

Prayer of the Month • June 2013

You are released, resplendent, in the loving mother,
the dutiful daughter, the passionate bride
and in every sacrificial soul.
Inapprehensible we know you, Christ beside us.
Intangible, we touch you, Christ within us.
With earthly eyes we see ourselves, dust of dust, earth of
the earth; fit subject at last for the analyst's table. But
with the eye of faith, we know ourselves all girt about of
eternal stuff,
 our minds capable of Divinity
 our bodies groaning, waiting for the revealing,
 our souls redeemed, renewed.
Intangible we touch you, Christ within us.



George MacLeod
17 June 1895 – 27 June 1991

George MacLeod, founder of the Iona Community, writes poetically and thoughtfully, reaching after images that convey the earthly reality and the spiritual indwelling. With words like 'resplendent' and 'inapprehensible' MacLeod explores the richness of the English language. The prayer recognises the commitment of individuals to another, that is also a commitment and recognition of God within, with the uniting underlying focus on sacrifice.

Born in Glasgow in 1895, George MacLeod was the son of a Scottish businessman, and the grandson of the Rev'd Norman MacLeod, sometime Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. After studying at Oriel College, Oxford, George MacLeod joined the Argyle and Sutherland Highlanders in 1914, at the outbreak of the First World War, rising to the rank of Captain. The shocking experience of war led him to train for ministry, and he studied at the University of Edinburgh and then Union Theological Seminary in New York City. Returning to Scotland he became Assistant Minister at St Giles Cathedral. He was ordained in 1924, and became Padre of Toc H (Talbot House) in Scotland. Following a disagreement with Toc H he resigned in 1926 and became Associate Minister at St Cuthbert's Church, Edinburgh. In 1930 he left St Cuthbert's to become minister at Govan Old Parish Church. The burden of work and social problems caused him to have a breakdown in 1932. He recovered the following year, during which he spent a formative period in Jerusalem. Through his concern for social justice he became involved with the Peace Pledge Union in 1937 and, from 1958, the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. In 1938 he resigned from parish ministry and founded the Iona Community, with plans to rebuild the ruined abbey. In 1957 he was elected Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. In 1967 he was given a peerage, and later became the first peer to represent the Green Party. He died on 27 June 1991. Through the Iona Community, its worship, community life, and involvement with social justice, George MacLeod continues to have an influence on the Church of Scotland and the wider Church today.

Colin Lunt