

**EFCA Doctrinal Survey:
Board of Directors' Summary/Analysis
April 2014**



Below are some of the key summaries and analyses of the doctrinal survey discussed by the EFCA Board of Directors. This highlights important or notable issues, which means this is representative not exhaustive. In the summary/analysis, we have focused on what we believe to be important information, yet we have done so in an objective a manner as possible.

As you read these summaries/analyses, please bear in mind that many individual responses were nuanced through comments (because the survey was anonymous, we could not connect answers directly with comments). Though those comments are not included, certain statistics must be read through this nuance which, if pertinent, we have noted below.

In order to have the right framework and context, please first read the EFCA Doctrinal Survey: Introduction (on the website) before you read though this summary/analysis and EFCA Doctrinal Survey: Questionnaire and Statistical Results.

What were some of the statistics?

- 1,928 emails sent; 1,074 responded: **55.7%! To a 46 question survey that took about 20-25 minutes (a very high rate of response – the typical response is 33%)!**
- 74% of respondents were credentialed in the EFCA
- 38% were credentialed over 20 years in the EFCA; 29% 11-20 years
- 3,670 comments!
- **Doctrine matters!**

General assessments

- Strong agreement on essential doctrinal truths
- Breadth represented in the areas of the “significance of silence”
- Need for instruction, education, information in some areas
- A few appear to be outside of parameters
- Addressed many of these issues over the years at the Theology Conference and in *Evangelical Convictions*

Assessment of Articles 1-3 (Questions 8-15)

- Strong commitment to the authority of the Bible, including matters of history and science (to the statement “The Bible is not authoritative in matters in which it touches on history or science, 85% disagreed or disagreed strongly, though 5% agreed or strongly agreed)
- Creation matters and a majority affirm literal six-day creation (60%), though there are some differences among us regarding the interpretation of the creation account in Genesis 1; there are

also differences among us regarding the importance of the age of the earth to one's theological framework (very important; 25%; not important; 35%)

- Strongly affirm Adam and Eve as progenitors of the human race (99% affirm this statement is very or somewhat important) and their historicity (99% affirm this statement is very or somewhat important)
- Difference of opinion on some forms of theistic evolution being compatible with the Bible (to the statement, "Some forms of theistic evolution are compatible with biblical teaching," 57% disagree or disagree strongly; 30% agree or agree strongly; 180 comments)

Assessment of Article 5 (Question 16)

- Strong commitment to the penal substitutionary atonement model (95% agreed or agreed strongly)
- Many consider this model the exclusive model, while others had no conception there were other valid models

Assessment of Article 6 (Questions 17-20)

Arminian and Calvinist

- Lean *slightly* in a Calvinist/Reformed direction on matters of salvation (38%; 35% Arminian/Wesleyan; 28% did not list any logical order)
- Strongly affirm (94%) that "those who have been regenerated by the Holy Spirit" cannot lose their salvation
- Some stated they had not thought about the order of salvation.
- 148 comments

Miraculous Gifts (gifts of healing, prophecy, word of knowledge, tongues)

- There are a number of cessationists (11%); the majority are open but cautious (72%)
- A number affirmed that we should expect to hear the Spirit apart from illuminating our understanding and application of Scripture (60%; 31% responded we should not) but it was qualified in a number of ways:
 - Scripture is the ultimate authority and has the normative role
 - "expect" was too strong a word
 - did not like the terms "speak" and "hear" but preferred "promptings" and "leadings"
- 274 comments

Assessment of Article 7 (Questions 21-29)

Women and Ministry

- Strongly complementarian (85%, while 6% affirm the egalitarian view), which is also important for the theological framework (92% affirmed it was very or somewhat important), with many comments focusing on the practical and pastoral outworking of the complementarian position in ministry

Membership

- Church membership is important (96% affirmed it is very or somewhat important)
- An interesting question to ponder is why attendance is so much higher than membership in EFC churches

Ordinances

- There are differences of opinion regarding the requirement of baptism for membership (52% no; 44% yes; 177 comments)
- A strong majority affirm that baptism is not to be required to participate in the Lord's Supper (86% no; 11% yes)
 - Many confuse the term "baptism" to mean "believer baptism" (are we baptists or Baptists?)
 - Some assume the EFCA does not require baptism for membership; others claim (wrongly) that in the EFCA a church cannot require baptism for membership
- A majority understand the Lord's Supper as a memorial (64%), while a number embrace the spiritual presence view (26%)

Congregationalism

- Strongly congregational (97%), though a few are elder rule (3%)
- There is confusion and misunderstanding between salvation and ecclesiology, between the true church and the local church

Assessment of Article 8 (Questions 30-34)

- Strong affirmation that the gospel has entailments to compassion, justice and mercy (94%, with 4% stating these ministries are equated with the gospel)
- Strong affirmation that racial/ethnic diversity in the local church (90% very or somewhat important; 10% not important; 198 comments) and generational diversity (94% very or somewhat important; 6% not important) manifest the gospel
- Individuals taking the survey were more committed to these issues than were the local churches
- Considering local context was important in responding to these questions

Assessment of Article 9 (Questions 35-37)

- On the tribulation, 52% are pre, 4% are mid, 28 % are post, with 16% being "other"
- Premillennialism is very or somewhat important to 76% of respondents
- In a future SOF revision, 42% believe premillennialism should be retained, 45% do not, with 12% not having an opinion
- 212 comments - 141 against retaining premillennialism; 39 in favor. These were the strongest comments of any question on the survey
- There is still misunderstanding about what the premillennial view entails

Assessment of Article 10 (Questions 38-39)

- Most affirm the importance of "eternal conscious punishment" to their theological framework (96% conclude this is very or somewhat important)
- Most affirm the necessity and exclusivity of Jesus Christ and hearing and responding to the gospel (77%), some claim not to know the answer for certain (5%), some claim salvation through general revelation (7%), with a number stating "other" (10%)
- Views on the doctrine of hell are not a slippery slope but rather a thermometer, making it reflective of many other doctrinal beliefs
- This is 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)

Marriage and Divorce (Questions 41-42)

- A majority affirm that remarriage is permitted on grounds of spouse's infidelity or desertion (73%), while some affirm divorce "on some other grounds" other than those reasons (17%), some including the possibility of abuse. 162 comments
- A few affirmed no divorce or remarriage is allowed (5%) with another few allowing remarriage for any grounds (5%)
- Many affirm that another ground for remarriage is preconversion divorce (67%)
- Many state this is a very difficult issue

Same-Sex "Marriage" and "Gay Christian" (Questions 43-44)

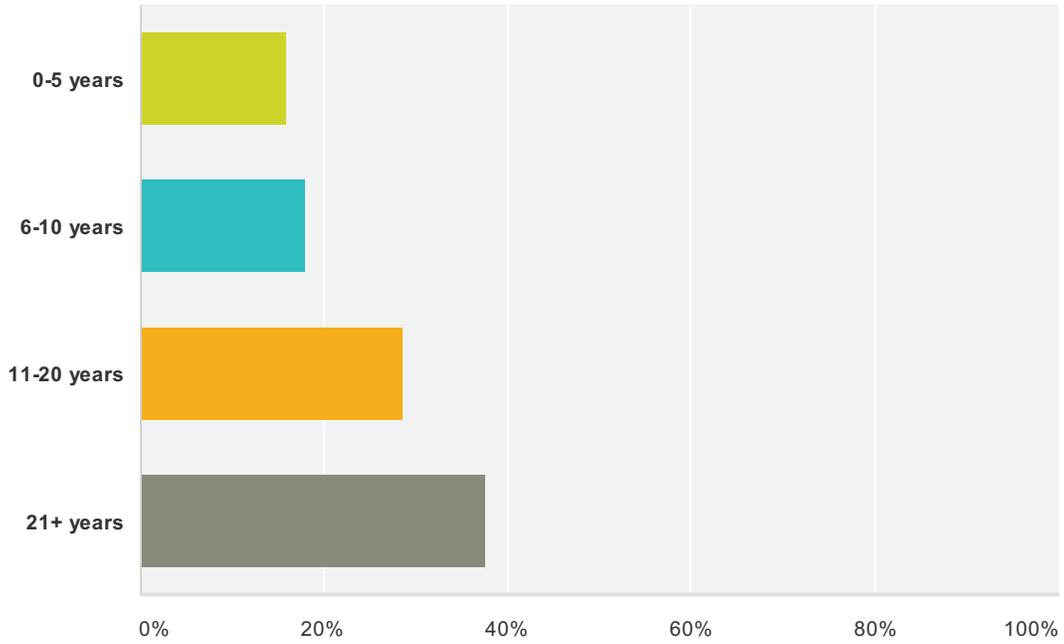
- We strongly affirm the biblical understanding of marriage as between a man and a woman: 97% do not believe the church should recognize legally constituted "marriages" of same-sex couples
- Most consider that the reference to "gay Christian" is either "problematic" (48%) or "contradictory and unacceptable" (25%). 272 comments, the most in the survey
- There is some confusion about a Christian who may struggle with same-sex attraction but who remains committed to the authority of the Bible and living a life of purity and holiness (celibacy)

Significance of Silence (Question 45)

- Most affirm this is a strength (95% agree or strongly agree) of the EFCA
- Some conclude this allows one to avoid hard issues
- Some believe this is inconsistent with premillennialism
- Some desire help on divisive issues or social issues and positions, and believe this commitment precludes that

Q1 How long have you served in the EFCA?

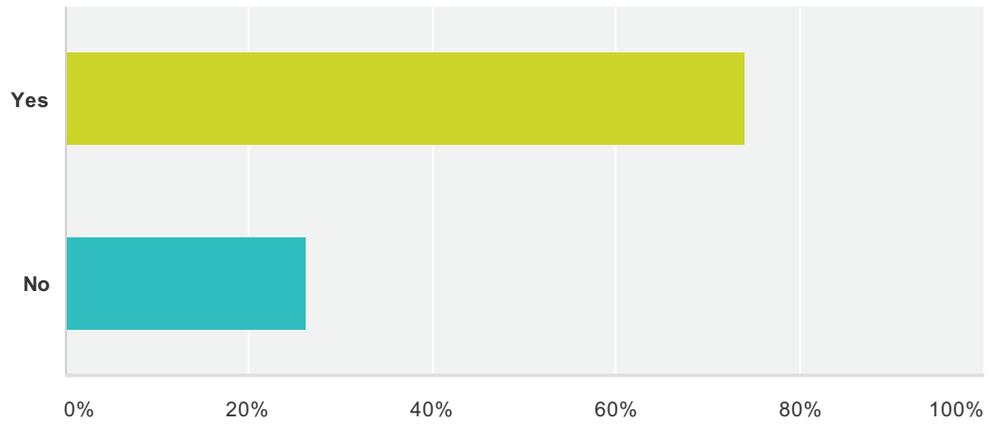
Answered: 1,055 Skipped: 19



Answer Choices	Responses	Count
0-5 years	16.02%	169
6-10 years	17.91%	189
11-20 years	28.53%	301
21+ years	37.54%	396
Total		1,055

Q2 Are you credentialed in the EFCA?

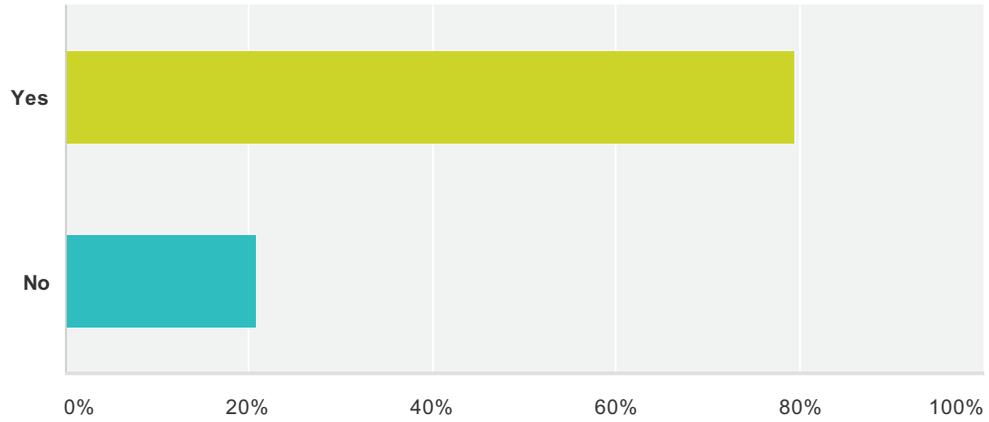
Answered: 1,054 Skipped: 20



Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	73.91% 779
No	26.09% 275
Total	1,054

Q3 Has your church adopted the new Statement of Faith (SOF)?

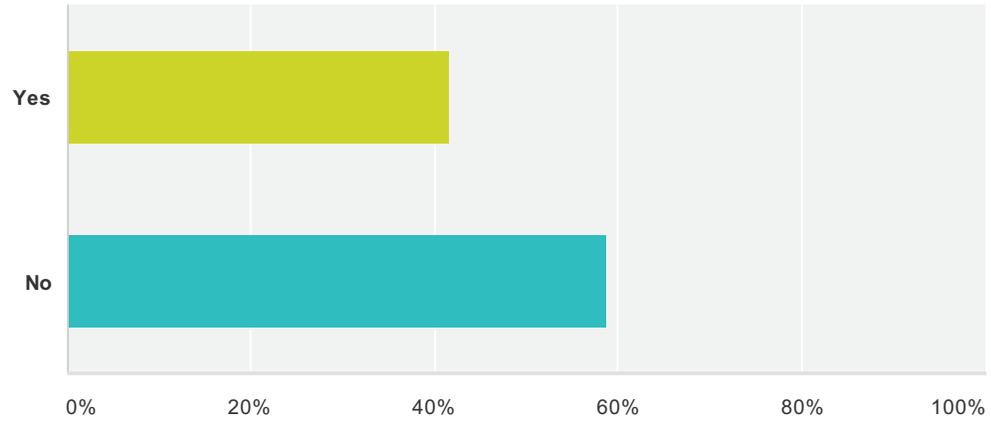
Answered: 1,007 Skipped: 67



Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	79.25%	798
No	20.75%	209
Total		1,007

Q4 Does your church intend to adopt the new SOF?

Answered: 176 Skipped: 898



Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	41.48%	73
No	58.52%	103
Total		176

Q5 If your church does intend to adopt the new SOF, when do anticipate this will occur?

Answered: 112 Skipped: 962

Q6 If your church has adopted the new SOF, in what ways has your congregation been taught the content of the SOF?

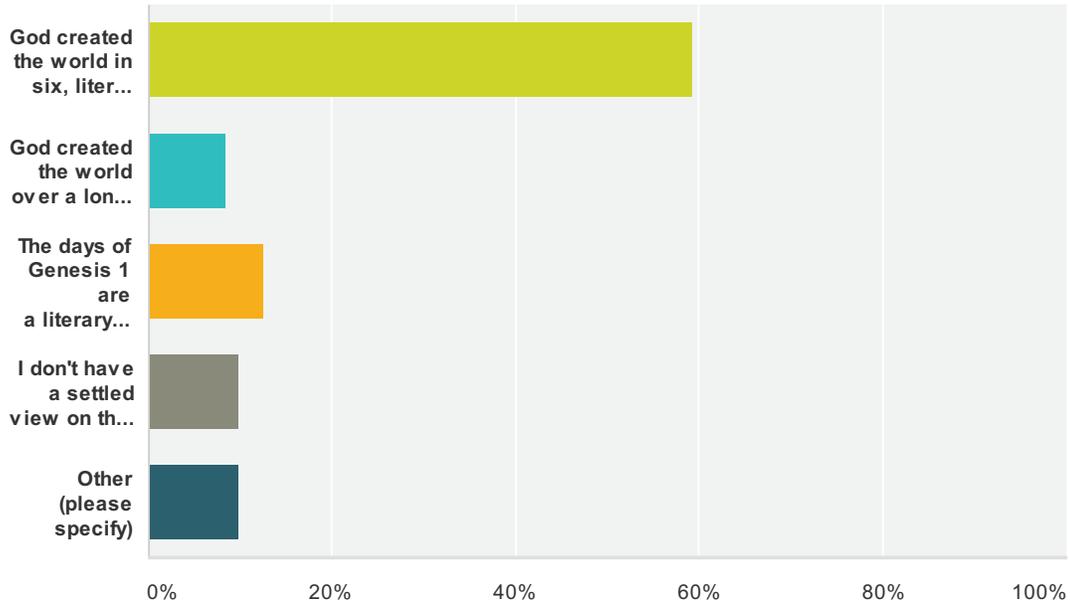
Answered: 739 Skipped: 335

Q7 Are there resources you would find helpful as you teach the SOF? (i.e. guide/summary of "Evangelical Convictions" with study questions, powerpoint show with teaching notes for a 12 week adult course)

Answered: 681 Skipped: 393

Q8 Which of these best characterizes your view of the creation account in Genesis 1?

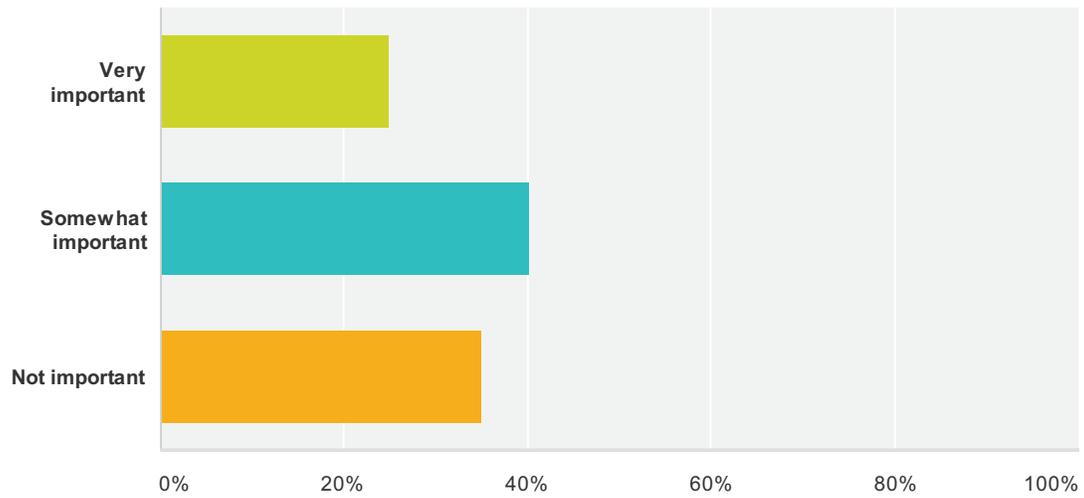
Answered: 933 Skipped: 141



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).	59.27% 553
God created the world over a long period of time—the "days" of Genesis 1 represent "ages" of the earth.	8.47% 79
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.	12.54% 117
I don't have a settled view on this issue.	9.86% 92
Other (please specify)	9.86% 92
Total	933

Q9 How important is your view of the age of the earth to your theological framework?

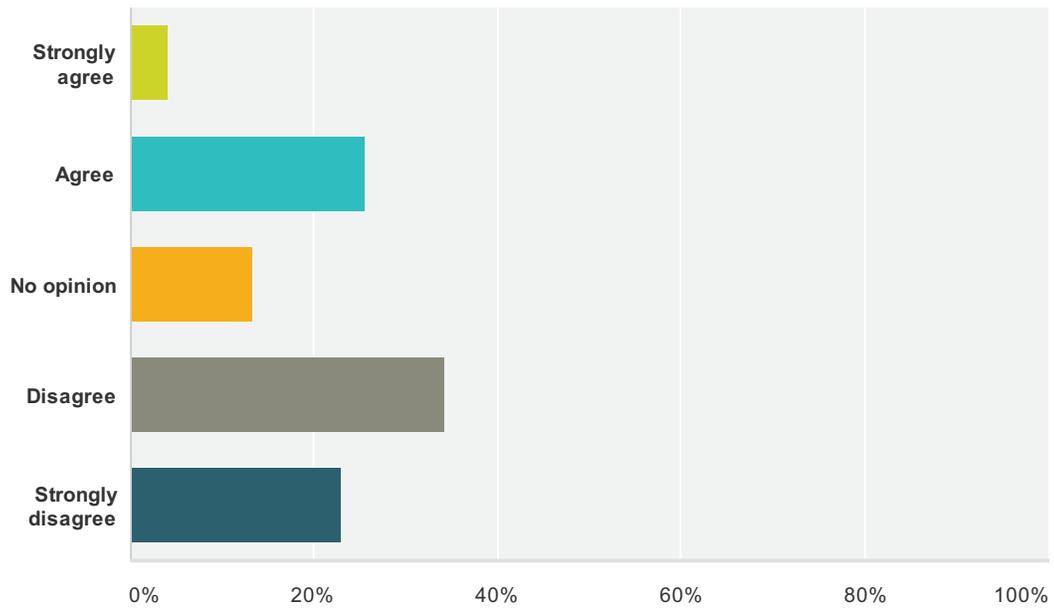
Answered: 928 Skipped: 146



Answer Choices	Responses
Very important	24.89% 231
Somewhat important	40.19% 373
Not important	34.91% 324
Total	928

Q10 "Some forms of theistic evolution are compatible with biblical teaching."

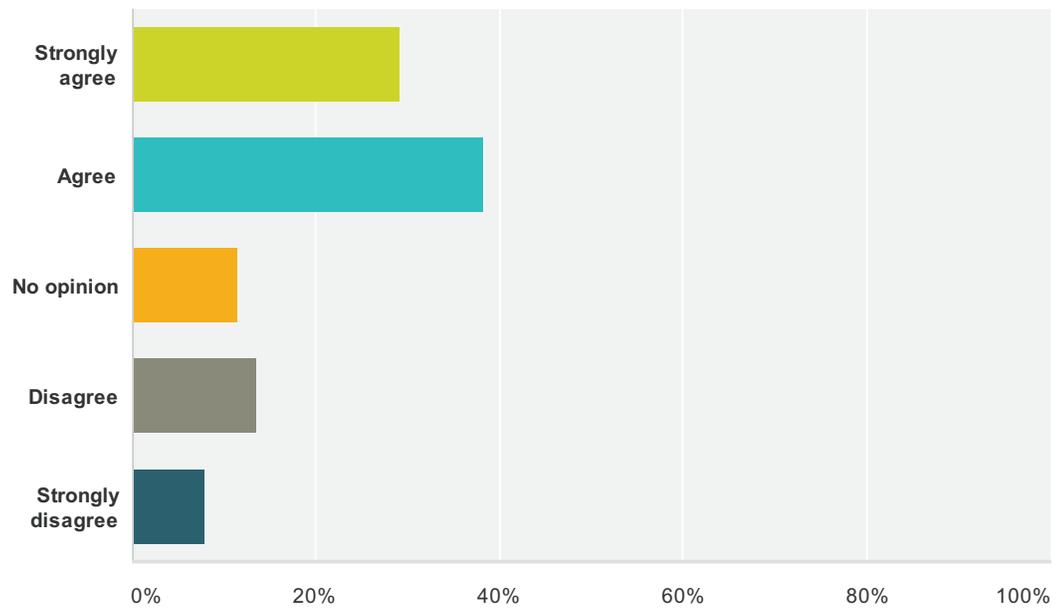
Answered: 927 Skipped: 147



Answer Choices	Responses
Strongly agree	4.10% 38
Agree	25.57% 237
No opinion	13.38% 124
Disagree	34.09% 316
Strongly disagree	22.87% 212
Total	927

Q11 "The Son is eternally subordinate to the Father in the eternal relations in the Trinity."

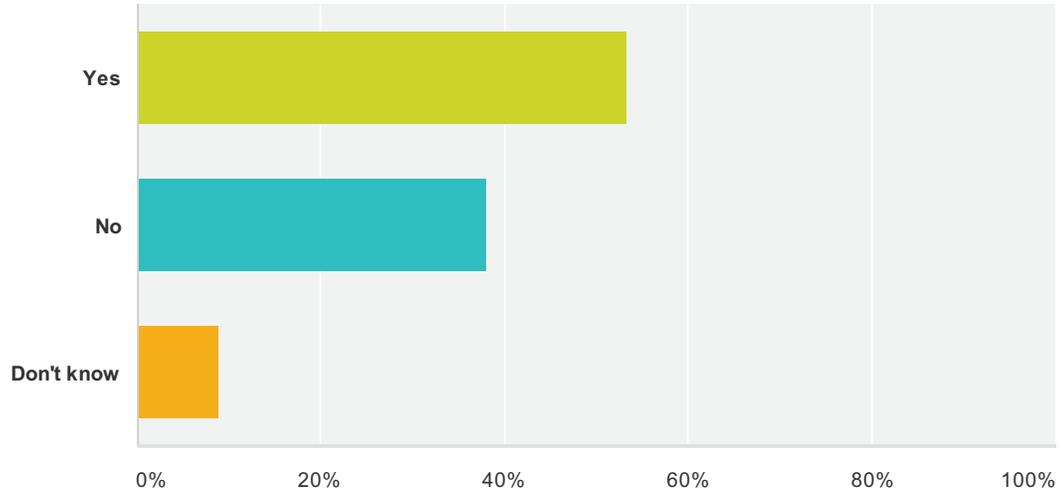
Answered: 919 Skipped: 155



Answer Choices	Responses
Strongly agree	29.16% 268
Agree	38.08% 350
No opinion	11.43% 105
Disagree	13.49% 124
Strongly disagree	7.83% 72
Total	919

Q12 Do you think the relationship of the members of the Trinity is hierarchical and that this provides a model for the relationship between men and women in the home and the church?

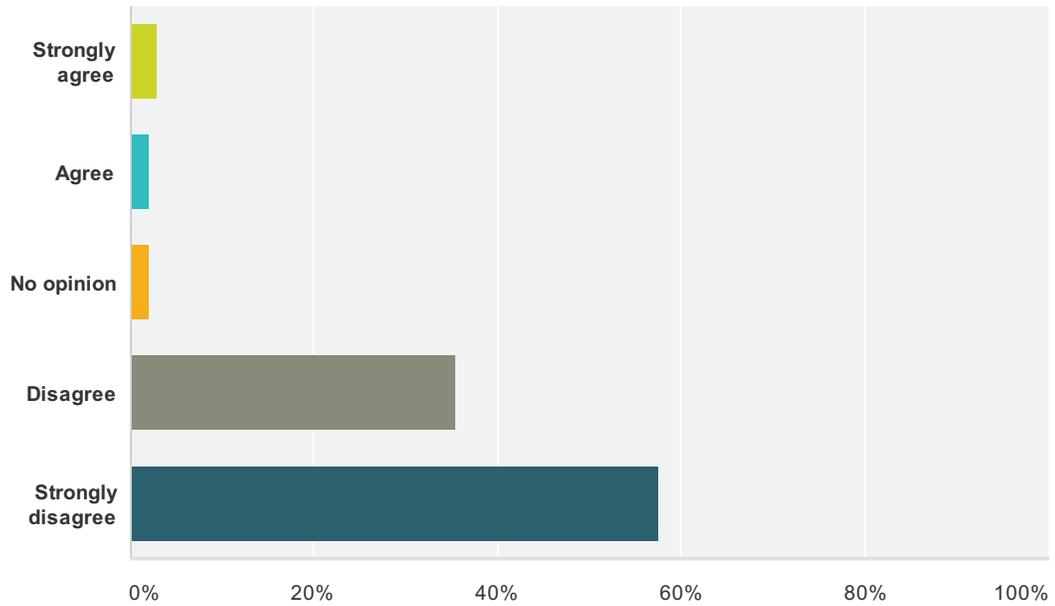
Answered: 919 Skipped: 155



Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	53.10% 488
No	37.98% 349
Don't know	8.92% 82
Total	919

Q13 "The Bible is not authoritative in matters in which it touches on history or science."

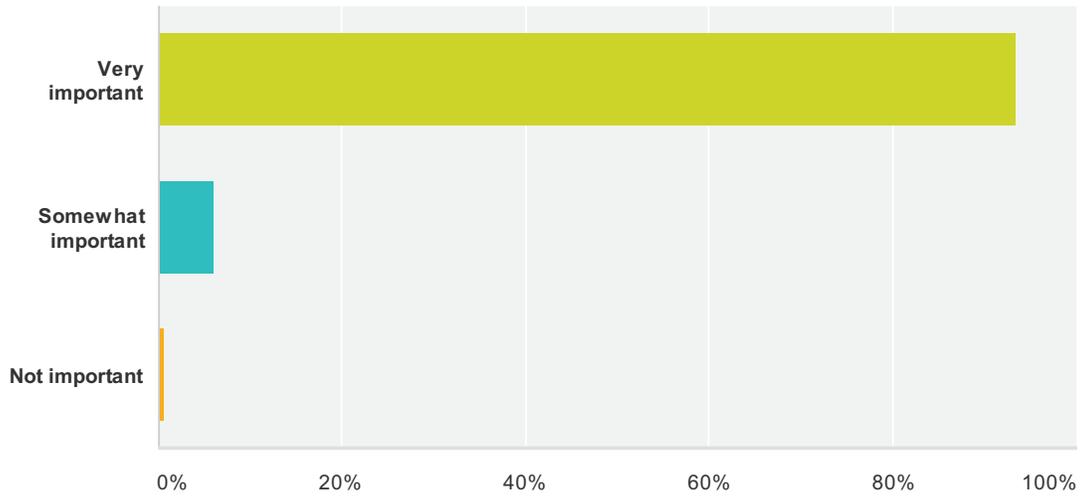
Answered: 912 Skipped: 162



Answer Choices	Responses
Strongly agree	2.85% 26
Agree	2.19% 20
No opinion	2.19% 20
Disagree	35.42% 323
Strongly disagree	57.35% 523
Total	912

Q14 How important is the doctrine of Adam and Eve as the progenitors of the entire human race?

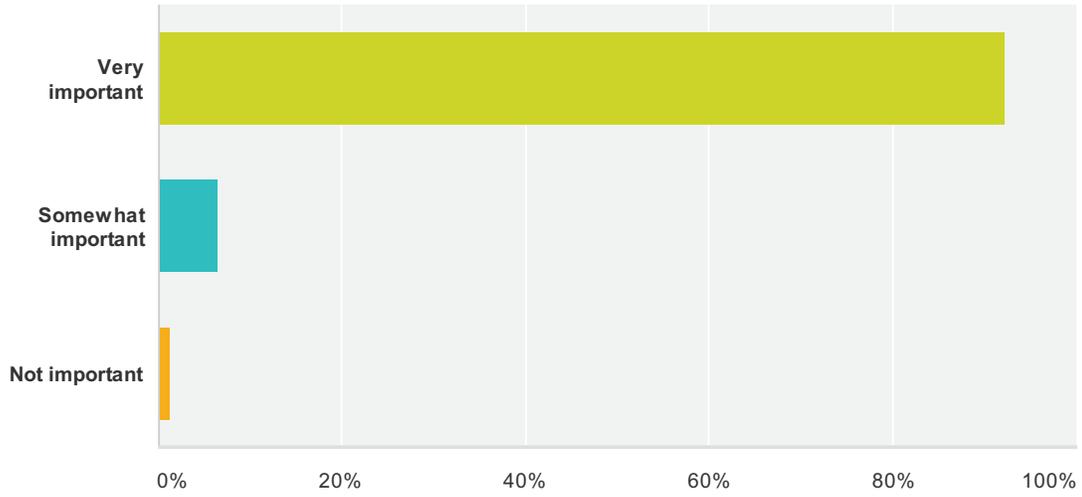
Answered: 916 Skipped: 158



Answer Choices	Responses
Very important	93.23% 854
Somewhat important	6.00% 55
Not important	0.76% 7
Total	916

Q15 How important is the historicity of Adam and Eve?

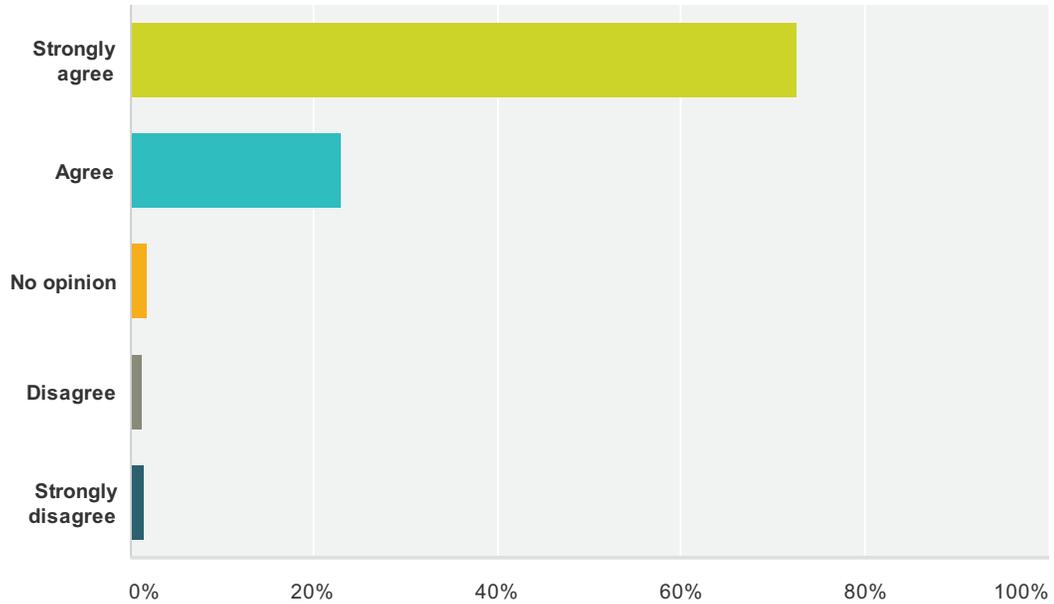
Answered: 918 Skipped: 156



Answer Choices	Responses
Very important	92.16% 846
Somewhat important	6.54% 60
Not important	1.31% 12
Total	918

Q16 "Though other models can be used, an essential biblical understanding of the saving work of Christ is expressed by the penal substitutionary atonement model."

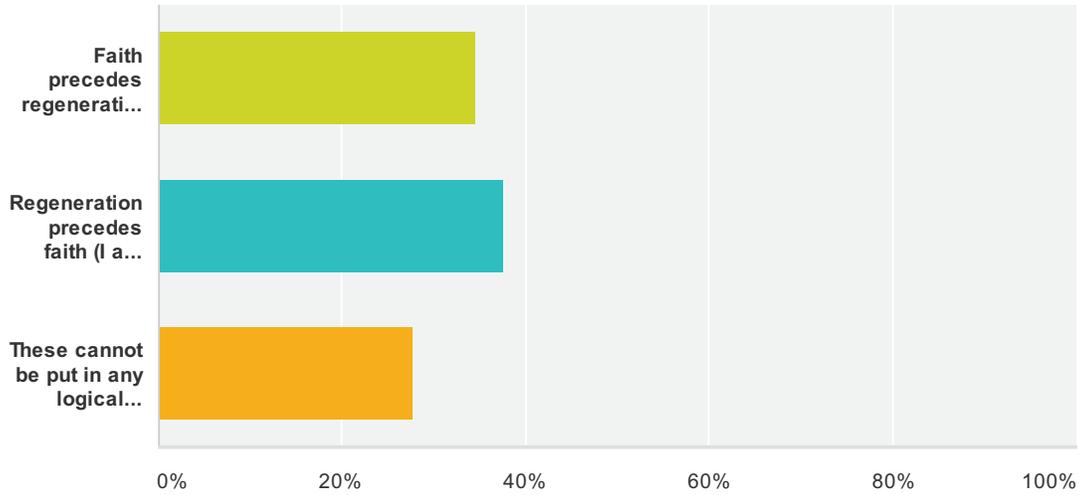
Answered: 907 Skipped: 167



Answer Choices	Responses	
Strongly agree	72.44%	657
Agree	22.93%	208
No opinion	1.98%	18
Disagree	1.21%	11
Strongly disagree	1.43%	13
Total		907

Q17 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?

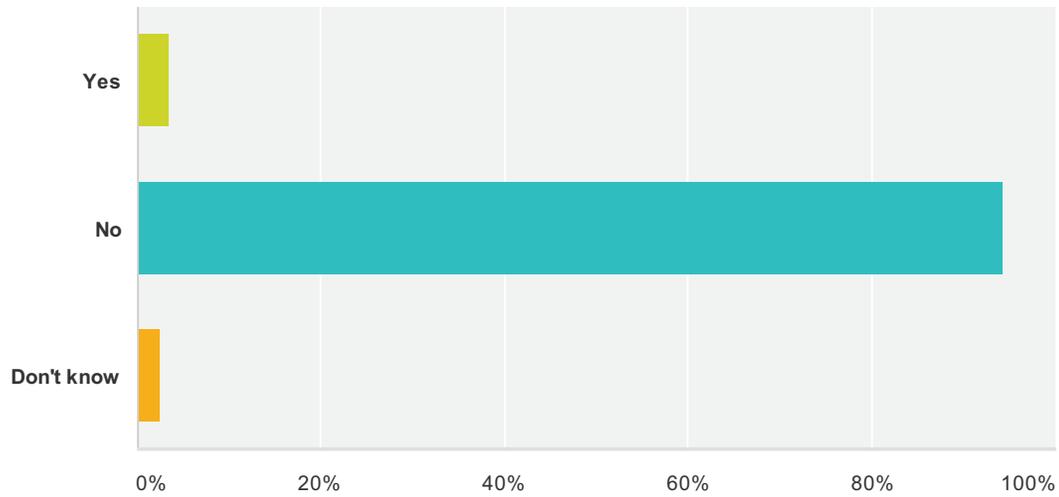
Answered: 883 Skipped: 191



Answer Choices	Responses	
Faith precedes regeneration (I believe and then I am regenerated).	34.65%	306
Regeneration precedes faith (I am regenerated and then I believe).	37.60%	332
These cannot be put in any logical order.	27.75%	245
Total		883

Q18 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?

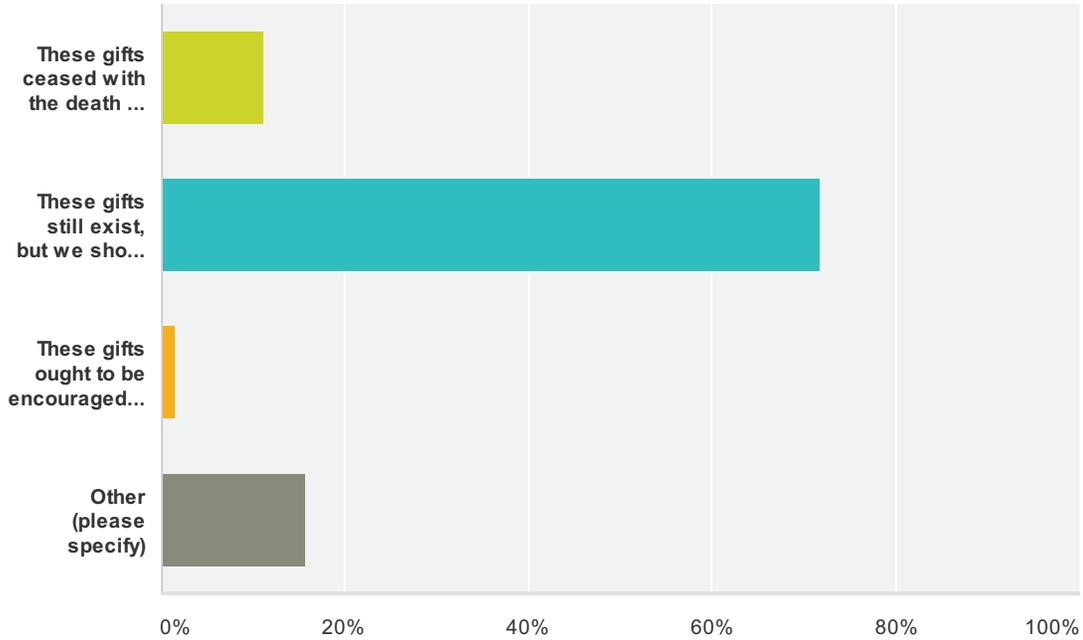
Answered: 902 Skipped: 172



Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	3.44% 31
No	94.01% 848
Don't know	2.55% 23
Total	902

Q19 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?

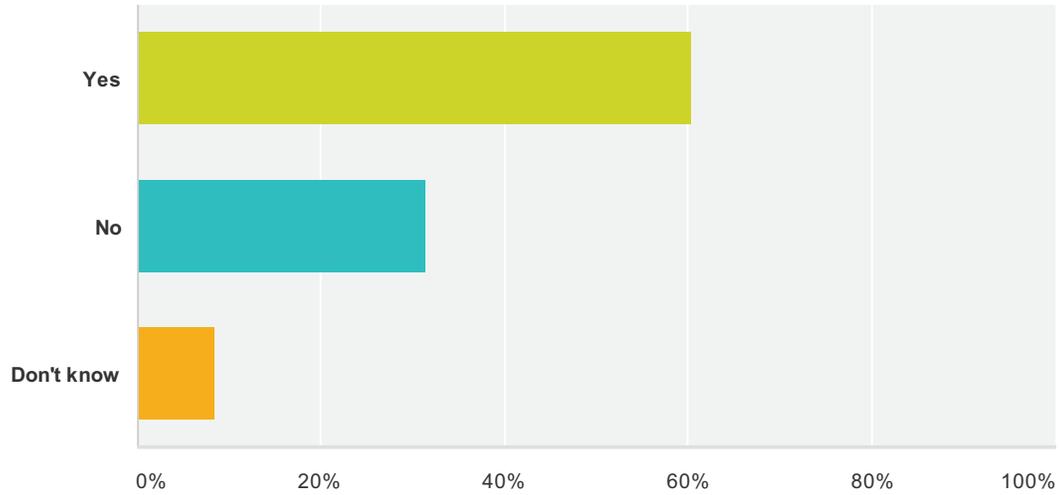
Answered: 909 Skipped: 165



Answer Choices	Responses
These gifts ceased with the death of the Apostles.	11.11% 101
These gifts still exist, but we should be cautious in the way they are expressed.	71.62% 651
These gifts ought to be encouraged in the public meetings of our church.	1.54% 14
Other (please specify)	15.73% 143
Total	909

Q20 Should we expect to hear the Spirit speak to us apart from illuminating our understanding and application of the Scripture?

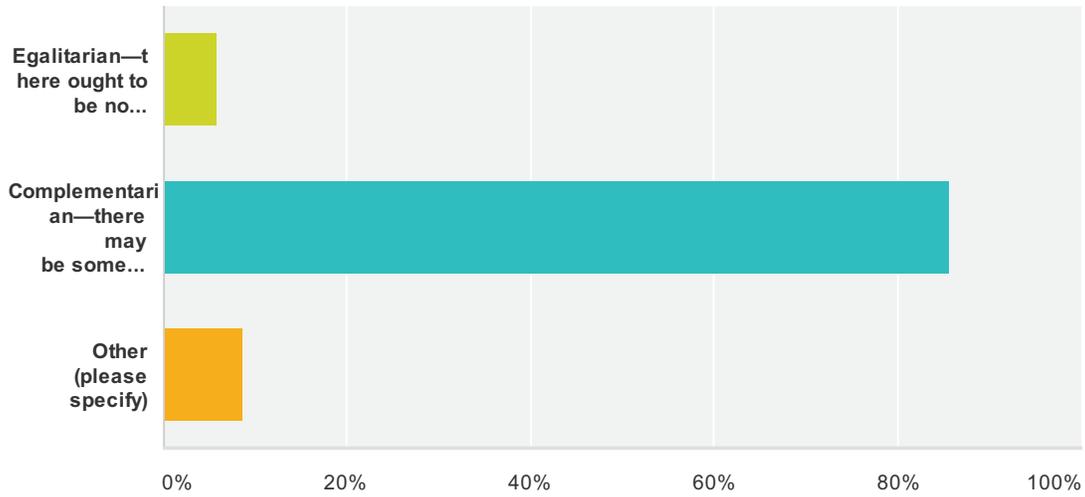
Answered: 898 Skipped: 176



Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	60.13% 540
No	31.40% 282
Don't know	8.46% 76
Total	898

Q21 Which best describes your position on the issue of women in ministry in the local church?

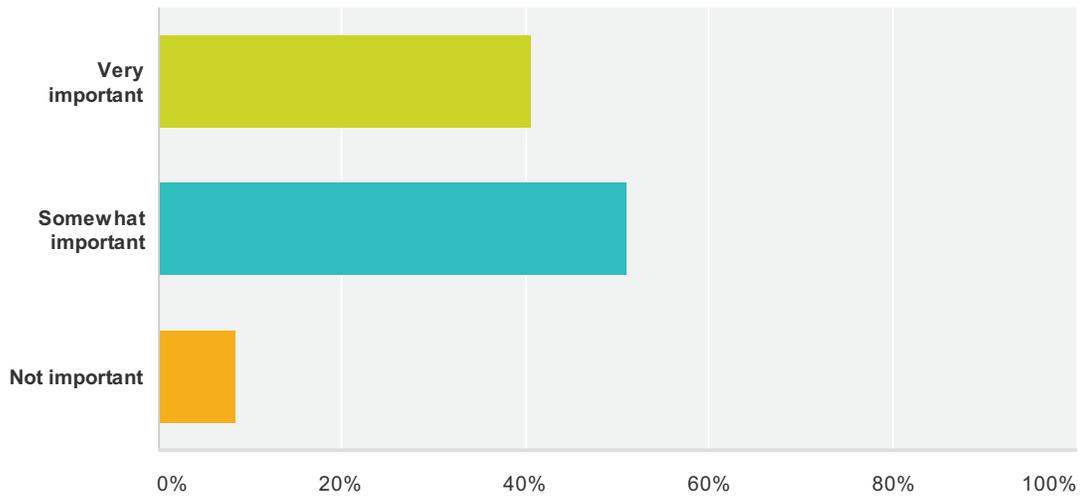
Answered: 912 Skipped: 162



Answer Choices	Responses
Egalitarian—there ought to be no differences in ministry roles based on gender.	5.81% 53
Complementarian—there may be some differences in ministry roles based on gender.	85.42% 779
Other (please specify)	8.77% 80
Total	912

Q22 How important is this position to your overall theological framework?

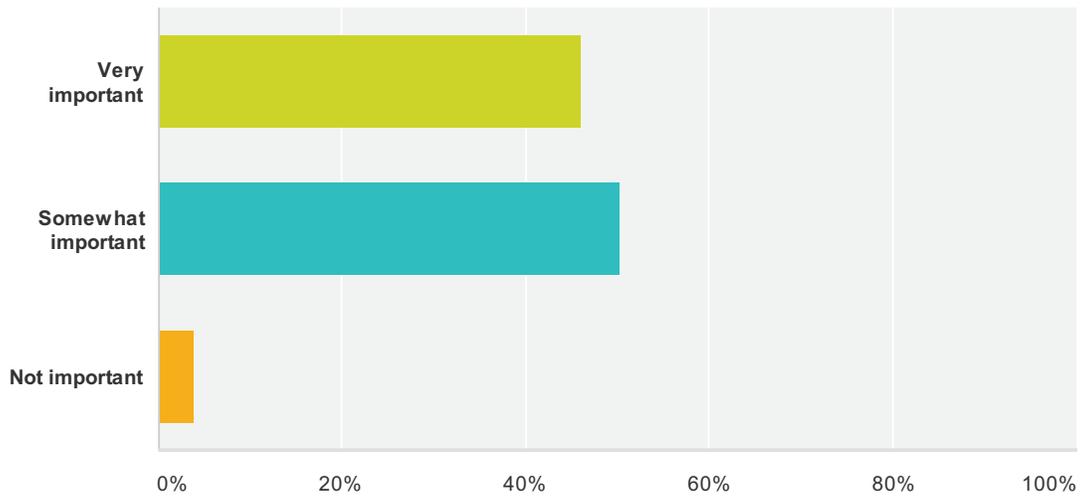
Answered: 906 Skipped: 168



Answer Choices	Responses	
Very important	40.51%	367
Somewhat important	50.99%	462
Not important	8.50%	77
Total		906

Q23 How important is church membership?

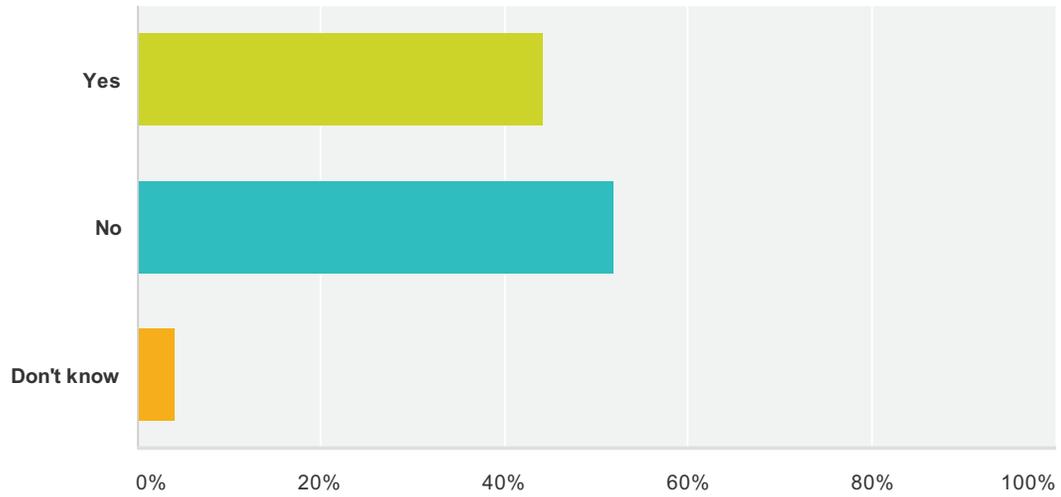
Answered: 912 Skipped: 162



Answer Choices	Responses
Very important	45.94% 419
Somewhat important	50.22% 458
Not important	3.84% 35
Total	912

Q24 Do you think baptism (of any sort) ought to be required for church membership?

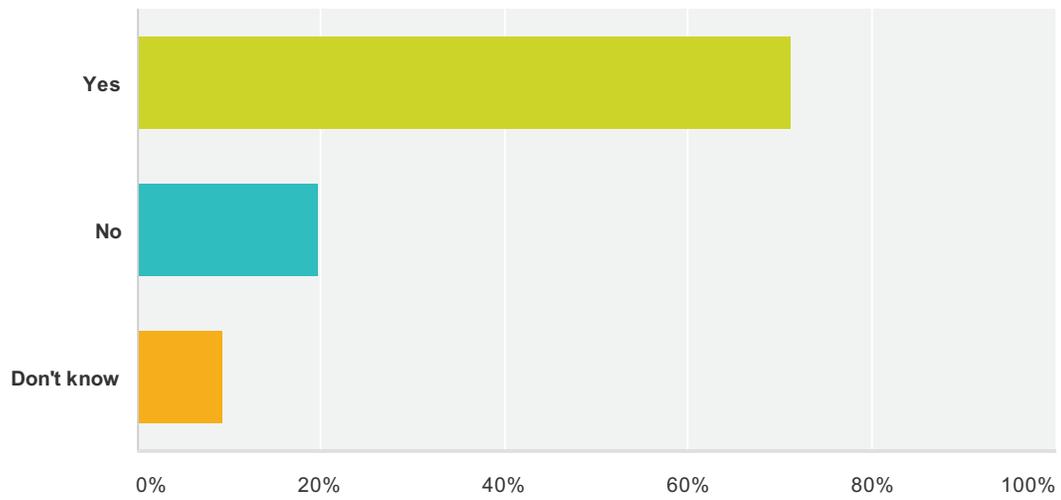
Answered: 904 Skipped: 170



Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	44.14% 399
No	51.77% 468
Don't know	4.09% 37
Total	904

Q25 Is this also the view of your church?

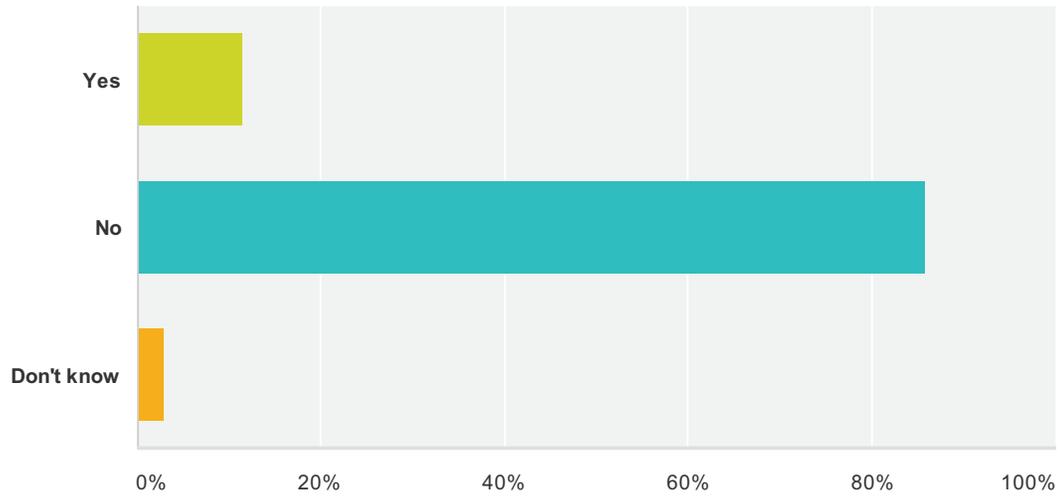
Answered: 889 Skipped: 185



Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	71.09% 632
No	19.69% 175
Don't know	9.22% 82
Total	889

Q26 Do you think baptism (of any sort) ought to be a required for participation in the Lord's Supper?

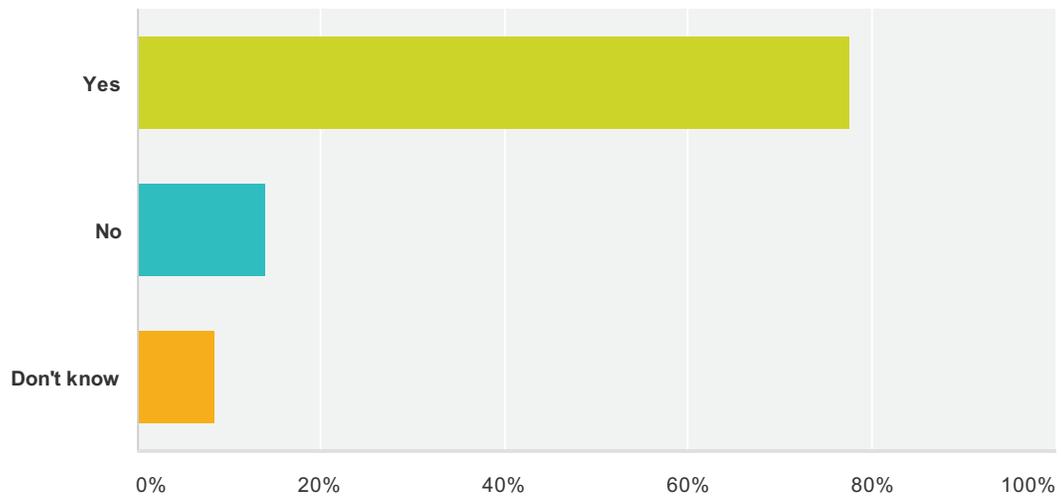
Answered: 907 Skipped: 167



Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	11.47% 104
No	85.67% 777
Don't know	2.87% 26
Total	907

Q27 Is this also the view of your church?

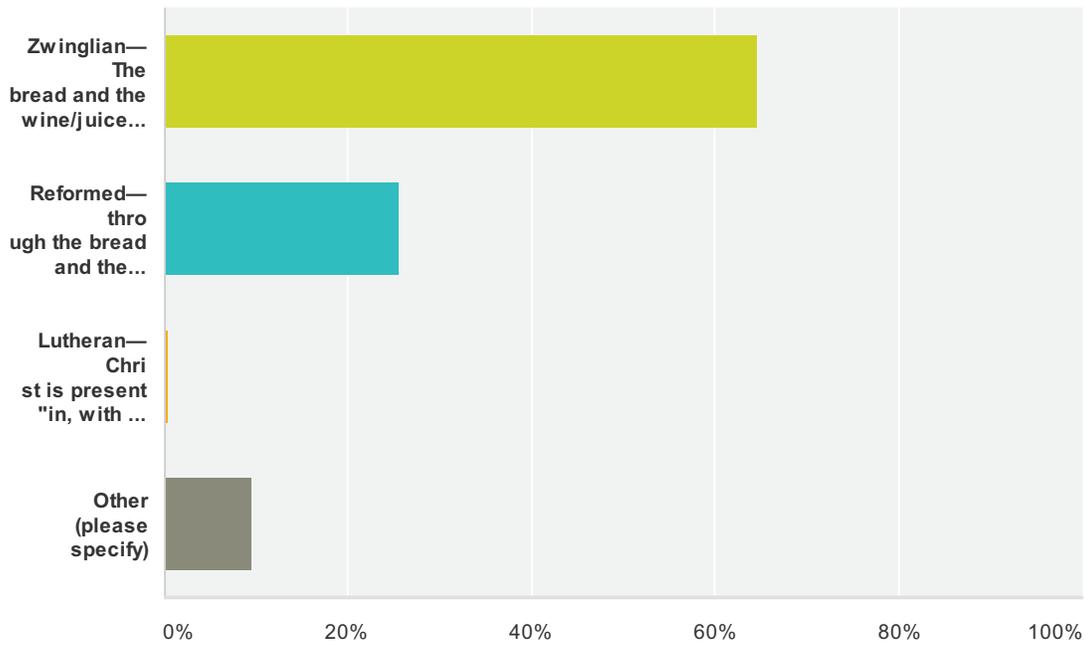
Answered: 895 Skipped: 179



Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	77.54%	694
No	13.85%	124
Don't know	8.60%	77
Total		895

Q28 What would best characterize your view of the Lord's Supper?

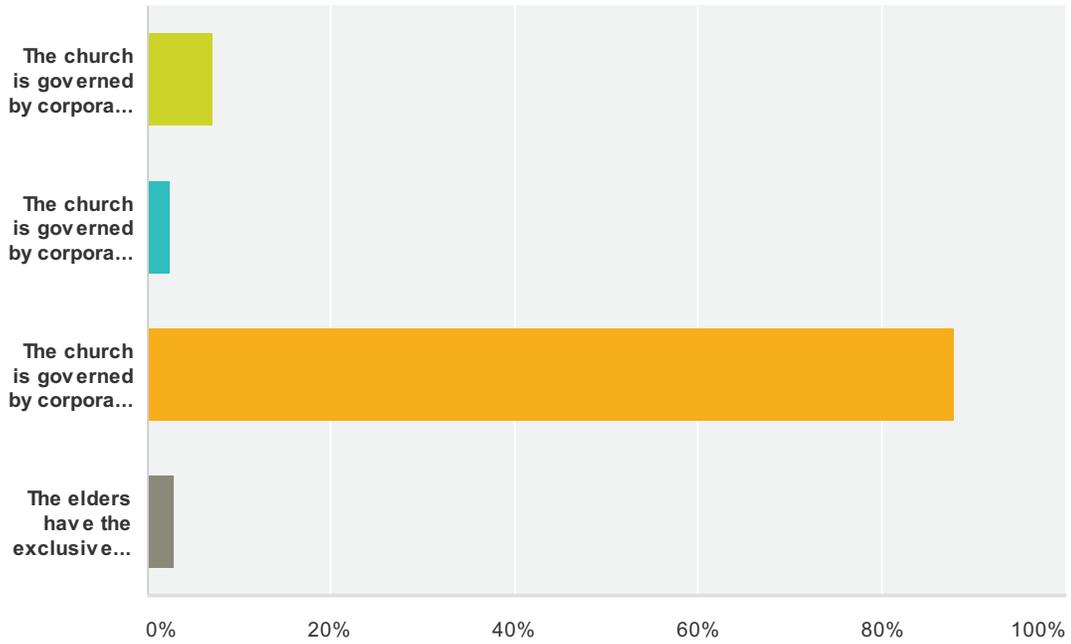
Answered: 911 Skipped: 163



Answer Choices	Responses	
Zwinglian—The bread and the wine/juce are symbols of Christ's presence.	64.32%	586
Reformed—through the bread and the wine/juce Christ is present in a spiritual sense.	25.58%	233
Lutheran—Christ is present "in, with and under" the bread and the wine/juce.	0.55%	5
Other (please specify)	9.55%	87
Total		911

Q29 Regarding church polity, which model best describes your understanding of congregationalism:

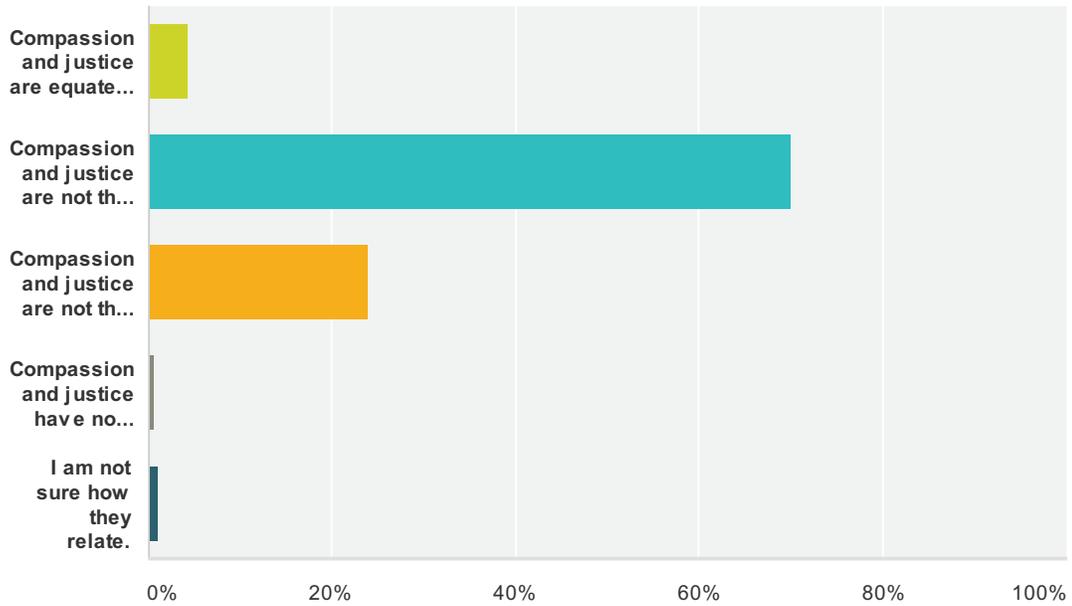
Answered: 905 Skipped: 169



Answer Choices	Responses	
The church is governed by corporate discernment of God's will through the entire congregation on all matters.	7.07%	64
The church is governed by corporate congregational discernment of God's will led largely by the lead pastor.	2.43%	22
The church is governed by corporate congregational discernment of God's will led largely by a team of pastors/elders.	87.62%	793
The elders have the exclusive role of discerning God's will for the entire congregation.	2.87%	26
Total		905

Q30 Which statement best explains your understanding of how compassion, justice and deeds of mercy relate to the gospel?

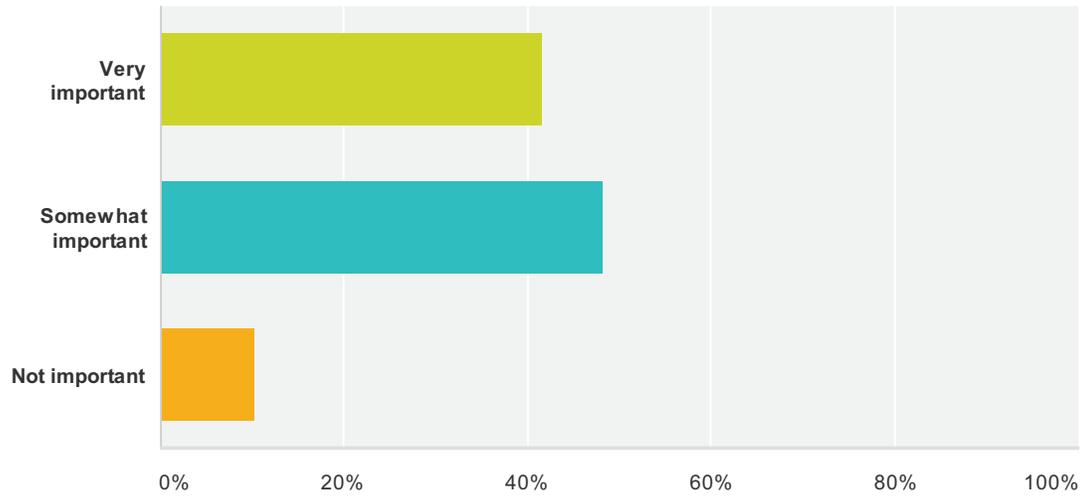
Answered: 891 Skipped: 183



Answer Choices	Responses	
Compassion and justice are equated with the gospel.	4.26%	38
Compassion and justice are not the gospel but are a necessary outworking of the gospel.	69.92%	623
Compassion and justice are not the gospel but biblical commands.	24.02%	214
Compassion and justice have no relation to the gospel at all.	0.67%	6
I am not sure how they relate.	1.12%	10
Total		891

Q31 How important is racial/ethnic diversity in the local church to the visible manifestation of the gospel?

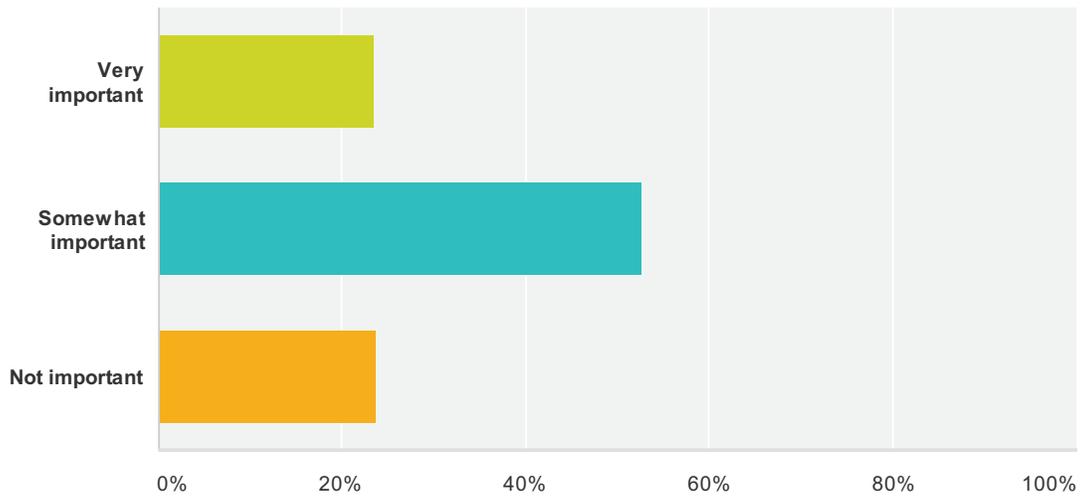
Answered: 889 Skipped: 185



Answer Choices	Responses
Very important	41.51% 369
Somewhat important	48.14% 428
Not important	10.35% 92
Total	889

Q32 How important to your congregation is racial/ethnic diversity?

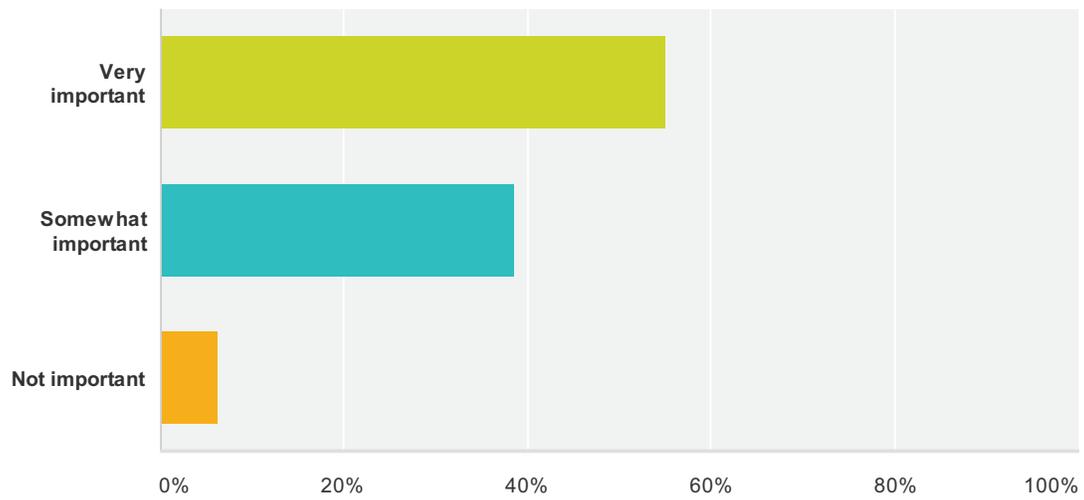
Answered: 881 Skipped: 193



Answer Choices	Responses
Very important	23.50% 207
Somewhat important	52.67% 464
Not important	23.84% 210
Total	881

Q33 How important is generational diversity in the local church to the visible manifestation of the gospel?

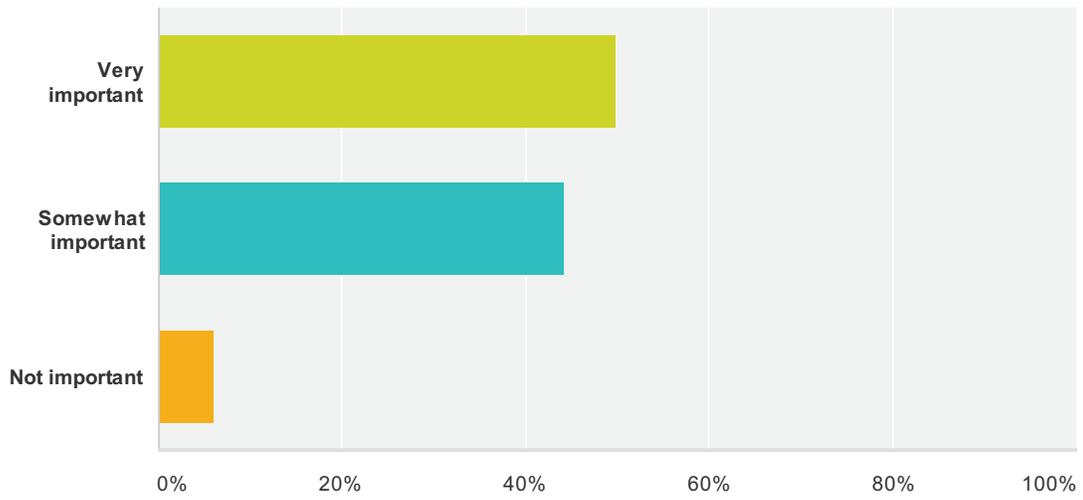
Answered: 895 Skipped: 179



Answer Choices	Responses
Very important	54.97% 492
Somewhat important	38.66% 346
Not important	6.37% 57
Total	895

Q34 How important to your congregation is generational diversity?

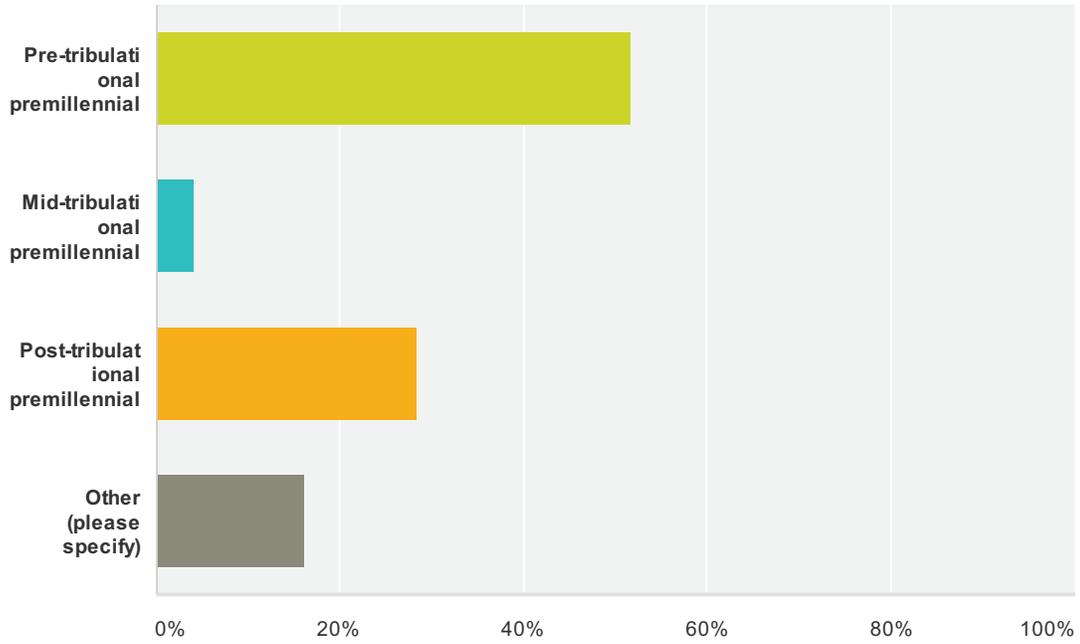
Answered: 882 Skipped: 192



Answer Choices	Responses
Very important	49.89% 440
Somewhat important	44.10% 389
Not important	6.01% 53
Total	882

Q35 What would best describe your eschatological position?

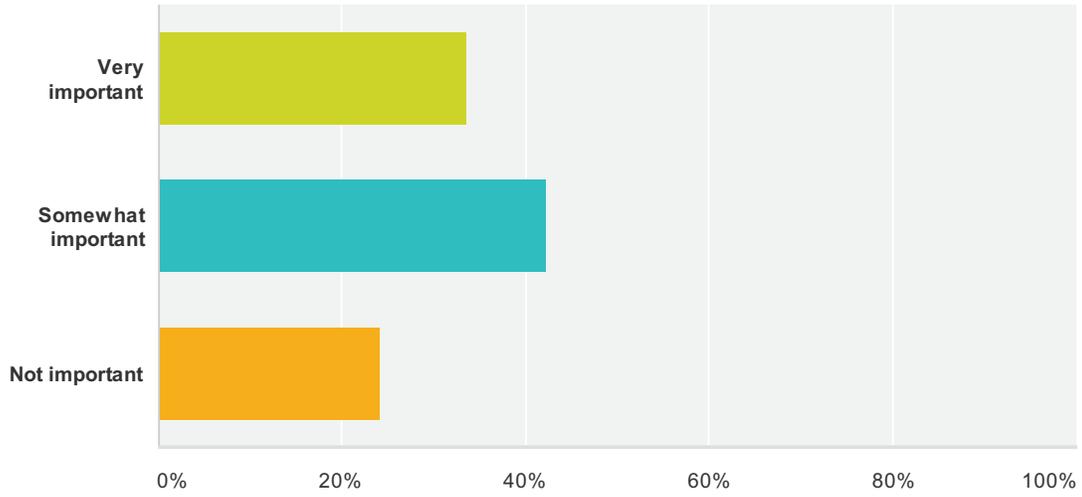
Answered: 899 Skipped: 175



Answer Choices	Responses	
Pre-tribulational premillennial	51.50%	463
Mid-tribulational premillennial	4.12%	37
Post-tribulational premillennial	28.25%	254
Other (please specify)	16.13%	145
Total		899

Q36 How important is premillennialism in your theological framework?

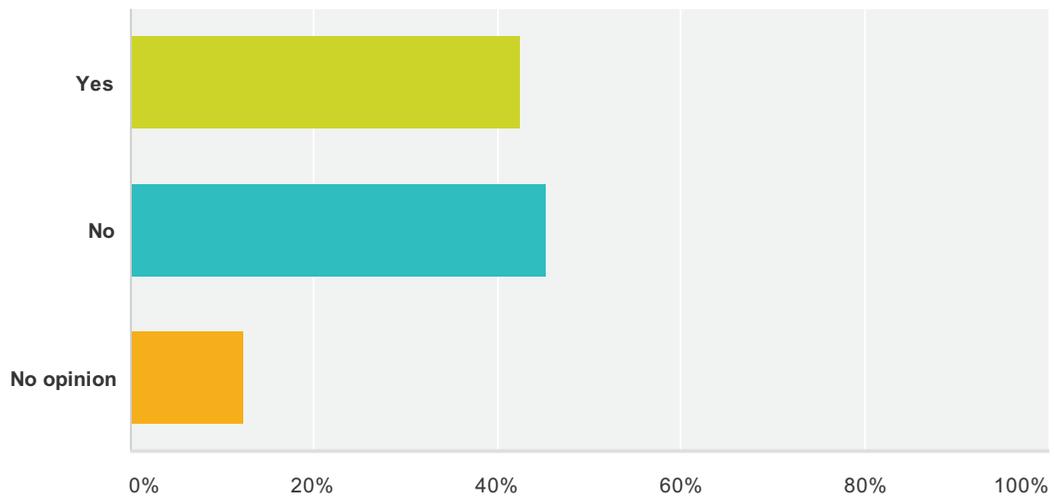
Answered: 898 Skipped: 176



Answer Choices	Responses
Very important	33.63% 302
Somewhat important	42.20% 379
Not important	24.16% 217
Total	898

Q37 In a future revision, should "premillennialism" be retained in our EFCA Statement of Faith?

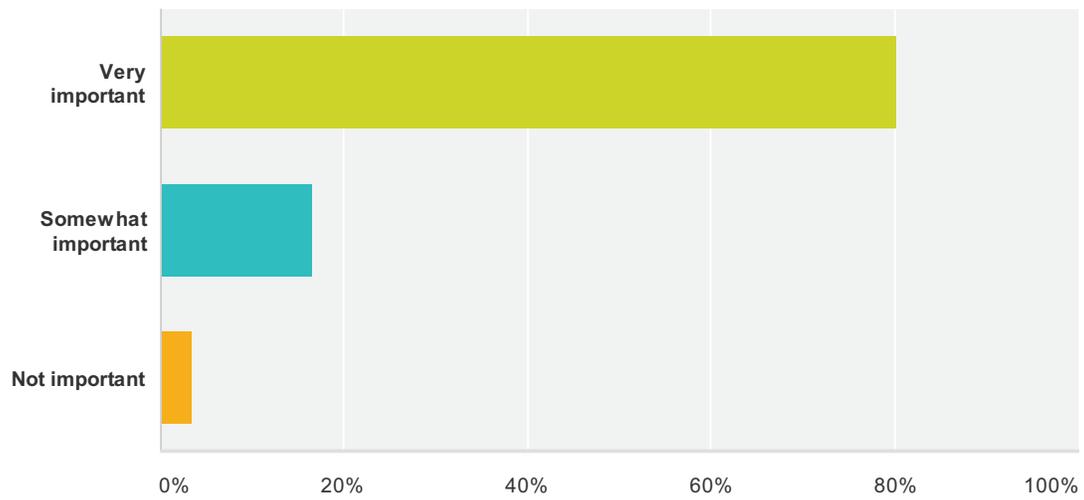
Answered: 897 Skipped: 177



Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	42.36% 380
No	45.26% 406
No opinion	12.37% 111
Total	897

Q38 How important is the doctrine of "eternal conscious punishment" in your theological framework?

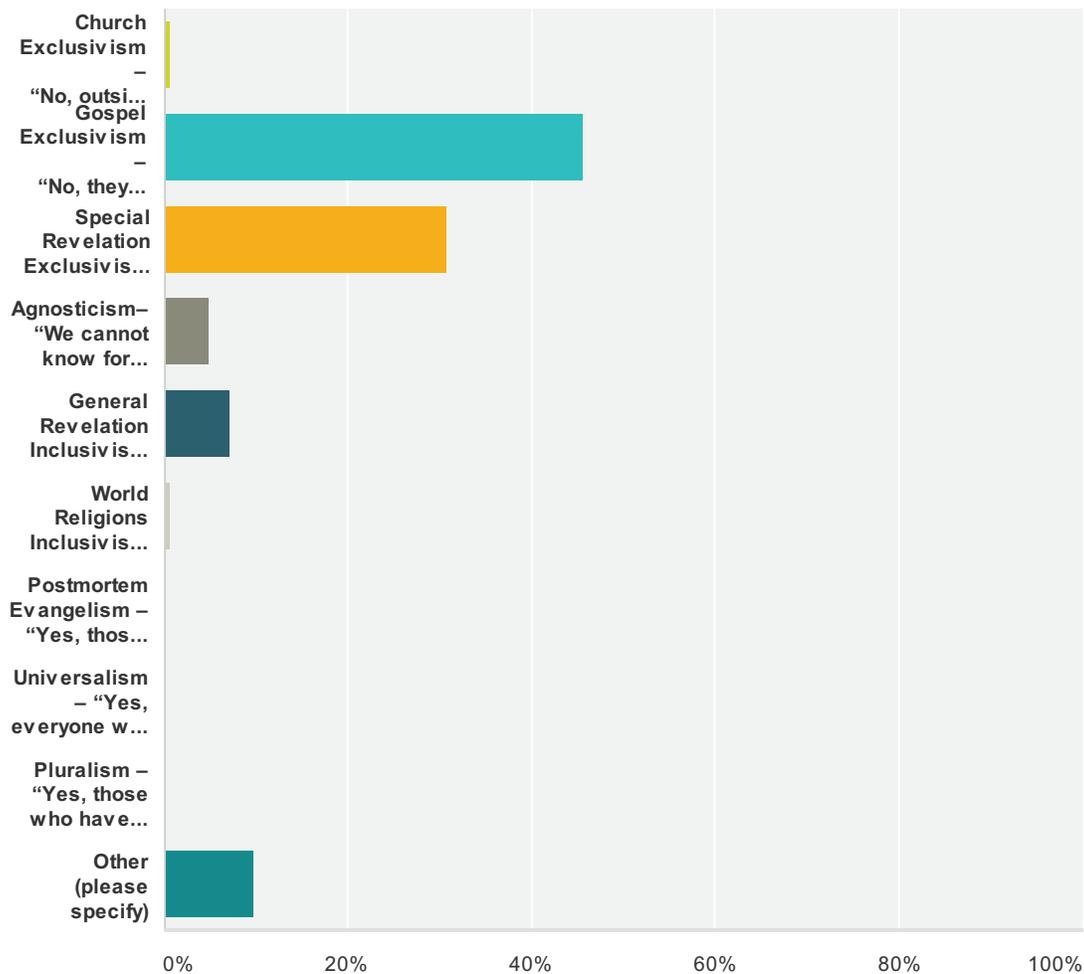
Answered: 895 Skipped: 179



Answer Choices	Responses
Very important	80% 716
Somewhat important	16.42% 147
Not important	3.58% 32
Total	895

Q39 Which of these views 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: 900 Skipped: 174



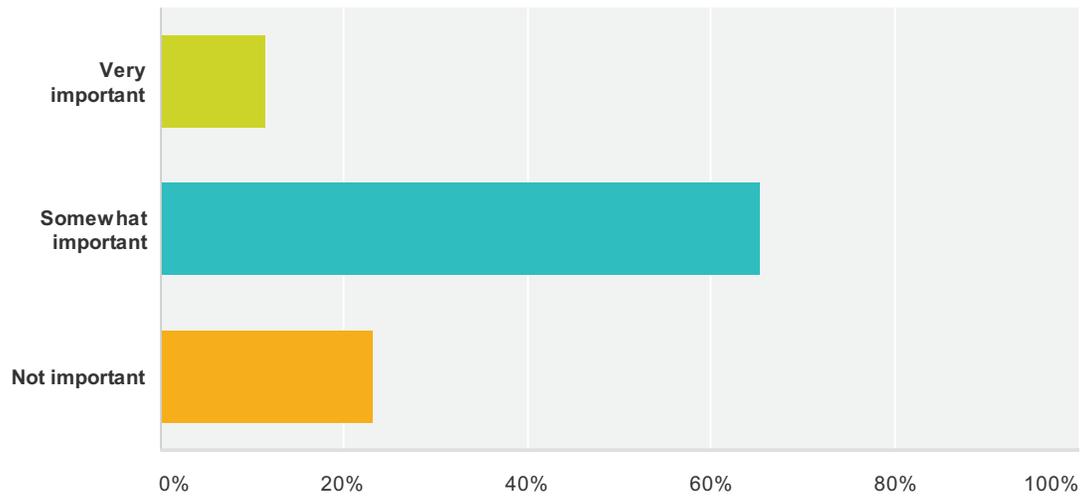
Answer Choices	Responses
Church Exclusivism – “No, outside the church there is no salvation.”	0.67% 6
Gospel Exclusivism – “No, they must hear the gospel and trust Christ to be saved.”	45.56% 410
Special Revelation Exclusivism – “No, unless God chooses to send them special revelation in an extraordinary way – by a direct revelation from the Lord, dream, vision, miracle, or angelic message.”	30.78% 277
Agnosticism– “We cannot know for certain the answer to this question.”	5% 45
General Revelation Inclusivism – “Yes, they can respond to God through seeing enough of who he is in general revelation.”	7.11% 64
World Religions Inclusivism – “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.”	0.67% 6

2013 EFCA Doctrinal Survey

Postmortem Evangelism – “Yes, those who have never heard the gospel will have an opportunity to trust Christ after death.”	0.33%	3
Universalism – “Yes, everyone will ultimately be saved.”	0%	0
Pluralism – “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.”	0.22%	2
Other (please specify)	9.67%	87
Total		900

Q40 How important to your congregation is the matter of creation care?

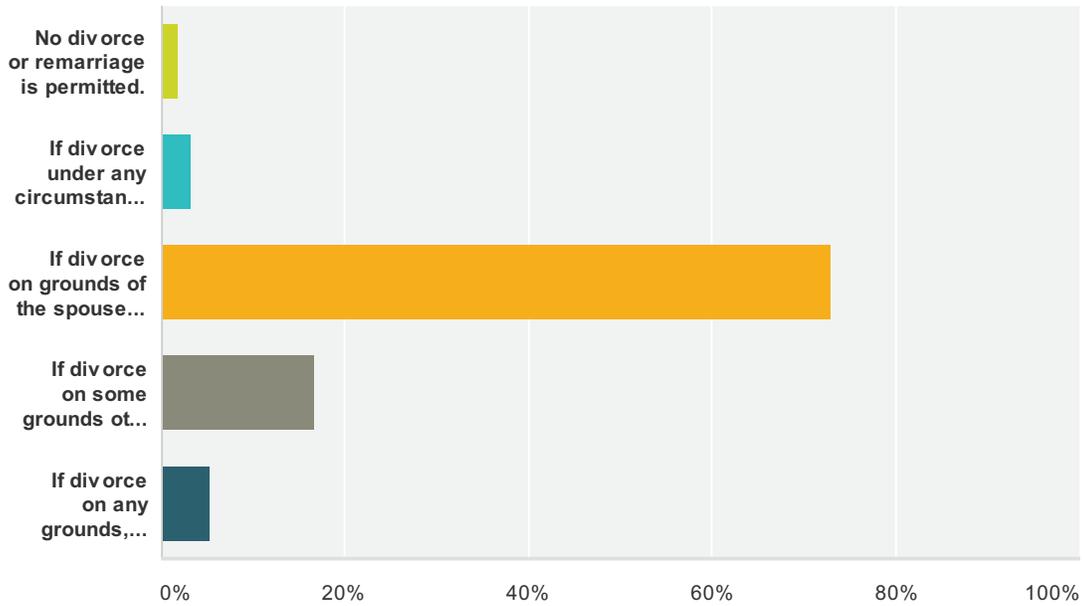
Answered: 857 Skipped: 217



Answer Choices	Responses
Very important	11.55% 99
Somewhat important	65.23% 559
Not important	23.22% 199
Total	857

Q41 What best describes your position on divorce and remarriage for a Christian believer:

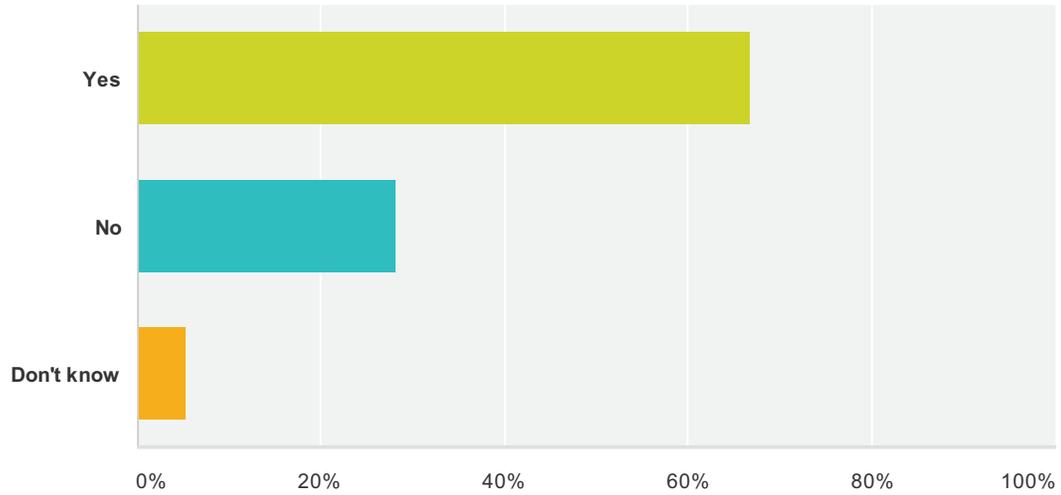
Answered: 884 Skipped: 190



Answer Choices	Responses	
No divorce or remarriage is permitted.	1.92%	17
If divorce under any circumstance, no remarriage is permitted.	3.39%	30
If divorce on grounds of the spouse's infidelity or desertion, remarriage is permitted.	72.74%	643
If divorce on some grounds other than the spouse's infidelity or desertion, remarriage is permitted.	16.74%	148
If divorce on any grounds, remarriage is permitted.	5.20%	46
Total		884

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

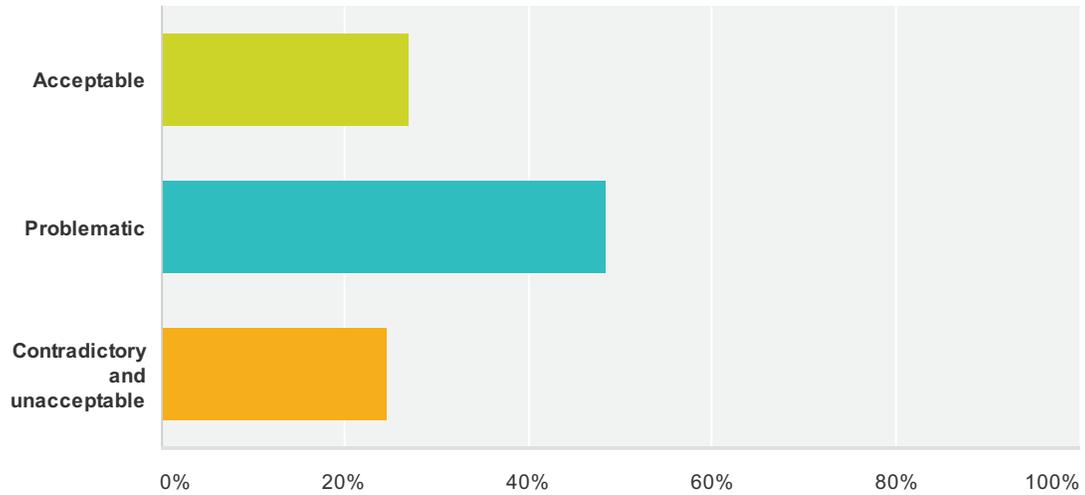
Answered: 891 Skipped: 183



Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	66.67% 594
No	28.06% 250
Don't know	5.27% 47
Total	891

Q43 Do you understand the label of “gay Christian” (with the understanding that the person agrees that sexual relations belong only in heterosexual marriage and seeks to be faithful to that truth) to be

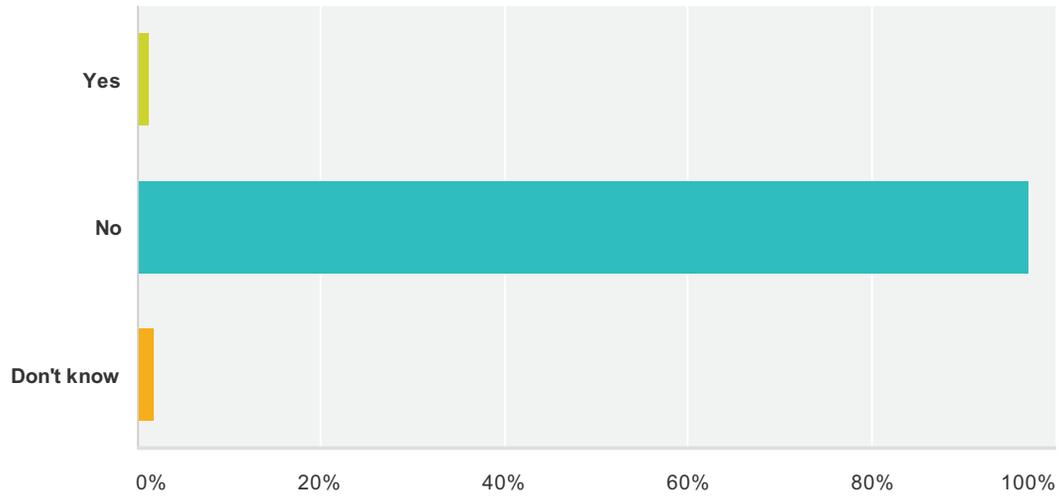
Answered: 884 Skipped: 190



Answer Choices	Responses	
Acceptable	27.04%	239
Problematic	48.42%	428
Contradictory and unacceptable	24.55%	217
Total		884

Q44 Do you think the church should recognize legally constituted "marriages" of same sex-couples?

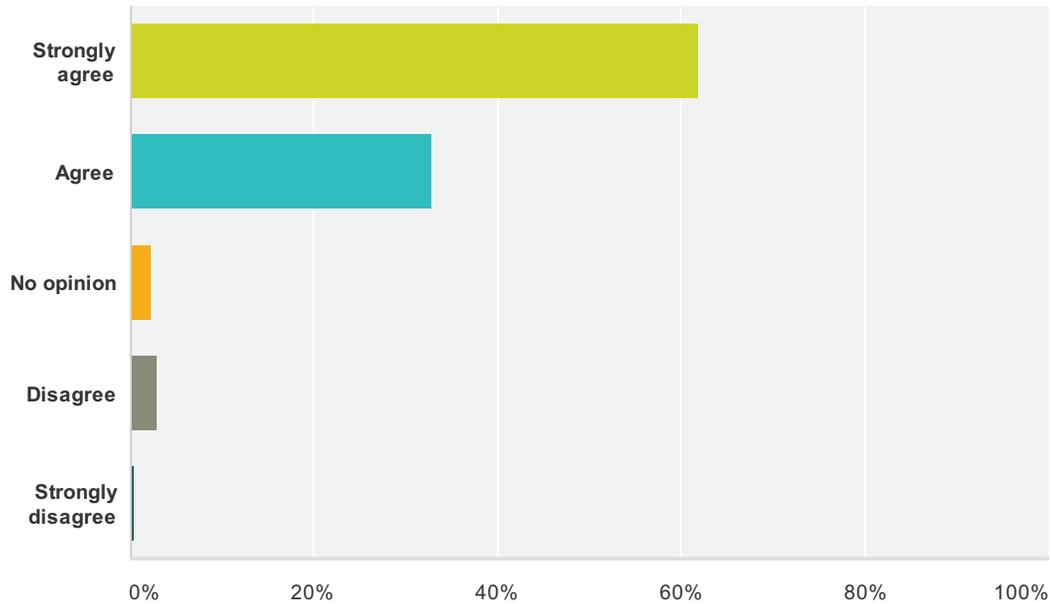
Answered: 891 Skipped: 183



Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	1.35% 12
No	96.86% 863
Don't know	1.80% 16
Total	891

Q45 The EFCA commitment to live and minister within the “significance of silence” framework (we will debate but not divide over certain non-essential doctrinal matters) is a strength.

Answered: 891 Skipped: 183



Answer Choices	Responses
Strongly agree	61.73% 550
Agree	32.66% 291
No opinion	2.36% 21
Disagree	2.81% 25
Strongly disagree	0.45% 4
Total	891

Q46 Extra Credit (!): Who are some of the theological/pastoral writers that you find particularly helpful or who have had the greatest impact on your thinking?

Answered: 668 Skipped: 406