



Do Christians, others think 'climate change' is manmade?

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Just before United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon addressed the UN General Assembly, dubbing “climate change” as “the defining challenge of our time,” the Barna Group asked Americans what they thought about the controversial topic and whether they believe man is responsible for the phenomena.

With climate change being taught and promoted in the schools, media and entertainment industry as black-letter law, rather than a theory – in the same fashion as Darwinian macroevolution – the Barna Group was not surprised to find that those showing skepticism as to whether climate change is manmade are far outnumbered by those who claim human responsibility. “When asked whether humans caused climate change and/or global warming, seven in 10 adults say either yes, absolutely (42%), or yes, possibly (29%),” Barna researchers reported, “Skeptics make up around one-fifth of all Americans, answering either no, probably not (10%), or no, definitely not (11%). Another one in 11 are not sure (9%). Even though younger generations have been more greatly influenced by climate change teachings than older generations, both have been found to accept the promoted theory that manmade pollutants have caused the warming phenomenon.

“Although most adults in each generational group believe humans caused climate change and/or global warming, more Millennials [born between 1984 and 2002] than Elders [born in 1945 or earlier] are *absolutely* sure,” those conducting the survey found. “Close to half of all Millennials (46%) believe climate change is absolutely caused by human activity, compared to a gradually decreasing scale of certainty among Gen-Xers [born between 1965 and 1983] (43%), Boomers [born between 1946 and 1964] (39 percent) and, finally, one-third of Elders (35%).”

Is one’s level of education indicative of whether or not one believes in human-caused climate change? Apparently so, as the study discovered that the longer a person is subjected to climate change teachings after high school, the more likely he or she is to buy into the notion. “Those most certain of human-caused climate change and global warming are those with a college degree (50%),” the research institute based in Ventura, California, divulged. “Certainty, decreases with one’s level of education: Four in 10 adults with some college education (41%), and about one-third with high school or less (36%), say humans absolutely caused climate change and global warming.”

Christians and conservatives ... harder nuts to crack: Despite a “creation care” movement that surfaced within the Church in the 1970s and again in the 1990s – which closely aligned many churchgoers with environmentalists – most evangelicals today are not significantly influenced by the climate change agenda that teaches man is to blame for any pronounced atmospheric warming. “[F]ewer than one in five evangelicals (19%) believe humans absolutely caused climate change and/or global warming -- to compare, this is less than half the national average (42%),” Barna revealed. “More than half of those who claim no faith (atheists, agnostics, etc., 53%) are absolutely certain of human-caused climate change and global warming – almost three times the number of evangelicals. In contrast to the smaller evangelical community, however, more than four in 10 practicing Christians (43%) are certain of human-caused climate change. The practicing Christian segment is more broadly representative of an array of denominational and political leanings, while evangelicals tend to be more theologically and politically conservative – a difference that may be partly responsible for the two groups’ diverging views.”

The same trend was found in the political spectrum, where ideology greatly influences one’s acceptance or denial of whether or not man’s activities triggered a change in the earth’s climate. “The partisan divide is clear – almost four times as many liberals (69%) as conservatives (20%) are certain of human-caused climate change,” the pollsters informed.

Fighting climate change

When asked how to fight climate change, the politically correct way of going about it frequently touted by the Obama administration was found to be the most popular answer. “A plurality of U.S. adults (37%) agree that establishing renewable energy sources is the best way to fight climate change,” researchers explained. “The next most popular answer is ‘not sure’ (23%), which reveals the complexity and uncertainty that surround initiatives to fight climate change and global warming. Following these two responses is the continual development of technological advancement (14%) and recycling/composting (12%). A small but not insignificant number of adults say ‘something else’ (7%), followed by smaller minorities who advocate for the expansion of public transportation infrastructure (3%), implementing a carbon tax (2%) and becoming a vegetarian (1%).”

When it comes to adopting environmentalists’ most aggressively pushed way to combat climate change, liberals are the most likely group to succumb to their marketing scheme to embrace clean energy. “Beginning with establishing renewable energy sources, the groups most likely to believe this is the best option to fight climate change are liberals (49%), those who claim no faith (45%), Millennials (43%) and those who have graduated college (43%),” the study uncovered. “Among those least likely to think this is the best option are practicing Christians (31%), evangelicals (29%), black Americans (27%) and conservatives (25%).”

More clear distinctions between demographic groups were witnessed when American adults were asked how to solve the so-called dilemma. “Looking at those who are unsure about the best solutions to fight climate change, the groups most likely to say so are black adults (40%), those who have completed high school or less (32%), Boomers (26%) and all non-white Americans (26%),” the statistics showed. “Among those least likely to be unsure are those who earn \$100K+ (14%), college graduates (13%), liberals (13%) and Asian Americans (12%).”

Technology aficionados anxious to use the most cutting-edge techniques to keep the temperature down were most prominently found in the highest economic and educational brackets. “The groups most likely to believe the most effective way to fight climate change is the continual development of technological advancement are Boomers (23%), college graduates (21%), those who earn \$100K+ (21%) and conservatives (21%),” the results indicated. “Among those least likely to say this is effective are evangelicals (11%), those who claim no faith (11%), very active church attenders (9%) and Millennials (6%).”

The more fundamental decades-old techniques geared to preserve the environment were particularly popular with faith-centered and younger American adults. “The groups most likely to believe recycling and composting is the most effective way to fight climate change are practicing Christians (18%), Millennials (17%), semi-active church attenders (17%) and Gen-Xers (16%),” they survey uncovered. “Among those least likely to say so are Elders (10%), those who live in the South (10%), college graduates (9%) and Boomers (5%).”

Dealing with of the results

Barna Group Senior Writer Cory Maxwell-Coghlan, who served as lead analyst of the study, contends that rather than fuel the debate, churches should merely seek to pursue the good stewardship God encouraged believers to follow in Scripture. “Faith leaders especially must be wary of hammering the stake deeper into the chasm separating those on either side of the issue,” Maxwell-Coghlan advised. “They must be willing to occupy that ‘messy middle,’ urging their divided congregations to look beyond their seemingly irreconcilable differences to seek common ground over a shared concern for God’s creation.”

He recommends that Christians just go about their Father’s business and leave the Earth in a way that will allow posterity to enjoy it as we have. “Whether human-caused or not, seeking energy independence, preserving rainforests, creating more livable cities, and fighting for clean water and air are all good reasons to build coalitions across political and religious divides,” Maxwell-Coghlan added. “Preserving God’s world for future generations is surely something we can agree on, especially since ‘no one knows the day or the hour’ of Christ’s return (see Mark 13).”