

Climate Communications to Empower Action and Solutions

June 25th, 2026



Climate Communications to Empower Action and Solutions

RECORDING

The webinar is being recorded and a link to the recording will be sent to everyone who registered within the next 24-48 hours.

Questions

Please submit your questions in the Q/A box.

Chat

Please remember to be respectful and civil in all chat interactions.

Climate Communications to Empower Action and Solutions

Let's prepare our hearts:

'Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.'

~1 John 3:18

Loving God, you made the world and declared it was 'very good'. And yet, we have not treated the earth and our fellow humans with the care and respect they deserve. We are sorry and ask for your forgiveness.

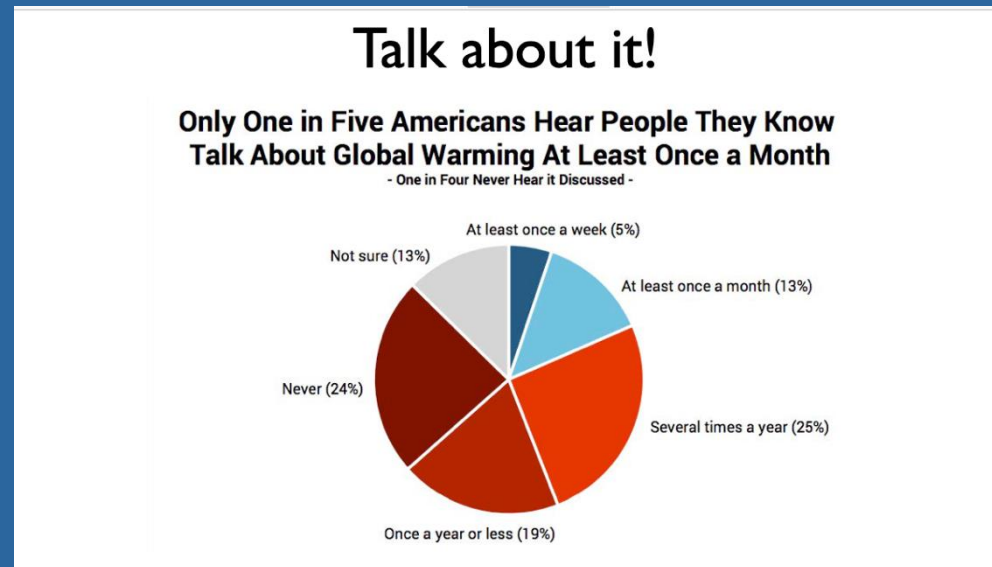
Give us the courage to keep raising our voices about the climate emergency, which affects people living in poverty the worst. And may your Spirit of peace be in the hearts of all people, so that conflicts end in peace, and relationships are restored.

Amen

[~Tearfund, Praying for Our Climate](#)

Climate Communications to Empower Action and Solutions

2018: Communicating Climate Change to People of Faith (Webinar with Dr. Katharine Hayhoe)



2019: Why the Faith Community Holds the Climate Key (Webinar with Ed Maibach)

2023: Encountering Church Leadership on *Laudato Si'* (Webinar with John Carr)

Climate Communications to Empower Action and Solutions



Dr. Joshua Ettinger
Postdoctoral Research Fellow
Center for Climate Change Communication
George Mason University



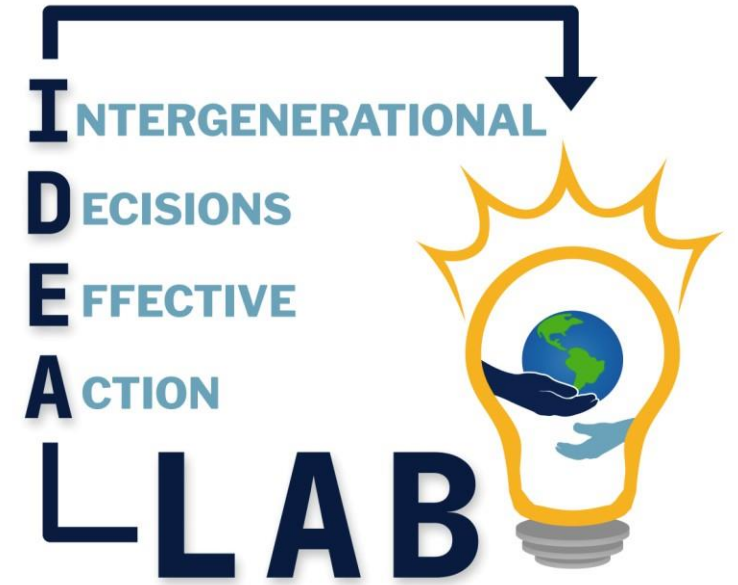
Dr. Stylianos Syropoulos
Assistant Professor
School of Sustainability
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Climate of Silence: Christians Religious Leaders Believe in But Do Not Talk About Climate Change

Stylianos Syropoulos, PhD

College of Global Futures

Arizona State University



National Survey of
Religious Leaders

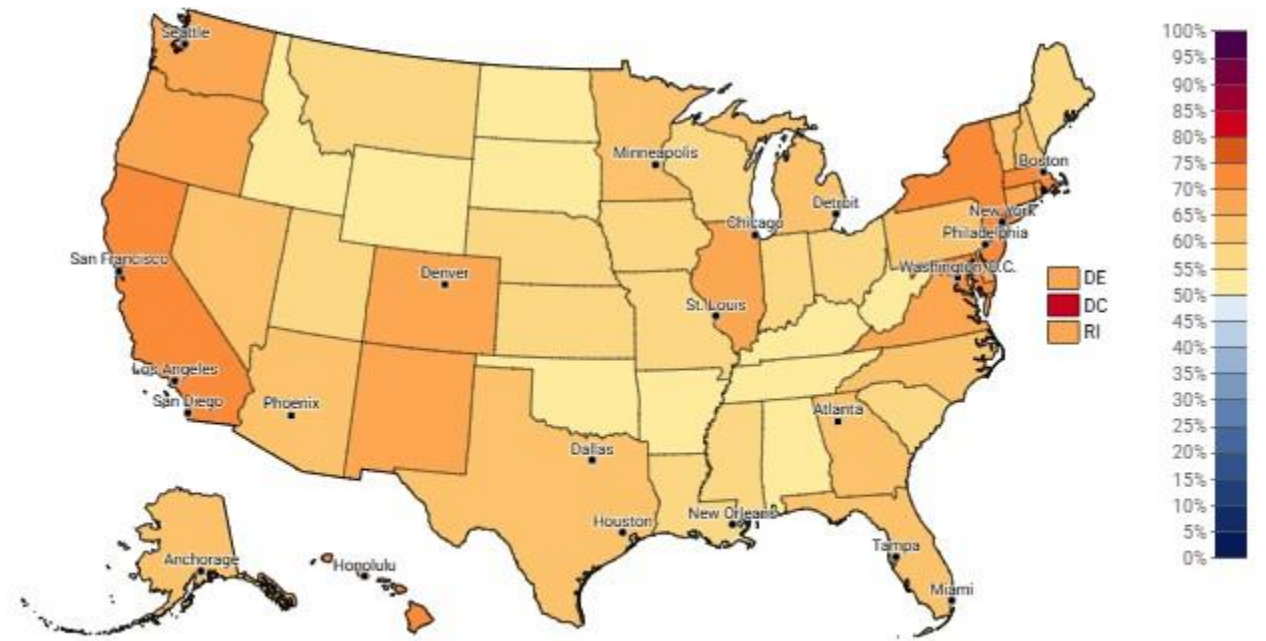
The Majority of Americans...

- 63% of US adults are worried about global warming

Estimated % of adults who are somewhat or very worried about global warming (nat'l avg. 63%), 2025

Select Question:

Click map or:



The Majority of Americans...

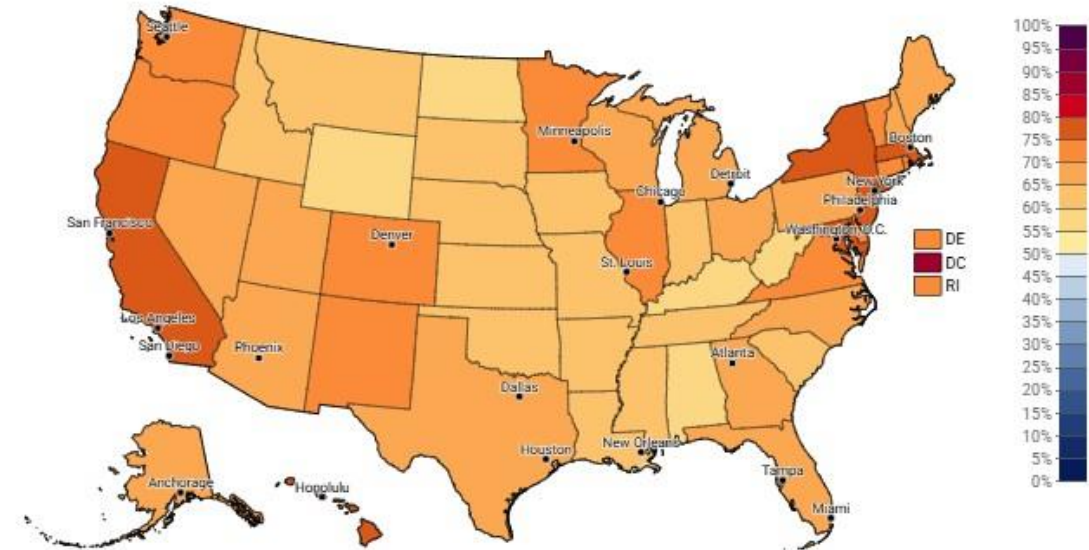
- 69% of US adults believe global warming is happening

Estimated % of adults who think that global warming is happening (nat'l avg. 69%), 2025

Select Question:

Click map on:

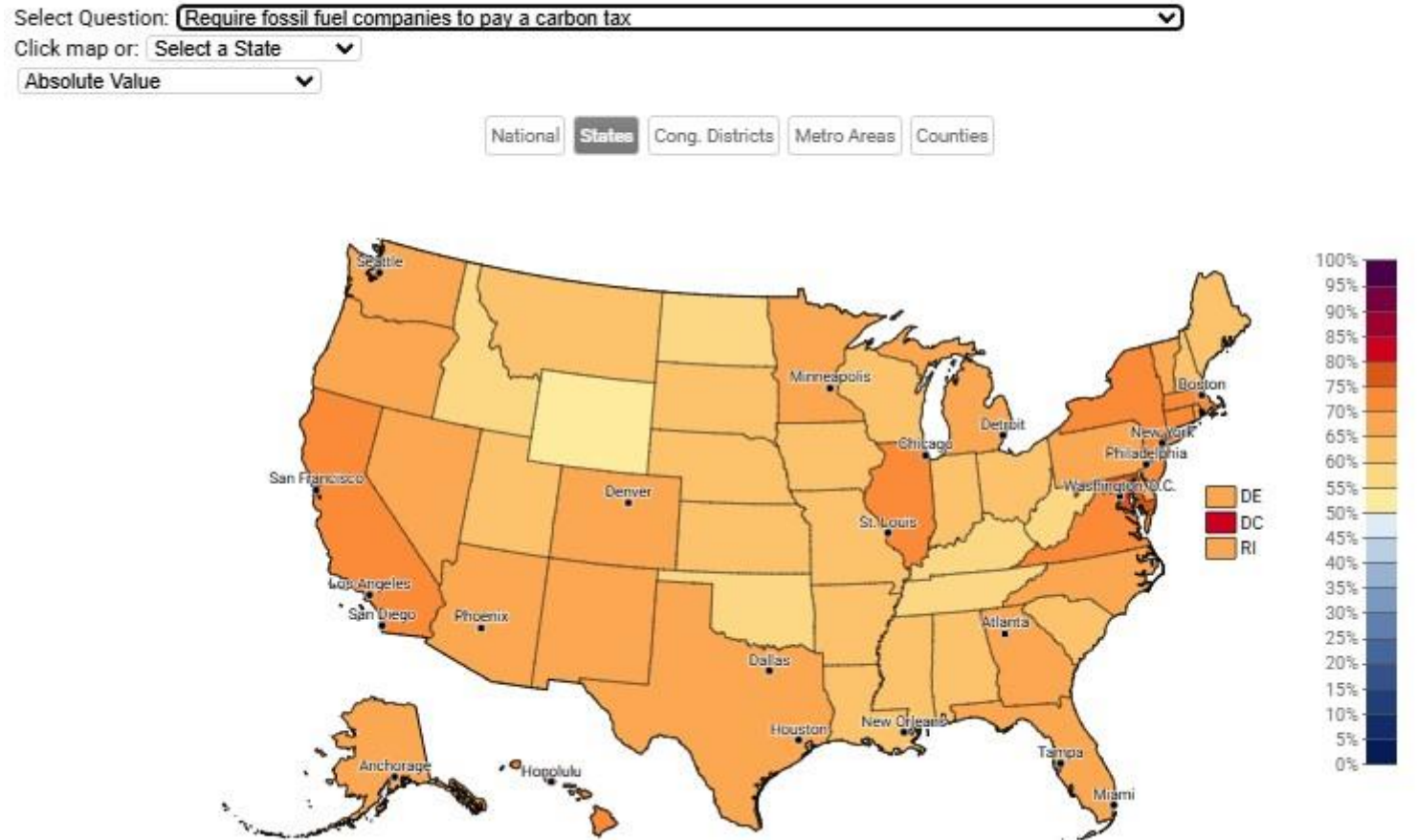
Absolute Value



The Majority of Americans...

- 66% of support a 100% clean energy transition!
- 75% want renewable energy to be produced in public lands
- 67% support carbon taxes for major companies

Estimated % of adults who somewhat or strongly support requiring fossil fuel companies to pay a carbon tax and use the money to reduce other taxes (such as income tax) by an equal amount (nat'l avg. 67%), 2025



Clean air and water, and a safe climate are shared American values across parties. *Q: Please indicate if you agree or disagree with each one of the following statements. Showing total for "Strongly agree" and "Somewhat agree". 1,013 national respondents. +/- 3% margin of error.*

■ **National** ■ Democrat ■ Republican ■ Independent

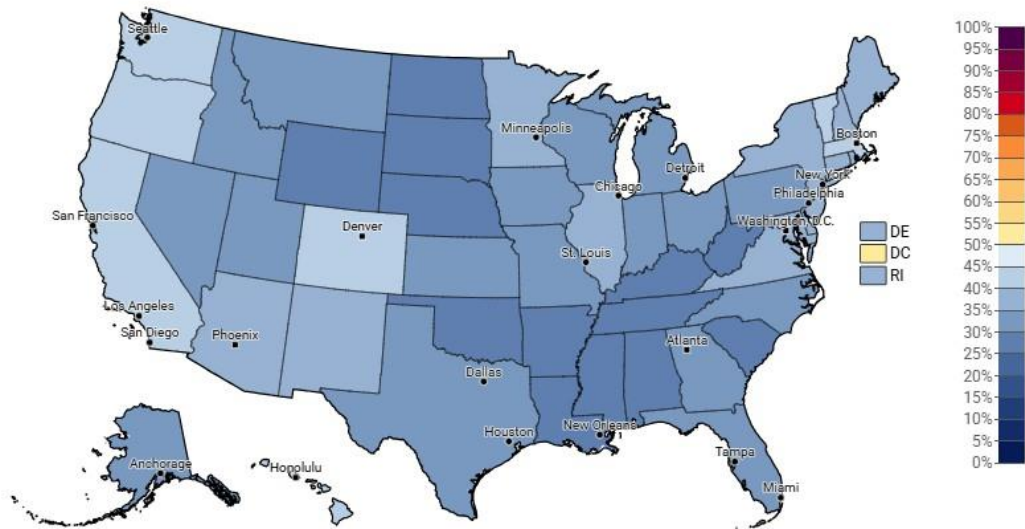
Americans stand together for fair climate solutions. *Q: Please indicate if you agree or disagree with each one of the following statements: Solutions to climate change should be fair, ensuring all communities benefit and no one is left behind. Showing total for "Strongly agree" and "Somewhat agree". 1,013 national respondents. +/- 3% margin of error.*

But! we don't talk or hear about the issue

Estimated % of adults who discuss global warming with friends and family occasionally or often (nat'l avg. 35%), 2025

Select Question:

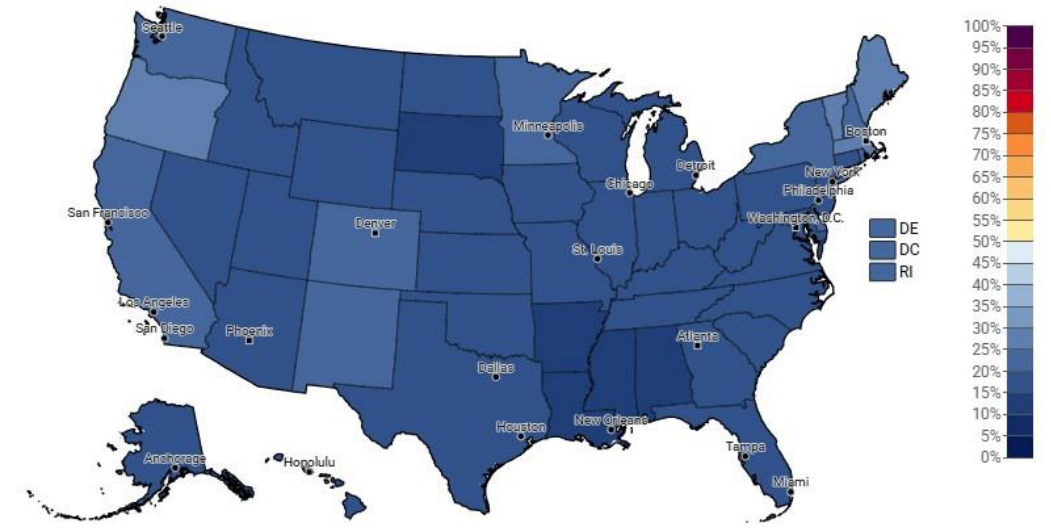
Click map or:



Estimated % of adults who hear about global warming in the media at least once a week (nat'l avg. 19%), 2025

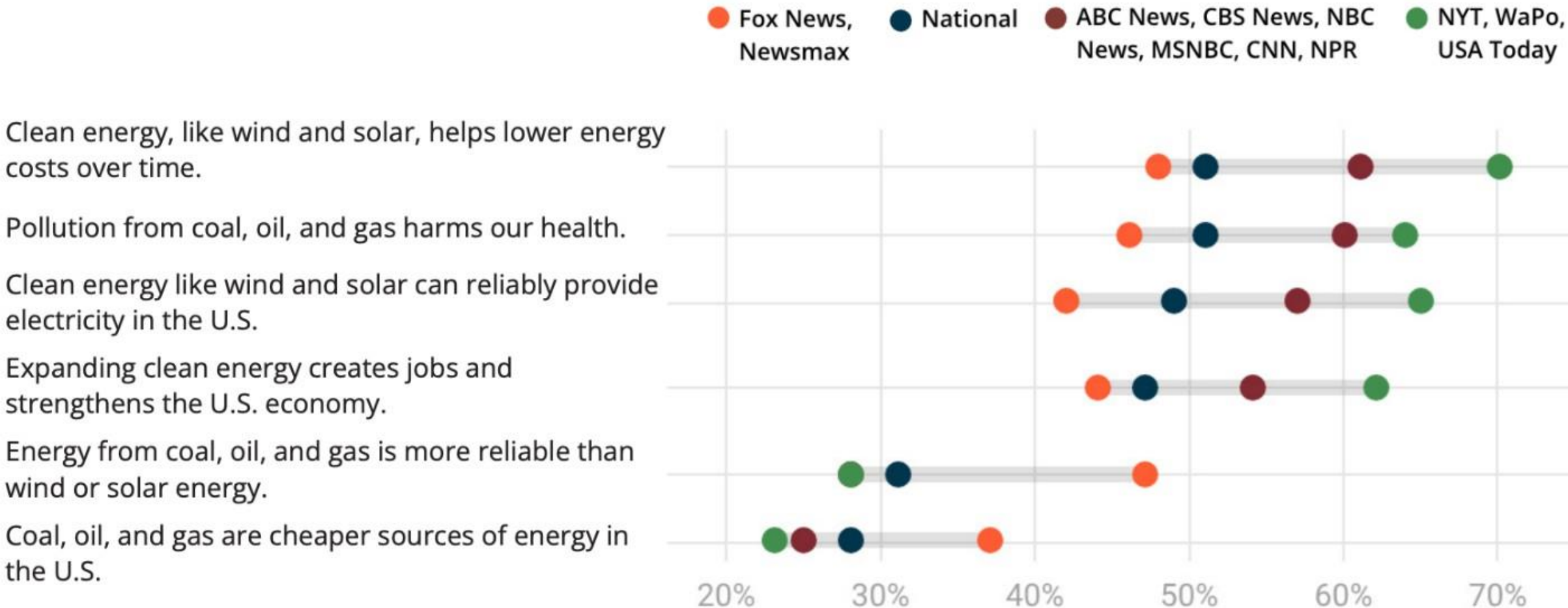
Select Question:

Click map or:



Where Americans get their news shapes what they believe about energy.

Q: Which of the following statements about energy do you believe are accurate? Select all that apply.



Each dot represents the share of Americans, by news source and nationally, who believe the statement is accurate. 1,037 national respondents. +/- 3% margin of error.

SIMPLE, CLEAR MESSAGES, REPEATED OFTEN, BY A VARIETY OF TRUSTED AND CARING MESSENGERS

Five key facts about global warming (in 10 words)

| | |
|----------------------|--|
| IT'S REAL | Global warming is happening. |
| IT'S US | Human activity is the main cause. |
| EXPERTS AGREE | More than 97% of the world's climate experts are convinced, based on data, that human activity is warming the planet. |
| IT'S BAD | The impacts are serious, and they affect us (especially our children and grandchildren). |
| THERE'S HOPE | There are actions we can take that will make a difference. |

How much do you trust or distrust the following as a source of information about global warming?

| Rank by trust | All registered voters | Liberal Democrats | Moderate/conservative Democrats | Liberal/moderate Republicans | Conservative Republicans |
|---------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1 | NASA | Climate scientists | Climate scientists | NASA | Family and friends |
| 2 | Family and friends | Environmental organizations | EPA | Family and friends | Your primary care doctor |
| 3 | Climate scientists | EPA | Environmental organizations | Your primary care doctor | NASA |
| 4 | Your primary care doctor | NASA | NASA | Climate scientists | The Fox News Channel |
| 5 | EPA | Teachers | Television weather reporters | EPA | Leaders in your religious faith |
| 6 | Television weather reporters | President Biden | American Medical Association | Television weather reporters | Television weather reporters |
| 7 | Environmental organizations | National Public Radio (NPR) | President Biden | US military leaders | Climate scientists |
| 8 | Teachers | Television weather reporters | Your primary care doctor | Teachers | US military leaders |
| 9 | American Medical Association | Family and friends | National network news | American Medical Association | American Medical Association |
| 10 | Your local newspaper | National network news | National Public Radio (NPR) | Environmental organizations | Teachers |
| 11 | National Public Radio (NPR) | American Medical Association | Your local newspaper | Your local newspaper | Oil, gas, and coal companies |
| 12 | Local TV news | Your local newspaper | Family and friends | Local TV news | EPA |
| 13 | National network news | CNN | Local TV news | National Public Radio (NPR) | Your local newspaper |
| 14 | President Biden | Your primary care doctor | Teachers | National network news | Environmental organizations |
| 15 | US military leaders | MSNBC | CNN | The Fox News Channel | Your congressperson |
| 16 | CNN | Local TV news | MSNBC | Leaders in your religious faith | Local TV news |
| 17 | MSNBC | Your congressperson | US military leaders | Your congressperson | National Public Radio (NPR) |
| 18 | Your congressperson | US military leaders | Your congressperson | CNN | National network news |
| 19 | Leaders in your religious faith | Leaders in your religious faith | Leaders in your religious faith | MSNBC | CNN |
| 20 | The Fox News Channel | The Fox News Channel | Oil, gas, and coal companies | Oil, gas, and coal companies | MSNBC |
| 21 | Oil, gas, and coal companies | Oil, gas, and coal companies | The Fox News Channel | President Biden | President Biden |

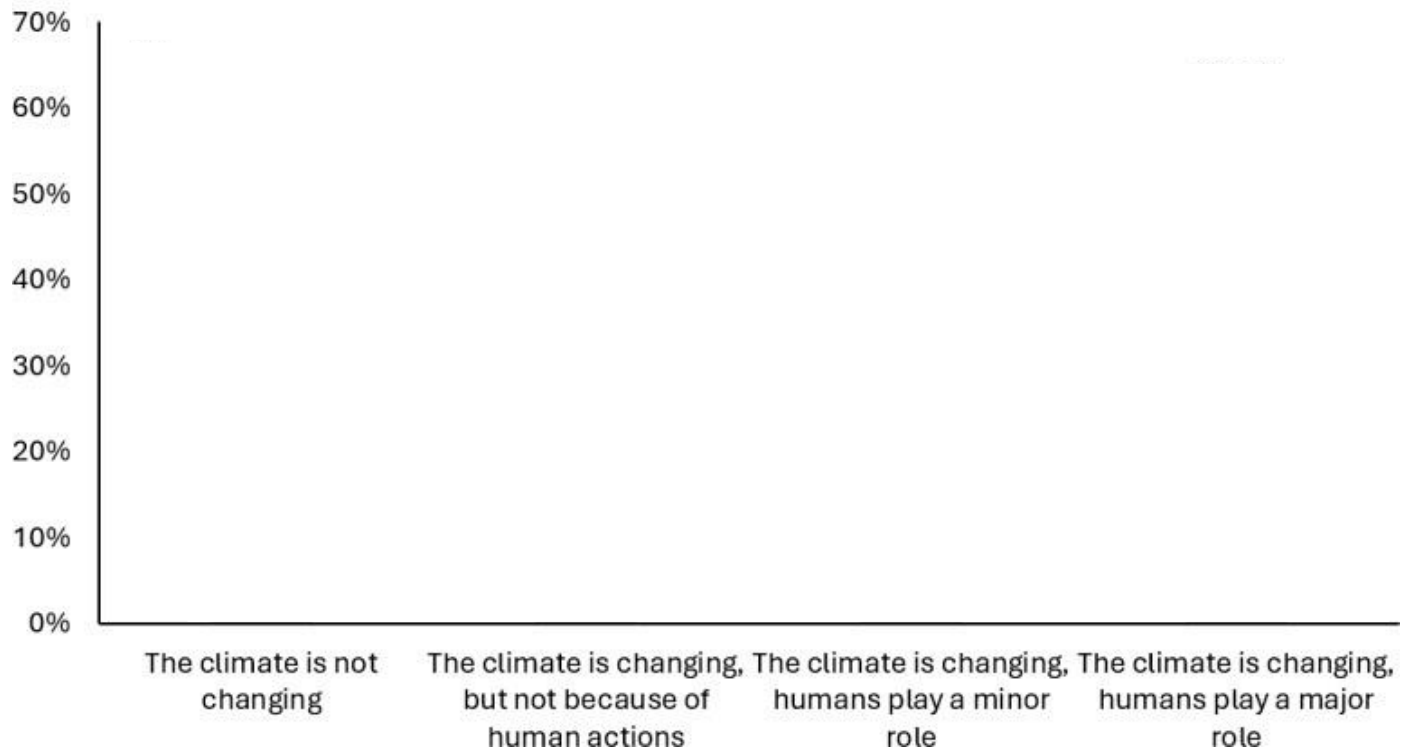
April 2022

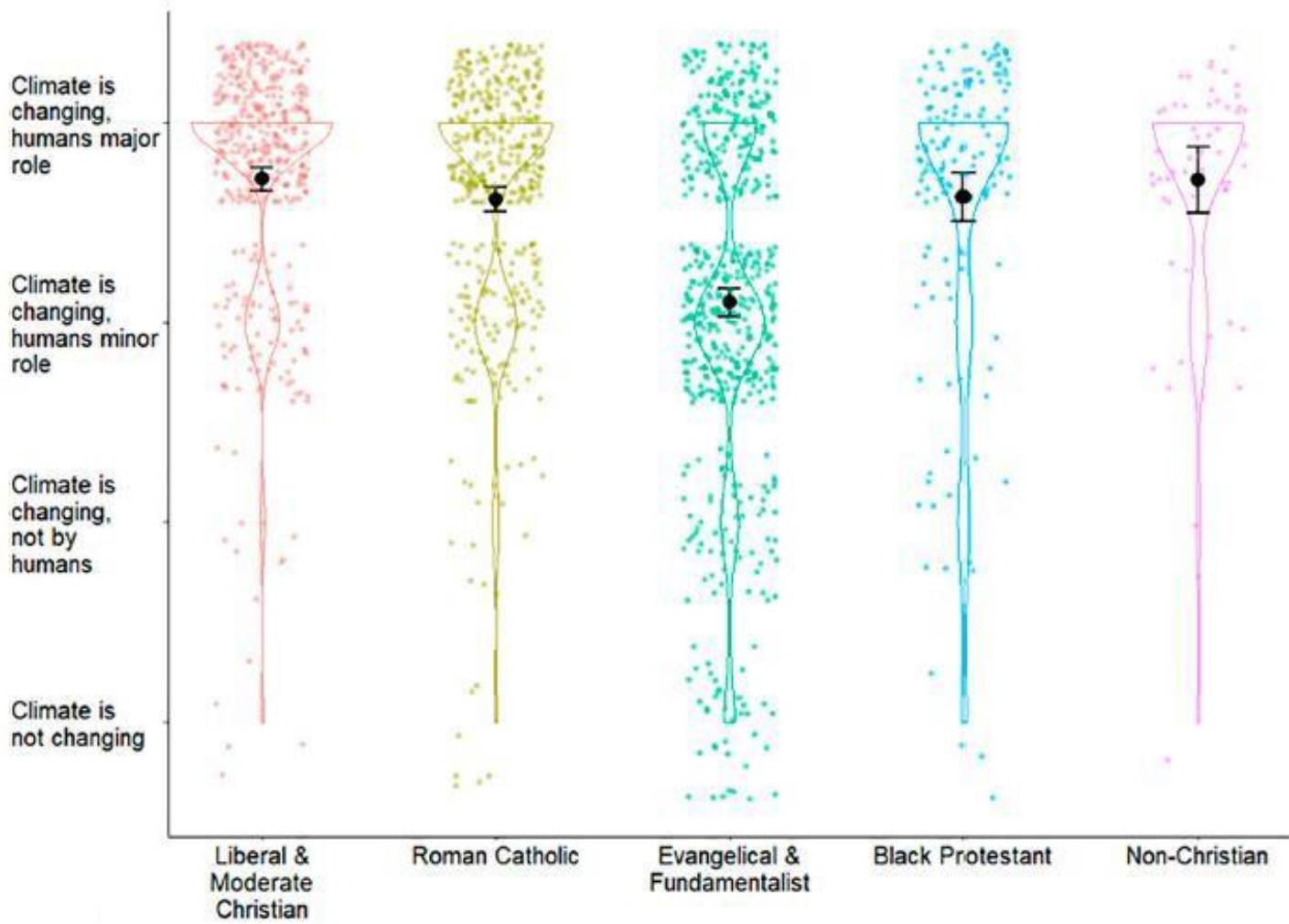
The Influence of Religious Leaders

- Religious leaders have a large audience (47% of US; 133 million people)
- They have access to populations that are skeptical of climate change (e.g., Pew Research Center, 2022)
- They can influence attitudes and behaviors via setting norms and leading by example (e.g., Myers et al., 2017)
- They have the perfect framework to make climate information personally relevant

So, let's investigate religious leaders' climate beliefs and practices

~90% believe in anthropogenic climate change



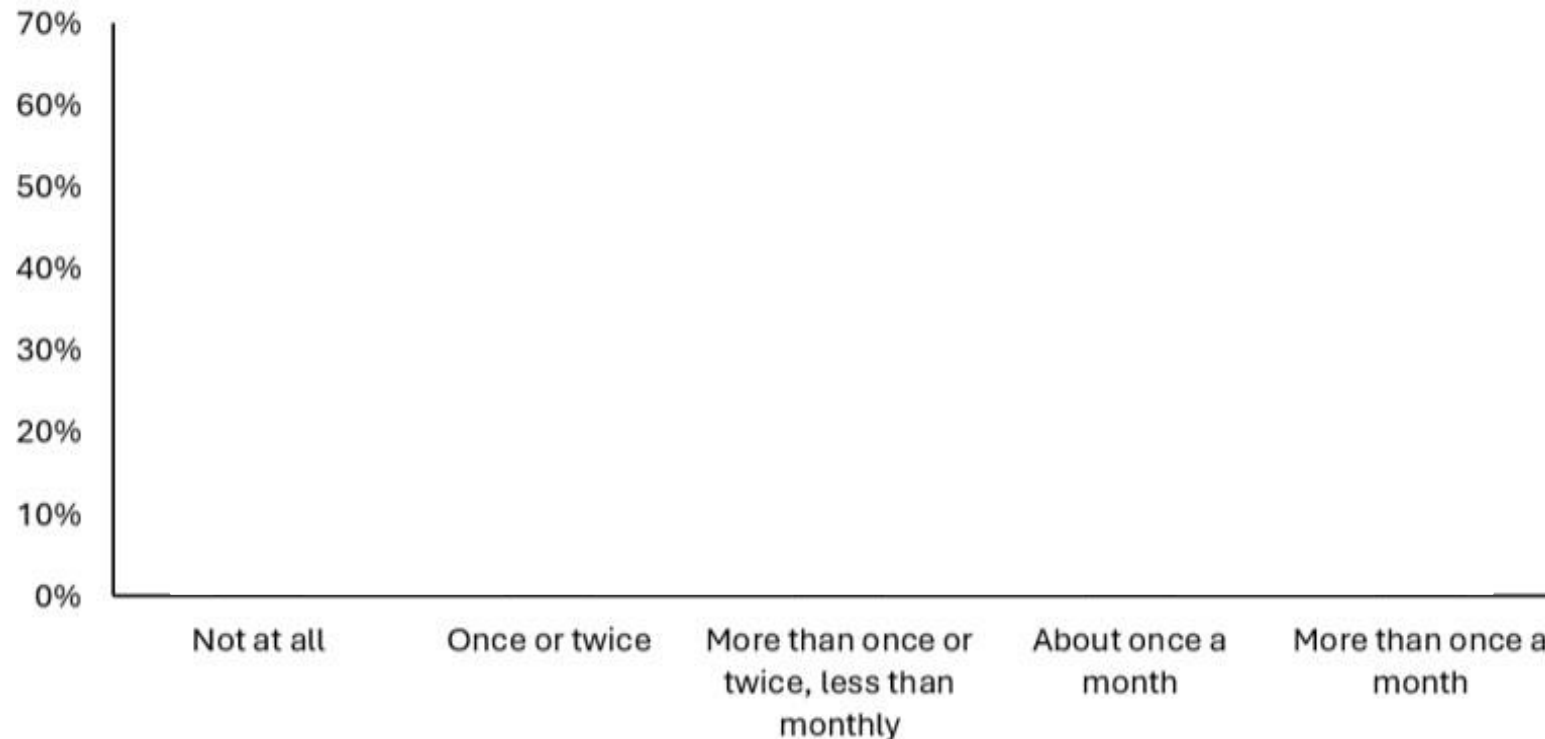


Climate Change Acceptance by denomination

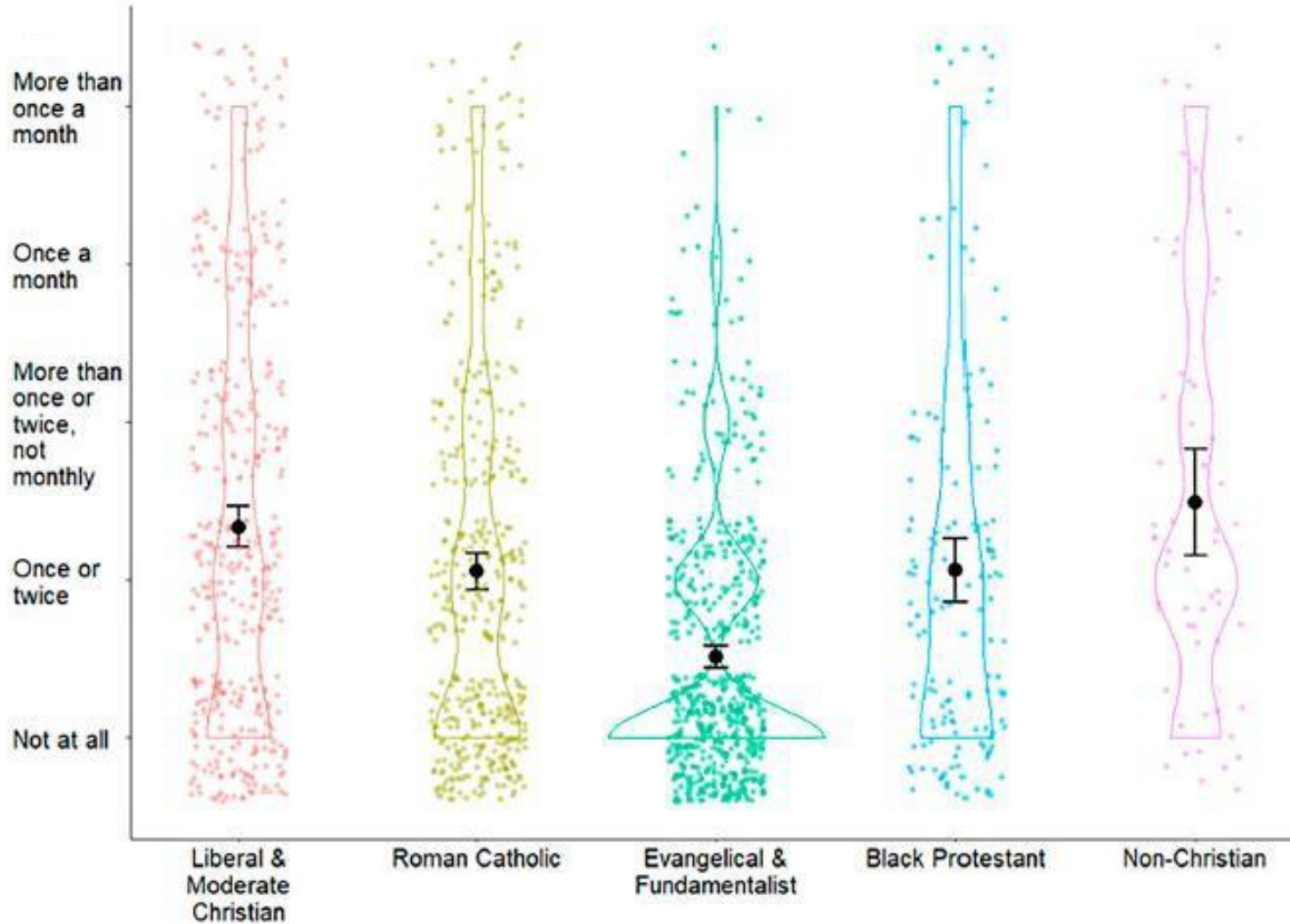


So, let's investigate religious leaders' climate beliefs and practices

~75% discuss it less than twice a year



Discussing Climate Change by denomination



Results for Roman Catholics

WHAT IS ACTUALLY TRUE

94%

of Catholic leaders believe
in human-caused climate change

42
percentage
points
apart

WHAT CATHOLICS CONGREGANTS THINK

52%

of Catholic leaders believe in
human-caused climate change

Every denomination shows the same pattern

| Denomination | Leaders who actually believe | Congregants' estimate | Gap |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------|--------|
| ★ Roman Catholics | 94% | 52% | 42 pts |
| Liberal & Moderate Christians | 96% | 51% | 45 pts |
| Black Protestants | 89% | 50% | 39 pts |
| Evangelical & Fundamentalist | 82% | 40% | 42 pts |
| All Christians combined | 93% | 48% | 45 pts |

When a pastor speaks, or even believes in climate change it can influence the congregation's attitudes

2.5×

more likely to attend
a church-hosted
climate event

2.3×

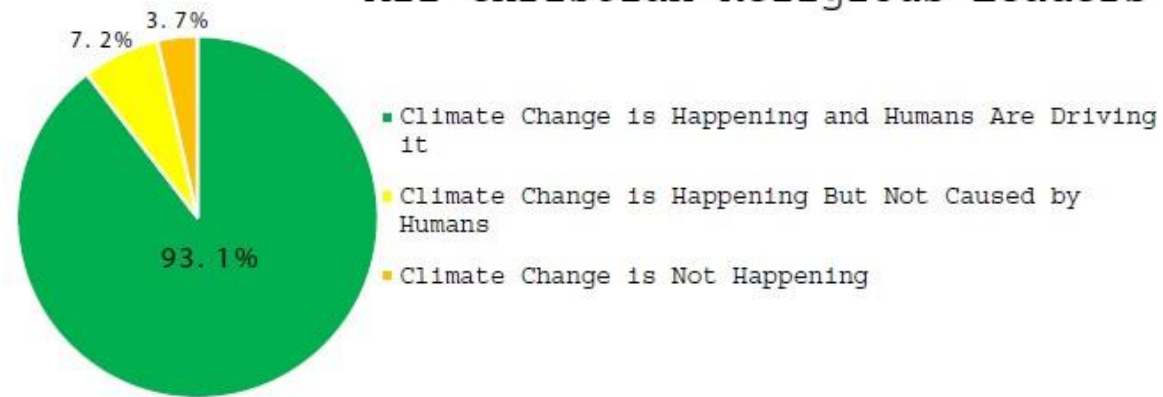
more likely to have
climate conversations
with fellow
churchgoers



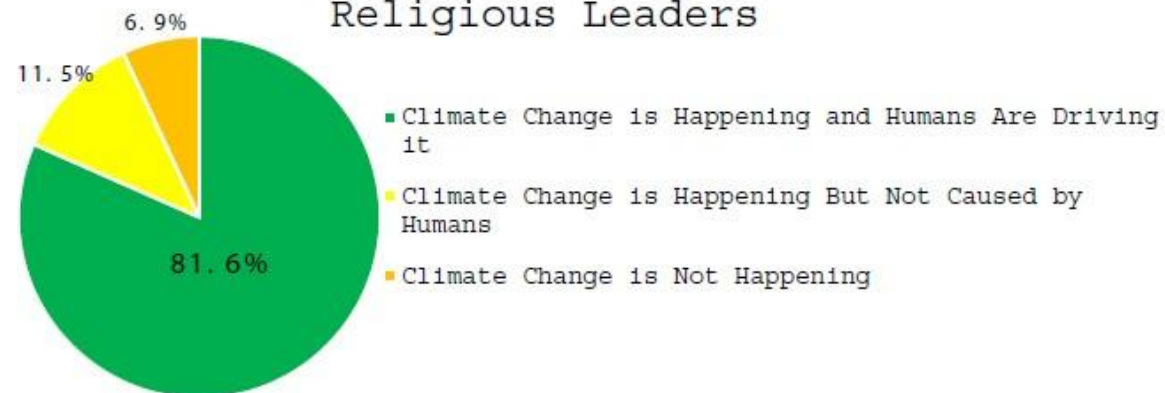
Greater comfort &
openness for climate
actions in church

Intervention message

All Christian Religious Leaders



Evangelical or Fundamentalist Religious Leaders



Simply sharing these findings changes how people see their community

| BEFORE learning the truth (control group) | | AFTER learning the truth (treatment group) |
|--|--|---|
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

All changes statistically significant ($p \leq .05$)

Simply sharing these findings changes how people see their community

| BEFORE learning the truth (control group) | | AFTER learning the truth (treatment group) |
|--|---|---|
| “About 50% of Christian leaders believe in climate change” | → | “About 80% of Christian leaders believe in climate change” |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

Simply sharing these findings changes how people see their community

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| “About 50% of Christian leaders believe in climate change” | → | “About 80% of Christian leaders believe in climate change” |
| “About 53% of people in churches like mine believe” | → | “About 70% of people in churches like mine believe” |
| | | |
| | | |

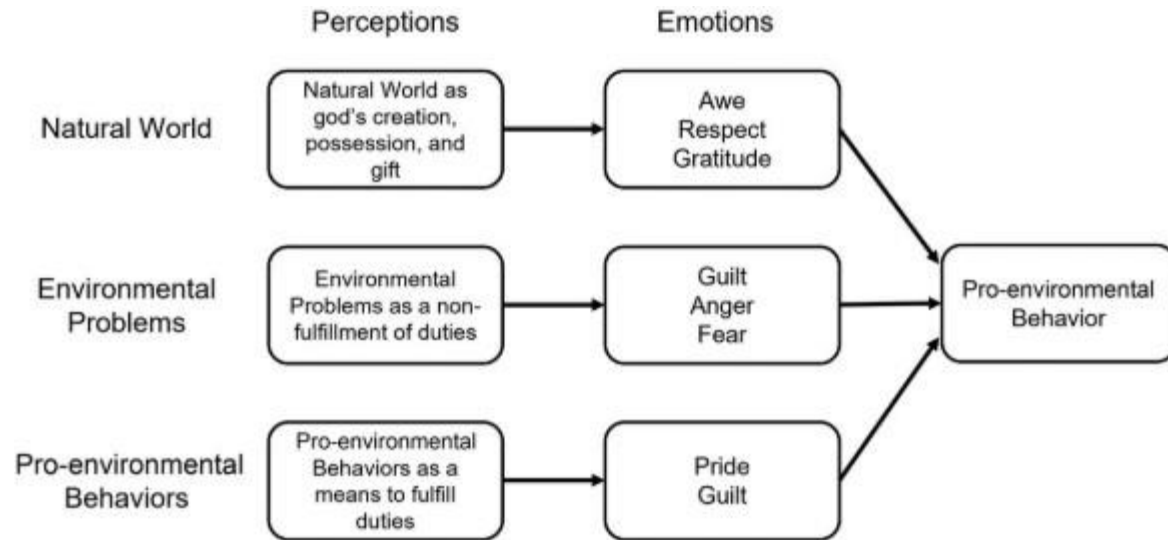
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| “About 53% of people in churches like mine believe” | → | “About 70% of people in churches like mine believe” |
| Climate action feels somewhat consistent with my church’s values | → | Climate action feels MORE consistent with my church’s values ✓ |
| | | |

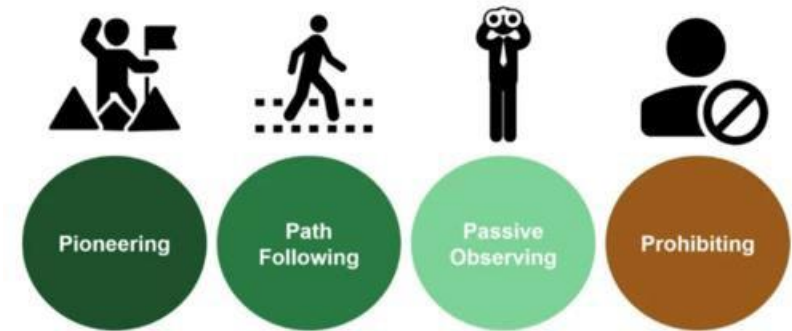
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| Climate action feels somewhat consistent with my church’s values | → | Climate action feels MORE consistent with my church’s values ✓ |
| Voting for anti-climate candidates—unclear if it conflicts with faith | → | Voting for anti-climate candidates goes AGAINST my church’s values ✓ |

Some additional considerations!



Eom & Ng, 2023 (TOPICS)



Koehrsen & Ives, 2025, Ambio

Takeaways

- Don't assume others know you are concerned
- Others are themselves probably concerned
- Talk, talk, talk
- Simple, clear messages, repeated frequently, by trusted and caring messengers, pointing to tangible and socially-supporting/empowering solutions

Don't be a stranger!

Feel free to email me at ssyropou@asu.edu