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JCIR Mission

The Jesuit Committee on Investment Responsibility advocates for corporate behavior consistent with Catholic Social Teaching, through dialogues with corporations, shareholder resolutions, and proxy voting.
Jesuit connections make the work of JCIR more fruitful. Jesuit-sponsored institutions and Ignatian colleagues can advocate for and influence corporate behavior for the common good in many ways. Below are some possibilities for collaborating with JCIR.

- Contact your Jesuit Provincial Representative. Your provincial representative can offer you more information on how to collaborate with JCIR, describe what is happening locally with Jesuit shareholder advocacy, and provide guidance on how to vote your proxies consistent with our priorities. Contact information is found in the Representatives section at the conclusion of this report.

- Establish an advocacy portfolio that mirrors JCIR’s. This is the easiest and most practical way for parishes, universities, high schools, retreat centers, and other Jesuit-affiliated institutions to express their commitment to shareholder advocacy. Establishing an advocacy portfolio separate from other institutional investments has emerged as a best practice for Jesuit treasurers and business managers of Jesuit institutions. At any given time, no more than five stocks would be held in your advocacy portfolio.

- Influence your investment manager. Mutual funds and other registered investment companies are required to make their proxy voting records available to their clients. Review the voting records of your investment manager and encourage them to vote your proxies according to guidelines established by the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility (ICCR), an organization of nearly 300 faith-based investors, including JCIR, that works to build a more just and sustainable world by integrating faith-based values into shareholder advocacy.

- Vote your proxies. Strong votes for shareholder resolutions are often the catalyst for dialogue and change in corporate policies and practices. Annually, ICCR publishes helpful resources: The Proxy Voting Guide gives an overview of socially responsible resolutions and a guide to voting proxies; the Proxy Resolutions Book contains the texts of shareholder proposals. Visit www.iccr.org for more information.

- Co-file on a shareholder resolution led by JCIR. A large number of co-filers demonstrate broad support for change in corporate policy. Co-filers are consulted and included regarding corporate dialogues and strategies to engage the company. Your provincial representative can assist you with this straightforward process as necessary.

- Stay informed and share your voice. Visit www.jesuits.org/jcir to keep up-to-date on JCIR shareholder initiatives and learn more about current news items and the history of the Canadian and U.S. Jesuits’ commitment to socially responsible investing.

- Recommend an engagement. See the section on “Guidelines for Proposing a New Engagement.”

- Pray. Your prayers for JCIR and for all those with whom we dialogue help to ensure that JCIR engagements advance the service of faith and the promotion of justice.
Greetings to you!

Pope Francis talks about dialogue, dialogue — and dialogue. The work of the Jesuit Committee on Investment Responsibility is primarily about that: dialogue with corporate leaders to help them reflect on the impact of their business ventures on people and the planet. Our hope is that, through this dialogue and reflection, our teams can assist the companies with which we engage to adopt measures, change procedures and provide keener oversight to their operations and therefore eliminate negative social and environmental impacts.

Our teams are composed of Jesuits, those who work with the Jesuits, expert partners and representatives of other religious communities.

Our work this year continued to focus on corporate engagements aimed at eliminating human rights violations and reducing water usage. Our successes included seeing through the first stage of corporate commitments into the United Nations CEO Water Mandate and an agreement to report water usage and risks through the Carbon Disclosure Project reporting platform. While both steps are significant commitments, perhaps more important is what they represent — a willingness to be a better corporate citizen.

This review offers you short reports of each of our current corporate engagements. In addition, Steve Privett, SJ, chancellor of the University of San Francisco, is our featured writer in “A Jesuit Reflects.” Steve’s piece includes reference to divestment as a strategy for social change, and JCIR has certainly been discussing this approach in terms of fossil fuels. I offer the story of the English Canada Jesuits and their recent divestment decision later in these pages. We also offer you a personal reflection of a member of our Aura Minerals dialogue team from Michael Runnels, associate professor of law and social responsibility at Loyola University Maryland.

JCIR welcomes your responses and your involvement in this work. We are guided by a faith that does justice, enriched by the words of Pope Francis: “Today, in view of the common good, there is an urgent need for politics and economics to enter into a frank dialogue in the service of life, especially human life.”

Thank you for your support.

Anne-Marie Jackson
JCIR Chairperson
The Jesuit Committee on Investment Responsibility (JCIR) promotes social change in corporate practices through shareholder engagement. In light of Jesuit apostolic preferences, JCIR identifies social and economic justice priorities and collaborates with other religious institutional investors to advocate for corporate social responsibility. We strive to support internationally recognized norms for community and economic sustainability, environmental justice, and human rights. We present the fiduciary case that Catholic Social Teaching principles (such as respect for human life, environmental stewardship, sustainable development, rights of workers and communities) best serve the interest of all stakeholders and therefore preserve shareholder value. JCIR respectfully engages selected companies on issues in which we have proficiency, interest, and capacity.

Faith-informed socially responsible investment (SRI) is a work of structural justice (GC35, D3, n 28). JCIR seeks to increase the participation, prayerful solidarity, and awareness of SRI at Jesuit-sponsored institutions and among our friends and constituencies. As active shareholders, JCIR expresses to corporations the concern and experiences of Jesuits and religious communities who witness the social impacts of multinational corporations both here and abroad.

Reflection on my Experiences with a Corporate Social Responsibility/Shareholder Activism Dialogue with Aura Minerals

by Michael B. Runnels, Esq.

“Corporations are not responsible for all the world’s problems, nor do they have the resources to solve them all… [but], a well-run business… can have a greater impact on the social good than any other institution or philanthropic organization.” (Porter & Kramer, 2006).

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) asks corporations to broaden relationships among multiple stakeholders, engage in meaningful and sustained efforts to improve communities, and to conform to social rules, including those embodied in both law and ethical custom. However, the CSR movement alone is incapable of achieving a socially responsible corporation. Part of this incapability stems from the traditional debate between those arguing that corporations should engage in CSR because they ought to do good for goodness sake and those viewing such arguments as being
lost in translation if not linked with the corporate bottom line. Irrespective of CSR values, it is increasingly clear that corporate marketing strategies have co-opted CSR language. Indeed, one can view the modern CSR movement as providing corporations with language that markets them as socially responsible, which is merely window dressing for business as usual. (Runnels et al., 2010).

This view is not based on any belief in the inherent malevolence of the corporate person; rather, this view recognizes the institutional and economic structures that comprise the contemporary business environment, structures by which corporate managers must abide. An increasingly competitive globalized economy, driven by short-term profit maximization, incentivizes corporations to cut corners with regard to employees, communities, developing nations, and stakeholders adversely affected by corporate behavior. In this context, corporations are neither inherently good nor bad, but hold the manifest ability to amplify either the good or the bad on a global scale. (Runnels et al., 2010). Accordingly, given its singular ability to impact the public good, shareholder activism acknowledges the economic environment of the corporation and seeks to speak to the corporation in a language that it understands — that of a shareholder.

The goal of the dialogue with Aura Minerals is for the company to adopt a transparent, accountable, and verifiable gold-standard human rights policy. My work with the JCIR acknowledges the shortcomings of CSR and, through shareholder activism, pursues deliberation with Aura Minerals and the broad range of stakeholder groups that comprise my dialogue team. Our team has access to local information and a context-specific understanding of Aura’s business challenges. Dialogue with such individuals is the most effective mechanism for helping corporations to make ethical decisions in complex, fast-paced business environments. This approach is narrowly tailored to have three favorable results in incentivizing corporations to become good corporate citizens: (1) It creates a larger pool of context-specific information; (2) it ensures the representation of a broad range of stakeholder views; and (3) it holds corporate managers accountable to the public.

In essence, when used effectively, shareholder activism galvanizes collaboration, dialogue, innovation, and pragmatic learning, which can encourage corporate cultures that are mindful, conscious, and self-scrutinizing in terms of the social consequences of their business practices. Indeed, such an approach typifies my experience with JCIR and is beginning to demonstrate positive results that will have a sustained positive impact on the communities directly affected by the mining practices of Aura Minerals.

Michael B. Runnels is an Associate Professor of Law & Social Responsibility at Loyola University Maryland. He is also a Visiting Professor of International Business Law at the Beijing Institute of Technology. Professor Runnels teaches law, ethics and social responsibility to undergraduate and graduate business students. He is serving in his second year as an advisor to JCIR and as a participant in JCIR’s corporate dialogue with Aura Minerals.
Bunge Limited (NYSE: BG)

On their website, Bunge Limited describes their company as “a large agribusiness and food company with industrial and logistics operations that can generate environmental impacts in the form of emissions, wastes and resources used.” Recognizing the impact that they have on the environment, Bunge has pledged that their company will “work continuously to minimize the environmental footprint of our operations by reducing the waste we generate, promoting recycling and the efficient use of energy and natural resources, and mitigating environmental risks in our supply chain.”

Since JCIR first engaged the company in 2009 on issues of water usage and sustainability in their operations, the company has made strategic and substantial commitments, including these:

- Increasing transparency and disclosure through a number of instruments: Global Citizenship Reports following the GRI methodology, regional GRI reports (Southern Cone & Brazil), palm oil reports, Carbon Disclosure Project Water, Carbon and Forest Reports.
- Committing to zero deforestation in its operations.
- Reducing the company’s footprint including achieving an 18% reduction in water in its oilseed value chain.
- Establishing a board-level sustainability committee.
- Adding and appointing senior-level staff to focus specifically on sustainability.
- Strengthening leadership in international coalitions addressing sustainability, including joining the World Business Council for Sustainable Development.

Sustainability has been integrated into the company’s strategic planning. The foundational activities that Bunge hope to be involved in moving forward include improving tracking and setting minimum standards for their direct operations as well as analyzing how the company can impact their supply chain. Bunge leaders are also diligently working on ways that the company can become thought leaders and advocates on water and other sustainability concerns in the agriculture industry — and beyond.

The progress that Bunge has made in the past seven years has actually exceeded JCIR’s initial hopes for increasing the company’s attention to and transparency on water sustainability issues.
JCIR, along with our ICCR partners, feels confident that the structures, commitments, coalitions, and reporting mechanisms that Bunge has put into place will insure the company’s ongoing attention to their operations and practices that impact water usage in the future. For these reasons, at the end of 2016, JCIR is concluding the formal dialogue stage of our engagement with Bunge, but looks forward to receiving annual reports on the progress that the company is continuing to make in sustainability practices.

**Ingredion (NYSE: INGR)**

Ingredion is a large agricultural products company that turns corn and other crops into additive ingredients in food, beverages, and other products. JCIR has been engaged with Ingredion for over five years on issues related to Ingredion’s use of water, emphasizing the company’s operations in parts of the world where water is scarce. Water scarcity is of great concern to JCIR and is a serious potential threat to the company, particularly in its agricultural supply chain, but also in the company’s own processing facilities. For the last two years, JCIR has made consistent requests to the CEO, Board of Trustees, and senior executives of Ingredion to report on the company’s water risks through the Carbon Disclosure Project’s (CDP) Water Questionnaire.

The past five years in dialogue have proved productive as Ingredion began the hard work of evaluating and reducing water use in its operations and supporting farmers in growing crops more sustainably. Ingredion also formally and publicly committed to significant water reduction goals in its operations. In 2016, Ingredion took an important step in responding to the CDP Water Questionnaire, an industry standard survey that provides a comparative framework through corporate reporting on internal water use and water in the supply chain. This initial response was limited, but it offers investors and other concerned stakeholders substantive data with which to analyze and inform Ingredion’s water risk management strategies.

In the coming year, JCIR will look for Ingredion to submit a more detailed response to the CDP Water Questionnaire. As we approach 2020, the year by which Ingredion aimed to achieve significant reductions in their water use for internal operations and meet sustainably sourced agricultural goals, we will work with the company to develop new water and sustainable agriculture goals that prioritize the most water-stressed regions in which the company is operating. Finally, we’ll encourage Ingredion to increase their involvement in water sustainability work across business, NGO, and government sectors by joining the United Nations CEO Water Mandate.
Our Engagements on Promoting Human Rights

The GEO Group, Inc. (NYSE: GEO)

The GEO Group is a worldwide operator of private prisons for the U.S Government, state governments and international government entities. The GEO Group’s operations also incorporate contract work on behalf of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), including detention of immigrant mothers and children entering the United States. JCIR is in dialogue with The GEO Group with the specific goal of ensuring that the human rights of all people in the GEO Group’s control and custody are fully complied with.

JCIR leads this dialogue in partnership with multiple faith-based religious orders as well as non-faith-based organizations working to bring a voice to all prisoners currently being incarcerated in the U.S. and around the world. The first major point in the dialogue centered on an agreement by The GEO Group to construct a comprehensive human rights policy. This work was completed in February 2013 and was subsequently adopted by the board of directors. The policy goal was constructed to provide a list of human rights responsibilities that The GEO Group adheres to in its operations.

Since adopting the policy, much of the work in dialogue has centered on both the implementation and training of the policy within The GEO Group workforce. The GEO Group announced in August 2016 that the majority of its over 10,000 employees have completed the human rights training and are acting in accord with the obligations and responsibilities directed by its human rights policy.

2016 marked a turning point in The GEO Group dialogue, when they began a focused approach of evaluating all The GEO Group’s operations that could potentially impact human rights performance. The GEO Group, to facilitate this effort, engaged in a full-day dialogue with the JCIR dialogue team in August 2016, providing input on all the areas of operations relevant to human rights. To fully evaluate all the operations — including health, safety, and the use of force — detailed analysis of policies and procedures will take place in the coming year. It is the hope of the JCIR dialogue team that this process will ultimately lead to a stronger human rights performance in The GEO Group’s operations.

2016 also brought news relevant to this dialogue from Deputy Attorney General Sally Yates that the U.S. Department of Justice should begin to wind down its use of private prisons. It is too early to know whether this directive will be maintained under the incoming administration, but public policy related to contracts with private prisons will continue to impact the dialogue.

Thanks to a generous grant from the Langeloth Foundation to the Jesuit Social Research Institute at Loyola University New Orleans to promote the protection of human rights in the private prison industry, the dialogue includes the participation of subject matter experts including Fr. George Williams, SJ, Catholic chaplain at San Quentin State Prison, and Richard Subia, former Director of the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation.
Aura Minerals Inc. (TSX:ORA)

The English Canada and Midwest Jesuits continue to co-lead this shareholder dialogue pursuing a human rights policy with the Toronto-based mining company operating in Honduras, Mexico, and Brazil. We held our fourth dialogue with members of Aura’s senior staff at the Jesuit Conference in Washington, D.C., on Oct 21, 2016.

Our goal is a comprehensive, verifiable, and transparent human rights policy followed by an equally strong environmental policy in light of the inherent environmental risks and impacts of open pit mining. Such board-approved policies strengthen corporate practices and accountability.

On October 21, we provided recommendations to strengthen the preliminary draft human rights policy offered by Aura Minerals, including four new sections to the policy as well as clarifying language to the existing sections. Aura considered and generally accepted most of our revisions at the meeting and in the subsequent re-write of the policy now awaiting board approval.

We were also able to address social concerns stemming from the San Andres Mine in the department of Copan in Western Honduras. On this point, we are in very close contact with Jesuits in Honduras, faith-based NGOs and civil society groups, and Chris Jeske from the Marquette Peacemaking Center, who was part of an international delegation that visited San Andres affected communities in July 2016.

In August 2016 Aura announced a new “social license” agreement with the community, and we will continue to monitor how it is implemented by the multi-stakeholder implementation committee that includes community, company, government, and civil society participation.

Aura CEO Jim Bannantine and San Andres General Manager Monty Reed offered their perspectives to inquiries by the dialogue team, including plans to move a 200-year-old cemetery; the potential relocation of the community of Azacualpa; human rights practices by security contractors; acquisition of surface rights by land held in community trust; processes for community consultation and consent; and concerns regarding possible police/military coercion. We appreciated Aura’s acknowledgement of the challenges they face, which may indicate a trust level that has been established in the dialogue. However, to hear Aura’s story compared to other trusted local sources can sometimes convey divergent pictures.

Our participation in this dialogue is in solidarity with those most affected by the mine: communities that bear the heavy repercussions of past, present, and future operations. Honduran bishops, local Jesuits, and human rights and indigenous leaders have noted utmost concerns regarding the Honduran mining sector after recently relaxed mining/environmental regulations and the ongoing levels of impunity for those forces that intimidate, terminate, and silence environmental and indigenous leaders.

View of the 200-year-old cemetery atop Cemetery Mountain. Photo by Chris Jeske.
Investing in Change

by Steve Privett, SJ

The strategy of divestment was well-publicized and widely supported in the 1980s during the struggle against Apartheid in South Africa. College campuses were rife with demonstrations urging university trustees to purge their endowment portfolios of stocks in companies doing business in South Africa. The rationale for divestment was that withdrawing financial support would pressure those companies to prevail upon the South African government to negotiate a nonviolent end to the social, political, and legal structures that supported and perpetuated an inhumane and unjust system of government on the majority of its people. Apartheid collapsed in 1994 with the election of Nelson Mandela as the first South African president of a multi-racial, democratic government, and divestment was credited with playing some role in its demise. Today, divestment in fossil fuel companies has become a rallying cry among student activists on many campuses, as universities are urged to eliminate from their endowments stocks in companies whose primary focus is the production of fossil fuels. Withdrawing financial support is thought to incentivize those companies to adopt more environmentally responsible practices, while supporting companies that produce renewable energy.

If not the opposite of divestment, “strategic investment” is a contrasting and less well-known strategy for effecting positive social change. It operates from a different rationale. Rather than remove specific stocks from endowment portfolios, this strategy calls for carefully targeted investments in specific companies with the express purpose of effecting change from within those corporations as a stockholder. This strategy is more of a “get your hands dirty” than “keep your hands clean” approach to affecting positive social change. That argument supports both strategies that militate against an “either/or” approach and argue for a “both/and” effort. Thus, Jesuit investment portfolios of Canada and the U.S. are modestly invested in companies involved with areas of intense concern, e.g., clean water, mineral extraction, humane prison conditions, and just labor practices. The overview of leveraging these Jesuit investments to promote the common good rests with the Jesuit Committee on Invest Responsibility (JCIR), to which I am the newest addition.

Stock ownership allows one to participate in annual stockholder meetings and propose resolutions that call attention to issues and promote best practices that hold large corporations accountable for their impact on the human and natural environments. Corporations are increasingly sensitive to informed public opinion on the ethics and morality of their way of doing business. “Bad business” is no longer simply about losing money; it now cuts to how a business conducts itself and is recognized by its publics. “Strategic investing” puts the investor on the inside and gives her/him a voice in shaping corporate policy decisions and practices. When I was named Assistant for Social Ministries for the Western Provinces, I was unaware of JCIR’s behind-the-scenes efforts to promote socially and morally responsible business practices. I have become involved in implementing this strategy to affect the constructive reform of privately-run detention facilities.
At the Annual General Meeting of The GEO Group, among the largest private prison contractors in the country, a JCIR-written stockholder resolution garnered 18% support from those voting. This was enough support to bring GEO’s General Counsel and top management to the table to dialogue about respecting and protecting the human rights of inmates in GEO facilities. Such an outcome would not have been possible without JCIR’s investment in this corporation. The initial conversation was satisfactory; it clearly represents the first few steps on a long journey toward producing measures that improve conditions faced by the inmates at GEO facilities. The next GEO conversation is scheduled for January 2017, at which time we will address a more specific set of human rights concerns. While the dialogue is only beginning and success in leveraging systemic reform seems a way off, it appears that those “who have ears” are at least willing to listen. (cf., Matt. 13,9).

Steve Privett, SJ, is President Emeritus and Chancellor of the University of San Francisco and Provincial Assistant for Higher Education and Social Ministries for the Oregon/California Provinces.

Guidelines for Proposing a New Engagement

Dialogues with companies are an effective way to address negative impacts of company operations on local communities. JCIR’s current or recent engagements with Monsanto, GEO Group, Inc., OM Group, Occidental Petroleum, and others were initiated because of concerns by Jesuits in Colombia, the U.S., and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. As a result of JCIR’s actions, each company has adopted a human rights policy that provides a foundation to remediate local concerns. JCIR welcomes suggestions for new engagements that reflect the following guidelines.

1. The company should be a U.S.- or Canadian-based multinational that is publicly traded on the Toronto Stock Exchange, New York Stock Exchange, American Stock Exchange, or NASDAQ.

2. Be specific about the adverse impacts of the corporation and what needs to be remedied. For example, human rights concerns include, but are not limited to, violations of the rights of indigenous populations or labor rights, abuses by armed security, pollution, and other environmental damage including adverse health impacts on affected communities.

3. Identify local institutions or individuals, preferably Jesuit-related when possible, capable of providing reliable information to JCIR.

4. Contact us at Klionetti@jesuits.org.
Divesting from fossil fuels: The story of the Jesuits in English Canada

by Anne-Marie Jackson

The Jesuits in English Canada have a long history of engagement on corporate accountability, especially ecumenically through the Task Force on Churches and Corporate Responsibility from the 1970s to the 1990s and, more recently, with the Jesuit Committee on Investment Responsibility. Their recent decision to divest from fossil fuels was a logical step after years of hearing the growing cry of the Earth inextricably linked to the cry of the poor.

The Ignatius Jesuit Centre in Guelph, Ontario, has led the English Canada Province in terms of care of creation for many years. The Centre comprises an organic farm, a 500-year project to develop an old-growth forest, and a retreat center increasingly integrating eco-spirituality, while serving organic food, much of which comes from its farm.

Meanwhile, the Society of Jesus at a global level has increasingly challenged us all to integrate the environment into our justice perspectives. The documents of the Jesuit General Congregation 35 in 2008 included a “Reconciliation with Creation” section that lamented the degradation and plundering of the Earth: “The drive to access and exploit sources of energy and other natural resources is very rapidly widening the damage to earth, air, water, and our whole environment, to the point that the future of our planet is threatened. Poisoned water, polluted air, massive deforestation, deposits of atomic and toxic waste are causing death and untold suffering, particularly to the poor. Many poor communities have been displaced, and indigenous peoples have been the most affected.”

In 2011, Fr. General wrote a letter On Ecology, accompanied by a task force report compiled by the Social Justice and Ecology Secretariat in Rome, entitled Healing a Broken World, which fostered deeper reflection and discussion globally. The Social and International Commission of the English Canada Jesuits was inspired and motivated by this document and subsequently raised questions about province investments, among other initiatives, in response to the challenges of Healing a Broken World.

Meetings with the province treasurer led to an item on the agenda of the Financial Affairs Committee. That produced a sub-group that later presented a revised investment policy, including divestment from fossil fuels. Fr. Provincial, Peter Bisson, SJ, approved it in 2016 saying: “Climate change is already affecting poor and marginalized communities globally, through drought, rising sea levels, famine, and extreme weather. We are called to take a stand.”

Leading up to this point, other religious communities and groups had divested, and this became a growing movement with major institutions at the global level adding their voice, for example, the World Council of Churches and most recently the World Health Organization. Trinity-St. Paul’s
United Church in Toronto was a leading voice in Canada. The Jesuit Committee on Investment Responsibility was also reflecting on divestment, and Pope Francis’ *Laudato Si’* was an extraordinary call for ecological conversion. Here is one short quote: “We know that technology based on the use of highly polluting fossil fuels — especially coal, but also oil and, to a lesser degree, gas — needs to be progressively replaced without delay.” (165)

Corporate dialogue was the earlier route, but many came to the conclusion that on this challenging issue, a public movement was needed to highlight the folly of business-as-usual approaches, given the scale and urgency of the need to transition to cleaner energy.

*Anne-Marie Jackson is director of the Jesuit Forum for Social Faith and Justice in Toronto, Canada. She is also Assistant to the Provincial for Social and International Ministries for the Jesuits in English Canada.*

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**A Note of Gratitude**

JCIR is thankful for the collaboration of Jesuit provinces and institutions and ICCR colleagues that strengthened our shareholder initiatives this past year. We look forward to our work ahead as we continue in our efforts to engage and inform corporations on issues impacting the lives of people and resources relevant to our world.

**A Welcome to New JCIR Members**

*Kristen Lionetti* joined the Jesuit Conference in 2016, where she serves as Policy Director. Prior to joining the Jesuit Conference, Kristen worked for the Catholic Legal Immigration Network (CLINIC) as well as with Catholic Relief Services in El Salvador. JCIR teams are excited to have Kristen’s experience and leadership further the work of JCIR.
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