4th May 2010.

Dear Sir,

THE END OF LIFE ASSISTANCE BILL

I have many concerns regarding the passing of the bill mentioned above. This bill states that it is intended to ‘enable a person to die with dignity and a minimum of distress’. We already have this through good health care and particularly palliative medicine. I am very much comforted knowing that the professional medical bodies and the British Medical Association do not support assisted suicide. Doctors are supposed to heal our bodies not, intentionally, cause us to die. Life has meaning, value and worth. How can we ask our doctors to take away a life?! It is all very well to have a ‘no conscience clause’ but we have all been given a conscience for a very good reason. Those who do not actually have to ‘do the deed’ can very conveniently distance themselves from it! I am very thankful that the majority of our doctors are not prepared to participate in implementing the proposals of this bill. The bill states that assisted suicide would be offered to people who are to some degree dependant on others. This could include people with non-threatening disabilities and those with relatively common conditions who have a degree of dependency on others. Old people and the vulnerable will be put very much at risk. We are supposed to protect and care for the elderly and the vulnerable, not push them out of the way as if they were a nuisance. Most of us will reach old age and some degree of infirmity one day. I have great compassion for those like Margo MacDonald and many who know who have life-threatening diseases. Our hospices give wonderful, loving care to those they look after and perhaps the answer would be that our Scottish Government would finance the hospices, build more, so they would not be put into the position of constantly having to fund-raise. When people are loved and cared for, the results are truly amazing – life, not death. I believe that the evidence coming from the Netherlands and Oregon state in the US where assisted suicide is legal shows that it is impossible to prevent abuses from occurring.

I cannot think of anything more awful than having to deliberately bring someone’s life to an end. There are doctors currently spending many years in jail who have done exactly that!

M McMillan