

Church Climate Initiatives Fly In The Face Of The Gospel

Blessed are the virtue signalers, for they shall inherit political favor.

Resurgent by Katie Tahuahua, July 1, 2020



The Methodist Church's British financial arm recently announced it had sold its shares in three major oil producers, worth over £17 million, and is considering divesting itself of additional fossil fuel holdings. While progressive Christians

and the secular Left hail the slowly growing coalition of churches making similar moves, the body of Christ should be deeply concerned by this trend. Divesting from and denouncing fossil fuels runs counter to and distracts from the church's purpose.

Churches exist — or should exist — for a singular purpose: to worship God and shepherd His followers in living a godly life. Christians are called to discern what love requires of us in every situation. When it comes to the devastating but little-acknowledged crisis of energy poverty, the answer is clear.

Nearly a billion people around the world have no access to energy. This means no electricity, sanitation, running water, medicines, or safe cooking fuels that don't generate lethal pollution. Billions more people have only limited electricity, an almost equal challenge. These billions of men and women and children, made in the image of and deeply loved by God, are trapped in lives of hard physical labor, poor health, oppression, and limited opportunity.

Electricity is the closest thing to a cure-all the human race has ever found. Sharing affordable, reliable energy with impoverished communities dramatically improves public health, economic opportunity, women's equality, education,

environmental quality, and even individual and religious liberty. Denouncing fossil fuels without a viable alternative — which renewable energy is not and won't be for generations at least — denies relief to the billions suffering from energy poverty. Restricting energy production by responsible Western producers only results in higher prices and more power in the hands of hostile and unstable petro-states. We should not demonize companies for producing and exporting something people need.

And divesting from fossil fuels wouldn't result in meaningful environmental change, either. Simple logic suggests that fewer fossil fuels would mean less pollution, but as with most things in life, reality is more complicated. Over the last 50 years, America has used more fossil fuels to drive more miles and produce more economic output than ever before, and yet pollution emissions are down 77%, and 92% of water systems meet the strictest national safety standards.

Similarly, bleak End Times prognostications on climate change are grounded in oversimplified headlines of suspect data models that have never yet been accurate. The best science suggests our climate is likely to remain mild and manageable and humanity will grow even more resilient.

These times are tense and uncertain, and it's easy to fall into the fatalistic belief that humanity's future is crumbling. Yet we are all blessed with the ingenuity and resourcefulness of a creative God — made in His image in so many ways. The same spark of imagination that led scientists to invent things like the combustion engine and fracking, tools that were once revolutionary but are ubiquitous today, also drove scientists and entrepreneurs to invent environmental protection technology to make those tools better for the world around us.

While that imagination may one day transform wind and solar energy into viable sources for primary power, it has yet to overcome the hurdles of the weather's unpredictability, large and expensive battery storage requirements, and the environmental impact of mining for rare minerals.

Until that day comes, we should embrace the profound potential of fossil fuels — our most abundant, affordable, and reliable energy source — to lift billions out of crushing poverty.

Too often, the good intentions behind environmentalism morph into idolatry, clouding our faith and allowing anger and fear to reign supreme. Followers of Christ are called to stewardship of the world we are blessed with. But that stewardship must be grounded in reason and science — neither of which support the apocalyptic climate change narrative — not in scoring political gimme points.

It's a shame to see faith leaders sacrificing their interest in human well-being in order to calm a vocal minority.

Ultimately, Christians are ordered neither to be perfect nor to perfect this fallen world — both impossible tasks — but to have faith in God. That faith necessarily flows into service and loving our neighbors as ourselves, even those neighbors in far-flung third-world villages we've never heard of. God desires good for these of his children as much as for you and me. If the church must take a stance on energy policy, true love for our neighbors compels supporting and sharing the fuels with the most power to end suffering and bring hope to those who desperately need it — for this life and the next.

It's a sad day for Christendom when catering to political whims becomes a bigger priority than standing firm for the gospel.

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