

Depth Perception

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Bullish on Socially Responsible Investing

I once worked for a denominationally-related mutual aid organization as it initiated one of the earliest conscience-driven families of mutual funds. Its success at attracting investment dollars was an early indication that a good number of people sought to invest for reasons other than fear they might miss out or greed to gain more. Rather, they invested with intention to make a statement or to make a difference. Instead of expressing a motivation to conserve wealth or expand income, they sought to create a better world. The purpose of gaining interest in such a case is to push on in this act of creation. The purpose of acquiring any gain is so that the investor can do this work tomorrow too.

Now, a Merrill Lynch whitepaper (Summer 2011) notes that values based investing has reached \$3.1 trillion of the \$25.2 trillion under professional management. Wow!

Investment vehicles like these are not the only manner by which we can show economic values rooted in Christian faith. It can be expressed by letting local charities wash your car instead of taking it to Clean-O-Mat with its triple color wax. Or, you can have them grill your burger at their stand outside the grocery store, or by supporting little league with your season ticket dollars. A vast menu exists by which you can direct money in order to attain multiple uses in your family, your community and your church before it goes elsewhere.

Here is an example: In sharing a home with my in-laws, the money I previously paid for my own housing now becomes available to expand fixed income during their retirement years. It also frees me up to connect more with my own parents. I'm also purchasing a car from my wife's aunt who no longer drives. The money we pay for the car becomes a source of money to cover increasing costs for her prescriptions. Yes, corporations will eventually see the money and provide payroll for the families employed there, My wife and I are just building in several uses of the money before it gets there.

The smallest expense of a dollar all the way up to grand investment plans are capable of broadcasting our intentions to be partners with God's redeeming work of mercy, justice and generosity. It is a hallmark of all those who receive gratefully and organize life's assets in such a way that others can receive gratefully too. A-men.

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Several Design Group International consultants are instructors at the [Christian Nonprofit Leadership Academy](#) in Denver, 20-23 September.

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