

# Scottish Christian Party – Highlands and Islands Region

## A Christian Voice in Holyrood

The Scottish Christian Party believes the country needs a distinctly Christian Voice in the Scottish Parliament and, by God’s grace, it is possible to do so.

### A Christian Voice in Holyrood

We are thankful that there are Christian MSPs in the mainline parties, but they are not always able to articulate Christian principles as such because their party managers don’t want them speaking in a “religious manner”. Even Tony Blair as Prime Minister was prevented by his advisers from ending his address to the nation, at the start of hostilities in Iraq, with the words: “God bless you.” On a later occasion, Alastair Campbell, his director of strategy and communications at the time, interrupted an interview with Tony Blair to say: “We do not do God”, in order to prevent the Prime Minister from answering a question about his religious faith. We hope to be a distinctly Christian Voice in the Scottish Parliament at Holyrood, Edinburgh.

### Is it possible?

Yes, because of the voting system. A “first-past-the-post” voting system for the new Scottish Parliament in 1999 would have resulted in no Conservative MSPs elected to the Parliament. So the voting system for the Scottish Parliament includes a *second* form of voting, based upon a type of proportional representation. So each voter has two ballot papers.

The first (lilac coloured) ballot paper is for a Constituency MSP, just like the system for the General Election to the Westminster Parliament.

The second (peach coloured) ballot paper is to elect a Party. This is the one which will help the Scottish Christian Party. It is called a Regional Ballot or List, because each Party makes up a list of Regional MSPs to represent not a constituency but a Region of Scotland. There are eight Regions in Scotland and one of them is the Highlands and Islands Region. This H&I Region has eight constituencies. So the H&I Region has eight first-past-the-post MSPs and seven Regional MSPs in Holyrood. These seven Regional MSPs are selected by the *proportion* of the vote *for a Party* across the whole Region – across all eight constituencies taken together.

In order to make the Parliament more representative, the voting system for the Regions helps smaller parties. This makes it possible for the Scottish Christian Party to have MSPs in Holyrood. This is explained on our website at:

[www.scottishchristianparty.org.uk/faq#how-does-the-pr-voting-system-work](http://www.scottishchristianparty.org.uk/faq#how-does-the-pr-voting-system-work)

### Small Parties in Holyrood

The result of this system can be illustrated by the Green Party. In the first Scottish election in 1999, the Green Party elected its first MSP, Robin Harper. Four years later in 2003, having made this breakthrough, *seven* Green MSPs were elected. There were also *six* Scottish Socialist MSPs elected. Across the whole of Scotland the Greens got 132,138 votes, and the Scottish Socialists 128,026 votes. Yet there are more Christians in Scotland than these numbers combined. There are 600,000 Church of Scotland members, and there are a large number of other Churches. However we do not have a distinctly Christian voice in Holyrood – not yet. With your help, and by God’s grace, you may have it.

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## **The balance of power**

The smaller parties may hold the balance of power in May 2011, and their vote will be important. The major parties will need every vote to count, and one will be taken up by being Presiding Officer.

## **What is the point in having a Christian Voice in Holyrood?**

The rise of the Green vote in the Scottish Parliament, from one MSP in 1999 to seven MSPs in 2003 was followed by a collapse to two MSPs in 2007. This is possibly because other parties have adopted green issues. Similarly, we believe that a rise in the Christian Voice will have an effect on the other parties. Party managers in these other parties, keen to win back ‘the Christian vote’, will allow Christians in their own parties to speak more openly about Christian values.

The Scottish Christian Party will work with Christians in other Parties. We will talk with other Parties, but we oppose them when they oppose Christian values. Thus we do not oppose the Green agenda, but we attack the Party for supporting homosexual practices. At the same time, the Scottish Christian Party will oppose discrimination against homosexuals as we are to love our neighbour as ourselves.

All Christians in Scotland will be able to use this Christian Voice in the Scottish Parliament. The Scottish Christian Party MSPs will articulate and promote Christian issues.

## **The Voting System**

If you usually give your Constituency vote to a major party, then the voting system is stacked against your Regional vote for the same party counting for much. We are asking Christians to give their Regional vote to the Scottish Christian Party. This is the way to get a distinctly Christian Voice into Holyrood. See

<http://www.scottishchristianparty.org.uk/faq/#how-does-the-pr-voting-system-work>

Our frequently asked questions FAQ section of our website explains more fully how it is possible for the Highlands and Islands to have a distinctly Christian Voice in Holyrood. It explains how wasted votes in the second ballot could have been cast for the Christian Party to great effect.

The Scottish Christian Party candidate at the top of the Highlands and Islands Regional list is Dr Donald Boyd, the Leader of the Scottish Christian Party.

## **Use this Window of Opportunity**

Please give this your prayerful consideration and vote for the Scottish Christian Party on the Regional ballot paper on 5<sup>th</sup> May 2011.

God bless you.