

# Statement of Rev. Gary Roop, Presbyterian Church in America

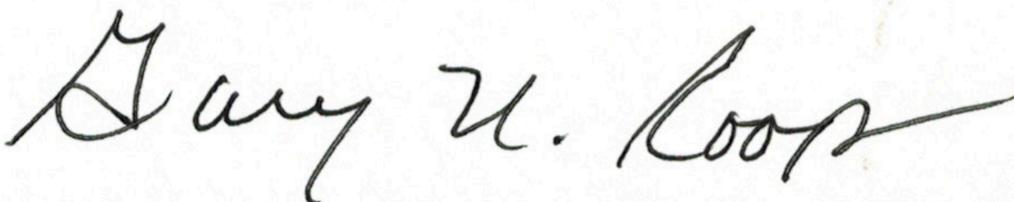
I am a pastor in the Presbyterian Church in America and a member of the Tennessee Valley presbytery. I oversee Brainerd Hills Presbyterian Church, where David Tulis and his parents and siblings are members.

I understand that David Tulis has applied to attend classes at UTC and has been asked to submit a form putting his objections to immunizations into a religious context.

Neither the Presbyterian church nor the reformed faith encompass a doctrine that explicitly makes a biblical argument against immunizations. If a Christian objects to immunizations, it is largely to be inferred from the teachings of the Word of God. The reservations a Christian man might have to immunizations arise from several doctrinal precepts.

- Self-preservation under the 6<sup>th</sup> commandment. The sixth commandment against unlawful killing requires an interest in the preservation of the lives of others, and of our own lives. It is clear that a person with a religious commitment to God's law might reasonably understand that it is God's will for him to abstain from immunizations. David Tulis has been taught by his Christian parents that immunizations put people in jeopardy of their health. Both the use of dangerous preservatives such as mercury and the recombinant genetic technology used to create vaccines are reasonably understood to pose a health hazard. David and his family have every reason to be free to make their own decisions about vaccines as part of their religious duty as Christians.

- The Tulis family's decision to abstain from vaccines is also protected under the 5th commandment, "Honor thy mother and thy father \*\*\*." This commandment requires people to be subject to superiors, and to treat equals and inferiors rightly, as described in our Westminster Confession of Faith and the Larger Catechism. Under authority of this commandment, people in my church exercise their prerogatives as parents. They take it from God himself that they have a duty to themselves and their children. The care and maintenance of children's health is in view, partly through this commandment. David Tulis and his family have acted on their religious convictions about their authority to decide for themselves whether to vaccinate. As far as I know, the family has taken few, if any, vaccines for the children.



Gary Roop, pastor, Brainerd Hills Presbyterian Church