

toric numerical shift to the global South; Africa, Asia, and Latin America are now the population centers of the global Mennonite body. These demographic shifts, moreover, occur in an era of global ecological catastrophe that was barely on the horizon during the activism of the 1960s. In spite of the changes, or even because of the changes, Harding's encouragement and challenge to white Mennonites remains of utmost importance.

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Andrew Cheon and Johannes Urpelainen, *Activism and the Fossil Fuel Industry*, Routledge, New York, 2018. 242 pp. \$31.94. ISBN: 978-1-78353-754-9.

It's not enough for the historic peace churches to oppose violence when it finally breaks out. Since we know that violence has its antecedents, peacemaking includes active work to erase conditions that increase the likelihood of conflict and decrease the full flourishing of life imagined by God. Climate change is a "threat multiplier," according to sound social science. Does that make climate change a peace issue?

As Anabaptists understand it, following Jesus manifests itself as peacemaking, in alignment with God's goals for shalom and the full flourishing of all. Therefore, a peace position normally leads us to oppose those things that increase risks to the more vulnerable of the world. If cumulative emissions from the use of fossil fuels are the largest contribution to changing climates, does our ordinary discipleship to the Prince of Peace imply opposition to expanding use of fossil fuels? And what is the role of activists—those people who contest the status quo and challenge others (us?) to consider that another way might be better?

Such are the questions I pondered as I read this book. Such questions are part of my professional work as a social scientist at a Christian university in the oil- and gas-focused economy and culture of Alberta. The latest major inter-governmental report on climate change documents the increasing effects of climate change, which most markedly affects the most marginalized people on the planet (IPCC Fifth Assessment Report, 2014). Heat, desertification, water shortages in some places, extreme weather in others, declining agricultural productivity, and other effects of climate change are degrading the efforts of international aid and accompaniment agencies—like Mennonite Central Committee, World Vision, and Christian Peacemakers Teams—to promote development and peace. That emissions from fossil fuels are the largest cause of climate change is increasingly clear according to both physical and social science.

The consequence is that well-paying jobs and caring for families in places like Alberta collide with stewardship of creation and the basic needs of the earthly poor. Or, “If economic development results in environmental deterioration, how much damage is acceptable?” (187). That is the sort of question activists ask—and if it sounds extreme, it is because we have normalized a socioeconomic system that relies on something that is magnifying damage to creation while providing a very advantaged lifestyle for a minority of global humanity. *For a while*. That’s not just this reviewer’s opinion; that’s the data, in study after study.

Besides being a researcher on environmental sustainability and justice questions, I write this review as someone who knows people who make their living from the oil and gas sector, including members of my own Alberta church. Lastly, I have friends who have been arrested at Burnaby, British Columbia, and spent time in jail due to protesting the Trans Mountain Pipeline and supporting Indigenous peoples. One of these friends is Anglican, another is Mennonite. They felt these activist stances were necessary commitments of their Christian faith.

Activism and the Fossil Fuel Industry is timely for these many reasons. We are probably beginning a major, necessary shift in energy sources. The shift will have many ramifications. The social and ethical implications of such phenomena are broad and confront many of our normal modes of living typical North American lifestyles. According to the book, activism presents counter-normal challenges that act as wedges to crack open alternatives to the normal ways of living or societal structuring. My Anglican and Mennonite friends occupy important but uncomfortable (for them too) places in the community of faith. “Jesus was an activist,” the authors of *Activism and the Fossil Fuel Industry* casually mention (41, in the context of Jesus’s overturning of the temple tables and thus challenging social norms of his own religious community).

Activism and the Fossil Fuel Industry is a secular academic book dedicated to exactly what its title indicates. The researchers focus on four case studies—Keystone XL (KXL) pipeline, divestment from fossil-fuel companies, anti-coal campaigns, and anti-fracking campaigns. The authors first contextualize the role of fossil fuels in contemporary society, the world economy, and theories of social change movements. They provide plenty of information, both in the early material about fossil fuels and their negative and positive effects and in the case studies. Only in the last chapter before the conclusion—about “global campaigns” against fossil fuels—are Indigenous, women’s, peasant, and other justice movements really mentioned. Faith groups are referred to very positively, especially in terms of the divestment movement in which religious organizations have been quite significant.

We learn that anti-fossil fuel activism has successfully employed a shaming strategy in which public pressure has led to weakening of what is called the “social license to operate”; fossil fuels no longer have the taken-for-granted support they

once had. Given this result, the researchers observe that “for the major fossil fuel companies, it would actually be in their best interest to acknowledge the reality of climate change” (15) and for activists to actively support and encourage any positive steps of genuine corporate social responsibility. Their research shows that the accumulation of “small wins”—each and every little victory—can motivate further activism by more people. That is, the “normal” is being shifted; a “new normal” is coming into place, albeit grudgingly. Again, other social science confirms these conclusions.

Overall, the tone of the book is academic. The authors believe that movement participants would benefit from reading the book, but they would probably best read the first and last chapters alongside the chapter that speaks to their particular form of activism. The book is also US-centric, barely mentioning the Canadian oilsands/tarsands and repeatedly referring to the KXL pipeline proposer as a Canadian company—as if that really matters in these days of transnational corporations.

The main point, however, is to address the question, What do we do in light of the challenges to the fossil fuel industry and in light of the declining benefit of fossil fuels *vis-a-vis* the global costs of these energy types? The tripartite system of “See – Judge – Act” would be useful to consider: SEE the evidence, as discussed in this book and plenty of other sources; JUDGE what to do; then ACT on such discernment. The activists in our own church communities have made their discernments and taken action, perhaps as a wedge toward a “new normal” of energy types that are less damaging to the planet and the world’s people. How do we See and Judge? How do we then Act?

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