

## Climate Change Survey of Methodist Leaders

Key Messages from 62 responses

87% believed that climate change was influenced by human behaviour

94% viewed care of the environment as part of their Christian witness

97% believed that acting on global warming and climate change was one way of “loving our neighbours”

50% were concerned for the future of the planet

21% thought their congregation took climate change seriously

88% wanted CSR to address climate change

The majority of respondents identified their theological outlook as mid-way between liberal and conservative.

### **Open questions**

#### **Personal change**

Respondents had introduced a wide range of changes in their personal lives to reduce environmental impact.

#### **Congregational change**

Suggestions made for ways in which their congregations could reduce their environmental impact fell into 5 main areas;

Eliminating disposables or non-biodegradable disposables,

Introducing green energy technology eg solar panels,

Energy conservation eg insulation, lighting, heating,

Recycling properly and

Vehicle use, car sharing/ walking/cycling to church

It was also noted that spiritual leadership was required.

#### **CSR leadership**

Suggestions for CSR priority action, fall into the following areas;

Awareness/education/challenge

Practical ways to be an eco church

Church policy/strategy

Political engagement

A theme of “creation care” as an aspect of discipleship and the need to set environmental issues into a biblical and theological context featured in many of the recommendations.

Several thoughtful and challenging comments were received which merit discussion in CSR.

*Avoid using terms like Global Warming when there is no viable scientific evidence that the earth is heating any more quickly now than it has ever done, in fact the data shows a cooling. Encourage higher focus on more careful use of the planets resources to avoid waste and reduce human impact, Bring forward critical thinking on the reasons global and national governments use climate change for their own agendas rather than for protection of the planet and its resources.*

*I think you need to be very careful. It is easy to jump on bandwagons like Fair-trade to the detriment of the concept of 'Trading Fairly" which is of more benefit globally. So be careful. Don't provide simplistic uninformed solutions. There are more than enough views on this and perhaps there are more important issues that CSR could address that are not being addressed by every other body, including government*

## **Way Forward**

Strategic approach;

The church adopted an environmental policy circa 2011, this has gone from the website and we are trying to source a copy. This was a well constructed policy but there is no evidence that it was widely adopted. Change is rarely achieved without strategic leadership and policy implementation alongside the enabling and awareness raising activities which groups like CSR can lead on.

A MCI environmental policy with implementation targets built into routine church monitoring processes is likely to be the most effective means of getting this matter on to circuit executive agendas and effect change.

Eg an environmental RAG rating self assessment should be inspected and reported on at every church commission visit.

Eg use of non biodegradable items

- Recycling provision and use

- Low energy light bulbs

- Energy conservation audit

We need to answer the question “**is MCI leadership serious about reducing our environmental footprint**”? If the answer is yes then it must become a policy issue. If no, then we will be having the same discussion in 10 years time. Do we need to ask conference if it wishes to take a strategic lead and develop and implement such a policy?