

Mission: To provide people of faith with tools for implementing their values as consumers, investors, employees, employers, and citizens.

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SRI in an Economic Downturn?

As market fluctuations continue to make headlines and financial concerns are highlighted in every arena of US economy, the triple bottom line (profit, planet, and people) can easily go under cover and emerge again only as profit. Non-profit organizations tighten their belts, scrutinizing their budgets for every dollar. Congregations often live on the edge, even at the best of economic times. Their concern becomes greater as they witness member households in personal financial woe.

Religious organizations often walk a tightrope, balancing their own financial fears with concerns for “doing right”. It is seemingly easier to be “responsible” when markets do well and there is a little financial cushion. Perhaps at this time when the economy is of great concern, the conversations about responsible investing are even more important. Increasingly, reports tell us that businesses taking social responsibility seriously match the financial results of those for whom it has not yet become a criterion for good business.

Finance committees and foundation directors may find this an excellent time to explore these issues with their congregations. They may be able to pursue the immediate mission through profit and also the longer term mission of benefiting people and planet.

Express Your Values through Action

1. ***Talk with your investment manager.*** Read the review of the *Handbook for Investing Across Asset Classes* on p. 9 and encourage your investment manager to download and read the free handbook. Discuss with your manager the resolutions submitted by The NYC comptroller (p. 3) and by PETA (p. 7) to determine if you own stock in any of the companies mentioned and if the proxies were/will be voted according to your wishes.
2. ***Take a look around town.*** Explore the lumber section of nearby big-box and locally owned stores for SFI products, article p. 5. Evaluate the use of computers in your work place and by your congregation's staff as you consider the statistics about energy use in the article on p. 6.