

## World View Book of the Year

*Hot, Flat, and Crowded: Why We Need a Green Revolution – and How it Can Renew America*  
Thomas Friedman Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2008

In a detailed and often frightening account of the relationship between globalization and the environment, Thomas Friedman's latest book, *Hot, Flat, and Crowded*, discusses the desperate need for a green revolution. Arguing that the convergence of global warming, the flattening of the world, and the increases in population has resulted in a "hot, flat, and crowded" existence, Friedman boldly asserts that we are living in the dawn of a new time: The Energy-Climate Era. In this era we must adapt, innovate, and revolutionize the way we produce and consume energy – or die trying.

For the skeptics out there, Friedman points out that there are many reasons to "go green" other than the obvious protection of our planet. Friedman points out that the pollution that large-scale manufacturers produce is not just harmful for the earth, but also results in waste of their valuable resources, energy, and materials. By this token, companies that eliminate waste will be cleaner, more efficient, and more competitive. Another advantage of exploring renewable energy is that our current addiction to oil is benefiting intolerant and anti-modern petro-dictatorships like that of Saudi Arabia and Venezuela. Friedman is careful to point out that a green revolution has advantages for everyone.

When he has you convinced of the necessity to be green, Friedman insists that doing so is not easy, despite what you may have heard. A simple buzz-word or a list of "10 Easy Steps to Being Green" is not going to do the trick. We need a true revolution in order to take control of the Energy-Climate Era. Though this may sound like a hard pill to swallow, coming from Friedman who is arguably the king of buzz-words, buzz-phrases, and acronyms, he has a point. It's true that turning off your thermostat or switching out your old bulbs for the energy-efficient variety helps, but we need a much bigger movement centered on innovation and government regulation in order to make the changes that are necessary.

So what is Friedman's vote on how to tackle this issue? On page 246 of his 400-plus page book, he says: "my favorite renewable energy is an ecosystem for energy innovation." It is going to take the commitment of brilliant minds and a plethora of new ideas. Not only does a green revolution need to be innovative, says Friedman, but it also needs to be cheap. Only if we nurture the cheapest emissions-free electrons to fulfill our energy needs will both the average CEO and the average Joe be open to living and working in a clean way. And who should lead this revolution? America, of course! But we need to solve our own problems before we can influence the rest of the world. If we can do all that, says Friedman, then we might be able to stay ahead of the pack in terms of being green, and hopefully inspire the world in turn through our leadership.