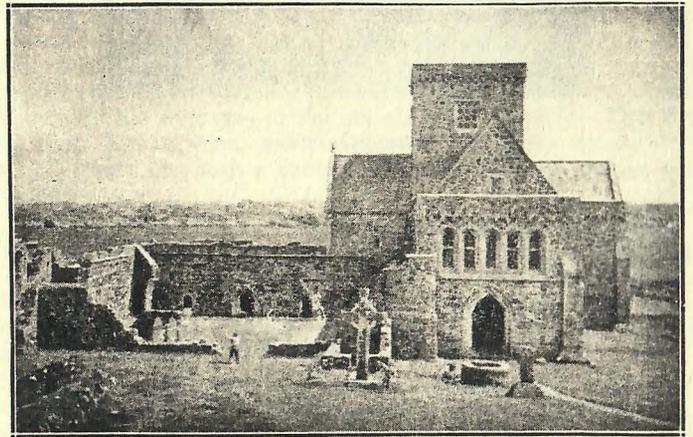
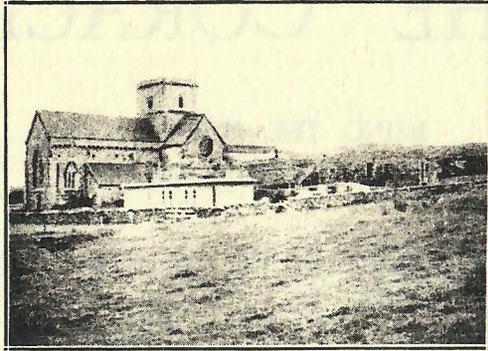


THE CORACLE

BEING THE PUBLICATION
OF THE IONA COMMUNITY



October, 1938



The First Hut

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CONCERNING THIS PUBLICATION

WHEN in May of this year—in a solitary newspaper article—we projected the idea of a Community within the Church of Scotland, we expected not a little comment and were prepared for some inevitable misunderstanding. What—perhaps foolishly—we did not expect, and were not prepared for, was a mail of nearly a thousand requests for further information from all over the world during the next three months.

As one day we stood on the slipway of Iona—there is no pier and everything from a needle to an anchor has to be manhandled on to the shore—answering further innumerable questions from mystified visitors, the brilliant idea struck us that we might answer everyone at one fell swoop by launching just such a small boat as St. Columba used to carry his messages to the mainland—a Coracle. This led to sound sleep for at least a fortnight—it was quite simple—"The Coracle" would sail into a thousand letterboxes and honour would be satisfied.

Unfortunately for our sleep, however, (if fortunately for the community) we had forgotten that "the idea" was not a static thing; indeed so much do we seem to have started "a movement," that it seemed to change in its implications from week to week. So we found ourselves at the end of the first summer's experiment with no "Coracle" yet launched.

On the mainland, we felt, we could see it all in clear perspective and construct a boat of some consistency at least. And so, in some measure, we can. But to our final horror we now realise that it now must go to some who already know much of it, others who know little, and a few who—to judge by their letters—manifestly know nothing. How can all be satisfied? The thing is impossible. Of course, we could write a book, but that would take time. . . . and already postcards come in, "Where is 'The Coracle'?" And the thought of a thousand postcards. . . .!

So we start with an apology. To some of you this telegraphic document must sound like Greek; to others who know almost the XYZ of things, this must sound like ABC—if we cannot satisfy everyone, it is at least "honours easy" if we satisfy none.

With each copy we enclose a reprint of the original article. If it is very old to you, then pass it on to someone who may be interested. It is enclosed for those who just know nothing!

The next number of "The Coracle" will incorporate the articles at present appearing in "Life and Work"—they will perhaps answer a number of questions which you expected to find answered here. Our main purpose in this flimsy structure is to give you some idea of what has happened so far. If it does not satisfy you, be cheerful in the knowledge that it does not satisfy us either.

WHAT IS OUR IMMEDIATE DESTINATION?

IF it be true that "the man goes furthest, who knows not where he goes" then it must be admitted that there were times this summer when it looked as if the Iona Community was going far! Every conceivable future was predicted—from its imminent collapse to the creation of a Franciscan Revival in a twelvemonth! Neither prediction stands. Setting aside some of its more detailed intentions (they are incorporated in the reprinted articles that will form our next number) it is worth while recording what we conceive the essential purpose of the Community to be.

The Background.

"The world is going collective." Or, as Romain Rolland more finely put it, "The world has become a unity and for this high destiny mankind is not yet fit." A glance at any daily newspaper makes clear how true this is, but there is still one good mark for "Mankind"—he steadfastly refuses to sit down under it. If everywhere there is restlessness, it is equally true that everywhere there is a constant effort by mankind to come abreast of his environment. Whatever of Darwin may be outmoded to-day, the "survival of the fittest" stands a permanent truth in this regard—not that the "beefiest" will survive, but that only those will survive who are fit to adapt themselves to the new environment. The only environment for a potentially united world is that of co-operation, and more co-operation; groupings and larger groupings. Whether Communism, Fascism or Christianity is to be the next immediate world order, it is manifest that—whatever the order—the next stage in man's development is going to be more collective "than the thing we know."

In those lands that still manfully strive after the retention of some individual freedom, give some room for the play of individual conscience—in a word, persist in believing there is still something to be made of Christian Democracy—it is clear enough that, if we are to "survive," then we must quickly investigate the possibilities of greater collectiveness alongside our Freedom. Nor is it strange that from Christian sources come the most forthright efforts towards some solution that will harmonise the two. It is Christianity that gave the idea of individual worth to every soul: it is Christianity also that announced that the individual could not be complete except in relation to his fellows; most importantly, it is Christianity that provided the Dual Way. Personality, indeed, is dependent on our being interrelated.

And so there is bubbling up, among believers in every land—like the commotion of a hot spring—a myriad of variegated efforts "towards Community." In our own land, from co-operative allotments and clubs for the unemployed (to mention the most tentative) to the Cotswold Bruderhof (where whole families have gone into a permanent community together, to till the soil and hold all things

in common) there is everywhere experiment in collectivism. And in infinitely wider areas there are myriads of folk, talking, discussing, dreaming of better ways of ordering society than "this poor present shows." They are wise in their generation! Unless our Christian Democracy makes more forthright experiment, the youth of our land will not forever be put off by our mere *declaimers* that ours is a Faith for the world, superior to Communism and Fascism. It is by our *fruits* that we are known.

Where in this bubbling world of Collective Experiment, then, does the Iona Community seek to take its place?

It Is a Laboratory.

It is to be no more than a laboratory of co-operative living in which we hope to discover a little more of what the place of the Church is in this particular commotion. It is more forthright than "spare time efforts at Community" such as allotments—for we will be living together and concerned with the whole of life. But it is not so foolish as to try and emulate the great effort in the Cotswolds—for we have not all things in common and our membership is not continuous. In operation only during summer months, different artisans may come, and it is certain that a completely different team of young ministers will experience the life from year to year. If this seems to strike a lower note we are not ashamed. If we cannot in any permanent sense call it the "New Social Order in Action," it is because we frankly admit that we do not know what that Social Order is going to be, in terms of Christianity (and humbly submit that nobody else really knows). It is a Laboratory working under the sign of all good laboratories—which is a Question Mark.

It Is a Crow's Nest.

Still part of the ship of State in which we are sailing but just high enough to see a bit further. Edward Wilson, on the *Discovery* in the South Seas, used to go aloft to say his prayers as well. If our "Crow's Nest of an experiment" helps us to see further it also gives us opportunity to listen better to God. For the Christian, the seeming distresses of the days in which we live should not be cause for pessimism they are rather the loud overture of some new and wondrous Revelation. If really we believe that the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth, it is faithless to look at the present world calamities as if "a God of Love had lost control." It is Man that refuses to listen to the warning notes of his Father's voice, and thinks "we can take a risk without God," that is the cause of our distresses. We believe not that God is trying to say something to us all above the storms of our present distress, rather it is the storm that is His Voice.

And so we go aloft, perhaps to see further, but above all to listen seriously again, and ask for Grace that we may interpret the

storm, and for courage that we may obey—lest we perish with the Ship.

It Is a Preparation.

We believe that Christ is making a Great Revelation of His Place in the social order of our day, and we fear it is "too high for us we cannot attain unto it." Let us then at least submit to John's Baptism, have the courage "to turn," if only for a Baptism that is of water—as a preparation. If only by living and working together as a very normal society still very much in the world, may it not be that the crooked ways may be made a little straighter and the rough places more smooth, in all our thinking and feeling about the Collective Age that is to be?

Nor is it just a sentiment to project so modern a thrust in Iona. The West Door of the Abbey stands in the very shadow of St. Martin's Cross. What was the essential thrust of that man of Tours except to express Christianity more closely in terms with the needs of his age? Nurtured as an army officer in that most imperialist age he foresaw the doom of the Empire within fifty years, and he bent all his vigour to the task of finding the expression of the Faith that might outlast the cataclysm.

The Island of St. Columba, too! How falsely men misread his work if they visualise his mission to the mainland as purely a "religious" movement. True to his patron of Tours, his whole evangel was compact of every aspect of man's living. Agriculture, fishing, education, craftsmanship—these were the domains he insisted must be brought in thrall to the sovereign will of the All Highest. And in our day and generation is not this essentially the challenge we must face?

And in an Abbey built of the Cistercians! Certainly our purpose is not to be cloistered. But the "religious life" was not the only splendour of Rome! The Abbey in its day stood on the outposts of an idea that was of the essence of our Faith—and must be made the essence of our Faith again—that there is but one Faith, One Lord, One Baptism, One God and Father of us all. Fatal, indeed, will be all these "efforts at Community" if we seek to blind our eyes to the rents there are in "the garments of Christ" to-day. "The grave dangers we are in by reason of our unhappy divisions" ceases to be a pious regret as we face the sin of our disunion in the setting of God's potentially united earth. The background of all our thinking must be the sense of a Church that is worldwide, whose welcome is for all. Else will all our strivings for Community be partial, for we will not have been based upon The Word.

So between St. Martin's Cross and the little settlement of Columba, under the very shadow of an Abbey builded by a worldwide Church, we make our thrust.

SOME ACCOUNT OF THIS SUMMER'S VOYAGE

Concerning the Start of Things.

IT is one thing to shoot an article at an unoffending public in the beginning of May, with the news that we intended building log huts round an Abbey and starting there a Community of Clergy and artisans. It is quite another thing, within six weeks, to have the thing in motion—yet so it happened. All at £1 a week and all found, that was the idea. By the middle of June a team was in shape! Four ministers who had already been at work in parishes; four Divinity students, one from each Divinity Hall; an architect, a doctor, and a cook, a secretary, and seven artisans had all volunteered their services. Indeed, it is right to point out that many others wrote offering to come. A retired contractor living in the Midlands, a barrister from London, placed clergy in England and Scotland, an apprentice craftsman, a surveyor, were among those who gave us encouragement of spirit by offering to throw over their futures and join the venture. These, however, we restrained. Some hardly seemed to fit our immediate needs, nor did we want too many when as yet there was not a stake in the ground. Others had to be gently reminded that when October came we could guarantee them no continuing work nor any place, but that of spiritual fellowship, in anything like a permanent community. In the end we only took those who were personally known to us and on whom we might reckon to be of specific service in the actual labour or in the plotting of our future purpose.

Four of them went gallantly ahead—with two skilled workmen, who knew the principles of hut construction. (These two were not pledged members of the community but from the beginning—and later in the summer when they returned to help us with the next main construction—entered into the spirit of our purpose and were invaluable in their leadership on the technical side). These six sailed North in the middle of June, pledged to get up the first hut before the rest of us promised to arrive in three weeks' time. It has never been discovered how actually it was done. There were mysterious tales of their working, during the last few days before our arrival, from five in the morning till eleven at night. But the hut was up and ready for occupancy a few hours before the *Dunara Castle* entered the Sound of Iona bringing the main party.

It was a slightly dazed company—truth to tell—who sat down for their first meal together out in the open, beneath the old Abbey and beside the solitary log cabin that was to be their dormitory, sitting-and-dining room for the next three months! Few knew more than two of the others previously, the majority were sitting in a community of complete strangers. Had we been too hurried? Would we all get on together? As we looked at the size of the hut, some must have wondered. But as we looked at the Abbey we were

reminded that the whole purpose of the experiment was to prove that what it stood for "still worked." Evening Worship on that first night in the half light of a dying day was our first confirmation that the thing would go on. Some folk from the island, visitors and residents, came and by their presence there symbolised, from its very inception, the truth that this was no "community apart" but an experiment within the world community as it is.

Thus our purpose consecrated, the hutment blessed, we lay down—some to sleep at once and one at least to feel the years roll back and think how strangely like to war-time memories was the steady breathing of twenty men in our tidy barracks, the whine of a distant shell would not have been unfitting to his thought, but instead there was the distant plashing of the waves in Iona Sound. Would this experiment lead some day, some year, to the "moral equivalent for war"? How many times had he not heard regretted, by how many soldier friends, that the spirit of the war years seemed incapable of recapture in days of Peace! What was it that made it possible in tragedy to find brotherhood, and in succeeding "peace" to find the brotherhood not intensified but throttled down to suffocation? Would "co-operation" work, last, bear fruit in a company, not of saints or even dedicated sinners, but a company just such as this. . . . men of good will, still of the world, but by the gesture of their volunteering all desirous to taste some richer life than somehow they had not yet found in workshop, office and university?

"Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you" had been the text of the first tiny sermon preached by him some hours in the half light of the dying day. Was it that essential Truth that Christ's followers had forgotten in the world?

Time would show.

Concerning the Middle of Things.

Yes it was working. Only the Spirit—we all agreed—could so quickly have welded us into a fellowship. Never had more diverse characters, with more diverse backgrounds, been brought into such close proximity for so shadowy a purpose. Yet the old throb was there, that thousands had known so well in Flanders, and hundreds in mission fields or outpost expeditions. True, there was a tendency for us parsons to ape the artisan, and occasionally a tendency by an artisan to ape the parson. But friendships fused and split regardless of former "differences." Groups inevitably formed but never assumed the danger of cliques. Opposites met. The man most near to Communism in his philosophy of life was perhaps most often seen in company with the artisan who had come amongst us because of his passionate advocacy of individual salvation. High Church and Low Church seemed absurdly trivial subjects now to excite much conversation from the parsons. The questions of the artisans were of a more fundamental thrust and some of us—who thought we were old hands—were reminded for the hundredth time what nonsense most of our sermons must sound. The parson who

was heard in the first week attempting to clarify an argument with the actual words, "your premise having fallen, your conclusion is false" (which so clarified the argument that it stopped altogether) was the centre of an argument in autumn that evaded such atrocities and was clarified by simplicity.

And time and time again we were reminded that artisans are better men than parsons — not just at their jobs but at piercing through by instinct to those real issues which mental acrobatics so often utterly confuse.

Difficulties?

Yes, of course. A wondrous Fellowship we would have builded indeed in three short months if we had risen above the Fellowship of the Acts of the Apostles! There was short temper sometimes, and real divergences as to whither as a fellowship we were meant to go. There were gross blunders of leadership. After the exhilaration of the first days out from land, the doldrums are the real test. Nor was it unlike a ship. The value of Iona is not only in its background but its peculiar divorcement. There is no picture house, no pub, no "bus to the nearest city," no "other end of no-where" to escape to! The hundred and one "escapes" that are the seeming mollifiers of tension in our breathless world are suddenly cut off. Sin at last has a chance to show its true colours! The real one, the gross one, the one that has brought Europe to the precipice; not drunkenness, not harlotry, not wantonness but MAN'S UNBRIDLED INABILITY TO SHARE. That is what gets you down on a ship, that is what cracks up Polar expeditions, that is the origin of the Rum Ration! And it's present too in the Councils of Nations, in Churches—but not so APPARENT there because of our manifold manipulations to escape. But in Iona you cannot escape. And so we faced the Crux. The Abbey—like all good abbeys—is built in the shape of a Crux. WHAT ABOUT THIS INABILITY TO SHARE? If you cannot face it among twenty . . . what are all our sermons about? At last we were face to face with it. Not as a theological formula, not as a spare-time hobby, what is THIS THING in man? Each morning and each evening, AT LAST, the prayer of confession — collective confession — (not the bed-side individual problem) broke into Life. It was plain as a pikestaff; if there is ever to be Collective Life, co-operative building of anything anywhere, we must face the Cross, we must be bridled if we are to be able to share. And it worked, my friend, it worked. For at

The End of Things

we were the same party that had gone North. None had been lost, nor was there one amongst us but had been changed, enriched. Something had been gained that was lasting, something painful that was sweet. We were assured that Christian Fellowship works, not just at home, not just in Guilds and spare-time Institutes, but in the work of the world, in a place confined, in the starting of the building of an abbey.

THE CREW

THE UNCENSORED COMMENTS OF ONE OF THE COMMUNITY.

I HAVE in my time kept very diverse company in varied circumstances and in many parts of the globe, on both land and sea. I have not known a body of men who, on the face of it, were so dissimilar as the group that came to Iona to start the Community. It was not only that professions, occupations, social classes, private means, education and so on, divided us into smaller sections, but also men within these sections were markedly different. The artisans, for instance, who composed the largest single section, were dissimilar, all belonged to different trades and had different outlooks, temperaments, natural talents, characters and characteristics. The same was true of the students and ministers, who composed the next largest sections that could be classified at all. Beyond that no classification was possible. The rest were individuals: teacher, secretary, architect, doctor, and all these had apparently as little in common as the others. It was obvious that a "community" would have to be created out of marked individualists.

Our life in Iona was no holiday, though it might have appeared that to onlookers, who, as it were, in passing, saw us stripped in the sunshine, working with obvious enjoyment. The onlookers might have seen most of the game, but they could not appreciate the strain that the work put on all, and especially on those who were not used to manual labour. Nor were the onlookers there to see us working often in mud and rain, when the work had to be done; and done by men who, in different circumstances, would have felt the mud on their boots and the discomfort of oilskin overcoats too much of a burden. Nor could we escape the discomfort when the work ceased or had to stop owing to bad weather. Out of it we had to go straight into our hut, muddy boots, wet clothes, wet oilskins and all. We could not discard them or dry them anywhere else; there was no other place.

Out of us individualists, living often under unfavourable material conditions, a community had to emerge. Could it be done? To an outside observer, in those early days, it might have rightly seemed that to get us to come to terms at all, would be a very high achievement; but to get us to work and live together for three months would be nothing short of a triumph. Yet it is a fact that we survived those three months without any casualties—without anyone departing or being sent away—and that a true community spirit emerged.

What were the forces that went to the making of this Community and which those, if any, that militated against it?

We all were volunteers. All of us had left our normal occupations to join the Community. Whatever our religious, social or political beliefs and practices, by joining the Community we were

ultimately responding to a desire, or need, within ourselves, to work at something which gives us in return something more, something other and different, than bread alone. We were volunteers to that fundamental impulse within us, which we wanted to find expression in the realisation of the ideal on which the Iona Community rested. That the impulse was, for the most part, unconscious, does not mean that it was less powerful; quite the contrary. Nor was it entirely unconscious. That we were all dressed alike, ate the same food, lived under identical conditions and so on, was but a symbolic recognition of our common spirit; an expression of our readiness to value a man not by any other standard than the quality and force of that spirit in him. Having that essential spiritual bond between us there was no need for us to sink our superficial differences; we found scope in the Community for our profound and mighty similarity, which from the first was a bond between us and made us accept each other essentially. It was not, therefore, so very remarkable that, in spite of our individualities and apparent dissimilarities, we quickly became a true Community. This became manifest not only in our family prayers, in our work and recreation, but also in the communal nature of our disagreements.

The fact that we all slept in the same hut, helped us not a little, I imagine, to get to know each other essentially. I have always been impressed how quickly people get to know each other, beyond superficialities, on board ships. The only quicker way I know of, is when circumstances make them share the same sleeping quarters. Or is it just my fancy that one knows complete strangers, in the other berths of a railway sleeping compartment, better after a night spent with them in sleep, than after the same number of hours spent during the day? Our unconscious selves, our inner spirits, put up no resistance, no barriers, between each other, as we do unintentionally in our everyday contacts.

There was no way of demonstrating these unconscious impulses, these subtle forces, at work in the Community. They cannot be conveyed to someone unaware of them, either by spoken word, or in blue-black ink, or print, or be demonstrated under a microscope, or be materialised by any earthly means. Just because they are spiritual. One is either sensitive to them or one is not. There can be no argument.

Whenever men can give expression to the true spiritual values within themselves, conditions of material existence cease to be a pre-occupation and become of quite secondary importance. True spiritual values dominate material conditions. We experienced the truth of this in the Iona Community. Nobody minded hard work. On the contrary, some of our happiest recollections will be of those days on which we worked twelve and sixteen hours under high pressure to get urgent work finished. Nor did anyone object to the discomfort. It was not, significantly enough, till I came to write this article that I realised how uncomfortable our life in the hut must have been at times.

There were, of course, periods of good weather, when life was extremely pleasant. The six windows of the hut face due east, and the uninterrupted view over the Sound of Iona towards Mull is enchanting. The light would fill the hut before the sun rose from behind Ben Mor on Mull, and from then till after it sunk in the west, the immediate surroundings and far distant vistas were ever delightful, constantly changing and claiming our attention and appreciation. On clear days the hills and mountains were far away, allowing a limitless expanse, and on dull and wet days they came near to us, huddled together. The shapes of hills and mountains changed continually according to the vagaries of light and atmosphere, and the colours on land, sea and sky transformed themselves ceaselessly and imperceptibly. All one saw seemed deeply alive: the earth, the sea, the sky, the near hills and far distant mountains. Deeply, quietly alive and intimate: the burn to wash oneself in, the ground to lie on, the air to breathe, the sea to swim in. In a deeply satisfying way one felt a part of all one saw; was in some mysterious way in elemental union with the surroundings. Yet to hear someone play a Mozart minuet, or take part in family prayers in the old Abbey, was more natural than anywhere else.

There were some among us who had not been to Church since childhood, and some who had not gone often even then. The effect on most of us, and particularly on them, of life in these natural surroundings, of our family prayers, of friendly, human contact with diverse types of men, etc., was a desire to reconcile the precepts of religious teachings with realities, as we experienced them in Iona and knew at home. The discussions were most often started by those who felt the disparity most. Here we got the opportunity to question, and argue with, those who were supposed to know and towards whom we were reserved at home, because of their "cloth" or their "position." But those who most felt the need to question and talk, were not always, or all, able to formulate their questionings, or express their problems, with any degree of conciseness or clarity. They failed to make themselves understood by the educated; the educated failed to get the meaning, and equally the spirit of the problems of the uneducated among us. Here it was where the forces became evident, which divided us and kept us, spiritually and otherwise, apart at home.

It was not easy, for instance, to fathom what one of us meant by repeatedly asking, how could the known facts of existence be reconciled with the statement in the Bible that "man shall not be afraid of the beasts." ("How is it, it says in the Bible that man shall not be afraid of the beasts? Eh? . . . Here is my theory. I say, what would any of youse do if a tiger came here?") This was probably only his garbled version of Genesis i, 26, *et seq.* That we did not guess it, or could not adequately answer it if we had, was not bad; but it was bad that we, the educated, did not even consider his version, to try and find out what he meant by it. We were too quick and eager to tell him, that we

knew there was no such statement in the Bible. As if we would smother him with our knowledge.

Often on those occasions we failed to understand the words of one, shook our heads over the evangelical fervour of another, and so on, and completely missed the overtones of the spirit. Nor did we know how to impart what we knew, when we understood what the other man meant. A young minister who starts saying to an artisan, "It is an axiomatic truth. . . ." deserves to be cut short with, "Wha's that?"; but it gets neither of them any further. To quote complicated beliefs of theologians and philosophers in a discussion with ordinary men, is not only pointless, it is worse. It is evidence of snobbishness, spiritual arrogance, assumed superiority and obtuseness. All of which we displayed in plenty. We did not appreciate enough, that behind the confused and turgid words of the uneducated was the urge of need and sincerity. We behaved as if the contributions of the uneducated to our discussions were always without sense, as if the problems they were expressing—if, indeed, we recognised them as their problems—were less valid than ours. We lacked humility and sympathy and, often, left them to carry on the discussion with their equals. We thus implied that we would have gone on, had they been as educated as we were. Then we would have been able to make everything plain to them. Whereas, in fact, it was often evident that we had accepted many of our beliefs and conceptions ready made, and had not thought them out for ourselves.

These discussions plainly showed that the educated and the uneducated among us were, on the whole, worlds apart. As elsewhere, we were still divided into nations, which roughly correspond to our economic divisions: working classes and middle classes, ministers and artisans. Our fundamental, unconscious, natural impulses, made the essential bond between us and that bond made the Community possible. The conscious, superficial, man-made forces of education and material circumstances, divided us and kept us so far apart that we seemed to speak in different languages. . . . But then, one of the aims of our Community is to make it possible for us, particularly the ministers, to learn how to talk to all and be understood. The Community does give them unique opportunity to learn that, but can it teach them what to say? . . .

During the last month in Iona our thoughts were under the shadow of international events in Europe, and our discussions were mostly concerned with the possibility of war. It became evident that the Community was composed of pacifists, non-pacifists and those who did not know what they would be in case of war. But the moral and religious questions in connection with it preoccupied the minds of all of us equally. The ministers became the centre of interest. We expected them to speak with one voice, that we might know the grace we were fulfilling or falling away from. But the ministers spoke only as individuals and differed, as did the rest. . . . "The Church" gave no lead. Who will give it?

THE IONA COMMUNITY AND THE COMMUNITY OF IONA

ONE of the great purposes of the Iona Community is to experiment with a project that shall steadfastly remain part of the world in which we find ourselves and yet not be of it. We have definitely barred the cloistered life.

This was clear enough to us, but so many rumours had got abroad that we half feared a total misunderstanding on the part of those who have lived on the Island all their lives and are as suspicious as the rest of us of any new thing which we do not yet understand. We are forever grateful to the folk of Iona, therefore, that they were content to wait and see what we were after before they judged us. Very soon it was apparent that they were more than interested. The hospitality that is the hallmark of the Highlander was ours before they had judged us. And as our purpose was discovered to be the reverse of a danger to the Reformation—and most rightly did they wait till they were assured of that—we found that the grand thing was going to be possible; this new witness of Community was not going to be made just *in* Iona but *with* Iona. It was a quite unconscious thought that decided us to have our evening Worship at 10 o'clock. One of the seeming obstacles against it was that it looked like being rather a late hour for folks outside to come and join us. But from the start we invited everyone to join us in worship daily both at 8 a.m. and 10 p.m. Rapidly it became obvious that the invitation was not in vain. Almost always in the morning there were the few—sometimes as many as twenty. But the evening Worship was our most interesting discovery. Forty, fifty, sixty, was the experience in the month of July. In August it was seldom less than a hundred and in the last week—of special services in preparation for the monthly Communion—never less than a hundred and fifty came each evening to what had now become the simple family prayers of the whole community of the Island. It is doubtful whether anywhere in England or Scotland—except, perhaps, in Westminster Abbey and St. Paul's—were so many folk coming to daily worship.

We have heard before of folk not going to Church because there was "a dance on"; but it was in Iona that we heard of the country dancing class that danced till they heard the Abbey bell ringing and then completely deserted the village hall to end the day quietly in worship.

It was the simplest form of Community prayers—a sung Psalm and Hymn; the reading of the Bible and Prayers.

Nor when September came, and so many visitors departed, did we find ourselves alone. In the very last week of September we rejoiced to be worshipping with the Islanders in their old Abbey which had become our common home.

From now on, in all we seek to do, we rest assured that the Iona Community seeks a common purpose and a common life with the Community of Iona.

MANNA

THE probable definition of this word is "what is it?" The question that the children of Israel would ask as the strange sustenance fell from Heaven for them as they continued in their pilgrimage. It had two characteristics. It had to be used as it came, or it would go bad; it stopped when it was no longer necessary.

Since launching this experiment we have often had cause to think of Manna. There was in the first place the strange response that came so quickly in an appeal for men. That an architect should be free at the shortest notice and willing to come up on dead level terms with everyone else was the first indication. The offer from another to come and help for some weeks turned out to be a man who was an expert in the very work that required leadership; and he "happened to come" during the very week that the architect was called away on business. . . .

Then as we walked through the ruins of the Abbey one day wondering (to be honest) whether we would ever get masons to come up—skilled men in a difficult department of their trade—there WALKED ROUND THE RUIN a complete stranger. He was a man who liked a walking holiday and had come North to see what this experiment was all about. He stayed with us a few days and we discovered that his trade was that of Foreman Mason . . . we are now much in touch with him about future days and he is getting in touch with other masons. . . .

Then again, at so late an hour, it was remarkable to get one student from each Divinity Hall coming and joining us for some weeks each and thus ensuring that in each Divinity Hall there is a man this winter who has seen the place and knows what we are driving at. . . .

The worship of our Community required an organist at morning and evening service each day throughout the summer. No arrangements had been made, but of the party who came up there was one who could do it and (I think) was never once absent from a service. . . .

Money is a token of God's desire that things should happen. Manna indeed has come in that regard. A large cheque to get us started removed initial fears and no appeal was put in the forefront of our work to begin with. It was the constant request as to how help could be given that first moved us to issue cards making possible "the buying of a stone" against the coming rebuilding. In three months without a solitary appeal by word of mouth some five hundred persons have sent us five shillings or more to have their place in the experiment. . . .

A doctor came along and said he would like to help yearly and had been thinking of some sacrifice. He had decided to give up his city club and send instead its annual subscription to us. . . .

Where are the men to come from? Where is the money to come from? are the questions often asked. We only know that money comes and men for just so long as the thing is meant to go on.

MANNA.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

The Rev. George MacLeod is leaving early in November to fulfil an engagement made prior to the formation of the Community. It is to attend, as a representative of his Church, the World International Missionary Conference at Tambaram, Madras, India. He hopes very much that—in addition to the holiday it represents—he may be able to hear there of the many efforts towards Community that are being made all over the world. Believers from Japan, China, India, Africa, and America are to be gathered there to the number of over 250. It is the sequel to the conferences held in Edinburgh in 1910 and the Jerusalem Conference of some years back.

Dr. MacLeod hopes to be back in Scotland in the middle of January 1939. No letter will be forwarded to him, **BUT ANY COMMUNICATIONS REGARDING THE COMMUNITY WILL BE ATTENDED TO, IF ADDRESSED TO HIM AT**

**4 PARK CIRCUS PLACE,
GLASGOW, C.3.**

Persons desiring to become "Friends of Iona Community" should send five shillings to the above address, which will entitle them to receive "The Coracle" for a year.

The next number of "The Coracle" will include the articles at present appearing in "Life and Work" regarding the Community from the Church point of view.

It is hoped in subsequent numbers to include articles of a historical nature about Iona; some account of other efforts "towards Community"; together with current notes of the progress of our own Movement.

BROADCAST LISTENERS are informed that Dr. MacLeod will be speaking on the National Wave Length on February 5th, in the first of a Series of Talks on the Tambaram Conference.

In March there will be a Broadcast Service, on the Scottish Wave Length, concerning Iona, together with an **APPEAL FOR THE REBUILDING FUND.**