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Ecumenical guide for shareholders on ethical investments launched

Shareholders wanting their investments to match their beliefs now have an additional tool to help them do so.

The Ecumenical Council for Corporate Responsibility (ECCR) has published a booklet, *Investment and Engaging with Companies: A Guide for Faith Communities*, to advise religious individuals and groups how to develop 'theologically based investment policies'. It does not give guidance on which companies to invest in, instead suggesting how best to influence those companies in which people already have shares.

Miles Litvinoff from ECCR explained that while much of the information is available in other documents, there had been requests for something more specific. 'There's a need for an accessible document and one tailored for smaller churches and trustees of church funds', he said.

Miles argued that in the past churches had been crucial in persuading companies to change their behaviour, such as disinvesting in apartheid South Africa. However, he warned: 'Large companies are masters at coming up with evidence that all is well. It's their job to present the facts in their most rosy light.' He acknowledged that people not directly involved with the issues would find it harder to verify what companies claim and hoped that the guide would give investors tools to do this.