I am writing in response to the Women and Equalities Committee re changes to Northern Ireland Abortion law.

I am a Presbyterian Church Minister, resident in Northern Ireland. I believe wholeheartedly in the value and sanctity of human life and I am opposed to all forms of abuse, harm and destruction to human life.

I understand that there are many concerns regarding abortion. However, I am deeply concerned that proposed changes to the current law in NI are based upon a very small percent of extreme cases of severe disability where life outside of the womb is unlikely to prevail. In 2016, 98% of abortions in GB were for social reasons, not medical.

Medical practice in NI ensures that life is preserved and protected. Two years ago, my daughter experienced difficulties during her pregnancy that ultimately led to the loss of her baby at 21 weeks. The care and advice that was given to her was outstanding and fully appreciated. The loss to the whole family is immense; yet we treasure the memory of a life, conceived in love and formed by God.

We often hear accounts from those who are pro-abortion, of trauma faced and hardship because they could not have an abortion. We seldom hear from those who cherished the child within the womb and even though unable to enjoy the blessing of a healthy child yet rejoiced to hold a little baby in their arms and close to their hearts.

Since 1967 when the Abortion laws in GB were changed, it is estimated that there have been almost 9 million abortions, the equivalent to almost 14% of the current UK population. In contrast an estimated 100,000, and similar percentage, lives in NI have been saved.

Human life is precious and must be protected. It is sad that in our present society animal welfare has become more important than the protection of innocent children. NI Law must be respected and protected.

I would ask the committee to consider how to promote secure and stable family life where children are conceived and born out of love and into a family. I would encourage more pro-active help and advice programmes that support mothers (and fathers) facing difficult decisions during a pregnancy. I would encourage support for pregnant mothers not to destroy the life within but to protect that life and if necessary, allow the child to be adopted and raised by others. There are many couples, unable to conceive or to bear children, who would love the blessing and privilege of sharing their lives with children.

Abortion is not an answer. It invariably causes serious stress and trauma for many years afterwards. Helping mothers to love and care brings greater joy than destroying a life before it has had time to breathe.

Every human life is fearfully and wonderfully made. God has formed each one in the mother’s womb. Life is precious. Please respect the right to life, please respect the NI law, please respect the minds of the majority in NI for whom life is precious.
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