

2019 Nurture and Retention Summit

Disciplining, Nurturing,
and Reclaiming

**Building healthy relationships with members
and former members**

David Trim

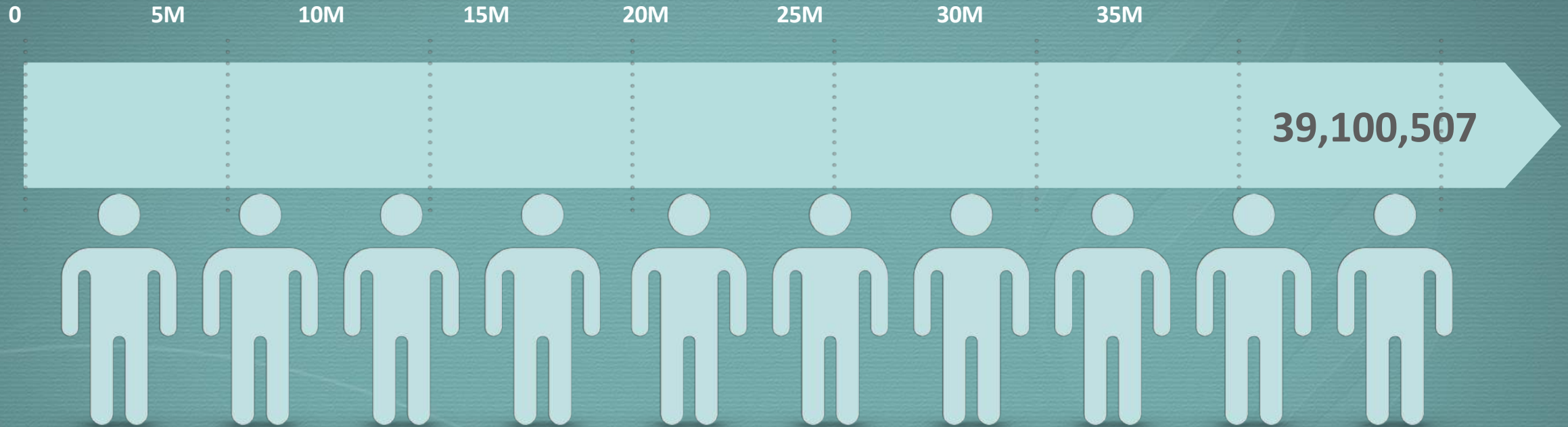
Director, Archives, Statistics, and Research

Data on membership loss

From official church statistics

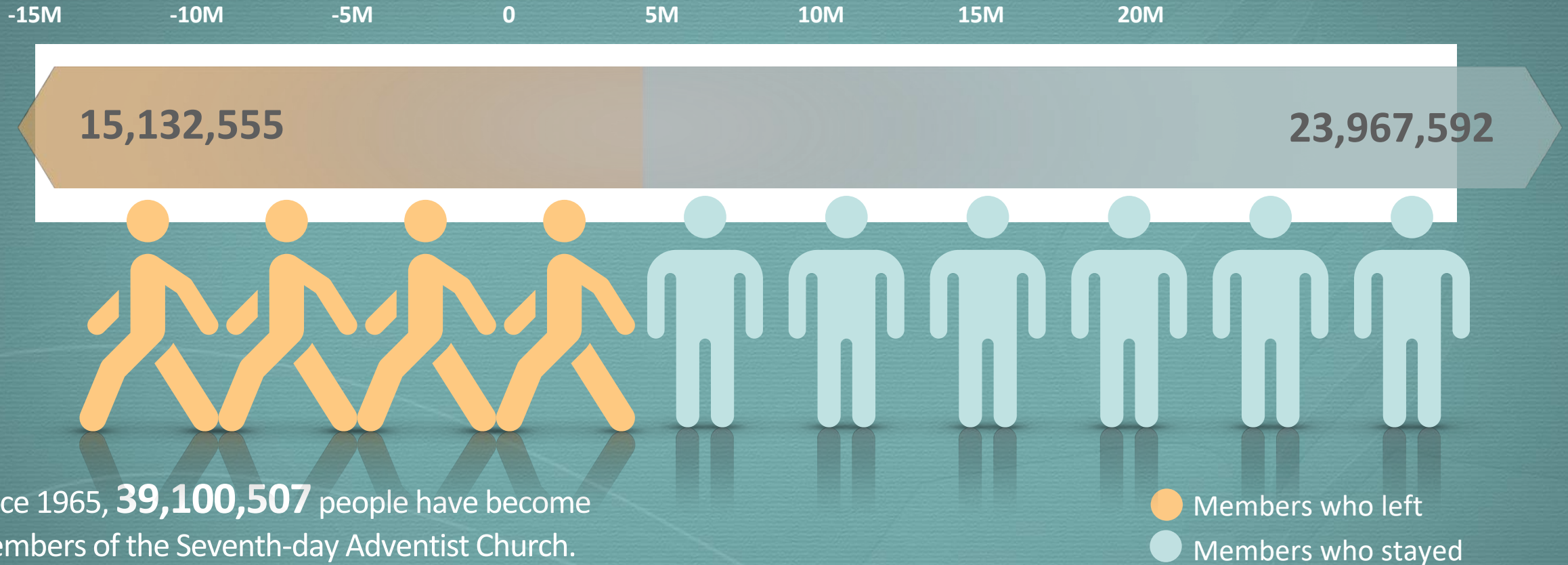


TOTAL MEMBERS



Since 1965, **39,100,507** people have become members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

MEMBERS WHO LEAVE



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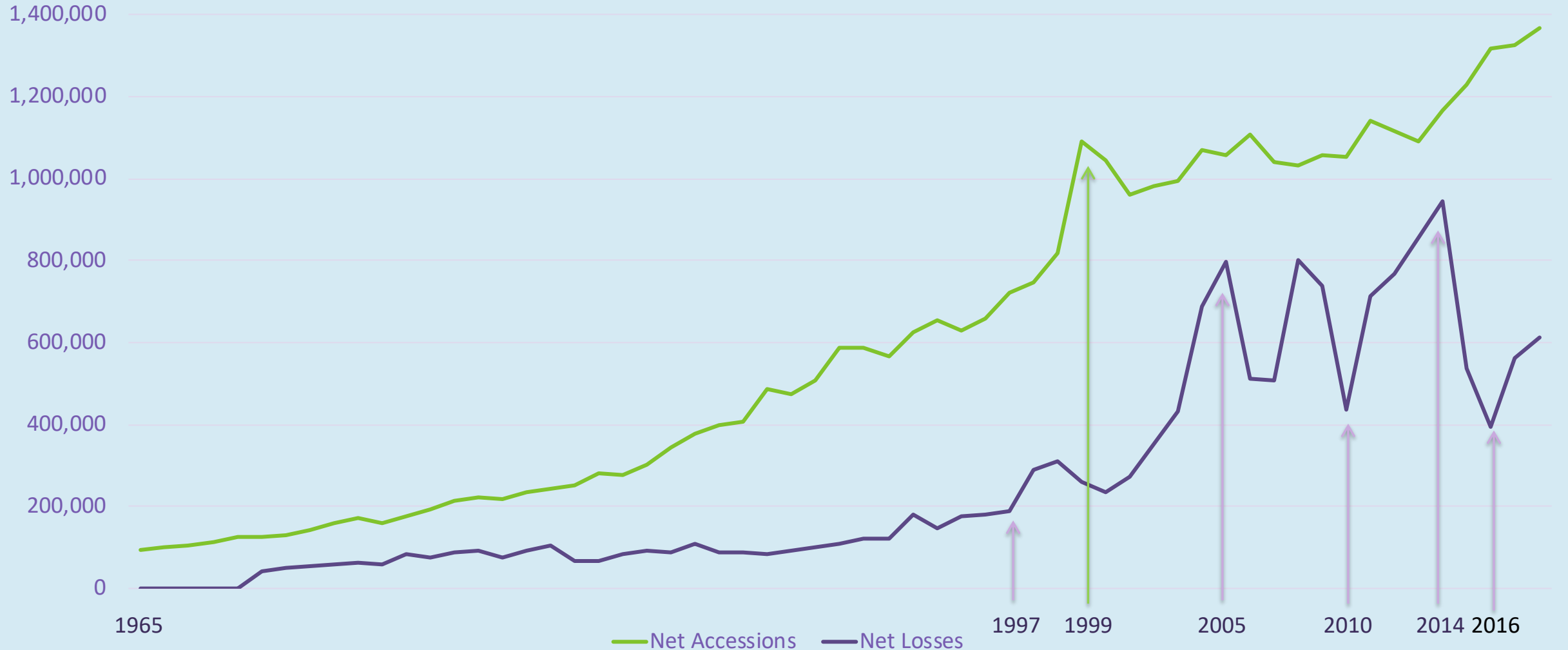
Of those, **15,132,555** have chosen to leave.

Our net loss rate is 39%.

In effect, **4 of every 10** new church members are slipping away.

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Global Net Accessions and Net Losses, 1965–2018

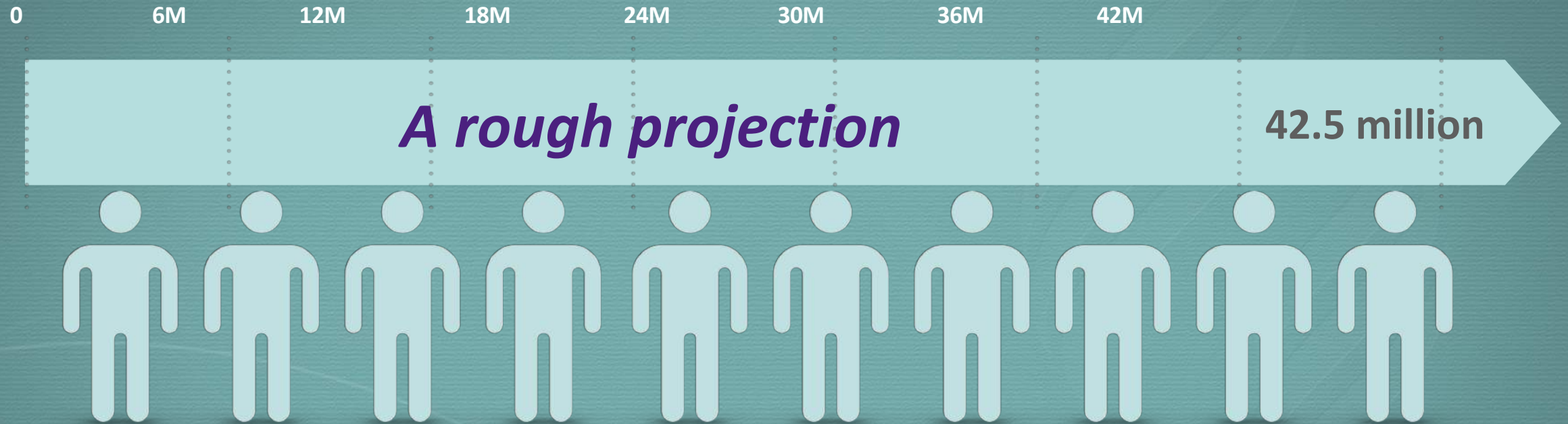


Global Net Accessions and Net Losses, 1994–2018

Data for the last quarter century, with 5-year moving averages



TOTAL MEMBERS—POTENTIAL



If we had retained 80% of members, instead of 60%, then with the new members *they* would have helped to bring in, who would have been maintained, *etc.*, less estimated deaths, church membership might have been 42.5 million (almost double the current reported 21.4 million)

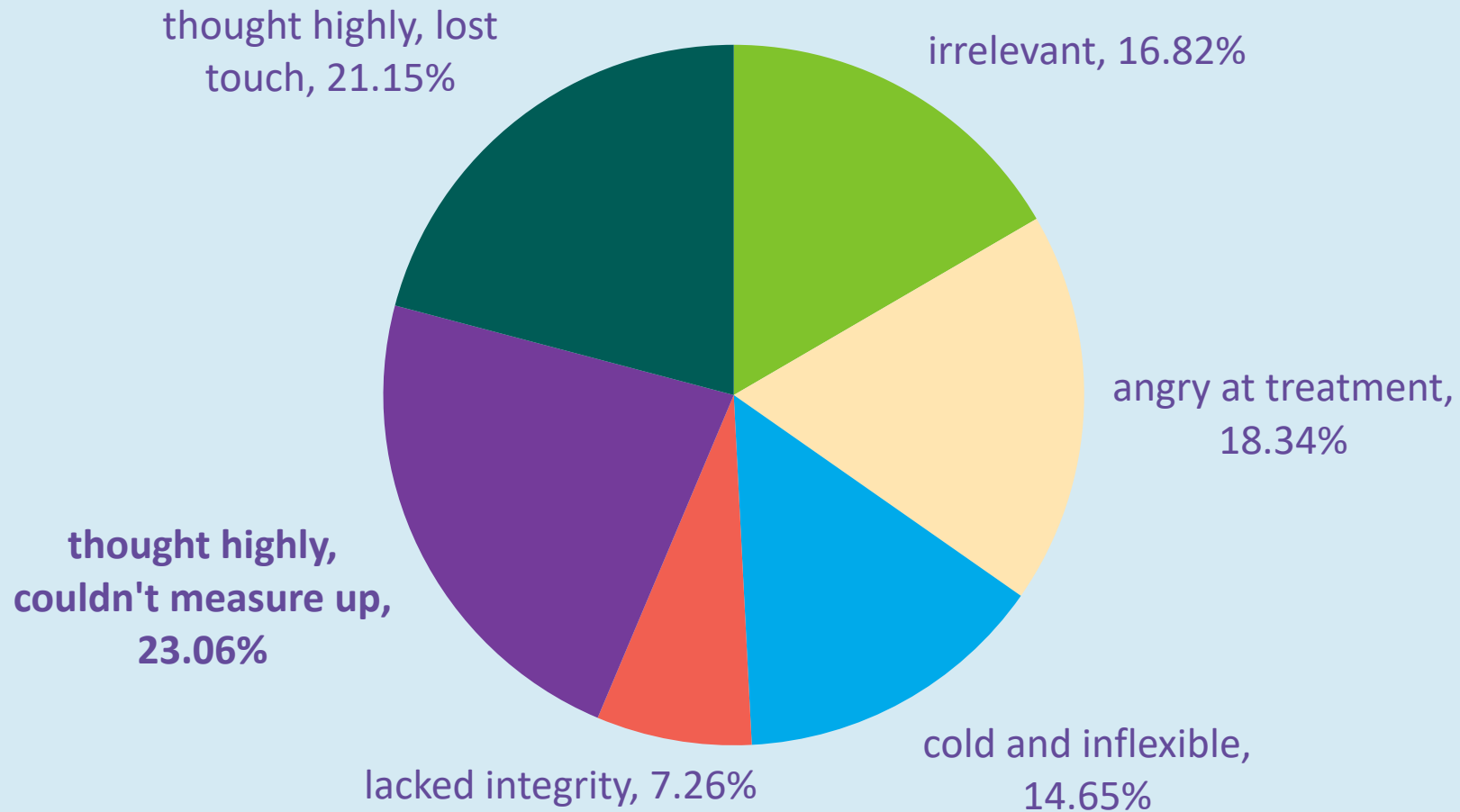
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Why did they leave?

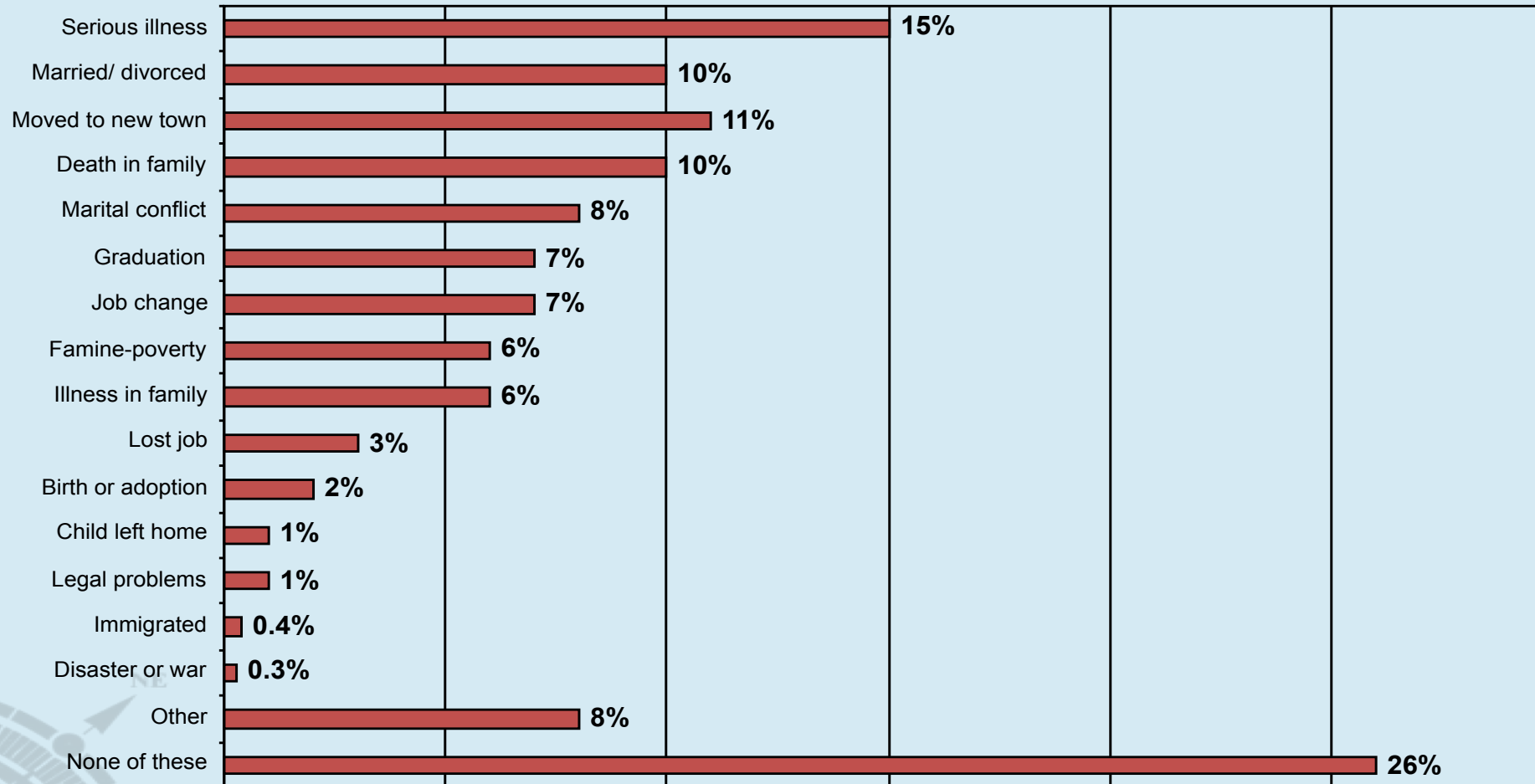
Findings from two global studies, 2012 & 2013



View of Adventist Church at Departure



Life Events in Year Leading Up to Decision to Stop Attending Church

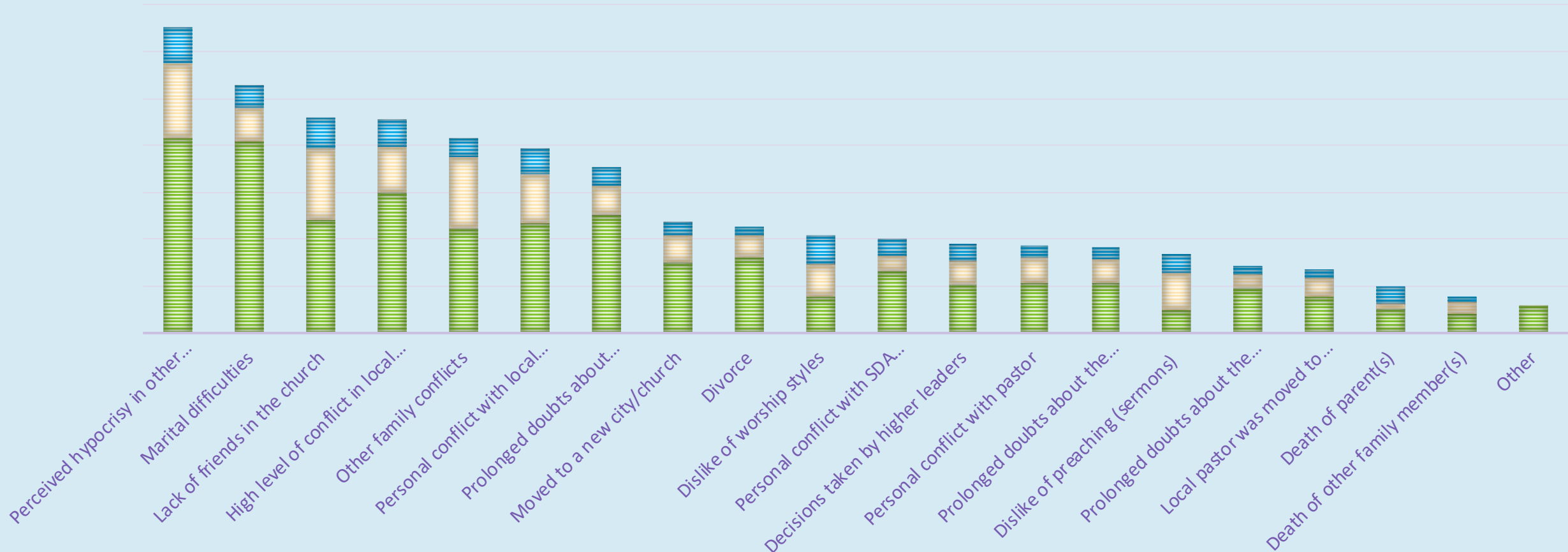


Most Important Reasons for Deciding to Stop Attending Church

- 28% No big issue; I just drifted away
- 25% Lack of compassion for the hurting
- 19% Moral failure on my part
- 18% I did not fit in
- 14% Too much focus on minor issues
- 13% Conflict in the congregation
- 12% Moral failures of members
- 11% Moral failures of leaders
- 11% Pressure from family or friends
- 10% Race, ethnic or tribal issues

What event triggered your decision to leave? (Listed in weighted rank order)

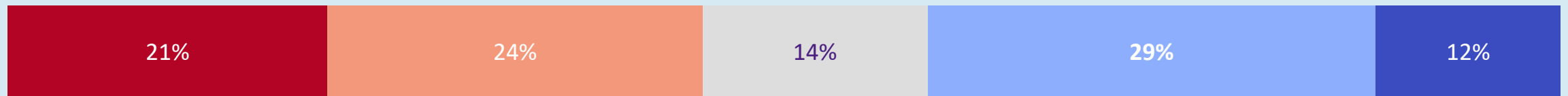
■ Primary Factor
 ■ Secondary Factor
 ■ Minor Factor



From 2018 Church Member Survey

I have been hurt by leaders, people, or incidents in my church

■ Strongly Disagree ■ Disagree ■ I Am Not Sure ■ Agree ■ Strongly Agree



What Happened When They Stopped Attending Church

- 40% No one contacted me
- 19% A church member came to visit me
- 17% A local elder came to visit me
- 15% A local church member contacted me by phone
- 10% An Adventist relative made contact
- 9% The pastor came to visit me
- 6% The pastor contacted me by phone or Email
- 3% An Adventist, not a local member contacted me
- 2% I received a letter in the mail
- 0.3% Printed material was mailed to me

What might help them to stay?

Findings from global
research, 2012–2018



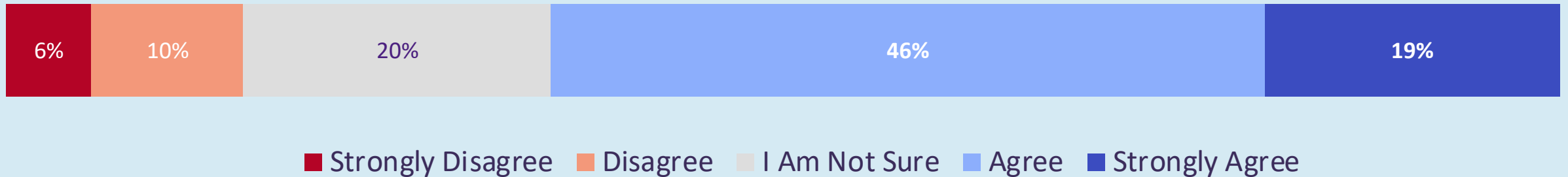
Pastors need to be equipped and trained — so then they can train elders and church-members

*Pastors engage very little with members who stop attending church: but in a 2012 survey of global pastors, **53%** stated that they **never** received training in nurturing and retaining in their Bachelors degree; of pastors with graduate degrees, again, **53%** stated that they received **no** training in these areas in their graduate study.*



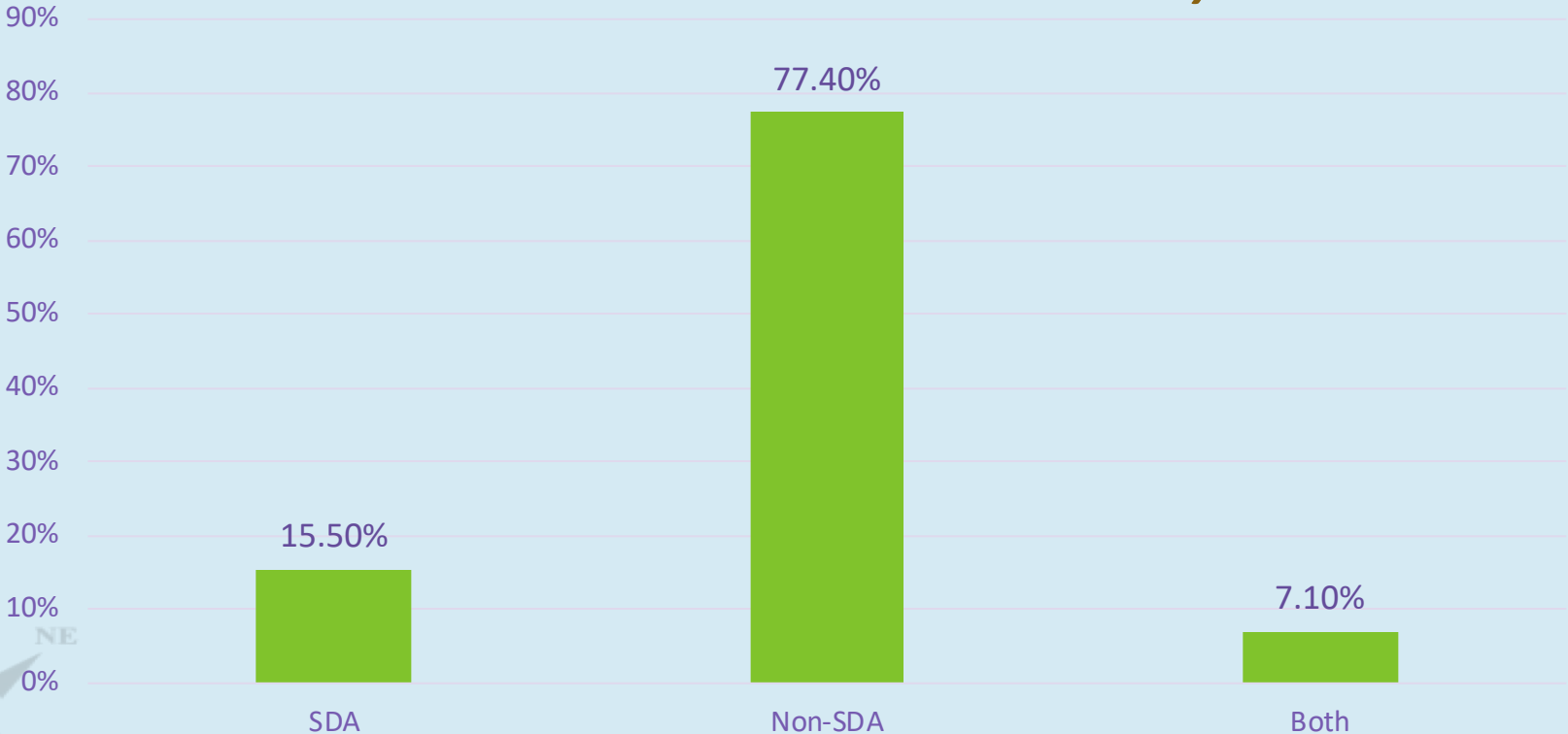
From 2018 Church Member Survey

Is training on nurture and discipling of church members offered through my local church?



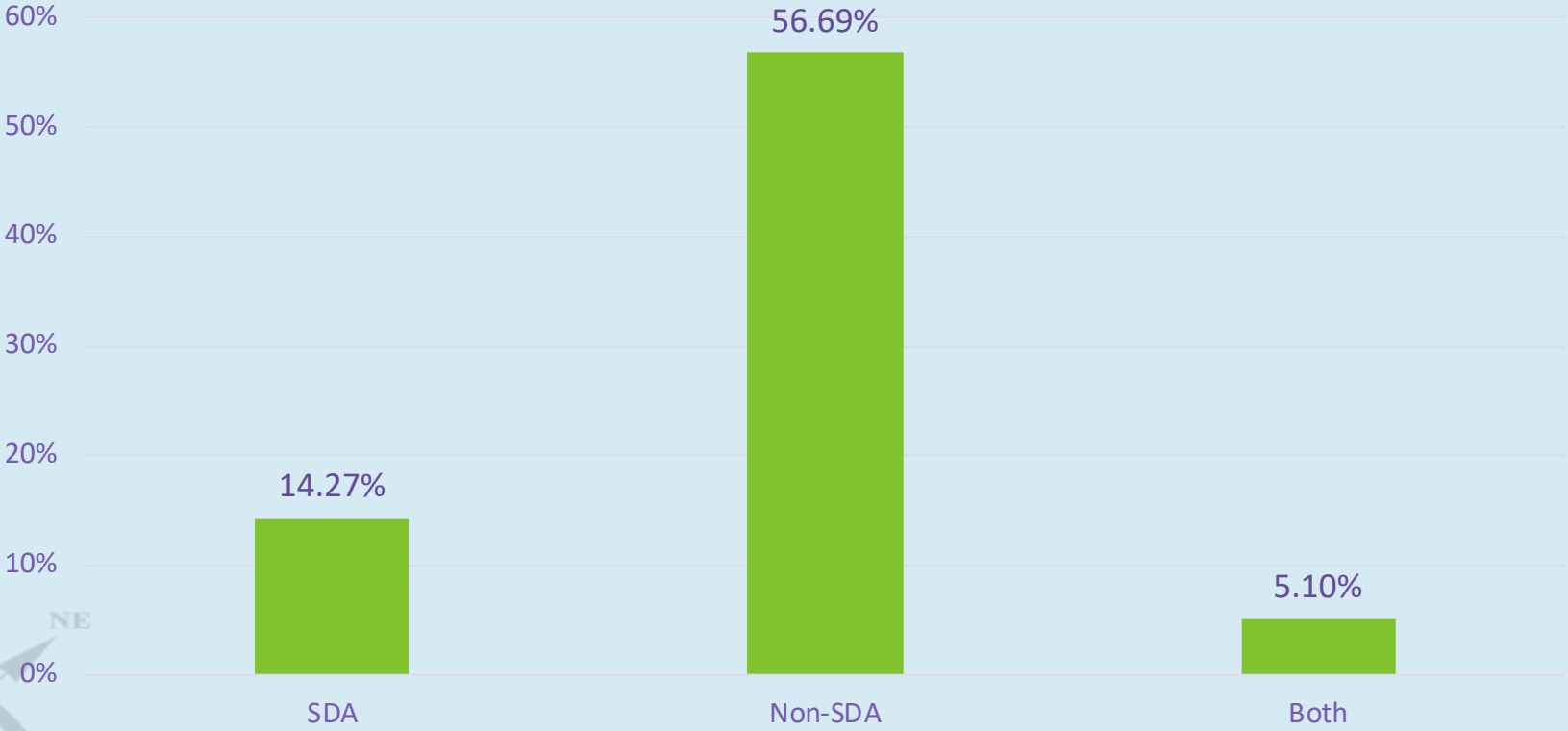
Ex-Members: Attended Primary (Elementary) School

Current Members = 46% Attended an SDA Primary School



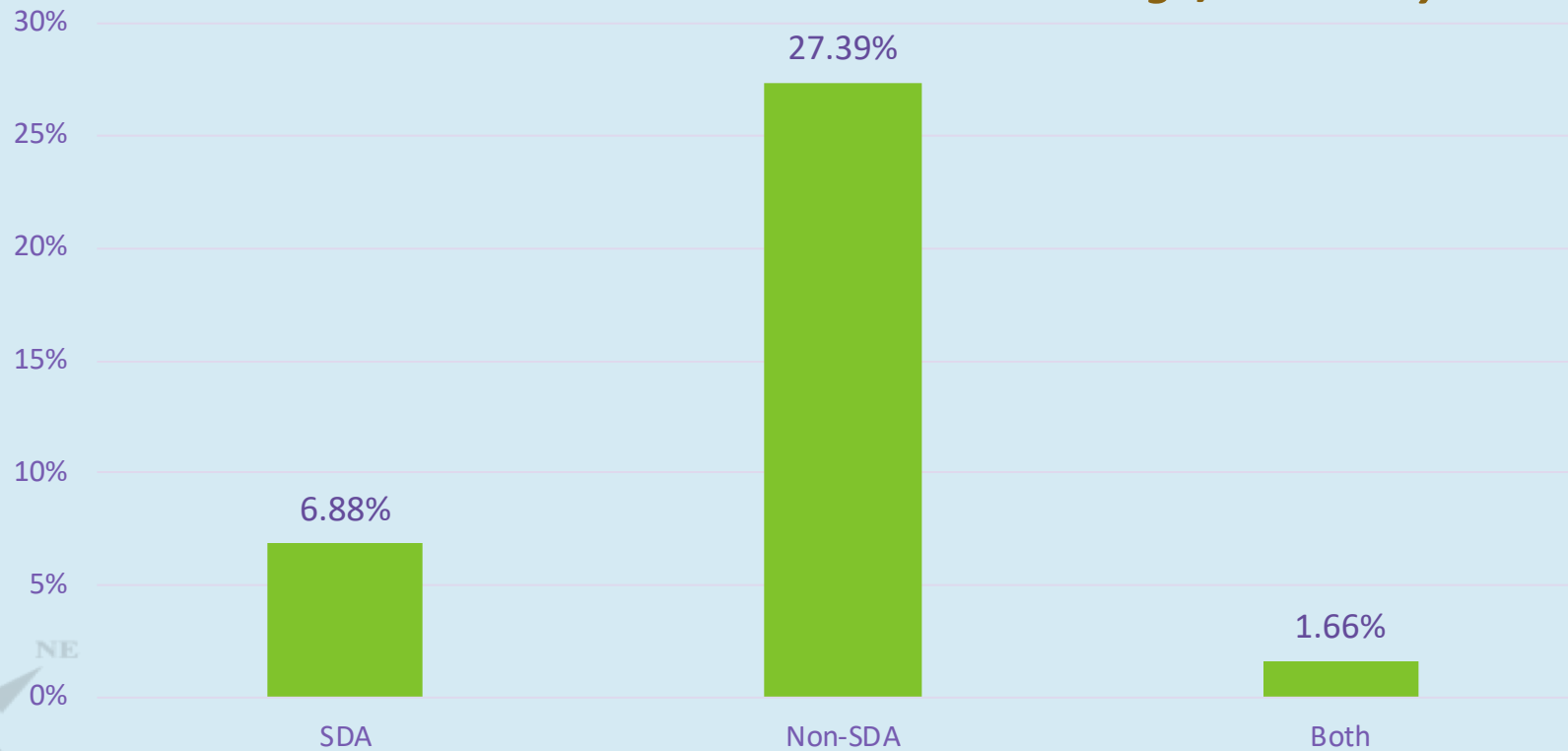
Ex-Members: Attended Secondary (High) School

Current Members = 35% Attended an SDA Secondary School



Ex-Members: Attended college or university (tertiary/further/higher)

*Current Members = 13% Attended an SDA
College/University*



From 2018 Church Member Survey

In my local church, I feel loved and cared about...

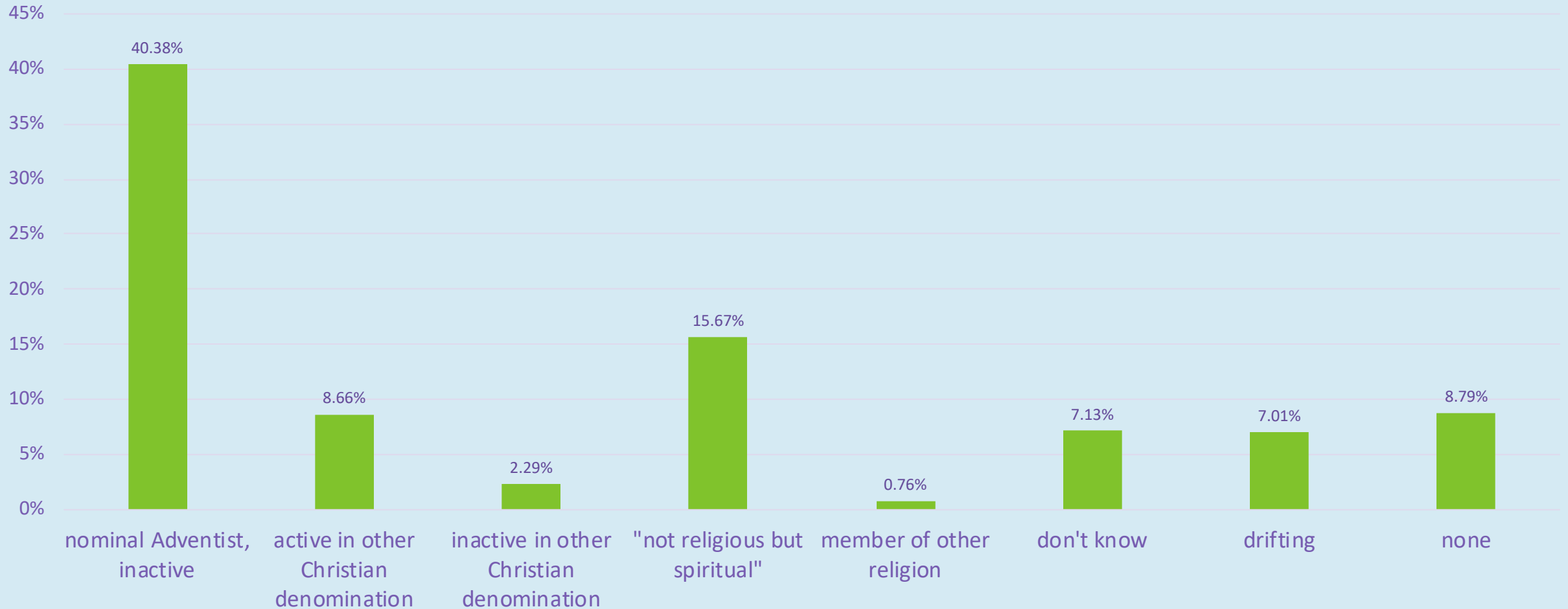


■ Not true at all ■ Not true at all-somew... ■ Somewhat true ■ Somewhat true-very true ■ very true

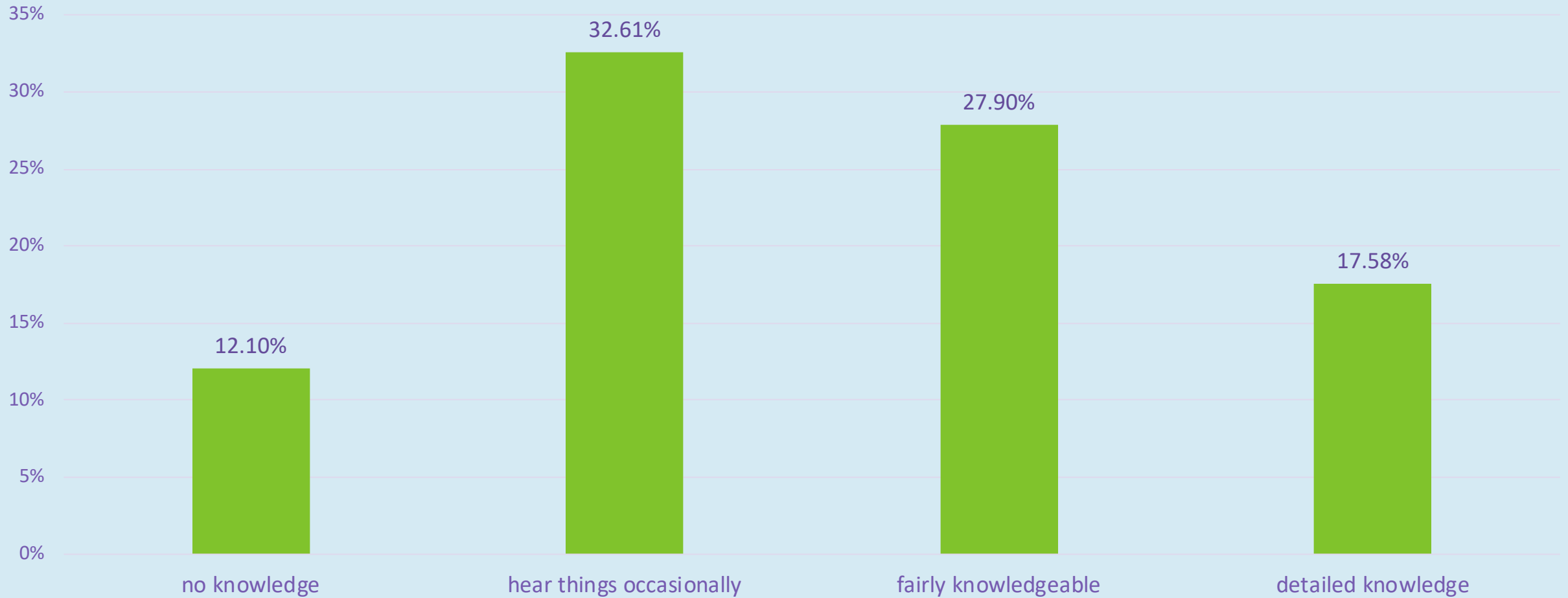
Might they come back??



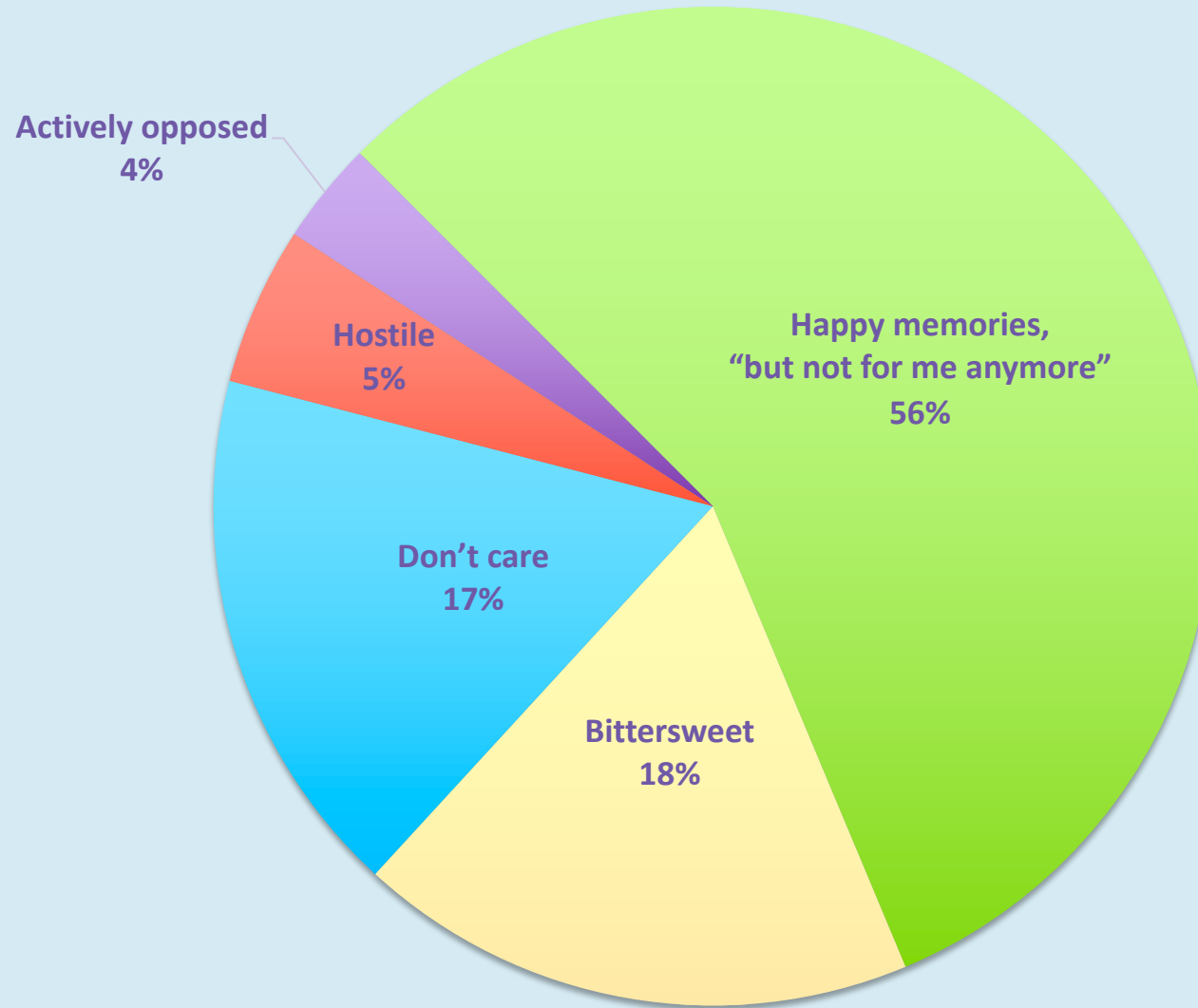
Religious Affiliation After Stopped Attending Church



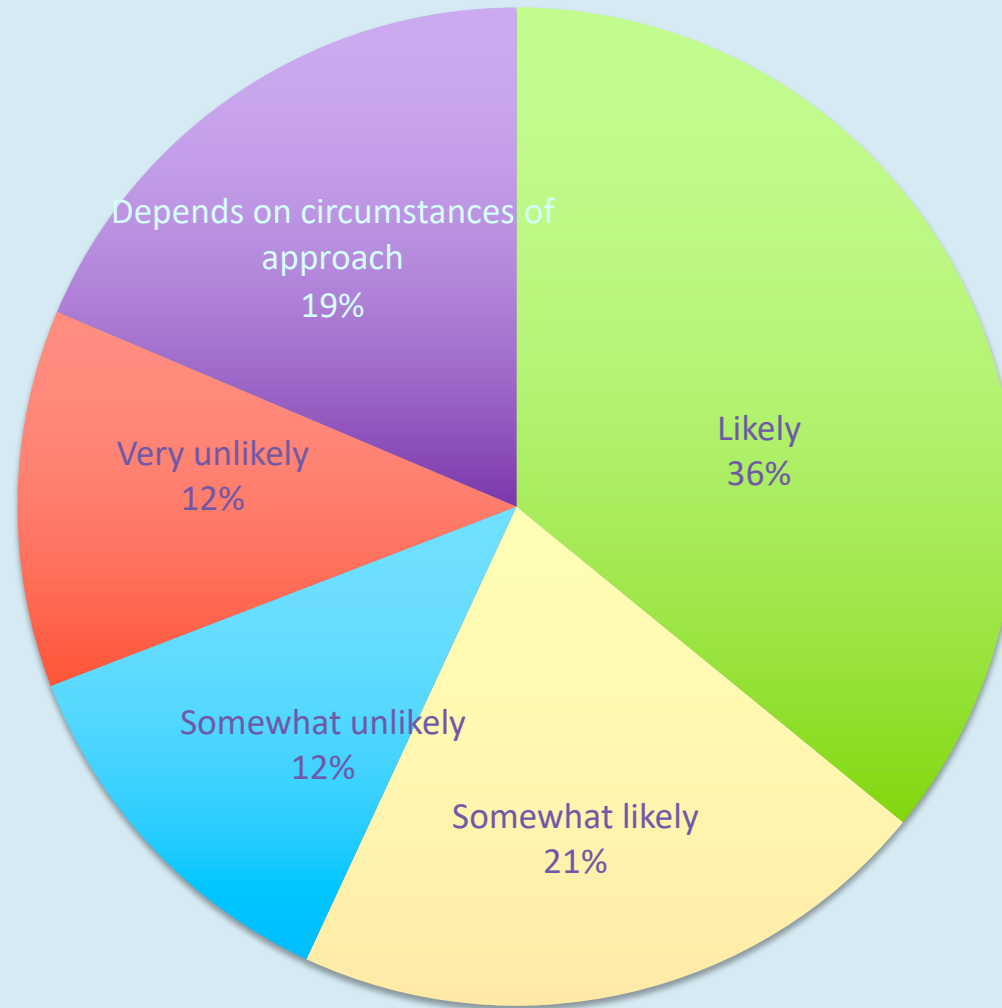
Awareness of Developments in Adventism



How do you presently feel about Adventism?



How would you rate your openness to reconnect?





**There are millions of
lapsed and former
Seventh-day Adventists
worldwide who already
believe much of what
we believe — they are
waiting for us to reach
out to them and to love
them, with the love of
the shepherd and the
father of Luke 15**

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