EDITOR'S NOTE

It is very rare that we produce an extra edition of BUC News, but with such world interest focused on Scotland, with such an exceptional level of debate and the highest turn out in a vote for decades, it seems appropriate, the day after, to immediately share a reflection from Scottish Mission President, Pastor Bernie Holford.

On a personal note, and aside from all the politics, as someone born in Scotland of English parents (and with various other bits of nationality mixed in), I have watched the debate with interest. Reading the history of Scotland as a child and teenager, including some excellent historical fiction such as D K Broster's Jacobite trilogy, "The Flight of the Heron", "The Gleam in the North" and "The Dark Mile", I always found myself on the side of 'Bonnie Prince Charlie', William Wallace and Co. However, with 300 years of history behind us, and certainly in the context of the church family and our mission of sharing Jesus Christ, I was glad to wake up this morning and find I don't need to share my loyalties between two nations.

I hope that the following two articles will help you in your reflections as you move towards the Sabbath hours.

ONE PEOPLE IN HUMILITY AND KINDNESS

Pastor Bernie Holford, President of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Scotland, responds to the results of the Independence Referendum in Scotland.

Seven-hundred years ago Scottish soldiers defeated a larger English army at the Battle of Bannockburn to claim independence. Today, after a long battle fought with words and banners, the Scottish people have narrowly rejected the Scottish Nationalist Party's proposal for Scottish independence from the United Kingdom.
Instead, they have peacefully voted to maintain a political union that was created over 300 years ago, albeit with promises from the UK's major political parties for greater devolved power.

We can thank God that this battle was not fought with physical violence, but that does not mean that this morning there are not a lot of very hurt people. Over 1.6 million Scots had hoped for a better future through independence. Some who voted 'Yes' will be deeply disappointed. Others, like a good friend of mine, said they were voting 'Yes' but hoping that the 'No' vote would win, as they reflected on the complexity of their decision.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus calls us to be peacemakers, comforters and proclaimers of hope to those who are disappointed. No matter if and how we voted in the referendum, God calls us to really love people who think differently from us. We clearly will not want to call those who voted the opposite way to our own views 'the enemy', but for many, there are strong feelings, a build-up of expectation and hope, that can create division. By the power of the Holy Spirit living in us, God is calling us as Adventist Christians to reach out with kindness to bring healing where there is division.

Personally, I've been impressed with the enthusiasm for this political debate. An unprecedented 84% of eligible Scots voted in this referendum indicating a real concern for shaping our national future. As agents of God's eternal kingdom, I call us through love and understanding, to create a greater passion for unity among our membership. No matter what our personal political convictions are, we reach out with respect and love to all people.

Today is the day to demonstrate the unity of our core Christian identity. We stand together as one people and show forgiveness, humility and kindness to all. Truly loving our 'enemies' will create friends for the true King. He has promised that by His Second Coming, He will inaugurate His eternal, perfect, united kingdom. After His return, His justice will reign, there will be no need for an independence movement. We will stand together united by Christ and His truth and His values.

THE MORNING AFTER POEM: SCOTLAND, 19TH SEPTEMBER 2014

It is always interesting to see ourselves through someone else's eyes. While this poem can undoubtedly be found in various locations across the internet, I found it on the Facebook page of one of our South England Conference ministers. He grew up in a former Soviet Bloc country. After the fall of communism he soon saw his county splintered and devastated by ethnic and religious tensions. He writes on his page: "For once, democracy at its best!... and by 'democracy at its best' I meant no broken windows afterwards, as our Balkan tradition would stipulate... and of course; impressive turnout and discussion."

Let none wake despondent: one way or another we have talked plainly, tested ourselves, weighed up the sum of our knowing, ta'en tent o scholars, checked the balance sheet of risk and fearlessness, of wisdom and of folly.

Was it about the powers we gain or how
we use them? We aim for more equality; and for tomorrow to be more peaceful than today; for fairness, opportunity, the common weal; a hand stretched out in ready hospitality.

It's those unseen things that bind us, not flag or battle-weary turf or tartan. There are dragons to slay whatever happens: poverty, false pride, snobbery, sectarian schisms still hovering. But there's nothing broken that's not repairable.

We're a citizenry of bonnie fighters, a gathered folk; a culture that imparts, inspires, demands a rare devotion, no back-tracking; that each should work and play our several parts to bring about the best in Scotland, an open heart.

[Christine De Luca]

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