

Institute for
the **Impact** of
Faith in Life



24th June 2024

v.07.24

Stewardship: Exploring Faith and Sustainability

Authors: Charlotte Littlewood, Rania Mohiuddin-Agir, Amanda Murjan

iifl.org.uk

Contents

Executive Summary	5
1. Introduction	7
2. Establishing attitudes to climate change	12
3. Exploring the relationship between attitudes and faith	20
4. Determining attitudes to methods in response to climate change	24
5. Translating attitudes to action	26
6. Support for environmentalist policies	30
7. Conclusions and Recommendations	36

Executive Summary

The Institute for the Impact of Faith in Life (IIFL) commissioned a bespoke nationally representative survey which focused on the relationship between faith and environmentalism in the UK. Fieldwork was carried out by Whitestone Insight (a member of the British Polling Council [BPC]) between the 31st May and 2nd June 2024. A total of 2,396 UK adults were surveyed across England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland. An additional booster set of 25 Muslims and 185 Hindus was included.

Any conclusions drawn from the results should not be extrapolated out to the wider population, but should simply be used as an indication of where certain groups and respondents stand on the issues on which we polled.

It should especially be noted that the samples of Jews, Sikhs and Buddhists were so small (15, 2, and 20 respectively) that the results from these faith groups in particular are not and should not be assumed to indicate any significant correlation between the answers given and the faith to which the respondents belong.

These are the key findings:

Hindu respondents lead in personal environmental actions and environmental concern:

Whilst not the faith group that is most in agreement with faith obligations to care for the planet, Hindu respondents showed the highest levels of concern for the impacts of climate change leading them to be the most active in various personal environmental actions¹. 64% of exclusivist² Hindu respondents participated in rewilding, compared to 31% of exclusivist Muslim respondents and 22% of exclusivist Christian respondents. They also led in changing consumer habits (78%), donating to charities (63%), and joining environmental groups (44%). Hindu respondents were then most likely to consider environmentalism when voting.

1 "Personal actions" here refers to actions that can be successfully completed by an individual, such as litter picking, voting, etc. A protest would be considered a group action.

2 Exclusivist: Respondents who agreed with the statement "I believe my faith to be the only one true religion."

Climate change denial highest amongst exclusivist Christian respondents:

Exclusivist Christian respondents showed the highest levels of climate change denial, with 31% agreeing with the statement "I don't believe the global climate is changing." This contrasts starkly with exclusivist Muslim respondents at 17%. Christian respondents in general were least likely to recognise the harms of climate change, to take personal environmental actions and to vote with environmentalism in mind. Despite their climate denial, exclusivist Christian respondents also held strong beliefs in their faith's requirement to care for the world, indicating influences other than their faith are guiding the outlook on climate change.

Belief in faith's requirement to care for the world is consistent across faiths, yet not translating into consistent action:

Hindu, Muslim and Christian respondents consistently believed their faith requires them to care for the world. This was most pronounced among exclusivist Muslim respondents (92%) and exclusivist Christian respondents (82%), showing a consistent belief across faiths that humanity has environmental responsibility. Despite this there was little difference between those of faith and those of no faith, whilst faith groups differed consistently and to similar degrees on environmental concern, action and voting. Hindu respondents were the most concerned and active, followed by Muslim respondents and lastly Christian respondents. This indicated cultural and socio-political influences on the different faith groups impacting concern and action rather than doctrine.

Youth more environmentally minded and more likely to connect their faith with environmentalism:

Young respondents were most likely to agree with the statement that God is in control and therefore there is no need to worry about climate change; 33% and 34% of the two youngest groups compared with only 11% of the 65+ group. However, younger respondents were more likely to agree with the statement that "God is an environmentalist" and were more concerned over and engaged in environmental actions compared to older generations. For instance, 46% of 18-24-year-olds agreed that "God is an environmentalist," compared to just 17% of those aged 65+. This trend indicates a generational shift in integrating religious beliefs with environmental stewardship.

1. Introduction

The challenges of climate change inspire a multitude of responses, and understanding how and why those attitudes emerge is paramount. In the intersection of faith and environmentalism, stewardship is often championed as a prime motivation for people of faith in caring for the world.

All faiths emphasise the guardianship humanity has over the world. Whether it is God's creation or a greater whole to which we all belong, there is an imperative to care for the planet. But how far does this translate into action? Do people of faith trust in God's plan, or do they actively work to preserve the world?

Alongside these questions, there is a growing perception amongst young people that the challenges posed by climate change are increasing; a research study from the Centre for Climate Change and Social Transformation showed that "younger age groups worry more about climate change, demonstrating a stronger emotional engagement with the topic than older age groups".³

Moreover, our own research has indicated that under 35s consider their faith to influence their voting behaviour more than any other age group, suggesting an increasing importance of faith at the ballot box.⁴

This leads to important questions regarding the relationship between faith and environmentalism. As well as the differences between age groups, what do the different faith groups believe about climate change? Is there more importance given to individual action, or is there a belief that God's plan means there is no need to worry? Which is given greater importance: national or global action?

Survey and Analysis

Respondents, polled between the 31st May and 2nd June 2024, were asked six questions aimed at establishing, first and foremost, what attitudes respondents held towards the topic of climate change. Similarly, the final question was intended to return to examine motivating factors to those attitudes. This allowed the results to establish a baseline point of comparison between different groups, including - importantly - between those with faith and those without. Thereafter, respondents who were of faith were asked questions intended to establish attitudes towards the relationship between faith and environmentalism, before turning to questions that examined how those professed attitudes translate into action and behaviour.

3 <https://www.cardiff.ac.uk/news/view/2730843-millennials-and-gen-z-have-higher-rates-of-climate-worry>

4 <https://iifl.org.uk/reports/britains-attitudes-to-faith-in-public-life-june-2024/>

The questions asked were as follows:

1. Do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the environment?

Strongly agree / Agree/ Disagree/ Strongly disagree/ Don't know or prefer not to say

- a. I don't believe the global climate is changing
- b. I do believe the global climate is changing but it's not primarily caused by human activity
- c. I believe that climate change is one of the most important issues for the world today
- d. Climate change is a threat but I am confident that human ingenuity will enable us to adapt to it
- e. Millions of people are already suffering because of climate change
- f. Humanity faces the real threat of extinction as a result of climate change

2. Do you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding the environment and your faith? (Excluding those who said 'none' to the faith question)

Strongly agree / Agree/ Disagree/ Strongly disagree/ Don't know or prefer not to say

- a. God has given humans the responsibility of caring for His creation in the world
- b. God will one day restore all of creation, so there is no need to be overly concerned about it now
- c. My faith requires me to care for the world
- d. I care about climate change primarily because it causes human suffering
- e. I know God is in control, therefore I am not worried about climate change
- f. God is an environmentalist

3. When it comes to dealing with climate change, how important or otherwise are each of the following:

Very important / fairly important / fairly unimportant / very unimportant / don't know

- a. Individual behaviour change
- b. Government action through targets and legislation
- c. International action and global commitments
- d. Protests and demonstrations

4. In the last 12 months, have you participated in any of the following?

No / Once / At least once a month / Once a week / More than once a week

- a. Litter picking
- b. Participated in tree planting or rewilding
- c. Donated to an environmentally focused charity
- d. Joined an environmental organisation
- e. Participated in a protest about the environment
- f. Stopped eating meat or changed transport method for environmental reasons
- g. Changed what you regularly buy out of concern for the environment

5. Would the following policy commitments influence your vote, or not?

Yes, if a party promised this I would consider voting for them / No, this policy wouldn't influence my vote / No, I know who I'm voting for regardless of this policy commitment / I think this policy is important but it wouldn't influence my vote / Don't know

- a. To ensure the UK has reduced its greenhouse gas emission by 100% from 1990 levels by 2050
- b. Expanding Ultra Low Emissions Zones to more areas
- c. To make Britain a green energy superpower
- d. Restoring waterways, peat bogs and planting trees
- e. Insulating all homes by 2030 and ensuring new builds are eco friendly
- f. Investing more in rail, buses, trams and electric vehicles

- g. Improving recycling and reducing single use plastics
- h. Banning the discharge by water firms of sewage into seas and rivers

6. To what extent, if at all, do each of the following shape your views on climate change?

Not at all / Somewhat / A lot / Don't know

- a. Your faith or religion
- b. Your political views
- c. Concern for loved ones
- d. Concern for future generations
- e. Health concerns
- f. Concern for those in less developed countries
- g. Concern for wildlife

The survey was undertaken by Whitestone Insight, who interviewed 2,396 UK adults online. The data was weighted to be representative of all UK adults. In addition, booster sets of 25 Muslims and 185 Hindus were included to bring each group to 200 respondents. Whitestone Insight is a member of the British Polling Council and abides by its rules. Enquiries were also made into the difference between “culturally” religious people – who might call themselves “Christian” or “Muslim” but only attend important services and not worship regularly – and “exclusivists”.

It is important to note that some faith groups have too few respondents to draw any substantial conclusions from their responses, as the survey was conducted with a general population sample. For example, in the weighted base sample, only 16 respondents were Jewish, 2 respondents were Sikh, and 15 were Buddhist.

Moreover, faith groups are not a monolithic bloc, but a heterogeneous and complex mosaic of different traditions within a broad religious belief; it is therefore important we do not homogenise the groups we are observing. To mitigate this risk, a future report will be published for which we will be conducting interviews with persons of different faiths with questions based on the survey questions.

The findings of the report are significant. First and foremost, they suggest that younger people of faith are more concerned about the threat of climate change than older generations, with Millennials (aged 25–34) and Gen Zers (aged 18–24) showing an increased belief that “God is an environmentalist” compared to older generations. What is important to note, however,

is that younger generations are also more likely to agree that, as “God is in control” of the environment, there is “no need to worry about climate change”. There is also, amongst younger people, a tendency to attribute decreased importance to *individual* behaviour and greater importance given to *group* actions, a trend that is especially clear over younger generations’ tendency to join environmentalist groups.

In addition, across all faiths there is evidence of a gulf between attitudes and behaviours, with people of faith amongst our respondents agreeing that their faith requires them to care for the world, but showing a similar level of commitment to people without faith to *behaviours* that tackle climate change.

This report is structured, therefore, as follows: first, questions one and six in the survey are combined into a single section that establishes the attitudes to climate change amongst respondents, with considerations given to the differences between those with and without faith, between age groups, and between regions of the United Kingdom. Thereafter, subsequent sections examine the results of each of the questions, with an overall analysis presented before turning to the differences between exclusivists and non-exclusivists, between faith groups, between age groups, and between regions of the United Kingdom. The report closes with conclusions that can be drawn from the data, as well as recommendations for improvements and how faith communities can be engaged more deeply on the topic of environmentalism.

2. Establishing attitudes to climate change

Overall, Christian respondents consistently showed a weaker belief in climate change, lower concern over its impact, were less likely to take personal actions to counter it, and were less inclined to vote for environmental policies. Conversely, Hindu respondents, while also having a relatively high rate of disbelief in climate change and scepticism about human activity causing it, were the most concerned about its impacts and the most active in personal environmental actions and environmentally-minded voting. This indicates that for Hindu respondents, belief in climate change and it being primarily caused by human action was not a requirement for concern and environmental action.

Despite Christian respondents' and Hindu respondents' differing coherence between belief in climate change, concern for it, and resultant environmental actions, Muslim respondents showed clear coherence. They exhibited belief in the possibility of climate change and its risks, linked their faith to environmental care, and demonstrated higher levels of action, and acknowledged their faith as more influential on their views of climate change than other faiths.

Faith was not necessarily seen as influential on views regarding climate change. Respondents of faith ranked faith as the second to last of influencers on what shapes their view on climate change. Similarly, faith and non-faith groups have given climate change relatively equal importance in the world today, with non-faith respondents scoring 1% higher than those of faith (70%, also equal to the national average). There was also mutual agreement on the suffering caused by climate change, with respondents in the faith category scoring 1% lower than the national average (73%), and non-faith respondents at 2% above the national average. Nonetheless, the results from the respondents of our nationally representative survey indicate that people of faith are more inclined towards climate change denial (16%) than both the non-faith category (9%) and the average (13%).

All exclusivist faith groups were in close agreement with each other with respect to God having control, their faith giving them responsibility over the welfare of the planet and also requiring them to care for it. However, different faith groups shared different feelings with regards to the realities of climate change. There was only one area of clear divergence and that was with respect to the question of the world's restoration. Whilst 44% of exclusivist Muslim respondents and 41% of non-exclusivist Muslim respondents were in agreement that God is in control so there is no need to worry, only 27% of exclusivist Muslim respondents and 26% of non-exclusivist Muslim respondents believe God will restore the world and therefore there is no need for concern. This may be due to the belief within Islam that the world will be destroyed at the end of days, not restored, which differs from Christian beliefs. The differences between Christian and Muslim respondents may highlight how specific doctrinal beliefs (e.g. end times in Christianity vs. destruction in Islam) can lead to different attitudes towards environmental stewardship and climate action. This divergence also highlights that the strong agreement on

all other faith related questions is a clear indicator of consensus across faiths with respect to God and environmentalism.

The consistency in belief amongst religious respondents that God has control and has also given them responsibility was not a precursor for similar beliefs on climate change and engagement in environmentalist actions. Rather, faith groups consistently behaved differently despite very similar faith related beliefs on the matter, suggesting that differing cultural and political influences as well as socio-economic pressures may impact the faith groups differently.

Exclusivists in general, and exclusivist Christian respondents in particular, were most likely to deny climate change and least likely to see it as an important issue or believe it was causing millions of people's suffering. Despite being more inclined towards climate denial and least likely to believe in climate change's adverse effects, they scored similarly high alongside Muslim respondents and Hindu respondents in the belief that humanity has a God-given responsibility over the welfare of the planet, indicating a potential disconnect that could be targeted by faith leaders in climate education efforts.

Exclusivist beliefs were a strong predictor of belief in the need for individual, national and global action. In all measures, apart from protests and demonstrations, Hindu respondents and Muslim respondents rated highest with marginal differences, whilst Christian respondents afforded personal action the least importance. This is coherent with their higher levels of climate denial and lower agreement in the belief that climate change is already causing mass human suffering. Exclusivist Muslim respondents took a clear lead in protests and demonstrations (70%), with exclusivist Hindu respondents following at 58% and exclusivist Christian respondents at 41%. Exclusivist beliefs were also a strong predictor of beliefs in the need for personal action. Hindu respondents took a clear lead on all measures whilst Christian respondents were the least active.

Whilst age showed little variation throughout, it was clear that younger respondents were experiencing a shift into integrating religious beliefs with environmental stewardship. They were most likely to see God as an environmentalist and scored the highest on questions that suggested high levels of belief in God. They were also the most engaged in environmentalism, despite having fewer years to participate.

There are also observable disparities in perceptions of climate change based on geographical region, where Scotland, Yorkshire, and the South West are more accepting of climate change and the impact of human activity on climate change compared to more populated regions such as the South East, London, and North West. London and Northern Ireland rated consistently high on concern over the environment and belief in the need for action, however this did not consistently translate into action for Northern Ireland. Respondents in Northern Ireland were most likely to have multiple factors shaping their views on climate change, emerging as the most popular region to prioritise political view, concern for loved ones, health concerns, concern for those in less developed countries, and concern for wildlife. Religion, as a factor, was most popular in London (15%) and least popular in Yorkshire (4%). Disparity across regions is unlikely linked to religiosity as other responses indicated that religiosity was not a precursor for concern and action. Instead, disparity could be due to different socio-economic

issues facing Northern Ireland compared with London, or perhaps environmental campaigning not resonating within Northern Ireland as it does in London.

With respect to whether certain environmental policies would persuade respondents to vote for them, there was very little difference between exclusivist and non-exclusivist respondents, thus indicating that religiosity is not an influential factor over environmentally minded voting. However, the general faith group did mark a difference, with Hindu respondents consistently and significantly more likely to vote according to commitments made around the environment, followed by Muslim respondents and, significantly lower, Christian respondents. Across all faith groups the environmental policy that received the most support was the policy which afforded the most immediate benefit whilst requiring no change to the way one lives their life (water companies not discharging sewage into the seas).

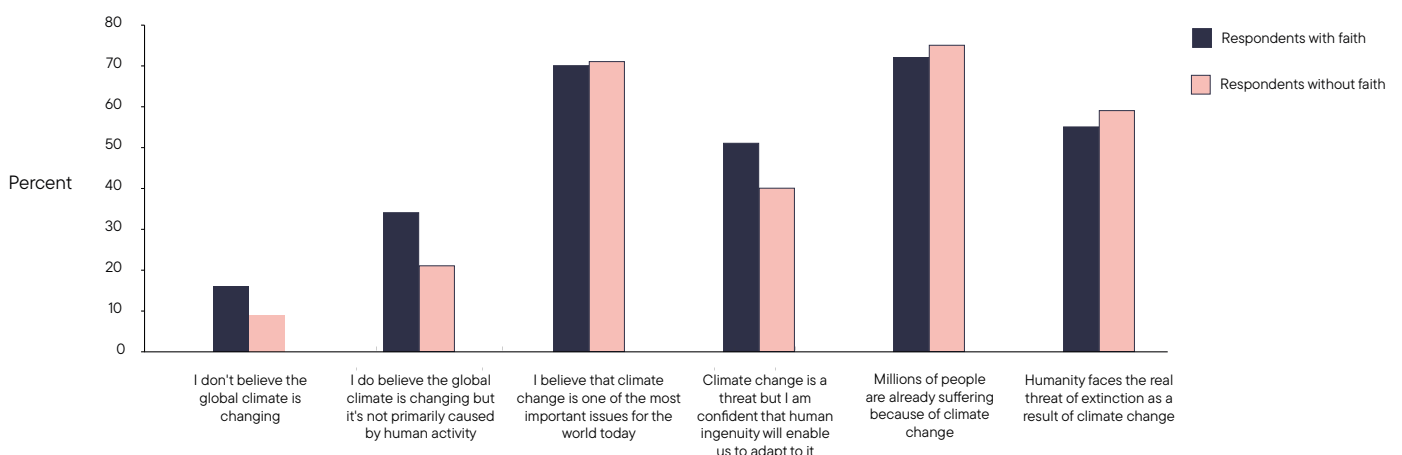
Conclusively, despite relative doctrinal consistency across faith groups, different faith groups held different attitudes and behaved differently with respect to environmentalism, thus indicating doctrinal beliefs bear little influence over environmentalism. Nonetheless, consistency within faith groups relating to attitudes and actions shows that there are different influencers acting on different groups - these could be cultural, political and/or socio/economic.

Thematic Summaries

The first question in our survey was aimed at establishing the attitudes of respondents to climate change and their perception of the challenges to the environment. Doing so allowed us to establish a baseline from which to judge the relationship between faith and attitudes to climate change, in order to make a judgement with subsequent questions on how that translated into action.

Faith

Faith v. Non-Faith



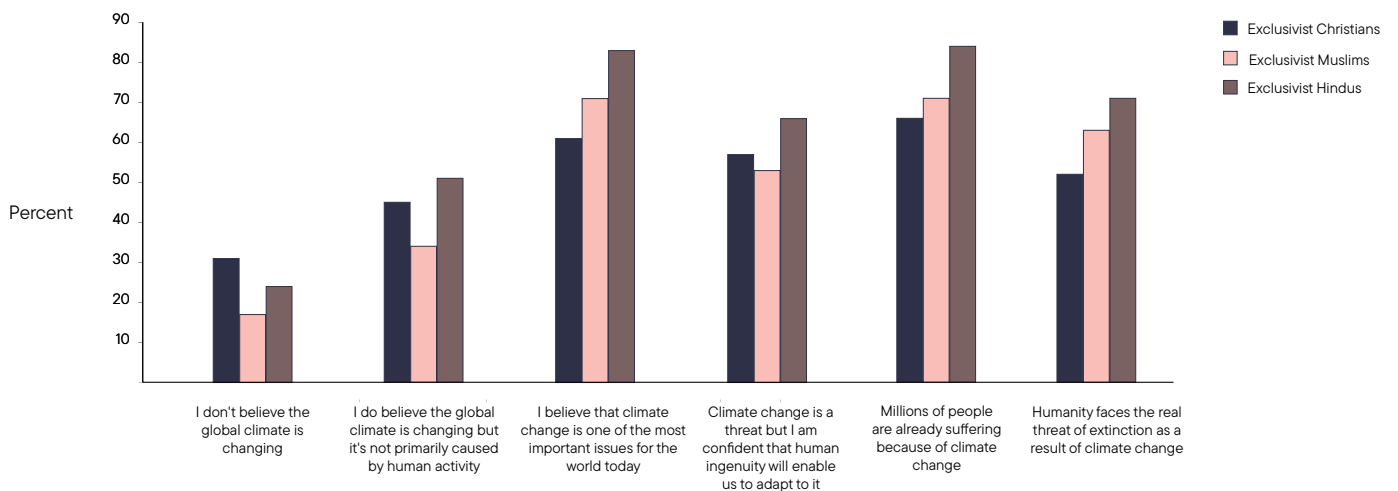
Faith and non-faith groups gave climate change relatively equal importance, with non-faith respondents scoring 1% higher than those of faith (70%, also equal to the national

average). There was also mutual agreement on the suffering caused by climate change, with respondents in the faith category scoring 1% lower than the national average (73%), and non-faith respondents at 2% above the national average on agreeing that climate change caused such suffering.

Nonetheless, survey results have revealed that respondents of faith show a greater inclination towards climate denial than both the non-faith category (7% difference) as well as the national average (3% difference). Similarly, respondents in the faith category expressed greater denial in the contribution of human action to climate change, and greater confidence in human ingenuity to adapt to climate change. The role of humans with relation to the environment and climate appears to be reactive, not causal for members of faith communities. This is once again exemplified in responses to the question on whether humanity faces a threat of extinction as a result of climate change, where the non-faith respondents were 4% more likely to accept the possibility of climate-caused extinction than faith group respondents.

There were also variations to responses given by respondents of faith, both in terms of religious grouping, as well as exclusivist perspectives.

Exclusivist v. Non-Exclusivist



Exclusivists tended to deny climate change more than non-exclusivists, the average person of faith, and the national average. Amongst the exclusivist category, exclusivist Christian respondents were most likely to deny climate change (31%), followed by exclusivist Hindu respondents (24%), and exclusivist Muslim respondents (17%). These probabilities remain higher than their non-exclusivist counterparts which came in at 16% across all three religions.

Likewise, compared to non-exclusivists, exclusivists were less willing to account for human agency and the role of human actions in changes to the global climate. Exclusivist Hindu respondents were most likely to point at other reasons for climate change (51%), followed by exclusivist Christian respondents (45%) and exclusivist Muslim respondents (34%).

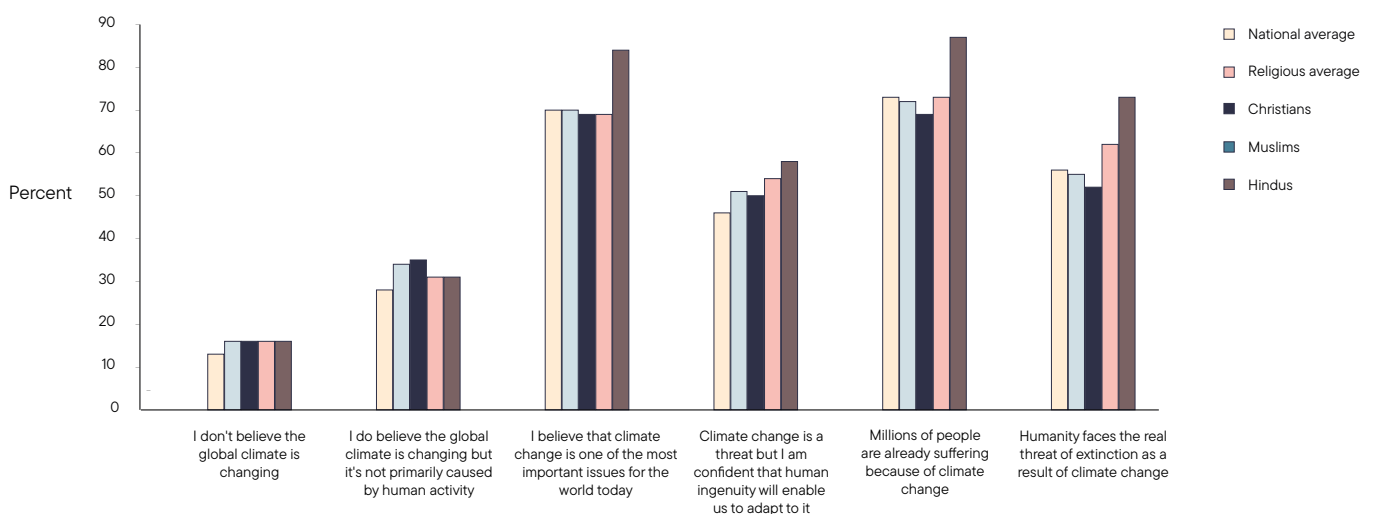
Exclusivist Christian respondents stand out from the remaining exclusivist categories in the importance they allocate to climate change (61% agree it is an important issue), the potential

of extinction (52% believe extinction due to climate change is a real threat), and the suffering caused by climate change (66% believe millions of people are readily suffering because of climate change). Comparatively, exclusivist Muslim respondents and Hindu respondents' views are generally close to, or above average with regards to an environmentalist perspective. For example, compared to 66% of exclusivist Christian respondents, 84% of exclusivist Hindu respondents and 71% of exclusivist Muslim respondents, showed an awareness of human suffering caused by climate change.

When examining the motivating factors towards approaches to climate change, exclusivists and non-exclusivists had the same top three priorities: concern for loved ones, concern for future generations, and health concerns, where the highest percentage of survey groups identified these as issues that shape their view on climate change. It would be interesting to explore whether these stem from religions' presentation of the family model and an encouragement to procreate to ensure continuity. The extent to which there was support for these views within the different religious categories does show variation, with the most influential factor for exclusivist Christian respondents (caring for loved ones and future generations) garnering 37% of support, whilst the most influential factor for exclusivist Muslim respondents and exclusivist Hindu respondents (concern for loved ones) came in at 52% and 65% respectively.

Expectedly, exclusivists placed religion and political views more centrally to their perception of climate change than non-exclusivists and the faith group average. 43% of exclusivist Muslim respondents, 41% of exclusivist Hindu respondents and 24% of exclusivist Christian respondents were influenced by faith or religion, which is considerably higher than the national average of 9%. As for political views, 29% of exclusivist Hindu respondents, 19% of exclusivist Muslim respondents, and 14% of exclusivist Christian respondents showcased a higher inclination than the national average (10%).

Religions



The graph above shows the percentage of respondents for each faith group that said they 'agree' or 'strongly agree' to each statement.

Delving further into trends within religious groups, there was a general trend of Hindu respondents being more open to accepting and placing importance on climate change compared to the other two Abrahamic religions accounted for in this study. 80% of Hindu respondents were convinced that the climate is changing, which is higher than both the average amongst those of faith (76%) and the national average (77%). Hindu respondents are also more likely to identify climate change as an important issue, with 84% compared to the (faith based and national) average of 70%.

There was, however, a discrepancy between the views of exclusivist and non-exclusivist Hindu respondents, where non-exclusivist Hindu respondents were more likely (62%) to accept that human activity was the primary cause of climate change, compared to 44% of exclusivist Hindu respondents.

The second group that was more accepting of climate change was Muslim respondents, which, except for a few outliers, were relatively consistent with the views of the average faith population and were generally lower than Hindu respondents and higher than Christian respondents. The main issue in which the exclusivist Muslim view diverged was that of human activity in bringing about climate change, where they were less likely than both Hindu respondents and Christian respondents to attribute climate change to human activity. A possible interpretation for this could be that the inevitability of apocalypse in Islam might have served to reduce human agency in the Muslim perspective. This also explains how both exclusivist and non-exclusivist Muslim respondents found the possibility of extinction due to climate change to be more likely (62-63%) than the national average (56%).

Exclusivist Christian respondents were the least likely to acknowledge changes in the climate, with only 61% agreeing that the climate is changing compared to 73% of Muslim respondents and 80% of Hindu respondents. They also were least likely to identify climate change as an important issue, where 30% of exclusivist Christian respondents, 20% of exclusivist Muslim respondents and 14% of exclusivist Hindu respondents believed climate change is one of the most important issues for the world today. For non-exclusivist, these numbers were 23% (exclusivist Christian), 20% (exclusivist Muslim), and 11% (exclusivist Hindu) respectively. Moreover, Christian respondents were less likely to agree with the view that millions of people are already suffering because of climate change, as well as the threat of extinction as a result of climate change.

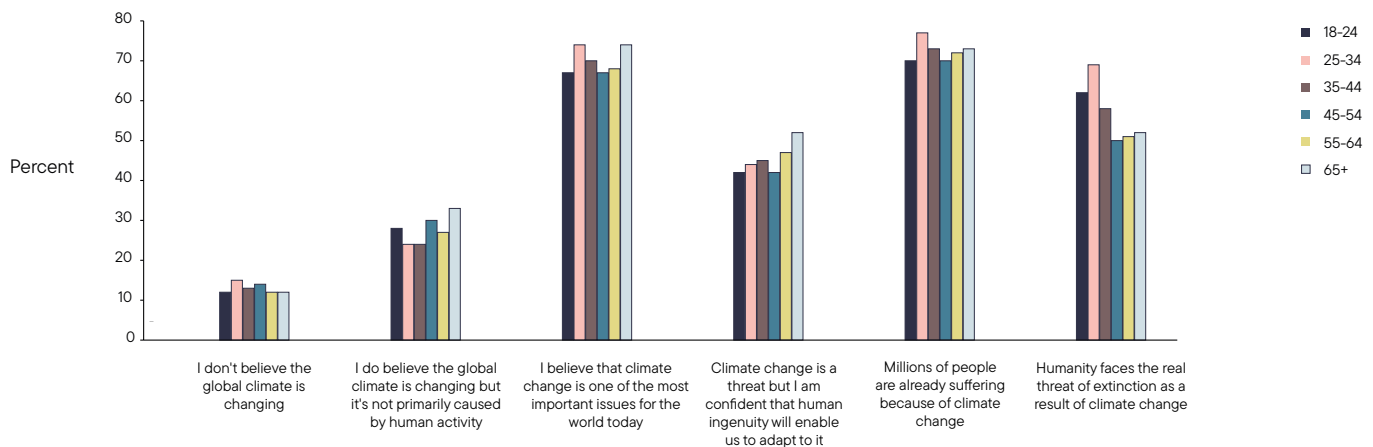
The various prompts in Question 6 showcased the different motivations different religious groups had for their environmentalist views.

Christian respondents and Hindu respondents had the same 3 priorities: concern for future generations (Christians 43%, Hindus 66%), concern for loved ones (Christians 40%, Hindus 62%), and health concerns (Christians 33%, Hindus 61%). However, the lower rates for Christian respondents is another example of the trend of apathy towards climate change that has been analysed in other parts of this study.

Meanwhile, Muslim respondents identified the following priorities: concern for loved ones (50%), health concerns (49%), and concern for those in less developed countries (45%). It is

worth questioning whether the Muslim category’s preference towards caring for those in less developed countries might have any links to the distribution of the Muslim population across the world. Of the top 10 countries at risk of climate disaster identified by the [International Rescue Committee](#), 5 countries (Somalia, Syria, Afghanistan, Yemen and Nigeria) have a predominantly Muslim population, while the remaining 5 countries have considerably large Muslim communities.

Age



There was a general consensus across various age groups that the climate is changing, and that it is an important issue that is causing worldwide suffering. However, there are observable variations in perspectives of climate change and factors driving different outlooks.

For instance, polling results show that older respondents, particularly those in the 65+ category, are more confident that human ingenuity will enable us to adapt to climate change. Meanwhile, respondents aged 18-54 consistently scored below the national average of 46%. This result could be interpreted as a more ‘resigned’ approach amongst the older population, with the youth more actively trying to bring about change that is more ‘reductive’ of the human footprint in its nature. Responses to the question on whether respondents believe climate change is caused by human activity could support this view, where 33% of 65+ year olds stated they did not believe this was the case compared to the 28% of 18-24 year olds who shared the same view. The youth appears to be more willing to attribute responsibility to human actions when it comes to climate change.

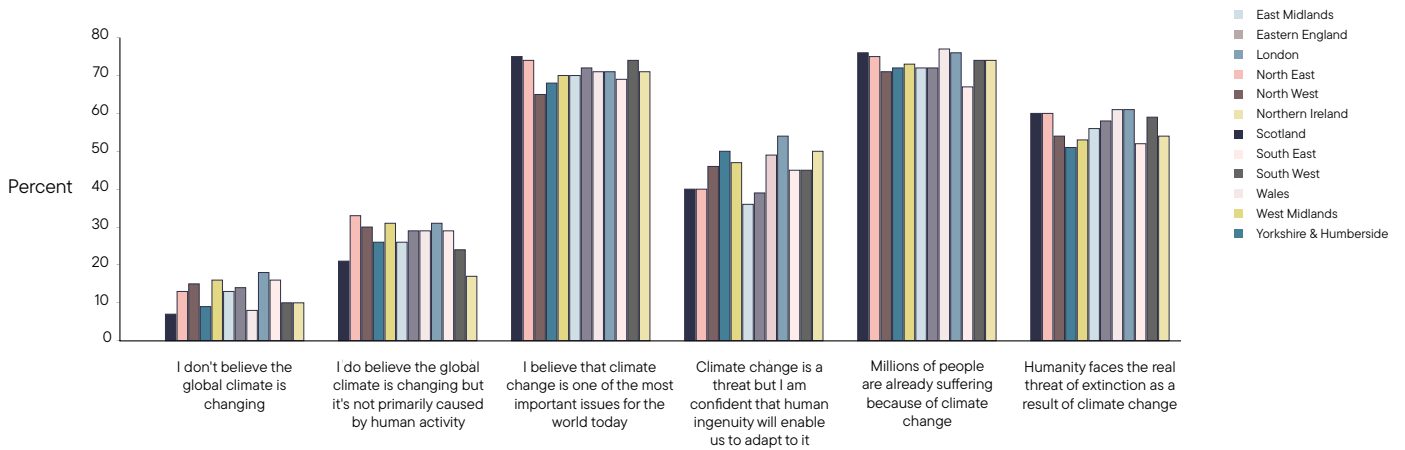
Another age-based divide to approaches to climate change can be observed in their views on the possibility of extinction due to climate change. Interestingly, 18-44 year olds were more convinced by the possibility of extinction, with the three younger age brackets - 18-24, 25-34, and 35-44 - scoring higher (62%, 69% and 58% respectively) than the national average of 56%. On the contrary, the older brackets - 45-54, 55-64 and 65+ all scored below (50%, 51%, and 52% respectively) the national average.

In this regard, we can expect to identify different motivating factors for different age groups.

Younger respondents (18-24s) scored considerably higher than the national average in three categories - religious view (6% higher), political party (7% higher), concern for those in less developed countries (6% higher).

There was no observable trend in the other categories of concern for loved ones, concern for wildlife, and concern for future generations, where variation from the national average was marginal in all age groups. It is worth noting, however, that the 65+ group specifically had an inclination towards concern for future generations (scoring 10% higher than national average) and health (scoring 16% higher than national average) in terms of issues that affected their view of climate change.

Region



There are observable disparities in perceptions of climate change based on geographical region, where Scotland, Yorkshire, and the South West are more accepting of climate change and the impact of human activity on climate change compared to more populated regions such as the South East, London, and North West. The variations could be a result of population, education, public awareness, or even geographical climate and surroundings.

Regions saw variation when it came to the influences considered to form one's views on climate change. Whilst religion was generally seen as not significantly influential, respondents from London were relatively more likely than those in other regions to consider religion a factor with 15% having selected this as influential compared with 4% of those from Yorkshire.

3. Exploring the relationship between attitudes and faith

Thematic Summaries

The second question in our survey was aimed at exploring further the attitudes of religious respondents to climate change and their perception of the challenges to the environment. This section allowed us to identify in further detail the differences between faiths, and between exclusivists and non-exclusivists.

Exclusivists

Despite responses to question one showing that exclusivists were more likely to deny climate change, exclusivists also showed strong beliefs in their faith's requirement to care for the world, indicating a potential disconnect that could be targeted by faith leaders in climate education efforts.

Whilst showing greater agreement with the idea that their faith requires them to care for the world, exclusivists also were in most agreement with the two questions that looked at theological determinism. This means the exclusivists were, therefore, inclined to believe that the well-being of the earth is in God's hands and thus not something to be overly concerned about.

Faith comparison

The highest net agreement between faith groups was on caring about environmental issues because they cause human suffering (66%). This was followed closely by a perceived requirement of faith to care for the world (62%) and a belief that God has given humans responsibility for caring for His creation (61%). Agreement fell sharply on whether God is an environmentalist (30%), followed by a belief that God is in control which means there is no need for concern (20%), however exclusivists only disagreed by a margin of 2% with respect to this belief. Belief that God will one day restore all creation so there is no need to be overly concerned now resulted in the lowest levels of agreement at 17% and was perhaps related to differing scripture with respect to restoration and destruction between the Bible and the Quran.

Non-exclusivist Christian respondents were consistently less likely to agree with statements related to their faith requiring them to care for the world. Similarly they were the lowest when it came to agreeing that their faith obligated responsibility over the world, that God will restore the world and that climate change is causing mass human suffering.

92% of exclusivist Muslim respondents held that their faith obligated them to care for the world, yet this was the only statement where exclusivist Hindu respondents were in least agreement at 80%, suggesting that Hindu respondents associate their faith less with statements that suggest an obligation whereas Muslim respondents conversely do. Despite 82% of exclusivist Christian respondents being in agreement with this statement, this faith group was consistently most likely to deny climate change and its impact on humanity, least likely to engage in personal action and afford importance to environmentalist commitments when voting. Suggesting, perhaps, that their belief that they should care for the world does not necessarily mean they care for it on issues of climate change and environmentalism.

Age

There were negligible differences between age groups. Where there were differences there were not clear inclines or declines as one aged.

Region

Regionally, respondents from London were consistently more likely to be in agreement with statements that denote belief in and trust in God. This is coherent with previous polling analysed by the Institute for the Impact of Faith in Life that shows respondents from London value their faith more strongly, have higher levels of personal faith and for their faith to be more instructive over their lives.

Detailed analysis of responses to each question

God has given humans the responsibility for caring for His creation in the world

Exclusivists were 14% more in agreement with the statement that God has given humans the responsibility for caring for His creation; 84% of exclusivist respondents agreed. 86% of exclusivist Christian respondents and exclusivist Muslim respondents were in agreement. High agreement with this statement dropped, however, for non-exclusivist Christian respondents at 57% while Hindu respondents and Muslim respondents remained high at 74% and 83%.

Regional differences ranged by 16%. London reported the highest agreement at 69%, followed by Scotland at 64%. Yorkshire/Humberside gave the lowest rating at 53%. Generally there are higher levels of agreement between statements suggestive of religiosity and London, indicating higher levels of religiosity in London.

Age was not particularly influential on whether respondents agreed that God has given humans the responsibility for caring for His creation. The 25-34 year old group were in the highest agreement at 72% with the group least in agreement being the 18-24 year olds at 61%.

God will one day restore all of creation, so there is no need to be overly concerned now

Regionally there was considerable variation with respect to agreeing with the statement that God will one day restore all of creation, therefore there is no need to be overly concerned now. 24% of respondents from London were in agreement compared with only 3% of respondents from Northern Ireland.

The statement resonated as truth for 42% of exclusivist Christian respondents and 50% of exclusivist Hindu respondents, dropping markedly for exclusivist Muslim respondents at 27%. Non-exclusivist Christian respondents were far less likely (15%) to hold this belief than Hindu respondents (26%) and Muslim respondents (26%).

There was a disparity in this belief among age groups, with 26% of 18-24-year-olds and 30% of 25-34-year-olds in agreement, compared with 9% of the 65+ group. This demonstrates that the belief that God will restore the earth and thus we should not be concerned drops off steeply with age, aligning with previous polling showing the 18-34 age group to be the most devoted in their faith.

My faith requires me to care for the world

This variable showed the least variation at 12%. Northern Ireland showed the highest agreement at 66%, followed by Scotland at 65%. The South West held the lowest agreement at 54%.

Belief that one's faith requires one to care for the world was held by 92% of exclusivist Muslim respondents, followed by 87% of non-exclusivist Muslim respondents, 82% of exclusivist Christian respondents, 80% of exclusivist Hindu respondents, and 77% of non-exclusivist Hindu respondents. Non-exclusivist Christian respondents were least likely to hold this belief at 57%.

I care about climate change primarily because it causes human suffering

Regionally, there was a variation of 19% on this variable. Northern Ireland and London showed the highest agreement at 73%, followed by Yorkshire/Humberside. The lowest agreement was held by the South West at 54%.

Exclusivist Hindu respondents were most concerned about the human impact of climate change, with 82% agreeing with the statement that they care about climate change primarily because it causes human suffering. Agreement with this statement dropped to 62% for exclusivist Christian respondents, who were also least likely to agree that millions of people are suffering because of climate change.

Non-exclusivist faith respondents followed a similar pattern to exclusivists, and whilst respondents of faith were less in agreement with the statement overall, Hindu respondents were most in agreement at 78% followed by Muslim respondents at 76% and Christian respondents at 64%.

Age played little influence as to whether respondents cared about climate change primarily because of human suffering; whilst there were differences between age groups they showed no incline or decline overall with age.

I know God is in control, therefore I am not worried about climate change

There was a variation of 18% on this variable between regions. London showed the highest agreement on this variable (26%), closely followed by the North West at 25%. Northern Ireland held the lowest agreement at 8%.

The belief that God has control and therefore there is no need to be worried about climate change was held similarly at around 45% across all exclusivists. 41% of non-exclusivist Muslim respondents agreed with this statement, a stark contrast to 17% of non-exclusivist Christian respondents.

Young respondents were most likely to agree with this statement, with 33% and 34% of the two youngest groups (18-24, and 25-34) compared with only 11% of the 65+ group. The age groups showed a steep and consistent decline from 35+ onwards. Despite high levels of youth concern around the issue, latterly we will see youth environmental action is the most deterministic of age groups.

God is an environmentalist

There was a variation of 17% on this variable across the different regions of the UK. Respondents from London showed the highest agreement at 40%, followed by the South East and Northern Ireland at 34%. The South West held the lowest agreement at 23%.

Exclusivists, non-exclusivist Muslim respondents, and Hindu respondents were in similar agreement (42-56%) that God is an environmentalist compared with 26% of non-exclusivist Christian respondents.

Despite age not being a particularly influential indicator of a person's agreement to the above statements, for the statement "God is an environmentalist" there was a clear trend; youth respondents were far more in agreement with this statement than older generations. Whilst 17% of the 65+ group were in agreement with this statement, 46% of the 18-24 year olds were. There was a steady decline in agreement as age increased. Considering concern for the environment was relatively consistent across age groups this response may indicate that religious teaching is becoming more environmentalist.

There is also the possibility that the youth result is a consequence of two factors: Islam being the faith into which most people convert (as shown in additional IIFL research); and Muslim respondents having shown the highest levels of concern for the environment.

4. Determining attitudes to methods in response to climate change

When assessing how respondents felt towards the efficacy of methods for dealing with climate change, this question only had four sub questions that asked:

How important is “individual behaviour change”; “Government action through targets and legislation”, “international action and global commitments”; “protests and demonstrations.”

This question therefore shall be analysed purely thematically rather than a detailed analysis of each question.

Thematic Summaries

Faith and non-faith

There were few significant differences between faith and non-faith groups across all four variables. The highest discrepancy was in the importance of individual behaviour change in which the respondents of faith scored 5% higher than non-faith respondents. Individual behaviour change, government action and international action were all deemed similarly important (net importance 77%, 78% and 81% respectively). Protests and demonstrations were considered the least important, with a net importance of just 40% for both groups.

Faith and exclusivity

Individual behaviour change was considered most important to exclusivist Hindu respondents (89%), followed by exclusivist Muslim respondents (87%), and exclusivist Christian respondents (75%). This difference was less pronounced for non-exclusivist groups, with an importance rating of 88% for Hindu respondents, 85% for Muslim respondents and 79% for Christian respondents. The difference between Christian respondents and people of non-faith was only 4%, with Christian respondents at 79% and non-faith respondents at 75%.

Government action was most important for Hindu respondents and Muslim respondents (80% and 81% respectively), followed by Christian respondents at 72%. The difference was slightly more pronounced in non-exclusivist groups, with Hindu respondents at 86%, Muslim respondents at 81%, and Jews at 78%. The non-faith group rated government action as more important than the Christian group, with the non-faith sample at 80% and Christian respondents at 76%.

International and global efforts were most important to Hindu exclusivists (88%), closely followed by Muslim respondents at 86%. Christian respondents gave the lowest rating of

73%. Non-exclusivist groups showed the same pattern although less pronounced, with Hindu respondents at 86%, Muslim respondents at 85%, and Christian respondents at 79%. At 82%, the non-faith group rated this variable as more important than Christian respondents.

In the exclusivist groups, protests and demonstrations were most important to Muslim respondents (70%), followed by Hindu respondents (58%) and Christian respondents (41%).

Non-exclusivist groups reflected the same pattern: Muslim respondents at 66%, Hindu respondents at 48%, and Christian respondents at 35%. With an importance rating of 40%, the non-faith sample again rated higher than the Christian.

Age

Beliefs in the importance of individual behaviour change increased with age but only by 10% (18-24 at 71%, 65+ at 81%).

With respect to government action and international action there were no significant differences between age, with values being evenly distributed. The 18-24 year old sample afforded the least importance to international action at 70%. All other groups sampled between 77%-84%.

The importance ascribed to protests and demonstrations declined steadily with age. This variable showed the largest discrepancy of 23% between age groups. 52% of the 18-24 sample considered this important compared to only 29% of the 65+.

Region

There were marginal differences between areas when it came to the importance of individual action. Northern Ireland scored highest (86%), followed by the East (81%). All other areas were similar, with London taking a central position of 78%.

With respect to government action through targets and legislation, there were marginal differences between regions. Scotland (82%), East Midlands (82%), London (81%) and Northern Ireland (81%) shared the highest scores, with the North West at the lowest with 73%.

With respect to international action, there was no significant difference between areas. Northern Ireland and Scotland gave the highest reading at 85%, followed by London at 80%. The North West gave the lowest at 77%.

With respect to the importance afforded to protests and demonstrations London scored the highest at 47%. Northern Ireland took a central figure of 39% and the East Midlands the lowest at 34%.

5. Translating attitudes to action

Structured around the same sub-questions as the previous question, this question was aimed at attempting to judge how far stated attitudes to methods for dealing with climate change translated into actions supporting those methods.

Thematic Summaries

Faith and non-faith

There were marginal differences between faith and non-faith groups. The faith group scored marginally higher on all variables apart from litter picking, which showed the greatest discrepancy between the groups at 11%. Further analysis between individual faith groups and the non-faith sample showed that faith groups reported higher rates of participation on all measures except stopping eating meat/changing transport due to environmental reasons and changing consumer habits. The Christian sample scored marginally lower than the non-faith sample on these variables.

Faith and exclusivity

Hindu participation was highest across all measures in exclusivist and non-exclusivist groups. In all measures across both groups Hindu respondents scored the highest, followed by Muslim respondents, then Christian respondents. While showing the lowest levels of participation within faith groups, Christian respondents still showed higher levels of activity than the non-faith group in five out of seven measures. The non-faith group scored higher than the Christian group in abstaining from meat/changing transport methods and changing consumer habits.

Age

Participation in environmental activities declined with age across all measures. Young adults were most likely to have changed consumer habits (51%), abstain from meat and changed transport methods (39%), collected litter (39%), donated and sustained donations to environmental charities (35%), participated in rewilding projects (30%), joined environmental organisations (23%), and participated in protests (23%).

Region

London reported the highest levels of participation in all activities and the lowest levels of participation were shared between Northern Ireland and Northern regions. The greatest differences between regions were in abstaining from meat and changing to more ecological transport methods (23%), followed by environmental organisation membership (20%), litter picking (17%), participation in protests (17%), rewilding (17%), changing consumer habits (16%),

and charitable donations (15%). This shows that regional differences were smallest in making donations to charities and largest in abstaining from meat and changing to more ecological transport methods.

Detailed analysis of responses to each questions

Litter picking

There was a progressive decline in litter picking with age. 39% of the 18-24 sample reported ever having collected litter compared to 28% of the 65+ sample.

London was the most likely to have collected litter (41%), while Eastern England gave the lowest score of only 24%.

In the exclusivist groups, Hindu respondents were most likely to have ever collected litter (64%), compared to 53% of Muslim respondents and 37% of Christian respondents. Hindu respondents were nearly twice as likely than Christian respondents to have collected litter within the last week. Non-exclusivist groups reflected a similar but less pronounced pattern. Hindu respondents were most likely at 56%, followed by Muslim respondents at 51% and Christian respondents at 32% [Buddhists rated 51%]. The no-faith sample were least likely to have ever collected litter at 23%.

Participated in tree planting or rewilding

Participation declined proportionately to age. 30% of the 18-24 sample reported ever participating in these schemes compared to 15% of the 65+ sample. Londoners were the most likely to have ever participated (28%) and the North East were the least (11%).

Hindu exclusivists were most likely to have participated with a clear lead of 64%, compared to Muslim respondents at 31%, and Christian respondents at 22%. In the last week, Hindu respondents were three times more likely than Muslim respondents to have participated in these projects, and seven times more likely than Christian respondents. In non-exclusivist groups, Hindu respondents gave the highest rating of 50%, followed by Muslim respondents (34%), and Christian respondents (17%). [Buddhists rated 21%]. The non-faith sample reported the lowest rate at 15%.

Donated to an environmentally focused charity

Younger populations were most likely to have given to charity and sustained their donations. Figures also showed a clear divide between ages 18 to 44 and 45 to 65+. Between the ages of 18 and 44 an average of 31% reported ever giving to environmental charities. This figure dropped between the ages of 45 and 65+ to 17%.

London gave the highest rates of donations (33%) and Yorkshire and Humberside the lowest (17%). 7% of Londoners reported to have donated in the last week compared to 3% from Yorkshire/Humberside.

In the exclusivist groups, Hindu respondents were most likely to ever have donated (63%) and most likely to have donated in the last month (18%). Muslim respondents followed, with 41% reporting ever having donated and 7% within the last month. Christian respondents came in last at 29% and 6% respectively. The non-exclusivist groups reflected the same pattern. Hindu respondents were most likely to have ever donated (53%), followed by Muslim respondents (44%) and Christian respondents (21%). [Buddhists rated at 68%]. Non-faiths rated lowest at 18%.

Joined an environmental organisation

There was a clear and steady decline in membership of environmental organisations with age. 23% of 18-24 year olds reported membership compared to 4% of the 55-64 and 65+ age groups.

London reported the highest figures of ever having membership in environmental groups (20%). Northern Ireland reported the lowest figure at 0%. Central figures were taken by the South and the East.

In exclusivist groups, Hindu respondents were most likely to have ever joined environmental groups (44%), followed by Muslim respondents (23%), and Christian respondents (19%). 9% of Hindu respondents, 7% of Muslim respondents, and 4% of Christian respondents had joined within the last month. Similar but less pronounced findings were evident in non-exclusivist groups. Hindu respondents and Muslim respondents were most likely to have ever joined groups (29% and 27%), followed by Christian respondents at 9%. [32% for Buddhists.] The non-faith sample rated lowest at 5%.

Participated in a protest about the environment

Participation declined with age with 23% of the 18-24 sample reported ever having participated compared to 2% of the 65+. The samples differentiated into two groups, with figures remaining consistent and lower from the 44-45 age group. Participation was at 23% in the 18-24 group, 15% in the 25-34 group and 10% in 35-44 group. However, the figures lowered further to 3% in 45-54 and 55-64 groups, and to 2% in the 65+.

London took a clear lead on 18%, followed by the West Midlands at 12%. The lowest rating came from the South West at 1%.

Hindu respondents took the highest value in exclusivist groups with 41% ever having participated in protests, followed by Muslim respondents at 25%, and Christian respondents at 13%. Within the last month, 17% of Hindu respondents compared to 5% of Muslim respondents and 3% of Christian respondents had participated in protests or demonstrations. Similar but less pronounced findings were present among non-exclusivist groups. Muslim respondents

took a slight lead at 29% compared to 26% of Hindu respondents and 7% of Christian respondents for ever having participated. [Buddhists came in at 26%.] The non-faith sample rated lowest at 4%.

Stopped eating meat or changed transport for environmental reasons

Participation declined with age. 39% of the 18-24 sample reported ever having participated compared to 22% of the 65+. The samples differentiated into two groups, with figures remaining consistent and lower from the 44-45 age group. Participation was at 39% in the 18-24 group, 36% in the 25-34 group, and 32% in the 35-44 group. Participation then lowered to 23% in the 45-54 group, 25% in the 55-64 group, and 22% in the 65+ group.

London again took a clear lead with 43% having ever engaged in these actions, followed by the South West at 30%. Northern Ireland took the lowest rating at 20%.

In exclusivist groups, Hindu respondents were most likely to have ever participated (55%), followed by Muslim respondents at 37% and Christian respondents at 30%. In non exclusivist groups, the pattern was the same and equally pronounced. Hindu respondents rated the highest with 55%, followed by Muslim respondents at 39% and Christian respondents at 23%. The non-faith sample scored higher than Christian respondents on this variable with 28%.

Changed what you regularly buy out of concern for the environment

There was a steady decline with age across all groups, with 51% of the 18-24 group reporting changes to their consumer habits compared to 38% of the 65+.

London took a marginal lead with 52% for ever having changed buying habits, followed by Scotland at 49%. Northern Ireland took a central position at 41%, and the North East took the lowest at 36%.

In the exclusivist groups, Hindu respondents led with 78% reporting ever having changed buying habits, followed by Muslim respondents at 52%, and Christian respondents at 41%. Similar and equally pronounced findings were evident in non-exclusivist groups. Hindu respondents led with 76%, followed by Muslim respondents at 54% and Christian respondents at 38%. In the last month, 22% of Hindu respondents, 17% of Muslim respondents and 9% of Christian respondents had changed their consumer habits. [Buddhist came in at 76%]. The non-faith group scored higher than the Christian with 41% reporting to have ever changed their consumer habits.

6. Support for environmentalist policies

Finally, in an attempt to understand how far attitudes and actions would influence voting behaviour, we asked the extent to which respondents would be inclined to agree with the efficacy of different environmentalist policies.

Thematic Summaries

Faith and non-faith

The non-faith group was more likely than the faith group to vote on the basis of all measures of environmental policies given in the survey. The differences were marginal but consistent. The faith groups showed less or equal interest in green policies in comparison to the non-faith group.

The highest agreement between the groups concerned the restoration of waterways, peat bogs and tree planting. 37% of the non-faith sample and 36% of the faith sample reported they would vote on this policy. There was also a full agreement of 22% on the importance of this policy.

There was also general agreement on voting on the basis of expanding Ultra Low Emissions Zones with the non-faith group at 18% and the faith group at 16%. This policy was considered almost equally important by both groups with respective figures of 15% and 14%.

Promises to insulate homes, improve recycling and reduce single-use plastics, and banning sewage discharge by water firms into seas and rivers showed greater yet equal divergence between the groups. 36% of the non-faith sample reported they would vote on the basis of promises on home insulation, compared to 33% of the faith sample. This was viewed as marginally more important by the non-faith group (21%) compared to the faith group (19%). 39% of the non-faith sample reported they would vote on the basis of improving recycling and single use plastics compared to 36% of the faith sample. This issue was more important to the non-faith group (23%) than the faith group (20%). 50% of the non-faith group reported they would vote on the basis of banning sewage discharge by water firms compared to 47% of the faith sample. There was almost equal agreement on the importance of this issue (17% and 18% respectively).

Voting on the basis of a promise to make Britain a green superpower showed the next greatest variation, with the non-faith sample at 38% and the faith sample at 33%. Again there was strong agreement (17% and 18% respectively) that this was an important issue.

This was closely followed by policies on rail, bus, tram and electric vehicle investment with 40% of the non-faith sample reporting they would vote on the basis of this policy compared to 34% of the faith group. There was high agreement between the groups on the importance of this policy (18% and 19% respectively).

The most pronounced difference concerned policies on greenhouse gas emissions. 35% of the non-faith group reported they would vote on the basis of a promise to reduce greenhouse gas emissions compared to 28% of the faith group, notwithstanding full agreement that this was an important policy (19%).

Faith and exclusivity

There were marginal differences between exclusivist and non-exclusivist groups across all measures. Following a similar pattern exhibited in previous questions, Hindu respondents were most likely to vote for a party on the basis of environmental promises, followed by Muslim respondents, and then Christian respondents.

Age

Age was not a strong predictor of voting behaviour. There was a clear pattern in only three measures that young people were more likely to vote in line with green policies: greenhouse emissions, expanding Ultra Low Emissions Zones, and making Britain a green energy superpower. The other measures showed no clear patterns or differences between age groups, with the exception of promises to invest in ecological transport and banning sewage discharge by water firms. While groups between the youngest and oldest were fairly consistent, those aged 65+ were less likely than the 18-24 group to vote on the basis of ecological transport investment and significantly more likely to vote on the basis of banning sewage discharge.

Region

Regional differences were marginal. The highest and lowest ratings for voting on green policies were evenly distributed. The greatest differences between regions was on restoring waterways, peat bogs and planting trees (15% distribution between highest and lowest scores), and the least on expanding Ultra Low Emissions Zones (6%). This shows that regional differences were smallest concerning promises to expand Ultra Low Emissions Zones and largest in restoring waterways.

Detailed analysis of responses to each question

To ensure the UK has reduced its greenhouse gas emissions by 100% from 1990 levels by 2050

Age was moderately correlated with willingness to vote on the basis of this policy. Figures showed a 10% decline with age. Young adults (18-24: 34%) were more inclined to vote on the basis of targets on greenhouse gas emissions than respondents over 65 (24%). Older populations were also the least likely to vote on this policy even while considering it more important than younger populations. While 24% of the 65+ sample believed this policy to be important, they reported it wouldn't influence their voting. This was 7% higher than the 18-24 age group and 11% higher than the 24-34 age group. Wales was most likely to vote on the basis of this policy (37%), and the North West was the least (26%). There was an 11% variation between regions, with no clear significant differences.

There was very little difference between exclusivists and non-exclusivists with respect to the likelihood they would vote for a party that made this commitment.

Expanding Ultra Low Emissions Zones to more areas

Age was moderately correlated with willingness to vote on the basis of this policy. Figures showed an 11% decline with age. Young adults (18-24: 21%) were more inclined to vote on the basis of promises to expand Ultra Low Emissions Zones than the over 65s (10%). As with above, older populations were also the least likely to vote on this policy even while considering it more important than younger populations. 20% of the 65+ group believed it to be important but reported it wouldn't influence their voting compared to 10% of the 18-24 group.

London was most likely to vote on the basis of this policy (21%), and Scotland and Yorkshire/Humberside were the least at 15%. There was only a 6% variation between regions, with no clear patterns.

There was very little difference between exclusivists and non-exclusivists with respect to likelihood they would vote for a party that made this commitment.

To make Britain a green energy superpower

There was no clear influence of age on voting on this policy. Values fluctuated between 30-44% between all groups under 65+ but with no discernable pattern. The 65+ age group was least likely to vote on the basis of promises to make Britain a green energy superpower. Likelihood of not voting on the basis of this policy even while believing it to be important

increased with age. 13% of the 18-24 group reported they would not vote on this policy despite believing it to be important compared to 23% of the 65+ group.

The West Midlands reported to be most likely to vote on the basis of this policy (39%), and Northern Ireland the least (28%).

There was very little difference between exclusivists and non-exclusivists with respect to the likelihood they would vote for a party that made this commitment.

Restoring waterways, peat bogs and planting trees

There was no clear influence of age on voting on this policy. All groups were within the range of 30-39%, but with no clear discernable pattern. The 18-24 age group were 2% less likely to vote on the basis of this policy than the 65+ group. Likelihood of not voting on the basis of this policy even while believing it to be important increased with age. 19% of the 18-24 group reported they would not vote on this policy despite believing it to be important compared to 30% of the 65+ group.

Northern Ireland reported to be the most likely to vote on the basis of this policy (46%), and the South East the least at 31%. Responses to this policy showed the highest variation at 15%.

There was very little difference between exclusivist Christian and non-exclusivist Christian respondents with respect to the likelihood they would vote for a party that made this commitment. However, whilst the difference was small, exclusivist Muslim respondents and Hindu respondents were more likely to vote for a party that made this commitment, with exclusivist Muslim respondents 7% more likely than non-exclusivist Muslim respondents and exclusivist Hindu respondents 3% more likely than non-exclusivist Hindu respondents. Exclusivist Christian respondents were least likely to vote with this commitment in mind at 35% compared with exclusivist Hindu respondents at 52%.

Insulating all homes by 2030 and ensuring newbuilds are eco friendly

Age was not shown to influence voting on this policy. The 25-34 age group were most likely to vote on the basis of this policy (42%), but there was only 1% difference between the 18-24 group and 65+ group. Likelihood of not voting on the basis of this policy even while believing it to be important increased with age. 17% of the 18-24 group reported they would not vote on this policy despite believing it to be important compared to 26% of the 65+ group.

Wales was the most likely to vote on the basis of this policy (43%), and the least were the South East and North West at 31%. There was a variation between regions of 12%.

There was very little difference between exclusivists and non-exclusivists with respect to the likelihood they would vote for a party that made this commitment. Exclusivist and non-exclusivist Christian respondents were least likely to vote with this commitment in mind at 34% and 30% respectively, compared with exclusivist Hindu respondents (49%) and non-exclusivist Hindu respondents (50%).

Investing more in rail, buses, trams and electric vehicles

Age was not shown to have a clear influence on voting on this policy. The 65+ age group was least likely to vote on the basis of promises to invest in rail, buses, trams and electric vehicles (6% less likely than the 35-44 age group, which reported the highest figure at 40%), but there was no discernable pattern across the groups. Likelihood of not voting on the basis of this policy even while believing it to be important increased with age. 16% of the 18-24 group reported they would not vote on this policy despite believing it to be important compared to 25% of the 65+ group.

The North East scored highest on this variable at 42%, and the South East the lowest at 31%. There was an 11% variation between regions.

There was very little difference between exclusivists and non-exclusivists with respect to the likelihood they would vote for a party that made this commitment. Once again both exclusivist and non-exclusivist Christian respondents were least likely to vote for a party that committed to this environmental policy, whilst Hindu respondents were once again most likely (exclusivist Hindu respondents 11% more likely than exclusivist Christian respondents) to vote for said party.

Improving recycling and reducing single use plastics

Age was not shown to influence voting on this policy. Figures were within the range of 34-42% with no discernable increase or decrease with age. Likelihood of not voting on the basis of this policy even while believing it to be important increased with age. 17% of the 18-24 group reported they would not vote on this policy despite believing it to be important compared to 28% of the 65+ group.

The North East was most likely to vote on the basis of this policy (43%), and Scotland the least at 33%. There was a variation between groups of 10%.

There was very little difference between exclusivists and non-exclusivists with respect to likelihood they would vote for a party that made this commitment. The largest disparity was seen between Christian respondents and Hindu respondents at 34% and 38% respectively.

Banning the discharge by water firms of sewage into seas and rivers

All age groups reported this policy to be the most influential on their voting. With the exception of the 18-24 group, 48-51% of all groups stated they would vote on the basis of this policy. The 18-24 group gave the lowest figure of 35%. Likelihood of not voting on the basis of this policy even while believing it to be important increased with age. 16% of the 18-24 group reported they would not vote on this policy despite believing it to be important compared to 23% of the 65+ group.

The East Midlands reported the highest percentage on this measure at 53%, and the North West reported the lowest at 41%. There was a 12% variation between regions.

There was very little difference between exclusivists and non-exclusivists with respect to likelihood they would vote for a party that made this commitment. There was high coherence across faiths, with the range being 42%-49%. This may well be because the commitment places no obligation on the voter nor changes to the way they live their lives, the commitment puts the action on large companies to the benefit of the individual.

7. Conclusions and Recommendations

The results from our polls reveal distinct trends among different religious groups concerning beliefs and actions related to climate change. Hindu respondents exhibited the highest levels of concern for climate impacts and proactive environmental behaviours, despite a relatively high rate of scepticism regarding the human origins of climate change. This suggests that concern for the environment and climate action among Hindu respondents is driven more by cultural and socio-political motivations than by specific doctrinal beliefs. Similarly, whilst exclusivist Christian respondents doctrinally were in agreement with theological determinism and an obligation to look after the world, this did not translate into a strong belief in climate change, its human origins or environmental action.

Regionally, responses also demonstrated that something other than religion and belief is influencing environmentalist action. Respondents from London rated relatively low for belief in climate change and its impact on humanity, however they scored consistently high for participating in environmentalism and for agreeing with statements denoted to higher levels of religiosity. Indicating, akin to the results seen across the Hindu respondents, that high religiosity and weaker belief in climate change is not necessarily a precursor for lack of action.

Younger respondents were both the most religiously engaged and environmentally concerned and active. The youth's religiosity and environmentalism could perhaps be an opportunity to influence the new generation and indeed the older generations via family and community initiatives.

Considering the increasing faith engagement from the youth and high consensus across faiths as to God's will for humanity to care for the planet, there is potentially untapped potential for faith leaders to do more to inspire their congregations to manifest their beliefs into environmental action.

Recommendations:

1. Targeted Climate Education by Faith Leaders:

Faith leaders, particularly within the Christian community, should focus on addressing the disconnect between belief in caring for the world and climate change denial. Emphasising scriptural and doctrinal support for environmental stewardship could bridge this gap.

2. Promoting Faith-Based Environmental Responsibility:

Initiatives should highlight the high agreement among faith groups that their religion requires them to care for the world. This can be a unifying message across different faiths to foster collective climate action. This could be something led by a particularly faith-engaged and environmentally-active youth.

3. Encouraging Political Engagement:

Campaigns should encourage faith groups to consider environmental policies when voting. Highlighting the moral and ethical dimensions of climate action can influence voting behaviour, particularly among Christian respondents who are currently less inclined to vote with environmentalism in mind.

4. Regional Focus:

Tailor regional campaigns to align with the specific religious and environmental attitudes of each area. For example, initiatives in London can leverage higher religiosity, while those in Northern Ireland can address lower participation rates in certain actions like rewilding.

By addressing these points, it is possible to foster a more comprehensive and faith-inclusive approach to climate action, leveraging the moral authority and community influence of religious leaders and teachings.



Institute for
the **Impact** of
Faith in Life

iifl.org.uk
