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Sent: Tuesday, 18 March 2008 5:10 PM
To: Legal and Constitutional, Committee (SEN)
Subject: inquiry into the rights of the terminaly ill (euthansia Laws repeal) bill 2008

This submission is made by David Gross. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

My wife died on 4th July 2005 after 55 years of marriage.

Billy Graham

Billy Graham is possibly the most well known, respected and deeply religious man in the world.

His wife died on in June aged 87, I believe in 2007.

Please be patient when reading this article, particularly the paragraphs in bold type below. I also challenge the reader not to shed a tear or too when absorbing this commentary.

This article appeared in Time Magazine August 2007, after an interview with Billy Graham under the title "ON LIFE AND LOSS" ,and is quoted in full below.

"No matter how prepared you think you are for the death of a loved one, it still comes as a shock" Billy Graham observers "and it still hurts very deeply"

Ruth and Billy would have been married for 64 years years this month. He called her his soul mate and best friend; she was also a women who could keep him humble, help swat away the temptations and ego trips and the offers from moguls who wanted to make him a movie star or talk show host.

She was a fierce warrior for Jesus, the kind of women who once tried to hide a broken arm from Billy because she did not want him to know she had gone hang gliding and who referred to her chosen burial place as her "launching pad". We asked him how he was coping since her death in June. "I realize now " Graham replied "in a way I never could have before, that a very important part of me has been taken away" And so he has a new tenderness for all those that morn, that they will be comforted .

Billy used to tell people he was not afraid of death but was maybe a little scared of the process of dying. Ruth turned 87 in June and was in rare form that day, celebrating with him and various children home from their world travels. But she was frailer than ever before after a bout of pneumonia, and that night , as evening came, she started to slip. The next day the feeding tube that had made it possible for her to be cared for at home came out as she was shifting in bed, she told the nurse that she did not want the tube to be put back in. She had struggled for a long time, longer than nature might have intended. The rest of the family talked it over and consulted with the doctors . In the end they agreed that the tube would replaced but only to deliver pain medicine, no more food or fluids.

Three days later, Billy and their five sons and daughters were ringed around Ruth's bed, reading scriptures, singing Great Is Thy Faithfulness, a hymn sung by millions of people at Graham's crusades. Finally, at twilight, she took a few last breaths. Billy leaned over and kissed her cheek and her forehead. He asked his children to sing the doxology with him, and they struggled through it,, praising God "from whom all blessings flow". The cat that had been shooed away from the bed for months was now allowed to jump on and curl up beside her. And the family lit a fire in the fireplace, just the way she had liked it .

"I know God has prepared a home for her in heaven" Billy told his friends at her burial." I just hope she saves room for me"

Grief is a demanding guest in and old man's house. Let sorrow settle in, and in time it no longer feels like home. His daughters had the hospital bed removed and restored Ruth's room as it used to be, warm and inviting, not sad so it looks like as if she is away on a long trip. It was Billy's habit through all their decades of work and travel, to call her every evening. These days, as twilight rolls around, he finds himself wanting to pick up the phone and call her and then remembering that he can't. "Sometimes I'll be preoccupied with something, and suddenly I'll be reminded of her for some reason" he say, "and I'll find myself almost overwhelmed" One way he copes is by thanking God for the years they had together. "They are over now, but God was good in giving us each other, and I want to be grateful for those memories and not suppress them" He has pulled out some of his favorite pictures of Ruth and put them on his desk to remind himself"

We asked him whether, with our advanced medical technology, we perhaps fear death death and fight to much. "I think we often do " he said." I'm convinced that in some cases we aren't so much as prolonging life but perhaps prolonging death" Over his long life he has endured some serious medical crises; he now has Parkinson's disease and prostate cancer and a shunt to drain excess water from his brain." I'm thankful for the incurable advances in medicine that have taken place in my lifetime. I almost certainly would not be here if it weren't for them" he says. And I believe God has given them to us because he loves us and wants the best for us both in this life and the next. But death is a reality common to all of us all, and as a Christian it isn't something to be feared, because I know what lies ahead form beyond the grave"

Graham has always been one to keep looking forward and not get stuck in the past. He's thinking about fixing up the house or writing another book- he has written close to 30. "Over the years I've seen people lose a spouse and then withdraw and lose interest in life" he says " and i believe we need to resist that" but it has become clear to a man who spent his life teaching people how to live is in a new position to show people how to die, with hope for an eternal kingdom that is no longer a theological abstraction to him. Heaven is where Ruth is . Someday soon I will join her" he says. "Most of all, I take comfort in the hope we can have eternal life in Heaven because of Christ's death and resurrection for us. I've preached this message almost all my life, and it means more to me now than ever before.

The sole reason I send this Times commentary to you. is people who want to end their lives, as Graham is "**CONVINCED**" as above, that under circumstances described in the commentary above , is that people must have a choice. Many, including Graham, are scared of dying and convinced.....

Those that do not want the relief of death may have this. Those that do must be allowed the same privilege. Why should people be refused such a relief just because other (in a minority) insist their views must prevail.

If it is good enough for Graham.....

