



3iG

International Interfaith Investment Group



To contribute to a just and sustainable society through responsible investment in a spirit of genuine interfaith dialogue and co-operation.

Why Faith Consistent Investing?

Communities inspired by faith measure the global economy on much more than its wealth. Funded through centuries of accrued land assets, stocks, and shares; the faiths manage significant economic assets, and thus, have a major impact on the global economy, social standards, and the environment. Faith communities around the world value the protection of all creation, and support integrity as a fundamental part of the economy. As Mohammad Siddiqi, former President of the International Association for Islamic Economics, presented at a 3iG conference in 2006, "It is time to recognize that there is more to life than material wealth; ethical and spiritual consideration must be brought into focus." The world's religious leaders, brought together from around the globe, agree. The great challenge is to integrate these faith-based principles into the world of business, particularly via investing. The first step in order to achieve this level of integration is to become educated on how ones' assets are invested and managed.

One area in which faith institutions express a common concern is the environment. Ashizu Takayuki, on behalf of the Association of Shinto Shrines, emphasises the importance of sharing global issues: "Nature is the heritage of a borderless world." The interlocking challenges of industrial pollution, resource depletion, biodiversity reduction, climate change, and population growth have stirred a formidable urgency for action as these issues threaten human survival. The world's religions have been called to participate in the development of solutions, especially related to water supply and availability of agricultural land. Dr. L.M. Singhvi, president of the Jain Institute of India, responds to this call as follows, "Jainism is fundamentally a religion of ecology and has turned ecology into a religion."

The moral imperative of faiths is indispensable in mobilizing corporate structures towards protecting the environment and improving society for future generations. Linking the transformative efforts of the world's faiths to other international movements working towards a humane and sustainable future

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is a challenge. “Risk-sharing becomes an important factor in promoting social solidarity,” expresses Reverent Seamus Finn, financial advisor of the Missionary Oblates of the Mary Immaculate. To reflect religious teachings in business marks a significant new phase in religious thought.

Faith leaders are writing papers, giving interviews, and discussing their strategies to ensure that their investments are aligned with their faith-based principles. Ignorance is no longer an excuse for investing in companies whose policies do not embrace their responsibility to society. The Executive Vice President for Jewish Funds for Justice, Rabbi Mordechai Liebling, recalls a lesson from the Kossover Rebbe: The Rebbe was asked, “Can we think of God when we are engaged in buying and selling?” and the Rebbe answered, “If we are able to think of business when we are praying we should be able to think of praying when we are doing business.”

There is a movement amongst faith groups to better understand how their money is being invested in order to take positive action. From a Hindu perspective, Dr. Tapan Datta explains, “Dharmic investing is, by logical extension, a construction which has to be left to the investor’s Dharmic conscience to build”. Each investment directly connects the faith institution and its principles with the business in its entirety. With this close relationship, one cannot separate one’s faith-based principles from the impact the investment causes on society, negative or positive. As a result, there is an increased demand from faith organisations for corporate transparency regarding financials and corporate policies. As Mohammad Siddiqi says, “What faith seeks is to make human creativity and innovativeness serve good intentions. It does not allow one to be indifferent to the public interest or to the fate of a brother.”

To live as a good steward while at the same time responsibly managing wealth, one must incorporate one’s beliefs in every aspect of investments. Over time this practice will be naturally assimilated and the world’s faiths will work together through shareholder advocacy, negative screening, investment in high social impact opportunities and education of faith communities in faith-consistent business ethics.



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What can be done?

The three major tools for faith-consistent investing are negative screening, positive screening on environmental, social and governance issues, and business engagement. In addition to these strategies, high social impact investments are becoming an attractive choice for faith-consistent investors. Business engagement is crucial when it comes to taking action and impacting change in the corporate environment. Direct dialogue with management regarding environmental and social policies is only the beginning. An investment arena strongly impacted by faith groups has the power to positively impact the outcome of resolutions filed during voting proxies. “We now have McDonald’s worrying about the obesity crisis. We have Coke worrying about what happens to their bottles after they are thrown away. We have Nike worrying about worker conditions in China and Indonesia. Those are all changes that have happened in the last decade or so, and religious investors have played a part in that,” states Mr. Gunther, a journalist writing on the topic of interfaith and economics for Fortune Magazine.

By law, investors who hold shares are owners. As an owner, one has the responsibilities and rights to engage with the business in which one invests. Being an owner has significant ramifications in many faith traditions. Rabbi Mordechai Leibling insists that “we need to take every reasonable step to make sure that the things we own do no harm.” With a unified voice and collective power, religious leaders around the world are being encouraged to act. Rabbi Bressler concludes, “If there is a shareholder movement attempting to pass resolutions at the annual company meeting that would prevent management from implementing some business impropriety or harmful practice it would be incumbent upon shareholders to support such proposals.”

Faith institutions and organisations around the globe hold great power and influence in numerous businesses. Positive engagement is of high importance regarding the task of shifting the attitudes and policies of decision makers in corporations. Chairman of the Church of England’s Ethical Investment Advisory Group, John Reynolds, takes the stance of a good steward; “Loving our neighbour and being prepared to engage in dialogue with corporate directors’, we regard our involvement with the corporate world as an intrinsic part of the Church’s mission.”

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Some fear that applying faith-based principles will reduce returns on investments. Aligning the faith-based principles with a particular fund is aimed at increasing the moral good rather than increasing profit, and doing so may not guarantee the strongest return on investment. Mohen Salan, the director of the Islamic Investment Fund Amana explains that "After you've screened for the Islamic criteria, you still end up with 50% of the market available" to invest in without sacrificing your faith's values and from then on, "it is a matter of good stock-investment skills." There is a risk involved in the stock market, but there are still plenty of opportunities to gain strong return on investment without ignoring the faith-based principles.

In addition to shareholder advocacy, faiths have shown great interest in high social impact investments. An increasing number of different types of investment funds focused on financial return as well as positive social impact have attracted faith-consistent investors. The emerging industry of high social impact investing has the potential to become a potent force for addressing global challenges. Projects that include clean energy, healthcare, and infrastructure can generate social and environmental value as well as a financial return.

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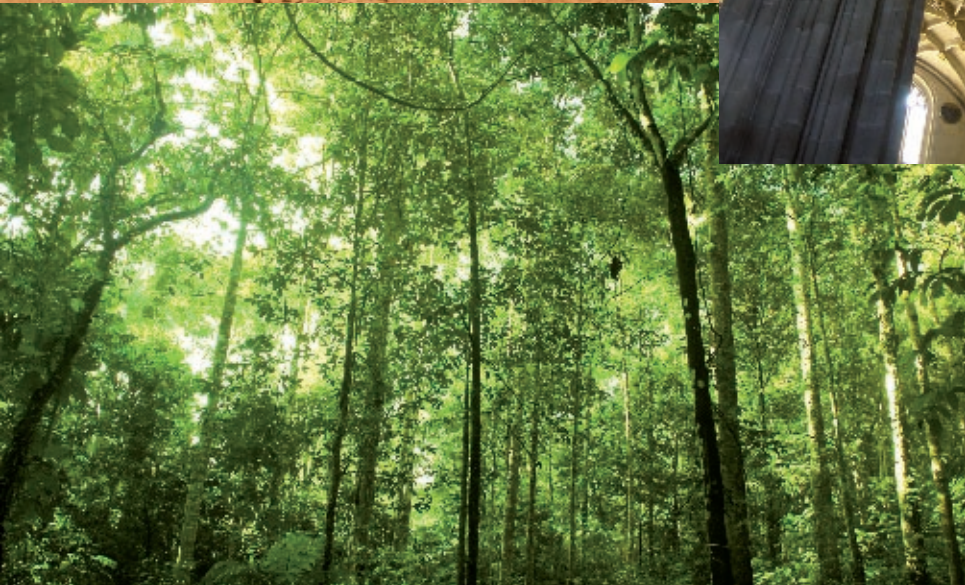
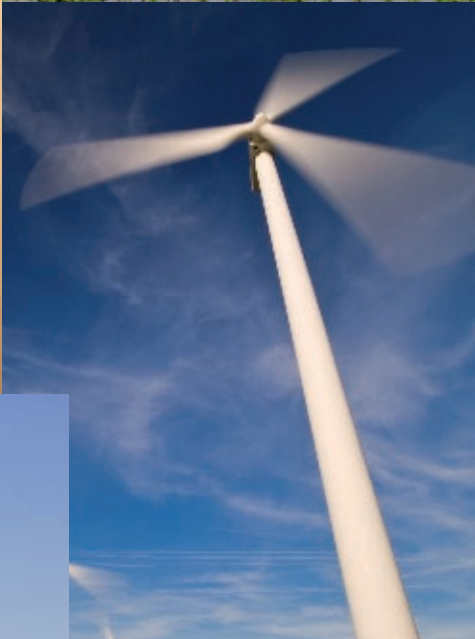
Faiths Working Together

The survival of our civilization and the habitability of the earth are at stake. John Reynolds, at the Church of England, feels that “We need to work with other churches and faith groups globally, to identify concerns about ethical and governance issues in specific individual companies and identify a lead advocate who has the access and is able to represent our combined voices.” Individually, it is difficult to accomplish the task of making a positive change for the greater good of the world. The international interfaith community strives for the continuous gathering and sharing of information through informal person-to-person contacts, professional conferences, committees, and task forces. Knowledge management allows faith communities to continue to build a collaborative and innovative sharing culture engaged in the activity of learning.

The involved organisations realize the importance of sharing practices and communicating with their grassroots members. Grassroots communication will “create a cascade effect by encouraging millions of people across the world to value their investments in terms of social and environmental effects as well as in financial returns,” says Rabbi Goldsmith of the Movement for Reform Judaism.

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What is the 3iG?

3iG, the International, Interfaith, Investment Group, is a not-for-profit membership organisation whose mission is to contribute to a just and sustainable society, by promoting faith-consistent investments in the spirit of interfaith and international dialogue and cooperation. 3iG was launched in 2005 through the efforts of the Alliance for Religions and Conservation and is a foundation registered under Dutch law.

3iG members and associates

3iG members consist of faith institutions representing the world religions, which are committed to the principle of faith-consistent and socially responsible investing (SRI). 3iG members agree that interfaith dialogue and collaboration supports them to accomplish their SRI goals. Associate members are organisations that actively support the mission of 3iG. These may include faith investor groups, pension funds, institutions investing responsibly or interfaith and development institutions.

Membership benefits

3iG offers a platform for faith-consistent investment, where different faith organisations share best practices on setting up investment guidelines, ‘greening’ religious property, shareholder advocacy and thematic subjects such as micro-finance, conflict-area investment, forestry, agriculture and climate change. Members are able to share thoughts, barriers, and successes with beginners in the field of SRI as well as with more experienced faith-consistent investors. They receive tools and services to support them in their mission for faith-consistent investment as well as results from research on the performance and transparency of faith-consistent investment. Members have access to grassroots’ communication materials and are informed about high social impact investment opportunities. 3iG is the connection between many ‘active capitalists’ with great energy and feel for interfaith work and faith-consistent investing.

Membership Responsibilities

Members of 3iG subscribe to the 3iG mission. There is no membership fee. Members engage by showing transparency and progress in the field of faith-consistent investment, opening doors to potential new 3iG members, and providing support to 3iG, either in the form of donations, project funding or via in-kind support.

Contact Us

For further information on the work of 3iG, please see

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