



"PROCLAIMING CHRIST'S LORDSHIP"



Another Approach

Restoring the Land of The Book

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The Manifesto of The Scottish Christian Party for the Scottish Parliamentary Election 3rd May 2007

The Scottish Christian Party has formulated policies on all the main areas of responsibility of the Scottish Parliament.

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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

1. Self-sustainability

Scotland's natural resources and its historical work ethic are well suited to self-sustainability in the climate of reduced reliance on fossil fuels. Wise stewardship of God-given resources is essential to build a just and prosperous nation. Scotland has great natural advantages that, properly managed, can provide the essential services for civilised life and useful productive employment. The economy should be the servant of the people of Scotland, not their master.

To achieve self-sustainability waste must be reduced. We will encourage built-in continuity rather than built-in obsolescence. We will seek to improve energy efficiency in our homes and lifestyles. We will also support local supply of food and recreation, power and building materials.

2. The Working Week

Many people work too much, many not enough. The Scottish Christian Party would seek to profoundly reduce waste in society and encourage the more equitable distribution of the opportunity to work and the benefits that flow from work. The Scottish Christian Party believes that "obedience is better than sacrifice" (1 Samuel 15: 22) The Scottish Christian Party therefore believes that the first step that Scotland should take to reduce waste and apparently environmentally damaging carbon emissions is to have greater observance of a weekly day of rest. We would seek a Royal Commission to report on the social and environmental benefits of observing Sunday as a day of rest. The Scottish Christian Party notes that the observance of a day of rest as prescribed in the Ten Commandments would not only bring Scotland into obedience with God's Word but also be an immediate blessing to the over worked Scottish people.

3. Venture Capitalism

The Scottish Christian Party supports local wealth generation with an emphasis on local entrepreneurs rather than handouts to multinational firms. We will encourage joint ownership schemes where venture capital rather than grants would be made available by local government. Profits from successful ventures would be ploughed back into new ventures. We will support incentives including business rates holidays and business mentoring for start-ups.

4. National Work Service

The Scottish Christian Party, in partnership with industrial leaders, will support training schemes to reduce skills shortages in Scotland and the need for costly immigration. School-leavers who have not found a job within weeks of leaving school would be attached first and foremost to new and growing Scottish owned businesses. Salaries would be subsidised for the first two years to the extent that benefits would have been paid if the school leaver were unemployed. As a condition of unemployment benefit we would explore the condition that claimants are available each Monday for work experience or work on environmental improvement projects. This would safeguard the habit of work and give opportunities to get positive references.

5. Super Casinos

Recognising that gambling addiction is a blight on society the Scottish Christian Party will oppose all plans to establish super casinos in Scotland.

6. Water

Scotland's water resources are a long-term national asset with the potential to deliver an increasingly competitive advantage over countries where water is becoming more scarce and expensive. We will keep Scottish Water in public ownership and encourage long term integrated planning (with housing, energy and transport) in the interests of all the people of Scotland. We will explore the potential for the large-scale export of water from Scotland.

7. Oil

In the North Sea, the remaining oil must be effectively extracted and the decommissioning process maximise the re-use of oilrigs and infrastructure into marine renewable projects. Similarly when the Atlantic frontier is developed, part of the revenue must be set aside to encourage renewables and the infrastructure designed to be adapted later for marine renewable projects.

8. Nuclear & Coal

We accept that a sustainable balance of energy sources is currently needed, including some new generation nuclear and clean coal provision, but supplemented with as much renewable energy as we can, as soon as possible. The Scottish Christian Party believes that it is wrong to leave the problem of the disposal of nuclear waste to future generations. Therefore we would require any budget for new nuclear power stations to include a significant percentage of that budget ring-fenced for research and development of a nuclear waste disposal solution. The Scottish

Christian Party is wary of any large-scale reliance on imported energy. We would invest now to be sustainable and self-sufficient in the future.

9. Renewables

Scotland has outstanding potential to be the renewable energy capital of Europe. The key to unlocking this potential could be a sub-sea 'ring main' round the coast from Hunterston to Torness. We would encourage serious research into its viability as a basis for making us self-sufficient in energy and a major exporter. The planning system and grants should encourage greater energy efficiency and the incorporation of appropriate technology into all new buildings and major improvements. We would encourage small-scale renewable schemes and champion their right to sell energy to the grid. We would cooperate internationally with research into the potential to transform energy storage and transmission; e.g. through the use of hydrogen.

10. Forestry

We will support the development of biomass energy and encourage the planning of Scotland's forests to meet our long term needs for energy, carbon sinks, construction and insulation materials. We will increase the level of support to community forest initiatives that encourage sustainable resources near to where people live.

11. Agriculture

We will seek to encourage retailers and builders to make the maximum possible use of local sources of supply, through the planning system. We will encourage home growing and allotments and the community use of 'set-aside' land.

12. Fisheries

We will seek limits around our coastline to preserve stocks of fish and sand eels. We will examine the role of the Crown Estate Commission to ensure that communities benefit from the potential offered by the shoreline and seabed.

13. Consumer Debt

We would legislate so that consumer debt not repaid within seven years, and the interest thereon, would be completely written off, forcing a new responsibility on lenders in advertising, contractual terms and collection mechanisms.

14. Working Mothers

We would reverse the incessant drive to get mothers into the formal labour market and lobby Westminster for a tax and benefit system that recognises the evidence that children brought up by a mother at home, with a working father, have by far the 'best life chances'.

15. Tourism

Tourism is without doubt the fastest growing and largest single industry in Scotland, particularly in rural areas. Tourism accounts for around nine per cent of employment, and this figure is increasing. This sector is currently worth approximately £4.2 billion to our economy, and this figure is also on the increase. The Scottish Christian Party will promote this industry within government and encourage further growth and professionalism at grass roots level.

Changes which have been detrimental to the tourist industry were introduced three years ago with the integration of the Area Tourist Boards (ATBs) into the centralised body VisitScotland.

The regions of Scotland are too diverse to be run centrally each having its own identity and history. We would propose the reinstatement of the fourteen Area Tourist Boards acknowledging the worth of their local expertise and passion for their respective areas.

VisitScotland as an organisation should be downsized and reformed as a small co-ordinating body with direction and control coming from the ATBs.

We will encourage registration of all tourism service providers without requiring classification and burdening them with legislation. The option of classification would still be available if desired.

The first point of contact is often the local Tourist Information Centre. Their current restricted hours need to become more flexible and they should be located, preferably, in establishments that are open for longer hours thus allowing more access to tourist information.

We will endeavour to take steps to lessen, where possible the building of large scale hydro-electric schemes and onshore wind farms in predominantly tourism orientated areas. We will encourage their construction in more industrialised locations where the power produced is most needed. We will encourage research into and development of small-scale renewable energy resources such as micro-hydro to directly benefit local communities, thus enhancing the eco tourism potential.

We will seek to develop an apprenticeship scheme within the tourism industry to encourage young people to view the hospitality industry as an exciting and worthwhile career choice with a definite structure.

We will encourage the promotion of cultural tourism, building on Scotland's established links within the UK and abroad. Thereby enabling more and more to say, "Scotland's for me".

16. Mechanical copyright protection for recording artists and producers

The Scottish Christian Party will seek that the Mechanical Copyright Protection enjoyed by songwriters should be extended to featured recording artists and record producers. The Scottish Christian Party will seek that a minimum royalty percentage (the level of which should be decided through consultation with the music industry) should be paid to featured recording artists and producers on exactly the same basis as is currently paid to songwriters. This could be administered by the Mechanical Copyright Protection Society.

EDUCATION

1. Choice

The Scottish Christian Party believes that the biblical injunction to “train up a child in the way he should go...” (Proverbs 22:6) is of critical importance and relevance to the well being of Scotland; both now and in the future. The rising tide of humanist secular fundamentalism in schools in Scotland has meant that the choice of education in line with parental beliefs and wishes is increasingly difficult to come by. Nowhere is this more so than within the Christian community.

The Scottish Christian Party believes that parents – not the state – should set the agenda for their children’s education, within educational parameters designed to prepare children for a positive contribution to Scottish society. For this to occur greater choice is required.

At present only the rich can afford to make such choices, as fees of up to £25,000 per annum are out of the range of most people.

The Scottish Christian Party will seek the introduction of an Education Voucher Scheme in Scotland, where voucher funding would follow a child. This would enable parents to spend the amount of money the government spends on each state school pupil (approx. £5,500 p.a.) at a school of their choice, provided the annual fees for that school were no more than 115% of the value of the voucher. Thus the voucher could not be used to subsidise a place at an expensive private school, but could, for example, go into a school being set up by parents, a charitable foundation, a church, or be applied to the cost of home schooling.

2. Sex Education

The Scottish Christian Party will call for sex education classes to be given only to children on a parental opt-in basis. The Scottish Christian Party will fight for the promotion in school of chastity before marriage, and faithfulness in marriage, as the safest sexual practice, as and when sex education is taught.

The Scottish Christian Party will also call for the re-instatement of Section 2A, thus calling for the end of the promotion and “*the teaching in any maintained school of the acceptability of homosexuality as a pretended family relationship.*”

3. Faith

The Scottish Christian Party will seek to re-introduce corporate readings from the Bible in all Scottish state schools, thus reflecting the Christian

constitutional foundation of Scotland, as set out in the Monarch's oath of allegiance and the Act of Union 1707.

The Scottish Christian Party believes that the provision of Christian religious education should be mandatory, (with no obligation to promote other faiths), the history curriculum should reflect Scotland's rich Christian heritage and the science curriculum reflect the evidence of creation/design in the universe.

4. Discipline

The Scottish Christian Party would allow schoolteachers to use reasonable force to maintain discipline in schools. The Scottish Christian Party would allow schools to elect to use supervised corporal punishment as a "punishment of last resort".

5. Further Education

The Scottish Christian Party would link the funding of university courses to the medium and long-term needs of society and the economy. We would also seek to promote vocational training as equally vital to a modern economy. The Scottish Christian Party is fundamentally opposed to the concept of student debt as a means of funding student education and would seek to reverse this trend.

HEALTH

1. National Health Service

The Scottish Christian Party supports the National Health Service, celebrating it as a gift from God, and believes that care should be free at the point of delivery. However, in spite of massive investment in recent years, the general sense of chaos in mainstream patient care persists.

The allocation of limited resources requires proper individual stewardship and relief from over-management. The elimination of waste and inefficiency in the health service is an environmental and a personal issue requiring the promotion of individual conscientiousness in Scotland's citizens. The Scottish Christian Party will seek to create incentives for individual participation and involvement in solutions in order to draw on local knowledge and talents.

2. Abortion

Whilst recognising that in seeking to save the life of a mother the life of her unborn child may be lost, the Scottish Christian Party would ask the Scottish Parliament to request Westminster to either legislate to ban abortion, or to make abortion a devolved matter. The Scottish Christian Party believes that the life of the unborn child should be protected to the full extent of the powers available to the Scottish Executive. We would encourage more supportive care for all expectant mothers. We will also campaign for full human rights to be given to the unborn child, thus acknowledging the child's humanity from conception.

3. Work – Rest Balance

Whilst recognising that one man's level of stress is another man's requirement for productivity, the Scottish Christian Party will promote the restoration of a healthy work-rest balance.

4. Personal Worth

We believe that restoring a sense of purpose and personal worth will promote realistic and achievable aims in each individual's life and help to remove the depression and despair so evident in modern life. We will promote policies that seek to identify the talents of individuals and to use their energies and resources for their personal and our collective good. Motivation and rewards are God-given measures for the promotion and recognition of faithful service.

We will publicise the catastrophic effect of ungodly behaviour on the life expectancy and health of people, whom God loves and we should love;

particularly homosexuality, excessive drinking and the use of addictive substances. We will do this in a way that shows Christian love to those affected and offers help back onto a healthy path. The Scottish Christian Party would also seek to increase taxation on alcohol and tobacco.

5. Obesity

Obesity is a new epidemic, which threatens the health and longevity of the individual, as well as the economic well-being of the nation. We will promote physical education in schools and will protect physical education teachers from unreasonable litigation through school insurance schemes. We would encourage personal sustainable exercise programmes.

6. International Health

The health of the nation can be affected by international ill health. Infectious diseases e.g. avian flu, Aids, know no boundaries. Immigration also brings new health challenges to the nation. We believe that a portion of national aid budgets should target the world's poor and needy not only for their sake, but also out of Christian charity. We believe that a robust health education program for international travellers should be initiated, especially in advance of international sporting and other events in high risk areas.

7. Drugs and Alcohol

Our drugs and alcohol policy will involve the promotion of personal worth. The wanton defacing of the image of God in man, attributing less responsibility to a non-sober human being to the extent that many use this as an excuse for criminal behaviour, reveals a lack of self-worth and accountability that arises from humanist philosophy. Too many look upon alcohol as an escape from their low self-esteem, just as the obese person may turn to comfort eating. We believe a restoration of God's estimate of their personal worth will help individuals to regain their self-control. The Scottish Christian Party will legislate to support efforts against easy access to alcohol, particularly to the young.

8. Personal or Other Insurance Schemes

While we believe in unconditional care for the needy, we also note that alcohol impinges disproportionately on the costs of Accident and Emergency medicine and other medical services. We will support initiatives to bring personal responsibility to bear upon self-inflicted disease, whether through personal or other insurance schemes. The costs of careless driving and road traffic accidents should be recouped more effectively to the NHS through insurance schemes. Participation in dangerous sports should be properly insured so that the NHS can recoup its costs for emergency medicine. Irresponsible use of the emergency

services is a growing phenomenon, impinging upon the responsible use of these services. We will support initiatives tackling this problem

9. Prescription Charges

Whereas most people don't pay prescription charges for their medicines, there are a minority who have to pay for medicines for chronic illnesses, which have not been self-inflicted. It is unjust that such people should pay prescription charges when many people with self-inflicted illnesses do not pay for prescriptions. We will support abolition of prescription charges, as it will be difficult to introduce a more equitable system. We acknowledge the successful efforts made by General Practitioners to reduce patient expectations for a prescription. Along similar lines, General Practitioners merit more assistance to reduce patient dependence upon Sickness Benefit certificates.

10. Parental Rights

The Scottish Christian Party will promote parental rights regarding the medical treatment of children, particularly relating to contraceptive services and abortion. We believe that parents have the right to know what medical treatment their child is having, and the right to decide what medical treatment their child should have, so long as the sanctity of life remains paramount at all times.

11. Care of the Elderly

The Scottish Christian Party will promote the care of the elderly in a Christian environment and review recent rules which are making it difficult for small local hospices to offer a vital service to rural and isolated communities. The provision of care at home is important. For those who cannot have an elderly relative to live with them, and cannot live with that elderly relative themselves, but where the elderly relative has a spare room, the alternative of a live-in funded carer could be promoted.

HOUSING

1. Affordable Local Family Housing

The Scottish Christian Party believes that Scotland's housing policy should support the sustaining of local communities built around the family unit. The dispersal of the extended family, owing to the lack of housing near to parents and siblings, is of major concern as it weakens traditional family support systems, particularly in the care of the elderly. The Scottish Christian Party will seek a year on year increase in the supply of affordable housing (and crofting land where appropriate) earmarked for members of local families. However, through our other policies, we will try to reduce the demand for new homes to the extent that demand is driven by family breakdown.

2. Housing Asylum Seekers

Political correctness has made the issue of asylum seekers a subject that no one dares mention, lest they be branded racist or worse. The Bible is clear as to our responsibility to love and to care for the "alien in the land" and to "love of our neighbour as ourselves". These principles guide the Scottish Christian Party's policy on housing asylum seekers. We also recognise that the handling of asylum seekers is seriously in need of improvement. The current situation is bad for the majority of asylum seekers, who are marginalised and alienated, and bad for the host community who see money and resources assigned and wasted in ways that are patently not fair or right. We further recognise that the majority of asylum seekers are single people (mostly men). The Scottish Christian Party proposes that local authorities adopt the practice of 'Asylum Seeker Hosting' that has been successfully pioneered by the charity Praxis in the East End of London.

3. Housing Stock Transfer & Public Assets

We would seek to create a public sector housing model that retains the accountability of local government and its low cost of capital along with greater involvement of tenants in the running of services. This can be through a "housing partnership" where the tenants have voted for such, or otherwise through the local authority. We would seek to ensure that decisions about land owned by public bodies, or in the ownership of charities who receive government assistance, are transparent and are taken in the best interests of Scottish society as a whole, through the planning process. We would reinstate genuine 'local connections' as a basis for housing allocation.

LAW AND HOME AFFAIRS (INCLUDING THE POLICE AND THE EMERGENCY SERVICES)

1. Equalities Legislation

The Bible teaches, "For there is no partiality with God." (Roman 2:11 cf. Act 10:34); therefore the Scottish Christian Party is against prejudice in all its guises, and takes breaches of equalities legislation very seriously.

The Scottish Christian Party believes that the criminalisation of equalities offences will give more proportionate protection for victims of prejudice, as well as protection for those innocent persons that might otherwise be targeted for pernicious litigation on the basis of their faith or other reasons that are void of criminal intent.

With this in mind the Scottish Christian Party calls for breaches in equalities legislation, including the Sexual Orientation Regulations (see Section 2. below), to become 'criminal' offences rather than 'civil' offences. Thus in cases of alleged breaches in equalities legislation criminal levels of proof and evidence would be necessary, and legal actions would fall under the auspices of the Procurator Fiscal rather than private individuals, pressure groups, quangos, etc.

The Scottish Christian Party will seek to achieve this aim by way of the "Reverse Sewell" process which allows the Scottish Parliament, with the approval of the United Kingdom Westminster Parliament, to introduce legislation that enters the scope of United Kingdom Law.

2. Sexual Orientation Regulations

Along with the majority of Christian and other faith community leaders, the Scottish Christian Party believes that the Sexual Orientation Regulations not only discriminate against the rights of individual conscience, but are an unprecedented and ominous imposition of immorality by the state on the people of Scotland.

The Scottish Christian Party believes that respect for conscience, which has served as a bulwark against tyranny, has been dangerously discarded by New Labour and must be urgently restored and defended.

3. Criminal Justice

The Scottish Christian Party recognises the Christian constitutional foundation of the country, as set out in the Monarch's oath of allegiance and the Act of Union 1707. We would promote biblical alternatives to the current criminal justice system, reducing the number of prisoners in our

overcrowded prisons, including extending parental responsibility to compensate the victims of juvenile crime and holding a referendum on reintroducing the death penalty for murder, where there are at least two human witnesses in addition to whatever forensic evidence is available.

4. Zero Tolerance on drug possession

The Scottish Christian Party will promote a zero tolerance approach towards drug possession, and prohibit the current police strategy of non-arrest for possession for personal use. The Scottish Christian Party recognises that any business, including the illegal drugs trade, relies on demand to survive. The current supply-sided approach that focuses only on drug dealers will never work if the demand side is not simultaneously tackled in a robust way, using a range of alternative punishments rather than prison sentences.

5. Elected Fire and Police Chiefs

The Scottish Christian Party will campaign for Chief Constables and Chief Fire Officers to be elected by the community that they serve, in order to bring greater public accountability.

6. Evidence and Restorative Justice

The Scottish Christian Party would seek to replace the standard of 'beyond reasonable doubt' with the more biblical 'evidence of two or three reliable witnesses', reducing the tendency for the guilty to evade justice. We would also support the imposition of large financial penalties on convicted criminals, to properly compensate victims of crime and to reimburse damage done to the community.

7. The Right to Evangelise and Preach in the Public Square/on Public Streets

The Scottish Christian Party is alarmed at the curtailing of free speech in the form of inhibiting street preaching and personal evangelism. It will defend and affirm the right to publicly preach the good news of salvation, love and everlasting life in Jesus Christ.

The Scottish Christian Party does not support the claim that we have a right to give offence, but since the Macpherson Report has re-defined racism in subjective terms, 'taking offence' has become as important as giving offence. Criminalising a person for someone's subjective taking offence, when possibly no offence was intended, will prove to be unworkable, and will itself contribute to louder and louder protests at being offended by disparate groups. This new criminal offence will only stoke up charges and counter-charges of being offended by each other's speech and way of life. Those who can shout loudest and make most use

of the judicial system will prevail. This is not the sort of society the Scottish Christian Party wishes to promote.

8. Mini-Brothels and Prostitution Tolerance Zones

The Scottish Christian Party will resist all attempt to make prostitution socially acceptable through so-called 'tolerance zones' and will seek to reverse the decision to allow mini-brothels. Prostitution allows women, in particular, to be abused and enslaved in such a manner that has no place in Scottish society.

9. Prisons

The Scottish Christian Party believes that the much needed extra prison capacity should be purchased from developing countries for the purpose of catering for Scotland's medium Security Prisons. This should take the form of building state of the art prison facilities in developing countries that wish to host Scottish Prisons.

Advantages would include:

1. Less overcrowded prisons, cheaper costs and greater efficiency
2. More resources at home to look after our worst offenders properly
3. More economic trade instead of aid handouts to developing countries
4. Raising prison standards in developing countries by example and the provision of expertise.

10. Curfew for the under 11 year olds

In light of the alarming rise in abduction, abuse and murder of children, the increase in juvenile crime, the unprecedented levels of alcohol abuse and drug use amongst the young, the Scottish Christian Party would seek mandatory intervention of child protection agencies in relation to any child 10 years or younger that is found unaccompanied on the street after 9:00pm. We believe that this would have far reaching benefits to the lives of our young, protecting them from the dangers that lurk in the streets at night. It would also encourage the rebuilding of the traditional family structure and the parent-child relationship.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

1. Reverse Centralisation

The Scottish Christian Party is concerned at the ongoing breakdown of local communities and the weakening of local government through centralist policies in Edinburgh, Westminster and Brussels. Individuals, families and communities should be encouraged to manage their own lives as much as possible, with collective arrangements being made at the most local level possible.

2. Freedom of Conscience

The Scottish Christian Party will seek to reverse the anti-Christian discrimination that permeates much of public life and enshrine in Scottish law the right to "freedom of conscience" for employees in relation to non-core duties and extra-curricular activities, particularly those working for statutory authorities and the BBC. In the event of dispute, the onus should be on the employer to demonstrate to an employment tribunal that the requested action is part of a core duty.

3. Control of Schools

The Scottish Christian Party opposes any plans to take responsibility for state schools away from local government in favour of large quangos. We would favour more issues concerning curriculum, discipline and policy being devolved from Edinburgh to local authorities.

4. Voting System

The Scottish Christian Party will resist plans to change the current system of voting for Scottish Parliament elections to the Single Transferable Vote (STV) system, and will seek to have the Additional Members System (AMS) adopted for local authority elections.

5. Diversity Training

The Scottish Christian Party will seek to ensure that all diversity training sponsored by local authorities should include the biblical Christian perspective on faith, morality, marriage, sexuality, etc. Currently, diversity training promotes the homosexual lobby's idea that mere toleration of homosexuality is condescending, and that nothing less than wholesale acceptance or approval of an alternative lifestyle is acceptable. However, true tolerance only begins where agreement ends. Diversity training ought to be about learning to live peaceably and tolerantly with people with diverse lifestyles and world views; and not allowing one's offence at other people's world views to break forth in verbal or violent

assaults, far less intimidating them with legal sanctions. We must “overcome evil with good” (Romans 12:21), “not rendering evil for evil, but blessing” (1Peter 3:9). When Christ was reviled, “He reviled not again, when He suffered, He threatened not, but committed Himself to Him that judges righteously.” (1Peter 2:23). This is Christian tolerance.

6. Holyrood MSPs

The Scottish Christian Party will seek to close the loophole that allows MSPs, that have been elected to a seat in the Scottish Parliament from a party’s regional list, to retain that seat after they have left their party. We believe the party should be allowed to replace such a person with an MSP from their official list.

7. Council Tax

Subject to realistic costings the Scottish Christian Party would support the replacement of the Council Tax with a fairer revenue raising system to provide for local services and infrastructure. On the same basis the Scottish Christian Party would also support the further reduction and even abolition of Council Tax for pensioners.

SOCIAL WORK

1. The Family Unit

The Scottish Christian Party believes that Christ's Great Commission to make disciples of all nations involves having a Christian social policy for nations as such. Christian love within the family unit is the building block of the Church, the nation and society. Both family and state government are institutions of God. Each has its own sphere of sovereignty and each should respect its own limits and not trample over the God-given boundaries of the other.

2. Provision for the Elderly

The Scottish Christian Party will press the Scottish Executive to review their assistance to low income pensioner households with special reference to the concessionary rail fare scheme, residential care costs, home help provision and the Council Tax.

3. Family Rights

The rights of families are being undermined under the pretext of protecting children from inadequate parenting. The Scottish Christian Party believes that social cohesion has deteriorated to such an extent that parenting classes are now being championed as the remedy for the lack of good parenting in recent generations, but ask "What exactly will be taught in these classes?"

Proper parenting seeks to promote the parent-children bond rather than disrupt it. Families and children have had too much interference from well meaning but misguided social workers. The judgement of some professional paediatricians has also been called into question in recent high profile court cases, but not before the social cohesion of the families concerned has been intolerably disrupted.

The Scottish Christian Party is concerned that political correctness is encroaching on state education and even the domestic teaching of children, as though the state is responsible for the world view and moral values of the children. Parents are not rearing children for the state to take them over, as though there is a battle for their hearts and minds. Parents are responsible under God for what a child is taught in the religious and moral sphere.

Just as there are parental rights, so there are parental duties towards society to rear responsible and useful children trained to their fullest potential, with recognition of their talents. Parental duties extend to meeting the needs and rights of their children in a safe and loving

environment, a caring upbringing and stimulating interest in their development.

The Scottish Christian Party abhors all forms of child abuse. The denial of the parental right to administer reasonable chastisement is one such form of child abuse, as it denies the child its fundamental right to effective parenting. The anti-smacking laws have altered the balance of power in the home in favour of the child, to the extent that many parents fear the legal consequences of reasonable chastisement, and thus elect to exercise little or no discipline in relation to their children. The Scottish Christian Party will seek to redress this imbalance and restore the right for parents to smack their children as a measure of reasonable chastisement.

4. Care, Fostering and Adoption

The Scottish Christian Party believes that it is in the best interest of the child to be placed for adoption with a heterosexual dual-sex family, rather than with a homosexual same-sex couple or homosexual single person. We therefore completely oppose adoption or fostering by unmarried or same-sex couples, based on the evidence that such parenting arrangements produce clearly inferior outcomes for children.

Any individual or organisation (including publicly funded adoption agencies) must be allowed an exemption from the Sexual Orientation Regulations on the basis that the regulations would compel action contrary to individual conscience and/or the teachings of their faith.

The Scottish Christian Party believes that taking children away from their parents should be the last resort and that stronger support services to families should be encouraged in a cost-effective way through local churches and other agencies.

We also draw attention to an institutional bias against placing children with Christian families in some local authority social work departments.

The Scottish Christian Party will seek to establish 'Open Adoptions' as the norm. When the knowledge of birth parents is withheld we believe that the biblical injunction to "honour your father and mother" is rendered impossible. Furthermore the evidence for serious psychological problems as a result of 'Closed Adoptions' gives rise to the urgent need to address this matter.

5. Mental Health

The Scottish Christian Party believes that those suffering mental distress deserve great love and care, as close to their family and home community as possible. Our health policies, on self-worth, sexuality, drugs and alcohol, together with our policies on family life, useful employment and

education will work to reduce the incidence of mental distress. For continued sufferers, we will make greater efforts to include useful work in their care, as the Bible and clinical studies point to the importance of work in the self-esteem of human beings.

6. Helping those with Disabilities

The Scottish Christian Party will seek to love and support those with disabilities to help them back into the workplace. We will review the chronic under funding of the current disability access legislation, where the expectations placed on public authorities are greatly in excess of the resources being provided to improve access to services and buildings.

7. Adult Services

The Scottish Christian Party will encourage and assist disadvantaged groups to help each other, thus enabling them to recognise their own potential and social capital despite their disadvantages. For example, we would seek to help the poor to build and restore their communities and support them to find work in social enterprises. Such adult services will be a priority for the Scottish Christian Party as it seeks to ensure that God's love and provision reaches those in need in our society.

SPORT AND THE ARTS

1. Investment in Scottish talent

The Scottish Christian Party supports investment in proven successful sports, sports unique to Scotland, and pioneering sportsmen training in Scotland. Scots men and women competing at the Olympic level and on the world stage are ambassadors for Scotland and deserve financial and promotional help. This should be a mutual benefit and there should be some tangible manner of recognising the partnership, if it is sought by individual sports people or establishments. The allocation of support to tennis, golf and football, etc., should be transparent to fulfil the public's right to know the allocation of the public purse.

The Scottish Christian Party will promote major international events coming to Scotland as a means of promoting Scotland, our arts, our sporting facilities, and homebred talent as well as being economically beneficial to the country. We note the recent spiralling costs in staging the Olympics in London. We believe that Scotland's Commonwealth Games bid plan should be linked to local regeneration in a similar manner as the regeneration of the Docklands area of London helped to secure the Olympics for London. There should be a clear vision of post-Commonwealth Games transformation. Sites for regeneration should be identified now which can be dovetailed to the likely timescale in the event of Scotland's Commonwealth Games bid being successful.

2. Minister for Gaelic and the Gaelic Heartlands

The Scottish Christian Party would emulate the Irish experiment of having a minister for Gaelic and the Gaelic regions of the country, enabling policy on the language to be linked to economic and social policy in these peripheral regions.

3. Mind Pollution Levy on 18 Certificate Films, DVDs, CDs, Video Games and Top Shelf magazines

The Scottish Christian Party believes that the easy spread of pornography through the media has a detrimental and costly effect upon the mental health and social well being of Scotland's citizens. This merits an extra levy on 18 and over Certificate films, DVDs, CDs, games and Top Shelf magazines. We believe that immorality promotes an irresponsible and unaccountable lifestyle, which expects society to pick up the bill. We would consult local authorities on the feasibility of licensing retail outlets that stock these items.

4. Arts Subsidy Restrictions

The Scottish Christian Party believes that our stretched financial resources can be better spent than giving subsidies to non-Scottish based or produced, new and recent stage productions. We support the removal of these subsidies, as well as subsidies for already commercially successful productions, such as West End shows on tour. We would reallocate these subsidies to new Scottish talent, particularly to arts projects that help the nation recover knowledge of Scotland's rich Christian heritage – which has been downgraded and overlooked by successive administrations.

STATISTICS, PUBLIC REGISTERS AND RECORDS

1. Referenda

The Scottish Christian Party is in favour of referenda in order to determine the wishes of the people of Scotland in substantive matters including issues of morality and constitutional change.

Whilst noting that constitutional change does not fall within the remit of the Scottish Parliament, the Scottish Christian Party will support the call for a referendum on Scottish independence provided that (1) the referendum is combined with a binding referendum on the re-instatement of Section 2A of the *Local Government (Scotland) Act* of 1986, and (2) the constitutional position of the Christian Church in Scotland, secured in the Treaty of Union 1707 and subsequent legislation, is not changed *de facto* by any future Scottish independence.

The Scottish Christian Party notes that when in 2000 a referendum on Section 2A of the *Local Government (Scotland) Act* of 1986 took place, well over a million people voted; with 87% of the ballots returned in favour of retaining Section 2A. However, the Scottish Executive and Parliament chose to ignore the wishes of the people.

The Scottish Christian Party notes that, in the debate on Scottish independence, the public has not been notified of the consequences upon the Christian constitution of the country. This debate needs to take place before a meaningful referendum can take place.

2. Civil Partnership

The Scottish Christian Party believes that the scope of the current Civil Partnership legislation is inequitable, partial, and thus unfair. The Scottish Christian Party will seek to widen the scope of the Civil Partnership to include all people who have committed to live together as a single household. This would include: friends, sisters, brothers, and a parent and his or her adult child. The Scottish Christian Party will take the criteria for Civil Partnerships out of the bedroom and into the living room; sexuality will play no role.

3. Marriages

The Scottish Christian Party opposes the concept of “no fault” and “quickie” divorce and would seek to re-establish the principle of the innocent party in a divorce being acknowledged in any divorce settlement. Equally, as Christians are burdened by the need for reconciliation, a serious attempt at reconciliation should be the required first step in the legal process of divorce. The Scottish Christian Party will also discourage

the obsessive practice of spouses being referred to as 'partners', and 'Mrs' being replaced by 'Ms' in local and national authority communications.

4. Transgender Registration

The Scottish Christian Party will seek transparency in relation to gender re-orientation. We believe that a policy of lies cannot be justified. Therefore, we will oppose the practice of altering birth certificates to reflect gender re-orientation surgery, and we will seek the right of fiancées and officiating ministers to be informed of gender re-orientation prior to marriage ceremonies.

TRANSPORT

In developing a Transport Policy it is necessary to strike a balance between the demands to stimulate economic well being and tackle social inclusion on the one hand and the need to reduce congestion and limit environmental damage on the other. As Christians we have to take seriously our God-given responsibility to be good stewards of world resources. It is therefore imperative that our vision for transport is based on socially and environmentally sustainable principles, while taxation of transport must be transparent.

1. Aviation

We will seek to bring aviation within the scope of the Kyoto environmental and climate targets. This will involve focusing energy on key business routes and peripheral areas as well as co-operating with research into alternative aviation propulsion. We support the Executive's introduction of the air discount scheme for the Highlands and Islands and we will give further consideration to a Public Service Obligation framework.

2. Buses

We congratulate the Scottish Executive on the extension of concessionary travel since 2003 and their investment in community transport initiatives that have improved the quality of life for many in Scotland. We will seek to build on this success by further integrating public transport to provide still more reliable journey times, enabling more people to use this for their daily work and business. In the cities we will learn from the best practice in Europe to expand park and ride and extend priority for public transport, cyclists and walkers.

3. Cycling and walking

For the sake of health as well as road safety, each city and town should have a blue print for how cyclists and walkers move between schools, shops and housing. We will continue the partnership with Sustrans to develop the national cycle network.

4. Ferries

We will support a fundamental rethink of the current ferry network, presently based on incrementalism and local lobbying, to highlight flaws in the infrastructure and identify where strategic improvements in other services enable us to rationalise subsidised ferries, in time for the next tendering exercise. We favour smaller faster boats where this is

appropriate and more use of the nights for freight runs. We will support operating six days a week where this is what the islanders want.

5. Rail

The Scottish Christian Party recognises the need for a High Speed Rail network, which would help stimulate the economy. A dedicated High Speed Rail network would “free up” existing capacity on the rail network, therefore enabling the transfer of freight from our roads, and cut the need for internal city to city flights. There are different means of delivery, and the Scottish Christian Party presently favours the introduction of Maglev (Magnetic Levitation) and recognises the need for urgent debate on this issue.

The Scottish Christian Party recognises the success of the existing Scottish Rail Franchise and would press to expand the existing networks. We will build on the success of Scot Rail’s Glasgow & Edinburgh’s commuter services with more initiatives such as the Beaulieu station refurbishment, which is helping to keep commuter traffic out of Inverness.

The Scottish Christian Party will also look for sustainable ways of linking rail freight traffic to our shipping network to take juggernauts off the route from Dover to the North of Scotland.

6. Roads

We would support bringing the strategic roads in Scotland up to an appropriate standard to reduce journey times e.g. upgrading the A9 to a dual carriageway throughout to make travel times to the Highlands more predictable. We will initiate a consultation exercise regarding the feasibility of variable speed limits for trunk roads to reduce journey times. We will link land use planning with transport planning to release appropriate land for strategic transport improvements, linking local, regional and national transport plans. We will seek to use transport channels for transmission of energy to reduce the impact on the rest of the countryside. In the cities we will seek to reduce congestion on the basis that the polluter pays through differential charging for parking and/or access e.g. big vehicles cost more. We will review the effectiveness of the out-sourcing of trunk road maintenance well before contracts come up for renewal.

7. Shipping

We will support the establishment of an international container hub in Scotland and encourage a modular coastal shipping strategy for non-urgent bulky cargoes, linked with rail where possible.

