

## **Review: *Invested in the Common Good***

By Susan Meeker-Lowry

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Meeker-Lowry, Susan. *Invested in the Common Good*. Philadelphia, PA & Gabriola Island, BC: New Society Publishers, 1995. 258 pp. includes resource list and index. US \$16.95 paper ISBN: 0-86571-292-1. Partially recycled, soy based ink.

What will it take to turn the tide of a contorted culture of untethered self-interest and consumption? In *Invested in the Common Good* Meeker-Lowry provides a handsome if compact contribution toward turning that tide. Proceeding from her 1988 *Economics as if Earth Really Mattered*, Meeker-Lowry provides practical advice on how we can adopt the "Small is Beautiful" aesthetic suggested by E.F. Schumacher in 1973. She begins by providing an inspired intimate vision of our ecological home and why we must alter the epochal forces of our present economic assumptions and practices. Once this foundation is established, she provides a veritable storehouse of informative and motivating instructions and examples of successes in sustainable finance, investment, and social organization. She discusses community development banks, meaningful protest strategies, and practical examples and lessons to be learned from what she calls "economics of community", "place", and "culture".

*Invested* is an attempt to provide practical instructions to realizing Thomas Berry's goal of "civic activities based on a profound sense of meaning inherent in the universe and in the life process". It suggests many ways of "succeeding" at socially responsible investing and ethical business practices. The tone is less entertaining and more sober than Wayne Roberts' comparable *Get a Life: How To Dance with the Dinosaurs and Make a Buck* (1995) but its focus and grounding are also more radical. After reading this book you will feel empowered by the many examples and successes in sustainable community economics. Meeker-Lowry takes criticisms of some of the programs seriously and examines the pitfalls to be avoided in future applications of similar methods. *Invested* is required reading for anyone serious about transcending the seductive gravity of the unsustainable economic apparatus that hastily propels us towards the dissolution of real wealth

in both its social and ecological senses. It is full of resources that will enable readers to connect to kindred spirits and opportunities and can be read and understood by high school students and up. If "doubt is the biggest enemy" of a new economics, this book puts a firm shoulder into dispelling it. Meeker-Lowry thinks globally and acts locally.

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