NATIONAL ETHICAL INVESTMENT WEEK
7th - 13th Nov 2010

Action Guide for Churches

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National Ethical Investment Week
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‘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 green or ethical investments and other financial products.

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 (7-13 November 2010) aims to help everyone with savings and investments consider a green or ethical 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 savings and 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. For much of 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, 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. Green and ethical options are also available for a range of other financial products.

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 investments.

Today, there are many 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 savings and investments. The third NEIW takes place from 7-13 November 2010.

As a Christian, concerned about human rights, global poverty and the environment, 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! Your feedback helps shape our future work.

1) Contribute an item about green and 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 bookmarks and download posters and display them in your place of worship or community hall. Bookmarks can be ordered from www.neiw.org.
3) Ask your minister to focus an act of worship and/or sermon around green and ethical finance 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 (IFA) 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 or Helen Boothroyd of ECCR at helen.boothroyd@eccr.org.uk or on 075 0393 1172 if you need help with this.

Of course only certain regulated investment professionals are allowed to give financial advice about particular investments and so you should not do this. Please see our Conditions of Participation on www.neiw.org for more details.

What materials are available?

From this guide:

- Sample text for your newsletters (pg. 5)
- Sample letter to the editor (pg. 5)
- Worship material (pgs. 6-11)

From our website www.neiw.org:

- Downloadable buttons and banners to use on your website and in your publications
- Downloadable posters to print off and display
- Order form for NEIW bookmarks

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.

Investors may have many different aims when it comes to the ethics of their investments. Green and ethical investing offers different ways to help make money and make a difference. Investors 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. It also helps them avoid activities that can be considered morally questionable, such as tobacco or arms production. Investment managers may also engage with the companies in which they invest on their customers' behalf to influence corporate behaviour.

Similar choices can also be considered for other financial products.

How can I be an ethical investor?

To learn more about how you can make a difference with your money, visit www.yourethicalmoney.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 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".

A range of other resources including case studies and links are available on the NEIW website at www.neiw.org.

Members of churches, faith groups and charities who want to know about how their organisation's funds can be invested responsibly should also visit www.charitysri.org and www.eccr.org.uk.

Sample Text for Newsletters

National Ethical Investment Week (7-13 November 2010) 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 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 Fairtrade 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 seek to make money, and make a difference.

Name & Address

Tips for writing a letter to the editor:

- You can customise 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, where given, when re-printing material. If you would like to suggest a reading, send it to community@neiw.org.

Bible readings (pg. 7)

Prayers (pgs. 8-9)

Reflections (pgs. 10-11)

Bible readings

Praise the Lord! O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; for his steadfast love endures for ever. Who can utter the mighty doings of the Lord, or declare all his praise? Happy are those who observe justice, who do righteousness at all times. *Psalm 106: 1-3*

Is this not the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked to cover them, and not to hide yourself from your own kin? Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up quickly; your vindicator shall go before you, the glory of the Lord shall be your rearguard. Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer; you shall cry for help, and he will say, 'Here I am'. If you remove the yoke from among you, the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil, if you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, then your light shall rise in the darkness and your gloom be like the noonday. *Isaiah 58: 6-10*

And Jesus said to them, 'Take care! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; for one's life does not consist in the abundance of possessions'. Then he told them a parable: 'The land of a rich man produced abundantly. And he thought to himself "What should I do, for I have no place to store my crops?" Then he said, "I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry." But God said to him, "You fool! This very night your life is being demanded of you. And the things you have prepared, whose will they be?" So it is with those who store up treasures for themselves but are not rich towards God.' *Luke 12: 15-21*

What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but do not have works? Can faith save you? If a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and eat your fill", and yet you do not supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that? So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead. *James 2: 14-17*

Prayers

OPENING ACCLAMATION

Loving God, open our minds
that we may imagine your world renewed.

Open our hearts
that we may be your compassionate presence in the world.

Open our hands
that we may work for justice.

Blessed be the one, holy, and living God.
Glory to God for ever and ever.

© Rev. Devon Anderson, Episcopalians for Global Reconciliation: www.e4gr.org

PRAYERS OF CONFESSION

Father God, Lord of the just scales and the fair measure, we ask your forgiveness for those times when we have added to the burden of the poor. When, as individuals, we have chosen profit above principle. **Forgive us.**

When, as a church, we have rated the value of our investments above the demands of justice. **Forgive us.**

When, as a nation, we have used power and prestige to win advantage over countries that are poorer, weaker and lacking our resource. **Forgive us.**

We confess the ways we have failed to match our lives to your commands.

(Silence)

Trusting in your forgiveness, we commit ourselves once again to do justly, love mercy and walk humbly before you. **Amen.**

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Gracious God, when we do not listen for your word in the voice of others, **forgive us and renew us.**
When we neglect or misuse the gifts you have given us, **forgive us and renew us.**
When we do not love one another as brothers and sisters in Christ, forgive us and renew us.
When we prefer our needs to those of our neighbours, **forgive us and renew us.**
When our investments are built on profit and not on ethics, **forgive us and renew us.**
When the earth's bounty is used to satisfy greed rather than need, **forgive us and renew us.**
When we fail to share the Good News with the poor, **forgive us and renew us.**

(Silence)

God calls us to serve him in the world,
forgives us in Christ,
and renews us by his indwelling Spirit
Amen. Thanks be to God.

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Loving God, you make us in your image.
Forgive us when we fail to see your image in each other, when we give in to greed and indifference when we do not question the systems that are life-denying.
As we are made in your image,
let us live in your image
and be Christ-like
in service, endurance and love.
Amen

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PRAYER OF INTERCESSION

Lord Jesus, you turn the tables on the Temple traders and rage at those who take advantage of the poor and the powerless.
You seek out and stand in solidarity with those discarded and damaged by the system and tell them they are beloved of God.
And you reserve your deepest scorn for those who wear their piety like a badge but who live without thought for the downtrodden and the disadvantaged.
Lord Jesus, give us your heart for the poor so that their needs shape the choices we make; fill us with a righteous anger so that we are moved to action on their behalf and raise our voice in the face of injustice; guard us from the peril of empty prayers and faith without deeds.
So may we help build your kingdom. Amen.

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PRAYER ABOUT THE GLOBAL FINANCIAL CRISIS

God of all the world, give us wisdom in troubled times.
As we realise how fragile our systems of security are, remind us how much more fragile they are for those who have nothing.
As we talk of financial crisis,
remind us of the true financial crisis for those who go to bed hungry.
As we face challenges over our own resources,
remind us that you teach us to share what we have.
Inspire us to live in a Christ-like way,
and to bring your peace to a world in turmoil.

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A COVENANT PRAYER

I am no longer my own but yours.
Call me and open my eyes to the injustice around me, the unfairness around me and the poverty around me; call me to dare to change my lifestyle, my habits and my outlook for you.
Call me to strive for fairness and justice in everything I do, not just in words, but in actions; not just locally, but globally.
Let me change myself for you, and so change the world for you.
I freely and wholeheartedly commit myself to this duty, knowing that in everything you will give me your inspiration, strength and grace.
Glorious and blessed God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, you are mine and I am yours.
So be it. Let this covenant now made on earth be fulfilled in heaven. Amen.

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Reflections

INVESTMENT AS A KEY AREA FOR CHRISTIAN MISSION?

I once mentioned a new friend to a respected senior colleague and said that I didn't yet know if he was a Christian or not. 'That's easy', I was told, 'Ask him how he spends his money and you'll immediately know what his basic faith is!'

So also with investments any of us may make, with our personal fortunes, or our organisation's resources. Especially now that the huge financial mess of the last few years has made us aware just how easily investment banks can mishandle our money, it surely becomes a Christian to ensure that any investment one is responsible for is made in a way that prevents bankers or financial advisers from using it wrongly.

Now we learn of financiers betting on rises in the price of foodstuffs a year ahead, aiming to enrich themselves to the cost of both producers and consumers in poor countries, and of land in poor countries being bought up cheaply by corporations from much richer ones. So agreeing on a policy for ethical investment and making the resultant investment decisions have become crucial acts of Christian witness. Sadly there is still scepticism and caution from many financial specialists, absorbed by the ideology that the chief purpose of using money is to make more money from it.

In a time when the poorest countries are being increasingly subjected to devices from the richer that will deprive them of their rightful resources and when climate change is going to face us all with a need to simplify our life-styles, it must surely become a first-level concern of any caring Christian to ensure our purchases and investments do nothing to help unthinking but cruel ways of using one's money. For instance, most of the large international oil and mining corporations should not be entrusted with investment by a Christian, except perhaps to keep a small holding of shares with which one can bring questions to bear at successive AGMs! On the positive side, some banks and other organisations, while offering somewhat smaller levels of annual interest, can be trusted to use the money carefully and for purposes that are surely part of what God in Christ must be expecting of his disciples in the 21st century.

© Martin Conway, President of the Selly Oak Colleges 1986-97, and member of ECCR

FROM QUAKER FAITH & PRACTICE 20.56 & 20.57:

The guiding principle which Friends should keep in mind in making an income, whether by work or by investment, should be the good of others and of the community at large, and not simply of themselves or their own family. Friends should, even at the risk of loss, strive to be strictly honest and truthful in their dealings; should refuse to manufacture or deal in commodities that are hurtful, and should be vigilant against obtaining an undue profit at the cost of the community. If Friends are investing, thought should be given, not only to security and the rate of interest, but to the conditions under which the income is produced and the effect which the investment may have on the welfare of all, through social or environmental impact, at home or elsewhere.

We believe that, as Quakers, we should put our whole lives under the guidance of the Spirit. This should determine our choices as individuals and as a Society between saving and spending and the way in which savings are invested. We are led to choose investments that benefit the community at large and not just ourselves and our families or small groups; to be strictly honest and truthful; and to refuse to deal in products or services which are hurtful to individuals or to society as a whole. We should only invest in accordance with our principles.

FAIR INVESTMENT FOR THOSE WHO TEND CREATION

In Matthew 14: 15 - 21 we read:
'Jesus said to them, "They need not go away; you give them something to eat." They replied, "We have nothing here but five loaves and two fish." And he said, "Bring them here to me." Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. And all ate and were filled; and they took up what was left over of the broken pieces, twelve baskets full. And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children.'

One of the attractive aspects of the Gospels is that the stories can be taken as descriptions either of what happened or as metaphors. For me, the metaphor in this draws our attention to abundance of creation, something that anyone who has recently shelled peas or picked fruit can see.

But many of those who tend creation to grow our food need investment, in the financial sense of the word, and on fair terms.

It is good to invest our money through financial instruments and institutions which can provide this kind of financial support to primary producers, and to strongly encourage the development of many more such opportunities for our investment.

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SOCIAL INVESTMENT

Text: Luke 10:25 – 37; The Parable of the Good Samaritan

The Good Samaritan comes to the aid of a foreign stranger, putting himself in danger by carrying the wounded man to the inn. However, when I heard this parable recently I was moved to focus on the innkeeper, the lesser role.

The innkeeper has apparently great wealth, maybe a huge hotel with many rooms for guests. We can imagine he chooses who may share in this resource, but he may not actually own the inn. Sharing our resources is central to the Gospel teachings, but it is not only about giving. The innkeeper was not asked to give a room at no charge. What strikes me is that the innkeeper is challenged to share his resource and trust that he will be repaid at some time in the future.

For me, this is perhaps a Biblical example of what we mean by social investment. In social investment, through organisations like Oikocredit, we are challenged to share our resources in solidarity with people who are disadvantaged, but we expect to be repaid. This is sometimes at odds with what we normally think of as charity, all about giving. I see in the parable a reminder that caritas (love of our neighbour) can also apply to lending resources, and therefore how we make our investments.

Without the innkeeper's willingness to lend his resources, the Good Samaritan would have been unable to complete his work.

© Patrick Hynes, Oikocredit Ecumenical Development Co-operative Society: www.oikocredit.org

THE LONG VIEW

It helps now and then to step back and take the long view
The kingdom is not only beyond our efforts; it is even beyond our vision

We accomplish in our lifetime only a tiny fraction of the magnificent enterprise that is God's work.
Nothing we do is complete,
which is another way of saying that the kingdom always lies beyond us.
No statement says all that could be said.
No prayer fully expresses our faith.
No confession brings wholeness.
No programme accomplishes the church's mission.
No set of goals and objectives includes everything.

This is what we are about, we plant seeds that one day will grow.
We water seeds already planted, knowing that they hold future promise.
We lay foundations that will need further development.
We provide yeast that produces effects far beyond our capabilities.

We cannot do everything, and there is a sense of liberation in realising that.
This enables us to do something, and to do it very well.
It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning, a step along the way,
an opportunity for the Lord's grace to enter and to do the rest.

We may never see the end results but that is the difference
between the master builder and the worker.
We are workers, not master builders, ministers, not messiahs.
We are the prophets of a future not of our own.

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