



# **In Bad Faith**

**The FACTS about how religious groups are campaigning on assisted dying**

**“The so-called 'right to die' will inexorably become the duty to die”**

Letter signed by the Catholic and Anglican Churches, October 2005, sent to the House of Lords against the Assisted Dying for the Terminally Ill Bill

**Would the new Assisted Dying Bill lead to a duty to die?”  
Yes 24%; no 76%**

Survey in Church Times, Friday 15 October 2004

**“The Catholic Church in England and Wales is planning to mount the biggest political campaign in its modern history in an attempt to stop assisted suicide from reaching the statute books.”**

Catholic Herald page 1 Friday 24 March 2006

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## **INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY**

The purpose of this report is to show, through their own words and actions, how various Christian groups have been campaigning against the Assisted Dying for the Terminally Ill Bill. The report is emphatically not an examination of faith or Christianity<sup>1</sup> or indeed of the legitimate arguments on either side of the debate.

Organised Christian groups have made the campaign against the Assisted Dying Bill their political priority.<sup>2</sup>

The British Humanist Association (BHA) supports the Assisted Dying for the Terminally Ill Bill on compassionate grounds. We believe that individuals should be able to make decisions about their own lives, as long as those decisions do not cause harm to others, and believe that a patient who is terminally ill and suffering unbearably should be able to seek a doctor's assistance if they wish to die but are unable to end their life without help. We believe that giving terminally ill patients the right to choose will result in the development and funding of palliative care.

The Assisted Dying for the Terminally Ill Bill is permissive, and allows choice to the patient who is suffering. Opposition to the Bill is a denial of the potential choice and freedom that it will offer. The Bill contains safeguards to ensure that only those competent to choose to end their lives may do so and it does not introduce 'euthanasia', voluntary or involuntary. These facts about the Bill must be borne in mind when examining campaigns against it.

Many religious people agree with us, and in fact the evidence is that our view is shared by the majority of Christians, who are being badly misrepresented and let down by their religious leaders and the narrowly focused religious lobbying groups. Similarly, when Christian groups claim to speak for the elderly or the terminally ill, they are in fact doing no such thing, but are pre-empting any views that such people may themselves wish to express.

### **Findings**

The report shows the extent to which religious groups and the religious press have adopted a wholly one-sided view of this issue.

Their activities are characterised by:

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<sup>1</sup> *Groups included*

The groups covered by this report are Christian and include: Alert, Catholic Church, Catholic Guild of Doctors, Church of England, Catholic Union, CARE, Centre for Bio-ethics and public policy, Christian people's Alliance, Christian Medical Fellowship Church of England, Evangelical Alliance, First Do No Harm, Lawyers Christian Fellowship, LIFE, Linacre Centre for Healthcare Ethics, Maranatha Community, No Less Human, Pro-Life alliance, Right to Life, SPUC (Society for the Protection of Unborn Children), and the World Federation of Doctors Who Respect Human Life.

<sup>2</sup> "The Catholic Church in England and Wales is planning to mount the biggest political campaign in its modern history in an attempt to stop assisted suicide from reaching the statute books." *Catholic Herald*, page 1, 24 March 2006

- systematic misinformation and widespread abuse and bullying of those who disagree with them;
- hypocrisy in the allegations these groups make against others, and in some cases also about the sanctity of life;
- unjustified and inflammatory language calculated to instil fear, and
- arguments that lack all evidence.

Religious groups also claim to speak for the elderly and the disabled, effectively disenfranchising them.

There is evidence of political subterfuge that is deliberate and strategic, such as the suppression of any mention of faith, God, or the Bible.

Political activism is extremely high, and the religious groups exploit the inbuilt political advantage of current and former Anglican Bishops in the House of Lords.

Most telling is how well funded these groups are and the enormous amount of money they are channelling into campaigning against the Bill. This huge spend could distort the perception of Parliamentary and public opinion.<sup>3</sup>

In our view, this cynical campaigning is unethical, dishonest and undemocratic. It does a deep disservice to most Christians.

The BHA believes it is important that everyone, including Christians, understands how these religious groups have been campaigning. We know that, like us, many people will be horrified.

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<sup>3</sup> For example, the Society for Protection of Unborn Children claims over 70,000 letters have been sent to the House of Lords opposing the Bill. Is this surprising with well-organised and funded mechanisms?

## **1 – SCARE MONGERING AND MISLEADING ARGUMENTS**

Religious groups have accused others of scaring people and using emotive arguments, but the evidence shows that fear mongering is an intrinsic part of their strategy. Consider these examples.

### ***"A right to die would become a duty to die"***

"If this law is passed, it seems to me that the duty of the law to act on behalf of the people would be broken, because the law is there to protect life, and a right to die can become a duty to die'."

*Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor, 'Catholic Herald, 8 November 2005*

"Patients regularly tell me they feel guilty for occupying a bed when others may need it more. It is only a short step from a 'right to die' becoming a 'duty to die'".

*Claire Hookey: Baptist Times 20 January 2005*

The "duty to die" argument is central to the Catholic and Anglican submission to the House of Lords on the Assisted Dying Bill and has been repeated by Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor (for example, in his BBC interview on *Sunday AM*<sup>4</sup>) and Archbishop Rowan Williams (for example, in the *Times*, 20 January 2005). It is a soundbite, designed to scare.

This argument is continually repeated despite the fact that even their own supporters don't believe them. When the *Church Times* asked its readers if a right to die would become a duty to die, 76% said no, in spite of the fact that the question followed an article that told them that it would create a duty to die. (*Church Times*, 15 October 2004.)

### ***Suffering is good for us***

"Christianity teaches the art of suffering...the suffering that God sends us has a profound and sublime meaning with which it is to be embraced".

*Paul Kokoski, Catholic Insight, 27 January 2006*

"Suffering can be good for us" (commenting on Dr Anne Turner's assisted suicide)

*Rev George Curry, Chairman, Church Society, BBC Radio Newcastle, 25 January 2006*

"There is also the risk of using the idea of assisted dying to avoid or relieve obligations...the obligation to journey with people right through their dying, and to learn from them; and the obligation to face existential terror and doubt."

*Anne Richards, Mission Theology Adviser at the Archbishop's Council, Church Times, 8 July 2005.*

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<sup>4</sup> BBC1, Sunday October 9 2005

"I bring my Christian faith very much to bear on the understanding of suffering, whether it be my own or other people's."  
*Rt Rev Christopher Budd, for the Catholic Church, in his evidence to the House of Lords Select Committee on the Bill, 13 Jan 2005*

While it may be a legitimate aspect of Christian belief to find virtue and value in suffering, this is not an appropriate argument to extend to those who do not share that belief. Suffering is best judged by the sufferer.

### ***We'll be killing babies next***

"... implicit in the legislative proposals is the possibility that assisted dying could eventually apply to children - not least those born unwanted or 'damaged'.  
*The Bishop of Manchester*

Nothing implicit or explicit in the Bill would allow it to be applied to children. The Assisted Dying for the Terminally Ill Bill is based on law in Oregon, USA, and applies only to adults. No child has been helped to die under the Oregon law.

Religious opponents talk constantly about the law in Holland, which is significantly different to that in Oregon. This is deeply misleading.

### ***No old person will be safe***

Religious groups say that if we change the law, the elderly would be at risk from relatives who find them a burden or wish to inherit from them.

"Euthanasia could be an unscrupulous state's easy answer, using its power of persuasion on elderly people to "do the right thing". We need to be alert to such matters of life and death".  
*Editorial, Church of England Newspaper, 12 November 2004.*

"[The Bill] could lead to pressure being put on patients by unscrupulous family members'  
*Christopher Herbert - Bishop of St. Albans, Church of England Newspaper*

"A core argument against euthanasia has been precisely that the old and infirm will come under social pressure to go along with this sense of duty to fade out for the sake of others."  
*Church of England Newspaper 17 December 2004*

"In a society that values people according to their economic output, those deemed elderly are viewed as expendable".  
*Archbishop of Cardiff, Peter Smith in Universe 26 March 2005*

"[The Bill] would compromise the elderly and infirm in the face of greedy relatives, who stand to benefit from suicide or euthanasia"  
*Dr Tony Cole, Catholic Union, Universe 18 Sep 2005*

"...after a Euthanasia Act, no old person will be safe from the lethal injection."

*John Gummer, Catholic Herald, 14 October 2005*

Supposing that many would kill their parents because they are a burden or for their inheritance demonstrates a very negative view of human nature and the health services. The BHA does not share this cynical and pessimistic view of human nature.

Being elderly does not make you stupid, automatically vulnerable, or unable to speak for yourself. It is patronising to assume that elderly people will easily be persuaded to die. Such attitudes expressed by religious groups demonstrate a profound lack of respect for elderly people.

In October 2004 NOP found that 78% of people over 65 support a change in the law on assisted dying. The evidence from Oregon shows that elderly people use assisted dying less than other age groups.

The argument about the elderly is a classic scare tactic.

### ***It's cheaper to kill people***

"It would risk a gradual erosion of values in which over time the cold calculation of costs of caring properly for the ill and the old would loom large" *Church Times 12 Sep 2004, p 9-11*

"...expensive treatment of the old becomes an economic justification for euthanasia in time to come. Why waste money on palliative care for the terminally ill?"

*Lord Brennan, (President of the Catholic Union)  
Catholic Herald 7 October 2005*

"Issues like the need to free up beds and whether it was worth keeping people alive would come to the fore"

*Archbishop of Cardiff, Peter Smith, Universe 26 March 2005*

"The Archbishop of Canterbury expressed concern that legalising voluntary euthanasia is being motivated by the need to cut costs in healthcare."

*Church of England Newspaper Friday 15 July 2005*

It displays a very negative view of the health services to suppose they would kill patients to save money or that the State would encourage assisted dying to reduce costs.

So far as the BHA is aware, no primary advocates of assisted dying have argued for a change in the law because it would save money. Are religious groups the only ones who contemplate this? If so, we believe they are articulating something no self-respecting person would endorse. Ascribing to your opponents such an appalling argument is deeply disturbing and it says much about the Bill's opponents.

### **More frightening arguments**

Liberal Democrat Party policy is, "kill the elderly or infirm through legalised euthanasia."

*Ram Gidoomal CBE, Christian People's Alliance, The Universe 16 May 2004*

"It is a fallacy to believe that only those who really wish to die would be euthanised."

*Baroness Jill Knight, Universe 16 May 2004 p4*

"If euthanasia, like abortion, were legalised, it would soon become common practice..."

*Agneta Sutton, Catholic Herald, 24 July 2005*

"When you legalise euthanasia or assisted suicide you are effectively telling patients they'd be better off dead."

*Lord Alton, Church of England Newspaper, 7 Oct 2005*

"...no matter how many regulations you put round it, we are devious. I am not saying that I am devious, but human beings are devious and if I have a further thing to achieve, I will find some way of getting round the regulations."

*Rt Rev Christopher Budd, for the Catholic Church, in his evidence to the House of Lords Select Committee on the Bill, 13 Jan 2005*

We have to assume that religious campaigners have studied the Assisted Dying for the Terminally Ill Bill. If they have, they will know that the Bill is modelled on the law in Oregon, and that it only permits assisted dying (not voluntary euthanasia, let alone involuntary euthanasia). They will know that the Bill would only allow a doctor to assist a terminally ill patient whose suffering (in their own judgement) is unbearable, and who is deemed mentally competent to make such a decision, to die – and nothing else. Also that the doctor would only be able to assist by prescribing medication and the means of administering that medication – not in any other way. They will also know that the Bill includes very stringent safeguards to prevent abuse. But these religious campaigners have no compunctions about stating that the Bill would lead to killing babies, and killing elderly people or people with disabilities who do not wish to die.

It is worth noting that there is no evidence that the Oregon law has resulted in large numbers of people asking for assisted suicide and no evidence of any abuse of the law by relatives or anyone else.

One might perhaps expect some fundamentalists to adopt such dishonest arguments, but it is surprising to find Archbishops, Bishops and Peers equally at home instilling such fears and casting slurs on the motives of those who disagree with them. The Churches do not seem concerned about lining themselves up with religious lobby groups that show no respect for truth.

## **2 - ABUSING AND MISREPRESENTING PEOPLE WHO DISAGREE**

### ***Insensitivity to people in distress***

Religious campaigning groups display a remarkable lack of sensitivity for people in deep distress after facing end of life dilemmas. When Graham Lawson's sister Sue asked him to be there when she took her own life, Graham agreed and underwent a harrowing 26-hour experience with her.

"Elsbeth Chowdharay-Best of the anti-euthanasia group, Alert, said Mr Lawson should have been prosecuted. She said: 'There is a new attitude emerging in society that if there is something wrong with someone they should be got rid of as soon as possible. Instead, they should be offered support. I think this man ought to face prosecution.'"

*Daily Telegraph, 20 January 2005*

"Death without dignity is the best description of the death of Dr Anne Turner, 67, who died in a flat in Zurich on January 24"

*Agneta Sutton, Catholic Times, 12 Feb 2006*

"The VES clearly wants to see this woman helped to kill herself. It is not clear whether this case has been brought by the local authority in order to avoid assisting this woman's suicide, or by the woman herself, prompted by the VES or others."

*SPUC, 1 December 2004*

SPUC commented after the High Court overruled an injunction by a local authority preventing a husband from accompanying his wife from travelling to Switzerland for assistance to die. This is a typically insensitive comment about a person suffering with a terminal illness. [The VES (now Dignity in Dying) informs us it has never had any contact with any party in this case.]

Religious groups calling for such people to be prosecuted, jailed, or claiming that they have been manipulated by others at a moment when they are distressed or grieving, seems to us to be extremely ill judged and lacking in human warmth.

### ***Abusing those who disagree and accusing them of Nazism***

The High Court decision above was that of Lord Justice Hedley, who was later invited to chair a debate on assisted dying.

LIFE described it as "very dangerous" and Right to Life said it is "outrageous"

*Universe 5 December 2004*

The Lawyers Christian Fellowship and the Christian Medical Fellowship also rounded on the Lords who gave very careful consideration to the Assisted Dying for the Terminally Ill Bill, and concluded that they: "lacked the wisdom and courage unequivocally to reject euthanasia."

*Church of England Newspaper, 8 April 2005*

The Archbishop of Canterbury's advisor, Canon Professor Robin Gill, who gave evidence on his behalf on this issue, was rounded on when he argued a case for merciful treatment of those who help others to die even though he did not wish to see the law changed. The religious groups pitched in at the first sign of compassion.

"Prof Gill's opinions made him an inappropriate person to represent the view of the Church of England...these are inappropriate views to be expressing."

*Rev Stephen Foster, Catholic Herald, Friday 21 Jan 2005*

He was also berated by the Christian Medical fellowship (*Baptist Times, 27 Jan 2005*)

If you disagree with religious groups there is a significant chance that you will be subjected to personal vilification, and you may be called a Nazi.

"If doctors are required to end life by withdrawing treatment and food...that is precisely what happened in Nazi Germany. The first victims were the disabled and elderly."

*Church Times, 17 December 2004, p8.*

James Kelly finds it easy to couple references to the pro-euthanasia lobby with "experiments on the mentally ill and killing of those whose lives are deemed worthless."

*Universe, 26 December 2004, p29.*

"...this is exactly the same path as they [the Nazis] went down."

*Lady Salisbury, Catholic Herald, 8 October 2004.*

### **3 - RELIGIOUS GROUPS LACK INTEGRITY**

#### ***Accusing others of their own failings***

While religious groups claim that a right to die will soon turn into a duty to die, and that the elderly and infants will be killed off in numbers, they still find time to accuse others of their own faults.

“The pro-euthanasia groups are trying to frighten people”  
*Phyllis Bowman, Catholic Times, 26 Sep 2004*

This was echoed in Parliament by Catholic MP Jim Dobbin.

The BHA hopes that Christians will make their views about the Churches’ campaigning tactics known to Church leaders. It takes a lot of provocation to make the BMA intervene in the debate:

Religious groups have become so frightening in tone that that the Catholic Guild of Doctors was accused by the British Medical Association, itself then opposed to changing the law, of using “unnecessarily alarmist language”  
*Catholic Herald, 30 July 2004, p9.*

#### ***We’re religious – so don’t mention God, Jesus or the Bible***

Religious groups are cutting God out of their public statements. They have even patted themselves on the back for doing so.

“In the House of Lords debate on Monday I heard no argument that ended with ‘for the Bible tells me so’”<sup>5</sup>  
*Andrew Carey, Church of England Newspaper, 14 October 2005*

The same day a religious Peer let the cat out of the bag by explaining that they were being advised not to mention their faith.

“I have been advised not to mention the Christian faith in this house. I regard that as almost unbelievable.”  
*Baroness O’Cathain, Hansard, 10 October*

The BHA has no objection to people expressing their sincere and faith-based reasons for opposing this Bill, but we strongly object to religious groups deliberately disguising their beliefs in order to avoid others knowing the true reasons for their opposition to the Bill.

Religious groups brought Wesley J Smith, a religious American campaigner on moral issues, over from America. He teaches religious campaigners how to maximise public support by avoiding faith-based arguments. It is clear that campaigners on this side of the Atlantic have taken the US experience to heart.

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<sup>5</sup> This piece continues to explain why the Bible does indeed tell you so.

This excision of what would seem to be their true motives from their public statements denies the public the chance to analyse these motives, an analysis which would reveal double standards, even within the true motivation of religious groups.

***Double standards: the death penalty***

The Catholic Church is very clear where it stands on the death penalty. The current Pope set out its theological position two years ago when, as Cardinal Ratzinger, he wrote:

“Not all moral issues have the same moral weight as abortion and euthanasia. For example, if a Catholic were to be at odds with the Holy Father on the application of capital punishment or on the decision to wage war, he would not for that reason be considered unworthy to present himself to receive Holy Communion... it may still be permissible to... have recourse to capital punishment. There may be a legitimate diversity of opinion even among Catholics about waging war and applying the death penalty, but not, however, with regard to abortion and euthanasia,”

*Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, The Tablet, 10 July 2004*

Catholic religious groups can therefore, with the blessing of their leaders, contemplate the killing of people for a crime or in a war. But under no circumstances will the same religious groups permit a person of sound mind, facing imminent death from a cruel terminal illness to make a choice to die peacefully and well. This moral hypocrisy demonstrates that what these religious groups are really against is choice.

The Bishop of Oxford informed the General Synod on assisted dying that, “the main argument about the sanctity of life was less convincing to many than it had once been.”

*Church Times, 15 July 2005*

We think it is easy to see why.

## 4 - BIAS IN THE RELIGIOUS PRESS

We examined every article and news item on assisted dying in the publications listed below between March 2004 and April 2006.<sup>6</sup>

We counted 82 news items in the religious press, 67 of which fail to provide a balancing quote. **82% of coverage in the religious press is biased if assessed by the standards that are applied by religious groups to other media.**

Specialist weekly newspapers rely heavily on columns and comment pieces. We counted 73 such pieces in that time, including editorials but excluding letters. Only 10 (less than 14%) could be said to be either neutral or balanced, or positive, on the issue of assisted dying. **86% of features and columns were written against the Bill.**

The worst offender is the *Catholic Times*, which out of 23 pieces had no balanced news coverage and no balanced features.

10 October 2005 – coverage of the Second Reading, Assisted Dying Bill: In reports of a debate that had roughly even numbers on both sides, most religious newspapers did not quote a single speaker in favour of the Bill. Readers might be forgiven for thinking that nobody did. *The Church of England Newspaper*, for example, quoted five Peers who were religious leaders, and nobody else.<sup>7</sup>

LIFE in the *Catholic Times* (8 Jan 2006), *Church Times* (27 Jan) the *Church of England Newspaper* (27 Jan), attacked Dignity in Dying's change of name without giving it a chance to reply. More significantly, when discussing its patrons, they omitted its two religious patrons and thus avoided giving readers the information that some religious people have opposing views.

Most Christians disagree with the religious groups, so balance remains an important consideration for the religious press. A YouGov (September 2004) survey showed 80% of Protestants and Catholics support changing the law to allow assisted dying. Work by Canon Professor Robin Gill, shows 66% of weekly Anglican churchgoers also feel the law should change. In its survey, the *Church Times* discovered that 76% of its readers do not accept the core "duty to die" argument made by the Catholic and Anglican Churches.

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<sup>6</sup> Excluding those exclusively on the Mental Capacity Bill/Act and excluding letters and news in brief.

<sup>7</sup> Two contrasting headlines seem to sum up the ability of the religious media to produce an accurate analysis of the debate, or the issue: "Stalemate" said the Universe (16 October) "Savaged" screamed the Church of England Newspaper!

## Bias in the religious press

| March 2004-April 2006       | NEWS     |            | FEATURES AND COLUMNS |          |
|-----------------------------|----------|------------|----------------------|----------|
|                             | Balanced | Unbalanced | Neutral / better     | Negative |
| Catholic Herald             | 6        | 11         | 1                    | 7        |
| Catholic Times              | 0        | 11         | 0                    | 12       |
| Universe                    | 2        | 15         | 2                    | 11       |
| Tablet                      | 0        | 4          | 1                    | 7        |
| Baptist Times               | 0        | 5          | 0                    | 3        |
| Evangelical Times           | 4        | 3          | 0                    | 1        |
| Church of England Newspaper | 1        | 6          | 0                    | 7        |
| Christian Herald            | 0        | 4          | 0                    | 7        |
| Church Times                | 1        | 7          | 6                    | 7        |
| Methodist Recorder          | 1        | 1          | 0                    | 1        |
| Totals                      | 15       | 67         | 10                   | 63       |
| Proportions                 |          | 82%        |                      | 86%      |

We leave the last word in top-drawer irony to this commentator.

“People are having ‘facts’ presented in an unbalanced way”  
*Dr Rhona Knight, Universe, 22 October 2005*

### ***Criticising other media for lacking balance***

Religious groups are quick to accuse others of lacking balance. The BBC especially is attacked.

“It is wrong of the BBC, he said, “to promote medieval concepts of medicine that are being used by an unscrupulous lobby in order to frighten the public”  
*Jim Dobbin, Catholic Herald, 4 November 2005*

“Much of the troubling information from the Netherlands, Belgium, and Oregon is overlooked by the media, and even medical journals cannot be relied upon to provide an accurate picture”.  
*Dr Wendy Hiscox, who teaches bioethics, The Tablet 8 October 2005<sup>8</sup>*

Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O’Connor appeared on the BBC’s *Sunday AM programme* (9 October, the day before the 10 October Parliamentary debate) speaking against the Bill without any balancing comment. Nobody complained.

“Mr Dobbin has written to BBC Governor-General Mark Thompson, also a Catholic, in the hope that he will act to stop the bias.”

<sup>8</sup> Dr Hiscox teaches bioethics but not only does she use the most biased media to attack the least biased, but her article is a triumph of imbalance in itself.

*Catholic Times, 6 November 2005*

The *Catholic Times* took Dobbin's allegation of bias as automatic proof, and did not even carry a quote from the BBC.

***BHA is asking the PCC to investigate the religious press***

Only two of the religious papers, *The Tablet* and the *Church Times*, are subject to oversight by the Press Complaints Commission (PCC). The BHA has written to the PCC asking them to examine the bias in these two papers.

The other religious newspapers are totally unaccountable. For that reason we are sending our report to Tessa Jowell, Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, to ask her whether political balance in the religious press should be overseen, and seeking her comments.

## 5 - RELIGIOUS GROUPS' FUNDING

"Voluntary euthanasia advocates ... are now running a well funded and sophisticated campaign"  
*Dr Andrew Fergusson, Centre for Bio-Ethics and Public Policy, briefing paper*<sup>9</sup>

This is not the only time religious groups have decried the "well funded" advocates of assisted dying. Such complaints are hypocritical: the religious bodies opposing assisted dying have considerably greater resources.

The BHA has tried to establish the annual income of the main religious groups campaigning against the Bill, excluding the Catholic and Anglican Churches. We have found astonishing sums of money. Given that the Assisted Dying for the Terminally Ill Bill is now these religious groups' top priority, it is not surprising that this funding, and considerable additional funding from the Catholic and Anglican Churches, is being directed against the Bill.

The religious groups listed overleaf (which excludes the Catholic and Anglican Churches) have an annual income of nearly 12 million pounds.

Annual accounts for some are not declared so it is likely that this sum is even higher. This funding is many times that available to organisations supporting the Bill. Around 80% of the public support the Bill, but the funding for the opposing view may ensure the voice of this majority goes unheard.

"The Roman Catholic attempt to distribute half a million anti-euthanasia leaflets and DVDs to each of their parishes in England and Wales is the biggest political campaign by the Church."  
*Church of England Newspaper 24 March 2006*

We estimate that half a million DVDs, glossy leaflets and 12 page briefing documents will cost hundreds of thousands pounds, perhaps more than a million.

This level of funding will inevitably distort the public debate. For example, a new mobile phone network will be set up to target television and radio programmes discussing euthanasia and abortion, and make protests.

"It will be sent to every Parish by the Catholic Media Office hoping to sign up at least 20,000 subscribers for the new service"  
*Catholic Times 2 April 2006*

The Catholic Church has invested £2million in its "Catholic Communications Network" (25 November 2006, *Catholic Herald*), and has launched a huge fundraising initiative aimed directly at Assisted Dying for the Terminally Ill Bill.

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<sup>9</sup> Dr Fergusson holds several religious posts and has written for the religious press on this issue

| <b>Religious lobby group</b>                         | <b>Year</b> | <b>Income</b>     |
|--|-------------|-------------------|
| Affinity (British Evangelical Council)               | 2002        | 37,822            |
| ALERT  |             | unknown           |
| CARE   | 2004        | 2,805,835         |
| Care not Killing (sponsored by Catholic Church)      |             | unknown           |
| Catholic Union of Great Britain                      |             | unknown           |
| Christian Institute                                  | 2004        | 977,075           |
| Christian Medical Fellowship                         | 2004        | 1,677,006         |
| Christian People's Alliance                          |             | unknown           |
| Church Society                                       |             | 124,911           |
| Evangelical Alliance                                 | 2004        | 2,351,493         |
| First Do No Harm                                     |             | unknown           |
| Guild of Catholic Doctors                            | 2003        | 30,335            |
| Institute of Medical Ethics                          | 2004        | 28,509            |
| Lawyers Christian Fellowship                         | 2004        | 261,132           |
| LIFE   | 2004        | 2,988,622         |
| Linacre Centre                                       | 2004        | 231,483           |
| Maranatha Community                                  | 2003        | 23,196            |
| Medical Ethics Alliance                              |             | unknown           |
| Pro-Life Alliance                                    | 2004-05     | 106,329           |
| Right to Life  | 2003-04     | 15,775            |
| SPUC (Society for the Protection of Unborn Children) |             | 190,264           |
|  |             | <b>11,811,965</b> |

## **CONCLUSIONS**

We conclude that:

- Many of the Christian groups who oppose the Bill deliberately use scare tactics and misleading arguments in their campaign;
- Many of them deliberately avoid mentioning what we take to be their actual motives – their faith and their beliefs about the sanctity of life;
- In the case of the Catholic Church, beliefs about sanctity of life are themselves inconsistent;
- The religious press is extremely biased on the issue, and fails to represent the views of the majority of Christians
- The resources at the disposal of Christian groups opposing the Bill are immense and are being used to distort public debate and perceptions.

There are many more examples than the ones we have included in this research.

We hope that everyone who reads this report will reflect on the integrity of the religious groups campaigning against the Assisted Dying for the Terminally Ill Bill, and that Christians, in particular, will challenge their religious leaders' approach to this very important ethical issue.

***British Humanist Association  
8 May 2006***