

## COMMENTARY

### Response to Commentaries by Peter Bancel and Andrew Foss

HENRY H. BAUER

The chief point my Essay Review makes is that the 2014 booklet *Climate Change: Evidence and Causes* published by the [London] Royal Academy and the [U.S.] National Academy of Sciences gives only one side of the case about carbon dioxide and climate change. The chief assertion from the two commentators is that the mainstream side is right, therefore it's OK to be one-sided.

But there exists undeniably another side, a great number of dissenting voices, many of them from relevantly credentialed, competent, well-informed sources. I cited several including the Leipzig Declaration on Global Climate Change with its many signatories. To ignore them and the evidence and arguments they present is not what one expects from a proper scientific evaluation, which would engage the substance of what critics present. The pamphlet does not do that, and neither Bancel nor Foss claims that it does. They and the pamphlet are one-sided, and one-sidedness is propaganda, not a scientific assessment.

Neither Bancel nor Foss denies that the pamphlet expresses certainty at some places while admitting fallibility at others.

They do not deny that the computer models fail to account for the cooling trend during the 1940s to the 1970s and the lack of warming in the last decade-and-a-half or so. Forget theory and models and look only at the facts. Carbon dioxide was increasing steadily during the period 1940s to 1970s and since about 2000, at the same time as temperatures were falling or remaining unchanged. Obviously, carbon dioxide was not the main determinant of temperature for about 1/3 of the period during which human generation of carbon dioxide is supposed to have become the chief contribution to global warming. Bancel's undocumented assertion that *ad hoc* calculations can account for those non-warming periods, and that this somehow validates the models, makes no sense; until the models incorporate all those factors *inherently* and track temperature changes correctly, they cannot be relied on over any time period, short or long.

Neither Foss or Bancel denies that the pamphlet tries to have it both

ways as to short-term and long-term effects, and they succumb to the same temptation.

Neither commentator denies that the pamphlet fails to mention the Medieval Warm Period and the Little Ice Age. The Little Ice Age ended in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. That alone presaged rising temperatures as a rebound from that cold period, during the very same time as levels of carbon dioxide were rising. What makes that natural rebound less good an explanation than the greenhouse one?

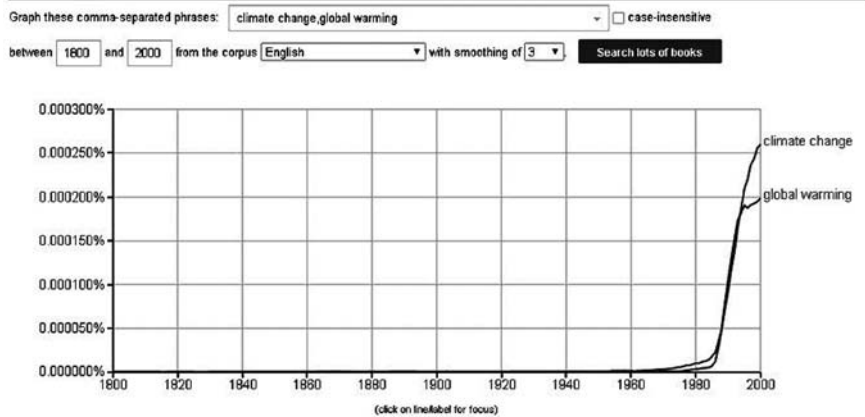
Neither commentator engages my speculation as to the motive for a more dogmatic but otherwise very similar pamphlet only 2 years after publication of the earlier one.

I don't know why Foss refers to me as "esteemed," since he seems not to share that sentiment. Nor do I understand why he would challenge me about the current practice of leading journals requiring authors to state what their specific contributions to an article are. Does he want to dispute that this has been increasingly the practice since concerns about dishonesty became prominent about three decades ago? One need merely look at a recent on-line issue of *Nature* to observe the section "Contributions" in which each author's participation is described. What I may or may not have done is entirely irrelevant. But since I'm asked, I will respond: I have not co-authored articles in any journal that has this requirement, perhaps because I have not been engaged in scientific research since the 1970s and leading journals did not make this a routine requirement until some time after that; dishonesty was much less common in the good old days when I was doing electrochemistry.

Bancel, too, resorts to *ad hominem* statements, including speculation about my motives and my possible reaction to a claimed rejection of my views about AIDS. He makes denigrating references to claimed "ideological advocacy"; questions Fred Singer's credentials, which stand up more than well against Bancel's own. He suggests that Singer and I are more motivated by lack of trust in some institutions than by the science; I might equally say that Bancel is more taken with trust in models than with the actual empirical temperature data that is the only way to test the validity of models. David Dilley is denigrated for citing the Bible, as though religious believers could not also be first-rate scientists (read John Polkinghorne or Francis Collins, for example).

Where Bancel challenges me on a point of fact, he is simply wrong. "Climate change" has indeed become more commonly used than "global

### Google books Ngram Viewer



**Figure 1. Use of the terms *climate change* and *global warming* in books from 1800 to 2000.**

warming” since the mid-to-late 1990s; before making my statement I had checked my impression against Google’s database (Figure 1).

Neither commentator has contradicted my main points about one-sidedness, misleading mixture of asserted certainty and admission of fallibility, and trying to have it both ways as to short-term or long-term influences, together with omission of pertinent data (Little Ice Age and earlier times). The lapses into *ad hominem* are characteristic for polemicists who cannot win an argument on the basis of substance.