



NEWS RELEASE from the Ecumenical Council for Corporate Responsibility

21 July 2008 FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

www.eccr.org.uk

New Guide to investment and engaging with companies published for faith communities

Church-based corporate responsibility research and advocacy group the Ecumenical Council for Corporate Responsibility (ECCR) this month publishes a new ***Guide to Investment and Engaging with Companies***.

The 30-page Guide aims to support church members, faith communities and other responsible investors in influencing companies on the basis of Christian and ethical values.

Co-sponsored by responsible investment specialists EIRIS and Ethical Screening, ECCR's Guide explains how invested funds provide opportunities for dialogue with companies and fund managers. It includes sections on the relationship between faith, values and finance; the 'business case' for corporate responsibility; why faith groups need to invest responsibly; how churches hold their funds; and the practical do's and don'ts of dialogue and engagement.

'All of us are, one way or another, investors in companies and therefore part owners,' says the Guide's main author, ECCR Co-ordinator Miles Litvinoff. 'This may be directly through holding shares or indirectly through our pension funds, savings, bank accounts, and insurance policies - and through whichever church or other organisation we may belong to. Most of the church denominations are major shareholders.'

'As investors, we give companies their mandate to operate, so companies act in our name. Accepting moral responsibility for our investments is empowering and helps us recognise our potential to influence the policies and practices of business for the better.'

ECCR, a membership organisation that has worked on corporate and investor responsibility for twenty years, hopes the Guide will help raise awareness and encourage more people of faith to take constructive action on the human rights and environmental impacts of business.

'The more faith communities and others seek to raise standards of corporate and investor responsibility, the sooner business will fulfil its potential to create value for the world's poor and marginalised people as well as for those who are already well-off,' Miles Litvinoff comments.

Investment and Engaging with Companies: A Guide for Faith Communities is available free of charge on ECCR's website and from ECCR's office.

Media inquiries: Miles Litvinoff, ECCR Co-ordinator, 020 8965 9682 / 07984 720103, miles.litvinoff@eccr.org.uk ; Helen Boothroyd, ECCR Church & Membership Relations Officer, 01325 580028, helen.boothroyd@eccr.org.uk.

more...

Notes for editors

The Ecumenical Council for Corporate Responsibility researches and publishes on the responsibilities of companies and investors, promotes shareholder advocacy, and dialogues with business.

ECCR works through international church networks to hear and give voice to the experience of communities impacted by companies' behaviour and collaborates with church investors and others to engage with and influence companies.

ECCR's most recent published report is *Water Sustainability: Meeting the Challenge*, a comparative analysis of water consumption in the food processing and beverage industries, May 2008.

ECCR submitted a shareholders' resolution to Royal Dutch Shell's AGM in 2006 raising concerns about the company's social and environmental performance in the Niger Delta, Ireland (County Mayo) and Russia (Sakhalin Island). In 2008 it presented shareholder statements on the human rights and environmental impacts of Anglo-American, BP and BHP Billiton at the respective company AGMs.