CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

The registration of civil partnerships

Question 1  (Paragraphs 2.12 and 2.13)

Do you agree that legislation should be changed so that civil partnerships could be registered through religious ceremonies?

Yes   □  No   √  Don’t know □

Please give reasons for your answer.

Such religious ceremonies would blur the important distinction between marriage and civil partnership.

Question 2  (Paragraphs 2.14 to 2.19)

Do you think that the proposals in England and Wales on registration of civil partnerships in religious premises would be appropriate for Scotland?

Yes   □  No   □  Don’t know   √

If you have answered no, please explain what elements of the proposals in England and Wales you consider inappropriate for Scotland.

Comments
### Question 3  (Paragraphs 2.20 to 2.24)

Do you agree with allowing religious celebrants to register civil partnerships in religious premises?

- Yes [ ]
- No [√]
- Don’t know [ ]

Please give reasons for your answer

See question 1

### Question 4  (Paragraphs 2.20 to 2.24)

Do you agree with allowing religious celebrants to register civil partnerships in other places agreed between the celebrant and the couple?

- Yes [ ]
- No [√]
- Don’t know [ ]

Please give reasons for your answer

See question 1
Question 5  (Paragraph 2.25)
Do you agree that religious bodies should not be required to register civil partnerships?

Yes √
No
Don’t know

Please give reasons for your answer

This should be an area where freedom of conscience is allowed. The fact is that hundreds of churches etc. simply will not comply if the law attempts to force them to act against strongly held beliefs. Gay activists would make a sport out of identifying such religious bodies and launching legal challenges against them.

Question 6  (Paragraphs 2.26 and 2.27)
Do you consider that religious celebrants should not be allowed to register civil partnerships if their religious body has decided against registering civil partnerships?

Yes ☐
No √
Don’t know ☐

Please give reasons for your answer

See question 1
Question 7 (Paragraphs 2.28 to 2.30)

Do you agree that individual religious celebrants should not be required to register civil partnerships?

Yes       √
No         ☐
Don’t know ☐

Please give reasons for your answer

See question 5

Question 8 (Paragraphs 2.31 to 2.35)

Which of the options do you favour to ensure that religious bodies and celebrants do not have to register civil partnerships against their will?

Do you favour:

Option 1 ☐
Option 2       √
Neither         ☐

If you have another option, please describe it.
Question 9  (Paragraphs 2.36 to 2.40)

Religious bodies may not wish their premises to be used to register civil partnerships. Do you agree that no legislative provision is required to ensure religious premises cannot be used against the wishes of the relevant religious body?

Yes  □
No   ✓
Don't know □

Please give reasons for your answer

I fear that premises could be booked under false pretences – it must be clear that this will not be tolerated.
### Same sex marriage

**Question 10** (Paragraphs 3.11 and 3.12)

Do you agree that the law in Scotland should be changed to allow same sex marriage?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Answer</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>√</td>
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<tr>
<td>Don't know</td>
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</table>

Please give reasons for your answer

See the further document included.

**Question 11** (Paragraph 3.13)

Do you agree that religious bodies and celebrants should not be required to solemnise same sex marriage?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>√</td>
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<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Don't know</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Please give reasons for your answer

See question 5
Question 12  (Paragraphs 3.14 to 3.18)

Do you agree with the introduction of same-sex civil marriage only?

Yes   ☐
No    ☑
Don’t know ☐

Please give reasons for your answer

See the further document included.

Question 13  (Paragraph 3.19)

Do you agree with the introduction of same-sex marriage, both religious and civil?

Yes   ☐
No    ☑
Don’t know ☐

Please give reasons for your answer

See the further document included.
Question 14  (Paragraphs 3.23 and 3.24)
Do you agree that religious bodies should not be required to solemnise same sex marriage?
Yes √
No
Don’t know
Please give reasons for your answer

See question 5

Question 15  (Paragraphs 3.25 and 3.26)
Do you consider that religious celebrants should not be allowed to solemnise same sex marriages if their religious body has decided against solemnising same sex marriage?
Yes √
No
Don’t know
Please give reasons for your answer

If acting outside the wishes of their religious organisation, the person can no longer claim to be a recognised “religious celebrant”.
### Question 16  (Paragraphs 3.27 and 3.28)

Do you agree that individual religious celebrants should not be required to solemnise same sex marriage?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>✔️</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Please give reasons for your answer

See question 5

### Question 17  (Paragraphs 3.29 to 3.33)

Which of the options do you favour to ensure that religious bodies and celebrants do not have to solemnise same sex marriage against their will?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Do you favour:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Option 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Option 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Neither</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Please give reasons for your answer and if you have another option, please describe it.
Question 18 (Paragraphs 3.34 to 3.39)

Religious bodies may not wish their premises to be used to solemnise same sex marriage. Do you agree that no legislative provision is required to ensure religious premises cannot be used against the wishes of the relevant religious body?

Yes  
No   √
Don’t know  

Please give reasons for your answer

See question 9

Question 19   (Paragraph 3.41)

If Scotland should introduce same-sex marriage, do you consider that civil partnerships should remain available?

Yes  
No  
Don’t know  √

Please give reasons for your answer
Question 20 (Paragraph 4.19)

Do you have any other comments?

Yes √
No □

We are particularly interested in your views on:

- potential implications of the proposals for transgender people (paragraph 3.42)
- possible transitional arrangements (paragraphs 3.43 and 3.44);
- recognition of Scottish same sex marriages elsewhere (paragraphs 3.45 to 3.49);
- any comments on forced marriage (paragraphs 3.51 and 3.52)
- any comments on sham marriage (paragraph 3.53)
- potential financial implications (paragraphs 4.01 to 4.08);
- potential equality implications (paragraphs 4.09 to 4.14).

See further document.
Kings Church, Edinburgh is a member of the New Frontiers network of churches (newfrontierstogether.org). The church began 11 years ago with 12 people. We now have 160 members and over 200 worship with us each Sunday. We are now based in a former Church of Scotland church building. There are currently four other New Frontiers Churches in Scotland, all relatively new, and we expect the number of congregations in Scotland to multiply in the future.

There are many newer evangelical and charismatic churches in Scotland that are not part of a denomination that would respond to such a consultation. Their views will be underrepresented in submissions that you receive from churches. We speak for no one but ourselves, but our comments could be seen as reflecting those of many nascent congregations.

**Same Sex Marriage**

Our concerns about same-sex “marriage” relate to protecting the institution of marriage as a positive foundation of society, ethical objections to homosexual relationships, and maintaining freedom of conscience for our members.

**Protecting Marriage**

We regard marriage as instituted by God as the public permanent faithful union of a man and a woman, the only proper context for sexual relations, creating a stable family unit that benefits partners, their children, and wider society. This view of marriage as a definite effective structure bounded by moral constraints, producing a strong society to everyone’s benefit, contrasts with the dominant contemporary view that personal preferences are paramount and self vindicating.

This traditional Christian conception has been eroded in Scottish society by permissive attitudes to sex before and outside of marriage, increased cohabitation preceding or instead of marriage, and relaxed attitudes to divorce.
Successive UK and Scottish Governments have been complicit in this erosion, failing to promote (sometimes even discouraging) marriage through the education system, the tax system or the legal system.

Now even the most basic concept at the heart of marriage is being challenged: the union of a man and a woman. This combination is not arbitrary, merely reflecting the numerical preponderance of heterosexuals. A man and a woman bring unique and complimentary qualities and attributes to a relationship and to the multifaceted demands of parenthood. Motherhood and fatherhood are not just gender specific terms for parenthood, but refer to two distinct roles within a family. Their sexual union can bring about procreation and bond children with their ideal carers: their natural parents.

Same sex “marriage” erodes the hugely valuable principle that biological parents are uniquely responsible for the upbringing of the children they create. Contrived schemes to enable same sex couples to have children through IVF are already proving vulnerable to conflict, and same sex “marriage” would increase the incidence of these problems, with the associated pain for children involved.

The egalitarian arguments employed to justify same sex “marriage” could equally be marshalled to justify polygamous, polyamorous or temporary marriage. Assurances that such further dilutions of the original institution of marriage will not follow will ring hollow unless it can be made clear what arguments will be made against them once it has been conceded that the definition of marriage is flexible.

Once inherently non-reproductive relationships are defined as marriages, the genetic justification for the restrictions preventing incestuous marriages becomes weakened, thus increasing acceptance of incest generally. It will be argued that there is no reason why a brother should not marry a brother, for example, thus diluting society’s disapproval of incestuous relationships. A morally founded law prohibiting incest protects family members from sexual advances within the family home, both by its moral force and its legal clarity, removing the need to prove lack of consent.

**Recognising Sin**

Adhering to Biblical Christianity, we regard homosexual sexual activity as inherently immoral. While the factors leading to homosexual orientation are varied and complex, we do not accept that all sexual desires are positive or that they morally justify consequent behaviour. We sympathise with the struggles many homosexuals experience, both within themselves and in facing hostility from others, but we maintain that ultimately the best, though not necessarily easy, path for a homosexual to follow is celibacy or orientation change. We welcome homosexuals into our church family, but our teaching and counsel will always reflect these principles.
Recognising same sex “marriage” legally formally displays a nation’s endorsement of homosexual sex. This is, of course, a major factor motivating the campaign for same sex “marriage”. The relatively tiny number of same sex “marriages” would receive hugely disproportionate media attention. This “official” endorsement of homosexual relationships amounts to a very public national endorsement of sin.

School materials introducing and promoting homosexuality to even the very youngest pupils would be introduced with a renewed boldness. Parents in our congregation face the unenviable situation of sending their children to the schools to which they have contributed through taxation, only for their children to be there exposed to messages directly contradicting the values promoted at home. Parents are already concerned about the amoral and conspiratorial sex education in primary and secondary schools. A surge of homosexual themed materials in schools following same sex “marriage” legislation could lead to some of our members considering withdrawing their children from Government controlled schools and home schooling.

As Christians, we wish to support those in government and to encourage political engagement, but this is more difficult when orthodox Christian principles are rejected across the mainstream political spectrum.

**Maintaining freedom**

While we welcome assurances that there will be no compulsion to conduct same sex “marriages”, we fear that once same sex “marriages” are legalised, subsequent “equality” legislation may threaten groups and individuals who perform marriages, but refuse to perform same sex “marriages”. Where gay rights have met freedom of conscience in other areas, gay rights always take precedence. There is therefore good reason to expect that eventually it will be illegal to marry heterosexuals while refusing to “marry” homosexuals, thereby leaving many churches no choice but to withdraw from registering marriages completely. Considering cases such as Christian adoption agencies in Scotland and other similar cases in England, this is a reasonable concern.

We believe that everyone should be free to decline involvement in same sex “marriages”, including photographers, florists, venue owners, caterers, registrars etc. Teachers should not be compelled to present a positive view of same sex “marriage”. Approval of same sex “marriage” should not be seen as a necessary or desirable trait in government or council employees. In summary, those holding orthodox Christian views should not be discriminated against.

Some gay campaigning groups seem determined to demonise and ultimately criminalise all dissent from their views, and they wield huge influence over the Scottish and UK Governments.
Conclusion
Legalising same sex “marriage” will be a grave error, clearly illustrating Scotland’s departure from its Christian roots. Experience around the world indicates that support for same sex “marriage” is strongest in societies where the institution of marriage is already not highly regarded. Sadly, Scotland is following this pattern and legalising same sex “marriage” will be another step towards relational and sexual chaos and confusion in Scotland, with all of the individual hurt and the toll on society involved.

We fully support the fuller submission to this consultation from the SOLAS Centre for Public Christianity.