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Subject: Proposed “denouncement” of Caterpillar, Inc. by Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI) Committee of P.C.(U.S.A.) at 2010 General Assembly

“For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven”, according to the biblical *Book of Ecclesiastes* (chapter 3, v. 1). In a time when our beloved denomination continues to lose members, in the midst of what world economists are calling “The Great Recession” where job losses wreak havoc with multiple generations in diverse nations, in an era when we continue to close long-lived Presbyterian churches for want of sufficient membership to sustain their mission and ministry, in a world troubled by terrorists who aggressively seek to bring whole countries to their knees, we come to learn that a committee of our own General Assembly has chosen to encourage our representatives to said body to “denounce” Caterpillar Corporation, Inc. Arguably, this ill-conceived notion is an extraordinary, precisely-targeted blow, particularly since the object of denouncement is an American-born, now international, corporation who has helped, literally, to assist whole countries (including our own) in building infrastructures which will lead to the improvement of third-world as well as established countries such as our own! In a time when responsible mission is increasingly demonstrated by entities *outside* the Church, it is egregious and wasteful for Presbyterians to invest our time and energy focusing on politicizing our people and polarizing our principles of social justice. There is no justice, there is no nurture, there is no exhibition of the kingdom of heaven to the world, when we knowingly supplant the proclamation of the gospel for the salvation of humankind for the denouncement of a lone corporation which some have self-determined a target. If we Presbyterians endorse this proposed denouncement of Caterpillar, as a denomination, I believe we will be perceived by multitudes *well beyond* our own denomination as a heartless drone seeking to destroy its target, mindless of the human collateral damage it will cause.

What is the real intent of this lamentable action to which we are encouraged to accede?

This troubling question fills the inquiring minds, troubled hearts, and weary spirits of all of us who tire of social injustice masquerading as “the promotion of social righteousness” familiar to all who seek to live by the “Great Ends of The Church” (in our own *Book of Order, The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A.*, Part II, 2009-2011, “Form of Government, Preliminary Principles”, G-1.0200).

“**Denounce**” is a verb. It is defined in *The New Oxford American Dictionary* (p. 456, Oxford University Press, 2001) as to “publicly declare to be wrong or evil”. “**Denouncement**” is a noun meaning “to proclaim someone to be wicked, cursed ...”. If we are to judge with right judgment, we need discern broader parameters than those provided for our decision-making on this recommendation from one of our denomination’s committees. If we would lift up the Great Ends of The Church, especially the proclamation of the gospel for humankind, let us knock down this regrettable, polarizing recommendation, and pour our united energy into the work of sharing the most amazing Good News the world has ever known, for the sake of Jesus Christ.