

GROSVENOR ESSAY NO. 10

The Church and Scottish Identity

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THE CHURCH AND SCOTTISH IDENTITY

INTRODUCTION

This Grosvenor Essay has been prepared in the months leading up to the 2014 Referendum on Scottish Independence. It is intended for use both before and beyond the Referendum, whatever the outcome. How the church contributes to questions of identity is always a pertinent matter, and is rooted in the church's understanding of its own identity in Christ. This Essay is forged in a specific historical and social context, from which we gain insights about the Church's calling and identity in any time and place. In training people for Christian ministry, Canon Dr Alistair Haggart, when he was Principal of Coates Hall and later Primus, would teach that we were working and preparing for a Church that does not yet exist. It should be so also in our aspirational hopes for this country. We are always working and preparing for a future that does not yet exist, but for which the seeds exist in our past and present, and for which we can choose to nurture those that are seeds of hope.

To attempt to speak about Scottish Identity is a vast undertaking. At present, while this Essay is being put together, the national debate is largely revolving around the economic integrity of an independent Scotland, so much so that numerous other factors that affect Scottish identity are at risk of being eclipsed.

What, for example, of migration? Scots' identity is known and celebrated worldwide. Burns Suppers are global. The 'Kirking of the Tartan' is a glorious recent innovation in, especially, the USA. Each of these, and there are more besides, are romantic but nevertheless very telling tributes to a small but internationally respected nation that has carried its influence way beyond its own shores. This is, paradoxically, matched by widespread immigration into Scotland. In former centuries various waves of people from lands near and far have chosen (and some have been forced) to come and live within our shores. Movement from within the UK as well as from the Republic of Ireland has been a marked feature, especially since the beginnings of the Industrial Revolution. In the years since the Depression in the 1920's, emigrés have come from Italy, the Asian sub-continent, eastern Europe, Africa, and the Americas. Throughout

the past century, Scotland has become increasingly ethnically diverse.

There are many more narratives that delineate Scotland's identity. We could think of its geography, travel, tourism and leisure infrastructure, its demographics of wealth and poverty, island, village, town and city life, to say nothing of ebbing and flowing trends in political allegiances, social struggles, health and welfare and so on. The story of Shetland and Fair Isle knitting, Borders wool and Harris Tweed, as well as whisky distilling and export could be told. So too could the historic trade associations such as the fleshers and glovers, the crofters and the seafarers. Soccer, golf, curling, mountain, water and rural pursuits are there as well both for leisure and wealth creation.

There's the dark side of Scotland too, including Highland clearances, wealth accrual from the slave trade, drugs, alcohol, sectarianism, and also people-trafficking in relation to agricultural, industrial, and construction labour gangs and to captive sex workers.

All of these themes deserve treatment on their own terms, but for the purposes of this Grosvenor Essay we consider Scotland in relation to its changing religious identity. This includes the intertwining histories of the churches in Scotland, and the current variegated forms of secularism in Scottish institutions and society, some but not all of which are responses to a growing multifaith demographic. In order to understand ourselves better, we take a particular, but not exclusive, interest in Episcopal history and identity in Scotland. We also hear from the Church of Scotland what it means to be a national church in this land. We invite readers to place historical and social considerations into the context of biblical and theological reflection. So we bring biblical reflection to bear on notions of church and national identity, and conclude with some practical-theological considerations of what we can learn from our past as we look forward to Scotland's future.

Several contributors have supplied material for this Grosvenor Essay, and the Doctrine Committee of the Scottish Episcopal Church is indebted to each for what they have given us. As much material as could be has been included, notwithstanding the inevitability that much has also had to be left out. Those who have contributed from

outside the Doctrine Committee are: John Reuben Davis, Emsley Nimmo, +David Chillingworth, Gerald Stranraer-Mull, Alison Peden, and +Gregor Duncan. In addition we are grateful to the office of the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland for commissioning a piece from Revd Dr Matthew Ross on being a national church in Scotland. Dr Ross is also the General Secretary of Action of Churches Together in Scotland, and is well-placed to speak about the churches in Scottish life today.

We are grateful too to Revd Professor Will Storrar, also a Church of Scotland minister, and currently Director of the Center of Theological Inquiry at Princeton Theological Seminary, who has permitted us to use talks that he prepared for the Edinburgh Diocese Haddington conference 'Tae See oursels', as a significant contribution to this Essay. Storrar provides theological and spiritual tools, combined with a sense of our nation's history, to help the churches to think irenically about Scotland's future.

This Essay offers itself for reading and reflection. It is not an official document of the Scottish Episcopal Church. Nor is it the case that every member of the Doctrine Committee, which has produced it, is bound to accept what is said below. But insofar as this Grosvenor Essay tells, at least in part, something of the story – past, present and prospective – of the Church in Scotland, it is part of that wider narrative that is Scotland's identity today.

CHRISTIANITY AND SCOTTISH IDENTITY: THE EARLY AND MEDIEVAL YEARS

The Earliest Years

The Church in this land was multi-ethnic from the beginning. The first Christians who came here were probably soldiers of the Roman Legions and their families. For a very short time the Antonine Wall, between the Forth and Clyde, was the northern border of the Roman Empire and from it there were forays much further north. There were Christians among the Legions long before the Emperor Constantine allowed toleration for Christianity in 312AD and some will have come to the northern frontier. The Roman Empire was, though, in decline and the frontier moved back to Hadrian's Wall, from the Solway to the Tyne. The Legions were withdrawn from Britain in 411, although vestiges of the Roman ways continued for far longer.

The first Christian to whom a name is attached is Ninian, although whether he is a single figure or a composite one around whom legends have gathered is uncertain. He is said to have been born in Galloway around 350AD and baptised into the existing Church there. Later he travelled to Rome and, having been ordained as a bishop for his people by Pope Siricus, he returned to Whithorn in Galloway in 397.

The Romans called all who lived in the north 'Caledonians', a term which included the descendents of the different pre-historic tribes, but in the centuries following direct Roman involvement five distinct kingdoms, with ever changing borders, emerged – the Picts in the north and north-east; the Vikings in the northern and western isles and the north-west; the Scots in Argyll; the Britons in the south-west and the Anglo-Saxons in the Borders and the Lothians.

Ninian and his followers travelled widely and founded new churches across the various kingdoms. Kentigern, who died in 612, was the last of the Romano-British bishops and Columba, who died in 597, the best known of the Irish Celtic monks who evangelised the whole of Scotland from their monasteries in the kingdom of the Scotti, Dalriada. For 200 years after Columba's death, his monastery on Iona remained the central point of the Church in our land.

Like the Romano-British church which stemmed from Ninian, the Church that stemmed from Columba was in communion with the Pope, and was a loose federation of abbeys. However, another strand of Christianity, with an efficient organisation, was moving northwards and the meeting point was the Anglo-Saxon kingdom of Northumbria, which included much of today's south-eastern Scotland.

A Synod at Whitby in 664 was ostensibly about the date of Easter, but is often seen in terms of a choice between the Celtic or Roman ways. It would be most accurate to describe differences as being between old Roman ways and newer Roman practice. Bishop Colman of Lindisfarne spoke for the 'Celts' and Bishop Wilfrid of Hexham for the 'Romans'. Lindisfarne and Hexham are less than 60 miles apart but in those miles was a border between two differing kinds of church, both of which recognised the other as part of the one Church.

The Synod opted for Bishop Wilfrid's way and although aspects of Celtic tradition continued (and have renewed popularity today) the importance of both Iona and Lindisfarne eventually diminished. The islands were raided by Vikings and the relics of the saints were moved to places of greater safety. Cináed mac Aiplín (Kenneth MacAlpin) became king of both the Scots and Picts around 843 and thus began a process of union between the kingdoms, although those living within the new kingdom of Alba would not yet have thought of themselves as one nation.

Alba was the fore-runner of Scotland but it existed without much of the land area of today's kingdom. The primacy was transferred from Iona to Dunkeld, with the Abbot Tuathal becoming Bishop of Fortriu and claiming primatial authority. The Celtic monks were giving way to the Culdees, a name derived from the Irish *Céle Dé*, meaning *Friends of God* (or it can be translated to mean 'client of God', or 'one of God's warband'). The Culdees were not missionaries, and were not a formal order. They lived a reclusive life in small communities, and were concerned with providing consistency in the standard of pastoral care, and provision for the sick and the poor.

The Medieval Church: the Emergence of National Identity

King Malcolm Canmore (reigned 1058-1093), and especially his wife Queen Margaret, set in motion an ecclesiastical revolution. They brought the church into greater conformity with church life as the Queen had known it in England and other parts of Europe.

During the reign of Malcolm and Margaret's sons, Alexander I and David I, dioceses were created and the primacy moved from Dunkeld to Abernethy and then to St Andrews. Monasteries and friaries of Europe-wide orders were established – Benedictine, Cistercian, Franciscan, Augustinian, Tironensian, Premonstratensian, Cluniac, and Valliscaulian among them. By 1230 there were 30 principal monastic houses in Scotland with, in addition, many priories. Only the Franciscans shared the missionary zeal of the old Celtic monasteries. The others saw their communities as primarily centres of devotion and learning.

Scotland, in its modern sense, as the name of a country that extended from the Pentland Firth in the north to the River Tweed in the south, did not appear until the early thirteenth century, when a chronicler at Melrose Abbey can be found describing events in Berwick, Roxburgh, Dunbar and Haddington as having happened 'in the southern part of Scotland', and Galloway as being 'in the western part of Scotland'. Before this time, 'Scotland' – in Gaelic called *Alba* and in Latin, *Scotia* or *Albania* – had always meant the country north of the Forth and south of Moray. Kings of Scots had nonetheless ruled south of the Forth since the mid-tenth century. The realm of the king of Scots therefore encompassed more than one country, taking in *Scotia*, Lothian, Cumbria (that is, Strathclyde), and Galloway.

It was not secular politics, however, but ecclesiastical jurisdiction that first threw the issue of the status of the Scottish kingdom into relief.

The organisation of the Church in the Latin West had been, since Constantine's time, closely linked to political jurisdictions. It seems likely that this pattern developed in northern Britain as much as anywhere else. Certainly, the few clear historical notices that we can discover before the twelfth century are of bishops linked to peoples or political centres. It is not until the reign of Alexander I, however, that we can begin to see with any degree of clarity. The names of several bishops are known from Alexander's time: Gregory of Moray,

Cormac of Dunkeld, and Turgot, Eadmer, and Robert, all of St Andrews, are known. Ailred of Rievaulx, who grew up in King David's court, said that David found three or four bishops 'in Scotland' when he came to the throne, but we do not know if 'Scotland' in this context was Scotia, that is Scotland north of the Forth. Apart from St Andrews, Glasgow, Dunkeld, Moray, and Ross, only Galloway certainly had a bishop at that time, and Galloway was really a separate entity. Aberdeen had a bishop with a local name, Nechtan, in the early 1130s. By the end of David's reign, however, nine of the eventual thirteen Mediaeval dioceses existed, and it would be surprising if Dunblane, the exception, did not also have a bishop.

Neither Glasgow nor Galloway lay in Scotia, but this is because their histories diverged. Glasgow had a strong sense of distinctiveness as the last remnant of the old British kingdom of Cumbria, and resented the attempts of the archbishops of York to establish authority over its bishops, and before the end of the twelfth century was firmly in the domain of the king of Scots. It was a bishop of Glasgow, Jocelin, who was foremost in securing the independence of the Scottish Church from York. The apparently sudden appearance of a bishop in Galloway throws up a number of problems, not least the question of who revived the see. The creation of the diocese was likely the result of a bargain between King David and Thurstan, the archbishop of York. Thurstan agreed to suspend his claim to authority over St Andrews when he consecrated Bishop Robert in 1127; the creation of the diocese of Galloway subject to York might have been a deal of give-and-take.

Now, so far as we might link the structures and hierarchy of the Church to any sense of national identity, it should be noticed that in the 1120s, a controversy arose over the consecration of an Englishman, Eadmer, as bishop of St Andrews or *episcopus Scottorum*, 'bishop of the Scots'. The quarrel was not so much over the nationality of the new bishop, but over who should consecrate him, for it was proposed that Eadmer should receive episcopal orders at the hands of the archbishop of Canterbury. King Alexander I declared 'that he would never in his life consent that a Scottish bishop should be subject to the bishop of Canterbury', and insisted 'that the kingdom of Scotland owed no subjection to the church of Canterbury'. But King Alexander's great-nephew, William the Lion, was less successful in maintaining the independence of the Scottish

Church and clergy. After his defeat and capture by Henry II of England in 1174, William and Henry made peace (the Treaty of Falaise, December 1174); but in August 1175, King William, together with a full gathering of Scottish prelates and nobles, met Henry II at York, where, in full view of his leading subjects, he was obliged to perform homage to King Henry and his son and heir, followed by the assembled Scottish prelates and nobles, who became vassals of the king of England and his son. This meant that, should King William pull out of his agreement with King Henry, the Scottish bishops would remain loyal to the king of England against their own king.

A different kind of attempt to enforce a superior jurisdiction over Scotland had been attempted much earlier by archbishops of York and Canterbury. This had been part of a wider process, initiated by the reforming popes of the mid eleventh century, of consolidating the Church's authority. The idea of the freedom of Scottish bishops from English archbishops had, however, been compromised from an early stage by Bede, who had clearly described Gregory the Great's purpose that Britain should be divided between two archbishops, with northern bishops obedient to York. At the Council of Windsor in 1072, it was decided that the archbishop of York would have authority over all bishops north of the Humber 'as far as the outermost bounds of Scotland', and the archbishop of Canterbury would be acknowledged by York as primate of 'all Britain'. But the point in question was the relationship between Canterbury and York, not the status of Scottish bishops – and no Scottish bishop was present at the council. The decision nevertheless had implications for Scotland. Although the bishop of St Andrews had, probably since the beginning of the tenth century, been acknowledged as pre-eminent bishop of the kingdom (although we do not know what this meant in practice), it was never going to be easy to win papal recognition of this as equivalent to metropolitan of a Scottish Church in the face of Bede's witness to Gregory the Great's intentions.

By the end of the twelfth century, submission by the king of Scots and all the magnates and prelates of his kingdom to the English king, forced upon them by Henry II in 1175, had been reversed by King Richard I, and independence from the overlordship of the English king had been secured. Meanwhile, in a papal bull of 1189 (or 1192), known as *Cum universi*, Pope Clement III (or Celestine III) had recognised that the kingdom was not part of England. But, as we

have seen, Scotland was not yet regarded by its leading men as a single jurisdiction under a sovereign ruler. *Cum universi*, moreover, while it may have rescued the kingdom from the authority of foreign archbishops, nevertheless did not give *Ecclesia Scoticana*, 'the Scottish Church', an institutional identity of its own as a province with its own metropolitan archbishop.

The Saints of Scotland and National Identity

As a consolidated kingdom of Scotland began to emerge during the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth centuries, so did cults of the saints of Scotland. Scotland's saints, along with its kings and bishops, played their part in representing, defining, and refining the kingdom, both as a whole and also in its constituent parts.

The saints of early Scotland continue to figure in a prominent way in the popular historical and religious imagination of Scotland's people. Columba, Ninian, and Kentigern, who were originally regional and even local in their cult were, over time, incorporated into the make-up of the wider realm, and are venerated in our current calendar as national saints. Other figures from the same 'Age of the Saints', saints of once-significant local import remained, on the other hand, just that – local. This process, however, also worked the other way around.

Ninian is an instructive example. In the later middle ages, as well as in the modern imagination and liturgical calendar, Ninian has been venerated as the apostle of Scotland; yet in early medieval Scotland he had no significant following that we can now satisfactorily trace. It seems, rather, that the growth of Ninian's cult in the later middle ages is really to be understood in the context of the ecclesiastical politics of northern England. During the twelfth century, the rulers of Galloway played hard-to-get with the kings who were attempting the consolidation of the Scottish kingdom. One ploy in this political game was for the first known bishop of the restored diocese of Galloway (based at Whithorn) to submit to the archbishop of York. After that, as we have already seen, the diocese of Galloway represented a problem at the heart of the struggle of the Scottish Church to maintain independence from York. And it was this contention that provided the context for a new *Life of Saint Ninian*, which was written by Aelred, abbot of Rievaulx, a protégé of King David I's court, and suggesting that this new promotion of his cult was linked to his claim

to be the earliest apostle of Scotland. But it was not until the later middle ages that Ninian's cult thrived; and when it did, royal support and the popularity of pilgrimages to Whithorn made sure that, from at least the fourteenth century on, Ninian as saint flourished as an intercessor for Scottish subjects across the kingdom.

Kentigern, also known as Mungo, was almost certainly recognised outside northern Britain as a church founder of regional significance in the seventh century. But again, the spread of his cult is most likely a much later phenomenon bound up with the rising importance of Glasgow as a religious centre in the twelfth century. It was the Old Welsh- or Cumbric-speaking inhabitants of Cumbria and Lothian who may have regarded him as a national saint, since he is one of only four saints who appear in personal names with the Cumbric prefix *gos-* or *cos-*, *Cosmungo*, 'Servant-of-Mungo'.

But it was Columba who remained the star, the national patron, right into the wars of independence. Columba's reliquary, *Breccbennach*, was carried before the Scottish army at Bannockburn in 1314. And about this time at the abbey of Inchcolm, in the Firth of Forth, the canons at Vespers on his feast-day would sing:

Save the choir which sings your praise
from the assaults of Englishmen.

Protector of our homeland ... Hope of the Scots.

The cult of Saint Columba is consistent in its growth in the popular imagination as that of a saint already identified with power and national fame in his own lifetime. The international spread of his cult probably began in earnest during the seventh century, when his followers expanded their reach from Iona into the territory of the Picts and Northumbrians. Columba became the patron saint of the royal dynasty of *Cináed mac Aiplín* (Kenneth MacAlpin), and its successors as rulers of Scotland, and this ensured that Columba would be the most national of saints. This status as dynastic patron grew to that of patron of the kingdom when the new kingdom of Alba (the successor to the Pictish kingdoms) merged its identity with the 'Scottish' nation. We seem to have in Columba, then, unlike Kentigern and Ninian, a saint whose status as a 'Scottish saint',

evolved during the early middle ages, rather than being asserted from one centre during the later medieval period.

Meanwhile, cults in the Southwest, Northeast, and Northwest – Uinniau, Drostan, Nechtan, Máelrubha, Moluag – did not make a strong impact on the national consciousness of later Scotland. Yet they can tell us something instructive by comparison with those saints – Columba, Kentigern, Ninian – who received the attention of hagiographers and royal dynasties. Each of the saints can be identified with particular national groupings or regions. In this way, we can probably recognise Drostan and Nechtan as the true patron-saints of the Picts, rather than Ninian; for the Britons of the Southwest, Uinniau seems to have been a more important patron than Ninian or Kentigern. That none of these saints became the subject of a ‘Life’, advocating their importance on a Scottish national stage, is probably the reason they do not figure in the modern story of Scottish nationhood and identity.

The relationship of the earliest saints of Scotland to national identity, then, can be seen to have taken different shapes. For some saints of local or regional standing, who at first were identified only with particular peoples within the later consolidated realm of Scotland, successful representation of their cults, in particular through the written word, led to growing identification with the new kingdom of Scotland as a whole. This became especially the case during the fourteenth century when there was an especial air of self-conscious nationalism, based on hard-won independence from the kings of England.

The Significance Of Saint Andrew

The importance of Saint Andrew the Apostle in the Scottish kingdom, and his adoption as patron, developed from the importance of St Andrews as an episcopal see and centre for pilgrimage. There had been an important Pictish royal monastery in the vicinity of the present St Andrews, then called Kinrimund, since the eighth century, and the case has been made for the likelihood that it was dedicated to Saint Andrew. The place grew in prestige, and by the tenth century it was the seat of the principal bishop of Scotland. In a later phase of development, a burgh was founded and named St Andrews by Bishop Robert, around 1140, during the reign of King David I. It has been argued that the street-plan of the burgh was designed to

mimic the Vatican borgo because of the church's status as an apostolic shrine. Pilgrims had, in fact, been visiting Kinrinvoud since at least the middle of the tenth century. A century or so later, traffic had built up enough for Queen Margaret to establish a free ferry for pilgrims across the Firth of Forth; and about the same time, the 'basilica of Saint Andrew the apostle' was famous enough for a Welsh hagiographer to incorporate it into his Life of Saint Cadog. By 1140 there was an official hostel for pilgrims, St Leonard's.

In 1160, William, bishop of Moray, was sent to Rome soon after the death of Bishop Robert of St Andrews (who had founded the burgh). The reason for William's visit to Rome was almost certainly to press the case for making St Andrews a metropolitan see in order to resist the claim of the archbishops of York to take control of the Scottish church. The Scottish Church and crown resisted such claims vigorously and one bishop of St Andrews around 1100 was already styling himself archbishop without papal sanction – a claim that David I first pursued in 1125.

A large part of the Scottish argument rested on the possession of corporeal relics believed to belong to Saint Andrew. How they came to be there is not known, but the earliest suggestion of their presence relates to the mid-tenth century and the Irish pilgrim who died at Kinrinvoud, which eventually in the twelfth century is renamed 'St Andrews'.

To try to account for the known presence of the bones of Saint Andrew in Scotland, a foundation legend arose, which survives in two discrete versions, known simply as Version A and Version B. Both versions of the St Andrews foundation legend, as they stand, belong to the first half of the twelfth century, but Version B purports to have its origins in the ninth century. The two versions agree that the Scottish bones were separated from the rest of Saint Andrew's remains by a bishop or abbot called Regulus, who in Version A is a guardian of the apostle's body in Constantinople. Regulus is guided by an angel to sail west, eventually landing at Kinrinvoud (St Andrews), within the realm of a Pictish king called Hungus, son of Forso. In Version B events are placed in AD 345, during the reign of the emperor Constantius II, but they are a century later in Version A, during the reign of Theodosius II; the King Hungus referred to, however, lived in the ninth century. King Hungus, meanwhile, had

received guidance from a vision of Saint Andrew helping him gain victory over either the Britons (Version A) or the Saxons (Version B). In Version A, Hungus is instructed to send his army in the direction of a cross in the sky – a clear echo of the story of Constantine’s dream before the Battle of the Milvian Bridge in 312. In gratitude, the king grants Regulus the land on the headland on which the future cathedral was built, and extensive possessions elsewhere in his kingdom. After Andrew’s body was translated to Constantinople, its presence had been used to bolster the status of the city’s patriarchs in relation to those of others that could claim apostolic founders or similar, namely, Antioch, Jerusalem, Alexandria, and Rome. That the bishops of St Andrews were trying to use his relics in just the same way is demonstrated by Version A of the foundation legend. There we read that the consequence of having his relics there mean that,

the archiepiscopacy of all Scotia should be exercised from this city where the apostolic see is [and] no bishop ought to be ordained in Scotia without the approval of the elders of this place. For in relation to the first Rome this is the second. This is the preeminent city of refuge. This is the city of cities of Scotia.

[Dauvit Broun, ‘The church of St Andrews and its foundation legend in the early twelfth century: recovering the full text of Version A of the foundation legend’, in *Kings, Clerics and Chronicles in Scotland 500–1297*, ed. Simon Taylor (Dublin, 2000), 108–14, at 111.]

St Andrews was claiming to be an apostolic see: a second Rome, no less. The idea that St Andrews was the counterpart to Rome was therefore clearly spelled out in the twelfth century.

In 1320, for the first time, we have something like an official recognition of Saint Andrew as patron of the kingdom. In late 1319 and early 1320 papal pressure on King Robert I (Bruce) and his government to submit to Edward II of England was at its most intense. The response included a letter to Pope John XII, dated 6 April 1320 at Arbroath, sent in the name of the barons of Scotland and the ‘whole community of the kingdom’. This has come to be known as the Declaration of Arbroath:

If [King Robert] should give up what he has begun, seeking to make us or our kingdom subject to the king of England or to the English, we would strive at once to drive him out as our enemy and a subverter of his own right and ours, and we would make some other man who was able to defend us our king. For as long as a hundred of us remain alive, we will never on any conditions be subjected to the lordship of the English; for it is not for glory, nor riches, nor honours that we fight, but for freedom alone, which no good man gives up except with his life.

And then comes a passage clearly recognising Saint Andrew the Apostle as patron of the Scottish people:

The high qualities and merits of [the Scottish] people, were they not otherwise manifest, shine forth clearly enough from this: that the King of kings and Lord of lords, our Lord Jesus Christ, after His Passion and Resurrection, called them, even though settled in the uttermost parts of the earth, almost the first to His most holy faith. Nor did He wish them to be confirmed in that faith by merely anyone but by the first of His Apostles – by calling, though second or third in rank – the most gentle Saint Andrew, the Blessed Peter's brother, and desired him to keep them under his protection as their patron for ever. The Most Holy Fathers your predecessors gave careful heed to these things and strengthened this same kingdom and people with many favours and numerous privileges, as being the special charge of the Blessed Peter's brother.

[Translation by Alan Borthwick,
<http://www.nas.gov.uk/downloads/declarationArbroath.pdf>.]

Church And Crown

The Treaty of Falaise in 1174 had marked a low point in relations with England. William the Lion had been captured at Alnwick and under the treaty signed between William and Henry II of England (at Falaise in Normandy where William was held prisoner) the king returned to Scotland but with the Scottish Crown now subordinate to that of England and five important Scottish castles under English control. During these years the Archbishop of York also sought to assert jurisdiction over Scotland's bishops. This was resisted and

eventually the Pope declared the Scottish bishops subject only to himself. In 1189 Henry II died and the new English king, Richard the Lionheart, revoked the Treaty of Falaise before setting off for the Holy Land on the Third Crusade.

Later kings of England re-asserted their claim to be Lords Paramount of Scotland and the death of Alexander III in 1286 left a vacuum in Scotland with the only direct heir being Alexander's grand-daughter, the infant Maid of Norway. The death of the Princess as she travelled to Scotland in 1290 left twelve candidates for the throne, all of whom were prepared to pay homage to Edward I of England. John Balliol was appointed and then sought to escape the legal noose which Edward had tied around him, eventually calling a Parliament at which the homage was withdrawn. An alliance with France quickly followed as did the Wars of Independence. They began with the defeat of the Scots army at Dunbar in April 1296 and by July all of Scotland was under English control, its castles occupied by English forces, and King John and many of the nobles imprisoned in England. There was, however, resistance, and there were some victories for the Scots (William Wallace and Andrew de Moray defeated the English at Stirling Bridge in 1297). King John was released into Papal custody in 1299 but a planned return to Scotland with French forces did not happen. When Edward I came into Scotland again in 1303 the Guardian, Sir John Comyn, sued for peace and lenient terms were granted. Sir William Wallace was one who opposed this and was executed by Edward in 1305.

The struggle for independence was continued by Robert Bruce, Earl of Carrick, and despite his flaws – a murderer and usurper – he was crowned as king at Scone in 1306. His victory over Edward II at Bannockburn in 1314 was a turning point although it took another fourteen years before there was acceptance by England of Scotland as a sovereign nation. Berwick, the last part of Scotland to be occupied by the English army, was retaken in 1318 – resulting in the excommunication of the entire nation as the Pope had called for an end to the fighting so that another Crusade could be set in motion. Scotland's answer to the Pope came in the form of the Declaration of Arbroath in 1320 with its resounding reasons for independence. Peace came in 1328 when, in the year before King Robert's death, the English agreed to recognise Scotland as an independent nation and King Robert's four-year old son David married the marginally

older English Princess Joan, sister of the new, young King Edward III.

However, when Edward III came into full power, he was determined to re-assert English authority. King David and Queen Joan were safely in France and Edward encouraged King John's son Edward Balliol, who had perhaps a better claim to the Scottish throne, to invade. He was crowned at Scone in 1332 and a month later gave homage to Edward III of England and also made a grant of the whole of southern Scotland to England. Edward Balliol tried to be an effective ruler but it was a forlorn struggle in a nation which now desired a king to be loyal to Scotland rather than to England, however legitimate his claim to the crown.

The beginning of the Hundred Years War between France and England in 1337 diverted attention away from Scotland. King David returned in 1341, and for the next 100 years successive Scottish kings sought to regain the southern lands given away by King Edward Balliol.

In the Church during these years corruption and laxity became tolerated, and then common-place. There were, of course, exceptions, and there were saintly bishops and faithful priests and people across Scotland. The general moral decline, though, is perhaps epitomised in the life of James IV - Scotland's Renaissance king, who was fluent in many languages, widely respected across Europe, a deeply pious man who founded many churches, but one who also secured the appointments of his brother, the 20-year-old Duke of Ross, and then his own illegitimate son, the 12-year-old Alexander Stewart, as successive Archbishops of St Andrews.

James IV died, aged 40, at the Battle of Flodden in 1513, along with the flower of Scotland – much of the nobility and their sons; bishops and abbots and a third of Scotland's entire army. After Flodden, Scotland ceased to be an important player on the European stage and once more the struggle was to survive the dominance of England.

The Crown came to James's seventeen month old son, James V, and power to a succession of Regents, including James's widow, Margaret Tudor, sister of Henry VIII of England. When James V

himself died, aged 30, soon after another defeat by the English, the Crown once more passed to an infant – James's six day old daughter became Mary, Queen of Scots. And, as before, power rested with a succession of Regents. There were attempts from both England and France to secure the future marriage of the infant Queen and - as elsewhere in Europe - an increasing interest in Reformed theology.

THE REFORMATION

The word 'Reformation' covers a wide series of changes in Western Christianity between the 14th and 17th centuries. It began with John Wycliffe (1329-84), an English philosopher and priest, who said that the Pope's claims were not founded in Scripture. In Germany, Martin Luther (1483-1546), began to teach that faith alone and not works is the ground for justification before God. In Switzerland, Ulrich Zwingli (1484-1531) and John Calvin (1509-64) taught a new theology and carried through anti-papal, anti-hierarchic and anti-monastic reforms.

In the mid 16th century there were two distinct groups of Reformers within Scotland: an extreme Protestant party, influenced by the teaching of John Calvin, and also a more moderate group who, though well aware of the need for change, wished to keep as much as was good of the old Church. But a crisis was brewing. Mary, Queen of Scots, married the Dauphin Francis, who soon became King of France, and in England the Roman Catholic Queen Mary died and was succeeded by her Protestant half-sister, Elizabeth.

Mary, Queen of Scots, had a claim to the English Crown through her great-grandfather, Henry VII of England, and questions persisted, at least in the minds of some, as to Elizabeth's legitimacy. It depended on whether Henry VIII's divorce from Catherine of Aragon and his subsequent marriage to Anne Boleyn, Elizabeth's mother, were considered valid. Francis I and Mary, Queen of Scots, knew what they thought and included the Arms of England in their own.

In Scotland in 1557 a group of nobles – the Lords of the Congregation – encouraged Reformation preachers and there were attacks on church buildings and property. In January 1559, the anonymous *Beggars' Summons* threatened monks with eviction from their monasteries in favour of beggars. In point of fact the Scottish Reformation saw more destruction of property than people. Many of those in religious houses were allowed to remain in their dwellings until they died, at least before 1590. There had long been concern about the way of life in many monastic houses, but this was a first, and calculated, attempt to involve the people of Scotland in unrest. Before then, the conflict had been amongst the nobles, who were politically as well as religiously motivated; many disliked the rule of

the Regent, the formidable Frenchwoman Mary of Guise, mother of the Queen.

Elizabeth of England offered support to the Lords of the Congregation while the Regent called on French troops. An English fleet arrived in the Firth of Forth and was followed by an army marching north. The Regent retreated to Edinburgh Castle, became ill and died there on June 11th 1560, aged forty-five. A month later, under the Treaty of Edinburgh, the French and English troops withdrew.

The triumph of the extreme reformers was total, as was the failure of the moderates. In 1560 the Scottish Parliament decreed the removal of the Pope's authority in Scotland and forbade the Mass. However, only forty Reformed ministers were available for over a thousand parishes, and even twelve years later, when a form of Episcopacy was restored (bishops being appointed rather than consecrated and subject to the General Assembly), the number had only increased by just over two hundred. In 1592, Presbyterianism was formally established as the Church of Scotland, although two thirds of parishes still did not have a Presbyterian minister. In many parts of Scotland the Reformation was regarded as a distant quarrel among the aristocracy, and those adhering to the old ways continued to worship, openly or secretly, depending on local circumstances.

The Reformation meant that the one Church, however imperfect, had become fractured. In these conflicts were the roots of what would later become the Episcopal, Presbyterian and Roman Catholic Churches in Scotland. The national church was at different times Episcopalian or Presbyterian, and each was variously at times (even at the same time) called *The Church of Scotland*. The name continues for the Presbyterian Church to this day, while in the Episcopal Church it continued to be used for nearly three hundred years, well into the nineteenth century. It was followed for ten years, by *The Protestant Episcopal Church in Scotland*, then *The Episcopal Church in Scotland* and currently *The Scottish Episcopal Church*.

Trouble was never distant in the years following the Reformation settlement. The enforced abdication of Mary, Queen of Scots, and her years of imprisonment in England, left the Crown once more to an infant – James VI. However, the child grew and by 1600 it was

clear to him that the logical conclusion of extreme Reform was the establishment of a power base able to challenge the Throne itself. James succeeded Elizabeth in 1603 and became King of England too (as the great, great-grandson of Henry VII of England). He kept Scotland and England as separate nations, ruling both in a personal union. But the balance of power had shifted and it was only a matter of time before the religious wheel turned once more.

In 1606 the Scots Parliament removed restrictions on the office of bishop and the General Assembly of 1610 restored full Episcopacy. Three of the bishops, appointed but not consecrated, travelled to England and were consecrated by the Bishops of London, Ely, Rochester and Worcester.

Troubles continued though, and the high-handed actions of Charles I did much to irritate almost everyone. In 1637 the king imposed a Prayer Book on Scotland without consultation with either the General Assembly or even many of the bishops. The following year the Assembly, ignoring the fact that the Royal Commissioner had dissolved it, deposed all the bishops, excommunicating eight of them.

However, when the English Parliament executed Charles I in 1649 the Scottish Parliament immediately proclaimed Charles II as king. Although Charles was crowned at Scone in 1651 he was soon back in exile and it was not until 1660, two years after the death of Oliver Cromwell, that the monarchy was restored in both Scotland and England. In 1661 the Scots Parliament passed the Recissory Act, which removed Presbyterian Church government and reverted to the 1637 position. The Church of Scotland was once more Episcopalian.

By then, of the bishops who had been in office in 1637-8, only Thomas Sydserf, Bishop of Galloway, remained alive. He was translated to the Diocese of Orkney and four new bishops consecrated in London by the Bishops of London, Llandaff, Worcester and Carlisle. For the second time in fifty years the Apostolic succession of bishops had been secured through English intervention.

Charles II had been, whenever it had suited him, determined to re-establish Episcopalianism, sympathetic to the claims of Presbyterianism, and in secret a Roman Catholic. His personal charm largely enabled him to succeed in all of this. But that success did not continue when his brother, the Duke of York, became James VII and II in 1685. James was firmly a Roman Catholic. Through his Declaration of Indulgence, which he first issued in 1687, he attempted to create religious liberty for Roman Catholics and Protestant Dissenters in England, and he provided partial toleration in Scotland, though he continued the persecution of the Presbyterian Covenanters. The Declaration of Indulgence put the Established Church in England in the position of eroding some of its own privileges. When the King reissued the Declaration in 1688, and ordered Anglican clergy to read it in their churches, the Archbishop of Canterbury and seven English bishops submitted a petition. They were charged with seditious libel and imprisoned in the Tower of London. The public became increasingly alarmed over the rise of Catholic influence, especially when Queen Mary gave birth to a Roman Catholic son and heir. The acquittal of the Archbishop and the seven other bishops brought great rejoicing, and James promised to uphold the Episcopalian nature of both the Church of England and the Church of Scotland. It was, however, too little too late to save James. Seven Protestant nobles had already petitioned his son-in-law, Prince William of Orange, to invade England, and James fled to France.

THE EMERGING IDENTITY OF THE SCOTTISH EPISCOPAL CHURCH

The Scottish Episcopal Church emerged when it was finally and reluctantly accepted on both sides that there would be no single Protestant Church in Scotland. The Scottish Reformation began nearly a century and a half of working out what kind of church government there would be in Scotland, what forms of worship, what doctrinal beliefs. Between 1560 and 1689, the Scottish Church was Episcopal for 81 years in total, and Presbyterian for 39 years (not quite half of the period). Although the Reformers had a vision of Scotland united in a quest for pure religion, supported by a godly monarch, the interplay of personalities and politics, and the regionalism of the country (with huge differences between Highland and Lowland) resulted in two Reformation kirks. In 1689, about two thirds of Scotland was Episcopalian, and the Presbyterian settlement under William III and Mary was by no means a foregone conclusion. But this settlement happened, and in 1712, the Episcopal Church of Scotland had been incorporated as a distinct organisation by the Toleration Act. Some Episcopalians considered it a temporary measure, until the 'King over the water' could be restored, but this became patently unrealistic in the aftermath of the Jacobite rebellions. The Act of Toleration of 1792 formally recognised the Scottish Episcopal Church as a legal, Protestant denomination. By this time, it was, as Sir Walter Scott lamented, now only 'the shadow of a shade of its former self'. But it had accepted its identity as one – but only one – expression of Christian faith in Scotland.

The Scottish Episcopal Church is about 12% of the size of the Church of Scotland. It is a Church in good heart, showing signs of growth and vision and purpose. It is organised to provide ministry throughout Scotland, from the largest cities to the tiniest island communities. It also gains strength from belonging to the Anglican Communion, a world-wide network of provinces. The 'Scottish Episcopal Church' is just that: Scottish, Episcopal (with bishops as part of its order) and a Church. Each word in its name is important to its identity, and was hard-won.

Scottish

The issue of the Episcopal Church's 'Scottishness' really arose after the union of the crowns in 1603. A key figure was John Spottiswoode, born in Calder as a strict Presbyterian, who became a royalist and accompanied James VI to London, where he was consecrated by three English bishops. As Archbishop of St Andrews, and Moderator of the General Assembly, Spottiswoode introduced the controversial 5 Articles of Perth in 1618, which enjoined practices usually associated with the Church of England, such as kneeling to take Communion. However, it was the Book of Common Prayer, that Charles I wanted to introduce to Scotland in 1637, that caused the major controversy. Prayer Books were not unknown, and the reformers had the Book of Common Order. But the Book of Common Prayer was based on the English version of 1559, as revised in 1604. It was not a clone – there were significant changes and additions made by its Scottish compilers, John Maxwell, Bishop of Ross, and James Wedderburn, Bishop of Dunblane. For example, the word 'presbyter' was used instead of 'priest' or 'minister', and the order of the Communion service was made closer to the original, more Calvinistic Book of Common Prayer from 1549. It had Scottish saints, and no readings from the Apocrypha as in England. Yet it was recognisably Anglican and fatally associated with William Laud, Archbishop of Canterbury. Archbishop Spottiswoode was doubtful about the wisdom of imposing it, especially without consulting the General Assembly. Jenny Geddes - if she existed – confirmed his doubts, and the riots against it in St Giles and elsewhere ultimately led to the National Covenant of 1638 and its rejection of unauthorised innovations.

It was a 'national' Covenant, but that did not mean that all of Scotland agreed to it. Presbyterianism had taken hold strongly in the South West of Scotland, but not in the North East, where the Gordons held sway. When the National Covenant was presented by James Graham, Earl of Montrose to six doctors of divinity at Marischal and King's College Aberdeen (the 'Aberdeen Doctors'), they declared that it went against the oaths that they had taken to the Five Articles, went against episcopacy and was unlawful in itself. These two parties placed themselves at the extremes; others had more nuanced attitudes. For example, Robert Leighton, at that time minister of Newbattle in Midlothian, signed the National Covenant, but also liked set prayers, a choir and organ.

Leighton refused to sign the Solemn League and Covenant, drawn up in 1643, during the First English Civil War. This Covenant bound Scottish Presbyterians with English Reformers, and committed the Covenanters to fighting with the English Parliamentarians. They hoped that the Church of England would become Presbyterian. But the Civil War and Commonwealth made it very difficult to know how to relate to England, whether you were Covenanter or Episcopalian. Do you 'engage' with Charles I, 'resolve' to defend Scotland against Cromwellian England, even using royalists, or 'protest' against any dealings with Charles II? (Each of these options described a party in Scotland.) What would be an authentic 'Scottish' stance for a Church at this time?

The Restoration of Charles II in 1660 aligned the Episcopal Church with the Stuart dynasty and set it up for one of the hardest choices it had to make: to uphold their oath to Charles's brother James VII after the accession of William and Mary, or to swear allegiance to the new regime. By no means all Scottish Episcopal clergy were Jacobite, in 1689 or later. There were those who were Williamite. They hoped to be included in an established church. But a divergence in identity between the two Reformation Kirks had grown up over the second half of the seventeenth century that was not just about church and state, or about church government, but about much deeper adherence to forms of worship and devotion, and the theologies they expressed. It would have been difficult to absorb Episcopalians into a Scottish Presbyterian Kirk in 1689, even had the Jacobite option not complicated matters.

For some Episcopalians, the political aspect of the Jacobite cause was a defining element of their identity. 15 of the 26 rebel clans in the '15 rebellion were Episcopalian, and some Aberdeenshire clergy were actively involved in it, though much less so in the '45. But many Episcopalian 'non-jurors' (who refused to take the oath that William III was king both *de facto* and *de iure*) were principally concerned to preserve the Scottish Church as restored by Charles II in 1660. Largely confined to the North East of Scotland, Angus and parts of Fife, though with a significant and quite fashionable presence in eighteenth-century Edinburgh, the Episcopal Church jealously preserved its own Scottish traditions. Experiencing penal laws, the restriction of worship and real hardship strengthened their sense of

identity and resolve. By contrast, those Episcopalians who did take the oath and prayed for the royal family publicly and so 'Qualified' as legal congregations were known as 'English'. They were often populated by the English: army personnel and engineers developing Scotland's industrial potential, but also by the upwardly mobile who gave large amounts of money for churches such as St Paul's Aberdeen and St John's Perth. These Qualified Chapels had clergy ordained by English Bishops, and they used the Book of Common Prayer, not the Scottish Communion Office.

The split in the Episcopal Church between non-jurors and jurors, between Scottish Jacobites and English-influenced Qualified Chapels, was only healed gradually from the early nineteenth century onwards (the last Qualified Chapel to be re-united was Montrose in the Diocese of Brechin in 1920). Once Charles Edward Stuart died in 1788, John Skinner, Bishop of Aberdeen and Primus, explored ways to get the penal laws against the non-jurors repealed. One of the sticking-points was the requirement to sign the 39 Articles of the Church of England. Scottish Episcopalians had never had a confession of faith apart from the creeds, and this particular one involved some difficult articles, not least article 37, asserting that the King is the Supreme Governor of the Church. Over the century, the non-juring church had gradually broken its links with the Crown, and appointed its own bishops. Indeed, in 1784 the Scottish bishops even consecrated Samuel Seabury to be the first bishop in the United States, since he was unable to take the Oath of Royal Supremacy in England, and so could not be consecrated by the English bishops. It was hard to see how George III would be Supreme Governor of the Scottish Episcopal Church in any meaningful sense. However, under the leadership of John Skinner the younger, Bishop of Aberdeen and Primus, the 39 Articles were adopted by the Episcopal clergy in 1804, the Qualified Chapels began to accept the Scottish bishops, and there was, again, a single 'other Reformation Kirk'.

The Scottish Episcopal Church had been closely associated with the Stuart dynasty in the seventeenth century, its preferred forms of worship and its political use of the Church. During the eighteenth century, the Scottishness of the Episcopal church was re-defined, and its independence emerged. In the following centuries, there would be a significant impact on the Scottish Episcopal Church from

English immigration and the import of developments from the Church of England such as the Oxford Movement. But while the Scottish Episcopal Church belongs to the Anglican Communion of churches, it was not founded by the Church of England, as every other province of the Anglican Communion has been, apart from the Episcopal Church of America. As one recent historian has claimed, 'While it owed much to English antecedents and intermittent influence, [the Scottish Episcopal Church] was ultimately a Scottish form of episcopal Protestantism'.¹

Episcopal

So why was it so important that this form of Protestantism should have bishops as an indispensable part of its church government? That perhaps begs the question – were bishops seen as indispensable by the Scottish Episcopal Church? To read some of the nineteenth-century Episcopalian historians, you would think that there was no doubt. George Grub, an Aberdeen lawyer who wrote an ecclesiastical history of Scotland from the earliest times in four volumes, devoted nine pages to proving that the church of St Columba had bishops who were superior to priests and abbots, and 'insofar as the Scottish ecclesiastical system differed from that which has been the rule of the Universal Church, it was necessarily imperfect'.² But Divine Right Episcopacy was a late product in the Scottish Church, and did not really emerge until the eighteenth century. The early Reformers were more experimental and creative, at least to begin with.

John Knox brought with him all the experience of Geneva, but Scotland was a largish kingdom, not a city-state. The *First Book of Discipline* (ch. 5), issued in 1560, prescribed superintendents for ten regions of Scotland, whose areas of responsibility corresponded territorially more or less to the ancient bishoprics (Orkney, Ross, Argyll, Aberdeen, Brechin, St Andrews, Edinburgh, Jedburgh, Glasgow and Dumfries). Only five were ever actually appointed and the office was in fact dropped in the 1570s. The superintendents were to travel round rather like pioneer missionaries, preaching and trying to plant reformed congregations, and approving and appointing

¹ R. Strong, *Episcopalianism in Nineteenth Century Scotland* (OUP, 2002), p.1.

² G. Grub, *An Ecclesiastical History of Scotland* Vol.1 (Edmonston and Douglas: Edinburgh, 1861), p. 160.

ministers. 'They must not be suffered to live as your idle bishops have done heretofore.'³ Their authority rested on their election, not on any Apostolic Succession, and they could be deposed for negligence.

Were these superintendents bishops? The name is the same, in that both mean 'over-seer', and John Erskine of Dun, Superintendent of Dun, declared, 'I understand a bishop or superintendent to be but one office, for where the one is, the other is'.⁴ The Bishop of Galloway did, in fact, become 'Superintendent' of his see. But superintendents were not to have traditional Episcopal temporal and political powers. They were a bit like the Celtic bishops that George Grub admired in his history – mobile evangelists whose authority was rooted in a local community.

The debate about bishops raged through the 1570s, with the fear uppermost in the reformers' minds of the Kirk losing its independence. In 1572, by the Leith Agreement, the Crown was permitted, with the Church's consent, to appoint bishops who could sit in both the General Assembly and Parliament. They were 'Bishops in Council', without more than titular ecclesiastical power. The regent (1571-2) Morton, had erastian hopes of making bishops the ecclesiastical arm of the Crown, and filled the bishoprics with his nominees. But Andrew Melville was having none of this, especially as the Crown was siphoning off church revenues through compliant bishops [the 'Tulchan' bishops]. Moreover, he was adamant about the essential parity of ministers. Melville's *Second Book of Discipline* in 1578 made the term 'bishop' just another descriptive role of the leader of a congregation: he would pastor it, serve it, teach it and 'bishop' it – as overseer. So the bishops were invited to take congregations, and James Boyd of Trochrig, Archbishop of Glasgow, was prepared to consider this.

Such reforming experiment was not at all welcome to James VI. The Black Acts of 1584 proclaimed the king's supremacy 'in all civil and spiritual estates' and James VI would declare to the English Puritans eventually: 'If bishops were put out of power, I know what would become of my supremacy. No bishop, no King'. The stage was set

³ *First Book of Discipline*, Fifth Head.

⁴ Harada, Koji (2010) *A study of the origin of Scottish Presbyterianism (1560-1638)*. MTh(R) thesis, Glasgow 2009, p.17 (<http://theses.gla.ac.uk/1655/>)

for the confrontation of the early seventeenth century. Bishops became associated with Stuart royal control of the church – anathema to a reforming movement in Scotland that began in doctrinal opposition to Mary Queen of Scots and prized church independence as a core element of its identity. The divergence of the two Kirks was beginning in earnest, and the question of ‘bishops or not?’ was becoming bound together with other issues: the relationship with the state, forms of worship, the authority of the Church of England.

In retrospect, it seems that the divergence was inevitable. But there were those who retained a creative vision about how the church could be nurtured. Episcopacy had co-existed with kirk sessions, presbyteries and the General Assembly until Charles I’s new Code of Canons for the Church in 1636 (which had no mention of presbyteries or the General Assembly). How important was it for bishops to be or not to be part of the Scottish Church polity? In some ways, Presbyterians were quicker to establish an absolute *de iure* position than Episcopalians. Andrew Melville had come under the influence of the French Calvinist Theodore Beza in Geneva, and for him there was no question but that there should be parity of ministries and an independent Church. But for some – perhaps most - Episcopalians in the seventeenth century, the presence of bishops in the church was a matter of expediency or royal prerogative, rather than a Scriptural necessity.

Take Robert Leighton, for example – best known for the legacy of his books to Dunblane which now forms the Leighton Library. Appointed Presbyterian minister in 1641, he had had a wide education in Europe, and no small exposure to reformed Catholicism in Douai. He had seen his father brutally tortured in England for writing a Puritan pamphlet against bishops. Leighton signed the National Covenant in 1643, but not the Solemn League and Covenant, and he resigned from his parish in 1651 to become principal of Edinburgh University. At the Restoration of Charles II in 1660, what should he do?

Various schemes for uniting Presbyterians and Episcopalians - whether in England or in Scotland – along some sort of ‘Broad Church’ lines had been mooted since the 1640s, and were developed by Bishop Ussher. Leighton upheld this vision of bishops

with limited power adapted to Presbyterian forms. Some of the 'Resolutioner' clergy – who wanted to work with Charles II (as opposed to the 'Remonstrant' Covenanters) – agreed with him, especially those in Aberdeen and the North, and in Lothian. So Leighton was consecrated Bishop of Dunblane in 1661 by four bishops of the Church of England, and set about putting his principles into practice. He refused to enforce conformity; he sat among the presbyters as guide and encourager, not as overlord; he tried to get a General Assembly held. In some ways, he was rather like one of the early superintendents of the reformed Kirk. But the times were against him, and he was crushed by extremists on both sides. When he resigned, defeated, as Archbishop of Glasgow in 1674, he claimed 'I have done my utmost to repair the Temple of the Lord'.

Part of the problem was the quality of most of the Restoration bishops. It's all very well to have a high ideal of a bishop, but when the visible incumbents of the office don't live up to it, the ideal is hard to sustain. Anyone writing on Archbishop Sharp might find themselves having a lot of sympathy with the Covenanters who assassinated him on Magus Moor in 1679. James Gordon, incumbent of Banchory-Devenick, published a scathing critique of church corruption the year after Sharp's death called '*The Reformed Bishop*'. The bishops who punished him for doing so were defending an erastian line of episcopal authority, authorised by the Crown. They thought Scripture permitted it, even if it did not prescribe it.

The change came in the 1690s, after the accession of William III and Mary.

The Presbyterian settlement in Scotland drew forth much more explicit and ideological defence of episcopacy. Bishop John Sage (in his *Principles of the Cyprianic Age (1695)*, Rev. George Garden (Aberdeen) and others claimed that Christ instituted different orders in the Church, and sent out Apostles to have authority until the end of the world (Matt.28:20). The 'Divine Right of Episcopacy' (to counter the 'divine institution of Presbyterianism') was now being preached and promulgated in the early eighteenth-century pamphlet war. This - together with the political and social consequences that followed on the bishops' refusal to treat with William III – made episcopacy a non-negotiable element of the 'other Reformation Kirk'.

Of course these bishops became as shadowy as the Scottish Episcopal Church itself during its outlawing in the eighteenth century. They revived under the Oxford Movement of the nineteenth century, when cathedrals were built for them and their missionary zeal rekindled. The Church's changing needs called forth different forms of ministry, and there were creative experiments in the Reformation period that should be celebrated rather than criticised as compromise. One can see some of the best of the past in the bishops of the Scottish Episcopal Church today – the mobility and mission-focus of the Celtic church and superintendents; the co-operative leadership of Bishop Leighton. Bishops are, of course, elected now too.

Church

The identity of the Scottish Episcopal Church was being formed in the crucible of conflict over its relationship with the state and the form of its church government. But belonging to a Church, and expressing the Christian faith within a Church, involves much more than lines of allegiance and authority. The regular practice of attending a particular building, worshipping, and listening to sermons, develops powerful sinews of belief and devotion that bind people and a Church together. Add to this the conservatism of local farming and fishing communities in the early modern period, and you have the potential for distinct confessional cultures emerging in Scotland. It used to be argued that Episcopalianism and Presbyterianism differed only on church government until the eighteenth century, but recent research has underlined a growing difference on a much broader front in the two religious cultures during the second half of the seventeenth century. What were the distinguishing features of Episcopalian practice?

Historians have tended to stress the similarities between Episcopalian and Presbyterian worship across Scotland up to 1689. That is: there would generally have been little prescribed liturgy; Holy Communion would have taken place with the congregation seated around tables; metrical psalms would have been sung, not hymns; there would not have been surplices worn or the sign or the Cross made at baptism. Episcopal worship would have included the Lord's Prayer and the Doxology said at the end of Psalms, but it was very far from the kind of ritualistic liturgical practice that became common in the Scottish Episcopal Church from the mid-nineteenth

century, and which owes much to the Anglo-Catholic Oxford movement. The Lord's Supper (Holy Communion) was celebrated only rarely, and set prayers of the liturgy would be found in few churches outside the Chapel Royal. Some, of course, loved set liturgy. Leighton much preferred the Prayer Book to extempore prayer, and urged better deportment in public worship (he would have liked people to kneel reverently to pray). But on the surface, the worship in most churches would have looked the same. However, to judge by the pamphlet war of the 1690s, there were differences even in the extempore prayer they used, with Episcopalians being more formal and Presbyterians more 'enthusiastic'.

The Scottish Episcopal Church had two main forms of worship in the eighteenth century. The (largely northern) non-jurors developed a Scottish Communion liturgy which was a unique to Scotland, though recognisably Anglican, while using a freer and more extempore type of worship for non-sacramental Sundays; and the Qualified Chapels began to use the Book of Common Prayer, still seen as 'the English service'. After 1707, there were more English people in Edinburgh, and army personnel sent up to subdue the Jacobite Highlands, and they sought to worship using the liturgy they were familiar with, so Prayer Book services became far more widespread.

The Scottish Episcopal Church prizes its liturgy, not just as a badge of identity (the non-jurors and their 'wee bookies' containing the Scottish Communion Office) but as a central way that it expresses beliefs. Apart from the historic creeds, we have no Confession of Faith. This has allowed for a breadth of theology as well as a reliance on worship to hold us all together. It is also why Episcopalians will tend to argue passionately about liturgy, rather than propositional theology. It is where we think. The Scottish Communion Office of 1764, for example, stirred a vigorous debate because it developed the 1637 Scottish Prayer Book's invocation to the Holy Spirit (the *Epiclesis*) after the words of institution, and raised questions as to whether this was consecrating the bread and wine, or the communicants. A long line of learned liturgists was begun in the Scottish Episcopal Church and a continuing stream of liturgical revision because of the profound belief that *lex orandi lex credendi*: the way you pray says something about what you believe.

Turning to sermons and devotional literature, modern historians have revealed that some Episcopalians moved away from Calvinist doctrines of predestination in the Restoration period (i.e. after 1660). In some ways, it was a matter of style and emphasis. Episcopalian ministers preached short, practical sermons, directed to repentance and moral duty. Bishop Leighton avoided election and predestination as 'a great abyss into which I choose to sink rather than attempt to sound it. And truly any attempt at throwing light upon it makes it only a greater abyss and is a piece of blameable presumption.'⁵ This tendency to focus on active, practical Christianity led to Episcopalians being accused of Arminianism, that is, the belief that election is conditional upon faith, and that people are free to accept or reject salvation.

Some Episcopalians did reject the Westminster Confession because of its Calvinist views of justification, as is clear from investigations into University divinity professors, but there has never been as much uniformity in Episcopalian theology as in Presbyterian.

There were limits though. George Gleig, Rector of Holy Trinity Church, Stirling from 1790, was refused a bishopric four times because of his suspected semi-Pelagianism – believing that Christians have free-will to turn to God, and then grow in faith through the grace of God working on them. But he eventually became Primus (presiding bishop) of the Scottish Episcopal Church in 1816. On the other wing, the strict evangelicals were organising themselves in the early nineteenth century into a small number of 'English Episcopal' chapels (distinct from earlier Qualified Chapels). They rejected among other doctrines the high doctrine of the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist (Virtualism), which they detected in the Scottish Liturgy, and they rejected any set liturgy at all. These English Episcopalians re-joined the Scottish Episcopal Church over time, the last being St Silas' Church in Glasgow, in 1886.

Finally, a Church needs somewhere to worship, and one of the legacies of the Reformation for the Scottish Episcopal Church was the need to find new church buildings after 1689. Sometimes, an Episcopal congregation remained for some years in the parish church, such as at Forfar. It was only in 1721 that they moved to the

⁵ Butler, p. 520.

Priory Church at Restenneth for a while, and then to private houses after the '45, and then to a new church built in 1775. The Penal Act of 1719 prescribed that no Episcopal priest could minister to more than nine people in addition to his own family; this was reduced to four in the Penal Act of 1748. Hence the use of private houses and secret locations. When public worship became possible, not every community could build anew. Small Gaelic congregations such as Ballachulish used a storeroom that is still lovingly preserved, until the church was built in 1842. Richer congregations like Stirling, which was surrounded by wealthy Jacobite estates, managed to build a proper chapel in 1795. The Episcopalians at Fochabers worshipped in a thatched cottage for 50 years, until the Gordon Chapel was built in 1834 by George, 5th Duke of Gordon, and Duchess Elizabeth. In areas where there had been a virtual wipe-out of Episcopalianism, such as in Ayrshire, Episcopal churches were only built when there was a socio-economic change in the nineteenth century. For example, whisky-distilling took off in Campbelltown, and the majority of excisemen were English or Irish Protestants, who had the church of St. Kieran's built. In general, what is remarkable is the tenacity of congregations even when worship was difficult to maintain. Today, there are numerous small congregations who are devoted to their local churches, and who continue to maintain a Christian presence and ministry on minimal resources.

Episcopalianism was not just a Protestant Church in Scotland that had bishops. It was a religious culture that developed distinctive liturgy and spirituality, and created a nation-wide network of church buildings. It was never uniform, and there remained a significant difference between the sacramental mysticism of the non-juring North East, and the moderation and Anglicising elements of the 'Qualified' Central and South. The reasons for allegiance to a particular religious culture are sometimes clear, but often opaque. It might be family tradition, or a supposed fashionability of one denomination over another. But why did, for example, John Skinner the elder become Episcopalian? He was educated at Marischal College, Aberdeen with a view to Presbyterian ministry. But while he was school-teaching at Monymusk, he became Episcopalian. Was it the influence of the laird's wife, Lady Anne Grant, who was English and liked the Prayer Book? (Though Skinner never used the Prayer Book himself at his church at Longside) Was it the Chapel at Blairdaff, and the inspiration of its incumbent, Alexander Lunan?

One thing it was not, was Jacobitism, for Skinner took an oath to the Hanoverians in 1747. What is clear is that Skinner formed a deep identification with the Scottish Episcopal Church: he wrote copiously in its defence and on its history; and also trained up many of its clergy.

The Revolution and its Results

When William and his wife Mary, James's daughter, were proclaimed King and Queen, and in England the bishops, clergy and people generally welcomed them, the new monarchs sought the same religious settlement in both England and Scotland. However, the Scottish bishops thought of the new regime as temporary and would not break their oaths of loyalty to James. And so the Presbyterian Church, for whom no such difficulties existed, once more became the Church of Scotland.

It was Episcopalian involvement in the Jacobite Risings which caused the Church to become what Sir Walter Scott described as 'a shadow of a shade'. After the failure of the Risings there were penalties for Episcopalian priests who would not swear allegiance to the Hanoverian monarchs who succeeded Queen Anne, the last Stuart monarch to reign in person, and there were penalties too for lay people who chose to remain loyal to the Church. A strain of 'Qualified Chapels' - Episcopalian in name, with priests in English, Welsh or Irish Orders, not recognising the authority of the Scottish bishops and willing to pray for King George - proved attractive for some. The penalties for Episcopalians were relaxed during the reign of George III and removed in 1792. But by then there were just four bishops and forty priests of the Episcopal Church ministering to five percent of Scotland's population.

The 19th Century – A New Beginning for the Episcopal Church in Scotland

Almost all the buildings belonging to the Church before the Revolution in 1690 became Presbyterian after the Revolution. The lifting of restrictions and penalties on Episcopalians led to a boom in church building across the nation, as did the Disruption of the Church of Scotland in 1862, which resulted in a competitive building programme from both the Free Church and the Episcopalians. This resurgence coincided with the Oxford Movement, which sought to

recall the richness of worship in the pre-Reformation Church. The Episcopal Church had a high doctrine of the Eucharist, although its practice was ascetic and simple. At the restoration of Episcopacy in 1660 it would have been difficult to distinguish Episcopalian and Presbyterian clergy as both groups wore black Geneva gowns. But now a change began to happen both in the architecture of buildings and in the worship itself where, gradually over the next 150 years, the celebration of the Eucharist became the normal and central act of Sunday worship in most congregations, the black gown being replaced by the surplice and later by Eucharistic vestments. The governance of the Episcopal Church also became more democratic with deans and representative clergy joining the bishops in decision making, and they were later joined by the laity.

The Episcopal Church grew in a wide range of ways. It became fashionable among the nobility and gentry who, educated in English public schools, felt more at home with Episcopal worship than with the Presbyterian forms of the Church of Scotland. Here is how the Reverend Dr Bisset, Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, expressed this in his address delivered on 2nd June 1862:

The descendants of the Lords of the Congregation, attached to the Protestant faith and to the principle of an Established Church, had, with few exceptions, felt it hitherto their duty to worship along with their own people; but when so great a division among them took place, a large proportion of our aristocracy (in many cases not without a great inward struggle) felt at liberty to consult their own predilections, and join the Episcopal Church. Educated, as many of them are, in the southern end of this island, they become, at an age when the heart is tender and most susceptible of strong religious impressions, attached to the Common Prayer and more imposing liturgical worship of England.⁶

In what were still autocratic times, some demanded that their household staff and estate workers be with them in church (a practice which in a few places still persisted into the 1970s and,

⁶ Edinburgh: MacPhail, 1862.

perhaps, beyond). The Episcopal Church also appealed to the emerging professional classes and neither did it neglect the poor. Bishop Alexander Penrose Forbes diligently visited slum, tenement housing in Dundee, even in times of epidemic when others stayed away. Churches in (what was to become) the Anglo-Catholic tradition were founded in the cities specifically to minister to the poor, and they brought love, colour and vibrancy into the drab and harsh lives of those around them.

Other factors in this growth included the greater mobility of the population, which meant people were freer to choose a Church for themselves (rather than simply continue in that of their parents) and also immigration into Scotland - people from the Anglican Churches of England, Wales and Ireland brought many extra members to the Episcopal Church.

The 20th and 21st Centuries - Hope and Decline

New churches continued to be built in the 20th century – appeals between 1914 and 1944 resulted in over twenty. This was also the century of ecumenism with the establishment of the British and World Councils of Churches and the Scottish Churches' Council, agreements for inter-communion with non-Anglican churches in Europe and elsewhere in the world. It was a century too in which new opportunities and ministries began – deaconesses in 1929, women lay readers in 1972 (men had been able to be readers since 1865), non-stipendiary clergy, although men only, in 1973, women deacons in 1986 and women priests in 1994.

In 2003 the General Synod agreed that women could be elected as bishops (although none have been so far) and in the same year debates over sexuality heightened across the Anglican Communion, triggered by the consecration of a gay man as a bishop in the United States and the request from the Canadian Diocese of New Westminster for a service of blessing for same sex relationships, both of which created much opposition. While there has been a changing attitude to sexuality in Scotland (as elsewhere) over the last decade, the world-wide moratorium requested by the Anglican Primates has thus far been upheld by the Scottish Episcopal Church. Legislation has been passed in Holyrood (2014) to allow same-sex marriage in Scotland. In 2013, legislation allowing same-sex

marriage in England and Wales was passed in Westminster. Neither the Holyrood or Westminster Acts permit clergy of churches that have not opted in, to conduct such marriages. The Scottish Episcopal Church, the Church of England, and Church in Wales have not opted in, and therefore clergy from these churches, and likewise from the Church of Scotland and the Roman Catholic Church, would be acting illegally if they conducted a same-sex marriage.

Some of these changes set in motion a small exodus from the Episcopal Church. In 2011 Pope Benedict XVI created the Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham in which Anglicans, unhappy with the direction of their Church, could be welcomed into the Roman Catholic Church. Thus far two priests of the Scottish Episcopal Church have been re-ordained as priests of the Ordinariate, and some members of a congregation in Inverness and individuals elsewhere in Scotland have been received into it.

The closing years of the 20th century and the first years of the 21st saw a far greater decline in the Church's membership than could ever be accounted for by the Ordinariate. Statistics presented at the General Synod of 2013 showed that membership had fallen by 15 per cent since 2008, although the Primus, David Chillingworth, pointed out that such statistics do not measure the missional life and faith of the Church.

The Scottish Episcopal Church is not alone in being in numerical decline. Data (released in the autumn of 2013) from the 2011 National Census confirmed the national downward trend. Just over half of the population of Scotland (54 per cent) thought of themselves as Christian, down eleven per cent since the 2001 Census, and the number of those who said that they had no religion rose by nine percentage points to 37 per cent

The figures also revealed considerable confusion over the Episcopal Church's identity. There were 21,289 people claiming to be Episcopalian; 8048 said that they are members of the Scottish Episcopal Church; and 4490 described themselves as Anglican. There were also 66,717 people living in Scotland who thought of themselves as members of the Church of England; 2020 of the Church of Ireland and 453 of the Church in Wales.

In our focus on Scotland, it is important to remember that the Church has from its beginnings been made up of multiple peoples, such as is celebrated in the Biblical account of the day of Pentecost when Parthians, Medes and Elamites, residents of Mesopotamia, Judaea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians, heard in their own languages the mighty works of God. We turn now to Scripture to unite this wider vision with the many peoples, from the pre-historic tribes, through the Romans, Picts, Gaels, Anglo-Saxons, Vikings, though to our current diverse mix, who are the church in Scotland.

BIBLICAL REFLECTIONS ON THE CHURCH AND NATIONAL IDENTITY

The god of Israel

It is commonplace in world religions that there is a triangular relationship between the nation, the land it inhabits, and the god(s) it worships and under whose protection it lives. This is particularly true of the ancient Near East, and is reflected in the biblical narrative, in the account of the emergence of Israel as a nation – conspicuously a nation without a land – and of their eventual occupation of Canaan and annihilation or dispossession of other nations living there. In ancient religiosity the struggles for territory and prosperity on earth reflect competition for supremacy among the gods. We see this throughout the deuteronomic history, in the contest between Yahweh, god of Israel, and the Canaanite deities, such as Ba`al and Asherah. The people of Israel sought the assistance of the gods associated with the places they had occupied; the prophets denounced this tendency and the Law ultimately forbade it. With the monarchy came international diplomacy, the associated trade in royal brides as well as in other commodities, and the introduction of Egyptian and Mesopotamian, Syrian and Levantine cults to the courts of Jerusalem and Samaria. Whether and in what form Yahweh was introduced to the courts of other near eastern kingdoms is not recorded, but the connection between god and land is reflected in the story of Naaman, who loaded two mules with earth from the land of Israel as an aid to his worship of the god of Israel (2 Kings 5) while living beyond its borders.

The repudiation of local and foreign deities, and denial of their power and ultimately of their divinity, if not their very existence, was the achievement of the prophets. The assertion of the absolute claims of Yahweh to the loyalty and worship of Israel evolved gradually into monotheism, implicit as early as Amos, but not fully developed until centuries later. The claims of Yahweh were not merely a matter of orthodoxy in worship and exclusive cultic allegiance, but extended to all aspects of social and economic life in Israel. Their god was a god of justice, and for the prophets the security of the nation in the land was contingent upon their covenant faithfulness, reflected in justice for the poor and the vulnerable as much as in worship and belief.

The exile severed the triangular relationship between nation, people, and god: Ps 137 reflects the crisis, how the (defeated) god of Israel could be worshipped in Babylon, not merely a foreign land, but the land of the conqueror. It was the experience of exile, of learning to worship their god in a foreign land that provided the impetus for monotheism to become firmly established in Israel. Yahweh had called Abraham from Mesopotamia, and Moses from Midian, and subsequently appeared again to Moses on Mount Sinai, and there – not in the promised land – revealed the Law which was to become the basis of Jewish life thereafter.

Yahweh's elevation to sole god did not in itself negate the bond between land and nation, even if it did enable Judaism to flourish in diaspora over the ensuing centuries in ways which were perhaps unique. This insight did, however require that members of other nations have the opportunity to worship the god of Israel – except among the more chauvinistic and xenophobic movements which anticipated the eschatological destruction of other nations; a view not unattested in modern Judaism. But among those who merely sought the subjugation of the nations, rather than their annihilation, this expectation required that gentiles be granted some access to Jerusalem and the temple. The eschatological hope did not imply that converts were actively sought, or even particularly welcomed – the nations coming to Jerusalem in pilgrimage rather than in tribute was for the future, and anticipation thereof was not interpreted as fulfilment.

Judaism after the Exile; inclusivity and exclusivity

Post-exilic Judaism, both in Babylonia and in the land of Israel, contained some degree of tension as the covenant community sought to redefine itself in new circumstances. The restoration, i.e. return of some Jews from exile in Babylonia to their ancestral land brought them into contact with the descendants of those of the nation who had not been taken into exile. A universalism is evident in books subsequently included in the Hebrew Bible: a universalism open to the inclusion within Israel of gentiles born outside the covenant, and open to wider Levantine, Mesopotamian, and Persian wisdom traditions. This tendency is reflected in Ruth, Job, Proverbs and much of the Wisdom literature, the creation and flood narratives, and also in many later writings, such as those of Philo of Alexandria. There is also a particularism, which defines the covenant community

along narrowly ethnic lines, with little if any scope for the inclusion of foreigners, and ready to define out of Israel those whose traditions and customs did not conform with those of the post-exilic elites. This was the dominant tendency during much of the Persian periods, and in the formation of the Pentateuch. The same tendency is reflected in the Chronicler, Ezra-Nehemiah, and in later works such as *Jubilees* and much of the apocalyptic literature, including the Dead Sea Scrolls.

Jewish communities in diaspora from Rome to India found ways of assimilating themselves to the cultures and economies of the places they inhabited, while maintaining their distinctive identity and adapting their customs to the requirements of their environment. They also attracted to their worship and social and economic life a variety of adherents who were not members of ethnic Israel, and had no ties with the land of Israel. Many of these found in the god of Israel and the religion of the synagogue a system of belief and ethics consonant with the philosophical monotheism of much Hellenistic and oriental philosophy, and a community and form of worship more compatible with their convictions than was the worship of the pagan temples.

The majority of these adherents probably remained marginal to the Jewish community, maintaining their inherited ethnic and cultural identity, and possibly even cultic practices which Jews would have regarded as abhorrent. Some, however, identified more fully with Israel, and abandoned the worship of all other deities in favour of the god of Israel. Even these would not have been considered members of Israel. Only when the men underwent circumcision, and the women pledged a similarly unequivocal allegiance to the god and nation of Israel, did they become adopted into the nation of Israel.⁷

While Judaism was by no means uniform or static, there was provision in Torah for gentiles to join Israel, and the patriarch Abraham was viewed as the archetypal proselyte. It was therefore generally accepted in principle that gentiles could become members of Israel. Where there was diversity of opinion was essentially in the area of eschatology: was the prophetic expectation that the nations

⁷ For a treatment of this issue, see S. J. D. Cohen, 'Crossing the Boundary and Becoming a Jew', *Harvard Theological Review* 82 (1989) 13-34.

would worship the god of Israel a future event, or to what extent could it be anticipated in the present? And what steps, if any, were to be taken to realise this eschatological expectation? The approach of most Jewish groups, so far as can be established, was cautious, concerned to maintain the ritual purity of Israel, which was at least as important to the fulfilment of eschatological expectations. While gentile sympathisers, adherents, and converts were to be welcomed, and even encouraged, there was little if any initiative to being about such conversions. Rather, the assumption was that the eschatological pilgrimages of gentiles to Jerusalem would come about through the changing political fortunes of Israel in the future rather than through mission or religious conversion in the present. Nevertheless, Christianity emerged in a Judaism which had in many places already transcended ethnic and geographical limits, but without abandoning ethnicity as a fundamental basis for identity or its ties to the land of Israel, even though the latter became largely symbolic as a consequence of two disastrous wars with the Romans during the first two centuries CE. These conflicts undoubtedly provided some impetus to separation of Christianity from Judaism, but the seeds of this process were almost as old as the Church itself.

Jesus and Judaism

That the Christian Church began as a movement within Judaism is now all but universally acknowledged. How this particular Jewish movement, which distinguished itself from other eschatologically oriented forms of Judaism in its identification of Jesus of Nazareth as the messiah, became an in principle universal religion, rooted in Judaism but without any enduring ethnic basis, is a very much more complex and uncertain process. This development is commonly associated with the apostle Paul, whose literary and theological legacy has certainly endured, but at most gave impetus and theological weight to a movement already under way.

That Jesus of Nazareth was an ethnic, Torah-observant, Jew is an undoubted fact of history, though one which may have been denied by certain European nationalist groups and eccentric strands of North American scholarship in recent decades. Nevertheless, Jesus was clearly not uncritical of fundamental Jewish institutions, and took issue with other Jewish figures over the observance of Torah. Most important for our present purpose is Jesus' attitude to the temple in Jerusalem, the central shrine of the Jewish nation and, in the eyes of

most, the only valid place of sacrificial worship. As is fairly well-known, the sanctuary was surrounded by courts, with barriers limiting the access of laity, women, and gentiles. Jesus' attack on traders in currency and sacrificial animals in the outer court (Mark 11:15-19), the episode which almost certainly precipitated his death, has often been understood as concerned with the access of gentiles to the temple. This interpretation could be supported by the quotation of Isaiah 56:7. However, the outer court was not a place of worship, and contrary to many popular assumptions, was never called the 'Court of the Gentiles'. It is also arguable that issues of corruption and exploitation are involved, as the quotation of Jeremiah 7:11 would suggest. Notwithstanding the force of these arguments, Jesus was put on trial for his life for threatening to destroy the temple (Mark 14:58). In the only explicit statement in the synoptic tradition that the temple would be destroyed (Matt 24:2; Mark 13:2; Luke 21:6), Jesus claims no agency in this development, and the eschatological discourse expounds the events which would precede this development. Centuries earlier, the prophets Micah (3:12) and Jeremiah (7:11-14) had proclaimed the destruction of the first temple, at the hands of foreign enemies acting as agents of divine judgement. The motif is therefore not new, nor does it necessarily imply God's ultimate rejection of the nation of Israel, still less their supersession by a new entity.⁸

It is at least arguable that temple-rejection began with John the Baptist, continued through the ministry of Jesus, and is reflected in sacrificial interpretations of the death of Jesus and the establishment of a non-sacrificial cult in which bread and wine symbolise his body and blood. Notwithstanding the complex issues surrounding the origins of the Eucharist,⁹ rejection of the temple and the sacrificial cult is reflected in the surviving records of later Jewish Christianity, and therefore does not imply any break from ethnic identity within Israel. Nevertheless, the centripetal power of the temple was clearly diminished for the early Christians through Jesus' proclamation of God's judgement upon it, sacrificial interpretations of his death, and the emergence of a Christian cult independent of Jewish institutions. While these developments did not constitute a break between the

⁸ For an accessible treatment of these issues in the life and ministry of Jesus see E. P. Sanders, *The Historical Figure of Jesus* (London: Penguin, 1994).

⁹ P. F. Bradshaw, *Eucharistic Origins* (London: SPCK, 2004).

Church and ethnic Israel, they certainly contributed to the viability of a new Christian entity independent of any national identity.

Emergent Christian identity

The separation of Christianity from Judaism was not a single, abrupt, development, but rather a complex and varied process, realised and experienced quite differently in different places and at different times over the first several centuries CE.¹⁰ That there was intra-Jewish conflict from the earliest days of Christianity in Jerusalem, as reflected in the early chapters of Acts, is no more than the inevitable consequence of the dissonance between the circumstances in which Jesus died and his disciples' proclamation of the Gospel. Tensions within Palestinian Judaism tended to marginalise the Church from its earliest days, but without its ceasing to be an essentially Jewish movement, and there continued to be Jewish forms of Christianity for several centuries.

It was in diaspora settings, most notably Antioch on the Orontes in Syria, that the Church began to attract adherents from outside ethnic Israel, and to acquire the designation *Christians* (Acts 11:19-30). This was the form of Christianity with which Paul came to be associated, and his theological rationale for a missionary strategy which admitted gentiles to membership of the Church without their first having been adopted into Israel, was to provide the definitive doctrinal basis for a Christian identity which, while maintaining continuity with the heritage of Israel, was identified with no nation but accessible to members of all. Paul's approach was not the only option available to the early Church, and it was not inevitable that it would prevail. Furthermore, the position traditionally associated with Paul was not a systematic or static doctrine, but rather an evolving response to a variety of missionary contexts and experiences. In Galatians, Paul makes or quotes the formulary in which there is no Jew or 'Greek' (3:28), and in that letter argues that God's promises to Abraham are fulfilled in Christ, and therefore the Law of Moses has become redundant and Israel no longer has a privileged relationship with God. Nevertheless, some years later, Paul quite clearly continued to struggle to reconcile his identity and aspirations

¹⁰ J. D. G. Dunn, *The Partings of the Ways* (London: SCM, 1991); J. M. Lieu, *Christian Identity in the Jewish and Graeco-Roman World* (Oxford: OUP, 2004).

as a (Pharisaic) Jew with the convictions he had acquired and developed as a Christian apostle (Romans 9-11).¹¹ In Ephesians, which may be a deuteropauline writing, this tension is resolved through the notion of the Church as a new humanity (*Kainon anthropon*) in which Jew and gentile are reconciled through the cross (2:11-18). Whether this represents a later development in Paul's own thought, or a resolution to his dilemma reached by others after his death, it is the outcome of a long and painful process of theological reflection upon several decades of missionary and pastoral experience.

Forms of Christianity which remained defined within Israel persisted in Syria and to the east for several centuries, and continued to attract gentile converts,¹² until the Arab conquests and the imposition of Islam. It was in the circum-Mediterranean, Greek-speaking world that Paul's vision prevailed, increasingly incorporated with other theological strands into the doctrine of the emerging catholic Church; a process undoubtedly hastened by the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in 70 CE, and the consequent alienation of Jewish communities from their neighbouring Graeco-Roman societies.

By the time of Constantine, Christianity was a widely established religion throughout the Roman empire, its connection with Israel maintained through continuing reverence for the Scriptures which have come to be known as the Old Testament. Nevertheless, in the west particularly, but also in the east, Christianity had ceased to have any ethnic basis, and had become a religion to which people of all races could be admitted on an equal basis. This was the Christianity brought to the British Isles by the Romans, and which gradually became established among the various nations which inhabited these islands. What becomes relevant with the decline and disintegration of the western Roman empire is the role of Christianity

¹¹ The differences between Galatians and Romans are variously understood in scholarship, with some arguing that Paul's thought developed, others that the contexts of the letters explain the discrepancies between them. However, it is clear that these issues are still unresolved in Romans, cf. H. Räisänen, *Paul and the Law* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986); N. H. Taylor, 'Paul, Pharisee and Christian: Israel, the Gentiles, and the Law of Moses in Light of Cognitive Dissonance Theory', *Theologia Viatorum* 24 (1997) 45-65.

¹² John Chrysostom's homilies *Adversus Iudaeos* attack judaizing practices among Christians in Antioch towards the end of the fourth century.

in forging a common identity in the emerging European kingdoms, including those in what is now Scotland. Of particular interest would be the use of Scripture, and appropriation of the ideology and imagery of the Davidic monarchy in establishing the Christian kingdoms of northern and western Europe. The use of anointing, by bishops, in the inauguration of kings, and the popularity of David among the names of the Scottish kings, are all suggestive of this.¹³

Two modern aberrations may be worth noting. The politically less malign, and the more easily dismissed on historical grounds, is British Israelism, the fantasy that the [white] inhabitants of the British Isles are the descendents of the ten tribes of the northern kingdom of Israel, dispersed after the destruction of Samaria by the Assyrians. The British Israel World Federation would appear to be a well-organised but small organisation, not aligned to any political party but with some affinity to UKIP and the BNP, and with possible connections with some forms of Freemasonry.

There are probably rather few members of the Scottish Episcopal Church who adhere to this position, but until recently a (now deceased) Reader was a Trustee of the British Israel World Federation, and his widow continues to maintain that it has been revealed to her that she is of the tribe of Asher; one suspects that Luke 2:36 may have been the source of this revelation. While the genetic theories associated with British Israelism may easily be dismissed, the mindset which justified imperial expansion and the exploitation of other nations was not free of notions of racial superiority, and this is as true of Scots as of English political, military, and commercial imperialists. The co-option and appropriation of previously proscribed and suppressed Highland traditions in the cause of British imperialism and militarism is illustrative of the seductiveness of aggressive nationalism.

While British Israelism may be dismissed as of a lunatic fringe, Christian Zionism represents a dangerous perversion of the faith, with widespread and uncritical support for the modern nation of Israel reflecting the dispensationalist interpretation of eschatological passages in Scripture associated with the deeply influential

¹³ John Reuben Davies, 'Old Testament Personal Names in Scotland before the Wars of Independence', paper delivered at 'Personal Names and Naming Practices in Medieval Scotland', conference, University of Glasgow, March 2014.

evangelicals Dwight L. Moody and Cyrus I. Scofield, as well as collective guilt at the European pogroms which culminated in the *Shoah* and western economic and military interests in the Middle East. Moody and Scofield succeeded in disseminating their ideas subtly, if not surreptitiously, through their immensely popular reference works, commentaries, and other publications, so that dispensationalism has come to be accepted without question in politically and economically powerful right-wing Christian circles in North America. The cultural and theological influence of North American evangelicalism in Britain, and particularly in Scotland, may be debatable, but the bias towards Israel is widely attested in evangelical circles in particular.

Having provided historical and biblical contexts for thinking about the Church in relation to Scottish identity, we turn now to three very different reflections: on the role of the National Church, the nature and influence of secularism, and the ways in which we might think theologically and spiritually about Scotland's future.

THE ROLE OF A NATIONAL CHURCH IN SCOTLAND

A view from the Church of Scotland

Introduction

The concept of a national Church is far from new. In 301 King Tiridates III proclaimed Christianity to be the national religion of Armenia and appointed St Gregory the Illuminator as the first Catholicos of the Armenian Church. Armenia can thus claim to have the world's first national Church, predating the conversion of the Roman Emperor Constantine.

The 16th and 17th centuries were scarred by wars for supremacy between Protestants and Roman Catholics in the (Germanic) Holy Roman Empire and beyond; the Thirty Years' War of 1618-1648 was one of the most divisive, destructive and bloody in European history. The Peace of Westphalia marked the end of the wars – effectively a stalemate by the exhausted combatants – and represented one of the most important documents of the Empire's constitution with many of its settlements still being in force. The concept of *cuius regio, eius religio* (whose realm, his religion) was developed, meaning that the ruler of the state could determine the religion of his subjects – whether Roman Catholic or Protestant. In 1817 the Prussian King Frederick William III decreed the union of Lutheran and Calvinist churches within Prussia. A united Germany was not created until the late 19th century; modern Germany still has its *Landeskirchen* (regional churches) such as the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Hanover and the United Churches of the former Prussian territories.

National churches inevitably reflect national circumstances and historical legacies; this applies as much to Scotland as anywhere else. The Church of Scotland has been recognised in law as 'a national Church' since the *Articles Declaratory of the Constitution of the Church of Scotland in Matters Spiritual* were declared lawful

through an Act of Parliament – the Church of Scotland Act 1921. This confirmed the independence of the Church of Scotland in spiritual matters. The spiritual independence of the Church, particularly the issue of who had the right to appoint ministers, had been a key issue in the Disruption of 1843 – when approximately one-third of all ministers left the Church of Scotland to form the Free Church of Scotland.

The concept of a national Church has to be balanced against the catholicity of the Church, above all in focusing upon God not nation. Article I of the Articles Declaratory of the Church of Scotland in matters spiritual states:

The Church of Scotland is part of the Holy Catholic or Universal Church; worshipping one God, Almighty, all-wise, and all-loving, in the Trinity of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, the same in substance, equal in power and glory; adoring the Father, infinite in Majesty, of whom are all things; confessing our Lord Jesus Christ, the Eternal Son, made very man for our salvation; glorying in His Cross and Resurrection, and owing obedience to Him as the Head over all things to His Church; trusting in the promised renewal and guidance of the Holy Spirit; proclaiming the forgiveness of sins and acceptance with God through faith in Christ, and the gift of Eternal Life; and labouring for the advancement of the Kingdom of God throughout the world. The Church of Scotland adheres to the Scottish Reformation; receives the Word of God which is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as its supreme rule of faith and life; and avows the fundamental doctrines of the Catholic faith founded thereupon.

Despite being a national church, the Church of Scotland has an explicit self-understanding that this is within the catholicity or universality of the Church. Furthermore, the law of the Church of Scotland does not permit Article I to be modified.

Definite or indefinite article?

Article III of the Articles Declaratory defines the Church of Scotland as 'a national Church' – not *the* national Church. The Church of Scotland Act 1921 goes further: section 2 states:

Nothing contained in this Act or in any other Act affecting the Church of Scotland shall prejudice the recognition of any other Church in Scotland as a Christian Church protected by law in the exercise of its spiritual functions.

The notion of being 'a national Church' rather than 'the national Church' is more than a nod to ecumenical sensibilities. Whilst acknowledging the calling of the Church of Scotland, it is not to detriment of any other denomination in contemporary Scotland. Article III of the Articles Declaratory states:

This Church is in historical continuity with the Church of Scotland which was reformed in 1560, whose liberties were ratified in 1592, and for whose security provision was made in the Treaty of Union of 1707. The continuity and identity of the Church of Scotland are not prejudiced by the adoption of these Articles. As a national Church representative of the Christian Faith of the Scottish people it acknowledges its distinctive call and duty to bring the ordinances of religion to the people in every parish of Scotland through a territorial ministry.

The Church of Scotland's Articles Declaratory have to be seen in their historic context. Secularism has grown considerably since 1921. The Articles Declaratory were drawn up to facilitate the reunion of the Church of Scotland and the United Free Church of Scotland, a union which eventually took place in October 1929. Prior to the passing of the 1921 Act, the Church of Scotland was established whilst the United Free Church of Scotland was voluntary. It is notable that the late 19th century had seen a vocal campaign by some to see the disestablishment of the Church of Scotland; the Church of Ireland had been disestablished in 1871 and the Church in Wales in 1920. The legal difficulties in trying to reach a satisfactory compromise between advocates of establishment and voluntarism resulted in the idea of 'a national Church'.

The United Free Church of Scotland was itself the product of the union in 1900 of the (strictly voluntary) United Presbyterian Church and a majority of the Free Church of Scotland (in practice voluntary, yet adhering to the principle of establishment). The decision of the Judicial Committee of the House of Lords (the predecessor of the current Supreme Court of the United Kingdom) to award the assets of the pre-1900 Free Church to the small remnant which stayed out of the 1900 union caused considerable alarm to pro-establishment elements in the Church of Scotland. Although legislation was subsequently enacted for a more equitable split of the assets, the Free Church Case raised doubts as to how far the state would intervene to protect the established Church.

The Very Rev Dr James Weatherhead, a former Principal Clerk to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, writes '*if establishment means no more than recognition as a National Church by the State, the Church of Scotland is established; but if establishment means established by the State, it is not established.*'¹ The spiritual independence of the Church of Scotland is such that Acts of the General Assembly cannot be challenged by the civil courts, let alone require any permission from the state. This is wholly different from Measures passed by the General Synod of the Church of England, which require ratification by the Parliament of the United Kingdom.

The Scottish identity

How far is self-identity defined in terms of difference from that one's neighbour? Driving on the left and red post boxes may distinguish the UK from France, but they are hardly the *sine qua non* of national identity. Likewise, it is tempting yet ultimately superficial to use symbolism in defining Scottish identity as differing from its southern neighbour.

The Treaty of Union guaranteed the continued existence of Scotland's separate legal system and system of ecclesial governance. Both institutions are thus reminders of a distinctive identity stretching back before the Union of 1707. Though sometimes portrayed as almost iconic examples of Scottish identity, a legal system and a system of ecclesial governance are ultimately

functional; an adherence to Presbyterianism is not the same as faith in the Triune God.

One of the final Acts of the pre-Union Parliament of Scotland was the Protestant Religion and Presbyterian Church Government Act 1707. This Act guaranteed the continuation of Presbyterian governance within the Church of Scotland, irrespective of Union. This Act is still in force. Article XXV of the Treaty of Union also incorporated the substance of this Act, being regarded by the Parliament of Scotland as a 'red line' in terms of the negotiations for Union. Thus Presbyterianism, arguably, came to be seen as integral to the Scottish identity.

The Disruption of 1843 has had lasting consequences for the Church of Scotland. Although there had been previous splits, the creation of a large, separate Free Church effectively marked the end of *cuius regio, eius religio* in Scotland. The notion of a Godly Commonwealth had been replaced by competing, rival denominations in late Victorian Scotland – mainly Presbyterian, but with growing and increasingly confident Roman Catholic and Episcopalian Churches.

Historically, the identification of Presbyterianism with Scottish identity perhaps reached its zenith in the 1920s, culminating in the union of the Church of Scotland and the majority of the United Free Church of Scotland in 1929. Yet the use of Presbyterianism to define identity also became misappropriated in a deeply sinister way, especially in the denigration of Roman Catholics of Irish origin. The part played by the Church of Scotland in this episode is one of shame; a report to the General Assembly in 1923 was subsequently published as *'The menace of the Irish race to our Scottish nationality'*. In 1986 the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland disassociated itself from the sections of the Westminster Confession of Faith which were blatantly offensive to Roman Catholics and, in 2002, expressly repudiated the 1923 report and apologised for its part in promoting sectarianism.

An inappropriate phrase still sometimes heard is for the Scottish Episcopal Church to be referred to as 'the English Church'. This is, of course, inaccurate given the distinctive history of the Scottish Episcopal Church and separate identity from that of the Church of England. It is also understandably irksome to Episcopalians proud of

their Scottish identity. The popular usage of the phrase 'the English Church' is usually in contrast to 'the Parish Church' or 'the Church of Scotland' – and to 'the Chapel' or even 'the Church of Rome'. Whilst often used casually and thoughtlessly, the stress on the words 'English' and/or 'Rome' can be interpreted as being 'not Scottish' and thus – in a pejorative way – not belonging. A similar pejorative labelling of shops run by people of Asian ethnic origin is now rightly regarded as racist and unacceptable. Despite John Knox having worked alongside John Calvin in Geneva, the Genevan influence upon the Church of Scotland is frequently overlooked in such discussions of national identity.

Notions of ethnic or national exclusivity within the Church are antithetical to the love of God revealed in Jesus Christ. Ideas of ethnic superiority came to be regarded as heretical, as happened with the decision of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) to expel the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa from membership in 1982 over its defence of Apartheid. (By 1992 the Dutch Reformed Church had condemned Apartheid and disassociated itself from its former doctrinal position).

Prior to the creation of the Scottish Parliament in 1999, the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland was frequently described as the nearest equivalent that Scotland had to its own parliament. This created sometimes unrealistic expectations. The creation of the Scottish Parliament and Scottish Government has allowed the Church of all denominations to speak freely – and at times critically – with legislators.

Although explicitly in favour of devolution, the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland has agreed a position of neutrality in the forthcoming referendum on Scottish independence, to be held on 18th September 2014. This is not from a position of indecisiveness or disinterest, but in recognition that Christians may have sincerely-held differing views on a matter of crucial importance to the nation, but not of theology or faith.

Being a national Church

For the Church of Scotland, the call to be a national Church in modern Scotland means serving every part of the country through a territorial parish ministry. This is becoming increasingly hard to

achieve, particularly as financial difficulties, declining membership and a shortage of ministers become ever more acute. Nevertheless, there is a deontological understanding of such a mission. It is a calling to live out the gospel of Jesus Christ in a nation, in the full knowledge that the gospel message is not confined to any one nation. A national Church cannot retreat to well-to-do suburbs.

Such a Church is called to serve small islands and peripheral urban housing schemes, as well as areas of prosperity. It is called to challenge the nation from complacency as well as to comfort when appropriate. It must speak prophetically to government; the Church of Scotland's longstanding opposition to nuclear weapons has at times proved irritating to the UK Government, yet the Church has a duty to hold to what it sincerely and theologically believes to be the truth. A national Church must demonstrate a preferential option for the poor; it is not permitted to exercise a postcode lottery in terms of outreach and pastoral care.

Splits and factionalism within denominations is nothing new. Current well-publicised disagreements over the ordination of homosexual people are not confined to one denomination. Denominations are not monoliths; friendship and co-operation are becoming increasingly frequent across denominational boundaries.

The creation of Action of Churches Together in Scotland in 1990 shows the importance of collaboration in Christian outreach. No one denomination is now large or strong enough to reach the whole of Scotland unaided; the sheer volume of Church buildings (mostly dating from the 19th century and frequently requiring repairs at exorbitant cost) shows the urgent need for greater co-operation, not least on grounds of effective Christian stewardship of limited resources. The Scottish Churches Initiative for Union (SCIFU) was a bold but unsuccessful attempt to unite the Church of Scotland, the Scottish Episcopal Church and the Scottish parts of the United Reformed Church and the Methodist Church. Nevertheless, there is increasing co-operation (both formal and informal) and trust between denominations; the aim to serve Scotland together means that the title 'national Church' should not be the jealously-guarded preserve of any one denomination.

CHRISTIAN IDENTITY IN AN ERA OF RISING SECULARISM AND INCREASING DIVERSITY

The changing contribution of the churches to Scotland

Christianity has been formative for many aspects of Scottish life and culture. That this is true historically, makes mention of the past influence of Christianity fairly uncontroversial, should Scotland come to develop a political Constitution of its own. Mention of Christianity's significance for the present is more controversial, as is the matter of whether a Constitution would mention any particular religion when looking to Scotland's future.

Spiritual prosperity has been part of the Christian mission since the arrival of Christianity in Scotland. Columba consecrated Áedán mac Gabhráin King of Scots of Dál Riata in 574, St Adomnán promulgated his Law of the Innocents in 697, the Monymusk Reliquary was carried before the Scots Troops in battle, Bernard de Linton of Arbroath Abbey was traditionally associated with compiling the Declaration of Arbroath in 1320. The Church was integral to the formation of hospitals in the Middle Ages, as it was to the development of the Welfare State in the last century. In the High Renaissance, the Church encouraged Humanities and the Sciences in the founding of the Ancient Universities. The Reformation gave this nation an appetite for rigorous intellectual enquiry, inventiveness and economic development, and in some places, particularly as strict forms of Protestantism emerged, re-shaped the cultural landscape. The Church has been at the heart of the nation in many ways in educational and social reform.

Migration of peoples across Europe have similarly added to this mix of Christian influences upon Scotland. Significant amongst this was Irish Roman Catholic immigration particularly from the mid-19th Century onwards. Settlement of Polish people after the Second World War, along with the earlier Italian immigration, for example, as well as more recent and broader East European migration enabled by easy movement across the European Union to Scotland has brought many more Roman Catholic believers to Scotland.

To add to this broad Christian mix, immigration into Scotland brings with it a wealth of religious diversity. Most of this immigration has

been post-industrialisation, such as the nineteenth-century immigration of Ashkenazi Jews, most of whom settled in Edinburgh and Glasgow. 'Scots-Yiddish' was spoken by Eastern European Jews in Scotland's Lowlands, in the first half of the twentieth century; though by the latter part of the century they were speaking English. Mosques are now a familiar sight in Scottish cities. So too are other places of worship, including Sikh, Hindu and Mormon temples.

It is too early to tell how all these factors will shape the cultural climate of Scotland. What is clear is that the increase in the religious diversity of the nation will have its impact. The question remains as to how this will happen and against what backdrop. This last consideration is important for, whilst religious diversity in Scotland has increased, the influence of Christian faith in the public space has decreased.

In part this is evidenced by the numerical decline of the historic institutional churches in Scotland, particularly the Protestant churches. There are simply fewer people going to church regularly now than there were, say, twenty or thirty years ago. Not unrelated to this is the rising age-profile of church membership.

Perhaps, more subtly, other factors are present. An example might be the position of the parish minister in the local community. Fewer parishes now have resident ministers. With this we might also suggest that the position, or perhaps better the prestige (and possibly the opinion) of the cleric is less regarded than hitherto. Trust in the clergy (along with, it has to be said) trust in the officials of many other institutions, has decreased as the activities of a minority of them in various forms of scandal and offence have come to light. The failings of this minority have had a backwash effect upon the whole.

The picture we are painting is not a wholly accurate one for there is significant growth in some church quarters. We have already mentioned immigration of Roman Catholics. There is significant growth in evangelical and Pentecostal churches. Likewise the number of various ethnic African churches is on the increase.

The cultural backcloth of rising secularisation

But all of this is taking place against a wider cultural shift in society. This is the growth of secularism. How are we to characterise it?

In its more obvious forms it is seen in the increasing number of weddings being taken, not so much by civic registrars in a Registry Office, but by secular humanists functioning outwith churches in a manner and at occasions where once Christian ministers and priests would once have been expected to preside at a Christian ceremony most likely (though not exclusively) in a church.

The same can be said of funerals. In Aberdeen and Dundee it is said that more than fifty percent of funerals are now conducted by humanists performing a secular rite of passage. This may well be true in other places. If true and we believe it is true, this marks a significant shift in society of quite epic proportions. It is a shift that has taken place not so much since the end of the Second World War but rather since, let us say, 1990.¹⁴

In many arenas this rise in secularism is relatively benign. It represents a shift in perspective away from adherence to religious, and more particularly traditional Christian, practice to other cultural preferences. These preferences include options for 'rites of passage' which do not ask or demand credal confession or adherence. This for many people is a 'more honest' way of doing things (given possible unfamiliarity with, for example, Christian faith and tradition) and instances personal or individual choice. The exercise of such choice also arises as a consequence of the deliberate rejection of Christian faith and practice, including the taking up of atheist positions.

Secularist arguments tend to focus on the importance of not privileging any particular religion or tradition of belief. Chamber Business in the Scottish Parliament begins with a 'Time for Reflection', unlike the opening prayers used at Westminster. Invitations to give a Reflection are increasingly extended to

¹⁴ In an important technical work Charles Taylor has written on this in his published University of Edinburgh Gifford Lectures 'Living in a Secular Age,' at the University of Edinburgh in 1998–1999. The lectures were published in three volumes: *Varieties of Religion Today: William James Revisited* (2002), *Modern Social Imaginaries* (2004) and *A Secular Age* (2007).

humanists and others espousing no religious faith, after complaints by the Humanist Society that religious faith was being privileged. The Church of Scotland and Scottish Humanist Society made a joint submission to MSPs in January 2014, to change the title 'religious observance' to 'time for reflection' in non-denominational schools, and to bring practice in line with the Scottish Parliament. The University of Edinburgh has replaced the opening prayer with an opening reflection at its graduation services, in recognition of the highly international and religiously diverse nature of its student body, although that rationale has come from a secular rather than Multifaith argument. Most other Scottish universities have retained prayers, including Herriot-Watt University which is also strongly international, but whose students voted to keep prayers at graduations.

This rise in secularism, and with it varying levels of tolerant to intolerant atheism, has been very comprehensively mapped by the former Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams.¹⁵ Admittedly writing from an English perspective, and in England, his analysis is applicable across the United Kingdom. In summary, Williams distinguishes between what he calls 'procedural' secularism and 'programmatic' secularism.

Procedural secularism is that perspective (and it may well envelope a political process) which gives no advantage to any religious body or viewpoint over any others. He continues in the Introduction to his book, *Faith in the Public Square*, 'It is the principle according to which the state as such defines its role as one of overseeing a variety of communities of religious conviction and, where necessary, assisting them to keep the peace together, without requiring any specific public confessional allegiance from its servants or guaranteeing any single community a legally favoured position against others.'

Programmatic secularism, however, is more aggressive. For the Christian churches and for the wider religious arena in Scotland it is genuinely more problematic. Rowan Williams again, '[Programmatic secularism] defines an exclusive public orthodoxy of a new kind, and works on the assumption that only one sort of loyalty is really

¹⁵ Rowan Williams, *Faith in the Public Square*, Bloomsbury Publishing, London, 2012

possible. Loyalty to your faith will be a matter of private preference ...¹⁶ This has implications for religious believers. Most acutely these implications are found when believers, whose faith is counted dear to them, begins to issue into the public arena. A few illustrations will demonstrate this.

Some illustrations

Nadia Eweida, a Christian check-in desk clerk employed by British Airways had been disciplined by her employer for wearing a cross at work. She took her case to the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg and won. A generation ago it is near inconceivable that any employer would have taken action against her in the way that British Airways did. Although the airline readjusted their policies in line with the direction of the verdict the very fact that they thought it fit to reprimand her indicates a significant shift in cultural attitude towards the public expression of religious (in this case Christian) faith. Other appellants did not however win their cases.

Lilian Ladele, a local authority registrar already in post, had refused to conduct civil partnerships and a marriage guidance counsellor from Bristol, who would not counsel gay couples, both had their appeals turned down. In each case there were others in their respective organisations who could have taken on the duties which each of these, in conscience, said they could not accept.

In the delivery of services by the registrar and counsellor, a different set of principles was applied. No exemption in the delivery of a public service on the grounds of conscientious objection, based on grounds of faith, is allowable within the European Convention on Human Rights.¹⁷ In such settings people are paid from society's coffers to perform certain duties. We now know that anyone who would be allowed to opt out of such a job, or to seek exemption from particular functions within that job, would clearly be not only breaking the equality laws, but breaking the delivery of service based on fair treatment to all who seek those services.

¹⁶ Williams, pages 3 and 4.

¹⁷ Daily Telegraph, 15th January 2013

Superficially this might seem a good and a fair response in the light of changing cultural perceptions. However it could have 'knock on' considerations in other areas of public life; medicine for example.

Doctors are paid from the public purse. They are expected to alleviate suffering, aid recovery without fear or favour in respect of patients who are before them. And yet they are allowed exemption from conducting abortions on grounds of conscience (and for some this will be religious conscience).

What is of particular interest in the context of this Grosvenor Essay is *not* the issue which surrounds abortion, nor yet the issue of whether or not one sympathises with the registrar and the marriage guidance counsellor. Engaging though each of these are, we have cited them because they bring into focus another and perhaps more worrying issue. This is the potential erosion of the worth of conscience.

The potential threat to the 'rights' of conscience

At the start of the First World War those who argued they could not go to fight risked local public ridicule and the anonymous delivery of dead chickens to their door in mockery. By the time of the Second World War conscientious objection to fighting in war had become more acceptable. By the time of the turn of the Twenty First Century the case for conscientious objection seemed, on the face of it, more or less secure. Conscience, as given by both atheist and religious believer is now accepted for a very long time as a sufficient and necessary reason for not being obliged to fight, were conscription to be re-introduced, within the UK military.

Whilst such re-introduction at the present time is entirely hypothetical it is worth asking the question whether refusal to fight, let us say, on grounds of religious conscience would be accepted if tested in the courts. A rack of questions can be laid out. For example, would a court consider that a pacifist case, if presented as a public outworking of personal religious view, was an invalid argument? Would the court insist on a public, uniform secular orthodoxy in the delivery of public services (including military service) that overruled the claim for the 'rights of [in this case religious] conscience'? In the current UK climate the questions are clearly hypothetical but they nonetheless raise complex and quite fundamental questions for a

liberal democracy such as our own. They have yet to be raised in the case of doctors who refuse to carry out abortions.

Perhaps more searching questions are raised for the commitment to and practice of Christian faith. Roger Trigg, in a tightly argued and somewhat polemical book, comments, 'One law for all,' may 'seem to treat everyone equally, but in so doing, it can bear down more heavily on some more than others, if it stops them following their conscience.'¹⁸

In an essay such as this it is important to examine why rising secularism is becoming more and more intolerant of what we might call 'special pleading on grounds of conscience' if indeed one accepts that it is. We can remind ourselves of Rowan Williams' distinction between procedural secularism and programmatic secularism. The former, and probably still predominant, view is largely tolerant of claims for religious conscience though would not accept any special pleading on the part of religious viewpoints if they sought privilege in any way. The latter would bear down on any religious viewpoint if expressed in such a way as make public and preferred that which they contend is private and personal, and from aggressive holders of such positions, mistakenly regrettable as well.

If this analysis is correct a passing summary can be offered of what may become a strengthening trend. For three hundred years or so our society has increasingly come to value individual freedom. It has been generally recognised that periods of history when discrimination was levelled against those who did not, or could not on grounds of personal conscience (and within that we can include religious belief), conform to the prevailing legislative or popular norm, were regrettable.

Yet in the current climate, as increasingly strident secular orthodoxy seeks ascendancy those in a religious minority may find themselves discriminated against. How a society, through its promulgation of legislation and in the enactment of its courts, treats its minorities becomes a barometer of its ideological generosity.

¹⁸ Trigg, p88

A positive contribution from religion in a secularising climate

However to leave things at this point would hardly be constructive. What positive developments in the current climate can we point to that indicate a positive contribution of religious belief in what Rowan Williams has called the 'public square'? As UK and Scottish society becomes increasingly diverse can there be a resolution of some, if not all, the problems that have been flagged above? In one respect what we have said so far in this section of the Grosvenor Essay tends to assume Scottish society is becoming more secularised. At the same time, there is greater religious diversity as well as greater religious practice across the UK.

Is there a principle which might allow faith groups involving those who wish to exercise religious faith and conscience publicly to do so? What we can call the principle of 'reasonable accommodation' could be one such.¹⁹ It might offer one way whereby laws are brought into being which offer differential treatment, possibly to individuals, on the one hand and on the basis of the integrity of their conscience, as well as to groupings (and let us include Christian denominations) on the other.

A principle of 'reasonable accommodation' recognises that there can be no such thing as a law that is neutral in its effect upon all in society because it is uniform in its application to all in society. We have seen how some individuals and faith groups can be impacted negatively if the public outworking of a personal (as distinct from private) faith fails to conform to the uniformly required application of given legislation.

The possibility of reasonable accommodation should be examined and tested²⁰. Far from giving way to a relativizing of law, or syncretising everything to a lowest common denominator, pursuing and testing the possibility of reasonable accommodation would offer a safeguard to the historic and cherished liberal democracy of which Britain, and not least Scotland, is justly proud.

¹⁹ The term 'reasonable accommodation' is not a new one. Most famously it was deployed in the Taylor-Bouchard Commission in Quebec.

²⁰ The authors of this Grosvenor Essay recognise that a thoroughgoing and comprehensive testing is beyond the scope of what we are offering here.

For the principle of 'reasonable accommodation' to gain respect and to work justly in a society such as our own, significant levels of trust and respect need to be in play. This is no bad thing if such qualities replace forced conformity against peoples' wills and conscience. Our society needs 'give and take' for it to run harmoniously. This is so in life's common courtesies in the street, giving way to another when driving in traffic, exercising patience when queuing and so on. We do things like this very well. How might these common courtesies be extended more deliberately?

It would be a worthy ethic in a liberal democracy to develop an agreed given outcome by mutual consent rather than to impose a prescriptive requirement to conform. We accept it won't always work and is open to potential manipulation. An example of this was found in a recent case in England.

On September 16th 2013 Judge Peter Murphy ruled that a woman giving evidence in court should not be allowed to wear a full-face veil. At issue was the right, claimed by a 22-year old Moslem woman, to wear the niqab. Her reason for doing so was to ensure she was not viewed by men. The woman is accused of intimidating a trial witness.

In his judgment Judge Murphy sought to 'balance the rights of religious manifestation against the rights and freedom of the public, the press, and other interested parties such as the complainant in the proper administration of justice.'²¹ He continued, 'The latter must prevail over [the woman's] right to manifest her religion or belief during the proceedings against her to the extent necessary in the interests of justice.'

In British justice it is crucial that a person is identified. Judge Murphy allowed that the court would be adjourned for this to be done by female court officials. He also allowed that the woman, when testifying, would be allowed to do so from behind a screen or via video-link so that she was only visible to the judge, a jury, and those questioning her. If she did not remove her niqab to allow this she would not be allowed to testify.

²¹ The Independent, The Times, The Guardian have been referred to in preparing this Grosvenor Essay. All major daily papers carried this story on September 17th 2013

From the side of justice this is 'reasonable accommodation' in action. From the woman's side her acceptance of what seems an eminently fair judgment, and respectful compromise, would be its genuine outworking in good practice.

A not unrelated issue was raised by former Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, in a 2008 'lecture to lawyers at the Royal Courts of Justice about the relationship between Islam and British [sic] law.'²² Williams' argument was that the given legal routes, whether in Scots' Law or the law of England and Wales, aren't the only way of resolving issues.

In his celebrated, but for some, infamous, 2008 lecture he argued that parts of Islamic Sharia law could be applied, for example, 'Muslims could choose to have marital disputes or financial matters dealt with in a Sharia court.' Where consonant with the law of the land the outcome of the Sharia court would be ratified by due civil process.

Williams' fundamental point was precise and succinct even if phrased with his characteristic reserve. An approach to law which simply says:

... there's one law for everybody and that's all there is to be said, and anything else that commands your loyalty or allegiance is completely irrelevant in the processes of the courts – I think that's a bit of a danger.²³

It was clear that many did not know when the Archbishop gave his lecture that the UK constitution already allows people to devise their own way to settle disputes in front of an agreed third party provided all parties agree in advance. The Archbishop's position was supported by the then incumbent Lord Chief Justice Nicholas Phillips (the most senior judge in England and Wales) who commented valuably:

²² The New Statesman, 5th June 2013

²³ From BBC News website, entry for 7th February 2008.

[there is] no reason why Sharia principles, or any other religious code, should not be the basis for mediation or other forms of alternative dispute resolution.²⁴

A reasonable accommodation, albeit not widely known, also exists within the Jewish community's Beth din courts. Difficult cases of matrimonial dispute can be addressed (though a civil court's divorce would still have to be obtained) within the religiously structured Beth din courts. Likewise complex cases involving companies (they have to be privately owned) can be taken to the Beth din courts for resolution. In these cases, like the Sharia courts already operating in the UK, there is no attempt to develop a parallel legal system to those of Scotland or England and Wales. Nor is there any desire in either of these to seek to be effective in criminal law. What is offered is a culturally sensitive, religiously framed, form of civil reconciliation between disputing parties that is already and perfectly sensibly accommodated within UK constitutional legal systems.

In short, reasonable accommodation is possible. It already works. By saying what he did, Rowan Williams wanted to avoid a very specific danger. He commented:

What we don't want ... is a stand-off, where the law squares up to people's religious consciences.

One can ask whether this 'stand-off' is now happening, and if so, worryingly, whether it is on the increase.

No one ought to want to return a society where discrimination against any minority becomes acceptable again in the way it once was. All sections of the UK have made great strides to reduce, if not end, such discrimination. But the downside is that in seeking, quite rightly, to end previous discriminations, others arise. In contemporary Scotland, we need to question ourselves so as to mitigate against such a risk. If we don't, and new discriminations do arise, then we have failed to resolve the very problems we have sought to rectify.

Reasonable accommodation of minorities and minority perspectives based on conscience is an option that, if tested and found to be of

²⁴ Cited from the New Statesman website of 5th June 2013.

merit, would maintain our nation's treasured heritage of liberal democracy, mutual tolerance and respect. It would also be in accord with an outworking of our national and historic Christian principles.

The modern secular state is a safer place, in many ways, than the structures it replaces: - it allows space for a proper separation of legislature, judiciary and church. Arguably, there is then room for a proper relationship between church and state, and for all of the faiths in relation to the state. The state should be the guardian and protector of religious freedom but it should not defer to religion.

Individualism and being individualistic

However, social policy now seems to be designed to harass those whom government chooses to view as the undeserving poor. We are becoming more individualistic, less communitarian, less committed to dreams, visions and ideas. Secularisation - or factors akin to it - affects not only churches but all organisations which depend on voluntary commitment. Political parties find it hard to build membership. Voluntary organisations find it harder to attract committed volunteers. People are no less good, kind or caring. But we seem to have a weaker sense of being part of one community and 'all in this together'. Our view of political choices is increasingly seen through the lens of 'how does this affect me'. This is not just secular. It is arid. What faith communities can bring, in face of impending aridity, is vision, hope, care and compassion.

A SIDEWAYS GLANCE AT SCOTTISH IDENTITY: THEOLOGICAL REFLECTIONS FROM A SCOT ABROAD

I. An Irenic Way of Thinking About Scotland

How should we think about Scotland at this moment in our history? How should we think of ourselves as Scots? How should we see ourselves? As others see us? Let me show you the view of Scotland from my window in Princeton.

My office looks out on a house called Morven, a name taken from the legendary story of Ossian, the ancient hero in the great literary hoax that fooled learned opinion in 18th Century Europe. Morven was the home of Richard Stockton, who signed the American Declaration of Independence in 1776. He did so on behalf of the State of New Jersey, along with his fellow Princeton resident, the Reverend John Witherspoon. Witherspoon was a Church of Scotland minister who grew up in the manse at Gifford, just a few miles from here in Haddington. After parish ministries in Beath in Ayrshire and the Laigh Kirk in Paisley, Witherspoon went on to become the President of the College of New Jersey, today known as Princeton University. Witherspoon is all but unknown in Scotland but he was probably the most influential non-native born actor in the American Revolution after Lafayette, the French general who fought on the American side. At Princeton, Witherspoon's students included James Madison, one of the authors of the American constitution and fourth President of the young republic, as well as a host of elected representatives, judges, professors and pastors who shaped the emerging nation. As the story of John Witherspoon demonstrates, what is extraordinary about the United States is the high level of philosophical deliberation that went into the founding of the American nation and Scotland's intellectual influence on those ideals.

But that is not all I see of Scotland out of my window. Both my research centre and Morven are located on Stockton Street, which in 1776 was the main highway between New York and Philadelphia. It was along that road, right outside my office window, that George Washington and his army marched to Yorktown to defeat the British in the final battle of the American War of Independence. We may be able to look with pride on the Scottish Enlightenment thinkers who

had such a profound influence on the American Declaration of Independence and Constitution, as well as shaping the character of its schools and colleges – I do so daily in Princeton – but the reality is that American independence was born of battle and bloodshed and a fatal compromise with slavery, a legacy of violence and hatred, poverty and inequality from which it has not yet escaped. Scotland is part of that story, as the historian Tom Devine reminds us in a recent confession of his historiographical sin of omission in neglecting the central role of slavery in his account of the Scottish Atlantic trade in the 18th Century.

A few yards from Morven, there is a bus stop. I pass it daily on my walk to and from work. I only ever see African Americans and Hispanic Americans standing there, waiting for the bus to Trenton, the State Capital but a poor, post-industrial city that provides the hard-working cleaners, care givers, waiters and gardeners of Princeton. The bus stop is located outside a red brick mansion house, next door to Morven. This grand house has a green plaque on its garden wall: 'Thomas Mann lived here, 1938-1941' - Thomas Mann, the great novelist who fled Nazi Germany to America, spending his first years there in Princeton, a neighbor to his fellow exile from the Nazis, Albert Einstein.

There you have it, 'to see ourselves as others sees us'; the view of Scotland from my window: Morven, the mythical home of a signer of the American Declaration of Independence in the company of the Reverend John Witherspoon from Gifford; on Stockton Street, where a liberation army marched to its final victory over the occupying colonial power; next to the house of an exile from Nazi terror in Europe; with a bus stop where the descendants of former slaves and the children of illegal migrants stand daily in their struggle to survive. The view of Scotland from my window reminds us that nations are typically born or torn out of violent conflict, ethnic hatreds, cruel oppression and ruthless economic exploitation, as much as from noble declarations and high ideals.

Contrast America's story with that of Scotland. In its Referendum of 2014, Scotland has a unique moment in the history of nations; one of facing its future without being in the shadow of violence or war. We are at peace. We are not poisoned by the contagion of ethnic hatred or religious division. We are a happily mongrel people. We are not

oppressing any group within our nation or denying them the full rights of citizenship. We are holding this debate as fellow citizens, whether our name is Humza or McKenna or McGregor or Marlborough. We are not engaged in a national struggle of liberation from a brutal oppressor. The two governments in Edinburgh and London signed a legal accord to hold a binding referendum on our democratic future.

The question then is not one of violence or victimhood but one of vision. As Donald Dewar so memorably put it in his address at the opening of the Scottish Parliament, it is a question of 'who we are and how we carry ourselves.' What is our Scottish identity and how shall we conduct our conversation on what it means to be a nation? In today's world of fleeting, tweeting public opinion, welcome to the slow referendum, where we have time to reason together. This is a gift, all but unknown in the history of humanity. Let us not bury it but be good stewards of that rare and precious gift.

But before I develop that plea, please don't misunderstand me. The history of Scotland is a chiaroscuro of light and shadow, the shadow of war and violence, ethnic hatred and religious conflict, class oppression and exploitation, personal cruelty and savagery, overshadowing our stories of education and enlightenment, industry and innovation. Today we still live with that legacy and share the common traits of a humanity prone to hate of the stranger and the demonized other. In Scotland this has taken on a particular mental form in our history and culture. I shall call it a binary way of thinking about Scottish identity - an either / or way of thinking and living that defines Scottish identity fundamentally in terms of rejecting its perceived opposite.

Binary ways of thinking about Scotland have too often defined our identity: Protestant or Catholic; Presbyterian or Episcopalian; Juror or Non-Juror; Saved or Damned; Highland or Lowland; Nationalist or Unionist. The poet Hugh MacDiarmid called it the Caledonian antiszygy – 'duelling polarities within the one entity.' The holding of the 2014 referendum requires Scotland to make another binary choice – Yes or No to Independence. That is not a problem in itself. That's democracy. The problem arises when the process of making that democratic decision divides us as a society, rather than bring us together for the commonweal.

How then shall we escape this trap and engage in lateral thinking about Scotland? Is there another way of understanding Scottish identity that breaks this binary bind of Yes or No, For or Against, Us or Them, Win or Lose? I believe there is an alternative to such binary thinking about Scottish identity. It is this other way of thinking about Scotland I invite you to explore with me today. I call it an irenic way of thinking about Scotland.

You will not be surprised to learn that the roots of this 'Irenic Way of Thinking About Scotland' are Episcopalian! What I am calling irenic thinking, in contrast to binary thinking, is inspired by the approach to church unity advocated by John Forbes, one of the famous Aberdeen Doctors and an outstanding theologian of the first decades of the 17th century. Forbes was writing when Scotland was riven by the binary choice of his day: bishop or presbyter, compliance with the Articles of Perth or the National Covenant? John Forbes re-framed these bitter, binary debates about Scottish identity in church and state.

In a book first published in 1629 on the highly contentious Five Articles of Perth (1618), significantly entitled *Irenicum, On Peace*, Forbes makes three basic moves which I believe are characteristic of irenic thinking.

First, Forbes sets out a reasoned account of his own position on the controversy of the day. *Irenicum* is a learned defence of the Five Articles of Perth, including such controversial liturgical practices as kneeling at communion. He seeks to answer the criticisms and concerns of his Presbyterian critics in an irenic spirit, point by point, line by line. While supporting episcopacy in the Church of Scotland, he does not make a polarizing case for it, seeking common ground with Presbyterians, editing his own writings to remove anything that might cause unnecessary offence to them, and never questioning his own non-episcopal ordination.

So, first, an irenic way of thinking about Scottish identity does not mean abandoning one's own convictions on the issues of the day. It does mean giving a reasoned and irenic account of those convictions, fairly recognising and not fiercely caricaturing contrary views in the process.

Forbes draws on his profound knowledge of the early Church Fathers as well as Scripture to make his case. T F Torrance has called John Forbes the father of Reformed Patristics. What Forbes sought to establish in this way was the unity and continuity of Catholic doctrine, amid the divisions over church government and liturgical practice in the one Reformed Kirk of Scotland. In other words, Forbes marked out the common doctrinal ground of Christian unity amid deep divisions in the Church of Scotland on the issues of the day.

I was taught this 17th century period in Scottish history by Gordon Donaldson, who was a distinguished professor at Edinburgh University and a devout member of the Scottish Episcopal Church. I shall never forget the moment in one of his classes when he said, the Episcopalian and Presbyterian parties within the one Church of Scotland disagreed on questions of government in church and state, not doctrine. It was for me, a cradle Presbyterian, an epiphany, and why I remain staunchly committed to the re-union of these two parties within the one Church of Scotland today. This ecumenical way of thinking is exemplified in the *Irenicum* of John Forbes, who makes his case as a Reformed Catholic, seeking the common ground of ancient doctrine as the basis for the unity of the Church, amid disagreement on penultimate matters of governance in church and state.

So, second, an irenic way of thinking about Scotland means setting contemporary debates about our identity within a bigger picture that might allow us to see some common ground beyond the battle ground.

And third, the *Irenicum* of John Forbes argues that there are some matters of religious practice that are not determined by the command or prohibition of Scripture. They are matters of Christian freedom, common sense and wise judgement. Now for Forbes, this was the basis of his argument for the authority of the King and his bishops to rule on such discretionary matters as kneeling at communion, and the compliance of their subjects and flocks on such earthly rulings. In a more democratic and secular age, some of us might take issue with Forbes in his deference to royal and episcopal authority on matters not settled by Scripture, but his fundamental argument is

sound. As his brilliant translator and expositor, Edward Selwyn puts it:

The object of Dr Forbes ... is to provide a rational foundation for this kind of authority; and his argument must appeal to all who believe that Christian revelation as given in Scripture has not dispensed future generations from the exercise of corporate judgement and common sense and from the responsibilities attaching to every free and living society. (*Irenicum*, Book 1, Appendix 1, p.193, 1923)

So, third, irenic thinking requires the recognition that there are many matters on which both Christians in particular and people in general will legitimately disagree. The question then becomes one of how such disagreements are resolved. For Forbes in his day, it was a matter of submitting to royal and ecclesial authority in such matters. For us today, it is a matter of accepting majority rule in government while respecting minority rights in law. But the welcome recognition that there are matters for legitimate disagreement and discretionary judgement, this is an essential characteristic of an irenic way of thinking, exemplified by John Forbes in his *Irenicum*.

So, in summary, an irenic way of thinking about Scottish identity has these three basic characteristics:

1. Irenic Thinking holds to one's own viewpoint on the issues of the day in a reasoned way, recognizing the integrity of those who hold a contrary view, representing them fairly, and seeking to engage with them respectfully.

By way of contrast, a binary way of thinking argues one's case to the detriment, distortion and demonization of one's opponents.

2. Irenic Thinking seeks to frame the debates of the day within a larger picture, finding a perspective that turns a battleground into common ground.

By way of contrast, a binary way of thinking seeks to dig deep trenches on that battle ground, and looks no wider than the sniper's cross hair at its opponents.

3. Irenic Thinking recognizes 'liberty of opinion in matters that do not enter into the substance of the Faith,' as my own Secession ancestors in the United Presbyterian Church first affirmed and as the Church of Scotland states it in this formula today. Or, as Erasmus and Melancthon argued at the time of the Reformation disputes in the 16th Century, we must distinguish non-essentials, *adiaphora*, where Christians may reasonably disagree, from essential matters of faith and unity (a historical comparison helpfully made during the conference).

By way of contrast, binary thinking sees every issue as a matter of the substance of their convictions, and never subject to compromise and the search for common ground.

As Christians, we might translate these three basic moves of irenic thinking into theological and trinitarian terms.

1. If we truly believe that all human beings are made in the image of God, then we must respect the other person in any debate or disagreement, and seek their respect in turn as fellow bearers of the divine mystery of creation. That is the ground of our mutual respect in earthly disputes.
2. If we truly believe in the coming shalom of God, then we shall hold all earthly visions and hopes under the judgement of Christ and his passion for the poor and lost. That is the big picture in earthly disputes.
3. If we truly believe that we see through a glass darkly, as sinful and frail mortals, even in matters of revelation, then how much more should we hold matters of opinion with due humility and dependence on the Holy Spirit for light. That is the source of our wisdom in earthly disputes.

Binary thinking may also be translated into religious terms. If we see the world as an eternal Manichaeian struggle of good against evil; if we see our worldview as revealed and all others as wicked; if we see our own judgement as infallible and all others wrong; then we shall always think in terms of the warring gods and not the living God.

If we are to escape the trap of such binary thinking and religious idolatry, and embrace this more irenic and trinitarian way of thinking about Scottish identity today, then what follows? That is the subject of my second talk!

But for now, I thank God for the Reformed Catholic tradition in Scotland, represented by John Forbes and the Scottish Episcopal Church. May I thank you for your gift to Scotland: this irenic way of thinking about our identity.

II. Complexity, Creativity and Civility in Scotland

According to Jack McConnell, the former First Minister of Scotland (now The Rt Hon. the Lord McConnell of Glenscorrodale) writing in the *Scotsman* (Thursday 21 February, 2013), he shares his fears for Scotland:

... the debate on the referendum to decide our future shows every sign of becoming the most divisive and antagonistic in our history. It could make the Monklands by-election of 1994 look like a constructive exchange about faith and politics.

Referring to the late Bob McLean, his close friend and a stalwart of the cross-party campaign for a Scottish Parliament in the 1980s, McConnell goes on to write:

Bob would never have denied, and I certainly don't, the right of those in both camps to make their case as forcefully as possible ... But he would already have been dismayed at the potential to turn Scot (however we define that in 2013) against Scot. He would be worried about the aftermath. For him the conduct of the campaign was as important as the content and the count, because it formed the roots of the post-campaign landscape, the future.

If we succumb to the Caledonian antizysygy, seeing Scotland in the binary terms of our dueling polarities – 'Scot against Scot' – then we are indeed lost and facing a bleak post-campaign landscape, a Scottish winter, the morning after the referendum vote, whoever wins.

But if we think of Scotland in the irenic way of John Forbes, and ask what will make for our peace as we prepare to vote in 2014, then a different landscape and a different liturgy come into view: the prospect of a civic Pentecost, where young citizens will have visions and old ones dream dreams of a different Scotland, beyond our imagining, a place of possibility, not polarity.

Now, by this stage, some of you must be thinking, 'Scotland, 'a place of possibility'? Come off it! He's been away too long! He's forgotten what Scotland's really like!' Well, you're right, if you are thinking that. I had forgotten what Scotland's really like, in the eight years since I have been away - until yesterday. On my way through from Glasgow airport to Edinburgh, I stopped off in Coatbridge. Coatbridge! Remember Lord McConnell's remark in the *Scotsman*: he feared a referendum vote so divisive that it would make the notorious 1994 Monklands by-election 'look like a constructive exchange about faith and politics.' Yes that Coatbridge, which in 1994 was the political battleground for a bitter by-election in which accusations of sectarianism and corruption replaced reasoned debate. Let me tell you about Monklands today, and of a civic Pentecost in the heartland of binary Scotland. It is the story of the Coatbridge Phoenix: the Xaverian missionary order who turned a former junior seminary into the Conforti Institute, 'promoting the global citizen, integral human development, intercultural and interfaith dialogue.' (<http://www.confortiinstitute.org/>) How did they do that?

1. They recognized there was no one simple solution to the challenges they faced. The challenge was complex and may not have been solvable.
2. They risked their imagination and engaged in creative thinking about what might be.
3. They returned to their founding charism as a religious order, and renewed their commitment to solidarity with people in poverty and civility with people of other faiths.

Inspired not by the American Dream but by the Coatbridge Phoenix, allow me to suggest three characteristics of irenic voting about Scotland:

First, irenic thinking leads us to recognize complexity

Second, irenic thinking leads us to risk creativity

Third, irenic thinking leads us to renew civility

Let me say a little more about each of these irenic ways of thinking about our Scottish identity and reflecting on Scotland's future.

1. Complexity: Scotland as a Wicked Problem

In binary thinking, there is always a simple solution to the problem of Scotland: defeat the other viewpoint, and all will be well. Irenic thinking, by way of contrast sees Scotland as what some in the sciences and social sciences have come to call a wicked problem, complex and without simple resolution, and therefore requiring new and imaginative, resilient and recurring ways of investigating it and tackling it. In their book on *Tackling Wicked Problems* (London: Earthscan, 2010, 3-15), Valerie A. Brown and her colleagues give this account of wicked problems drawing on a 1973 article by Rittel and Webber:²⁵

Rittel and Webber (1973) identified a class of problems that fits [our] planetary dilemmas. They called problems such as complex social-environmental issues 'wicked problems and contrasted these with 'tame problems', which can be solved by existing modes of inquiry and decision-making.

A wicked problem is a complex problem that defies complete definition, for which there can be no final solution, and where solutions are not true or false or good or bad, but the best that can be done at the time. Such problems are not morally

²⁵ 'Dilemmas in a General Theory of Planning', Horst W. J. Rittel and Melvin M. Webber, *Policy Sciences* 4 (1973): 155-69.

wicked, but diabolical in that they resist all the usual attempts to resolve them (Rittel and Webber, 1973).

Since wicked problems are part of the society that generates them, any resolution brings with it a call for changes in that society [including] different forms of governance and changes in ways of living

Scotland is in this sense a wicked problem in the mind of irenic thinkers. The complex problems of unemployment, poverty, poor health, addiction, abuse and violence that we face admit of no simple solutions. They will not be solved by a Yes or No vote but by working on all fronts, with all approaches, in the unceasing search for the possibility of practical and sustainable change in some measure. Seen in this way, the referendum is re-framed from an all or nothing, once in a generation vote to free the nation or save the Union, and instead becomes what it is: an historic opportunity to strengthen our capacity to tackle wicked problems by the way we all conduct ourselves in the constitutional debate. As Jack McConnell put it at the end of his article: 'Can we have a debate that leaves us stronger, able to move on and succeed?'

This is not only a wicked problem of complexity. It is also a theological problem of chronology.

I had the privilege of being taught and supervised as a theology student by the late Alan Lewis. Under the shadow of living with terminal cancer, Alan wrote an extraordinary book on Holy Saturday, *Between Cross and Resurrection* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), reflecting on the desolate experience of death in the day between Good Friday and Easter Day. In the course of his profound meditation on the depths of human and Christian experience, Alan made a brilliant passing observation about contemporary political theology. The welcome recovery of an eschatological perspective, with its biblical emphasis on the kingdom of God breaking in from the future, had had the unintended but perhaps inevitable consequence of neglecting the mundane realities of every day life and every day political issues. It is theologically glamorous to speak of the *kairos* of God's coming reign of justice and peace rather than the *chronos* of public spending priorities in a time of austerity. But, said Alan Lewis, these mundane, everyday issues are the stuff of Holy Saturday, for

example, in the time between the times, when God is also present and at work.

In an Easter faith, when all of life is cast anew in the joy of the Resurrection but there is no way to get there than through the long Holy Saturday, when we live with intractable, wicked problems without end, a dead body in a tomb. Irenic believers, as well as irenic thinkers and voters, recognize that kind of complexity to our Christian faith as well as our Scottish identity.

2. Creativity: Scotland as an Imaginative Community

The second trait of irenic thinkers and voters is that they risk creativity in the face of complexity. And here the key word is imagination.

Benedict Anderson famously described nations as ‘imagined communities,’ bound together across time and space by images of their common identity among people who would never meet face to face. He saw the rise of newspapers and novels in the 18th and 19th centuries as the media that bound together such imagined communities or nations. Today, undergoing another technological revolution in the digital age of the internet and new social media, I would argue that we need to see Scotland not as an ‘imagined community’ but as an ‘imaginative community,’ actively engaged as citizens and inhabitants of this land and society in re-imagining who we are and how we carry ourselves. This is also seen as a key to tackling wicked problems, as Valerie Brown and colleagues note in their volume of essays on this topic:

[It] requires the use of imagination. Without exhausting the possibilities, imagination is associated with creativity, insight, vision and originality; and it is also related to memory;,, perception and invention. All of these are necessary in addressing the uncertainty associated with wicked problems in a world of continual change.

In a practical sense, imagination has been central to the work of anyone who is involved in change in the society in which they live. This includes, artists, philosophers, scientists, inventors, citizen activists and community leaders

the world over. It should come as little surprise that imagination plays an essential role in decision-making on complex issues. Accepting a central role for the imagination does not mean that we abandon standards for assessing the validity and reliability of the knowledge so generated; it indicates the potential for change and shows us where to look.

Rittel and Webber point out that wicked problems ... require us to welcome paradox (conflicting propositions can reveal root causes) and tolerate uncertainty (recognizing that there can be many solutions). An active imagination is a primary requirement if one has to deal with paradox, uncertainty and complexity.

We need to realize that we are re-creating our Scottish identity over the next twenty months as agents of our future and not as victims of our past or hostages of our present. We need to turn the binary Yes – No debate into an irenic occasion for play and imagination, art and invention, spirit and soul, inspiration and innovation, not by a creative elite but by the extraordinary gifts of ordinary children, women and men from Shetland to Stranraer.

This too is a theological matter. The promise of Pentecost is that God will pour out God's Spirit on all flesh. As one commentator on the Book of Acts has put it, it is as if the walls of that upper room dissolved and the disciples found themselves out on the public street, witnessing to the work of the Spirit among people of every tribe and tongue and nation. Irenic thinking is the work of the Spirit. Without the fruits of the Spirit – love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith – there can be no true creativity or life-enhancing imagination. But with this civic Pentecost, Scotland can be an imaginative community.

3. Civility: Scotland as a Civic Identity

And thirdly, irenic thinkers and voters believe in civility: they believe in treating one another with a respectful reserve, listening to what others have to say. Irenic voters take a Sideways Glance at Scotland – looking at Scottish identity as citizens, standing side by side in a post-industrial, democratic, and networked society, and not as

subjects ruled from above in a hierarchical society, or as the masses, organized from below in an industrial society. To exercise that civility, we need an irenic way of thinking about Scotland, not head-butting one another over our differences, as some would express their Scottish identity.

We need to be a civil community, addressing the wicked problem of Scottish identity in creative ways, as fellow citizens, living with our deep differences and yet handling them with mutual respect and understanding.

Again, this is a theological matter. Even in modern secular Scotland, debates over church and state can hit the media headlines. But the real zone of theological energy for irenic voters is not the ebbing world of church and state but the emerging space of civil society and the public sphere, where we negotiate the relationship and responsibilities of discipleship and citizenship.

Conclusion: Confidence

We are contemplating what it means to be Scottish. In 1990 I began my own tract for the times on *Scottish Identity* with a text from Anthony Ross, then the Catholic chaplain at Edinburgh University. In an essay on Scottish identity entitled *Resurrection*, Anthony wrote that before we can know what it means to be Scottish, we have to decide what it means to be human and to be Christian and to repent of all the destructive ways in which being Christian in Scotland – whether Catholic or Protestant – has distorted our humanity and deprived us as Scots from knowing God’s lavish and life-affirming love in the Christ.

But seen in the light of God’s love, poured out at Calvary, longsuffering on Holy Saturday, confirmed to the women on Easter morning, what it means to be human and Christian and Scottish takes on a different character, beyond complexity, creativity and civility, and even contrition. Our identity becomes a matter of confidence, confidence in God’s loving purpose for little Scotland and all humanity and the whole cosmos.

EPISCOPAL ENDEAVOURS TO OPEN UP A WIDER VISION

In 1960 the Bishops of the Scottish Episcopal Church prohibited Episcopalians from having anything to do with the celebrations of the 400th anniversary of the Scottish Reformation. They did this in the belief that any such participation would inevitably mean compromising the Episcopal Church's identity as the *true* Church of Scotland. It was, perhaps, a classic example of that 'binary' way of thinking about identity that Will Storrar has discussed. But it was quite different, fifty years on, in 2010, when Episcopalians gladly accepted invitations to take part in the 450th anniversary celebrations and when it would have been unthinkable for the Bishops to have said anything negative upon the subject – in fact, they said nothing and never considered saying anything: it simply was not on their agenda.

Again, in 1960, it would have been very common to find two iconic pictures displayed in the entrance areas of Episcopal church buildings – one depicting the consecration at Aberdeen in 1784 of Samuel Seabury to be Bishop in the American church, the other showing an imprisoned Episcopal priest baptising infants from the town goal in Stonehaven in the middle of the eighteenth century. The first perhaps represents the enduring pride of a small church which believed that it punched above its weight in being in on the origins of the Anglican Communion, while the latter with its reference to the persecution of some Episcopalians under the penal laws speaks of a church well aware of the cost of sustaining episcopacy against the Presbyterian establishment. Today one would be very hard put to find these pictures anywhere on public display, though they were reproduced once more in the first decade of the twenty-first century.

This change in attitude towards celebrations of the Scottish Reformation and the disappearance from view of once prominent icons of identity, may well suggest a church with at least the potential to model what has been called elsewhere in this essay an 'irenic' approach to church and to national identity, if one assumes that these changes also mark a move away, consciously or not, from a more confrontational approach.

How then could the Episcopal church model an irenic approach to identity for the nation as a whole? We could begin with the oft-repeated description of it by non-Episcopalians as ‘the English church’, the Scottish branch, as it were, of the Church of England, a designation rarely if ever intended as a compliment and one that might be thought fatal to any possibility of the church modelling anything positive about Scottish national identity! But, oddly enough, it may very well be that this long-standing ‘problem’ faced by the Episcopal Church – and it has certainly been perceived as a problem by many Episcopalians - could now turn out to be a strength and an opportunity. To see how this might be so, we need to remind ourselves of the history. The charge of being ‘the English Church’, though vehemently denied by Episcopalians, is not without merit. It is still the case that in many of our churches the majority of the public voices, whether clerical or lay, are or sound English and often pretty posh English at that. The view of the church as really the Church of England in Scotland for people who like that kind of thing has acquired force in many Scottish minds. Maybe it began in the 1700s with those ‘Qualified’ congregations, served by English clergy, using an English service book, catering for some English worshippers who did need an Anglican service. Moreover, in the 19th century there was certainly a strong move in the Episcopal Church to assimilate itself in many ways to the Church of England in the interests of a pan-Anglican identity which could give it clout against the Kirk, and against a Kirk that many, in the aftermath of the Disruption of 1843, thought was in decline anyhow. In Scotland but not wholly of it might be a fair summary of all of this, whatever the denials we are accustomed to make.

So, what do *Episcopalians* really make of this description? Well, of course, it is absolutely true that without both laity and clergy of English origin the church would be a good deal smaller and much the poorer in all sorts of ways. So, if the Scottish Episcopal Church repudiates this description it cannot be for any narrow, silly, nationalistic reasons. That would be quite unworthy of a Christian body. There *are* grounds, though, for being anxious about it. First, for some people, this designation is a way of claiming that Episcopalians have no right to consider themselves an authentic tradition within the story of Christianity in Scotland. And that is simply untrue to the history of Scotland and its experience of Christianity. And any such move ought to be resisted. Scottish Episcopal Church second, it is

the case that not all English churchgoers in Scotland adhere to the Episcopal Church – many go, in fact, elsewhere, not least to the Kirk and quite a lot of them are, in fact, Anglicans. Third, the history of the Scottish Episcopal Church is quite distinct from that of the Church of England and has taken a very different course, though it would be foolish to deny obvious links, affinities and bonds of affection, quite apart from the very important fact that the Episcopal succession was restored twice via the Church of England in the seventeenth century (in 1610 and at the Restoration of the monarchy in the early 1660s). Fourth, the Episcopal Church in Scotland is really very unlike the Church of England, being a small nonconformist Anglican church – not a huge, established national church like the Church of England (or indeed the Church of Scotland with which the Church of England has much in common). And it could therefore be argued that the Scottish Episcopal Church has far more in common with the many small Anglican churches around the world (e.g. in Japan) than it does with its big sister in the south. And a good case could also be made for saying that the Kirk, with its vocation to be a national church with national responsibilities, is far more like the Church of England in its self-understanding than is the Episcopal Church.

Yet, be all that as it may, and important as that has been in our sense of being Scottish, the time is surely right for a far more positive take on all of this. After all, the church can quite easily and perfectly credibly demonstrate its credentials to be fully a part of the story of Christianity in Scotland and, as developments since 1960 have shown, no longer feels itself under any obligation to do so by making exclusive claims or by tilting against others who are equally part of the story. But it can also say that while *fully* part of the Scottish scene it is not to be, does not wish to be and does not see any need to be, *wholly* defined by that participation. It has strong links not only to the Church of England, but to the other Anglican churches in the British Isles and, as a member of the Porvoo Communion with Lutheran churches, to Scandinavia and the Baltic republics. In other words, it is possible to be fully Scottish and to have multiple identities which take the church far beyond the bounds of this small nation. In this respect, even the sobriquet of ‘English Church’, while hardly the most comfortable of designations, can be understood to suggest an identity that is far from narrow, but rather is open and flexible and respectful of difference and diversity. And so the church might want to argue that it seeks to play a part in Scottish life, whatever the

outcome of the 2014 Referendum, which both celebrates the particularities of being Scottish and also all the potential for that to be entirely compatible with many other strands of identity and interest, because that is actually what this church is like in its own life. It comes naturally and by grace to us to be like that.

If a new take on the term 'English church' could help the Scottish Episcopal Church model important aspects of identity for Scotland, so too might another aspect of a church that has changed much since the more definite days of 1960. Mention has already been made of it – 'difference and diversity'. Within its own life since 1960 the Scottish Episcopal Church, as it has become numerically much smaller has also become much more diverse and contains within its congregations many ways of being Anglican. It is now, in effect, a broad church – terms like 'liberal catholic', 'liberal protestant', 'evangelical', 'anglo-catholic' ('scoto-catholic' is, of course, wonderfully in this context, a Presbyterian and not an Episcopalian term) simply do not encapsulate this reality, only facets of it. The art of being such a church – and it is an art - requires much that is, in the terms of one Scottish Episcopal Church section of this essay, irenic – respect for different approaches and opinions, willingness to stay together in the midst of strong disagreement and lively dispute, and a capacity to learn from one another and not to retreat into little Scottish Episcopal Church sects and coteries of the like-minded. And this applies not only to the internal life of the Scottish Episcopal Church but also to the whole, transnational enterprise of being part of the worldwide Anglican Communion. None of this, it is important to note, is an immutable given in our life, so that current stresses and strains could very well overcome the irenic arts – yet, so far, they have not, so that this church can also model the art and the cost of being and staying together in very considerable diversity.

A church which understands itself to be fully part of the Scottish story but is more than happy not to be wholly defined by that story, and which tries hard to embrace within its own life very different ways of being Christians and Anglicans, offers to the communities it serves in Scotland a model of identity which deeply respects and celebrates the particularities of country and of diverse places within that country, but refuses to be limited in its life and its vision only to these. It will see identity as a complex, not a simple, phenomenon and will hope for it, and work for it, to be conceived in very broad terms whether

Scotland opts to remain in the Union or to become independent. It will almost certainly want to believe that such a conception is possible whatever the result of the referendum in September 2014, and it will instinctively trust that politicians on both sides of the debate will eschew narrow views, but it will also understand that its members, like any other citizens, will have to make a judgement. And it will hope that the kind of identity by which they already live will play a significant part in how they judge.

Of course, none of this makes any sense at all by way of offering some kind of model for aspects of national identity unless the Scottish Episcopal Church is known, visible and active in its local communities all over Scotland, and has some kind of presence in the public square and in civic society. And that, in turn, is to do with the gathering confidence of a church which sees itself as fully part of the Scottish scene and yet not wholly encompassed by or defined by that participation – but then how could this fail to be true for all Christian churches for whom it is bound to be true that here we have no abiding city?

Recommended Reading

Dauvit Broun, *Scottish Independence and the Idea of Britain from the Picts to Alexander III* (Edinburgh, 2007), esp. 111–14

Ian Campbell, 'Planning for pilgrims: St Andrews as the second Rome', *The Innes Review* 64.1 (2013): 1–22

T. M. Devine, *The Scottish Nation 1700-2000* (London: Penguin 1999).

James E. Fraser, 'Rochester, Hexham and Cennrigmonaid: the movements of St Andrew in Britain, 604–747', in *Saints' Cults in the Celtic World*, ed. Steve Boardman, John Reuben Davies and Eila Williamson (Woodbridge, 2009), 1–17

Arthur Herman, *The Scottish Enlightenment: The Scots' Invention of the Modern World* (London: Fourth Estate, 2001).

Magnus Magnusson, *Scotland: The Story of a Nation* (London: HarperCollins, 2000).

Ian Meredith, *The Scottish Reformation: An Episcopalian Perspective* (Glasgow: Scottish Episcopal Church Diocese of Glasgow & Galloway, 2012).

Alasdair Raffe & Eleanor Harris, *Episcopacy and Scottish Identity from 1689* (Glasgow: Scottish Episcopal Church Diocese of Glasgow & Galloway, 2014).

William Storrar, *Scottish Identity: A Christian Vision* (1990)

William Storrar, *Public Spirit: Connecting Citizenship and Discipleship in a Global Era* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2012).

Rowan Strong, *Episcopalianism in Nineteenth-Century Scotland: Religious Responses to a Modernizing Society* (Oxford: OUP, 2002).

Rowan Williams, *Faith in the Public Square* (London: Bloomsbury, 2012).

Some Suggested Questions for Discussion

1. Looking at the sections that focus on the history of the Scottish Episcopal Church, and the church in general in Scotland, what things strike you particularly?
2. Again looking at the historical sections what other things come to mind that you would like to know about? List these.
3. The Essay has a section on biblical themes regarding the people of God and national identity. Are there other things that you would like to refer to from the Bible that personally have informed, or do inform, your own thinking in this area?
4. The Essay has a section that makes particular comment on secularisation in Britain, and therefore in Scotland as well. Do you agree with what it says? If so, in what ways do you agree? If you don't agree with the thrust of this section, can you say what your own viewpoint is?
5. Underlying the essay is the theme of national identity and of the place of the church within Scotland. Given the forthcoming / recent referendum how far do you see (a) your own personal identity affected by the referendum and (b) how far do you feel the identity of your church / the Scottish Episcopal Church to be affected by the referendum?
6. What values do you most wish to see embedded in Scottish life?
7. What can we do to help embed these values?