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## Reverend backs gay marriage

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*The Reverend Bob Brown of Queen's Cross Church in Aberdeen voiced disapproval of a campaign by Christian group, Forward Together, who want ministers and deacons banned from conducting civil partnership ceremonies*

A Scottish minister has given his backing to civil partnerships after calling on the General Assembly of Scotland to reject an evangelical group's protest against priests conducting the gay service.

The Reverend Bob Brown of Queen's Cross Church in Aberdeen voiced disapproval of a campaign by Christian group, Forward Together, who want ministers and deacons banned from conducting the ceremonies because they believe it is against the Bible.

A Forward Together spokesman told the Aberdeen Press and Journal, "Sex is a good thing but it is for men and women in the context of marriage. This (civil partnership) goes against what it says in the Bible.

"This is trying to condone something that God actually condemns and it is inconsistent with 4,000 years of Jewish Christian beliefs."

Mr Brown said: "The Church has never identified the word of God with the Bible, the Church's position is and has been that scripture is to be interpreted by the guidance of the spirit in the light of Jesus Christ.

"He is the word of God and that far from being located only within scripture, the word of God is encountered in the world as well as the Church."

The minister, who has been a guest at civil partnership ceremonies, warned that the Bible should not always be taken so literally, "If this was the case we would not have women priests or ministers and slavery would still be acceptable.

"This (slavery) was something presented as something God approved of until the 19th century but in this day and age it is acknowledged by Christians as morally wrong.

"We all know that a significant number of people in society are gay. If this is their God-given orientation are we to say that God wishes them to be gay but not to express their sexuality in a gay relationship? What kind of God would that be?

"Where two gay people enter into a loving, committed, faithful relationship as they do a civil partnership, is it unreasonable to believe that they enjoy the blessing of the God of loving faithfulness in the same way heterosexuals making a similar commitment do?"