

Mission: To provide people of faith with tools for implementing their values as consumers, investors, employees, employers, and citizens.

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Preparing for Proxy Season

The three-legged SRI-stool is often described as screening, shareholder activism, and community investing. Screening is a relatively easy concept to understand—each investor establishes criteria for excluding or including companies within his/her investment portfolio. Community investing is the concept of investing in local, community-building organizations, including community-focused banks. Shareholder activism is perhaps the most difficult concept for the average investor to pursue.

Anyone can write a letter to a company expressing a specific opinion. Letters from customers are certainly taken seriously, but investors are in fact owners of the company and have special access and rights. Many large investors, particularly institutions like pension plans and mutual funds, take their responsibilities as investors and owners of a company seriously. For some, this includes filing shareholder resolutions on topics of concern to be voted on by all the shareholders at the company's annual meeting.

Individual investors are much less likely to submit a shareholder resolution, but some do. All investors have the right to vote at an annual meeting and most do so by submitting their votes on a proxy card.

Since most corporate annual meetings take place in the spring, this issue of the *Review* is the logical time to highlight a number of issues and companies investors will see this proxy season.

Express Your Values through Action

1. ***Prepare a proxy season strategy.*** Read about the companies and issues in the feature on page 2 to see which issues will come up for a vote at companies in your portfolio. Identify issues you need to research before the proxy statements start arriving in the mail.
2. ***Rate your employer or business.*** Reading the articles on *The High-Purpose Company* (p. 9) and the study on business interactions with ecosystems (p. 8), consider your employer's approach to these issues. Also, read the article about Nike (p. 6) and decide whether your company would have acted differently in a similar situation.
3. ***Make a video.*** Read about a video contest (p. 7) and have your youth group use its creativity to show your congregation how to help reduce climate change.