



SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE INVESTING: MISSION RESPONSIBILITY THROUGH INVESTMENT (MRTI)

Socially Responsible Investing

- ◆ Our faith in Jesus Christ informs all aspects of our lives including how we earn, use, and invest our money.
- ◆ God calls us to live as stewards, using the resources entrusted to us to provide for the economic needs of our families and to seek justice, to care for the poor and oppressed, and to live in harmony with creation.
- ◆ Socially responsible investing involves applying our faith values as we invest our money.
- ◆ People have practiced socially responsible investment whenever investors have been concerned with both the financial return on their investments and the impact of their investments.
- ◆ The Social Investment Forum reports that fifteen of the twenty-one largest socially responsible mutual funds received top ratings from Morningstar or Lipper, companies that rate the performance of mutual funds.
- ◆ Socially responsible investors include individuals and institutions.

Presbyterian Options for Socially Responsible Investing

- ◆ The *New Covenant Funds* are four professionally managed mutual funds sponsored by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation. The funds screen companies that make money from tobacco, alcohol, gambling, and firearms, as well as defense contractors. Minimum investment is \$500. Visit www.newcovenantfunds.com or call (877) 835-4531 for more information.
- ◆ *Oikocredit*, an international Christian credit organization, makes loans to organizations in Third World nations seeking to improve living conditions through job creation or similar initiatives. Minimum investment is \$1,000 for a two-year term. Investors choose to receive an interest rate ranging from zero to two percent. More money is freed for loans when less interest is paid. Visit www.pcusa.org/oikocredit for more information.
- ◆ The *Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Investment and Loan Program Inc.* provides loans for church capital projects such as building new churches. Investors receive interest ranging from 1.1 percent annually to 3.9 percent depending on the term of the investment. Terms range between six months to five years. Minimum investment is \$500. Visit www.pcusa.org/pilp or call (800) 903-7457 for information.

Tools for Socially Responsible Investing

- ◆ **Screening** involves making investments based on criteria rooted in our faith. Positive screens may include environmental responsibility, fair hiring practices, and efforts to support human rights standards. Negative screens may include gambling and the production of alcohol, tobacco, or war materials. Research enables concerned investors to make informed choices so they can invest in companies that come closest to their values.
- ◆ **Shareholder Advocacy** involves seeking to influence the behavior of a company in which stock is held. This may include talking and meeting with company management to encourage more responsible corporate citizenship; voting on issues at the company's annual meetings; and filing shareholder resolutions, often with other concerned individuals or institutions.
- ◆ **Community Investing** provides money for economic development in communities that are overlooked or excluded by traditional financial structures. Such investments help provide access to jobs, housing, and local services and to offer economic opportunities for a sustainable future.

Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI)

- ◆ The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) believes that church investment is more than a practical question. It is also “an instrument of mission and includes theological, social and economic considerations” (183rd General Assembly [1971], UPCUSA). This belief flows from our understanding of the stewardship of God's resources entrusted to the church.
- ◆ Recognizing the church's unique opportunity to advance its mission faithfully and creatively through the financial resources entrusted it, the United Presbyterian Church (USA) in 1972 and the Presbyterian Church (US) in 1976 each established committees on corporate social responsibility.
- ◆ In the reunited Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the Mission Responsibility Through Investment Committee (MRTI) is part of the Social Justice Program Area of the National Ministries Division.
- ◆ MRTI implements General Assembly policies on socially responsible investing by engaging corporations in which the church owns stock through correspondence, dialogues, voting of shareholder proxies, and occasionally filing shareholder resolutions. Issues are selected upon referral from the General Assembly and in consultation with ecumenical partners.
- ◆ MRTI members include representatives from the General Assembly Council, the Board of Pensions, the Presbyterian Foundation, the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy, the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns, the Advocacy Committee for Women's Concerns, and three members-at-large.





SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE INVESTING: MRTI

- ◆ MRTI works ecumenically. The Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility (ICCR) provides the primary ecumenical link. ICCR maintains a central information, research, and technical assistance capacity and coordinates strategy and activity.

“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 Ministry of MRTI

- ◆ From 1977 to 1982, MRTI worked on a number of matters including strip mining, the misuse of infant formula in developing countries, corporate activity in South Africa, the impact of mineral exploration on the ecosystem and culture of the Arctic peoples, and energy issues.
- ◆ During the early 1980s, MRTI developed a strategy of phased, selective divestment that involves working with the General Assembly to create guidelines, establish criteria, identify companies that meet the criteria, engage in dialogue with the companies, submit shareholder resolutions, and with final General Assembly approval, divest funds.
- ◆ Phased, selective divestment was applied to corporations that were involved in South Africa, Sudan, and Indonesia as well as to corporations involved in military-related production, tobacco, or human rights violations.
- ◆ Since 1990, MRTI has focused on a variety of issues. This work has included:
 - ❖ developing a long-term relationship with Intel and Advanced Micro Devices focusing on environmental and health and safety standards for their own employees and those of their international suppliers
 - ❖ helping broker ongoing discussions in Matamoros, Mexico, between a company partly owned by Dupont and community residents living near the plant concerning the creation of a buffer zone around the plant that would displace people and farms
 - ❖ holding ongoing dialogues with four large mortgage lenders who have made commitments to improve performance with regard to lending to borrowers with low-to-moderate incomes and people of color
 - ❖ presenting Corporate Achievement Awards to recognize exemplary corporate programs and actions
 - ❖ engaging in dialogue with several companies about global warming
 - ❖ bringing attention to health and safety issues for workers and communities in the petrochemical industry

SOURCES

Robyn Davis Sekula, “Doing Well by Doing Good,” *Presbyterians Today*, December 2004, pp. 10–13

Jacque French, “The Best-Kept Secret,” *Horizons*, July/August 2004, pp. 15–17

A Christian Call to Faith-Based Investing, available through Mission Responsibility Through Investing, call (888) 728-7228, ext. #5809

MRTI, *Mission Responsibility Through Investing*, www.pcusa.org/mrti

The Presbyterian Church as Investor: 30 Years of Socially Responsible Investment, *Church & Society*, September/October 2002

“MRTI’s story is the story of people seeking to grow in their faith, their faith in the God who created all there is and who executes justice for the poor and oppressed.”

—*William Somplatsky-Jarman*
“The Presbyterian Church as Investor”
Church & Society, September/October 2002

