End of Life Assistance (Scotland) Bill Committee,
T3, 60,
Scottish Parliament,
Edinburgh EH9 1SP

Dear Sir/Madam,

End of Life Assistance (Scotland) Bill

As a member of the Church of Scotland I wish to state my views on the above. I strongly oppose the introduction of this Bill for the following reasons.

I do not think anyone has the right to ask a medical practitioner to end his or her life, as doctors take a vow to save life. I do not think the age of a patient has anything to do with this matter.

Which "categories" of people are being talked about? The terminally ill have been mentioned. My sister and my husband's sister had terminal cancer and were wonderfully treated by medical staff in hospital and in the hospices where they died. They would never have agreed to this Bill. They kept smiling to the end, refusing the strongest pain-killers. That is dying with dignity, NOT what Margo Macdonald wants.

A friend with Parkinson's Disease, like Margo Macdonald, kept going bravely and loved his life. He died naturally with dignity surrounded by his loving family.

I cannot understand why the word "dignity" is used in connection with end of life assistance. I have read of cases of families accompanying loved ones who wish to die in Switzerland. The families have been horrified at the process and I have been horrified reading the description of the deaths. One family member said there was no dignity at all.

Another "category" of patient might be one who is seriously ill but also very depressed and saying things like "I want to die". Is this to be taken as a serious intention? It is more probable that if the depression is treated the patient will regain the determination to become physically well. Also coma patients have been known to make full recoveries. Miracles do happen.

I do not understand how "safeguards" can be mentioned in connection with such a Bill - there can be none. People would lose their trust in doctors and nurses. Carers would feel under pressure to agree to their loved ones' wishes.

The whole subject is far too complicated, unclear and above all scary. There are too many grey areas. Many of us would be terrified to go into hospital if this Bill were to be passed. I would call the process not "end of life assistance" but "murder". I feel we should value life not deliberately end it therefore I oppose the passing of the Bill.

Yours faithfully,

Christine Fordyce