

2023 EFCA Doctrinal Survey Results, Assessments, and Comments October 2024



Introduction

Why conduct a doctrinal survey?

When the EFCA Conference adopted our 2008 Statement of Faith, the EFCA Board of Directors affirmed a “process for safeguarding our spiritual heritage.” One part of this process was to receive an annual theology update. Another aspect of the process was to conduct a doctrinal survey every five years. The first one was conducted in [2013](#) with the second completed in [2018](#). Our third, and most recent, was completed at the end of 2023. It was a way the board sought intentionally to value and safeguard the vital role of the Bible, theology, and doctrine in the Christian life for those in the EFCA.

How was the survey structured?

The survey assumed respondents affirmed the EFCA SOF. (Since not all senior pastors are credentialed with the EFCA, this assumption may not have been accurate.) The questions and structure of the survey were based on our SOF with a focus on major doctrinal issues, including some matters of “significance of silence” (matters we will debate but not divide over, i.e., “disputable matters” [Rom. 14:1]), other theological and contemporary issues, and finally some critical moral issues to address. Also included at the beginning of the survey were a number of profile questions. The survey was conducted anonymously, and each question provided opportunities for comments. An exception was questions that provided a possible response “Other (please specify),” which was the only response that allowed respondents to provide comments (Qs 7, 20, 23, 30, 36, 38).

Who received the survey and what was the response rate?

All senior pastors of EFCA churches (not all are credentialed in the EFCA), and everyone credentialed by the EFCA (not all are in EFCA ministries) received the survey through email. The 50-question survey was conducted from October 16 to November 20, 2023. SurveyMonkey was used to conduct the survey and compile the data. The survey was sent to 3,133 individuals, it was completed by 1,445, which represents 46%. This is an excellent response rate, especially remembering this 50-question survey took an average of 24 minutes to complete.

What did we desire to learn from the survey?

The Survey was conducted for informational purposes, to discern a doctrinal “pulse” from a select group of the EFCA, those most often responsible for biblical and doctrinal matters in the local church and in the EFCA (all senior pastors and all those credentialed in the EFCA). Because we assume the SOF is affirmed, one purpose is to reveal theological aberrations or doctrinal outliers. We also sought to determine how strongly our SOF is affirmed, where there are doctrinal weaknesses, how many doctrinal outliers there are and on what Articles and doctrines, what issues need to be addressed and where instruction is needed, what biblical and theological issues and trends are affecting us, with possible trajectories, and what resources we should provide to retain our biblical and theological convictions and commitments to doctrinal fidelity and faithfulness.

Reminder: surveys have both strengths and weaknesses

Results of our Doctrinal Survey do not carry the same weight as the Bible, as God's Word is the absolute and final authority, *sola Scriptura*. Our Statement of Faith is a faithful articulation of some of the key truths in the Scriptures. Biblical truth is not determined by a majority perspective. But doctrinal surveys can be helpful as a data point regarding the beliefs of survey respondents.

Furthermore, surveys must be read and interpreted carefully. They can be misunderstood and/or misused. It is important to remember that survey bias can occur for a number of reasons: survey questions, respondents of the survey, definitions either assumed or imported, misunderstanding or confusing questions, more than one question asked in a question, over-interpreting or under-interpreting either a part or the whole, universalizing rather than recognizing it is a limited group that records a "pulse" at a point in time. Bearing all of these limitations in mind, surveys are still helpful tools and provide much helpful information, including this doctrinal survey.

Responses, Assessments and Comments

As noted above, this five-year doctrinal survey was conducted from October 16 to November 20, 2023. Below are the responses, assessments, and comments of the doctrinal survey compiled and assessed by the Spiritual Heritage Committee and presented to and discussed by the Board of Directors in at their January and April 2024 meetings.

These assessments highlight important aspects of the responses, and all the questions in the survey are included. There is also some cross tabulation with the 2018 doctrinal survey, and also with some of the profile assessments. The comments highlight important or notable issues, which makes them representative not exhaustive. In the responses, assessments, and comments, we have focused on what we believe to be important information, yet we have done so in as objective a manner as possible.

As you read these responses, assessments, and comments, please bear in mind that many individual responses were nuanced through comments. Though those comments are not included, certain statistics must be read through this nuance which, if pertinent, we have noted below.

Doctrinal Survey Data

1. The Survey was sent to 3133 individuals, it was completed by 1445, which represents 46%. (In 2018, the survey was sent to 3,000 individuals, it was completed by 1,509, which represents 50.3%.)
2. The Survey was conducted from October 16 to November 20, 2023.
3. 92% of those respondents who began the Survey completed it. (In 2018, 93% who started the survey completed it.)
4. The average completion time was 24 minutes and 4 seconds. (In 2018, the average completion time was 20 minutes and 44 seconds.)
5. The Survey consists of 50 questions along with 5832 comments: six questions received over 200 comments (Qs 9, 10, 12, 18, 26, 34), one question received over 300 comments (Q 41), and one question received over 400 comments (Q 16). The last two questions, 49 and 50, which only allowed written responses, received 1152 and 1132 comments respectively.
6. Of those questions which gave as one of the responses "Other (please specify)," comments were only able to be made if this response was checked (in all other questions, comments were able to be made regardless what answer was checked). This consisted of the following questions: Q7 (view of the creation account in Genesis 1; 103 comments), Q20 (position on the "miraculous

gifts”; 167 comments), Q23 (position on women in ministry in the local church; 132 comments), Q30 (view of the Lord’s Supper; 110 comments), Q36 (eschatological position; 121 comments), and Q38 (eternal destiny of those who have never heard of the gospel message; 121 comments). The comments most often reflect one of the other responses/options included, which means the comments must be read to determine if the response reflects one of the other responses/options. This may result in a change to the final percentages for the question.

7. In each of the questions, several respondents skipped answering the question. It is difficult to discern the reason why, but there may be numerous reasons (though conjecture at best): (1) skipped with the intent to return but did not; (2) took too much time to think about a response so skipped; (3) did not like the question or the possible answers so skipped; (4) survey fatigue as the numbers increase, hitting over 100 (123) with Q18, and then staying mostly consistent; (5) there is always the consideration of “some other reason,” known only to the respondent.

A Few Comments About Survey Questions

1. An introductory statement was added, “what is your view of this statement” (Qs9, 10, 12, 16, 17, 43, 46), to clarify that we were asking the respondent to reply to a statement. In 2018, we only included the statement in quotation marks, which was confusing to some, thinking it was a statement we were affirming, which was not the case.
2. We added a few new questions: Christology (Q11), politics and the kingdom (Q33), divorce for abuse (Q41), and biologically sexed identity (Q45).
3. We asked only one question on Article 9, Christ’s Return (Q36). In 2018, we asked three questions because of the motion before the Conference to revise our Statement of Faith removing the word “premillennial” and replacing it with “glorious.” The Conference approved the motion (79%) in 2019.
4. We included two questions about statements made in the declaration, [Where We Stand in the EFCA: Denials and Affirmations](#) (Qs33 and 45).
5. There was an opportunity for commenting on every question. On the questions that included the option of “other (please specify),” Qs7, 20, 23, 30, 36, and 38, the respondents listed an alternate view to the responses/options listed and there was no opportunity for general comments on those questions. The comments most often reflect one of the other responses/options included. This means comments must be read to determine what the respondent believes, resulting in a possible change to the final percentages.

A Few General Assessments and Observations

1. We remain strongly committed to the essential doctrinal truths espoused in our SOF. Our doctrinal convictions remain strong because of our unwavering commitment to the inerrancy, infallibility, authority, and sufficiency of the Scriptures.
2. We retain a strong commitment to “sound doctrine, that conforms to the gospel concerning the glory of the blessed God, which he entrusted to me [us]” (1 Tim. 1:10-11), though there are a few doctrinal outliers.
3. We remain strongly committed to “live out our faith” on some of the major moral and social issues of the day, though there are a few moral outliers.
4. We are committed to orthodoxy *and* orthopraxy, affirming right belief and engaging in right behavior.
5. In addition to a strong commitment to biblical and doctrinal fidelity, there is also a strong commitment to living with the “significance of silence,” i.e., debating but not dividing, which reflects our ethos. The two commitments of biblical and doctrinal fidelity, that which is of “first importance” (1 Cor. 15:3), and living and serving together in loving unity on “disputable matters” (Rom. 14:1) are the primary issues that describe the uniqueness of the EFCA.

6. Through the years we have addressed many of the doctrinal and moral issues in Theology Conferences and at EFCA One.
7. There remains an ongoing need to address some of the issues raised in the doctrinal survey, which will be somewhat accomplished through providing teachings and resources. It is both helpful and important to remember that *Evangelical Convictions* is the “theological exposition” of our SOF, so it is the best resource to learn about our SOF. Another important resource to learn about and study our SOF is the EFCA and TEDS Statement of Faith Project: A Study Guide, which consists of interviews with faculty with TEDS’ professors, and is based on both our SOF and *Evangelical Convictions*.
8. The questions asked in the doctrinal survey will be made available on our website so they can be asked of pastoral staff, elders, leaders, or possibly even members. Based on what is learned, pastors and/or elders may develop a teaching series to address areas of needed growth based on the specific results of the doctrinal survey. You can find the doctrinal questions [here](#).
9. There is agreement between the results of the doctrinal survey and what was written in [Where We Stand in the EFCA: Denials and Affirmations](#). This document and the accompanying [biblical-theological commentary](#) were written as expositions of biblical truth applied to numerous contemporary issues. God and his Word are foundational and fundamental for truth and life, what we believe (truth/doctrine) and how we live (morals/ethics). The doctrinal survey consists of individual responses that provide important information about what is believed regarding certain issues. The survey results do not carry the same weight as the biblical-theological exposition since truth is not determined by a majority perspective. But the results reflect that the great majority of EFCA sr./lead pastors and those credentialed in the EFCA confirm what is written in the declaration.
10. In the EFCA, we are committed to convictional kindness: *convictional*, because we affirm the faith once for all entrusted to the saints (Jude 3), and we do so with *kindness*, as that is a fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23; cf. Micah 6:8). We affirm the truth of the Scriptures, and we reflect in life the truth we proclaim with our lips.
11. As Evangelicals, we are not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for salvation (Rom. 1:16) and sanctification/transformation (Rom. 8:29; 12:2; Cor. 3:18; Phil. 3:20). The gospel, that which is *orthodox* (right belief), is the ground of a new heart (*orthocardia*), which bears fruit in right behavior (*orthopraxy*), and right desires and passions (*orthopathy*), all created by the gospel of Jesus Christ to transform lives. We are Evangelicals, gospel people, meaning we are neither progressive evangelicals nor neo-fundamentalists.
12. In the midst of the sifting and sorting happening among Evangelicals, the results of our doctrinal survey are encouraging. There is also consistency with the results of our 2018 doctrinal survey. We give thanks and praise to God. We also commit ourselves afresh to watch our lives and doctrine closely (1 Tim. 4:16).

Questions

Profile (Q 1-6)

Assessments

- About one-half of respondents have served in the EFCA 21+ years (45%), 41% have served between 6 and 20 years.
- Many of those who took the survey serve as senior pastors (55%), with a number serving as associate pastors (10%), with numerous identifying as “other” (30%). (Remember, all senior or lead pastors are included in the survey, though not all are credentialed.)

- With the exception of those aged 18-34 (7%), there is an even distribution of ages represented: 30% are aged 35-49; 33% are aged 50-64; and 30% are aged 65+.
- A majority of respondents (1135) are credentialed (79%), with 303 respondents not credentialed. (Remember, all credentialed individuals are included in the survey, though not all are in an EFCA ministry.) This compares to 77% in the 2018 survey and 74% in the 2013 survey. The trend reflects an incremental increase.
- A strong majority of the respondents are White, Non-Hispanic: 92% (1326 individuals). The other ethnicities consist of the following: Asian American Pacific Islander: 2.58% (37 individuals); Black African American: 0.91% (13 individuals); Hispanic Latino: 2.44% (35 individuals); Other, Mixed: 1.67% (24 individuals).
- Slightly over one-half of respondents serve in the Midwest (53%), with a number serving in the West (22%), numerous equally distributed in the Northeast (11%) and South (10%), and a few serving Internationally (4%).

Comments

- The general distribution of ages represented is encouraging, consisting of many older, some younger, and many in-between, with many years of ministry experience represented.
- It is encouraging to see the numbers of respondents who are credentialed, along with an incremental increase over the years. One would expect this number to be high since the survey is sent to all those credentialed and all sr. or lead pastors. The incremental increase reflects more sr. or lead pastors being credentialed. It is another reminder of the importance of pastors, and other ministers, in EFC churches to be credentialed. It is an important means in the EFCA by which pastors and ministers remain accountable for doctrinal fidelity and moral faithfulness. The slow but steady increase of those credentialed is encouraging.
- There is work that remains to expand our ministry to include all people.

Article 1, God (Q 7-11)

Assessments

- Most affirm a literal, six-day view of creation (58%). This is mostly the same as the 2018 survey. 17% affirm the days in Genesis “are a literary device to express theological truth,” which is slightly higher than in 2018 (13%). 10% have no settled view.
 - There are differences in view based on age. In comparing the (1) literal view, and (2) the literary expressing theological truth view, there are differences based on age: 65+: 63% and 13%; 50-64: 64% and 12%; 35-49: 51% and 25%; 18-34: 39% and 29%.
- The age of the earth remains important for the theological framework with 67% affirming it is very (22%) or somewhat important (44%). This has increased slightly from 2013 and 2018 (65%).
 - There are also differences of perspective based on age: 65+: 74%; 50-64: 67%; 35-49: 60%; 18-34: 58%.
- To the question “Some forms of evolutionary creation are compatible with biblical teaching,” 29% “disagree” and 25% “disagree strongly” with the statement. 34% “strongly agree” or “agree” with the statement, about the same as 2018 (33%).
 - There are also differences of perspective based on age, with the first number indicating a response of “disagree” or “disagree strongly,” with the second bracketed number reflective of responses of “strongly agree” or “agree”: 65+: 59% (30%); 50-64: 60% (28%); 35-49: 45% (42%); 18-34: 42% (50% agree).

- Over one-half (55%) affirm the Son is eternally subordinate to the Father in the eternal relations in the Trinity, with respondents either agreeing (33%) or strongly agreeing (22%). 34% “disagree” (19%) or “disagree strongly” (15%) to the statement, with 12% responding “no opinion.”
 - Even though slightly more than one-half affirm this statement, there has been a change with the number decreasing from 65% in the 2018 survey.
 - There are also differences of perspective based on age, with the following percentages either agreeing strongly or agreeing: 65+: 62%; 50-64: 57%; 35-49: 48%; 18-34: 41%.
- In a new question in this survey, of affirming God the Son being eternally begotten/generated of God the Father, 84% responded Yes, 7% responded No, and 8% had No Opinion.
- There were 915 comments, with the question related to evolutionary creationism (Q9) receiving 289 comments.

Comments

- Most affirm a young earth view, but there is openness to other views, which is especially noted generationally. We affirm a biblical understanding of creation that encompasses the views of young-earth creation and old-earth creation, while rejecting any view that presupposes or espouses a naturalistic worldview, or any view which undermines or denies the historicity of Adam and Eve. In sum, there is commitment and conviction on the essentials of the doctrine of creation, while granting liberty and living with charity, undergirded with humility, on the issues of the “significance of silence.”
- There is confusion about the eternal relations among the Persons of the Trinity. A strong majority affirmed the Son is eternally begotten/generated of the Father, though the numbers who either responded No or No Opinion are concerning, since this is biblical orthodoxy. Affirming this truth is not the same as affirming the Son is eternally subordinate to the Father in the eternal relations (either ESS [eternal subordination of the Son] or ERAS [eternal relations of authority and submission]). Slightly over one-half believe the Son is eternally subordinate to the Father. That, too, is concerning. It is clear the Son is obedient in his incarnate state. It is not clear the subordination or obedience of the Son exists in the eternal relations.
- We affirm the *eternal relations of origin* (the way the persons of the Trinity relate to one another in eternity), the *inseparable operations* (in every work of God, the three persons work inseparably), and *appropriations* (though the external works of the Trinity are undivided, one person of the Trinity may take a unique role in redemptive history).
- Clarification and instruction are needed on the doctrine of the Trinity.

Article 2, The Bible (Q 12)

Assessments

- We have a strong commitment to the authority of the Bible, including matters of history and science: 93% disagreed (32%) or disagreed strongly (61%) to the statement “the Bible is not authoritative when it touches on matters of history or science.”
 - In the 2018 survey, 92% disagreed or disagreed strongly.
- There were 201 comments made on this question.

Comments

- Since God is the Creator of all, God’s two books, the Scripture (revelation) and nature (creation), ultimately agree. There is harmony and concord, not antagonism, between faith and science.

There may be genuine tension and disagreement (not ultimate or absolute) between faith and science, and these differences are not to be glossed over or forced to harmonize. We affirm these tensions and disagreements may not be resolved until the eschaton, when they are both finally and fully harmonized. Some of these tensions and disagreements should not be alleviated by theological revision, since some truth claims rest in biblical revelation, with or without scientific evidence or support.

- Ultimately, even though the Bible and science address different matters, the Bible and science do not ultimately disagree. And the Bible can be trusted in all that it affirms on the issues of history and science.
- We affirm the inerrancy and authority of the Bible, and we affirm God created everything “very good.” But because this creation is now in a fallen state due to sin, we see general revelation through the eyes of faith, from a posture of “faith seeking understanding.” As Christians, how specifically the Bible and science relate to one another is not an issue over which to be dogmatic or to divide.

Article 3, The Human Condition (Q 13-15)

Assessments

- Adam and Eve are affirmed as progenitors of the human race by 99% of respondents, which is considered “very important” (93%) or “somewhat important (6%). This is the same as the 2018 survey.
- The importance of the historicity of Adam and Eve is claimed by 99% of those taking the survey, with 93% believing it is “very important” along with 6% claiming it is “somewhat important.” This is the same as the 2018 survey.
- We strongly affirm the doctrine of original sin, that we are “sinners by nature,” which is affirmed as “very important” by 98% of respondents. This is the same as the 2018 survey.
- There were 209 comments made on these questions.

Comments

- Believing Adam and Eve to be the progenitors of the human race is strongly affirmed and critically important. While affirming that the Bible and science are not ultimately in conflict, there are some important truths to affirm regarding God’s creation of Adam and Eve in his image.
- Another critical truth to affirm is the doctrine of original sin, that we are “sinners by nature,” since it is part of the biblical story and biblical doctrine. In addition to the biblical record, it also explains/describes the fall and the world in which we live, and also explains/describes another important aspect of the story, that of redemption, which is accomplished in Christ, the second Adam.
- This is also important because Adam and Eve are created in the “image of God” (the *imago Dei*), and the image of God, who human beings are and what their purpose is, anthropology, is at the heart of many of the moral discussions today, viz., theological anthropology, especially in the realm of human sexuality and the dignity and sanctity of life, all of life from conception to the grave and beyond.
- These convictions are grounded in our strong commitment to the inerrancy and authority of the Bible.

Articles 4, Jesus Christ (Q 16)

Assessments

- There is confusion about Jesus, that he is fully God and fully man. Even though 81% rightly disagreed or disagreed strongly with the statement, “the Son of God is the first, highest, and greatest of all created beings,” 16% agreed or strongly agreed to the statement. This is similar to the 2018 survey.
- There were 442 comments made on this question.

Comments

- This is clearly and explicitly an Arian teaching, which is a heresy which was condemned at the Council of Nicaea (325), a decision affirmed and clarified at Chalcedon (451). It is likely some did not read the question carefully, or they did not read or process the question carefully theologically.
- Despite the 16% who affirm a heretical Christology, comments made did not defend a heretical view, but attempted to explain the response given. A number of the comments reflected on the time during which God the Son incarnate obeyed and submitted to his Father, which influenced responses. But it is essential to note that this reflects God the Son incarnate, Jesus Christ, in his incarnate state, while being fully man and fully God, one Person in two natures: “Jesus Christ is truly God and truly man. He is fully and completely both at the same time, showing us the true nature of each.”
- This is critical. The biblical truth was summarized in early Creeds (Nicaea, [325] and Chalcedon [451]) by claiming God the Son became incarnate “for us and for our salvation.” In sum, Christ is the subject matter of the Scriptures, he is central to the gospel, and he is the heart of all of theology. This means Christ alone connects “all the doctrines of our theology because Christ alone stands as the cornerstone of all the purposes and plans of God himself.”
- Teaching on Christology and the Trinity are needed. There are some misinformed, and there may be some unsuspecting Arians among us.

Article 5, The Work of Christ (Q 17)

Assessments

- There is a strong commitment to the penal substitutionary view of the death of Christ being central, even while affirming other models can be used, a view on which 64% “strongly agree” and 28% “agree” (92%). This is similar to the 2018 survey, as 94% strongly agreed or agreed.
- There were 167 comments made on this question.

Comments

- Although there is a strong commitment to Christ’s death as penal substitution, some concluded the penal substitutionary view of Christ’s death was the only view. Although it is accurate to affirm the penal substitutionary view of Christ’s death, and it is accurate to affirm the view is central, it is too narrow and delimiting of the comprehensive implications of Christ’s death to conclude it is the only view.
- While affirming penal substitutionary atonement, some were unaware of any other models or views of the saving work of Christ.
- Some affirmed other models or views of the atonement but only in relation to the central model of penal substitution. This appropriately affirms a greater breadth to the implications of Christ’s death, while acknowledging limitations. For example, the “ransom to the devil” theory is an inaccurate understanding of the atonement.

- Although the death of Christ can be studied as an isolated doctrine, it is critical that it also be studied as an organic whole, along with other doctrines. The Bible is clear the death of Christ is the essence of the work of Christ and the gospel. But it must also be understood in conjunction with Christ's sinless life, his burial and resurrection, and his session at the Father's right hand in his intercessory role for us. When affirming this view, it is also important to do so while affirming the simplicity of God, that God's attribute of love is not contrary to his attribute of holiness. We affirm God is "holy, infinitely perfect, and eternally existing in a loving unity of three equally divine Persons" (Article 1). God's attributes truly reveal his nature. We affirm "the outward works of the Trinity are indivisible." So even in the penal substitution of Christ, although God the Son incarnate is crucified, it is the one God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—who acts in the whole history of salvation, which includes the incarnation and the cross. We affirm *inseparable operations*, which addresses the unity of God such that you cannot separate the acts of God between the persons of God.
- This doctrine reflects what we believe about sin (Article 3), the wrath of God (Article 3), eternal conscious punishment (Article 10), the person and work of Christ (Articles 4 and 5), salvation (Articles 3, 6), and eternal blessed with the Lord in the new heavens and new earth (Article 10). It is a doctrine that is much maligned today, so it requires reaffirmation of this truth in our teaching and preaching.

Article 6, The Holy Spirit (Q 18-22)

Assessments

- We lean in a Calvinist/Reformed direction on matters of salvation, with 45% affirming the Calvinist/Reformed view of salvation, and with 31% affirming the Arminian/Wesleyan view of salvation. 24% of respondents did not list any logical order.
 - Among those in the 65+ age category, 44% identify as Arminian/Wesleyan and 28% Calvinist/Reformed. Those aged 50-64, 31% identify as Arminian/Wesleyan and 44% identify as Calvinist/Reformed. Those aged 35-49, 20% identify as Arminian/Wesleyan and 58% identify as Calvinist/Reformed. Those aged 18-34, 17% identify as Arminian/Wesleyan and 68% identify as Calvinist/Reformed.
 - There is a slight change in the percentages in the logical order of salvation from 2018: 39% Calvinist/Reformed and 33% Arminian/Wesleyan. The percentage of those not listing any logical order 28%.
- Respondents strongly affirm "eternal security," "perseverance of the saints," as 92% do not believe one "can lose their salvation."
 - This remains mostly the same as the 2018 survey.
- A majority (77%) identify as continuationists. Of that 77% identifying as continuationists, 59% of those are "skeptical" and "do not actively encourage their use," while 19% "encourage people to express them appropriately." 10% identify as cessationist, while 12% responded "Other."
- We strongly affirm there is no new revelation binding on the church that has the same authority as Scripture (99%). However, there are 3 who say "yes" there is, and 7 claim they "don't know."
- We also strongly affirm the sufficiency of Scripture, as 94% affirm all truth necessary for our salvation is taught explicitly or implicitly in the Scripture (4% say "no," 59 people).
- There were 659 comments made on these questions, with the question related to Arminianism and Calvinism (Q 18) receiving 215 comments, and the question related to miraculous gifts (Q 19) receiving 167 comments.

Comments

- We reflect well our ethos regarding the belief in the order of salvation, providing a place for both Arminians/Wesleyans and Calvinists/Reformed. There are generational differences in understanding this issue, with the younger identifying as more Calvinist/Reformed. Interestingly, when approaching the issue of the possibility of losing one's salvation, or apostatizing, there are virtually none who affirm that view. Arminians/Wesleyans generally affirm one can lose salvation or apostatize. The strong sense of those who affirm Arminian/Wesleyan soteriology and conclude it is not possible to lose one's salvation is unique and one of the uniquenesses of the EFCA.
- There is breadth and charity granted on the miraculous gifts, which is evident in the various positions represented. There are a few cessationists. But even those who affirm this view also believe God can do what he wills. This means personally the person believes the miraculous gifts have ceased, but God can and may still miraculously act. The majority identify as continuationists, which is qualified by two views. The larger of the two approach this with skepticism and they do not actively encourage their use, an "open but cautious" view. The smaller of the continuationists encourage people to use them appropriately.
- Remaining committed to the inerrancy and authority of the Bible, we also affirm *sola Scriptura*. We strongly affirm there is no new revelation given that has the same authority as the Scriptures. We also continue to affirm the sufficiency of the Bible.
- It is somewhat troubling there are three who believe there is new revelation from the Lord that is binding on the church and that has the same authority as Scripture, and there are 59 who do not believe that all truth necessary for our salvation and spiritual life are taught either explicitly or implicitly in Scripture. This goes contrary to our commitment to *sola Scriptura*, as espoused by the Reformers during the Reformation, which recaptured the truth of God and his Word, the Scriptures.

Article 7, The Church (Q 23-31)

Assessments

- We remain strongly complementarian, as 83% of respondents affirm "there ought to be some differences in ministry roles based on gender (Complementarian)." 7% identify as egalitarian concluding "there ought to be no differences in ministry roles based on gender (Egalitarian)." 10% responded "other," consisting of 132 respondents. In reading through the comments of the 128 who responded "other," 99 were complementarian, 9 were egalitarian, and 20 identified as other, namely they were undecided, or they were studying and processing the issue. This results in the following: complementarian, 90.4%; egalitarian, 8.1%; and other, 1.5%. In responding to the question about how important this view is to one's overall theological framework, 94% affirmed it was "very important" (48%) or "somewhat important" (46%).
 - These figures are the same as the 2018 survey, which is similar to the 2013 survey.
 - On the importance of the theological framework, in the 2018 doctrinal survey 91% affirmed it was either "very important" or "somewhat important."
- In response to the question of the importance of church membership, 55% affirm it is "very important," 41% affirm it is "somewhat important," and 4% claim it is "not important."
 - Among the various age groups who consider church membership to be "very important," 51% make the claim in the 65+ age category, 49% among those aged 50-64, 62% among those 25-49, and 65% among those 18-34. This reflects that the younger age groups consider church membership to be important to a higher degree than the older age groups.
 - In the 2018 doctrinal survey, 49% affirmed that church membership was "very important," while 46% claimed it was "somewhat important." The numbers of those who see that church membership is "very important" is increasing.

- Regarding the importance of baptism (of any sort) to be required for church membership, 51% claim Yes, while 46% claim No. In responding on behalf of the church's requirement, 64% responded No, while 32% responded Yes.
 - Moving from oldest to youngest, the younger are more committed to connect baptism and membership: 65+: 58% No; 50-64: 50% Yes; 35-49: 61% Yes; 18-34: 65% Yes.
 - In comparison to the 2018 doctrinal survey, the results have reversed, in that 46% responded Yes, while 51% responded No.
- In responding to the question about the requirement to be baptized (of any sort) in order to participate in the Lord's Supper, 18% replied Yes, while 78% responded No. When responding on behalf of the church, 5% claimed the church made this requirement, while 93% did not.
 - Here is the personal response to the connection between being baptized and participating in the Lord's Supper: 65+: 88% No; 50-64: 81% No; 35-49: 70% No; 18-34 60% No.
 - In the 2018 doctrinal survey, 14% responded Yes, and 82% responded No.
- The Memorialist view (Zwinglian) of the Lord's Supper is affirmed by 58%, while the Spiritual Presence view (Reformed) is affirmed by 34%. The Lutheran view of Christ's presence "in, with and under" the elements, .45% (6 respondents) affirm the view.
 - Here is the personal response to one's view of the Lord's Supper: 65+: 66% Zwinglian (Memorialist) and 24% Reformed (Spiritual Presence); 50-64: 61% Zwinglian (Memorialist) and 31% Reformed (Spiritual Presence); 35-49: 49% Zwinglian (Memorialist) and 43% Reformed (Spiritual Presence); 18-34: 49% Reformed (Spiritual Presence) and 39% Zwinglian (Memorialist).
 - In comparison to the 2018 doctrinal survey, 63% affirmed the Zwinglian (Memorialist) view, and 27% affirmed the Reformed (Spiritual Presence) view. There is a slight decrease in the former view, and there is a slight increase in the latter view.
- Regarding church polity, respondents strongly reflect congregational rule and elder led (89%). 3% function as elder rule (34 people). 7% function by making all decisions corporately by the entire congregation (89 people). 2% of respondents (24 people) believe the church is governed by corporate congregational discernment led largely by the senior/lead pastor.
- There were 1132 comments made related to questions on Article 7, with questions regarding the ordinances (questions 26-30) receiving 679 comments.

Comments

- The survey respondents strongly affirmed the complementarian position, including those who responded "other." In the comments written by those who checked "other," a majority stated there are "some differences in ministry roles," thus affirming the complementarian position. The numbers of respondents affirming the complementarian position have remained consistent in the three doctrinal surveys conducted (2013, 2018, and 2023). Based on our understanding of the Scriptures in reserving ordination for qualified men, this reflects the EFCA is *prescriptively* complementarian. And based on the fact the vast majority of our senior or lead pastors and credentialed leaders affirm complementarianism, as evidenced in the 90.4% response in the Doctrinal Survey, we are also *descriptively* complementarian (results of our Doctrinal Survey do not carry the same weight as the Scriptures or our Conference decision, as biblical truth is not determined by a majority perspective. But the results reflect that the great majority of EFCA senior or lead pastors and those credentialed in the EFCA affirm [*descriptive*] the EFCA's complementarian convictions [*prescriptive*]). As noted in *Where We Stand in the EFCA: Denials and Affirmations*, "We are *not* egalitarian in our understanding of the roles and functions of men and women in the church, *but* we do believe that the gifts and ministries of women are essential to the health and fruitfulness of churches and ought to be sought out and multiplied in ways that

arise from and are consistent with our complementarian convictions, as reflected in our EFCA ordination policy.”

- Membership in the local church is affirmed by slightly more than one-half respondents. The numbers increase among the younger age groups, which is an encouraging trend. In the EFCA, most churches consist of more attenders than members. Some of this may be due to the time in which we live and minister, and some of this may be due to the fact that the EFCA was birthed in a revivalist setting in the Nordic countries so that soteriology became strongly emphasized while ecclesiology was not emphasized as much.
- There is less of a commitment to connect membership with baptism. Respondents are evenly distributed between those believing baptism should be required for membership and those who do not believe it should be required. The connection between baptism and membership is stronger with the younger age groups. The teaching of the Scriptures and the consistent testimony of the church throughout history connects membership and baptism. Those in the history of the church who did not connect them are outliers. Our history is somewhat captured in the notion that the qualifications to be a member in the local church should be no greater than to be a member in the universal church, that is, nothing more ought to be required beyond being born again. But being born again, a believer, is not all the Bible says about the local church, membership and baptism. Even though our Statement of Faith does not prescribe the “time” or “mode” of baptism (allowing for both credo- and paedobaptist practices), it does expect believers will be baptized which will be connected with membership. As noted in *Evangelical Convictions* (p. 151), “this distinguishes Free churches from Baptist churches.” Thus, there are two issues that need to be remembered and addressed. On the one hand, there is the practice of not requiring any baptism at all. On the other hand, there is the desire to become Baptist. It could be said the EFCA is baptist (small b), not Baptist (capital B).
- There is an even less of a commitment to consider the connections between baptism and the Lord’s Supper, an order to the ordinances. This is not considered a strength. As written in *Evangelical Convictions*, 2nd ed. (p. 144), “historically, it has been the near universal practice in churches of all denominations to require baptism (in some form) before participation in the Lord’s Supper.” However, being committed to addressing this in a “more excellent way,” and yet knowing our history, the quote ends in this way: “In the EFCA this is a matter that is left to the local church.”
- Regarding the view of the Lord’s Supper, a majority of respondents affirm the Zwinglian (Memorialist) view, and a minority affirm the Reformed (Spiritual Presence) view. Several claim to affirm some of both of those views, while a few affirm both a Reformed (Spiritual Presence) and a Lutheran (“in, with and under”) view. There are also a few who are working out what they believe about the Lord’s Supper. It is important to remember that in the EFCA, the Statement of Faith does not define the precise manner in which Christ is present in the Lord’s Supper (allowing for a variety of historic Evangelical views).
- A strong majority affirm our free church, congregational polity. There are some unhealthy outliers on both ends of the congregational spectrum: on the one end is democracy, or polity by the populace, with little to nothing of being elder led; and on the other end is elder rule, which has little to nothing of being congregationally governed. Neither of these reflect our EFCA congregational polity.
- A strong majority affirm our free church, congregational polity. There are some unhealthy outliers on both ends of the congregational spectrum, which is not actually congregationalism.
- Regarding ecclesiology, we affirm the doctrine of the church, but we remain quite free in function. This can and often does result in a low or weak ecclesiology. This often means we have a strong sense of autonomy but a weak sense of interdependency. Furthermore, we have a strong understanding of and commitment to the doctrine and practice of soteriology, but less so of ecclesiology. This means that at times churches may think and function more like a parachurch

than a church. During the Reformation, the regular and faithful celebration of the ordinances was one of the marks of a true church. Even though soteriology and ecclesiology are not one and the same, they are related, as the ground and the fruit. There is a shift in view regarding some of these matters among those in the younger age groups.

Article 8, Christian Living (Q 32-35)

Assessments

- A strong majority of the respondents (92%) affirm that while compassion and justice are not the gospel, they are a necessary outworking of the gospel. Some believe compassion and justice are equated with the gospel (4%), while others claim they have no relation to the gospel at all (2%).
- In a new question in this survey, from the declaration, Where We Stand in the EFCA: Denials and Affirmations, respondents were asked to respond to the denial of political means to establish the kingdom of God and an affirmation of God appointing governing authorities to do good and King Jesus' rule and reign over all, and 98% either strongly agreed (75%) or agreed (23%) with the statement, with only 1% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing.
- The sense that the church ought to reflect the racial/ethnic diversity of the community was quite strong at 92%, with 44% believing it is "very important," and 49% concluding it is "somewhat important."
 - The younger the respondent, the stronger the view of this being "very important": 18-34: 53%; 35-49: 46%; 50-64: 42%; 65+: 42%.
- There are differences of view between the person responding to the survey and the position of the church. To the same question asked about the church reflecting the racial/ethnic diversity of the community, respondents concluded the church believed it was "very important" (18%) or "somewhat important" (65%), totaling 83%.
- There were 523 comments made related to questions on Article 8, with 135 comments made about how compassion, justice, and deeds of mercy relate to the gospel with 206 comments made on the question asked about the local church reflecting the racial/ethnic diversity of the community.

Comments

- There is a strong affirmation that the gospel not only commands us but compels us or enables us to live out compassion and justice with and to others. These issues are not the gospel, but they are reflective of the gospel being lived out in and among us. Orthodoxy is the ground and orthopraxy is the fruit.
- There is a strong affirmation that the kingdom of God is not established through political means, and an accompanying strong affirmation that God has put governing authorities in place to do good, that for Christians in Christ's kingdom, King Jesus' rule and reign transcends all other relationships, citizenships, and partisan ideologies and transforms everything about us.
- There is also a strong sense that the church membership and attenders ought to reflect the racial/ethnic diversity of the community. Jesus Christ builds his church, so this is not something we create. But this one new community created by Christ is something about which we must be eager and diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Individuals are more committed to this than is the church (remembering this is based on self-assessment).
- This is one important area in which the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ we proclaim with our lips is lived out and manifested in the way we live our lives. The application of the gospel of Jesus Christ in personal lives by the Holy Spirit creates one new humanity. This new community is a manifestation, a commentary on the truth of Jesus Christ we proclaim.

Article 9, Christ's Return (Q 36)

Assessments

- A strong majority remain premillennial in their eschatological beliefs (76%), with 28% identifying as Dispensational Premillennial and 48% identifying as Historic Premillennial. With our broadened view, 13% affirmed the Amillennial view while 2% affirmed the Postmillennial view, with 9% responding Other.
- There are 121 comments to this question.

Comments

- With the adoption of a revised Statement of Faith in 2019, this is the one Article that was revised, broadening our eschatological position. Premillennialism is no longer the exclusive view articulated in our Statement of Faith. Thus, this is a different question than was asked in the 2018 survey.
- Most are premillennial in their understanding of eschatology, some are in process, meaning they have a position, but they are rethinking their view, there are a several Amillennialists and only a few Postmillennialists. A few are undecided, likely some of those in process.
- Many stated that one's millennial view is not a matter of first importance.
- Responses to the question reveal we are still predominantly premillennial, though there are a rising number of those who embrace Amillennialism, with only a few affirming Postmillennialism.

Article 10, Response and Eternal Destiny (Q 37-38)

Assessments

- To the question of how important is "eternal conscious punishment" to one's theological framework, 96% affirm it to be "very important" (76%) or "somewhat important" (20%).
 - Of those credentialed, 97% affirm the belief is very or somewhat important, while 91% of those not credentialed conclude it is very or somewhat important. While 91% is a predominant majority, it is important to note the difference.
 - The response of "very important" is consistent across the various generations. 65+: 79%; 50-64: 79%; 35-49: 70%; 18-34: 76%.
- To the question of "Can a competent adult be saved apart from an explicit knowledge of Jesus Christ?," we remain strongly exclusivists (79%), either "gospel exclusivism" (49%) or "special revelation exclusivism" (30%).
 - Of those credentialed, 79% affirm the exclusivist view, while 76% of those not credentialed.
 - The commitment to the exclusivist position is strongest among the youngest generation, and it slightly lessens across generations: 65+: 74%; 50-64: 76%; 35-49: 84%; 18-34: 88%.
- A few claim to be agnostic (4%, 57 individuals), and more concerning, 7% (87 individuals) believe general revelation is sufficient for salvation. 9% responded to the question with "Other." And even more concerning still are those who affirm postmortem evangelism (5 individuals), those who die apart from Christ can be saved after death, and world religions inclusivism (2 individuals). Granted these are only a few individuals, but they are individuals who have responsibility to shepherd the flock faithfully and the flock is being misled.

- There were 227 comments made related to Article 10.

Comments

- The final fate of the unbeliever, the one who turns away from the Lord Jesus Christ and denies the gospel, is “eternal conscious punishment,” a truth we steadfastly believe. We affirm this truth because we believe it is taught in the Scriptures, and this view has been the theological and historical consensus view of the church.
- We also strongly affirm the exclusivity of believing in Jesus Christ for salvation. There is no salvation and no hope for those who have not heard apart from explicit knowledge of Jesus Christ.
- Our convictions here are related to our view of the Bible (Article 2), God’s wrath (Article 3), the work of Christ (Articles 4 and 5) and the need to respond to the gospel (Article 10). All these critical biblical and theological issues are being questioned, undermined, and/or denied by many Evangelicals today. We give thanks to the Lord the EFCA remains strongly believing and firmly committed to these crucial truths.
- In reading comments, there are some outliers. A few are pondering annihilationism, with some thinking it ought to be a viable option. A few are also asking questions about postmortem salvation. As with some of the other doctrinal positions, there are also a few outliers on this doctrine as well.

Other Doctrinal/Moral Issues (Q 39-48)

Assessments

- There is almost a unanimous affirmation (99.85%) of the Resolution on Human Sexuality and the Covenant of Marriage.
- Most affirm the traditional biblical view of divorce and remarriage, that on the grounds of a spouse’s infidelity or desertion, remarriage is permitted (70%). Some would allow divorce and remarriage on grounds other than infidelity or desertion (23%). A few respondents (4%) affirm remarriage if the divorce is for any reason. And fewer respondents (1%) believe there is no remarriage permitted after any divorce.
 - The traditional biblical view is consistent among the various age groups, with the youngest affirming it the strongest: 18-34: 78%; 35-49: 70%; 50-64: 71%; 65+: 68%.
- Regarding the question related to divorce and remarriage on the grounds of abuse, which is a new question in this survey, 75% respond Yes, 14% respond No, and 12% respond Don’t know.
 - Here is the breakdown in responses across the age groups who responded Yes: 18-34: 74%; 35-49: 78%; 50-64: 75%; 65+: 72%.
- If divorce or remarriage occurred before conversion, it would change the answer of 57% of respondents, and it would not change the response of 33%. 10% of respondents stated they Don’t know.
- We strongly affirm that sex outside God’s ordained plan to be shared between a man and a woman in marriage is sinful. To the question “Sex outside of the marriage covenant between a man and a woman is acceptable,” 97% either “strongly disagree” (88%) or “disagree” (9%) with the statement. However, disconcertingly, there are 34 respondents (3%) who “strongly agree” with the statement.
- 99% of respondents believe homosexual behavior is always contrary to the teaching of Scripture. 9 respondents believe it is not contrary to Scripture. Even though the number is small, it is concerning.

- In a new question in the survey from the declaration, Where We Stand in the EFCA: Denials and Affirmations, addressing the fact that “we do not believe that a person’s biological sex should be separated from their self-perception as a man or woman nor that the body should be altered when it does not conform to that self-perception,” though we affirm there are those who experience a struggle between these two and we respond with love and compassion, 98% of respondents either “strongly agree” (82%) or “agree” (16%). There are 10 respondents who “disagree” or “disagree strongly.”
- A strong majority affirm the sanctity of life, with 98% concluding abortion is a sin, the taking of a human life created in the image of God.
- On the matter of the importance of creation care to the congregation, 19% claim it is “very important,” 67% state it is “somewhat important,” and 16% conclude it is “not important.”
- The “significance of silence,” that “we will debate but not divide over certain nonessential doctrinal matters,” is considered a strength among most as 95% either “strongly agree” (64%) or “agree” (31%).
- There were 1238 comments made to the critical and doctrinal issues, with 649 comments made addressing the questions of divorce and remarriage (Qs 40-42).

Comments

- Not only do we remain convictionally committed to the authority of the Bible, we also remain convictionally committed to live under its authority in the realms of ethics and morality taught in the Bible.
- On the traditional biblical view of divorce and remarriage, the view is consistent across the age groups, though the younger generation is the strongest proponent of this view. Could it be they have lived with the devastating results of divorce.
- Even though there is a consensus on these ethic/moral views, there are also outliers. There are 34 who took the survey who “strongly agree” that sex outside the marriage covenant between a man and a woman is acceptable. There are 9 people who do not believe homosexual behavior is always contrary to the teaching of Scripture. There are 10 individuals who either “disagree” or “disagree strongly” to God’s very good design in creating male and female. There are 13 respondents who do not believe that abortion is a sin, the taking of a human life created in the image of God.
- As we remain committed to the Bible’s teaching on ethics and morality, we need not only to teach these truths to others, but we also need to live under these truths ourselves. In confessing Jesus Christ is Lord and picking up our cross to die to self, there are no exceptions. It is the call Jesus gives to all, which is the only ground and basis of life and hope. This is what it means to affirm the gospel in these ethical and moral matters during this day.
- One of the unique distinctives of the EFCA is the “significance of silence.” However, in the EFCA this is often understood as a doctrine being either an essential of the gospel, that which is of “first importance” (1 Cor. 15:1-5) or a significance of silence matter, or what is referred to as a disputable matter (Rom. 14:1), matters about which we ought not to divide. However, this requires more nuance, what is referred to as doctrinal rank or theological triage. This conveys that not all doctrinal claims are on the same level of biblical-theological significance. In a forthcoming book, *Evangelical Unity: Debate Without Divide*, there is developed four categories of doctrinal rank: Of First Importance; Of Second Importance; Of Third Importance; and Disputable Matters. Added to this is a taxonomy/grid by which one determines this rank, the category in which a certain doctrinal issue falls. This six-fold taxonomy/grid and this four-fold doctrinal framework provide the necessary nuance when discussing, weighing, and discerning how to classify various doctrines.

- We strongly affirm these truths, these other doctrinal and moral matters, and yet there is a continuing need for instruction and resources.

Critical Biblical/Theological Issues To Address (Q 49)

Q49: What are two or three of the most important/critical biblical and theological issues to address in the next five years?

Of these recommended issues to address, many of them have been addressed at our Theology Conference (TC), or at the Theology Conference preconference (pre), or in one instance a Theology Conference postconference (post). This list is an encouragement in that we have addressed many of the issues, and it is a reminder that we need to provide additional resources in these areas.

Assessments

1. Gender/sexual identity, LGBTQ+, reaching them, caring for those in our churches. 471 responses = 40.9% 2005 (pre), 2016 (post), 2022 (pre)
2. The authority, sufficiency, inerrancy and need for literacy of Scripture. 225 = 19.5% 2015 (TC)
3. Role of men and women in the church, complementarianism. 172 responses = 14.9% 2012 (TC), 2020 (pre)
4. Political divisions, Christian nationalism. 155 responses = 13.5% 2022 (TC), 2024 (pre), see #13 below
5. Living as exiles in an increasingly secular society, apologetics. 137 responses = 11.9% 2020 (TC), 2022 (TC)
6. Ecclesiology, congregationalism, membership, discipline. 126 responses = 10.9% 2016 (TC)
7. Biblical anthropology, image of God. 119 responses = 10.3% see #1, 2025 (TC)
8. Evangelism, discipleship, our identity in Christ. 99 responses = 8.6% 2018 (pre), 2021 (TC), 2022 (TC)
9. Salvation in Christ alone, atonement, soteriology. 79 responses = 6.9% 1998 (TC), 2015 (pre), 2017 (TC)
10. Eschatology, prophecy, blessed hope, millennial views. 71 responses = 6.2% 2000 (TC), 2006 (TC), 2007 (TC)
11. Technology, AI, social media, online church. 71 responses = 6.2% bio-tech/ethics 2003 (TC), 2022 (pre); 2025 (pre)
12. Biblical/social justice, how this connects to the gospel. 60 responses = 5.2% 2018 (TC)
13. Church and state, civil disobedience, political theology. 58 responses = 5.0% 2022 (TC), 2024 (pre), see #4 above

Comments

- This question received 1,152 comments which included 2665 different topics/subjects. On the one hand, that is expected because the question provided only an option for a write in comment. But on the other hand, respondents took time to respond to this question with thoughtful and helpful responses, arising out of their own pastoral and ministry needs.
- The survey and comments reflect a need for teaching on the issues that are mentioned. Several of the issues have been addressed in one of our annual Theology Conferences. But there is a great need to continue providing teaching, resources, and encouragement to one another so that we remain steadfast and immovable. We are those who are not ashamed of the gospel, since we are convicted and convinced that it is the power of God for salvation to all who believe, and it is the gospel that is the ground for sound doctrine.

- Some of these key topics will likely become the focus of future Theology Conferences. This list can also be used for others when considering topics to address in the church or district conferences.

Theological and Pastoral Influences (Q 50)

Q50: Who are two or three theological/pastoral writers that you find particularly helpful or who have had the greatest impact on your thinking? (1,132 comments).

The top 30 individuals are included. As you will note in the word cloud, there are many additional names that were mentioned.

- 1-10: John Piper (336); Timothy Keller (333); D.A. Carson (325); Wayne Grudem (219); C.S. Lewis (145); John MacArthur (120); R.C. Sproul (91); Eugene Peterson (74); N.T. Wright (74); Charles Swindoll (70).
- 11-20: John Stott (69); J.I. Packer (68); A.W. Tozer (62); John Calvin (55); Mark Dever (55); Dallas Willard (52); Al Mohler (51); Charles Spurgeon (51); Francis Chan (49); Kevin DeYoung (49).
- 21-30: Paul David Tripp (48); Ravi Zacharias (45); Jonathan Edwards (41); Larry Osborne (41); Francis Schaeffer (40); Martin Lloyd-Jones (37); Matt Chandler (34); Charles Ryrie (32); Millard Erickson (27); Kevin Vanhoozer (27).

Paul David Tripp C. H. Spurgeon
Chuck Swindoll
Eugene Peterson
Henri Nouwen
Michael Reeves
Rebecca McLaughlin
Gavin Ortland
Herman Bavinck
Jonathan Edwards
Charles Ryrie
Martin Luther
Francis Chan
Walt Kaiser
Michael Heiser
J. I. Packer
Alistair Begg
Larry Osborne
John Piper
Erwin Lutzer
John Frame
Christopher Warnock
G. K. Beale
Francis Schaeffer
Mark Dever
Al Mohler
Craig Blomberg
Kevin Vanhoozer
D. A. Carson
Dane Ortland
Scott McKnight
Tim Mackie
Carl Trueman
Preston Sprinkle
John Calvin
Wayne Grudem
Tom Schreiner
Jerry Bridges
John MacArthur
Sinclair Ferguson
John Mark Comer
Voddie Baucham
Norman Geisler
Augustine
Ray Ortland
Russell Moore
David Jeremiah
Dietrich Bonhoeffer
John Stott
N. T. Wright
Dallas Willard
Warren Wiersbe

2023 EFCA Doctrinal Survey Questionnaire and Results

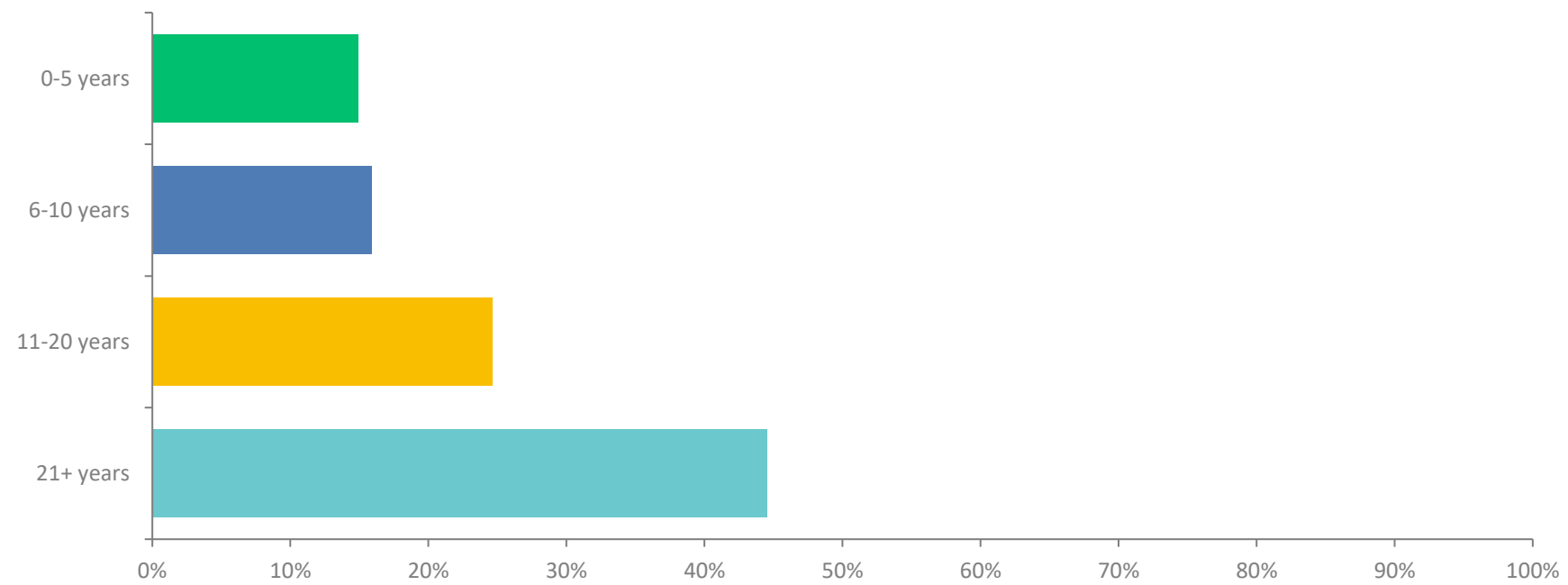


Profile



Q1: How long have you served in the EFCA?

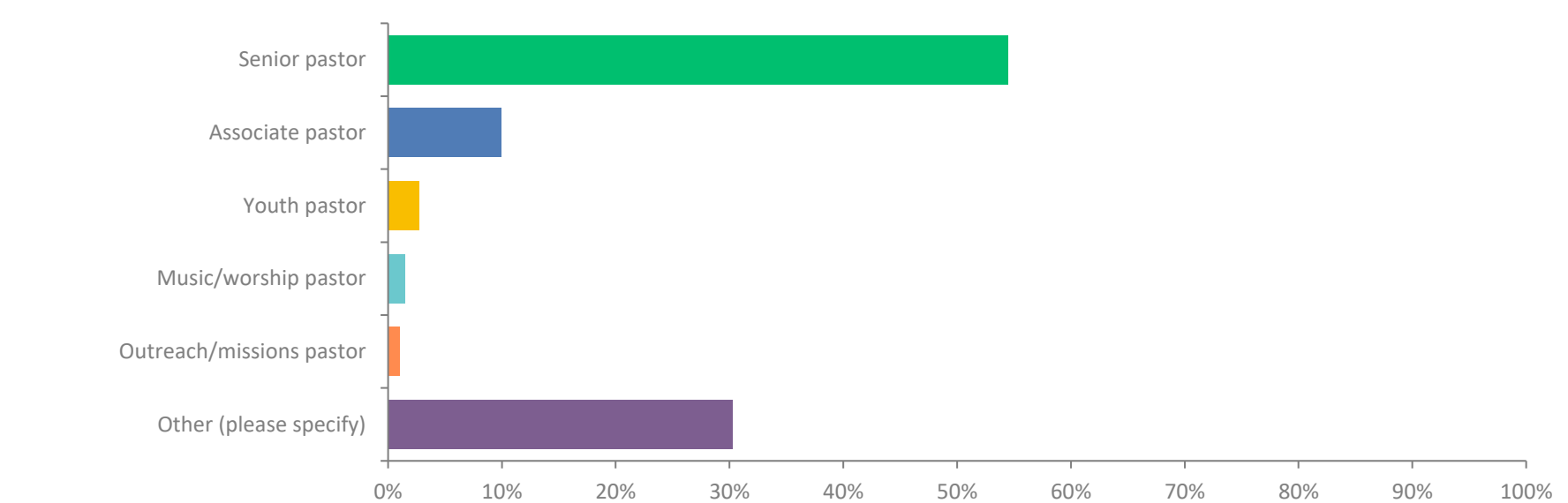
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ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
0-5 years	14.93%	215
6-10 years	15.90%	229
11-20 years	24.65%	355
21+ years	44.51%	641

Q2: In what ministry role do you serve?

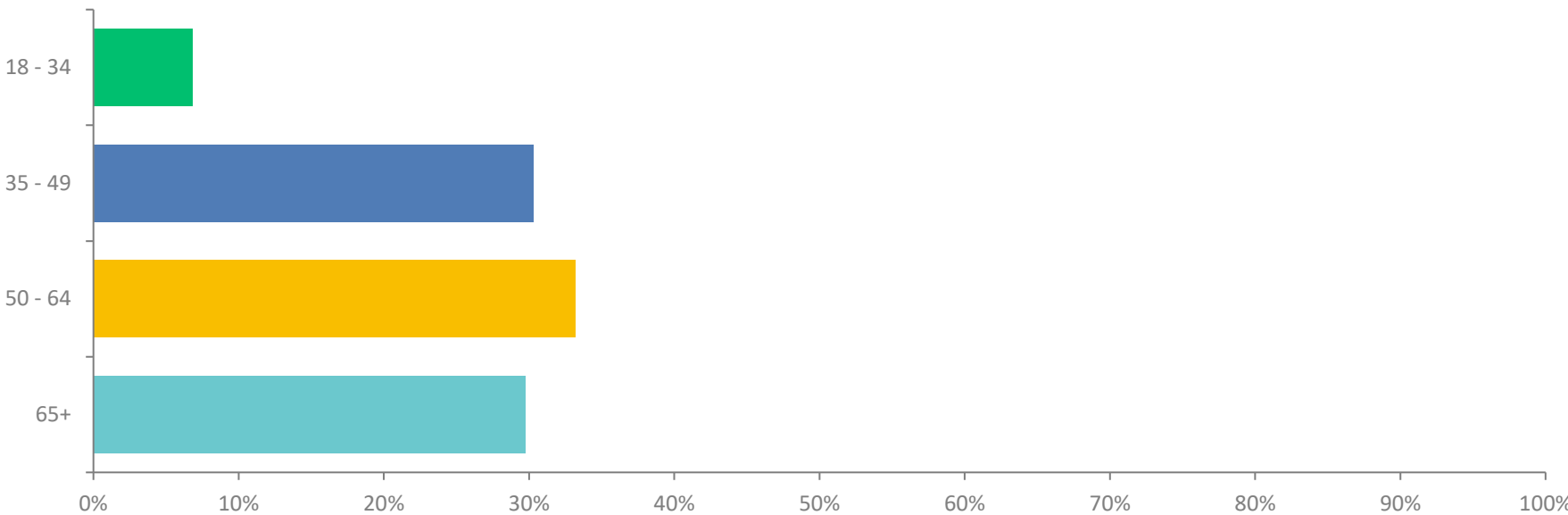
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ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Senior pastor	54.51%	785
Associate pastor	9.93%	143
Youth pastor	2.71%	39
Music/worship pastor	1.53%	22
Outreach/missions pastor	1.04%	15
Other (please specify)	30.28%	436
TOTAL		1440

Q3: What is your age?

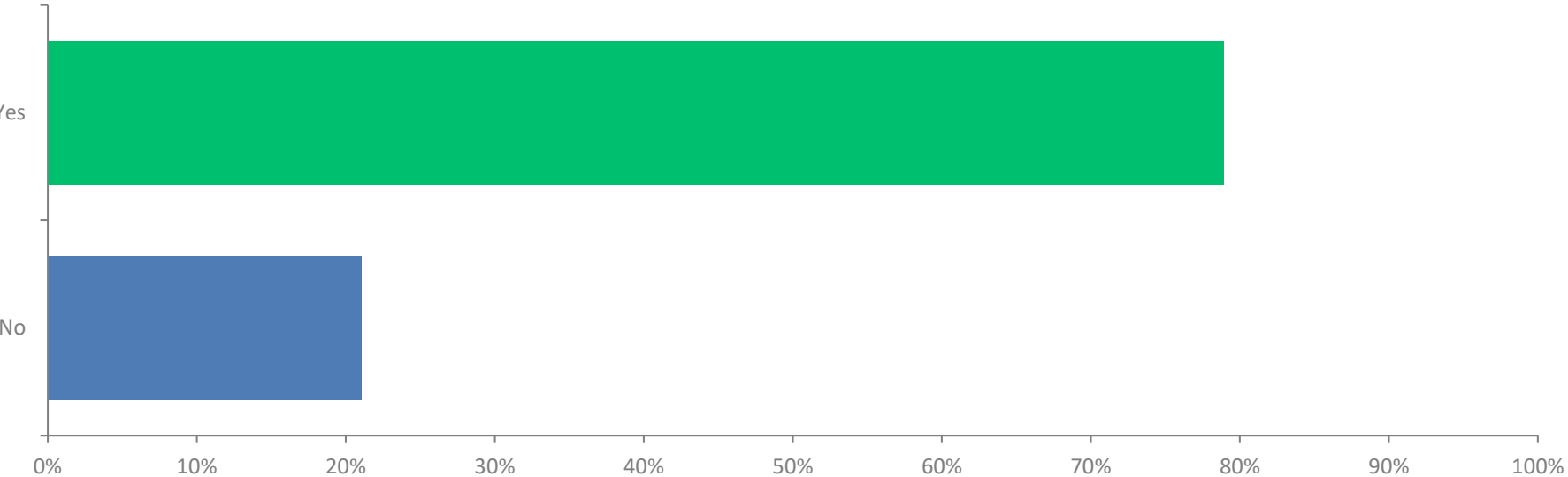
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ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
18 - 34	6.81%	98
35 - 49	30.28%	436
50 - 64	33.19%	478
65+	29.72%	428
TOTAL		1440

Q4: Are you credentialed in the EFCA?

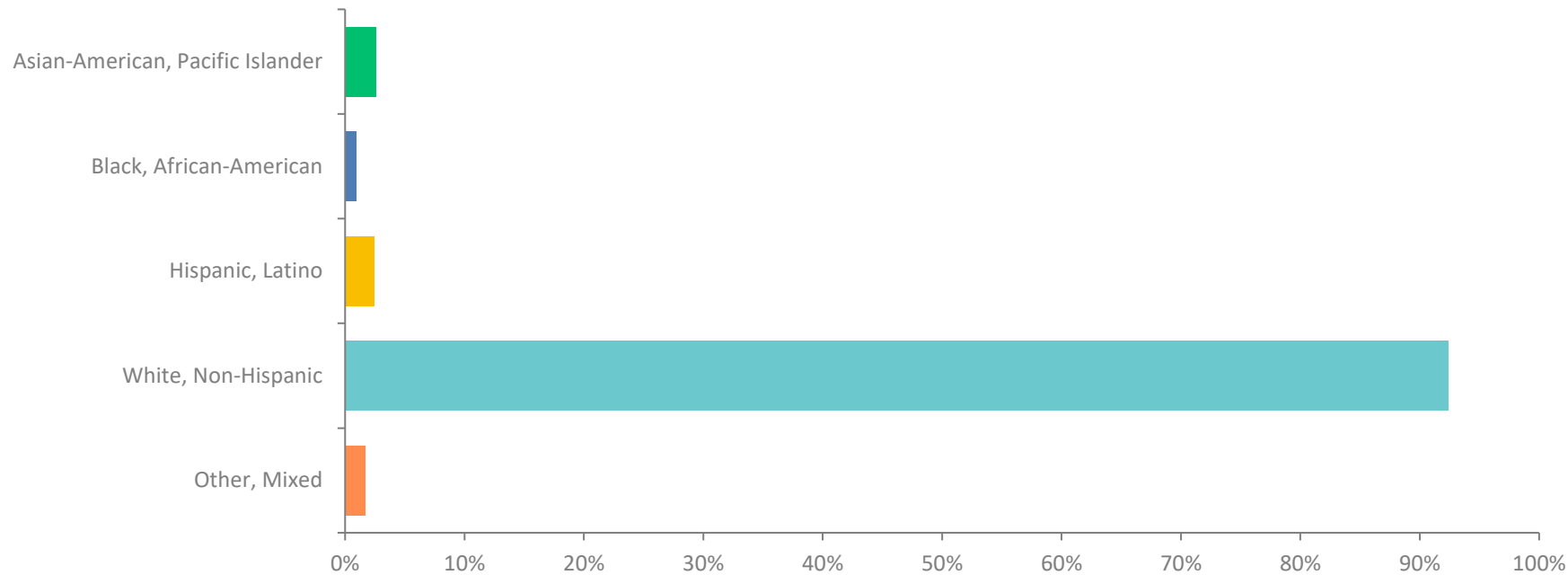
Answered: 1438 Skipped: 7



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	78.93%	1135
No	21.07%	303
TOTAL		1438

Q5: What is your ethnicity?

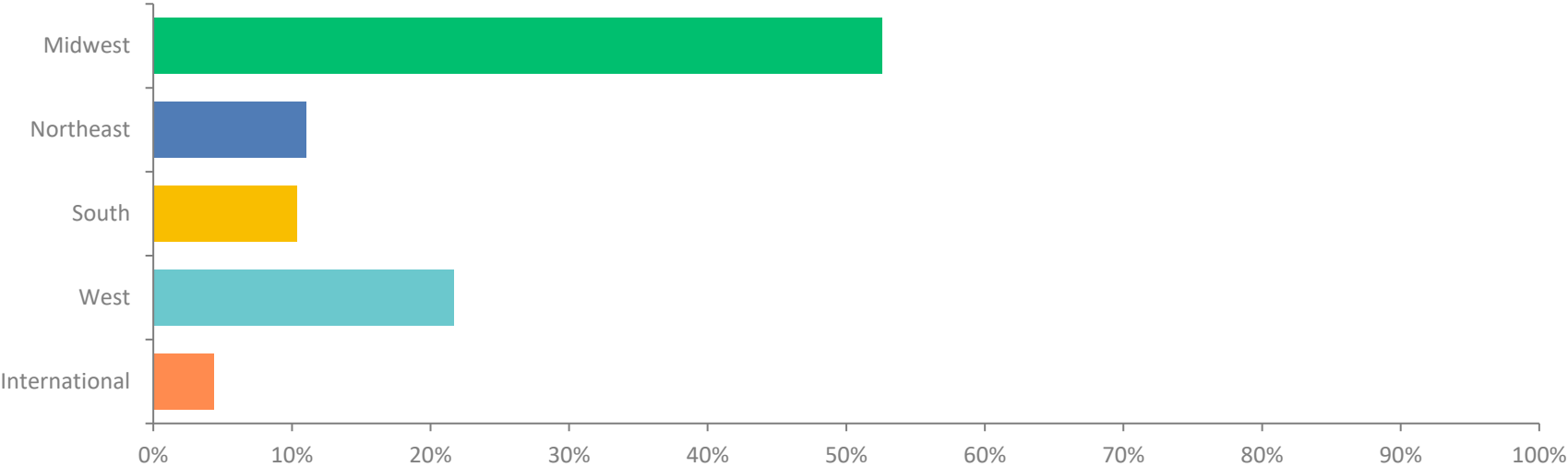
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ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Asian-American, Pacific Islander	2.58%	37
Black, African-American	0.91%	13
Hispanic, Latino	2.44%	35
White, Non-Hispanic	92.40%	1326
Other, Mixed	1.67%	24
TOTAL		1435

Q6: What region of the country do you serve?

Answered: 1440 Skipped: 5



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Midwest	52.57%	757
Northeast	11.04%	159
South	10.35%	149
West	21.67%	312
International	4.38%	63
TOTAL		1440

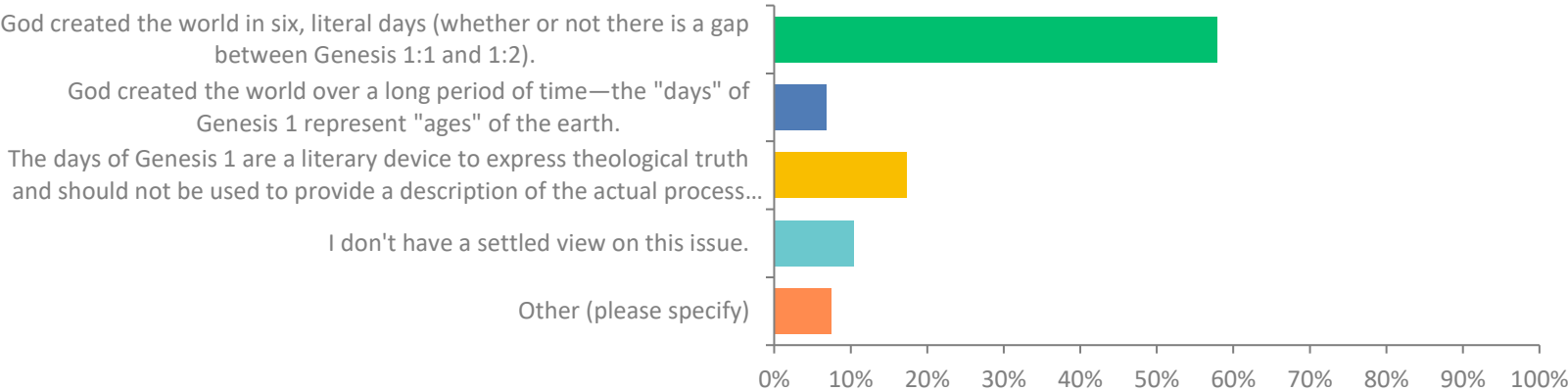
Article 1

God



Q7: Which of these best characterizes your view of the creation account in Genesis 1?

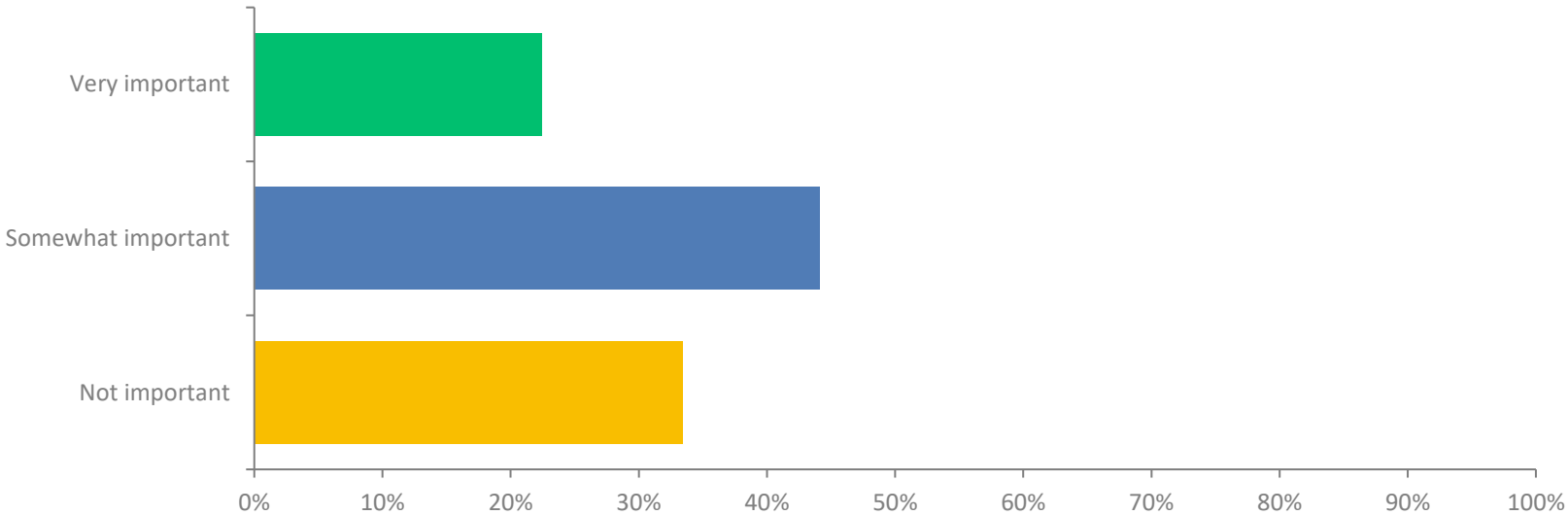
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ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
God created the world in six, literal days (whether or not there is a gap between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2).	57.91%	802
God created the world over a long period of time—the "days" of Genesis 1 represent "ages" of the earth.	6.79%	94
The days of Genesis 1 are a literary device to express theological truth and should not be used to provide a description of the actual process of creation.	17.40%	241
I don't have a settled view on this issue.	10.47%	145
Other (please specify)	7.44%	103
TOTAL		1385

Q8: How important is your view of the age of the earth to your theological framework?

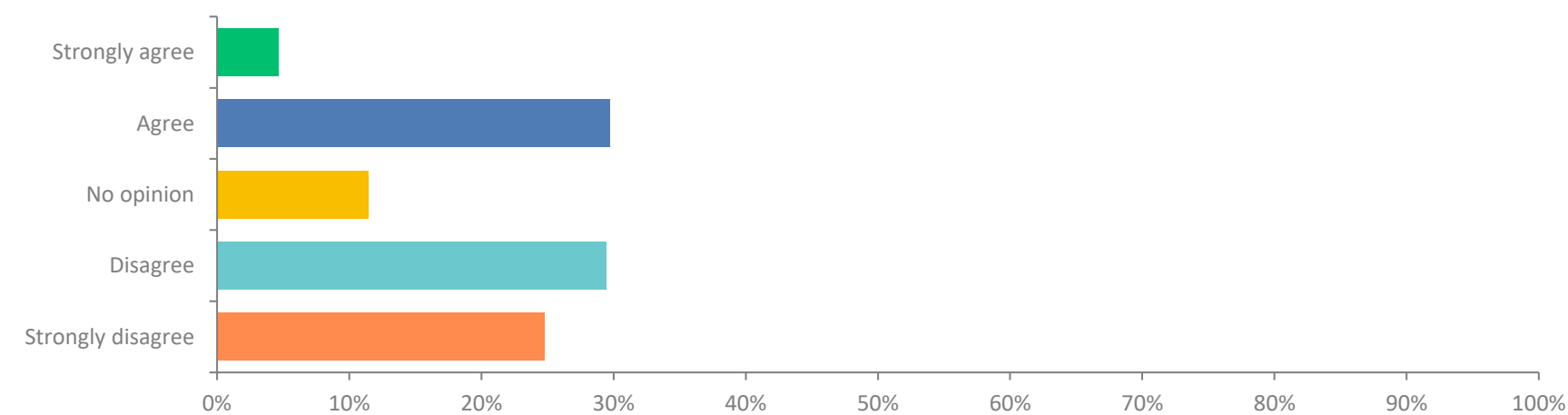
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ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Very important	22.45%	311
Somewhat important	44.12%	611
Not important	33.43%	463
TOTAL		1385

Q9: What is your view of this statement: "Some forms of evolutionary creation are compatible with biblical teaching."

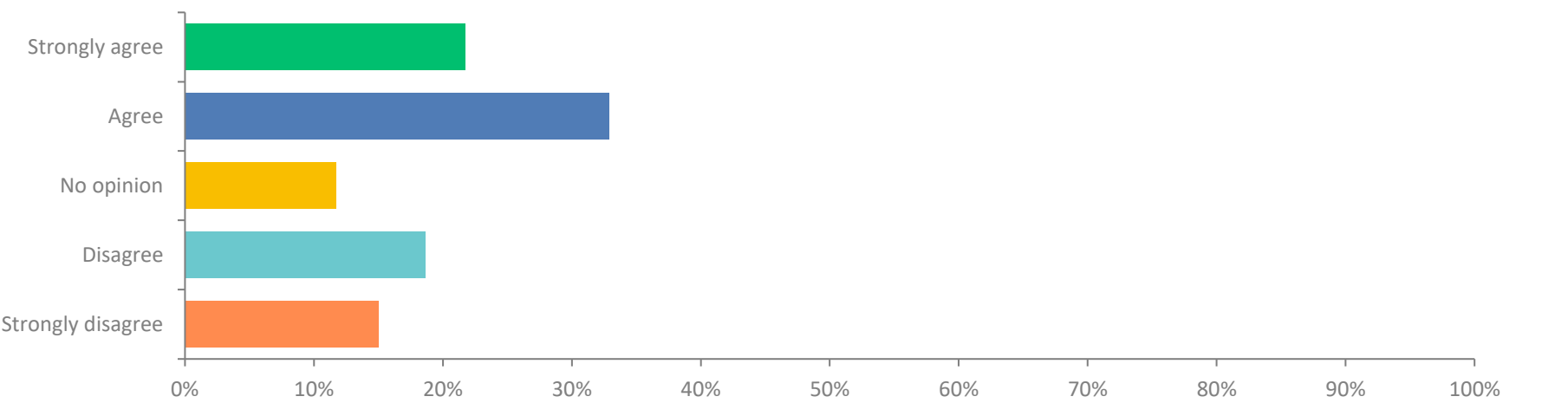
Answered: 1380 Skipped: 65



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly agree	4.64%	64
Agree	29.71%	410
No opinion	11.45%	158
Disagree	29.42%	406
Strongly disagree	24.78%	342
TOTAL		1380

Q10: What is your view of this statement: "The Son is eternally subordinate to the Father in the eternal relations in the Trinity."

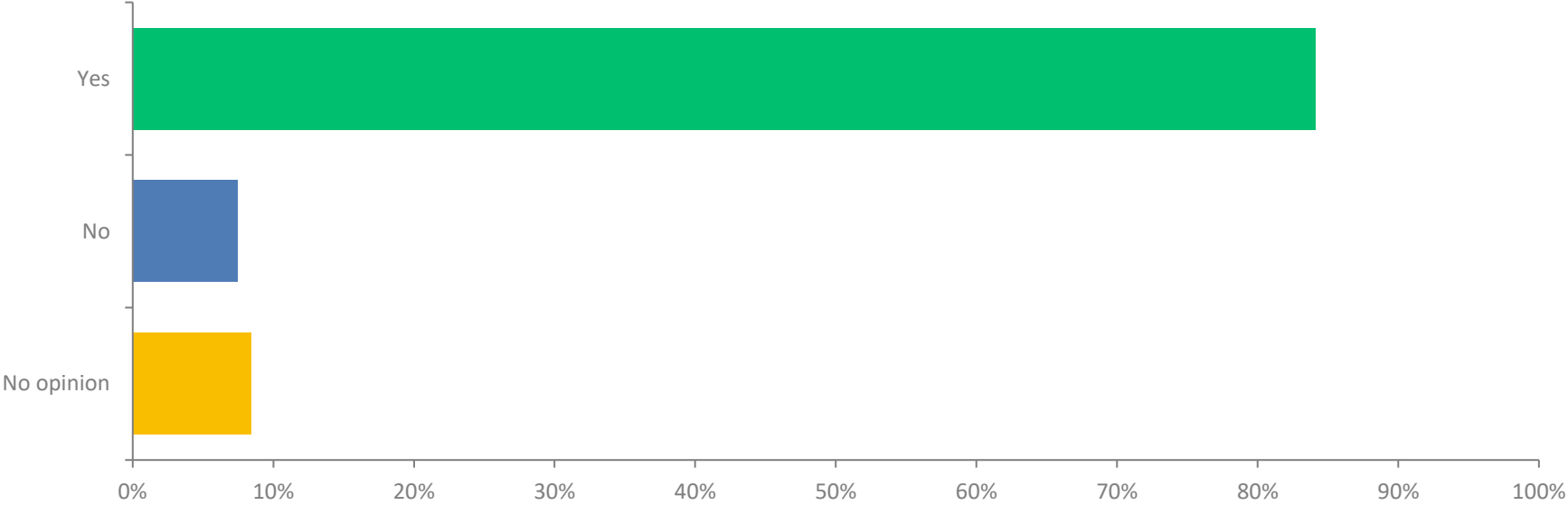
Answered: 1366 Skipped: 79



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly agree	21.74%	297
Agree	32.87%	449
No opinion	11.71%	160
Disagree	18.67%	255
Strongly disagree	15.01%	205
TOTAL		1366

Q11: Do you affirm that God the Son is eternally begotten/generated of God the Father?

Answered: 1367 Skipped: 78



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	84.13%	1150
No	7.46%	102
No opinion	8.41%	115
TOTAL		1367

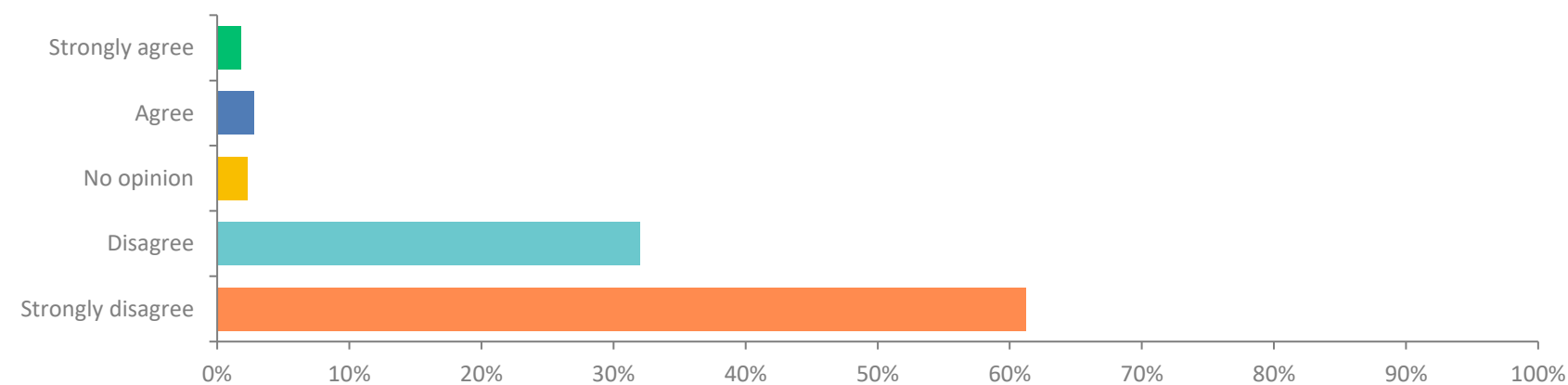
Article 2

The Bible



Q12: What is your view of this statement: "The Bible is not authoritative when it touches on matters of history or science."

Answered: 1355 Skipped: 90



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly agree	1.77%	24
Agree	2.80%	38
No opinion	2.29%	31
Disagree	31.96%	433
Strongly disagree	61.18%	829
TOTAL		1355

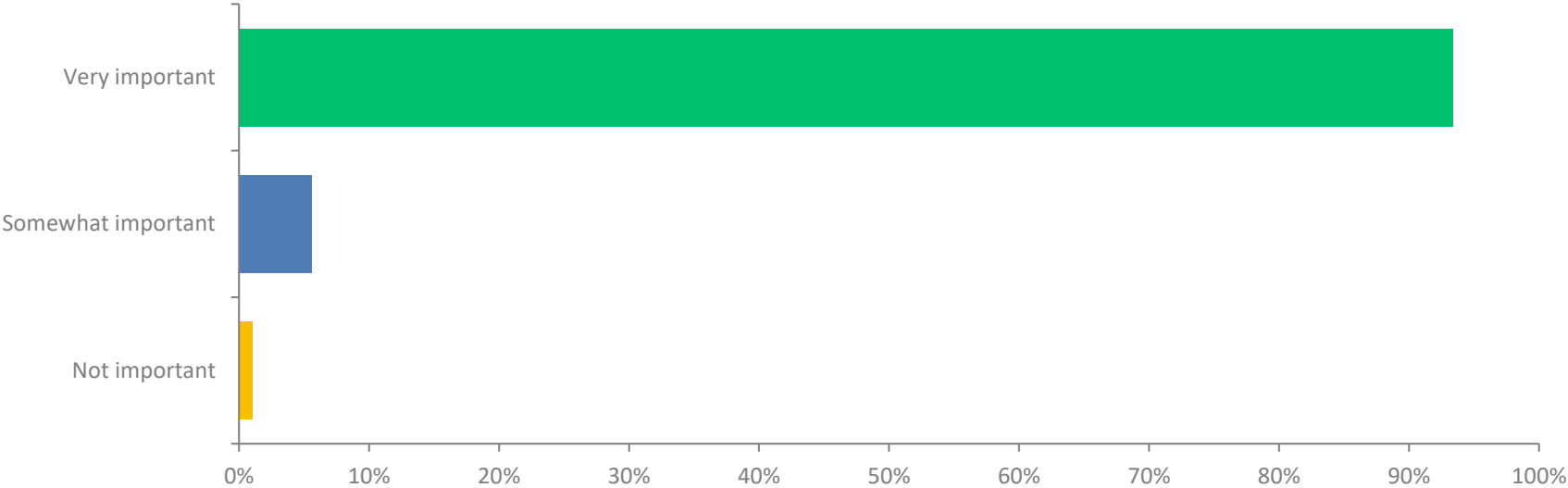
Article 3

The Human Condition



Q13: How important is the doctrine of Adam and Eve as the progenitors of the entire human race?

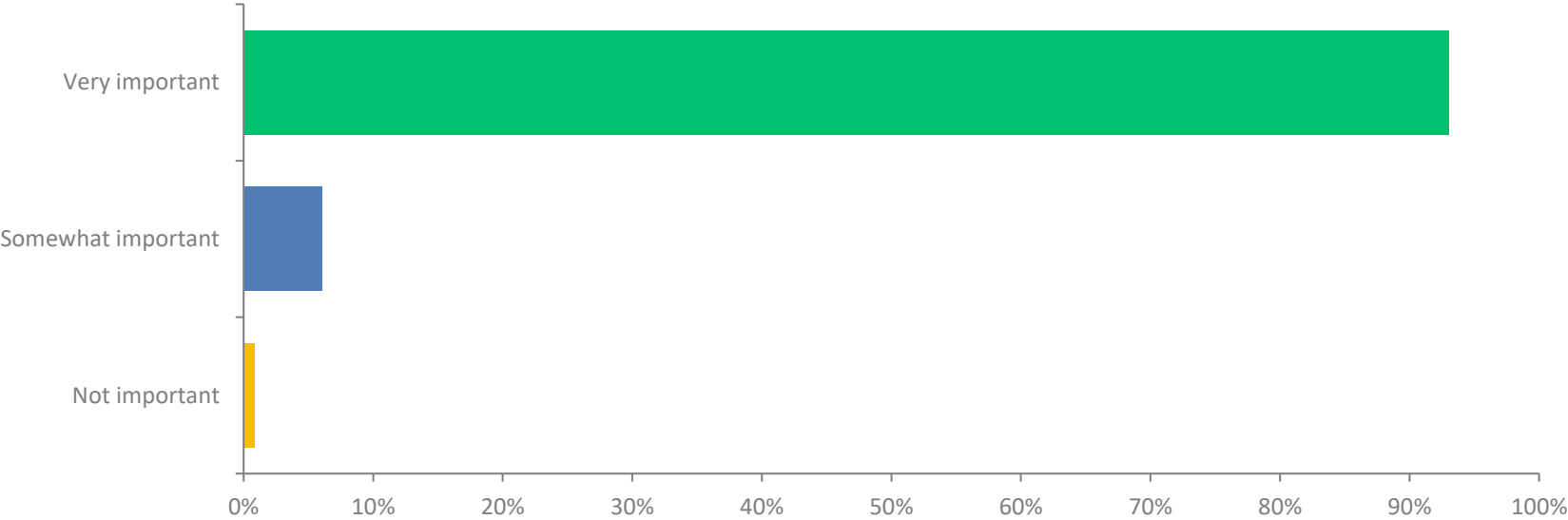
Answered: 1356 Skipped: 89



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Very important	93.36%	1266
Somewhat important	5.60%	76
Not important	1.03%	14
TOTAL		1356

Q14: How important is the historicity of Adam and Eve?

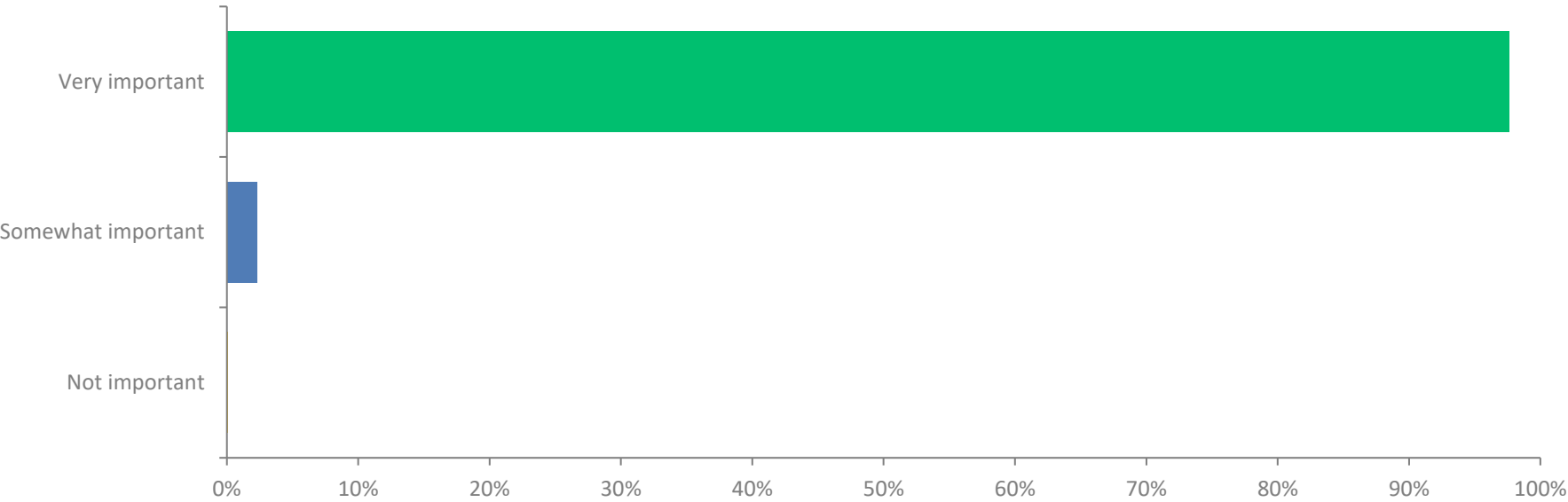
Answered: 1356 Skipped: 89



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Very important	93.07%	1262
Somewhat important	6.05%	82
Not important	0.88%	12
TOTAL		1356

Q15: How important is the doctrine of original sin (we are “sinners by nature”) in your theological framework?

Answered: 1358 Skipped: 87



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Very important	97.64%	1326
Somewhat important	2.28%	31
Not important	0.07%	1
TOTAL		1358

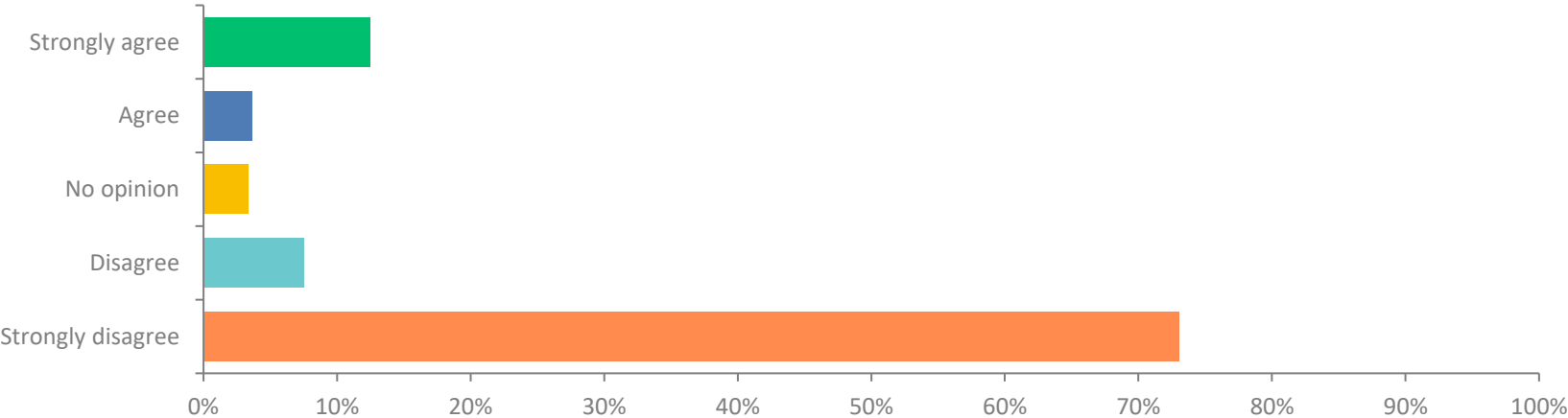
Article 4

The Person of Christ



Q16: What is your view of this statement: “The Son of God is the first, highest, and greatest of all created beings.”

Answered: 1348 Skipped: 97



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly agree	12.46%	168
Agree	3.64%	49
No opinion	3.34%	45
Disagree	7.49%	101
Strongly disagree	73.07%	985
TOTAL		1348

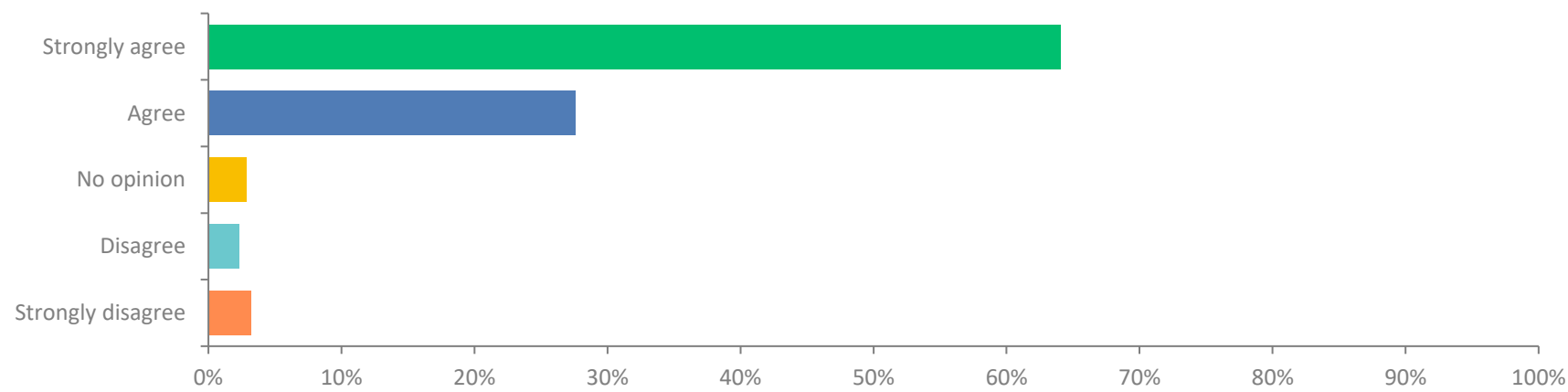
Article 5

The Work of Christ



Q17: What is your view of this statement: "Though other models can be used, an essential biblical understanding of the saving work of Christ is expressed by the penal substitutionary atonement model."

Answered: 1353 Skipped: 92



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly agree	64.08%	867
Agree	27.57%	373
No opinion	2.88%	39
Disagree	2.29%	31
Strongly disagree	3.18%	43
TOTAL		1353

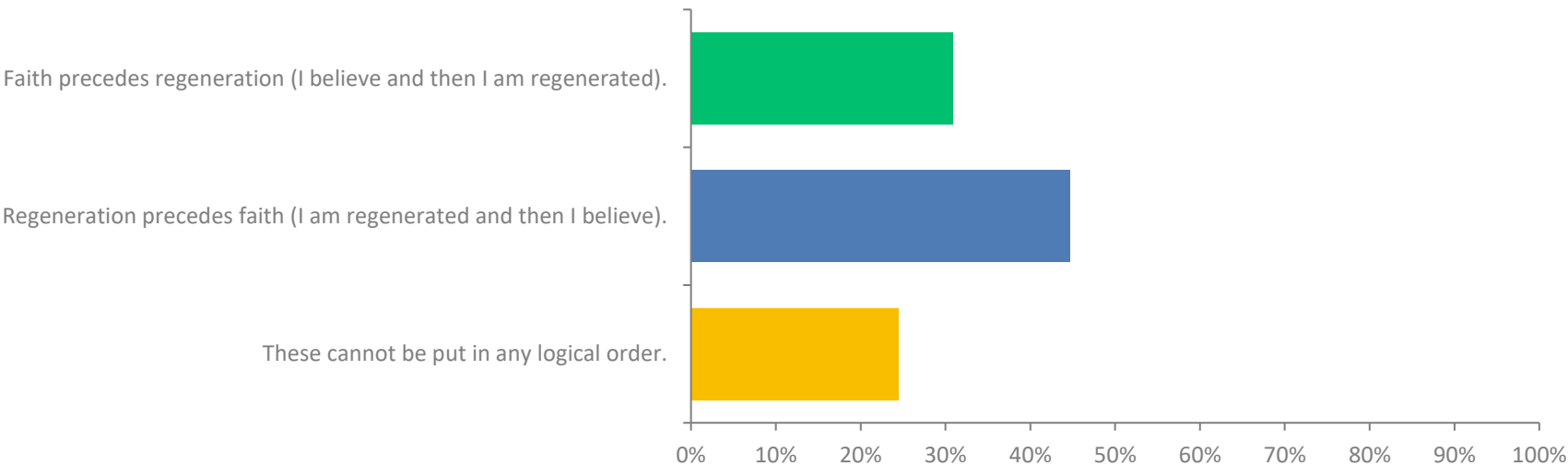
Article 6

The Holy Spirit



Q18: As you consider the logical order of a believer's exercise of saving faith and the Spirit's work of regeneration, which best describes your belief?

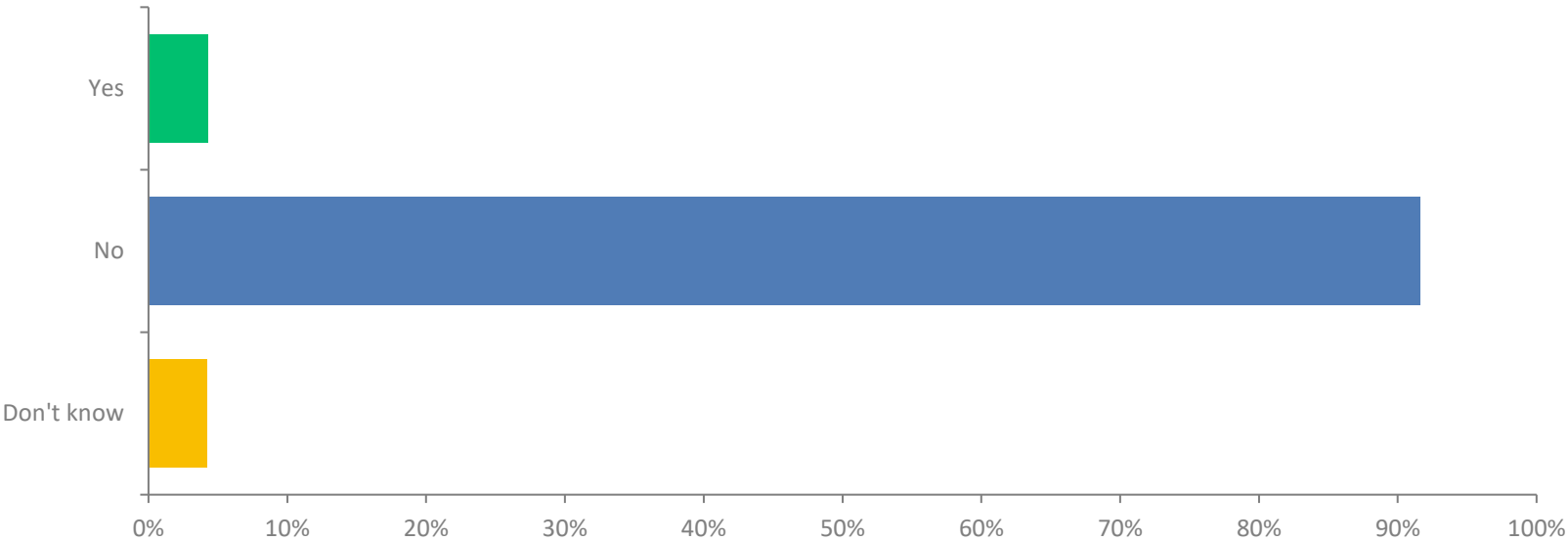
Answered: 1322 Skipped: 123



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Faith precedes regeneration (I believe and then I am regenerated).	30.86%	408
Regeneration precedes faith (I am regenerated and then I believe).	44.70%	591
These cannot be put in any logical order.	24.43%	323
TOTAL		1322

Q19: Do you believe that those who have truly put their faith in Christ and have been regenerated by the Holy Spirit can lose their salvation?

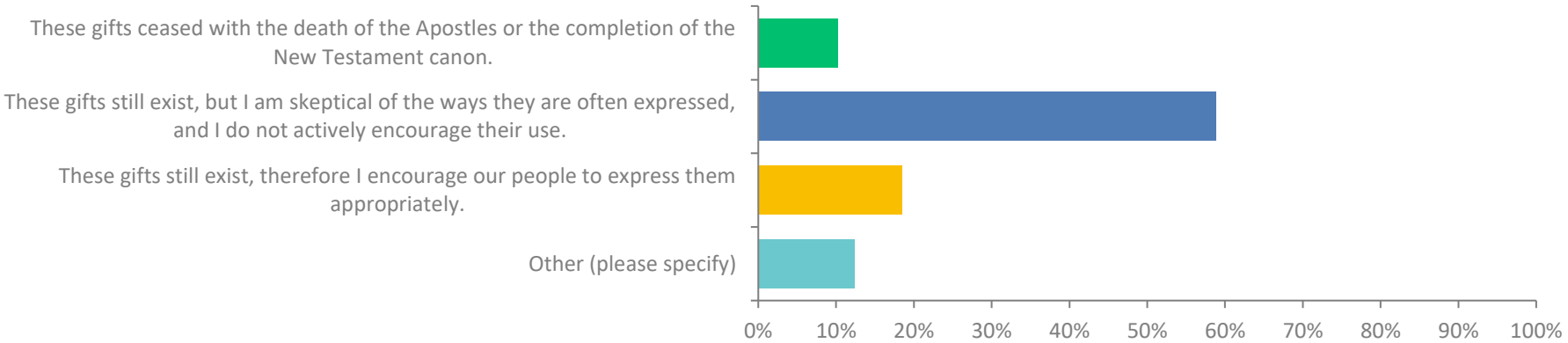
Answered: 1340 Skipped: 105



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	4.25%	57
No	91.57%	1227
Don't know	4.18%	56
TOTAL		1340

Q20: Which of these would best characterize your position on what are called "miraculous gifts" (gifts of healing, prophecy, word of knowledge, tongues) of the Spirit?

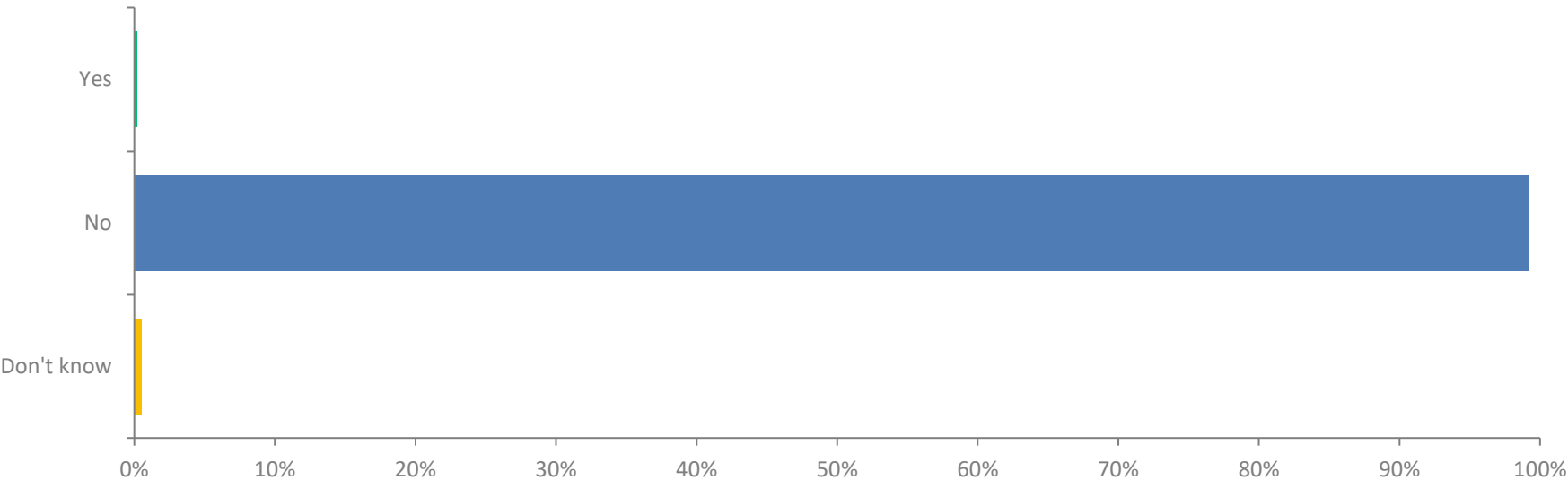
Answered: 1346 Skipped: 99



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
These gifts ceased with the death of the Apostles or the completion of the New Testament canon.	10.25%	138
These gifts still exist, but I am skeptical of the ways they are often expressed, and I do not actively encourage their use.	58.84%	792
These gifts still exist, therefore I encourage our people to express them appropriately.	18.50%	249
Other (please specify)	12.41%	167
TOTAL		1346

Q21: Is there new revelation from the Lord that is binding on the church and that has the same authority as Scripture?

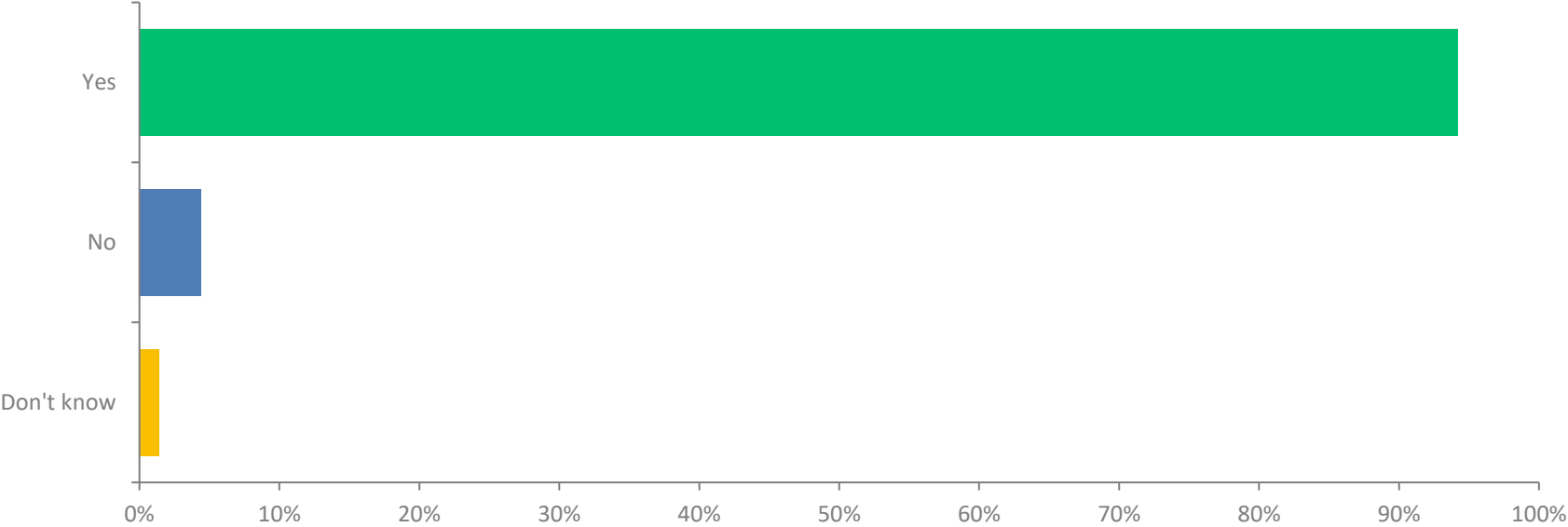
Answered: 1346 Skipped: 99



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	0.22%	3
No	99.26%	1336
Don't know	0.52%	7
TOTAL		1346

Q22: Is all truth necessary for our salvation and spiritual life taught either explicitly or implicitly in Scripture?

Answered: 1341 Skipped: 104



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	94.18%	1263
No	4.40%	59
Don't know	1.42%	19
TOTAL		1341

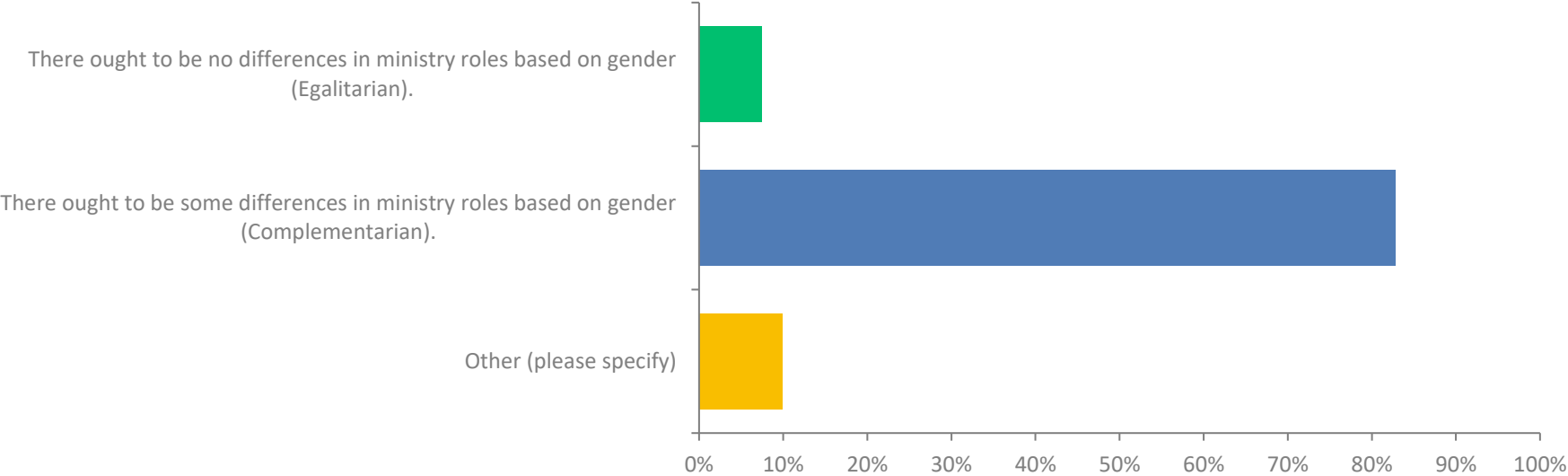
Article 7

The Church



Q23: Which best describes your position on the issue of women in ministry in the local church?

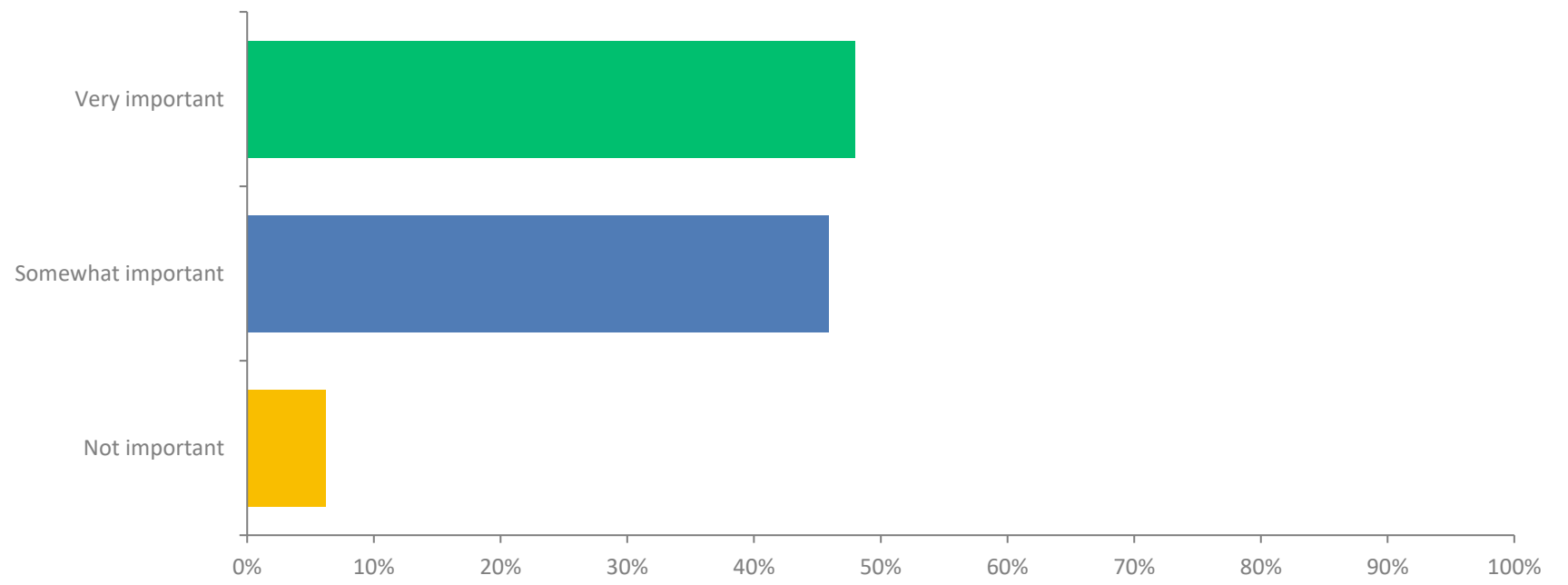
Answered: 1339 Skipped: 106



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
There ought to be no differences in ministry roles based on gender (Egalitarian).	7.39%	99
There ought to be some differences in ministry roles based on gender (Complementarian).	82.75%	1108
Other (please specify)	9.86%	132
TOTAL		1339

Q24: How important is this position to your overall theological framework?

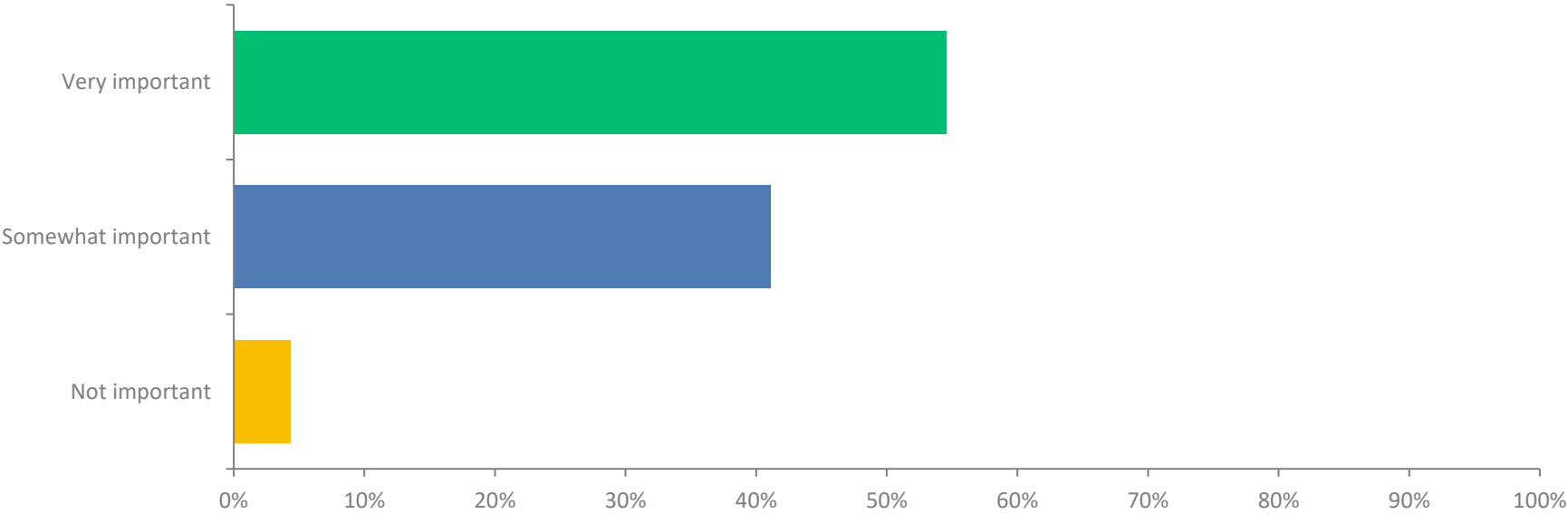
Answered: 1339 Skipped: 106



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Very important	47.95%	642
Somewhat important	45.86%	614
Not important	6.20%	83
TOTAL		1339

Q25: How important is church membership?

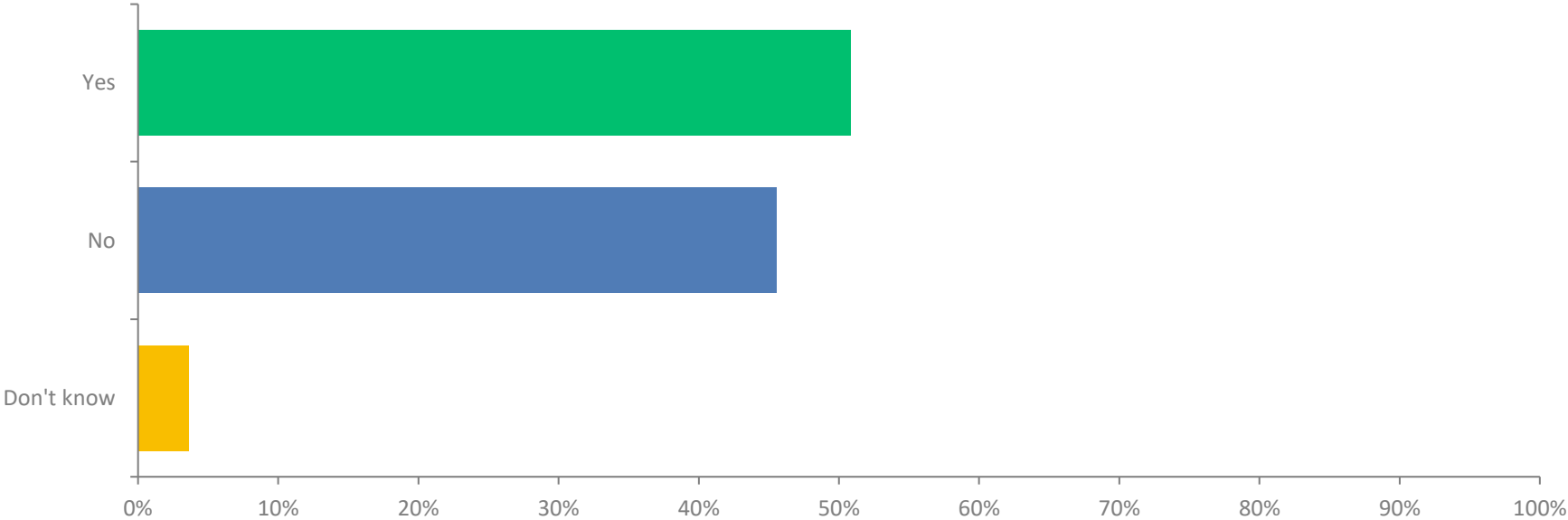
Answered: 1340 Skipped: 105



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Very important	54.55%	731
Somewhat important	41.12%	551
Not important	4.33%	58
TOTAL		1340

Q26: Do you think baptism (of any sort) ought to be required for church membership?

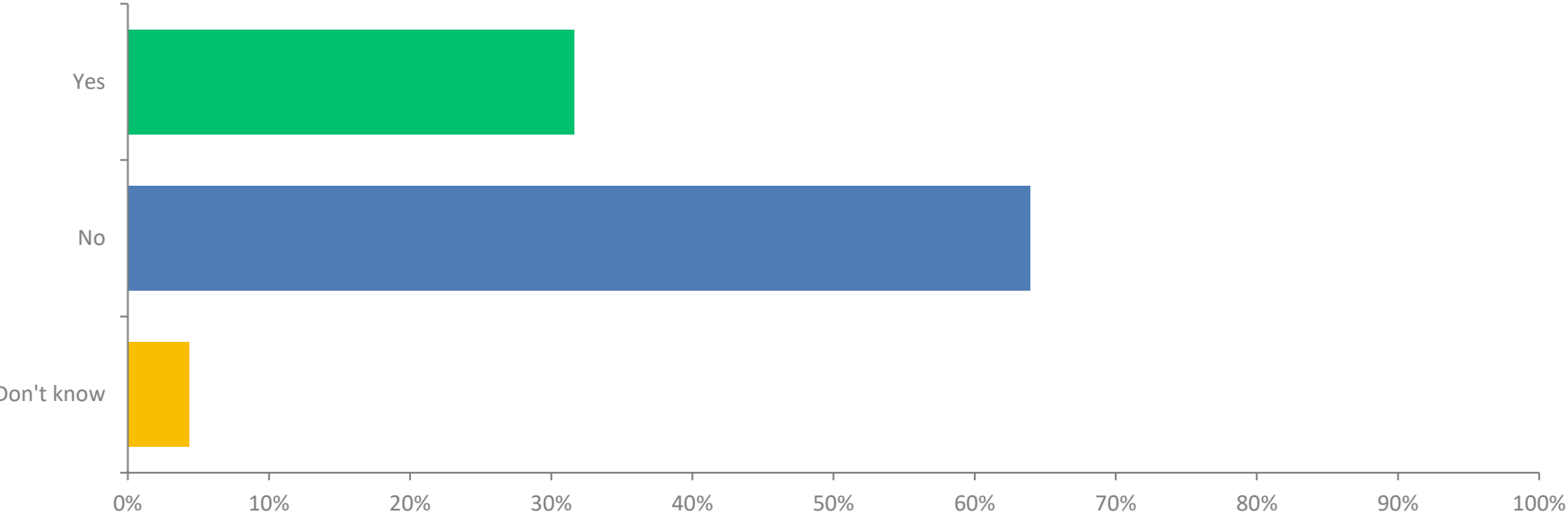
Answered: 1332 Skipped: 113



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	50.83%	677
No	45.57%	607
Don't know	3.60%	48
TOTAL		1332

Q27: Does your church require baptism (of any sort) for church membership?

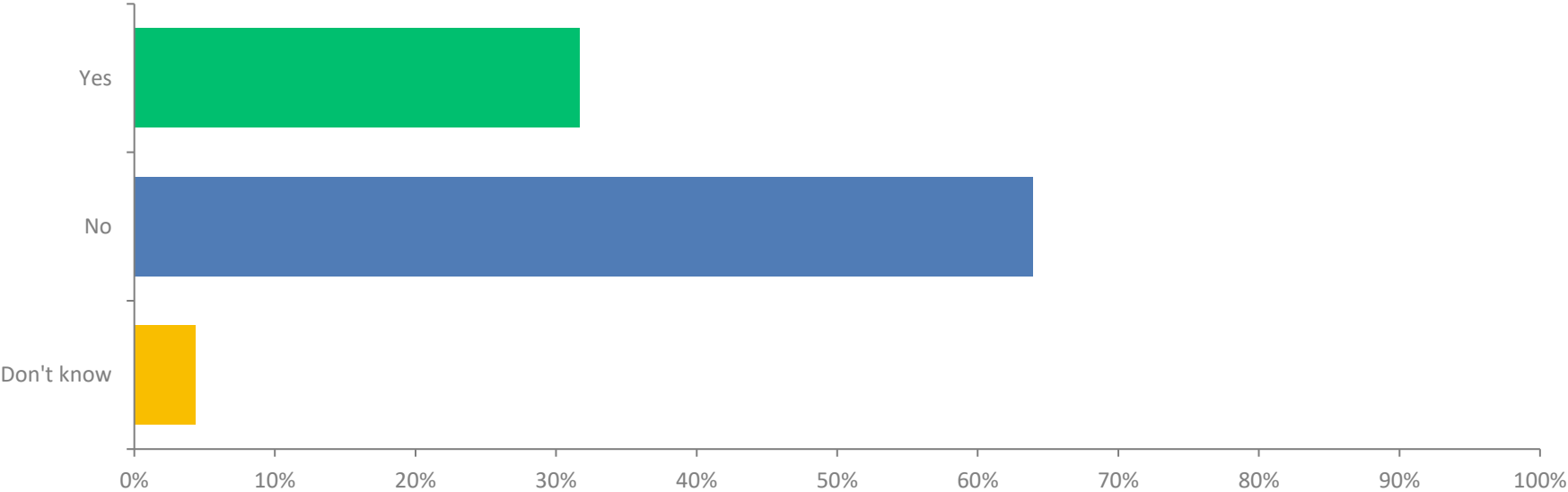
Answered: 1326 Skipped: 119



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	31.67%	420
No	63.95%	848
Don't know	4.37%	58
TOTAL		1326

Q28: Do you think baptism (of any sort) ought to be a required for participation in the Lord's Supper?

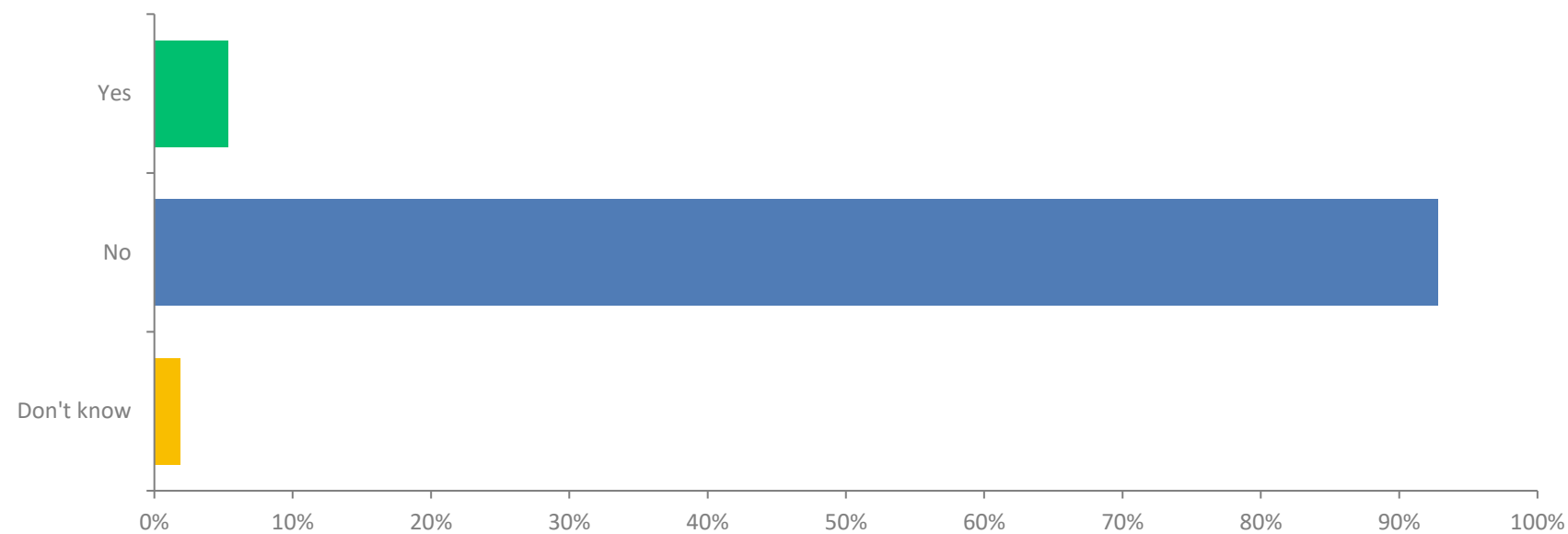
Answered: 1339 Skipped: 106



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	17.92%	240
No	78.49%	1051
Don't know	3.58%	48
TOTAL		1339

Q29: Does your church require baptism (of any sort) for participation in the Lord's Supper?

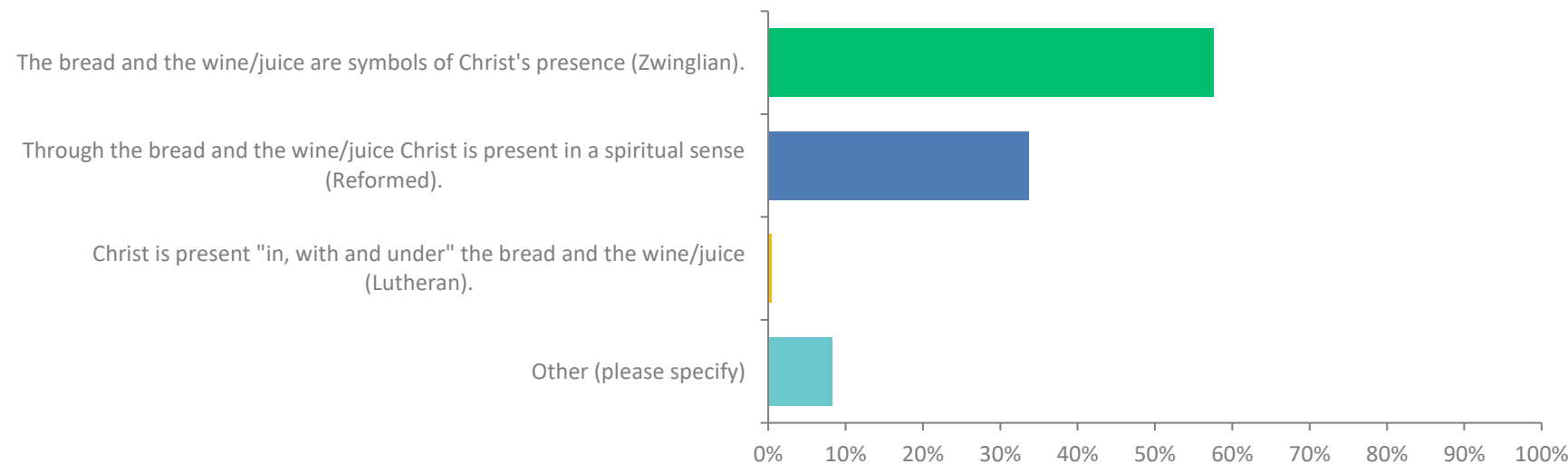
Answered: 1330 Skipped: 115



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	5.34%	71
No	92.78%	1234
Don't know	1.88%	25
TOTAL		1330

Q30: What would best characterize your view of the Lord's Supper?

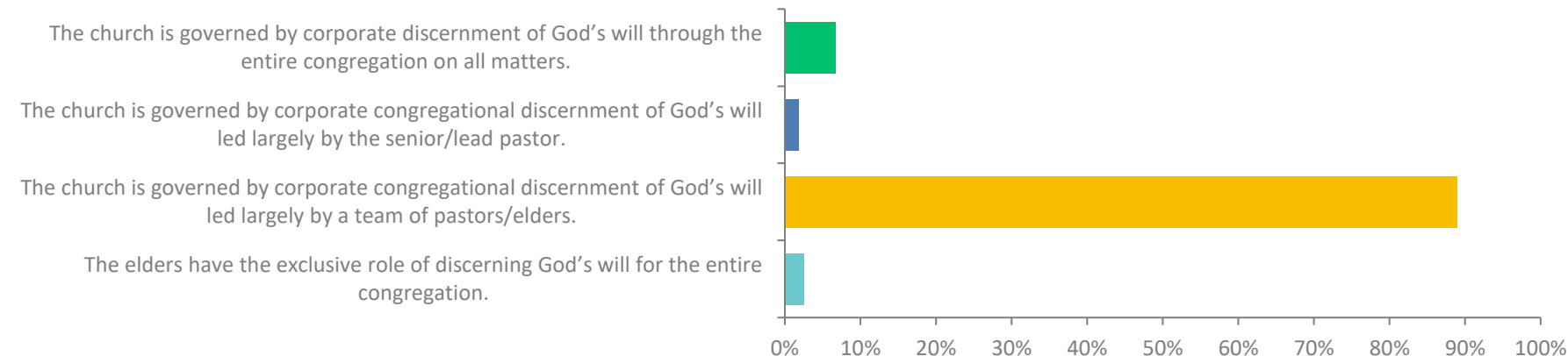
Answered: 1340 Skipped: 105



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
The bread and the wine/juice are symbols of Christ's presence (Zwinglian).	57.61%	772
Through the bread and the wine/juice Christ is present in a spiritual sense (Reformed).	33.73%	452
Christ is present "in, with and under" the bread and the wine/juice (Lutheran).	0.45%	6
Other (please specify)	8.21%	110
TOTAL		1340

Q31: Regarding church polity, which model best describes your understanding of congregationalism:

Answered: 1331 Skipped: 114



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
The church is governed by corporate discernment of God’s will through the entire congregation on all matters.	6.69%	89
The church is governed by corporate congregational discernment of God’s will led largely by the senior/lead pastor.	1.80%	24
The church is governed by corporate congregational discernment of God’s will led largely by a team of pastors/elders.	88.96%	1184
The elders have the exclusive role of discerning God’s will for the entire congregation.	2.55%	34
TOTAL		1331

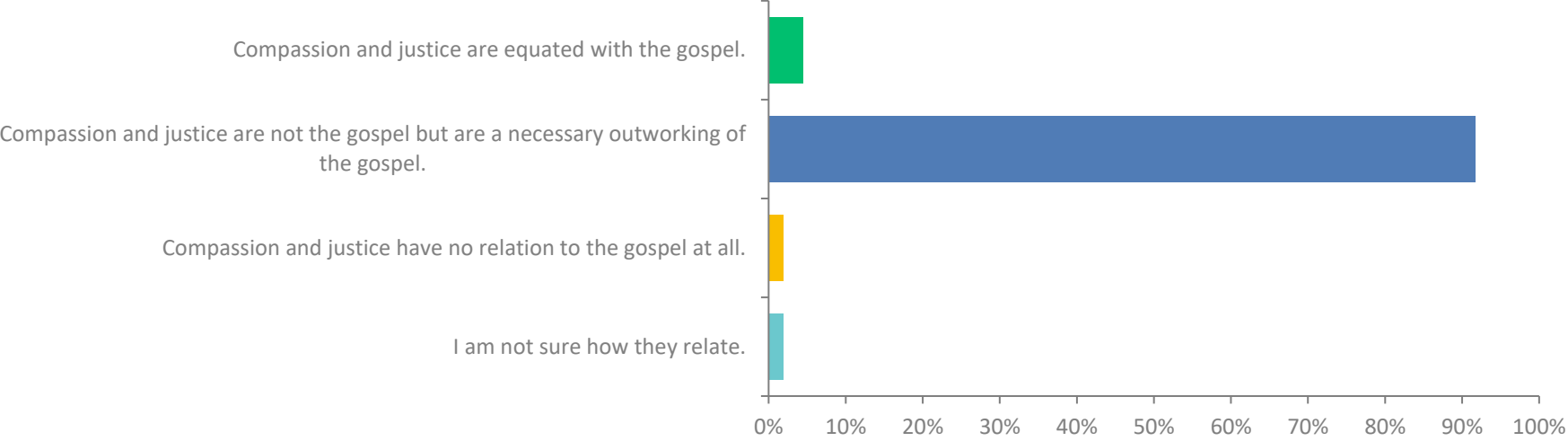
Article 8

Christian Living



Q32: Which statement best explains your understanding of how compassion, justice and deeds of mercy relate to the gospel?

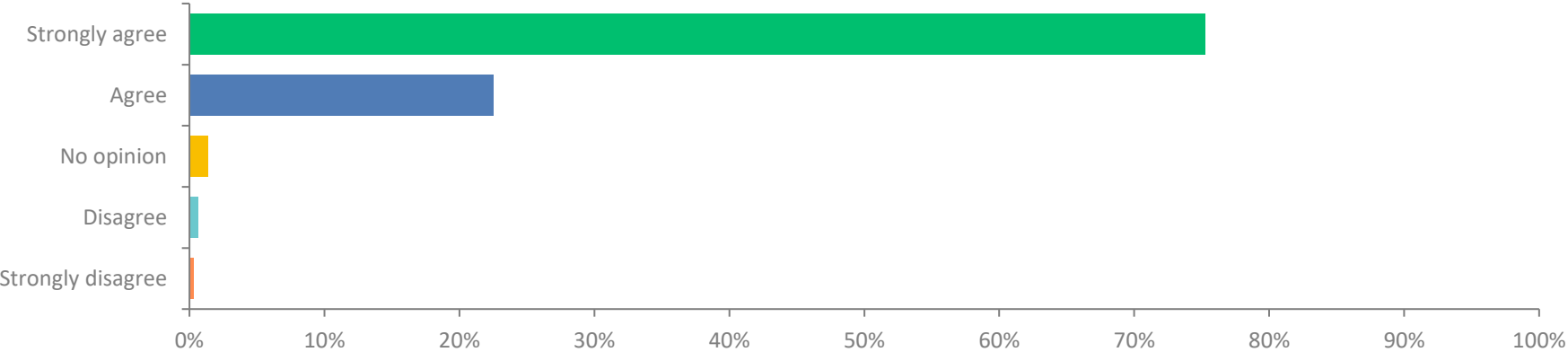
Answered: 1323 Skipped: 122



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Compassion and justice are equated with the gospel.	4.46%	59
Compassion and justice are not the gospel but are a necessary outworking of the gospel.	91.76%	1214
Compassion and justice have no relation to the gospel at all.	1.89%	25
I am not sure how they relate.	1.89%	25
TOTAL		1323

Q33: What is your view of this statement: “We do not believe that political means can establish the kingdom of God, but we do believe that God has appointed governing authorities to do good and that, for citizens in Christ's kingdom, King Jesus’ rule and reign transcends all other citizenships and partisan ideologies and transforms how we live in the world” (Where We Stand in the EFCA: Denials and Affirmations [2023]).

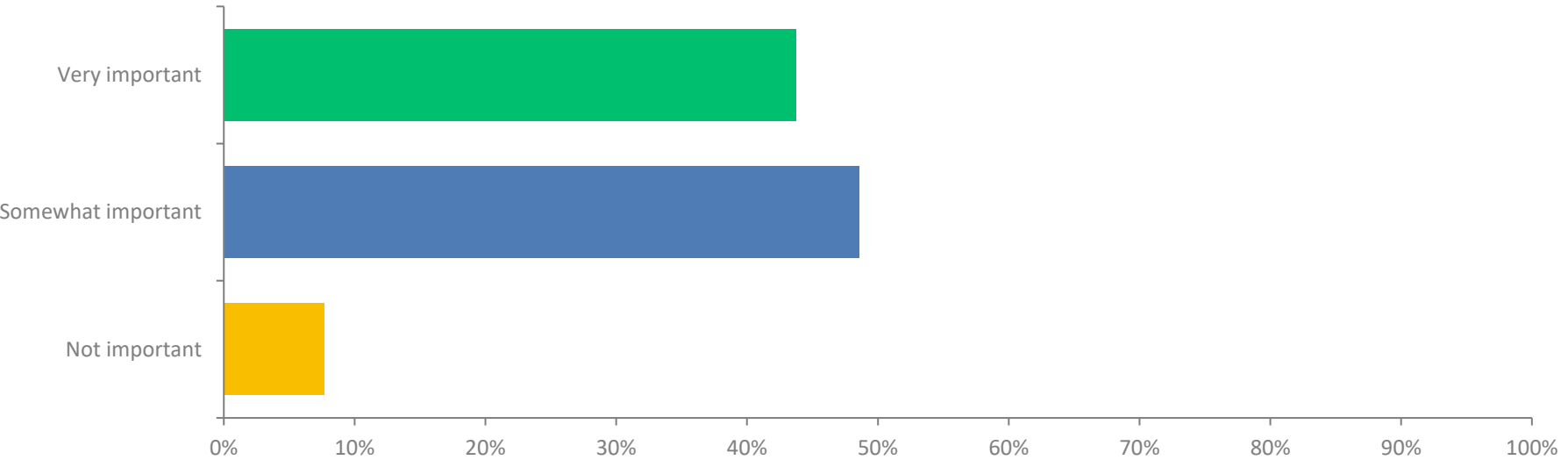
Answered: 1333 Skipped: 112



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly agree	75.24%	1003
Agree	22.51%	300
No opinion	1.35%	18
Disagree	0.60%	8
Strongly disagree	0.30%	4
TOTAL		1333

Q34: How important do you think it is for your local church to reflect the racial/ethnic diversity of your community?

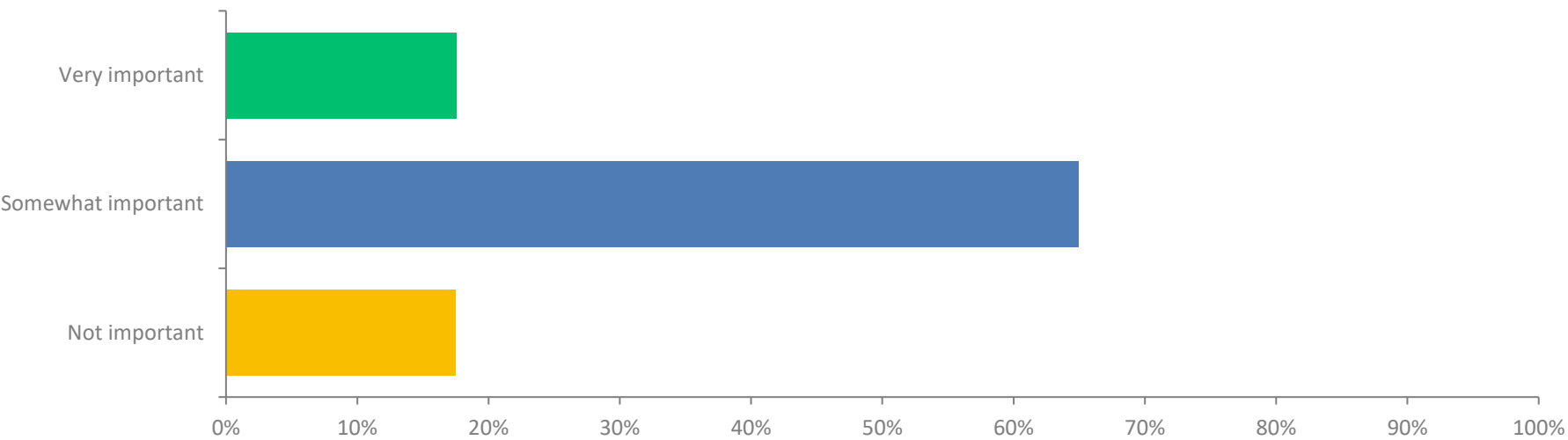
Answered: 1330 Skipped 115



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Very important	43.76%	582
Somewhat important	48.57%	646
Not important	7.67%	102
TOTAL		1330

Q35: How important does your congregation think it is for your local church to reflect the racial/ethnic diversity of your community?

Answered: 1321 Skipped: 124



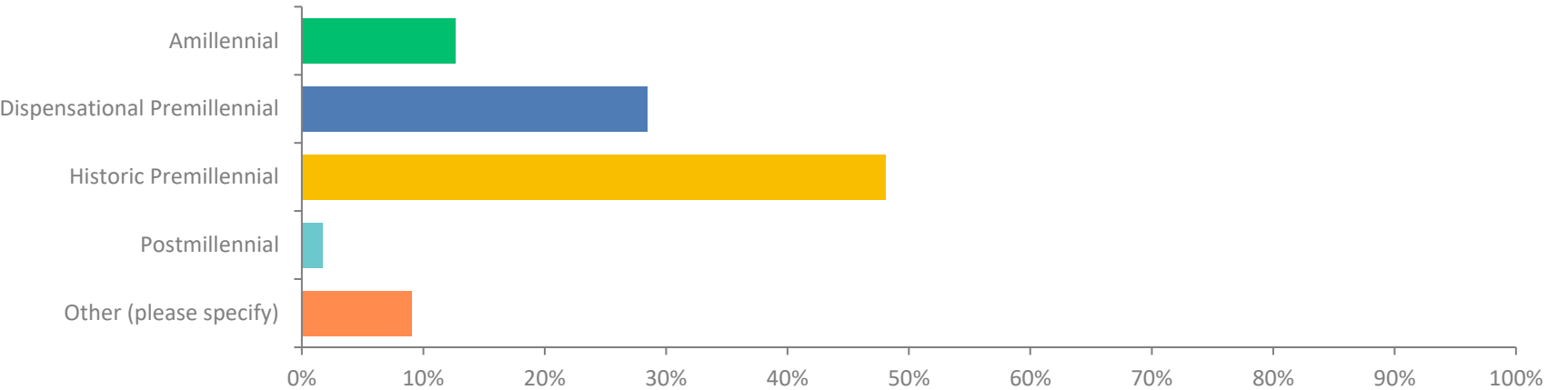
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Very important	17.56%	232
Somewhat important	64.95%	858
Not important	17.49%	231
TOTAL		1321

Article 9: Christ's Return



Q36: What would best describe your eschatological position?

Answered: 1335 Skipped: 110



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Amillennial	12.66%	169
Dispensational Premillennial	28.46%	380
Historic Premillennial	48.09%	642
Postmillennial	1.72%	23
Other (please specify)	9.06%	121
TOTAL		1335

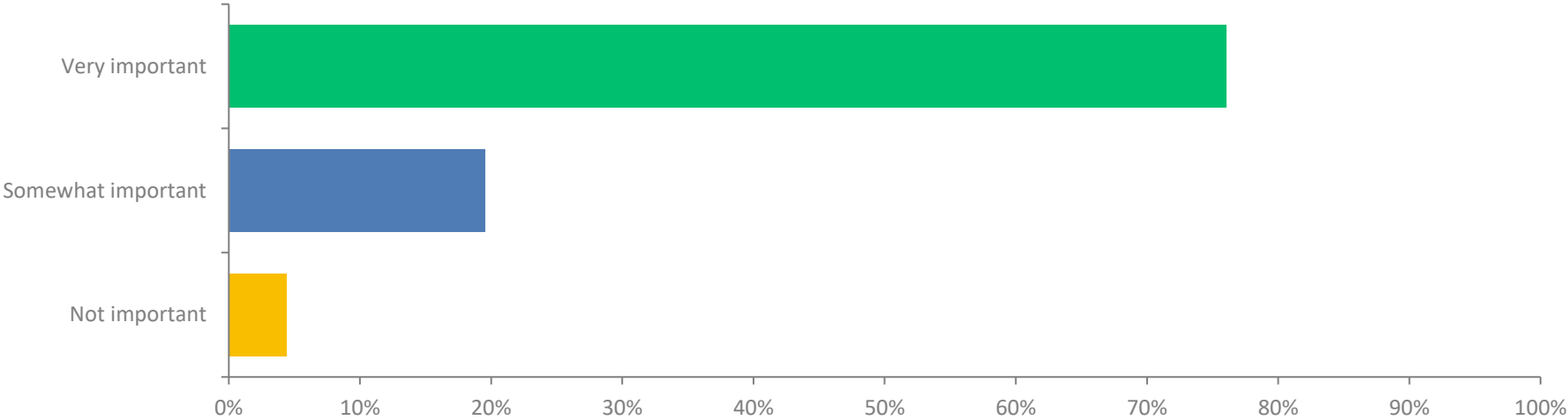
Article 10

Response and Eternal Destiny



Q37: How important is the doctrine of "eternal conscious punishment" in your theological framework?

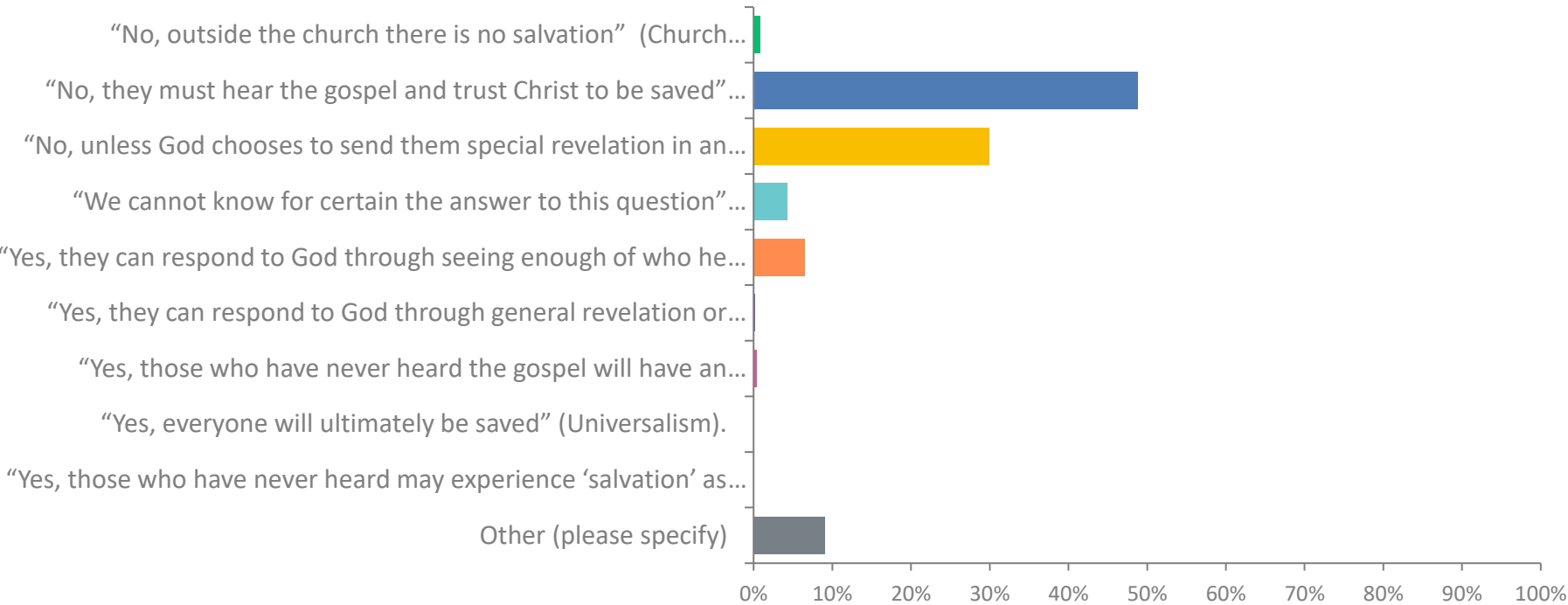
Answered: 1332 Skipped: 113



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Very important	76.05%	1013
Somewhat important	19.52%	260
Not important	4.43%	59
TOTAL		1332

Q38: Which view best represents your own with regard to the eternal destiny of those who have never heard the gospel message: Can a competent adult be saved apart from an explicit knowledge of Jesus Christ?

Answered: 1332 Skipped: 113



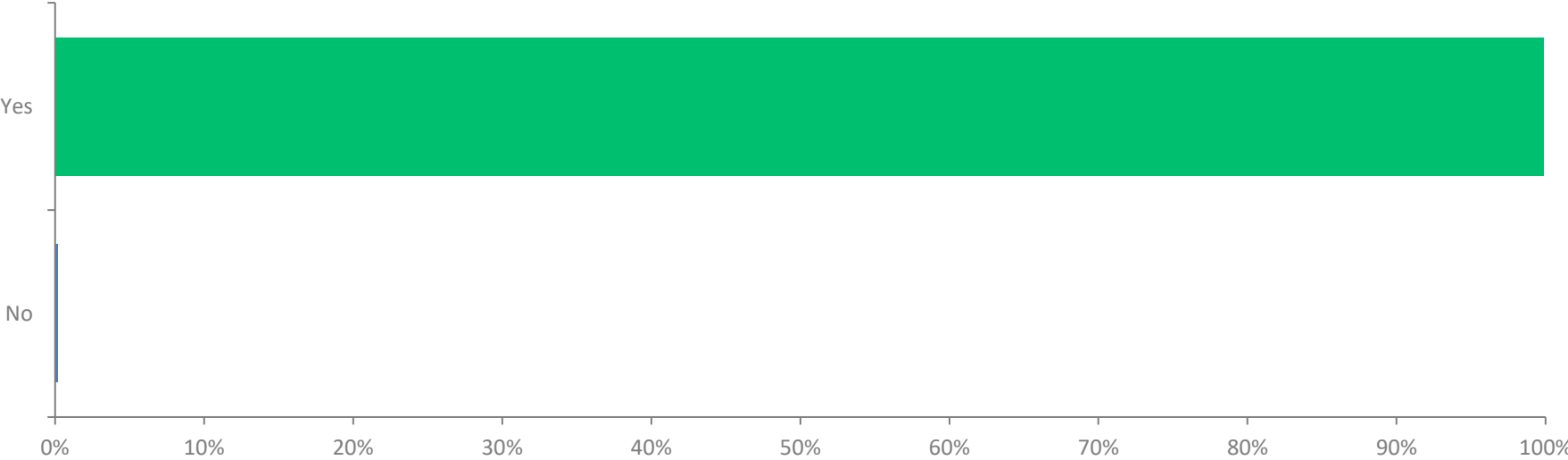
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
"No, outside the church there is no salvation" (Church Exclusivism).	0.83%	11
"No, they must hear the gospel and trust Christ to be saved" (Gospel Exclusivism).	48.80%	650
"No, unless God chooses to send them special revelation in an extraordinary way – by a direct revelation from the Lord, dream, vision, miracle, or angelic message" (Special Revelation Exclusivism).	29.95%	399
"We cannot know for certain the answer to this question" (Agnosticism).	4.28%	57
"Yes, they can respond to God through seeing enough of who he is in general revelation" (General Revelation Inclusivism).	6.53%	87
"Yes, they can respond to God through general revelation or their religion, since their religion contains truth from general revelation and possibly remnants of special revelation" (World Religions Inclusivism).	0.15%	2
"Yes, those who have never heard the gospel will have an opportunity to trust Christ after death" (Postmortem Evangelism).	0.38%	5
"Yes, everyone will ultimately be saved" (Universalism).	0%	0
"Yes, those who have never heard may experience 'salvation' as they understand it because each embraces their version of the real, but the question is erroneous because it assumes Christianity is ultimate"	0%	0
Other (please specify)	9.08%	121
TOTAL		1332

Other Doctrinal/Moral Issues



Q39: Do you agree with the Resolution on Human Sexuality and the Covenant of Marriage (2017), that “God created human beings uniquely in His image as male and female, and He has designed marriage to be a covenantal relationship between one man and one woman.”

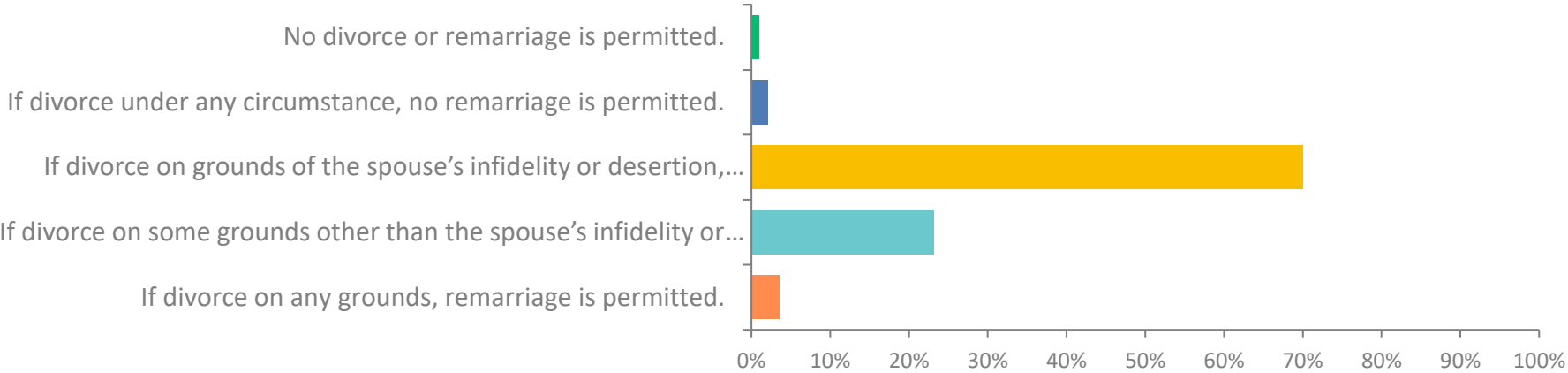
Answered: 1325 Skipped: 120



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	99.85%	1323
No	0.15%	2
TOTAL		1325

Q40: What best describes your position on divorce and remarriage for a Christian believer:

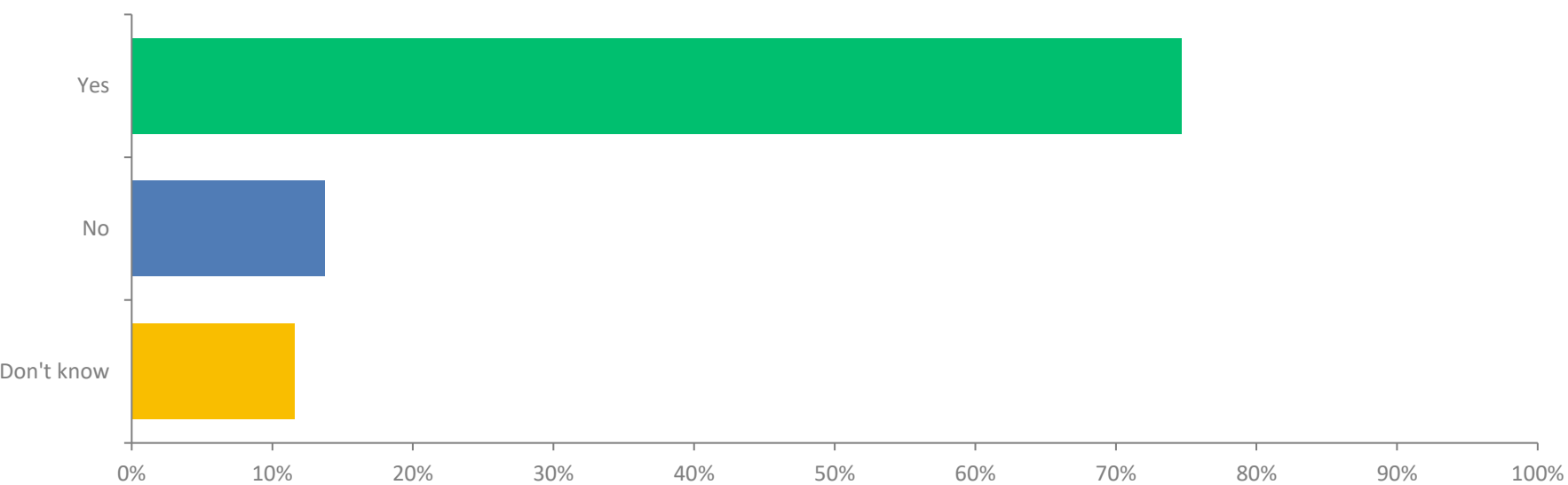
Answered: 1319 Skipped: 126



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
No divorce or remarriage is permitted.	0.99%	13
If divorce under any circumstance, no remarriage is permitted.	2.12%	28
If divorce on grounds of the spouse's infidelity or desertion, remarriage is permitted.	70.05%	924
If divorce on some grounds other than the spouse's infidelity or desertion, remarriage is permitted.	23.20%	306
If divorce on any grounds, remarriage is permitted.	3.64%	48
TOTAL		1319

Q41: Is abuse ever grounds for divorce and remarriage for a Christian believer?

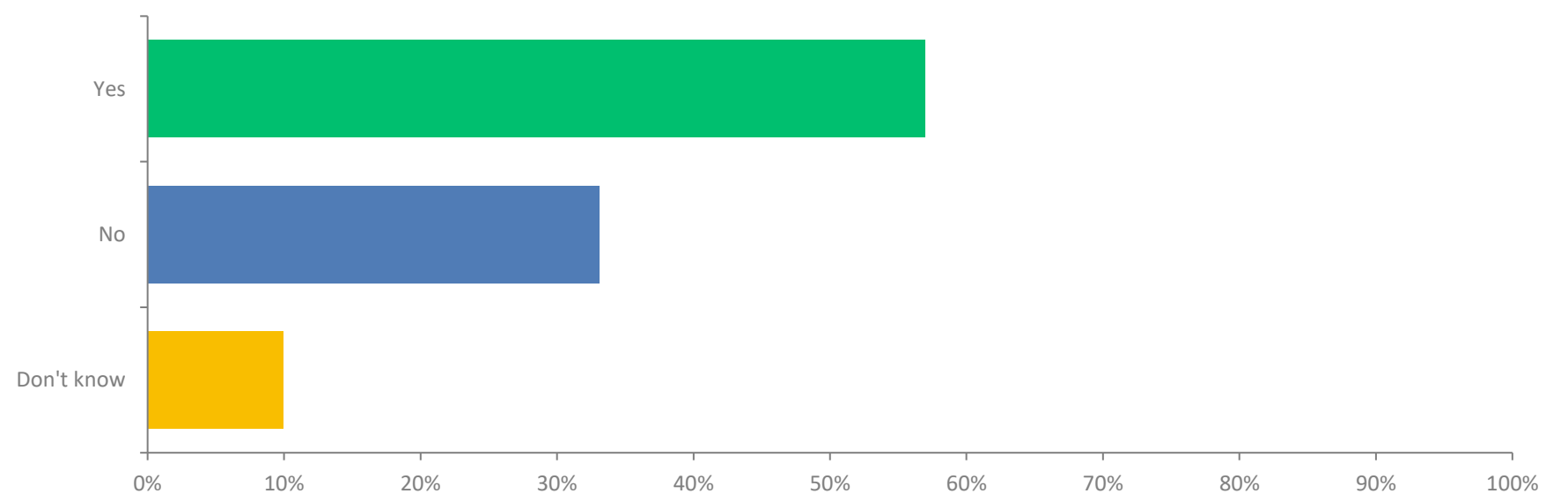
Answered: 1312 Skipped: 133



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	74.70%	980
No	13.72%	180
Don't know	11.59%	152
TOTAL		1312

Q42: Would your answer to the two questions above be different if either the divorce or remarriage occurred before a person's conversion?

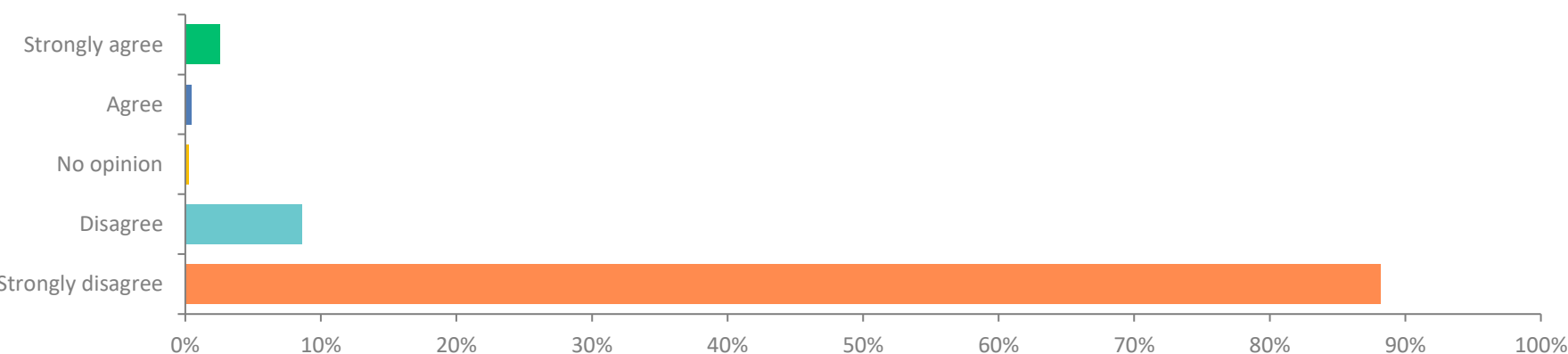
Answered: 1318 Skipped: 127



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	56.98%	751
No	33.08%	436
Don't know	9.94%	131
TOTAL		1318

Q43: What is your view of the statement: “Sex outside of the marriage covenant between a man and a woman is acceptable.”

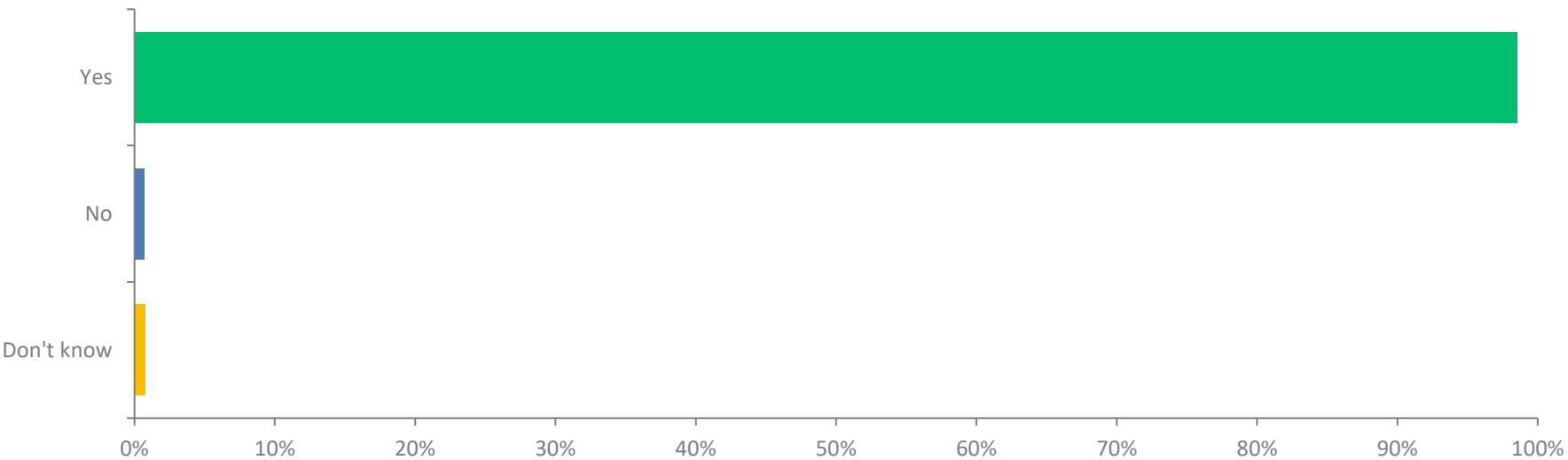
Answered: 1325 Skipped: 120



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly agree	2.57%	34
Agree	0.45%	6
No opinion	0.23%	3
Disagree	8.60%	114
Strongly disagree	88.15%	1168
TOTAL		1325

Q44: Do you believe homosexual behavior is always contrary to the teaching of Scripture?

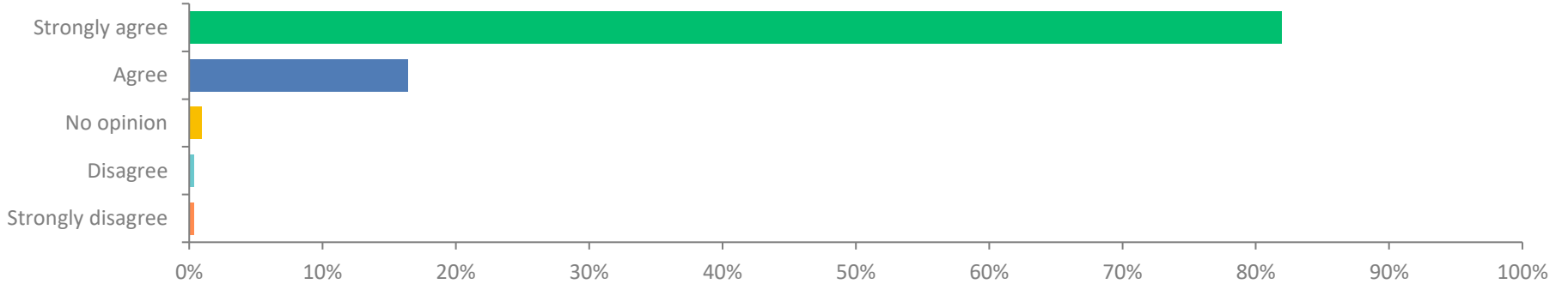
Answered: 1325 Skipped: 120



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	98.57%	1306
No	0.68%	9
Don't know	0.75%	10
TOTAL		1325

Q45: What is your view of this statement: “We do not believe that a person’s biological sex should be separated from their self-perception as a man or a woman nor that the body should be altered when it does not conform to that self-perception, but we do believe that some people experience a distressing struggle between these two and that we must treat those who struggle in this way with love and compassion as we seek to help them, with the truth and power of the gospel, toward the wholeness of a biologically-sexed identity grounded in God’s 'very good' design in creation as male and female” (Where We Stand in the EFCA: Denials and Affirmations [2023]).

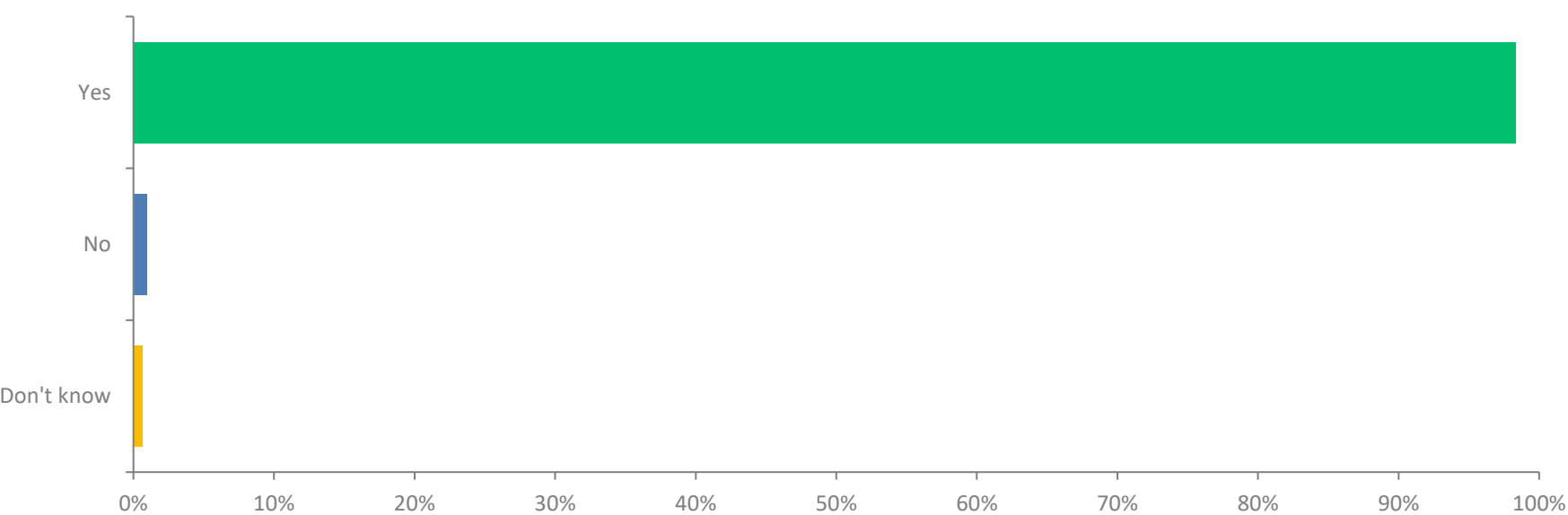
Answered: 1322 Skipped: 123



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly agree	81.92%	1083
Agree	16.41%	217
No opinion	0.91%	12
Disagree	0.38%	5
Strongly disagree	0.38%	5
TOTAL		1322

Q46: Do you agree with this statement: "Abortion is a sin, the taking of a human life created in the image of God."

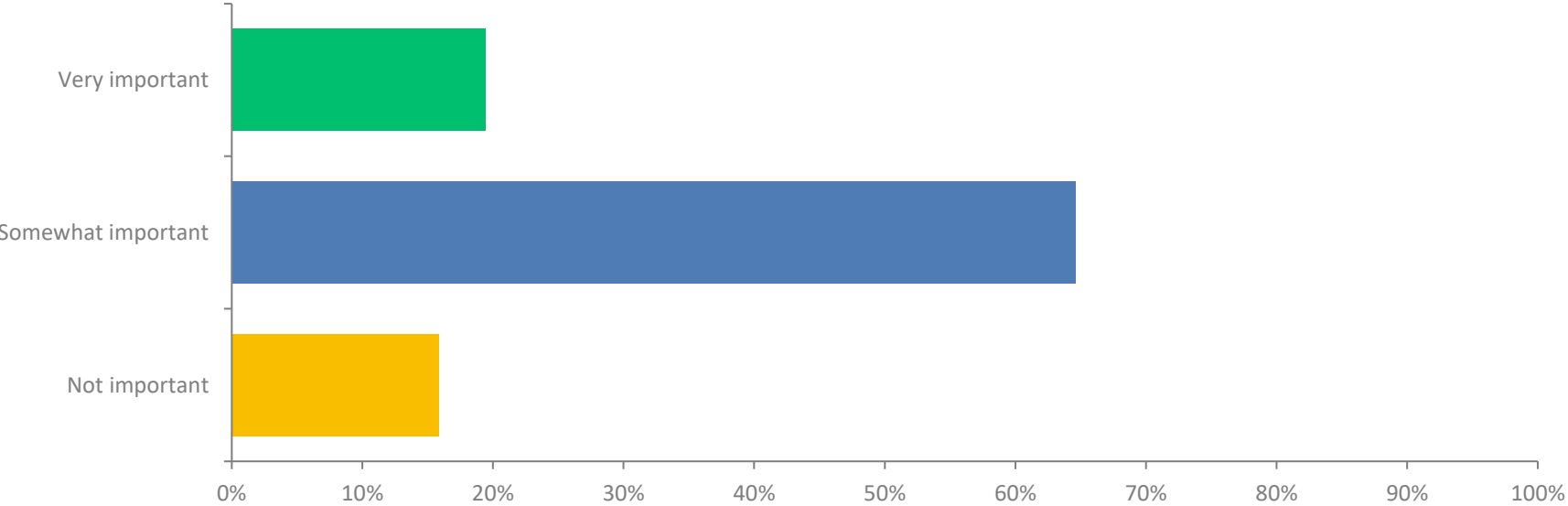
Answered: 1319 Skipped: 126



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	98.33%	1297
No	0.99%	13
Don't know	0.68%	9
TOTAL		1319

Q47: How important to your congregation is the matter of creation care?

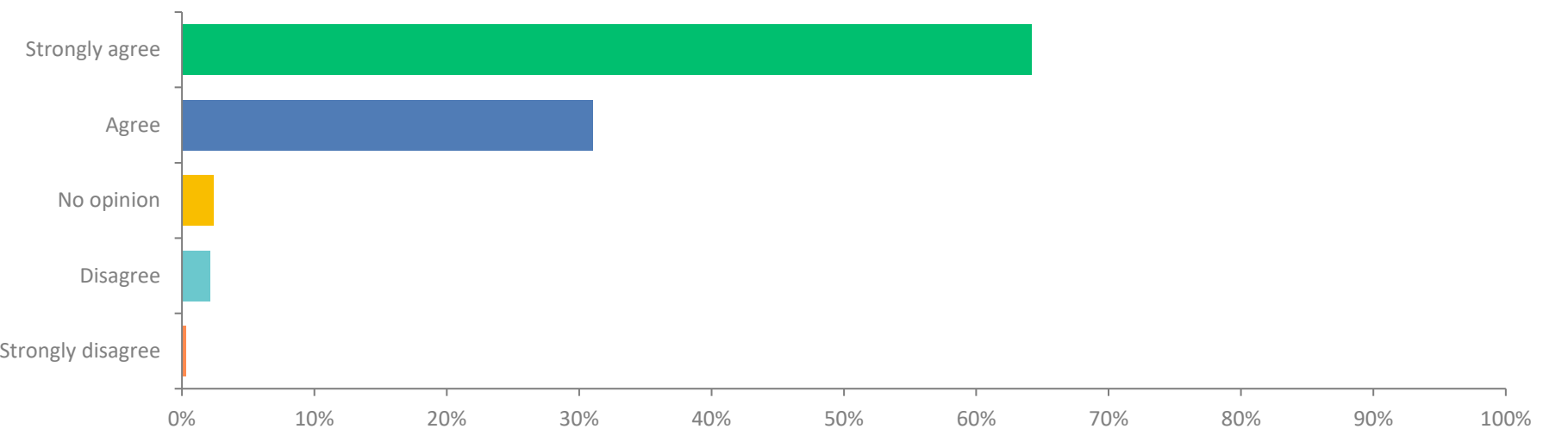
Answered: 1284 Skipped: 161



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Very important	19.47%	250
Somewhat important	64.64%	830
Not important	15.89%	204
TOTAL		1284

Q48: What is your view of this statement: “The EFCA commitment to live and minister within the ‘significance of silence’ framework (we will debate but not divide over certain nonessential doctrinal matters) is a strength.”

Answered: 1318 Skipped: 127



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly agree	64.19%	846
Agree	31.03%	409
No opinion	2.35%	31
Disagree	2.12%	28
Strongly disagree	0.30%	4
TOTAL		1318

Critical Biblical/Theological Issues To Address



Q49: What are two or three of the most important/critical biblical and theological issues to address in the next five years?

Answered: 1152 Skipped: 293

Summary (the 1152 responses included 2665 different topics/subjects)

1. Gender/sexual identity, LGBTQ+, reaching them, caring for those in our churches. 471 responses = 40.9%
2. The authority, sufficiency, inerrancy and need for literacy of Scripture. 225 = 19.5%
3. Role of men and women in the church, complementarianism. 172 responses = 14.9%
4. Political divisions, Christian nationalism. 155 responses = 13.5%
5. Living as exiles in an increasingly secular society, apologetics. 137 responses = 11.9%
6. Ecclesiology, congregationalism, membership, discipline. 126 responses = 10.9%

Q49: What are two or three of the most important/critical biblical and theological issues to address in the next five years?

Answered: 1152 Skipped: 293

7. Biblical anthropology, image of God. 119 responses = 10.3%
8. Evangelism, discipleship, our identity in Christ. 99 responses = 8.6%
9. Salvation in Christ alone, atonement, soteriology. 79 responses = 6.9%
10. Eschatology, prophecy, blessed hope, millennial views. 71 responses = 6.2%
11. Technology, AI, social media, online church. 71 responses = 6.2%
12. Biblical/social justice, how this connects to the gospel. 60 responses = 5.2%
13. Church and state, civil disobedience, political theology. 58 responses = 5.0%

Q49: What are two or three of the most important/critical biblical and theological issues to address in the next five years?

Answered: 1152 Skipped: 293

Topics/Subjects less than 5% (but more than 20 responses)

14. Sin, holiness, sanctification. 45 = 3.9%
15. Israel and the church, Israel and the future, anti-semitism. 43 = 3.7%
16. Marriage, divorce, singleness. 43 = 3.7%
17. The gospel. 41 = 3.6%
18. Theology of suffering, persecution. 41 = 3.6%
19. Critical Theory/CRT, DEI. 39 = 3.4%
20. Sexual ethics, purity. 38 = 3.3%
21. Hell, ECP. 36 = 3.1%
22. Race, racial & ethnic diversity, reconciliation. 31 = 2.7%
23. Sanctity of life/Abortion. 27 = 2.3%
24. Hermeneutics. 27 = 2.3%
25. Unity of believers, esp. over political differences. 26 = 2.3%
26. Creation care, climate change. 23 = 2.0%
27. Christology. 21 = 1.8%
28. God/Trinity. 21 = 1.8%
29. Christian family. 20 = 1.7%

Theological and Pastoral Influences



Q50: Who are two or three theological/pastoral writers that you find particularly helpful or who have had the greatest impact on your thinking?

Answered: 1132 Skipped: 313

Paul David Tripp C. H. Spurgeon
Chuck Swindoll
Eugene Peterson
Henri Nouwen
Michael Reeves
Rebecca McLaughlin
Charles Ryrie
Tony Evans
Walt Kaiser
Gavin Ortlund
Jonathan Edwards
Herman Bavinck
Martin Luther
Francis Chan
Lary Osborne
J. I. Packer
Alistair Begg
John Piper
John Frame
Christopher Watkin
G. K. Beale
Erwin Lutzer
Grant Osborne
John Ortberg
Philip Yancey
Francis Schaeffer
J.C. Ryle
Mark Dever
Craig Blomberg
Andy Stanley
Andrew Murray
Doug Moo
Dwight Pentecost
John Owen
Fred Sanders
Ed Welch
Greg Strand
David Martyn Lloyd-Jones
Dane Ortlund
Scot McKnight
Kevin Vanhoozer
Kevin DeYoung
Tim Mackie
Carl Trueman
Preston Sprinkle
John Calvin
John MacArthur
R.C. Sproul
Augustine
Ray Ortlund
David Jeremiah
N.T. Wright
Dallas Willard
Warren Wiersbe
Al Mohler
James Boice
Matt Chandler
Greg Kouss
Billy Graham
Lee Eclov
Tom Schreiner
Jerry Bridges
Sinclair Ferguson
John Mark Comer
Voddie Baucham
Russell Moore
Dietrich Bonhoeffer

