The End of Life Assistance Bill Committee  
T3, 60  
The Scottish Parliament  
Edinburgh  
EH99 1SP  

23 April 2010  

Dear Members of the Committee  

End of Life Assistance Bill  

I refer to the proposed legislation in connection with the End of Life Assistance Bill. As a private citizen but also as church leader having always had a particular interest in pastoral care I would oppose any moves to sanction this legislation. My reasons are as follows:  

- Human life is precious and any moves to introduce assisted suicide or euthanasia demeans and devalues the sanctity of human life  
- The proposed wording of the Bill is dangerously wide and despite safeguards which may be introduced places the vulnerable and elderly at risk  
- The Bill apparently includes no definition of ‘intolerable’ (a subjective term) and the method of terminating life is not prescribed  
- Experts advise that the safeguards contained in the Bill are illusory and seriously defective  
- The intent of the Bill to enable people to ‘die with dignity and a minimum of distress’ ignores the fact that good health care under the NHS and palliative medicine already adequately addresses this issue  
- The expressed will of both the Scottish and Westminster Parliaments (which is probably reflective of the conscience of the nation) has been clearly opposed to assisted suicide on a number of occasions in past years; why does this issue need to be raised again?  
- The BMA and other medical bodies are opposed to assisted suicide  
- Apparently evidence from the Netherlands and the US state of Oregon, where assisted suicide is legal, shows that it is impossible to prevent abuses occurring despite safeguards  
- No provisions exist in the Bill for a ‘conscience clause’ despite the fact that doctors are charged with providing the ‘end of life assistance’ – notwithstanding
the indications that the majority of doctors would not be prepared to implement the proposals

- In 40+ years of visiting people, many of whom have suffered greatly through terminal or chronic illness, it has been my experience that not one has sought or suggested assisted suicide as a means of release from their condition.

Yours sincerely

Ernest J Bayton