Indies fleet out of Madras. Three weeks later, in January 1815, Deaf Mackenzie also died, leaving Lady Mary the heir. Each of her four brothers – the last, within Scott's six moons – had predeceased the colonel.

In popular perception this fulfilled a dread prophecy of the Brahan Seer. The seventeenth century prophet was reputedly burnt as a witch in a barrel of tar by one of the Mackenzie wives upset by his revelations of her husband's infidelities while on a business trip to Paris. Sometime before he expired the seer predicted the fall of the house of Mackenzie under "a white-coiffed lassie from the East who would kill her sister."

Returning from Madras bearing a white coiff (or headscarf) of mourning, the doubly-bereaved Lady Hood became "the Hooded Lassie". Fulfilment of the second half of the prophecy would have to wait another eight years. While out with her sister driving a pony carriage near Brahan the horses bolted and Lady Caroline was fatally thrown. Later the family erected a large six-sided monument which still marks the spot on the A835 Inverness-Ullapool road. Its Latin inscription translates (Sutherland 2009, 167–171):

> Here, according to her prophesied fate, Caroline Mackenzie,
> daughter of Francis, Baron Seaforth, was snatched from us.
> Her sister, who shared in the same peril, survived as the last
> hope of rebuilding her family, 1823.

Irrespective of whether or not the Brahan Seer's prophesies appeared after the events that folk tradition holds them to have foreseen, the wording suggests an almost karmic belief in destiny within the family.[71]

But the Mackenzies were a portentous force, and these were portentous times. The Black Isle of Easter Ross lies just three miles across the water from Culloden's battlefield. Brahan Estate lay on the front line of security worries for welfare of the British state.

Culloden and the Good Days of the Fathers

In 1725 General Wade was given his road-building remit as "Commander in Chief of all His Majesty's Forces in North-Britain" with responsibility for castles, forts and barracks in order to quell Jacobite unrest. The string of forts that straddle the Great Glen geological fault demarcated our Durand Line – the North-West Frontier of early Britain.[72] Here was the start of al-Qaeda-style bandit territory, filled with what a characteristic southern writer in 1745 would typify as "these malignant wretches [who] infringe our laws" (Maclean 1914).[73] Worse than that, here was the back door that, if not secured, could let the French or Spanish in along with a Jacobite "pretender" to the throne. At stake was Britain's Protestant constitution and all the gains of the Glorious Revolution.

This called not only for the security of the sword, but also for a hearts and minds initiative. The initial answer to this forerunner of "the Highland problem" was to implant the "true religion" through the missionary work of such groups as the Society in Scotland for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge (Hunter 1976; Szasz 2007; Macleod 2008). The SSPCK was incorporated in 1709 in London by royal letters-patent – a function of the royal prerogative. Its charter (Roxborogh 1999, 164), was for:

> … promoting Christian knowledge and increase of piety and virtue within Scotland, especially in the Highlands, Islands and remote places thereof, where error, idolatry, superstition and ignorance do mostly abound by reason of the largeness of parishes and scarcity of schools, and for propagating the same in popish and infidel parts of the world.

In 1725 King George I introduced an annual "Royal Bounty" of £1,000 with which the Church of Scotland could pay for missionaries and catechists to evangelise the said remote places. The SSPCK was a major channel for this money. As it paid salaries ranging from just five to thirty pounds a year, enough manpower could be mobilised quickly to alter the religious texture of the Highlands (Stiùbhart 2007; Ansdell 1998, 32–35).[74] This was especially so given the spiritual vacuum caused amongst the people by the constant persecution of their "popish" priests. Professor Meek notes that "although parts of the Highlands such as Ross-shire and Sutherland had been imbued with Puritan doctrine in the 17th century, the established church in the Highlands as a whole was not identified with evangelicalism before 1800" (Meek 1996, 23).

However, once evangelicalism started – and in this context, evangelicalism is a byword for the radical Calvinistic approach to faith – it soon became indigenised. The SSPCK acquired both local Gaelic-speaking personnel and, as of 1801, had published the first translation of the Bible into Gaelic that contained the complete Old Testament. The outcome, as the Rev John Macinnes describes it (Macinnes 1951, 11), was that that:

> The established Presbyterian church, in 1688 [at the Glorious Revolution] an alien intrusion offensive to the majority of the Gaelic people, became in a relatively short time the beloved and venerated spiritual Mother from which it was not only grievous loss but sin to be separated.

The shift from Episcopalian and Catholic expressions of faith to evangelical Presbyterianism based on a rigorous reading of Westminster Calvinism was arguably more of a reorientation of native piety than its creation out of nothing. The Highlanders, as the Rev Donald Maclean of Edinburgh pointed out in the *Celtic Review*, were by nature a people for whom religion, whether of the "fierce gods of the Celtic pantheon" or the New Testament, "was their chief concern". He gave an example from Easter Ross (Maclean 1914):

> Writing of his people on 20th June 1744, the Rev John Balfour of Nigg says: "They often fill me with a conscious blush when I am among them and hear them praying as well as speaking to religious cases. The men of letters dispute Heaven, these live it." And yet, these are the people that English writers call savages!

Such were the religious dynamics and strategic significance of Lady Mary's home region in the generation or two prior to her birth in 1783. It is why the evangelical biographer, the Rev Dr John Kennedy of Dingwall, viewed Easter Ross as the epicentre for his oft-repeated refrain: *in the good days of the Fathers in Ross-shire* (Kennedy 1979).

Fear, the "Secret of the Lord"

Calvin had said: "pure and genuine religion [is] confidence in God coupled with serious fear – fear, which both includes in it willing reverence, and brings along with it such legitimate worship as is prescribed by the law" (Calvin 1559, 1.2.2). Plenty thunderous passages from the Old Testament could lend teeth to that from the violent theology of violent men in violent times (Numbers 31; Deuteronomy 20). But the Bible reveals a historical evolution of the human experience of God. As it progresses the early Hebrew harshness mellows in the later prophets, and ripens to the wine of John – the apostle so loved within the Celtic church – and his sublime utterances such as: "God is love … There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love" (1 John 4:8, 18 cf. Jennifer O'Reilly in Wooding (ed) 2010, 69–94). We must look not just at what is in the Bible, but at the human psychology behind what is selected, interpreted and emphasised from out of it.

The Days of the Fathers in Ross-Shire was an influential evangelical history based mainly on biographical sketches and published in 1861. It also contains an appendix on the theme: "The secret of the Lord is

with them that fear Him" (Psalms 25:14). "Both as His fearers and His favourites they are a peculiar people," says Dr Kennedy, with "peculiar" here meaning the Elect, and God "often maketh known their election to them who fear him" (Kennedy 1979, 201 & 207).

Kennedy's biographies subsume the psychological function once served by the "Catholic" saints. He effectively fills their place with hagiographies of evangelical clergy raised not just to the status of "worthies" as with other authors of the era, but to that of "the Fathers".[75] Their capacity to provoke fear and impose strictness is treated as a spiritual gift, as if the people had to be afraid in order not to be afraid.

Of Dr Angus Mackintosh of Tain: "His love did not lie on the surface" (p. 69). And of the Rev William Forbes of Tarbet: "If kindliness of manner is required to make a man amiable, Mr Forbes was far from being so. There was a rough crust on the outside of him, but there was much sterling love beneath it, though too deep for all to find" (p. 71).

Of the Urray catechist, Rory Phadrig – he was "afraid to show in his manner the warmth of his heart [such as] a stranger would have thought him to be an impersonation of rudeness" – even telling himself, "I'm but a rude and crabbed *bodach*" (p. 96). Yet Rory claimed that notwithstanding "the vile stable within me," he had read his own name written "in the list of the chosen" (p. 97).

Of the Rev Hector McPhail of Resolis on the Black Isle – "a man of singular worth, and unaffected piety" (pp. 49–52):

> He was much given to pastoral visitation of his parish. Throwing the rein on the neck of the well-known grey pony … at whatever door it stopped he alighted and entered the house … and he would expound a portion of Scripture and pray with them. Then remounting, he would go, as the pony carried him, to some other place, and would occupy the remainder of the day in the manner in which he began it. On one of his excursions through the parish, he was observed striking with his cane a dog that lay beside the door of a house

> as he passed. Being asked why he had done so, he answered, "He was so like myself, as he lay dumb and sleeping at his post, that I could not hold my cane off his back."

One can but wonder at the psychology behind this sort of kick-the-dog theology. Equally so, the unabashed authoritarianism of Kennedy's assessment of the Fathers' achievement: "The power of the pulpit was paramount in Ross-shire and the people became, to a great extent, plastic to its influence" (p. 98).

Dr Kennedy dates "the good days of the Fathers" as having started "after the first quarter of the eighteenth century had passed." In other words, in the tense period between the Jacobite risings of 1715 and the '45. Their culmination, he believed, was a communion service at Kiltearn on the Cromarty Firth in 1782 – one year before Mary Elizabeth Frederica Mackenzie's birth nearby.

Whatever our judgement of *the good days of the Fathers* by the standards of today, their oft-times valiant élan – including that of *na daoine,* the lay-prophetic "men" with their strangely shamanic demeanour – must have burned a fiery testament upon the spiritual horizons of her youth.[76]

Blown off Guns and Dancing on the Sabbath

The British Empire's high imperialism was the world and social class to which Lady Mary was born. But paradoxically, it was an overstepping of the mark on home turf that signalled the decline of the good days of the Fathers. In a long, sad footnote, Kennedy quotes Dr Gustavus Aird that 1792, a decade after high noon at Kiltearn, marked the ebb tide. The gospel, Aird said, continued to be "faithfully and purely preached" but never again "with the same power as it had been before then" (Aird in Kennedy 1979, 26–27).[77]

What changed was that the contract between religion and landed power in Easter Ross had overshot its licence. The culprit, or at least, the

local symptom of a wider trend, was Deaf Mackenzie's neighbour, Sir Hector Munro of Novar.[78]

Sir Hector had made his name in 1764 where he oversaw the slaughter of 6,000 resistance fighters (a.k.a. "mughals") in the Battle of Buxtar on the banks of the Ganges. He rose to command the British Army in India where his renowned punishment for native mutineers was to have them "blown off guns". Each of the condemned men would be tied to an array of canons primed with blank charges and literally blown away. Eye witnesses reported that it was a spectacularly messy form of public execution, but suitably participative for the duly splattered native onlookers.[79]

When he returned to Novar, rich with pickings from the East India Company, he invested in creating a commercial sheep farm. This meant depriving his tenants of their common grazings. There was heady talk of driving his sheep into the River Conon, but Sir Hector made a pre-emptive strike. He summoned the Black Watch from Fort George and had the potential ringleaders carted off to Inverness prison.

Both in Ross-shire and Sutherland where similar "improvements" were happening, 1792 thereby went down in Highland history as *Bliadhna nan Caorach,* The Year of the Sheep. But why did Aird and Kennedy connect it to the decline of the good days of the Fathers? Astonishingly, Sir Hector's excuse for putting down his foot was not sheep-worrying, but rather, that a report had reached his pious ears that there had been *music and dancing on the Sabbath* (Aird in Kennedy 1979, pp. 26–27).[80] His precipitous action seems to have helped awaken the people to the truth that their once-beloved indigenous chiefs were now Anglocentric landlords, and religion was being used for social control. Lady Mary was nine at the time.

The Chieftainess – "Wicked" or a Feminist?

As a young colonial wife she cut a dramatic persona. Lady Mary was glamorous to the point of dashing. She even claimed to be the first British woman in India to have shot a tiger (Henderson & Reynolds

2012). In 1811 when she was twenty-eight, Walter Scott wrote by way of introduction to his brother-in-law in south India, Charles Carpenter of Cuddalore (Fraser 1885, 11–16):

> Lady Hood is by birth a daughter of Lord Seaforth, one of our greatest Highland Chiefs, and a keen Scotchwoman … She has always lived in the first circles of society in London, but deserves regard still more for her valuable personal qualities than from her rank and manners.

Touched by her "warm heart and lively fancy," Scott elsewhere hailed her "as an enthusiastic highlander, and deep in all manner of northern tradition" … truly, a woman who displayed "the spirit of the chieftainess in every drop of her blood" (in Lee 1808, 368).

Others have been less panegyric. In *White Mughals,* a study of colonial love and betrayal, William Dalrymple (2004, 461) recounts a situation where,

> The occasion was the visit of an aristocratic Scottish tomboy from the Isle of Lewis named Lady Mary Hood. Mary Hood had temporally deserted her rich, elderly admiral husband and gone off on her own around India, breaking a series of diplomatic hearts as she passed: Mountstuart Elphinstone, William Fraser and Henry Russell himself all seem to have been, to different extents, a little in love with her.

Most of the relevant Elphinstone correspondence was lost in a fire, but we can glimpse his esteem for his dear friend in a surviving letter to Edward Strachey of July 1813 (Colebrook 2011, 252–254):

> Lady Hood is spoken of in raptures by everybody (including Sir J. Mackintosh and Adam) for her good sense, information, good looks, good temper, and vivacity. She has lately seen all my friends, and I shall almost think myself in England when she comes.

What few mentions come up by searching her multiple name permutations on Google Books and Google Scholar are often quivered with intrigue.[81] For example, an article published in French by Nick Havely in the journal *Synergies Inde* describes how Elphinstone longed for the days he had spent reading Dante with Lady Mary along with "our innumerable digressions." To this, Havely remarks (my translation): "The nature of these 'digressions' is not indicated. But the love affair, if it was one, doesn't stop there and we can deduce the importance of these shared readings …" (Havely 2009).

Other arrows cast at her character are less softly barbed. The second Lord Teignmouth was the son of a governor-general of India who was also president of the Bible Society. Recounting his journey to the Highlands and Islands in *Reminiscences*, Teignmouth described Lady Mary as "no ordinary person." He claims that "tales were rife" of the readiness with which she compromised Admiral Hood's position by, for example, accepting gifts from native princes, contrary to the prohibition of the East India Company. He also casts slight on what he calls her "seeming parentage," remarking that both her physical appearance and her "roving propensities" would have passed muster had she been "discovered by an artist in search of the picturesque among a troop of gypsies" (Teignmouth 1878, 346–353).

Yet more acidic was the Whig politician and war secretary, T.B. Macaulay. In 1817, two years after she was widowed, Lady Mary found herself a second husband in James Alexander Stewart of Glasserton. Years later, writing to his sister Hannah on 18 November 1833, Macaulay gives a hint at how her social capital had slipped in polite society (Macaulay 2008, 227–228):

> I have asked Inglis, who knows everything about India, to procure from some of his lady-friends, such information as may be of use to you. Stewart Mackenzie has written to his wife, who was, you know, much in the East with her first husband Sir Samuel Hood, (wicked woman to marry again)

> and she will furnish us with some hints which, wicked as she is, may be useful.

Was she really "wicked", or was she just a feminist ahead of her time? A feisty woman smeared, like so many of her era, by stuffy patriarchs whose stiff upper crust her self-possession threatened to crumble? My bohemian side warms to Teignmouth's description that on her way home from India, a strange sail was sighted. As the crew leapt to battle stations the civilian passengers were ushered below deck. Noticing some movement beneath a sailcloth, the captain presumed that he had found a skulking sailor; only to eject the young widow who had hidden hoping for a bit of the action!

Even Teignmouth – busy doling out bibles on his travels to help quell residual Highland Catholicism – cuts her a little slack in the end. At least when she was in Stornoway, he concedes, "her talents and influence were devoted, as were those of her excellent sisters, to works of Christian benevolence" (Teignmouth 1878, 353 & 345).

Stewart-Mackenzie and Stornoway Whisky

James Alexander Stewart, Lady Mary's new spouse as of 1817, was the son of a minor Galloway landowner, Vice-Admiral Keith Stewart. His father died when he was only eleven and his mother, Georgiana Isabella Simha D'Aguilar – a naturalised Sephardic (or Spanish) Jewess – remarried within two years of her husband's passing (Fisher 2009).[82]

It seems that young James Alexander was then raised by his cantankerous uncle, the 7th Earl of Galloway. In the year following his father's passing he got bundled off to boarding school at Charterhouse in England. Modern psychologists would have much to say about such dislocation (Duffell 2000; Bull, McIntosh & Clark 2008). Here was a young man whose mother had remarried two years after widowhood, taking to himself a wife who was also remarrying two years after

widowhood. It is a sorry reflection on the Brahan Seer that he missed that one.

On marriage, Stewart annexed his wife's standing by changing his name under Royal License to Stewart-Mackenzie. Deaf Mackenzie's gambling had left Lady Mary with plenty land but no money. Business acumen became the order of the day.

In 1823 he tried to issue a private currency from Stornoway. It went the way of most such dodgy banking schemes (Symes 1998). In 1825 he set up a whisky distillery where Lews Castle now stands across the town harbour. The Excise Act of 1823 had turned distilling into a good business for lairds who were in a position to help stamp out "illicit" stills and ensure that duty was paid. Even allowing for planned exports to India, Stewart-Mackenzie's design capacity of 54,000 gallons per annum could have resulted in quite a tight little island. Lewis at the time had a population under 15,000. Evidently, they didn't drink enough, and the venture, which had always vexed Lady Mary, failed within a decade (Kraaijeveld 2003; Cunningham 2008, 29–32).

Stewart-Mackenzie and the Rise of Capitalism

Stewart-Mackenzie ended up as a politician and diplomat, most notably as the Governor of Ceylon. Here his hard-line Christianity seems to have fallen foul of the Buddhist constitution, leaving behind a legacy of little local difficulties (Symes 1998).[83] In his time on Lewis, however, he ramped up the clearances that his late father-in-law had started. This meant breaking up the south of the island into rentable lots: as he put it, to "farm them out" for the "grand improvement" of "the introduction of mutton in lieu of man" (cited in Hunter 1976, 43).

An 1820 advertisement in the Inverness Courier offered, "… very extensive Sheep Grazings, of the best quality [that] will be arranged by removing to other parts of the Island all the smaller Tenants at present dwelling thereon." Investment in this endeavour, the advert stressed, was "well worthy of the attention of Capitalists" (Robson 2011, 88–89).

What this looked like at ground zero was later described to Lord Napier by Norman Morrison, a crofter and fisherman of Breanish in Uig (Napier Commission 1883, 13848–13925):

> We were deprived of the old rights of the township moorland pasture … Our places were crowded first when the neighbouring township of Mealista was cleared. Six families of that township were thrown in among us; the rest were hounded away to Australia and America, and I think I hear the cry of the children till this day.

From Femme Rouge to Mother of Island Evangelicalism

Meanwhile, as her husband got on with being a Capitalist with a capital C, Lady Mary's wanton ways – if such they were – seem to have inverted to a sympathy for the oft-times hyper-Calvinist evangelicalism of her childhood Easter Ross. Whether or not she herself "got the *cùram*" – a word for overwhelming evangelical conversion that also means "care", "responsibility" and "anxiety" – she appears to have wished it for her tenants.

In those days the appointment of Church of Scotland parish minsters lay by law in the patronage of landed power.[84] To the Evangelicals, many of these appointees were laid-back "Moderates". They lacked the Puritan fire in the sense that, as John Macleod says in his religious history of Lewis (Macleod 2008, 108):

> True Evangelicalism is Christianity as a vivid and vital personal knowledge of Jesus Christ, the "liberty of the Gospel", usually – though not always – obtained by a process of crisis and a sense of entire, Hell-deserving guilt described as "conviction of sin".

Research is needed on original documents, but it would seem that Lady Mary used her proprietorial position to hand-pick conservative Evangelical charges.[85] Today opinions vary as to where this has left the island. Dr Finlay

Macleod of Shawbost reflects on her as "this strange, and for us destructive, woman" (pers. com. 2011). The opposite was held by the crofter historian, Angus "Ease" (Macleod NRAS 4336/1/1/14; cf. Campbell 1886, 222):

> Mrs Mary Stewart Mackenzie is remembered in the traditions of Lewis as a good Christian lady to whom Lewis is deeply indebted for her Christian concern to exercise her right as Patron of the Lewis parishes, by appointing only Evangelical preachers, if at all possible. It was said that she scoured the Highlands for the Godliest ministers, and that patronage in her hands became a holy weapon.

The Rev Alexander Macleod of Uig – the first of the Lewis evangelicals – from *Disruption Worthies of the Highlands* (1886), p. 220, by courtesy of *Comann Eachdraidh Uig* and Stornoway Library.

The first of her protégés to arrive on Lewis was the Rev Alexander Macleod from Assynt. It was in 1824, and the Rev Norman Macfarlane takes up the story in *Apostles of the North* (Macfarlane 1995, 31–40).

> The Island of Lewis had long lain in spiritual darkness. Her ministers, as a rule, were kindly and neighbourly helpers of their people, but they had no stirrings and uplifting message – no evangel … The people sat in the shadow of death. At long last the hour of emancipation struck and God's great instrument appeared. The emergence of Alexander Macleod out of the unknown sent a thrill through the island. The proprietrix, the Honourable Mrs Stewart Mackenzie of Seaforth … discovered Macleod, and urged him to come. It was a glorious moment for Lewis when he agreed.

The islanders, said Macfarlane, would come to adore Macleod as "a very Apostle of God … his name inlaid in diamonds on the foundations of the evangelical Christianity of the island." It was a process that justified religious terror to drive out remnant pagan error.

Homage to the Sun and Moon?

It seems that the "thrill" that went out through the island quickly reached Uig. As Murdo Macaulay, a Free Church minister of deep humanity and wit, related the matter (Macaulay 1980, 169):

> Before Mr MacLeod was settled in Uig, it was reported that when he would come he would not baptise a single child unless the parents were exemplary in conduct, and stood a searching examination in Scripture teaching. The entire parish discussed the situation, and all the parents crossed the moor to Harris with their unbaptized children, and Mr Bethune, the minster of Harris, sprinkled them all without ado.

We should take stock. Here was Lady Mary bringing Alexander Macleod to Uig in April 1824. Evangelical fervour was already stirred before he arrived, and it had been from this very parish that her late father, Deaf Mackenzie, had hounded down the young men to go and "live and die together," taking strokes at the Monsieurs for a German king enthroned in London. Meanwhile, her husband was proposing to clear tenants for Capitalists, while hoping to top up his sporran from proceeds of his home-brew firewater.

On reaching Uig what the Rev Macleod found was a parish of eight hundred souls, "in general kind and obliging, and but few instances of drunkenness and uncleanness among them." However, their only faith comprised the "polluted remains of Popery," this confirming them in "consummate ignorance of true religion" (Macleod 1925, 13).[86] His diary also describes how he found the people believing more in justification by works than of faith, and with a wariness (or perhaps humility?) towards hyper-piety:

> When I enquired their hope of salvation as to its grounds and foundation, good conduct and doing the best we could was the answer, and with regard to their expectation of heaven, they said it would be a wonderful favour to be somewhere else upon the borders of that happy place, though not admitted to the society of the holy.

"Most of them were pagans. He witnessed with his own eyes their homage morning and evening to the sun and moon" (Macfarlane 1995, 34).[87] Perhaps, but as Arthur Geddes – the son of the Victorian thinker Patrick Geddes – interpreted such seeming idolatry (Geddes 1955, 200):[88]

> Strangers who had lost the sense of the beauty in the skies mistook a Gael's adoration of God at sunrise for prayer to the sun; when a man unbonneted or a woman knelt in the open, face turned to the rising moon lightening the dark, they confused prayer with worship of the moon itself.

A Fear Well-Nigh on Terror

In the pulpit Macleod could raise within his congregation "a sense of fear, amounting to well-nigh terror," and was likened to a Marplot – a meddling busybody (Macfarlane 1995, 39). Always in debt (p. 32), he wrote to Lady Mary in November 1824 begging for additional evangelical resources with the plea: "I greatly regret that I have no copies for distribution of Boston's *Four-fold State* … in Gaelic, as their perusal in this island has been already eminently useful, and would be now extensively read with benefit had we more of them" (Macaulay 1980, 183).

In this, his most celebrated work, Thomas Boston takes the quasi-Hobbesian view that the "natural state" of man is misery arising out of being born "a son of death" (Boston 2012, 103–104).[89] Unregenerate human existence is eked out,

> … under the wrath of God … wholly under wrath – wrath is, as it were, woven into their very nature, and mixes itself with the whole of the man, who is, if I may so speak, a very lump of wrath, a child of hell, as the iron in the fire is all fire.

Macleod paced such choice of words. His sermons, by his own admission in what was published of his diaries, left the people "much afraid and astonished at the truths delivered" (Macleod 1925, 13–15):

> But when I came to the practical application of the discourse, and showed that the words "Fear not" were turned *vice versa* to all unbelievers, and that their fears and terrors, terrors unspeakable, would never terminate through the rounds of eternal ages, if the offers of salvation were rejected, you would think every heart was pierced, and general distress spread through the whole congregation. May it bear forth fruit!

The power that he exerted from the pulpit, said Macfarlane, was that of one "who spoke with the authority of a dictator." He started off laying

down the line by refusing communion to most of his congregation. He also debarred the God-inebriated Angus of the Hills on account of the poor man's diminished intellectual capacity. This was a crushing judgement; one that caused the holy simpleton to feel as if his minister and kirk session "were slamming the door of heaven in his face, and he mourned as one rejected of God" (Macfarlane 1924, 2–22).

He even debarred the visiting Rev Duncan Matheson of Knock as being unworthy of a place at the communion table. Matheson subsequently exclaimed: "He debarred everyone in the congregation; he debarred me, and in my opinion he debarred himself" (Macaulay 1980, 186).[90]

At the same time the SSPCK's Gaelic Bible of 1801 was gaining in circulation and traction. Pondering the psychological effects of it all, Arthur Geddes reflected (Geddes 1955, 214–215):[91]

> Those [who have been] familiar from infancy [with Bible readings] can hardly appreciate the shock to the sensitive heart of first hearing the whole of the Old Testament read Book by Book. The shock is due not only to the acts of vengeance or massacre, but still more to their repeated justification in the name of the Lord God.

Macleod was clearly a complex and not just a conflicted personality (Beaton 1925; Campbell 1886). His four surviving sermons may not be to everyone's taste, but they eruditely emphasise God's love as well as the consequences of sin. They reveal a hard-line theology, but surprisingly, one that is not hyper-Calvinist in the sense of resting on double predestination. On the contrary, the preacher appears to lean towards an Arminian position. His sermon on Psalm 55:22 begins: "We are all in a state of trial and probation, for a permanent and eternal existence in another world." That on Genesis 22:14 ends by invoking the apostle James: for as God "has joined faith and good works, let not man put them asunder. Let your light so shine before men that others seeing your good works may glorify your Father who is in heaven" (Macleod 1925, 40 & 60).

His Sermon on John 3:16 even echoes something of the Russian Orthodox position that I outlined in the previous chapter (Macleod 1925, 32).[92]

> Behold, then, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called the sons of God, a subject so very grand and so elevating that our limited capacities are quite inadequate to comprehend it. Who can by searching find it out? who can trace it to perfection? It is as high as heaven. What can we do, deeper than hell, what can we know?

In 1828 one of his communion services drew an astounding 9,000 people from all over the island. Their "stupid attention", as Campbell's sketch in *Disruption Worthies of the Highlands* quotes one of his irascible turns of phrase, was by now focussed onto one question of "heart-wringing enquiry, *What must I do to be saved?*" (Campbell 1886, 226).

Macleod's surviving letters reveal him begging Lady Mary to influence the Governor of India to find a better civil service job for his brother (Macaulay 1980, 181–184). John Macleod evaluates as "dishonest" his appeals for more evangelical resources and more land on which to graze his burgeoning herd of cattle. These requests "precipitated evictions for his own greed" (Macleod 2008, 147 & 160).

He remained on Lewis until 1846 and then went back to Sutherland. There he worked his days out, Norman Macfarlane tells, never failing to raise "his silvery voice against all those pleasures and practices that seemed to him to impair the spiritual life … dancing, cup-reading, ceilidhs, gay clothing" (Macfarlane 1995, 39).

One almost has to wonder whether the Rev Macfarlane was seeing a funny side to it all. The list of iniquities includes "galloping on broomsticks" such as "opened the vials of his wrath" to the point where he "denounced them in unmeasured speech". But if there were any laughs on offer, Alexander Macleod got the last. In Rogart churchyard stands his tombstone (Campbell 1886, 232). Its inscription: *By the Grace of God, I am what I am.*

Stockholm Syndrome and the Fog of Confusion

Island historians are unanimous that he was not only "the first evangelical minister who did so much to stir up the people with his fiery eloquence" (Macdonald 2004, 104), but that "the pattern … set for all of them on Lewis was established by Alexander MacLeod" (Macleod 2008, 159; cf. Macaulay 1986, 169). In the absence of more research from primary sources it is impossible to say what Lady Mary thought, but in 1837 an informant wrote and told her (Little 1991, 183):

> I may say of those poor people who have sincere religion in this Island that they are the most forward in all the duties required of them, the most submissive and persevering in the Island; I wish they were all religious, they would be much easier managed in every respect …

What was the subsequent impact of such religion? At various times between the 1820s and the 1950s the island has been swept by religious revivals.[93] Some have had long-lasting positive effects on people's lives where, as Duncan Campbell put it in the 1950s, "Revival is a community saturated with God" (Campbell 1956, 52).[94] Others have had many of the characteristics of cults, with fevered "swoonings" where people broke down emotionally, fell into trances, and cried out in strange quasi-prophetic utterances (Macleod 2008, 128–138; Geddes 1955).[95]

Historically one has to ask how far we can see here variations on the Stockholm Syndrome in which a hostage group comes to identify with, and even to love, their captors in "traumatic bonding" as a primal survival mechanism (de Fabrique 2007). Related to this is "cultural invasion"(Freire 1972) and the "inferiorisation" (Fanon 1967) of the colonised by the coloniser.[96]

Also, the "double bind" theory of alcoholism and psychosis in which the psyche collapses under prolonged exposure to anxiety-provoking Catch 22 situations that have no prospect of escape (Bateson 2000).[97]

The story of the Gadarene demoniac makes a salutary case study, starting with the questions: "Why *Legion,* who kept the pigs, and where is the demoniac today?" (Mark 5:1–20).

Colonisation is the presumption of right to take that which has not been given. The Apache philosopher, V.F. Cordova, has written perceptively about the "fog" that filled her people's minds when confronted by the "European reality" that took their land. Too often, she lamented, their response remains either denial and the self-obliteration of drink, drugs and suicide; or an over-compensating embrace of "the white world – committing oneself to an endless denial of what once was" (Cordova 2007, 124).[98]

Similarly, on this side of the North Atlantic, when we look at the west of Scotland's continuing high levels of alcoholism, suicide, heart disease and violence (Craig 2010), we have to ask the Gadarene questions. We have to, as Walter Wink put it, start *naming*, *unmasking* and *engaging* the Powers that Be, which is to say, the inner spirituality of social and psychological structures including the voiceless oppressed and the loud oppressor that resides as the Jungian "shadow" somewhere inside each one of us (Wink 1992).[99]

Arthur Geddes would have loved this, for his gentle criticisms of island religion viewed it through the eye of a "critical friend", nodding on the one hand to the universal atonement theory of the Rev John McLeod Campbell, and on the other, to the emerging present-day Iona Community (Geddes 1955, 220–222).[100] I so admire his conciliatory conclusion, that:

> Underneath the doctrinal severity of the Presbyterian Gael, there has continued some of the cheerful faith in living, the belief in mutual aid, the tolerance and calm, breathed in our native religious lore … Yet the maintenance in the Scottish Church of a doctrine of universal love was due, no less, to Gaelic ministers, and seems to have owed its rebirth to Gaelic tradition through these men.

Lady Mary and the Nascent Free Church

For all the Highland church's trials and tribulations it found the strength, in the end, to cut the ties of landed patronage; and that linked to the land question in a Highland liberation theology (Meek 1987; Henneman & McIntosh 2009). As described by Donald "Sligo" MacKenzie of Bayble (in Ferguson 2007, 187):

> Until 1843, there was only the Church of Scotland. Unfortunately, the Church of Scotland in those days was governed and controlled by the landowners and ministers were appointed by them. Ministers said from the pulpit what the landowners wanted them to say – the very landowners who were driving the people off the land. That, of course, was the era of the Clearances, a time of great hardship for the people of the Highlands and Islands. Our oppressed people at that time decided to form their own church – *the Free Church of Scotland.*

And irony of blessed ironies, on the day I went to ask Principal Donald Macleod about limited atonement he took me through to see David Octavius Hill's vast painting of the Disruption assembly of 1843 (pictured on p. 75). There, towards the top right of the picture, sits Charlotte Elizabeth Mackenzie, Lady Mary's surviving younger sister.

The very family – the High Chiefs of Kintail and Seaforth – that had wielded patronage as Angus Ease's "holy weapon", had symbolically laid it down before the people's feet. It felt like Donald lifted for me the corner of a white coiff, no longer one of mourning, but of some huge redemptive power. I struggled to suppress a tear.[101] *This is how we must remember the last of the Mackenzies.*

As for the Hooded Lassie, Lady Mary, who in the end were her real friends? Who, her Communion of Saints? Highland church historians have paid her scant attention. Was she too scandalous for the evangelicals? Too evangelical for the scandalous? Or just a woman?

For me, what lingers most, are those exposés, risqué though they may have been, of her kind and sparkling heart: "For she loved much."

She rests now on the Black Isle, across the water from Fort George, amidst the roofless walls of Fortrose Cathedral; a sacred precinct that ironically was brought to ruin by Cromwell's forces.

Alexander Mackenzie recorded that her funeral in 1862 "was one of the largest ever witnessed in the Highlands, many thousands being present on foot, while the vehicles that followed numbered more than 150" (Mackenzie 1894, 345–346).

Her real friends were the people. They could always tell a saint when they saw one.

4

The *Miann* – Our Island's Greatest Export

Presbyterianism and a Reconciled Future

Island religion is in a fragile state. In the current academic year, not one new *Gàidhealtachd* student registered at the Free Church College (Macleod 2013).[102] The upside is in signs of fresh thinking that shows, for example, in the local newspaper columns of Principal Macleod and Iain D. Campbell. Although I am not "a Calvinist", like my *Sgitheanach* piper friend quoted in Chapter 2, I find such hints of *semper reformanda* are helping me to gain a new appreciation of what our Presbyterian roots have given us, and of underlying Hebridean spirituality as perhaps our greatest export.

But let us not conceal how excesses of the past have touched the lives of many of us here tonight.[103] Just before his passing, Professor Derick Thomson of Bayble generously said that I could use his elegiac poem, *Although Calvin Came* (Thomson 1982, 172–173).

> Although Calvin came
> he did not steal the love out of your heart:
> you loved
> the tawny moor, and suffered pain
> when that land and the flower were taken from you,
> and a coffinful of songs was laid in the earth.

His generation of "the poets" took on an oppressive face of religion that had to be challenged. At the same time, we would fail the love remaining in the heart if we get stuck in looking back and wallowing in the wounds. Like Lot's wife, our tears would turn to bitter salted columns.

We need history to tell us about our past, but vision to tell us about our future. This is about more than just church institutions. "Where there is no vision the people perish" (Proverbs 29:18). I for my part can only feel a faltering path, but in this closing chapter I want to explore three general areas that hold out hope. 1) With examples of reconciliation from both South Africa and the Hebrides I want to suggest that we can shed our straitjackets. 2) I'd like to examine island "numinous" experience, because it is important in challenging materialism and sustaining the island culture's sense that we live within a spiritual world. 3) I want to end by sharing a couple of disarmingly simple parables for our times that, as I have experienced them, open windows rather than close doors.

Conciliation and the South African Dutch Reformed Church

In the words of Abraham Kuyper, a theologian and prime minister of the Netherlands from 1901–05: "If Calvinism had not been passed on from our fathers to their [white] African descendants, no free republic would have arisen in the South of the Dark Continent" (Kuyper 2010, 26–27).

So often oppressive peoples are those who have themselves once been oppressed, and sadly, it was a branch of the Dutch Reformed Church that provided the theology behind Apartheid. In *A History of South Africa* the acclaimed scholar, C. W. de Kiewiet, told how the Boers had allowed "their imagination to lie fallow." Belief in their own election had the effect of "setting them apart from the unelected pagans about them [and] bred in them a sense of special destiny as a people" (De Kiewiet 1966, 17–23).

There we see the this-worldly political shadow cast by a binary division of the world into an in-group and out-group that a presumption of election can imply in its most unfortunate expressions. The consequential self-belief in a God-given "manifest destiny" to colonise, to divide and rule, are equally terrifying whether amongst the Boers, the Ulster Scots, or even as Erich Fromm has proposed, in the cultural psychodynamics that gave rise to Nazi Germany (Fromm 2001).[104]

Closer to home but reflecting a similar ability to inferiorise another peoples, it was remittances from slave-owning southern American Presbyterians in the early days of the Free Church of Scotland that resulted in the "Send Back the Money" campaign and caused division within the church (Whyte 2012). In mentioning that disquieting fact, however, let me as a Quaker add that members of the Religious Society of Friends, too, before we woke up to abolitionism and a widened sense of social justice, were also complicit in slavery and slave-ship owning. It was not for nothing that Herman Melville in *Moby Dick* – a classic study of the outward projection of evil by the "good" onto an innocent party – portrayed the brooding Captain Ahab and Chief Mate Starbuck as Quakers (Starbuck was a Nantucket whaler name, long before it became a coffee shop); for some Quakers at an early stage in our history also believed themselves to be a "peculiar" or Elect people!

However, Apartheid in the Orange Free State and elsewhere amongst the Boers or Dutch farmers of South Africa presents a wider and more recent window through which to view the psychopathological evil of violent theologies that came out of violent times. To understand Apartheid's full religious gravity we have to listen to the voices of those who it spiritually colonised. Before he died in 1977 at hands of white police torturers, the black civil rights leader, Steve Biko, gave this account and made this plea (Biko 1987, 93):

> Knowing how religious the African people were, the missionaries stepped up their terror campaign on the emotions of the people with their detailed accounts of eternal burning, tearing of hair and gnashing of teeth … This cold and cruel religion was strange to the indigenous people … I do not wish to question the basic truth at the heart of the Christian message [but] there is a strong case for a re-examination.

But remarkably, beautifully, such re-examination came to pass. In 1990 the Dutch Reformed Church signed the Rustenberg Declaration. This declared "the unequivocal rejection of apartheid as a sin … against

our unity in the Holy Spirit" (Rustenberg 1990).[105] In 1999 the church's spokesperson told the Truth and Reconciliation Commission: "We are a reformed church which means that we wish to be open to the Lord to change us."

Archbishop Desmond Tutu was in the chair. He was profoundly moved by these white Calvinists, wrestling with their past as if wrestled by angels. In his inimitable way he replied (TRC 1999):

> If I may say so humbly, I am so glad that you have seen the light and we know we could almost say to the Devil watch out, here comes the Dutch Reformed Church.

Hope for the world lies in the capacity to humanise the dehumanised. What is needed, as traditional African healers would say, is *to call back the soul.* Here Dutch Calvinism, to which our Hebridean version owes so much from the days of Dort, has proved itself a gritty expression of religion, yet a prodigal one.[106] Around that grit what Tutu saw was a pearl of great price.

Bridging Across Boundaries

On this island, as recently as in the past year, we have seen brave steps towards bridging old divisions. One example was the BBC's watchnight service from Martin's Memorial last December with its contributions, remarkably but joyously, from clergy of the Church of Scotland, the Free Church and the Roman Catholic Church.[107]

Another example was the ecumenical service organised in Stornoway, aided by a prominent Free Presbyterian adherent when, as alluded to above, a Roman Catholic teenager was murdered.[108]

A small but beautiful example is in a *Stornoway Gazette* book review by Iain D. Campbell, the current Free Church moderator. *And on this Rock* was written by Donald "Rufus" Murray from Ness. It describes how, during their detention as prisoners of war, the Italians on Orkney built an ornate Roman Catholic chapel. What hit me with an eye-moistening

force was the courageous generosity of Iain D's closing line (Campbell 2010): "I may not be prepared to endorse the dogmas which Orkney's Italian Chapel represents, but I know faith when I see it."

An Dà Shealladh and "the Listening In"

Faith, but faith in what? What evidence do we have that life has a spiritual and not just a materialistic basis? Calvin said (in one of the passages that throws into question how far he believed in limited atonement): "*Every person*, therefore, on coming to the knowledge of himself, is not only urged to seek God, but is also led as by the hand to find him" (Calvin 1559, 1.1.1, my emphasis, *chacun* in the French original).

Central portion from David Octavius Hill's dramatised painting of the Disruption Assembly, May 1843. Chalmers is presiding beneath the chandelier. Hugh Miller, the Cromarty stonemason, at the bottom right beneath the column hints at his role as a pillar of the new church. A fallen vase of May flowers at his feet nods to his impending tragic passing. (Photograph by Rev George T Thomson LRPS. Reproduced with kind permission of the Free Church of Scotland).

These days when I come home to the island and go visiting from house to house I am often struck by the extent to which creedal faith is complemented by an awareness of numinous experience. *Numinous* is from the Greek, "to give a nod", and is used by scholars to cover real-life experiences that give a nod towards the spiritual.

This may seem strange to outsiders, but psychic and spiritual experience is widely held to be a commonplace reality within indigenous Hebridean culture. The Uig-born (1930) folklorist, Dr John MacInnes (now retired from the School of Scottish Studies at Edinburgh University) has been described as the greatest living Gaelic scholar. Across a number of his writings he has pointed out that in the Gaelic worldview, *an dà shealladh* – literally the "two sights" or "second sight" – is held to be an extension of natural reality, rather than something that is "super" natural (MacInnes with Newton (ed.) 2006, 423–500). It is as if certain happenings – usually carrying a high emotional charge, such as a death or marriage – can lead to a stepping back from the constraints of space and time and superimpose upon the outer senses a revelatory visionary experience.

Whilst not overtly sought after in the Highland church, these things have a history of being respected, including (from first hand encounter) by such weighty figures as Hugh Miller (Bennett 2009, 168–169). Dr Kennedy recounted instances of the sight amongst his Ross-shire Fathers and in a characteristically acerbic riposte to his critics retorted: "The improbability of such things to the minds of some is owing to their own utter estrangement from the Lord" (Kennedy 1979, 157–158).

The Skye poet, Maoilios Caimbeul, has published an account of some of his own paranormal experiences such as contributed to his spiritual awakening (Campbell 2011), and recently I heard a Free Church sermon in which the minister remarked: "Within our church, the Celtic church, there have been people with the second sight."[109] When I spoke to him later he gave as an example *Tormod Sona,* "Happy Norman" or Norman Macdonald of Melbost, Borve. Born in 1853 this devout man would speak of his renowned capacity for clairvoyance

as "the listening in". "It is the Truth," Tormod had said, that he was listening in to (Macleod undated, 41–44). Such an understanding of the spiritual structure of time is entirely consistent with St Augustine in the *Confessions* (Augustine 2002, XI:14).

The stories told of Happy Norman's "listenings in" are far too dated now to be of any evidential value. Their value is in demonstrating a cultural meme. Quite literally every time I come back to the island I hear new stories, often from first hand, of people experiencing what seemed to be foreknowledge or distant knowledge of events. My own openness to these is linked to having been directly involved in one such experience. One day when I was in my late teens, my mother, taken by a sudden feeling of unexplained acute distress, turned her car back from just outside Stornoway at the same time as I witnessed my father's beloved whippet being killed on the road outside the Leurbost surgery (McIntosh 2008, 200–202).

In a seventeenth century letter from Lord Tarbert, the First Earl of Cromarty and one of the Mackenzie clan, to physicist Robert Boyle of "Boyle's Law" fame, Tarbert made the observation (Kirk 1990, 39–45):

> There were more of these seers in the Isles of Lewis, Harris, and Uist than in any other place … Several of those that did see with the Second Sight when in the Highlands or Isles, when transported to live in other countries, especially in America, they quite lost this quality.

Songs tell of the loneliness of those pioneer days of "no ceilidh on the prairie." This highlights the extent to which *an dà shealladh* is linked to a community's inner depth of cohesion. Margaret Bennett of the School of Scottish Studies has found that "the geographic location of *community* need not be one of the islands" but "any place where the tradition is familiar to those present" (Bennett 2009, 170). Given this proviso, she has found that the sight remains vibrant wherever there are strong pockets of expatriate Gaels, such as Newfoundland, Quebec, North Carolina and New South Wales.

Most of the world's close-knit indigenous cultures would hold similar beliefs based on their empirical experience (McIntosh 1980). In contrast, when Edmund Burt was stationed with English redcoats at Inverness immediately after the 1715 Jacobite rising and encountered the writings of Martin Martin from twenty years previously (Martin 1994), he couldn't believe that this Skye physician, (who had been to university in Edinburgh and Leiden), could devote "six and thirty pages" to "so contemptible a subject" as the second sight, "as though it were a settled system" (Burt 1998, 274).[110]

Sigmund Freud famously posited religion as "the universal obsessional neurosis of humanity." Carl Jung defined neurotics as people who "are not adapted to reality." Either Freud was right, or he was neurotic. Burt too! (Freud 2001, 43; Jung 1967, 190).[111]

Traditional WiFi

Here I cannot attempt to evaluate whether or not experiences of the second sight might be veridical. The opportunities for deceit and delusion are, of course, legion. My interest is in the ontology – the sense of what it is to be a human being – of the cultural belief structure, and in pursuit of this some months ago I emailed Iain "Jock" Mackenzie with whom I was at school and worked summers at the Alginates seaweed factory in Keose. I wanted to check if he shared my memories of AM, an elderly crofter with whom we'd share shifts. AM had a penchant for "seeing lights", most notably, running along in the ditch beside his car at the side of a loch one night before a tragic drowning.

Jock, who is now an electronics engineer, verified my memory, and added: "AM had an early type of WiFi installed. Of course, what he had is much more sophisticated than the WiFi we tend to be so pleased with ourselves for, and for very limited achievements."

Modern technology and the world of Edmund Burt, however, obviates the need for traditional WiFi and denigrates its arguable insights.[112] Our sense of living in a spiritual milieu may be correspondingly diminished.

I asked Agnus Maclennan of Achmore what she thought. For many years before retirement she was my father's esteemed practice manager. She had been telling me about a man on Bernera who could locate the bodies of lost fishermen because he "heard the scream" of them falling overboard.

I put it to her: "Do you think that people experience the second sight as much as they used to these days?"

"No," she answered, "because these days everybody is *too busy,* and *too noisy!"*

Psychic, Spiritual & Mystical Experience

I have introduced the numinous because it nods towards what Principal Macleod has spoken of as "our distinctive emphasis on experimental religion" (Macleod 1989). Experimental religion is the principle of "O taste and see …" (Psalms 34:8).[113]

The examples I have given thus far are only at the level of ostensible *psychic experience.* They concern matters of alleged fact and their spiritual value is limited to the inquiry that they invite into space, time and the psyche. At the deepest level – that which Professor Macleod probably meant – is direct inner intimacy with God; the category of *mystical experience* at its various depths of knowing. This need not be the anathema to Calvinism that is sometimes imagined. No less a figure than Kuyper, though himself uncomfortable with the notion, acknowledged that "God created … the heart for mysticism … and a Christianity that neglects the mystic element grows frigid and congeals" (Kuyper 2010, 144).[114]

Mid-way between the psychic and the mystical if we might model it rather crudely like that is a spectrum of *spiritual experience* that concerns non-material dimensions of reality and is usually apprehended thorough alternate states of consciousness and perception (James 1983; Grof & Grof 1989, Cardena, Lynn & Krippner 2000). When Adomnán described St Columba on Iona surrounded by "holy angels … flying

down with amazing speed, dressed in white robes" at the hillock called *Sìthean* (Faerie Hill) – subsequently also known as *Cnoc nan Aingel* (The Angels' Knoll) – what is interesting is less the question of the veracity or objectivity of the vision, as its empirical epistemology; that is to say, its experimental approach to what creates and comprises knowledge. Adomnán offers this specific advice (1995, 217–219, my emphasis):[115]

> *One should take notice of this story, and carefully think* about the extent and nature of the sweet visits by angels that no one could know about but which, without doubt, were very frequent, for they generally came to him as he remained awake on winter nights or as he prayed in isolated places while others rested.

Neither is this kind of experience confined to the sixth century. Last week I was leading the programme week at Iona Abbey on the theme of "the pilgrimage of life". While there, a person of high standing on the island told me of having vividly experienced both an angelic and a saintly encounter within the past couple of years. These were of huge professional support in ways that I cannot describe without breaking confidence. Often when I go to the Hebrides these days I get told similar first-hand accounts. For example a year ago an elderly friend on Point told me that her greatest fear had always been that she would not cope when her husband died because she feared the dark alone. However, one night, before his passing, she became aware of a benign presence at her bedside. She knew from that moment her phobia was lifted, and so it proved to be.

Another instance was the late Katie or "Ceiteag" Maclennan of Seaforth Head – one of my father's patients – who was full of the stories of angels, a blue man, apparitions of Christ and even a ring of faeries dancing outside her door. Some would say she must have been crazy, but I was not alone in knowing her as a woman of double-edged razor wit, intellectually deft at both the material and spiritual levels. In her the ancient worldview ran in parallel with modernity. This is not the place to share most of what she told me over the course of several visits

in 2011 when she was eighty-six. Suffice to say that I was stirred by her depth of spiritual centredness. She lived without the mains power and I used this as a hinge to ask her the questions: "Do you not get lonely, do you not get frightened, all alone by the light of your oil lamp, the last of the living in Seaforth Head?"[116]

She replied with the sublime conviction of a Presbyterian mystic: "How can I be lonely, how can I be frightened, *when I'm with God!*"

Torcuil MacRath's Visitation

A final case study of spiritual experience in island culture is from Torcuil MacRath, "the Buddha of Grimshader … one of Gaeldom's most original poets and scholars" (Urpeth 2003). This exchange took place in his early eighties a couple of years before his passing, so sufficient time has now elapsed.

Torcuil Macrath, the late bard of Grimshader, with Alastair McIntosh in 2002. By courtesy of John "Rusty" Macdonald, Leurbost.

"I am very glad that you have come, *a bhalaich,"* he said, in a tone of unusual urgency, as I stepped through his door on a visit back to North Lochs.

"You see," he said, moving straight to the point, sitting me down in the chair that he always emphasised had belonged to his grandmother. "Since I last saw you, *I have seen an angel.* At least, it must have been an angel, because I do not know what else it could have been."

He pulled his chair right up against mine, coming so close that it was hard to focus.

"You see, *a bhalaich* – I used to have a disease. Your father knew all about it. He had tried everything to treat it, but even to himself this disease was incurable. Then one day since I last saw you, in the middle of the night, I woke up. And there was this – *figure* – standing at the foot of my bed. As real as you're sitting there. A presence. Just like a person."

"Were you afraid?" I asked, after a long pause.

"O, no fear, a bhalaich! *No fear!* I was not afraid! *I just knew, beyond any doubt, that from then on my disease was cured.* And that is how it was."

Wrestling With Predestination

I hear a lot of these kind of stories because people know or can sense that I'm interested, and three things impress me about them. They give a nod towards the validity of spiritual reality, they suggest profound interconnection in that sense of branches on the vine, and they encode a cultural belief in destiny, perhaps even predestination. The Rev Kenneth Macleod of Eigg was held by Professor Donald Mackinnon and Professor James Carmichael Watson (both holders of the chair in Celtic at Edinburgh University) to have been the greatest interpreter of Hebridean Gaelic tradition of the early twentieth century.[117] When Macleod stared "Calvinist" predestination between the eyes, he looked further back in time (Macleod 1927, 44):

> Very curiously, however, the Celtic Heaven or Hope has from the first been limited by a Doctrine of Election; in Pagan as well as in Christian times some were "chosen" and others not, and the deciding factor was the will of the other-world rather than the conduct of man. Possibly the explanation is that Celtic religion, whether Christian or pre-Christian, has been largely coloured by the influence of the sea. The God of the Celt was as the Atlantic, infinite and eternal, terrible in anger, never to be trifled with, mysterious in His actions, harsh to one and gentle to another. Men who knew from experience how one boat reached her harbour in safety while the other went down, how the sea brought wealth to one family and death to another, would be more likely than most to believe and even find comfort in such a doctrine as Predestination.

So there we are. We can't always blame Calvinism. The strength of this tradition might be hot from the Druids! Why, it might be Truth itself, but not, I would venture to suggest, as understood through the limited faculties of human reason on its own. Rather, the seeming paradox may be that we are predestined to become what we choose to be.

The Parable of the Lord's Pound

To perceive more deeply, consider this latter-day true-life parable that was drawn to my attention by a friend and mentor, Catherine MacKinven. It comes from John Morrison – John the Miller of Habost, Ness, who was born in 1917 – and is told in Calum Ferguson's wonderful collection, *Lewis in the Passing* (Ferguson 2007, 50–61).[118]

In his youth the miller knew a poor woman who lived in Point. It was the poverty-racked 1930s and her daughter was dying from *A' Chaitheamh* – the "wasting" or "consumption" – as the post-war wave of tuberculosis that swept the island was called. Morrison notes, "some of

the most beautiful girls that I ever saw" suffered from *A' Chaitheamh*, for "there was a certain kind of luminance in their countenances."[119]

As the lassie from Point lay weakening in her bed, she called out and asked her mother for some food.

"My darling girl," came the strained reply: "There is nothing inside this house that I can offer you to eat."

The poor woman went and stood at her door. She gazed out across the moor and to the sky and wept. After a little while she saw a man coming along the road. She stepped back inside so that he would not see her tears.

The man walked past the house, but turned around, retraced his footsteps, and knocked upon the door.

"I wish you to have this," he said, passing her a pound note. "The Lord directed me to give it to you."

Prayer Meeting in the Church of Scotland, Leurbost. Photo by kind courtesy of James C. Richardson.

And that's it. Such a simple story. But look at where it leaves us. At one level, the man found a way of helping out that freed the woman from a burden of obligation that she'd have struggled to repay. It was not to *him* that she owed any debt of gratitude, but to *the Lord*.

At a deeper level, this story takes us to the heart of agency: to the question of *who acts?* The man is coming from a place that is no longer the *me*, but rather, the *we* of a magnified as distinct from a shrunken sense of being (Luke 1:46). Here, "I live, yet not I but Christ liveth within me" (Galatians 2:20); and that "Christ" as Christianity's understanding of the personification of God as the ground of all being. Here, we become participants in or "partakers of the divine nature" (2 Peter 1:4). The logical divide between free will and divine sovereignty dissolves in mystical co-inspiration.[120]

Here the dilemmas and awful implications of predestination if viewed only through the narrow lens of human logic dissolve into a false dichotomy. Such is the perspective glimpsed from eternity: from the *pleroma* or fullness of time, the *apocatastasis* or revelation of cosmic salvation, the *parousia* or arrival in the "Second Coming" that is "the Day of the Lord".

Once on a bus going to a meeting about sacred natural sites in Lapland, a Greek Orthodox scholar turned to me and said: "the Holy Spirit is *diachronic*. It *cuts through time*."[121] This is the realised eschatology of the "sacrament of the present moment" (de Caussade 1996; Luke 17:21; Matthew 6:10), and if the Greek sounds like Double Dutch, it needs to become less so, ere we wither on the vine.

Such are the deep mysteries of love, and no wonder "there was a certain kind of luminance in their countenances."

Revival and The *Miann*

For these mysteries are not intrinsically strange to island spirituality at its highest. But how to open them?

In June this year I was in visiting the Rev Calum Macdonald of the Free Church of Callanish and his wife, Margaret. We probably wouldn't

agree on the Westminster Calvinist theology that he preaches, but I don't believe that matters. What matters is another quality that can lead us not so much *back*, but *through,* to the eternal verity of the undivided church as the driver for "revival" in our times.

We sat down over a cup of tea in their living room. Calum was in his rough and ready working clothes as the croft runs by the church. Suddenly, and for no apparent reason, he said: "The old people of the island often say that there is only one quality in the human heart that the Devil cannot counterfeit."

I looked at him with eyebrows raised. "The Devil?"

"Yes. I've heard it several times. The old people in this community would say that there's only one thing he cannot fake."

It was another of these seminary conversations of the croft.

"And what is that?"

"We call it in the Gaelic, the *miann.* M-i-a-n-n."

"Mee-an," I said, trying to get his pronunciation, always embarrassed at my lack of Gaelic. And what does that mean?"

"You could translate it as *ardent desire,*" he said. "Specifically, *the ardent desire for God.*

"The one thing in the human heart that the Devil cannot counterfeit *is the ardent desire for God.*"

Our Greatest Export

The layers of depth that this unfolds, to use an old time evangelical expression, just *blew my mind!* I have told the story several times now, including at a conference organised by Catholics and Presbyterians in Ireland, and it equally blows everybody's minds; for here is a quality that can open hearts, lead to mutual recognition within diversity, and carry us beyond history's vicissitudes.

What matters is not what we say we believe. What matters is whether we've got the *miann.* And if not, whether we want to "knock, and it shall be opened unto you" (Matthew 7:7).

On Iona last week I asked a visiting English woman why Calum's story spoke to her so deeply. She said, "It gives a word for something I have always felt but never had the language to express."

The next time I see Cathy Macdonald at the BBC I'm going to tell her: "I think that the Free Church minister of Callanish has located your 'spiritual gene', and its sequence code is *m-i-a-n-n*."[122]

What's needed is not less island religion, but from every church or friends of seekers of the truth, an ever-deepening discernment of "the substance of the faith"; for the higher up the mountain the more the paths to God converge.

We are invited to honour the Fifth Commandment – to tread with veneration on the holy ground of those who paved our way – "that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee."[123]

We should treasure what gave and still gives life about the Reformation, but not neglect to honour also the "father and mother" of the "aulder lichts" that gave life before, and from around the sides; and then turn and face the rising sun that is our common human future.

The early church, especially from the teachings of the second century Clement of Alexandria, held the sun – the *helios tas anastasis* – to be the symbol of the risen Christ. Who knows – perhaps that is why a twelve-rayed sun features so radiantly amongst the saints on the sixteenth century carved stone tomb of Alasdair Crotach at St Clement's of Rodel as well as in an eight-rayed version on a medieval Beggar's Badge also depicting the church (MacAulay 1993, 28, 24).

Clement said: "Hail, oh light … for he who rides over all creation is the *Sun of Righteousness* who … has changed sunset into sunrise, and crucified death into life" (Jensen 2000, 42–43). Could it be that those old "pagans" of Uig, along with many of the hymns and blessings gathered in Carmichael's *Carmina Gadelica*, were not quite so "stupid" in their attentions after all? Could it be time for a measure of reconciliation between our indigenous "Old" and "New" Testaments?[124]

I conclude that providence in the land is not for the manufacture of bread alone. The meaning of a crofting community is not just to

manufacture *marag*, but to cultivate the *miann*; and that's this island's greatest export to the world today.

And you know, when he comes to speak here next month, I wouldn't be surprised if Professor Richard Dawkins won't be carrying a little of it home with him.

But don't be letting on what's in the *marag dubh*. It'll only set him preaching sermons on Acts 15:20!

What then for Charley Barley? What then for how we might discern what to take or leave from the Law of Moses? What then, indeed, for Stornoway's bid for European recognition of its celebrated black pudding?

Thank you for listening, thank you to the organisers, and goodnight.

Endnotes

These notes are intended to provide scholarly detail, and my apologies that they may not be as readable or well-organised as the main text. Many are mini-essays on topics on which I could otherwise only touch in passing or which were too preliminary to be firmly set forth.

1. **Duns Scotus:** The medieval Franciscan theologian who coined the term *haecceity* was Duns Scotus. Born in 1266 in Duns in Berwickshire (as was Thomas Boston, of whom more throughout *Island Spirituality*), Scotus became one of the four great scholastic thinkers alongside Thomas Aquinas and earned the Latin nickname *Doctor Subtilis* for his penetration of the subtle essence of reality (Hause 2007; Yates 2008). He argued for the primacy of Christ at the centre of a loving universe, but later philosophers were less complimentary, hence the origin of our word, *dunce*.

In his Saltire Society publication, *Why Scottish Philosophy Matters*, Alexander Broadie, formerly Professor of Logic and Rhetoric at the University of Glasgow, makes the weighty claim: "I believe Scotus to be Scotland's greatest philosopher and to have set down markers which have been present ever since in the philosophical life of Scotland."

Scotus stands alongside and was influenced by another Scot, the 12th century Richard of St Victor, in also majoring on the theology of love. Richard's ideas were "taken up into Franciscan theology in the thirteenth century almost as soon as the Franciscan Order was founded" (Broadie 2000, 14). Interestingly, it was the Franciscans who re-evangelised the southern Hebrides after the Reformation (Campbell 1994). We can also view Scotus as an early exemplar of Scots internationalism such as Hugh MacDiarmid later championed. The inscription on his tomb in the Conventual Franciscan Church in Cologne reads: *Scotia me genuit, Anglia me suscepit, Gallia me docuit, Colonia me tenet.* "Scotland begot me. England reared me. France taught me. Cologne holds my remains" (Broadie 2000, 7–8).

In the battle of ideas that comprised medieval scholasticism Scotus fell (until very recently) out of fashion. This is why in Leurbost School, in those

halcyon days before Health & Safety, our teachers would make us stand in that part of the classroom named after him – the Dunce's Corner.

2. **The Wine Calculation:** John 2:6 tells that there were six stone jars, each holding twenty to thirty gallons, so 150 gallons in total. There are six bottles of wine to the gallon, ergo 900 bottles – if we are to read the story literally.

3. **Angus of the Hills:** I have adapted this from the version given by John Macleod (Macleod 2008, 152) where the fish referred to was a trout; but its described behaviour better fits a salmon – perhaps call it an example of maturation in the retelling.

4. **Loch Roag Archaeology:** Seumas (or James) Crawford of Garynahine has undertaken extensive survey works on the islands of Loch Roag and submitted his findings to RCAHMS – the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland – where they have been published under the editorship of Dr Paula Milburn. This work was carried out on a self-funded and needs must basis due to the urgency of documenting what was there in the face of rising sea levels. It included mapping what he described as the 'Cele De' site at Eilean Fir Chrothair, Uig, in a plan of the Island that was done some time ago for an exhibition in Stornoway Town Hall on Celtic Monasticism. He wrote to me (pers. com. December 2012):

> My thinking was that though the Island is translated as the *Island of the Men of Chroir* that it was an Island retreat for contemplation for *Bernera Bheag* as a whole. At this period (early medieval) access from Chroir would be easy at low water. In the mid 1980's the Graveyard [of St Michael's] suffered collapse on its east aspect and some observations were made before consolidations were done by the council. This confirmed the folk tradition that when the Lairs were exhausted new sand was brought up from the beach to cover the recently deceased, Ceit's [his wife's] Great Grandfather Donald being one of the last to be interred there … You will be interested to know that a new site was revealed for *Teampuill Eilean Donnan* not at *Teampuill Mhicheil* were it was thought to have been but at the other side of the Island.

5. **Eucharist and Inebriation:** My references to the Eucharistic wine may seem a little strange given that we Quakers do not celebrate such sacraments because we hold that the whole of life should be treated as sacramental. That said, I find that the ceremony as held in other churches can be very meaningful because it reminds us of what we too easily forget.

St Isaac of Nineveh (Syria) spoke of spiritual intoxication as *rawwayuta,* usually translated as its semantic relative, "inebriation". This steers us away from the etymology of toxins, and instead, leaves us with a word meaning that comes from the Latin *ebrius* meaning "sated", "filled" or "drunk". If we might be permitted to read the story of the wedding feast at Cana metaphorically, then what we see in this, the first miracle in John, is Jesus at his mother's request getting them all inebriated at the spiritual marriage that's all about the love of God (cf. *The Song of Solomon*).

In the gospels, the Greek that Jesus uses in the Eucharist is *anamnesis* – "without amnesia" usually translated as "do this in memory of me." However, a more literal translation would be "without amnesia". As such, it suggests a re-minding in the sense of calling back to the consciousness of deep reality. The "transubstantiation" in question is in consciousness of what reality actually *is*. In this sense it is also *symbolic* – the etymology being *syn-* as to "bring together" and *bol-* as in ballistics, being that which has been "thrown apart". This squares the circle of the Roman Catholic and the Protestant interpretations of the Eucharist. The Eucharist is therefore a realisation of what actually is – the *apocatastasis* of which I have written elsewhere in the text and these notes. Bread can be seen as symbolising the matter of the universe and wine, the spirit – all there in the sacrament of the present moment whenever we "do this without amnesia of me". It is a profound humanisation, indeed, a *theosis* or *divinisation* of reality and it renders all the world holy. As such, "The Eucharist anticipates the Parousia, Christ's return, or rather that of the world to Christ … when God is 'all in all'. So the Eucharist constitutes the Church as a people of the Exodus on its way to the Kingdom, already fed by it with eschatological 'manna', a 'manna' of eternity" (Clément 1993, 114). See also Note 120.

In Orthodox theology the notion of *apocatastasis* is bound up with the Eighth Day of Creation. This is the day when time itself will be redeemed, eternity realised, and the whole of creation made new as Paul anticipated in Romans 8. As usual, however, the crofters beat them to it. In *Hebridean Altars* the Rev Alistair MacLean relates a story belonging to John of the Cattle of Mull where

God woke up after the Sabbath on the Eighth Day. He realised he still had a pocketful of jewels left over from the previous week's work, opened the trapdoor of Heaven, and behold, "those jewels are the Hebrides" (MacLean 1937, 9–13).

6. **Island Connections:** I am presuming here to speak of a "we" as being all who are, in some meaningful way, a part of the island's life. This may be geographically misleading from one who has lived for the past nine years in Govan, but Govan is a part of Glasgow where you can still buy the *Stornoway Gazette* over the counter. I think Iain Crichton Smith said something like, "We may leave the island but the island never leaves us."

7. **James Purvis, Stornoway Surgeon**: The British Medical Journal gives a swashbuckling account of his escapades in those pioneering times and the article, which could have been dispatched from the furthest reaches of the Empire, can be found online (Anon 1928). I explore the life and times of "Uncle Jim" in a chapter in a forthcoming book on rural medicine from the University of the Highlands and Islands, edited by my father's one-time trainee assistant, Professor Richard Collacott, and his daughter Rachael Tearse.

8. **Burns and Boston:** See Burns' poem, "Letter to James Tennant of Glenconner" (1789). Burns disputed the Calvinist notion of the total depravity of human nature. He wrote: "Mankind are by nature benevolent creatures; except in a few scoundrelly instances, I do not think that avarice of the good things we chance to have is born with us," and he counted the writings of Thomas Boston as "damned trash" (McGinty 2003, 41–43).

Boston continues to hold traction in island evangelicalism. Iain D. Campbell reviewed his life in his *Stornoway Gazette* column earlier this year, "Commonplace Genius", concluding: "But give me a man with the calibre to write the *Fourfold State*, and I'll show you how God can set a church on (spiritual) fire" (Campbell 2012a).

9. **Hyper-Calvinism & the Marrowmen Controversy:** This note is not for the faint hearted! A range of positions that constitute "hyper-Calvinism are laid out and referenced in Wikipedia at http://goo.gl/DR4iR. As I will use the term here, hyper-Calvinism is the superlapsarian position of the Westminster Confession and its antinomian implications, including the belief in limited atonement and the double predestination of election or reprobation. The meanings of this

term changes with time and context and is sometimes used interchangeably with High Calvinism, though in the context of writings about Boston the High Calvinists are legalistic nominalists – the kind who'd want to bring back the Sharia-like theonomy of Old Testament law. As such, if I had to be one or the other, I'd rather be a hyper-Calvinist than one from on high!

In the Marrow Controversy, Boston had supported the Marrowmen who held that grace alone effected salvation. This view came to a head over controversy about the *Auchterarder Creed* in 1717 and its position, which Boston agreed was poorly worded, that: "It is not sound and orthodox to teach that we must forsake sin in order to our coming to Christ." A heresy inquiry by the Church of Scotland later condemned this position as an "unsound and detestable doctrine." It was deemed "antinomian", meaning that it was contrary to the upholding of obedience to moral laws.

The Marrowmen were so called after Edward Fisher's book, *The Marrow of Modern Divinity* (1645). A good (albeit anonymous) summary of the debate can be found at in my bibliography (Anon 2012). While all this may seem obscure to outsiders, it remains an issue within the island's more traditionalist Presbyterian denominations today since it gets to "the marrow of the matter" in the debate as to whether justification is by works or by faith. In kindly trying to help me to get my head around some of these issues, the Rev Ewen Matheson of the Free Church in North Uist mentioned, "Interestingly, the Act in the Church of Scotland prohibiting the Marrow is still in force" (pers. com., 5 June 2012).

10. **Murdo Maclennan the Contin Precentor:** Precented at the Free Church assembly in 1845 and his old-style tunes were written down – not entirely accurately, Morag Macleod of the School of Scottish Studies told me in 1999 – by the Celtic revivalist ethnomusicologist Joseph Mainzer from Germany. Morag said that it is still Murdo's rendition of Psalm 65, to a French tune as documented by Mainzer, that is sung at the closing of the Mod every year.

The North Star and Farmers' Chronicle obituary of 8th June 1899 states that Murdo's precenting was also heard by Professor John Stuart Blackie – Edinburgh University's professor of Greek, who established the Chair in Celtic and was also a passionate advocate of crofter land reform. He described Murdo's "wonderful compositions of slurring, trilling, and wailing," telling him afterwards (doubtless to his Presbyterian consternation!), that "he must have got that tune from the Pope of Rome"! (Communicated 1899).

11. **St Adomnán of Stornoway & N. Uist:** The Rev Murdo Macaulay (1986, 42) states that the pre-Reformation church at Stornoway was dedicated to St Adomnán. Martin Martin (1994, 106) gives "Stornoway Church" no saintly designation. There was, however, a Stornoway church dedicated one St Lennan, the bell of which is discussed by Macdonald (2004, 269–270). Otta Swire states that Adomnán evangelised North Uist (Swire 1966, 100). Both Macaulay and Swire provide no sources but presumably drew from oral traditions. I value Adomnán, not just for his *Vita* of St Columba, and his *De Locis Sanctis*, but also for his law protecting innocents in warfare (Adomnán 1997).

12. **Harris as the Parish of Kilbride:** A legal notice relating to the deceased Alexander Hume of Harris appears in the Edinburgh Gazette of spring 1832, p. 64, http://goo.gl/1B9Dp, with reference to:

> … the following Subjects as included in the said Process of Ranking and sale, viz – The Patronage of the Churches and Chapels of the whole Lands of Harris, lying within the parish of Kilbride, commonly called Harris, and Sheriffdom of Inverness.

My friend Jamie Whittle of R & R Urquhart LLP, Inverness, advises me: "This would seem part of a process to the Court of Session in Edinburgh by various creditors of Alexander Norman Macleod asking the court to include various landed interests as assets which could be sold so that the creditors could recoup their debts" (pers. com. March 2012).

John MacAulay tells me that the main church of the Harris people (as distinct from St Clement's as the Westminster of the Macleods) was Teampall Bhrìghid (St Bride's or Bridgit's) at Scarista. The present-day Church of Scotland rests on its foundations. He said that as far as we know, up until the time of the Reformation, worship there was Catholic until the priest converted to Protestantism.

I have discussed St Bride's of Scarista in *Soil and Soul*, but in November 2012 while in England I visited Ian Callaghan, the former proprietor of the Scarista House Hotel. He told me that there are two small islands out to sea from the church, and it was pointed out to him by local people that as the sun sets further and further to the south, it creeps along the horizon and at Midsummer, sets right in the notch between them, and that this is thought to be why the church might have been located there, probably on a pre-Christian sacred site.

Although scholars debate the etymology of the word *Hebrides* and tend to be wary of suggestions that it is linked to Bhrìghde, Alexander Carmichael drew a connection when he wrote (Carmichael 1900, xv):

> The greater portion of the collection has been made in the Western Isles, variously called "Eileana Bride", Hebrid Isles, Outer Hebrides, Outer Isles, "Eilean Fada", "Innis Fada", Long Island, and anciently "Iniscead", "Innis Cat", Isle of the Cat, Isle of the Catey. Probably the Catey were the people who gave the name "Cataibh", Cat Country, to Sutherland and "Caitnis", Cat Ness, to Caithness.

13. **The Celtic Church and Orthodoxy:** Some Orthodox historians such as Telepneff hold that the Celtic church was effectively Orthodox because most of the Celtic era was before the Great Schism of 1054. Roman Catholics tend to be more sceptical of this claim. Protestants have often liked to think the Celtic church to have been a form of proto-Presbyterianism. New Age neo-pagans set Celtic spirituality even further back in time, and I was quite taken by Jill Smith's little book about the island (Smith 2003), but I'll say no more about that to avoid spoiling the day for Donald Meek.

The connections with the Eastern church are suggested especially in the iconography – the dreaming almond eyes are very Coptic (Orthodox) – and in Orthodoxy's autocephalous ("self-headed") decentralised pattern of local-up church organisation – all appearing to be similar to the Celtic church (Telepneff 2001; cf. Evdokimov 2011, 38–41). Whatever was the precise form of the Celtic church it came under challenge at the Synod of Whitby in 664 and, later, with the replacement of Gaelic liturgies by Roman ones and European orders under the Latinising reforms of Queen Margaret and her son, David I.

While acknowledging Coptic (Orthodox) links with the early Irish church, Donald Meek is sceptical of this connection (Meek 2000, 89, 107–109).

14. **Lord MacLeod, Franciscans & Augustinians:** This claim (or accolade) of George MacLeod's critics can be seen as applying not only to his socialism, but also to his sharing the view that Celtic spirituality was substantially Orthodox. Perhaps to find the roots of Celtic nature mysticism we should be looking deeper than the Hebridean Franciscans (Note 1) to Orthodox traditions where liturgies are profoundly creation-centred.

I have wondered whether the Hebridean (and wider Scots) propensity towards Calvinism might have something to do with the Augustinian order having paved the way. There were supposedly some twenty-five Augustinian priories introduced across Scotland by David I, including the nunnery on Iona and Rodel in Harris (MacAulay 1993, 5). I put this loose theory to Professor Karla Pollmann of St Andrews University, an authority on Scottish Augustinianism. She was kind enough to reply that such ideas are important but virtually no research has been carried out on the Hebrides (pers. com. 2013). She offered the opinion:

> It is fair to say that Augustine was a very powerful ally to have if one wanted to make any kind of theological argument. And if there was the Order as an institutionalised presence of Augustine, all the better. But it is also true to say that interpretations or receptions of Augustine varied greatly (and do so up to this very day), up to the point of outright controversy. So depending on how the Hebrides' Augustinians focussed on Augustine (whether as the Doctor of Grace, or the Doctor of Love, or the Doctor of the Church), they would or would not have agreed with Calvin. Here a more specific in-depth study (also via Calvin and Knox) is needed to give a good answer. There was certainly also a strong anti-Catholic/anti-Episcopalian sense in Scotland, so your hypothesis would need careful differentiation as to who allied with whom.

15. **Old Gaelic Liturgies:** It is possible that parts of the old Gaelic liturgical tradition is not entirely lost. In December 2012 I asked Domhnall Uilleam Stiùbhart (Donald William Stewart) what he considered the most exciting edges of his work on the Carmichael-Watson Project of the *Carmina Gadelica* and related papers – http://goo.gl/hIx3A. He told me it was Gaelic liturgies collected from around the Lochaber area, and the question of what influences they reveal.

16. **Which St Clement?** Two other possibilities are Clement, an early Irish monk, or Pope Clement III who, according to Macaulay (1986, 7) issued a Bull in 1188 that declared the Scottish Church to be under the sovereignty of Rome alone, and divided into nine dioceses. Stewart-Hargreaves (at press) favours Clement of Alexandria. The absence of an anchor symbol by the effigy of Clement on Alasdair (Alexander) MacLeod's tomb hints against Clement of Rome.

Personally, I find both figures attractive. Must we be forced to choose between them? Is not the whole point of such imagery to stimulate our imaginations?

Clement of Rome was the patron saint of quarry workers, having been martyred in the Black Sea with an anchor stone around his neck. This felt symbolically meaningful during the campaign to save Mount Roineabhal from being turned into a superquarry (McIntosh 2001). On the other hand, Clement of Alexandria is a great figure in the Orthodox church, and I love his insistence on the spiritual equality of women, his solar-symbolised emphasis on the resurrection, and Greek openness to what we would today think of as interfaith dialogue.

17. **Hebridean Sheila-na-gigs:** The significance of the beautiful "Sheila-na-gig" – the unclothed feminine figure – on the tower of St Clements and on other early Irish and West Highland ecclesiastical architecture (including at St Donan's on Eigg, and the Augustinian nunnery on Iona) is worth reflecting on in terms of Catholic and Orthodox theology. The Orthodox theologian Olivier Clément writes of, "the Church in her function of mystic womb … the *Theotokos* … bringing into the world the offspring of the universal resurrection, the universal transfiguration" (in Evdokimov 2011, 12).

18. ***Drùidheachd***: For example, the menhir that may have formed part of a complex at Scarista (St Bride's) on Harris, or cup and ring marks in the rocks at the twin complex of *Teampull na Trionaid* and *Teampull Clan a'Phiocair*, North Uist – see http://goo.gl/4iZeo. On cup marks on the Isle of Ensay, Harris, see Haswell-Smith 2008, 8.3.

19. **Decent Edifices of 1760:** I shall tell the story of the rediscovery of *Tobar a' Gobha* helped by the ladies of the Bays' Café in my future book provisionally entitled *Poacher's Pilgrimage.* Michael Robson discusses how best to name the *teampallan* in English. He opts for "churches", while acknowledging that this gives the wrong impression of size (Robson 1997, 5–7). He also cites a 1760 survey of the condition of parishes in the Highlands and Islands which reported:

> In almost all these Countrys, where Churches are now wanting … we saw the Ruins of Decent Edifices, which had been anciently devoted to Sacred use. These had been built before the Reformation. We observe with Concern that Since that period, in many parishes the house of God hath Continued to lye waste.

20. **Much Loved Temples:** In the "District News" section of the *Stornoway Gazette* of 17 March 2011, p. 18, the correspondent for Harris writes about plans to stabilise the medieval chapel at Northton – *An Teampall, An Taobh Tuath* – as "a much loved local monument." The same phrase recurred in the *Gazette* in an article about the restoration, "Unearthing Harris Secrets" on 23 June 2011, p. 17. In writing about another such conservation project on North Uist the *West Highland Free Press,* 6 November 2009, p. 12, described *Teampall na Trianaid* as "one of the most iconic medieval churches in the Outer Hebrides."

21. **Ronan's Cross:** I found the Ronan Cross with its symbolism expressed by three holes – Trinitarian or life-death-rebirth? – to be very moving. Also, its portrayal of Christ that, like the Rodel Sheila-na-Gig, does not flinch from physical life's progenerative source (RCAHMS 1987 & 1997 and Notes 17 & 124).

22. **IUCN & Sacred Natural Sites:** The International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) is the world's leading scientific conservation agency and has developed a programme to aid the recognition of Sacred Natural Sites (SNSs) and encourage their protection (Verschuuren et al. 2010; Mallarach, Papayannis & Väisänen 2012). Here biological scientists have recognised that religious organisations and people often have a much longer and more effective track record of ensuring conservation – culturally, spiritually and biologically – than secular governments and NGOs. Such SNSs link to the present resurgence of interest in pilgrimage where, in Scotland, it is encouraging to see the ecumenical efforts of the Catholic Church, the Church of Scotland and the Scottish Episcopal Church (e.g. Bradley 2009). I am an advisor to the IUCN's SNS programme run jointly with the World Commission on Protected Areas and other agencies – see http://sacrednaturalsites.org/ and (McIntosh 2012) at http://goo.gl/1nRBu.

23. **The Leper's Bell & Deathbed Gaels:** In one of his visits to our premises at the GalGael Trust in Govan about three years ago the comedian and author of *The Leper's Bell*, Norman Maclean, told me that in his time he has seen many a secular Gael on his deathbed, "and they all wanted to hear the Gaelic Psalms before they died."

Yet these are becoming endangered, and the Psalms simply lack the same depth when no longer sung in Gaelic. In churches where English has become the preaching norm, perhaps consideration could be given to maintaining the

precenting in the traditional manner in the Gaelic. Non-speakers could be given a phonetic pronunciation with a translation. This would allow English to fulfil its role as a practical international language, and Gaelic to maintain its role as an indigenous poetic, even a sacred language.

24. **Jesus & Shamanic Healing:** Similarly, Jesus would mix his body (the spittle) with matter (the clay) in his healing ministry (John 9:6; cf. Mark 7:33). Such an approach is widespread in shamanic traditions. While pursuing his interest in Tibetan medicine, Heinrich Harrer reported: "We found that the people had more confidence in the laying on of hands and faith healing than in the ministration of the monks of the schools of medicine. The lamas often smear their patients with their holy spittle" (Harrer 2009, 197).

25. **Pantheism v. Panentheism:** Of course, I distinguish between pantheism and pan*en*theism. Pantheism – "God as nature" – is the belief that God is no more than nature. Panentheism – "God in nature" – is the belief that nature is infused with God but God is not just immanent, but also, transcendent. Most pantheists are probably panentheists if the distinction is explained in this way.

When working in Java while finalising this text I learned that both the Dutch colonialists and the post-Dutch dictatorship made use of Islam as a tool to break the indigenous Javanese pan(en)theistic nature mysticism (Beatty 1999). It made me consider that politicised authoritarian religion – whether nominally Christian, Islamic or otherwise – needs to destroy a people's indigenous and therefore autonomous sense of spiritual connection in order to break their spirit and take their land. Worldwide this has led to the widespread denigration of indigenous spiritual practices. It also suggests why renewed spiritual connection to the land has proven so effective in helping indigenous peoples to resist the onslaughts of globalisation.

Whether one then needs Christ as the key to God – that is to say, the humanisation of the divine, as well as finding its expression in the creation – is an issue that, for me, hinges on the personification of divine love. If we are in the "image of God", that implies that God is, in some sense, deeply human; and this leads in to the mystery of the Cross, specifically when understood as the supreme symbol of nonviolence. Personally I see Christ in a manner that is inclusive of other faiths predicated on divine love. So did Fr Raimon Panikkar, who has written extensively on the Christian-Hindu nexus in the

cosmotheandric experience – the triune *cosmos* (matter), the *theos* (God) and the *andros* (human) (Panikkar 2010; cf. 1981).

26. **MacDiarmid & Christ:** Hugh MacDiarmid's epic poem, *On a Raised Beach,* comes a close second and in some ways surpasses, especially when understood as Christ's experience in the wilderness.

27. **Luther's Condemnation of Pilgrimages:** In his address to the Christian nobility of Germany, Luther advocated that "All pilgrimages should be done away with,' as well as festivals and processions celebrating saints' days. Pilgrimages were the root of "countless causes of sin" and local saint cults, nothing more than excuses for the clergy to cash in. Holding saint-day festivals meant that "the common man … loses a day's work." As such, to "every community, council, or government authority it is their duty, as they value their soul's salvation" to see to it that "the country chapels and churches must be destroyed" (Luther 1520, sections 12, 18 & 20).

28. **Was Cultural Destruction Wilful?** I have spoken to the tradition bearer, author and Church of Scotland elder, John MacAulay of Manish (telephone conversation 11th December 2012). He says he knows of nothing in the oral or written record to add greatly to what is here. He questions whether St Clement's was wilfully destroyed by the reformers. It may just have suffered neglect, for the church's remarkable carvings of saints and fertility figures were not destroyed as might have been expected had violent iconoclasm been seriously set loose. See note 19 (above) where Michael Robson cites a 1760 survey suggestive of a merely sorry state of neglect for many island temples. John added:

> It doesn't take long for people's memories to fall apart – like the wells they fill in and disappear… A lot of what went on pre-Reformation and around that time was wiped out of people's memories. They weren't allowed to discuss it and had to turn to the new way of the established church, which destroyed a huge amount of the culture of the people – poetry, music, dancing, stories – were deemed to be evil.

An example would be the description of Mary Macrae of Harris being left to mouth her own music and dance with her own shadow. Carmichael tells it with a rhyme: "The bigots of an iron time/ Had called her simple art a crime" (Carmichael 1900, 4–5). I asked John how he saw this when set against the

revisionist view, often expressed by Principal Macleod, that Calvinism was not as culturally genocidal as is sometimes made out (Macleod, 2001). He said that it was certainly very damaging in Harris, but: "The severity varied from place to place and at different times. It depended largely on the attitudes and strength of character of some of the individual ministers." (See also Note 80 on Calvin and Sabbath dancing at Novar).

29. **Iconoclasm:** For example, and in contrast to the foregoing, in his entry for *Teampall na Trianaid*, Holy Trinity Temple in North Uist, Dr Finlay Macleod maintains that "it was burnt to the ground by Uisdean MacGilleasbaig Clèireach – one of the MacDonalds of Sleat – after the Reformation in the 16th century" (Macleod 1997, 65). It would seem that the Synod of Argyll ordered iconoclasm in the Hebrides around 1640 (Marshall 2013, 89–92).

30. ***Sola Scriptura* and Presbyterian Polity:** The bottom line of Calvinism as it is commonly found expressed is to proclaim the sovereignty of God, consistent with the Latin motto – *sola scriptura* – "by scripture alone." Charles Spurgeon who was a "Particular" or Calvinist Baptist, famously summed it up with the line: "If anyone should ask me what I mean by a Calvinist, I should reply, 'He is one who says, *Salvation is of the Lord*'" (Spurgeon 2004, 176).

How unique such a position is to Calvinism, or even to Protestantism more widely, might be debatable. What can be said is that Calvinism in its Presbyterian expression is relatively democratic. A congregation "calls" its minister and church government is through a presbytery (or eldership) of ministers and other elders. As such, the *Institutes* have been described as "the seedbed of democracy", and this relative democracy is part of why Calvinism gained popular traction during undemocratic times.

Elders are drawn from congregations and ordained ministers have special standing as "teaching elders". This provides for a balance between ordained authority and congregational participation. The Presbyterian system is therefore mid-way between episcopacy, where church government is expressed top-down by bishops, and bottom-up congregationalism.

31. **The XXXIX Articles and Double Predestination:** Much of the language of the XXXIX Articles is more restrained than that of the Westminster Confession, but the doctrine of election is clearly there in its double predestinarian form in Article XVII:

> Predestination to life is the everlasting purpose of God, whereby, before the foundations of the world were laid, He hath constantly decreed by His counsel secret to us, to deliver from curse and damnation those whom He hath chosen in Christ out of mankind, and to bring them by Christ to everlasting salvation as vessels made to honour.

It is always interesting to ask Anglican clergy if they accord with the XXXIX Articles. In my experience, most have no idea and hope that it has fallen into retirement! The main portal of the Church of England's website is singularly unhelpful on what, if anything, their creedal standing is, preferring to present a warm embrace of various ancient creeds – the Nicene, the Apostles', the Athanasian and other affirmations of faith. The church celebrates its creedal diversity and the website shows how different approaches are used in differing parishes in the modern context. To find mention of the XXXIX Articles one has to seek out section A:A2 of the 7th Edition of the *Canons of the Church of England* – http://goo.gl/p9rLw. Headed, *Of the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion,* this says in terse words that suggest the product of much bygone debate:

> The Thirty-nine Articles are agreeable to the Word of God and may be assented unto with a good conscience by all members of the Church of England.

32. **The Six Points of French Calvinism:** To this day French Calvinism has a different feel to Dutch Calvinism. My in-laws are of Huguenot origin and belong to *L'Église Réformée de France, The* Reformed Church of France. They profess six points of Calvinism in their Declaration of Faith of 1938, but with a very different emphasis from TULIP (see later in Chapter 2). My mother-in-law, Joëlle Nicolas Randegger, is a noted theological writer, and tells me that they have simply bypassed issues in their compatriot's thought which they find unhelpful for contemporary faith.

Their six points are: 1) Glory belongs to God alone; 2) Grace alone can save man and is God's free gift to humanity; 3) Faith alone [prompts grace] and arises from meeting God; 4) Only the Bible has ultimate authority; 5) The churches must be open to continual reform; 6) Universal priesthood – the priesthood of all believers. See under "Theology" at "French Reformed Church" at http://goo.gl/kxvzi.

33. **Episcopalianism & the Scottish Church:** Episcopalian polity claims to be the old church in Scotland, and as recently as 1998 this point was made to me by Canon Kenyon Wright (of the Scottish Constitutional Convention). As Donaldson states it in a Hebridean context (Donaldson 1922, 9–10):

> When Saint Columba evangelised Scotland, neither what are now the distinctive dogmas of the Roman Catholic Church, nor Protestantism in any shape or form, were known. It was to the Catholic religion, pure and undefiled, that Saint Columba made converts, and Episcopalians believe that after the overthrow of the Medieval Church in Scotland … it was essentially the faith of Saint Columba and the ancient government of the Church of which he was a priest, that was recovered by Scotland, first by the restoration of the Episcopate in 1610, and again in 1661, and never since lost. The canonical rule of the Catholic Church, that there be but one bishop in every see [i.e. the autocephalous principle], has been broken, as in England, so in Scotland, by the later papal intrusion of second bishops, owning the Roman obedience, into dioceses long previously filled by bishops of the Scottish Episcopal Church – lineal descendants in the Apostolic Succession of the Church of Saint Columba.

34. **Auld Lichts:** The *Auld Lichts* – or "old lights" of Covenanter stock, who resisted every attempt to deprive them of the right to be Westminster Calvinists. J.M. Barrie of Peter Pan fame –the son of a Free Church family in Kirriemuir – popularised the term in his couthie book, *Auld Licht Idylls* (1895), but it is used in many contexts to mean the old guard, such as the *staroobryadtsy* or Old Believers of Russian Orthodoxy.

Age carries gravity in the timeless context of eternity, and there is an enduring sense amongst Scots Presbyterians that they too hold principles that are very ancient. We see it, for example, where that great pillar of the Free Church, the stonemason and geologist Hugh Miller, referred to "the old theology of Scotland" (Miller 1857, 1).

My dedication at the start of this book is therefore an attempt, "for a' that", as Robert Burns put it, to honour the whole shebang! Again, there are many paths up the mountain; many facets to the crystal, and I will seek to reconcile

this outrageous ecumenical syncretism in my final chapter when I address the *miann*.

35. **Island Protestant Churches:** On Lewis and Harris the main Presbyterian churches comprise the Free Church of Scotland and its "Continuing" offshoot, the Free Presbyterian Church and its "Associated" offshoot, and the Church of Scotland as by law established, with most of its island clergy being conservative evangelical.

36. **Shipwrecked of North Lochs:** As many of you will know, Coinneach was a sailor from my own village of home adoption, Leurbost in North Lochs, and he had spent twenty years shipwrecked on a desert island.

> "Tell me just one thing," said the captain of the passing ship that eventually rescued him. "How did you survive all alone for so long?"
>
> "Well, that's very simple," said Coinneach. "Come and I'll show you around before we leave. You see, there is my croft. Down by the river is the fank where I'd dip the sheep, or rather, my domesticated wild pigs. At the crossroads I built the village hall for Friday nights where I'd dance with my shadow. And on the hilltop, right at the north end of the village, is my church."
>
> "All very impressive," replied the captain. "But before we set sail, explain to me just one peculiarity. Why did you build a second church on the hilltop, right at the south end of the village?"
>
> "Ah well," said Coinneach, "That is very simple. You see, at the north end is the church that I have faithfully attended twice every Sabbath day and for prayer meetings on Thursdays. But at the second – och, ma tha – that is the one inside of which I would never set a foot!"

37. **Indonesian Dutch Calvinism:** Ironically, as I write this text, the main paid work of my wife and I has been with community development and climate change, including theological considerations, with the Planning Department of Papua Province in the Indonesian eastern half of New Guinea island (Dressler 2012). There, thanks to a remarkable Papuan woman, Maria Latumahina, and her colleague, Adrian Wells, we have been working with both the Moslem and animist minorities, and the Reformed church majority, the latter being a legacy of five hundred years of Dutch colonial missionary work.

I am therefore in the peculiar position of having my work on Hebridean Calvinism funded by Indonesian "cultural Calvinists" who want, as part of drawing up their hundred-year provincial plan, to understand better the roots of their own Reformed traditions; and that understanding being assisted from a Hebridean perspective, because each are substantially based on the Synod of Dort's Dutch Calvinism.

The Reformed Church in Indonesia is very interested in liberation theology, notwithstanding its origins from the radical edge of the Roman Catholic Church and the reforms of Vatican II. It was from the Rev Joas Adiprasetya, President of the Jakarta Theological Seminary, that I was suggested the term "cultural Calvinists" by which he meant a theology derived from that historical base but no longer constrained by its original boundaries: a Reformed church, in other words, that is always reforming.

I understand liberation theology to mean an applied theology that seeks to give life by liberating theology itself, focussing especially on God's "preferential option for the poor" consistent with such passages as Matthew 25:35–45 and Luke 4:18–19, where Jesus proclaimed the Jubilee or "acceptable year of the Lord" to which the redistribution of wealth and the land was implicit (Gutiérrez 1988; Boff & Boff 1987). This is not in any way to suggest that liberation theology is merely a political theology: it is very much more rounded in its grounded spirituality.

38. **TULIP Limitations:** TULIP Calvinism has a high internet profile, especially in the Bible Belt where it was popularised by the Orthodox Presbyterian pastor, Lorraine Boettner, in the 1930s. However, Principal Macleod (to distinguish him from all the other Professor Macleods) has told me that he finds this very frustrating. He writes (pers. com. by email, 9 November 2012):

> In my view it is ridiculous to use the TULIP as an acronym for Calvinism. In fact it was never used even as a teaching tool until Lorraine Boettner's, *The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination* (1932), pp. 59–204; and the very first reference to it is early 20th century. The TULIP certainly doesn't sum up the Reformation, in which the key element, after all, was Justification by Faith … Remember that Calvin himself required 59 volumes to express his thought.

Principal Macleod's own views on Christianity are put forward in his thoughtful book, *The Person of Christ* (Macleod 1998).

39. **Elect v. Damned:** This is glossed over in the Westminster Shorter Catechism which, across questions 19 and 20, states that "God elected some to everlasting life," but leaves implicit the deduction that the remainder fall under "the pains of hell for ever." In being instructed in this at school religious education classes we were never left under any doubt that we were the potential Elect. The apparent injustice of the fate of the preordained Damned was therefore not so much in our faces as deeper study, and some sermons, forces it to become.

40. **Communion of the Saints:** In Christian theology the Communion of the Saints is a deeply mystical concept, akin to the *Ummah* in Islam and the *Noble Sangha* in Buddhism. It means a fundamental human unity in divine love. However, Calvinism is rarely comfortable with mystical realms that transcend human reason. The Westminster Confession accordingly takes its distance. In an implicit challenge to the notion in 2 Peter 1:4 that we are to become "participants in the divine nature" it insists that the Communion "does not make them in any wise partakers of the substance of His Godhead" (WCF 1647, 26:III). Calvin (2012b) was less dogmatic, though conflicted as to how to interpret the passage – see Note 120.

41. **Westminster & Property Rights:** The lead scripture proof that backs this up seems rather tangential: "Thou shalt not steal" (Exodus 20:15). It is hard to understand how the Westminster Divines could have overlooked the story of the rich young man in Luke 18, or the Christian communism of the early church: "All the believers were united and shared everything with one another" (Acts 2:44 ISV). One is left to ponder whether in seeking to accommodate the mercantile classes to the Reformation's success a little too much might have been yielded.

42. **Elective Dictatorships:** Lord Hailsham's celebrated description of the Westminster system as an "elective dictatorship" by which the people episodically elect a government with sweeping powers to rule could be described as a very Presbyterian system.

See on England's part, the Union with Scotland Act (1706), at http://goo.gl/H522m; and Scotland's, the Union with England Act (1707), at http://goo.gl/h7htI.

43. **The Orange Lodge, the Sword, and Kuyper on Calvinism:** By way of illustration … on 7th May 2001 I was leading a Centre for Human Ecology

study tour under the auspices of the Open University on a visit to Northern Ireland. During a day in South Armagh with British Army helicopters clattering close overhead we met with politicians in the Camlough Sinn Fein office near Bessbrook, Newry. On the Garavaghy Road, we talked with Republican community leaders, and in the Drumcree Community Centre a woman memorably said about the Orange Order's marches: "They say they are just playing traditional tunes, but we know what those tunes mean, and they cut through us like a knife." As we went away she said the meeting had helped her better to understand herself.

It astonished many of our students that most of these people did not consider themselves to be "British". That evening we went to the Portadown Orange Lodge and met with the Grand Secretary of the Grand Orange Lodge in Northern Ireland, Dennis Watson, and the County Master of the Orange Order for Armagh, Nigel Dawson. The Orange men sat straight and stiff, uneasily on guard with these students who had felt such sympathy with the Catholics they had met earlier in the day. They struggled to communicate the principles for which they stood in any way in which our group could make a meaningful connection.

Eventually, in profound discomfort, I turned and said to the students: "What we don't realise is that these gentlemen see themselves as the heirs and guardians of the democratic freedoms that today we take for granted."

At this, the two Orange men breathed a palpable sigh of relief and for the first time, relaxed back into their chairs. "But what I don't get," I said in follow up, but smiling, "is how come when you're all so *Presbyterian* and *egalitarian*, you give yourselves such fancy titles as *Grand Orange Masters of Grand Orange Lodges*?"

The room erupted into laughter, and from that point on we were able to have a flowing conversation in which differences of power and perception were explored with warmth and honesty. It was an experience that taught me the importance of always trying to understand another's worldview from their own point of view in order to facilitate communication.

Kuyper (who was recommended to me by Principal Macleod) cites Professor Fruin to the effect that, "Protestantism has had to establish itself at the point of the sword" and it was "Calvinism that gained the day" (in Kuyper 2010, p. 26). Seen in this light, Calvinism and its working through into the Westminster Confession is more than just a statement of faith. It is a comprehensive marker

of cultural and political identity; one that, as its adherents see it, is not an imposition on the world, but rather, God's gift to the world. This is why the *Institutes* have been described as "the seedbed of democracy". As Kuyper described such self-perception, also in his 1898 lecture series (p. 17):

> Hence Calvinism condemns not merely all open slavery and systems of caste, but also all covert slavery of woman and of the poor; it is opposed to all hierarchy among men; it tolerates no aristocracy save such as is able, either in person or in family, by the grace of God, to exhibit superiority of character or talent … for the sake of spending it in the service of God.

44. **C of S Creeds:** For modern Church of Scotland creeds see "Statements of the Church's faith" at http://goo.gl/9ERyR.

45. **Accommodating Calvin:** *Accommodate* was Calvin's favourite qualifying word. Time and time again he stresses how God "lisps with us as nurses are wont to do with little children," stooping "far below his proper height" to accommodate the infinite to the finite capacity of human minds (Calvin 1536, 1:13:1). Sometimes when one gets Calvin at his best, one can catch him gazing into the mystical vastness like at a starry sky, albeit through a telescope that was perhaps too much the manufacture of the late Renaissance and early Enlightenment rationality of his times.

I have come to see Calvin as the Aquinas of the Protestants although he only mentions the Catholic systematic theologian some half a dozen times in the *Institutes*. In a deathbed vision on the morning of 6th December 1273 Thomas Aquinas, author of the *Summa Theologica,* uttered his remarkable last words. "I can do no more. Such secrets have been revealed to me that all I have written now appears of little value" (The Catholic Encyclopaedia online, 2012). Calvin would have appreciated that recognition of accommodation.

46. **"We're all Barthians Now" – Karl Barth on the Atonement:** This refers to the revisionary work of the Swiss Reformed theologian, Karl Barth, and especially, to his interpretation by Thomas Torrance. However, on the central doctrine of the "atonement" in particular, I find it questionable how far Barth's *Church Dogmatics,* for all its nine thousand pages, takes us beyond Calvin. The central problem is the notion of a wrathful God expressing an ironic love that required Christ to die to "purchase" human salvation

Barth appears contradictory on the atonement. On the one hand he appears to uphold the Calvinist position of penal substitution. He writes: "He was the Judge judged in our place. All theology … everything depends upon the fact that the Lord who became a servant … fulfilled in this way the divine judgement laid upon Him. There is no avoiding this strait gate" (Barth 2010, 266). Jesus who "willed to make Himself the bearer and Representative of sin, caused sin to be taken and killed on the cross" (p. 246). If we turn from this, then "When it is resisted His [God's] love works itself out as death-dealing wrath" (p. 246).

But on the other hand, in the same paragraph Barth concedes that while the idea of punishment came into Christian theology from Isaiah 53, the notion that "He *satisfied* or offered satisfaction to the wrath of God" is actually "quite foreign to the New Testament"!

In other words, the 'satisfaction' or penal substitution theory of blood atonement only adds up if the carriage of Christianity continues to be dragged along by the Old Testament warhorse. So what are we meant to be? Christians, or unreformed Jews? To address that question goes beyond the remit of this text, but it is not for nothing that, from time to time, I have placed the word "atonement" in scare quotes. From the perspective of a nonviolent theology of the Cross – the theology of a God of absolute love – I question whether "atonement" is the right rubric. Etymologically the word only started to mean the reconciliation of sinners with God from the 1520s, and "propitiation of an offended party" from the 1610s. Its etymologically correct meaning is *at-one-ment*, and when the word is used in that original sense, I have absolutely no problem.

47. **Respecting God in All:** Both of these traditions have, and continue, to give me a great deal. So has the Roman Catholic tradition and other faiths, especially Hinduism. I was drawn to Quakerism because of its emphasis on discerning the movement of the Spirit and its ethic of nonviolence. In the context of an ecumenical discussion such as this my guidance is from the Quaker *Advices and Queries* as follows (YM 1994, 1.02.17, my emphasis):

> Do you respect *that of God in everyone* though it may be expressed in unfamiliar ways or be difficult to discern? Each of us has a particular experience of God and each must find the ways to be true to it.
> When words are strange or disturbing to you, try to sense where they come from and what has nourished the lives of others … Do not

> allow the strength of your convictions to betray you into making statements or allegations that are unfair or untrue. *Think it possible that you may be mistaken.*

One thing that I have loved in recent years is how much I have been learning from Presbyterianism as I wrestle to understand the parts of it that I have found most difficult.

48. **Robert Barclay, Quaker, on Universal Redemption & Visitation:** Robert Barclay noted that John 1:9 is often called "the Quaker text" (Barclay 1991, 100). It is the taproot of the Quaker ethos of seeking "that of God in all" and "walking in the light". Quakerism's primary source of authority is neither creeds, clergy nor scripture, but the discerned "truth of the heart" (Ambler 2001).

Barclay was the Gordonstoun-born governor of the colony of East Jersey. He said that the Calvinism in which he was raised was more severe than any of Geneva or the Reformed churches abroad. He was educated by Jesuits in Paris and became a Quaker by convincement when he was eighteen (Barclay 1991, xiii ff.). His *Apology* challenges what he calls "the horrible and blasphemous doctrine of predestination." In its place he points to universal redemption founded on universal love where the spirit of Christ is offered to all including, he insists, to those of cultures and eras who have never heard of Christ, for the Spirit will at some point touch everyone in "the day of visitation" of Luke 19:14 (pp. 72–124).

Barclay's proof texts for countering the doctrine of limited atonement include John 1:7–9, Matthew 11:28–30, Luke 2:10 and Titus 2:11 – "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to *all* men." However, God does not force Heaven on anybody (pp. 98–99). Only those who harden their hearts lose it, which is how he interprets such texts as Matthew 25:29. Justification goes beyond the Old Firm faith-works dichotomy. "Justification arises, instead, from the love of God for us, and this is the original and fundamental reason why he accepts us" (Barclay 1991, 129–130).

The Synod of Dort was important in his thought, especially where it emphasises the role of the Holy Spirit, for example: "In his chosen ones … [God] not only sees to it that the gospel is proclaimed to them outwardly, and enlightens their minds powerfully by the Holy Spirit so that they may rightly understand and discern the things of the Spirit of God, but, by the effective operation of the same regenerating Spirit, he also penetrates into the inmost

being of man, opens the closed heart, softens the hard heart, and circumcises the heart that is uncircumcised" (Dort 1619, 3/4:11).

In Barclay's opinion, however, "The theologians who were assembled at Westminster were afraid of the testimony of the Spirit because they sensed a new dispensation which was beginning to dawn, and which would eclipse them," even though they claimed the Spirit's authority for their own work (p. 48). Few contemporary Quakers read Barclay because one needs a grounding in Dutch-cum-Westminster Calvinism to grasp the importance of his points. Contemporary Quaker thought as accumulated through history is best expressed in *Quaker Faith and Practice* (YM 1994), and given the importance of discernment and seeking "clearness", there have been many good studies of such processes as used in spiritual development and practical church polity (e.g. Sheeran 1996; Loring 1992), as well as in action for social change (Green, Woodrow & Peavey 1994).

49. **Beauty in Orthodoxy and Calvinism:** Beauty as the direct perception of love is the touchstone in discerning spiritual truth. It is why the Orthodox churches call their standard that is subordinate only to scripture – their collection of readings from the thinkers and mystics of the early church – the *Philokalia* – which is Greek for "the love of the beautiful."

Calvin did not have a strong aesthetic sense. In one of his searching reflections – the kind of thing that has given me considerable respect for the man – Principal Macleod writes: "There has been no Calvinist aesthetic. An excessive spiritualism has inhibited us from clearly asserting the goodness of the material universe. Terrified of the sensual we have refused to face the deeper question of the sensuous. We have also failed to insist on the absolute value of beauty, even though it is clearly emphasised in the creation narrative itself. In Genesis 2:9, for example …" (Macleod 2001).

In his lecture on Calvinism and Art Abraham Kuyper acknowledges that "Calvin, it is said, was personally devoid of the artistic instinct." He sought instead the "high seriousness of life … sealed not with the pencil or chisel in the studio, but with its best blood at the stake and in the field of battle" (Kuyper 2010, 107–108; see also Note 114). As such Kuyper held that Calvinism sought "to clothe itself in beauty of a much higher order – the inward, spiritual beauty of the worshipping soul" (p. 48). Given the vacuous narcissism of much art that is not grounded in the sacred, an argument could be made that Calvinism thereby

has a very deep aesthetic. It reaches for what the Jewish poet, Allen Ginsberg in *Howl*, called "the ancient heavenly connection to the starry dynamo in the machinery of night" and as such, repudiates the idolatry of "Moloch whose love is endless oil and stone!/ Moloch whose soul is electricity and banks!" (Ginsberg 1956, 9 & 22).

Neither must the transcendent Calvinist aesthetic necessarily remain stuck in the *meta* at the expense of the immanence in the *physical.* The possibility of achieving a synthesis is movingly demonstrated in *Thine Eyes Shall See the King in His Beauty*, a memoir by the island religious historian, the Rev Murdo Macaulay. Written after the passing of his deeply-loved wife, this draws richly on the Hebrew Bible's *Song of Solomon* (Macaulay 1988). I am told that it received some local criticism. To me, on being lent it by a Free Church minister, I found there affirmation of the Highland church's capacity to shape-shift stereotypes that might otherwise box it in.

50. **McLeod Campbell, Oaths, and the Westminster Confession:** This was the Church of Scotland's successful heresy trial against the Rev John McLeod Campbell of Rhu who taught Universal Atonement, and on such account was removed from his parish ministry.

There is a debate as to whether or in what sense the ordination of Free Church office bearers constitutes an "oath", and Dr Fergus Macdonald of the United Bible Society cites Principal Macleod (2011b) as holding that historically there was no concept of "ordination vows" in Scottish Presbyterianism, this term being more a matter of popular parlance. That may be the case for "vows", nevertheless, Act IX, 1851, of the Church lists "the Subordinate Standards and other authoritative documents" and stipulates that "every office bearer in the Church must testify his personal adherence" to the Westminster Confession of faith (Macdonald 2011).

51. **Sources of Religious Authority:** Traditionally Christian theology has recognised three main sources of authority: the scriptures, the early Christian writings (or "patristic" texts), and the action on our hearts of the Holy Spirit. Strict Protestant interpretations emphasise *sola scriptura*, "by Scripture alone", but as scholars like Robert P. Carroll late of Glasgow University point out, *Which canon of scripture?* (Carroll 1991). (See also note 14 on the Augustinians).

52. **"Calvinism" Sources:** The neglect of many other church Fathers, not to mention occasional Mothers, and even the relative neglect of the gospels of Jesus is even more apparent in some Calvinist books. For example, at the time of writing, the Calvinist bestseller on Amazon – *The Five Points of Calvinism* by Steele, Thomas & Quinn (2004) – cites the various epistles of Paul one hundred and thirty-seven times, but the gospel of Mark only twice and Luke seven times.

53. **Principal Macleod on Limited Atonement & the Declaratory Act:** As Principal Macleod put it more formally in one of his papers that he sent afterwards (Macleod 2009): "What, then, did the cross achieve? The transforming, glorifying ministry of the Spirit! For how many? Is it ours to ask?"

He also tackles limited atonement in articles on his website. One powerfully states (Macleod 2011b):

> How many know that by becoming deacons they are subscribing to, for example, the doctrine of limited atonement? How many know what that doctrine means? And how many know where to find it in the Westminster Confession? In all probability, many office-bearers unknowingly hold opinions at variance with the Confession of Faith; or, at least, are ignorant of what exactly they have signed up to.

Another of his articles cuts some slack (Macleod 2011a), albeit revealing the difficult balance that the Professor tries to walk between a liberal and a conservative position. He remarks that in 1893 the Free Church passed:

> … a Declaratory Act which radically altered the terms of Confessional subscription. In future, office bearers would be committed only to such doctrines as enter into `the substance of the faith'. It was easy, of course, to argue, that neither Limited Atonement nor the Establishment Principle had that level of importance: they were 'open questions'. But a day would arise when men would claim, equally forcefully, that their ordination vows also gave them liberty of opinion on such matters as the resurrection of Christ and the virgin birth. As far as their legal position was concerned, they were undoubtedly correct. The Declaratory Act (and its equivalent in other Presbyterian churches all over the world) made the Confession completely inoperative.

54. **Dawkins in the Hebrides:** For example, an article in *The Independent* implied that Lewis is the antithesis of the holy land. It maintained that while Professor Dawkins "has braved the world's most god-fearing communities" his visit to Stornoway will present him with "one of the most hostile receptions of his career" because the invitation had "sparked a battle for the soul of the Highlands" (MacDonnell 2012).

55. **Pan Drops:** Peter May provides plenty more: The houses of "Crobost" are "nestled in the dip of the cliff road, gathered around the grim, dominating presence of the Free Church where Fin had spent so many cold and miserable childhood Sundays. The sky behind it was blackening for rain, and Fin could smell it on the wind …" (pp. 74–75). Surreptitiously sucking mints in the sermon was "a kind of small, secret victory against the power of religious oppression" (p. 349). What he should have remarked upon is the splendidly pagan irony that the mints most commonly sucked during long sermons are … Pan Drops!

56. **Christ's Descent Into Hell:** "He descended into Hell" – the Apostles Creed, and its basis in 1 Peter 3:19, a text with which Calvin struggled, suggesting that Christ had merely sent the Spirit into Hell, but not his soul (as if the Trinity could be so split). Calvin expresses thus his distaste for the notion that Christ descended into Hell (Calvin 2012a):

> Moreover, the strange notion of those who think that unbelievers as to the coming of Christ, were after his death freed from their sin, needs no long refutation; for it is an indubitable doctrine of Scripture, that we obtain not salvation in Christ except by faith; then there is no hope left for those who continue to death unbelieving.

57. **The Bible and Proof Texts:** Calvin's scripture proofs in this section of the *Institutes* are either from Old Testament (which is pre-Christian), from 2 Thessalonians (which is a disputed text attributed to Paul), or to Jesus in citing Mark 9:43 and Matthew 8:12. The latter two texts are thought unlikely utterances of Christ by liberal Biblical scholars of the *Jesus Seminar* (Funk et al., 86 & 159–160; cf. Carroll 1991). In the case of Mark 9, the repetition of the passages about the worm that never dies is of such dubious authenticity that many modern translations either omit or show it bracketed. The same is the

case with the longer ending of Mark where the tests of faith include drinking poison and handling snakes (Mark 16:9–20).

I am not arguing for turning down the thermostat of Hell. Ironically, I am arguing for turning it up, but purifying our perception of the flame. The challenge to Evangelicals is not to recant, but to become more evangelical, to communicate the *good news*. In saying that, I hope that it will be clear, especially towards the end of this text, that I am inviting my own liberal theological thinking to be challenged, in turn, by island evangelicals, and furthermore, I find this to be a fertile ground for personal spiritual deepening. It is not their conservative social values that draw me – especially not those relating to women. Rather, it is their all-important connection to the heart as captured, for instance, in the title of Professor Macleod's book, "The *Person* of Christ". More and more I find myself exploring this as a Highland mysticism in which what is said to be believed at a head level, and is often an obstacle to liberals, is less important than what is manifested from the level of the heart.

58. **Thomas Boston, David Livingstone and Punishment:** Pain or violence seems to run everywhere through this era. Even Boston's writings were used punitively. Around the age of sixteen the famous Scots missionary to Africa (as he was to become), David Livingstone, showed an interest in reading books on astrology – until "soundly flogged by the good deacon his father by way of imparting to him a liking for Boston's *Fourfold State*" (*Harper's New Monthly Magazine,* XVI:93, 1858, p. 304).

59. **Childhood Traumatic Psychology:** References on the impacts of trauma in childhood – about disarticulation between the inner and the outer life (Robben & Suárez-Orozco 2000; Laing 1960); boarding school psychology and land Scottish land ownership (Bull, McIntosh & Clark 2008); and authoritarian childhoods of prominent tyrants including those of the Third Reich (Miller 1987). Alice Miller links the biographies of prominent Nazis to their cripplingly authoritarian childhoods and argues that "poisonous pedagogy" was particularly prominent in German and British culture.

60. **The Solway Martyrs:** The youngest of the Solway Martyrs was eighteen-year-old Margaret Wilson – see http://goo.gl/1MlJC. John Buchan's *Witch Wood* is an all-too-believable depiction of how such paranoid horrors murderously grew in small, frightened communities and either side could be so easily wronged or wrong-footed, thereby tightening the spiral of violence (Buchan 1993).

61. **Athanasius and Divinisation:** This leads human eschatology – its ultimate end – into unimaginably deep territory. As the church father, Athanasius of Alexandria expressed it: "Christ became man that we might become as God" (Vatican 1993, 460), and I was struck by how strongly this is expressed in the stated paragraph of the catechism of the Roman Catholic Church.

While taking care not to suggest that we *are* God, the Orthodox churches (of Russia, Greece, etc.) are especially strong on such *theosis* or *divinisation* as they call it – see especially Clément (1993) for the patristic sources, but also, Evdokimov (2001). The same principle is also the fulcrum of Hindu thought as has been explored so deeply by the late Hindu theologian and Roman Catholic priest Raimon Panikkar (1981 & 2010), who spoke in the *No Life Without Roots* conference in Govan in Scotland in 1990 as a Gifford lecturer and guest of the Scottish churches – see http://goo.gl/14VyS.

Interestingly, Olivier Clément was as a friend of both Pope John Paul II and the French Reformed Church spiritual teacher, Frère Roger of Taizé. In such interweavings we glimpse the resurgent fabric of the Undivided Church, including its capacity for interfaith appreciation. This is not to suggest that we should abandon our Christian roots. Rather, it suggests that in a progressively post-imperial and post-racist age it is time to explore how deep and how wide those roots extend, so that we do not commit the idolatry of making our Christ too small.

62. **Remonstrance at the Gates of Hell:** This sense of resurrection beginning here and now in a "realised eschatology" – the end of all things being in the here and now – is not trying to explain Hell away. Neither is it "Purgatory" in any punitive sense of that word, for Evdokimov is saying that Hell is very real, only that it is entirely self-made. It exists out of the necessity for human freedom. It exists because "the ability to refuse God is the pinnacle of human freedom." The one thing that God cannot do, or will not do, is to force the love of anyone.

The paradox of Hell, therefore, is that it "witnesses to our freedom from loving him" (Evdokimov 2001, 28–34).

It is true that the God of traditional thunderbolts and hellfire can be found in the Bible. However, any sense from some of the scriptures of God being "armed for vengeance," as Calvin put it, must be set in context, and dwarfed beyond insignificance, by the over-arching keystone principle of the late Hebrew prophets and the New Testament that "God is love" (1 John 4:8). Such

a God is "gentle and humble in heart" and gives rest to "all ye" that labour and are burdened – *all* ye is what the text says, not just "some of ye", and the Greek original really does mean "all" (Matthew 11:28–30, NIV/KJV).

I believe that this is a theology on which we must insist and if need be, metaphorically speaking, do so as a remonstrance at the gates of Hell; just as Abraham, in his time, also made the remonstrance – "Far be it from you to do such a thing" (Genesis 18:25, NIV; cf. Jeremiah 5:1). An interesting feature of that passage is that some of the ancient manuscripts present it as the Lord standing before Abraham rather than the other way around! A Jewish theologian at the University of Florida once told me how significant this is. It is as if God is having to stand to account before the human created in God's own image – though such a notion of divine psychotherapy (such as Carl Jung explored in his commentary on Job) is potentially much too blasphemous to have made it into most English translations of the Bible (Jung 1984).

The full implications of universal redemption are, of course, utterly repugnant to human notions of justice in which their remains any trace of vindictiveness. It means considering the possibility, as St Ambrose of Milan wrote in his *Commentary on Psalm 118*, that, "The same individual is at the same time saved and condemned" (Clément 1995, 305). It means not shirking penance, but rather, embracing the ethos of St Silouan of Athos: "Keep your soul in hell and do not despair" (Evdokimov 2001, 193). And Evdokimov even cites Augustine and Jerome on the tradition that Judas himself "carried in his hand an awesome mystery, the morsel of bread from the Lord's Supper. Thus hell holds in its very heart a fragment of light" (p. 32).

"We must pray," adds Oliver Clément, "that the fire of judgement – which is the fire of God's love – will not consume the wicked, but only that part in each one which is evil" (Clément 1995, 303). Perhaps the 'sheep' and 'goats' of which the Last Judgement scene speaks are not two divisions of people into the Damned and Elect as human rationality has assumed, but rather, "two kinds of character within each individual" (p. 304).

Within the limitations of language and such baggage-loaded terms as "the Last Judgement", I find this a liberating theology, consistent with Gustavo Gutiérrez viewing liberation theology at three levels: 1) "liberation from social situations of oppression and marginalization," as 2) "a personal transformation by which we live with profound inner freedom in the face of every kind of servitude," and 3) "liberation from sin, which attacks the deepest root of all

servitude; for sin is the breaking of friendship with God and with other human beings" (Gutiérrez 1988, xxxviii).

What I have written here about Hell and soteriology, leaning mainly on Evdokimov and Clément, is not marginal to the Eastern church. Dostoevsky considered it to be the deepest teaching of the most saintly practitioners of his native Russian Orthodoxy. In *The Brothers Karamazov* he portrays Fr Zosima giving this counsel (Dostoevsky 1998, 402–405):

> Remember especially that you may not sit in judgement over anyone. No man on this earth can sit in judgement over other men until he realises that he too is just such a criminal as the man standing before him, and that it is precisely he, more than anyone, who is guilty of that man's crime … Believe this, believe this implicitly, because therein is contained all the hope and all the faith of the saints … If your light had shone forth it would have illumined the path for others … Fathers and teachers, I ask myself: "What is hell?" I argue thus: "It is the suffering caused by not being able to love any more … the flames of thirst for spiritual love."

63. **Hebridean Folk Parables on Hell:** One example is John Lorne Campbell's story about Ruairi MacNeil the Mingulay crofter, who appears to have been well schooled in the Hebridean Orthodox tradition. One day while out working his croft he was confronted by one of three visiting evangelical ministers who asked: "Do you know, my man, what hell is?" Ruairi replied, "Hell, my man, hell is deep and difficult to measure, but if you keep on going, you'll find the bottom" (Campbell 2000, 109).

In the Bible Jesus used two words that are translated as "Hell". *Gehenna* was the burning city rubbish dump outside of Jerusalem, and *Hades* was the underworld of the dead. In the story of Lazarus (a beggar) and Dives (a rich man) told in Luke 16, it is from his place in *Hades* that Dives pleads for a single drop of water to be sent down from Heaven to cool his tongue. Lazarus was unable to bridge the great divide. But there is a postscript to this teaching story from the traditions of the Isle of Eriskay as collected by the Skye ethnographer, Otta Swire (Swire 1966, p. 166).

The robin, back in those days, was just another little brown bird like all the rest. On seeing the plight of Dives, he filled his beak from the cold spring, and

dived down through the fires of Hell and delivered succour to the suffering sinner's tongue. In so doing his breast feathers were singed bright red, and so they have remained to this day – a testimony, as we might see it, to the supremacy of love.

For sure, this is a folk parable fit only for the ears of little children. But the Christian religion is a historical religion. Its understanding of God progressively deepens from the Pentateuch, through the later prophets, into the New Testament, and then there is the ongoing witness of the Paraclete. Perhaps this tale is a parable for our times – for those who can be as little children – and the robin, a remonstrant at the gates of Hell saying in effect, "Far be it you to do such a thing" (Genesis 18:25; see Note 62). The robin's red breast can therefore be viewed as symbolising the passion of spiritual love. A stone mason also told me that this bird has a totemic place in his trade. In days gone by, stone masons often developed silicosis and coughed blood. Their chests were "red" as was that of the robin, who would often follow them, hopping along the wall as their work progressed.

Otta's granddaughter, incidentally, was Flora Macdonald Margaret Swire, the twenty-four year old medical student who died in the Lockerbie bombing, and whose father, Dr Jim Swire, campaigned selflessly for the release of al-Megrahi who he believed to have been wrongly convicted. The family are directly descended from the original Flora Macdonald who ferried The Prince to safety "over the sea to Skye" in the aftermath of the '45. Ronald Black of the School of Scottish Studies says in his introduction to the new Birlinn edition of Otta's book about Skye that it, "is widely regarded as the best book ever written about the island," because "her roots were deep in the MacLeod Country" (Swire 2005, p. xiii).

64. **The Significance of Loch Seaforth (Sìthphort) and Mackenzie Power:** The first Ordnance Survey map of 1854 renders the name in variations of *Sithphort,* which would suggest Faerie Port. *Sìthean* place names abound in the area. The most prominent is the mountain that looms across the loch from the castle site on the croft of the late Mary Kate Maclennan at 5 Seaforth Head. Called *Sidhean an Airgid*, this summit forms the "nose" of what is sometimes called the "Sleeping Beauty" mountain complex. Its name translates as "the Silver (or the money) of the Faeries." An audio recording online from the School of Scottish Studies made by Dr Emily Lyle in 1976 has William Murdoch MacLennan

describing a childhood memory of the "faerie silver" being pointed out to him from the south end of Airidhabhruaich – see http://goo.gl/JZbZN.

In his chapter on why Seaforth chose the castle site, Dr Macdonald of Gisla (Macdonald 2004, pp. 84–86) tells how he confirmed the location with the then head keeper of Eishken, Duncan Macrae of Eishken (whose grandson, Christopher, now holds the position). He notes from a reference in an old paper that Seaforth "could not have been very reverent or superstitious, for he had built three standing stones of a druid circle into the walls of his new castle." In fact, the ruins of the castle appear to be on the knoll to the east of the Maclennan croft house at No. 5, straight down from where the Seaforth Highlander memorial now stands by the roadside as commissioned by Mr Ian Mitchell of Matheson Road, Stornoway. The political even-handedness of Ian's philanthropy shows in his also having commissioned Seumas (or Jim) Crawford to build the astonishing stone teardrop at Airidhabhruaich to commemorate the landing of the "Prince From Over the Water" when fleeing the aftermath of Culloden.

Although Mary Kate Maclennan had a diesel generator, being off-grid, she did not like to use it, and was very probably the last person on Lewis to spend her evenings reading her Bible by the light of oil lamps. Born in Luskentyre, Katie passed away peacefully in the Lewis hospital on Sunday May 13, 2012, aged 87 – R.I.P. – and rests now in the old Kinloch cemetery amongst her loved ones. She herself was well loved for both her laughter and her evangelical passion as a devout member of the Free Church at Kinloch. She was a holy woman, a visionary seer, and a sharp-witted theologian who sent me a well-thumbed copy of the Westminster Shorter Catechism just before she died, presumably to keep me in my place! I shall share more of my conversations with her in *Poacher's Pilgrimage.*

65. **Mackenzie's Deafness:** Mackenzie 1894, pp. 342–3, cites the Hon Henry Erskine as observing that, "Lord Seaforth's deafness was a merciful interposition to lower him to the ordinary rate of capacity in society."

66. **Sanitised Histories:** Similarly adulatory was Alexander Mackenzie: "The martial spirit of the people soon became thoroughly roused, and recruits came in so rapidly" … that within four months the regiment was marched to Fort George where they were duly inspected by Sir Hector Munro of Novar and dispatched to active duty.

67. **Deaf Mackenzie and the Protection of Slaves:** Mackenzie 1894, p. 338 similarly maintains: "While Governor of Barbadoes he was for a time extremely popular, and was distinguished for his firmness and even-handed justice. He succeeded in putting an end to slavery, and to the practice of slave-killing on the island [which had been] deemed by the planters a venal offence punishable only by a small fine of £15." Mackenzie, however, was an adulatory source so his assertions would merit triangulation.

68. **Colley on the Making of Britain:** The religious underbelly of the Empire that gave it a vindicating narrative and plausibility structure was substantially configured by using and, arguably, hijacking Reformation ideology (Hill 1992; Longley 2002). As such, says the influential English historian, Linda Colley (1992, 5):

> Britain was an invention forged above all by war. Time and time again, war with France brought Britons, whether they hailed from Wales or Scotland or England, into confrontation with an obvious hostile Other and encouraged them to define themselves collectively against it. They defined themselves as Protestants struggling for survival against the world's foremost Catholic power. They defined themselves against the French as they imagined them to be, superstitious, militarist, decadent and unfree.

69. **Landlordism & Anglicisation:** I explore the rise of landlordism and its tie-in with the enforced Anglicisation of the children of the chiefs in the first part of *Soil and Soul* (McIntosh 2001).

70. **Name Variations of Mary Elizabeth Frederica (Stewart) Mackenzie:** Various name conventions and spellings occur for her and her second husband, James Alexander Stewart, who then took the name Stewart-Mackenzie. The *Dictionary of National Biography* (Lee 1808, 368) lists her as *Maria* Elizabeth Frederica Stewart-Mackenzie and this recurs in some online sources. Was she originally Maria at birth, but dropped it for being too Catholic-sounding? To look into this would require genealogical research that exceeds what I have time to undertake. All three of *The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (ODNB online – Henderson & Reynolds 2012), *The Peerage of the British Empire* (Lodge 1840, 229) and the *Genealogical and Heraldic Dictionary* (Burke 1839, 435) use

the double-barrelled hyphenated version of her surname under her second marriage, but speak of her as Mary rather than Maria. The ODNB speaks of her as *Lady Mary*. Because it is the most authoritative contemporary source, that is how I shall call her. She was also known as Lady Hood Mackenzie as well as the Hooded Lassie. Her first husband should not be confused with the more famous Admiral Samuel Hood – one of Nelson's "band of brothers" – though both the Admiral Hoods were related.

John Macleod in his history of Lewis religion speaks of her as Lady Elizabeth or Lady Elizabeth Stuart-MacKenzie(2008, 147). He may have had reasons for this that would be useful to know. Peter Cunningham (2008) calls her the Hon. Mrs. James Stewart-Mackenzie which, whether with or without the hyphen, was probably her correct title on her second marriage to Stewart (sometimes also spelled Stuart).

While the English reference works just cited all render it hyphenated (or "double-barrelled"), Scottish sources such as reports of James Alexander's activities as an M.P. in the *Inverness Courier* mostly place them unhyphenated, as also does his parliamentary biography which is the best researched biographical piece that I have been able to locate (Fisher 2009). There is a difference between English and Scottish convention here. In Scotland, following especially from the Campbell-Gray petition of 1950, the Lord Lyon has ruled that hyphenation is improper for ancient clan names as it creates, in effect, a new name (see http://goo.gl/ePdBB). I have been told that Alastair Lorne Campbell of Airds when serving as Scotland's Unicorn Pursuivant of Arms in Ordinary summed this up with the magnificently waspish maxim: "In Scotland no true gentleman hyphenates his name" … a point of etiquette that, as my informant suggested, "… would be a good one to tell them at the Skye Ball!"

That noted, given the weight of formal biographical reference to the double-barrelled version, given too that the Stewarts and Mackenzies drew their power from a southern imperial social reference group, and given that it avoids for the general reader the ambiguity as to whether or not Stewart was his Christian name or surname, I have chosen to use the hyphenated form.

71. **Mackenzie Belief in the Brahan Seer:** In his study of the Brahan Seer(s), Alex Sutherland holds that while the family "had certainly come to believe there was a prophecy … there is no evidence to believe it existed prior to the event" (Sutherland 2009, 170). This view was not shared by Alexander Mackenzie

(1894, 340–342). While Sutherland is correct to be prudent, he may also be undervaluing oral tradition that, in times of widespread popular illiteracy, left few scholarly finger prints and had its own standards. These could, however, range from the exacting to the fabricated.

It would be interesting to know how Lady Mary might have viewed Highland traditions of the second sight and destiny in the light of her experiences in India with its belief in karma, and how she saw Indian spiritual thought in general.

72. **Northwest Frontier Forts:** Fort William in the west was named after both the Prince of Orange and the "butcher" Cumberland whose Redcoats had carried out the infamous "no quarter" command at Culloden and reprisals in the subsequent Harrying of the Glens. Fort George in the east – still a military barracks to this day – was built three years after Culloden at the peninsular point that controls the shortest easterly sea crossing to the Black Isle as well as the sea approach to Inverness. Both forts share the same Gaelic name – *An Gearasdan* – The Garrison.

73. **Cultural Genocide:** In a study of the social effects of the 1745 Jacobite rising the Rev Donald Maclean of Edinburgh examined how non-Highland writers in *The Scots Magazine* during the year of Culloden perceived the Gaelic clansfolk. Their support for policies of cultural genocide is explicit. They hoped that by "breeding up their children in loyal principles, the name of *Highlander* by this means would in another century scarcely exist." The '45 and its nemesis at Culloden presented them with a long-awaited excuse by which, wrote one contributor: "It now seems that Providence has given us the opportunity of at least reducing the number of these malignant wretches; and tho' the total extirpation of them may not be practicable, surely none should be spared that have ventured to infringe our laws."

Remarks such as these, said Maclean (1914), "might be dismissed as the wild ebullitions of frenzied but ignorant scribblers, were it not that they embody the opinions of the average English and [Scottish] Lowland citizen, which have passed into literary currency as a correct portraiture of our race."

74. **Colonsay & the SSPCK:** Domhnall Uilleam Stiùbhart uses his study of a catechist on Colonsay as a lens through which to view these elite and state-sponsored missionary dynamics of the Royal Bounty and its relationship to the SSPCK. His monograph was originally published in the Colonsay magazine,

The Corncrake, and I have taken its date from the file properties of the PDF version. Stiùbhart has a Free Church background from Back on Lewis and curates the Carmichael-Watson archive at the University of Edinburgh which is of vast importance for Hebridean spirituality, and much of it now available online. I greatly appreciate the fact that it is a scholar of Highland church pedigree that is holding this material and rendering it accessible.

75. **Dr Kennedy, Disruption Worthies & *Na Daoine*:** John Macleod describes how Dr Kennedy's "worshipful biography" of Dr John MacDonald as "the Apostle of the North" was "publicly disowned by Dr MacDonald's own son, writing angrily to a Highland newspaper in 1865." He quotes the son's letter that describes Kennedy's work as "bad taste and arrant bigotry" (Macleod 2008, 163–164). Macfarlane would not have agreed with the tone of such an assessment. He says that Kennedy's books, including *The Apostle,* "were reviewed, by some with cordial appreciation, by others with usparing severity. Both kinds of review bespeak quality in the books" (Macfarlane 1995, p. 103).

The folklorist John MacInnes once remarked to me that *na daoine* and from them presumably, indigenous Highland preachers, followed in the footsteps of the panegyric bards. Such excessive praise – a kind of kirkyard Kailyard – was commonplace in the nineteenth century as, for example, where Macfarlane wrote in what today sounds positively camp locution (1995, 105):

> Dr Kennedy himself appeared as young as Hyancinthus. He became a lovely weaver who wove his magic carpet in entrancing colours before the eyes of his hearers. Dingwall's keen metaphysician, and deep theologian, and scientist too, abreast of the knowledge of his day, had doffed his stately garb and appeared as in the faery wings of Peter Pan. His speech was crested by attractive metaphors which hit the imagination, while his picturesque addresses seemed like roads that sinuated, every bend revealing a new surprise.

The term "worthies" is used in *Disruption Worthies* published by John Greig & Son (Anon. 1876) profiling leading figures in the Free Church, and in a sister publication, *Disruption Worthies of the Highlands*. The parallel that I draw between the function previously played by pre-Reformation saints, bardic panegyric and adulatory biographies of the worthies is remarked on in a preface to what seems to be a reprint of *Disruption Worthies of the Highlands*

from Christian Focus Publications, http://goo.gl/C3cpz. This opines that the sketches presented (pp. 7–8):

> … were brief, highly stylised and worshipful biographies … It is important to note here that the *Disruption Worthies* volumes were never intended as objective treatments of their subjects. Rather, their purpose was to keep alive the memories of some of the leading figures in the church, so that their lives might be emulated.

76. ***Na Daoine* & the Shamanic Function:** The shamanic function in indigenous societies is to connect with the spiritual world and thereby help to channel the flow of life back into the community from where it has been damaged or lost. Such is "the shaman's essential role in the defence of the psychic integrity of the community" (Eliade 1989, 509).

Shamanic figures often appear a little strange, or on the margins of their societies, and some descriptions of *na daoine* with their long coats and hair, their sometimes seership and healing capabilities, and colourful handkerchiefs knotted over their heads, hint at such a demeanour and would merit further study. Kennedy (1979), however, in his chapter on The Men is at pains to stress that they were strictly subordinate to and in service of the clergy. One wonders if he protested too much. It would be interesting to know all sides of the perspective, for some of *na daoine* as reflected in the various published sketches suggest a pre-politicised spirituality that is the hallmark of shamanic calling – examples being Angus of the Hills of Uig or Callum the Seer of Shawbost (Macfarlane 1924).

77. **Dr Aird and the Napier Commission:** Dr Aird testified to the Napier Commission on the plight of the people. He asked the chair: "Is it mere policy for the rulers of this nation to allow such a class of people to be treated as if they were serfs ?" (Napier 1883, 39993–40027).

The Rev Dr Gustavus Aird was born in 1813 at Kilmuir (the Church of Mary), Easter Ross, where there is a well named after him, a photograph of which is held in Tain Museum, http://goo.gl/7KDXF.

78. **The Ross-shire Buffs in Harris:** It was Munro who had inspected Deaf Mackenzie's "volunteers" after being ripped from their Lewis crofts and shipped to Fort George to start the 78th Regiment. These were also called the Ross-shire

Buffs, and at one point in their history were shipped over from Fort George to suppress tenant unrest during the clearances of Harris in a measure of turning the people against themselves that was described to Lord Napier as having been "very severe" (Napier Commission 1883, 859).

79. **Blown off Guns:** Illustrated in Orlando Norie's watercolour, *Mutineers about to be blown from guns by the Bengal Horse Artillery, 1858* – http://goo.gl/ZmEDt. For eye-witness accounts see *Harper's Weekly,* February 15 1862, at http://goo.gl/le3ZB.

80. **Calvin and Dancing:** Munro's ire against dancing, on the Sabbath or otherwise, has a clear precedent from Calvin. Bruce Gordon writes (2011, 141):

> The foundations of Calvin's church [in Geneva] were quickly tested in the years following 1546 by a series of conflicts that underscored the fragility of Genevan society and its new order. Dancing at the wedding of the daughter of Antoine Lect, a prominent citizen, brought more acrimony. When the matter was examined the participants denied any wrongdoing, a response that seems to have sent John Calvin into an apoplexy of anger. He thundered from the pulpit against dancing and the "shocking" conduct of the Genevans. He recounted his rage to Farel [his violently iconoclastic friend].
>
> > After your departure the dances caused us more trouble than I had supposed. All those present were summoned to the Consistory [the church court] … [where they] shamelessly lied to God and us. I was incensed, as the vileness of the thing demanded, and I strongly inveighed against the contempt of God in that they thought nothing of making a mockery of the sacred admonitions we had used.

81. **Women's Historiography:** I am not a professional historian, but I have been unable to find a scholarly study of this exceptional woman; indeed, there is surprisingly little written on Highland church history in general (Meek 1996, viii). Most writers either mention her in passing or not at all.

82. **Hebridean Judaism?** As Jewish identity passes down the maternal line, this raises the curious consideration that, under different circumstances, Lewis could have been given a non-Christian destiny!

83. **Stewart-Mackenzie in Greece:** An English historian, Simon Baddeley, has suggested to me that Stewart-Mackenzie may have fared better in his later posting as governor of the Ionian Islands (Greece). He writes that in the course of his research into the governing style of Lord High Commissioners of Corfu: "All I've heard of the man was that he was good at his job, wisely resolving some of the more volatile rivalries among different factions on Corfu and the other Ionian Islands" (pers. com. 26 December 2012).

84. **The Church Judicial Function:** Martin Martin relates how, even in his era of the late seventeenth century, "every parish in the Western Isles has a church-judicature" by which, under the chairmanship of the minister, the church elders met after worship to discuss misdemeanours along with the "chief heritor" (i.e. the clan chief or landlord) whose disciplinary authority was "irresistible within the bounds of his jurisdiction" (Martin 1994, 185; cf. Macleod 2001). It sounds as if it could have been similar to the Consistory arrangement of Calvin's Geneva, though it may have predated it, for in Ireland the Catholic priest often doubled in a law-and-order capacity. Defenders of Presbyterianism's judicial role in post-Reformation Scotland point out that in the absence of local secular courts, the church often had to step in and that this contributed to the image of Presbyterian severity.

85. **Lady Mary's Hand-Picked Evangelicals:** "Hand-pick" is Dr Finlay Macleod's (Shawbost) description to me. Campbell's profile of Alexander Macleod in *Disruption Worthies of the Highlands* (not to be confused with *Disruption Worthies* that dealt with mainly Lowland "worthies") expands on this point (1886, 222):

> In the interval between 1819 and 1824 Mr Macleod officiated as minister, first of the Gaelic Chapel of Dundee, and afterwards of that of Cromarty, with what measure of success in either case the writer of this sketch is, owing to the lack of information, unable to say. In the year 1824, however, he was settled as parish minister of Uig, in the island of Lewis, and it is worthy of note that this was the first settlement of an evangelical preacher that occurred in the known history, not only of Uig, but of the whole Long Island [i.e. Lewis and Harris]. It should not be forgotten here that the instrument in God's hands in bringing about this happy event proved to be the late Honourable Mrs Stuart Mackenzie, a name very dear to the

> Christian people of Lewis, on account of her warm sympathy with evangelical preaching, and her continued and effective influence in securing the appointment of men of God in the various chapels and parishes throughout the island. It was due mainly to her efforts that, in addition to the introduction of a gospel preacher into Uig, Mr Finlayson of Lochs, Mr Cook of Ness, and others found fields of ministerial labour in the religious waste of Lewis.

Precisely what Lady Mary's role was, and what documentation might survive in the Seaforth and other archives, could be the subject of a fine PhD or biography, not to mention the blockbuster movie that could be built up from her tiger-shooting days!

Controversially at the time, Lady Mary supported both Presbyterian and Baptist evangelicalism. Ansdell mentions the Rev John Cameron's ire towards her for encouraging the Baptists, and this in the face of the Rev Alexander Macleod's insistence that Baptists should be given no countenance on Lewis (Ansdell 1998, p. 46). Ironically most Baptist doctrines were essentially Calvinist. For a chart of creedal comparisons see Gene Taylor's critique of five-point Calvinism (Taylor 1995).

86. **Folk Culture, Piety and Oral-Literary Shift:** The Rev John Macinnes points out that the Highland social order of the pre-Evangelical era was oral, and that literacy became necessary mainly for interactions with the Lowlands and the colonial empire. The old Highland culture was "admirably fitted to instil ideas of honour, fidelity, courage [and] hospitality" but otherwise wide open to cultural mistranslation and so, he argues, to being misinterpreted as ignorant and barbarous (Macinnes 1951, p. 224–225):

> Its spiritual background was a blending of pagan and "Catholic" elements. It can therefore be readily understood that to the Lowland Presbyterian eye, the whole body of the folk culture and literature would appear to be harmful superstition [therefore] "Piety" meant [or came to mean] the substitution of the true religion, whether Presbytery or Prelacy, for Popery, paganism and ignorance.

The importance of the oral-written transition cannot be underestimated. I am finishing editing these notes while in Indonesia and as part of that, speaking at the Protestant training college in Jakarta. The point was suggested to me

by one of my hosts that in both Christianity and Islam in Indonesia when the emphasis shifted from oral traditions to the written word, a hardness set in, the head came to dominate over the heart, and the indigenous sense of the spiritual feminine and the animation of nature was suppressed; to which I responded by citing St Paul that "the word killeth but the spirit giveth life."

87. **The Uig Shipwreckers?** As part of the lore of the unregenerate nature of the Uig people of old we were all told in childhood how "they even prayed for wrecks." Geddes citing Martin as one of his sources, suggests: "Shipwreck was still thought of as an 'act of God', and a dire 'misfortune'" … and that there is "no hint of deliberate wrecking ever taking place" (Geddes 1955, 209). Wrecks were a vital source of wood and metal (p.225), and the attitude of the parishioners of Uig on the exposed Atlantic coast of Lewis in the early nineteenth century was perhaps not that far removed from today's insurance industry, which still sees maritime tragedies as "acts of God" – albeit from a less pious perspective.

When we see the old indigenous spirituality of any culture being denigrated, we must ask whether it really was as caricatured, or whether we are seeing what the Irish scholar, Michael Cronin, would describe as a failure to "translate" between cultures (Cronin 2006).

88. **Arthur Geddes, Rabindranath Tagore and Gaelic Spirituality:** Arthur Geddes was also an expert on Bengal and wrote his PhD on Tagore country. Recently his daughters have edited his translations of some of Tagore's poetry, made at the bard's personal request (Geddes 2011). He was a geographer at the University of Edinburgh and his two chapters – "The Spiritual Life of the Community" and "Change in Religion and Social Customs" – in *The Isle of Lewis and Harris* are the finest study that I have encountered on this theme. They remain pertinent more than half a century later, and as the book is hard to procure I have scanned and placed them on this book's web page. He remarks (Geddes 1955, 206):

> Gaelic belief and practice show a recognition of communal as well as individual spirituality; of the depth of consciousness below its upper surface, and its upwelling power; and of the visible world without, in all its beauty, as a gate to the world within.

89. **Boston & Hobbes:** Here Boston magnifies such passages as Ephesians 2:3 and 2 Samuel 12:5. It is interesting that Boston was born in 1676 and Hobbes died in 1679. There is probably yet another PhD waiting to be written on

comparing the religious Covenant of one with the secular Commonwealth of the other.

90. **Macleod of Uig and Religious Authoritarianism:** While Alexander Macleod is often described in somewhat Talibanesque terms, his methods were mild in comparison with Calvin's Geneva. The Protestant reformers feared latent continuing Catholic sympathies amongst the people, therefore: "The standard response was to demonize these recalcitrant elements as 'superstition' or 'idolatry'" (Gordon 2011, 136). Punishment for religious offenses like failing to attend church "was intended to bring about reconciliation with the community" (p. 134) and included being forced to attend sermons, or banned from the Lord's Table, which had social implications because it disqualified the miscreant from becoming a godparent or being able to marry (p. 134).

At least Alexander Macleod's methods were Calvin-lite in comparison with Geneva. There Calvin had "resolved to erect a godly community, even if the means were brutal" (p. 124). The most extreme example was his part in the conviction of the pantheistical heretic, Michael Servetus, leading to the authorities passing sentence of death by burning at the stake, his head sprinkled with sulphur presumably to pave his way all the better to Hell (p. 223). It took him half an hour to die – though not as bad as Patrick Hamilton's six hours at the hands of Archbishop Beaton in St Andrews. Although Servetus stands out in a league of his own, and can be marginalised as a once-off aberration by those who choose to be in denial of what was done, witch burnings also kept the heat on heresy and in such respects, both Catholic and Protestant versions of Christianity have suffered from the corruption of violent men in violent times in massive crucifixion of the standards of love.

In Christian totalitarianism the key passage used to justify compulsion has been Luke 14:12–24, KJV. "The lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled." The critical phrase is "compel them to come in" (v. 23) – *compelle intrare* in the Latin Vulgate translation – typically rendered into English as "to force them to enter." The original Greek, however, reads more in the sense of "to urge". Augustine and Luther misused this passage to justify religious compulsion by violence if necessary – see commentary at http://goo.gl/tE5Hw. Paul Evdokimov responds to Augustine's interpretation saying: "One forgets here the words of St John Chrysostom: 'The one who threatens or forces a heretic commits an

unforgivable sin'. It is the 'nightmare of good imposed' in which everything good imposed turns into evil" (Evdokimov 2001, p. 181).

For all of Calvin's irascible and bombastic style and links with real-time terror during his lifetime, it is hard to study the man without also appreciating his achievement, complexity and social sensibility, as in his commentary on Acts 13 with the sublime line: "Mankind is knit together with a holy knot … we must not live for ourselves, but for our neighbours." He has to be set in his age, and what he was up against with the power of a centralised Catholicism that was usually in league with landed power. At the same time, our Protestant traditions have often made a Procrustean bed of Bible passages and stories that should have been understood through poetry and metaphor (such as is parable), and not overstretched. Procrustes, it might be recalled, fitted visitors to his iron bed by trimming off or hammering out their body parts.

91. **Arthur Geddes on Evangelicalism & Social Upheaval:** Geddes considered that the religious psychology was compounded by the fact that the evangelical movement had been shaped by men from the Lowlands and England who "had themselves undergone the same crushing experience" as the post-Culloden Scottish Highlands were now experiencing "at a time when communal life was being overthrown by the Industrial Revolution" (Geddes 1955, 215–216).

Again, we sense the impact of political violence on religious mores and how hyper-Calvinism resonated with what Fromm calls the "character structure" of the times (Fromm 2001, p. 56, see note 104 below). One can imagine how a theology of "total depravity" would resonate with those who had already been made to feel totally worthless as the dynamics of inferiorisation, victim blaming and the internalisation of oppression played out. Protestantism was itself a liberation theology in its origins, but that process of liberation needs to be continuing.

92. **Mystical Protestantism:** In this respect Alexander Macleod follows in a tradition of Protestant theology that has, through unflinching study of the Bible combined with contemplative prayer, arrived at mystical conclusions that are not usually considered comfortable in the Western churches. In this Macleod deeply has my respect. A helpful online summary of such mystical Protestant thought is given in the final paragraph of Batiffol (1907). However, interestingly, in discussing the edginess of *apocatastasis* (to which *theosis* or *divinisation* as in Macleod's "sons of God" reflection is intimately related), Pierre Batiffol fails

to mention the word's occurrence in Acts 3:21, which, surely, sweeps aside all question of canonical authority. See also Note 120.

93. **Revival Waiting:** In his *Stornoway Gazette* column last week, Iain D Campbell (2012) reflected on the angst felt by pious islanders that there have been no revivals in recent years. He found himself having to temper the much prayed-for hope that another might be just round the corner. I admired his own demonstration of "heart for others" in saying:

> Maybe we need to be careful what we ask for, though. Are we praying for revival to come to Lewis again just to fill the seats in our particular church? What if the revival came but filled the church of the new denomination along the road? Would we be happy to give God all the glory then? … We are also commanded to maintain unity within the family of God. I'm not sure we would get top marks for that either. But in churches where genuine unity and a heart for others exists, genuine worship takes place….

This shows the self-reflective quality that has emerged in contemporary Free Church thought and is apparent both in some of Dr Campbell's columns and those of Principal Macleod – for example, where the latter frequently goes out of his way to use gender-inclusive language in his writing. Such a spirit gives me a strong sense of warmth towards the Free Church part of my own ancestry and an active sense of well-wishing towards that church today. We do not have to agree on Calvin and Westminster to hold one another in mutual respect and dialogue. Neither Calvin nor Westminster are necessarily of "the substance of the faith" in Christianity, we are all fallible and in my own chosen denomination, the Quakers, we have had our share of rapaciously capitalistic and even, before the rise of abolitionism, slave-owning fraternity.

What matters is to constantly discern "the substance of the faith," whatever our faith may be, in learning to "speak truth in love" as my friend Tom Forsyth of Scoraig would often put it. What's more, I am editing this endnote while working in Java and having just visited the largest Buddhist temple in the world in the largest Muslim country in the world. Most of the visitors were local Muslims proud of their interfaith heritage. Living in one world we can come to respect others without losing our own identity where that identity is securely grounded.

94. **Revival, Duncan Campbell and his Granddaughter, Mairi:** Iain D's column on revivals gives the opinion: "Sociologists would be right to question the extent to which other factors contributed; in his most recent book on Lewis, for example, Bill Lawson interestingly raises the question of whether the loss of the *Iolaire* might have been a contributor to some of the subsequent religious revivals of the mid twentieth century?" (Campbell 2012). This is helpful insight, but always we must ask where the line lies between trauma being the cause of a religious movement, and the religious movement being a self-healing answer to the trauma. Secular sociologists tend to see the first point but miss the latter.

The current Wikipedia article on Duncan Campbell is excellent, and I take an interest in him because I know his son, Archie, as a fellow Quaker. From her childhood I have also known Archie's daughter, Mairi, who has been meeting with me to try and understand the social context and importance of her grandfather. She also contributes to our work at the GalGael Trust with her viola and voice in expressing a form of music that is utterly ethereal and hauntingly shamanic. It transfigures consciousness, calling back the soul even in some of our most broken people in Govan.

Mairi Campbell's own faith approach is, like my own, shaped by the mysticism of the east as well as by Christianity. Her current musical tour, blending themes of religious revival and the urgent imperative of healing our people and planet, is called *Revival and Red Earth.* She writes: "I know we're not really supposed to sing about these things … but … what to do??" and one of her lyrics – see http://goo.gl/T4vzB – is about the Rev Duncan Campbell's days on Lewis and is called "Ballad of the Revival":

> When war had gone and peace had come
> Times were hard I've heard folk say
> But there were sights on the Long Island
> as they'll remember till this day.
> It started on a bitter night
> as people crept to church in fear
> that God would pass them by again
> when hopes ran high that He was near.

Mairi's work prompted me to reflect on human destiny from Genesis 3:8 – that there will come a time when poverty has been defeated, and war a faded spectre of the distant past: then we will turn our hands, late and last, to the ruined

remnants of the Earth; and re-set Eden's seeds; and sit beneath the tree; and listen once again to hear "the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day."

95. **The Year of the Swooning:** The most noted example was 1822, as John Macleod describes it, "still remembered as the 'Year of the Swooning' because it was accompanied by … dramatic human phenomena … [where] people screamed and shouted out … went into alarming trances … [lending] powerful ammunition to the ministers increasingly disturbed by the new Evangelical movement" (Macleod 2008, 135). He adds: "It is difficult to see how protracted trances did anyone any good." They were "genuinely frightening for attendant children" and, ultimately, "difficult to regard them as more than attention-seeking entertainment."

However, "entertainment" might be too light a diagnosis. From what is known of cultic behaviour in other contexts, mass hysteria provoked by severe social, psychological and spiritual upheaval might have been more to the point (Galanter 1999), and again, Lawson's reported remarks about the *Iolaire* trauma are apposite, as is Mairi Campbell's line, gleaned from her own research on the island, that the revival came "when war had gone and … times were hard" (Note 94).

96. **Inner Colonisation and Hardline Religion:** Paulo Freire from his experience in Brazil spoke about the "cultural invasion" by which "the invaders penetrate the cultural context of another group, and ignoring the potential of the latter, they impose their own view of the world." Such colonisation is not just an outer one of land, resources and labour. It is, above all an *inner colonisation*. It is a colonisation of the soul that subsumes the inner world of the colonised and helps to make them "plastic", to borrow Dr Kennedy's word, to the will of the coloniser. The presumption of superiority by another race, social class or dominant group, says Freire, serves to "inhibit the creativity of the invaded by curbing their expression." It is therefore "always an act of violence against the persons of the invaded culture, who lose their originality" (Freire 1972).

The power of fundamentalist religion wherever it appears in the world is that it offers a seemingly invincible identity to peoples who have been stripped of, damaged or humiliated in the identity that they had before. Potentially this can be a healing process. It can bring alive the restorative experience of God –

the fundamental ground of all being – when all else has been stripped away. But when not handled tenderly with love, it can comprise religious oppression – a form of spiritual abuse – that only compounds political oppression.

97. **Double Bind, Inferiorisation and Cultural Invasion:** In his "double bind" theory of psychosis, Gregory Bateson saw both schizophrenia and alcoholism as having social origins, but with genetic predispositions. He viewed the social aspect as the psychological fissuring of extreme anxiety when a person, especially in childhood, has been held in "double bind" or Catch 22 situations of "damned-if-you-do" / "damned-if-you-don't", and with no prospect of escape (Bateson 2000). The Glasgow psychiatrist R.D. Laing in *The Divided Self* suggested that such dynamics lead to the creation of a false self that draws energy from the true self, leading to psychic collapse and the imperative of breaking down in order to break through (Laing 1960).

On the island, it is not hard to see how certain Calvinist theologies can feed such double binds when expressed through preaching that combines hellfire with double predestination. Behind that, in unpacking the social context, we may be looking at such dynamics as:

> 1) Victim blaming internalised (or self-adopted) by those who have historically undergone "cultural invasion" imposed by a newly-arrived colonising mentality or social class, that presumes superiority over their generations-long exerience (Freire 1972);
>
> 2) The "inferiorisation" of the colonised resulting in multiple compounded collapses in confidence (Fanon 1967);
>
> 3) The excruciating anxiety of double binds that can divide people within and amongst themselves, possibly to the point of psychotic melt-down (Bateson 2000); and,
>
> 4) All of these, ratcheted up by punitive theologies such as caused the Gadarene demoniac – whose self-harming echoed colonisation by a legion of pig-eating Romans – to fear the very hand that came to salve his suffering (Mark 5:1–20).

I press these issues because, as for many of us who were raised in the mid-twentieth century, the issues were very alive with some clergy. I recall a now-deceased Free Church minister who I visited one evening in Harris in

the mid-1990s. He was a lovely, gentle man, yet he told me how it *broke his heart* to look on his congregation, and to see that there were some sitting there who, no matter what they did, or what he tried to do for them, were damned as reprobates. Such a psychological backdrop perhaps helps explain how some islanders toggle heavy drink with heavy religion. What is important to understand is that religion itself, because of its very power, so often falls a victim of political vicissitudes. From such things we must heal, just as Jesus too sought to repair and extend the broken trellis.

98. **Apache Philosophy and the Fog of Colonisation:** More fully, Viola Cordova who was the first Native American woman to obtain a PhD in philosophy, wrote: (2007, 124):

> The "fog" that rises between the Native American and the European world is a clash of realities. There is much support for European reality; there is the dominant culture. The Native confronts this "alien" reality from an early age through a system of compulsory education. He is taught that the Earth is raw material, an enemy to be conquered and used … Too often the Native American responds to this rising "fog" by seeking oblivion in alcohol, drugs and suicide. He responds by striking out in violence, battering at the fog he sees enveloping his world, his loved ones. Still another response is to go through the fog to the reality that it represents – the white world, committing oneself to an endless denial of what once was.

99. **Daiches on Calvinism and the Poor:** In his Gifford Lectures David Daiches (of a Jewish background) discusses the cultural crossed wires caused by what I am describing as "inner colonisation" or "colonisation of the soul" and how it leaves the peasantry all the more ready to comply by coming to own their imputed sinfulness. It begs consideration as to how far preachers who are heavy on the sins of others are doing a *Moby Dick* on their congregations – projecting out their perhaps more justified sense of sinfulness, and seeking their own redemption vicariously in further expression of kick-the-dog theology. Daiches touches on this where discussing Robert Burns's and James Hogg's critiques of Scottish Calvinism in the following passage. It also invites reflection as to why, across many religions and religious denominations, hard-line fundamentalism tends to be most virulent amongst what the "negro psychoanalyst" Franz Fanon

called in the English title of his book, *The Wretched of the Earth*, or as the French original had it with more theological piquancy, *Les Damnés de la Terre* (The Damned of the Earth). Daiches said (1984, 145):

> One of the paradoxes of the religious position in Scotland in Burns's day was that the sterner and indeed what may seem to us the crueller forms of religion were preached by the more democratically minded and were popular among the peasantry, while the more humane and liberal doctrines were propounded by the genteel and the well-to-do, who supported the principle of patronage – the appointment of ministers by vested authority rather than election by the congregations concerned. So we find Burns, the great egalitarian and champion of democracy, sneering at those who attacked patronage in favour of democratic election, because he associated the attackers with extreme Calvinist intolerance and the defenders with humane and liberal ideas. Further it is one of the disappointments of eighteenth-century Scottish culture that the religious doctrine that was set in opposition to Calvinism was more often than not a wishy-washy "moderatism", a combination of easy-going deism and sentimental morality … so Burns, passionate critic of social inequality though he was, found himself on the side of the gentry in religious matters, while the peasantry tended to be Auld Lichts or, in more general terms, Evangelicals.

As such, harsh religion fills the breach of the chambers of the soul that colonisation has emptied and "disarmed". It offers an explanation for the suffering of the Damned of the Earth and a re-cast identity, to which the notions of punishment and fear are pivotal. We have to ask, however: *Is this Christian?* Is it not the same Phariseeism, albeit in the hands of latter-day "Christian" Pharisees, that Jesus sought to spare us from, and which merely continues to perpetuate the spiral of violence of the retributive justice of unreformed Judaism such as Jesus and the later Hebrew prophets tried to bring to closure; and that, most absolutely, with *the-buck-stops-here* statement of the Cross that, as the supreme symbol of nonviolence, absorbs redemptive violence and thereby breaks the power of its myth (Wink 1992)? As Raimon Panikkar put it, "Only forgiveness breaks the law of karma" (Panikkar 1991, 56).

100. **Donald Meek & Geddes on Liberation Theology:** Arthur Geddes drew his analysis of Lewis and Harris religion to a close by pointing to the work of the Rev Norman Macleod (*Caraid nan Gàidheal*), the Rev John McLeod Campbell, the Iona Community and the principle of universal salvation. A man of Highland Aberdeenshire stock, he loved this island and its spiritual people, just as he had loved the India of his youth and its vast spiritual vistas that his friend, the Bengal bard and Nobel Laureate, Rabindranath Tagore, had helped to open to him (Geddes 2011; Watson 1968).

Like Professor Donald Meek (1987), Geddes would have recognised liberation theology when it arose in Latin America in the nineteen sixties and seventies. He had already described its essence in his perception of the Free Church's origins (Geddes 1955, 212–213):

> The Disruption gave a powerful urge to the movement for freedom, in many ways. Throughout Scotland the people were made to feel that both landlordism and the State were in the wrong: the people were with God and, most of all when they suffered, God was with them! The sense of liberation brought to the Highlanders and Islesmen encouraged them to press their claim to the land they worked, strengthening the agrarian movement of 1880–86. The moral victory of 1843 contributed to legal victory in 1886 [i.e. with the passing of the Crofters' Holdings (Scotland) Act 1886].

101. **Hugh Miller and the Vase:** What also stirred a tear was Donald's – if I might now de-formalise "the Professor" or "Principal" – explanation of how Hugh Miller is visually portrayed at the foot of a pillar; as if he, more even than Chalmers, was the pillar of the Free Church. The Disruption took place in the month of May, and a broken vase of May wildflowers lies scattered at his feet – the artist's way of presaging this dear stonemason's untimely death. See http://goo.gl/bIXY9.

102. **Gender and the Highland Church:** The current shortage of Free Church ministers has been the subject of debate in the local press, with the Rev Shona Boardman, the new priest at St Peter's Episcopal Church in Stornoway, offering the suggestion in a letter in the Stornoway Gazette that the Free Church might consider accepting women clergy. To this, the Rev Iain D. Campbell responded in his column: "My whole ministry has been shaped by the women God sent

my way. But none of them, I dare to suppose, would ever imagine, or have imagined, themselves as candidates for ministry; and nor would the Church, I hope, imagine it either" (Campbell 2012b). Tangentially, in the *West Highland Free Press*, Principal Macleod has often bent over backwards to use gender inclusive language – including "she" in place of "he" – and has drawn attention to the pivotal passage, Galatians 3:28, that in Christ "there is neither male nor female." As such, the Free Church's heart-searching for balance between tradition and the emerging promptings of the Holy Spirit (as some of us might see it) is an ongoing and healthily-public discourse in the wider community. I therefore persist in referring to our two Hebridean newspapers as "the best theological journals in Scotland"!

103. **Hellfire Sermonising and Religious Instruction:** I say "the past" optimistically. I most recently heard such preaching from a Free Church minister at the funeral of a friend on Lewis just a few years ago. Such was the look on my face as we stood at the graveside that, when the minister had finished on his theme from Paul that "the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23, KJV) the brother of the deceased, albeit inconsistently with accepted form, asked if I would like to add anything. I said that those of us who had known our late friend had seen not so much that he was "a sinner" through and through, such as the preacher had insisted in accordance with the doctrine of total depravity, but as a man in whom, as Paul also put it "Christ liveth in me" (Galatians 2:20). As such, we had known him as a fruitful branch on the Vine of Life.

I also recall being taken from our class in the Nicolson Institute sometime when I was perhaps around sixteen to hear a sermon in a nearby church. Such was the vitriol of the preacher that I had to restrain myself from standing up and denouncing his words. I am glad that the restraint succeeded as I would then have lacked the theological capacity to carry through what it would have started and that, with consequences for which I would not have been equipped. (In other words, they'd all have thought me a nutter). Ours, it should be remembered, was a generation when corporal punishment was still the rule in school, and we were threatened with the tawse, the leather strap applied to our hands, if we did not learn chunks of the Bible and our Westminster Shorter Catechism.

Such religious instruction dates back to the Scottish Education Act of 1872. It remains the case, as the Scottish Government's website puts it, that "The

Education (Scotland) Act 1980 continues to impose a statutory duty on all local authorities to provide religious education and religious observance in Scottish schools – see "Religious Education and Observance," http://goo.gl/Syzrc. This is unpacked further in the Scottish Government Circular 1/2005: "Provision of Religious Observance in Scottish Schools" which, amongst other measures, makes provision for parents who so wish to withdraw their children from participation – see http://goo.gl/axBDX. I strongly support religious education in schools but "observance", in my view, should require not just parental consent, but also that of the child.

104. **Fromm on Reformation Theology, Spiritual Inequality and Nazi Ideology:** In *Fear of Freedom* (also titled *Escape from Freedom*) Erich Fromm the German humanistic psychologist of the Frankfurt School (born of Orthodox Jewish parents) puts forward his thesis that Renaissance and Reformation thought were contributing factors in Germany's embrace of Nazi ideology. He suggests that the burning social issue is not whether an idea is true or false, but how it factors in with the times: (Fromm 2001, 56):

> The influence of any doctrine or idea depends on the extent to which it appeals to psychic needs in the character structure of those to whom it is addressed. Only if the idea answers powerful psychological needs of certain social groups will it become a potent force in history.

Fromm analyses Luther's authoritarian personality in relation to his strict and loveless childhood and links it to his adult ambivalence to authority (p. 56 ff.). He argues that although the medieval Roman Catholic Church held many of the same (Augustinian) doctrines as Luther and Calvin drew from, the *spirit* in which it held these was very different "with regard to the problem of human dignity and freedom and the effect of man's actions upon his own fate" (p. 60).

He argues that Calvin's binary division of humankind into the Damned and the Elect "found its most vigorous revival in Nazi ideology: the principle of the basic inequality of men" (p. 77 ff.). Calvin had "preached to people who felt immensely alone and frightened, whose feelings were expressed in his doctrine of the insignificance and powerlessness of the individual and the futility of his efforts" (p. 75 ff.).

The breakdown of the medieval order was not caused by Calvin. It was already in train from the Renaissance, and in many respects, the Reformation was a response to it. However, Calvinism provided a plausibility structure by which people could make sense of their sufferings as being caused by their own sinfulness. The belief that God, though "armed for vengeance," had sent Christ to save some of them was a glimmer of hope on a dismal horizon. The victims might be redeemed provided they embraced the humility of victim self-blaming, and it is here that we might discern the psychological roots of preaching in which fear is the "secret of the Lord."

These are painful reflections for Reformation thinkers. However, the key to peace is turned not by denying the contradictions in our reality, but by holding those contradictions in tension. Luther and Calvin were very deeply men of their times, and if we fail to own our inherited share of their issues in what might be thought of as a process of cultural psychotherapy (McIntosh 2008) we are doomed to repeat the past.

We already are. Following the Iraq and Afghanistan invasions some commentators have persuasively argued that predestinarian psychodynamics are what have shaped neoconservative Anglo-American foreign policy to this day (Longley 2002; Davis 2006, 121–150). Before it was renamed *Operation Enduring Freedom* (to avoid compounding the offence to Muslims caused by assuming one of the attributes of God), the American-led and British-supported invasion of Afghanistan in 2001 was called *Operation Infinite Justice,* and spoken of by President George W. Bush as "this crusade" (BBC 2001).

105. **Rustenberg Declaration**: Rustenberg – for context, discussion, and criticism, see the online *Sojournours* article by Villa-Vicencio (1991).

106. **A Kinder, Gentler Calvinism:** The American Evangelical Presbyterian, James McGuire, attempts to counter contemporary hyper-Calvinism (if that is what it is) in the American Bible Belt by taking on those preachers who demand "a lean, mean Calvin machine, barring no holds and taking no prisoners," and arguing, instead, that "we need a kinder, gentler Calvinism because truth fuelled by love is the most liberating force known to man" (McGuire 2004).

But is there a forced contortion here, born of a Möbius strip-like Calvinist twist where the internal contradictions are too great to reconcile? One senses this where McGuire himself states: "Obviously the Bad News about God's wrath is what makes the Good News about Jesus good."

In none of this am I suggesting that Roman Catholicism has been any less immune from theological contortion and excesses. I was not raised a Catholic so it is not my job to work in the same way on their past. However, let me be clear that the Catholic repression of Protestants and other heretics during various inquisitions was brutal and un-Godly. I believe that the crux of the problem with the mainstream Western church as a whole is the blood atonement theory of the Cross, and this I will explore in the forthcoming reflection of a walk across Harris and Lewis in *Poacher's Pilgrimage*.

107. **Ecumenical Service:** The latter two were the Rev James Maciver of Knock Free Church and Fr Roddy Johnston, Stornoway's Roman Catholic priest. Protests were made, but the Rev Maciver was, at the time, the Free Church's moderator, and the protests were simply "noted". See http://goo.gl/wN5Jr.

108. **Ecumenism at Times of Loss:** The prominent Free Presbyterian adherent was the journalist John Macleod, who later said in a blog comment of 24th December 2011 that he had "approached Fr Roddy Johnston asking if we might together organise and conduct a memorial service at Our Holy Redeemer Roman Catholic Church for wee Liam Aitchison, the lad from South Uist and of the Roman Catholic faith murdered a month ago on this Protestant island" – see http://goo.gl/tI3yb.

This service seems to have sparked a glimmer of ecumenical hope out of the midst of tragedy. Too often it has been said that amidst our heritage of denominational splits, the island gathers to worship together only in the cemetery. For non-islanders, I should explain that the significance of John Macleod's conciliatory approach needs to be understood in the context that the Free Presbyterians split over the controversy of one of its members, Lord Mackay of Clashfern, having attended a Roman Catholic funeral mass in 1988.

109. **Free Church & Columba:** Yet more surprising and pleasing to me than his affirmation of the second sight was this minister's warm embrace of the continuity between the Columban and the Free Church.

110. **Status of Transpersonal Studies:** In modern scholarship the general field of religious experience and its associated phenomena was pioneered by William James in his Gifford lectures in natural theology at Edinburgh University between 1900 and 1902 (James 1983), followed by Evelyn Underhill's seminal

book *Mysticism* in 1911. The most seminal recent study is *The Varieties of Anomalous Experience* from the American Psychological Association (Cardena, Lynn & Krippner 2000). The field is growing in significance, including amongst psychologists, psychiatrists and counsellors within the UK's National Health Service (Clarke ed. 2010). Professor Peter Fenwick, a neuropsychiatrist at Broadmoor Prison and the John Radcliffe Hospital, tells me that "Spirituality and Psychiatry" is the fastest-growing special interest group within the Royal College of Psychiatrists of which he is a very active member (pers. com. 2011).

111. **Freud & Jung Quotes in Full:** "Religion would thus be the universal obsessional neurosis of humanity; like the obsessional neurosis of children, it arose out of the Oedipus complex, out of the relation to the father" (Freud 2001, 43).

"People who know nothing about nature are of course neurotic, for they are not adapted to reality" (Jung 1967, 190).

112. **Traditional Wi-Fi and Norman Macleod's Visions of the Falklands War:** Last week while heading for Iona I met on the outbound ferry an old colleague from Edinburgh University, the American parapsychologist, Professor Deborah Delanoy. We'd not seen each other for fifteen years so I grabbed the opportunity to catch up on her work that has involved large-scale statistical studies of telepathy, including measuring physiological responses to remote viewing (Delanoy 2001).

In the course of telling her how Jock had described AM's purported abilities she told me about a mountaineer who had died from exposure on Mount Everest, but who, before expiring, used the last of his mobile phone's battery to call his wife and children to say *adieu*. Deborah's question was how far are we now living in a world where electronic WiFi is substituting for the kind that AM may have had, thereby, and notwithstanding the weight of laboratory evidence, compounding our postmodern scepticism?

It truly astonishes me how deeply and richly the tradition of second sight remains alive in our Presbyterian communities. Norman Macleod of Bridge House, Leverburgh, Harris, was a retired policeman and lobster fisherman and a strong encourager of my work to help stop the Harris superquarry (McIntosh 2001, 152 & 256; see also Note 123). I think enough time has elapsed since his passing to share the following from a five page typescript letter that he wrote to

me in 2001 when he was aged 75. Here, without even having been told of my interest in the paranormal, he said:

> Recently, I read a book by Ludovic Kennedy, a confirmed atheist, in which his trump card to rubbish the Bible was prophecy. "No-one," he confidently claimed, God or man could possibly know the future until it happened. Even if I had never heard of a Bible or God, anyone as afflicted or gifted with the second sight as I am, to put it mildly, could not accept that. To give one tiny example, I could have written an account of the Falklands War and every stage of it, weeks or days before it happened, including being transported the 8,000 miles there in a split second and seeing events perhaps weeks before they happened, or simply seeing things that were to appear on TV afterwards, such as the warship HMS Sheffield with the metal superstructure going up in white incandescent flames. It actually happened. The superstructure was of aluminium and caught fire. I could go on at great length but as you are unlikely to believe a word of it, I will leave it at that … *My God*, Alastair, is the high and lofty one who inhabiteth eternity; whose name is Holy – not subject to any laws of man, mathematics, time or motion, and certainly not to be catalogued within the tiny mind of Ludovic Kennedy or any other mere mortal.

Readers who are not familiar with the isles of Lewis and Harris might glean from the passion of that letter the depth to which the island is a religious community, and the unfathomable privilege of having been raised amongst such people.

113. **Lord as a term for God:** In full: "O taste and see that the Lord is good" – KJV. Personally, I find gendered constructions of God such as the term "Lord" very problematic. If we take Genesis, human beings were created *both* male and female. In Job 35 the Creation is twice depicted as issuing from the *womb* of God, and Paul states that in Christ "there is neither male nor female" meaning that while Jesus was a man who lived and died, the cosmic principle of Christ is beyond gender.

The term "Lord" is linked to feudal societies, however, it can perhaps be redeemed by observing that in 1 Samuel 8 God advises the Israelites not to have a king like other peoples, for he would only impose feudal suzerainty over them, making warriors of their men and perfumers of their women. Here "Lordship"

can be understood simply as a term for divine sovereignty albeit one that has been defiled by secular abuses of power. Perhaps it therefore stands ready to be reclaimed and redeemed as we decolonise both the soul and our theologies.

114. **Calvinist Ambivalence Towards Mysticism:** Kuyper's ambivalence towards mysticism is similar to his position on art (see Note 49). In his lecture on "Calvinism and the Future" he concluded, notwithstanding his acknowledgement of mysticism as the fruit of the heart, that (Kuyper 2010, 144):

> Mysticism is sweet, and Christian woks are precious, but the seed of the Church, both at the birth of Christianity and in the age of the Reformation, has been the blood of martyrs; and our sainted martyrs shed their blood not for mysticism and not for philanthropic projects, but for the sake of convictions such as concerned the acceptance of truth and the rejection of error.

I am reminded here of the Edinburgh University professor of divinity who is said to have begun his lectures each year by telling his first year students: "In this faculty there is only one way to spell mysticism, and it begins: *m-i-s-t*"!

115. **Cross Cultural Angels:** The criticism is often made that "angels" seem to appear to Christians in white robes, to Hindus as colourful deities, to primal peoples of shamanic traditions as plant and animal totemic beings, and to latter-day techno-mystics as extra-terrestrials. How come? As so often with religion, imagery can only be understood from the perspective of the Mythos (Panikkar 1991). What matters is not the outward form of a numinous vision but its archetypal content – the deep story and meaning that it conveys. It is therefore to be expected that archetypal motifs from transpersonal levels of being that transcend the ego level of individuality will be accommodated to consciousness in a culturally-conditioned manner (Grof & Grof 1989; Cardena, Lynn & Krippner 2000).

116. **Katie Maclennan:** See Note 64. Katie's croft at the site of the original Mackenzie stronghold on Lewis has now been inherited by her granddaughter who has moved in with her son, so a light stays on in Seaforth Head.

117. **Mackinnon & Carmichael Watson on the Rev Kenneth Macleod:** When Marjory Kennedy-Fraser sought the advice of Professor Mackinnon of

Colonsay, incumbent to the first chair in Celtic at Edinburgh University, as to where she might find the help she needed in working on her collection of the songs of the Hebrides, he told her: "There is only *one* man, Kenneth Macleod" (Kennedy-Fraser 1929, 144).

Professor James Carmichael Watson succeeded to the same chair until he was called up and, as an ordinary seaman, lost his life when HMS *Jaguar* was torpedoed off the Egyptian coast. In his Editor's Note to Volume 3 of the six tomes of Alexander Carmichael's *Carmina Gadelica* he wrote: "The Rev. Dr Kenneth MacLeod, my grandfather's and my mother's friend and my own, has given me valuable help in this volume. *None now living can match his understanding of the language of these poems and of their whole import*, and his power to help in interpreting them has been increased by his close friendship with the Collector" (Carmichael 1940, viii, my emphasis).

Any who would relegate Macleod to the "Celtic Twilight" in the derogatory sense of Yeats' term can hardly have been cognisant of these testimonials. As for Sorley Maclean's satire on Macleod's *Road to the Isles* – his attack on it being "about Blue Men and Catholics" etc., (Black 1999, 318–319 & 769), I have heard it suggested by a Gaelic tradition bearer that Maclean probably lived to regret such uptightness.

118. **Armour Piercing Missiles:** I use the term "parable" in the sense described by my friend Fr John Roughan, a with-the-people Irish-Australian Catholic priest in the Solomon Islands in the 1980s, who eventually became that country's Cabinet Secretary. He said words to the effect that: "A parable is armour-piercing missile that penetrates the outer crusts of the ego, and explodes into the heart through ever-deepening layers of meaning."

119. **Island TB Epidemiology:** My father was of the opinion that this wave of TB resulted from new strains brought back by soldiers returning from the First World War to which native Hebrideans had very little natural resistance. I remember him pointing out to me one or more tiny houses built for isolation on the right hand side as you enter Airidhabhruaich on the road from Stornoway. My memory, which might be mistaken, was that at least one of these was still occupied in the early 1960s by an old woman who he would visit. It felt very sad.

120. **Deification in Bridging Calvin & Orthodoxy:** The fundamental unity of all things in the love of God is the essence of mystical experience. As Jesus

said, "I and my Father are one" (John 10:30). As the ancient Vedic mysticism of India puts it, "Atman is Brahman" – the individual soul ultimately is one with – "attuned" with or "atoned" to – the universal soul in cosmic consciousness.

Calvin was unusually unclear in how to interpret 2 Peter 1:4 about participation in the divine nature. On the one hand, he wrote in commentary that "The Manicheans formerly dreamt that we are a part of God, and that, after having run the race of life we shall at length revert to our original. There are also at this day fanatics who imagine that we thus pass over into the nature of God, so that his swallows up our nature." On the other, he bites the bullet and concedes: "Let us then mark, that the end of the gospel is, to render us eventually conformable to God, *and, if we may so speak, to deify us*" (Calvin 2012b, my emphasis).

These words of Calvin's are of huge importance. They allow for a bridging point between the Protestant church and such central principles of the Eastern church as *apocatastasis* and *deification* or *theosis*. Indeed, Calvin gives such mystical insight a socially-grounded impetus in his commentary on Acts 13:36 ("… when David had served his time …"), where he observed, to quote more fully than before (Calvin 2012c): "For every man doth not live, neither is born, for himself, but mankind is knit together with a holy knot. Therefore … we must not live for ourselves, but for our neighbours".

See also Notes 5, 40 and 92, and consider also such "participation" or "partaking" in the context of Psalms 82:6 and the use that Jesus made of it to defend himself from the charge of blasphemy in John 10:34.

121. **Diachronicity:** This was Thymio Papayannis of the IUCN-associated Delos Initiative: *diachronic* from the Greek *dia* meaning "through" and *Chronos* "time".

122. ***A Call to Sacrificial Giving*:** Mind you, I have a sneaking suspicion that this might have been Calum's way of passing off on me what Calvinism calls "effectual calling"! It can also be connected to the Ignatian (Jesuit) use of the notion of desire as *magis* or always seeking to do more in and for Christ.

I hope that throughout this text the respect that I have developed for island clergy will be manifest. It is not just their preaching, some of which I would argue with. It is the extent of their pastoral work, their love in and usually of the community, that makes them cornerstones of the community even at a time

when they struggle to be funded. There is a pressing need, as one of them put it to me, for "sacrificial giving" to help keep the indigenous church in good heart and able to reflect on changing times.

123. **The Fifth Commandment and the Environment:** The application of the Fifth Commandment to reverence for the natural environment is a point that was made to me by Norman Macleod of Bridge House, Leverburgh, during the successful campaign to stop the Harris superquarry (see also Note 112 on Norman and the second sight). He told me that in his view to destroy the mountain (Roineabhal) would dishonour the forbears and disable the Creation from allowing our days to be long upon that part of the Earth. Principal Macleod made a similar point at the superquarry public inquiry (cited in full in McIntosh 2001, 233–235), but invoking Genesis rather than the Commandments.

When speaking in the villages of Papua Province, Indonesia, while finalising this text as a guest of the Provincial Planning Department I made frequent reference to Norman's interpretation. Anchoring to the familiar commandment gave massive traction, quickly opening doors in this Melanesian society where the ancestors are of great importance. Apropos ancestors, Beatty (1999, 176) cites a Javanese mystic speaking in a manner that bridges respect for the ancestors with a sense of the Communion of the Saints, and I suspect that Norman would have liked this interpretation: "We speak of the afterlife/eternity (*Jaman Kelanggengan*) but really it is the living, or rather life itself, which is eternal. The ancestors are nowhere but in us. You need not look outside."

124. **The Theology of the Cross:** Jensen describes how Tertullian felt he needed to defend the early Christians from charges of being sun-worshippers because they faced the east when praying and worshipped on a Sunday (Jensen 2000, 42). Brock and Parker (2008) argue that images of Christ being tortured on the Cross were rare before the second millennium, the first millennium having focussed, as does Orthodoxy today, on the risen Christ more than the crucified Christ. It is striking that the image of the naked Christ engraved on the cross from North Rona suggests a posture of prayer rather than helpless agony.

Implicit in my bottom line here is that we have to rethink what the violence of medieval feudalism in western Europe did to the Christian church around 1054 when the western (Roman Catholic) Church split from the eastern Byzantine or Orthodox Church. How much has violence infected our theology, including

that of the "atonement"? This is the theme that I am working on in *Poacher's Pilgrimage*. In the first millennium the Cross and the "ransom" passage in Mark 10:45 was widely held by the church to be the price of liberating lost souls from the Devil. In the second millennium, starting with Anslem of Canterbury, the ransom was to purchase salvation from the dissatisfied feudal honour or wrath of God. Calvin further raised the stakes in developing what has become known as the "penal substitution" theory of blood atonement – the idea that Christ took the punishment justly due from God on behalf of the Elect, thereby effecting salvation.

I cast my lot with those who think that the task of the third millennium is to develop a nonviolent theology of the Cross. Here, as Abbé Pierre of France suggests, the ransom in question is that we are both the ransomed and the ransomers: ransomed unto "our own disordered desires, to our egotism" (Pierre, 69–70). Pierre developed this notion from his work with drug addicts, where he observed that the addict is held hostage unto themselves – a reality that we repeatedly see (against backgrounds of crushing social oppression) in our work at the GalGael Trust in Govan, Glasgow, that was started by the late Colin Macleod whose father, Donnie, is from Gravir in South Lochs.

The significance of the Cross, the reason why it must not be marginalised as well as its staggering contribution to world faiths, is that it stands for the unconditional love of God. Stepping back from the constraints of space and time, into eternity, it transcendently absorbs the violence of the world. It encodes the cosmic sum forgiveness that "breaks the law of karma."

The greatest work of Highland evangelical thought could yet be far from over. It has such depth from which to speak, such power, as Professor Meek has hinted, to liberate theology itself. And that, for all its time-conditioned contradictions. For all its rough edges. For all the struggles of "always reforming".

We work, each one of us, beneath the precious burden of our limitations. And so, MacDiarmid, *On a Raised Beach*: "We must be humble. We are so easily baffled by appearances." And Eliot, in "The Dry Salvages" of *Four Quartets*:

> These are only hints and guesses,
> Hints followed by guesses; and the rest
> Is prayer, observance, discipline, thought and action.
> The hint half guessed, the gift half understood, is Incarnation.

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Island Spirituality – Addendum and Erratum

These dozen extra pages (Roman numerated, and added to the end of the PDF version as of May 2018) contain ***important new material****. There are a number of minor, mainly pedantic corrections to the text, but also new insights*. I am *especially grateful to Colin Scott Mackenzie, the retired Stornoway Procurator Fiscal, for having alerted me to a biography of Louisa Lady Ashburton who was one of Lady Mary's daughters: "The Ludovisi Goddess" by Virginia Surtees (Michael Russell Ltd, Salisbury, 1984), see particularly note 20. This led me to some reappraisal of Lady Mary, see note 10. I continue to hope that a PhD student will be attracted to study this remarkable woman, the blockbuster movie to follow.*

1. **The book's cover photograph.** I've been asked where this came from, and there's an interesting story. When I walked through the island in May 2009 I passed by a lochan called *Loch an Teine* (the Loch of Fire) just on the Harris side of the Lewis-Harris border, on the headwater that flows in to the south end of Loch Langabhat. In October that year I returned with my wife and some of the guys from Leurbost to walk out on the stalker's path up Glen Bhìogadiail (from Aline) to Loch Voshimid. There was an incredible storm with a force 9 gale. Langabhat was in complete spin-drift, and we only ventured out because there were 5 of us together. On the way over I asked Rusty (John Macdonald, the Leurbost blacksmith) why he thought the loch was associated with fire. He said, "Sometimes when you see a place in particular conditions you'll see why it got its name - Gaelic placenames are usually very descriptive." On the way back to the car park I turned to take one last look, and saw this huge shaft of sunburst through a gap in very heavy cloud heading for the loch. I grabbed my camera just in time to take a

snap, and it was gone before any of the others could do likewise. I turned to Rusty and said, "As you were explaining!" The photographs of Teampall Eòin in Bragar were taken when I passed through in May 2009 - and all these, on a nothing-special automatic camera. It was Dr Finlay Macleod (Shawbost) who told me of the local tradition that associates it with St John the Baptist as distinct from St John the Evangelist, though as Finlay would often emphasise, most such designations have been the subject of constantly shifting layers of meaning over time.

2. P. 2, last para - delete extraneous comma after "theologians".
3. P. 4, 2nd para - delete duplication of "sacred" at "sacred Hindu sacred text."
4. P. 8, penultimate para – O'Loughlin page ref 128 not right.
5. P. 15, bottom line, insert "as" after "refers to such places".
6. P. 25, last para - insert "a" before "plethora".
7. P. 49, first para - insert "the" before "welfare".
8. P. 58, 3rd para. **The Stornoway distillery's dates.** Based on sources as cited I said that the Stornoway distillery failed within a decade. However, Fred Silver (a former editor of the Stornoway Gazette) tells me that in researching his book, *Glimpses of Stornoway*, he uncovered documents suggesting that it survived for longer. He tells me that: "On June 23, 1833, the distillery was described by the then factor, Alex Stewart, as 'doing well'. In 1840, according to a document held by Museum nan Eilean, the distillery was seen as a suitable subject for a school visit. In 1851, Lews Chamberlain John Munro Mackenzie was looking for another site for the works. It was closed and demolished in 1857." Fred also cautions against the tendency of some writers to exaggerate the extent to which landowner schemes were failures.
9. P. 62 & Note 87 on p. P. 129. **Uig 'paganism' and shipwrecking.** As I was working on the manuscript I was searching through Martin and Carmichael, trying to find something I'd read that supported Geddes' view that the wrecking

of ships in the Hebrides was not a deliberate undertaking. I've since found that I'd been looking in the wrong books. The reference I was seeking is pp. 176-7 of Otta Swire's *The Outer Hebrides and Their Legends* (Oliver & Boyd, Edinburgh, 1966). Here Swire describes "what was said to be a favourite prayer of the Barra men ... so great was the lack of wood." She gives it in translation: "If ships must in any case perish, do Thou O Lord guide their timber with their tackling and rigging to the Isle of Barra and the Sound of Watersay." Swire's Hebridean folklore collections have a unique timbre and her book about Skye is highly acclaimed by the Gaelic cultural scholar Ronald Black. Her mother used to stay at Stornoway Castle in the days of the Matheson proprietors. Her son is Dr Jim Swire who lost his daughter in the Lockerbie bombing and yet has selflessly campaigned for more transparent justice for Megrahi, who in Swire's assessment, was probably set up.

10. P. 69, last para. **My closing appraisal of Lady Hood Mackenzie.** I wrote: "Her real friends were the people. They could always tell a saint when they saw one." However, such lines raise an interesting point of historiography (i.e. how we write history). A friend and reader who is an authority on post-colonial Highland studies has put it to me that in saying this, I have deflated the effectiveness of my own preceding argument about the landed power's use of religion invoking a form of the Stockholm syndrome. I was aware of this danger when I was writing. Was I being sucked in to becoming an apologist? Or was it a decent stance to take given the remarks of Angus "Ease" (p. 60) and the fact that at the end of the day, Lady Mary's sister (while Stewart-Mackenzie was returning from Corfu, just prior to his death) attended the Disruption assembly of 1843 thereby, symbolically on behalf of the family, laying down the power of patronage (p. 68)? For my part, and in the absence of further source material, I just wanted to leave this complicated woman in peace, to give her the benefit of the doubt, and not back her into a posthumous corner. I also felt these lines come up in me with an inner imperative to place them there as her epitaph and

to accept not being able to resolve all the seeming contradictions of her life. Since that time I have come across Surtees' biography of Mary's daughter Louisa and while this lowers my appraisal of Stewart-Mackenzie, it leaves unaffected that of his wife (See the extensive additional notes to p. 121, Note 70, below). Perhaps, however, I could more prudently have worded that last line: "Blemishes notwithstanding, they could always tell a saint when they saw one." *Additional point*: (and sorry, I can't easily put paragraph breaks into this format without screwing up the automatic numbering system) - my said correspondent raised the additional question as to whether the description that I quoted on p. 69 of the size of Lady Mary's funeral might have been an exaggeration on behalf of my source, Alexander Mackenzie. It was a fair question as Mackenzie's portrayal, as I've noted elsewhere in the text, was undoubtedly sycophantic. I've therefore looked in to the matter further by way of contemporary newspaper accounts. Again, these may also be sycophantic (as their tetchiness in dismissing reports of suffering in Sky suggests), but both the Inverness Courier and the Elgin Courier concur that it was a pretty massive funeral - at least 3 miles long. I've put these reports, along with the Inverness Courier's report of her death into a single PDF file along with my other special resource materials - download here. Note that the death notice cum obituary also speaks of her having kept an estimable journal while in India. If that still survives it would be an outstanding source for the swashbuckling biography that awaits the writing.

11. P. 71, first para. **Correction re. my Sgitheanach friend.** Delete extraneous comma after "in Chapter 2" as this could be read to suggest that my Sgitheanach friend considers himself to be "Calvinist", which he does not. My apologies for any such confusion.
12. P. 75, “French original” – take out “original” as multiple French/Latin versions.
13. P. 91, Note 5, para 3. **Meanings of *anamnesis*.** Delete the first two sentences commencing "In the gospels ..." as my etymology

is misleading without having given further explanation. Substitute instead: "In the gospels, Eucharistic *anamnesis* is usually translated, "do this in *remembrance* of me"; but the Greek is far deeper - more akin to "without amnesia" as in Plato's sense of "memory" (*mnemnon* = "mindful") as the restoration of the past to an ever-living eternal present."

14. P. 92, para 3, line 3 - delete "at" were it says "... can be found at in my bibliography".
15. P. 93, Note 10. **Mainzer, Maclennan and "French".** I refer to Joseph Mainzer's rendition of "a French tune" as originally collected from Murdo Maclennan for Psalm 65. Elisabeth and Alan Jack of the Mull Gaelic Choir, who sung this at the 1450th St Columba anniversary event in Iona Abbey in May 2013, have put me right: I should have said, "the tune known as *French*." However, while at it, here are some links for original material now on the web. (Some of these have several blank pages at the front and back.) 1) Mainzer's dissertation including *French*. 2) Mainzer's *Gaelic Psalm Tunes of Ross-shire*. 3) Macbean's *Fuinn nan Salm*.
16. P. 94, first para - insert "to" before "one St Lennan".
17. P. 104, Note 36, para 4 - replace "But at the second - " with "But at the south end - ".
18. P. 108, Note 45 - the Calvin reference should be dated 1559, as I used the fifth and last edition of the *Institutes*, not the 1536 first edition.
19. P. 117, para 3, line 2 - correct spelling of "their" to "there".
20. P. 121-2, Note 70 etc. **Lady Hood Mackenzie & James Stewart - further biography from Victoria Surtees**. *Island Spirituality* was launched prior to the dinner of the *Slighe Chaluim Chille* conference held in South Lochs in June 2013 and in a short address I spoke about my dearth of sources on Mary Mackenzie (The Hooded Lassie) and the complication in conducing research due to her multiple name permutations. A descendent of the family line was present, Colin Scott

Mackenzie who is the retired Procurator Fiscal of Stornoway, and afterwards advised me that additional biographical material on Mary can be found in the biography of one of her daughters, Louisa Lady Ashburton, called *The Ludovisi Goddess* by Virginia Surtees (Michael Russell Ltd, Salisbury, 1984). The first three chapters of this describe Louisa's childhood and family background. Here are the main points of interest:

a. **Maria or Mary?** Lady Mary was indeed originally named *Maria* (see my p. 48 and its Note 70) - Surtees writes: "Of the Hon. Maria Frederika Mackenzie's childhood (or Mary as she was always called) there is little to tell" (p. 11, note also Frederika with a "k").

b. **Her mother.** Was Mary Proby, the only child of Mary Russell (a clergyman's daughter) and the Very Rev Baptist Proby DD, Dean of Lichfield (p. 11). Internet research suggests that Mary Proby died in Edinburgh at the age of 74 in 1829, and it would be fascinating to know if any correspondence survives that would shed light on the mother-daughter relationship with respect to religious formation. Dean Proby's obituary in *The Gentleman's Magazine* of 1807 (Vol 101, p. 275), describes him as a man "not less admired for the urbanity of his manners than honoured and revered for that religious integrity of principle from which he never swerved." One of his sons was in Bengal, having gone to sea and later been "appointed to a fituation in the Honourable Eaft India Company's fervice."

c. **Scott.** Sir Walter Scott, a close friend and admirer, took her as the role model for Ellen in *The Lady of the Lake* (Chapter 2).

d. **First marriage.** First marriage to Admiral Samuel Hood portrayed as loving and happy, with no mention (by Surtees) of any suggestion of dissatisfaction or scandal.

e. **Brahan Seer.** The Brahan Seer's prophesies of the fall of the house of Mackenzie were treated by both Lady Mary and Sir Walter as having been predicted prior to, and not antecedent to, the actual events that they purported to anticipate (pp. 7 & 22).

f. **Changing titles.** After Sir Samuel's passing she called herself Lady Mackenzie (p. 22), but once remarried to James Stewart, according to Sophia Scott, "she has dropped her ladyship, and is now plain Mrs Stewart Mackenzie" (p. 25).

g. **Stewart and anti-Semitism?** James Alexander Stewart, her second husband, is described in generally unflattering and scarcely-disguised anti-Semitic terms by, for example, Carlyle who portrayed him as the "dark-complexioned Whig, lean, bilious, whose face consisted almost wholly of a long hook nose and two huge yellow eyes" (p. 24).

h. **Stewart's maternal grandfather.** The father of Stewart's heiress mother Georgiana Simha d'Aguilar was Ephraim Lopez Pereira, or Baron d'Aguilar of Highbury as he preferred to be called. A Sephardic (or Iberian) Jew who began his fortune by gaining a monopoly in the tobacco trade, he left Lisbon for Vienna after the Spanish Wars of Succession and was made a baron of the Holy Roman Empire in 1726 for having lent money to rebuild a palace. He left Vienna for London in the mid-eighteenth century bringing his children and slaves with him where his habits were "the most unnatural, inhuman and degrading" and "his name was a byword for bestiality," keeping prostitutes and the women he seduced, along with their daughters, in his house in Shaftesbury Place; and in Islington, running a yard known as "Starvation Farm" where "he kept some wretched animals, deliberately denying them sufficient

food so that they expired of hunger, perished of cold on heaps of dung, or else fed upon each other" (pp. 5-7).

i. **Stewart's inheritance.** James Stewart is described as having "a very good fortune" and selling Glasserton estate to finance the virtual bankruptcy of Lady Mary's inherited estates (p. 25).

j. **Landseer rocking it.** Landseer (the painter's) view on geo-psychology: "There is a stern sincerity about Highland rocks ... a sort of *unadorned* truth that you don't find in the *rich* combinations of the Banks of the Conan where everything is suggestive of comfort and tenderness" (p. 26).

k. **Distilling virtue.** Surtees says of Mary Mackenzie and her second husband, James Stewart: "Both were dedicated Whigs and Liberals; among their efforts and achievements were concern for education and Church reform, the founding of a distillery to deter unlawful distilling, and a stern regard for Protestant religious observance" (p. 4).

l. **Brahan Gaelic superstitions.** Mary's and James' daughter, Louisa's childhood, is described as having been in Edinburgh, Lewis, "and at Brahan where Gaelic was still more generally the tongue, where superstition, belief in the occult and prophecies were rife and where she was allowed an unconstrained freedom which was to determine her behaviour in future years" (p. 25).

m. **Mary's & Louisa's omnipotence.** "On their own territory the Mackenzies were omnipotent and Mary retained and passed on to her daughter the quite unconscious tendency of expecting others to submit to her wishes, though in her this was tempered with a keen intelligence" (p. 11).

n. **Choice of Rugby School.** Louisa's brother, Frank, was expelled from Rugby for hitting other boys: "Rugby had been chosen with care by his parents. Arnold [the head

teacher] was known to be a supporter of the new Broad Church as well as being a great reformer; religious and moral principles took precedence over all other disciplines. Stewart-Mackenzie had been brought up a Presbyterian and Mary was to range herself with the Free Church of Scotland. Both were exponents of Evangelicalism." (pp. 28-29).

o. **Trevelyan's evangelical disquiet:** Surtees' description of Pauline Trevelyan's visit to Stewart-Mackenzie's High Commissioner's Palace in Greece: "The house was admired, also the shrubbery of geraniums ... [and] they were driven by an Albanian coachman 'all gold braiding and white kilt' ... [but] recorded with lesser enthusiasm by this follower of Pusey [of the Oxford Movement] were the Wednesday evening Baptist meetings (involving an early dinner) held in the house by Mr Lowndes, 'this missionary sort of man'. Two months earlier there had been riots, caused, it was rumoured, by unwonted proselytizing. He was said, in the judgement of others, to have great influence on the family for they 'have all an Evangelical twist - he sings psalms, expounds false doctrine, heresy and schism and makes extempore orations, by courtesy called prayers.'" (p. 33).

p. **Stewart's Ionian dismissal:** In contrast to what my informant suggested to me (Note 83), Surtees suggests that Stewart-Mackenzie's governorship in the Ionian Islands was not successful, and for the same reasons as in Ceylon. He was recalled to England and dismissed from the post: "The High Commissioner was falling foul of authority at home, largely on account of his policies through his manic evangelizing and bad temper were also causes for friction" (p. 34).

q. **Stewart's passing & Louisa's evangelicalism:** He then returned to Corfu to await the arrival of his successor

and in the spring of 1843 (the same year as the Disruption), sailed home with his family but became ill and died in Southampton on the way back - possibly from chronic meningitis and/or TB (though given his social and pecuniary embarrassment, one might ponder on other factors). Louisa went back to her mother and she, Mary, sold Lewis (to Sir James Matheson) to cover debts. "Again Brahan provided the home and was the stable background for Louisa till she married.... But though a most devoted and dutiful daughter she was mature for her age, eager for life and determined to ensure that it was led along her own chosen line. Her mother had moved in the aristocratic world [and] Loo found her friends in the same environment and this was to be her course to the end. Religion, of the strongly Evangelical persuasion, was throughout her life an impetus of recurring degree, with occasional forays into the Anglican Church" (p. 35).

r. **Louisa's relationship with F. Nightingale:** "Soon after her (Louisa/Loo) return from Corfu she had met Florence Nightingale, who a few years earlier had received 'a call from God'. A friendship had been struck, infatuation had developed such as many romantically minded unmarried women entertained for each other at that time (a tendency to which Loo was never immune) and Florence, the 'beloved Zoe' signed herself 'Ever your dearest life, F. Nightingale', while Loo was 'your truly loving Bird' (p. 35).

s. **Louisa's character and "goddess" descriptor.** Virginia Surtees has also written the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography entry for Loo under her married name, Louisa Caroline Baring (of Barings Bank). She writes: "Many of her [Louisa's] earliest years were spent on the grim moorland island inherited by her mother through the Seaforths.... So faithful were her strong, well-defined features to those of classical

nobility that the art historian and critic Anna Jameson credited her with a resemblance to the head of Juno in Rome, the ‘Ludovisi goddess’. Yet, despite her attractions, a streak of pushiness, of ambition, was all too apparent; her emotions were uncontrolled, her capriciousness uncircumscribed, her restlessness inexhaustible. She was romantically inclined, and a readiness to fall in love flourished in conjunction with her eagerness for marriage."

t. **Louisa's eulogy and comparison with her mother.** Louisa died of cancer in her 76th year at Kent House, Knightsbridge, 2 February 1903, her finances in chaos, her once "vast fortune" dissipated, the "wandering meteor" being laid to rest in a Highland glen on what had been her own land (p. 185-6 & ONDB). A few years earlier when in ill health Florence Nightingale had written that she "trusted in God that He will raise you up again soon - dearest child of God" (p. 185). Surtees' closing paragraph reads: "If in Louisa was reflected her mother's 'almost lawless spirit of adventure', then surely, at the close of the glen at the foot of rising hills, where the wind sweeps and storm clouds mass, and as so often in her life of contradictions the dark gives place in turn to light, so ardent a spirit would not linger in her massive tomb, free now for some new adventure or some timeless quest, or to make a haven of her lost inheritance, the sea-girt Western Isles" (p. 186).

u. **My appraisal.** What I draw from *The Ludovisi Goddess* largely leaves my appraisal of Lady Mary unchanged, but it hardens my appraisal of Stewart-Mackenzie, and raises questions as to how far the family's evangelical zeal on Lewis was as much, or more, from him as from her. Further, given the dark questions around his mother's family background and his own sad/hard/neglected childhood (as I discuss on pp. 57-8 - his mother appears to have neglected him on her

remarriage soon after his father's death when he was 11), one might reasonably ask: how much was his seemingly forceful attitude to religion a psychological accommodation, perhaps not unlike I've discussed with Thomas Boston (pp. 36-7)? If so, ought we judge him harshly, or with compassion? Most of us have not had to walk in anything like his shoes - yet at the same time, not flinching from assessing Stockholm syndrome dynamics as my note on p. 69 (above) discusses in response a colleague's questioning of my leniency towards Lady Mary.

21. P. 129, first para - "the word killeth but the letter giveth life" should read "the Spirit", not "the letter".
22. P. 140, top para – close quotes after “schools”.
23. P. 141,Note 105 - correct 2 spellings of "Rustenberg" to "Rustenburg" - also at foot of p. 73, top of p. 74, biblio on p. 163 and index on p. 172.
24. P. 147, para 2, line 6 - add "hand" after "other" to read, "On the other hand,".