

Statement made by Johanna Bos at the Stated Meeting of the Mid-Kentucky Presbytery, September 17, 2011

Mr. Moderator, members of the Presbytery of Mid-Kentucky, thank you for giving me the opportunity to say a few words on behalf of the overture that is before us. My husband, David Bos, was one of the main authors of this document and it was he who sent the overture for approval to the session of Central Presbyterian Church in Louisville in the fall of 2010. As many of you know, before the overture could be brought before this body, David died unexpectedly in February after a brief illness.

David's death was an immeasurable loss, not only for me personally and the family members who loved him, but for the national movements concerned with the dire consequences of the US health care industry that have affected millions over the past two decades. As people conveyed to me their sadness over his sudden death, and as they gave powerful witness to the significance of his voice and the enormity of the loss of that voice in letters and public testimonials, there was one element of David's commitments that, although not unacknowledged, perhaps received less emphasis and that I want to lift up today, as perhaps a partner who lived with him for almost 45 years was most able to observe. That element was his devotion to his faith in God and God's incarnation in Christ, and his dedication to the Presbyterian Church as it gave expression to that faith. David was above all a churchman, one who believed fervently that religious commitment is lived out in calling local and national government to its task of caring for the well-being of all of its people. He never gave up on this, as much as he took at times a critical view of the Presbyterian Church, he stayed with the conviction that the Church could always be better and rise more faithfully and courageously to this task. The beloved community in David's words is always there to both provide a mirror to society and government of what it means to be a loving and just group of people and at the same time to hold government to account on issues of justice and love.

Efforts in the Presbyterian denomination to bring change in the corrupt and broken systems represented by the health care industries witness to the conviction that God's people respond first of all to the call to live a communal life that holds dear the values of taking care first and foremost for the weakest among us, rather than to the call for amassing wealth at the cost of disenfranchising millions and driving them into bankruptcy. Health insurance companies in the first half of 2011 alone took in seven billion in profits, while medical bills have been a major cause of bankruptcies. Nearly 45, 000 people die in the United States each year because they lack insurance and cannot get good basic care (Harvard Medical School Study). As for the excellence of our care, our health care is as good as money can buy. In fact, our country rates very low in terms of its healthcare and rates high only in terms of its infant and maternal mortality rate. The World Health Organization ranks the U.S. healthcare system 37<sup>th</sup> in the world while our infant and maternal mortality rate is the highest of all developed countries. The litany can go on and on, and I brought to this meeting some important information on these and other facets of the problems we face that you can find on the tables in the registration area.

While I have said a good deal about my husband and his role in the shaping of the overture, I am compelled to state also that in this as on many other issues, we were of one mind. As a biblical scholar, a Christian woman, a minister of the gospel, I view the efforts to bring changes in our health care system as one that is entirely coherent with the gospel mandate to love one another, a mandate that is most clearly lived when we take care of the wounded and vulnerable. I joined David on the bus tour two years ago to lobby representatives and senators in Washington for Single Payer Health Care. I was on the streets with him during the protest at Humana. I can think of few issues that address the core of who we are as a Christian community that are of greater importance. We have the opportunity to let our light shine before the world. Let us take this chance.