

Before and Beyond Baptism Pilot Study

Summit on Nurture and Retention Presentation
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Silver Springs, MD

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An investigation into the relationship between current baptismal beliefs and practices, Christian maturity, and commitment to the core Seventh-day Adventist beliefs of church members within the South Pacific Division.

The Survey & Questions

- Divided into Sections A-G
- Ninety questions cover the individual's personal baptismal experience and beliefs about baptism
- Mostly Quantitative measures with some Qualitative responses
- Sections A-F: Nominal Scale measures (frequency tables)
- Section G: Ordinal (Likert) Scale measures (questions selected from the Valuegenesis survey)

Survey Sections Outlined

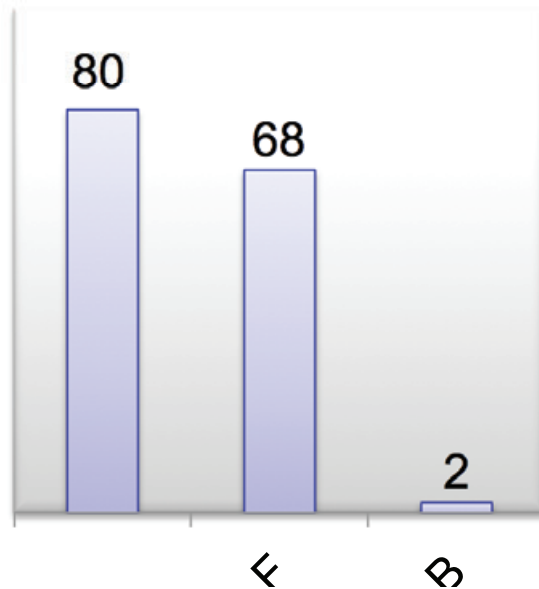
- Section A: Questions about you and your background (x12)
- Section B: Questions about your baptism (x20)
- Section C: Questions about your past relationship with the church (x3)
- Section D: Questions about rebaptism (x3)
- Section E: Other questions relating to your experience with baptism (x6)
- Section F: Questions about your beliefs about baptism (x8)
- Section G: Questions about your current faith and relationship with the church. All these questions have been lifted from the Valuegenesis questionnaire (x39)

The Pilot Study

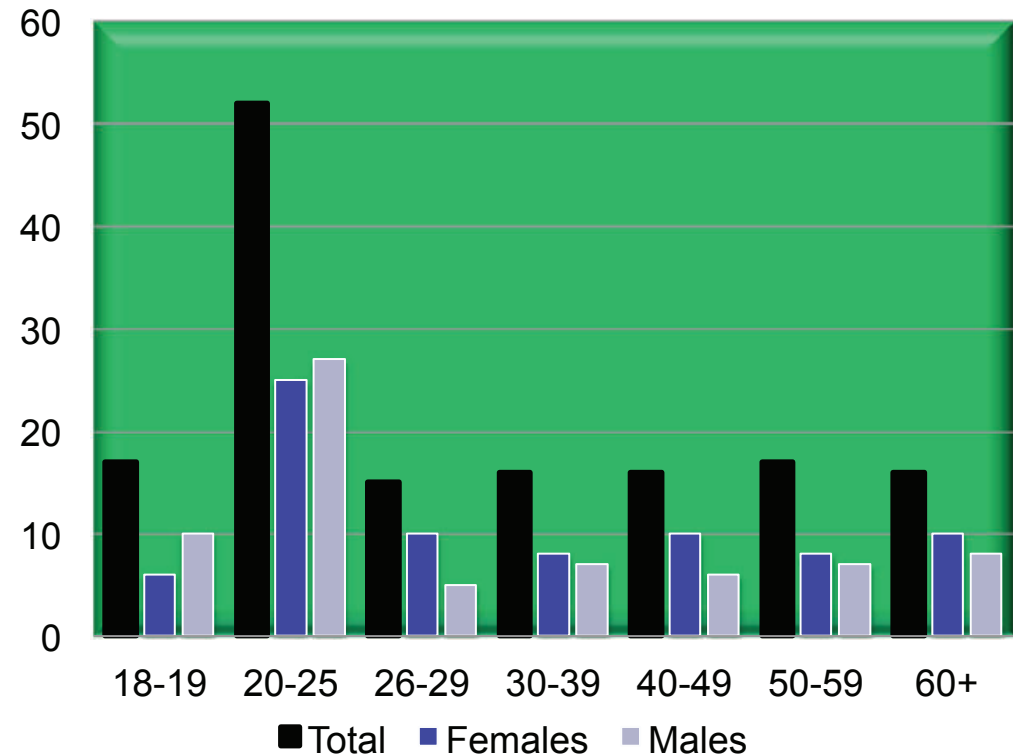
- This pilot study is a work in progress.
- It involved a cohort of 150 participants, aged 18+, from the Faculty of Education, Science and Business and several Sabbath School classes on the campus of Avondale College of Higher Education.
- It is intended to provide the foundation for a more comprehensive project to be conducted in the South Pacific Division in 2014 that is funded by the SPD.
- It has the potential to offer valuable insights and up-to-date data for church administrators, ministers, chaplains and educators as they seek to nurture, retain and disciple young believers.

Section A: Questions about you & your background

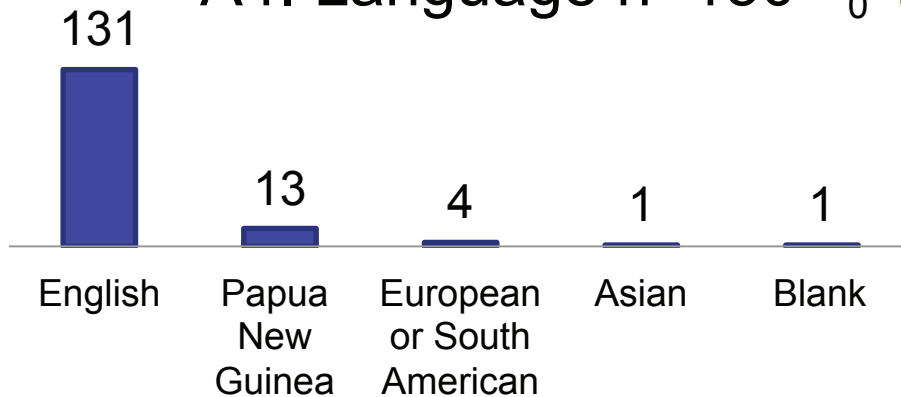
A2. Gender n=150



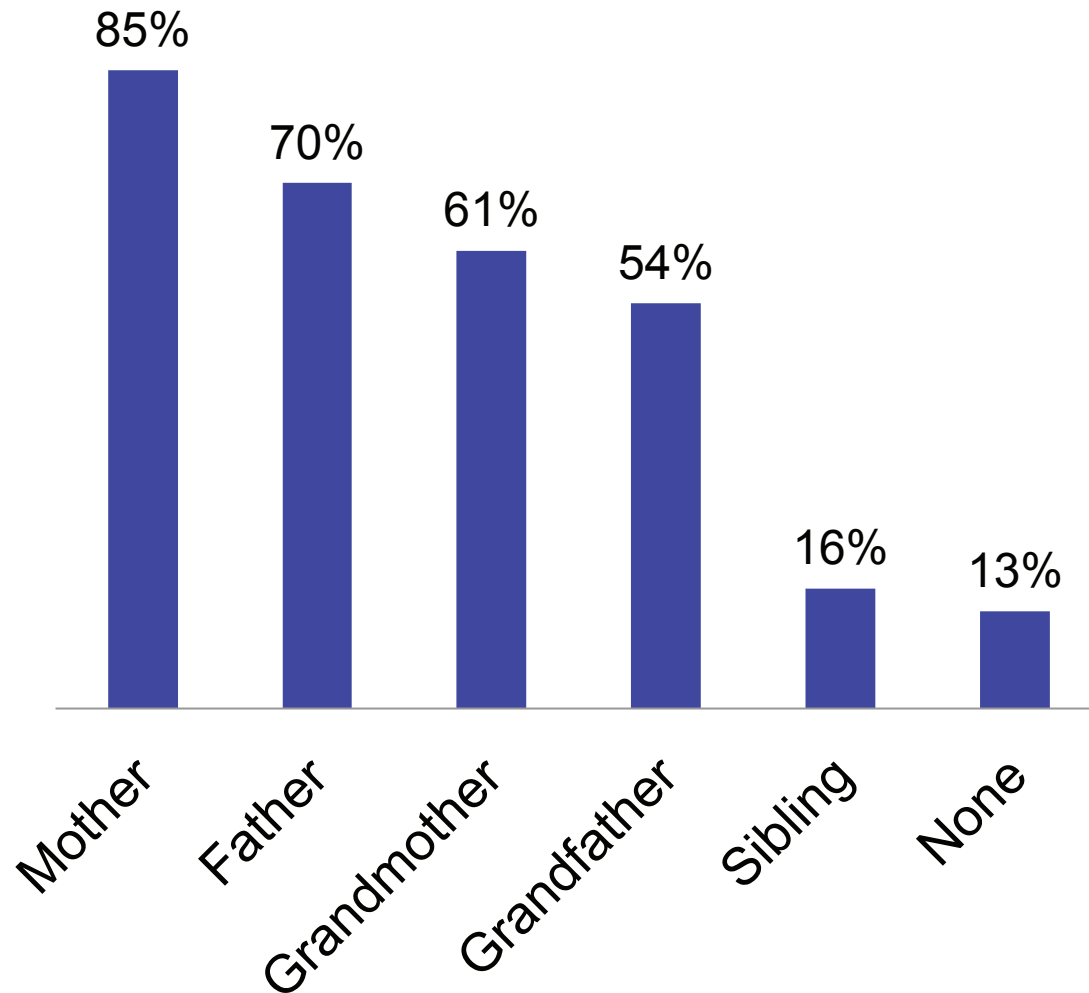
A3. Gender by Age n=150



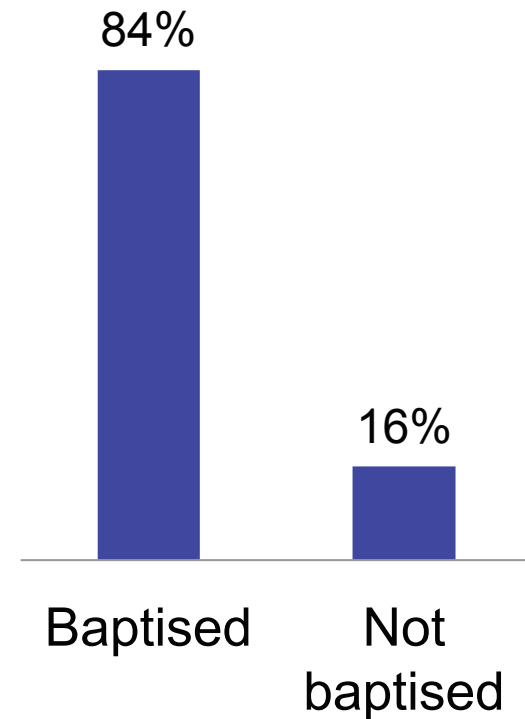
A4. Language n=150



A10. Are any of your family members baptised members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church? Mark all answers that apply.



A11. Are you a baptised member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church?



A12. I AM NOT a baptised member of the SDA church because:

	Frequency n=29
I don't think it is necessary for my salvation	2
I have been told I am too young	0
I do not understand the concept of baptism and how it relates to daily living	5
I am still studying and learning about baptism	8
I have seen too many hypocrites baptised	4
My parents or family are opposed to it	0
I joined the Seventh-day Adventist Church by profession of faith in place of rebaptism	1
Other	9

Questions B1-E1: only those who have been baptised answer.

Comments written for Questions A12

A12. I am not a baptised member of the SDA church because:

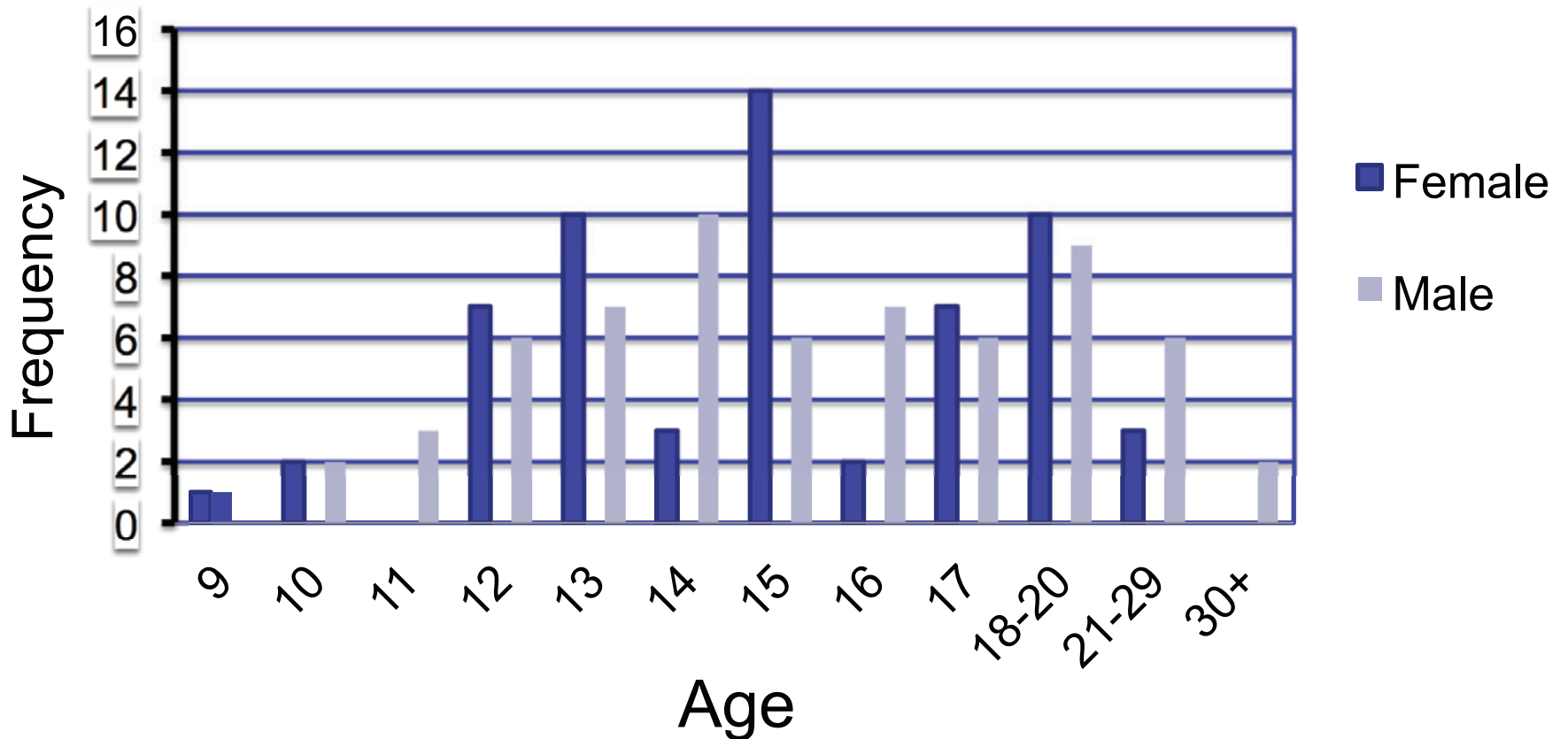
- Respondent 10068. “I put up my hand a number of times at big camp etc. They took my name but never followed it up. I understand it is my responsibility to keep asking.” (Male aged 20-25 from a country town whose parents, grandparents and siblings were baptised).
- Respondent 10100. “Sometimes it just conflicts with the belief of your parents and trying to respect them is important too. I am waiting for the right time to tell my parents” (Asian male student aged 18-19 who has no SDA family members and didn’t grow up in a SDA home).

A12. I am not a baptised member of the SDA church because:

- Respondent 10107. I believe it is important but I don't necessarily agree with being baptised into the church and the emphasis they place on matters such as being the remnant & revelation.
- Respondent 10064. I'm still deciding
- Respondent 10078. When is the right time?
- Respondent 10093. I do not feel like I have a home church
- Respondent 10110. Haven't felt ready yet
- Respondent 10132. I haven't done it yet

Section B: Questions about your baptism

B3. Age you were baptised (Female & Male Frequency Comparison) $n=150$



Ages	Frequency	n=126
9	1	Numbers show potential Total = 8 baptisms
10	4	
11	3	
12	13	Most significant years Total = 65 baptisms
13	17	
14	16	
15	19	
16	8	Significant years Total = 41 baptisms
17	13	
18-20	20	
21-29	9	Numbers show a decline Total = 11 baptisms
30+	2	
Blank	1	(24 not baptised)

B3. At what age were you baptised into the SDA church?

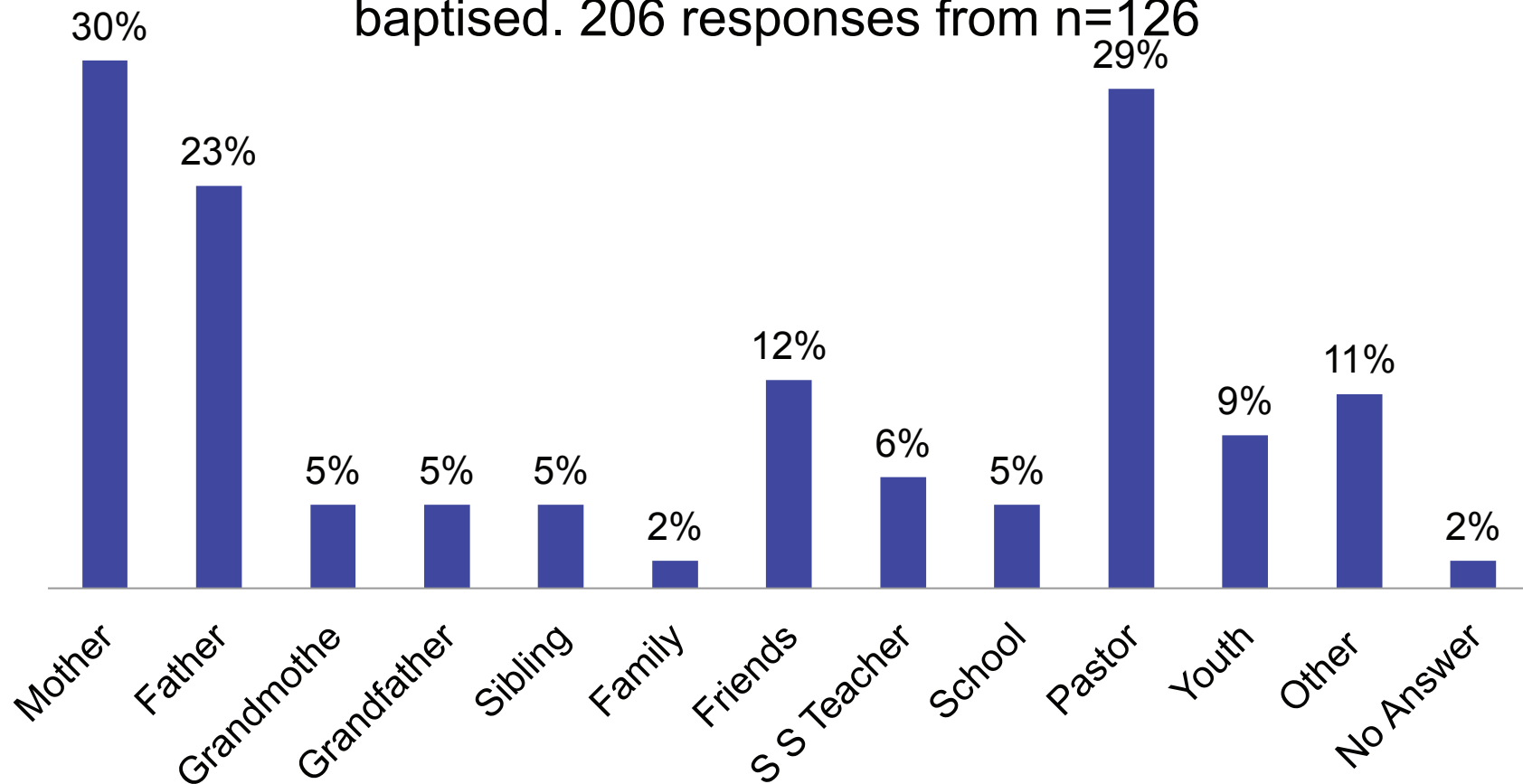
B6. When do you think you understood what your decision for baptism meant?

	%
Less than six months BEFORE my baptism	16%
7-12 months BEFORE my baptism	17%
Longer than 12 months BEFORE my baptism	32%
In the first 6 months AFTER my baptism	5%
7-12 months AFTER my baptism	2%
1-5 years AFTER my baptism	13%
More than 5 years AFTER my baptism	14%
Blank	1%

B8. What was the reason you chose to get baptised? Mark ALL that apply.
333 responses from n=126

	%
I wanted to publicly acknowledge God's presence in my life	68%
A personal, well-reasoned choice based on my study of the Bible	58%
I believed my salvation depended upon it	23%
Everyone in my age group was getting baptised	22%
It was suggested to me by an adult	19%
In response to an altar call	17%
Others in my family were getting baptised	11%
I felt pressured to get baptised	10%
Because of a decision I made during a summer camp or youth rally	10%
I believed it was a rite of passage for teenagers	8%
To please a significant adult in my life	8%
It was an emotional or spur of the moment decision	4%
Other	5%
Blank	1%

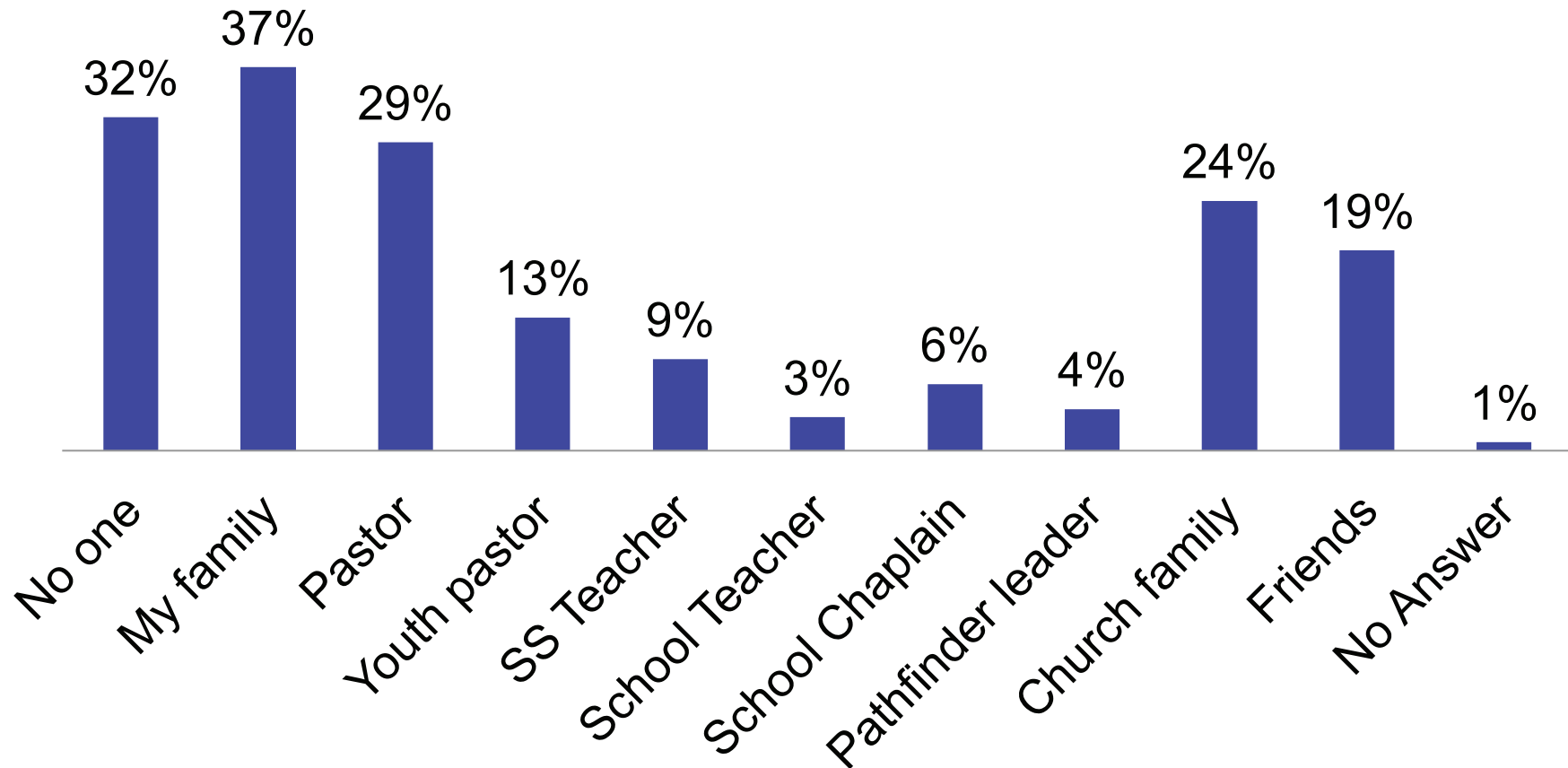
B9. Person most influential in encouraging you to be baptised. 206 responses from n=126



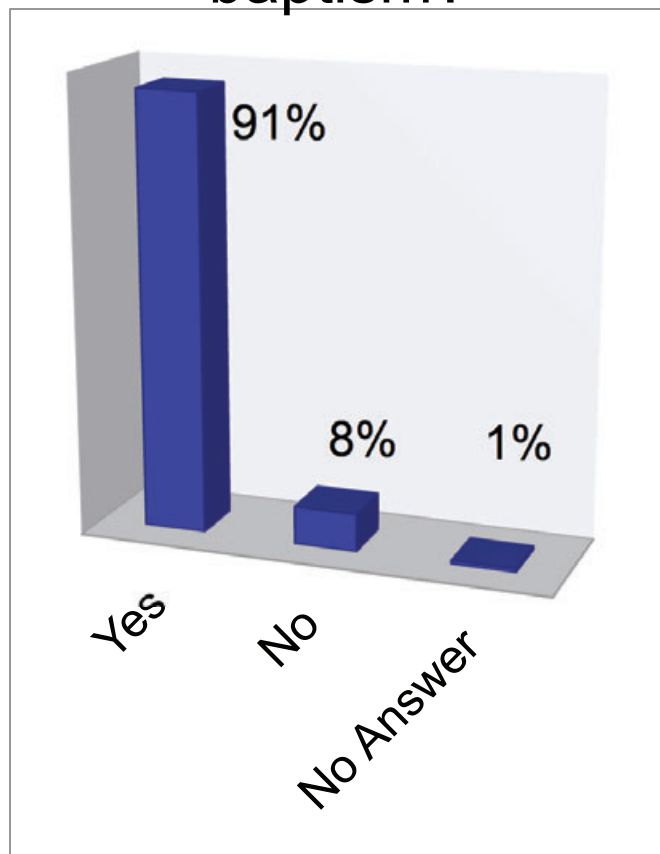
Other suggested people not listed in the survey included:

- | | |
|-------------------|------------------|
| • Boyfriend | • Wife |
| • School chaplain | • Evangelist |
| • Employer | • Church members |

B11. Who mentored you after your baptism?
Mark ALL that apply. 222 responses from n=126.



B16. Did you have specific instruction about Adventist beliefs (Bible Studies) prior to baptism?

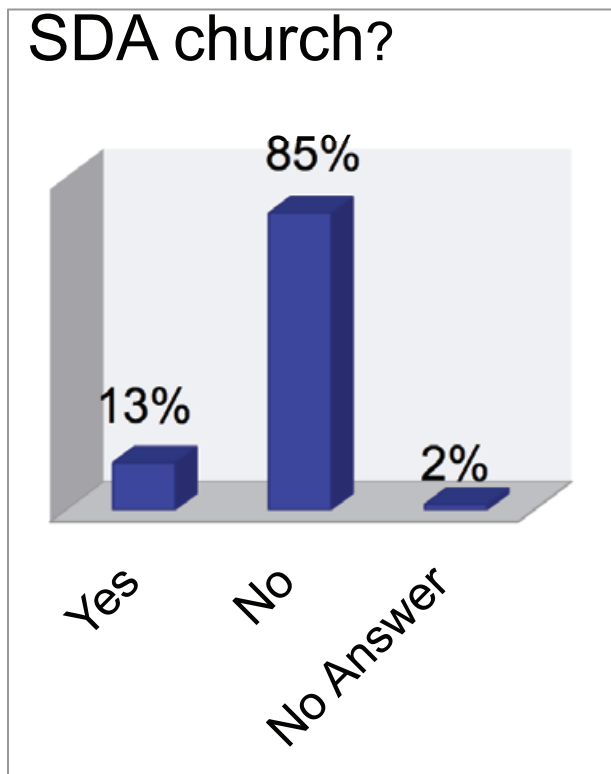


B20. Why were you baptised without instruction?

	Frequency n=10
The person baptising me considered I needed no special instruction because I was brought up in the SDA church.	5
I discovered and accepted Adventist beliefs through personal Bible study and research	3
I was baptised at the end of a week of spiritual emphasis	1
I'm not sure, Bible studies were not offered to me.	1

Section C: Questions about your past relationship with the church

C1. Have you at any time disassociated yourself from the SDA church?



C2. For how long did you disassociate yourself from the SDA church?

	F n=19
I have never disassociated myself from the church	0
Less than a year	2
1-2 years	3
3-5 years	7
6-10 years	0
More than 10 years	3
I am currently disassociated from the church	2

Section D: Questions about rebaptism

D1. Have you been baptised more than once?

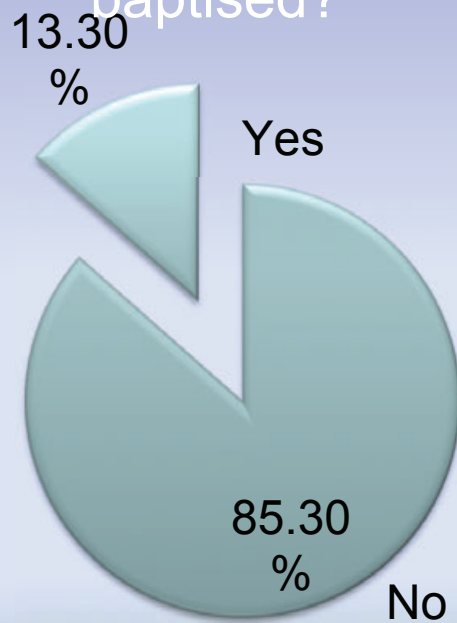
	%
No. Skip to Question E1.	95%
Yes. The first time was by sprinkling and the second by immersion.	2%
Yes. I have been baptised by immersion twice.	2%
Yes. I have been baptised by immersion three or more times.	0%
Blank	1%

D3. What was the reason you chose to be rebaptised? Mark ALL that apply

	F n=7
I was too young the first time and didn't understand the significance of my decision.	2
I came back to the church after disassociating myself from it, and wanted to demonstrate my renewed commitment.	1
I felt that I needed to be rebaptised to validate a new beginning in my commitment to God.	3
I wanted to be baptised by immersion because my first baptism was by sprinkling.	1

Section E: Questions about being too young to be baptised

E3. Were you ever told you were too young to be baptised?

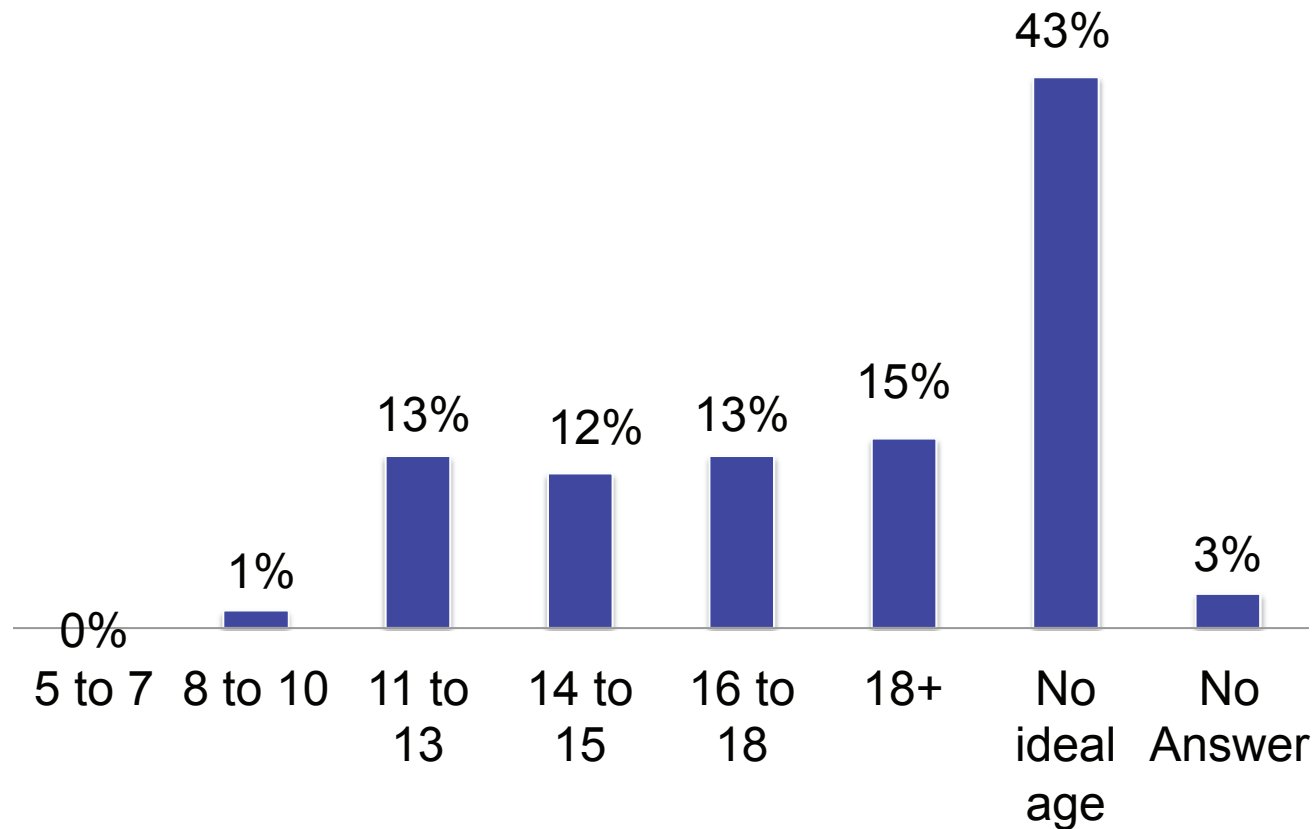


E4. At what age were you told you were too young to be baptised?

Age	F n=20
5	1
6	0
7	1
8	4
9	1
10	2
11-13	7
14-16	4
17-20	0

Section F: Your beliefs about baptism

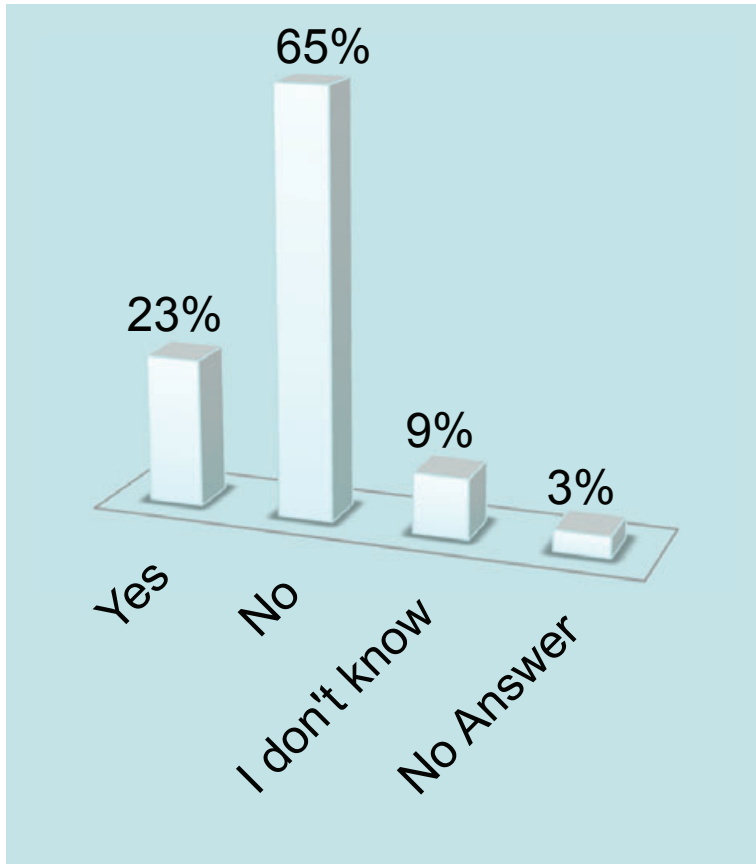
F1. I believe that ideal age for baptism is:



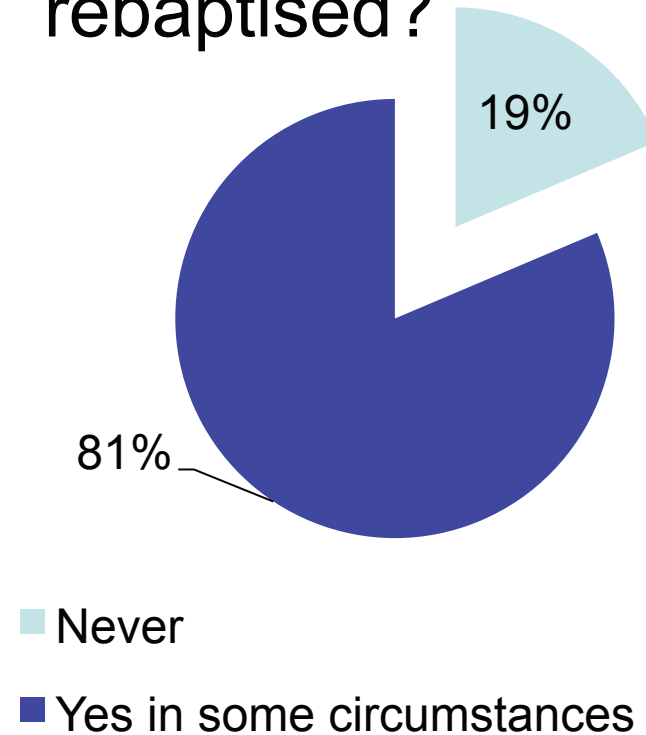
F3. I believe that the individual should be baptised

	%
As soon as they accept Jesus as Saviour	11%
As soon as they accept Jesus as Saviour AND understand the implications of this decision.	67%
When they understand the gospel and some key Adventist beliefs	10%
When they have studied and accept all 28 Fundamental Beliefs of the Adventist Church even if they are still battling with some lifestyle choices.	7%
When they have studied and accept all 28 Fundamental Beliefs of the Adventist Church AND have made all the appropriate lifestyle choices consistent with Adventist standards.	1%
Blank	4%

F4. Is baptism necessary for salvation?



F6. Are there circumstances when a person can or should be rebaptised?



F5. What do you see as the primary role of baptism?
Mark only ONE response. 167 responses from n=150

	%
Baptism declares to the world that the person loves and wants to follow Jesus	64%
Baptism washes away our sins	2%
Baptism is equivalent to the new birth	10%
Baptism is a way to follow Christ's example	6%
Baptism is necessary for salvation	2%
Baptism is simply a way to join the church	2%
Baptism is an expected rite of passage	0%
Baptism is a way to receive the gifts of the Spirit and be commissioned to serve Jesus	1%
Baptism is a way to identify with Jesus' death, burial and resurrection	10%
Other	1%
Blank	2%

F8. Who do you believe should be able to baptise candidates after the church board has given approval for each candidate's church membership? Mark only ONE

	%
Only an ordained pastor, or person holding some sort of commissioned or ministerial credential or licence	42%
Anyone with theological training even if they do not yet hold a credential or licence	15%
Any person who did Bible studies with the candidate regardless of whether they are theologically trained or not	19%
Any member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church	7%
Other	13%
Blank	4%

Other Comments:

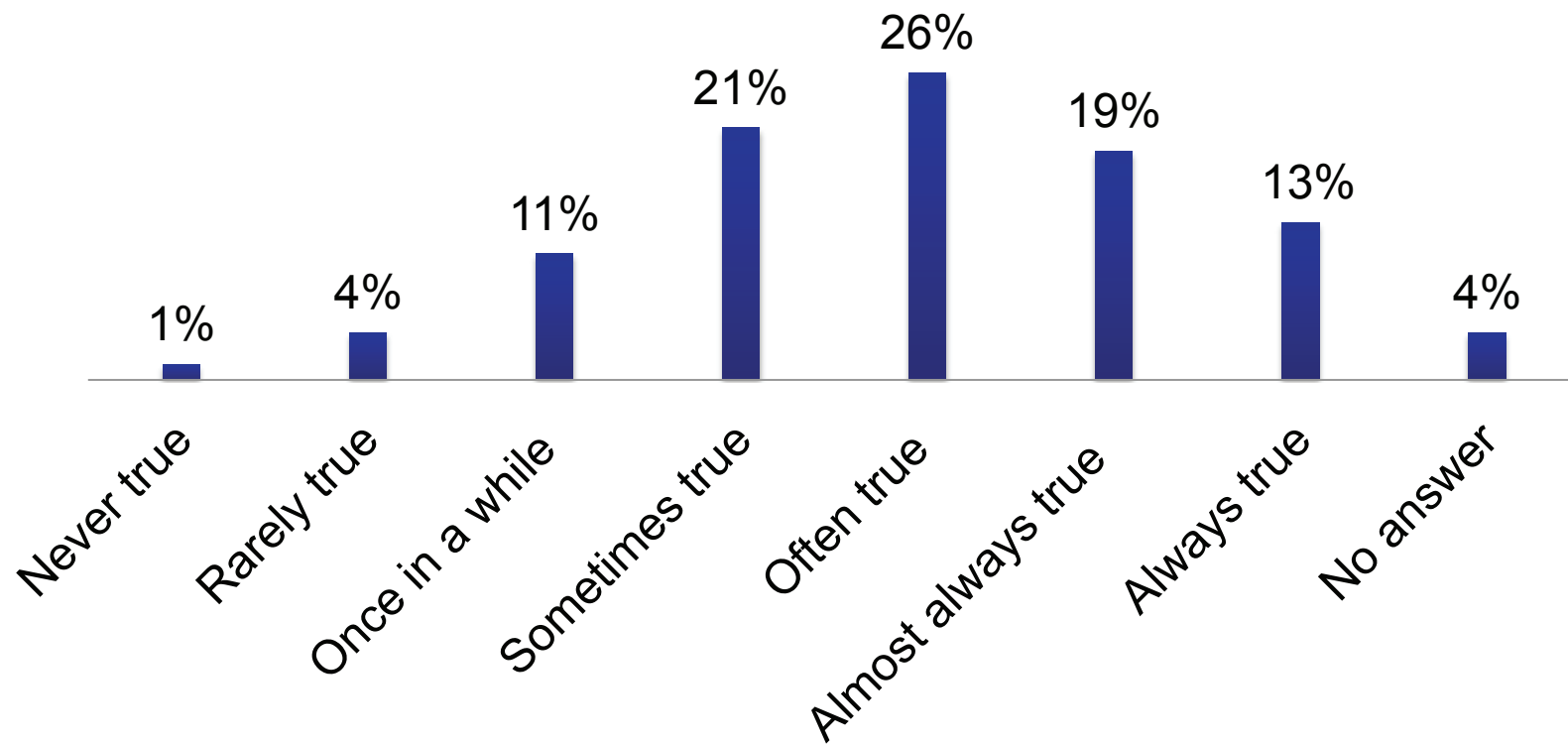
- Anyone who has accepted Jesus (x4)
- Spiritual mentor(x3)
- Elders (x2)
- Any SDA if the pastor is not available (x3)
- Participant 10204: "Anyone: no power comes to them through the person baptising."

Section G-Questions about your current faith and relationship with the church

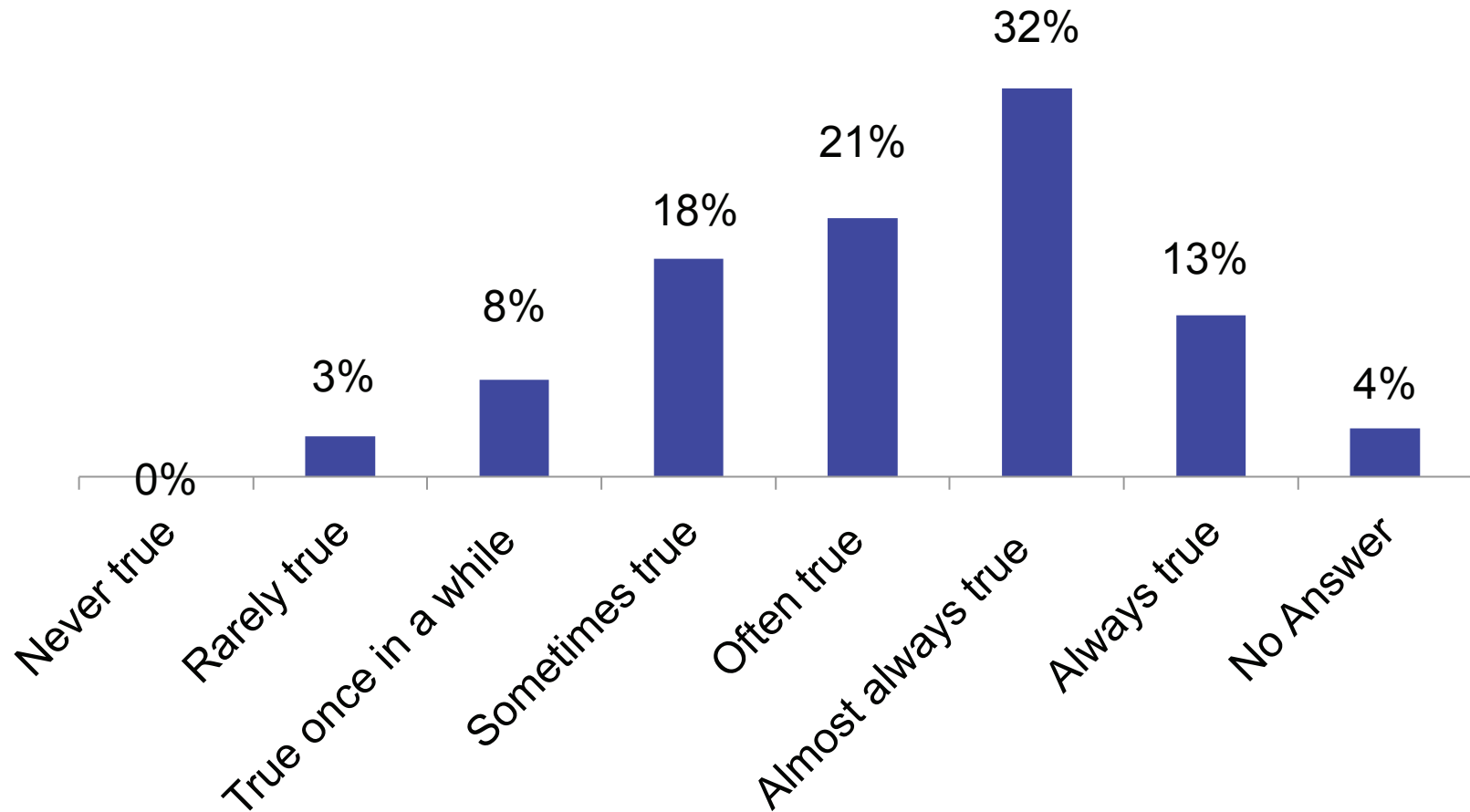
G2. How important is it for you to attend a SDA church?

	%
It is not at all important. I could just as well attend a church of another denomination.	6%
It is not very important to me.	5%
It has some importance.	14%
It is quite important to me.	19%
It is very important to me.	52%
Blank	3%

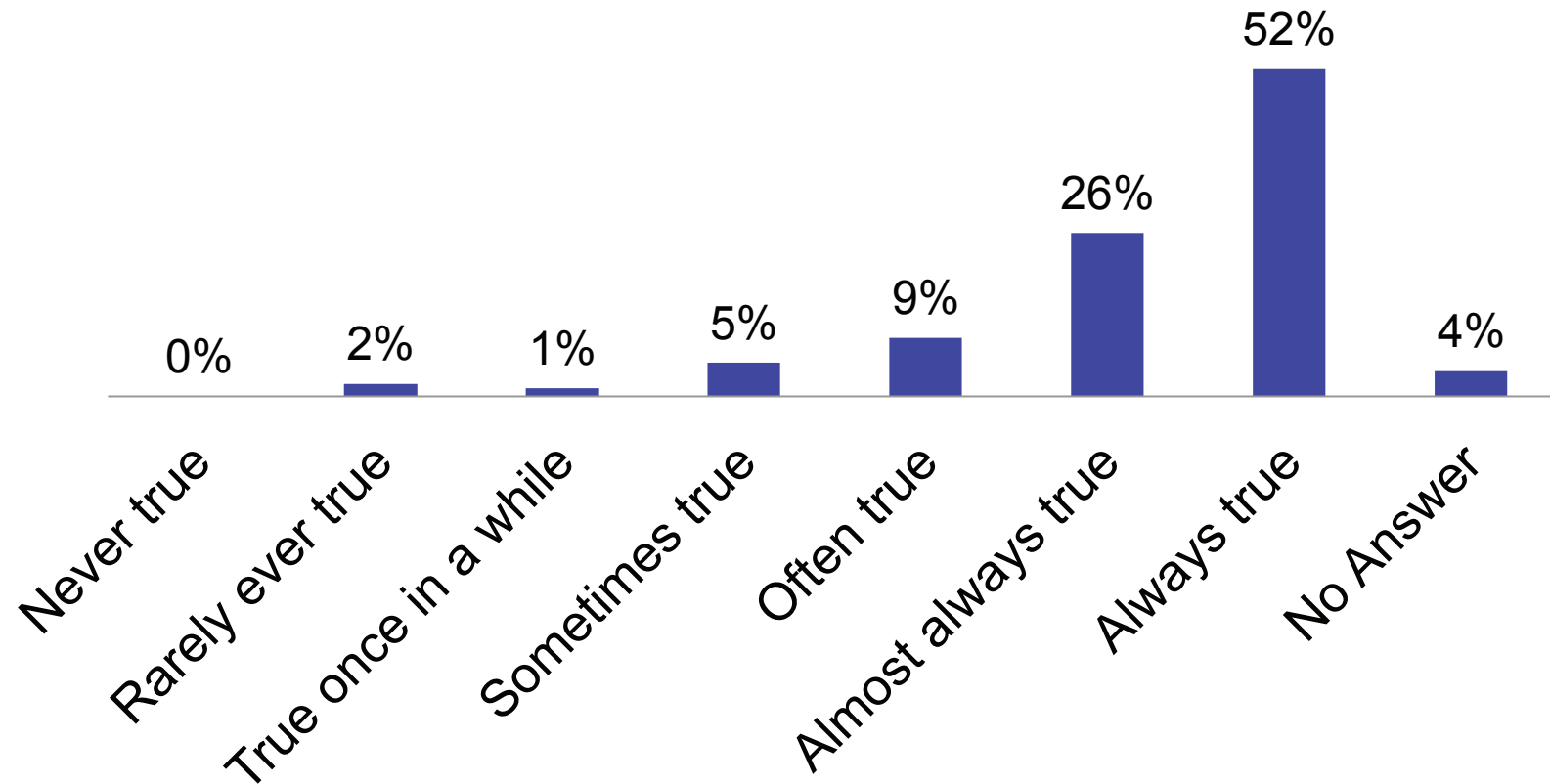
G8. I devote time to reading and studying the Bible



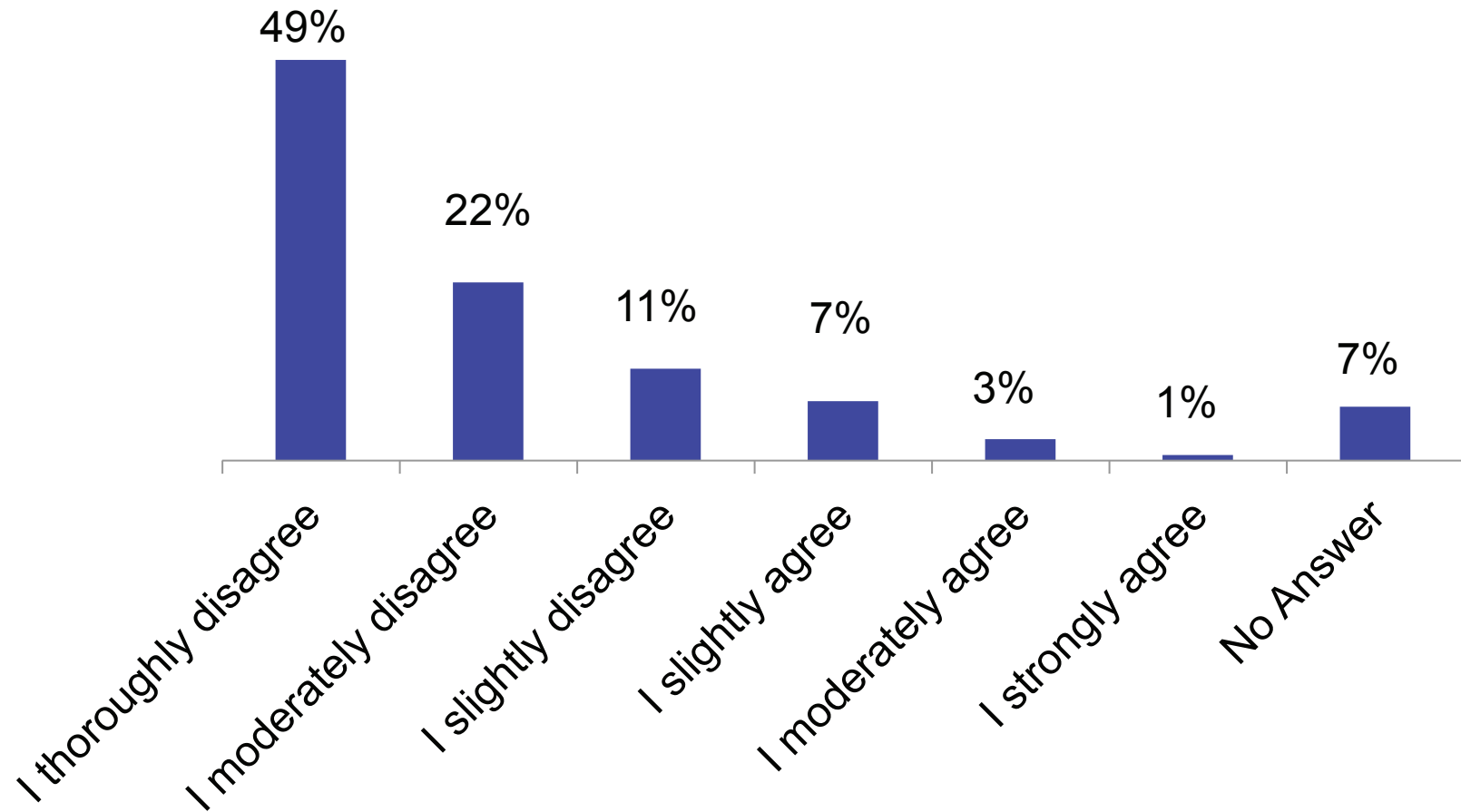
G10. I take time for regular periods of prayer and meditation



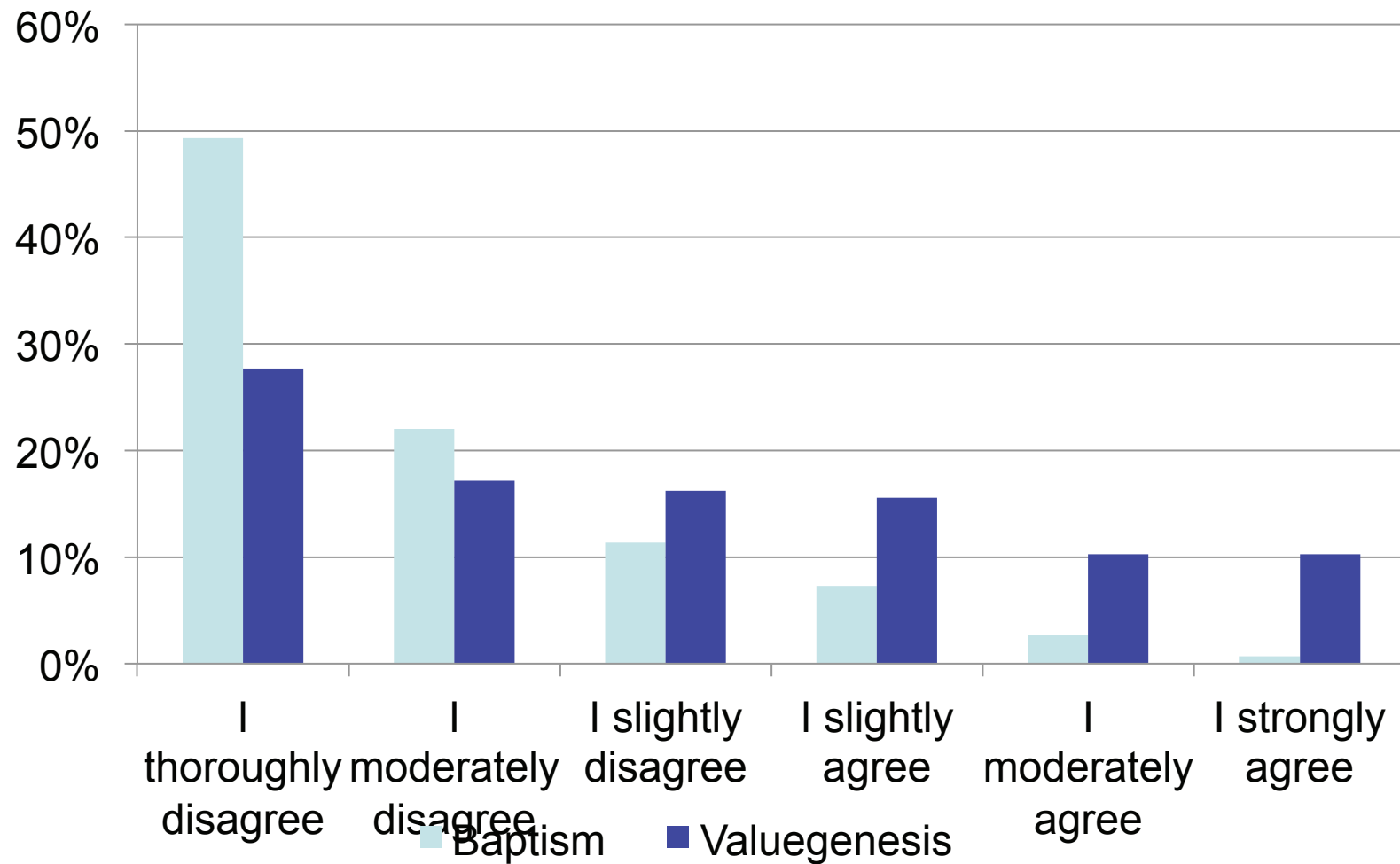
G12. My life is committed to Jesus Christ



G27. It doesn't matter what I believe so long as I am goo



G27. It doesn't matter what I believe so long as I am good



Section G - Q 39 Is there anything else you would like to tell us about baptism that has not been covered in this survey?

Respondent 10078. “One day I will be baptised. Till then I’ll praise Jesus as I would once I have been baptised.”

Respondent 10074. “Before baptism we as SDA’s spend a lot of time focused on ensuring the person fully understands as much as possible about the Bible and then once baptised, that’s it. No continued discussion, no regular time met to mentor and build up. It should be the opposite. The decision to accept Christ and be baptised should come first and then the mentoring and studies follow-up from that.”

- Respondent 10134. “If you’re not baptised, GET BAPTISED!!.. And I’m not even a pastor!”
- Respondent 10124. “Mentors are important after baptism!”
- Respondent 10102. “Baptism does not have to be a big, elaborate thing. It is a simple, special time between you and God.”
- Respondent 10128. “You don’t need “lessons” to be baptised. You only need Jesus, not an ordained pastor.”

Female 10116, 20-25 years, not baptised and no baptised SDA members in her family.

- “I do not understand the concept of baptism and how it relates to daily living, and I am still studying and learning about baptism.”
- She also wrote, “Baptism is a personal decision for Jesus, not for the church. The church can’t place barriers on people who want to make

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Summary of the Pilot Study Trends

Section A

- A12 indicates that some people do not understand the concept of baptism and how it relates to daily living.

Section B

- B3 indicates that the most common age to be baptised, as an SDA, is between 12-15 years of age.
- B20 indicates that the role of baptism may not be fully understood.

Section D

- D1. & D3. Rebaptism is seen as an option for a variety of reasons

Summary of the Pilot Study Trends

Section E

- E4. Some young people aged 11-13 years are being told that they are too young to get baptised.

Section F

- F8. A variety of suggestions is given regarding the appropriate person to conduct a baptism.

Section G

- G8 is indicating that devoting time to Bible reading and study for 21% of respondents is sometimes true, for 26% often true and always true for 13%.

Fine-tuning the Questionnaire

- Before the 2014 research project commences the committee will look at the available Pilot Study to assist in refining the survey instrument. It will consider:
 - Comments about the length of the survey;
 - Suggestions regarding the re-arranging, editing, adding/ removing of some of the questions; and
 - Written feedback provided by the participants in the Pilot Study project.

Finally:

Respondent No.10114: Female baptised at 12 years of age. Now aged 20-25 years, attended a small SDA church of 50-99 members and her family members are all baptised SDA members. She wrote:

“For a while I wondered if I needed to be rebaptised because I was baptised so young, and I only began to understand and develop a loving and passionate relationship with God a year or so later, but since then I’ve decided that God used my early baptism as a beginning for the journey that was to come, and if we could only be baptised when we understand everything, we never would.”