End of Life Assistance (Scotland) Bill

Margaret Urquhart

The Church of Scotland welcomes all efforts to improve the quality of care available to all Scotland's citizens. History and contemporary experience bear witness to the fact that, true to the injunction of their leader to show love and compassion to all, followers of Christ have long been at the forefront of social care in the country.

I therefore find the contents of the proposed End of Life Choices (Scotland) Bill being brought to the Scottish Parliament by MSP Margo MacDonald deeply disturbing, undermining as it does the accepted need to offer care and comfort to all - especially those who are placed in a vulnerable position as a result of age, incapacity or other circumstance. I believe the whole approach taken by Ms MacDonald to be flawed, given that what is proposed would result in healthcare being called upon to deliberately terminate life. Such legislation represents a seismic shift in the relationship between carer and patient.

A major concern is that any legislation allowing the deliberate killing of another person would always be open to abuse or misuse. Are we really to believe that, when a patient can die in an NHS ward after 26 days without being fed, and when recent cases highlight that vulnerable children can fall through all the "safety nets", guarantees can be given that legislation with the express purpose of bringing about the deliberate ending of a human life will never be misused or abused?

The worth and dignity of every human life needs to be emphasised and celebrated: in particular, the ending of life would be a matter to be deplored if it were to be seen as a means of saving resources, or that any person was perceived as merely a burden.

As legislation which endorses the deliberate ending of a human life undermined us as a society. I do not accept that the law should be changed to allow the legal termination of human life, and believe that society is better served by the sacrificial love exemplified and enjoined by Christ- whatever the cost.

I would urge you not to sign the proposed End of Life Choices Bill

Margaret Urquhart.
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