A Comparative Study of the Responses of Three Highland Communities to the Disruption in the Church of Scotland in 1843

Thesis

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A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE RESPONSES OF THREE HIGHLAND COMMUNITIES TO THE DISRUPTION IN THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND IN 1843

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VOLUME II
Within the framework of the research imperative, employing the case study approach, it is essential to investigate the role of significant people in the church and how these specific individuals may have influenced the attitudes and behaviour of the inhabitants of the three parishes. Again, as acknowledged in the second introductory chapter, strengths and weaknesses will emerge, according to available sources, incomplete evidence naturally affecting the emerging picture. Initially the input of church courts within the Establishment will be explored. The role of church officials, especially the ministers but also catechists and teachers, will then be examined, as well as missionaries from both church and voluntary organisations. Finally, the impact of laymen, particularly 'The Men,' the loose group of pious church members, will be addressed. Certain elements of this current overview of religious background will be subjected to closer examination in later chapters.

**Church Courts.**

**The Kirk Session.**

The Kirk Session, the governing body of the individual church, comprised the minister and elders. Despite the fact that there are unfortunately considerable gaps in availability of Kirk Session Records for the three parishes being studied, nonetheless those available do afford a glimpse of the significant role of this body, although scant evidence of the identity of elders. Additionally, little further information relating to this body in these communities, including social status of elders, could be traced in either secondary or other primary sources. In order to explore the contention that elders were not only expected to be devout Christians but tended to
be men of some standing in their particular communities, it is useful to quote the Reverend Donald Sage, minister of Resolis in Easter Ross from 1822, who observes, in connection with his own group of men: 'the character and standing of all the elders were according to godliness, each and all being men possessed of weight, and to whose judgement the people readily submitted,'\textsuperscript{571} all bar one being tenants, the exception being the miller. Sage’s pronouncement suggests that the Kirk Session could indeed be of considerable influence in its own community.

Further evidence confirming the social standing of elders, in very different geographical and socio-economic contexts, can be found in the work of MacLaren in Aberdeen and Hillis in Glasgow. MacLaren observes, referring to the period 1830 to 1850, that, although morality and business integrity were highly regarded, 'suitable socio-economic standing' was necessary. In this case large merchants and manufacturers were particularly prominent, followed by lawyers, professionals and retired gentlemen. Landed gentry or those related to landed families were apparent, the body of elders being noted to represent men who 'dominated every major economic and political institution in the city.'\textsuperscript{572} Hillis’s findings in mid-nineteenth century Glasgow corroborate this impression of high status groups, principally the upper-middle class and again predominantly the large merchant-manufacturing group, although professional and commercial men were well represented, while lesser numbers of public servants, small merchants and artisans were also included.\textsuperscript{573} Such evidence would tend to suggest that the ministers of the parishes in this study would have been supported by elders representing the more prestigious elements within their specific socio-economic environments.

\textsuperscript{571} Sage, the Reverend Donald (1975), p.272.
\textsuperscript{573} Hillis P. quoted in Cooke, Anthony, Donnachie, Ian, MacSween, Ann and Whatley, Christopher A.A. (eds.), (1998), pp.75-76.
Tain.

Tain’s extant records only run from 1791 to 1828, but serve to show the Session’s deep concern with morality and its function as an organ of social control. Innumerable cases of young women committing fornication and being found to be ‘with child in uncleanness’ figure in the Minutes. For example, on 3rd September 1795, a serving maid to a town innkeeper was found to be pregnant. Both parties appeared before the Kirk Session, confessing their guilt, for which they were rebuked and asked to attend the next meeting of Presbytery. Even when the parties concerned actually married shortly after committing the offence (antenuptial fornication), a rebuke and payment of a fine was elicited, as the case recorded on 9th November 1800 demonstrates. The seriousness with which such behaviour was regarded by minister and elders is indubitable, public shame and humiliation being brought upon those involved. Unruly behaviour was also censured, an example being the case recorded on 5th May 1806, when a woman charged with keeping a ‘disorderly house’ was banished from the town.\(^{574}\)

The church’s role in supporting members of its own community is amply illustrated in the copious entries concerning the ‘poor’s funds.’ Tain was not unusual: this responsibility was carried by all parishes in Scotland. Church funds were raised by church door collections, fines, rent of the Poor’s Croft and the occasional donation. Once collected, the money was distributed annually, after payment of salaries to such as the Session Clerk, the Catechist and the ‘Charity Schoolmaster.’ Occasional payments to the poor and sick also occurred, the remaining money being then disbursed to those on the Poor’s Roll. On 14th August 1792, small payments were made to 139 persons, of whom approximately 45 were widows and only

\(^{574}\) Tain Church of Scotland, St. Duthus Church, Kirk Session Minutes, CI12/349/3, pp.49, 101 and 147.
32 were males. The Session, concerned about the size of the Roll, considered that, in order to make better provision for the truly needy, their duty was to eliminate the names of those able to support themselves. The notion of the deserving and undeserving poor was strongly linked to this argument, the church’s role as a moral arbiter being paramount. The success of the Session’s measures is duly reflected in the declining numbers of recipients in ensuing years.

Various general issues also occupied their minds, including burials, baptisms and the raising of money. These basically practical matters added another dimension to the principally moral role of the Session, a spiritual dimension to their work not being noted. However, pressure to conform to certain ‘mores’ could have created a feeling among parishioners that they should also follow the elders’ lead in spiritual matters.

The Tain Minutes contain little evidence concerning the socio-economic status of elders, although two entries do furnish some clues. On 11th April 1799 the Session unanimously agreed that Mr. John Barclay, Sheriff Substitute, should be ordained an elder. This case appears to illustrate two points. Firstly, as suggested earlier, elders were essentially drawn from among the more prestigious members of the community, and secondly, their road to acceptance in their office was a very public one. The solemnity of the office can be inferred from the prayer, scriptural discourse, and imposition of ‘Vows and Engagements’ to which the new elder was subjected. Corroboration for the notion of social standing can be found in a later record, two new elders being a writer and a military captain respectively.

573 Tain Church of Scotland, St. Duthus Church, Kirk Session Minutes, C112/349/3, pp.21-25.
574 Ibid., 7th September 1809.
575 Ibid., eg. 23rd September 1813 and 24th October 1816.
576 Ibid., pp.85-86.
577 Tain Church of Scotland, St. Duthus Church, Kirk Session Minutes, C112/349/3, 9th June 1823.
Portree.

Sources tapped in relation to Portree's Kirk Session, whose records prior to 1854 are missing, see its function in much the same light as that revealed by Tain's Session Minutes. Firstly, it acted as an organ of social control and secondly, it handled the finance, especially important in relation to its duties regarding the poor. Only one reference has been unearthed regarding the Session's former function in the pre-Disruption period, demonstrating the late eighteenth century church's power in the disciplinary measures it adopted to penalise those 'guilty of breaches of the Moral Law.' An adulterer, for example, would be condemned 'to stand in a barrel of cold water at the door of the church before and throughout the service,' the severity of this 'form of penance' being 'sometimes tempered, when the culprit was allowed, instead, to stand on a seat, in full view of the congregation, dressed only in a wet canvas shirt.'

Although a more physical penance than that implied in Tain, the purpose would have been identical; to shame the offender before his neighbours, a powerful deterrent against recidivism, the moral and emotional suffering being assuredly greater than the physical discomfort.

The Session's continuing role regarding moral control and discipline is reflected in Minute entries such as that of 22nd December 1858, propounding the following general but firm opinion: - 'The Session regret that there has been a laxity in regard to Church Discipline in this parish, resolve that in future the Rules of the Church be strictly enforced, particularly those having reference to Illegitimate Children.' Some of the several entries regarding illegitimate children involve requests for baptism, including those recorded on 4th April 1855 and 9th June 1856. Such requests, seeming to reflect the importance with which membership of the church was regarded, display a strong desire for the child to be welcomed into the band of worshippers, despite having started life with the slur of illegitimacy.

581 Portree and Raasay Session Minute Book, CI12/1116/1, pp.22, 6-7 and 12.
Although a more poverty-stricken parish than Tain, Portree would have been expected to
distribute money from its necessarily more meagre church funds to those on the Poors’ Roll.
The Reverend John Nicolson had established a ‘parish poor fund of £140,’ built up at a time
when collections were greater and the number of poor smaller. The interest on that sum, plus
contemporary collections and delinquents’ fines, served to support the indigent poor. 46
individuals in the Skye section of the parish and 15 in Raasay appear on the list in the OSA.
Other needy folk in the parish would have been supported by friends or relatives. 582
The composition of the fund and support of the indigent had not changed by the time of the
New Statistical Account. Coll Macdonald claims that a majority of the poor were supported by
the charity and benevolence of their neighbours, only ‘dire necessity’ causing folk to ‘submit
to the degradation of public begging,’ nothing being ‘so repugnant to their minds as to have
their names inserted in the poor-list of the parish’ 583—a situation not dissimilar to that
accruing in Tain. However, in contrast to Tain, numbers receiving aid had actually risen, to a
figure of 89 584—hardly surprising in view of the destitution caused by the harvest failures
alluded to in earlier chapters.
As in Tain, the Portree Kirk Session undertook other tasks, including appointing church
officials and deliberating upon timing of church services, as the entry for 15th June 1861
intimates, or the date for administration of the Lord’s Supper, as reflected in the record of 28th
July 1856. 585 This demonstration of the Session acting in a more ecclesiastical capacity may
reflect post-Disruption changes, or may display a continuing but possibly different role to that
fulfilled by the Tain Session. The absence of records for parallel dates precludes any definitive
statements. Certainly, as in Tain, the Session appears to have been deeply involved in parish

582 Sinclair, Sir John (1795), p.156.
584 Ibid., p.234.
585 Portree and Raasay Session Minute Book, C112/1116/1, pp.28-29 and 15.
affairs, although no evidence has come to light concerning the identity of elders. Likewise
significance of influence, related to continuities or discontinuities in the body prior to the
Disruption, cannot be determined, whereas the strong body of elders defecting to Tain Free
Church in 1843 suggests that there was no problem of reduced influence in that parish.

Strath.

There is, however, evidence to suggest that the church in Strath did lack elders, certainly in the
year of the Disruption, a situation likely to have accrued due to a lack of tacksmen, men of
suitable standing to assume the role. Unfortunately there are no extant Kirk Session Minutes
for this parish, but the Presbytery Records of 19th December 1843 refer to a request from the
minister for permission to appoint elders.586 Although elders may have been lost to the Free
Church at the Disruption, no record of this has as yet been uncovered. Indeed, as stated earlier,
several sources affirm that virtually the whole congregation remained within the Established
Church. Consequently the church in Strath may well have been operating for a period with few
or no elders.

Lamont furnishes the only other reference to this body which has been traced in the sources.
He regards the Session of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries as a combination
of ‘law court, kirk session and parish council,’ confirming that fines were imposed on
delinquents, a method of swelling the parish’s meagre funds for assisting paupers. However,
when the congregation moved to the new church in Broadford this whole regime of punishing
offenders virtually disappeared and indeed the kirk session ‘lost alike its power and its most
serious difficulties.’587 This comment suggests that there was a kirk session in 1841, but its
size, duties and how long it continued remain undisclosed.

586 The Presbytery of Skye Records, Cl12/330/4, p.41.
587 Lamont, the Reverend D. (1984), pp.151-152.
Summary.

Thus it can be surmised that the Kirk Session exerted a practical and moral influence in all three parishes, although the level of that influence was variable. There appears to have been a strong body of elders in Tain prior to the Disruption, but the size and continuity of the Session in Portree and Strath is uncertain. Considering the social composition of the inhabitants of these Skye parishes, as revealed in earlier chapters, it seems likely that there would have been a dearth of men of sufficient ‘standing’ to fulfil the role of elder as painted above, especially in Strath. The implied diminution of the Session’s role in Strath, followed by a seeming discontinuity in the Disruption year, suggest that the minister of this parish may have wielded a greater share of the influence over the morality and material well-being of his parishioners at that time than his counterpart in Tain. As regards Portree, the pre-Disruption picture lacks clarification.

As regards impact on religious observance, there is a lack of evidence, apart from reports relating to the post-Disruption period in Portree, to suggest that the Session played any direct part in this field. It would appear, therefore, that the minister would act as the key figure in the spiritual field and indeed was probably the linchpin of the church in Strath. However, the moral and social strength of the kirk session in Tain could well have had a significant impact on religious behaviour within that parish and the disparate behaviour of minister and parishioners in Portree at the Disruption throws up distinct questions about persons of influence in that community.

The Presbytery.

The Presbytery, the organ acting for a group of parishes, exercised a wide range of functions, as well as being represented on the wider regional organisation, the Synod, and the supreme
body, the General Assembly. It would debate and pronounce upon religio-political issues, theological points and worship patterns, determine days of fasting or thanksgiving within its bounds and, most significantly, decide upon the suitability of candidates for the ministry and the appointment of religious personnel, catechists as well as clerics, throughout its parishes. It was also responsible for disciplining ministers. On the material side, it was involved in the organisation of the building of churches and manses and, for this and other purposes, liaising with the local heritors. Within the framework of its responsibility for educational provision, referred to in an earlier chapter, it appointed teachers and supervised schools. Finally, it acted as a higher court than the kirk session on moral issues and social control.

It could be argued that business conducted at Presbytery level, being concerned with all the parishes within its boundary, would have had less direct impact on actual parish members. However, certain matters discussed and acted upon would have had a considerable effect on their lives. A glimpse at the appropriate records will serve to illustrate this point.

Tain.

Between 1810 and 1823 much of Tain Presbytery’s concern with this parish centred on the need for and then building of a new church, followed by the construction of a new manse. These practical issues, however, were not divorced from a realisation of the centrality of the spiritual needs of the parish, or the significance of its prestige as a community, the minister informing the meeting on 28th November 1810 that the founding of the Academy in the burgh must have added ‘considerably to its respectability and population.’

In its spiritual role the Presbytery undertook a rigorous procedure for approving potential teachers and ministers. The Minutes record the efforts of William Ritchie, Rector of Tain Academy and Student of Divinity, to be accepted as a preacher of the Gospel, starting in

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November 1822. On 5th February 1823 the Presbytery accepted his certificate of University training and conduct and expressed satisfaction following their examination of his knowledge. However, the members took exception to a piece of doctrine included in the popular sermon he preached to themselves and an assembled congregation on 19th June. Regarding it as unscriptural and ‘contrary to the Standards of this Church’ to assert that a person’s best and sincerest efforts, even if not perfect, would serve for righteousness through the merits of Christ, the Presbytery asked him to present a further discourse. Ritchie’s view on this matter was seemingly too ‘soft’ for the fiercely evangelical stance of Tain Presbytery. He did not pursue his application in Tain.

On the other hand, the application of Charles Calder Mackintosh, son of Angus McIntosh, to preach the Gospel, met with immediate success. Licensed by the Presbytery on 25th November 1827, presented to the parish of Tain on 28th April 1828 and ‘ordained and admitted assistant and successor to his father on 19th June 1828, he succeeded his father as sole minister on the latter’s death in 1831. Although Charles suffered poor health, the Presbytery was sympathetic. It can be conjectured, therefore, that the Presbytery wielded considerable influence over the nature of the religious message entering a parish, refusing licence to preach to anyone whose doctrine or character it regarded as unsuitable, thus perpetuating its own doctrines, beliefs and observances. Thus the current ministers and representatives of Kirk Sessions within the Presbytery were able to have a notable impact on the religious experience of parishioners.

The strength and seeming unanimity of feeling among the members of Tain Presbytery regarding the issues of the Ten Years’ Conflict is reflected in a number of entries in the

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589 Presbytery of Tain Minutes, CI12/348/13, pp.60 and 65.
591 Macnaughton, the Reverend Colin (1915), pp..342, 347, 360-361 and 363.
Minutes, anticipating the reactions of these ministers and key elders at the time of the Disruption. Two particular testimonies to their beliefs will serve as illustration. On 4th May 1838 ‘an overture on the subject of the independence of the Church in regard to her doctrine, worship and discipline, and against all interference of the Civil Courts, was agreed upon, and ordered to be transmitted.’ On 27th January 1841 they agreed ‘unanimously to transmit resolutions to Her Majesty’s Government expressive of their deep concern at the alarming and violent encroachments made by the Civil Courts on the constituted rights of this Established Church of Scotland,’ making especial reference to the ‘pretended rights of patronage.’ It can be inferred from these examples that Tain was situated within an area of strong non-intrusion principles.

Seemingly Tain’s minister and elders not only espoused a strong evangelical form of Christian spirituality, but also were anxious to apply it within the ecclesiastical realm of ministerial choice and actions. These religio-political areas of non-intrusion and the questionable role of patronage would appear to lie at the heart of their reasons for entering the Free Church. However, despite a distinct aura of validity, such a postulation is too facile and superficial in the face of an indubitably complex situation.

It is also vital to indicate that there is no evidence to suggest that the impact of such arguments carried on at Presbytery level was as great on the parishioners. Although religio-political addresses may well have issued from the pulpit, nonetheless Tain inhabitants were subject to a wide variety of influences, which would have intertwined in numerous different ways to determine their Responses to the Disruption.

The Presbytery also involved itself in community matters of a practical nature, sometimes taking an active role and sometimes restricting itself to spiritual intervention. For example, it

592 Ibid., pp.370 and 376-378.
is recorded, in line with earlier noted responsibilities, that the Presbytery examined Tain Academy classes in December 1831, demonstrating the close link between a religious body and the seemingly secular training of young minds. On a more spiritual level, the Presbytery is seen to have imposed days of prayer on each of its parishes. To exemplify, on 28th March 1832, when the country was suffering 'under the visitation of the Lord by pestilence,' it expressed the requirement of all to 'humble themselves under the mighty hand of God' and thus hold 'public meetings for prayer and humiliation,' following the general pattern of the time.

Finally, the Presbytery also acted as an instrument of social control in the sense of being a higher court. Examples of this are to be found in the Minutes of 14th January 1818, 25th November 1819 and 21st February 1821, the man and woman involved in this last case being remitted 'to the Session of Tain to serve discipline according to the rules of the Church....' The Presbytery of Skye.

It would appear from the wide range of practical and spiritual issues addressed by Tain Presbytery, as described above, that it played a notable role in the lives of those living within its bounds, particularly in terms of worship patterns, religious personnel, education and social control. An exploration of the records of the Presbytery of Skye, which included both Portree and Strath, will endeavour to discover whether it exercised a similarly significant influence over the individual parishes.

Portree.

As in Tain, the Presbytery assumed responsibility for the suitability and appointment of religious personnel. For example, on 8th April 1801, the Portree schoolmaster, Rodrick

594 Ibid., pp.348-349.
McLean, presented pieces for training, which received unanimous approval, and on 8th April 1807 the same gentleman delivered discourses and answered questions in a manner satisfactory to the meeting, which then proceeded to ordain him to the ministry.\textsuperscript{596}

The Presbytery was also responsible for approving the appointment of catechists, often associated with the post of schoolteacher, and missionaries to assist the parish minister. On 19th July 1810 the meeting approved the appointment of Mr. George Rose to the former positions in Portree and on 1st December 1829 it requested the minister to approach the Royal Bounty Committee for the purpose of establishing a mission on Raasay. After much correspondence on the matter, including communication with the heritors, the entry of 29th March 1842 referring to the missionary minister at Raasay\textsuperscript{597} demonstrates the eventual success in obtaining this valuable assistance in a scattered and fragmented parish. Clearly this Presbytery, like that of Tain, was instrumental in deciding who would preach the Word within its bounds. However, the thorny question of lay missionaries and ministers from elsewhere exercising influence either in Tain or the Skye parishes will be addressed later, as this forms part of the patchwork of pressures on parishioners.

The Presbytery of Skye, like its counterpart in Ross-shire, undertook other tasks relating to the more spiritual care of the church, including the disciplining of ministers, a role which would have assisted in protecting the interests of parishioners. The case quoted, in entries such as that of 5th December 1832, at a time when the minister of Portree was Moderator of the Presbytery, concerned another parish, centring on accusations against the Reverend Roderick Macleod for failing to baptise children in his parish or admit people to communion.\textsuperscript{598} Macleod, however, did have some effect on Portree parishioners, as will be discovered later.

\textsuperscript{596} The Presbytery of Skye Records, CH12/330/2, pp.157 and 211-212.
\textsuperscript{597} Ibid., CH12/330/2, p.245; CH12/330/3, p.169; CH12/330/4, p.15.
\textsuperscript{598} The Presbytery of Skye Records, CH12/330/3, pp.328-329.
Regarding schooling, Skye Presbytery, like its counterpart in Tain, represented the Church, which at that time, as noted earlier, held a direct responsibility for educational provision. As well as appointing and exercising continued approval of schoolmasters, committees of its members regularly examined schools. An eye was also kept on the provision of Sabbath schools, Portree's minister reporting on 29th March 1842 that the parochial schoolmaster also kept a Sabbath School. 599

Strath.

No case has been found in which Skye Presbytery replicated in Portree its Tain function as an organ of social control, a function seemingly exercised only rarely in Strath, a sole case having been discovered in the Minutes for the pre-Disruption period. On 23rd July 1830 the Presbytery discussed a complaint about the 'improper conduct' (details not disclosed) of a Strath man who had become Schoolmaster of Sleat parish. 600 In the absence of other relevant data it is difficult to formulate hypotheses concerning the marginality of this function in Skye Presbytery. It may be that such matters were conclusively dealt with at parish level, ministers not considering it necessary to refer to a higher court. As intimated earlier, with reference to elders, it appears that the Strath minister acted as the linchpin of the parish. However, there are other possible interpretations, as is the case with any documentary 'traces.' Lack of data could, for example, reflect the bias or agenda of the Presbytery Clerk or the priorities assumed by members of Presbytery or even a lack of need to exercise this function.

The Presbytery's spiritual role appears to have been as prominent in Strath as in the other parishes. Again it can be seen to have assumed responsibility for the propriety and appointment of religious personnel. For example, the call for John Mackinnon to be Assistant

600 Ibid., CH2/33/3, p.195.
and Successor to his father in Strath was sustained by the Presbytery on 7th April 1824.\footnote{The Presbytery of Skye Records, C12/330/3, p.28.} This body's ratification was necessary before a minister could be accepted in his new parish, a function which could be merely a 'rubber stamping' or which could be wielded with much consequence when the occasion appeared to warrant it. A study of the Presbytery Minutes of Tain and Skye would tend to suggest that the former took its duties regarding the fitness of spiritual leaders within its bounds more seriously than the latter. However, this may just reflect the fact that candidates submitting themselves for examination in Skye were more in tune with that Presbytery's requirements than their counterparts presenting in Tain.

Further spiritual affairs in which the Presbytery played a part include administration of communion, the 'Committee of this Presbytery' having met in Strath in September 1788 'for the purpose of administering the Sacrament,' assuming a direct responsibility for this important religious observance. On 7th December 1841 it pronounced a Day of Thanksgiving within its parishes.\footnote{Ibid., C12/330/2, p.41; C12/330/4, p.3.}

In common with Tain and Portree, involvement in educational provision was understandably a key function, Presbyterial intercession in cases concerning non-parochial schools also occurring, as in Tain. For example, the Presbytery discussed the scheme of the Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge on 22nd June 1790 and offered support to a local heritor applying for an SSPCK school in Strathaird (7th April 1802).\footnote{The Presbytery of Skye Records, C12/330/2, pp.72 and 170.} Regarding further practical concerns, decision taking about providing a suitable church and manse occupied much time during meetings in Skye, as they did in those held in Tain.
Summary.

The issues examined in the preceding paragraphs regarding Presbytery business in Tain and Skye represent matters which would have impinged directly on the lives of parishioners, either spiritually, morally or materially. Even the Presbytery’s influence in planning suitable places of worship should not be underestimated in light of the significance attached to accessibility to the preaching of the Word, as revealed in the last chapter.

The fact that elected members of Presbytery represented it at meetings of the General Assembly would mean that material regarding broader religious, social and political issues would reach the ears of at least some parishioners. Easier access in Tain to a regular place of worship and the higher social status of a larger number of inhabitants, as outlined in previous chapters, would tend to suggest that their awareness of and ability to respond to matters outwith the bounds of their parish would have been greater. However, as will be disclosed later, other channels of communication did exist.

Tain Presbytery’s response to the events leading up to the Disruption has been alluded to earlier. That of Skye Presbytery was somewhat different, although not unanimous, the reactions of the Reverend Roderick Macleod in particular being passionately opposed to the majority view. During the pre-Disruption period one of the wider issues debated by Skye Presbytery was the Veto Act, which the meeting of 9th February 1842 declared, in a successful motion seconded by Macdonald of Portree, should be ignored, having been ‘found illegal by the highest Civil Tribunal of this Country’ and constituting ‘the source of all the troubles in which the Church is now involved.’604 This statement reflects the fact that most Skye clergy, including the Portree and Strath ministers, were moving in one conservative and reactionary direction, whereas many of the inhabitants in the north of the island were being quietly drawn

604 The Presbytery of Skye Records, CI12/330/4, p.8.
in another, seemingly more spiritually free, direction. Skye Presbytery, unlike its Tain counterpart, did not carry all its ministers with it in this time of conflict, and parishioners were divided on the same score.

Having examined the role of official church courts, it is vital to consider the significance of the parish ministers, their relationship with parishioners, whether positive or negative, influencing the reactions of the latter to some degree. Catechists, teachers and lay missionaries will then be revealed to have exerted varying degrees of influence, the part played by visiting or neighbouring ministers being investigated at a later stage.

**Ministers and Other Church Officials.**

**Ministers.**

The parish was chosen as the unit of study as its boundaries, determined by the presence of the Established Church, are readily identifiable. Additionally, as the previous section has demonstrated, certain key issues affecting inhabitants' lives were the concern of the parish church, in particular morality, education and poor relief. Membership of the Kirk Session would also have furnished those already in positions of some standing in the community with an opportunity to exert an even stronger influence over the other inhabitants. At the centre of the church structure was the individual minister and this section will glance briefly at the occupants of this essential post in the three parishes. A more in-depth look at their spiritual role in the pre-Disruption decades, along with the influence of family members and other significant ministers, whether or not linked by kinship tics, will be undertaken in later chapters.

The issue of Moderate versus Evangelical obtrudes into this situation. Due to the high level of emotionalism attached to these terms, as indicated in the Introductory Chapter, it is difficult to
paint a disinterested picture of the personalities and religious attitudes of the individuals to be studied. However, an attempt will be made to view them as dispassionately as possible, making allowances for bias among the reporters. Although Presbyteries, Kirk Sessions and heads of families had a role to play in certain cases, it should be remembered that the choice of minister rested principally with the patron, generally either the Crown, local landlord, Town Council or College, a point incurring much wrath among writers of evangelical persuasion, undoubtedly the most prolific in the field. Donald Sage, for example, maintains that Moderate ministers, ‘linguistically, theologically and by character and training incapable of the spiritual and moral leadership of their congregations,’ were foisted on Highland parishes by their patrons. He contends that ‘Highland churches needed the leadership of evangelically-minded ministers, prepared to carry their mission to local communities – sometimes still sunk in superstition – suffering the neglect of generations of ineffective ministers.’ Despite possessing a probable germ of truth, this viewpoint is too sweeping, failing to make allowances for the spiritual care and moral responsibility of individual clerics whatever their religio-political adherence – and seeing evangelicalism as the only acceptable doctrinal and ecclesiastical answer to the needs of parishioners.

Tain.

The two ministers of significance in Tain were the Reverend Angus McIntosh (1797-1831) and his son, the Reverend Charles Calder Mackintosh, who succeeded him and was the incumbent at the time of the Disruption. Later Free Church writers have regarded both men with some reverence. Angus, born in 1762 at Strathdearn (Inverness-shire), was educated at Fortrose Academy and Aberdeen University. Returning to Easter Ross, he tutored at Balnagown and Scotsburn, then taught at Alness, before being licensed to preach by the

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Sage, the Reverend Donald (1975), p.8 – Introduction by Donald Withrington.
Presbytery of Tain. Following a short period as minister of a Gaelic Chapel in Glasgow, which highlighted his fluency in that language, he was ordained as minister of Tain in 1797. On 8th May 1823, the Inverness Courier reported his receipt of the degree of D.D. from the Senatus Academicus of King's College, Aberdeen - a well-deserved recognition of his intellectual capabilities.

Several sources convey impressions of Angus McIntosh. The Fraser Papers contain letters written by him, including that of 23rd May 1821, displaying his deep commitment to the Lord. Having been asked to preach at a meeting of the Northern Missionary Society (a society he had helped to establish), he comments 'May all be done with an eye to the glory of God.' At communion seasons in the locality, where his services were eagerly sought, his 'appeals to the unconverted' were of the 'most rousing description,' and 'delivered with terrible earnestness and impressiveness.' Perhaps superstitious fear, likely to have been prevalent among local inhabitants, caused numerous conversions and adherence to evangelical doctrines, a pattern which material on Raasay, to be investigated later, would also tend to suggest. Whatever the underlying reason the influence of McIntosh on his hearers is undeniable. Having an expressive face, 'commanding presence,' 'powerful and well-balanced voice,' and 'solemn and dignified aspect,' he could command the attention 'of the whole audience' for hours on end. Possessing such skills, he would have been able to utilise his position of authority to influence his parishioners, his ability being furthered by a talent of making himself 'intelligible to the plainest capacity' both in English and Gaelic, a bilingualism already demonstrated to have been necessary in the area. His doctrinal views, delivered with

607 Barron, James (1903), p.221.
608 MacAlpine, the Reverend A. (n.d.), (Talk/Sermon), p.3.
609 The Fraser Papers, IIRA/D122/3 (h).
610 Noble, the Reverend John (1909), pp.230-231.
611 Ibid., pp.235-236.
612 Noble, the Reverend John (1909), p.236.
'penetrating power,' were 'sound, solid, clear and accurate'\textsuperscript{613} – unquestionably in accordance with those of an evangelical persuasion! He was well able to assist the doubting and soothe the anxious – again signs that he was influential in affecting the minds and lives of his parishioners. His time at the Gaelic Chapel in Glasgow and an association with the Chapel of Ease in Inverness, institutions often creating notions of schism, could have left their mark on him and, in turn, been communicated from father to son.

No criticism of Angus McIntosh, a man of undoubted influence in the community, has been discovered in any of the sources trawled for this study. Possessing warmth of personality as well as sanctity and piety, he was a ‘dutiful and loving husband’ and ‘wise and affectionate parent,’\textsuperscript{614} most certainly leaving his mark on his son and successor. Charles, born in 1806, fourth in a family of nine, attended Tain Academy and King’s College, Aberdeen, where he obtained an MA at the age of fifteen. Having studied Divinity at Glasgow University, he was licensed by the Presbytery of Tain, as mentioned earlier, when only twenty-one. Ordained as his father’s assistant and successor in 1828, he assumed responsibility for the parish on his father’s death in 1831.

Charles suffered from recurrent illness, including depression, which may have been caused by early over-work,\textsuperscript{615} especially his excessive diligence at University, which gained him distinction in many classes.\textsuperscript{616} His father, although he could be a stern and strict adherent of the Gospel, displayed tenderness in attempting to calm his anxieties as a student. This paternal care, coupled with the acknowledged gentleness and amiability of Charles as a boy,\textsuperscript{617} help to explain the tenor of Noble’s closing comments: ‘A man of settled principles, gentle in manner,
of steadfast friendship, of deep and accurate knowledge, and of sound judgement, he was
withal the humblest and most loveable of men."\textsuperscript{618}

Charles, from an evangelical viewpoint, was a worthy successor to his father, although of a
softer and more sensitive nature. Anxious about living up to the standards he considered were
expected of him as the son of "the great Dr. Mackintosh," a piece of advice from his father
"Let your face shine; be much on the mount with God; the praying minister is the preaching
minister....," most probably helped him to outshine his excellent parent in one respect at
least.\textsuperscript{619} 'Beloved by his congregation to an extent perhaps seldom equalled in the annals of
the Church' he was 'no less esteemed by his brethren in the ministry.'\textsuperscript{620} Possessing a
'spiritual insight and refinement which none of his predecessors could approach,' this man of
'high culture' and 'refined literary tastes' was nevertheless as 'simple and unassuming as a
little child.' Living 'in close communion with the Master,' he 'did his work, as far as his
fragile frame permitted, conscientiously, and with a single eye to the glory of God.'\textsuperscript{621} Such a
man, whose success in the 'conversion of sinners' and the 'edifying and comforting of the
broken in heart' marked him out as a true servant of his Master,\textsuperscript{622} may well have encouraged
a following in the community through respect, love and admiration, rather than superstitious
fear.

Ministerial influence in the community most certainly continued during Charles’s
incumbency, undoubtedly having an impact on Disruption reaction. Although gentle and
loving, he still conveyed a fear of sin and thirst for salvation, elements central to evangelical
doctrine.

\textsuperscript{618} Noble, the Reverend John (1909), p.243.
\textsuperscript{619} MacAlpine, the Reverend A. (1968), p.5.
\textsuperscript{620} Noble, the Reverend John (1909), p.238.
\textsuperscript{621} Macnaughton, the Reverend Colin (1915), pp.342-343.
\textsuperscript{622} Noble, the Reverend John (1909), pp.240-241.
Strath.

Strath constitutes the other parish where the inhabitants largely followed the lead of their clergyman. In this case, however, as affirmed in the Introductory Chapter, loyalty to the Established Church was displayed, although there is an interesting parallel with Tain in that a father and son ministry is again involved.

Sources consulted on the clerics of Strath are notable for their lack of reference to evangelical fervour. Donald Mackinnon, a graduate in Arts from Aberdeen University, was a 'great and good man' who ministered in Strath, his native parish, for nearly fifty years, the first of an 'illustrious line' of men to do so.623 A letter addressed to Lord Macdonald's solicitor by a certain Alex McAlister (probably Strath's other heritor) in January 1800 questions Mackinnon's effectiveness as a clergyman, implying that he was more successful as a farmer.624 Although this could be interpreted as revealing Mackinnon's ecclesiastical leanings, since Moderate ministers were commonly accused of over-involvement in farming, nonetheless the writer is discomfited about the minister's request for an increase in stipend, a fact possibly colouring his judgement. Another angle on the matter is revealed in papers recording Mackinnon's dissatisfaction regarding his 'stipend which he considers inadequate, his house which he describes as a hovel, and his duties which he claims involve hardship and danger.'625 Farming was probably necessary for his family's survival, and, if he carried out his duties as claimed, they would indeed have been arduous and demanding. The places of worship for which he was responsible (alluded to earlier) were considerable distances apart over difficult terrain and involved frequent outdoor preaching, even in inclement weather.

624 Lord Macdonald Papers, GD 221, 583.
625 Ibid., 5647.
Donald’s successor was his son, John, who was translated from Sleat in 1825, being appointed assistant and successor to his elderly father in the same fashion as Charles Calder Mackintosh in Tain. The geologist and author, Archibald Geikie, a regular guest at the manse, furnishes an opinion of John, worth quoting despite reflecting the warmth of personal friendship. Regarding him as the ‘best example of a Highland clergyman’ he ever met, Geikie refers to his hospitality (a characteristic also ascribed to Angus McIntosh of Tain) and describes him as ‘a gentleman by birth and breeding’ who ‘mingled on easy terms with the best society in the island, while at the same time his active discharge of his ministerial duties brought him into familiar relations with the parishioners all over the district’. There are definite overtones of Moderatism inherent in this description.

John Mackinnon gained an M.A. at Aberdeen University, like his father. He held the charge of Sleat from 1812 until his translation to Strath, acted as Clerk to the Presbytery until 1834, and then became Clerk to the Synod. This is the picture of a man heavily involved in Established Church affairs, but who would have required boundless energy and enthusiasm to carry such burdens on top of his duties as parish pastor and the more secular tasks on his farmland, leases for which have been discovered in the Lord Macdonald Papers. Nonetheless Mackinnon carried his parishioners with him in his decision to remain within the Establishment at the Disruption, parishioners to whom he was well known and whom he had most probably served diligently.

Portree.

On the other hand, Portree’s minister, Coll Macdonald, appears to have been out of step with his parishioners. Alleging in 1841 that there were no ‘sectarians of any description in the

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627 Geikie, Sir Archibald (1906), p.53.
629 Lord Macdonald Papers, GD 221, 4290 and 4298.
parish,’ all the inhabitants being ‘of the Established Church of Scotland,’ he asserted that they were ‘firmly attached to her constitution, worship and doctrine’ and vehemently against any changes which current disputes were threatening to cause. The existence of a Secession Chapel contradicts the former statement and the latter conviction was rudely shattered in 1843. Who were the ministers of Portree in the pre-Disruption decades and how much were they personally responsible for the gulf which seems to have opened up between them and their parishioners? In 1799, Alexander Campbell, already a familiar figure in the parish, where he had spent the previous few years serving as schoolmaster and catechist, became its minister. A Skye man, son of the tacksman from Comlarach near Dunvegan, he had graduated from King’s College, Aberdeen. While still schoolmaster, he compiled the submission for the OSA, his status as a ‘native of the island’ being regarded as important. Donald Mackinnon quotes the entry in the Fasti, lauding this cleric in the following words: ‘His erudition was varied and extensive, his liberality and benevolence were great, while’ he was known for ‘his amiable qualities in private and social life, as well as his strict and conscientious discharge of the duties of his office.’ As this seemingly supportive writer was a Free Church Minister in Portree, it could be conjectured that Campbell’s message hinted at evangelicalism. However, his greatly lamented death occurred suddenly, at the age of 41, the consequence of a ‘fall from the top of his stair,’ thus cutting off a man of ‘sterling qualities’ in the ‘prime of life.’ Whether or not this minister, a native of Skye, might have remained in tune with his parishioners can never be known. The effects of his successor’s ministry have been shown to be very different, obviously lacking in the evangelical message which will be seen later to

631 Mackinnon, the Reverend Donald (?1906), p.18.
633 Mackinnon, the Reverend Donald (?1906), p.20.
634 Ibid., p.20.
have permeated the district from other sources. Coll Macdonald, a North Uist man (although his father had hailed from Skye), was a comparative outsider as far as the parishioners were concerned. This is in direct contrast with his counterparts in Tain and Strath at the time of the Disruption.

Reports of Macdonald unearthed in the research process seemingly display mixed messages. The Free Church minister, Mackinnon, records nothing positive about this 'Moderate' cleric, whom, he asserts, 'combined farming with ministerial duties.' Not 'ultra-evangelical' himself, he was no friend to his 'parishioners who were evangelically inclined and his pulpit was not open to Gospel ministers.' Sharpe, however, eulogises Macdonald as a 'man of sterling integrity, of clear and discriminating mind, and a most friendly and amiable disposition,' who was responsible for the erection of schools in Portree and Snizort parishes. Nonetheless, such observations do not necessarily clash with the evangelical viewpoint, merely constituting insufficient ground to qualify him as a zealous preacher spreading a message of grace and salvation.

Nicolson produces a reasoned summary of Macdonald's qualities and shortcomings. A 'man of forceful character and great industry,' who successfully obtained a new church building for the parish, he possessed 'high moral worth,' coupled with a readiness to 'forward the best interests of the poor and to give sound direction and advice in matters both sacred and secular.' However, in a seemingly plausible postulation of the situation accruing in 1843, he contends that in the 'bitterness of the strife that centred around the Disruption his name was much maligned, while from the great numbers that defected from his charge, it would appear

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636 Mackinnon, the Reverend Donald (?1906), pp.19-20.
that his ministry failed to appeal to those who were carried away by the new evangelical movement in this part of Skye.\textsuperscript{638}

\textbf{Catechists, Teachers and Missionaries.}

At this juncture it is appropriate to undertake a cursory investigation into other officially appointed individuals who may have had some impact on the communities.

Tain.

The presence of a catechist in Tain has been acknowledged in the reference to a salary payment in the Kirk Session Minutes for 14\textsuperscript{th} August 1792.\textsuperscript{639} Kennedy, referring to the role of such men in Ross-shire, affirms that they were ‘employed’ in their work ‘on four evenings of the week,’\textsuperscript{640} ensuring that members of the local community were familiar with the Catechisms, regarded as fundamental elements in an understanding of the doctrines of the Church. The catechist acted as the ‘pastor’s pioneer,’ his ‘diets of catechising’ in all the districts of the parish being ‘conducted almost quite like those of the minister,’ prayer, praise and an ‘exposition of one of the questions of the Shorter Catechism’ being followed by rigorous examination of each individual in attendance.\textsuperscript{641} Consequently he was able to relate to all members of the community in a spiritual and doctrinal sense, and from the immediacy of his contacts with them it could be surmised that a conscientious worker could have exerted much influence.

During Angus McIntosh’s incumbency, according to Noble (a Free Church minister), there were ‘a number of bright Christians resident in the parish’ of Tain, the inference being that

\begin{itemize}
  \item Tain Church of Scotland St Duthus Church, Kirk Session Minutes, C12/349/3, pp.21-25.
  \item Kennedy, John (1979), p.99.
  \item Ibid., pp.99-100.
\end{itemize}
they held sound evangelical views. The first three men he enumerates were all catechists, successive occupants of the post, John Campbell, John Macleod and his brother Thomas.642

Reflecting the responsibility for education vested in the Church, the parochial schoolmaster in some areas also acted as catechist, as noted earlier, although no definitive proof has emerged of this situation occurring in Tain. However, the impact of the Church’s involvement in schooling provided by other bodies is demonstrated, for example, in a letter addressed to Sir Charles Ross of Balnagown in 1805 in which the Reverend Angus McIntosh deplores the magistrates’ appointment of a certain gentleman as English Schoolmaster while approving their discontinued consideration of him as Sabbath School Teacher.643 Additionally, parochial and non-parochial schoolmasters were frequently on the path to ordination, as noted with reference to the unsuccessful William Ritchie, and further highlighted in the case of Alexander Cameron, again Rector of Tain Academy but also preacher of the Gospel and assistant to the minister of Edderton, an adjacent parish.644

Portree.

Skye Presbytery Minutes have reaffirmed the close relationship between the Church and education, although the island situation was somewhat different. As noted earlier, applicants for the post of schoolmaster in Portree were also expected to act as parish catechist.645 Thus the spiritual and doctrinal ‘suitability’ of the occupant of these posts, responsible for a broad swathe of the inhabitants, was ensured in one go.

The existence of catechists employed by other bodies was of greater importance in extensive, topographically challenging parishes than in the more compact low-lying parishes of Easter Ross. Whereas a minister and Established Church catechist could cover a reasonable amount

642 Noble, the Reverend John (1909), p.234.
643 Balnagown Papers, GD 129/2, Bundle 324/4.
644 Fraser Papers, IRA/D122.4e.
645 The Presbytery of Skye Records, Cl12/330/2, pp.135 and 245.
of ground in Tain, the task would have proved impossible in Portree or Strath. Although the Church appointed missionary ministers to assist in some parishes, Presbytery Minutes fail to reveal any reference to one in the Skye section of Portree parish. Nonetheless, these same Minutes do record much discussion regarding such a post for Raasay and Rona. The request was originally raised on 8th December 1830, proposed again on 4th December 1833, and eventually, on 29th March 1842, it becomes apparent that the post has been filled.\textsuperscript{646} The date of appointment is undisclosed and, even more significantly, no evidence has yet come to light concerning the influence of Mr. McCallum, the Missionary Minister, on the Raasay folk. It can only be conjectured that his message was evangelical, since the inhabitants of that island unanimously supported the Free Church in 1843 – although other forces were undoubtedly also at work.

Indeed, other missionaries, unquestionably evangelical, were also at work in Portree parish. MacRae alludes to much excitement in 1805 when an evangelical missionary, Mr. Farquharson, appeared. Large crowds attended his preaching in Portree, as they did elsewhere in the north of the island.\textsuperscript{647} Mackinnon, likewise of evangelical persuasion, asserts that Farquharson’s severe sermons were inspired by the teachings of the Haldane brothers. The Haldanes and the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel at Home (SPGH) had notable influence in other parts of the Highlands, but this is the only reference in the three parishes under consideration to any input stemming from this body or any other external mission. Farquharson’s invective against the sins of the islanders and claim that the ‘righteousness of Jesus Christ’ was the only ground for a sinner’s justification before God’ furnished a ‘new message for Skye.’\textsuperscript{648} However, although his ‘solemn warnings and affectionate invitations,

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{646} The Presbytery of Skye Records, CI12/330/3, pp.193-194 and 363 and CI12/330/4, p.15.
\item \textsuperscript{647} MacRae, the Reverend Alexander (n.d.), p.69.
\item \textsuperscript{648} Mackinnon, the Reverend Donald (71906), op. cit., p.20.
\end{itemize}
excited great attention and deep seriousness,
he appeared to attract only one convert, the blind
Donald Munro,\textsuperscript{649} whose extraordinary efforts in the field will be examined in the next section.
This exogenous influence stemmed from the Society for the Promotion of the Gospel at Home,
found by the Haldanes in 1798 to promote schools and Sabbath Schools, distribute gospel
tracts and encourage scripture reading and preaching of the Gospel. In Portree, the labours of
Farquharson, one of the society's itinerant preachers,\textsuperscript{650} were undoubtedly of more
significance in the long-term.
The influence of schoolteachers on the religious message conveyed to parishioners would have
varied in nature, over time and between townships. The parochial schools, for which the
Church was directly responsible, numbered two in Portree, one in the village and one on
Raasay, according to Coll Macdonald in 1841.\textsuperscript{651} The latter, in the south-west township of
Clachan, inadequate to meet the needs of the island, had been run by the SSPCK since the
beginning of the nineteenth century and taken over by the parish before the NSA report of
1841. The newly-formed Gaelic Schools Society, whose professed aim was to enable pupils to
read the Bible in Gaelic, moving the establishment to a new location once the aim had been
achieved, opened a school on Raasay in 1815, despite the minister's objection that the Braes
district on Skye was more needy. The school circulated on the island, and also intermittently
operated on Rona.\textsuperscript{652}

Strath.

A similar situation would have accrued in Strath, the impact of schoolteachers being
intermittent and variable. Although GSS schools existed in the parish, one source consulted
identifies Strath and Sleat as the only Skye parishes failing to lend enthusiastic support to the

\textsuperscript{649} MacRae, the Reverend Alexander, op. cit., pp.69-70.
\textsuperscript{650} Ansdell, Douglas (1998a), pp. 41-42.
\textsuperscript{651} The New Statistical Account of Scotland (1845), p.233.
work of the Edinburgh GSS. This reluctance is attributed to an anxiety felt by Moderate ministers about the evangelical content of the theology espoused by Society teachers. This assertion undoubtedly contains a germ of truth, although it has to be questioned why the avowedly ‘Moderate’ minister of Skye apparently at least condoned the existence of such schools – perhaps his considerable support for education overruled any disquiet about its doctrinal content.

No material has been uncovered relating to an expectation that Strath’s parochial schoolmasters would also undertake the duties of catechist. Catechists themselves are not mentioned in the pre-Disruption Presbytery Minutes, although several references appear during the post-Disruption period, initially regarding inadequate salaries. Nevertheless, it is likely that at least one would have been operating in the parish prior to 1843, although lack of evidence precludes any sensible comments concerning their role.

No written sources have furnished information concerning the presence or otherwise of missionaries in Strath. However, these individuals were highlighted during interviews on the 20th and 22nd September 2000 with two current Church of Scotland elders in Broadford. Peter Fulton, whose family was cleared from Suishnish to Waterloo in 1852, maintained that there was a missionary in each of four places where a congregation existed. Catriona Maclean, however, whose family have occupied the same croft in Skulamus since about 1826, asserted that Strath’s minister would not have accepted missionaries. The apparent contradiction in these statements may stem from differing interpretations of the term ‘missionary.’ Peter Fulton could have been referring to catechists or other ‘lay’ assistants, whose task was to supplement the work of the parish minister, whereas Catriona Maclean was probably thinking of evangelical missionaries, carrying a more zealous form of doctrine and observance, either on

653 Macleod, Roderick (1976), p.34 (quoting Lay Member of the Established Church, 1827), p.68).
behalf of a society or as individuals. John Mackinnon’s attempt to halt the oration of Dr. John Macdonald, the distinguished evangelical minister, whom he had permitted to preach from his pulpit on one occasion,⁶⁵⁵ would tend to add weight to this assumption.

The above reference to lay assistance neatly carries the investigation into the next section, which concerns the role of ‘The Men’ and other influential laymen in the communities being studied.

‘The Men’ and Other Lay Figures of Influence.

In pursuit of the research imperative, adopting a case study approach, it has been vital to investigate ‘The Men’, a ‘recognised group of evangelical laymen,’ who played a significant role in the Highland church, although their participation in worship and the spreading of the Word varied across the region. Assuming ‘important leadership functions,’ they were acknowledged for their ‘godliness and knowledge of scripture and exemplified a standard for the church to imitate and aspire to,’ in many cases becoming a virtual ‘spiritual elite or spiritual aristocracy.’ In places where they were strong numerically or in personality and application, particularly where the Church was struggling to reach the people either spiritually or physically, their importance in spreading evangelical Christianity could be immense. Although some ‘Men’ dressed in a distinct and somewhat dramatic fashion, others operated quietly and unobtrusively (at least in physical appearance).

Tain.

Thomas Hog, the seventeenth century Easter Ross minister mentioned in the previous chapter, is credited with introducing the idea of laymen adopting spiritual leadership in fellowship and prayer meetings, replicating personal experiences of student days in Aberdeen. Such men were

active in this sphere during eighteenth century revivals in Easter Ross. By the end of the century fellowship meetings became more frequent, involving ‘The Men’ in this public form of worship, where ‘prayer, praise and scripture reading’ preceded an invitation by the minister for ‘someone to put a question relating to a passage of scripture.’ Following ministerial comment, a number of ‘the Men’ would be invited to ‘speak to the question,’ the minister then concluding. The same pattern was adopted at the Friday communion meetings and, having originated in Easter Ross, it spread into the northwest, reaching Skye about 1810.656

The author of a letter to the Free Church Magazine of 1846 maintains that the field of lay participation was open to abuse. However, he recognises that the majority of ‘The Men’ exercised an influence which ‘tended to increase the Disruption,’ as they had undergone a ‘decided and manifest’ conversion to God, were deeply “exercised to godliness,” had a considerable knowledge of the ‘Word of God and the Christian system,’ possessed ‘deep humility,’ were ‘strictly holy in their lives’ and were ‘staunch Presbyterians.’657

Tain was seemingly in the heartland of the development of these truly evangelical “Men.” The Reverend Donald Sage commented in 1822 that ‘Easter Ross, especially, was a stronghold of the “Men.”’ He also maintained that ‘while in other parts of the country true religion was to be found among the middle classes, in Ross-shire it was almost entirely confined to the peasantry.’658 ‘The Men,’ being often drawn from the poorer classes, may well have related better to those from similar socio-economic backgrounds. Having been brought forward by the ministers, for whom they entertained the greatest respect, they supported him in the fellowship meetings, held for the ‘mutual comfort and edification of believers.’ Their support was no less

657 The Free Church Magazine (1847), Volume IV, pp.301-302.
658 Sage, the Reverend Donald (1975), p.6.
valuable for their being in general uneducated, as their talents stemmed from 'mental vigour' and the orthodoxy of those practising in Ross-shire was unquestionable.659

The sources tapped have not uncovered any specific references to 'The Men' in Tain during the pre-Disruption decades, but folk renowned for piety have received a mention. Although the occupations of some of the 'bright Christians' living in the parish during Angus McIntosh's incumbency remain undisclosed and consequently conjecturing about their abilities to influence would lack validity, Noble does refer to a merchant who was 'well read in Puritan theology and Scottish Church history.'660 A merchant, engaging with a stream of customers and probably holding a position of significance in the church due to his obvious interest in theology (particularly the Puritan theology much espoused by the evangelicals), would have been in an admirable position to influence sectors of the community. Kennedy, identifying the routine of worship in Ross-shire, which there is no evidence to suggest would have differed in any notable way in Tain, includes evening Sabbath meetings, presided over by an elder or 'by some man of repute for godliness.' Additionally, elders conducted prayer-meetings in the different districts on a 'set evening of each week,' as well as assisting the minister in preparing those seeking admission to the 'Lord's Table' at the Communion Season.661 Thus elders or other godly laymen could indeed exercise spiritual influence over parishioners. The nature of this influence in Tain, with its strong tradition of evangelicalism and its fervently evangelical ministers, is unequivocal.

Portree.

Similarly, an evangelical influence was manifest in the Skye parish of Portree, which would have received the fellowship meetings (and undoubtedly the attendant involvement of 'The

659 Kennedy, John (1979), pp.80-82 and 84.
660 Noble, the Reverend John (1909), pp.234-235.
Men') about 1810, as noted above. Indeed the presence of 'The Men' is well documented by Roderick MacCowan and merits some detailed investigation in this study due to the notable significance of these individuals in affecting religious attitudes in this parish.

Donald Munro, however, figures in many sources as an influential figure who could well have paved the way for an acceptance of the Disruption in the north of Skye, including Portree parish. Alluded to earlier in connection with his conversion by Mr. Farquharson, he was indeed a figure of considerable influence in the religious milieu of Skye's northern parishes.

The work of this blind former fiddler following his 'awakening' was heavily criticised in 1825 by the 'Moderate' Presbytery, who considered that he had 'aligned himself with a class of sectaries notorious for their bitter hostility to the establishment.' Taylor claims that he was 'discharged from the office of Catechist at Portree,' although MacCowan submits that there is an absence of definitive information as to why he left his native parish. Nonetheless it is indisputable that the cause of evangelical Christianity benefited greatly from his labours, Ansdell indeed maintaining that he 'is regarded as the father of evangelical religion' in Skye.

Donald Munro principally undertook his 'mission' in Kilmuir, Snizort and Bracadale, parishes close to his home area. Responsible for converting many souls, he held meetings attended by large numbers. These meetings, 'solemn and happy occasions,' involved prayer, praise and the reading of scriptures (in line with the fellowship meetings presided over by ministers in Easter Ross), as well as other religious works available in Gaelic, such as the writings of Bunyan. The meetings, concluding with the exposition of a passage by Munro, were often held

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666 MacCowan, Roderick (1902), p.23.
outdoors and sometimes in Munro’s house. Eliciting a profound effect on those attending, agitation and wailing would ensue, then praise in the form of singing would burst out naturally amidst an atmosphere of ‘the utmost cordiality and brotherly love.’ During meetings in 1812 and later, conversion rate was high, ‘several hundred’ professing to have ‘returned to the Lord,’ particularly in the under thirty age group. An interesting conversion he inspired was that of the Reverend Malcolm MacRitchie, who, while a teacher at Sconser (parish of Portree), travelled to meetings in Snizort, later confessing that Munro’s teaching on humility surpassed that of any of the Disruption worthies.

The influence of this man of ‘eminent piety and gifts,’ must have been considerable, either directly through his own labours or as the result of the ripple effect, with its ever widening circles of converts. A reaction noted by MacCowan was people’s reluctance to receive ordinances administered by the parochial clergy, whom they regarded as Moderates, under whose dry preaching they felt their souls being starved. Munro’s influence, as asserted earlier, having spread right across northern Skye, such reaction could have contributed towards the behaviour of Portree parishioners at the Disruption.

It is appropriate to glance briefly at the other lay preachers who would have contributed to the spread of evangelical Christianity in the area, thus laying a spiritual foundation for departing from the Establishment at the Disruption. MacCowan enumerates several, the first of whom, Alexander MacLeod of the MacLeods of Raasay, was born in 1790 and ‘awakened and brought to the knowledge of the truth.......through the influence of the Haldanes.’ His relatively advanced education enabled him to translate some religious works into Gaelic, of notable benefit to the intelligent, though sometimes ill-educated, ‘Men’ of Skye, who were his

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669 MacCowan, Roderick (1902), p.27.
670 Ibid., pp.24-25.
spiritual colleagues. MacLeod, commissioned as a catechist by the Highland Missionary Society, figures as the local missionary at Portree in their 1834 report. His journals bear witness to his labours in the scattered townships of Raasay as well as the Skye section of the parish. ‘As a teacher and missionary, he was faithful, and practised what he preached. His personal example, including family worship three times daily, at home or in the fields when labouring, would have profoundly affected those meeting him. On his death the poet, John Morrison of Harris, who was a spiritual friend, affirmed that the people had ‘lost a leader and edifier who had special care and watch over his flock.’

MacLeod, like Munro, was of undoubted significance in the district during the pre-Disruption decades. Space precludes more than a cursory mention of other ‘Men,’ of variable impact, but all sharing an opportunity to affect the lives of Portree parishioners and their attitudes to worship. Influential teachers comprise Angus Munro, born at Achtalean like blind Munro and later appointed a Gaelic teacher, and Nicol Nicolson, who became a Gaelic teacher at Glens in Portree parish, as did Malcolm Nicolson, a man of ‘indubitable piety’ who wrote moving poetry. Other individuals who played their part in spreading the evangelical message include Angus Macneil, who became catechist in Braes, Donald Campbell, the sheep farmer, a ‘kind, loving, consistent, truthful, and peaceable man,’ whose homes in Raasay and Portree were ‘full of the Lord’s people’ and Angus Nicolson, a godly, intelligent, kind and affectionate person, whose work as a tailor took him into numerous homes in the Braes district.671 John MacCowan who lived near and came under the influence of Donald Munro in his early days and Donald MacQueen, who worked as a devout and industrious catechist in Sconser, Braes

and Portree village, having turned down prestigious posts as a fairly well educated man,\textsuperscript{672} are likewise worthy of mention.

All these ‘Men,’ principally local in origin and thus known to their communities, were well placed in their different walks of life to influence the spiritual leanings of those with whom they came into contact.

\textbf{Strath.}

‘In the south-end of Skye the people were not stirred up as they were in other parts of the Island. Those in power threw cold water on whatever was calculated to excite the people to an interest in religion, so that they remained in their hardness and delusion.’\textsuperscript{673} Thus MacCowan deplores the lack of opportunity for evangelical activity in the area, linking it in Strath to the close kinship of the ‘Moderate’ minister and factor, this ‘concert of influence’ keeping the parishioners in ‘spiritual ignorance and deadness.’ The adherence of the majority to the Established Church is laid at their door.\textsuperscript{674} The minister’s role may well have contributed significantly to the behaviour of his parishioners at the Disruption, but for more complex reasons than the single issue referred to here.

Unsurprisingly, few lay evangelists operating in Strath appear in MacCowan’s volume. Interestingly, Nicol MacIntyre acted as catechist in Strathaird for eight years, following in the footsteps of an earlier holder of the office, Neil Stewart, who had ‘sowed the good seed of God’s word in the minds of the people.’ Strathaird was the first part of the parish to display Free Church adherence, a few years after the Disruption, following the granting of sites by the proprietor of the time, Dr. MacAllister, a ‘zealous’ supporter.

\textsuperscript{673} Ibid., p.202.
\textsuperscript{674} Ibid., pp.202-203.
A prominent member of the band of 'Men', Norman Macleod, born in Bracadale in 1773 and converted by MacDonald of Ferintosh, who sent him to Skye as a Gaelic teacher, principally worked in the northern parish of Kilmuir. Although he spent some time at Strollamus, near Broadford, there is no mention of any ‘conversions’ consequent on his work there. He also perambulated the bounds of Strath and Sleat during the year of the Disruption, attempting to interest folk in the Free Church and enjoying the hospitality of Dr. MacAllister.675 However, his influence in Strath was seemingly slight at the time of the Disruption, his labours bearing more fruit in the north.

The Skye Parishes.

Macleod, in common with several other ‘Men’ of Skye, possessed a ‘poetic genius,’ significant in exposing the ‘evils of the time.’ His poems breathed ‘an intense spirit of true brotherly love, disregard for the little things of this world in comparison with the great things of eternity, and faith in Christ.’676 The influence of spiritual poetry will be examined in a later chapter, as well as the participation of ‘The Men’ in evangelical revivals.

The reasons for ‘The Men’s’ greater success in spreading evangelicalism in northern Skye are undoubtedly complex and open to conjecture. Chance may have played a part, in that Farquharson landed at Portree and decided to conduct his meetings within a readily accessible area. The fact that his principal convert, Donald Munro, became such a charismatic and able messenger of evangelical faith undoubtedly laid a firm foundation in the district, reinforced by the strong support of the later ‘converted’ Reverend Roderick Macleod. The ‘Moderate’ ministers of northern Skye seemingly had limited influence in their parishes and their awareness of the strength of evangelicalism within the bounds of these large, unwieldy parishes is questionable. Coll Macdonald’s own daughter was converted during stirrings of

676 Ibid., pp.78-79.
revival in the 1820s, but he himself appears to have turned a blind eye to what was happening on his own doorstep! However, without contemporary written accounts by the ministers themselves or those of similar religious persuasion it would be unwise to formulate any definitive hypotheses. The powerful personal influence of John Mackinnon of Strath combined with the topographical barrier of the Cuillins may have contributed towards limiting ingress of 'The Men' to inhabitants of that parish.

Summary.
Where laymen were able to exert a notable influence on local inhabitants, as in Tain and Portree, their varying backgrounds and occupations were of positive benefit. Different socio-economic sectors of society would relate more readily to specific individuals, the fact that teachers, tailors and merchants were included in their number ensuring access to a considerable range of homes.

The principal impact of 'The Men' tended to be in the spread of evangelical doctrine (generally espoused by those supporting non-intrusion and the headship of Christ over the spiritual affairs of the Church), rather than a direct involvement in the religio-politics of the dissension. Their influence centred more on the laying of a spiritual foundation for adherence to the Free Church, although undoubtedly some of them would convey to their listeners the principles involved.

Devine has postulated that 'The Men' may have constituted a new social élite to replace the disappearing class of clan society tacksmen, their spiritual lead being transformed into a wider influence. Although this argument could probably be applied with some validity in the parish of Portree, the new proprietor on Raasay, George Rainy, may have been as influential in

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677 Mackinnon, the Reverend Donald (?1906), p.21.
this direction as the lay preachers who had been labouring on the island. Even on Skye the parishioners may have reacted as strongly to the negative influence of their minister as to the positive teachings of ‘The Men’ and other visiting missionaries. The argument is seemingly inapplicable in Strath, and in Tain, where local landowners supported different denominations, a more complex situation existed. Although lay folk of different occupational and social backgrounds, either elders of the church, pious men in prominent positions or actual ‘Men’, appear to have wielded significant influence, the part played by the ministers of Tain should also be given due emphasis in terms of leadership as well as spiritual guidance. Consequently, although the impact of ‘The Men’ was highly significant in certain districts and parishes, it was by no means universal.

Within the ecclesiastical framework of the parishes, the church courts have been seen to fulfill similar and influential roles, although their effectiveness differed, as did the nature of their spiritual inclinations. The part played by individuals, specifically ministers, catechists, teachers, ‘The Men’ and other active laymen, in affecting the reactions of parishioners has been shown to be highly significant, although complex and again variable.

The next chapter will address the concept of spirituality. As mentioned earlier this forms part of a broader field of belief systems, the more secular ‘folk’ convictions having been explored within the cultural milieu. Particular forms of spirituality, relationship with God in a monotheistic, Christian setting, would help to form a base for religious attitudes and practice. Its specific characteristics, therefore, could form contributory factors in determining Disruption reaction in the three parishes.
CHAPTER 7. SPIRITUALITY.

Spirituality in a Christian context, as referred to at the end of the last chapter, is particularly relevant to the research thrust of this thesis, the exploration of possible influences on decision making in the three parishes at the time of the Disruption in the Church of Scotland. However, it must also be recognised that spirituality in a broader sphere, a relationship to a creative and unseen force or forces, forces beyond physical control, a relationship which could be defined as a realisation of non-material aspects of life, requires to be taken into account in a Highland context. Pagan or pre-Christian beliefs, such as those investigated in the cultural milieu chapter, were not necessarily abandoned when Christianity appeared in the region, but were often incorporated into the new belief system, some still persisting when Protestantism came on to the scene. Even within the Highlands there was considerable variety in the nature and persistence of such 'superstitious' beliefs - superstitious in the sense of irrational or unfounded beliefs in supernatural agency, omens, divination and sorcery. Consequently, although this chapter will concentrate on Christian notions of spirituality, reference to these pagan influences will be made in appropriate places.

A recognition of the interplay between pagan and Christian forces across Europe is noted by Hugh McLeod, who raises two interesting and relevant points. Firstly, in the nineteenth-century world where the rural population was continually threatened by disasters of nature, recourse to a spiritual world would be made through 'prayers, pilgrimages, spells' and 'rituals of all kind,' a magical world in which the 'institutions of Christianity were in some measure bound up.' This relationship and the specific forms of 'magic' would vary between localities, indeed between communities of these largely illiterate people, such variations tending to form a significant part of individual community identities. Secondly, McLeod contends that popular
evangelicalism served to fill 'some of the gap between official religion and folk religion,' an ever-widening gap, fuelled by 'increasingly rational-minded clergy' who had 'lost touch with the forms of thought of the superstitious masses.'\(^{679}\) Although the Strath minister, as intimated in earlier chapters, was of the Moderate persuasion, his empathy with his somewhat superstitious parishioners may well have overcome their need to turn to evangelical religion. The notion of evangelicalism harnessing local superstitious beliefs has indeed already been floated in this thesis and would seem to find accord with McLeod's assertion.

Acknowledging the above observations, this chapter will commence by investigating a little further the difficult concept of spirituality. The various facets of the commonly termed 'Highland spirituality' will then be explored, references to the parishes studied, or the areas in which they lie and from which they would have absorbed influences, being inserted in appropriate places in order to pinpoint relevant distinctive elements of this broad-based phenomenon. Specific geographical references to characteristics of spirituality, whether philosophical, theological, behavioural, causal or consequential, tend to be sporadic in the sources. This inability to definitively identify all the various recognised features at parish level renders it preferable to include discovered information within the framework of more generalised observations. Lack of local material either suggests coincidence with the general Highland picture or highlights the danger of applying generalisations without available localised confirmation. This danger has already been seen in relation to aspects of socio-economic background, religious experience and cultural milieu. Consequently, it is vital to be aware of possible unrecorded local variations in spirituality, especially as the thoughts and emotions of the 'common folk' cannot be positively determined.

The Nature of Spirituality.

It has been recognised in a monotheistic context that the core theme of spirituality is relationship with God. This need not be expressed in a coherent religious system as spirituality is a broader concept than religion. Until recent decades it was regarded as a 'transcultural phenomenon' in the sense of the individual's convictions about his or her relationship with God, so only a single model existed. Sheldrake, however, while recognising a transcendence in this relationship, affirms that it 'is lived out, not in isolation, but in a community of believers' who, for example in a Christian context, react to the 'gospel message from the past' while responding from within their own concrete circumstances. This historical character of spirituality is likewise recognised by de Certeau, who also asserts that, in its relationship to contemporary experience, it is inevitably linked to forces and influences operating in a more secular environment.

Both Sheldrake and Vandenbrouke, the latter writing in the Roman Catholic journal, Concilium, identify multiple spiritualities existing within the context of the church. Vandenbroucke asserts that these spiritualities can vary even within the same country, culture, social milieu and religious denomination. Such factors as personality, spiritual climate, social class, occupation and type of area can determine and be associated with differing spiritualities. Michel de Certeau likewise concentrates on the notion of spirituality existing within a cultural context, spiritual experiences and reactions taking place within a total life situation, a notion as applicable at local as at national level. Such assertions link in with the earlier quoted observations of McLeod.

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680 Due, the Reverend Noel (1996), pp.2-3.
682 De Certeau (1966), pp.4-6 and 15.
684 De Certeau, Michel (1966), pp.4-5.
Needham, Senior Lecturer at the Highland Theological College, in personal discussion spoke of several areas he regarded as important for identifying the type of spirituality existing in a community. These comprised worship patterns, theological convictions, relationship between Church and State, the reading matter of individuals, prayer meetings and prayer life in general, the influence of both ordained ministry and the laity, plus attitudes to evangelism and mission. Significant theological issues would include attitudes to sin and conversion and how these are conceptualised, the role of the Bible in people's piety, the relative prominence of the Old and New Testaments, perceptions of the work of the Holy Spirit and the Providence of God, the attainability of the assurance of salvation and impressions of entitlement to participation in communion. Finally, in addition to conceptions of the sacraments, both in theological and practical terms, views on Sabbatarianism should be addressed as well as attitudes to secular culture, including music, festivities, oral history and temperance.

Ansdell considers the spirituality of Highlanders to be expressed in faith and worship of both 'individual and collective, devotional and propositional' kinds. Although general requirements of adherents, including attendance at Sabbath worship and communion, an understanding of Christian doctrine and presentation of children for baptism, were shared with Christians elsewhere in the country, he affirms, in line with earlier assertions in this chapter, that 'the particular language and culture of the Highlands and Islands ensured the development of a distinct and unique spirituality.'

Highland Spirituality.

In the light of the research questions embodied in this study, Campbell's observation is very telling: 'The typical Highland Christian of Dr. Kennedy's age has sometimes been

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misrepresented as introspective and seldom, if ever, able to reach that place in the spiritual life where the soul rejoices in the assurance of God’s love. The fact is, however, that in the Highlands, as elsewhere, all degrees and complexions of the Christian life could be found. This is a strong warning against over-generalisation.

As indicated earlier, the religious background of each parish differed. Although Tain experienced a strong evangelical environment from about the mid-eighteenth century, the religious state of Skye at the beginning of the nineteenth century, as painted by MacRae, seems somewhat gloomy. Allowing for his evangelical bias, the nature of spirituality and religious observance is indeed questionable. As MacRae claims, the religion the people adopted, characterised by an admix of ‘Druidism, Romanism, and Protestantism’ and bearing the imprint of ‘grotesque superstition,’ was that of their chief or landed proprietor—a viewpoint implying that the behaviour of the masses in religious affairs may well have been affected by influential figures in their lives. Additionally, as Lamont has maintained, the spiritual base of the folk of Strath reflected a weak hold on Christianity in notable contrast to Easter Ross where the people were ‘under the enlightening and saving influences of the Gospel,’ thanks to an ‘evangelical and living ministry.’

However, although post-Reformation records for the Highlands are sparse, Kirk affirms that the church had a presence in most mainland parishes within decades of the Reformation, benefits in Skye being recorded in the 1560s. Admittedly the level of support is difficult to assess, the inordinately large size of many parishes rendering effective ministerial cover extremely difficult, but there is no proof of widespread irreligion or apathy. Consequently,
predominantly evangelically weighted accounts should be treated with caution. Before concentrating on the evangelical nature of Highland spirituality, it is apposite to mention Moderate influence in the Highlands, since the pre-Disruption ministers of both Portree and Strath were acknowledged to be of that persuasion. Although, as Needham acknowledged in interview, stereotyping should be employed with caution and it has been observed that theological emphases, worship practices and religio-political attitudes were more significant differentials between the Moderates and Evangelicals than basic doctrinal discrepancies, nevertheless, as MacInnes affirms, the "whole tone of Moderatism, in its constant preoccupation with refinement and good manners rather than sound doctrine, was hostile to the Evangelical fervour," and thus, as suggested earlier, probably alien to the common folk of the Highlands. However, MacAlpine reiterates the blurring of differentials, asserting that, while "in the fullest use of the term evangelical, the area of Tain 'could best be described by that word,' the terms "evangelical" and "moderate" are too 'sharp to allow for the wide variety of personality and of influence as the eighteenth gave way to the nineteenth century." Despite caveats and discernible local differentials, the predominant form of spirituality found across the Highlands in the Disruption era could validly be described as evangelical. General elements of this type of spirituality can be discerned. Campbell affirms that such Christians were 'noted for their holiness of life, Christian steadfastness, and thirst for the Word.' Highland evangelicalism set 'a high value on the visible church, together with a 'profound reverence and trembling awareness of the Unseen,' a 'depth of religious experience, and a

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691 MacInnes, John (1951), pp.79-80.
corresponding subtlety in spiritual analysis' and a 'tenacious grasp of confessional doctrine.\textsuperscript{694}

Paton, concentrating particularly on the northern Highlands, contends that 'the distinction between the saved and the sinner, and the emotionalism' accompanying it were crucial features, the evangelical message from the clergy asserting the prior claim of 'spiritual' over 'temporal' need.\textsuperscript{695}

Macinnes maintains that evangelicalism would have served to anchor the religious restlessness which has been identified as existing in the early nineteenth century Highlands, channelling it into 'lasting religious commitment' through the 'concerted endeavours of evangelical ministers, the men and ambulatory school teachers.\textsuperscript{696} This Puritanical religion, it is claimed, gave the people a 'focus for their new identity' in a time of social disruption,\textsuperscript{697} a point raised in the Introductory Chapter. It is a point which undoubtedly contains some validity, but cannot be applied in blanket fashion, as this study is endeavouring to emphasise. Although evangelicalism was seriously espoused by many in the parishes of Tain and Portree, social disruption was less evident in the diverse areas of Tain parish than in the struggling parish of Portree. Also, townships in Portree and Strath, for instance, shared similar socio-economic experiences but parishioners reacted differently to the Disruption.

Before exploring specific themes in Highland spirituality material relating to an overall view of spirituality within the specific parishes, or their surrounding district, will be investigated. Easter Ross commands many plaudits concerning evangelical spirituality. Kennedy describes the 'pious Highlander,' epitomised by Ross-shire folk, as being 'free from frivolity - grave but not gloomy,' a 'godly seed,' possessing 'clear views of the doctrines of the Gospel,' aware of 'Satan's devices' and anxious to be 'spiritual.' Although 'severe in' self-judgement and

\textsuperscript{694} MacInnes, John (1951), pp.8 and 7.  
\textsuperscript{695} Paton, David (2000), pp.73 and 66.  
\textsuperscript{696} Macinnes, Allan I. (1990), p.54.  
\textsuperscript{697} Brown, Callum (1987), p.121.
anxious about the profession of others, all 'warmth and tenderness of heart' would be shown to those similarly drawn to the Lord. 698 In appraising these descriptions it is important to be aware of evangelical hagiography, of which Kennedy furnishes a prime example, seeing contemporary Ross-shire filled with 'intensely spiritual beings,' their 'minds firmly set on heavenly things, and spurning the things of earth.' 699 The existence of such an ideal is unquestionable. Its widespread nature, however, is debateable. Indeed, the Reverend Alexander Stewart, minister of Dingwall from 1805 to 1820, affirms that the people of Easter Ross were 'when religious, of the sublimest piety - when not enlightened, addicted to low immoralities, and a prey to debasing superstitions.' 700

The more serious folk, even among the lower classes, were so well versed in Calvinistic preaching that their ability to understand and discuss doctrinal subjects in a discriminating and copiously argued manner was astonishing. 701 As Donald Sage has been noted earlier to have contended in 1822, although the 'eminent and decided piety of Ross-shire' was widely-known, in contrast to elsewhere 'true religion' was to be found almost entirely among the peasantry rather than the middle classes. 702 Although containing much validity, the statement is somewhat sweeping in view of the almost wholesale adherence of the burgesses of Tain to the Free Church in 1843.

However, a very different view of Easter Ross piety is painted by the Reverend Hall visiting Tain in 1807. Travelling from Edinburgh and reporting from London, his observations must be viewed in the light of his other probable religious experiences. The concentration of the 'melancholy fanatics of Tain' on rebirth in Christ, characterised by a specific and

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698 Kennedy, John (1979), pp.103-106.
701 Ibid., p.196.
702 Withrington, Donald in Sage, the Reverend Donald (1975), p.6.
instantaneous 'conversion and election' contrasts with his notion of a gradual change in
'sentiments, habits, views, and hopes' wrought by 'the progressive influence of the doctrines,
precepts, examples, and motives held out in the gospel.' Finding them 'wholly absorbed in
metaphysical notions and beliefs,' Hall maintains that 'with the love, charity, and joyful hopes
inspired by the genuine doctrines of our Saviour they seem to be unacquainted'703 - unlike
Kennedy, undoubtedly finding them gloomy as well as grave! He considers their piety to be
only skin-deep and their evangelicalism apparently demanding self-castigation,704 possibly
feeding on the pre-existing superstitiousness of the local population - material on Skye,
particularly Raasay, seeming to accord with this last suggestion. Finally, concerning the
contemporary appellation of Ross-shire as the 'Holy Land of Scotland,' Hall contends that
religion had no more effect on the 'hearts of the people' than anywhere else in the country,
where 'public devotions do not occupy above one half of the time.'705 Thus the spirituality
regarded by internal sources as so positive is questioned by this external opinion, although this
in no way invalidates its existence.

Less material has been discovered in relation to the Skye parishes. Samuel Johnson, visiting in
1773 and referring to the entire Western Isles, confirms the 'gloomy' impression of the state of
spirituality outlined at the beginning of this section, discovering no evidence 'of spiritual life
and evangelical activities.'706 However, by the time the Reverend Charles Calder Macintosh
visited Skye (probably the north!), some time prior to the 1830s, evangelical preaching had
arrived. It was 'relatively new and powerful,' carried principally by charismatic laymen,
visiting or local, and seemingly filling a spiritual vacuum with its message of redemption,
salvation and the grace of the Lord. Indeed Macintosh contrasts the 'eager attention of the

703 Hall, the Reverend James (1807), pp.490-493.
704 Ibid., pp.490-493.
705 Ibid., pp.490-493.
706 Mackay, John (17914), p.213.
congregations, and the warmth and simplicity of faith of the recent converts' with the folk of Easter Ross, who displayed the 'comparative listlessness of a people.....long... familiar with the richest exhibitions of Gospel truth.' On the grounds of this observation it could be suggested that enthusiasm propelled more parishioners into the Free Church in Portree than in Tain, where force of habit may have carried more weight.

Evangelical Christianity was still weak in Strath in 1850, when the parish was described as 'without exception the most neglected portion of the church.' The local laird had constructed a building for the Free Church in Strathaird, but, although folk attended, no minister had been appointed. Several families asked a visiting Free Church cleric to baptise their children, but they may have been merely taking advantage of his presence in an area remote from the Established Church rather than feeling a deep commitment to his denomination. The visitor claims to have discovered some people apparently setting a 'high value on the means of grace,' but also much ignorance, 'utter unconcern,' iniquity and ungodliness, and a general lack of appreciation of a need for salvation to atone for sins. This picture displays a persistent lack of evangelical spirituality, although the absence of its most marked features may reflect a continuing spiritual joy carried by inhabitants into their daily lives.

Theological Elements of Highland Evangelical Spirituality.

MacLeod, writing more specifically about the Western Isles, observes a greater interest in doctrinal questions in the Highlands than elsewhere in Scotland. MacInnes, indeed, investigates responses of typical Highland Evangelicals to such topics, noting the supremacy

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709 The Home and Foreign Record of the Free Church of Scotland, Volume I, (1851), pp.224-225.
710 MacLeod, Roderick (1976), p.113.
of grace and the compulsion to seek assurance of salvation after conversion. Highland Christians ‘had been taught to distinguish between doubting the safety of their state and doubting the truth of the Word.’ Although the Gospel call was to everyone without exception, conversion was essential, a ‘self-abasement under conviction of sin’ being a necessary precursor to ‘true conversion.’ The converted believer, having realised he had received a ‘sure pledge of eternal love, everlasting happiness, complete victory, full provisions and furniture of all graces,’ also recognised a need to exercise ‘sobriety, righteousness, and godliness’ in daily living.

The notion of the ‘secret of the Lord’ being available to certain godly folk who feared Him is a feature connecting evangelical spirituality with that of the early Gaelic Church, as exemplified in the life of Colum Cille. Providential guidance, prophetic foresight and specific predictions were elements of this phenomenon. ‘With a people especially sensitive to the supernatural, it invested the more intense Evangelicalism with the manifest stamp of heavenly authority.’

The strong persistence of superstitiousness within the three parishes has indeed been noted, although the type of spirituality with which it was associated in Raasay and Strath, for example, was markedly different.

It is contended that Highlanders regarded ‘each episode in a nation’s life or in an individual’s’ as ‘a revelation of the Divine purpose, a judgment.’ This ‘eschatological view of history’ demonstrates how they were taught to interpret ‘distress or injustice.’

Related to and indeed consequent upon this concept of divine judgement is the doctrine of submission. Its widespread inclusion in contemporary Gaelic spiritual verse ‘strongly suggests that passive submission to the divine will had been internalised by the people,’ becoming ‘part of their culture, not merely an item of faith delivered from the pulpit.’ Evidence of the ‘folly

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of storing up riches on earth' and of the necessity for repentance was perceived in the damaging changes they witnessed. In the face of eviction and emigration this spiritual ideology succoured them.

The 'faith of the Highland presbyterian church was based on the teaching of the Bible,' reinforced by the documents emanating from the Westminster Assembly of 1643-1648, including the Confession of Faith and the two Catechisms. Teaching from the pulpit being a central pillar of worship the tardy production in 1801 of an 'adequate translation in Gaelic' was somewhat 'curious.' Thereafter, however, attempts to 'implant the Gaelic Bible in the minds and hearts of Highland people' by Gaelic Schools Societies, first founded in 1811, had 'massive implications for the spiritual development of the region.'

Meek identifies specific messages Highland folk took from the Bible. They discovered in its pages a 'chosen people,' whose history appeared to parallel their own, in 'spiritual, social and even political terms.' The exile and bondage in Egypt, and later Babylon, could be interpreted as a metaphor for their own needs to emigrate, although the New World was also seen as the 'promised land.' In attempting to divorce 'home' from a particular piece of land, Highlanders could find in the New Testament 'the means of becoming, through Christ's sacrifice, a part of God's continuing remnant, the spiritual Israel, whose existence was not confined to Canaan.'

A final element of theology linked to Highland evangelical spirituality is that of Puritanism, eighteenth century evangelical sermons seemingly following a Puritan model, employing a plainness and simplicity of language and preaching from a standpoint of grace. Allied to this,

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according to MacInnes, pre-Disruption decades witnessed an increasing insistence on a Puritan discipline of life, including an aversion to 'music, poetry and innocent recreations.'\textsuperscript{717} Regarding specific theological issues addressed in sources relating to the three parishes, Kennedy outlines the elements embodied in the message conveyed by the 'Fathers' to Ross-shire inhabitants. Fear of the Lord, reverence for His anger and respect for His commandments were regarded as essential to the true Christian. His secret, the covenant of grace and His 'everlasting purpose of mercy' would be revealed to them, not merely through Biblical teachings but through direct revelation, a spiritual knowledge. Godliness and righteousness would attend 'the communion of His people with the Lord,' the sure guidance of the 'Spirit of truth' preventing souls from wandering or deception.\textsuperscript{718} Conversion was the necessary prerequisite for followers of the evangelical path.\textsuperscript{719}

The doctrine of submission to the divine will is reflected in Presbyterial reaction to the 1846 potato crop failure. Calling for 'humiliation in the presence of Almighty God,' Tain Presbytery appointed a day for 'solemn fasting and humiliation....' MacDonald of Ferintosh addressed doctrinal difficulties in a sermon delivered during the 1832 outbreak of cholera, which decimated the village of Inver. Endeavouring to encourage cleansing of cottages to inhibit the disease, he attempted to reconcile the evangelical interpretation of submission to the divine will 'with a duty to look after one's health and material well-being.'\textsuperscript{720}

The existence and applauding of Puritan theology in Tain can be gleaned from the reference quoted in an earlier chapter to a merchant, 'well read in Puritan theology,' living in the parish during Angus McIntosh's ministry.\textsuperscript{721}

\textsuperscript{717} MacInnes, John (1951), pp.73 and 153. 
\textsuperscript{718} Kennedy, John (1979), pp.201-215.  
\textsuperscript{719} MacInnes, John (1951), p.126.  
\textsuperscript{720} Macnaughton, the Reverend Colin (1915), pp.403 and 314-315.  
\textsuperscript{721} Noble, the Reverend John (1909), pp.234-235.
Regarding the Western Isles generally, it is maintained that most folk upheld the theology of Roderick Macleod of Snizort, comprising 'atonement for the elect' and the notion that 'Christ died only for the elect'. Specific references to theology espoused by Portree parishioners are conspicuous by their absence, the one observation being linked to the island of Raasay, which supposedly adhered 'closely to the principles of Calvin and Knox,' a somewhat strict doctrine.

A tendency towards fatalism (the doctrine of submission), an above average Biblical knowledge and a deep Puritan influence suggested by the current Strath minister may have eventually percolated through to that parish from the evangelical north of the island.

**Influences Affecting the Spirituality of the Highlanders.**

Influential people, both clerical and lay, would have affected inherent notions of spirituality. Ministerial preaching will be explored first, followed by a brief mention of the role of laymen, including 'The Men,' catechists and teachers. Their respective roles in terms of significance in affecting spirituality in the three parishes is difficult to determine from sources available, although the importance of 'The Men' in Portree has already been established in relation to the spread of evangelical religion.

**Ministers.**

Preaching constituted an important aspect of spirituality, the sermon being 'arguably' the 'principal focus of public worship and the principal duty of the minister.' The Bible was expected to form its core, the main purpose being to exhort, encourage and educate.

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Evangelicals regarded their own preaching as answering people's needs in this respect more efficiently than that of their Moderate colleagues.\footnote{Ansdell, Douglas (1998a), p.110.}

Macinnes identifies a 'local preference for evangelical preaching,' which contained 'doctrinal fundamentalism' and stressed 'the merit of individual religious experience within an inspirational framework' fostering the 'communal pursuit of godliness.' This message, he contends, which 'anchored social and cultural alienation' during a period of social upheaval, was 'grounded in the Calvinist orthodoxy propagated by the Covenanting Movement,' predestination plus 'election tempered by grace' determining salvation.\footnote{Macinnes, Allan I. (1990), p.49.} Such preaching encouraged folk to consider the next world rather than this, promises of after-life reward creating the emotionalism that was so marked a feature of Highland preaching.\footnote{Paton, David (2000), pp.118-119.}

In attempting to appreciate the specific preaching addressed to parishioners in the individual parishes and their surrounding districts, allusions to this or actual sermons will undergo a cursory examination.

Tain.

Evangelical preaching formed part of the diet of Easter Ross folk from an earlier time than on Skye, John Fraser, minister of Alness from 1726 to 1769, preaching 'standard unmodified Calvinism,' with its emphasis on partial atonement rather than universal, the centrality of a 'thorough conversion' and the need for repentance coupled with an acceptance of the fact that only divine grace can ensure salvation. This is echoed in the theology which Macleod imparted to the people of the Western Isles, as mentioned above. According to Fraser a 'fatalism and other-worldliness' led to submission to the divine will.\footnote{Ibid., pp.106-110.}
The Reverend Charles Calder, father in law of Angus McIntosh of Tain, ministered in Ferintosh from 1774 to 1812. He preached a significant sermon on the declaration of Christ in St. John’s Gospel (xii.32), “And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.” Relating this to Paul’s conversion, he maintains that only through Christ, the light of the world, can people turn away from darkness and reach the Father. Although Christ’s blood held sufficient virtue to ‘expiate the guilt of the whole world,’ His death on the cross offering benefit to all, only the few turn from their sins and so become conscious of being chosen. Thus he urges his hearers to learn the message of the Cross and through it turn to God for salvation.\(^{728}\) It is a sermon hinting at the availability of salvation for a wider audience than that purveyed by the stricter preachings of Fraser or Macleod.

The evangelical orations of Calder’s successor in Ferintosh, the Reverend John MacDonald, known as the ‘Apostle of the North,’ wielded immense influence. Ministering in Ferintosh from 1813 to his death in 1849, his outpourings there and elsewhere were innumerable and effective. His cholera sermon, mentioned earlier, was based on the text from Acts (xvi. 28), “Do thyself no harm.” Taking as his text Paul’s Epistle to the Romans (iii. 21), “But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested,” MacDonald emphasises the ‘important doctrine of the sinner’s justification before God.’ To him this doctrine constituted the ‘very foundation of Christianity,’ offering ‘all the blessings of eternal life’ and man’s only hope or comfort now and for eternity. The centrality of man as sinner is set against the righteousness of God allied to the justification through faith ‘without the deeds of the law,’ made available through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. MacDonald concludes by stressing that God’s righteousness is ‘manifested in the gospel for the benefit of all.’\(^{729}\) Again, like Calder, he regards the blessings as being available to all who turn to God and away from their sins.

\(^{728}\) Beaton, the Reverend D., ed. (1930), pp.69-88.  
\(^{729}\) Ibid., pp.131-149.
The belief, however, that mankind is inherently sinful appears to lie at the heart of all evangelical preaching.

While admitting that prominent preachers of the neighbourhood would have exercised considerable influence over Tain parishioners, either through pulpit exchange or the rhetoric of communion seasons, it is apposite now to consider the preaching of the Tain ministers. Angus McIntosh preached on the ‘inexorable demands of the holy law,’ proclaiming ‘in thrilling terms the terrors of the Lord.’ The significance of fear of the Lord, rather than a sense of His love, concurs with the observations of the clerical visitor alluded to earlier. Kennedy, however, applauds McIntosh’s approach. Affirming his ‘unusually deep’ conviction of sin and understanding of the ‘terror of the Lord,’ Kennedy accords him the status of a preacher careful not to ‘hurt when the Lord was healing.’ ‘In unravelling the mystery of iniquity and in exposing all counterfeits of godliness he was peculiarly solemn and skilful,’ likewise clearly and powerfully ‘unfolding and applying the doctrines of grace’ Allowing for Kennedy's hagiographical tones, nonetheless the notion that fear, coupled with ingrained superstitiousness, precipitated conversion is very strong. However, McIntosh’s strong influence, reflected in the acknowledgement of his eminence as an evangelical preacher in the northern Highlands, cannot be denied.

Finally, the sermons of Charles Calder Mackintosh, his son and successor, appear from extant examples to convey a no less determined though sometimes gentler message. Preaching from Isaiah (lv. 8,9), “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts,” Mackintosh affirms, ‘these words refer to God’s ways

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731 Kennedy, the Reverend John (1979), pp.69-70.
and thoughts in redemption.’ This redemption reflects God’s ‘mercy real and infinite,’ revealed in the faith of those admitting they are sinners and begging for mercy and grace, although recognising that they deserve God’s wrath. The preacher exhorts the hearers to appreciate that God hates sin, to believe that Christ came into the world to redeem sinners and to seek this redemption and thus join the ‘blessed throng’ in heaven.’ A very positive approach is contained in a later sermon, for which the text is taken from Luke’s Gospel (xv.10), “Likewise, I say unto you, There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.” Including the parable of the lost sheep in his oration, he affirms that ‘repentance is attended with salvation,’ and it ‘gives glory to God as the righteous lawgiver.’ Mackintosh continues by identifying the repentant sinner, seeing the power of divine grace in the change, a reflection of the ‘mercy of God,’ and finally the turning of his soul ‘to God as its Rest and everlasting Portion,’ a wonderful example for the impenitent to follow. 733

It would appear that preachers adopted harsh fundamental Calvinist doctrine in the early days of evangelicalism affecting a district, as in the case of Fraser of Alness (the tentative developments of Puritanical doctrine requiring firmer emphasis) or the later Macleod in the seemingly untouched Skye. However, the more positive tones of moderate Calvinism, such as those found in the Mackintosh circle, would seemingly surface as such teachings became more firmly rooted.

Portree.

Turning to the situation in Skye, it is apposite to investigate initially the teachings of Roderick Macleod, a minister of some importance to this parish. Born on the island in 1794, inducted to the charge of Bracadale in 1823, he was translated to Snizort in 1838, where he laboured until his death in 1868. Few of his sermons have been preserved, although he was a powerful

733 Taylor, the Reverend William (1871), pp.55-61 and 160-169.
speaker. During the 1842-43 revival in north Skye, he took the text, 'Behold I stand at the door and knock,' producing a moving oration which resulted in a great manifestation of God's Spirit. His intense anxiety over the number of sinners failing to seek redemption and gain a chance of joining the 'elect' persists in his later preaching. His sermon at the induction of the Free Church minister on Raasay in 1850 exemplifies this. Referring to Paul's letter to Titus (ii.12), 'Instructing us, to the intent that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly and righteously and godly in this present world,' he uses the metaphor of the barren fig tree. Contending that 'there are many unfruitful ones cumbering the ground,' he affirms that the Lord 'seeketh fruit,' though that fruit may lead to salvation or destruction. 734

This strict and unyielding message may well have led to conversions enshrined in still persisting superstitious fear, as postulated in reference to Tain. Indeed, although evangelical ministers attempted to eliminate such beliefs, 735 they could well have been harnessed to the evangelical message of salvation and eternal blessings in the next world.

Coll Macdonald of Portree was an acknowledged Moderate minister, neither conveying evangelical doctrine to his parishioners nor opening his pulpit to 'Gospel ministers.' 736 However, Macleod was instrumental in spreading Evangelical doctrine in the parish, as were laymen or visiting ministers, responses to the Disruption underlining the immense significance of these often charismatic figures. As the content of the message is unlikely to have changed materially after the Disruption, 1850s examples of texts for sermons on Raasay furnish further, if somewhat partial, clues about ministerial preaching. Most texts are from the New Testament, which, although this very limited evidence of Free Church preaching should not be

734 MacLeod, the Reverend Dr. Roderick (1983), pp.193-195.
735 MacLeod, Roderick (1976), p.96.
736 Mackinnon, the Reverend Donald (?1906), pp.19-20.
regarded as definitive, would tend to suggest that Christ's message took precedence over Old Testament exhortations.

Space precludes the inclusion of more than a few examples. The strong message from Old Testament passages appears to be a call to turn from wickedness (Ezekiel, xxxiii.7-8), as the watchman sees the wicked man, and 'prepare to meet thy God, O Israel,' (Amos, iv.12). The significance of the call to turn to God, the implication that this relationship furnishes the key to spiritual well-being, is reflected in the use of the first three verses of the 1st psalm on two separate occasions, 'Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly.....but his delight is in the law of the Lord.....'

The New Testament references resonate with the importance of possessing the Son of God, for example, 'He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life,' (The First Epistle General of John, v.12). Opening the soul to the Son of God is one step on from the Old Testament notion of turning to God, as Christ has made the relationship more immediate for all; 'Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light' (Ephesians, v.14). A freedom will be found in this new relationship with God, 'If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed,' (St. John's Gospel, viii.36). The notion of spiritual freedom associated with Christ could have had considerable emotional significance for traditionally superstitious folk believing in other-worldly beings and facing a material struggle for survival and physical insecurity created by recently initiated clearances. The additional message 'Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed,' (St. John's Gospel, vi.27), 737 could have instilled strong hope in the after-life for those following the path indicated in the preaching.

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737 Raasay House Weather Tables.
Although postulating in an informed manner from these few examples is dangerous, the lack of explicit reference to the salvation procured for sinners in the crucifixion is somewhat surprising, but may well have formed part of the sermons emanating from the texts, the sermons themselves being unavailable. The propounded doctrine appears strong, lacking any reference to God's love.

Strath.

John Mackinnon, minister of Strath, like his Portree colleague, appears to have been of the Moderate persuasion. No extant sermons by him or his father have been traced in the sources, but they would probably have read and utilised in some way the discourses of such notable Moderates as the Reverend Dr. Hugh Blair and the Reverend Dr. George Hill. It is impossible within the scope of this study to adequately cover their prolific works, but a few examples will hopefully suggest the tone of preaching which Mackinnon and Macdonald may have employed.

Blair became a minister of the High Church in Edinburgh, as well as Professor of Rhetoric and Belles Lettres in the University. His sermons do indeed contain several discourses on issues of general morality, such as sensibility (Romans, xii.15), "Rejoice with them that rejoice; weep with them that weep" and envy (I Corinthians, xiii.4), "Love suffereth long, and is kind; love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up." However, more spiritual issues appear, including the compassion of Christ (Hebrews, iv.15), "For we have not a high priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but one that hath been in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" and the unchangeableness of the Divine Nature (James i.17), "Every good gift and every perfect boon is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom can be no variation, neither shadow that is cast by turning." Fear of God's wrath and the notion of men as miserable sinners, so central to evangelical preaching, seem to
have little place. Indeed, in the sermon concerning "the proper disposition of the heart towards God, (Acts, xvii.28), "In him we live, and move, and have our being," Blair emphasises the need to love God "with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind," quoting the first commandment (Matthew, xxii.37). Reverence mixed with awe, gratitude as to a benefactor and submission to his divine will "arising from reverence compounded with gratitude," are also identified as essential to man's relationship with God. While recognising that "fear" at that time basically embodied the notion of reverence, nonetheless Blair's teachings place a different emphasis from the evangelicals on the relationship with God, "Moderate" teaching perhaps being too gentle to afford sufficient spiritual assistance to most Highlanders in the harsh contemporary social climate. A warm and more personal relationship with their minister and his family may partially explain why Strath folk did not seek spiritual comfort elsewhere prior to the Disruption. The non-local Portree minister may have been unable to similarly compensate for the seeming lack of theological strength in his message.

Hill may also have furnished inspiration for these Moderate ministers. Basically a Moderate, he tended to "bridge the gap" between the preaching of these colleagues and that of the Evangelicals. Born in St. Andrews in 1750, he eventually became Professor of Divinity and then Principal of St. Mary's College in the town. This celebrated preacher, although investigating such concepts as the use of reason in religion, tackled many issues which could be regarded as forming the central core of evangelical preaching. However, while proclaiming "the foundation of the gospel is this - that men are sinners," faith in the knowledge that Christ died to redeem mankind from sin being insufficient basis for salvation, he did nevertheless consider that good works proceeding from faith and performed through the strength of God's Spirit are spiritual sacrifices acceptable to and "well-pleasing in the sight of God through Jesus

Christ.' Although delving further into the tenets of Calvinistic faith by exploring such issues as particular rather than universal redemption, predestination, conversion and the covenant of grace,\textsuperscript{739} Hill treated these themes in a broader and more reasoned manner than the often highly emotional and generally narrower, more in-depth sermons of Highland evangelical preachers.

**Laymen.**

As suggested earlier, the spiritual content of the message conveyed by laymen, although undoubtedly evangelical, is more difficult to identify than their already explored influence in a general sense. A few comments will suffice to convey an impression of the lay role in this respect.

MacInnes affirms that missionary preachers, employed by the Royal Bounty or the SSPCK, mostly 'continued the Evangelical tradition,' and that the majority of catechists acted as the 'true representatives of a class which has done invaluable service to Evangelical religion in the Highlands.'\textsuperscript{740} The post of catechist, aimed at ensuring folk knew the fundamentally important shorter catechism, was often attached to that of schoolmaster, as intimated in an earlier chapter with reference to Portree

Again, as witnessed in earlier chapters, presbyteries acknowledged the church's ultimate responsibility for education by occasionally inspecting schools established by other bodies, thus exerting some influence, albeit variable, on the religious content of the education they offered. The principal aim of most schools was to enable pupils to read the scriptures for themselves. The specific aim of the SSPCK being to 'evangelize and civilize the Highlands,'\textsuperscript{741} the teaching in their schools was undoubtedly evangelical. That this message

\textsuperscript{739} Hill, the Reverend Dr. George (1854), pp. ix, xiii, 160-165, 132-144, 386-391, 397-402, 459-465 and 493-495.

\textsuperscript{740} MacInnes, John (1951), pp.206-211.

\textsuperscript{741} Ibid., p.242.
was more effectively conveyed in their native tongue is highlighted by Meek's affirmation that 'the success of the Gaelic school movement in particular forged a strong bond between evangelical spirituality and language....'\textsuperscript{742} Durkacz, indeed, emphasises the significance of the Gaelic Bible in achieving the evangelical aim of reaching and saving Highland souls, although his assertion that this was not realised until the mid-nineteenth century\textsuperscript{743} is debateable, as it seemingly ignores efficacious work undertaken from early in the century. The north-west Highlands in the eighteenth century had been problematical for Christian spirituality, the lack of formal education seemingly preventing folk, who were in the 'profound grip of ancient religious notions,' from understanding the abstract preaching of the pre-evangelical era.\textsuperscript{744}

A parish-specific example of the relationship between teachers and a spiritual message can be inferred from the fact that the Rector of Tain Academy in 1820 was also assistant minister in nearby Edderton parish,\textsuperscript{745} a seat of evangelical preaching.

That a spiritual message had been imparted to a wide spectrum of society, leading to an interest in evangelical works is witnessed in the list of subscribers to a book of sermons (1845). A Gaelic teacher from Balmeanach, Portree had obtained 42 subscribers, of whom about three-quarters came from the parish and the other quarter from nearby districts in north Skye. Their occupations varied from sheriff-officer, teacher, farmer and merchant to shoemaker, mason, flesher, shepherd and labourer. Easter Ross subscribers were gathered by catechists or schoolmasters in such places as Creich, Dornoch and Kincardine, where 223 subscribers were obtained. Again the socio-economic spread of the interested parties was considerable, examples including teachers, farmers, merchants and ministers, but being

\textsuperscript{742} Meek, Donald E. (1996), p.39.
\textsuperscript{743} Durkacz, Victor (1983), The Scotsman.
\textsuperscript{745} Fraser Papers, HRA/D122 4 (e).
heavily weighted in favour of the artisanal class, such as weavers, tailors, millers, shoemakers and wrights, as well as fishermen, shepherds and labourers. A desire to support theological works had indeed filtered right through society, an indication of a deep sense of spirituality.

The role of 'The Men' in spreading evangelical Christianity has been explored in the religious background chapter and their participation in revivals will be investigated later. Their significant contribution in private and public fellowship meetings and Friday communion gatherings has been acknowledged, James Haldane, for example, visiting in 1797, commending the 'fellowship meeting in Tain.' MacInnes identifies certain spiritual characteristics of these 'lay leaders of a spiritual democracy.' For example, they were intimately acquainted with the Scriptures, possessed the gift of power in prayer, stressed the importance of the conversion experience and the seeking of assurance, emphasised the necessity of walking with God and warring with Satan, and, in some cases, believed they held the 'secret of the Lord.' There are distinct echoes of evangelical preaching in some of these features, but the final element connects them 'closely with Covenanting Evangelicalism,' as well as the 'piety of the Columban Church.' It should also be noted that they tended to combine a traditional mysticism with strong Puritanism, often claiming to have second sight, a reflection of an earlier noted alliance between superstitious beliefs and evangelicalism.

In Portree and across northern Skye, where there was a lack of evangelical spirituality emanating from the pulpit, 'The Men' took a leadership role. Blind Donald Munro, who wielded such influence, was, as intimated earlier, 'among the first whom God called into His

746 Welsh, Eoin (1845), pp.3-7.
747 MacInnes, Rev. J. (1944), pp.19-26 and 34-41.
grace' when the 'evangelical doctrine' reached Skye.\textsuperscript{750} The Reverend Malcolm MacRitchie, converted by him while a teacher at Sconser, confessed later that Munro's teaching on humility surpassed that of any of the Disruption worthies.\textsuperscript{751} Another of 'The Men' of Skye, Alexander MacLeod of Raasay, 'awakened' through the influence of the Haldanes, spread a 'clear testimony,' being a 'leader and edifier' of 'his flock.'\textsuperscript{752}

\textbf{Highland Evangelical Spirituality in Relation to the Sacraments and Sabbatarianism.}

Communion.

The sacrament of communion was the 'high point of public worship,' generally observed annually. By the early nineteenth century the Highland communion season consisted of a fast day on the Thursday, a fellowship meeting and day of self-examination on the Friday, preparation on Saturday, the communion on the Sabbath and thanksgiving on the Monday.\textsuperscript{753} These 'public' communions drawing people from other parishes, as 'opposed to the private or parochial administration of the Lord's Supper,' were the rule in the Highlands 'rather than the exception,'\textsuperscript{754} although it is claimed that Moderate ministers preferred the 'private,' considering the 'public' a threat to the 'concord,' 'tranquility, order and propriety they were striving for in their parishes.'\textsuperscript{755} However, the latter, furnishing a 'rich means of grace and blessing,' were a way of spreading spiritual life and Christian fellowship to isolated folk and those maintaining 'their Christian witness under difficult providential circumstances,'\textsuperscript{756} as well as possessing an educational, doctrinal and inspirational value.\textsuperscript{757} A post-communion

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\item \textsuperscript{750} Campbell, Murdoch (1989), p.41.
\item \textsuperscript{751} Taylor, Steve (undated), p.1.
\item \textsuperscript{752} MacCowan, Roderick (1902), pp.31,33 and 50.
\item \textsuperscript{753} Ansdell, Douglas (1998a), pp.114-115.
\item \textsuperscript{754} MacInnes, John (1951), p.214.
\item \textsuperscript{755} MacLeod, Roderick (1993), pp.218-223.
\item \textsuperscript{756} Campbell, Murdoch (1999), p.11.
\item \textsuperscript{757} MacLeod, Roderick (1993), pp.161-162.
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Word gave encouragement to 'faith and godliness,' a concluding address making a moving appeal to the unconverted. 758

MacDermid, referring to north-west Highland communions, noted problems associated with their administration. Firstly, ministers would frequently delay holding them due to the expense and secondly, for some folk the spiritual significance was secondary. Regarding them as social occasions, stalls would be set up, turning the event into a 'holy fair.' 759 However, as evangelicalism spread, the communion season became an opportunity for vastly extending 'the range of influence of earnest evangelical preachers,' 760 some of whom, like Macdonald of Ferintosh, were charismatic figures. The centrality of communions in the 'spiritual life of the people' was attended by an emotionalism and a 'cult of the individual conscience' regarding admission to the Lord's table. 761 This moral and spiritual self-examination was accompanied by a ministerial 'fencing of the table,' the privilege being denied to those considered unworthy. Evangelical standards could be exceptionally rigorous, Roderick MacLeod reducing the communicant roll of Bracadale (Skye), which stood at 150 in 1823, to under ten at his first communion. This was an extreme case, but evangelicalism spread a high standard of expectation of communicants, a feature which 'came to be a characteristic of Highland spirituality.' 762 However, despite the paucity of communicants, affected by the contention that only those able to furnish a 'satisfactory account of a work of grace upon their souls' could approach the table, Maclnnes maintains that the 'true benefits of the sacrament were bestowed on great multitudes who attended without daring to' partake. An intense consciousness of the 'real presence of the Saviour' existed at these Highland sacraments.

760 Maclnnes, John (1951), p.100.
In the early eighteenth century, private Fellowship Meetings held on communion Fridays became ‘public gatherings,’ help being sought from the stronger brethren in answering the unanticipatable questions of non-parishioners concerning the ‘work of self-examination.’

‘The Men’ and elders responding to the various spiritual questions would incorporate personal experience of the work of ‘saving grace,’ the individual contributions furnishing a means of ‘comforting and assuring sorely tried or downcast Christians.’

Testimony, or question meetings, began to be held monthly or quarterly in many parishes during the pre-Disruption decade, supplementing those of the communion season and helping to spread a harmonious message in such areas as Ross.

Although no specific references concerning communion seasons in Tain parish have been uncovered in the sources, the Ross-shire picture, which Tain would have been reasonably expected to follow, is frequently presented. The centrality of this sacrament is reflected in the Inverness Courier report of 26th October 1825: a ‘strong complaint’ had been registered at the Michaelmas Court for Ross-shire concerning the insistence of many clergymen on ‘dispensing the Communion at times “when the labours of seed-time and harvest were being carried on,”’ thus in some instances causing serious loss. It is apparent that the populace felt constrained to give priority to religious observance over subsistence.

Preparations in a parish enjoying a ‘spiritual ministry’ would include a suitable course of sermons preached on preceding Sabbaths and special assistance for the few proposing to ‘seek admission to the Lord’s Table.’ This reinforces the earlier observation regarding the increasingly fenced table in evangelical areas. The Ross-shire Fathers felt themselves ‘specially called to guard the passage to the table of the Lord,’ the ‘sacrament of the Supper’

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763 Maclnnes, John (1951), p.213.
764 Macleod, Principal John (1965), p.79.
765 Campbell, Murdoch (1999), pp.11-12.
being seen as an 'occasional feast to believers during all their wilderness journey,' such souls being those who had the 'most conspicuous connection with the cause and glory of Christ.' Communion, they maintained, was a more 'advanced privilege' than baptism, presenting 'the mystery of Christ's person,' and His 'death, in relation to the everlasting covenant of grace.'

Such communion seasons would have occurred in the parishes served by Roderick MacLeod in northern Skye, as earlier references to this evangelical minister suggest, and would have been attended by Portree parishioners. Lamont asserts that, following the arrival of evangelicalism in Skye, an aura of complete solemnity and revival began to pervade the communions, the purveying of vast quantities of whisky and the termination of the celebration by a ball being frowned upon and gradually pushed aside. However, although his book addresses the situation in Strath, he fails to clarify how soon and how much this parish was affected as opposed to northern Skye, where the evangelical message sank deep into the souls and behaviour of the inhabitants at an earlier time.

Baptisms, Weddings and Funerals.

The sacrament of baptism secured admission to the church, being usually 'administered to young children by the parish minister.' Differing viewpoints were associated with it across time and space. In areas of the north-west Highlands largely untouched by evangelicalism, despite folk attaching great importance to baptism, no prior demands were made on parents or godparents to possess sound religious knowledge. Even its doctrinal meaning was imperfectly understood, the salvation of baptism being seen as a protection from 'mischievous and unfriendly powers,' a strongly persistent superstitious belief, as well as providing a 'passport for entrance to heaven.' Early baptism was regarded as essential in case the child died.

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768 Lamont, the Reverend D. (1984), pp.146-147.
769 Ansdell, Douglas (1998a), p.120.
unprotected in this way.\textsuperscript{770}

This sacrament, as well as that of communion, frequently caused dissension prior to the Disruption, one party arguably having too lax an attitude towards admission and the other too strict:\textsuperscript{771} A particularly uncompromising stance was adopted by Roderick MacLeod in Bracadale, MacLeod tending to require an 'accredited profession of faith' for admission to baptism as well as communion.\textsuperscript{772}

Kennedy's assertions, quoted earlier, would suggest that admission to baptism in Easter Ross, and presumably Tain, was less restricted, greater 'charity' as regards parental profession of faith being exercised in relation to entry through 'the door of admission into the visible church' than admission to the Lord's Table,\textsuperscript{773} an 'uncontradicted profession of faith' being regarded as sufficient.\textsuperscript{774} Pre-Disruption baptismal records for Tain are unavailable, but the Free Church Baptismal Register indicates that between 1843 and 1860 from 31 to 51 children were baptised annually, including infants from Inver and the country areas.\textsuperscript{775} However, the number of refused baptisms and prerequisites for its administration remain unrecorded, thus preventing the drawing of firm conclusions on this aspect of spirituality in the parish.

As numbers furnish a very imperfect impression of attitudes to baptism, they should be treated with the utmost caution. The 'moderate' parish of Strath, for example, similar in population to Tain until the mid 1850s, shows a similar record of baptisms in the 1840s and early 1850s, apart from a 'bulge' of 69 in 1843.\textsuperscript{776} However, as in Tain, this fails to reveal such complexities as the numbers of children born, requests for baptism or the level of parental faith.

\textsuperscript{771} MacLeod, Roderick (1976), p.100.
\textsuperscript{772} MacLeod, Roderick (1993), pp.262 and 257.
\textsuperscript{774} MacLeod, Roderick (1993), p.257.
\textsuperscript{775} Tain Free Church Baptismal Register, Cl13/748/4.
\textsuperscript{776} Strath Parish Records, Baptisms.
The sources trawled have failed to produce firm views on the ordinance of marriage, although evangelical aversion to the excesses of frivolity and intoxication generally associated with Highland weddings has been noted in the Cultural Milieu chapter. Regarding funerals, evangelical antipathy towards their intemperate nature has also been registered in the last chapter. However, until significantly into the nineteenth century, Highland funerals were essentially civil occasions. Nevertheless, the implicitly spiritual associations of this observance were gradually acknowledged and the church, therefore, ‘increasingly embraced this rite.’ As ministers began to concern themselves with funeral practices, so these became more temperate and 'began to assume the devotional quality' formerly lacking.

Sabbatarianism.

Taking the fourth commandment as basis, Sabbath worship was regarded as the most important gathering of that nature in the week. The catechism highlighted this significance, stating that temporal activities should be eschewed and the whole day spent 'in the public and private exercises of God's worship.'

Several sources identify different attitudes between Moderate and Evangelical parishes. MacDermid observes that in the north-west Highlands prior to the revivals Sunday was a day for relaxing and even working as well as worshipping, probably only a moderate degree of reverence being witnessed. MacLeod, indeed, asserts that in the Western Isles Evangelicals were usually regarded as stricter than Moderates over church discipline, particularly Sabbath observance. He relates Sabbatarianism to observances in the early Gaelic Church, where prohibitions and permitted activities were carefully enumerated in the Cúin Domnaig. The

Law of the Lord’s Day. The strict code of many evangelical ministers reflected a Puritan discipline, the rigorous teaching and example being said to create ‘habits of reverence for all spiritual things,’ ‘a healthy self-discipline’ and a ‘Bible-loving and Church-going people.’ Many of ‘The Men’ probably helped the ministers to spread such observance.

Generally ‘sport, work and drinking’ were regarded as the main Sabbath breaches. In the Moderate dominated Presbytery of Skye it was claimed that inhabitants would ‘carry home water, bake bread; and if reproved for doing so…. would attempt to justify themselves by referring to what they saw ministers’ servants do on that day.’ In view of earlier observations concerning the three parishes, such practices probably lingered longer in Strath than in Portree, Tain undoubtedly experiencing stricter Sabbatarianism from an earlier period. The speed of diligent enforcement would vary between areas, principally reflecting the spread of evangelicalism.

Highland Evangelical Spirituality and Secular Culture.

Again specific references to the parishes being studied are sparse, but inferences can be taken from information contained in earlier chapters. The seeming effects of evangelicalism on various facets of secular culture have already been alluded to, but the relationship with spirituality will now be explored. The traditionally received notion was that a ‘hostile church’ ‘contributed to the demise of an indigenous culture and consistently opposed song, story, music, poetry, and sport.’ Ruaridh MacThòmais (Professor Derick Thomson) vividly expresses this viewpoint in poetry, referring to a scarecrow in black clothes coming into the

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780 MacLeod, Roderick (1976), pp.97 and 98-99.
782 MacInnes, John (1951), pp.7 and 217.
784 Lay Member (1827), p.53.
ceilidh-house and causing the traditional entertainment to cease.

This seeming replacement of the 'collective solidarity of a Gaelic community' with 'lack of humanity, fear and terror, self-protection and individualism' is painted in the ceilidh-house, 'centre of the Gaelic culture of a Highland community.' Although probably over-stated for poetic reasons it does, however, display a 'direct intrusion into a traditional culture-centre.' However, revisionist writers, such as Donald Meek, have identified factors other than evangelical Calvinism which have played their part in attacking Gaelic secular culture, including 'clearance, famine, emigration, education and the English language.' Additionally, the stricter religious conventions often harnessed older customs to their own interpretations: for example, the funeral wake became a 'small-scale religious service' and indeed Thomson's poem refers to new, obviously evangelical Calvinistic Christian elements being introduced into the ceilidh-house.

However, within the theatre of these changes, traditional culture persisted, maintained by evangelicals as well as those of other persuasions. Indeed, it has been registered that a higher proportion of traditional songs persisted into the twentieth century on Raasay and Harris, with Free Church and Free Presbyterian backgrounds, than on the predominantly Roman Catholic islands of Barra, Eriskay and Benbecula.

Regarding specific cultural features, in the field of literature, although some ministers, both Moderate and Evangelical, collected and analysed Gaelic folklore, nonetheless little indigenous Gaelic religious literature was written, most available material being translations of English texts, with the exception of spiritual poetry, which will be investigated later. The

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788 Meek, Donald E. (1994a), pp.4 and 1-2.
evangelical movement was anxious to discourage secular outpourings and folk tales, which could deflect attention from the all-important spiritual message.

Regarding music, there is the stereotype of fiddle burning, the blind Donald Munro being cited as a prime example. However, this may well be apocryphal, 'introduced to emphasise the culturally destructive force of Evangelicalism' or indeed the 'world-rejecting spirituality of new converts.' He undoubtedly rejected his fiddle, his music now being of a 'higher and more spiritual nature.' Other music took the stage, as referred to in the poem - the Gaelic Metrical Psalter and Gaelic hymns. The latter, reflecting both 'sacred and secular dimensions of Gaelic musical culture,' drew on 'personal emotions,' utilising popular tunes and becoming 'a major outlet for spontaneous religious feeling,' although not employed in formal worship.\textsuperscript{791} The psalms were sung in public worship, Gaelic metre having been adapted for their use.\textsuperscript{792}

Indeed, the old church music of Ross-shire was preserved in the early nineteenth century and published for use in Gaelic Free Church services.\textsuperscript{793}

Donald Munro's above-mentioned stance reflects a spiritual attitude which would have gradually pervaded Portree parish, as would the views of the influential Reverend Roderick MacLeod, who believed that those singing, dancing or playing the pipes at weddings were 'eating and drinking damnation on themselves.'\textsuperscript{794} However, MacDonald of Ferintosh, perhaps because he considered Easter Ross deeply embedded in evangelical spirituality and therefore not requiring the severity witnessed in the newly evangelised areas of Skye, wrote verse, 'collected traditional songs and poems,' played the fiddle and bagpipes very ably and permitted dancing in his house.\textsuperscript{795} It seemingly reflects a mature understanding of the

\textsuperscript{791} Meek, Donald E. (1994a), pp.7-8.
\textsuperscript{792} Macinnes, Allan I. (1990), p.52.
\textsuperscript{794} Ansdell, Douglas (1998a), p.131.
\textsuperscript{795} Ibid., p.133.
difference between innocent enjoyment of such traditional secular customs and harmful indulgence detracting from a spiritual walk with the Lord. That such an attitude would have been adopted in nearby Tain can only be conjectured.

An 'inherent ambivalence' is thus emerging in the relationship between Highland churches, with their particular brands of spirituality, and Gaelic culture. This also appertains with regard to superstition, which could indeed be harnessed to evangelical tenets. On the other hand, it is contended that Highland presbyterian churches became committed to eradicating all 'forms of magic and superstition,' although maintaining an ambivalent attitude towards some supernatural manifestations, including 'second sight, visions and miracles.' Accounts exist of ministers and church members foretelling happenings, a Christian rationale for this 'second sight' being embodied in the concept of the 'secret of the Lord,' a spiritual gift rather than an 'unacceptable aspect of a superstitious society' and acceptable as long as recognisably existing within this framework.

The persistence of superstition in the Skye parishes has been outlined in the previous chapter, as well as its continuation in Tain outwith the burgh. Superstitious practices could indeed be directly associated with the church, as the following observations from Skye indicate. Displaying ancestral bones in the windows or wall cavities of churches was witnessed on Raasay in the late eighteenth century by Boswell and Johnson, some of the bones in a ruined chapel purporting to belong to a strong man of heroic tradition, Faobairnes MacCuidhein. Nicolson also recorded this practice, the explanation, gleaned from 'unbiased observers on this custom,' being that it 'savoured rather of a foolish pride in the strength of their forebears than

of a genuine desire to advance those matters that pertained to the glory of God. This interpretation probably contains a germ of truth, but employing the epithet 'foolish' emphasises that, by no means 'unbiased,' it actually reflects attitudes formulated within a different cultural context. Evangelicalism may well have ousted this practice, possessing overtones of superstition, but at different speeds in the different parishes. It displays a spectrum of beliefs seemingly only loosely linked with religion, but in fact reflecting a wider vision of spirituality than that generally associated with the Christian religion. Indeed, in line with McLeod's contentions, quoted at the beginning of the chapter, magic and 'folk religion' seemingly lingered in the Skye parishes and the country areas of Tain in tandem with Christianity, reflecting the fact that spirituality is a broader concept than religion.

Regarding the final spiritual element to be addressed, Gaelic religious verse, although little emanated from the parishes being studied, the words were carried round the Highlands, initially orally, later in written form, deeply affecting the inherently emotional soul of the people. Reflecting the argument embodied in this study, it must be acknowledged that individual background and experience would influence the reception of these outpourings and that the actual material reaching specific communities would vary. Nevertheless, it should be recognised as an integral part of Highland spirituality.

**Gaelic Spiritual Poetry.**

Although spiritual poetry could be viewed as an 'introspective concern with personal salvation,' it also had a commitment to 'communal inspiration' throughout the Highlands and Islands. Indeed, the creation of verse dealing with 'issues of Christian doctrine and devotion' 'enabled people to sing about their faith,' strongly supporting the spread of

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evangelicalism and helping to ‘shape the religious life of the people.’ Such influence reflects its wide circulation in the region and ability to communicate the Christian message as it was ‘sung, recited and memorised’ by people who were ‘passionately fond of verse’ and ‘endowed with accurate and tenacious memories.’ Although the dain spioradail were precluded from use in the church, their employment in the domestic scene, at prayer and fellowship meetings, in the ceilidh house and the shieling at the summer hilltop pastures gained them a wide circulation and they became ‘effectual in the conversion of individuals and in the spiritual nurture of Evangelical communities.’

Paton envisages a dual dimension to early nineteenth century popular evangelical verse, submitting that, as well as recording the ‘emotions and understanding of the Highland people’ it also possessed a ‘causal value, insofar as it contributed to a psychology of abasement... crucial to the formation of popular Gaelic religion and its response to social crisis.’ Its impact in times of crisis, such as clearance or famine, may well have been to furnish a spiritual hope in the face of material devastation, but generally the relationship of individuals or specific communities to the messages in the poetry would have been complex, reflecting localised cultural contexts and personality characteristics.

Maintaining that the spiritual verse of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries enabled the Church’s teachings to be ‘internalised in a form that accorded with’ the ‘cultural and linguistic forms’ of the Highlands, Paton exemplifies his argument regarding the doctrine of ‘submission to the Divine will’ by referring initially to the works of Donald Matheson of Kildonan (Sutherland). Matheson’s verse was published in Tain in 1816 and again in 1825, endorsed by Macdonald of Ferintosh and the Reverend John Kennedy of Killearnan (Easter

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802 Maclnnes, John (1951), pp.262-265.
Ross). Drawing parallels between physical and spiritual suffering and desolation, he affirms that ‘only Christ can save us in times of distress.’

Threatened with eviction from his croft, Matheson, who died in 1782, turned towards the spiritual Canaan where eviction is unknown:

An fhéarrann nach d’heid an daors’
is air nach caochail maighstir
’S gach neach a tharas a dhol ann
A chaoidh chan fhaisear ainnis air.

('It is) the land whose rent will not increase, and whose overlord will not die/change, and those who go there will never know poverty).

Matheson’s Sutherland Gaelic was ‘frequently unintelligible to the Western and Southern Gael,’ which may have limited the influence of his verse. However, verse in different dialects would have been available, as spiritual bards came from various areas, including Inverness-shire, Perthshire, Argyllshire and Tiree. Additionally, oral transmissions may have gradually adapted the messages as they filtered across the region. Regarding such filtering across dialectic divisions, the widespread influence of Dugald Buchanan and Peter Grant is consistently acknowledged. As space and the scope of this study preclude an exploration of all known spiritual bards, the work of these two men will be briefly scrutinised, as well as that of John Morrison of Harris, whose influence on Skye was considerable, Malcolm Nicolson of Portree parish, the little known John Morrison of Skye and Macdonald of Ferintosh.

Buchanan (1716-68), born in Strathyre, Perthshire, was eventually appointed teacher and then catechist at Kinloch Rannoch in the 1750s. His father, a religious man, furnished him with a

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fairly sound education and a bi-lingual upbringing. Between 1741 and 1750, whilst employed as a carpenter, Buchanan, aware of past sins, kept a diary, revealing his struggle and anguish as he underwent an 'intellectual and spiritual conversion.' His struggle provides the 'key to his “songs,” reflecting his overwhelming ‘passion for the Salvation of men’ and conveying a ‘s\n\n
tem doctrine concerning the ‘enormity of sin, the righteousness of God, and the greatness of the sacrifice of Christ.' However, Buchanan, whose poems constituted the Gaelic book printed the most frequently after the Bible and Catechism, was ‘full of tender sympathy’ and a ‘zest’ for life. His imagery appealed to the Celtic mind, being full of the ‘wonders of the physical world and the variety of external nature.’ For example, in Mórachd Dhé, a ‘meditation on the nature of God,’ he employs the following simile regarding attempts to ‘comprehend, and apprehend, God’s being:

'Nan oidhirpibh tha aingle 's daoin'  
Mar shligean maoraich glacadh chuain.  
('In their efforts angels and men are like the shells of limpets attempting to hold the ocean. ')

Buchanan's poems can be seen as ‘extensions of his role as religious instructor and evangelist.' Fulangas Chriosd, for example, is a ‘smooth flowing summary of the Gospel story,’ but involving the emotional sufferings of the poet within its lines. In what has been considered his greatest poem, Lä a' Bhreithecanais (The Day of Judgement), containing ‘standard Evangelicalism, with its emphasis on faith and submission to God,’ the necessity of abhorring sin and fleeing to Jesus, the ‘images of desolation and Divine power underline the theological message of... complete annihilation before the presence of God.'

Urnuigh (Prayer) may serve as a final example from the many outpourings of this man who

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807 Maclean, the Reverend Donald, ed. (1913), pp.vii-xi.  
was able to convey so successfully the stern evangelical doctrine in terms immediately appreciated by folk across the Highlands, whose hearts, minds and souls he understood. Full of devotional feeling, it is rich in evangelical thought, setting out the doctrine of the Atonement, with its excellency and sufficiency, in language of devout adoration.\textsuperscript{111}

The Reverend Peter Grant (1783-1867), born in Grantown-on-Spey, had a somewhat different career. Raised in the Establishment, undergoing a stormy spiritual experience, he was affected by the Haldane movement and eventually converted through the preaching of the first local Baptist pastor, Lachlan Macintosh. Initially an itinerant missionary, he succeeded as pastor in Grantown in 1826, being formally ordained in 1829. An inherently musical man, he was spiritually affected by Buchanan's hymns, although his own works differ noticeably in style and content, focusing on the pilgrim's progress in the life of faith. The path runs from conversion to the believer's arrival in heaven, this world being seen as a vale of tears and the joy of the eternal home being anticipated through the efficacy of Christ's blood. These experiential hymns, written with the aim of supplanting the heathen ballads of Fingal and Ossian, were set to well-known tunes\textsuperscript{112} (more effective in conveying the message), becoming so popular that they ran through many editions. Their simple conception and natural style plus the fact that Grant's warm nature is felt in every stanza undoubtedly contributed to their success.\textsuperscript{113} The sweetness, grace and touching humanity found among his works tended to enhance his presentations of spiritual truth and popularise them\textsuperscript{114} – seemingly indicating that the message did not always have to be harsh to affect Highland folk.

Indeed, although the stricter doctrinal tenets are certainly present, the teaching is conveyed with sensitive tenderness. The features Grant considered the heart of the Gospel are

\textsuperscript{111}Maclean, the Reverend Donald, ed. (1913), p.100.
\textsuperscript{113}Macneill, Nigel (1929), pp.479-480.
\textsuperscript{114}Maclean, Magnus (1925), p.128.
reflected in the titles of his most popular dain, including Gradh m’Fhear-Saoraldh (My Saviour’s Love), Gealladh an t-Slanuigheas (The Saviour’s Promise), and Eifeachd an Fuil an Uain (The Virtue of the Lamb’s Blood). The love of Christ was his ‘abiding inspiration.’

’S i nighean Shioin ’s fear dheth, ’s i fhuair am fàbhar mòr,
A bhi tighinn an nuas o’n fhàsach, is fear a gràidh ’na coir,
Chan iarrainns’ tuille fàbhair na greis an tir nam beò,
Ach laigh’ air uchd an t-Slànuiigh ear, an t-àit anns an robh Èòin.

(‘How blessed Sion’s daughter, who leaneth on the way,
Upon her strong Beloved, her never-failing stay;
It is the greatest blessing for which I ever pray
To lean on Jesus’ bosom, where John at supper lay.’)

(Songs and Hymns of the Gael). 817

John Morrison (1790-1852), the poetic blacksmith of Harris, was converted under the preaching of Macdonald of Ferintosh, becoming his ardent disciple. Following his marriage in 1820 he concentrated on ‘religious problems’ and was appointed a catechist in 1828, an office he held until his death, his life becoming entirely devoted to preaching after the demise of his wife in 1829. His effective writings took the form of soul-analysis, conveying his ‘spiritual warfare,’ and including such topics as the ‘power of sin, the might and wonder of free grace,’ the love of the Saviour and the contrast between ‘the glories of heaven and the horrors of hell.’

Morrison’s poem An Nuadh Bhreith (The New Birth or The Struggle of the Old Man and the Young Man) admirably expresses his spiritual conflict, a conflict which would speak directly
to troubled souls:

Is e ’n seann duin’ leam as annsa,
Ach ’s e cuspair m’fhuaith is m’anntlachd,
’S mi don òigear am bith-naimhdeis,
Ged ’s e m’annsachd e ’s mo chaidreobh.
An seana duin’ na ghalair bàis domh,
’S an duin’ òg air gràs gam altram.

(‘The old man is the one that I prefer,
but he is the object of my loathing and hatred,
While with the young man I have eternal conflict,
Though he is my delight and converse.
The old man is my death-dealing disease,
while the young man nourishes me with grace.’)

The young man, Christ the hero, offers hope for folk searching for light at the end of a spiritual or material tunnel.819

Morrison’s acknowledged discipleship of Macdonald of Ferintosh would undoubtedly have affected the spread of his poetry. His links with Skye are more explicitly demonstrated in his elegy on the blind Donald Munro, for whom he bore friendship, love and a respect for his labours:

Do fhradhare sùl ge do dh’fhàg thu
Rì aimsir t’òige na d’phàisde;
Fhuair thu dùbladh na’ àite
Gu d’ ungadh, slàinte an Righ2

819 Meek, Donald E., ed. (2003), pp.282-283.
('Although the vision of your eyes forsook you, in your childish youth, you received twice as much in its place, to anoint you – the healing salvation of the King.')

Doubtless the outpourings of these three spiritual bards would have reached the ears of many of Portree’s parishioners, though perhaps fewer in Strath, the works of the first two most probably forming part of the spiritual background of many Tain inhabitants. The influence of hymns composed by John Morrison of Skye, basically ‘just sermons and Christian experiences put in respectable verse’ is more uncertain, although they would have helped, like the works of other minor poets, to ‘propagate the earnest evangelical teaching of the authors.’

Occasionally some of ‘The Men’ would compose verse, Malcolm Nicolson of the Braes (Portree), converted by Donald Munro and employed as a Gaelic teacher in his native parish, being a prime example. Doubtless well aware of the works of Morrison of Harris, his poetry reflects incontrovertible piety, ‘charity of spirit towards the Lord’s people’ and strong denunciation of sin in himself and others. MacCowan regards his works as being ‘not commonplace’ and *An Canran (The Murmuring)*, as a masterpiece, such *dain spioradail* assuredly assisting him in spreading the evangelical message in his locality. His self-denunciation and similar spiritual struggles to Morrison are powerfully expressed in the following stanza from *An Canran*:

'Sin bha mi ’m shineadh air bheag ell,
Mar neach a bhiodh gun deò ann;
Gun fhios de ni, gun sgeul air Criosd,
Le iocshlaint bheireadh beò mi;
Bha cionta ’grà, chan fhaigh thu bàigh,'
'S as-creideamh, slàn le trocair,
Cuimhnich binne na craoibhe fhige (Matt. xix., 19),
Oir's ionnan crioch do shèorsa.

("Then I was stretched out with little strength
As a person who had no breath in him,
With no sign of Christ, without knowledge of anything
With a healing balm that would bring me to life.
Guilt was saying you'll not get a warm reception
And unbelief was saying goodbye to mercy.
Remember the condemnation of the fig-tree
For your kind will have a similar end.\')</n
Nicolson's spiritual awareness is acute, the evangelical spirit in himself and others being relentlessly explored, harsh conformity to standard doctrines without a changed heart being soundly rejected\(^{823}\)

The final poet to be considered in this brief overview of the place of religious verse in Highland spirituality is the man whose disciple, Morrison of Harris, has been cursorily investigated, Macdonald of Ferintosh. A less accomplished versifier than his disciple, nonetheless his fame as a conscientious and fervent evangelical preacher would have increased the efficacy of his poetry. His 'chosen medium was the elegy,' these 'metrical sermons' containing much 'edifying Evangelical doctrine.'\(^{824}\) Other noteworthy poems include the three-part work entitled The Christian on his journey, at, and beyond Jordan\(^{825}\) and Obair an Spioraid ann an Sluagh Dhe, a 'metrical treatise on the work of the Holy Spirit in the souls of

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824 MacInnes, John (1951), pp.292-293.
825 Macneill, Nigel (1929), p.482.
believing Christians,’ not great poetry but an excellent sermon in which there is a ‘refreshing absence of the censorious party spirit.’

His elegies followed a specific pattern, expressing grief at the passing of a man who was reul, solus ãluinn, ceann-iuil or gaisgeach treun, (a star, beautiful light, leader or brave hero), then enumerating ‘the qualities of mind and spirit which fitted’ the individual for his work as a “twice-born Man,” whose call came from the ‘imperious demand of Christ, backed by popular assent.’ Aiming to powerfully influence ‘the minds of a sensitive and warm-hearted people,’ he contrasts this ‘shining picture of a dedicated servant of God’ with the black picture of a “Stipend-lifter.” In the marbhrann of Charles Calder, father-in-law of Angus Mackintosh of Tain, he writes:

Cha deach’ thu mach mar chuid ’s an lath-sa,
Tha meas gur leòr dhoibh gairm a’ Phatroin,
A rinn ar Sion lom is fàs!
’S luchd-sàruchaidh an treud iad.
Oir mu’n do ghabh thu dreuchd an aodhair’,
Fhuair thu gairm o Dhia ’s o dhaoinibh;
Is cheangail sud an còrdaidh gaoil,
Do sgìr’ is thus’ r’a chèile.827

(‘You did not go forth like some in the present day who think that the Patron’s call is sufficient for them, and who have made our Zion bare and barren – they are the oppressors of the flock; but before you took the office of pastor, you received a call from God and people, and that [call], in the cords of love, bound you and your parish together.’)

Macdonald was ‘not an original thinker’ but an able and ‘typical representative of the

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aggressive evangelical Christianity.... so powerful in Scotland' in the pre-Disruption decades. His influence, however, was atypically massive, both in his own parish and elsewhere and his links with 'awakenings' or revivals are well documented.

The mention of revivals furnishes an appropriate bridge to the next chapter, which will investigate this highly significant feature affecting the spirituality of the Highlands. The phenomenon, which was essentially international, differed according to specific spiritual, cultural and socio-economic contexts, a factor requiring to be acknowledged in relation to the research questions embodied in this study.

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CHAPTER 8. REVIVALS.

In order to fully comprehend the role of revivals in affecting the religious scene and therefore place them within the arena of possible influences on Disruption reaction in the three parishes, this chapter will commence with an endeavour to analyse and interpret different definitions of the term ‘revival,’ attempting to contextualise these within the area of the Highlands. The various influences leading to ‘revivals,’ including that of ‘The Men,’ as well as the nature and results of these events will then undergo brief examination in relation to this pan- Highland picture. The final section will incorporate an investigation into how such phenomena affected the three parishes themselves, whether they occurred within the community bounds or in neighbouring districts, strengths and weaknesses in available source material again being recognised. Within this section the specific socio-economic and cultural environments will be acknowledged as well as the spiritual. Revivals occurring in the localities in which the parishes were embedded require to be addressed as the influence of such movements spread outwith parish bounds, either drawing folk from considerable walking distances or being carried by ministers or laymen.

**Analysing, Interpreting and Contextualising Revivals.**

Gérest suggests that, in recent centuries, spiritual movements have been referred to as re-awakenings or ‘revivals,’ seemingly implying that the institution is paralysed, dead or at least asleep.\(^{829}\) The frequently occurring accusations that Moderate clergy were too secularly oriented, neglectful of pastoral duties and too concerned with civic rather than spiritual virtues in their preaching readily spring to mind in this connection. Indeed, there is the possibly

apocryphal story of the Skye ‘original,’ Gilleanbuig Aotrom. One Sunday after the Disruption, he disturbed the Broadford congregation by ‘setting all the shepherds’ dogs fighting.’ He then commented to the minister, John Mackinnon, that the Free Church folk ‘say your congregation is asleep; they must say it no more. We’ve wakened them to-day.’ How often through the ages has the ‘fool’ spoken words of wisdom!

MacInnes, however, differentiates between ‘revivals’ and ‘awakenings,’ defining the latter as ‘marked’ periods of ‘spiritual quickening’ or ‘unusual concern’ which ‘evangelical ministers and missioners sometimes bring to our notice.’ Although perhaps possessing sufficient vigour to help ‘influence and mould’ spiritual life in some parishes, they failed to ‘attain the dimensions of great mass movements.’ A revival, however, was ‘an unusual manifestation of the power of the grace of God in convincing and converting careless sinners, and in quickening and increasing the faith and piety of believers.’ Although not explicitly stating it to be a ‘mass movement’ ‘to a greater or less degree,’ nonetheless by definition this is implied.

Meek, recognising ‘revivals’ or ‘awakenings’ as an integral part of a ‘popular spiritual dynamism,’ acknowledges that such movements ‘occurred at a time of great social change in the Highlands.’ However, ‘portmanteau theories’ attempting to connect anti-landlordism with evangelicalism, ‘social dislocation’ with ‘religious revival’ and viewing revival as a ‘beatific vision in the midst of grinding poverty and social collapse’ should all be treated with caution. ‘The link between social change and religious revival in the Highlands requires more thorough probing and analysis as ‘religious revivals are complex experiences, pulling on, and being shaped by, a wide range of factors operating at national, sub-national and local levels.’

Meek is here emphasising, within the realm of revivals, the argument behind this study, that

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832 Meek, Donald E. (1998a), pp.116-117.
blanket theories have distinct limitations because a complex web of factors determine behaviour in individual communities. Even when parallels and links can be identified between movements within and without the Highlands, nonetheless it should be recognised that revivals are 'rooted in specific localities and are activated......by "triggers" within these localities.'

As regards terminology, Meck affirms that the spiritual movements, regarded as 'God's intervention in the affairs of humanity, stirring men and women to rebirth and renewal,' were generally known to Highlanders as diasgaidhean (awakenings), their 'keynote' being the 'awakening of unbelievers who became conscious of their need of salvation.' However, the evidence does 'indicate that the "revival" of existing believers was sometimes the prelude to an "awakening."'

Whatever terminology is applied, revivals being employed henceforth to avoid unnecessary semantic deliberation, these movements seemingly had a fundamental effect on responses to the Disruption, Dr. Charles Brown contending that the Free Church had been "nursed in the bosom of religious revival." Continuing in this more generalist line of thought, Ansdell maintains that Highland communities became remarkably attached to certain preachers, responding enthusiastically to their message, often in a deeply emotional collective manner which could lead to 'revivals' of religion. Within these 'usually intense, emotional periods of religious awakening' folk would become 'acutely aware of their own unworthiness and sinful condition and of the forgiveness and consolation.... contained in the Christian message.'

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833 Ibid., p.117.
834 Ibid., pp.117-118.
835 Brown, the Reverend Thomas (1892), p.773.
Such movements were, however, international phenomena, occurring, for example, in Europe and America in the eighteenth century.\footnote{Paton, David (2000), pp.217-218.} Within Scotland revivals are recorded in Easter Ross in the 1720s and in Cambuslang and Kilsyth in the Lowlands in the 1740s. Highland visitors attending these Lowland gatherings ‘hoped to reproduce this vitality in their own congregations’ and indeed revivals were noted in parts of Easter Ross and Sutherland in the same decade, continuing later in the century. By the 1790s and early nineteenth century the work of the Haldane brothers and their agents, as well as continuing presbyterian involvement, stimulated movements elsewhere, including Skye, Lewis and Perthshire. Gradually these events became a feature of evangelical Christianity throughout the region,\footnote{Ansdell, Douglas (1998a), pp.117-118.} the north, as demonstrated above, being affected earlier than the ‘western seaboard.’\footnote{Campbell, Murdoch (1999), p.8.}

**Highland Revivals – Influences, Characteristics and Results.**

Missionary activity, fuelled by reaction to the French Revolution, initially centred on overseas developments, but subsequently zeal embraced the situation at home. The Haldane brothers in particular, whose Bengal mission had failed, turned to the Highlands. Although the Established Church considered lay preaching to be an ‘affront,’ the Haldanes became the moving spirits behind the establishment of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel at Home in Edinburgh (1798). This instituted such useful works as distribution of tracts, foundation of Sabbath schools, with which evangelistic meetings became associated, and the spread of laymen undertaking itinerant missionary tours. In 1799 the Haldanes severed
themselves and their chief associates from the Established Church, forming the Congregational Church\textsuperscript{840} and later becoming involved in the Baptist movement.

MacInnes contends that, in connection with revivals, the minister was always the evangelist of his own parish, calling in 'like-minded neighbouring ministers' if requiring assistance at the 'crisis of a movement.'\textsuperscript{841} This ignores the existence of movements in parishes like Portree where the clergy were unsympathetic towards evangelicalism, local laymen or itinerant missionaries taking the initiative, undoubtedly then calling on the assistance of sympathetic ministers from elsewhere. Paton, although also maintaining that revivals were clergy led, admits that, due to 'alienation of the established church' on Skye, 'the Men' in this area 'took a leadership role.'\textsuperscript{842} This highlights the importance of exploring and incorporating local differences when attempting to understand behaviour at either revival or Disruption level.

Meek addresses this concept of local influence, affirming that 'in both the Highlands and Lowlands the national impulses which brought awakening to the region were rooted in local community life.' He maintains that two specific qualities triggered 'revival at the human level,' a 'gathering of like-minded people with a clear sense of unfulfilled religious purpose,' and 'the presence of a strong authority-figure who could help them to achieve a sense of fulfilment.' Communion seasons were 'particularly suited to the impulses of spiritual awakening,' 'deep spiritual experiences, productive of revival,' being associated primarily with them. The increasing numbers of evangelical clerics in the Highlands facilitated the effectiveness of this link between communion and revival.\textsuperscript{843} However, other communal events, both informal and formal, the latter including prayer and fellowship meetings, also

\textsuperscript{840} MacInnes, John (1951), pp.139-149.
\textsuperscript{841} Ibid., p.166.
\textsuperscript{842} Paton, David (2000), pp.298 and 297.
\textsuperscript{843} Meek, Donald (1998a), pp.123-124.
acted as stimulants, varying combinations of highly localised circumstances precipitating a specific revival.

Numerous attempts have been made to link revivals with other events or movements within society. The broader aspects of relationship to social change have been addressed earlier, with the concurrent dangers of applying blanket theories at local level. However, Allan Macinnes, while recognising that no ‘definite causal connection’ can be made with ‘economic privation, insofar as local revivals rarely coincided with famines or population removal and relocation,’ does nonetheless contend that ‘revivalism cannot be dissociated from the social restlessness occasioned by Clearance and by rural congestion and deprivation within crofting communities.’ Nonetheless, even though Meek can identify Hebridean revivals occurring around times of social uncertainty, plus the 1836 and 1846 potato blights (the latter blight triggering large-scale emigration), when investigated at parish level the correlation cannot be upheld across the area.

Meek does, however, propound an interesting hypothesis when considering the relationship between revivals and emigration. The notion that further destabilisation of ‘an already unstable society’ was created by altering the traditional mindset towards conceiving emigration as ‘a divinely ordained pilgrimage to other lands’ is countered by the theory that ‘revivals encouraged greater stability in the face of impending crisis, by applying further bonding (through spiritual experience) to communities’ already ‘held together by links of kin and culture.’ Thus “families of faith” were created, incorporating ‘whole family groups and their collaterals,’ who could be willing to emigrate as a body, pursuing a “better” life for the group. Although more research is required, it could be postulated that such groups would be

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844 Macinnes, Allan I. (1990), p.54.
845 Meek, Donald E. (1998a), p.137.
equally willing to act as dissenting bodies entering the Free Church together.\textsuperscript{847} Ansdell adopts a similar approach in contending that ‘belief groups’ could function alongside such groupings as economic or linguistic in a socially cohesive manner and thus be ‘an adequate frame of reference for explaining religious change.’ However, these groupings should be taken in context in individual parishes alongside other social groupings plus highly personal and individual factors, such as family background, community traditions or other loyalties.\textsuperscript{848} Consequently revivals, incorporating such groupings as those postulated by Meek and Ansdell, could have served to reinforce individual community identities and thus reaction to events such as the Disruption.

Regarding cultural consequences of these often highly emotionally charged movements, the Gaelic language benefited as revival preachers ‘drew their inspiration from the Gaelic Bible,’ thus elevating its status and extending its ‘range as a spiritual medium.’ However, the dramatic nature of revival-inspired conversions tended to have an adverse effect on other cultural elements, a point raised earlier in connection with evangelicalism in general, converts becoming eager to throw off the ‘old life and its symbols.’ Meek maintains that the ‘revivals sharpened the contrast between sacred and secular interests,’ ‘cultural renewal seldom’ accompanying ‘spiritual renewal in the Highlands.’ Nonetheless, new art forms appeared in the shape of sermons, prayers, hymns and spiritual verse.\textsuperscript{849}

Finally, a thought-provoking point raised by Paton should be aired before exploring revivals affecting the specific parishes. As well as quoting the Rosskeen minister’s contention that the revivals occurring immediately prior to the Disruption ‘validated the stand being taken by the church as a whole,’ Paton also visualises the Disruption as a revival in itself. The argument for

\textsuperscript{847} Ibid., p.138.
\textsuperscript{848} Ansdell, Douglas (1998b), pp.92-93.
\textsuperscript{849} Meek, Donald E. (1998a), pp.141-142.
this interpretation centres on the Disruption being the climax of achievement of 'popular Highland Presbyterianism, the practices and ideology of which provided a template for the new Free Church' and the fact that, if 'Christ's headship was truly in contest, then a quickening in religious life, a positive expression of divine presence, might almost be expected.'

**Revivals Affecting the Three Parishes.**

Bain remarks upon the 'wave of serious thought' which 'during several years preceding the Disruption passed over the greater part of Ross and the Inner Hebrides.' Among the consequences noted was the desire to be saved, which a 'serious-minded people' saw resting in the Evangelical rather than the Moderate clergy. However, implications of revivals specifically affecting the three parishes require to be addressed separately.

**Tain.**

Tain has been seen at the time of the Disruption to have been a community in transition, both socio-economically and culturally, although no sense of social dislocation is apparent in the sources. Agricultural improvements had begun to appear, the burgh was a thriving settlement and educational developments together with increasing contacts with the south had given it the opportunity to absorb more and more influences from non-Gaelic culture, including religious attitudes and movements. Emigration and socio-economic crises do not appear, from the sources available, to have been particularly prevalent issues at that time. Consequently attempts to link the strength of revivals in the parish and surrounding area with economic privation and destitution would be beset with difficulties. Tain was firmly embedded in an area with a strong tradition of evangelical religion, as noted in an earlier chapter, and,

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851 Bain, Robert (1899), pp.397-398.
therefore, it seems likely that spiritual forces were highly influential in drawing it into the scenario of revivals in this area, the repercussions of which would have been felt in the parish. As intimated above, Easter Ross witnessed the earliest revivals, stirrings of which became noticeable as early as 1724. Prayer meetings, appointed by Tain Presbytery to take place at Edderton, Tarbert and Logie Easter, fostered revivalism, as did similar meetings initiated by the folk of Nigg, led by 'the elders and serious people' of the parish. Between 1730 and 1739 there was a 'gradual quickening, with stops and intermissions, in the spiritual life of the people,' under the helm of John Balfour, appointed to the parish in 1730. He became the 'acknowledged leader of the northern Evangelical revivals,' which continued to spread through Ross and Sutherland 'well into the nineteenth century.' The movements were generally accompanied by strict Sabbath observance, much catechizing and increased reading of the Bible and Gaelic Psalter.\(^{852}\)

Other early eighteenth century examples in Easter Ross include Rosskeen, Rosemarkie (following the communion season of July 1743), Kilmuir Easter, Logie-Easter, Alness, Resolis and Avoch.\(^{853}\) Although Tain is not mentioned specifically at this stage, it was surrounded by enthusiastic revivalist parishes and would undoubtedly have caught some of the atmosphere. Mowat asserts that it was the common people who were the most enthusiastic in their zeal,\(^{854}\) reflecting Callum Brown's observation that revivals in the mid-eighteenth century, as witnessed among agricultural workers at Cambuslang and Kilsyth in 1742, occurred 'elsewhere in rural and village Scotland.'\(^{855}\) As regards the locality of Tain, Couper affirms that revival of that time found 'a place prepared for it in Easter Ross,'\(^{856}\) a spiritual

\(^{852}\) MacInnes, John (1951), pp.156-159.
\(^{853}\) Mackay, John, (?1914), pp.184-187.
\(^{856}\) Couper, Reverend W.J. (1918), p.66.
background of evangelical ministry, as intimated above. As regards the nature of the revivals, there were a number of similarities between that occurring at Cambuslang and those taking place in Easter Ross, as Couper and Smout indicate. Converts had travelled considerable distances, the minister had a key role, other local ministers assisted and communion services played a notable part. However, no evidence has been found of any significant input from an exogenous preacher in Easter Ross, in contrast with the role of the English evangelist George Whitefield at Cambuslang, and the detailed analysis of converts there, as examined by Smout and revealing a high percentage of reading-literate lower classes, has not been replicated in available records for the northern area. Indeed, although Sage asserted, as mentioned in an earlier chapter, that in 1822 true religion was almost entirely confined to the peasantry, by 1843, when the Disruption occurred, the prominent burgesses of the town led the way into the Free Church.

From the mid-eighteenth century onwards, as MacInnes affirms, the movement in the district displayed ‘chronic virility,’ with a constant stream of able preachers and pious laymen, ‘eminent Christians’ who contributed to the high level of ‘religious observance and moral conduct.’ The period was consequently referred to as the ‘Days of the Fathers.’ Memorable evangelical preachers included John Sutherland of Golspie and Tain, a well-known leader of Easter Ross revivals, Charles Calder of Urquhart (or Ferintosh), a ‘holy and heavenly-minded man’ and Angus McIntosh of Tain, whose ministry lasted into the nineteenth century. Thus Tain parish was drawn into the heart of evangelical movements. Even James Haldane, who considered the Highlands a spiritual wilderness, believed the people of Tain were ‘highly favoured; they are blessed with a zealous and faithful minister in the Established Church.’

860 MacInnes, John (1951), pp.117-120.
However, although men such as McIntosh can be regarded as the ‘forerunners and pioneers of the great Evangelical revivals which, during the first half of the nineteenth century, touched the larger mass of the Highland people,’ nonetheless Maclnnes adds a caveat that the character of such ministers was not always ‘reflected in the character of the flock,’ established religious tradition and the voice of godly laymen requiring to be taken into account. Nor, he continues, should such seemingly favoured parishes as Tain be regarded as the ‘Garden of the Lord’ without investigating more closely the moral character of communities elsewhere.\textsuperscript{861}

Nonetheless, in the swell of evangelical fervour sweeping the district during the few years prior to the Disruption, undoubtedly helping to fuel reaction to it, two ministers in particular exercised considerable influence. The Inverness Courier of 15\textsuperscript{th} July 1840, reporting the revival, records that Macdonald of Ferintosh preached ‘on Sunday to an open-air gathering of not less than five or six thousand persons.’ The strength of people’s reaction can be inferred from the additional comment that they were ‘engaged night and day in prayer meetings.’ Noble attributes much of the effect of the communion season that year to the praying and preaching activities of Tain’s minister, Charles Calder Mackintosh, and the preaching of the zealous and highly acclaimed Macdonald of Ferintosh. He quotes a letter of Calder Mackintosh, in which the minister describes how that communion turned into an awakening both in his own parish and in neighbouring Easter Ross districts:

‘What I believe to be a genuine revival of religion – the work of the Spirit of God – has taken place during the past year, to a considerable extent, in this parish and district. By a revival of religion I mean that which, under Divine influence, is effected by the word of God, the main features’ being ‘a deep anxiety to hear the Word, and to wait upon its dispensation – conviction of sin – earnest inquiry after the way of salvation – and apparent conversion,'

\textsuperscript{861} Maclnnes, John (1951), pp.120-121.
leading to holy life and conversation – connected with the refreshing and growing sanctification of the people of God.' Macdonald, preaching powerfully from the text, Luke xiii, 24 ('Strive to enter in by the narrow door; for many, I say unto you, shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able'), had initiated an excitement which caused his strong and rousing voice to become sometimes ‘inaudible in the wail of lamentation’ rising from the ‘audience.’

Two distinct features have emerged from this cursory glimpse of revivals affecting Tain. Firstly, movements began early in the district and took a strong hold, perhaps partly due to historical links with Puritanism and partly to a longer-term existence in Easter Ross of evangelically-minded ministers. Secondly, the revivals generally appear to have been cleric-led, especially in the immediate pre-Disruption period.

Portree.

The situation accruing in this parish, however, was quite different. Revivals were seemingly unknown before the early nineteenth century and inspiration appears to have come initially from laymen, specifically missionaries, ‘The Men’ and teachers. Later, visiting evangelical ministers, including Macdonald of Ferintosh, and the ‘converted’ Roderick Macleod of Bracadale and Snizort lent clerical weight to these awakenings.

The socio-economic and cultural environment was, likewise, in distinct contrast to that of Tain. The parish has been seen to have been predominantly rural, its inhabitants generally living at subsistence level, suffering periodic bouts of famine and deprivation together with tenurial insecurity, sometimes accompanied by larger-scale clearances and emigration. However, although this picture fits in with Macinnes’s assertion that revivalism could be associated with ‘rural congestion and deprivation within crofting communities,’ a correlation with peak periods of socio-economic crisis cannot always be made, the 1836 potato

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862 Noble, the Reverend John (1909), pp.240-241.
863 Macinnes, Allan I. (1990), p.54.
crop failure and the Raasay clearances of that year, for example, not triggering off a revival in the area. Additionally, as will be noted later, Strath shared a similar socio-economic profile but was barely affected by revival movements.

Culturally, literacy levels were low in this essentially Gaelic-speaking community, traditional folk belief systems having been seen to still exert a notable influence. Consequently, with a Moderate minister seemingly not in tune with such ‘superstitious’ beliefs, the emotional and spiritual intensity associated with evangelical revival may well have played a part in stimulating the local fervent response.

The revivals influencing this parish, although considerably later than that at Cambuslang, exhibited a certain similarity in that an external missionary, Farquharson, provided considerable impetus, as Whitefield had done in the southern parish, other ministers assisted and people again travelled considerable distances between parishes in order to hear evangelical exhortations.

These Skye revivals, occurring either within Portree parish or nearby, in the north of the island, seem to have been very intense, exercising an increasingly profound effect on the inhabitants. In appreciating Portree’s religious milieu it is important to recognise that the laymen heavily involved in revivals were also frequently the principal agents keeping the fresh spark of evangelical Christianity alive.

MacRae, evangelical by profession, alleges that ‘living, practical religion was entirely unknown’ in Skye at the beginning of the nineteenth century, both the ‘people and the clergy’ being ‘totally ignorant of the grace that is in Christ Jesus.’ Lack of any discovered concrete evidence to the contrary, apart from glowing (and similarly partisan) eulogies on the ministers.

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864 MacRae, the Reverend Alexander (n.d.), p.66.
of the period, precludes informed debate on this issue. However, there was obviously fertile ground for evangelical revivals to bear fruit, the first of these being recorded in 1805.

MacRae claims that at that time the Presbytery only contained two 'enlightened' Christians, one of whom was a Ross-shire man teaching in Raasay865 (a fact which might have some bearing on the island’s later wholesale adherence to the Free Church). The excitement aroused by the preaching of the evangelical missionary, Mr. Farquharson, who arrived in northern Skye in 1805, has been outlined in an earlier chapter, in tandem with the observation that blind Donald Munro was apparently his only convert. As open-air preaching by a layman was a novelty,866 perhaps curiosity was the more powerful motivator for attendance than sincere interest.

Thus 1805 saw only faint traces of 'awakening,' whereas the movement reached 'solid proportions' in 1812,867 when another revival occurred in northern Skye. Although Farquharson had left the island, Donald Munro had been labouring in the area as a catechist, joined briefly by the Reverend Donald Martin of Kilmuir. Although the constant efforts of Munro, the 'father of evangelical religion in Skye,'868 were vital to the development of this 'awakening,' it must be acknowledged that the Reverend John Shaw who was inducted into the parish of Duirinish in 1811 and who introduced the renowned Macdonald of Ferintosh to Skye, helped to prepare the path.869 This revival appeared to have considerable success, 'several hundreds' professing to 'have returned to the Lord,' MacRae claiming that the 'genuineness of their conversion was evidenced by the change of life that accompanied their
profession. Unfortunately no details of life changes have been recovered, only an observation that hearing the Scriptures and attending lengthy services were welcomed.

Following the Reverend Roderick MacLeod’s conversion to evangelical faith in 1822, stirrings again occurred in north and west Skye. Even the ‘Moderate’ Portree minister’s daughter underwent conversion!

The major revival of 1841-42 can be viewed as ‘a kind of spiritual explosion,’ reflecting the ‘cumulative effect of several factors, including local evangelicalism,’ often undertaken by locally based men. This had been gradually gaining momentum since 1805. Additionally there was reaction to the wider religious framework of ‘The Ten Years’ Conflict’ and its associated ‘pre-Disruption tension.’ Indeed, Mackinnon contends that the pre-Disruption struggle was keenly followed in parishes affected by the ‘awakenings.’

This significant revival was initiated by a Gaelic Schools Society teacher at Unish, in Waternish. On the eve of his departure to another post, Norman MacLeod preached to the people from Mark, chapter xi, regarding the fruit borne on the barren fig tree during his three years with them. His incredibly passionate outpourings released intense emotion among the listeners, leading to an awakening which kept him in the vicinity for some weeks longer. People assembled with little intermission, listening to his reading, praying and exhorting.

Meetings were eventually moved to Fairy Bridge, which, though seemingly remote, was a central point for parishioners of Snizort, Duirinish and Bracadale. Roderick MacLeod became involved, preaching weekly at this spot and attracting large gatherings, sometimes of several thousand. Much awakening of sinners into an acceptance of Christ occurred, a

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870 MacRae, the Reverend Alexander (n.d.), p.72.
872 Mackinnon, the Reverend Donald (1906), p.21.
873 Meek, Donald E (1998a), p.120.
874 Mackinnon, the Reverend Donald (1906), p.21.
875 Meek, Donald E. (1998a), p.126; MacRae, the Reverend Alexander (n.d.), pp.75-77.
876 Mackay, John (1914), p.266.
particularly notable manifestation of the power of the Spirit occurring when Macleod preached from the words, 'Behold, I stand at the door and knock.'

This revival, which gradually spread out in great ripples across northern Skye appears to have been a final awakening and preparation before most of the inhabitants of Portree and other parishes in the area entered the Free Church. The enthusiasm was remarkable. The Reverend Fraser from Kirkhill, near Inverness, answering the call for more ministers to assist in the revival, was highly impressed by his experience of preaching at Sconser in Portree parish in October 1842. Despite very wet weather and the necessity of sitting on the 'shingle of the seashore,' folk refused to depart, even when the tide encroached, insisting on a further sermon.

In this period of heightened spiritual fervour the distances people travelled and the discomfort they endured for long periods in order to hear evangelical preaching reflect an eagerness for something more than they were receiving under their own ministers.

This ever-spreading revival was 'remarkable for the extent of its unusual manifestations — shouting, clapping, swooning,' although these were merely extreme examples of fairly common reactions. Those undergoing conversion professed their faith verbally, but this was held of 'little account' if not accompanied by a 'life that could bear the scrutiny of friend and foe.' Saying grace at meals and holding regular family worship increased as did attendance at the communion seasons, although fewer folk sat at the Lord's table due principally to a heightened awareness of unworthiness.

Although a few other local ministers helped to fire evangelical enthusiasm in Skye Presbytery over brief periods prior to the Disruption, initial stimulation undoubtedly came from laymen,

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877 Brown, Thomas (1892), p.204.
880 Mackay, John (?1914), p.266.
particularly those named above. Additionally, many other 'Men,' mentioned in an earlier chapter, quietly conducted their labours in the Lord's vineyard. By 1843 only the southern parishes of Strath and Sleat had failed to respond to the evangelicalism sweeping the rest of the island.

Strath.

As noted above, Strath's socio-economic and cultural background essentially resembled that of Portree. Consequently, the fact that revival movements scarcely touched the parish emphasises both the importance of studying all possible factors which could have influenced reaction to evangelicalism and the Disruption in each individual community as well as the earlier-mentioned complexity of the relationship between revival and socio-economic privation.

A factor to be taken into account is the antipathy of Strath's minister, John Mackinnon, to evangelical preaching. This was overtly apparent in his attempt to halt the oration of Macdonald of Ferintosh, whose sermon was creating waves of distress in the Broadford congregation.882 Such distress was regarded by evangelical preachers as indicating admission of sin and desire for salvation. Mackinnon's reaction in attempting to dampen down the situation could have contributed towards the erection of a barrier to change.

Despite apparent antagonism or apathy to evangelical movements some limited effects were noted by the Baptist Church pastor in Broadford during the 1841-42 revival. Although James McQueen was initially shocked by the intense physical manifestations accompanying the movement, this feeling was somewhat mitigated by an increase in zealousness and number of baptisms in his congregation. Nonetheless he experienced a sense of relief when 'matters

became more "moderate" by March 1842. Such extreme reactions to religious exhortation seemingly did not sit naturally on the shoulders of Strath folk, their tenacity in holding on to traditional folk beliefs seemingly understood and even shared by their minister. Personal and topographical barriers undoubtedly helped to keep 'awakenings' at bay in Strath. However, the reasons for the rarity of such a contributory precursor to Free Church adherence in the parish were, as suggested during the previous chapters, many and complex.

Summary.
The last two chapters have investigated a key aspect of life, spirituality, linking it with the experience of evangelical revivals. In exploring spirituality and relating it to worship patterns and other aspects of life and culture, material, though sparse in quantity, relating directly to the parishes being studied was utilised in an attempt to demonstrate the dangers of generalisation and the significance of purely local characteristics and circumstances. This chapter on revivals has also clearly shown that, although 'awakenings' or 're-awakenings' occurred not only throughout the Highlands, but also in the Lowlands of Scotland and elsewhere in Europe and America, the specific nature of each revival, even in the same locality, was essentially unique, a point emphasised by Meek in his earlier-quoted assertions. Strath was assuredly not alone in being barely touched by revival and the timing and initiators of awakenings in Tain and Portree were manifestly dissimilar. Additionally, Portree witnessed a lay, populist, new style of revival, Tain, on the other hand, experiencing a more traditional minister-led type of revivalism. It should also, significantly, be observed that where there was a notable level of revival within and around the parish, as can be seen with reference to Tain and Portree, the

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883 Meek, Donald E. (1998a), pp.128-129.
Disruption hit hard, whereas in Strath, barely affected by revivals, the Disruption failed to have an impact.

As the disparate picture of total life experience in the three parishes is gradually compiled and elements in the complex web of factors contributing to responses to the Disruption revealed, one final field of significance remains to be explored, that of ministerial networks and kinship, principally within the religious field but interweaving strongly with the secular world. This constitutes the fabric of the next and ultimate thematic chapter.
CHAPTER 9. MINISTERIAL NETWORKS AND KINSHIP.

The preceding chapters have identified numerous factors, operating principally on a local level, but displaying influences from a wider context, which contributed to the life experience of parishioners in the communities being studied. In the early to mid-nineteenth century Scotland was still essentially a country where local identities were strong, despite developments in communication and increasing involvement with the wider scene. Consequently it is important to recognise the significance of the politics of the locality. Within this scene the minister was a key figure. Although his popularity, either due to personal, spiritual or pastoral qualities, would have enhanced his influence, nevertheless his pivotal role would have been considerably strengthened by other significant attributes. These comprised ministerial dynasties, notable local ties, links with other influential families in the community and support emanating from neighbouring clerics who held a similar religio-political stance. Indeed, the parish minister in the Highlands tended to draw support if he displayed a sense of identity with the locality and came from the right ‘class’ in secular terms. Kinship was highly significant in the region, in this case operating in a subtle spiritual way, and there was tremendous respect for continuity in the profession, it being a point of honour for sons to follow fathers and indeed aim to be better than fathers, a case of such a dynasty being demonstrated by the MacLeods of Morvern, kin to Roderick MacLeod of Snizort. Consequently, the influence of such clerical as well as secular kinship links together with fraternal networks, should receive consideration among the factors contributing to Disruption reaction at parish level and will be addressed in this chapter. The ministerial conformation in each parish will be explored first, followed by an investigation into the relationship patterns of other clergymen whose role could be deemed
consequential in these parishes, specifically Charles Calder, Roderick MacLeod and Macdonald of Ferintosh. Finally, before drawing the threads together, there will be a cursory glance at examples of other possible clerical linkages.

**Tain.**

As intimated earlier, Tain experienced a father and son ministry in the pre-Disruption decades, a continuity of personal influence not to be ignored. An upbringing in the parish destined to be the scene of ministerial responsibility during the Ten Years' Conflict would surely evoke a greater understanding of the character and needs of the inhabitants and foster closer interpersonal relationships between cleric and parishioners.

The presentation of the father, Angus McIntosh, suffered delay, due principally to the problem of contending patrons. The call was finally moderated in April 1797, with the enthusiastic concurrence of all concerned, Magistrates, Town Council, heritors, elders and heads of congregational families. McIntosh was familiar to parishioners, having previously laboured in the area, as indicated previously.

The issue of kinship networks is undeniably relevant, as McIntosh's wife was daughter to the Reverend Charles Calder of Ferintosh, a nearby parish. This family link will be explored further in the section relating to Calder. Angus's domestic relationships were indeed important to him, being a 'dutiful and loving husband' and a 'wise and affectionate parent.'

Diverse fraternal links with other clerics occurred, particularly within neighbouring districts. As well as undertaking official Presbyterial duties, Angus, in recognition of his eminent powers as a preacher, was frequently asked to assist at communions in other parishes, such as

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884 Macnaughton, the Reverend Colin (1915), pp.294-297.
885 Beaton, the Reverend D. (1929), p.194.
Additionally, ministers of significant worth, including the renowned Macdonald of Ferintosh, would attend Tain communions or seek his assistance elsewhere. Macdonald’s funeral oration observes, significantly, that Angus had kept the ‘doctrines of faith,’ living as ‘became these doctrines, as a father, husband, and friend.’

Pulpit supply or exchange likewise cemented fraternal relationships, constituting a two-way process which facilitated the spread of a minister’s influence beyond that of his own parish. In the sources consulted the only specific reference to McIntosh undertaking duties in this sphere is an expression of willingness, if his health were better, to preach at the Chapel of Ease in Inverness, contained in a warm letter of friendship to the son of the founder, with whom he corresponded frequently.

As mentioned earlier, his association with this Chapel and formerly with the Gaelic Chapel in Glasgow, institutions often displaying schismatic tendencies, could have affected his attitudes, attitudes then passed on from father to son. McIntosh’s involvement in preaching, or obtaining preachers, in a further field involving brotherly co-operation, that of the Northern Missionary Society, which he was instrumental in helping to establish, is frequently revealed. Examples include a letter of 23rd May 1821 signifying his intention to preach at the forthcoming meeting in Inverness, while correspondence dated 26th August 1818 intimates that Macdonald of Ferintosh and Kennedy of Killicarnan had preached at the society’s recent meeting in Tain.

McIntosh’s most notable secular relationship, although not one of kinship, was that which he enjoyed with the Rosses of Balnagown, an important Easter Ross family. Known to them through his appointment as personal tutor to their children, they were influential in securing

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888 Ibid., pp.230-231.
889 Kennedy, the Reverend J. (1866), p.277.
890 The Fraser Papers, HRA/D122/4 (e).
891 The Fraser Papers, HRA/D122/3 (h) and HRA/D122/16.
for him the charge of Tain parish.\textsuperscript{892} It is apposite to recall that the same family had been efficacious in protecting persecuted evangelical ministers during the reigns of Charles II and James VII.\textsuperscript{893} Angus’s relationship with the Frasers, managers of Inverness Chapel of Ease, has been hinted at above, but the letter cordially inviting Mr. Fraser’s mother to stay at the manse while attending the Tain communion season and expressing disappointment should the invitation not be accepted, furnishes strong evidence concerning the closeness of this relationship.\textsuperscript{894}

Angus McIntosh had a ‘genius for friendship, being ‘much loved’ and drawing thousands of folk from considerable distances when word spread abroad that he was assisting at a communion.\textsuperscript{895} A Sutherland catechist, attending a Tain communion season, at which McIntosh had preached in the afternoon, when asked by a friend to join him in complementing the morning preacher, concurred, but added, “Bu mheist a’ ghealach gu’n d’cirich a’ ghrian” (“The moon suffered by the sun having risen.”)\textsuperscript{896}

The brief but highly effective Mackintosh dynasty was continued by Angus’s son, Charles Calder Mackintosh, undoubtedly named in honour of the former’s eminent father-in-law. Indeed, although only the second family member to minister in Tain, on his mother’s side he was ‘the fourth in lineal descent who occupied the ministerial office – all of whom were celebrated and eminent in their respective generations.’\textsuperscript{897} Charles’ path to ministering in Tain from 1828, as outlined previously, commenced locally, in Tain Academy.\textsuperscript{898} Following in his father’s footsteps in a further sense, his wife likewise had clerical connections, although the link was less close geographically. Ann Brown’s maternal grandfather was the Reverend

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\textsuperscript{892} Noble, the Reverend John (1909), p.229.\\
\textsuperscript{893} Taylor, the Reverend William (1871), pp.8-9.\\
\textsuperscript{894} The Fraser Papers, HRA/D122/3 (i).\\
\textsuperscript{895} Beaton, the Reverend D. (1929), pp.195 and 197.\\
\textsuperscript{896} Noble, the Reverend John (1909), pp.233-234.\\
\textsuperscript{897} Macdonald, Kenneth (1902), p.238.\\
\textsuperscript{898} Macnaughton, the Reverend Colin (1915), pp.342 and 347.\\
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George Rainy, the 'former much esteemed minister of Creich, in Sutherlandshire' and she was also related to Robert Rainy, a prominent evangelical, later principal of New College, Edinburgh. Thus the web of kinship relations and influence spread even further.

Regarding fraternal relationships with other clerics, these again occurred in different ways. Charles, like his father, experienced the sharing of communion seasons, Macdonald of Ferintosh, for example, assisting at the 1840 Tain communion noted earlier to have played a part in initiating a significant local revival movement. Pulpit supply can be exemplified in the letter he addressed to John Fraser, manager of Inverness Chapel of Ease, regretting his inability to preach there on the requested date due to commitments in Tain. As well as undertaking official Presbyterial duties, Charles acted as one of the ministers delegated by the November 1842 convocation of evangelical ministers to address other congregations in connection with the 'non-intrusionist' position, as witnessed by the Reverend David Mackenzie in Farr (Sutherland).

Mackintosh's impact on other clerics, either through formal or informal links, was considerable. The Reverend Stewart of Cromarty, for example, regarded him as the “model minister” and Dr. Kennedy of Dingwall, who held him in the 'highest veneration,' described him in his funeral oration as a 'brother and a father in one,' 'to whom I found it easiest to open up my heart, and at whose feet I was at the same time most inclined to sit.' Such plaudits were not confined to local ministers. Dr. Chalmers admitted: “There is not a worthier man than Charles Mackintosh in all Scotland.” Indeed, reverence for this quiet man appears to have been widespread: 'Ministers who have risen to eminence in the Church have acknowledged

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899 Taylor, the Reverend William (1871), p.46.
901 Taylor, the Reverend William (1871), p.41.
902 The Fraser Papers, HRA/D122/4 C.
903 Disruption Manuscripts, XX, BRO 143, p.3.
904 Beaton, the Reverend D. (1929), p.229.
905 Macdonald, Kenneth (1902), pp. 238-239.
that they felt his preaching, his character, his weighty judgment, and the steadfastness of his convictions, together with his warm personal sympathy, to exercise a power for good over them such as they had never felt before, and which helped greatly to lay the foundations of their future usefulness.906 Such esteem would have assuredly filtered through to Tain parishioners through external contacts pursued by more prominent burgesses.

No kinship ties with significant secular figures have been traced, but Charles' spiritual and friendship links are frequently noted as warm and influential. Suffering considerable health problems periodically throughout his life, as mentioned earlier, whilst first absent on medical grounds Tain parishioners took active steps to secure him as assistant and successor to his father. During this absence he visited Skye, adding his support to the fresh eagerness of recent evangelical converts907 and thus spreading his influence to folk in districts such as Portree. Later breaks caused by illness did not deter Tain inhabitants from wholeheartedly supporting him. Indeed, not only was his settlement a 'source of unfeigned delight' in Tain, but also throughout Easter Ross.908 This man, whose presence was felt to be holy,909 exerted notable influence through a personality considered faultless, humble, loving, deeply sympathetic and of 'clear intellect' and sound judgment.910

Charles's character and the respect accorded him would undoubtedly have formed significant elements in the complex web of factors influencing the decision of most of his parishioners to follow him into the Free Church. As his successor, the Reverend Thomas Grant, wrote, 'Under the Evangelical Ministry of the Saintly Dr. C. C. McIntosh nearly the whole population of the town and parish of Tain joined the Free Church....'911 A report in the Inverness Courier, dated

906 Duff, the Reverend Alexander (1877), pp.53 and 59.
907 Taylor, the Reverend William (1871), pp.30, 33 and 41.
909 Duff, the Reverend Alexander (1877), p.55.
910 Taylor, the Reverend William (1871), pp.38 and 47-48.
911 Disruption Manuscripts, LXIX, BRO 143.
14th June, notes that the congregation was well prepared for his decision and admired his stance, particularly his refusal to dwell on any personal sacrifices. A wooden building being ‘hurriedly erected for temporary use,’ the support of influential members of the parish was noted: ‘all the magistrates of the burgh, preceded by their red-coated, halbert-armed officers,’ walked ‘in procession to the Free, as they had been wont to do to the Established Church.’912 The ‘knock-on’ effect of the adherence of important parishioners could also have constituted an influential factor in congregational reaction.

Even allowing for a degree of hagiography in several sources trawled, the effects of this brief ministerial dynasty with its kinship network and significant fraternal links, as well as secular influence, should not be underestimated. The familiarity of the McIntosh dynasty (a two-way element), the high regard in which they were held and their kinship and fraternal links with other significant figures, both clerical and lay, in the political and evangelical fields of the neighbourhood are factors which would have undoubtedly helped to inspire confidence in their parishioners when the time came for decision-making in 1843. A similarly noteworthy picture could be painted in Strath, although, in contrast to Tain, evangelical influence appears to be missing from the relationship patterns.

Strath.

Donald Mackinnon, although born in Sleat in the 1730s, was the son of Lachlan Mackinnon of Ceann Uachdarach, Strath.913 Thus it becomes immediately apparent that the ministerial dynasty had local secular links. Initially a missionary on Benbecula and an ordained missionary at Strontian, he was, however, presented to Strath, the parish of his family origins, by George III and inducted to the charge in 1779.914

912 Duff, the Reverend Alexander (1877), p.58.
913 Scott, Ilew (1928), p.183.
914 Ibid., p.183.
Although no specific details have been discovered in the sources, it would seem likely that Mackinnon experienced similar official fraternal links to those described in Tain, ministerial involvement occurring at Presbyterial level, at communions and in pulpit supply. Little information about personal influence has emerged, although ‘tradition speaks of him as being a devout man and a great evangelical preacher.’ The definition employed for the term ‘evangelical’ is unspecified and may well have borne little resemblance to that generally used in reference to ‘Highland spirituality.’

More material has been uncovered relating to his son, John, parish minister at the Disruption. Born in Strath in 1786 and ordained minister of Sleat in 1812, he became, as intimated previously, assistant and successor to his father in Strath in 1825 and sole minister on the latter’s death in 1831. Kinship links were not confined to the clerical sphere. His wife Anne, whom he married in 1815, was daughter to Lachlan Mackinnon of Corry, the local prominent tacksman. The significance of both the minister and his wife having been reared in notable local families should not be overlooked, as their understanding of parishioners would have been more deeply rooted and the familiarity of their faces could well have been reassuring. Sir Archibald Geikie, a frequent guest at the manse, observes that problems created by rudimentary communications in large Highland parishes conferred an extra importance on the minister’s wife, to whom the ‘social wants of the people’ would generally be imparted. Mrs. Mackinnon, dignified, imposing, somewhat stern in appearance, nonetheless possessed a warm heart. ‘The mother of the whole parish,’ she ‘seemed to have her eye on every cottage and cabin throughout its wide circuit. To her every poor crofter looked for sympathy and help, and never looked in vain.’

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913 Mackinnon, the Reverend Donald (1930), p.28.
917 Geikie, Sir Archibald (1906), pp.54-55.
Fraternal clerical links would again have appertained in Strath during John’s ministry. Although no specific references to assisting at communions elsewhere have been traced, Mackinnon offered pulpit supply in Snizort immediately following the Disruption (when their minister, Roderick MacLeod, quit the Establishment) and in Portree in 1848, 1852 and 1853, when their minister was indisposed, suggesting that this was established practice on Skye. Other formal links with fellow clergymen would have occurred in church courts. John took his turn as Moderator of the Presbytery, also undertaking the additional tasks of Clerk to the Presbytery for some years and then clerk to the Synod of Glenelg, as intimated previously. All these roles would have assisted the spread of inter-parish influence.

Good relationships with a cleric from another denomination may also have assisted in disseminating regard and understanding. John Mackinnon willingly intervened with the estate factor to secure a site for a Baptist Chapel, following a request from its pastor.

As well as a kinship tie, through his wife, with a notable secular Strath family, John utilised his position in a warm and friendly manner to reach out to folk in all strata of society, thus increasing possibilities of cross-fertilisation of ideas and attitudes. Geikie reinforces this observation, as revealed in an earlier chapter, by applauding his ability to mix with ‘the best society’ and be on ‘familiar terms’ with all his parishioners. Visitors to the island were well received, the ‘Manse at Kilbride’ being ‘noted for its hospitality.’ A significant guest in the 1830s, Catherine Sinclair, a relative of Lord Macdonald, affirms that the manse demonstrated that the ‘most unqualified and abundant attention is paid to that injunction of Scripture, “use hospitality one towards another, without grudging.”’

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918 Presbytery of Skye Records, CH12/330/4, pp.30, 118, 155 and 181.
923 Sinclair, Catherine (1841), p.204.
Geikie claims that Mackinnon’s relationship with his parishioners was so strong and he had ‘so entirely’ ‘gained their respect and affections’ that he was able to keep ‘his flock in the old Church’ in 1843. During a possibly apocryphal but entirely feasible meeting between the minister and his elders, in which the former questions the latter regarding their intentions following a discussion on the church question, Mackinnon is asked to advise them, but recommends they use their ‘own wisdom under God’s guidance.’ He does, however, intimate his own intention to stay in the Establishment, receiving unanimous concurrence.

It seems distinctly probable that the influence of John Mackinnon and his wife, through their personalities, local upbringing and kinship links, would have been significant in affecting the decision of most parishioners to remain in the Established Church. However, as observed in connection with Tain, such an issue requires to be taken in conjunction with the many other factors revealed in this study. These contributory elements will be drawn together in the concluding chapter.

**Portree.**

Portree, unlike the other two parishes, lacked any sense of ministerial continuity. Even the benefit of a locally born and bred minister had died out before the pre-Disruption decades. John Nicolson, who occupied the charge between 1756 and 1799, was a local man, a member of the Nicolson family, tacksmen of Scorribreck, situated to the north of Portree village. On his death Nicolson was succeeded by Alexander Campbell, already a familiar figure in the parish, having been schoolmaster since 1791, licensed by the Presbytery of Skye in 1792 and ordained as their catechist in 1795. Although not originating from the actual parish,

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924 Geikie, Sir Archibald (1906), pp.53-54.
Campbell was the son of a tacksman from northern Skye, thus coming from a similar socio-economic and cultural environment to that of his parishioners. No specific kinship links, ministerial or secular, have been established from the sources, but his fraternal links would have followed similar lines to those suggested for other ministers. Acting as Moderator of the Presbytery, for example, from 1800-1805 and again in 1808 and 1809, he was representative to the General Assembly (another task shouldered by the ministers) in 1804, 1806, 1808 and 1809. As regards secular relationships, this 'learned divine' was a 'conscientious pastor, much loved by his parishioners who lamented his tragic end,' at the early age of 41.

The minister succeeding Alexander Campbell, Coll Macdonald, was not native to Skye, having been born and bred in North Uist, although his father Archibald belonged to the Macdonalds of Rigg and Balvicquean in Trotternish, Skye. He was licensed by the Presbytery of Uist in 1803 and ordained by the Presbytery of Lochcarron as missionary at Strontian in 1804. Although his first wife, who died in 1840, was daughter to Captain Norman Macleod of Bernisdale (Snizort) and related to the Macleods of Ulinish (Bracadale), the sense of a local ministerial family understanding local needs would have been absent, unlike the situation in Tain and Strath.

There is ample evidence that Macdonald undertook similar official fraternal links to those of his colleagues, although his confirmed Moderate position and that of the clerical majority in Skye Presbytery probably militated against any benefit accruing in an evangelically oriented parish. Given responsibility for overseeing pulpit supply for post-Disruption vacancies, the further clerical duty of admitting a new minister to his charge is exemplified in the

928 Mackinnon, the Reverend Donald (71906), p.18.
932 Scott, Hew (1928), p.174; Mackinnon, the Reverend Donald (71906), p.22.
Presbytery’s request for Coll to undertake this task in the Small Isles in 1816. Like Mackinnon of Strath, Macdonald was Moderator of the Presbytery on a number of occasions, specifically 1812, 1813, 1828, 1829 and 1832, as well as being Presbytery Clerk in 1824 and, along with other colleagues, acting as a representative to the General Assembly in 1813, 1815, 1824, 1830, 1842 and 1843.

Macdonald’s lack of local identity in a period when this still had notable significance, combined with his Moderatism, could well have contributed to the power of the initially lay evangelicalism entering the parish. The content of his ministry may have been insufficient to offer an alternative belief system to the traditional admix of superstitious and Christian concepts which had satisfied spiritual needs until the uncertainties and insecurities of the period hit the community. Additionally, despite being a sound and caring Christian, Coll may have lacked sufficient understanding or strength of personality to offer spiritual leadership. Indeed, as indicated previously, he seemingly totally misread the mind of his people, whom he regarded as unquestionably loyal to the Establishment, whereas he lost the majority to the Free Church in 1843. Even his only daughter was converted to evangelicalism, as recorded in the last chapter!

An interesting situation accrued on Raasay. The Edinburgh businessman, Mr. George Rainy, to whom the bankrupted long-standing proprietorial family of Macleod had sold the island in 1843, was, like Charles Calder Mackintosh’s wife, related to the prominent evangelical, the Reverend Robert Rainy, and was himself a staunch supporter of the Free Church. He reserved the island church, built in the 1830s, for the Free Church’s exclusive use, the Established Church minister being refused admittance. The path for this powerful influence, possessing

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934 Ibid., C112/330/2, pp.273 and 278; C112/330/3, pp.149, 159, 316 and 28; C112/330/2, pp.278 and 315; C112/330/3, pp.29 and 173; C112/330/4, pp.11 and 25.
overtones of kinship networking, may have been prepared already by an earlier secular-clerical familial link, that of the afore-mentioned Reverend Alexander MacLeod, a ‘member of the Raasay family, and brother of John MacLeod of Balmore, the factor on Raasay,’ who visited the island frequently in the 1820s and 1830s, preaching and holding prayer meetings in all districts. A further kinship tie, affecting the whole of Portree parish, will now be explored – that of Roderick MacLeod of Bracadale and Snizort with the Macleods of Raasay.

The Kinship and Fraternal Networks of Other Local Ministers of Influence.

(1). The Reverend Roderick MacLeod.

Roderick MacLeod, like the incumbents of Tain and Strath at the time of the Disruption, was a son of the manse. Born in Snizort in 1794, he was grandson to Malcolm the Tenth, laird of Raasay. This strong kinship link with Portree parish may well have helped to underscore MacLeod’s influence following his conversion to evangelicalism. His father, Malcolm, was the youngest son of the family of Raasay, a family to which fealty was acknowledged by other branches of the MacLeods on the mainland, including MacLeod of Geanies and MacLeod of Cadboll, both owners of land in Tain, another possibly significant link. Indeed, Cadboll is recognised by the later Free Church minister of Fearn, a parish adjoining Tain, as having willingly given sites for a church, manse and two schools.

The Reverend Malcolm MacLeod, a member of the Evangelical party, was regarded as a faithful and diligent minister of “high moral worth” and “unaffected piety.” At Aberdeen University, Roderick, having been persuaded by his college principal, ‘his father’s kinsman

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937 MacLeod, the Reverend Dr. Roderick (1983), p.175.
938 Mackay, M. (1869), Brief Memorials, p.1.
939 Disruption Manuscripts, LXVII, pp.3-4.
940 MacLeod, the Reverend Dr. Roderick (1983), p.176.
and friend, a native of Skye, to likewise pursue the ministry, he was licensed by the
Presbytery of Skye in 1818, ordained to the mission at Lynedale in 1819 and admitted to the
parish of Bracadale, adjacent to his home parish, in September, 1823. The following month he
married Anne Robertson MacDonald, daughter of Donald MacDonald of Skeabost — a local
Snizort lass, who was always a ‘source of comfort and inspiration to him.’ She had ‘profited
under her future husband’s ministry’, being ‘eminently worthy and fitted for him’ as an
‘eminent help-meet,’ an ‘heir with him of the grace of life.’ In 1838 Roderick was translated
to Snizort. Thus he formed part of a local, brief ministerial dynasty, married locally and was
descended from the land-owning family of nearby Raasay. Additionally, his sister Isabella
married the Reverend John Finlayson of Cross (Lewis), who became Free Church minister at
Bracadale.

These powerful clerical-secular kinship ties combined with his spiritual conversion to
evangelicalism in 1821 could well have furnished MacLeod with a basis for influencing
parishioners of nearby Portree as well as the districts in which he laboured officially. Despite
Presbyterial antagonism towards his severe policy on baptism and refusal of privileges to
former communicants in Bracadale, he had considerable support not only in the General
Assembly but also amongst his own parishioners. Additionally, Snizort folk actually
‘petitioned the crown to have Roderick MacLeod as their minister when the charge became
vacant.’

MacLeod, in common with fellow ministers, would have established both official and
unofficial fraternal links. As well as involvement in communion seasons, he would have been

941 Mackay, M. (1869), Brief Memorials, p.4.
942 Mackay, M. (1869), p.27, Brief Memorials, p.11.
943 MacLeod, the Reverend Dr. Roderick (1983), pp.176-178 and 184-185.
944 Ibid., p.175; Beaton, the Reverend D. (1929), p.190.
945 Mackinnon, the Reverend Donald (1930), p.54; MacLeod, the Reverend Dr. Roderick (1983), pp.184-185.
engaged in pulpit supply, even as far afield as Inverness, as indicated in a letter of regret addressed to the Manager of the Chapel of Ease in 1832. In contrast with Presbyterial duties were his informal, but notable, links with lay evangelists, particularly the blind Donald Munro, and teachers, such as Norman Macleod, the Gaelic School teacher responsible for initiating the 1842 revival. Indeed, as observed in the last chapter, MacLeod was highly influential during later revival movements, preaching at meetings, such as those at Fairy Bridge, spreading his message right across northern Skye.

MacLeod was ‘charismatic’ according to the dictionary definition of “having or showing a personal quality of leadership that arouses special popular loyalty or enthusiasm” and also in the sense of possessing a “favour vouchsafed by God; a grace, a talent.” Not just an earnest evangelical preacher, he was a man of ‘warm affections,’ a ‘congenial companion, and a confiding and steadfast friend.’ The Reverend Dr. John Macphail asserts that “such a man could not fail to be beloved by the people of his native island, and his sufferings for righteousness gave him a place in their hearts that no other man has ever had.” The wisdom and kindness of his wife were an added blessing to his highly significant ministry.

MacLeod was at the forefront of the ‘Disruption in the north,’ having held meetings passing resolutions and encouraging ‘Skye people to declare themselves for non-intrusion and spiritual independence.’ Although such influence did not spread to southern Skye, the strength of feeling in 1843 was such that the majority of inhabitants of the northern parishes quit the Establishment. Portree’s support for the Free Church was overwhelming, Raasay’s inhabitants acting in total unanimity. MacLeod, who most probably unofficially supported Portree folk

946 The Fraser Papers. IIRA/D122/4 O.
947 MacLeod, the Reverend Dr. Roderick (1983), pp.201-202.
948 Beaton, the Reverend D. (1929), pp.193 and 179.
prior to the Disruption, held an evening service for them in a village house every Sabbath for ‘some time.’ As suggested above, his familial and fraternal links should not be underestimated within his complex role in contributing to the intricate network of factors influencing responses to the Disruption in Portree.

(2). Charles Calder of Ferintosh (Urquhart).

MacLeod’s role was seemingly of a higher profile than that of Calder, whose influence could be deemed more of a historical nature, as he died in 1812. However, his significance for the ministerial family of Tain and the part they played in the pre-Disruption scene should not be overlooked.

Charles Calder was himself the third member of a ministerial dynasty, his two brothers also becoming ministers. ‘Ordained, and settled’ at Ferintosh in May, 1774, he was a ‘very able and successful minister of the gospel,’ a ‘man of refined mind, scholarly attainments, and holy life,’ and ‘one of the principal instruments in spreading and deepening evangelical religion in the central part of Ross-shire.’ A warm, affectionate and modest man, ‘few ministers ever reigned more in the hearts of the people.’ Despite believing that the Holy Spirit had taken ‘possession of his soul’ at a very young age, he experienced doubts about his ability to undertake the Lord’s great work. However, his wife, through her constant encouragement, gave him considerable support. A daughter of Brodie of Brodie, a family offering notable witness to the cause of evangelical religion since the late seventeenth century persecutions, she was also aunt to the ‘pious Duchess of Gordon.’ Her obituary, published in the Inverness Courier on March 16th, 1820, acknowledges the endowment of ‘redeeming grace’ bestowed upon her by the Lord and the ‘brilliancy’ it gave to her character. This ‘diffused its influence

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951 MacLeod, the Reverend Dr. Roderick (1983), p.189.
953 Taylor, the Reverend William (1871), p.18.
954 Macdonald, Kenneth (1902), pp.90 and 92; Taylor, the Reverend William (1871), p.18.
daily around her, in all the walks of life, and in the various acts of humanity, Charity, and Christian benevolence, for which her life was so eminently distinguished’ and which would be greatly missed by the parishioners and other ‘numerous objects of her untold beneficence.’ Allowing for an understandable tendency to emphasise an individual’s good qualities in an obituary, nonetheless it is sufficiently clear that Mrs. Calder’s own personal influence as well as her indefatigable private support to her husband would have contributed to the success of his ministry. Such a point should be recognised in connection with other manse wives.

Anne, their daughter, married Angus Mackintosh of Tain, thus becoming mother of Charles, as intimated earlier. This inheritance of strong evangelical ministry and kinship links with families offering substantial support to that cause could have added weight and strength to the ministry of these clerics in Tain. Additionally, the significance attached to social status may have caused the notable secular links to impact on the more prominent and thus influential burgesses of Tain and more substantial landholders and tenants in the country areas. Certainly inter-parish fraternal links have already been identified as noteworthy ways of spreading a spiritual message, even without the kinship ties which could well have increased their authority. One minister who seemingly lacked familial ties with the parishes being studied but who nonetheless utilised fraternal links to the maximum in order to disseminate evangelical presbyterianism was Macdonald of Ferintosh, successor to Charles Calder in that charge.

(3). The Reverend Dr. John Macdonald of Ferintosh.

John Macdonald was born in November 1779 in the parish of Rcay (Caithness), the son of the highly religious local catechist. In July 1805, John was licensed by the Presbytery of Caithness to preach the gospel, ordained by them as a missionary minister at Berriedale in September 1806 and inducted as minister to the Gaelic Chapel, Edinburgh in January 1807.

His translation and admission to Ferintosh, as successor to Charles Calder, occurred in September 1813, his ministry there lasting until his death in 1849.

Macdonald’s fraternal links were highly significant. Consistently asked to assist at other communions, including, most significantly, Tain, his services were welcome to both ministers and people. People welcomed him in their thousands, enthusiastically gathering to gain the spiritual blessings from his preaching. Pulpit supply figured large in his labours, as references in the Fraser Papers indicate. In July 1821, for example, he regretfully had to decline an invitation to preach at the Inverness Chapel of Ease due to a prior commitment in Tain.

Apart from fostering official fraternal connections through Presbyterial, Synod and General Assembly duties, Macdonald’s spread an evangelistic mission considerably further than the district of Easter Ross in which his parish was situated. This work, for which he earned the title “Apostle of the North,” took him away from his own charge for about two-thirds of the year.

Regarding the parishes currently being investigated, Macdonald’s widespread influence would not only have affected Tain, where he assisted in communions (as intimated previously), but also Skye. The anxiety aroused in John Mackinnon when he permitted Macdonald to preach in his Strath pulpit has already been acknowledged. However, his services have been registered as highly appreciated in northern Skye, his evangelical preaching undoubtedly helping to stir some of the souls in parishes such as Portree. A letter he wrote in July 1821 expresses his concern during the early days of evangelisation on the island. “I believe the Word had some

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956 Macdonald, Kenneth (1902), pp.94-95.
957 Duff, the Reverend Alexander (1877), pp.20 and 22.
958 Ibid., p.20.
959 The Fraser Papers, HRA/D122/3 (i) and HRA/D122/4(b).
960 Sage, the Reverend Donald (1975), p.319.
effect. Several at least appeared to be deeply impressed on the Monday. It is a truly destitute
country. I am verily convinced that there is no spot I visit in all the Highlands that stands more
in need of an evangelical Morsel.' (The underlining is Macdonald’s own).961. Enjoying an
‘intimacy and friendship’ with Roderick MacLeod (a further significant connection), his
frequent visits were ‘mutually prized’ and acted as a blessing to the younger man.962
Macdonald’s part in instigating or reinforcing revivals in northern Skye and Tain has received
recognition in the last chapter, these events often witnessing the highly charged
emotionalism963 likewise recorded.

As the impending Disruption grew closer, Macdonald, at the instigation of the November 1842
convocation of evangelical ministers, spread the word throughout the north, collecting
signatures from those supporting the non-intrusionist position. Assuredly he would have
visited Tain, although Roderick MacLeod fulfilled this role in northern Skye.964 Nonetheless,
Macdonald’s earlier visits to Skye would have been instrumental in planting suitable seeds
among folk he addressed. The power of his preaching and his indefatigable labours on behalf
of the Evangelical non-intrusionist position were recognised in his being chosen to preach the
first sermon of the newly constituted Free Protesting Church in Tanfield Hall.965

Macdonald of Ferintosh was an exceptional man, fervently employing his talents to further the
cause of evangelical presbyterianism over a wide area. A precise but imaginative thinker with
a breadth of understanding, he was regarded as sound in the ‘great truths’ of Christianity and
possessed of a clear view of theology.966

961 The Fraser Papers, IIRA/D122/3 (i).
962 Mackay, M. (1869), BrittMemorials, p.10.
965 Duff, the Reverend Alexander (1877), p.21.
966 Kennedy, the Reverend J. (1866), pp.328-335.
(4). Other Ministerial Links.

Kinship ties and fraternal links of the ministers serving in the parishes under investigation understandably had pre-eminent significance within these communities, the roles of the three other ministers examined being of secondary but arguably considerable importance. Other clerics with whom the incumbents of Tain, Portree and Strath related in brotherly terms could also have spread their influence into these parishes. A few examples will suffice to illustrate this point.

Regarding Tain, Charles Gordon, minister of Assynt (Sutherland) in 1843, enjoyed a 'life-long and unbroken intimacy' with the two Mackintoshes, Angus having been of 'much spiritual benefit to him.' Duncan Macgillivray of Lairg (Sutherland), who, as 'an aged minister,' came out in the Disruption, was a cousin of Angus. As well as possible family intercourse, this 'sound divine' did, 'on one occasion,' receive his cousin's assistance at a communion season and 'a memorable time it was.'

Within Skye Presbytery, two illustrative examples may be quoted. Firstly, there is the case of John Swanson, minister of the Small Isles in 1843. Schooled initially in Cromarty alongside Hugh Miller, who was to become an avid Free Church supporter, Swanson commenced a successful grocery business in Cromarty following further education at Tain Academy. However, he felt inspired to pursue the ministry. Licensed by Tain Presbytery in 1833, he was presented to the charge of the Small Isles in 1840, following a few years in Fort William. His diligent and caring ministry in these islands helped to encourage his small flock to follow him into the Free Church. Undoubtedly, although regular physical contact was impossible, the fact that he and Roderick Macleod were 'both true bosom friends' would have furnished

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967 Duff, the Reverend Alexander (1877), p.154.
968 Munro, the Reverend Donald, compiler (1953), pp.109-111.
969 Duff, the Reverend Alexander (1877), pp.127-133.
influence and support. Secondly, it is interesting to note that Mackintosh Mackay, incumbent at Dunoon in 1843, when he fervently embraced the Free Church, spent a year teaching in Portree in the early 1820s during his time at theological hall.

Conclusion.

This chapter has sought to explore the possibility that ministerial fraternal and kinship networks may have had considerable influence in helping to determine responses to the Disruption in the parishes. It would seem that, where ministerial dynasties occurred, with the concomitant consequence that the ministers residing in the charges at the Disruption were locally born and bred, these were indeed significant. Secular links with prestigious families would have helped to reinforce the position, as would the personal touch afforded by locally raised kindred. Where such networks were lacking, as in the case of the Portree minister, the relationships of another cleric, Roderick Macleod, may well have filled the gap. Strong fraternal links between ministers, either within the limited district surrounding the parish or on a wider canvas, as exemplified by Macdonald of Ferintosh, would assist in spreading a spiritual message. As intimated at the beginning of the chapter, the Church would have had a key role in local politics in this period, its web of networks serving to both underline and also enlarge its influence.

Allowing for the somewhat hagiographical tones of many of the sources, this possible contributory factor to Disruption reaction should be acknowledged, recognising, as suggested earlier, the significance of the relationship of a particular minister with his parishioners and the esteem in which he was held, for personal, spiritual and pastoral attributes. However, as preceding chapters have demonstrated, a wide range of varying environmental factors

970 Mackay, M. (1869), Brief Memorials, p.21.
971 Ibid., p.80.
contributed to the total life experience of folk in each parish, negating simplistic explanations for responses to the Disruption and consequently this requires to be conjoined with these earlier investigated elements. The final, concluding chapter of this empirical study will endeavour to draw together all the relevant threads in the complex web of contributory factors in order to demonstrate, through the medium of the chosen parishes, the dangers of placing too heavy an emphasis on blanket generalisations regarding Disruption reaction in the Highlands.
CHAPTER 10. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS.

In response to the research thrust of this study the thematic chapters have endeavoured to demonstrate, through the adoption of a case study approach, the differential experiences, in all aspects of life, of inhabitants of the three parishes. As indicated in the Introductory Chapter the initial determinant in selecting the parishes was that of dissimilar reactions to the Disruption, the strategy employed for specific choice reflecting interaction between minister and parishioners rather than geographical or socio-economic determinants. These examples have been utilised as a means of exploring the range of factors which could have influenced decisions on a local basis, thus also exposing at this level the applicability of a variety of 'blanket' theories regarding responses to the Disruption in the Highlands and Islands, which have been applied in a generalist fashion across the whole or large swathes of the region.

The question of range of tapped sources, together with the problem of missing evidence, bias and agenda, has been raised in Chapter 2, the problems being acknowledged throughout the study, including the fact that what has not been written or has not survived has a part to play in the final analysis. What has emerged has considerable merit. The 'traces' disclose very different images in the three parishes and reveal a complex web of possible explanatory factors which both embrace (in differing combinations and prioritisations) and move outwith the range of theories propounded by past historians.

The first section of this chapter, identifying the varying packages of influential factors in the individual parishes, acknowledges that these are suggested precipitating causes of responses to the Disruption and that they cannot be authoritatively prioritised or regarded as definitive. Their value is to highlight the hypothesis that local influences were still paramount in the first
half of the nineteenth century, that seemingly similar reactions were subject to variable motivators and that overarching theoretical constructs should be applied with caution.

In the ensuing section, the principal theories outlined in the Introductory Chapter will be investigated in order to determine how they relate to the research findings in each parish and demonstrate the extent to which they appear to be applicable to these specific sets of circumstances. These theories will be treated thematically, as in the introduction, for example religio-political arguments separately from socio-economic explanations. Some concluding comments will draw the study to a close, emphasising the significance of its findings.

The Web of Conditions and Contributory Factors in the Three Parishes.

These contributors will be explored according to the thematic categories addressed in this study. Although, as stated earlier, they cannot be authoritatively prioritised, an attempt will be made in each parish to suggest the factors, both positive and negative, most likely to have exercised the greatest influence according to the available sources.

Tain.

Tain, a parish with a population of 3,158 in 1841, has been seen to incorporate a small Royal burgh with a rural hinterland and a fishing village, situated in the north-east Scottish mainland. Regarding socio-economic background, the approximately 23% inward migration registered in the burgh at the 1841 Census would have been likely to assist the movement of ideas, religious as well as secular. Uptake of new notions and opinions would probably have been limited initially to the more comfortably placed burgesses. However, the influence of its more prominent members concerning religious affairs would have filtered down through the community, the relative economic security (in contemporary Highland terms) of most inhabitants possibly offsetting the negative effects of the struggle for subsistence and
insanitary surroundings experienced by the poorer folk. Indeed, Tain, with its fairly satisfactory physical communication channels, appears to fit more closely into a Lowland pattern of improved agricultural land, with a small burgh apparently successfully interacting with its hinterland.

Within the 'cultural milieu,' the earlier quoted 1822 report noted that Tain exceeded the Highland average as regards literacy levels and availability of Bibles. Schooling was well established by the late eighteenth century, constantly improving facilities permitting an increasing number of inhabitants to read the Bible and imbibe religious attitudes spread into the schools by the Church within its sphere of educational responsibility. This opportunity to absorb written information, including religious doctrine and even religio-political attitudes, was assisted by occasional subscription and circulating libraries, the sessional and presbyterial libraries and the public reading-room. Thus the reasonably high proportion of literate parishioners, particularly in the burgh and predominantly the English speakers, could have found opinions emanating from such sources as pulpit, school and session reinforced by accessible literature.

This last sentence has raised the issue of language, a significant avenue through which a culture can be expressed. As intimated in the relevant chapter, misunderstandings or even total incomprehension and a perceived threat to a culture can result from dissemination of religious information in an unfamiliar language. Tain's apparently serious attempts to address this issue, both in school and especially in church, holding services in both English and Gaelic, would undoubtedly have assisted the successful spread of the evangelical message. In tandem with the increased use of English would have been a growing awareness of economic, social and cultural forces in the Lowlands. Although the communication channels were long-established

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972 Inverness Society for the Education of the Poor in the Highlands (1826), p.53.
in this Royal burgh, influences were previously limited for the majority of the population by language barriers. These increasingly comprehensible influences would have included religious dissension and theological disputation.

Tain contained three disparate areas, both socio-economically and with reference to cultural environment. This observation also carries weight in considering perceived behavioural characteristics. Inver, for example, possessed a feudal pride of order, preserving the people as a separate community. Just as the professional and merchant class in the burgh would have been in a position to influence the behaviour of other townsfolk, so those at the top of the pecking order in Inver would have undoubtedly fulfilled the same role among the fisher folk.

Regarding the part played by the persistence or otherwise of secular customs, such as music, fairs and celebrations of the rites of passage, in influencing parishioners’ attitudes, the received wisdom, challenged but not disproved in revisionist literature, is that evangelical religion frowned upon or even abhorred frivolity. Although the scant evidence discovered concerning such activities in Tain would seem to reflect this attitude, any implications that this contributed towards responses to the Disruption should be treated with caution. Intoxication rather than jollity, for example, was seemingly the focus of criticism at New Year celebrations.

The above reference to evangelical religion leads on to a consideration of possible contributors within the broad field of religion and spirituality. The parish was embedded in an area historically associated with evangelical religion from the Reformation onwards. Several enumerated features supported the continuation of this tradition in the seventeenth century, including Puritan influence from returning soldiers and the considerable protection offered by substantial local landowners to persecuted presbyterian clergy. This strong evangelical

973 Cameron, James Esq., Surgeon (1841), p.15.
974 Scrapbook of Mary Ferguson.
background continued after the Glorious Revolution, Tain being particularly blessed with pious ministers.

Regular worship and therefore contact with the minister would have been relatively easy in Tain, distances not being as prohibitive as in many Highland parishes. Communication facilities were reasonable for the period and, although the burgh and its church were not situated in the geographical centre of the parish, the burgh acted as the commercial and cultural focus. Additionally, the new building erected in 1815 was observed by 1837 to cater satisfactorily for the parishioners.975

The impact of prominent community members, occupying influential situations, such as merchant, banker, teacher, writer, sheriff clerk and landowner, has been alluded to above. Such folk would have become elders, making their views known to the minister who would be empowered to take them to Presbytery level. Session members, therefore, being men of status as well as godliness and sound judgment, would be of considerable significance in the community. As well as the Session acting as an organ of social control and supporting the poor, elders assisted at Sabbath evening meetings and weekday prayer meetings and cooperated with the minister in preparing folk for communion.976 In a parish dominated by an evangelical minister, it is probable that those elected to serve on the Session would have been of like mind. The doctrines, beliefs and observances of the Presbytery, passed on through the minister, would be communicated to the Kirk Session, thereby impacting on the religious experience of parishioners. Presbytery minutes record the trials and approval (or otherwise) of potential ministers and teachers, testifying to its influence on the religious message entering the parish, an essentially evangelical and non-intrusionist message, reflecting the dominant persuasions of presbytery members.

975 The New Statistical Account of Scotland (1845), pp.296-297.
Ministerial influence appears to have been considerable. Both Angus and Charles Calder Mackintosh succeeded in converting considerable numbers of local inhabitants to evangelicalism, the former perhaps harnessing (either consciously or unconsciously) a lingering superstitious fear, particularly among country and fisher folk. Charles, on the other hand, may well have encouraged a following through respect, love and admiration.

Among laymen, the catechist, considered the 'pastor's pioneer' in Ross-shire,\(^977\) having an immediacy of contact with parishioners in his instructional work, could also have exercised significant influence if conscientious. The absence of evidence concerning catechists in Tain during the immediate pre-Disruption period should not be construed as indicating an absence of this source of influence. Teachers would also have occupied a strong position for spreading their message, at least among the young, their 'suitability' for posts according to Presbyterial dictates having been acknowledged above. The church was intimately involved in educational establishments, regularly examining schools, the minister even acting as a director of the prestigious Tain Academy. Little information about the role of 'the Men' in the pre-Disruption years has been uncovered, although their part in eighteenth century meetings in Ross-shire is well documented. Generally drawn from the poorer classes, this would have helped them relate to those in similar socio-economic situations.

Although it has been suggested that superstitious fear may well have influenced conversion of rural and fisher folk under Angus McIntosh, such mystical beliefs being more persistent in these parts of the parish, the overarching significance of religion is unquestionable but may well reflect the imposition of ideas from external figures, such as the minister and elders, onto an intrinsic well of spirituality.

\(^{977}\) Ibid., pp.99-100.
Spirituality possesses several facets. Allowing for evangelical hagiography, the ‘pious Highlander’ as epitomised by the people of Ross-shire was undoubtedly alive and well in Tain, having recognised the centrality of the conversion experience and absorbed the piety associated with Calvinistic teaching. The immense scale of Free Church support in 1843 emphasises the final effectual nature of evangelical tradition, tenets and preaching, whatever material may have been employed to build the pathway to that institution.

The ministerial preaching previously alluded to was highly effective both in the hands of the Tain ministers and also clerics from nearby parishes, such as Charles Calder and later Macdonald, both of Ferintosh. Calvinism was strong, redemption through conversion being highlighted as well as mankind’s inherent sinfulness. The powerful message conveyed, for example, at communion seasons produced revivals or awakenings in Ross-shire from the early eighteenth century, reinforcing the traditional background of evangelicalism. 1840 saw a fervent revival initiated at the Tain communion season, the preaching and praying of their own minister being strengthened by the authoritative preaching of Macdonald of Ferintosh. That such a revival would probably have encouraged Tain parishioners down the evangelical path cannot be denied, and carries some strength as a contributory factor to Disruption reaction.

Imposing Sabbath observance and regulating admission to the sacraments of baptism and communion also reinforced ministerial influence. A particularly strict approach to the administration of communion probably prompted folk to seriously seek a fitting relationship with the Lord. Although mere attendance at such a spiritual occasion was supposedly sufficient for many, lack of confirmatory evidence precludes such a claim from constituting a definitive determining force in 1843 behaviour. Although no ‘traces’ of spiritual poetry emanating from Tain have been discovered, there is a strong tradition that such works as those

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Kennedy, John (1979), pp.103-106.
of Dugald Buchanan and Peter Grant found their way right across the Highlands. In the absence of definitive information, it can only be conjectured that such works may have reached the ears of local Gaelic speakers, their culturally effective images helping to reinforce the message of evangelical religion.

Finally, the notion of ministerial kinship networks and fraternal links, basically absent from the theoretical constructs, requires serious attention in relation to responses to the Disruption in Tain. Not only did the parish benefit from a father and son ministry but close kinship links with Calder of Ferintosh, a third generation minister, and with eminent ministers of the Rainy family have also been revealed. Consequently, in a society where kin was significant, the parish clerical picture exhibits a strong network of familial involvement in ministry, especially evangelical ministry. Calder Mackintosh, minister at the time of the Disruption, having been born, bred and educated in the parish, would have been furnished with a greater understanding of parishioners' needs, wishes and personal characteristics. The fact that he was their expressed choice of assistant and successor to his father speaks volumes, most probably indicating an incipient predisposition to follow his choice of path at the Disruption.

Fraternal links would also have been beneficial, keeping the minister abreast of doctrinal and religio-political issues, both through participation in church court meetings from Presbytery up to General Assembly level and through the more informal medium of pulpit supply. Angus and his son were both highly revered by other clergy in the area and asked to participate at communion seasons. Reciprocity occurred. Macdonald of Ferintosh's assistance in 1840, for example, contributed to a remarkable and probably highly influential revival, as intimated above.

Thus a complex web of possible contributory factors to Disruption reaction has been revealed, a specific amalgam which would not necessarily be repeated in any other parish, as the
relevant components in the various areas of life could not be exactly replicated, although the final result may look identical in the records. As indicated earlier, in a fervent atmosphere of evangelicalism, a massive Free Church adherence was registered in 1843, the ‘knock-on’ effect of the support of important parishioners undoubtedly constituting a factor influencing congregational reaction. Indeed, in this parish, the strong history of evangelical religion, the wide-ranging influence of pious, highly-regarded ministers, operating within a supporting ministerial kinship and fraternal network, and the significance of pre-Disruption revival activity would appear to constitute weighty factors in prompting this reaction. Church links with a fairly sound educational provision, good physical communication channels within the parish and increasing ideological links with the Lowlands added to reasonably comfortable and well-structured socio-economic environments would seem to have helped to support this position.

Portree.

Portree also ranked among the many Highland parishes displaying a massive adherence to the Free Church in 1843. However, like a number of others, although in total contrast to Tain, it was a lay movement, the minister remaining in the Establishment. This extensive parish in the north of the Hebridean island of Skye, numbering 3,571 in 1841, has been seen to comprise numerous isolated rural townships, with a significant village and some offshore islands. As such, it exhibited similarities to countless parishes both on the mainland and in the islands, although displaying a unique set of circumstances and experiences.

The size of the parish and the rudimentary state of contemporary communication networks could have restricted the dissemination of ideas, although this will be shown later to have impacted less than expected. Nonetheless, as Portree did not assume Tain’s role as a dominant community or centralising force in its parish, township communities generally being
essentially self-sufficient, the 16% inward migration into the village recorded in 1841 would have been less effective in spreading ideas.

Clearance, relocation and emigration, however, undoubtedly encroached on parishioners' lives, affecting them in complex and, due to lack of explanatory 'traces,' indeterminable ways. For example, whether relocation or emigration occurred, township identities would have been disturbed, creating in some families a sense of rootlessness or loss, which a spiritual message of hope in the after-life could have effectively addressed. Additionally, the minister's positive attitude to emigration979 may have been as significant an impetus for leaving the Established Church as the clearances and emigration themselves.

The domestic milieu of a vast majority of parishioners displayed abject poverty and tenurial insecurity, reflecting a constant struggle for survival. Their local minister registered without comment the state of their dwellings,980 suggesting an acceptance of the status quo. A further indication of a seemingly unhelpful attitude emanating from the manse is to be found in scathing remarks about inhabitants' clothing, criticism without encouragement possibly contributing to a poor relationship between minister and parishioners.

Within the 'cultural milieu,' low literacy levels in the parish would tend to suggest greater emphasis on oral transmission of information and attitudes, feeding into the significance of lay or ministerial preaching. The evangelical message would have been spread principally through the medium of Gaelic (still the predominant tongue locally), both by resident laymen and visiting ministers. Communication in the mother tongue with the attendant adoption of its inherent cultural facets, as emphasised with regard to Tain, would have increased its efficacy, speaking to people's hearts and souls as well as their intellect. Their North Uist bred minister may possibly have failed to address significant local linguistic nuances, but lack of evidence

980 The New Statistical Account of Scotland (1845), pp.225-226
precludes the adoption of this observation as an indisputable contributory factor to parishioner reaction in 1843.

Perceived behavioural characteristics of the inhabitants of Portree tend to be positive, typical epithets being polite, hospitable, courteous, law-abiding and even peaceable. A noted decline in certain behaviour frowned upon by evangelicals, such as drunkenness and Sabbath breaking, suggests that evangelicalism had begun to affect the parish and may well have reinforced a determination to support the Free Church in 1843.

The dampening down of traditional customs, posited to reflect the influence of evangelicalism, appears to have occurred in Portree, as in Tain. Nevertheless, markets remained on the scene, overtones of disapproval of merriment in the sources (principally evangelical) not being reinforced by observations concerning the reaction of local inhabitants. This incomplete evidence also applies to rites of passage festivities. Consequently, the strength of evangelical feeling remains uncertain on this score, the failure of certain authors writing about Skye to differentiate between different parts of the island likewise complicating the issue.

Despite the persisting predominance of oral tradition in Skye, nevertheless, in contrast to Tain, some local secular literature has been uncovered in the sources. Examples reflect the continuing strength of superstitious beliefs in the parish, a feature able to be diverted into fervent evangelical faith. Indeed, notable extant spiritual poetry displays the harnessing of this fervour, the powerful emotional tension created, particularly in Raasay, seemingly assisting in the acceptance of evangelicalism in the parish.

Evangelicalism seemingly arrived in the parish only a few decades before the Disruption, it being claimed that the masses had adopted the religion of their chief or landowner, observance and belief constituting a mixture of 'Druidism, Romanism and Protestantism.'\(^{981}\) This allusion

\(^{981}\) MacRae, the Reverend Alexander (n.d.), pp.66-67.
to influential figures affecting religious affiliation corresponds with findings in Tain, but in Portree the affiliation may have been to a very loosely structured and arguably unsatisfactory religious régime.

Distance adversely affected access to worship, the church being situated in the northernmost part of the parish and across the water from the associated islands. Although two other places of worship existed, they were each only served every fifth week. Additionally the lack of a sufficiently commodious or adequately maintained building in the early decades of the century would have accentuated the problems of accessibility of the Word, regardless of the content of the message.

Regarding the influence of church courts, no extant records exist for Portree Kirk Session prior to 1854. Although the later minutes suggest a similarity of role to that appertaining in Tain, any consideration of sessional influence on Disruption responses should be treated with caution — the recurrent thorny problem of missing evidence. The Skye Presbytery, like that of Tain, was instrumental in deciding who would preach the Word within its bounds. Evangelical influence would have been minimal at that level, the Skye Presbytery being predominantly Moderate, conservative and reactionary. Portree’s minister, Coll Macdonald, himself seconded a successful motion put forward by the Presbytery in early 1842 declaring that the Veto Act should be ignored.982

As in Tain, certain key figures would have been well positioned to affect the religious attitudes of parishioners. However, in contrast to Tain, the Portree minister appears to have failed in this respect. An outsider, despite many sterling qualities he seems to have been out of step with his parishioners, his preaching and ministry insufficient to answer their spiritual needs. On the other hand, catechists and teachers, particularly those employed by bodies other than

982 Presbytery of Skye Records, Ch12/330/4, p.8.
the Establishment, such as Gaelic Schools Societies, appear to have exerted considerable influence, generally employing evangelically-minded men. However, these schools tended to be circulating, teaching sufficient reading skills for pupils to be able to read the Bible before moving on to another township. Consequently, the experiences of different townships would have varied in nature and over time. Nonetheless, such influence on religious attitudes should not be overlooked in the package of factors contributing to Disruption reaction.

The role of an external missionary requires to be taken into account, although chance played a large part in determining Farquharson's presence and activity in the north of the island. His mantle was, however, assumed by local laymen, in particular the charismatic native of Portree parish, Donald Munro. Munro and other 'Men' were principally local in origin and consequently imbued with an understanding of localised cultural identities. Additionally they were well placed in their different walks of life to influence the spiritual leanings of those with whom they came into contact. Such influence may have contributed in Portree parish to the reluctance, noted by MacCowan, of folk to receive ordinances from the Moderate parochial clergy, whose preaching lacked fervour and spiritual weight.\(^9^8^3\) Although the labours of these laymen were undoubtedly highly significant in spreading the evangelical message in Portree, nevertheless the involvement of ordained workers in the field should be recognised. Roderick MacLeod was particularly industrious, but was not alone, his work and that of a few other clerics temporarily ministering in Skye parishes being implemented by that of visitors, especially the indefatigable Macdonald of Ferintosh.

'The Men,' seemingly principally engaged in spreading evangelicalism rather than becoming involved in religio-political dissension, would have been most significant in laying a spiritual foundation for adherence to the Free Church. It is unlikely that the minister was oblivious to

\(^{983}\) MacCowan, Roderick (1902), pp.24-25.
their efforts, but Macdonald appears to have had little influence within his enormous and unwieldy parish and any attempts to counteract their impact remain undisclosed, no 'traces' referring to such action being available.

A final point regarding general religious background concerns the foundation of a mission of the United Secession Church in Portree in 1840. An impatience among some parishioners to throw off state shackles could be claimed, but, no extant rationale existing for the establishment of this church it can merely be observed that another gap in the spiritual lives of some parishioners was being filled.

Regarding spirituality, it has been noted earlier that the recent arrival of evangelicalism in the parish, seemingly filling a spiritual vacuum, created an aura of enthusiasm and refreshing eagerness. Such enthusiasm could have constituted a strong force propelling parishioners into the Free Church, folk being attracted to the exhortations of 'The Men' and the sermons of neighbouring or visiting evangelical ministers. Many of the opportunities to hear such ministers would have occurred at the open communion seasons, fertile ground for mass revival movements. Such 'awakenings,' often stirred up by the labours of laymen, were fruitful in attracting many folk in northern parishes like Portree into the evangelical fold, the timing of a particularly inspiring revival, 1841-42, being highly significant. The build-up of forces arrayed against a satisfactory resolution of the Ten Years' Conflict and the inevitability of secession were becoming increasingly apparent.

As regards the significance of ministerial networks, Portree, unlike Tain and Strath, did not benefit from a local ministerial dynasty. Macdonald, occupying the charge from 1811, was from North Uist and, although his first wife, who died in 1840, was Snizort-born, the sense of a locally born ministerial family understanding local needs would have been severely limited. This lack of ministerial connections (particularly of an evangelical persuasion) and paucity of
neighbourhood identity could have combined with Macdonald's Moderatism and above-quoted characteristics and attitudes to militate against parishioner support.

However, the ministerial dynasty in neighbouring Snizort possessed a powerful evangelical figure in Roderick MacLeod, incumbent in 1843. As grandson of Malcolm the Tenth, laird of Raasay, he enjoyed a familial tie with Portree parish which could have been highly significant in increasing his prestige and influence with parishioners. His longstanding and intimate friendship with Macdonald of Ferintosh, who frequently visited Skye to reinforce the evangelicalism springing up in the north, would have assisted the cause. Finally, his immediate provision of a weekly Free Church service in Portree is suggestive of a close link between these parishioners and himself.

As in Tain, support for the Free Church, rooted in an atmosphere of evangelicalism, was massive — indeed total on Raasay. However, as demonstrated above, it was a completely different Disruption from that experienced in Tain, reflecting a dissimilar web of contributory factors. Although the evangelical religious impulse again appears considerable, unlike Tain it was initially and consistently lay-led, ministerial support coming from elsewhere, principally from Roderick MacLeod, whose kinship links in Portree parish were significant. The personality and religio-political stance of the parish minister, coupled with his lack of local links, would seem to have exerted a negative influence on his parishioners. Revivals, as in Tain, precipitated a notable level of conversion to evangelicalism, but again, in contrast, these were initially stimulated by laymen. Oral transmission by local men within a local Gaelic cultural context would have been a strong contributory factor and the socio-economic forces of economic deprivation and social insecurity coupled with the possibility of linking evangelical spirituality to lingering mystical beliefs would have furnished fertile ground for sewing the seeds of Free Church adherence.
Strath.

Although possessing many similarities with Portree, Strath reacted quite differently in 1843, following its minister's lead as the folk of Tain did, but in this case remaining in the Establishment. The investigation into the intricate and fascinatingly different network of contributory elements will commence with the socio-economic factors.

Strath, situated in southern Skye, separated from Portree by the Cuillin Mountains, had a population of 3,150 in 1841. Like Portree it consisted of many isolated rural townships, but, unlike its northerly neighbour, it lacked any notable settlement and its offshore islands were virtually uninhabited. Although some clearances occurred before 1843, numbers of folk being moved from the west to the east of the parish, a situation disrupting township identity, no clear-cut evangelical response has emerged. Indeed, despite the clearing of Kilbride farm to accommodate the new assistant minister, John Mackinnon, in 1825, nevertheless no signs of antipathy towards him at the time of the Disruption have been discovered. However, absence of information, as indicated earlier, should not be taken as definitive evidence. Negative opinions could have been suppressed or lost, as could statistical 'traces' regarding size of congregation before and after 1843. Finally, the essentially oral nature of contemporary communication requires to be recognised, later population movements assisting in the erasure of folk memory. However, a general support for their Moderate minister does appear to be reflected in the Responses to the Disruption of Strath parishioners, although the reasons could be complex. For example, the inward migration into Broadford, a port of call for steamers, of approximately 24% in 1841, a similar figure to that of Tain, again suggests the possibility of a spread of exogenous ideas, but in this case evangelical ideals appear to be missing.

984 Census of Scotland 1861, p.xx.
Attitudes to life and receptiveness of new concepts would probably have been affected, as in Portree and parts of Tain, by the daily struggle for existence experienced by the majority. However, unlike the situation in Portree, the Strath minister was seemingly in sympathy with the plight of his parishioners and aware of their industriousness, a factor which would have strengthened their relationship with him. Their own inter-relationships do not seem to have been severely affected by changes in land tenure and holdings from communal to 'lotting,' neighbourly assistance still continuing. These two categories of warm relationship could well have offset the tenurial insecurity which Strath residents shared with their Portree counterparts and which evangelical religion seemingly addressed in the latter parish. However, neighbourly assistance may have persisted in Portree also – a further problem of absence of evidence complicating the picture of contributors to responses to the Disruption in individual parishes.

Within the 'cultural milieu,' Strath's low level of reading literacy and access to Bibles stresses the significance, as in Portree, of oral transmission of ideas, including religious attitudes. Due to intimated topographical and distance problems, certain areas may well have remained unreached by minister or teachers. Provision of schooling varied over time and space, the education provided by either the parochial or circulating Gaelic Society schools being basic, especially in the latter, where ability to read the Gaelic Bible was deemed sufficient. Their seeming failure to spread an evangelical message has been noted above, emphasising that the reception of specific religious attitudes has a complex relationship with schooling.

As in Portree the predominant language was Gaelic, likewise employed both in school and in the church. The benefit of the minister being a native of the parish, shared by Tain but not by Portree, would have been reflected in the specific dialectic nuances in which his message was

conveyed. As the society of that time and area was still very locally based and oriented, this presentation of the religious message could have been significant within the whole cultural framework.

Regarding perceived behavioural characteristics, those noted in the sources tend to reflect those observed in Portree, such as hospitality, caring, politeness, patience, obedience and respect for superiors. However, it must be recognised that certain sources fail to differentiate between parts of the island in their writings. Nevertheless, it appears that secular customs such as music, dancing, other forms of entertainment in the ceilidh house, jollification at markets and festivities at rites of passage, Harvest, Halloween and New Year persisted longer in Strath than in northern Skye. This would tend to suggest that warmth and gaiety still existed in the neighbourhood at the time of the Disruption, a persistence which could reside in a number of contributory and intertwining factors, including religious apathy, Moderate influence and personality characteristics.

Strath appears, historically, to have harboured apathy towards religious dissension. It is predicated that the moral or spiritual facets of earlier inter-denominational struggles failed to affect local notions of Christianity. Consequently a residual apathy towards religio-political issues could well have pervaded a people whose broader understanding of the concept of spirituality combined with a traditional superstitiousness supported a thin veneer of Christian doctrine and practice. Additionally, the inward-looking nature of the isolated communities coupled with the physical barrier of the Cuillins and the spiritual barrier of the attitudes of their Moderate minister and secular leaders could have conjoined to hinder the ingress of new evangelical ideals.

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Religious apathy could also have militated against evangelical missionaries gaining a foothold in a parish, which, like Portree, suffered from inaccessibility of worship due to topographical and distance handicaps. Prior to 1841, the church was located in the eastern part of the parish, moving at that date to Broadford in the extreme east. Although worship occurred at two other locations, facilities for attendance were limited in bad weather, creating an inequality of opportunity for worship and assimilation of the Word.

Regarding the role of church courts in influencing parishioners, unlike Tain, the size and continuity of the Session in Strath, as in Portree, is uncertain due to missing records. However, Presbytery Minutes reveal a definite discontinuity during the year of the Disruption, following a period when it has been implied that this body experienced a diminution of its role. Consequently, Strath’s minister may well have held more immediate sway over the morality and material well-being of his parishioners at that time than his counterpart in Tain, for example, an influence possessing implications for their spiritual welfare and leanings. Additionally, the principally Moderate Presbytery would have been unlikely to direct evangelically-minded preachers, missionaries and teachers or religio-political messages supporting an Evangelical position into parishes within its bounds headed by a Moderate minister.

The minister will gradually be revealed to have been noticeably influential. As suggested above, missionaries and teachers accepted into the parish would have embraced a similar spiritual stance to him, apart from those employed by Gaelic Schools Societies, whose influence, as implied in the sources, was comparatively weak in Strath. Similarly ‘The Men’ appear to have been either inactive or unsuccessful, probably for reasons suggested above in relation to the failure of evangelical attitudes to penetrate the district. However, the chance

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987 The Presbytery of Skye Records, CH2/330/4, p.41.
988 Lamont, the Reverend D. (1984), pp.151-152.
factor associated with Farquharson’s arrival at Portree rather than Broadford or Kyleakin should not be discounted.

Although a revival affected the Baptist congregation in the immediate pre-Disruption years, its membership only rose slightly, although ‘listeners’ did increase in numbers.\textsuperscript{989} This latter observation could be interpreted as indicating that evangelically-minded folk sought spiritual refreshment in Baptist preaching while retaining membership of the Established Church, thus obviating the need to defect to the Free Church – an uncorroborated suggestion which could complicate but not invalidate the general impression of Establishment support in 1843. However, the existence of evangelicalism in another form may well have weakened the appeal of the Free Church, as in other parts of Scotland, such as Shetland.

Attempts to pinpoint notions of spirituality within the parish have been frustrated by lack of informative ‘traces’ in the sources. No sermons by the Mackinnons have survived, although their known Moderatism would suggest that they may have trawled the preaching of such prominent individuals as Blair and Hill for material, incorporating a gentler, less impassioned approach to Calvinistic doctrine, general morality being included as well as the love of the Lord and reverence compounded with gratitude and awe. Although the Portree minister was seemingly unable to compensate in any way for a lack of evangelical theological strength in his message, the warm relationship of the Strath minister with his parishioners may constitute a partial explanation of their seeming spiritual satisfaction. Indeed the retention of certain superstitious practices even at the manse (seemingly demonstrating the validity of the earlier suggestion that the Church merely absorbed Christianity into the wider belief system of the parish), would have probably helped to strengthen a relationship of sympathy between the minister and his flock. The absence of marked features of evangelicalism may also reflect a

\textsuperscript{989} Meek, Donald (1990), p.336.
continuing spiritual joy carried into their daily lives, allied to a pleasure in secular entertainment.

No 'traces' have been discovered of spiritual poetry emanating from Strath or verse originating elsewhere impacting on parishioners. The limited effects of revivals have been outlined above in relation to the Baptist mission, extreme reactions to religious exhortation seemingly inconsistent with the nature of Strath folk. The minister's antipathy to evangelical preaching has likewise been noted in connection with his attempts to halt the oration of Macdonald of Ferintosh, who was disturbing his congregation in Broadford.\footnote{Mackinnon, Neil (1981), pp.184-185.} Such elements may be added to the already complex web of factors inhibiting the spread of evangelicalism.

The final, but by no means least significant, component is that of ministerial kinship networks and fraternal links. Strath, like Tain, witnessed a ministerial dynasty. John, the incumbent in 1843, was born in the parish, appointed assistant and successor to his father in 1825 and succeeded him on his death in 1831. Additionally, he benefited from a strong secular link within the parish, his wife being the daughter of a prominent tacksman.\footnote{Scott, Hew (1928), p.183.} Consequently, both the minister and his wife were known to the parishioners and would have understood their needs, beliefs and attitudes, the wife indeed involving herself intimately in pastoral care.

John Mackinnon's fraternal links, involving pulpit supply and Presbyterial duties, would have helped to consolidate his Moderate views. Also, his good relationship with the Baptist pastor and ability to mix with all sectors of society would have strengthened his relationship with his parishioners, undoubtedly having some effect on their decision to remain with him in the Establishment.

As in Tain, the minister and his kinship and fraternal network, incorporating spiritual, cultural, emotional and physical elements, appear to provide a weighty factor in determining the
decision of a majority of Strath folk to remain in the Establishment in 1843. Again, religious
history, this time seemingly of apathy and a thin veneer of Christianity overlaying traditional
superstitiousness, appears to have played its part, the social insecurity, economic privation and
problems of topographical inaccessibility shared with Portree failing to lead to an uptake of
evangelicalism. However, although loyalty to a seemingly caring and understanding minister
appears to have been a major contributor to Disruption reaction, it could be argued that the
opportunity to hear Baptist preaching in the parish may have obviated the need to quit the
Establishment. It must be recognised, as in Tain and Portree, that a complex and individually
determined network of identified contributory factors affected decision-taking at parish level.

**Examining The Theories.**

Material investigated in the introductory chapter of this study has demonstrated that, although
specific theoretical constructs are clearly delineated in works addressing the background to the
Disruption, whether in the nation as a whole or in the Highlands specifically, the arguments
propounded often comprise different elements informed by divergent perspectives. For
example, many historians, both those writing general histories and those undertaking more
specialist research, focus on religio-political explanations for the Disruption. These, however,
may constitute a single argument, a major component or merely part of a package of causal
factors.

The most commonly identified religio-political arguments centre on the issues of patronage
and the spiritual independence of the church. A majority of the general histories investigated
tend to concentrate on the problems surrounding patronage, although Lynch, Michael (1992), pp.398 and 401.

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number of them, spanning the decades between the late nineteenth and the late twentieth century, emphasise the issue of spiritual independence, although MacDermid gives roughly equal weight to this argument and that of patronage, the latter figuring large in works published in the latter half of the twentieth century. Other religio-political constructs mooted include the contention surrounding the concepts of one or two kingdoms, addressed by Donaldson and Stewart Brown, the significance of recognising the church as an institution per se, propounded by Cheyne and the discernment by Callum Brown of 'schismatic tendencies' in Scottish Presbyterianism.

In seeking the relevance of such theories to circumstances accruing in the individual parishes it must be recognised that news concerning the disputes of the Ten Years' Conflict would have filtered through to some parishioners, at least in Tain and Portree. Calder Mackintosh has been identified as one of the ministers delegated by the November 1842 Convocation of Evangelical Ministers to disseminate the non-intrusionist message, Macdonald of Ferintosh and MacLeod of Snizort likewise being involved in this undertaking. Indeed the only relevant material uncovered relates to meetings in Snizort parish, adjacent to Portree, the main thrust of the arguments for supporting Roderick MacLeod centring on the tendency of the Civil Courts to 'subvert the spiritual liberties of the Christian people.' The unlikelihood of this message permeating the confines of the parish of Strath can be inferred from its minister's antipathy to evangelicalism.

Before forming any conclusions about this mission's efficacy in directing the parishioners of Tain and Portree towards the Free Church, it would be wise to recall the very different cultural experiences of these folk, using the epithet 'cultural' in its broadest sense. As seen earlier, the

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Brown, Callum in Withrington, Donald (1995), pp.149-150.
995 The Witness, Feb.25th 1843.
district of Tain had been, since the Reformation, steeped in evangelicalism, which centuries of usage would have permitted to filter through to most sectors of society. However, as Calder Mackintosh observed, this familiarity also bred a certain 'listlessness',996 which could have militated against any particular interest in religio-political affairs, except among the more educated classes. Although he also witnessed, in the late 1820s, an 'eager attention' among the recent converts in northern Skye, lack of education could have precluded a deeper understanding of issues facing the wider church, as well as the grinding toil of subsistence living creating a psychological barrier.

No antipathy towards patronage has been traced, as Chapter 2 has illustrated. Although disputes concerning patrons occurred at the time of Angus McIntosh's presentation, Tain folk seemed well pleased with their appointed minister and were later successful in encouraging the presentation of his son, already beloved by them, as his assistant and successor. Allowing for caveats concerning absence of evidence, despite Portree parishioners seemingly finding Coll Macdonald uninspiring, there is no record of antagonism or even discomfort at his presentation. Mackinnon of Strath, although non-evangelical, appears to have both suited and been in sympathy with his parishioners. It could indeed be postulated that their noted historical indifference to religious disputation might have predisposed them to ignore the pre-Disruption debates. Nonetheless, recognising the many other cultural aspects to be considered, this would be too simplistic an argument. As regards the other postulated religio-political arguments, lack of evidence precludes definitive conclusions as to their impact at parish level in Tain, Portree or Strath.

Most theories concerning spirituality form part of a more complex package of arguments. Included in the specific hypotheses regarding the Highlands is the identification by Norman

MacLeod of a spiritual excitement, defined by Walker as a religious earnestness, which, coupled with the influence of revivals, led to a religious adherence embracing a mixture of tradition and spiritual beliefs. An adjustment of emphasis if not an actual transformation of belief is embodied in Devine’s observation that evangelicalism was a more personal and emotional faith than that espoused by the Moderates, who considered ‘civilisation’ as constituting a necessary prerequisite for accepting the Christian gospel. The Moderates’ ‘moralism,’ according to Drummond and Bulloch was replaced in evangelical religion by the ‘Gospel of forgiveness and redemption,’ a concept arguably more attractive in an atmosphere of bewildering socio-economic and cultural change. The ‘demotic form of evangelicalism,’ which Meek affirms gave the Highlands religious stability once institutionalised in the Free Church, was based on a non-materialist agenda, which Macinnes contends gave hope of spiritual reward in the after-life to ordinary folk demoralised by bewildering changes in their temporal circumstances.997

As observed, earlier, mixed messages emanate from the sources regarding the spirituality of Tain inhabitants. Somewhat hagiographic literature paints a grave, self-judgemental and godly piety,998 whereas a visiting cleric in the early nineteenth century considered this piety gloomy and only skin-deep, the devoted parishioners being unacquainted with the love and hopes inspired by the ‘genuine doctrines of our Saviour.’999 However, this questioning of their spirituality by no means invalidates its existence. Indeed, it probably reinforces the picture frequently painted of evangelical spirituality, a spirituality which may well have predisposed a number of parishioners to follow the path indicated by those eventually advocating separation

998 Kennedy, John (1979), pp.1-3-106.
999 Hall, the Reverend James (1807), pp.490-493.
from the Establishment. Nonetheless, the reasons for pursuing this path are enmeshed in a variety of precipitating possibilities. The more relevant ones to be considered at this stage are intellectual reasoning among the better educated burgesses of Tain and a self-castigation feeding on pre-existing superstitious fears among the country and fisher folk. This latter viewpoint is also suggested by similar information regarding superstitious beliefs in Portree parish, especially Raasay.

Further conflicting information centres on the notion, addressed in the spirituality chapter, that the evangelical precepts of Calvinistic teaching were embraced almost exclusively by the peasantry in Ross-shire,\textsuperscript{1000} which appears to ignore the wholesale adherence of the burgesses of Tain to the Free Church in 1843. This again highlights the dangers of isolating specific arguments to explain Disruption reaction.

Certainly the faith espoused by most Tain and Portree parishioners was a personal and emotional one, probably a gradual adjustment of belief accompanied by religious earnestness in the case of Tain but a greater transformation for Portree folk, whose spiritual excitement has been noted earlier. Indeed it could be suggested that enthusiasm propelled more of them into the Free Church than in Tain, where force of habit may have carried more weight. However, the relationship of attitudes to reactions is complex, as the role of revivals emphasises. The later arrival of ‘awakenings’ in Skye, confined essentially to the north of the island, was accompanied by fervent emotionalism, still very much alive in 1843. Nonetheless, although evangelical revivals were widespread in Ross-shire from the early eighteenth century onwards and excitement could be postulated to have diminished, the Tain revival of 1840 fuelled renewed religious fervour in the area. Regarding evangelicalism’s non-materialist agenda, it is likely that a greater number of Portree inhabitants would have embraced notions of spiritual

\textsuperscript{1000} Withrington, Donald in Sage, The Reverend Donald (1975), p.6.
reward in the after-life than their counterparts in Tain, socio-economic insecurity and subsistence living being more widespread there than in the better-favoured environment of the latter parish.

The 'traces' found in connection with Strath are resonant with epithets of ungodly, iniquitous, unconcerned and ignorant. The need for salvation to atone for sin, germane to evangelical religion, is consistently regarded as unrecognised. Such attitudes, although compatible with the responses to the Disruption of Strath inhabitants, reflect many diverse standpoints and experiences requiring to be taken into account as determinants of their decision to remain in the Establishment.

A number of theories are philosophical in nature, either incorporating religious and spiritual dimensions or being embedded in the socio-political field. MacLaren's arguments, for example, identify the pre-Disruption problems as emanating from the 'incompatible philosophies of life' adopted by the contending church parties, whereas Donaldson visualises a more political slant, that of the disputed areas of decision-making between church and state, his somewhat semantic philosophical argument reflecting his one versus two kingdoms theory alluded to earlier. Hume Brown and Donaldson link their philosophical constructs, seeing the fervour of the 'human spirit' as displayed in the French Revolution affecting not only politics, speculative thought and a campaign for electoral reform, but also religion as Evangelical zeal replaced moderation. As a final example, Macpherson contends that Highlanders were declaring an independence from the landlord dominance in ordering their church life, reflecting an 'awareness and acceptance of the new world of individual liberty and responsibility.'

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It is difficult to validate these theories at parish level, although it could be suggested that Tain and Portree parishioners may, to a certain extent, have been affected on an emotional level by the philosophy behind the evangelical position. Nonetheless, the sources trawled have failed to reveal reactions to such philosophical conceptions apart from those recorded in Presbytery Minutes. In the Skye parishes, where most school pupils did not progress beyond reading literacy, oral transmission of information and ideas would have been the norm. This is not accessible today. Even in the burgh of Tain, where a greater number would have been able to write, few would have put pen to paper to describe such attitudes in the world of the church, more practical affairs being likely to have higher priority.

The strength and unanimity of feeling among members of Tain Presbytery regarding issues of the Ten Years’ Conflict have been recorded in an earlier chapter, the minutes of 4th May 1838 revealing a number of areas of agreement, incorporating philosophical as well as doctrinal and religio-political elements.\textsuperscript{1002} However, the spread of such views cannot be acknowledged definitively, as the viewpoints of even prominent burgesses remain undisclosed.

The Moderate Presbytery of Skye essentially failed to address any of the above-mentioned philosophical arguments. The almost lone voice of Roderick MacLeod, as well as the messages brought by visiting evangelical ministers or lay missionaries, may well have informed some Portree parishioners about such arguments in addition to the non-intrusion issue, but evidence confirming or refuting this is missing. The probability of Strath becoming ‘enlightened’ in this way is negligible, a point possibly acting as a contributory factor in their decision to remain within the Establishment.

Socio-political constructs, reflecting the philosophical arguments concerning responses to the Disruption alluded to above, were indeed common, but lack corroborative ‘traces’ in the

\textsuperscript{1002} Macnaughton, the Reverend Colin (1915), p.370.
parishes being studied. Many quoted historians regard The Reform Bill and accompanying
movements for popular rights as being notable contributory factors in encouraging a parallel
surge in the church, which only the eventual Disruption could satisfy. Drummond and
Bulloch, for example, postulate that, outwith the industrial areas, the Free Church furnished a
means for the non-enfranchised to express their resentment against the landed classes.1003
However, it is highly unlikely that many of the inhabitants of Tain burgh, essentially a local
market and administrative centre, would have regarded this as a motivating force for Free
Church adherence. Equally, the insecure and poverty-stricken parishioners of Strath failed to
abandon the Establishment in 1843 despite landlord disregard for their well-being.
The fear of anarchy following the French Revolution fuelled a governmental reluctance to
activate changes within the Presbyterian polity, as Donald Smith contends,1004 Moderates
seemingly supporting this position. In tandem with movements for popular rights, alluded to in
the previous paragraph, it is possible that some more educated or more vociferous members of
Tain and Portree parishes may have subscribed to evangelicalism for these reasons, but the
sources have revealed no corroborative proof.
Other socio-political theories tend to centre round high-level issues, such as anxieties
regarding the Church of Scotland's role in 'securing Scottish identity' or Stewart Brown's
observation that the Scottish judges, who accepted the concept of absolutist Parliamentary
sovereignty following the failure of compromises, played a part in precipitating the
Disruption.1005 Although there were grand tours of Scotland conveying such arguments to the
localities, which would be expected to have touched at least Tain and Portree, no 'traces' have
been found in the sources furnishing information about these.

1004 Smith, Donald (1987), pp.75-76 and 81-82.
1005 Machin in Withrington, Donald J. (1995), pp.143-144; Brown, Callum in ibid., p.151; Brown, Stewart J.
A socio-political theory which would certainly have impacted at parish level is Donaldson's contention that changing settlement patterns could have contributed to pre-Disruption agitation, a problem leading to communities being poorly served by the church, still regarded in that period as contributing to the 'institutional cohesion of the community.'\textsuperscript{1006} This would not have been applicable, however, in the comparatively small parish of Tain where population shifts would mainly have constituted small agricultural tenants being cleared off their land and seeking work in the burgh. Portree's difficulties in receiving an adequate ministry were related to distance and topography, the change to a system of 'lotting' from the early nineteenth century not necessarily aggravating the situation, already open to missionary endeavour. The similarly problematical environment in Strath failed to produce groups of parishioners eager for evangelical ministry, although it could be observed that relocation generally brought folk nearer to the church in the east of the parish. Consequently, although Donaldson's theory contains considerable validity, it cannot be applied portmanteau-style to every Highland parish.

It has been noted that socio-economic theories of Disruption causation became fashionable mainly from the 1970s onwards. Although a number of angles have been adopted, the principal perspectives have centred on material need, decay of the social order in the Highlands, the Clearances, class conflict and anti-landlordism. As regards material wretchedness, although Pryde noted Evangelical concern for this,\textsuperscript{1007} evangelicalism tended to concentrate more frequently on spiritual reward in the after-life, as noted above. Indeed, there is no clear evidence of Evangelicals making specific attacks on material poverty in the three parishes before the Disruption, although the Free Church was the most responsive body during the famines of the later 1840s.

\textsuperscript{1006} Donaldson, Gordon (1985), pp.225 and 227.
\textsuperscript{1007} Pryde, George S. (1962), p.183.
Hunter has been identified as one of the main protagonists in the school of socio-economic theories of Disruption causation in the Highlands. Dismissive of the influence of religio-political conflict, his arguments give centrality to the detrimental effects of the collapse of the traditional clan system, plus class conflict and anti-landlordism.\footnote{Hunter, James (1995), pp.103, 96, 104; Hunter, James (1974), p.358.} Regarding his first contention, other historians similarly seek contributory factors in mass revivals as the source of an 'alternative hegemony,' spiritual enthusiasm as a compensation, or religion as a forum for Highlanders to control their destiny in a changing socio-economic world.\footnote{Withers, Charles (1988), pp.338, 340 and 342; Smout, T.C. (1985), p.436; Macleod, James Lachlan (1993), p.246.} Portree parishioners may well have pursued evangelicalism for such reasons, but this fails to acknowledge other influential neighbourhood factors, such as the power of superstition or physical difficulties of access to worship, and the fact that the inhabitants of Strath, similarly placed socio-economically, followed another path entirely.

Other historians, including Devine, have embraced the class theory, Drummond and Bulloch maintaining that in a large swathe of the Highlands the Free Church constituted the church of the ordinary working folk without attempting any explanation for this phenomenon.\footnote{Devine, T.M. (2000), p.376; Drummond, Andrew L. and Bulloch, James (1975), p.7.} The notion that evangelicalism was principally the preserve of the peasantry in Ross-shire has already been challenged on the grounds of the massive Free Church adherence by the more comfortable burgesses of Tain. Regarding the other parishes, both Portree and Strath were overwhelmingly populated by labouring folk but reacted totally differently to the Disruption.

Anti-landlordism theories include solidarity of protest as an assertion of popular will and the Disruption as an expression of resentment against indignities, such as the Clearances.\footnote{Richards, E. (1985), pp.337 and 359; Macpherson, the Reverend R. (1971-72), p.257.} Such arguments seem barely applicable to Tain parishioners, apart from the few cleared off the land.
by improving landlords earlier in the century, and remain unproven in the sources as regards Portree, Strath again seemingly disproving the theory. Landlord hostility to the Free Church,\textsuperscript{1012} espoused by Smith, for example, carries the proposed anti-landlord stance of the pre-Disruption era to its apparently logical conclusion. It is, however, disproved in Tain and also on the island of Raasay, where the new owner actively barred the Establishment minister from the church building.

Devine, while admitting the difficulty of tracing 'direct linkages between revivalism and clearance, famine and privation,' contends that structural changes in society and economic crisis could have provided a 'cultural context' for the spiritual excitement fuelled by missionary endeavour.\textsuperscript{1013} Such problems do not appear to figure large on the pre-Disruption scene in Tain, whereas they were prominent in Portree, re-location or emigration occurring. The major revivals in northern Skye did, indeed, fail to coincide with major clearances or periods of famine, the 1812 'awakening,' for example, occurring when socio-economically the population was in a position of relative comfort. Nevertheless, when clearances occurred, township cultural identity was threatened, evangelicalism arguably providing an alternative 'identity' to cling to, with its promise of heavenly reward. Strath, however, challenges this theory. Despite re-location with the new lotting system occurring from about 1811 onwards, folk even being cleared from Kilbride Farm to accommodate the Reverend John Mackinnon, nonetheless they remained in the Establishment with their minister.

Both Meek's hypothesis that revivals could have encouraged greater social stability by encouraging "families of faith" and Paton's theory that evangelical gatherings were survivors from the old clan communities\textsuperscript{1014} may well have considerable validity but are difficult to

\textsuperscript{1012} Smith, Donald (1987), pp.140-141.
\textsuperscript{1014} Meek, Donald E. (1998a), pp.120-126 and 137; Paton, David (2001), p.135.
prove in a local context. The oral tradition of the Skye communities militates against 'traces' being found in the sources and the cultural environment of Tain, with its socio-economic contrasts, precludes the application of such notions 'across the board.' Indeed, Tain, as observed earlier, more closely resembled a Lowland community than a 'typical' Highland parish, although other 'burgh-centred' Highland parishes did exist.

It has been submitted that 'The Men' were significant as an influential indigenous élite, succeeding the disappearing class of tacksman, their lead in both the social and religious spheres encouraged folk to embrace evangelicalism and ultimately the Free Church.¹⁰¹⁵ 'The Men,' however, appear to have exercised a stronger role in Ross-shire in the eighteenth century, their part in the pre-Disruption scene in Tain being unclear. In contrast, local lay leadership in Portree, along with other north Skye parishes, has indeed been observed as highly influential in spreading the evangelical message. It must be acknowledged, nonetheless, that, although laymen initiated evangelical stimulus, ministerial influence was also involved, Roderick MacLeod of Snizort and Macdonald of Ferintosh among others being instrumental in reinforcing evangelicalism. The seeming lack of penetration of Strath by evangelical missionaries, probably prompted by ministerial antipathy and topographical barriers, could, however, be utilised to give support to this theory from a negative angle.

The local studies investigating socio-economic theories of Disruption causation in Aberdeen and Glasgow¹⁰¹⁶ have concentrated solely on the socio-economic angle, already shown as debateable in the case of the three parishes under investigation. In his earlier, more broad-sweeping study, Hillis acknowledges that the sociology of the Disruption varied across the regions, being subject to localised precipitators, such as ministerial personality and local traditions. His contention that more local studies are required in order to clarify the wider

picture through comparative analysis\textsuperscript{1017} may be limited by its concentration on the sociological angle but does point the way towards such studies on a broader canvas, not tied to preconceived theoretical constructs but approaching, as this study does, from an empirical standpoint and with an unaligned perspective. This point will be re-emphasised later.

Ansdell's local study in Lewis was undertaken to question the validity of specific theories and attempt to highlight the lamentable fact that past historical investigation has tended to overlook influences at grass-roots level. For example, as discovered in Raasay during research for this study, Ansdell notes an absence of proprietorial antagonism, landowners in fact offering substantial support for the Free Church. The class theory is also challenged, in that elders of the Free and Established Churches in Stornoway show a similarly mixed occupational and status profile, and the disintegration of the clan system swept aside as immaterial due to society being organised traditionally on township rather than kinship lines.\textsuperscript{1018} Although the 1841 population census figures for Portree and Strath tend to show a concentration of particular surnames within each township, there is nonetheless an admix of other names in most communities. Consequently, it could be argued that the changing social order was less damaging in Skye than many sources would argue, individual township identities, as suggested earlier, being more significant than clan ties. However, the picture is complex and reactions variable, so definitive statements should be treated with caution.

Other theories, less commonly advanced, embrace cultural, psychological, behavioural and geographical explanations. The cultural influences advanced as aiding the spread of evangelicalism include the use of the Gaelic language, Gaelic literacy, education (especially by the Gaelic Schools Societies), the development of Gaelic spiritual verse, the inherent

\textsuperscript{1017} Hillis, P. (1993), pp.44-45 and 58.

imagination and language of ‘The Men’ (na daoine) and the acknowledgement that communities were linked by culture as well as kin.\textsuperscript{1019}

The value of Gaelic in spreading the Word through Skye communities is indisputable, as communication in English would have produced misunderstandings and a block to comprehension. Circulating Gaelic Society schools have been recorded in both Portree and Strath parishes, the former including the island of Raasay. The impact of one particular Gaelic Society teacher, Norman MacLeod, in Unish, in stimulating a massive revival in the north of Skye in 1841 has undergone investigation.\textsuperscript{1020} However, despite such schools existing in Strath, the evangelical message seemingly failed to take root, demonstrating the necessity of taking other factors into account in explaining Disruption responses. Although all three parishes held services in both Gaelic and English, the latter language was becoming increasingly prominent in Tain burgh and reasons for Free Church adherence by country and fisher folk would have been more complex than the mere imbibing of an evangelical message from the pulpit.

The significance of approaches by ‘The Men’ fitting the cultural traditions of the societies in which they operated would have been strongest in Portree, where, as has been intimated earlier, their pre-Disruption influence was most marked. The value of spiritual verse in a society accustomed to song and poetry would probably have been most powerful in the Skye parishes and the country and fishing sections of Tain, the burgh itself being affected by influences embedded in Lowland, English-language based culture. Although the extent of the effect of major spiritual bards on the parishes studied is not revealed in the sources, the influence in Skye of John Morrison of Harris has been recorded. The actual spread of his work

\textsuperscript{1019} Mearns, Alexander (1992), p.57; Macinnes, Allan (1990), pp.51-52 and Meek, Donald E. (1998a), pp.120-126 and 137.
\textsuperscript{1020} Meek, Donald E. (1998a), p.126; MacRae, the Reverend Alexander (n.d.), pp.75-77.
has not been identified, but his friendship with Donald Munro is acknowledged. Additionally, poets such as John Morrison of Skye and particularly Malcolm Nicolson of the Braes, part of Portree parish, would undoubtedly have had some effect in that parish.

The final cultural premise advanced, that of local communities or townships being linked by specific cultural traditions, has been noted in relation to the fishing village of Inver and would have undoubtedly existed in Skye parishes, with their township ceilidh houses and difficulties of communication. However, it cannot be definitively affirmed that such links could have affected Disruption responses, as no records have been traced furnishing information on religious adherence by individual communities. Additionally, Tain burgh constitutes a somewhat different and more loosely connected community.

Psychological and behavioural causes for explaining Disruption reactions reflect the cultural context to a certain extent, utilising the term in its broadest sense. 'High emotionalism,' 'crowd psychology' and a tendency to 'move in masses,' due to a 'sympathetic' Celtic nature or a traditional, clan-associated 'habit of following leaders,' have all been postulated as predeterminants of accepting evangelicalism. Strong emotionalism, including physical manifestations, has indeed been observed to display mass involvement at revivals. For example, the strong reaction to the preaching of Macdonald of Ferintosh at the 1840 Tain revival or the intense emotion raised by Norman MacLeod, the Gaelic School Society teacher at Unish mentioned earlier. Such manifestations discomfited the Baptist pastor in Strath, but excitement seemed to die down quite rapidly, evangelical enthusiasm being seemingly unsuited to the people of Strath.

1022 Meek, Donald E. (1998a), pp.127-128.
1024 Meek, Donald E. (1998a), pp.128-129.
Nonetheless, although attachment to evangelicalism was apparently strong in both Tain and Portree, according to their Disruption reactions, the emotionalism and crowd psychology theories have their limitations. There is no definitive proof that a type of mass hysteria propelled Tain parishioners into the Free Church in 1843, other factors such as status, ministerial influence and intellectual reasoning or superstitious fear having been seen to offer explanations for individual decision-making. Again, a complexity of factors would have affected Portree inhabitants, including the influence of local lay figures over a period of time (a gradual absorbing of the message rather than a sudden 'enlightenment') or again superstitious anxieties. The warm and personal relationship recorded with their minister may have constituted the strongest reason for most Strath inhabitants remaining within the fold of the Establishment. Behavioural characteristics should indeed be taken into account, but the relationship with Disruption reaction is complex.

Continuing the theme of ministerial influence, ministerial personality or ability and efficiency and clerics as surrogate leaders replacing the former clan chiefs have all been postulated as major determinants in Disruption decision-making. The overall ability and efficiency of a particular minister is difficult to prove from available sources, obituaries, for example, being understandably somewhat hagiographical. Involvement in church courts and seeming efficacy of preaching, however, can be gleaned to a certain extent. In all three parishes the pre-Disruption ministers appear to have been strongly involved in church courts from local to General Assembly level, but too much time spent on business at a higher level than the parish could have had a detrimental effect on delivery of pastoral care. On the other hand it could have assisted the dissemination of information concerning the religio-political problems facing the Establishment. Regarding the delivery of God's message, Calder Mackintosh, Macdonald

of Ferintosh and Roderick MacLeod of Snizort have all received accolades as effective evangelical preachers, as such aiding that cause in Tain and Portree. There are no extant sermons or comments on the preaching of the Moderate ministers of Portree and Strath, who, as suggested earlier, probably dipped into the sermons of such notable figures as Blair and Hill.

The notion of substitute leaders is more applicable to the Skye parishes than Tain, where the structure of burgh life and notable differentials in socio-economic organisation between country areas and fishing village serve to blur the issue. The communities of Portree and Strath, seemingly more traditional in nature, may well have retained the concept of looking to significant figures as leaders for some time after the demise of the clan system. The Portree minister, however, who appears to have lacked understanding of his parishioners, failed to fulfil this function, whereas John Mackinnon in Strath kept his flock with him in the Establishment.

All the theories concerning ministerial influence over responses to the Disruption would appear from research in the three parishes to contain much applicability, the role of the minister’s personality being reflected, for example, in the positive attitude of the Tain congregation to Calder Mackintosh, whose services they were instrumental in obtaining through pressure on the patron. However, the theories have not been expanded sufficiently or adopted by enough historians. The value of clerical kinship networks and fraternal links has been emphasised in the last chapter and requires to be taken into account when hypotheses are advanced concerning Disruption reaction in Highland parishes.

Regarding geographical arguments, regional differences have been recorded by some historians.\textsuperscript{1026} Such generalisations are unquestionably applicable when the picture is being

viewed on a broad canvas, but within regions, as this study has endeavoured to show, local variations in adherence occur and, even more significantly, local variations in precipitators require to be recognized. Drummond and Bulloch’s contention, with reference to Disruption reaction, that local life and local institutions had traditionally carried more weight in Scotland than national bodies and issues,¹⁰²⁷ has much to commend it. Finally, Callum Brown’s thesis concerning the correlation between landscape and intensity, type and doctrinal content of religion, identifies a firmness of faith in isolated regions, which may not always be satisfied by the coverage and actions of the ‘official’ church.¹⁰²⁸ However, this is not supported by the opposing reactions of Portree and Strath at the Disruption. The general religious enthusiasm observed across the Highlands and Islands, a region where considerable distances separated a majority of the communities, could well reflect an association with landscape which breaks down at individual parish level.

Summary.

Strath and Portree both possessed Moderate ministers, but reacted totally differently in 1843. Tain and Strath both followed the inclinations of their ministers and this took them in opposite directions. Tain and Portree both witnessed a strong adherence to the Free Church, the former with its minister, the latter without. The complex webs of factors which could be postulated to have influenced the decision-making in the three parishes investigated in this study have been shown to incorporate differing features. Similarities and dissimilarities, continuities and discontinuities have all been seen to form components in the jigsaw of factors contributing to Disruption reaction.

¹⁰²⁷ Drummond, Andrew L. and Bulloch, James (1973), pp.257-259.
¹⁰²⁸ Brown, Callum (February 2000), e-mail.
The thesis has not attempted to dismiss the theories explored in Chapter 1 regarding precipitators of the Disruption, merely to challenge the application of blanket theories to circumstances superficially appearing similar but in actuality hiding many complexities and consequently to investigate the situation at individual community level, comparing and contrasting reactions in three specific parishes. Theories concerning spiritual independence, spirituality, social change, 'The Men,' behavioural characteristics and the significance of local life and local institutions have all been seen to have played their part in differing ways and varying measure, the issue of ministerial influence (either positive or negative) being a strong factor readily identifiable in all three parishes. However, an investigation of three different communities would reveal a contrasting picture of influential theories. All theories supply answers on a general and indeed regional level, but have variable applicability at local level, as the previous section of this chapter has demonstrated. Some explanations are parish-specific and some theories cannot be supported at parish level. Additionally, although an attempt has been made to identify the principal contributors to the differential packages of determinants in each parish, these should be treated with caution.

As emphasised in Chapter 1, Ansdell and Withrington have highlighted the value and necessity of undertaking local studies in an attempt to understand Disruption reactions. This study has responded to the call for such studies. Currently available local studies have tended to concentrate on one community or district, whereas this study has accepted the value of comparison and contextualisation. It has recognised that historians 'are usually children of their times in the questions they set themselves' and that no writer can definitively embrace the concepts, attitudes and experiences of the folk of the period and localities being investigated. Nonetheless, an attempt has been made to discover sufficient information about

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1029 Hufton, Olwen (2002) in Cannadine, David, ed., p.77
these concepts, attitudes and experiences in order to put forward sensible hypotheses as to why inhabitants of each parish may have reacted to the Disruption in the manner recorded.

This comparative, empirical study has hopefully served to open another chapter in the ongoing debate about responses to the Disruption in the Highlands. It does not attempt to prove a new hypothesis, but rather to suggest that at the local level it was the interplay between the very different and often location-specific factors which was significant in determining people's response to the Disruption rather than the relative influence of these same factors. Although particular incidents and attitudes can be postulated as precipitating a certain event like the Disruption, the reactions to that event lie in the intricate realm of human behaviour, which cannot be fitted into neat categories. Finally, in a period when highly localised influences and experiences, even at such levels as that of individual communities, were paramount, in contrast to the global impacts of the early twenty first century, such influences and experiences require to be acknowledged and incorporated into historical writing.
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**Abbreviations.**

HCA – Highland Council Archives.

HRA – Highland Region Archives, Inverness.

NAS – National Archive of Scotland, Edinburgh.

NLS – National Library of Scotland.

RSCHS – Records of the Scottish Church History Society.

TGSI – Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness.