

**A Dazzling Mixture:
Scotland on the 300th Anniversary of the Union**

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It is a great honour to be invited to give the Scottish Churches Parliamentary Office Annual Lecture this year, 2007, on the 300th Anniversary of the Union. And it is a particular pleasure to deliver that lecture here in the Netherbow, a place of precious memories for me – not least because in the momentous months after the April 1992 General Election, it was the venue for several important events in the life of *Common Cause*, the civic forum on democratic renewal that some of us founded around that time as part of the wider movement for a Scottish Parliament.

If you will allow me to have a senior moment and reminisce, it is those political memories from 1992 which will spark the theme of my lecture this evening – the identity of Scotland on the 300th Anniversary of the Union.

In May of 1992, for example, we held a press conference here in the Netherbow to announce that *Common Cause* would organize a massive Home Rule demonstration when the leaders of the European Union held their summit at Holyrood Palace in December of that year. Two memories stand out from that time.

First, the skeptical look on the face of the veteran BBC political correspondent, the late Kenny McIntyre, when I made the grandiose statement that tens of thousands would march through the streets of Edinburgh in our common cause. To use that distinctive Scottish double positive, conveying a negative, I could see him thinking, ‘Aye, right!’

Second, the following Sunday, my fellow Common Causer Alan Miller and I were summoned to a meeting at the Scottish Trade Union Congress offices in Glasgow to meet with its general secretary, Campbell Christie. It was made clear to us in no uncertain terms that any mass demonstration of the Scottish people would be organized by the industrial tribunes of the people, the STUC, and not by any upstart, white wine club from the chattering classes!

But those *Common Cause* public intellectuals had real substance in Scottish public life – Willie McIlvanney, Neal Ascherson, Tom Nairn, Joyce McMillan, Isobel Lindsay, Billy Kaye, Alan Miller, Stephen Maxwell and others – and they really did make a difference in the Home Rule movement over the next five years.

For example, it was Alan Miller and *Common Cause* that drafted the *Democracy Declaration of Scotland* for the December 12, 1992, march at the European Summit. This was the occasion when twenty five and perhaps even thirty thousand Scots and friends really did come on to the streets of this city as citizens and peacefully demanded their democratic right to a Scottish Parliament for Scottish affairs. That 1992 *Democracy Declaration*, read out to the marchers at the closing rally by an unknown citizen and adopted by acclamation, was the only document in the hundred year history of the Scottish Home Rule Movement that was jointly adopted by Labour, Liberals and Nationalists; establishing the common ground for the united ‘Yes, Yes’ referendum campaign of 1997.

It was that march by the ordinary citizens of Scotland, surprising everyone by their sheer numbers and clear demand for unity, which ensured that the Home Rule cause did not wither after the

surprise Tory General Election victory in April, 1992 – as happened after the 1979 Tory victory under Thatcher. On the Friday morning after that April 1992 General Election, the defeated opposition parties in Scotland were gutted, demoralized and paralyzed after their fourth electoral failure in a row. In those crucial days and months, it was the civic groups, including the churches, which energized and reunited the Home Rule movement in a new *Coalition for Scottish Democracy* rooted in civil society and led by citizens.

We should not lose that civic democratic memory at this time in Scotland's political history when those same political parties are now firmly, and rightly, back in the electoral saddle and riding high in opinion polls and election-day dreams of victory. It was the march of the people in Edinburgh on December 12, 1992, announced to a skeptical media in this building and united around a declaration written by and for citizens, which saved the day and ensured the confident civic democratic and cross-party movement of the 1990s that led to those two resounding Yes votes in the 1997 Referendum. It was the people who made the difference in the 1990s, and the parties who followed their democratic lead and their civic demand for a united front on constitutional reform in that Referendum campaign.

It was also *Common Cause* that introduced and practised the idea of holding civic forums across Scotland as a key part of the Home Rule campaign, enabling ordinary citizens and different sectors of civil society to hear considered arguments and fresh thinking on all sides of the issue and to have their say – an idea later taken up nationally with the establishment of the Scottish Civic Forum, now sadly of blessed memory – but more of that later in the lecture.

And, finally, it was *Common Cause* that realized Neal Ascherson's long held dream to take a little bus party of writers, poets and singers around small town Scotland, outside the Central belt, to discuss its political future together and celebrate its many cultures and languages. In the last 100 hours of the September 1997 Referendum campaign, Neal and Willie McIlvanney led that travelling caravan of thinkers and artists around the North East and Highland and Borders – Joyce McMillan and Billy Kaye, Rod Paterson and Sheena Wellington, Robert Crawford and Douglas Dunn, Angus Peter Campbell and Fearghas MacFhionnlaigh, Mairi Campbell and Dave Francis of The Cast – discussing people's aspirations for Scotland in high schools and housing schemes, town halls and church halls; and celebrating our diverse cultures in Buchan Doric and Highland Gaelic and Border Scots. I am delighted to see that Neal's inspired idea for a new style of democratic politics that combines civil conversation with cultural celebration has been taken up in this Scottish Parliamentary Election Campaign by the inimitable Lesley Riddoch and her *Scottish VotePod* events around Scotland and on the web, bringing together politicians, citizens and singers to discuss election issues and have a good time while they're at it – exactly as we did to packed houses in 1997.

So, despite the skepticism of seasoned political commentators like Kenny McIntyre, the work of *Common Cause* and the other civic groups in the 1990s - mobilizing citizens and making the case for a more participatory democracy in Scotland through the recall of the ancient Scottish Parliament of 1707 as a modern legislature - all that work by people within Scottish civil society did make the difference when we finally came to vote for it in the 1997 Referendum.

Indeed, this evening, as we contemplate the identity of Scotland on the 300th anniversary of the Union, we do well to recall this story about the critical, perhaps decisive role played by Scottish civil society in the common cause of democratic renewal in the 1990s. Some would argue - and I would be among them as one who lived through these decades and was active in the Home Rule cause during these years, within both *Common Cause* and the churches - some would argue that it was the Scottish cultural renaissance in the 1980s and this Scottish civic uprising in the 1990s that

galvanized both Scottish public opinion and the divided home rule parties to work together and vote decisively for a Scottish parliament with legislative and fiscal powers in 1997.

We do well to recall this story of a civic democratic cultural renaissance in the 1980s and 1990s as the source of the self-confident buoyancy of popular support for a Scottish Parliament. It is a very different story from our national loss of confidence in the run-up to the 1979 devolution referendum. In 2007, on the 300th anniversary of the Union, I think that the critical question for our future as a small nation in a globalizing world is once more fundamentally cultural and civic democratic rather than narrowly party political or even constitutional.

In other words, I don't think that the decisive question facing Scotland in the May 2007 Parliamentary Election is whether or not we vote for independence. I am quite relaxed about that. In the immortal words of Kenny Dalglish, 'maybes aye and maybes no!' We campaigned for a Scottish Parliament as a democratic assembly of the Scottish people's representatives. Once we had secured that Parliament, it was always going to be possible for the Scottish electorate to vote in a Scottish government advocating independence. It is no big deal for democrats. Let's have a reasoned, informed debate and hear the arguments on all sides and let us come to a considered judgment in parliamentary elections and a subsequent referendum. That's democracy. Let the people decide.

No, that is not the big question facing Scotland on the 300th anniversary of the Union – that's now a routine political question and we have established the democratic processes to decide it in Scotland, whatever the mythical claims of the UK Parliament to sovereignty in such matters. Under agreed international standards in a democracy, the people will decide, and in Scotland the Scottish people will decide in a referendum (as Professor Matt Qvotrup of Robert Gordon University sets out very clearly in an article in today's *Scotsman* newspaper).

The Fundamental Challenge Facing Scotland

No, I wish to argue in this lecture that *the fundamental challenge facing Scotland in 2007 is not the constitutional question of independence but the cultural question of immigration*. Put simply, it's not a question of Scotland's Oil, but Scotland's Oldies. As David McCrone, the doyen of Scottish social analysts, has stated in a recent study of population and demography in Scotland (see 'Population and Demography', in Lindsay Paterson, Frank Bechhofer, David McCrone, *Living in Scotland: social and economic change since 1980*, EUP, 2004):

... there is no other European country with lower levels of population growth. Scotland's population is the only one to fall since 1918 ... modern Scotland is not able to reproduce itself, and will decreasingly be able to do so on present trends. This, together with an ageing population, has led many to be concerned about the future, particularly in terms of how Scotland's labour force is to reproduce itself in the next few decades. The relation between economic growth and population growth is an emerging issue in Scottish politics, especially as immigration is a reserved rather than a devolved power.

McCrone goes on to argue that Scotland's long term static and declining population trend cannot be explained by fertility and mortality trends. These mainly followed the rest of Great Britain, where the population has increased in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. The explanation lies elsewhere:

In broad terms, where Scotland did differ was that, historically, more people had emigrated but far fewer had in-migrated. This is the key to understanding why its population has been so static, compared with other Western European countries....

There was ... no major net incoming of population after the Irish arrived in the nineteenth century. This helped to reinforce the sense that Scotland was manifestly a society of emigrants, not immigrants.

McCrone and his colleagues conclude their cool sociological and statistical analysis of the population and demography of Scotland by making a bold statement with a subtle qualification that might make you miss its full import for our public life and debate: 'Post-industrial Scotland, as typified by Glasgow and west central Scotland, has very low birth rates, high mortality, levels of morbidity well above average, and continuing out-migration: these present the country's leaders with *perhaps* their greatest challenge.'

Allow me to be more emphatic. Demography does present Scotland's leaders with their greatest challenge.

Now I know the latest population figures show a small increase in population, reflecting recent immigration of workers from Eastern Europe, especially Poland, and perhaps some impact from the Fresh Talent Initiative attracting skilled foreign graduates to work in Scotland. But this recent population upturn exactly makes my point – we need massive immigration into Scotland to staff a dynamic economy, enrich our multicultural society and support an ageing population. And even with this tiny turn around, the historic trend and long term impact of population loss remain as the greatest problem we face as an ageing society in a competitive global economy.

Scotland is not alone in facing this problem. I recently heard two luminaries of American capitalism, Alan Greenspan, former head of the Federal Reserve, and Michael Bloomberg, Mayor of New York, take part in a broadcast symposium on the future of the American economy. They declared that the USA needed an annual immigration rate of 300,000 to 400,000 skilled workers if it was not only to remain competitive in a global economy but also redress what they saw as the immoral gap between rich and poor in American society through economic growth.

I believe the same conviction holds true for Scotland in the 21st century. I believe that we have to welcome and work for the prospect of a Scotland of ten million, not five, created through massive and successive waves of skilled immigration into Scotland from around the world, and not just from Eastern Europe, as at present - not so much a Fresh Talent solution as a Fresh Scotland revolution. You may think this an absurd goal and an unattractive prospect for Scotland, and for good liberal rather than hostile anti-immigrant reasons – consider, for example, the impact of massive population growth on the environment and quality of life; or the ethics of taking skilled nurses and doctors from the clinics and hospitals of Africa; or the capacity of our social and physical infrastructure to cope with such changes (as illustrated by today's story in the *Herald* about whether Glasgow's social services could cope with the proposal to accept relatively large numbers of migrant children without parents requiring foster care). But this is the dilemma facing nearly every Western country seeking to compete in the global economy today, with declining birth rates and ageing populations and growing disparities of wealth and poverty – can we integrate younger transnational migrant workers and their families into our national life in ways that respect their non-Western beliefs and values, our Western liberal democracy and everyone's global responsibilities?

My current life and work in America, directing a global ecumenical research institute in Princeton, has set me thinking about these questions on both sides of the Atlantic. I now live as a legal alien in the United States of America and as a migrant worker in the global knowledge economy, albeit a very privileged one. And so, this evening, I am offering you the reflections of someone who is both a local citizen and a global migrant worker. In particular, I want to share some current thinking and

research in America on these questions of migration and citizenship. But I speak primarily this evening as a concerned citizen of Scotland in a globalising world.

As a concerned citizen and global migrant worker, I want to see us building on the commendable if small scale and legally circumscribed Fresh Start Initiative of the present Scottish government and First Minister. I think we need a bold and ambitious immigration policy for Scotland as the number one priority in our public life in 2007. Such a Scotland of ten million people, with a highly educated and highly skilled sustainable economy, a younger work force, a healthier and more caring community life and a more equitable distribution of wealth, is the future prospect I wish to set before you this evening, on the 300th Anniversary of the Union.

This demographic analysis and proposed public policy goal reframes the political, electoral and constitutional debate we are embarked upon in the May election for the Scottish Parliament. The question has to be put to all those advocating a particular constitutional settlement for Scotland in the 21st century, whether a continuing or expanded devolution of powers, a federal Union or independence: how would your constitutional settlement for Scotland enable us to welcome and work for massive immigration?

But to achieve that goal, or something like it, in whatever measure – *five and a half million, six million, seven and a half million Scots; of course I am deliberately being provocative with a figure of ten million, although I should tell you that it was the number given to me by a leading member of Scotland's financial community as a serious goal for growth* – to achieve that goal, is not simply or primarily a matter of party political policy or electoral preference. It is a civic democratic matter that Scottish civil society has to think about in an extensive and extended national conversation – just as we did after the 1979 Referendum in Scotland, in two fruitful decades of civic conversation and consensus building on devolution.

Many of us think that the Parliament we eventually won was all the better for that extended period of debate and discussion. Similarly, we need to build a social consensus and put the social infrastructure in place to welcome and work for such a 'Fresh Scotland of ten million' local and migrant Scots in one diverse and democratic country within the wider world. This is a task not primarily for the political parties and the elected representatives but for Scottish civil society, including the churches and other faith communities. As with the devolution debate of the 1980s and 1990s, I think that the parties and politicians will follow the citizens' lead in the demographic debate of the opening decades of the 21st century.

To engage in that national civic conversation on immigration which I am calling for this evening – to develop that consensual vision of 'ten million Scots' and the means of realizing it in a just, equitable and peaceful way – we first have to address the problem of the cultural legacy of the British Union in Scotland. I believe that these past three centuries of parliamentary Union have not left us particularly well equipped to embark on this demographic road to national renaissance in the 21st century.

In the remainder of my lecture, I therefore want to look briefly at three critical issues that need to be addressed in a sustained civic conversation on the migration question: our sense of national identity; our sense of citizenship; and our sense of mission and purpose as the churches in Scotland. In each case, the 300 year old legacy of the Union has not readily given us the cultural resources to imagine the national identity, the notion of citizenship and the kind of churches that we need for this Fresh Scotland of ten million people.

A National Identity for Ten Million Scots

Scotland began its story as a nation by bringing together a very mixed bunch of peoples. As the historian Michael Lynch has noted (*Scotland: a new history*, Century, 1991):

In 1138, at the Battle of the Standard, David I led a diverse army made up of Normans, Germans, English, Northumbrians and Cumbrians, men of Teviotdale and Lothian, Galwegians, and Scots. It was, to the English they confronted, an astonishing assembly of the diverse peoples who comprised the kingdom of the Scots.

A sense of national identity was invented in the Wars of Independence of the late 13th and early 14th centuries and re-imagined through the changing eras of medieval Catholic and post-Reformation Protestant Scotland. The parliamentary Union of 1707 and the rise of the modern British state required the Scots to embrace the defining markers of this new, emerging British identity that they shared with the English and the Welsh: Protestantism, Imperialism and Militarism, as the historian Linda Colley has now famously named them. The tartan uniform of the Scottish soldier in the service of the British empire symbolizes the nature of national identity for the Scots in this 300 year period of the Union – we may have kept the kilt but wore it as a threatening symbol against the non-Protestant other. Remember how alien this 18th century sense of Scottish-British national identity was to the Irish Catholic immigrants into Scotland in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Now, in the early 21st century, we are slowly acquiring friendlier and more playful civilian identity clothing as a nation.

This change in our national wardrobe has been brilliantly captured in Ken Loach's recent film, *Ae Fond Kiss*: a 'Romeo and Juliet' love story across the divide of ethnic and religious communities in contemporary Glasgow. It is the contemporary story of a controversial romance between an Asian Scottish DJ and an Irish music teacher, working in a Catholic High School.

In the film's opening scene, the Asian Scot's younger sister, Tahara, is taking part in an assembly hall debate in that same Catholic High School in Glasgow. The motion before the house is that the West should oppose international terrorism. Tahara is summing up her speech and declares:

'I reject the West's simplification of a Muslim. I am a Glasgow Pakistani teenager woman, *woman*, of Muslim descent who supports Glasgow Rangers in a Catholic School – because I am a dazzling mixture and I am proud of it!'

You can imagine the howling response of the Celtic-supporting Catholic school boys to this provocative declaration, especially when she pulls off her blouse to reveal a blue Glasgow Rangers football strip underneath. But Tahara has named the national identity we need to be a Fresh Scotland of ten million people. Each Scot and each community within Scotland has to be proud and free to be a dazzling mixture of many identities within a common liberal democratic society. We need this new national identity of being dazzling mixtures. The uniform identity of Scottish-Britishness that we have inherited as a hand-me-down from 1707 no longer fits us, if it ever did. Whether within that British Union over the next three centuries, or outwith it, Scotland must be free and proud to become Tahara's dazzling mixture: truly a tartan people.

A Sense of Citizenship for Ten Million Scots

The second critical issue that we must examine in our national conversation on immigration concerns our notion of citizenship. This was first brought home to me during one of our Common Cause civic forums in the 1990s. The argument was being made that a Scottish Parliament would strengthen active citizenship in Scotland. One woman in the forum asked, with anger and pain in her voice:

Why are you always talking about citizenship? It excludes so many people from participating in our society: the immigrants, stateless refugees and asylum seekers in our midst.

The thought had never occurred to me. Citizenship had always seemed an unqualified good. But that civic forum participant was absolutely right. It is a problematic term that requires further thought and debate. For those who enjoy the legal status of citizenship within the physical borders of the democratic nation state, it is a universal, egalitarian, progressive and democratic notion; guaranteeing our equal rights under law and protecting our security and welfare. But for all those who do not enjoy that legal status – the transnational migrants, refugees and asylum seekers in our midst, or those seeking permanent entry into our country from authoritarian or poor nations - it can be an exclusionary and even threatening concept and practice.

When we come to discuss our sense of citizenship in the national conversation on immigration, therefore, we shall need more complex and just ways of thinking about the relationship between the citizen and the alien. While those of us campaigning for the Scottish Parliament in the 1990s often spoke the democratic language of active citizenship, the reality is that it is still primarily a legal term, defined and determined by the history and laws of the British nation state. From this legal perspective, immigration and citizenship remain reserved powers and the political debate is now about defining 'British values' and setting British citizenship entry requirements. However, this is not the only way to think about citizenship and immigration.

Again, I do not think that the Union legacy serves us particularly well here in thinking about citizenship in 2007, faced with a more interdependent world than that which gave birth to Britain as a modern nation state in 1707. Given America's birth and long experience as a nation of immigrants, allow me briefly to draw on the work of two American thinkers on questions of citizenship and migration and offer an alternative ethical perspective to the legal one; before suggesting a practical step that Scottish civil society can take to foster that different ethical notion of citizenship.

The American legal scholar Linda Bosniak has made a special study of these two faces of citizenship in relation to immigration law: an inclusive face for citizens and an exclusionary one for outsiders. In her book, *The Citizen and the Alien: dilemmas of contemporary membership* (Princeton University Press, 2006), she considers the special position of the resident alien within the democratic nation state and the challenge that this category of person represents to all our inherited legal notions of citizenship. To do so, she draws on a neglected aspect of the thinking of the political philosopher Michael Waltzer on questions of immigration and membership of the political community.

In his seminal work, *Spheres of Justice*, Waltzer has argued that a democratic nation state is normatively justified in excluding outsiders and strangers from its national community, in order to ensure the shared good of a common way of life for those who have membership within its borders. This part of his argument has received a lot of attention from immigration scholars. And yet, Bosniak reminds us, Waltzer also argues that the same democratic nation state must show equal treatment to all those living within its borders, including its resident aliens. In particular, the modern democratic state must not practice the injustice of the ancient Athenian polis which condemned its resident aliens to the status of *metics*, those permanently excluded from the rights and even the possibility of citizenship. The modern democratic state, according to Waltzer, must allow its resident aliens to acquire citizenship. To keep them in a state of permanent exclusion as a separate caste of guest workers, for example, would be unjust. Drawing on this normative argument about citizenship and immigration, Bosniak offers a helpful term for these resident aliens on the way to full citizenship status and rights. She calls them 'non-citizen citizens'.

Anyone advocating an expansionist immigration policy for Scotland must think seriously about the citizenship position of increased numbers of resident aliens in Scottish society. They must not become an alienated group of guest workers in our midst. In Waltzer's terms, such a permanent metic status would be unjust. To see them normatively as 'non-citizen citizens', those enjoying many citizenship rights and practices on the way to full legal citizenship, may be a more fruitful way forward in our national conversation on what it means to be a just society of citizens and immigrants. The non-citizen citizen challenges us to re-think not only our notion of what it means to be a citizen but also our practices, institutions and experiences of citizenship within and beyond the nation state. Let me give one practical example of what I have in mind.

The recent demise of the Scottish Civic Forum is a matter of great regret to those of us who saw it as a complementary body to the legislative assembly of the Scottish Parliament. It provided our public and democratic life with an informed 'moral assembly' on policy issues from the perspective of Scottish civil society. I strongly support the revival of such a national body, as an independent and representative Civic Assembly, widely recognized as the public arena for all the inhabitants of Scotland to express their public concerns. Such a Civic Assembly could allow the public voice of our new immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers - the non-citizen citizens of Scotland - to be heard as equal members of our political community and common life. Recalling such a body as the moral assembly of Scottish civil society is but one practical step, albeit a vital one, in the just transition to this dazzling mixture of 'ten million Scots'.

Faith Communities for Ten Million Scots

Finally, given the occasion of this lecture, I would like to reflect briefly in closing on my third critical issue in our civic conversation on immigration: the role of the Scottish churches in welcoming and integrating immigrants into Scottish society. Again, I think the political legacy of the Union in the Scottish churches over the last 300 years is not particularly helpful in this matter. Each of our major churches has been damaged by its entanglement in the exclusionary politics of the British Union: whether it was the Scottish Episcopalians in the lost Jacobite cause of the '45; or the Church of Scotland and the Scottish Catholic Church in the anti-Irish / anti-Catholic conflicts and Unionist / Nationalist politics of the 1920s. This view of the Union has to be balanced by the story of the Catholic Church in helping Irish and other European immigrants to integrate into Scottish and British society in the 19th and 20th centuries; a role it has taken up again with recent Polish immigrants to Scotland. However, there are not enough such examples of churches helping new immigrants to be full members of our national community. The 300th anniversary of the Union is an appropriate time for all the Scottish churches to recognize the danger of any kind of church-state alliance to their own catholic identity as a dazzling mixture of different kinds of people.

While our Scottish churches in 2007 have recovered their gospel calling to welcome the stranger in their midst and seek reconciliation between locals and immigrants, our local congregational experience of doing so is necessarily limited in a society of limited immigration. The experience of American faith communities on immigration may therefore be instructive of ways forward for the Scottish churches. In a recent study, *Religion and the New Immigrants: how faith communities form our newest citizens* (Oxford University Press, 2007), Michael Foley and Dean Hoge show how diverse types of local worshipping communities play a socially significant role 'in promoting civic engagement among recent immigrants to the United States.' Their research highlights three ways in which certain kinds of faith community are effective in enabling new immigrants to be incorporated into American civic life.

First, such faith communities, including churches, are reservoirs and builders of social capital: they provide the social connections and networks that all human beings need to flourish but which new

immigrants especially need in making a new life for themselves and their families. Second, such faith communities are themselves exemplary actors in civil society, practising varied forms of charitable work and social engagement. Thirdly, such faith communities shape the civic participation of their members. They teach them skills relevant to civic life, organize their active participation in the community and give them a sense of what it means to be a good citizen. While other social factors affect this process, such faith communities play a significant role in forming America's newest immigrant citizens.

The church life and civic culture of a more secular Scotland is clearly very different from those of a more religious United States. Yet these American research findings are still relevant to the Scottish churches. Even in their relative institutional decline, local congregations in Scotland continue to possess extraordinary social capital, act responsibly in the community and mobilize their members as good neighbours and citizens – as a number of churches in the poorest communities in Glasgow have shown in their remarkable work of welcoming and integrating asylum seekers and their families. Whatever the legacy of the last 300 years, and it is a mixed one on the question of welcoming the stranger, the Scottish churches, and faith communities in other religious traditions, have a vital contribution to make in forming our new immigrants into our newest citizens. Some discussion of the theological and local resources for that task has already begun in some congregations and denominations, I know. Perhaps the Scottish Churches Parliamentary Office and other ecumenical ventures can help to widen that discussion and make the churches part of a constructive and informed national conversation on immigration. I hope so.

Conclusion: Scotland's Civic Pentecost

This evening we are weeks away from Holy Week as well as the Holyrood Election. After Holy Week and Easter comes Pentecost, the time when the churches remember how a disparate group of people from around the ancient world became a dazzling mixture of many members in the one Body and many gifts in the one Spirit. This is the theological challenge we face on the 300th anniversary of the Union as the Scottish churches – the calling to be civic pentecostalists, embodying in our church life that dazzling mixture which is the Risen Christ's work and which Scotland so urgently needs if our common life is to flourish in the 21st century. Let the conversation begin.

Thank you.

