

An Litir Bheag le Ruairidh MacIlleathain

An Litir Bheag is a shortened and simplified version of Ruairidh's Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh (also available on the BBC website), designed for those who are at an earlier stage of learning Gaelic. The topic each week is the same as Litir do Luchd-ionnsachaidh so that, once the Litir Bheag is mastered, a student of the language might wish to try the full Litir. This is Litir Bheag 467 (which corresponds to Litir 771). Ruairidh can be contacted at rodny.maclean@bbc.co.uk.

I was telling you about the Rev. Donald MacCallum. He stood shoulder-to-shoulder with the crofters at the time of the land struggle. When he moved to Vaternish on the Isle of Skye he became renowned.

His congregation on the Sabbath was very small. He was in the Church of Scotland. Most of the area's people were in the Free Church.

Through the week, however, many people were coming to listen to him. He was giving lectures on the evil[s] of landlordism. In May 1884, he spoke in front of a large meeting of crofters at the Fairy Bridge. Màiri Mhòr nan Òran was present. She praised MacCallum in her poetry.

Donald spoke a lot about God's work. He had a Christian viewpoint on the issue of the land. The governors of the Church were not happy with him, however. The Presbytery severely censured him. They said he was inciting crofters to violence. But MacCallum continued. The police came to his manse. The minister spent a weekend in a police

Bha mi ag innse dhuibh mun Urramach Dòmhnall MacCaluim. Sheas e an guailibh nan croitearan aig àm strì an fhearainn. Nuair a ghluais e gu Bhatairnis anns an Eilean Sgitheanach dh'fhàs e iomraiteach.

Bha an coitheanal aige air an t-Sàbaid gu math beag. Bha esan ann an Eaglais na h-Alba. Bha a' mhòr-chuid de mhuintir na sgìre anns an Eaglais Shaoir.

Tron t-seachdain, ge-tà, bha mòran a' tighinn a dh'èisteachd ris. Bha e a' toirt òraidean air olc na h-uachdranachd. Anns a' Chèitean ochd ceud deug, ochdad 's a ceithir (1884), bhruidhinn e air beulaibh coinneamh mhòr de chroitearan aig Beul Atha nan Trì Allt. Bha Màiri Mhòr nan Òran an làthair. Mhol i MacCaluim na bàrdachd.

Bhruidhinn Dòmhnall gu mòr mu obair Dhè. 'S e sealladh Crìosdail a bha aige air ceist an fhearainn. Cha robh luchd-stiùiridh na h-Eaglaise toilichte leis, ge-tà. Chronaich a' Chlèir gu dubh e. Thuir iad gun robh e a' brosnachadh chroitearan gu fòirneart. Ach lean MacCaluim air. Thàinig na poilis don mhansa aige. Chuir am ministear seachad deireadh-

cell in Portree.

Donald Meek delivered an interesting paper at a conference in Lewis a year a half ago. He compared MacCallum's situation to 'liberation theology'. That was the campaign that arose in Latin America in the [the seventies of the last century [1970s].

Catholic priests were defending the people who were suffering from poverty. They were using the scriptures to 'prove' that they were doing God's will. But the Church's hierarchy severely criticized them. Among those leaders was Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger. He rose to become the Pope. Meek says that the Skye Presbytery of the Church of Scotland dealt with Donald MacCallum in a similar manner.

MacCallum moved to a new congregation in Tiree. He wasn't there long but the islanders erected a monument to him. They were sorry he was leaving. And he was going to another place where there was a great controversy about the land question. This hero's life story will continue next week.

sheachdain ann an cealla-poilis ann am Port Rìgh.

Lìbhrig Dòmhnall Meek pàipear inntinneach aig co-labhairt ann an Leòdhas o chionn bliadhna gu leth. Rinn e coimeas eadar suidheachadh MhicCaluim agus 'diadhachd na saorsa'. B' e sin an iomairt a dh'èirich ann an Ameireagaidh Laidinneach anns na seachdadan dhen linn a dh'fhalbh.

Bha sagartan Caitligeach a' dìon an t-sluaigh a bha a' fulang bochdainn. Bha iad a' cleachdadh nan sgrìobtaran airson 'dearbhadh' gun robh iad a' dèanamh toil Dhè. Ach chàin àrd-urrachan na h-Eaglaise gu dubh iad. Am measg nan àrd-urrachan sin, bha an Càrdanal Iosaph Ratzinger. Dh'èirich esan gu bhith na Phàp. Tha Meek ag ràdh gun do dhèilig Clèir an Eilein Sgitheanaich de dh'Eaglais na h-Alba ri Dòmhnall MacCaluim ann an dòigh choltach.

Ghluais MacCaluim gu coitheanal ùr ann an Tiriodh. Cha robh e ann fada ach chuir muinntir an eilein carragh-cuimhne an-àirde dha. Bha iad duilich gun robh e a' falbh. Agus bha e a' falbh gu àite eile far an robh connspaid mhòr timcheall ceist an fhearainn. Bidh eachdraidh-beatha a' ghaisgich seo a' leantainn an-ath-sheachdain.