

The Passy Press

Letter to the Editor

From: jhlbingham@undisclosed.com

To: Nick Gardiner enpg@thepassypress.com

Date: December 30, 2014 5:00 p.m. EST

Subject: Essay on Death With Dignity by Charles Hamlin, MD

Dear Sir,

I think we all, more and more as we age and witness stories of extended dying, must abhor *poor* dying, even as more and more of us may have become “comfortable” with the inevitability of death itself. I am not so very afraid of death itself, believing that our individual deaths are (as the Tibetans might say) very OK, not “bad”, not loss, only change, even possibly joyful change. Tibetans might say our deaths are segments of a continuum, extensions, from the here we sense further into that great nothingness we may approach now, if we want, through meditation practices and death-conscious living.

Saving ourselves, and especially our beloved families and friends, from our *poor* dying is certainly a high priority of mine. Choosing to die while I am not yet “poorly” would, I believe, be a joyful choice honoring life - the lives of loved ones especially. It would be made so that they might live less distracted from life’s bounty and deep mystery, being kept less distraught from those fruitless agonies - physical, moral, psychological, intellectual, spiritual, financial - that accompany dying *poorly*.

...though, either way, it saddens me equally to think that I might, I must, miss any single one of the whispered secrets of yet unborn grandchildren and great-grandchildren. It will be a tough, but most loving call.

John Bingham

John H.L. Bingham is a graduate of Yale College and served in the U.S. Navy. After 25 years in the information technology field - marketing, strategic planning consulting, and developing business and telecommunications products at IBM, Nolan Norton, AT&T, and Wang - through the heady '80's days, followed by five

years doing IT market research for industry watchers, John and wife Katharine Preston bought a farm in New York's Champlain Valley in the Adirondack Park, where they now excitedly and enthusiastically help the community enhancing young farmer "local food" movement evolve, and the statewide rapid transition to renewable energy sources and infrastructure. Their six children, 7 grandchildren, and 2 great-grandchildren thrill them with the many new possibilities for humanity to be saved from its pressure cooker madneses.