

**SAY HELLO TO CELTIC CANADA by Ken McGoogan**  
**Letter to the Editor /Halifax Chronicle Herald, 2015**

In his Nov. 15 review of my book *Celtic Lightning*, Paul W. Bennett suggests that I have omitted "critical pieces" in exploring the roots of Canadian identity. He clings to the old narrative of a French-English rapprochement – the Confederation story that highlights the political alliance between John A. Macdonald and Georges-Etienne Cartier.

Unfortunately for Mr. Bennett, that narrative is dead. It ended with a whimper on Nov. 27, 2006. That was the date when, under Stephen Harper, the Canadian House of Commons passed a resolution recognizing that "the Quebecois form a nation within a United Canada."

Basically, one partner has withdrawn from the original rapprochement. We find ourselves looking at a symbolic divorce. What? Are we supposed to keep telling the same old story of a happy marriage?

If the Quebecois constitute a distinct nation, what happens to the idea of Canadian nationhood? We must engage yet once more with that perpetual Canadian question: Who do we think we are? One answer, proposed recently by John Ralston Saul, is that we should embrace our identity as a Metis nation.

Alongside that idea, *Celtic Lightning* presents an alternative. It suggests that we should recognize our Scottish and Irish heritage as seminal. My latest book emerges out of the view that Canada is postmodern: one nation, multiple identities.

Yet, among those Canadians who do not identify as Quebecois, almost one-third claim Scottish or Irish roots. By celebrating "Celtic" heroes and heroines as belonging to this country's extended history, *Celtic Lightning* moves on from the death of that old familiar narrative of French-English rapprochement. We live under the same roof, but the marriage is dead. Perhaps it is time to say goodbye to "Anglophone Canada" and speak instead of "Celtic Canada."