

## **Worldwide study shows religious investors can ally faith and finance**

Religious investors, in economic terms the third largest group to invest on the world's stock markets, can post high placement profits and remain faithful to their religious creed. This is the message of the third biennial world report on religious investors, the only report of its kind.

If a large number of religious investors still believe that a mix of faith and finance causes a dip in return on investment, the 2014 report refutes this claim. The report's research team argues that the real question is less how to choose between profit and faith, but more how to find the right balance between these two aspects that should be at the heart of all religious investors' actions.

The report highlights the profile of religious investors who respect this balance and thus can have a major influence on company ethics:

- Their principles of faith can serve as a road map for investment choices;
- By nature, these investors have a long-term view which is key to the notion of responsible investment;
- They can call on the support of what is often a worldwide community;
- They have set up networks that offer the chance to work together on stakeholder actions and therefore increase their impact.

Even though a certain number of religious organisations invest responsibly and use their role as shareholder-activists to promote change this sort of profile is far from the majority.

What this active minority displays is investment patterns that other religious organisations would do well to follow. The report shows that ageing of the population and other demographic changes among believers mean that financial investment offers a new tool for religious groups to spread messages such as respect for the planet, integrity and justice.

*Methodology - This report was authored by three researchers: Katinka C. van Cranenburgh of the International Interfaith Investment Group (3iG), Daniel Arenas of ESADE (Institute for social innovation) and Céline Louche of Audencia Nantes School of Management. Their research lasted eight months and was split into three stages: research of relevant literature, cartography of religious investors, interviews (in person and/or by telephone). The qualitative sample was made up of 20 religious organisations mainly of Catholic or Jewish faith.*