

Title: Relationships among evangelical college students' worldviews and their anthropogenic climate change literacy.

Joel Light, PhD
American Scientific Affiliation
University of Northwestern, St. Paul

Justification

- Evangelicals are largely resistant to acceptance of anthropogenic climate change.
- Knowing why could influence curriculum and instruction.
- Meaningful policy and action in the U.S. will not happen without this subgroup.

- In what ways does an evangelical college student's worldview, specifically the religious, environmental, economic, political, and epistemological areas of belief, relate to his or her anthropogenic climate change literacy, that is his or her knowledge, beliefs, and acceptance of anthropogenic climate change?

Primary Research Question

Three Propositions from Literature

- Number 1: Evangelical students' worldviews are made up of areas of belief.
- Number 2: There is a range of knowledge, beliefs, and acceptance of anthropogenic climate change among evangelical college students.
- Number 3: An evangelical college student's worldview relates to his or her knowledge, beliefs, and acceptance of anthropogenic climate change.

Evangelical Continuum of Acceptance

- Based on literature: a continuum of acceptance of anthropogenic climate change in this group.
- Dismissive/Doubtful
- Skeptical/Cautious
- Concerned/Active

Research Paradigm

- Case study approach employed.
- Qualitative research paradigm.
- Individual college students representing the three variations of acceptance.
- 8 instruments of data collection

Analysis and Reporting

- Data coded
- Themes emerged
- Narratives constructed
- Cross-case comparison

Cross-Case Analysis: to accept or to not accept

Evangelicals that accept:

- Positive view toward science.
- More integrated understanding of CC.
- Accepted that humans can affect planet systems.
- Had a more harmonious view of the relationship between God, humans, and the environment.
- See CC as a threat to religious values – creation care and social justice.
- High empathy for suffering people and for nature.
- Held more of a global perspective.
- Key people from culture influenced views.

Evangelicals that resist:

- Skeptical view toward science.
- More segmented knowledge and missing information.
- Accepted that humans could only affect smaller, more localized systems.
- Had a more hierarchical view of the relationship between God, humans, and the environment.
- See CC as unimportant due to higher held values – evangelism and God's sovereignty.
- Lower empathy for others.
- Held more of a self-focused perspective.
- Missing climate positive voices in experiences.

The Short Answer to the Research Question:

- Worldview matters.
- Religious beliefs are at the core.
- Values have to be a part of the conversation.
- Scientific data second.

Curriculum and Instruction

Curriculum Recommendations:

- **What to teach...**
- Regional vs. global change
- Time scales and rates of change
- Short and long term patterns
- Data and evidence
- Impacts of climate change (specific and current)
- Human influence

Instruction Recommendations:

- **How to teach...**
- Real-world examples
- Religious language/principles
- Similar voices (Climate Prophets)

Final Summary

- Landing on hope
- Encouraged
- What is possible



Questions?

