



Action Guide for Church Groups

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National Ethical Investment Week
8-14 November 2009
Action Guide for Churches

'For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is also dead' – (James 2:26).

Faith calls Christians to care about our fellow human beings, and the creation itself, in action as well as in word. One way that Christians can apply their principles in every day life is to choose a green or ethical investment.

More of us today are considering the environmental and social consequences of our everyday choices. We are recycling, reducing our carbon footprint, buying local and Fairtrade. Not only can we spend our money in responsible ways, but we can also invest it to support social justice and prevent environmental degradation. Climate change, human rights, poverty alleviation: these are all issues that are being addressed by green and ethical investments today.

What can my money do?

National Ethical Investment Week (8-14 November 2009) aims to help investors consider a green or ethical investment option. We ask you to take a few simple steps to let your congregation, family, friends and other people in your community know that they, too, can make a difference with their money. If appropriate, we also hope you will consider a green and ethical option for your investments.

Ethical investing in the UK is rooted in the faith community. Churches, charities, and people of faith were the first to take account of ethical criteria when making investment decisions. Throughout the twentieth century, faith groups used their power as investors to address such issues as unfair labour practices, apartheid in



South Africa, and arms trading. Since then, the number of ways to invest ethically has grown, as have the issues that green and ethical investments address.

The denomination or other church organisation that you belong to is likely to have considerable investments through pension funds or other assets. For example, members of the Church Investors' Group (CIG), a group of investors connected with the Churches of Britain and Ireland, manage combined assets of £12.6 billion. CIG members, as well as many other churches and faith groups, already use responsible and / or ethical policies to guide their investment decisions.

By choosing a green or ethical investment option, investors can make a positive difference to society and the environment. Green and ethical investments can promote transparency and encourage corporate social responsibility, help fund solutions to global problems, and may contribute to more sustainable profits in the longer term. They also help people reflect their values in their investments.

What is National Ethical Investment Week?

Not long ago, Fairtrade products were not very well known, but through the efforts of campaigners and activists, Fairtrade Fortnight has shown consumers the positive impact they can have by buying Fairtrade goods. NEIW aims to do the same for green and ethical investment.

Today, there are all kinds of financial products that take into account ethical, social or environmental issues. However, not everyone is aware of the options available.

National Ethical Investment Week (NEIW) is a cooperative campaign to encourage people to consider a green or ethical option for their investments. The week takes place 8 – 14 November 2009.



As a Christian, concerned about human rights, global poverty and the environment to take a few simple steps to let your friends, neighbours and fellow churchgoers know that they, too, have green and ethical options when it comes to their money. We are also asking you to consider how your money could be invested to make the world a better place.

The materials to help you are available either in this guide, or on our website, www.neiw.org.

NEIW is coordinated by UKSIF – the sustainable investment and finance association (www.uksif.org). For a list of our sponsors and other organisations involved, see www.neiw.org.

How can I get involved?

Below are a few simple steps that you can take to get involved in National Ethical Investment Week. If you do something, please let us know! Tell us what you are doing by e-mailing the team at community@neiw.org. Your feedback helps us shape programming for future years.

- 1) Contribute an item about ethical investment to your local church newsletter and/or website. Sample text for your newsletters is included with this guide. If you have access to a website or blog, download our web banners from www.neiw.org and add them to your site.
- 2) Order National Ethical Investment Week posters and leaflets and display them in your place of worship or community hall. They can be ordered from www.neiw.org. If you do not have access to the internet, contact Helen Boothroyd, Church and Membership Relations Officer for ECCR (Ecumenical Council for Corporate Responsibility): email helen.boothroyd@eccr.org.uk, tel. 01325 580028.



- 3) Ask your minister to focus an act of worship and/or sermon around ethical investment during National Ethical Investment Week. A variety of worship material is found later in this guide. This could be used as a basis for a service and sermon.
- 4) Write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper voicing your support for green and ethical investments and for National Ethical Investment Week. A sample letter is included with this guide.
- 5) Hold a study group meeting or talk at your church on green and ethical investments. Invite an independent financial adviser to speak generally about the issue and talk about some of the options available. We can help you find an IFA who would be willing to speak to your church group, or you can contact the nearest member of the Ethical Investment Association (www.ethicalinvestment.org.uk). Another option could be to invite someone from your denomination who is familiar with its ethical investment policy, to talk about the development of this policy from Christian principles. Contact community@neiw.org if you need help with this.

What materials are available?

From this guide:

- Sample text for your newsletters (pg. 7)
- Sample letter to the editor (pg. 7)
- Worship material (pgs. 8-14)

From our website, www.neiw.org (from September 09):

- Downloadable buttons and banners to use on your website and in your publications (from September 09)
- Order form for posters and leaflets (from September 09)



What is green and ethical investment?

When people invest in a fund or pension scheme, someone is investing money on their behalf. Green or ethical investing means that the people who manage that money are obliged to take social, environmental or ethical considerations into account.

Green investors may have many different aims when it comes to the ethics of their investments. Green and ethical investing helps them avoid activities that can be considered morally questionable, such as tobacco or arms production. Investors also have the opportunity to choose investments made in line with their religious beliefs, for example, those that contribute to a cleaner environment, aid sustainable development, or make a contribution to local communities. In either case, investment managers may also engage with the companies in which they invest to influence corporate behaviour.

How can I be an ethical investor?

To learn more about how you can make a difference with your money, see www.youethicalmoney.com which provides information on ethical banking, pensions, and insurance.

For anyone looking to invest a large amount of money in a green or ethical fund, we suggest that you contact a financial adviser for assistance. For a list of advisers experienced in advising on green and ethical investments, visit the Ethical Investment Association website at www.ethicalinvestment.org.uk. A longer list of advisers is available at <http://www.unbiased.co.uk/find-an-independent-financial-adviser/>. Tick the ethical investment box under “What areas do you require advice on?” for advisers who list themselves as having this expertise. A qualified financial adviser should be able to help you find an



investment that is right for you, whether you are concerned about a specific issue, or you just want to make sure your investments “do the right thing”.

Members of churches, faith groups and charities who want to know about how their organisation’s funds can be invested responsibly should visit

<http://www.charitysri.org/supporters.html> and

www.eccr.org.uk/module-htmlpages-display-pid-48.html



Sample Text for Newsletters

National Ethical Investment Week (8-14 November 2009) is coming up, offering us all an opportunity to reflect on the impact of our finances on the world around us. Consider how your money could be invested in line with your faith to help combat climate change, alleviate global poverty, or address human rights abuses. To find out how your money can make a difference, visit www.neiw.org.

NEIW is a coordinated campaign that includes faith and community groups, NGOs, charities, and financial organisations working together to spread the word about green and ethical investing. Read more about green and ethical investing, National Ethical Investment Week, and how to get involved at www.neiw.org.

Sample Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor,

National Ethical Investment Week takes place this November, and as a supporter of the week, I would encourage everyone to consider green and ethical options for their finances. Green and ethical investing can have a positive impact on issues such as climate change, global poverty and human rights.

If you do your best to recycle, buy local or fair-trade goods, it makes ethical, as well as financial sense, to also consider how your money is invested.

Given the crisis of confidence in the financial markets, it seems now is the time to invest in a sustainable recovery. With green and ethical investments, you can make money, and make a difference. *Name & Address*

Tips for writing a letter to the editor:

- You can customize this letter by talking about your own experience with green and ethical investing, and letting others know why you think it is important.
- Remember to keep it short (100-150 words) and send it in a few days ahead of the week to alert the editor that the week is upcoming.
- Include your name, address and a contact number on the letter



Worship Material

These materials are included to provide ideas for a service and/or sermon focused on ethical investing. They have been provided or suggested by members of the Ecumenical Council for Corporate Responsibility (ECCR), who we thank for all their contributions. Please acknowledge copyright when re-printing material. If you would like to suggest a reading, send it to community@neiw.org.

Bible readings (pg. 9)

Prayers (pgs. 10-12)

Reflections (pgs. 12-13)

Fair finance – Fair trade, sermon extract (pgs. 13-15)

Bible readings

Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the nations. He will not cry or lift up his voice, or make it heard in the street; a bruised reed he will not break, and a dimly burning wick he will not quench; he will faithfully bring forth justice. He will not grow faint or be crushed until he has established justice in the earth ...
Isaiah 42: 1-4a

Hate evil and love good, and establish justice in the gate. Let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream. *Amos 5: 15a & 24*

He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?
Micah 6:8

The Parable of the Talents, see *Matthew 14:29*

Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you. *Philippians 4: 8-9*



Prayers

Jesus, our Light and Lord
 who preached in terms financiers use
 and taught we should give to this world's powers their due,
 you drove traders from your Father's house and revealed how hard
 Heaven's access is to those who prosper;
 give us your eyes to see the human faces of worldly wealth and poverty,
 and make yours our management of their complexities
 so that those among us who buy and sell, labour and invest,
 may do so only in your just and loving name,
 and always to your Father's glory and the welfare of all people
 in this land and right across the world.
 Amen

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A PRAYER FOR WISE FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP

Lord Jesus Christ,
 by taking human flesh you sanctified material things
 to be a means of your grace;
 grant us wisdom in our attitude to money,
 and a generous heart in the use of the resources entrusted to us,
 that by faithful stewardship we may glorify you. Amen.

Adapted from a prayer from the Church of England website at
<http://www.cofe.anglican.org/prayers>
(c) The Archbishops' Council

Lord, in the fight against poverty, in the cry for justice, in the struggle against
 corruption, show me the part I must play. Show me how my acts, my choices,
 help to build your kingdom – or deny it.

Forgive me, Lord, that so often I prefer not get involved, want to be left alone.
 Forgive me that that I like to enjoy the comfort of your Gospel and too often
 ignore its challenge.

In the power of your spirit, set me free for the failures of my past; help the values
 of your kingdom grow in my heart and life; move me and shake me out of apathy
 and indifference and neglect and let me bring good news where it is needed,
 whatever that demands of me. Amen.

Peter Collins/Traidcraft

Gracious God, you understand my human weakness and you know my frailty.
 And so I pray for strength and the courage to live the life you want me to live.
 Guide me in the decisions and choices I will make today so that no life is made
 poorer by them.



Give me the wisdom – and the time - to properly weigh the consequences of all I will think and do and say this day.

Give me the courage to do what is right, even though it is unpopular, to do what is needed although it may be hard, to do what is loving, even though it will go unacknowledged.

Inspire me with your love and lead me into your truth.

And for this I pray. Amen.

Peter Collins/Traidcraft

Help us, Lord...

As we stand together

Against child labour

Against the exploitation of craftworkers, farmers and growers.

Help us, Lord...

As we stand together for fair business.

Moon Sharma, Tara Projects, India (A Traidcraft supplier)

Loving God, we pray for those whose resources are running out:

The poor and the hungry - (*silence*)

Those tiring in the struggle for justice - (*silence*)

Countries burdened with heavy debts. - (*silence*)

Those clinging to honesty in the face of corruption – (*silence*)

Show us what we should do to help.

Call us, change us, use us.

Your kingdom come, **Your will be done**

Loving God, we pray for those who feel their resources for living running low:

The weak and the exploited – (*silence*)

The stressed and the exhausted – (*silence*)

The fearful and the despairing – (*silence*)

The broken and the discarded – (*silence*)

Show us what we should do to help.

Call us, change us, use us.

Your kingdom come, **Your will be done**

Loving God we come to you in prayer

To ask for the resources we need for Christian living;

For faith and courage – (*silence*)

For integrity and fair dealing – (*silence*)

For wisdom and generosity – (*silence*)

For love – and all the gifts of your holy spirit

Which will equip us to fulfil our calling from you – (*silence*).

Call us, change, us, use us.

Your kingdom come: **Your will be done,**

Amen

Source unknown



Reflections

From **Good Business - Ethics at Work**, © Quakers & Business Group, 2009: (www.quakersandbusiness.org.uk):

Money is a complex commodity. Our use of money has the power to do great good or great evil. It should be remembered that money has extremely powerful, symbolic and psychological connotations and implications that can lead people to behave unexpectedly. In business, money should be used like any other tool – to help achieve your business objectives. More money should not become an obsessive goal in itself.

Think carefully how you invest any surplus funds not immediately needed. Whilst these funds are being invested, someone else is making use of them. Is that use something you would approve of? Seek to invest in activities or enterprises that contribute positively to the local or global economy, and which raise the quality and standard of living. Consider the conditions under which the income is produced and the effect which the investment may have on the welfare of all.

Does your company invest in, or earn revenue from, activities that are unethical or harmful to life? These may include alcohol, drugs, tobacco, firearms or military weapons and supplies, or gambling. When you have surplus funds, do you keep some back for when your business will need them? Do you look after your reserve funds properly, or could they be used more effectively? Do you consider ethical investments, even if the return might be slightly less? Do you use money entrusted to you with prudence, discretion and responsibility? If you lend money, is the loan properly recorded? Do you charge a higher rate of interest than you could earn on the money if you invested it elsewhere? If you do, are you sure that this is justified by the risk involved?

From **Catechism of the Catholic Church**: extract from paragraph 2425:
The Church ... has ... refused to accept, in the practice of "capitalism," individualism and the absolute primacy of the law of the marketplace over human labor. ... Reasonable regulation of the marketplace and economic initiatives, in keeping with a just hierarchy of values and a view to the common good, is to be commended.

Making The Connection

Think of the difference fair trade brings;
the dignity of wages for work that is valued.



Pride in the history of learning
to carve, to stitch: that sense of purpose.

Think of the power of a coffee bean,
the taste of satisfaction. Crops grown,
enjoyed by others, appreciated,
giving the pleasure of making plans.

Think of the fingers that made that stitch,
weaving us together, thread to thread,
touch upon touch, smile meeting smile.
Imagine the dream and feel it taking shape.

Think of connecting hope with reality,
one world with another, lives and hearts
and voices in a joyful celebration.
Rejoice in the difference fair trade brings.

Fiona Ritchie Walker

Fair Finance – Fair Trade: Sermon extract

Text: Luke 16:1-8a

How can we be fair in safeguarding a good future? There are many good people all over the world who long to escape the vicious circle of materialism and commercialisation, of chasing after the highest return on investment, of hunting for bigger and better bargains. They suffer from the burden of this continuous search for more and realise that if we carry on like this, the world will have no future. How can we attain a just future? What can we do for our world to ensure that peace and justice join together? What would this justice look like, what can each one of us do to walk the path of justice step by step? How can people reach into the centre of the economy, how can economic life be put at the service of people again and be based more on solidarity?

Ensuring a good future – wisely. That is also the wish of one of the main characters in a story from one of the Gospels. Perhaps this story will inspire us for our next steps into the future, towards more justice worldwide. The story is a parable told by Jesus. We can find it in Luke's gospel, chapter 16, verses 1-8a. The King James Bible speaks of the 'wise steward' and the NRSV speaks of the 'shrewd manager' – and that takes us into the heart of this ambivalent story. It is not clear what it means at first sight, or even after a second reading. That is why it is rarely used as a text for sermons and rarely referred to in theological and



other literature. One of the few books in which it appears is called 'Immoral heroes'. That just about sums it up.

The manager tries to ensure a good future for himself. To do so he uses unusual methods. Yet the unambiguous message at the end of the story is: the dishonest manager is praised for his wisdom. Let us look at the story a bit more closely to see whether we can find guidelines on fair ways to move into the future.

We are not told what exactly the charges of the rich man against his manager are. The manager is afraid of losing his job. And so he uses a legal method to safeguard his future. He does not take money out of the till nor does he commit fraud. Because he could be told to give it back when called to account, he does not steal money from the rich man. The manager cancels part of the debts of his master's debtors. It could be assumed that he cancels the share that he had previously taken for himself as a salary, the share that he himself as manager lived on. But this arrangement that he offers the debtors gives him no material security. He has to trust that it will in future assist him to make ends meet should he become jobless. He sets up a kind of unemployment insurance with no guarantees but built solely on trust. He reduces the debts owed by the weakest in the chain, the debtors, probably tenants, without causing further difficulties for himself. The weakest in the chain benefit from it, not out of a spirit of sentimental charity but out of the manager's self-interest. He hopes that through his obliging attitude he will ensure his own future in the houses of the tenants – without hard labour and without having to beg. The debtors of his master are to finance his livelihood out of the debt reduction – that is his plan. A clever man!

What kind of cleverness is that? He cancels the tenant's debts – without any guarantee that he will really have a roof over his head later. He acts out of calculation because he has planned a future for himself. The master praises him for this behaviour although we don't know whether the plan succeeds.

Let us take a closer look at the key point of this story. It is wise to connect action in solidarity with personal interest when it is a matter of securing the future. Is this a productive thought for us today? For people who hunger and thirst for righteousness and long for a fair future? Linking readiness to help with self-interest – today we would say: creating win-win situations, planning our action so that both sides win and benefit from it.

The global problems today – such as climate change or wasting resources - make it more than clear: no country can secure the future for itself alone. The global challenges can only be met together. Our economy will only be sustainable if we create fair conditions worldwide from which everyone benefits. Here it is wise and rational to connect solidarity with our own interests - only then can we develop lasting cooperation and long-term structures from which all those



concerned benefit. Only if business activity enables the future for all – producers, traders and consumers – only then can we all build a life for the long term. When public spirit and self-interest come together in business activity you get a sense of what social entrepreneurship [or corporate responsibility] means. Economic action can thereby develop an immense social and philanthropic force.

For example in the Philippines: PREDA, a human rights organisation for the protection of children works for abused and exploited children and young people. It gives them a home and an education. But it also asks questions about the causes of the children's misery. How did the children come to be exploited and abused? There are several answers to this question but a frequent cause is the poverty of the parents, the poverty of the families. When families do not have an adequate income the children have to look after themselves too early – and often end up in disastrous circumstances. Or families fall prey to human traffickers who promise the children a rosy future in Europe or America – but ultimately sell them. PREDA in the Philippines has therefore set up a prevention programme: it supports poor smallholders and producers in processing or producing and then marketing their products, such as mangos or sandals. PREDA makes contacts with fair trade organisations for them. Via fair trade organisations they receive a fair price for their products and so are not forced for economic reasons to send their children into a future of violence, danger and dependence. The German fair trade organisation dwp for instance imports these fairly traded mangos or slippers from PREDA. In order to expand its trading facilities with PREDA, dwp needed financial support. The ecumenical development cooperative Oikocredit assisted them in 2005 with a fair loan. What do consumers get out of this Fair Trade – with products and money? They enjoy delicious mangos or wear fashionable slippers. And they have a way of investing money with a high social benefit. I hope that you will enjoy the profit you can make from fair investments. And I hope for all of us that the desire for a fair future for our world will be accompanied by economic wisdom that will link both – self-interest and solidarity. For the good of people who are economically disadvantaged, and for a sustainable lifestyle for us here.

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