

**Scottish Christian Party response to Questions submitted by the Rev. David Robertson as Moderator of the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland.**

1. Are Christians and those of other faiths welcome to become members in your party, to participate within them and in the political process, without discrimination?

Ans: The Scottish Christian Party is a faith-based political party rather than a values-based Christian party. Members make a basic declaration of Christian faith available at <http://www.ukchristianparty.org/scottish-christian-party-membership.html>, just as other political parties have rules of association. The Scottish Christian Party campaigns against the discrimination inherent in UK Equalities legislation and for reform of its pecking order which has placed Christianity low down its list of priorities.

2. Would your party support another cross-party group on religious freedom in Scotland at the Scottish Parliament?

The Scottish Christian Party supports religious freedom and co-operates with others who do the same.

3. Do you think that Christianity has a role in the public square, especially in politics, education and the media?

Yes; the Scottish Christian Party is actively engaged in promoting Christianity in all areas of public life.

4. How will your party ensure Scotland has a strong influence protecting the rights of persecuted Christians around the world?

The Scottish Christian Party is able to speak distinctively from the Christian perspective and has highlighted and will continue to highlight the persecution of Christians and others around the world. We believe the Bible teaches that social justice is a mark of genuine Christian faith. The Centre for the Study of Global Christianity estimates that 100,000 Christians die every year, targeted because of their faith – that is 11 every hour. In 2015 the Equality and Human Rights Commission's largest report showed that Christians are the group who suffer most discrimination in the UK today.

5. What is your party's position on state-funded faith schools, whether they be Christian or Muslim?

The Scottish Christian Party believes in the Establishment Principle – that the Christian church and the state should support each other, while recognising the role and province of each other under God. The state-funding of schools is a political decision but as a country with a Christian constitution we believe that schools should have a Christian ethos. Christian schools are symptomatic of the failure of state schools to provide such an ethos, and to fund them and other faith schools at the taxpayers' expense is to capitulate to the secularist agenda. We advocate a voucher system for parents to have more choice in how and where their children are educated.

6. We believe a diversity of schools would create a healthy competition of ideas and outcomes and improve educational standards across the nation. Should Scotland lead the way by democratising our education system by allocating vouchers to parents to produce financial support for faith schools?

Competition is a proper principle recognised in the Bible. The Scottish Christian Party has long advocated a voucher system in which the money follows the child. 'The one size fits all' attitude to education fails to capitalise on diversity of talents and needs, and the mediocrity it creates can fail pupils and mask failing schools.

7. As the state education system becomes increasingly secular and removed from its Christian roots and values, if the Free Church were to set up its own schools, open to all, would you support this?

The Free Church of Scotland left the Established Church of Scotland out of necessity, and not because it disagreed with the concept of the Establishment Principle. Similarly, when the state fails to support, far less provide Christian education, and compounds this with demeaning of Christianity and discrimination against Christians, then it is proper to support those who wish to educate their children in a Christian environment. The Scottish Christian Party supports all Christian schools, to the extent that its resources and principles can, but from our own experience as a political party it is important to distinguish clearly between a school and a church.

8. Do you agree that children being bullied and taunted at school because they go to church should also be included in new anti-bullying advice being prepared by the Scottish Government?

Very much so. Such bullying is a manifestation of the absence of Christian teaching about the dignity and worth of each human being.

9. Do you agree that sex education should be inclusive of a wide variety of opinions and views on the nature of sex and sexuality?

Not at all. We believe that Christian principles should be brought to bear on the topic, which will mean a complete overhaul of the subject, especially as the latest opinion articulated by the First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon, is to promote gender fluidity, meaning that Scottish adults and children could legally change their gender without any medical diagnosis or treatment, and decide they are neither male nor female. Nicola Sturgeon said that one of her top priorities if the SNP wins the Holyrood election in May 2016 will be to review Scotland's gender recognition laws

10. Will your party support moves to reconsider the Sunday trading issue in Scotland so that we can move towards a more continental approach?

For the duration of our existence, the Scottish Christian Party has called for the restoration of the biblical work-life balance in its Manifestos for the spiritual and mental well-being of the work-force.

11. Given that babies can survive at 24 weeks outside the womb, and that France, Germany and Italy have 12-week limits, is there any scientific or logical reason not to reduce the age limit on abortion in Scotland? Would you support a reduction in the time limit?

The Scottish Christian Party has always supported any reduction in the gestational age for abortion and it opposes abortion except when the mother's life is endangered. We believe in the sanctity of life from the womb to the tomb.

12. Do you agree that the named person scheme needs to be refined, and if so, in what way?

The Scottish Christian Party website was one of the first to highlight the dangers of the Named Person Bill. The first point is to re-establish that children do not belong to the state - a communist opinion - but to their parents under God. Resources need to be targeted to identify abuse and manage it accordingly, but in co-operation with parents and biological grandparents. Biological grandparents should be considered Relevant Persons in the case of Looked After Children as the current situation is too fragmented between health professionals guarding their own areas of responsibility, whereas biological grandparents have everyone's interests at heart and have a right to be heard.

13. What are your proposals to alleviate poverty in Scotland? How do you think that Government can work together with the churches on this?

The Scottish Christian Party has advocated raising the tax threshold since before the 2010 Tory-Lib Dem government began to implement it. We have advocated a minimum household income, going beyond the minimum wage and now the living wage. Slowly current legislation is moving towards the target advocated in the Christian Party Manifestos. We advocate improving mental health in the work force as a happy work force will be a healthy, productive and wealthier work force. Secondary schools need to address and promote the entrepreneurial spirit to encourage self-esteem and a 'can do' attitude to prevent young people failing after leaving school. More imaginative solutions need to replace the hand-out welfare culture and churches are well placed to motivate those most affected by poverty - Jesus said: 'to the poor, the Gospel is preached'. American studies have shown the enormous value to the economy from Christian charitable activity. The strains on the economy and the banking system need banking reform to reduce the strain on tax-payers and to allow the benefits of investment to fund welfare and reduce taxation.

14. Do you believe that we should accept more refugees in Scotland?

Scotland should be open to helping refugees. Christian Party policy on foreign aid contributes to an international solution for refugees and their repatriation. We oppose the European Arrest Warrant and the undermining of *habeus corpus* by European justice procedures.

15. Do you think that children have the ability to choose their own gender? How many genders do you think there are?

Gender is a fact and not a choice. God made us male or female.

Dr Donald Boyd

Leader of the Scottish Christian Party "Proclaiming Christ's Lordship"

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