MARRIAGE AND CIVIL PARTNERSHIP (SCOTLAND) BILL
SUBMISSION FROM REVD SCOTT MCKENNA

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

In support

This is an issue of justice and compassion. I am very happy to support LGBT people and, at the same time, help break the cycle of prejudice and discrimination against LGBT people.

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

In support

I look forward to this introduction, in the hope that there will be simply be 'marriage', not 'same-sex' marriage and 'ordinary' or 'heterosexual' marriage but simply 'marriage'.

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

In support

I am happy to welcome this. At such an important moment in the lives of two people, it is important to hold a ceremony which is entirely meaningful to the couple, which has been shaped according to their outlook and beliefs.

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

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

In support

I am in support of this, either as a ceremony or an administrative exercise. It is important to allow the couple to make the choice which best suits them. To some couples, it may seem superfluous to hold a marriage ceremony having been in a civil partnership for some time. In such cases, an administrative means may be best, if they wish it at all. Others will welcome the opportunity of a marriage ceremony because they feel they have been denied marriage up til now.

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

Ministers of the Church are permitted able to conduct marriage ceremonies anywhere because it is the person who is licenced, not the place or building. I think it right that civil celebrants should have that same opportunity. Why should couples choosi

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

In support

It is a useful option but, once same-sex marriage is law, I'm not sure how many people will take up this option.

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

It would be ludicrous to require a couple, who wish to remain in partnership, to divorce in order for one of them to obtain a GRC.

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

Ideally, those employed by the state to perform civil ceremonies should be required to do so. That said, as I understand it, doctors in the NHS, who are opposed to abortion, are not obliged to carry out the procedure. I recognise the practical difficulty for the state on administering an opt-out system. An opt-out system maybe viewed as a transition arrangement: I am sure that as time goes on same-sex marriage will be viewed no differently from heterosexual marriage.

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

Freedom of speech is vitally important and the Act should not seek to curtail that.

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

I whole-heartedly endorse the suggestion that there be a GENDER-FREE form of ceremony. This is particularly important for couples where one or both is transgender or intersex. In my experience, it is also true that some heterosexual couples do not like the overtones of patriarchy which continue to be associated with marriage. 'Husband and wife' is an improvement on 'Man and wife' but, by virtue of order, the law still gives prominence to the male partner. We need to move away from this.

Are you responding as...

a celebrant
Revd Scott McKenna
23 August 2013