

## Impact Statement: Proposed Caterpillar Denunciation

Caterpillar, Inc. is a large corporation making construction and mining equipment. Caterpillar equipment has many commercial uses, but it is also used by governments and non-governmental agencies to respond in times of crisis and disaster. Almost any time you see pictures of a response to a natural disaster or one caused by human beings around the world, you will see a bright yellow piece of equipment being used to assist those who are working to help put people's lives back together. Caterpillar works within the parameters of its own statement of ethics to improve the lives of its employees and to improve the lives of many people around the world who have never heard of their company.

Caterpillar, Inc., is a valued and valuable member of the Peoria, Illinois, community. For many people in Central Illinois, Caterpillar is not only a corporate giant, a good investment, and a source of the kind of heavy equipment that is needed to do work in times of stability and times of instability. It is also the employer that provides the income for many families, including many Presbyterian families, either as a paycheck or a part of an investment strategy. It provides health care and pensions for its thousands of retirees. It provides the economic stability on which this region is based. The number of Presbyterians either currently or once employed by Caterpillar is significant. In one of our largest and fastest growing churches in Peoria, thirty per cent of the members are currently employed by Caterpillar or its subsidiaries. The other two large PCUSA congregations in Peoria would reflect the same kind of numbers.

Most PCUSA members who are employed by Caterpillar and who are members of the churches in Peoria are engineers, middle and upper managers who keep the business running. They are among the decision-makers and leaders of the company. So if the PC(USA) divests from Caterpillar stock how will that impact our ministry? We believe it will have devastating consequences. One session has said that it will find it difficult to pay its per capita (much of which is made up of money that has come as salary or investment income from Caterpillar) to a denomination that will not accept money in the form of investment income from the same company. If the PC(USA) divests from Caterpillar, they are considering "divesting" from the denomination. Other individuals will find themselves in the same dilemma. Why should they give some of their income from Caterpillar to a congregation that is part of a denomination that will not invest in the same company? There will undoubtedly be calls for congregations to find a denomination with which to affiliate that does not take this attitude toward their employer.

Caterpillar does not make products that fall under the criteria for divestment as they make construction and mining equipment. The company works closely with foreign governments and obeys domestic and foreign laws to ensure they are a good civic partner. Furthermore, they have donated millions of dollars and millions of dollars worth of equipment to improve the lives of people in Peoria and abroad. Caterpillar is also a leader in environmental issues. With all of that, it is very hard for Presbyterians CAT employees to understand why their company should be listed among those with which the PCUSA does not want to have a business relationship.