



Free Presbyterians charge NIO over "heinous" abortion laws

Members of the Free Presbyterian church are taking to the streets of Belfast today in protest at the imposition of the child abortion framework imposed in Northern Ireland by the Conservative government at Westminster.

Billy Kennedy

The framework, introduced a year ago, contains the most liberal abortion laws in the United Kingdom and Free Presbyterians from congregations across Northern Ireland want to reiterate in a public protest their total opposition to what they describe as “heinous” legislation.

A letter is being sent to the Northern Ireland Secretary of State Chris Heaton-Harris underlying the church’s “continued and unremitting” opposition to the measures.

Mr Dane indicated that members of the 60-plus church’s Ulster congregations would gather to demonstrate their their opposition to violent government treatment of “defenceless infants” in the name of health care.

There will be a short service at which Free Presbyterian moderator the Rev John Armstrong will speak. Other Free Presbyterian ministers will take part.

The Rev Dane said his church felt it was important that the matter of abortion should not become accepted in Northern Ireland society.

“Our obligation to love our neighbours means that we need to fight for their lives,” he said.

The highly controversial abortion legislation is also strongly opposed by the four main churches in Northern Ireland – Presbyterian, Church of Ireland, Roman Catholic and Methodist, and by the unionist parties, and sections of nationalism.

In a letter to Secretary of State Chris Heaton-Harris, the Free Presbyterian church says: “On this the anniversary of the imposition of new abortion regulations on Northern Ireland, the Free Presbyterian Church of Ulster voices its continued and unremitting opposition to this heinous measure.”

The letter said In church discussions with the then minister of state a few years ago the presbytery delegation was informed that the government was under obligation to implement the CEDAW report on abortion and then later there was an obligation imposed on the Secretary of State by legislation from Westminster.

The Secretary of State was told: “We would remind you there is an obligation to the moral law of God which says: ‘Thou shalt not kill’ (Exodus 20:13). There is little appetite for this legislation in Northern Ireland and to have it imposed over our heads cannot be good governance.

“We would remind that people who have been or will be responsible for this are on the wrong side of history and are certainly on the wrong side of God Almighty. There is a day of judgement at which we will all give an account to God.”