How would you characterise your views on the Bill in general?

In opposition

Couples would have no more rights than they already receive in civil partnerships. The Biblical basis of marriage is for heterosexual union of a man and a woman primarily, to give each companionship and to create children. Same sex unions cannot create children!

How would you characterise your views on the introduction of same sex marriage, so that same sex couples can marry each other?

In opposition

Religious celebrants who refuse to marry same sex couples may be liable to prosecution. Adoption by same sex couples is not, in my opinion, in the interests of children. Some employees would run into legal penalties if they refuse to endorse same sex marriage. Prospective employees, who believe in the current definition of marriage, could face discrimination at job interviews. Teachers who believe in the present definition of marriage could be forced to teach same sex marriage even if they find it abhorrent. Charity Law would have to be amended to allow charities to disagree with same sex marriage. The vast majority of parents would disagree with their children being taught that same sex marriage is "normal".

How would you characterise your views on putting belief celebrants on the same footing as religious celebrants?

In opposition

Heterosexual Marriage is an institution started by God (of the Christian Bible) and as such has a supernatural dimension - it comes with the blessing of God. All other forms of marriage do not have this same dimension.

How would you characterise your views on the arrangements for authorising celebrants to solemnise opposite sex and same sex marriage (including the opt-in procedures)?

In opposition

The vast majority of celebrants would only officiate at heterosexual marriage. The Church of Scotland is right now risking total breakdown on this same sex issue.

How would you characterise your views on civil partnerships changing to marriages?

In opposition
Different dynamics are involved in each of these relationships and they would not be compatible or interchangeable.

**How would you characterise your views on allowing civil marriage ceremonies to take place anywhere, other than religious premises, agreed between the couple and registrar?**

Neither

No firm views

**How would you characterise your views on allowing the religious and belief registration of civil partnerships?**

In opposition

I personally do not recognise them as being worthy of registration

**How would you characterise your views on allowing transgender persons to stay married when obtaining a full Gender Recognition Certificate, which provides legal recognition in the acquired gender?**

In opposition

I do not believe in transgender change – I believe we remain as we are born - male or female

**Would you like to comment on the wider issue of protections for those in society who may have concerns about same sex marriage?**

See my answers to questions 4 & 5

**Would you like to comment on the wider issue of freedom of speech?**

Specific amendments need to be made, if the bill is to become law, to protect the right of free speech; so that criticising same sex marriage is not rendered unlawful. I preach the Christian message on the streets and in secular venues, as well as churches, and I would want the Bible's message to be free of any retribution. The Bible advocates heterosexual marriage. More robust safeguards are needed to ensure on-one is compelled to agree with same sex marriage or face legal penalties; people who support the present marriage laws must not be put in the position of facing potential legal penalties; religion and belief must be protected under any equality law.

**Would you like to comment on any other wider issues in relation to the Bill that are not mentioned above?**

Gay and lesbian websites comment on the increased violence between such couples as opposed to 'straight' couples, together with the increased incidence of sexually transmitted disease and suicide in gay and lesbian partnerships. It appears not to be a normal healthy form of partnership!
Are you responding as...

a faith/belief-based organisation a private individual

Douglas Renton
Douglas Renton Ministries
13 August 2013