

In my first statement before this committee, I wish to do something a little unusual. I am not speaking to you in your heavy role as responsible to your fiduciary pledge to profit or to your loyalty to a party rationale, but to the part of you which is that of God. If you prefer a substitute word, (Spirit, Higher power, Source of Life, Love, etc,) call it what you will. Whether you care to know it or not, as a Quaker, I know there is that of God in each of you which may or may not be reached.

And I do not envy you in a role with extreme tension between the still, small callings of that and your obligations enmeshed in a system which puts other values above it. The clear path consistent with that of God, or good, in you is one which strenuously begins the divestment process from fossil fuels. As Bill McKibben says, "If it is wrong to wreck the climate, it is wrong to profit from it."

As you will hear from others, it is not a risk to profits to choose to disinvest. But if you say it is, I answer that if we choose to focus on profit as the "bottom line" we ignore the humanising purpose of God as discerned by those closest to God through history. This is a capitalist heresy, not heresy to a written dogma, but to the depths of truth within us. Profit is not the "bottom line." As creatures of God, we have as our divine vocation the achievement of human well-being, and the well-being of other life facing extinction, not existing for ourselves, but belonging to the God who ordains sufficiency for all.*

I know this is peculiar language in these surroundings. We all compartmentalise in order to adapt to a disjointed and diseased system based on profit for the few which impacts so cruelly on so many, as well as the whole of the planet. But other organisations are now divesting and surviving, and they will be the survivors who align with a future consistent with the welfare of all, as the emerging truth insists. In a quiet moment, please remember this call to your finest self and turn towards divestment as your greatest contribution in your capacity on the Pension Fund Committee.

*This paragraph draws on the work of Walter Wink in *The Powers That Be, Theology for a new Millennium*, page 50