MARRIAGE AND CIVIL PARTNERSHIP (SCOTLAND) BILL
SUBMISSION FROM ALAN FINDLAY

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

In support

If LGBT people are to be GENUINELY regarded as equal to other members of society, there is no justification for excluding their relationships from the union of marriage. Virtually all opposition to this step appears to be rooted in thinly-veiled homophobic prejudice.

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

In support

Covered in 4 above

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

In support

I presume this relates to, for example, humanist celebrants, although humanism is not a 'belief'. However, I do not think that religious celebrants should be given special treatment.

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 support

I feel these are fully adequate to protect all points of view, including those individuals or faith groups who do not wish to be involved in same-sex marriage ceremonies.

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

In support

Many couples who have entered Civil Partnerships did so as a 'second best' to marriage, because marriage was not open to them. Where marriage becomes available, these couples should be able to 'upgrade'.

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?
In support

I can see absolutely no objection to this in a modern, free society. Many couples will have venues which have great significance for them, and in which they'd like to get married.

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

In support

As with marriage, if all are in agreement, it should be possible to do this.

**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 support

This will be one of the major pluses of same-sex marriage legislation.

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

This is, sadly, a divisive issue. I, and many others, see these concerns as rooted in prejudice. Prejudice CAN be backed up by one's interpretation of scripture. People are perfectly entitled to believe that same-sex marriage is wrong, but they do not need this belief backed up or protected by any legislation. No-one is going to threaten them because they believe this, unless they themselves cause hurt or offence by excessive public statement of their beliefs.

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

This should be common sense. Everyone should be free to state their views, but not deliberately to hurt or offend others. We have recently seen examples of suicides apparently caused by careless or malign use of social media, so, sadly, there needs to be some restraint on hate speech and bullying. The law should be used sparingly, but in a way which will encourage people to think before they speak.

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

Are LGBT people 'as good as' others? If so, they should be treated no differently. When people say, "I just see LGBT people as different, not as second-class", this usually proves to be a veil for some degree of homophobia. Religious objections to LGBT people do not stand up to rational examination, based as they are on carefully selected scriptural texts.

**Are you responding as...**

a private individual