

Isle of Skye Revivals Last Century

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[0 : 00] Our subject for tonight is the beginning of evangelical religion in sky. And if you have to go back to the beginning, you really have to go right back to 563, when Columba came over from Ireland and settled in Iona with 12 followers.

He was just 42 years of age at the time. And for the next 34 years, he dedicated himself to evangelizing the north and the west of Scotland.

He saw great success when Brood, the king of the northern Picts in Inverness, was converted. His churches were established all over the highlands and islands.

The name Columba or Columquilla is very common in little islands around the coast. Colum, all three churches, Columquilla.

So Celtic Christianity was established throughout Scotland. The next important date is the Norman Conquest in 1066.

[1 : 25] A princess from England, a refugee of the royal family in England, fled north to Scotland.

Princess Margaret. And Malcolm Canmore, the king of Scotland, fell in love with her, married her. And she set about anglicizing and romanizing the Celtic church.

The Celtic church was really far more evangelical than the Roman church. But she was concerned to have a very beautiful church with a lot of ceremonies and ritual and drama and everything so polished that the Roman Catholics are expert at doing.

So she anglicized, she romanized the Celtic church. Her son, King David, carried on the work with great enthusiasm. And so we ended up with a dark age.

Ritualism, superstition, ignorance and immorality even among the priests. So that they were on the one hand saying, claiming that they were celebrate.

[2 : 46] And at the same time they would have several mistresses and lots of children. The reformation in the 16th century brought life and salvation to our land.

But it only affected the south and the east. The chiefs in the north and the highlands, they became nominal Protestants.

And their clansmen, of course, followed them. But there was no heart to their religion. The beginning of the 18th century, there were the Jacobite uprising.

And they did much harm, not only because of the loss of life, but also because of the loss of a way of life. After Culloden, the clansmen were no longer valued as soldiers.

The concern of the chief was to get more and more money so as to live like the lords in the south, in the pleasure and extravagance and luxury which the aristocracy of the south lived in.

[4 : 04] And so the chief was no longer a kind of father figure, but was rather the lord, the master.

And the clansman became the scowak who would work for five days for his landlord.

And in return, he allowed to cultivate some scraps of land on the edge of Amur on the sixth day. The fact of, or taxman, farmer, richer farmer, could strike the crofter on his face without any concern.

And could evict him from his home and from his cross without any redress of a poor crofter. And the ministers weren't much better.

It's a story told about Roderick MacLeod of Barra. He caught the son of a poor hen woman eating some mouthfuls of meals that were escaping from his meal barrel through a mouthful.

[5 : 25] The poor fellow was starving. So what did he do? He sentenced him to be whipped. There was no public hangman. So he and his wife, the minister and his wife, took the poor fellow, stripped him off his rag, tied him to a pole, and lashed him on his bare bottom.

And made him come next Sunday to church with a meal bag tied round his neck. To church. To hear the message of love and of salvation and of forgiveness.

And that is the way he treated the poor starving fellow. Sheep were more valuable than people.

From 1800 to 1803, in these three years, 25 ships left sky with emigrants going to the colony.

One of them carried 500 folk from Brackadale to Wilmington, USA. Sheep were more important than people.

[6 : 35] What about the religion? That was the general condition at the end of the 18th century, beginning of the 19th century. Poverty.

The rich. Very rich and powerful. The poor. Very poor and oppressed. What about religion? What was the religion then? It was moderatism.

Moderatism. Moderatism. Its one distinctive is that it's against the zeal.

Against enthusiasm. Enthusiasm was almost a swear word in the 18th century. There must be no zeal or enthusiasm.

It was an icy, cold religion. The ministers were far more interested in philosophy and in science and in literature than they were in theology or in their Bible.

[7 : 32] They would read their sermon. Moralistic sermon. You must love your neighbor. You must be honest. You must be upright.

You must do this and you must do that. No gospels. No good news. No glad tidings. Just do all. No gospels. And when they bothered to prepare a sermon they felt it was worth preaching many, many times.

And so the same sermon would often be repeated. They spent their time hunting, fishing, eating and drinking and making merry with the wealthy, with the aristocrats.

The parishes were very large to begin with in the 18th century. The beginning of the 18th century, poultry, brass, slate and the small isles were all just one parish.

Just think of it. From poultry to broadford to slate and including rum, egg, musk, tanna, all one parish. The small isles were disjoined in 1720 and slate and poultry became separate parishes in 1726.

[8 : 49] So as the parishes were as large as that and the ministers as lacking in enthusiasm, you can just imagine how seldom the people heard any sermon at all.

When the people went to church, they settled down to sleep. They knew there was nothing much worth listening to.

There's a story told about a fellow who went to Aran on one occasion. And he was present at a communion service there.

And as the service was proceeding, the minister asked the people to come and sit at the Lord's table. Nobody was moving.

Many heard a great rumpus behind him and he looked round and there was an elder with a pole hitting people, wakening them up and driving them down to the front to come to sit at the Lord's table.

[9 : 51] Communion time was a time when people gathered together. Lots of people would gather. And so it was a great opportunity for pack men and peddlers and traders and illicit spirits to gather.

And they would set out their wares at communion time as if it was a fair. Roderick MacLeod, Mr. Rory, whom we'll be referring to later on, remembers being at communion in Dunvegan, when after the tables were served, the communion was in the open air.

The churches were very small at that time. The communion was out in the open air. And after the communion was over and the tables cleared away, three pipers struck up and the people began to dance.

Was there any real spiritual life in the sky at that time? We're told of one young woman who was concerned to hear the gospel and was bothered about the fact that she wasn't hearing it from her own minister.

And so she left home. And as she left home, her parents put seven curses on her head. She left home and travelled to an evangelical communion in the north of Scotland.

[11 : 19] And as she was sitting there, listening to the preaching, the minister, who knew nothing about her, said, If you are here today, you have left home speaking the gospel with the seven curses of your parents in your head.

Your place is at the Lord's table. The Lord revealed this to the minister. And this, of course, was a tremendous encouragement to this woman.

There's a story told, too, about a young girl from Glendale who got this terrible feeling that God was not in her own village or in her own island.

And so she left home seeking God. She stole away from home. And wherever she went, she was asking, is God here? Her parents thought she had gone mad.

Religious mania. And so they didn't bother going after her. Wherever she went, people thought she was mad. But they were all kind to her. And bit by bit, she made her way across the sky, crossed over to the mainland.

[12 : 26] And over a period of weeks and months, eventually she reached Inverness. She met a woman there and asked her, is God here? I'm looking for God.

The woman said, come home with me and I'll take you to where God is tomorrow. It was a Saturday. She took the girl home with her. And the next day, she took her to church, to a church where the gospel was preached.

And there, God opened her heart. She was converted. She received the message. She stayed on in that home with a woman who had shown kindness to her.

She lived there for a while until she married. She married and settled down in Croy. She never returned back home to Skye. But she often prayed for Skye and returned to Skye in her prayers.

And it is believed that the revival which came to Skye came as a result, at least in part, of that woman's prayers.

[13 : 31] How important it is for us to pray. Whoever we are, we can pray to the Lord that God will be by the cost in our land.

And that's what we are badly needed in our day and age. Were there any true Christians here in Skye at that time?

We know of a teacher from Rosshire who had come here. And also a young lady who was converted through the preaching of the famous Lachan Mackenzie of Lacharren.

And both of them lived in Razi. Mr. Ruri tells of his first Presbyterian duty.

His first duty as a minister in the Presbyterian here in Skye. What was it? To help his fellow ministers to find their beds.

[14 : 36] They were so drunk and so incapable. What a sad situation. Blind leaders of the blind. They couldn't even find their way to their own beds.

No wonder Skye was in such a bad way. Well, what about the beginning then of evangelical religion in Skye last century?

Really it begins with the Haldanes. I don't know if you've heard about the Haldanes. Their names are not well known but they're very important.

Very significant in the history of our country. It's a very interesting book published by the Banner of Truth Trust. A biography of James and Robert Haldane by Alexander Haldane, the son of James Haldane.

It's very well worth reading. Well, the Haldane, they were wealthy, they were of an aristocratic family. They owned the earthly estates in Perthshire which included Glen Eagles.

[15 : 48] They were converted, these two brothers, in 1795. James became a great preacher, evangelist.

He went round preaching in the open air up and down the land from east to west and north to south. He preached with great effect, for example, in Spurso and in Wick and up in Orkney and in Scotland.

Crowds came to hear him. Many people were converted through his ministry. His brother, Robert, who was the one who owned the estate, he sold his estate, as I said, and used the money in order to help forward good works of evangelism in Scotland.

And one of the things which he did was to set up colleges to train men to be evangelists and to be ministers. And in a period of ten years, more than 300 evangelists were trained by him.

And these men were sent out to Scotland, all over Scotland, yes, in England and Ireland too, with a gospel message. And you can just imagine the effect that that had.

[17 : 05] James Haldane going round preaching to thousands up and down the land. And then all these other evangelists then, starting with a message, going out and preaching it in different parts.

So many of the ministers at that time were mothering, with no gospel, no heart religion, no knowledge of Christ the Saviour.

But here was the message of the gospel going out to the four corners of Scotland. One of the young men that were commended to the Haldanes to be trained for the ministry was a man by the name of Parkerson.

He was a very zealous young man. And so he was taken into the college. But after about six months, they despaired of being able to teach him or train him anymore.

He didn't have a great brain. He wasn't very bright. He didn't have much ability. And they felt that there was no point in keeping him any longer in the college.

[18 : 13] They thought that maybe he could do a little bit of good as a Bible reader. And so they sent him to Bredalding, the area in Perthshire, round Loch Tay.

And in that area, there was great ignorance. They had no Bible. One or two people perhaps professed a New Testament, but very great ignorance.

And when he went to the area, none of the inns or hotels in the area would take him in. Just like Christ, remember, when he was born, there was no room for him in the inn.

There was no inn that would take a faculty in. But there were three homes in the area that afforded him hospitality. So he came and he went round with his Bible and he would talk and he would read his Bible to anybody who would listen.

And in the beginning of 1801, in the spring of 1801, there was a bit of interest and awakening in the area.

[19 : 23] But then in early 1802, there was a great revival. More than a hundred people were converted and the whole area was transformed with a new spiritual interest and awareness.

God's blessing came down. It's wonderful how the Lord can use somebody who's zealous, somebody who's prayerful, somebody who loves him, even although he has very little in the way of brains and abilities.

That's the way it was with Parkinson's. From Bredalden, he made his way up to Bremer. And there he was arrested as a disturber of the peace and he was put into prison in Aberdeen.

But he wasn't very long in the cell when the door opened and in came this gentleman. And the fellow took out of his pocket a little book and said, Read that. Part of it was written in this very same cell in which you're a prisoner.

And you won't be a prisoner here for long. This was a Christian lawyer. And when Parkinson took the book, he found that it was the letters of Samuel Rutherford.

[20 : 39] Remember, Samuel Rutherford had been in prison there 150 years before that. He was a great covenanter and imprisoned for his faith in Aberdeen.

Parkinson, in 1805, set out for America. But on his way there, the boat that he was on took him to Eurig Bay, on the west coast of Skye.

And Parkinson went ashore. Wherever he went, he would preach. He couldn't keep him quiet. Wherever he was, he would talk about the Lord and what the Lord had done.

So, he came ashore in Eurig and he started to speak and to preach to the folk who gathered to listen to him. And he had two very important converts.

We'll look at these in turn. The first was Blind Donald Munro. Blind Donald Munro, you could say, was the father of evangelical religion in Skye.

[21 : 52] He was born in Ach-Tah-Yahin, between Bramui and Ach-Achort in 1773.

At the age of 14, he was struck with smallpox and lost his eyesight. He was quite a gifted fellow. He learned to play the fiddle.

There was a minister in Poultrie at that time. The parish minister was John Nicholson. He was minister in Poultrie from 1783 to 1823, a period of 40 years.

Mr. Eeyan, they called him. Mr. Eeyan Kinshirama. Mr. Eeyan who couldn't preach. That's the way the folk described him.

Now, John Nicholson felt sorry for Donald Munro, Blind Donald Munro. And so he gave him the job of catechist, to which was attached a small salary.

[22 : 56] So between playing the fiddle at weddings and functions and being catechist, he learned the catechism of my heart in Jewish Church chapters of the Bible, he was able to make a living for himself.

Now, when Sparkershon came to Skye and began to preach, Donald Munro thought, since he was a catechist, that he ought to go and hear him, hear this religious man.

And what he heard that day changed his whole life, and indeed changed the life of Skye. The message led to his conversion and to the transformation of his life.

He had a tremendous memory, and he applied himself to get to know the scriptures, and he said of them, eventually, that if all the Bibles in the world were lost or burnt, but the Bible could be copied down from the mouth of Donald Munro.

He loved his Bible so much, and he remembered it. He memorized it from Genesis to Revelation. He had a pleasing personality.

[24 : 13] An old man at Mingenes said to him one day, you are much nicer when you used to come along as catechist and play your fiddle.

He said, ah yes, said Donald, but if I died then, I would have gone to hell. You see, at that stage, he was nicer in some ways, perhaps.

But he wasn't a serious Christian. He didn't have a personal knowledge of God. He didn't know about heaven and hell. He didn't know about the way of salvation by the blood of Christ and faith in the cross.

So, Donald Munro started a little prayer meeting down by the river Snysert.

A little prayer meeting in the open air. And two or three people would gather there. Bit by bit, slowly it grew, and more folks started coming along.

[25 : 18] There was a little gathering there of people who used to gather by the riverside in order to pray, and who would speak to them from the scriptures.

And then a Baptist minister came along. And some of the folk were really taken with him, because they were used to... The ministers they had were moderate.

They had no gospel. There was no message of salvation. It was all just law. And here was this Baptist minister preaching the gospel.

So, eleven of the group were re-baptised by him in the river Tora. And this caused a division in the group, and so the group folded up.

Eventually the Baptist died out. And it was unfortunate how that trouble came along and caused division and disharmony within the group.

[26 : 19] Well, that was Donald Munro. The other convert was... The other convert that a Baptist had was the Reverend Donald Martin, the minister of Kilmourne.

Donald Martin saw the crowd listening to Sparkerton and wondered what they were up to. And so he went along and he stood at the edge of the crowd and listened. And what he heard touched his heart.

He invited Sparkerton to his house, and for the rest of Sparkerton's time and sky, he stayed with Donald Martin, the parish minister in Kilmourne. Martin was converted, and of course his whole ministry changed, became evangelical.

People started being converted through his preaching. He took Donald Munro to work in Kilmourne with him as a catechist. And for two years, things were really looking well in Kilmourne, moving forward of the work of the Gospel in that place.

But then he got a call from the Gaelic Chapel in Inverness, what is now the East Church in Inverness.

[27 : 35] And Donald Martin left accepting that call. And unfortunately, his successor was not an evangelical but a moderator.

The godly schoolmaster who had come to work in Kilmourne left in disgust. Donald Munro stayed on for a while, battling on for the souls of men and women.

But the new minister needed to come along and try and trick him and catch him out with difficult philosophical questions.

One day he came to Donald Munro and asked him the question, Who will be the deepest in hell? Quick as anything, Donald replied, Graceless ministers.

So you can just imagine how the conflict was developing. Graceless ministers, indeed they will be deepest in hell. Those who are in opposition of responsibility, and who instead of leading people to salvation, are leading them further away from God.

[28 : 48] Not just private Christians, but leading others with them to a lost eternity. It's a serious thing to be a minister. But the tension developed between them.

And so eventually Donald Munro was sacked. Susanna, the wife of Norman MacDonald, the proprietor of Burnesdale, gave to Donald Munro a croft down at Scabers Bridge.

And the people built him there, a house with a meeting house at the other end of it. A black house with a meeting house at the other end. And that is the site of the present Free Church and Mount, beside the River Tora and down there at Scabers Bridge.

In 1814, John Shaw became minister of Brackadale. John Shaw came from Moulin and Perthshire, where he had been converted in the revival there.

He was a godly man, but he was not a strong leader. He wasn't strong in his health, and he was a timid individual.

[30 : 12] He took Donald Munro to be his catechist for a while, and Donald remained with him for a year. But then, Donald Munro felt that his duty was to the whole of Scabers, and he became a kind of roving evangelist, going all over Scabers and over to Razzie, and wherever he went, he was preaching the Gospel.

But John Shaw was an evangelical, his preaching was evangelical, and the Christians started to gather to him, and people were converted through him.

He was the one who introduced the Apostle of the North, John MacDonald Ferrantosh, into Scabers, got him to come to preach at his Communion.

And as you know, John MacDonald was the great evangelist of the Highlands. He saw so many revivals under his ministry, and crowds of people converted through his preaching.

He came to Scabers, and of course his ministry was blessed in Scabers, at another places. But unfortunately, John Shaw died at the age of 38 in 1823.

[31 : 27] He was never robust in his health. So the first Sky Revival was in 1812 to 14. 1812 to 14, or 15, around that time.

It began in the north of Skye, in the Kilmure area, and then spread throughout the rest of the island. And of course the great evangelist in that revival was Donald Munro, blind Donald Munro, led by other people around, and sometimes the folk would carry him on their back.

They loved Donald Munro. And he went right throughout the island, preaching God's word to all who would come to listen to him. And God's blessing and God's Holy Spirit rested upon him, and upon his ministry, so that many were converted through him.

And through this revival, a change came in Skye. A new reverence for God. A new fear of the Lord came down upon the people. The Sabbath of servants became common.

And family worship was held in the homes. And honesty and morality were to be observed amongst the people. Preaching on morality and preaching on honesty doesn't make moral and honest people.

[32 : 46] It's the Gospel that does it. Preaching the Gospel. Faith without works is dead. The true Christian faith finds its expression always. In a holy life.

What was the first revival in Skye then? 1812 to 14. And Donald Munro was the great leader in that work.

Now, the next great individual, and indeed the greatest in a sense, is the Reverend Roderick MacLeod, commonly known as Nishtia Ruhari.

Roderick MacLeod was the son of the Reverend Malcolm MacLeod, who was the youngest son of Malcolm MacLeod, Chief of Raffae.

The youngest son by his second wife, bound she earned it to Osgate. He was born, Roderick MacLeod, on 18th March 1795, at Glenhalston Farm near Kispel.

[33 : 53] So he was 22 years the Junior of Donald Munro. 22 years younger. Born then at Glenhalston, 1795, he went to St. Began School, and from there to Aberdeen University.

He intended to go in to the army, but there was a professor there, who had an interest in him, an Aberdeen professor, Roderick MacLeod, who was related to the MacLeod of Palisket, and he influenced him to go in for the ministry.

He was a brilliant student. He did very well at university. Graduated in 1815. He was licensed to preach the Gospel in 1818, and then he became a missionary in Lyndale and Arnesort, 13 April 1819.

So he was ordained a missionary in Lyndale and Arnesort, that's part of his father's parish. His father was the parish minister of Smythras. He wasn't converted when he became a minister.

He was a great sportsman, great with a gun and with a fishing rod. And this is what commended him to Lord MacLeod of Dunbegan.

[35 : 16] That Lord MacLeod promised him that the first vacant congregation that became available within his jurisdiction, that Lord MacLeod would give that congregation to him.

And so when John Shaw died in Brackadale in 1826, 1823, Mr. Leary went to Brackadale.

He used to say concerning Brackadale, with my sword and my bow, I have got this congregation. Referring of course to his prowess with a gun.

Donald Munro went to hear him several times when he was a missionary at Lyndale. And on one occasion somebody asked him, what did you think of Roderick MacLeod?

He said, there's plenty of fuel there, if somebody would only like it. Referring to the ability that Roderick MacLeod had, the learning and intelligence and the gift of speech and so on.

[36 : 32] There's plenty of fuel there, if only it were lit. On another occasion, when they were coming out at their little prayer meeting, somebody said to Jonathan Rose, look, there's Black Rory.

There was Rory with his gun and his doves coming back from a hunting expedition. There's Black Rory, the quiet young man, said Jonathan Rose. Black Rory will soon become White Rory.

But in 1821 his mother died. Now that probably had a solemnising effect upon him. He called one day at the Manson Brackadale, where John Shaw was minister, and John Shaw gave him a copy of Joseph Bellamy's Christian Religion Delineated.

A new edition of it had just been produced. And this book was by the great New England theologian, Joseph Bellamy, Christian Religion Delineated.

And John Shaw told him, take that home with you and read it carefully. So he took it home, and there reading that book in his father's garret, he first began to shed tears for his soul.

[37 : 56] He came under concern, he realised he was a sinner, he was unconverted, and he needed to be saved. He came across a copy of Thomas Chalmers' Lectures on Romans.

And while he was reading this book, he understood the Gospel for the first time, and he received that Gospel with joy.

And he used to refer afterwards to Chalmers as his spiritual father. His conversion, of course, transformed his life.

His preaching changed. His companions changed. Now he sought out the despised Donald Munro, and loved to be in his company, talking about the things of God.

People started to be converted under his preaching. He was inducted to Brackadale in June 1823, and he got married later on that year, October 18, to Anna Robertson, the daughter of Donald MacDonald, the proprietor of Kingsborough and Stables.

[39 : 18] Now, as I said, John Shaw, his predecessor in Brackadale, was timid and was not a strong person or a strong leader.

But Mr. Roury was very different. He refused to baptise the children of parents who would not regularly attend church, and who were not leading upright lives.

No matter how wealthy or powerful or influential they were, he wasn't prepared to baptise their children. In fact, his view was that only the children of members should be baptised.

And further, with regard to communicant membership, his view was that only those who gave evidence of being born again should be accepted into membership.

Shaw had 250 members in his congregation, communicant members in Brackadale, which generally reduced to 10 or 20 communicant members.

[40 : 32] And so, of course, conflicts arose between the rich and the privileged and the minister.

The people, the landowners, the rich taxmen, and the retired army captains and so on, these privileged people, who thought they had every right to dominate the church and to live however they liked in the pressures of the world and in their godless ways and their sins, and yet to have baptism and to have the Lord's Supper, conflict arose.

And here was a minister who set standards and was prepared to stand by them. He was a minister with guts. The rich people in his congregation appealed to the presbytery against him.

And, of course, the presbytery were all moderate ministers and so they sided with the wealthy. And eventually, Mishiruari was suspended from the ministry for two months and various procedures were set up against him in order to depose him from the ministry.

But he hung on by a thread, as it were. You can see the hand of God keeping him in there, fighting, standing, not allowing his principles to be trampled upon in any way, standing firmly, sincerely, and steadfastly from his principles.

[42 : 08] The Lord looking after him, keeping him in there. To begin with, the assembly was still in the hands of Madhuri. And various appeals were made from the presbytery to the assembly and these were going against Mishiruari.

But somehow or other, he was able to hang on. And as time went by, the evangelicals eventually became the majority in the assembly, in the Church of Scotland assembly in Edinburgh.

But even the evangelicals found this man, Mishiruari, a very strange man. And some of them thought that he must be a terrible troublemaker and that his congregation must be in an awful state because of all the complaints and appeals that were coming from the sky presbytery to the assembly about him.

So eventually it was decided that a deputation should be sent from the assembly to Brackadale to see what was going on in the congregation. And this deputation was led by a Dr. Beast.

He was an evangelical. He came to the church and went to the church this day and wondered what was in front of him, thought that they would have terrible problems.

[43 : 29] When he got into the church, he found the church was packed full of people. He started the service, preached, and then he asked for objectors to stand up and to state what they had against Mishiruari.

He was waiting for a big flood of objectors and nobody was standing. Eventually one man stood up, Martin MacLeod of Dreynor. He was the only man who objected to Mishiruari.

What he discovered was a congregation who loved their minister were united behind him in a congregation that the Lord was blessing. And outside, a handful of troublemakers, the rich and the privileged were troublemakers.

But the people of Brackadale loved Mishiruari and supported him. He was one who was fighting for them. Martin MacLeod of Dreynor went off with several others and built the Episcopal Church of John the Baptist at Caroy.

And there he got all his children and all their children baptized, whatever good that would do to them. Baptism in and of itself will save no one.

[44 : 46] And if baptism is not properly used, it's only condemned. It doesn't bring blessings, it's only condemned. The sacraments of the church are to be approached with great solemnity.

If we come thoughtlessly or carelessly to the Lord's table, we eat and drink damnation to ourselves. If we come thoughtlessly or carelessly for baptism, we sprinkle ourselves and our children with damnation.

The church of John the Baptist at Caroy is today a ruin. And that's what happens to all who do not follow the true will of the Lord.

Another powerful enemy of Mishiruari was Ewan MacAskill, Ewan Mór and Rooa. He leased Talisgar Farm for £3,000 rent annually.

He collected the rent from the crofters and demanded work of them as well. One spring, the crofters of a certain township were out cutting seaweed in the spring tide, making use of the spring tide.

[46 : 02] And Ewan sent word to them to come and do some work for them. And they refused because of what they were doing. As a result, he got them evicted from their homes, from their crops, thrown out of their homes.

They had that kind of power in those days. John Shaw allowed him to have church membership. But Mishiruari would not allow this cruel wicked man to be a church member.

The poor saw Mishiruari as their champion. It's interesting that several of those families who were evicted from Tavoiskir settled in Oonish at the extreme west of Waternish, Waternish Point.

And there they were, a Dalek teacher, a school teacher, was sent to work amongst them. Norman MacLeod, who had been a soldier under Abercrombie in Egypt, was wounded there, came home to Edinburgh.

And while walking along the streets in Edinburgh one day, felt this terrible urge inside him, like a little voice saying to him, Buy a Bible. Go and buy a Bible. Buy a Bible.

[47 : 25] So he went into a shop and he bought a Bible. He started to read it. And as he says himself, A bullet of love struck my heart.

Changed his life. He was laid low and converted. Changed into a new man. Well, Norman MacLeod went to Oonish. And not only was he a teacher there, teaching them to read, but he also held meetings, much to the annoyance of the moderate minister in Dunvegan.

He held meetings and exhorted the people. Didn't see very much though from his meetings. But when his period there came to an end, after three years there, he had to move on to a new station.

And on his last night there, he preached a sermon to the people on the parable of the barren fig tree.

Read three years. I have come seeking fruit and found none. Cut it down. Why cumber us at the ground?

[48 : 37] For three years I have been working amongst you. And there has been no fruit. And as he was speaking to them, the Holy Spirit came down in power. And they became deeply concerned about their souls.

Seeking the Lord. And a little local revival started there in that little township of Oonish. Near, at the Waternish Point.

His wife said to Norman, Stop or you'll put the people out of their minds. Oh, he replied, It's a long time since I've wished to put you out of your mind.

And haven't succeeded. She was an unconverted woman herself. She had to wait on several weeks, helping the people to find the Saviour and to put their trust in him.

Mr. Roury moved from Brackadale to his home congregation of Snysert on 9th April 1838.

[49 : 50] His father had built a new church in Kensalaya, which would seat about 500 people, but it wasn't adequate for the congregation and now started to gather.

A new wing had to be built on it to seat another 250. And even then, with a seating of 750, the church was crowded out Sunday after Sunday.

We now come to the second great revival in Skye. The dates are 1840, April 1840 to 43.

The people at Unish, where there was that little revival under Norman MacLeod, they were thirsting for the gospel.

They weren't getting anything from their own minister, a moderate minister. And they were longing for somebody to come and preach to them. So eventually they sent word to Nishert Roury and he agreed to come and came over to Skye in Waternish.

[50 : 50] And when he arrived there, he found that crowds of people had gathered. Fifty boatloads of people from all round the coast gathered there at Skye.

And as he preached, he felt the power of the Holy Spirit present and God working amongst the people. And so it was decided that there would be another meeting the following Wednesday.

This time in Sperry Bridge. Sperry Bridge is where the three roads meet. The road to Dandeggan, the road from Dandeggan, the road from Waternish and the road from Snysert.

Nobody lived there, but it was a convenient meeting place. And so the following Wednesday, he preached there in Sperry Bridge. And for many months afterwards, every Wednesday, Nishert Roury would preach at Sperry Bridge.

And crowds gathered there, from five to nine thousand people sometimes, gathering there at Sperry Bridge. And when you consider that the population of Skye at that time was just over twenty thousand, nine thousand people gathering at Sperry Bridge.

[52 : 01] It was almost half the population gathering from all over Skye. And God's Spirit was mightily at work. One Wednesday, he was preaching on Revelation 3 verse 20.

Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in with him and sup with him and he with me. And in the middle of his sermon he said, Friends, my fear is not that Christ will not accept you.

But my fear is that you will not accept Christ. He stands at the door and knocks and you will not accept him.

The people became deeply concerned and moved. God's Spirit working in our hearts. And that night, it took a long, long time for many of them to go home.

Their cry was, We won't go home until we've got Christ with us in our hearts. That was the great revival then at Sperry Bridge.

[53 : 12] A revival that affected the whole of Skye. Several other ministers came over to help at that time.

Fraser from Kirkhill and MacDonald from Uri came over together. There was, by this time, there was an evangelical minister in Brackadale by the name of Glass.

And they went to help him down in Brackadale. They sent word to a remote village on one occasion that they would be holding a service there the next day.

When the next day came, it was pouring with rain. And they thought, Oh, it seems it's a remote village and all this rain. There would be hardly a soul there at that village.

But when they made their way to the village, they were seeing crowds of people being dragged in the rain. Crowds of people making their way to the meeting place.

[54 : 16] And there was a river there that had to be crossed. And it was in full state. There was no way across, but simply by wading through it. And it was very dangerous because it was a fast flowing river.

And they wondered what the crowd of people would do. And what did they do? The strongest men went in first, wading into the river. And then helping the women across and the older people across. Wading through the river up to their middle.

And then they came and sat down there soaking wet to listen to the gospel being preached. And as they preached that day, they were saying, The attention of the people.

Every head was bowed as the people wept over their sins and concerned about their soul. There was only one man who held his head up. One old man held his head up.

And even he, the tears were trickling down his cheeks. God's spirit at work. Touching people. Convicting them of their sin. Of their lack of righteousness.

[55 : 17] Of the judgement which was to come. Of their need of peace with God. They made their way to Sconcer. And held a service there. And there was nowhere for them to gather but on the shore when the tide was out.

And the people sat down there on the shingle. And a little tent had been constructed with oars and a sail for the minister to stand in. To shield his Bible from getting weight.

He preached one sermon to the people. And sermons then were long sermons. Forly an hour. Sometimes much more than that.

But the people weren't content with one sermon. They wanted another. There was another minister there. He could preach too. There they were sitting on the shingle and the tide was coming in.

But they wouldn't move until they'd heard another sermon. And even after that. Although they had to move with the waters coming in. They were reluctant to go home until they were told that the minister should be preaching the next day in Broadford.

[56 : 26] And so the next day they made their way from Sconcer to Broadford. God's spirit was giving them this interest and concern in their souls.

When they got to Broadford, the minister in Broadford, who was a moderate, wouldn't give them the church. There was this crowd of people wanting to go into the church, but the minister wouldn't give them the church.

He said, you can come back tomorrow and you'll get the church tomorrow. There were some people there from Strathaird. And they hit on a plan. They said, come, come to Strathaird and we'll show you the stalactite cave there.

And if you, if you come, we'll show you the cave, providing you'll preach for us in our little mission church. So they agreed to that. And they went by boat to Strathaird.

And the men took them up to show them the cave. And the women ran off around the village to gather all the people together so that the meeting house was packed with people. And once again, they weren't satisfied with just one sermon.

[57 : 32] They wanted two, two sermons. Next day, they made their way to Broadford and the big church in Broadford was packed with people. And in the middle of the sermon, they had, there was so much emotion that they had to announce the psalm and sing a few verses of a psalm in order to calm the emotions of the people.

They were amazed how ordinary sermons made people tremble and wait. There was nothing special about the sermon. The special thing was the Holy Spirit working through the sermon, opening the hearts of sinners, making them concerned about their souls.

This second revival, 1840 to 43, was preparation for the disruption.

In 1843, 470 ministers left the Church of Scotland to form the Free Church. The reason why they left was because of patronage and state interference in the church, in the running of the church.

The rich landlords could say who would be ministered here or there. The law courts were interfering in the way the churches were being run.

[58 : 58] So eventually, a third of the ministers, 470, left the Church of Scotland to form the Church of Scotland Free. The Free or Independent Church of Scotland.

There was no one more relieved to join the Free Church than Mr Rurie. One person had described him as a bagged fox, which the moderates would let out of their bag every so often when they wanted a chafe.

They wanted some amusement and so they would sit on Mr Rurie. Somebody came round to see his wife and said to her, How do you feel?

Surely you don't want your husband to leave the Church of Scotland. What's going to happen? You're going to have to leave your man and you won't have a stipend.

You're going to be in poverty. What are you going to do? A father too had said, A father was the proprietor for Bernersdale and Kingsborough and he said, If you leave the Church of Scotland you won't get a penny from me.

[60 : 04] You'll get no help from me whatsoever. What are you going to do with your thirteen children? And Miss MacLeod said, I would rather see him die than deny his principles.

And so they had to move in, Mr Rurie and his thirteen children, into a little cottage where they were very overcrowded.

And it's reckoned that they caught there in the overcrowded conditions, fever, TB or something, which caused the death of most of the children before they reached the age of 20.

Of the 27,000 people that lived in Skye and Uist at that time, 26,000 joined the Free Church.

Just a thousand people between Skye and Uist left in the Church of Scotland. The two chiefs, Lord MacDonald and Lord MacLeod, were very angry.

[61 : 11] And they did everything in their power to destroy the Free Church. They refused sites. There were 1,100 adherents of the Free Church in Poitry at that stage.

They applied to Lord MacDonald for a site to build a church. He refused them in no uncertain terms. He said he certainly wouldn't give them any site for building a church.

In Kilmour and Stenshull, there were 1,300 adherents of the Free Church. They didn't bother applying to Lord MacDonald. They knew how fanatical he was against the Free Church.

Several Sucentration Fund collectors were evicted from their homes and cross. They were seen as the sort of ringleaders.

The Sucentration Fund was the collection that was made for supporting the ministers in the work of the church. They were evicted from their homes and cross. In a letter to the Free Church monthly record in 1849, we find the following words, Lord MacDonald is understood to have threatened 3,000 Free Church people with eviction from their homes.

[62 : 27] 3,000 Free Church people. You see the pressure that was put upon the people in these days. To give up their principles and to give up their religion and to sell their souls.

Mr Uri tells of how he addressed 1,500 people in a bog near Poitree.

By the time he was finished preaching, the people's feet were sinking down in the bog. He tells on another occasion of how he was preaching at Uri. And the snow was falling.

And falling so thick that in the end he could hardly see the people he was addressing. They were covered in snow, only their little faces showing through. And there they were sitting motionless in the snow, listening to God's word being preached.

The power of God, the Holy Spirit working, the interest, the thirst for the scriptures. The only other minister in sky who joined the Free Church was Mr Glasson Brackadale.

[63 : 36] And shortly after the disruption he accepted a call to Muscledore. John Findlayson, who came from Moogaree up in the end of Glenmore, he was called from Ness and he came to Brackadale in December 1843.

But he wasn't allowed to stay by the landlords, the proprietors wouldn't allow him to stay in Struan or Cabos or that area. He had to stay in Portree.

And travelling one day he was thrown from his cake and he died as a result of the injury. So his ministry in Brackadale was for less than a year.

He died in September 1844. So the tremendous burden of the work of God in sky all came down on the shoulders of Nischa Ruhari.

And not just all these congregations from Slaves to Kilmyra, but also the U.S. as well. That was part of the Presbytery.

[64 : 49] And there was only one Free Church minister in the whole of, from North Uist to Barra. One minister in Trumscurry in South Uist.

So Mr Ruhari had to go out to the Uist. And he also had St Kilda in the Presbytery. He had to go out as far as St Kilda out there in the Atlantic. He was a strong man.

And in all weather she would be found travelling around, preaching in the open air, wet and cold. It didn't matter. His wife went to see her father and begged and begged and pleaded and begged until eventually he relented and gave to her a site for building a Manson church.

And the site that was given was the site of the present church, Free Church in Manson, in Snysers and Scables Bridge.

Where, before that area had been blessed by the prayers of Donald Munro and the others who gathered in this little prayer meeting there by the riverside.

[66 : 05] Where Donald Munro used to live. Eventually, the Lord MacLeod first and eventually even Lord MacDonald relented.

And so sites were given. And by 1851, five Free Churches and nine Free Church schools had been built. These nine schools had 30 teachers and 435 pupils.

26 more schools were built by an association of ladies from Glasgow and Edinburgh. The first Free Church minister in Portree was a Mr MacEchran.

He came as a probationer on a sort of trial period in 1848. The problem was he didn't have Gaelic and he came intending to learn Gaelic.

But eventually, three years later, in 1851, he accepted a call to Cromartie. He just couldn't learn Gaelic. He'd failed. The first regular Free Church minister was John Reed who came in 1854.

[67 : 15] The third great revival in Skye was in 1860 to 1863. It began in the north, Kilmueagh, and then spread throughout the whole island.

And that revival, MacRamore, John MacRae, the minister of Nocbane first to move to Loughston, Lewis in 1857, was greatly used.

He was so influential that the congregation of Snyzert bought him a yacht so that it would be easier for him to be going back and forth from Lewis to Skye.

Preaching in Skye was greatly blessed. Many, many people again converted. In 1863, Mr Rueri was made Free Church moderator.

But he was getting older and his strength couldn't go on forever. In 1868, he went to a communion in South East. The weather was very stormy and on the way home, he slept on the ballast stones on the bottom of the boat.

[68 : 29] The rain and the waves sending their spray in upon him. Seventy-three years of age, how could he sleep on the ballast stones in a storm? And yet, he seemed he was able to do that.

He was that sort of man. But a day or two later, after having arrived home, feeling alright when he got home, but a day or two later, he took ill.

And his communion came and he wasn't able to go out. The assisting minister was his friend, Charles Macintosh, up to noon. When the communion was over, Macintosh went to see him and wished him well and hoped that he would soon recover.

But Mr. Ruri said, Oh, don't speak to me like this. I'm as happy as a king and a great deal happier. I feel that the Lord's time has come to take his servant home.

The following Sunday, he felt a bit better. And so he ventured out to church. He started the series and eventually he announced his text. Glory to God in the highest on the earth, peace and goodwill toward men.

[69 : 44] Luke 2.14 And the people settled down in their seats, looking forward to hearing a great sermon on the glory of God and the peace of God and the mercy of God and salvation of the Lord.

But it wasn't to be. Mr. Ruri collapsed and had to be helped home. And he died a few days later, without fear and perfect confidence.

Like the apostle Paul, he could say, I have fought a good fight. I have finished my course. I have kept the faith. Henceforth, there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me in that day.

He was buried in Brackadale. His death was 20th March 1868. Buried in Brackadale, beside his wife and nine children who had already died before him.

Summing up then, the Gospel came in 1805 through the preaching of Parkersham. And Don Monroe was converted. The first revival was 1812 to 14.

[70 : 53] The second revival, 1840 to 43. The third revival, 1860 to 62. The sky was changed beyond all recognition into a law-abiding place.

A place where the fear of God was. A place where there was knowledge of the truth. A place where family worship was observed. Every day God's word read and prayer offered up.

Not just in the homes of the professing Christians, but in the homes of virtually the whole population. The Sabbath was observed universally throughout the whole island.

And people appreciated the need to be converted, to be born again. Real Christianity came to sky. And still today, after more than a hundred years of decline, we are still enjoying the fruits of these revivals at the beginning and middle of last century.

Could we see a revival again? Here in sky. Let's remember, the Lord's arm is not shortened that it cannot fade. Nor his ear grown heavy that it cannot hear.

[72 : 08] There's not an inevitability about the progress of evil. Although we in our weak faith sometimes think that evil will go on and things will get worse and worse.

But that's not the case. Rather it's the opposite. There's an inevitability about the progress of Christ's kingdom. His kingdom shall prevail.

Remember the stone in Daniel. The little stone cut out of the mountain without hands. And it rolls along. And it strikes down the image.

The image that represents the empires of the world and the powers of the world in their ungodliness and in their antagonism to God.

And the stone rolls down, smashes the image to pieces, breaks them to powder so that they're blown away. And then the stone becomes a great mountain that fills the whole earth.

[73 : 09] The stone representing the Church of Christ, growing and filling the whole world. Himador ■ indicates usulously proclaims the whole world and telling us that we are not Allah coming.

No longer are we just sitting in our pews and thinking Everything is fine And people can come, the door is open And if they want they can come to church And the gospel is there for them Nowadays we know that we must reach out We have a duty and responsibility And we've realized that To take the gospel to the world outside That's encouraging The second thing that's encouraging Is that all the Church of Scotland ministers In the island are evangelical As well as are all the other Presbyterian ministers That's something that should give us encouragement too All these evangelical ministers Ministers who know the gospel And who seek to preach the gospel in our island Further, something else that should encourage us Is that we have an active evangelical Christian As the headmaster of our high school

That should give us great encouragement And further We should be encouraged That there are so many people As we see here tonight Who come to a meeting such as this And also That there is a burden of prayer For revival We hear it in our prayer meetings Every week People pray for revival Do you think God doesn't hear?

He does hear He will hear And he will answer Ask he says And you shall receive So what is required of us? Surely Reformation of our lives That more and more We will be holy Christians What is required of us?

Prayer To pray to the Lord For his blessing And what more? That we humble ourselves before him So that we're not seeking our own glory So that we're not seeking The glory of our own denomination But so that we are seeking The glory of God Above all else Our duty is to make sure That we ourselves Have a personal relationship With Jesus Christ That we're not like the moderates With a heartless Christianity So that we're not like the church At Sardis In Revelation The book of Revelation Which had a name that it lived When it was dead Let's make sure That we personally

[76 : 27] Know Christ ourselves That we have him As our own personal saviour And then We are in a position To help others And to look too For God's blessing Upon our island And our land And our land And our land