

New book brings a fresh angle on Scotland's Independence Debate

Donald Smith's topical new book, 'Freedom and Faith', discusses and explores the so-far overlooked key questions about religion, culture and Scottish Independence. Reflecting on the massive, unprecedented changes during his own lifetime, he poses fascinating, insightful and urgent questions about Scotland's future.

Religion, in particular, is a focus for the book. The Scots have gone in 50 years from mass participation in religion to a nation of dwindling church attendance. Throughout Scottish history, religion has been such an intrinsic part of Scottish life and values that it would always have been at the very core of any debate about Scotland's future. Today, it is almost entirely overlooked in the Independence Debate. Society has changed so much and so far, Smith believes, that the religion angle hasn't been properly addressed. Smith suggests that if we are to form a rounded view of Scottish Independence and the future of Scotland, 'whatever it may be' we need to include all elements of Scottish society, including religion, morality and culture – and their relationship to our national identity. Any debate that does not focus on these issues short-changes Scotland.

Freedom and Faith cuts through all the prejudice and misunderstandings surrounding religion and Scottish culture. It asks questions and suggests some inspiring solutions to enable Scotland to thrive with a mature and enriching attitude to religion – but author Donald Smith has taken care only to suggest and not to dictate answers: A debate that includes religion and its relationship to culture and identity is needed, urgently.

“I wanted to open the debate about Scottish Independence out to all the rich diversity of Scottish life. It’s very clear to me that we, as a nation, should consider all areas of our contemporary society. This isn’t just a political debate. I want people to read my book and make up their own minds and I believe Freedom and Faith lays out all the key aspects that have been overlooked, in an inclusive way. I hope that people will read my book and use it as a tool to think carefully about their own views: this isn’t just about September 2014, but more about how Scotland will evolve in the future.”

Donald Smith is a storyteller, theatre director, and theologian, who has been on the frontline of change in contemporary Scotland for 35 years.

Freedom and Faith is available now from good bookshops

A launch debate will take place on Tuesday 3 December 2013 at 6.30pm at the Storytelling Centre, 43-45 High Street, Edinburgh EH1 1SR

Donald Smith will introduce ‘Freedom and Faith’. A panel debate follows and includes Donald Smith; former Editor of The Herald and author, Harry Reid; and historian Lesley Orr. They explore the question ‘What part – if any – should spirituality play in the Scottish Independence Debate?’

Event is free, but ticketed. Please go to <http://www.tracscotland.org/scottish-storytelling-centre> to book or call 0131 556 9579.

Submitted by [Jude Henderson](#)

