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

In support

I believe that this bill (and any others like it in the world) will have the effect of further marginalising prejudice based on sexual orientation. If marriage between two people of any gender becomes legal, it will then become normal, and prejudice will be seen as even more undesirable. I also believe that two people who wish to commit to each other in this way should be allowed to do so. It is not so many years ago in some countries when marriage between black and white was frowned upon or was illegal, but for the most part that prejudice is now gone.

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

In support

See above. I believe that if two people wish to marry, they should be allowed to do so, and that gender should not be an issue. The purpose of marriage is to seal a commitment with a solemn promise, and gender should not be an obstacle.

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

In support

Many people are outside a formal or organised religion, but their vows should be given equal status with those taken within a religion. The days when religious people were considered 'better' than those outside religion have gone, and this should be reflected in the status of celebrants.

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 am not religious. There are elements of religious dogma which I find distasteful because they are not inclusive. Many in the Western world criticise the status of women in muslim countries, and yet support some exclusivities within some western churches. I would therefore be in favour of any legislation which leans towards inclusivity, which would include any opt in procedures. I would prefer the boot to be on the other foot, so that 'opt out' procedures were the default position.

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

I see no purpose in distinguishing between the two. Marriage in its present form can either be religious or civil. See my answer to 6

**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 believe that marriage venues should be licensed as such, to avoid ceremonies being trivialised by gimmicky weddings.

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

In support

If marriage is inclusive as discussed above, I see no purpose in continuing with civil partnerships - but if people want to register a civil partnership in such a way then that should be allowed.

**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

Transgender people should be allowed to stay married if both parties agree. But transition must NOT be dependent on the permission of the partner; if that were to be the case, and permission was withheld the marriage would be unlikely to survive anyway.

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

Everyone is entitled to a view, and to express it, But same sex marriage is not going to impact on opposite sex marriage. I am not clear what those people with concerns wish to be protected from. We live in a society which expects its citizens to be tolerant of other peoples beliefs, but does not expect us to impose our beliefs on others - such imposition has been the downfall of many societies.

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

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

a private individual

Tim Thomson
15 August 2013