End of Life Assistance (Scotland) Bill

Mr and Mrs Plaisted

In answer to your Bill, "The End of Life Assistance Bill" promoting assisted suicide. My wife and I do not agree that a person should be helped to kill themselves. We also have other considerations which you fail to take into account. We believe that those people who advocate killing instead of caring, are playing on peoples fear of death, the fear of pain, and the fear of loss of dignity.

We believe this requires us to debate and allay those fears, to demonstrate that care can overcome pain, preserve dignity and allow death to be met well. The exemplars of this are the hospices. Hospices are popular. their care for the terminally ill is widely welcomed and applauded. They are part of the community- in their fundraising and in their work at a more active level than NHS hospitals.

We know we can argue that the medical profession will be compromised, if assisted suicide is legalised, that it's the antithesis of individual autonomy to require another to help to end a life. We can warn about the slippery slope and the destruction of palliative care when the pass is sold to assisted suicide. We can appeal for a culture of care and seek to reassure that the process of death has a unique value for all. But, none of that will wash with the emotional reaction to the fears and pain of loved ones.

But, Assisted Suicide is an illusion of care. The very idea of assisted suicide promotes a kind of pity that is incompatible with any appreciation of the sanctity of life.

As a matter of interest to the committee, that words of warning have been uttered by none other than Doctor Els Borst. She was the Dutch Minister of Health, who saw the legalisation of euthanasia through the Dutch Parliament in 2001. She stated that she regrets that euthanasia was legalised before good palliative care was in place. She expressed the view that: "There is the euthanasia law and there is euthanasia reality. To think that we have neatly arranged everything by adopting the euthanasia law is an illusion. Reality is more complicated than that." No doubt it is.

Mr Mrs Plaisted