



# 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 Christianity clearly because their party managers don't want them speaking in a "religious manner". Even our 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, the Prime Minister's 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 Christianity. We hope to be a distinctly Christian Voice in the Scottish Parliament at Holyrood, Edinburgh.

### Is it possible?

The new Scottish Parliament in 1999 wanted to engage the Scottish electorate. The "first-past-the-post" voting system 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 ballot paper** is for a Constituency MSP, just like the system for the General Election to the Westminster Parliament.

**The second ballot paper** is to elect a list of seven MSPs to represent not a constituency but a Region of Scotland. A Region consists of many constituencies. 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 List or Regional MSPs in Holyrood. These seven List or 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 engage the electorate and to make the Parliament more representative, the voting system for the Regions has been arranged to favour smaller parties. This makes it possible for the Scottish Christian Party to have MSPs in Holyrood. This is explained in our Highland Leaflet.

### 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. The Greens have promoted many green initiatives. 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, we may have it. [Continue over]

## **The balance of power**

The smaller parties may hold the balance of power in May 2007, and their vote will be important. The major parties will need every vote to count, and they may not want to waste a vote by one of their own party being Presiding Officer. So Robin Harper has been tipped as the next Presiding Officer. However, Robin Harper is also a prominent supporter of homosexual issues. He is a patron of LGBT [lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender] Youth Scotland.

## **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 at present, has contributed to the other parties turning green. 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. At present, the Labour Cabinet seems to think that there is more humanism in the country than Christianity, so it ignores even the powerful Roman Catholic vote over the gay adoption issue.

The Scottish Christian Party will work with Christians in other Parties. We will talk with other Parties, but we will attack them when they oppose Christian values. Thus we do not attack 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.

## **Highland Leaflet**

Our Highland Leaflet explains 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 a Christian Party to great effect. The Scottish Christian Party candidate at the top of the Highlands and Islands Regional list is Murdo Murray, a former Technical Director of Western Isles Council.

## **A Window of Opportunity**

However, there are plans to change the voting system which will make it more difficult for smaller parties such as the Scottish Christian Party from gaining representation in the Scottish Parliament. Therefore we ask Christians to support the Scottish Christian Party to use this opportunity at least on this occasion. Your support after 4<sup>th</sup> May 2007 will be very welcome, but it may come too late if the window of opportunity is closed after the Election on the previous day.

Please give this your prayerful consideration and vote for the Scottish Christian Party on the second ballot paper on 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2007.

God bless you.