

Sea of Faith Network (NZ) Questionnaire 2007

REPORT by Ralph Pannett

Executive Summary

This document presents the statistically-analysed responses.

The text responses appear in the document “The Qualitative Data”.

The Questionnaire

The SoF Steering Committee agreed to survey the membership on a wide range of matters affecting the Network at the 2007 Annual Conference held at Kings College, Auckland in September 2007, and subsequently other members not at Conference. This was the first time the membership had been surveyed in depth since the Network inception in 1992 (other than the annual conference satisfaction surveys).

Questions were derived from lists supplied by Steering Committee members and some others via Local Group contacts. In particular, senior members Lloyd Geering, Ian Harris and Noel Cheer were invited to offer questions, and did so. Despite the draft questionnaire seeming rather long, the Committee agreed that the information gained could be valuable and the draft was agreed to after some minor changes to the questions.

The questionnaire (Appendix 1) is headed by the Sea of Faith Network (NZ) *Statement of Purpose* for reference, and then includes sections on personal (anonymous) data & attitudes, attitudes to membership, the institutions of the Network and its purpose and ethos, conferences, content of programmes at national & local level, and public relations. In total, 45 items of information were sought. Most of the questions provided a ‘tick box’ for selection and many offered a spectrum of choice to gauge strength of opinion. There were also 16 opportunities to offer opinion and suggestions in text form.

After the Conference, copies of the questionnaire were sent to all known Local Group contacts for them to copy and distribute on white paper to group members (conference attendees had coloured copies). The questionnaire was also available from the SoF website.

Data

Returned questionnaire documents were hand numbered in two sequences, for Conference attendees (coloured copies) and Local Group members and other members not at conference (white copies). Returned questionnaires from ‘Conference’ and ‘Local Group’ & other members totalled 125 and 37, respectively, making 162 responses in all.

The laborious task of data extraction from the questionnaires was performed by Steering Committee volunteers using ‘tally sheets’ for counting for each question from the tick boxes; and ‘text summary sheets’ for the text questions, according to prescribed guidelines. For each survey item the tally count was checked to see that it added to the correct total.

The tally and summary sheets are in Appendix 2, and images of the completed sheets are in Appendix 3. The original completed survey forms should be retained in the medium term until all research on the data has been completed.

Missing Data

For each 'tick box' question and those requiring a text answer, the fact of missing data was recorded. Considering the tick boxes, the amount of missing data seems very high for an engaged constituency like SoF. Missing data of about 5% could be considered acceptable, but it rose as high as 15% for conference-goers. Other 'Local Group' responses showed a consistently higher missing data rate (though from relatively low absolute figures). In several cases this would be due to lack of relevance of the question to responders.

Missing data may occur for several reasons: a poorly framed question, lack of understanding of a question, an irrelevant question (e.g. on conference to those who don't go), unwillingness to address the question, and inattention by responders (particularly with a long questionnaire).

How Representative is the Data?

When responses are reduced to percentages and charts, these may take on an 'authority' of their own. We need to question how well the survey process represents the views of the Network membership as a whole, or of any defined group within it.

There were approximately 158 attendees at Conference on the morning that the questionnaire was issued. With 125 survey returns, that represents a 79% response rate. So we may presume that the survey sample represents very well the views of members *at the 2007 Conference*. Opinions are likely to be somewhat biased to the experiences, good and bad, of the current conference.

From a total Network membership of over 500, only 37 more survey forms were received from Local Group members and individuals, giving a response rate of only $37/(500-125)$ or 10%, and providing an overall response rate for the survey of $162/500$, or 32%.

Moreover, the responses to 1.1 'Your home town' question tells us that there were few 'non-Conference' (which are called 'Local Group Members') responses from Auckland (but 33% of conference-goers came from Auckland region) and Wellington provinces, none from Canterbury, and many (49%) from Otago and 'Other' localities (32%) — a very patchy representation. This low and patchy response from Local Group members is disappointing and may be a reflection on the way the network functions in terms of communicating with Groups and members.

At a particular conference there will be a high representation of local members, while for travel cost reasons the more distant regions are likely to be less represented. So if there happens to be a regional position on certain matters this may lead to a bias in the national representation from a survey taken at that conference. Any bias has not been investigated here, though in principle the gathered data could demonstrate it.

One should be aware of all the above, including the 'missing data' factor, when taking meaning from the derived statistics. In effect it means some error band on the reported percentages. Nevertheless, this survey presents the best data available!

Data Processing

A Microsoft Excel spreadsheet was designed for the numerical or 'tick box' data and the scores from the tally sheets were entered into categories or 'opinion range bins' in two groups:

‘Conference’, and ‘Local Group Members’ (which would also include some individuals not belonging to a local group). These pairs of scores for each question were added to produce a third group ‘All Responses’. For each data item the percentage with respect to its group total response (125, 37 & 162) was calculated in the spreadsheet.

Rather than derive some numerical statistics for these scores and the range of opinions, it was decided to graph the percentages for each question as ‘clustered column’ charts, as this visual representation of the data would enable lay people to quickly appreciate and compare the most popular opinions, and the spread and skew of opinions toward extremes. The missing data percentages are not shown in the charts but are included in the spreadsheet tables and flagged in the ‘Notes’ column if above 10%.

The data could be analysed for correlations between different data elements, e.g. is there a strong relationship between those respondents favouring the ‘mystical’ (item 1.5) and those favouring ‘non-verbal, arts’ content (item 5.3). No attempt at this level of enquiry has been made at this time, except for the obvious comparisons in items 2.1 and 2.2; 2.3 and 2.4; 3.7 and 6.1.

To eliminate processing errors, transcription from tally sheets to spreadsheet was double-checked, spreadsheet arithmetic was checked, as was the generation of charts from the correct data.

Results and Comments

The results are presented below both in numeric form (percentage of responses supporting each opinion bin) and in graphical form.

Please note that the comments are my own opinions and are offered as pointers and to provoke discussion. I have no particular expertise in the analysis of surveys like this. The Steering Committee will wish to make its own interpretations, and may modify or delete these comments from the published findings.

Results of the Survey

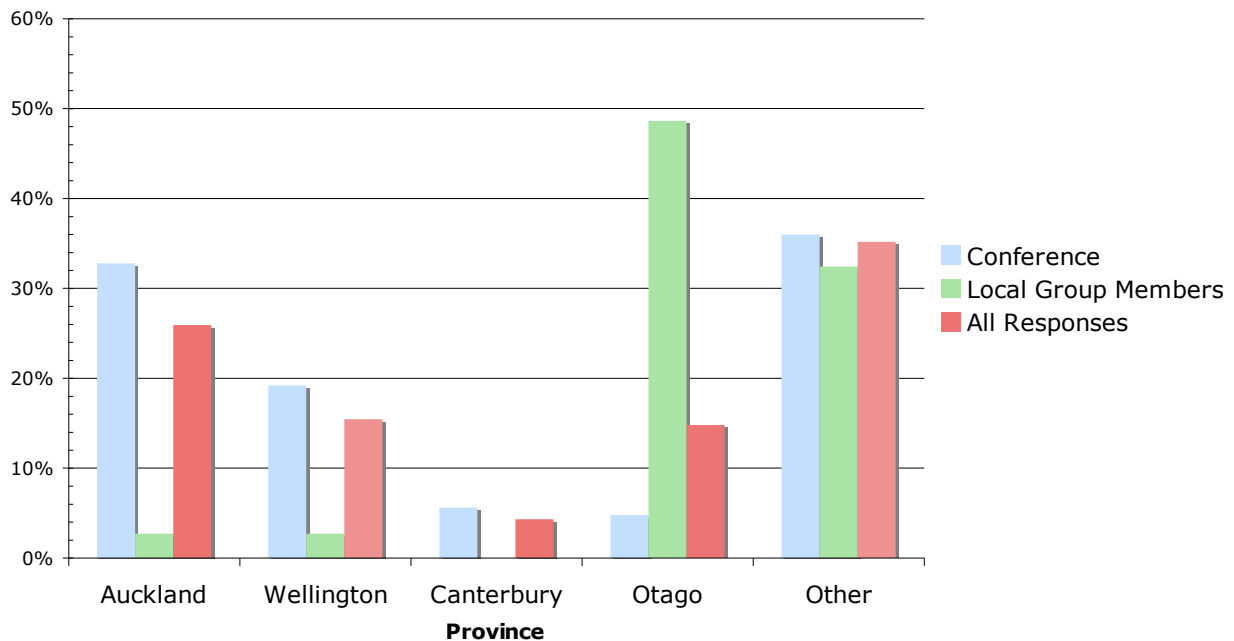
Results are listed here under the relevant question text, with the spreadsheet data table and chart, if applicable, followed by my comments on interpretation of the data.

1. Personal

1.1 Your home Town/City

1.1 Home Town	Miss. Data	Auckland	Wellington	Canterbury	Otago	Other	
Conference	2	41	24	7	6	45	
%	1.6%	33%	19%	6%	5%	36%	
Local Groups	5	1	1	0	18	12	
%	13.5%	3%	3%	0%	49%	32%	high Miss Data
All Responses	7	42	25	7	24	57	
%	4.3%	26%	15%	4%	15%	35%	

1.1 Geographic Distribution of Responders

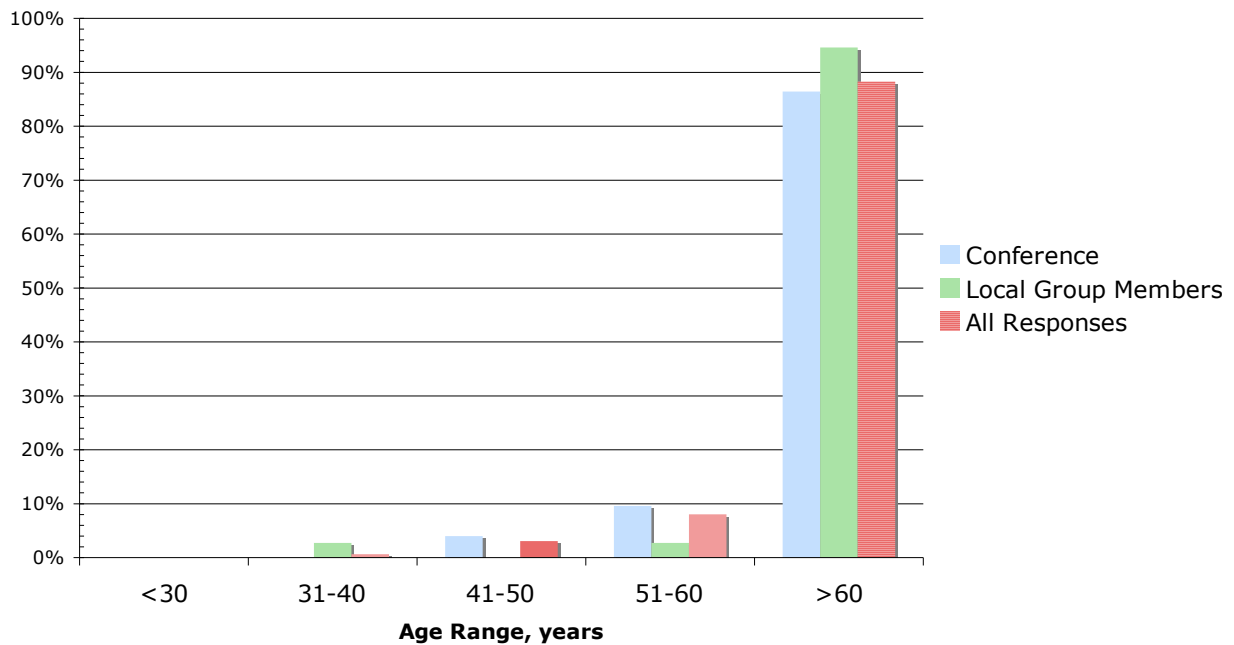


Comment: The home towns are included in the survey forms, but grouped here into four provinces. The large group of 'Other' may deserve further breakdown. See my comments above under 'How Representative ...?'

1.2 Age bracket

1.2 Age Bracket	Miss. data	<30 yr	31-40	41-50	51-60	>60 yr	
Conference	0	0	0	5	12	108	
%	0.0%	0%	0%	4%	10%	86%	
Local Groups	0	0	1	0	1	35	
%	0.0%	0%	3%	0%	3%	95%	
All Responses	0	0	1	5	13	143	
%	0.0%	0%	1%	3%	8%	88%	

1.2 Age Distribution of Responders

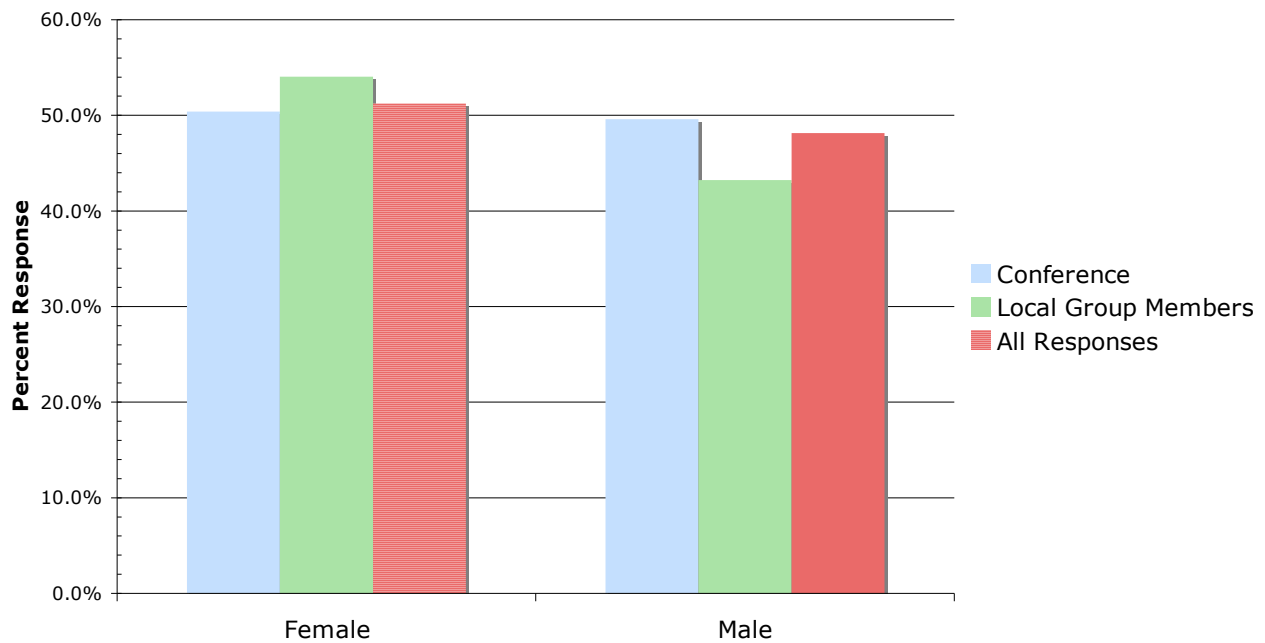


Comment: The Network might consider the full implications of the data that supports what we already know. Either SoF appeals to an elderly age group only and membership can be sustained by attracting people of that age, or it feels its objectives deserve the awareness and vitality of younger people and it reforms its programme around them.

1.3 Gender

1.3 Gender	Miss. Data	Female	Male
Conference	0	63	62
%		50.4%	49.6%
Local Groups	0	20	16
%		54.1%	43.2%
All Responses	0	83	78
%		51.2%	48.1%

1.3 Gender Distribution of Responders



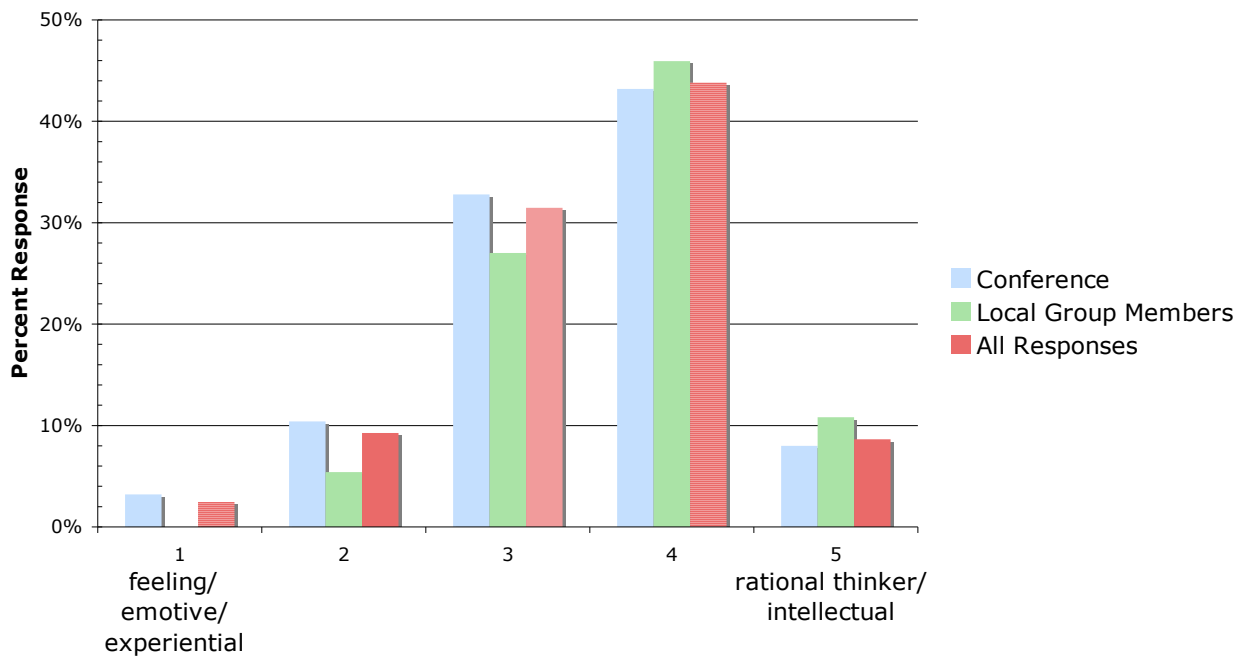
Comment: The remarkably even gender balance is something we can be proud of, can we? Hopefully it is reflected in the leadership and active participation of members.

1.4 Where do you put yourself on the spectrum:

feeling/emotive/experiential — rational thinker/intellectual

1.4 Feeling - Rational	Miss. Data	1	2	3	4	5	
Conference	3	4	13	41	54	10	
%	2.4%	3%	10%	33%	43%	8%	
Local Groups	4	0	2	10	17	4	
%	10.8%	0%	5%	27%	46%	11%	high Miss Data
All Responses	7	4	15	51	71	14	
%	4.3%	2%	9%	31%	44%	9%	

1.4 Feeling — Rational Spectrum



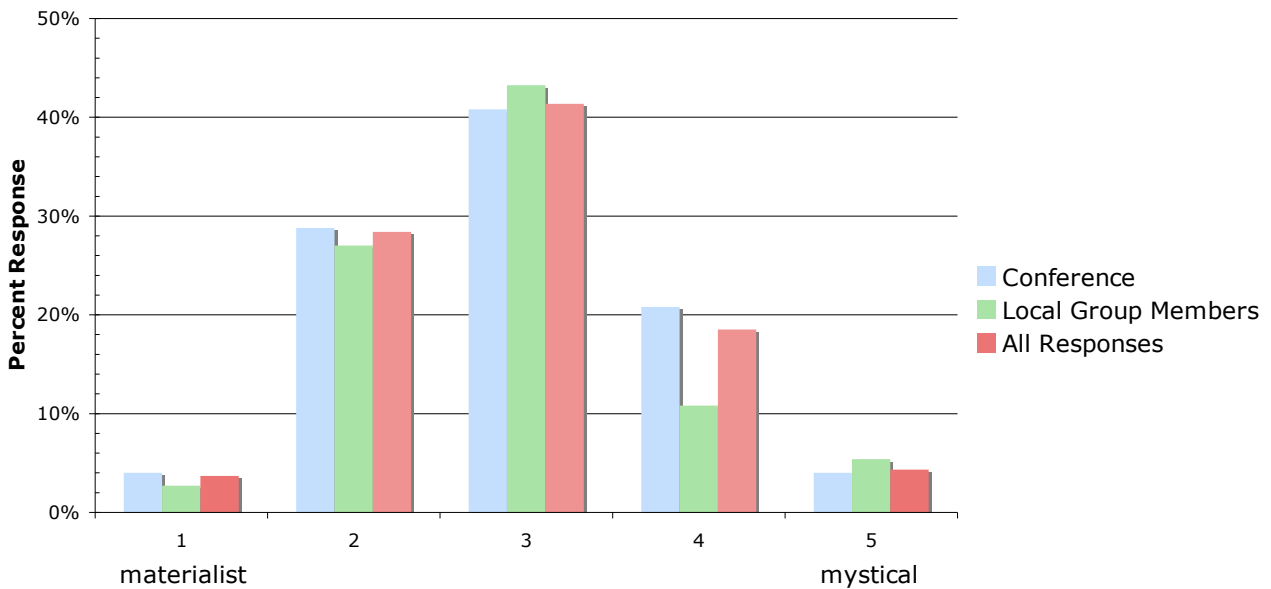
Comment: This almost approaches a statistical ‘normal’ distribution with a pronounced skew to the ‘rational’— with 53% of respondents in bins 4 and 5. However 56% of respondents are in the mid range opinion bins 2, 3, 4. SoF may wish to address in its programmes the ‘whole person’ represented here.

1.5 Where do you put yourself on the spectrum:

materialist — mystical

1.5 Material - Mystical	Miss. Data	1	2	3	4	5	
Conference	2	5	36	51	26	5	
%	1.6%	4%	29%	41%	21%	4%	
Local Groups	4	1	10	16	4	2	
%	10.8%	3%	27%	43%	11%	5%	high Miss Data
All Responses	6	6	46	67	30	7	
%	3.7%	4%	28%	41%	19%	4%	

1.5 Material – Mystical Spectrum



Comment: The spectrum is close to ‘normal’ and with an obvious skew to ‘materialist’. Bin 3 is most popular and 23% of respondents elected bins 4 or 5 at the ‘mystical’ end.

In relation to the ‘whole person’ of our membership, this has interesting implications. Does SoF adequately cater for feelings of wonder, mystery and the transcendent?

1.6 Do you call yourself a 'spiritual' person? If so, can you describe what you mean?

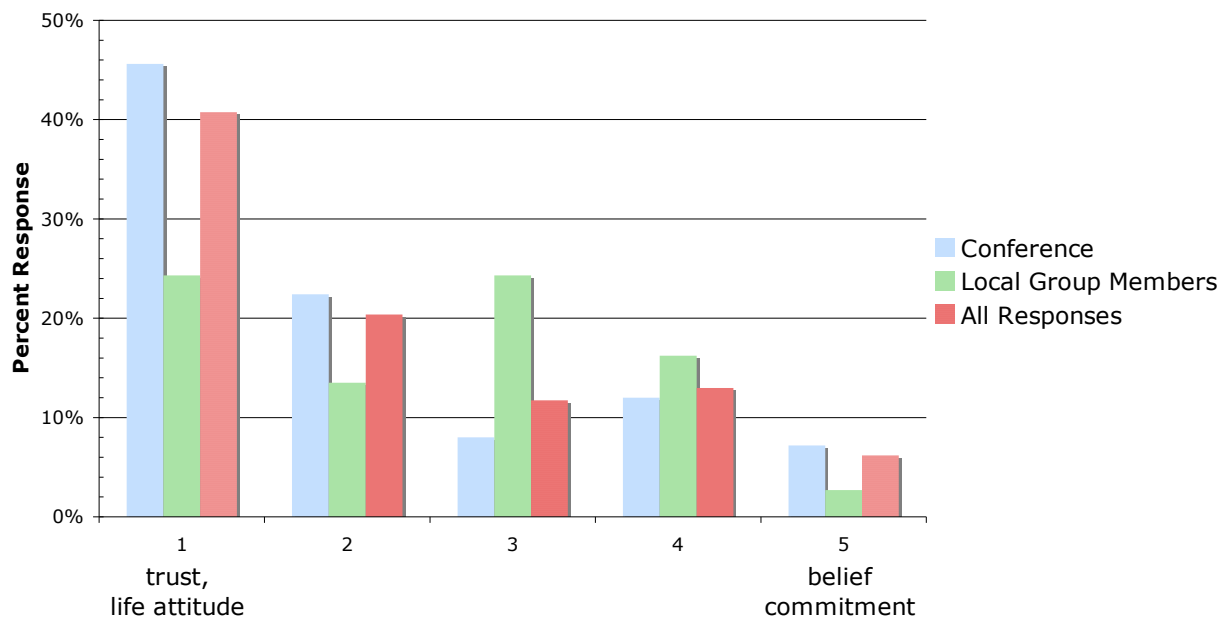
Refer to "The Qualitative Data".

1.7 What does the word 'faith' (e.g., as in our name) signify for you?

trust, life attitude — belief commitment

1.7 'Faith': trust-belief							
Conference	6	57	28	10	15	9	
%	4.8%	46%	22%	8%	12%	7%	
Local Groups	7	9	5	9	6	1	
%	18.9%	24%	14%	24%	16%	3%	high Miss Data
All Responses	13	66	33	19	21	10	
%	8.0%	41%	20%	12%	13%	6%	

1.7 Understanding of 'Faith'



Comment: There is almost a linearly decreasing spectrum here, with a high emphasis on faith as 'trust'. Nevertheless, about 60% of respondents relate to some degree with faith as 'believing'. The question referred to the meaning as in 'Sea of Faith'. Of course this does not necessarily translate into personal lifestyle. Responses to the following question should be looked at in this context:

Do you want to elaborate on the meaning of 'faith' for you?

Refer to "The Qualitative Data".

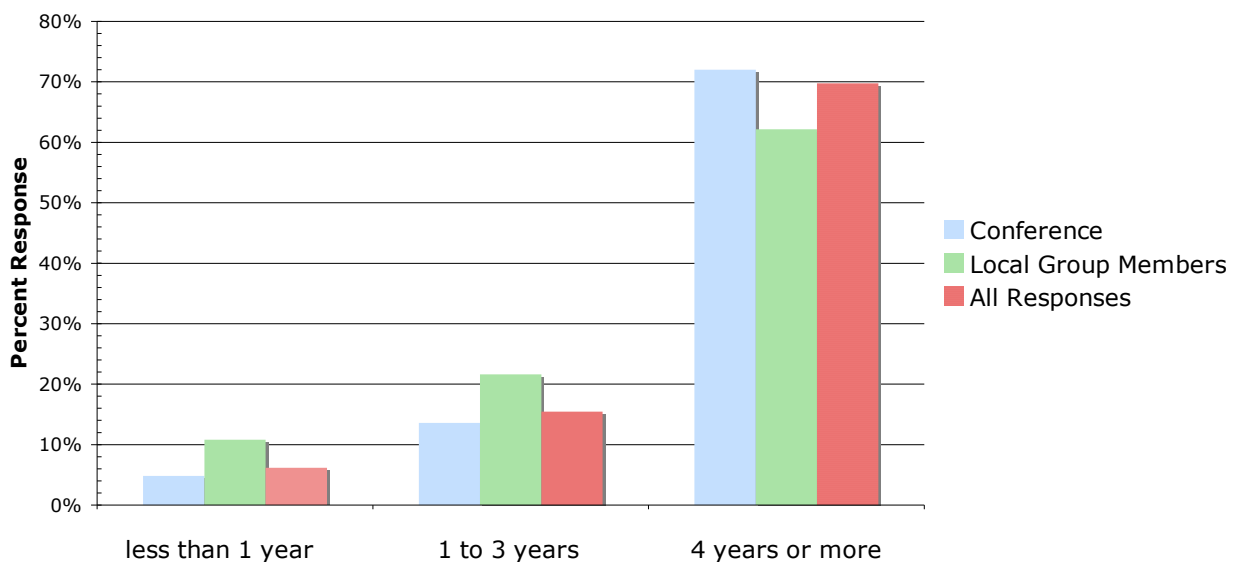
2. Membership of SoF

2.1 How long have you been a member of a local SoF (or similar) group?

less than one year — 1 to 3 years — 4 years or more

2.1 How long - Local	Miss. Data	<1 yr	1 – 3 yr	4+ yr
Conference	12	6	17	90
%	9.6%	5%	14%	72%
Local Groups	2	4	8	23
%	5.4%	11%	22%	62%
All Responses	14	10	25	113
%	8.6%	6%	15%	70%

2.1 Length of Membership - SoF Local Group



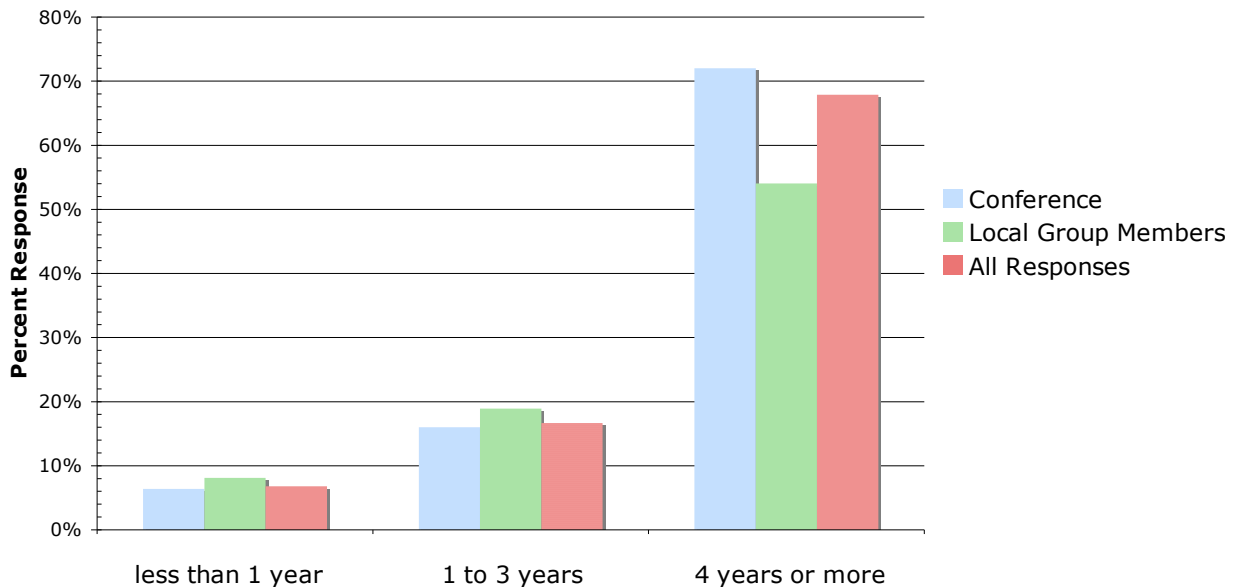
Comment: This illustrates the maturity of the organization and the general loyalty of its members, but also a tailing off in the rate of new members joining. Does SoF cater for a certain 'market' that is now becoming saturated? On the other hand, between 5 and 10% of respondents joining in the last year seems to point to a healthy influx. This needs to be checked against other membership evidence. Overall the data may point to a need for the organization to revivify, and broaden its appeal base, particularly to younger people as already noted. See also item 3.1.5.

2.2 How long have you been a member of the National SoF Network?

Less than one year — 1 to 3 years — 4 years or more

2.2 How long - National	Miss. Data	<1 yr	1 – 3 yr	4+ yr	
Conference	7	8	20	90	
%	5.6%	6%	16%	72%	
Local Groups	7	3	7	20	
%	18.9%	8%	19%	54%	high Miss Data
All Responses	14	11	27	110	
%	8.6%	7%	17%	68%	

2.2 Length of Membership - National Network



Comment: The conference respondents' figures track those for Local Group participation quite closely, though a small percentage of conference-goers are not members of local groups. We can say that conference-goers are generally members of the National Network. Over all periods, and particularly at 4 years and above, the percentage of Local Group members belonging to the National Network is lower and possibly falling off (but recall that this is from a fairly small sample). See also comments for 2.1 above. Whether this is the best question for testing membership joining and sustainability is arguable, but if it is repeated in a survey in say 3 years time the comparison will be interesting.

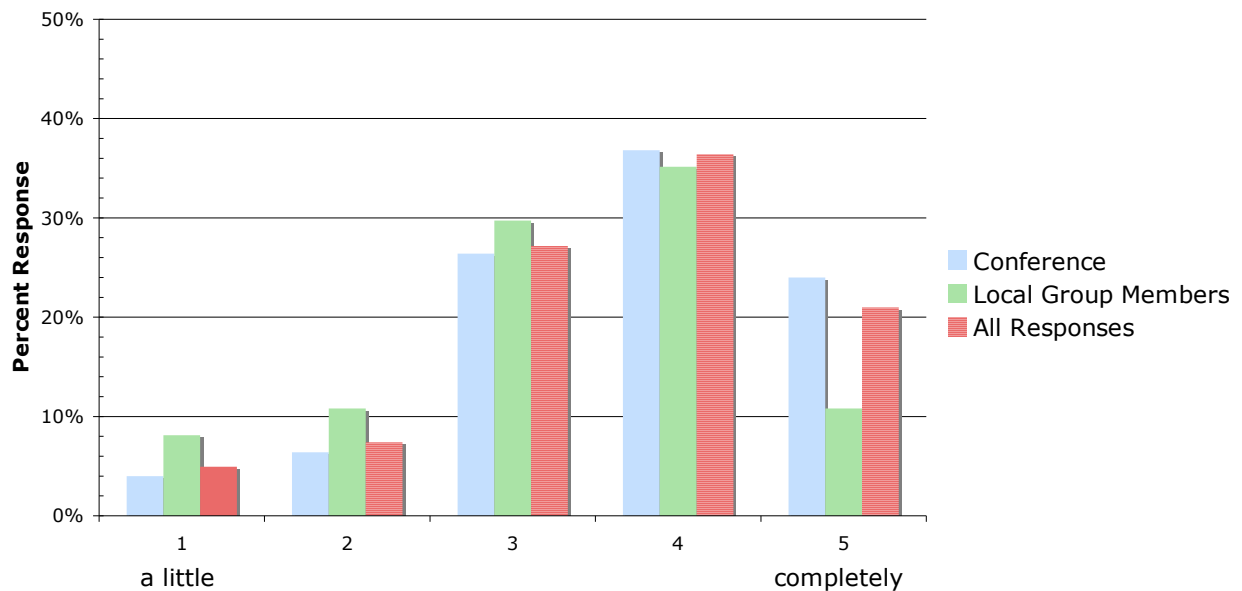
The high 'missing data' for Local Groups presumably relates to members not subscribed to the National Network.

2.3 How did you feel SoF met your needs at the time you first joined?

a little — completely

2.3 Needs met at first: little - complete	Miss. Data	1	2	3	4	5	
Conference	3	5	8	33	46	30	
%	2.4%	4%	6%	26%	37%	24%	
Local Groups	2	3	4	11	13	4	
%	5.4%	8%	11%	30%	35%	11%	
All Responses	5	8	12	44	59	34	
%	3.1%	5%	7%	27%	36%	21%	

2.3 Needs Met by SoF at First



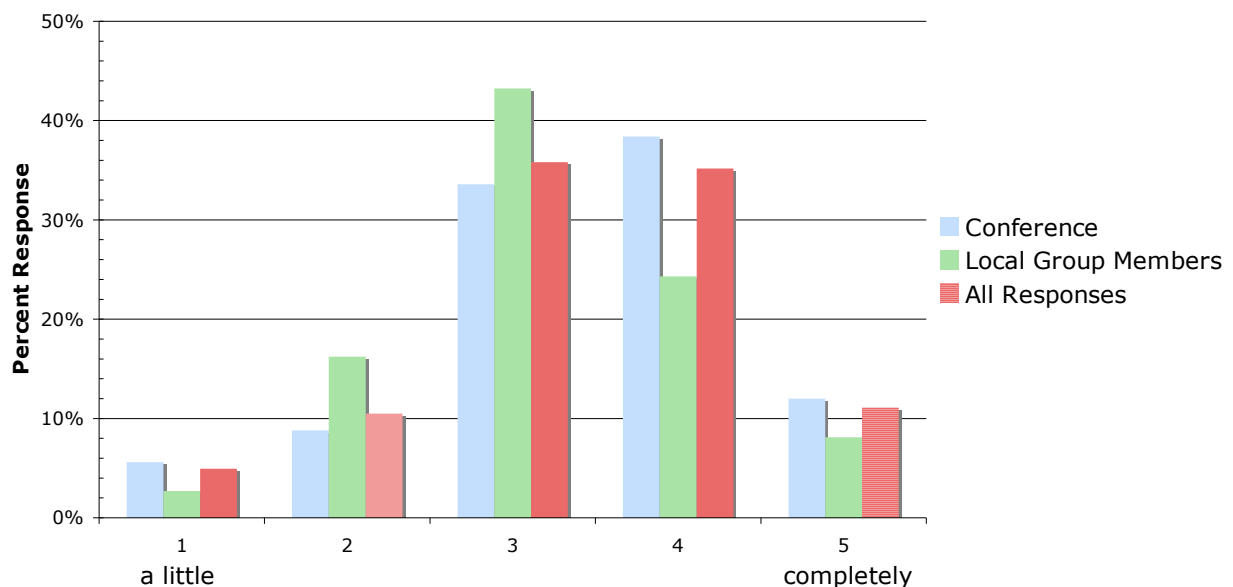
Comment: See comment under 2.4 which compare ‘then’ and ‘now’.

2.4 How do you feel SoF meets your needs now?

a little — completely

2.4 Needs met now: little - complete	Miss. Data	1	2	3	4	5	
Conference	3	7	11	42	48	15	
%	2.4%	6%	9%	34%	38%	12%	
Local Groups	2	1	6	16	9	3	
%	5.4%	3%	16%	43%	24%	8%	
All Responses	5	8	17	58	57	18	
%	3.1%	5%	10%	36%	35%	11%	

2.4 Needs Met by SoF Now



Comment: Chart 2.4 shows a high level of satisfaction with SoF, when 82% of all respondents selected bin 3 or higher, and 46% selected bins 4 or 5.

The sizable differences between some 'Conference' and 'Local Group' selections may partly be due to the small sample size of the latter and regional differences (chart 1.1) but also because SoF meets some needs at national level while local groups meet the more immediate needs of members.

However, comparing charts 2.3 and 2.4 we can see a shift of opinion between 'at first' and 'now' down the scale from needs being 'completely' met. So votes for bins 4 and 5 are less now, while the votes for bins 2 and 3 are higher. Thus in chart 2.3, 'at first' 84% of all respondents chose bin 3 or higher (similar to the 'now' case of 82%), and 57% chose bins 4 or 5, compared to 46% who chose them 'now'. This effect could be normal in a maturing organization where about 70% of members have belonged for 4 years or more.

An organization that cares about meeting the needs of its members might be concerned about the 15% who state their needs are met just more than 'a little'. The text responses to other questions should give a clue here.

2.5 *Which of these words or phrases describe what SoF means to you?*

[Tick every circle that applies.]

There were 28 words or phrases, 20 with generally positive connotations, and 8 that could be thought negative; the latter scattered randomly. In Table 2.6 (a), the phrases are in the same tabular order as in the questionnaire. All figures are percentage responses, i.e. of Conference attendees, 70% chose the descriptor ‘truth seeking’.

Table 2.6 (a)

	Conference	Local Groups	All Responses		Conference	Local Groups	All Responses		Conference	Local Groups	All Responses		Conference	Local Groups	All Responses
truth seeking	70	68	69	spiritual home	11	22	14	sectarian	1	3	1	socially nurturing	26	35	28
like minds	68	57	65	intellectual growth	74	68	73	socially responsible	26	41	29	unfocussed	8	3	7
peacemaking	14	19	15	progressive	38	51	41	harmonizing	21	14	19	introverted	2	0	2
just a talk shop	26	16	23	provocative	48	35	45	intellectual	64	59	63	intolerant	1	0	1
seeking justice	13	19	14	closed shop	1	0	1	liberating	61	54	59	open to others	67	68	67
tolerant	76	68	74	inspirational	42	35	41	unifying	14	14	14	dogmatic	2	0	1
integrating	25	30	26	proactive	10	19	12	life affirming	58	51	56	interpreting the ultimate	20	27	22

In Table 2.6 (b) the descriptors are sorted in descending order of preference for each of the three groups.

Table 2.6 (b)

Conference		Local Group Members		All Responses	
Descriptor Words & Phrases in Descending Order of Preference	% Selection	Descriptor Words & Phrases in Descending Order of Preference	% Selection	Descriptor Words & Phrases in Descending Order of Preference	% Selection
Tolerant	76	intellectual growth	68	tolerant	74
intellectual growth	74	open to others	68	intellectual growth	73
truth seeking	70	tolerant	68	truth seeking	69
like minds	68	truth seeking	68	open to others	67
open to others	67	intellectual	59	like minds	65
intellectual	64	like minds	57	intellectual	63
liberating	61	liberating	54	liberating	59
life affirming	58	life affirming	51	life affirming	56
provocative	48	progressive	51	provocative	45
inspirational	42	socially responsible	41	inspirational	41
progressive	38	inspirational	35	progressive	41
just a talk shop	26	provocative	35	socially responsible	29
socially responsible	26	socially nurturing	35	socially nurturing	28
socially nurturing	26	integrating	30	integrating	26
integrating	25	interpreting the ultimate	27	just a talk shop	23
harmonizing	21	spiritual home	22	interpreting the ultimate	22
interpreting the ultimate	20	peacemaking	19	harmonizing	19
peacemaking	14	proactive	19	peacemaking	15
unifying	14	seeking justice	19	seeking justice	14
seeking justice	13	just a talk shop	16	spiritual home	14
spiritual home	11	harmonizing	14	unifying	14
proactive	10	unifying	14	proactive	12
unfocussed	8	sectarian	3	unfocussed	7
introverted	2	unfocussed	3	introverted	2
dogmatic	2	closed shop	0	closed shop	1
closed shop	1	dogmatic	0	dogmatic	1
intolerant	1	intolerant	0	intolerant	1
sectarian	1	introverted	0	sectarian	1

Comment: There is close similarity between the ‘Conference’ and ‘Local Group, selections. These are appellations that members might apply to their network, and the selections are very positive, with only a few percent of dissident, negative views. (Of course we don’t know how external critics or ex-members might choose.) It is striking that the favourite words and phrases describe a society of intellectual enquiry. Words evoking a sense of community occur with lower frequency. A vocabulary of words that might be common in the dialogue of a liberal church are much less favoured in SoF.

2.6 *If Sea of Faith (NZ) didn't exist, where would you go, or what would you do, to meet your needs?*

Refer to "The Qualitative Data"

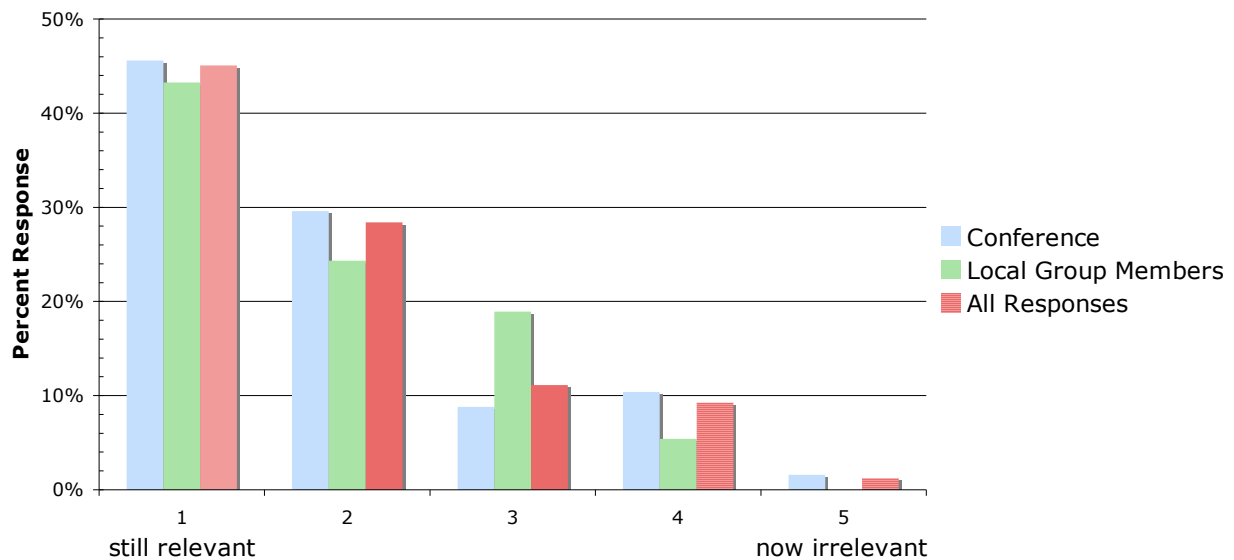
Comment:

2.7 Is the SoF Network still relevant, or has it fulfilled its purpose for you?

still relevant — now irrelevant

2.6 SoF relevant: relevant - irrelevant	Miss. Data	1	2	3	4	5
Conference	5	57	37	11	13	2
%	4.0%	46%	30%	9%	10%	2%
Local Groups	3	16	9	7	2	0
%	8.1%	43%	24%	19%	5%	0%
All Responses	8	73	46	18	15	2
%	4.9%	45%	28%	11%	9%	1%

2.7 Is the SoF Network Still Relevant?



Comment: For 46% of respondents the SoF Network is still highly relevant in terms of fulfilling the perceived initial purpose of respondents in joining. This level of satisfaction falls off almost exponentially for the others, so for about 12% of respondents it is close to irrelevant.

In Bin 3 of the data the figure for Local Groups seem anomalously high by comparison. Note that Local group members might be considered to get most satisfaction from the local group and the Network may have less relevance.

This is a case where a correlation between this item and ‘length of membership’ (items 2.1 & 2.2) and ‘needs met’ (items 2.3, 2.4) may be revealing, but this has not been explored at this time.

A possible conclusion is that for some members the SoF is important for stabilizing their ‘faith journey’ initially, but they may feel they have ‘graduated’ after a few years and focus on other areas of life.

3. Sea of Faith — The Network

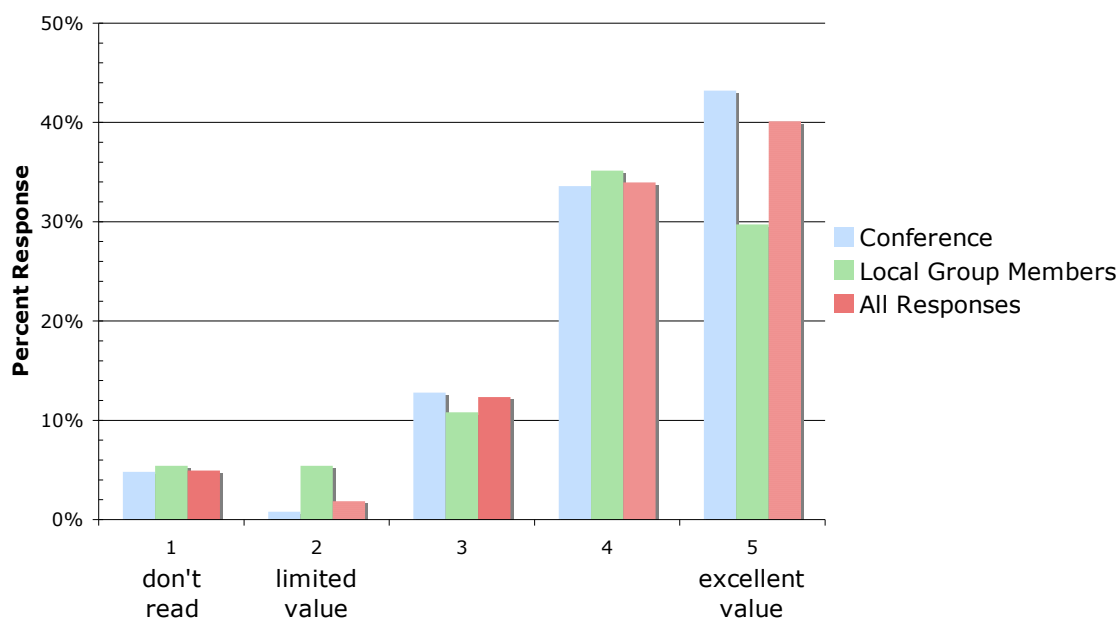
3.1 How do you rate these SoF institutions?

3.1.1 Newsletter

don't read; limited value — excellent value

3.1.1 Rate Newsletter: don't read - excellent	Miss. Data	1	2	3	4	5	
Conference	6	6	1	16	42	54	
%	4.8%	5%	1%	13%	34%	43%	
Local Groups	5	2	2	4	13	11	
%	13.5%	5%	5%	11%	35%	30%	high Miss Data
All Responses	11	8	3	20	55	65	
%	6.8%	5%	2%	12%	34%	40%	

3.1.1 Rating the SoF Newsletter



Comment: Members clearly place a high value on their newsletter, though Local Group members (a small sample) don't appear to rate it quite so highly and have a high rate of missing data. Any desire for improvements should be found under question 3.2.

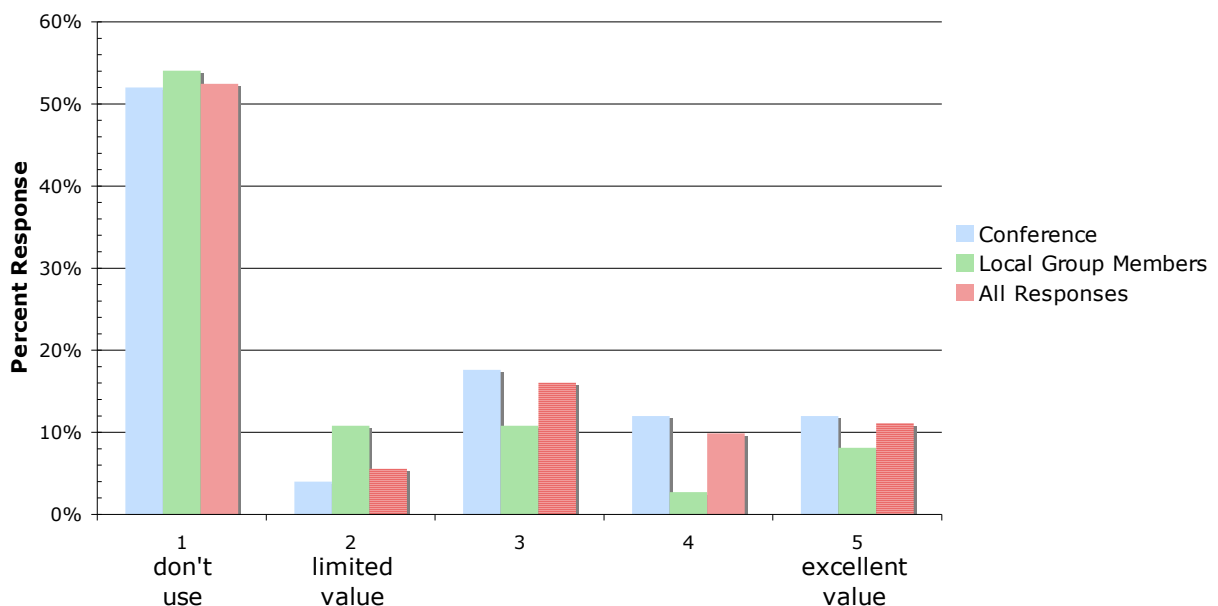
3.1.2

SoF Website:

don't use; limited value — excellent value

3.1.2 Website: don't use - excellent	Miss. Data	1	2	3	4	5	
Conference	3	65	5	22	15	15	
%	2.4%	52%	4%	18%	12%	12%	
Local Groups	5	20	4	4	1	3	
%	13.5%	54%	11%	11%	3%	8%	high Miss Data
All Responses	8	85	9	26	16	18	
%	4.9%	52%	6%	16%	10%	11%	

3.1.2 Rating the SoF Website



Comment: That over 50% of members who don't use the website is very disappointing in terms of its potential value as a network tool and the effort that is made to update it and make archived material easily available, but may relate to the predominant age bracket of members. Possibly many members only use the site infrequently, e.g. for conference announcements and reference questions about the network. It would be interesting to know how many visits the site gets annually from non-members. See also item 3.2.

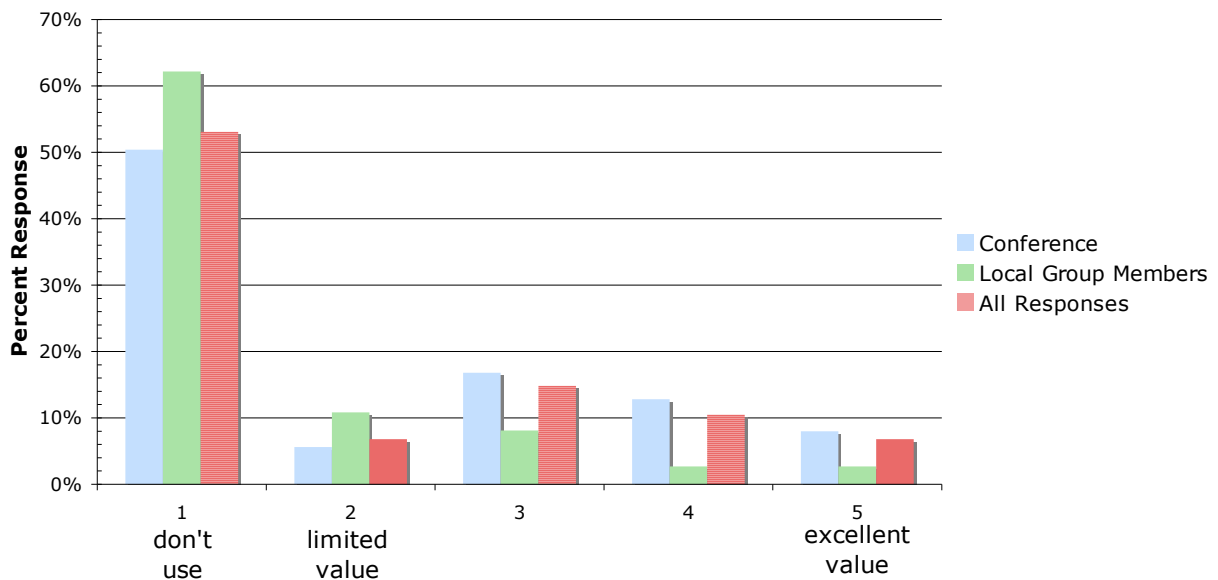
3.1.3

SoF Resource Centre:

don't use; limited value — excellent value

3.1.3 Resource Centre: don't use - excellent	Miss. Data	1	2	3	4	5	
Conference	8	63	7	21	16	10	
%	6.4%	50%	6%	17%	13%	8%	
Local Groups	5	23	4	3	1	1	
%	13.5%	62%	11%	8%	3%	3%	high Miss Data
All Responses	13	86	11	24	17	11	
%	8.0%	53%	7%	15%	10%	7%	

3.1.3 Rating the SoF Resource Centre



Comment: Members mostly don't use the SoF Resource Centre, but that doesn't mean that it isn't very valuable for some remote members and the Local Groups who aren't collectively represented here. It may be time to look at ways of effectively promoting the use of the Centre.

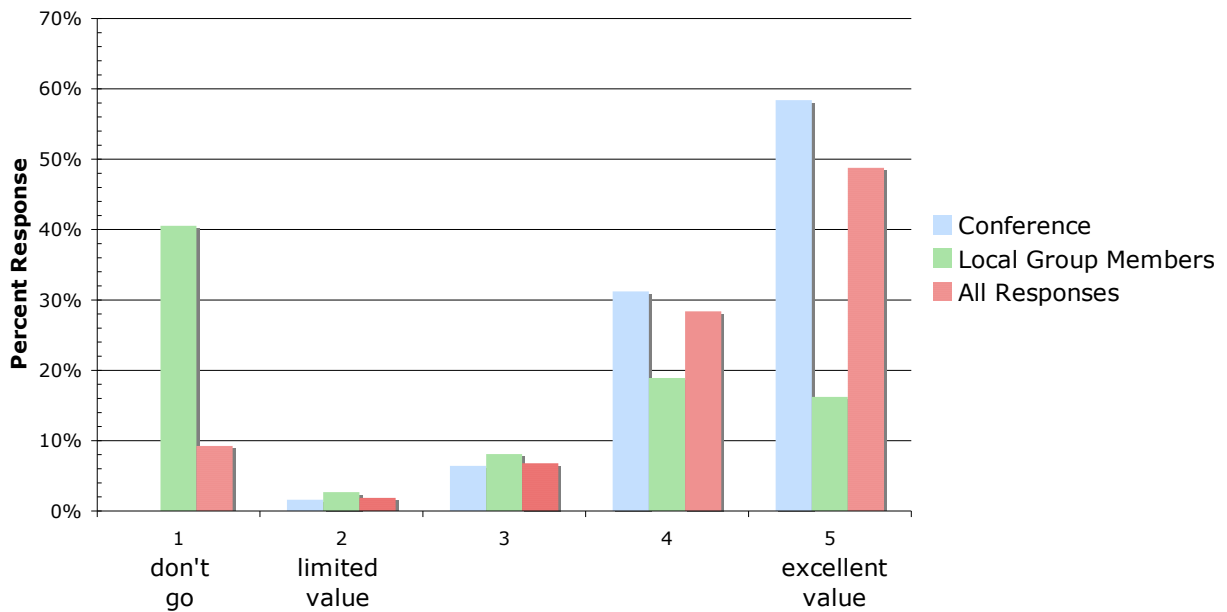
3.1.4

National Conferences

don't go; limited value — excellent value

3.1.4 National Conference: don't go - excellent	Miss. Data	1	2	3	4	5	
Conference	3	0	2	8	39	73	
%	2.4%	0%	2%	6%	31%	58%	
Local Groups	5	15	1	3	7	6	
%	13.5%	41%	3%	8%	19%	16%	high Miss Data
All Responses	8	15	3	11	46	79	
%	4.9%	9%	2%	7%	28%	49%	

3.1.4 Rating the SoF National Conference

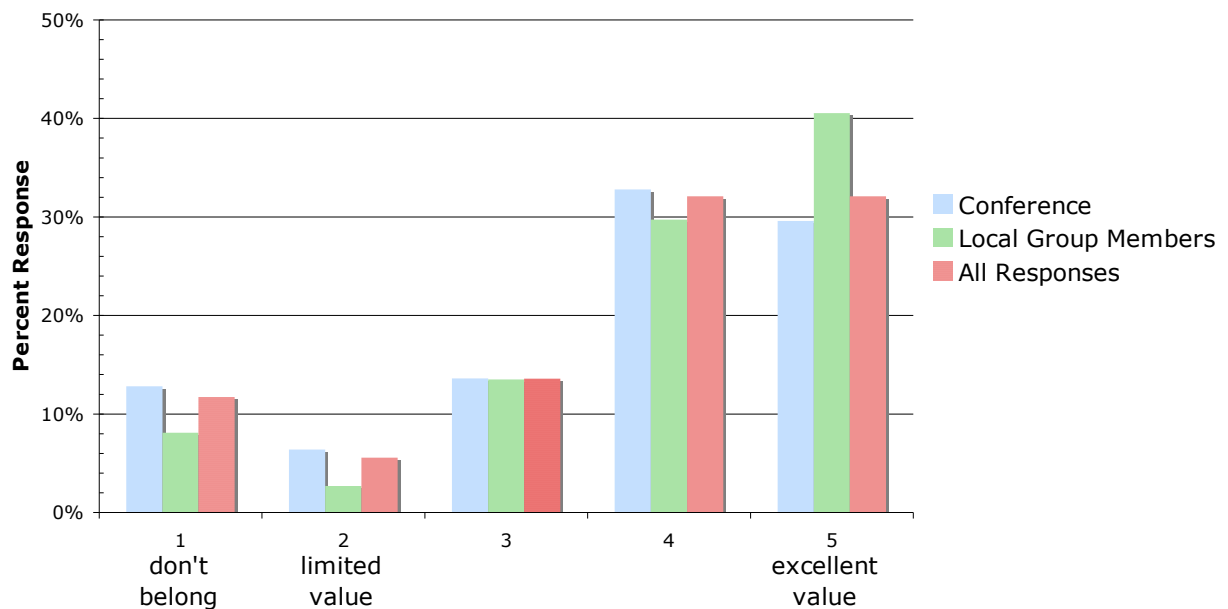


Comment: Almost 90% of conference-goers rate the annual conferences very highly. For the small sample of Local Group Members, 40% don't go to conferences and the missing data percentage is large for this group.

3.1.5 *Local SoF Group (or equivalent)*

3.1.5 Local group: don't belong - excellent	Miss. Data	1	2	3	4	5
Conference	6	16	8	17	41	37
%	4.8%	13%	6%	14%	33%	30%
Local Groups	2	3	1	5	11	15
%	5.4%	8%	3%	14%	30%	41%
All Responses	8	19	9	22	52	52
%	4.9%	12%	6%	14%	32%	32%

3.1.5 Rating SoF Local Groups



Comment: While over 60 % of members rate their Local Groups very highly, opinion about Local Groups is mixed in this sample. 13% of conference-goers don't belong (compare with item 2.1), so for them Conference is obviously a vital aspect of belonging to the Network.

3.2 *What changes would you like to see in the SoF website or Newsletter?*

Refer to “The Qualitative Data”

3.2 *What other resources or functions of the Network would you most value?*

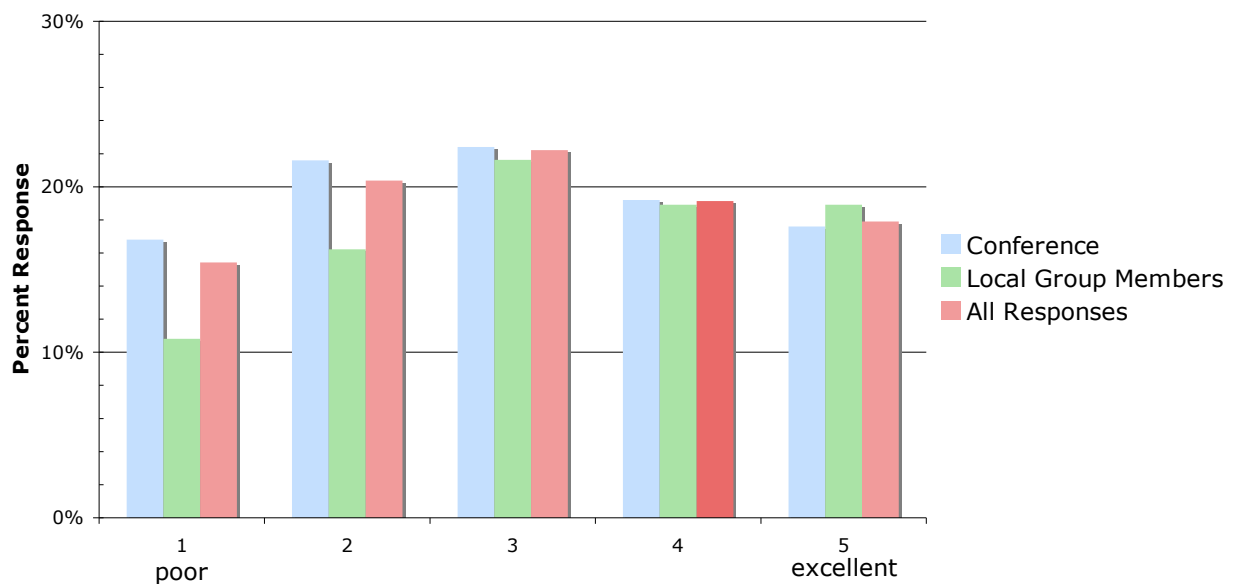
Refer to “The Qualitative Data”

3.4 How do you feel about the 'Sea of Faith' as the descriptive name of our network?

poor — excellent

3.4 How is the SoF name: poor - excellent	Miss. Data	1	2	3	4	5	
Conference	3	21	27	28	24	22	
%	2.4%	17%	22%	22%	19%	18%	
Local Groups	5	4	6	8	7	7	
%	13.5%	11%	16%	22%	19%	19%	high Miss Data
All Responses	8	25	33	36	31	29	
%	4.9%	15%	20%	22%	19%	18%	

3.4 How is 'SoF' as Network Name?



Comment: There is a fair degree of dissatisfaction with the name 'Sea of Faith', with 61% of conference-goers voting for bin 3 or lower. This negative view is shared by Local Group members, but less intensely (49% for the lower three bins). See item 3.5.

3.5 *Do you have a suggestion for a new name for the Network?*

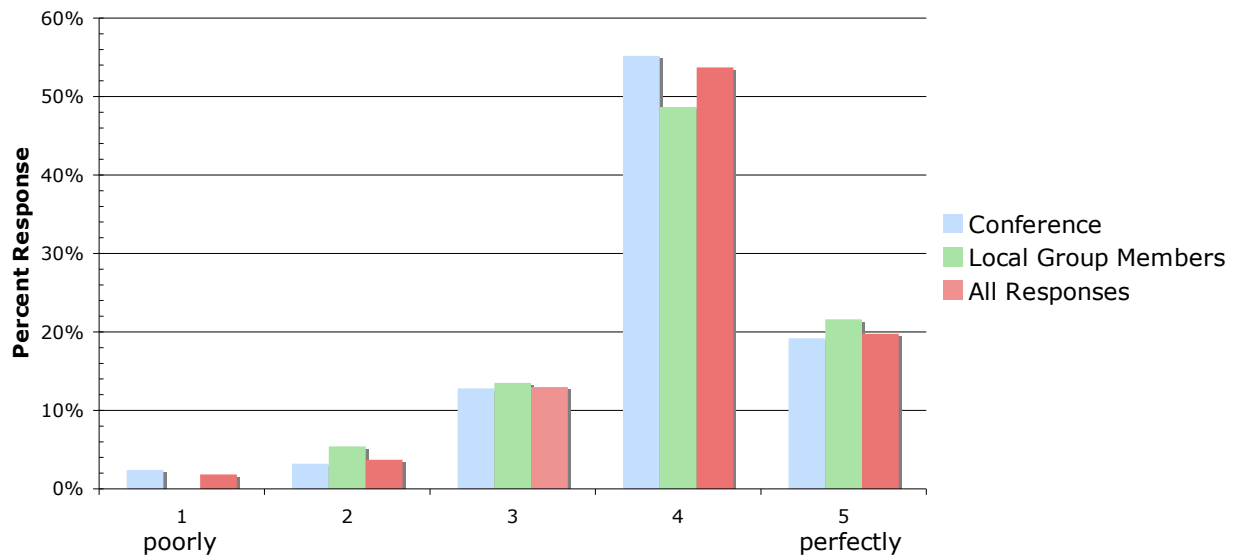
Refer to “The Qualitative Data”

3.6 *How well does the Sea of Faith ‘Statement of Purpose’ (see page 1) reflect who we are & what we do?*

poorly — perfectly

3.6 SoF Statement of Purpose: poor - perfect	Miss. Data	1	2	3	4	5	
Conference	9	3	4	16	69	24	
%	7.2%	2%	3%	13%	55%	19%	
Local Groups	4	0	2	5	18	8	
%	10.8%	0%	5%	14%	49%	22%	high Miss Data
All Responses	13	3	6	21	87	32	
%	8.0%	2%	4%	13%	54%	20%	

3.6 How Adequate is SoF 'Statement of Purpose'?



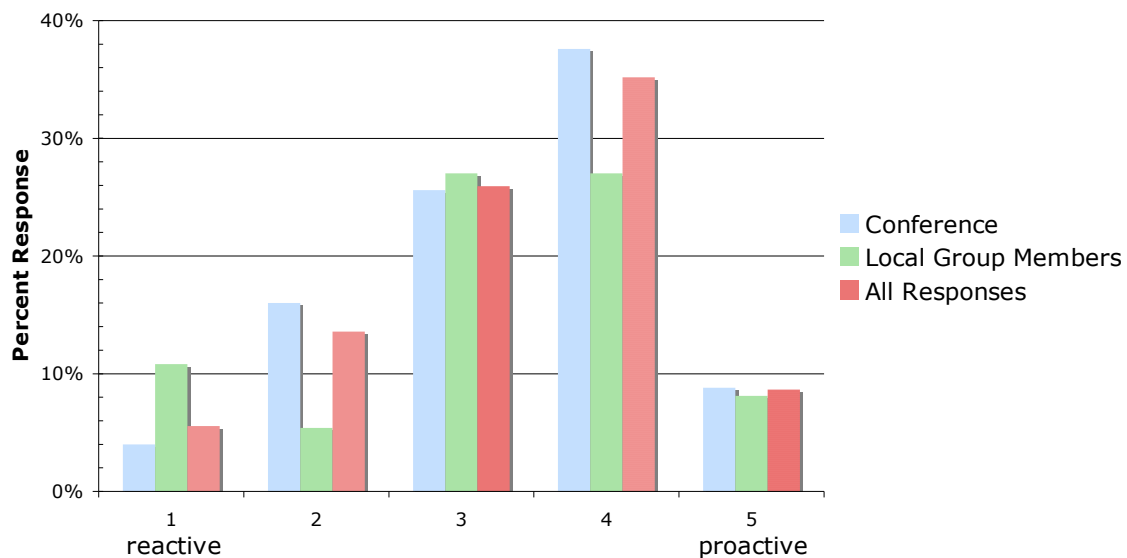
Comment: With 74% of all respondents voting bins 4 and 5, there seems to be no imperative for change. Since the survey did not provide for reasons for dissatisfaction, it may be worth opening the subject to debate through the SoF Newsletter.

3.7 *Should the SoF Network chart a direction for its future, or simply respond to changes in the wind. What score best describes your wish for a proactive or reactive organization?*

reactive — proactive

3.7 SoF: reactive - proactive	Miss. Data	1	2	3	4	5	
Conference	10	5	20	32	47	11	
%	8.0%	4%	16%	26%	38%	9%	
Local Groups	8	4	2	10	10	3	
%	21.6%	11%	5%	27%	27%	8%	high Miss Data
All Responses	18	9	22	42	57	14	
%	11.1%	6%	14%	26%	35%	9%	

3.7 SoF a Proactive or Reactive Organization?



Any comment?

Refer to “The Qualitative Data”

Comment: This is a question not of the current state, but how respondents wish SoF to be. The spectrum of responses has a high skew towards ‘proactive’, with the middle ground of bin 3 at 26% and bins 4 and 5 totalling 44%. Most respondents clearly wish SoF to actively mark out its future strategy. See also item 6.

3.8 ***What changes would most increase your satisfaction with SoF?***
[state when you mean local or national level]

Refer to “The Qualitative Data”

4. Conferences

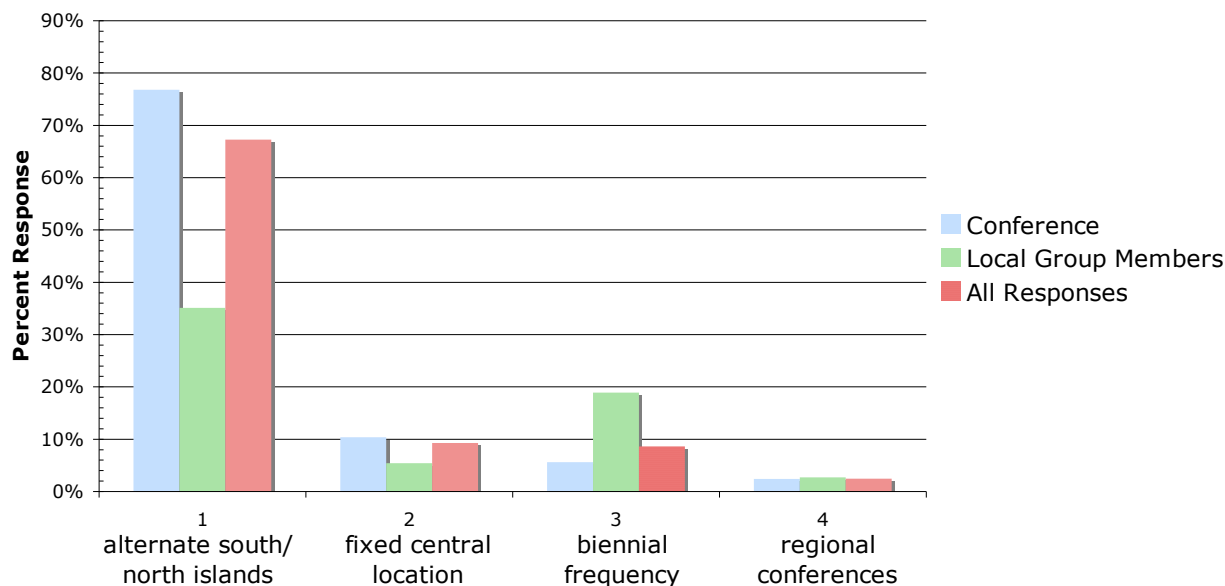
4.1 *The cost of national conferences, in venues, administration and travel, and finding a willing organizing group are seen as future issues. At present ‘profit’ on larger annual conferences supports the engagement of overseas speakers.*

Please indicate your preference: (ie what would you most likely go to?)

1. National Conference (alternating South/North Islands—as now) 2. National Conference (fixed central location)
3. Biennial National Conference 4. Regional Conference (all local organization)

4.1 Conference Location & Frequency	Miss. Data	1	2	3	4	
Conference	5	96	13	7	3	See Note on Tally
%	4.0%	77%	10%	6%	2%	
Local Groups	14	13	2	7	1	
%	37.8%	35%	5%	19%	3%	high Miss Data
All Responses	19	109	15	14	4	
%	11.7%	67%	9%	9%	2%	

4.1 Location/Frequency of Conferences?



Comment: There is a very strong preference (67%) for annual conferences to run as they are, alternating between South & North Islands. A few respondents added a note suggesting a frequency ratio of two conferences in the North for one in the South Island. The ‘fixed central’ and ‘biennial’ options were each favoured at about 10%. Only 2% favoured regional conferences to replace the annual national ones.

Responses from Local Group members are noticeably different, with high (38%) missing data, probably because many of the respondents of the small sample do not attend national conferences (but they didn’t particularly favour regional conferences either).

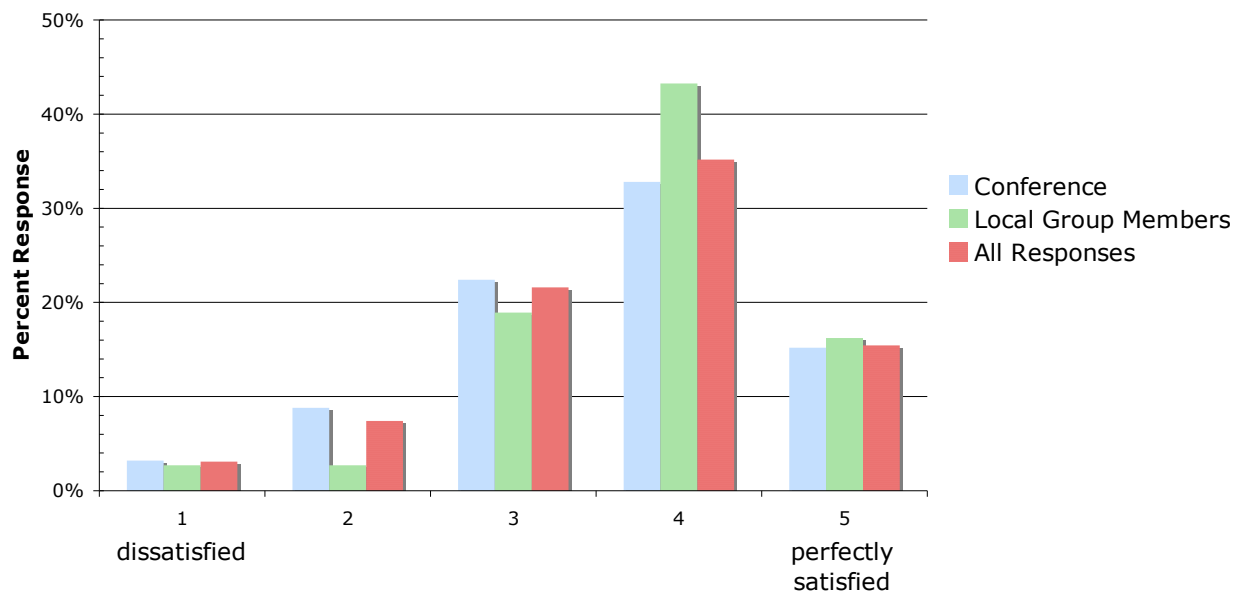
5. Content of SoF Programmes

5.1 How satisfied are you with the content of your Local Group programme?

dissatisfied — perfectly satisfied

5.1 Local Group: dissatisfied - perfectly satisfied	Miss Data	1	2	3	4	5	
Conference	22	4	11	28	41	19	
%	17.6%	3%	9%	22%	33%	15%	high Miss Data
Local Groups	6	1	1	7	16	6	
%	16.2%	3%	3%	19%	43%	16%	high Miss Data
All Responses	28	5	12	35	57	25	
%	17.3%	3%	7%	22%	35%	15%	high Miss Data

5.1 Satisfaction with Local Group Programmes



Comment: Satisfaction is generally very good, with bins 4 and 5 scoring a total of 59% for Local Group members and 50% for all responses. The high percentages of missing data may relate to respondents who do not belong to a local group.

5.1.1 *What is it about programme content you dislike most in your Local Group?*

Refer to “The Qualitative Data”

5.1.2 *What would you like for your Local Group?*

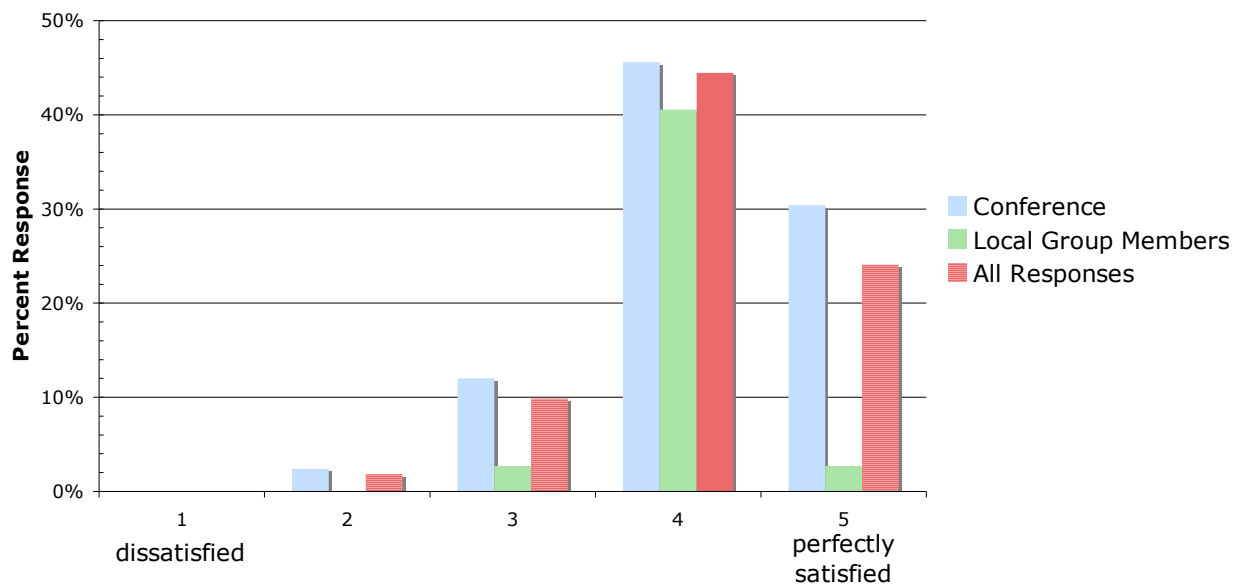
Refer to “The Qualitative Data”

5.2 How satisfied are you with the content of the National Conferences?

dissatisfied — perfectly satisfied

5.2 National Conf.: dissatisfied - perfectly satisfied	Miss. Data	1	2	3	4	5	
Conference	12	0	3	15	57	38	
%	9.6%	0%	2%	12%	46%	30%	
Local Groups	20	0	0	1	15	1	
%	54.1%	0%	0%	3%	41%	3%	high Miss. Data
All Responses	32	0	3	16	72	39	
%	19.8%	0%	2%	10%	44%	24%	

5.2 Satisfaction with National Conferences



Comment: Conference-goers are very satisfied with SoF national conferences, scoring bins 4 and 5 with a total of 76%. Local group response is erratic with a very high rate of missing data, presumably due to low attendances at conferences.

5.2.1 *What is it about programme content you dislike most about what is offered, in general?*

Refer to “The Qualitative Data”

5.2.2 *What would you like for future Conferences? (include new topics)*

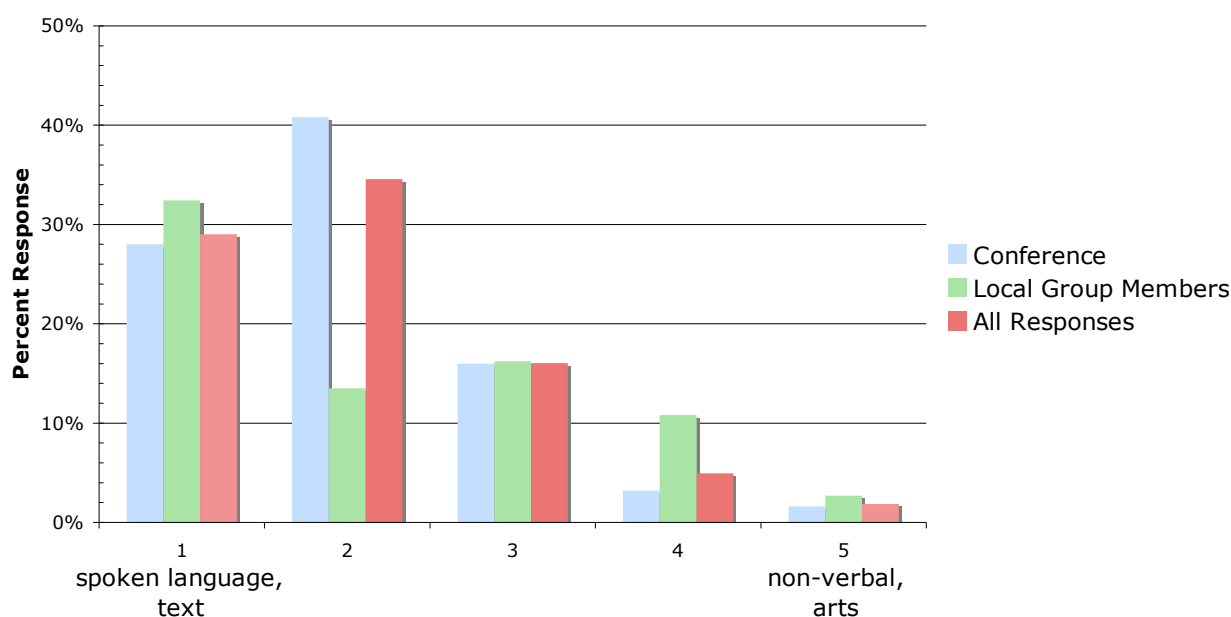
Refer to “The Qualitative Data”

5.3 Please indicate on the range your instinctive preference from entirely language-based programme content (spoken & text) on the one hand, to non-verbal, symbolic content, i.e. music, dance, visual arts (count drama close to this end) on the other:

spoken language, text — non-verbal, arts

5.3 Prefer: language - arts	Miss. Data	1	2	3	4	5	
Conference	13	35	51	20	4	2	
%	10.4%	28%	41%	16%	3%	2%	high Miss Data
Local Groups	9	12	5	6	4	1	
%	24.3%	32%	14%	16%	11%	3%	high Miss Data
All Responses	22	47	56	26	8	3	
%	13.6%	29%	35%	16%	5%	2%	

5.3 Language — Arts Spectrum



Comment: The distribution is weighted heavily toward spoken & written language, with a total score of 64% in bins 1 and 2. The other 23% acknowledge some weighting toward the arts, but only 2% rate them most highly. This is interesting when one thinks of the high incidence of music, dramatic ritual, dance and the visual arts in world religions. Compare with items 1.4 & 1.5.

There is a high rate of missing data, particularly from the local group respondents. Overall respondents see the arts as having a significant role and it is a matter of striking the right balance.

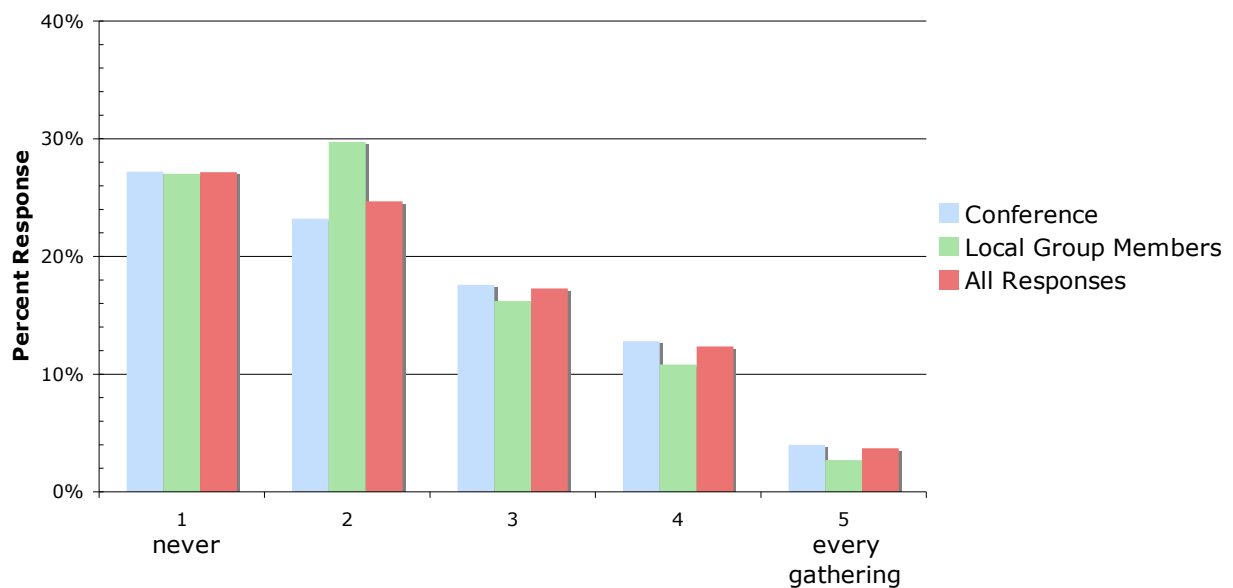
5.4 *Forms of ritual or liturgy form part of religious practice in all traditions. In Sea of Faith gatherings, do you see a place for new or experimental forms of ritual?*

5.4.1 — *in Local Group meetings*

never — every gathering

5.4.1 Ritual - Local group: never - every time	Miss. Data	1	2	3	4	5	
Conference	19	34	29	22	16	5	
%	15.2%	27%	23%	18%	13%	4%	high Miss Data
Local Groups	5	10	11	6	4	1	
%	13.5%	27%	30%	16%	11%	3%	high Miss Data
All Responses	24	44	40	28	20	6	
%	14.8%	27%	25%	17%	12%	4%	high Miss Data

5.4.1 Ritual, Liturgy in Local Group Programmes



Comment: The spectrum of responses is linear, down from a strong 27% at ‘never’ to 4% at ‘every’. There is a high rate of missing data for both groups of respondents.

While undoubtedly most SoF members are retreating from traditional religious ritual and liturgical practice, the spread of opinion suggests that a need for some new forms of ritual is recognized at local group meetings, and this seems to be worthy of discussion and experimentation.

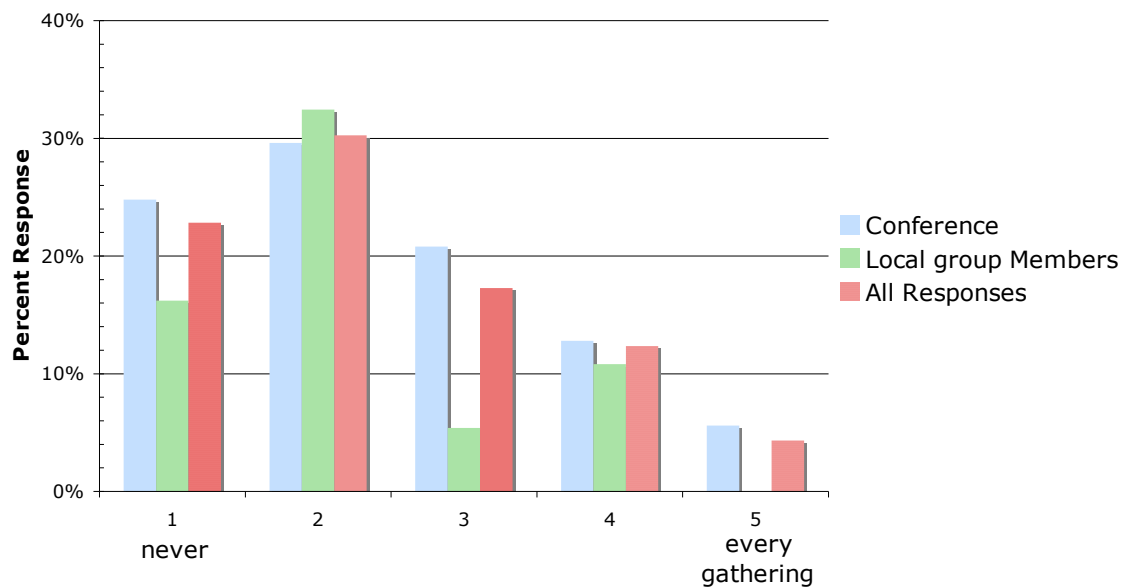
Forms of ritual or liturgy form part of religious practice in all traditions. In Sea of Faith gatherings, do you see a place for new or experimental forms of ritual?

5.4.2 — in National Conferences

never — every gathering

5.4.2 Ritual- National Conference: never - every time	Miss. Data	1	2	3	4	5	
Conference	8	31	37	26	16	7	
%	6.4%	25%	30%	21%	13%	6%	
Local Groups	13	6	12	2	4	0	
%	35.1%	16%	32%	5%	11%	0%	high Miss Data
All Responses	21	37	49	28	20	7	
%	13.0%	23%	30%	17%	12%	4%	

5.4.2 Ritual, Liturgy in National Conferences



Comment: The spectrum of responses is heavily weighted toward ‘never’ or infrequent. The vote for ‘never’ is 23%, down 4% on the same question for Local Groups (but note the high missing data).

Bin 2 is the most popular at 30%, possibly representing ‘seldom’ and then the scores decline to about 5% for ‘every’. Refer comment on item 5.4.1. Again, because of the spread of opinion, there seems room for discussion and experimentation here.

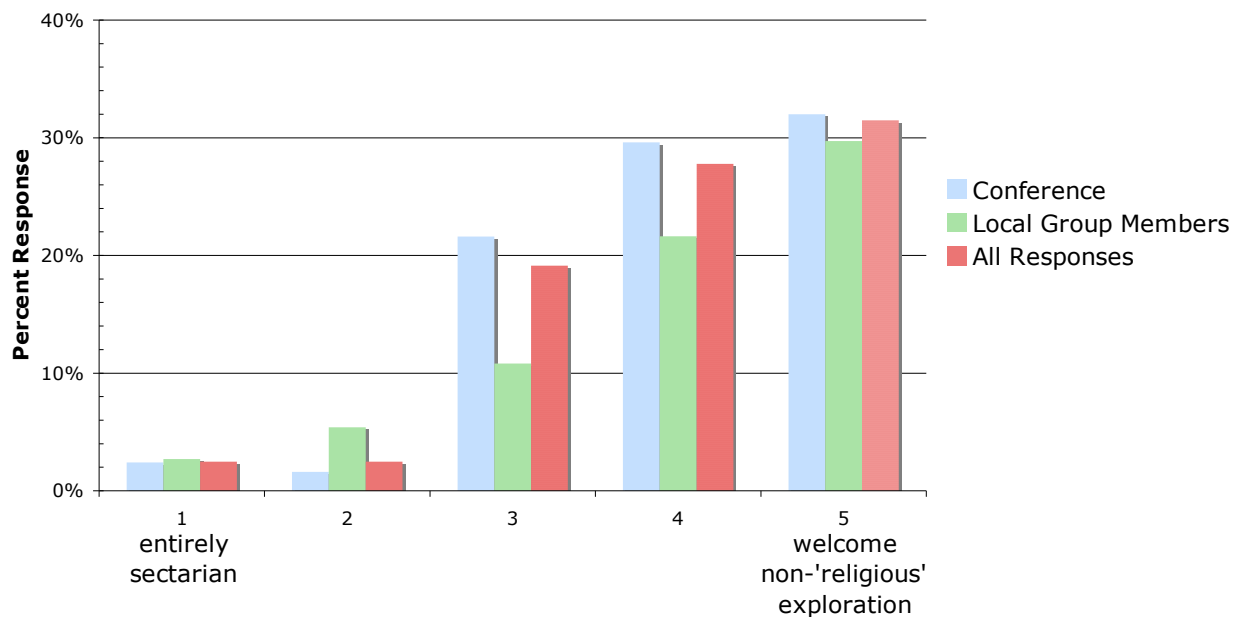
Make a comment on 5.4 if you like:

Refer to “The Qualitative Data”

5.5 *Our 'Statement of Purpose' invites us to 'draw freely upon our spiritual heritage without being bound by it'. How do you feel about engagement with progressive/radical theology and practice of Christian and other world religions at National SoF Conference?*
programme entirely sectarian — welcome all non-'religious' exploration

5.5 Spiritual heritage: non-sectarian - welcome exploration	Miss. Data	1	2	3	4	5	
Conference	16	3	2	27	37	40	
%	12.8%	2%	2%	22%	30%	32%	high Miss Data
Local Groups	11	1	2	4	8	11	
%	29.7%	3%	5%	11%	22%	30%	high Miss Data
All Responses	27	4	4	31	45	51	
%	16.7%	2%	2%	19%	28%	31%	

5.5 Heritage — Non-'Religious' Spectrum



Comment: I have the feeling that the wording of this question could be much better (note the high levels of missing data). The opinion spectrum rises linearly from a low of 2% for an entirely sectarian (denominational?) tradition to over 30% who welcome exploration of a 'non-religious' kind (presumably this means not of a denominational religious style). The maximum in Bin 5 is expected, but what is interesting is the spread of about 50% in favour of some level of 'tradition', including perhaps the 'progressive' elements of the major world religions.

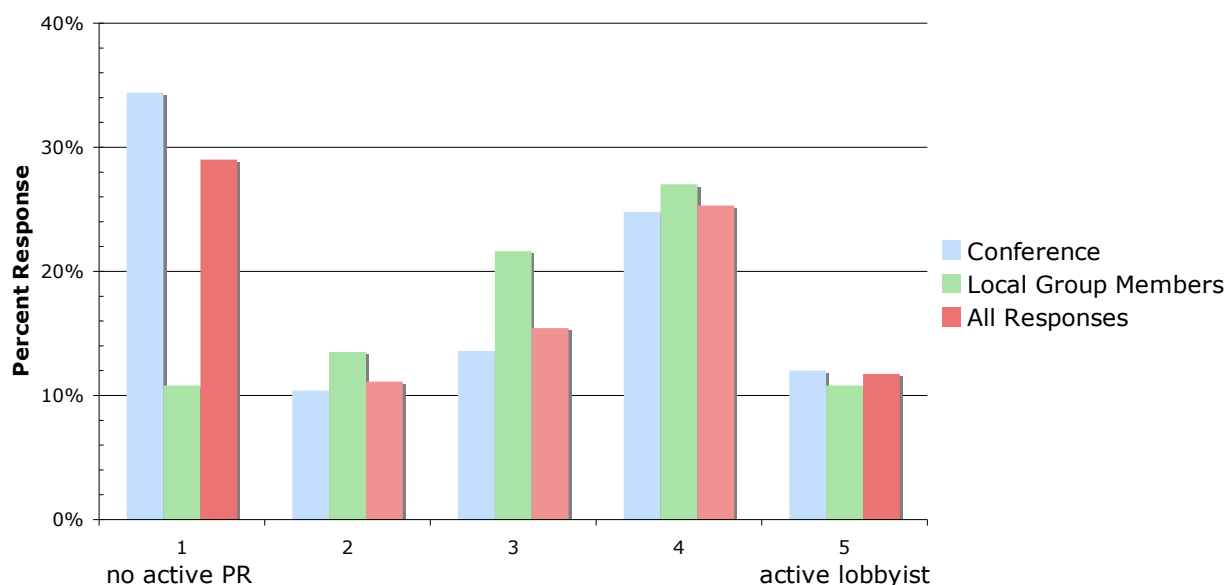
6. Public Relations and Publicity

6.1 *Should we have a higher profile on public issues relating to our 'Statement of Purpose', e.g. critiquing Brian Tamaki's demand for NZ to define itself as 'Christian'? (The 'active lobbyist' role would include monitoring media, letters to editors, press releases, seeking interviews with journalists.)*

no active PR — active lobbyist

6.1 SoF profile: no PR - active lobbyist	Miss. Data	1	2	3	4	5	
Conference	6	43	13	17	31	15	
%	4.8%	34%	10%	14%	25%	12%	
Local Groups	6	4	5	8	10	4	
%	16.2%	11%	14%	22%	27%	11%	high Miss Data
All Responses	12	47	18	25	41	19	
	7.4%	29%	11%	15%	25%	12%	

6.1 SoF Public Relations



Comment: The spectrum of opinion has two peaks: Bin 1 (no active PR) 29%, and Bin 4 (a fair degree of lobbying activity) 25%. Otherwise the other bins are scored at about 12%. Bins 4 and 5 for active lobbying total 37%, so there are two poles of opinion to guide the SoF Steering Committee. Local Group members appear to be more in favour of the lobbying stance.

**6.2 What do you think are the most effective means of publicity for increasing membership?
(Members of Local Groups have to actively seek membership of the National Network.)**

6.2.1 Your *ideas for publicity for SoF at the local level:*

6.2.2 Your *ideas for publicity for SoF at the National level:*

6.2.3 Your *ideas for publicity for National Conference:*

6.2.4 How *might SoF appeal to a younger age group?*

For all of the above refer to “The Qualitative Data”

Ralph Pannett
3 June 2008