

Don't Forget Your Tithe to the Church of England

Church of England puts its faith in Al Gore's investment arm

Tuesday, 30th December 2008

By: George Conger



The Church of England's Church Commissioners have gone green, investing £150 million with former US Vice-President Al Gore's environmentally minded investment firm, Generation Investment Management.

On Nov 18 the First Church Estates Commissioner, Andreas Whittam Smith reported that in late September the Commissioners had placed the funds with Gore's boutique management firm which follows an "environmentally sustainable global equities mandate." Funding for the investment came from "cash and Treasury bills", he said, and not from the sale of UK equities as initially planned.

In Oct 2007 Mr Gore was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his work in raising awareness of the potential threats from climate change. Generation Investment Management was founded in 2004 by Mr Gore and David Blood, former head of Goldman Sachs Asset Management, and had almost £5 billion under management before the market collapse.

The firm invests in companies that follow "socially responsible" business model such as insulin manufacturer Novo Nordisk, Swiss food conglomerate Nestlé, and San Francisco's New Resource Bank --- a "green" lender in the US.

Speaking at a press conference last March in Geneva, Mr Gore said private industry should take the lead in creating environmentally friendly market capitalism noting that "more money is allocated by markets around the world in one hour than by all the governments on the planet in a full year."

"The principles and ways and values that have an impact on the way markets allocate resources can have an enormous effect" in tackling climate change, he said.

Institutional investors in his fund are "more attracted to the strategy we follow are managing long-term assets toward long-term goals."

"Those looking for a quick hit in the market place, to skim the cream and go somewhere else, those are not the investors attracted to this strategy," Mr Gore said, according to wire service reports.