

## Go fossil-free – bright now!

Money can do good things! We can buy gifts, give it to charities and spend it on home improvements that will cut our energy use. What about savings, though? Does it matter where our money is invested?

A new campaign has just started in the UK to push universities and churches to disinvest from fossil fuels.

Before I heard about the campaign, I'd never really thought about it but, of course, churches, universities and other public bodies have millions of pounds sitting in investments, making money for pensions and other rainy day things. This money provides an income to the investor – the church, university, or whatever – but only because it is put to work by the companies that have it. So we have two questions. Firstly, does it matter how it is put to work, and secondly, if it does, is financing the exploration and mining for fossil fuels a good use of the institution's money?

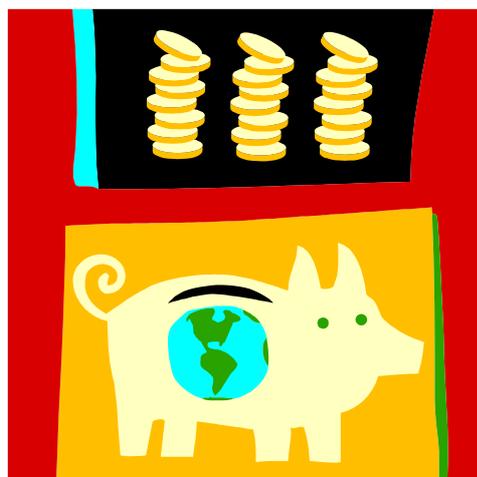
The churches have already answered the first question. They do not invest in gambling and pornography, and recently, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, said he wants to disinvest from financing the payday loan company, Wonga. They have already decided they don't want to profit from what they see as immoral activities.

On the second question, for me the answer is clearly 'no'. Depending on which research paper you read, there are enough known reserves of fossil fuels to wreck between three and five planets. There is no global framework to limit or cap the burning of these reserves. Knowing this, it cannot be right to carry on mining and exploring for more.

And universities are there for the benefit of the students. But the universities' money is financing the ruin of the natural world of the students' future. This doesn't sound right to me.

As the US environmentalist Bill McKibben says: 'If it's wrong to wreck the climate, it's wrong to profit from that wrecking.'

Would you like to join this exciting movement for change? If you are a student or an alumni of a university, a church-goer, or just someone who wants to support these campaigns, go to <http://peopleandplanet.org/fossil-free> or [www.brightnow.org.uk](http://www.brightnow.org.uk).



Disinvesting from fossil fuels could be the start of something big. Fancy it becoming no longer economically viable to wreck the future? Maybe a way off, but the fossil-free campaign is making a start. Join us.

Ruth Jarman

