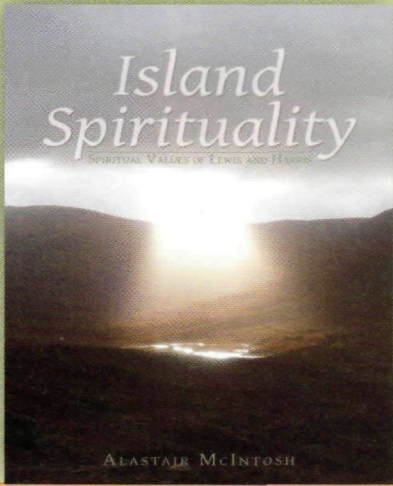


Review of *Island Spirituality* in *Life & Work*, magazine of the Church of Scotland, by Finlay Macdonald, former Moderator, September 2013, p. 43.



### ISLAND SPIRITUALITY

Written by: Alastair McIntosh

Published by: The Island Books Trust 2013

Price: £10.00

Subtitled *Spiritual Values of Lewis and Harris* Alastair McIntosh's latest book covers a fair spectrum of Hebridean spirituality.

We meet Aonghas nam Beann (Angus of the hills), an Uig shepherd who likens faith to a salmon running up a river. At every leap it has to trust there is a higher pool. We overhear a conversation in which a Free Church minister speaks of the *miann*, which he translates as 'ardent desire for God', adding that this is the one thing in the human heart the devil cannot counterfeit.

We are offered an exposition of the Westminster Confession's TULIP theology – Total Depravity, Unconditional Election, Limited Atonement, Irresistible Grace, Perseverance of the Saints – which underpins the stern ecclesiology associated with the northern Hebrides.

We hear tales of an *da shealladh* (second sight) and of Lady Mary Stewart-Mackenzie, 'the hooded lady', who went from femme rouge to mother of island evangelism.

McIntosh, a Presbyterian turned Quaker, argues that, while island religion is in a fragile state, it nevertheless expresses a profound inner spirituality.

Observing that the Outer Hebrides may seem geographically on the edge of things, in an echo of Yeats he suggests that when the centre collapses the periphery becomes central.

Very Rev Dr Finlay A J Macdonald