

Why did they leave?

Statistics and research data on member loss

David Trim, Ph.D.

Director of Archives, Statistics, and Research
General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

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*Retention and non-retention
are vital issues for mission
and for church growth*



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**First a look at objective data —
then at subjective data**

What do church statistics tell us?

**Starting in 1965 the church has categorized
“accessions” and “losses”: 52 years of data!**



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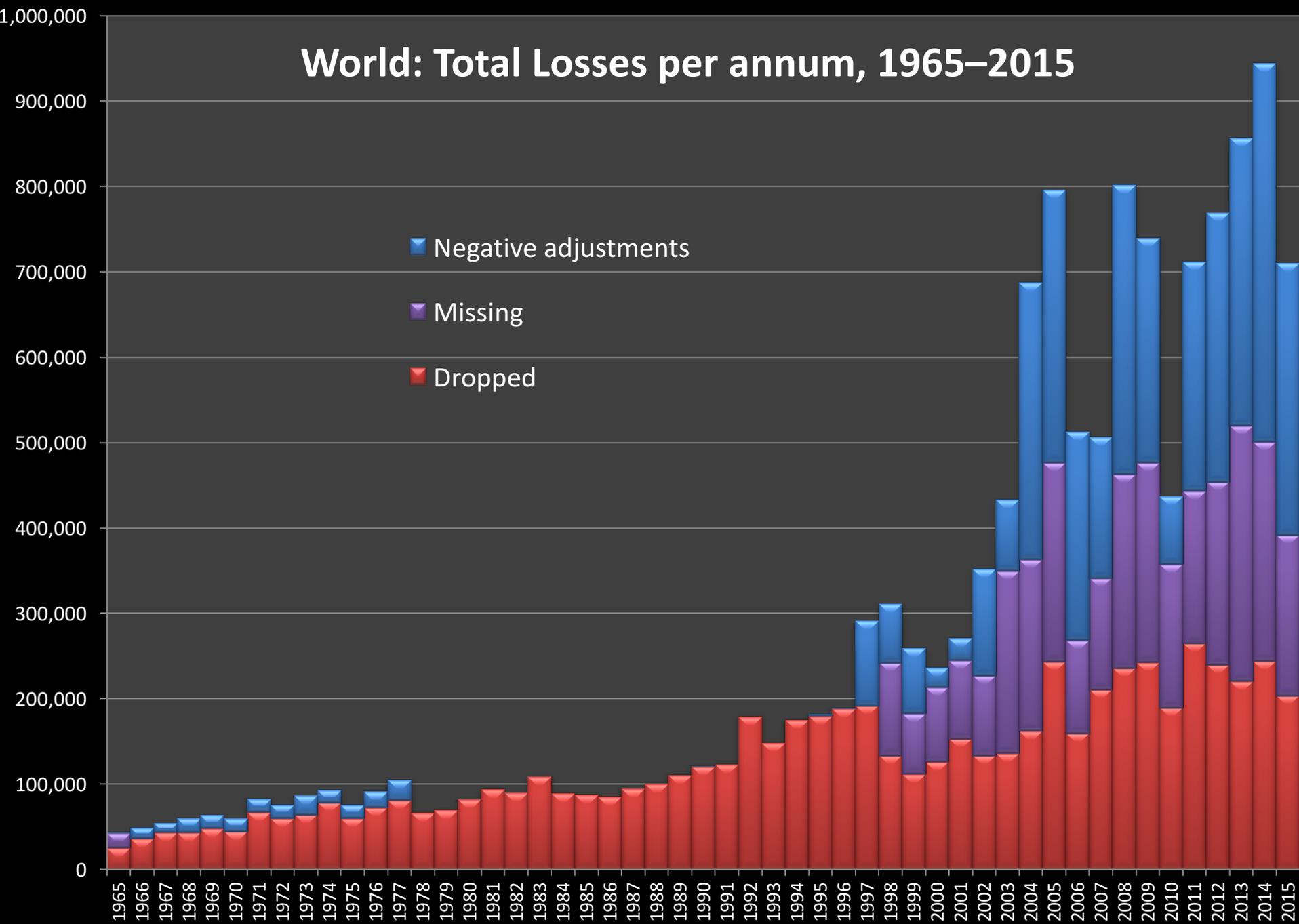
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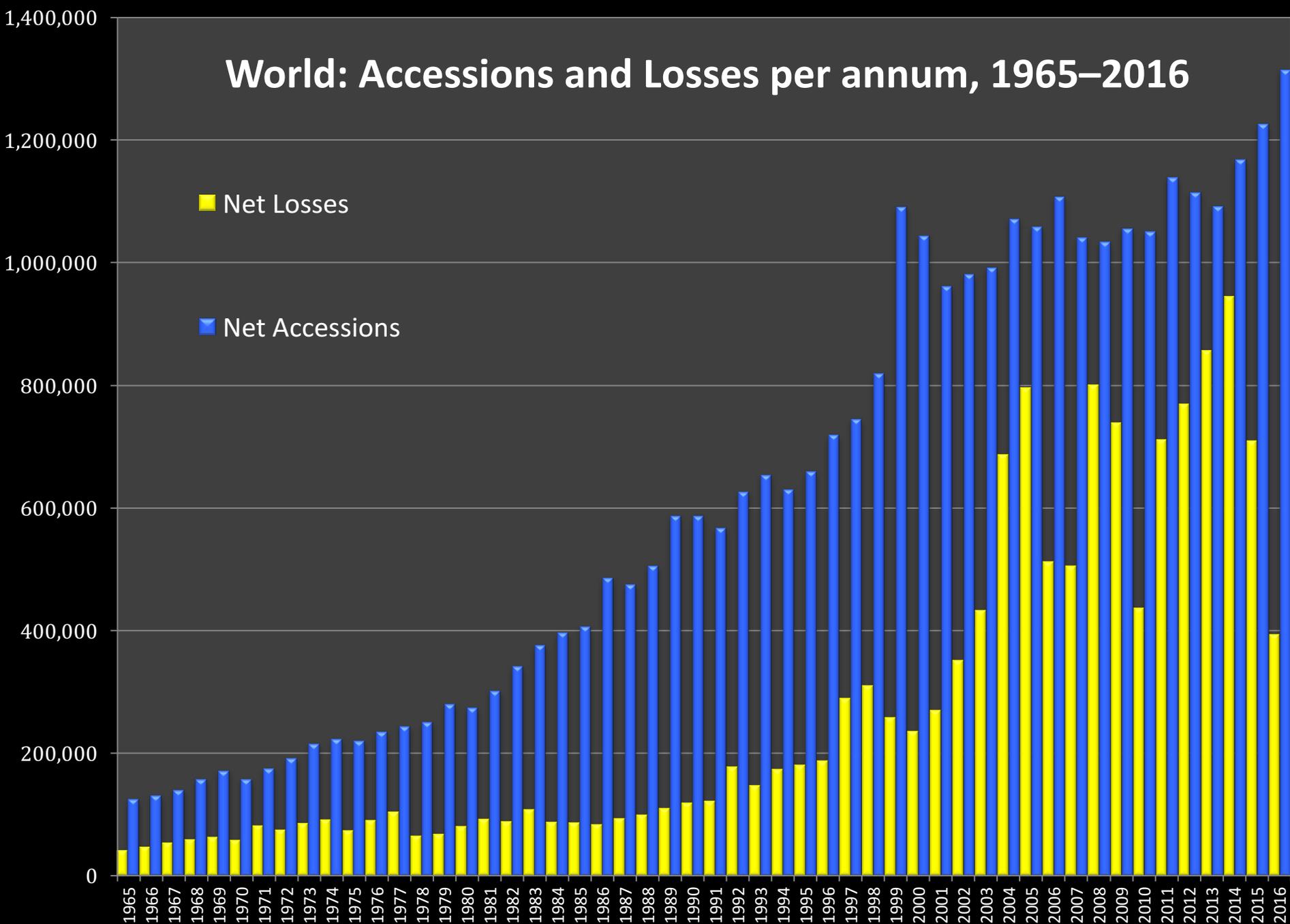
World: Total Losses per annum, 1965–2015



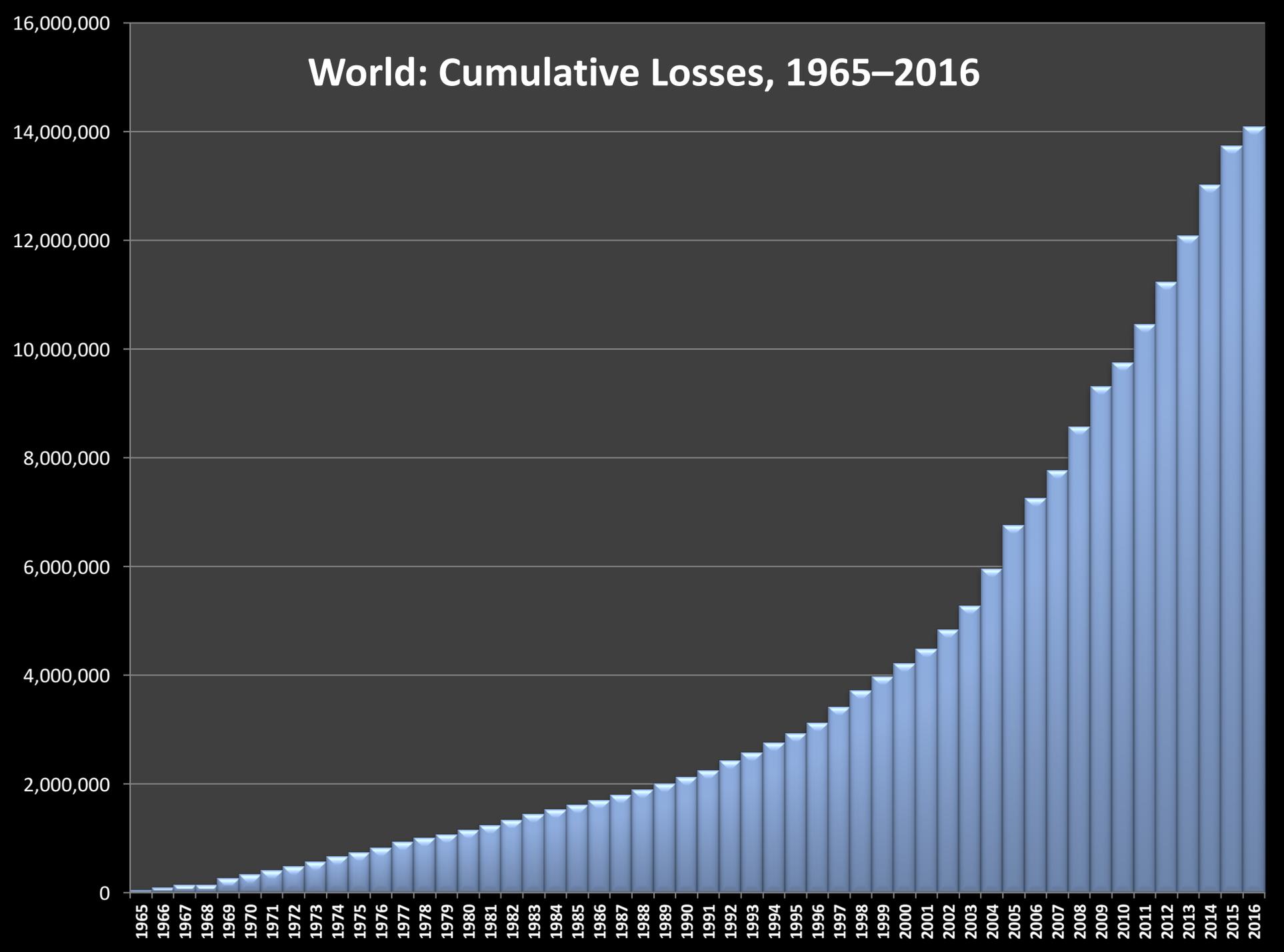
World: Accessions and Losses per annum, 1965–2016

■ Net Losses

■ Net Accessions

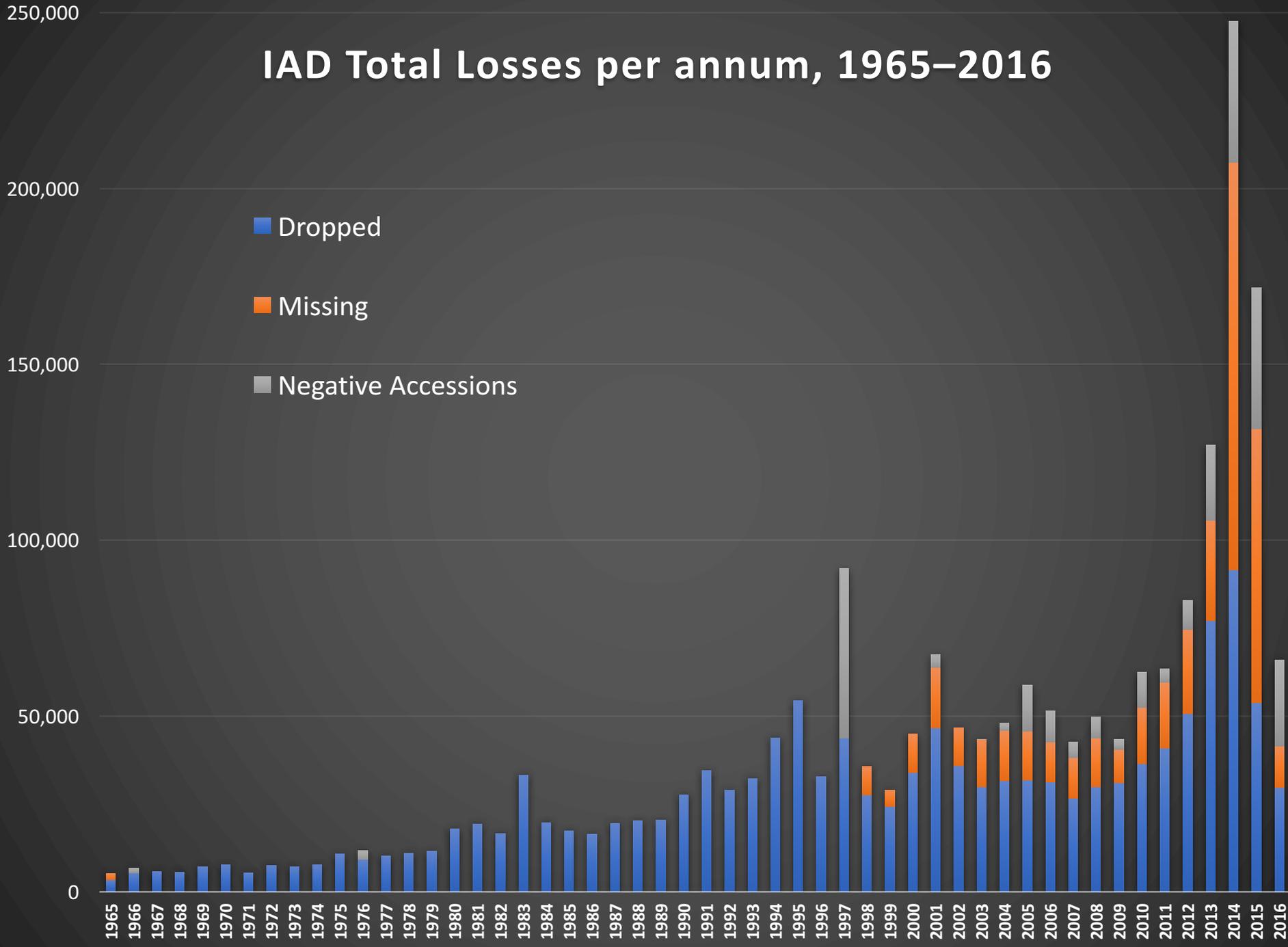


World: Cumulative Losses, 1965–2016



IAD Total Losses per annum, 1965–2016

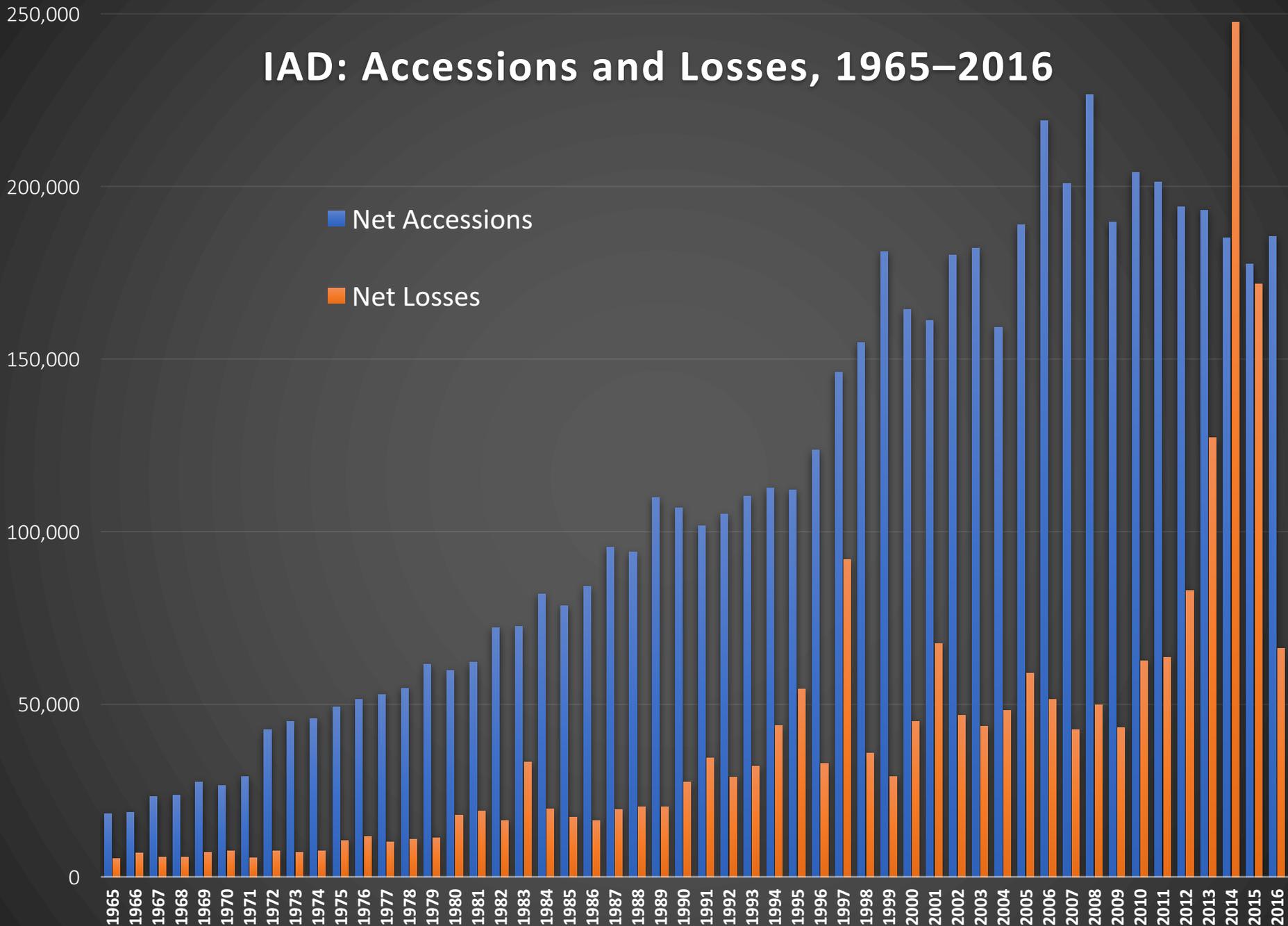
- Dropped
- Missing
- Negative Accessions



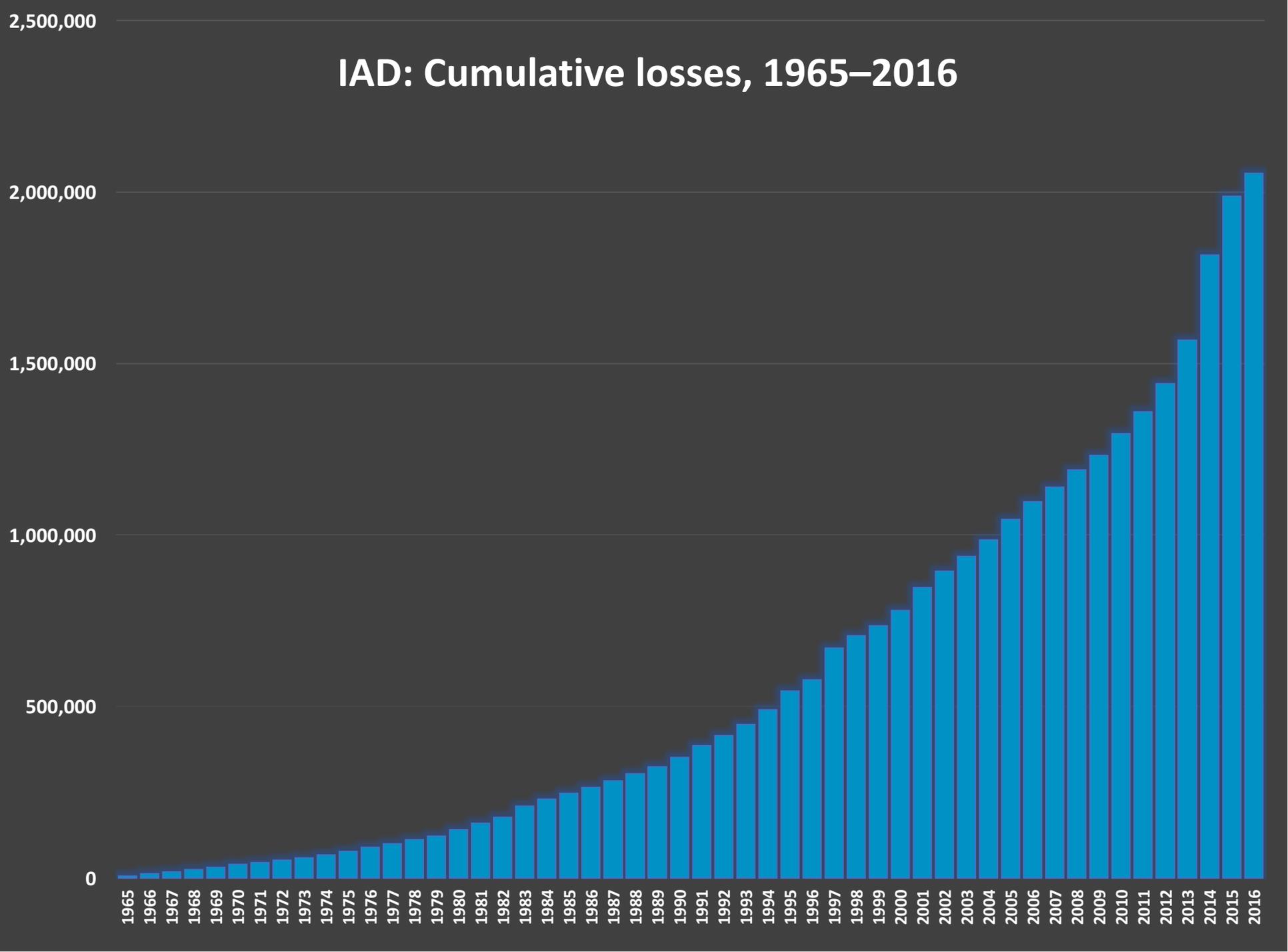
IAD: Accessions and Losses, 1965–2016

Net Accessions

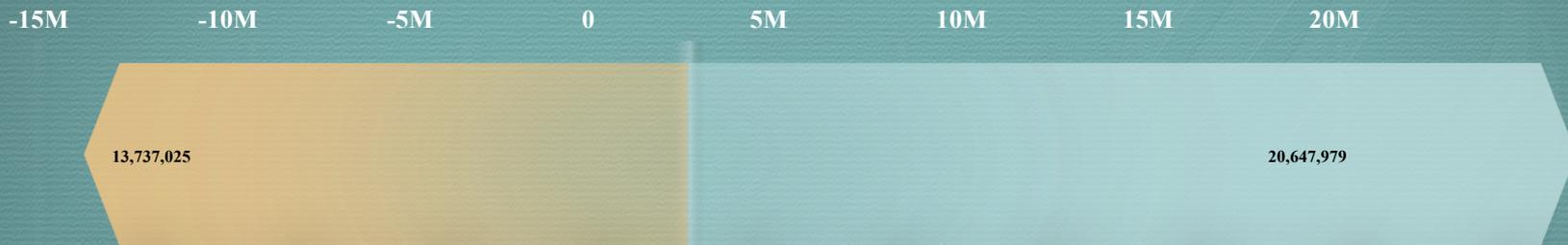
Net Losses



IAD: Cumulative losses, 1965–2016



GLOBAL: MEMBERS WHO LEFT, 1965–2015



- Members who left
- Members who stayed

Since 1965, there have been **34,385,004** church members.

Of those, **13,737,025** (or more) have chosen to leave the church.

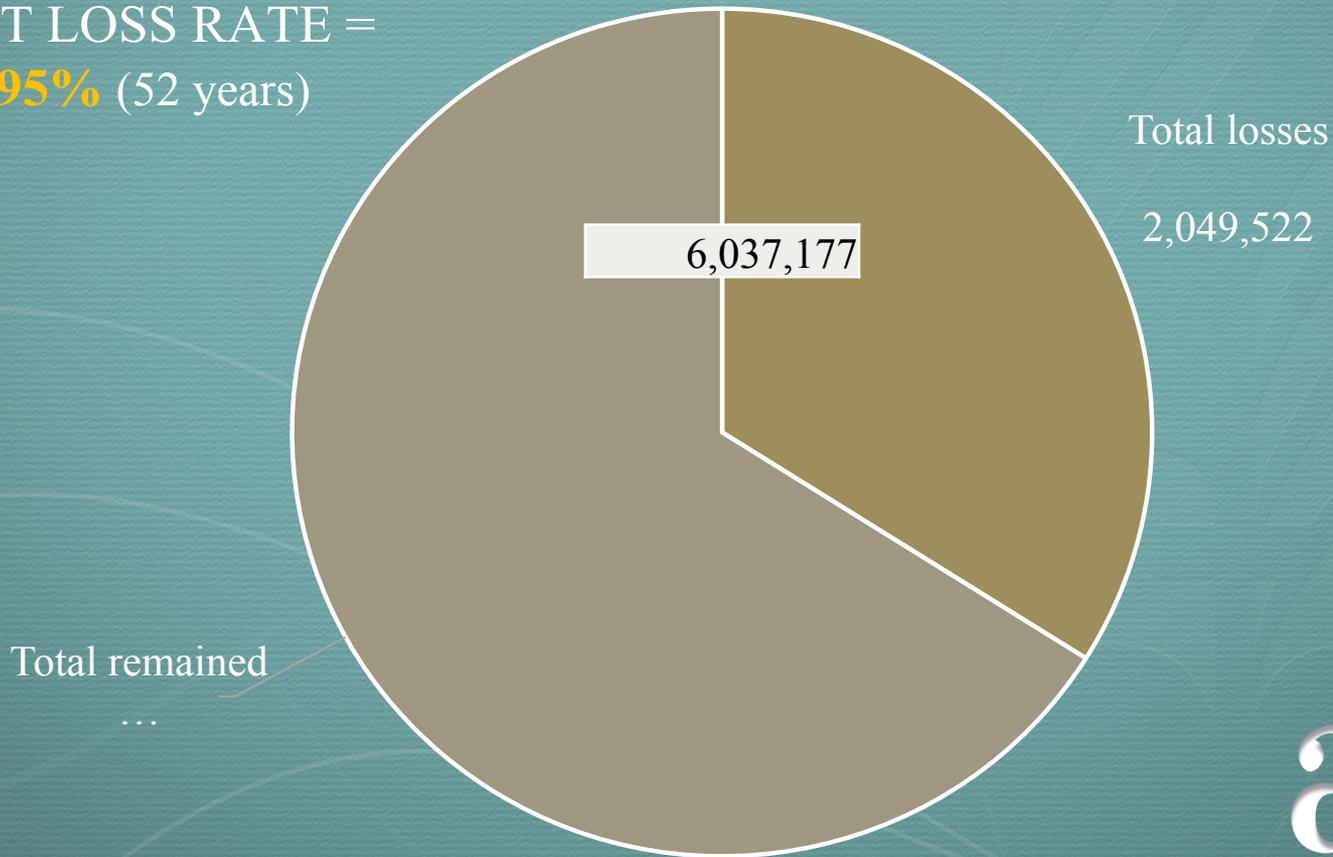
Our net loss rate is 39.95%

In effect, at least four members have slipped away for every ten who were in the church.

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IAD MEMBERSHIP, 1965–2015: REMAINED VS LEFT

NET LOSS RATE =
33.95% (52 years)



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2. Why did They Leave?

Research findings from
two global surveys of
Seventh-day Adventists



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Two Studies of lapsed Adventists

In 2011, Seventh-day Adventist church leaders, concerned about evidence that a large proportion of its members were leaving the church, decided to carry out worldwide research into the factors that may be involved. Because of the nature of this research, two studies were carried out: one qualitative, one quantitative—both were global.

1. The General Conference strategic planning group contracted the Center for Creative Ministry, an American Adventist research group, to carry out in-depth interviews with members who no longer attend church; this was qualitative research, but with results able to be summarized in quantitative form. **925 interviews**

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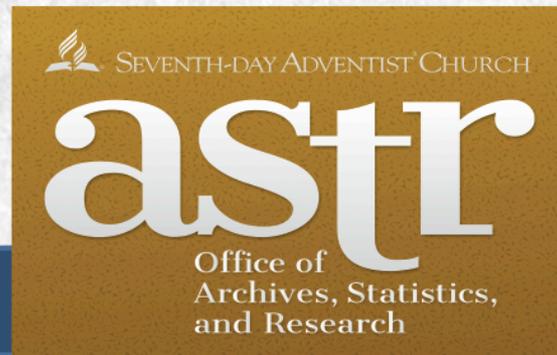
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Two Studies of lapsed Adventists

2. Under the leadership of the General Conference Nurture and Retention Committee, a detailed quantitative survey was developed by the Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research (ASTR) and administered to members who had left the church. **785 surveys completed/returned**

Many of the findings of the studies complement each other, which adds confidence to the conclusions. This presentation includes data from both research projects.



Demographics



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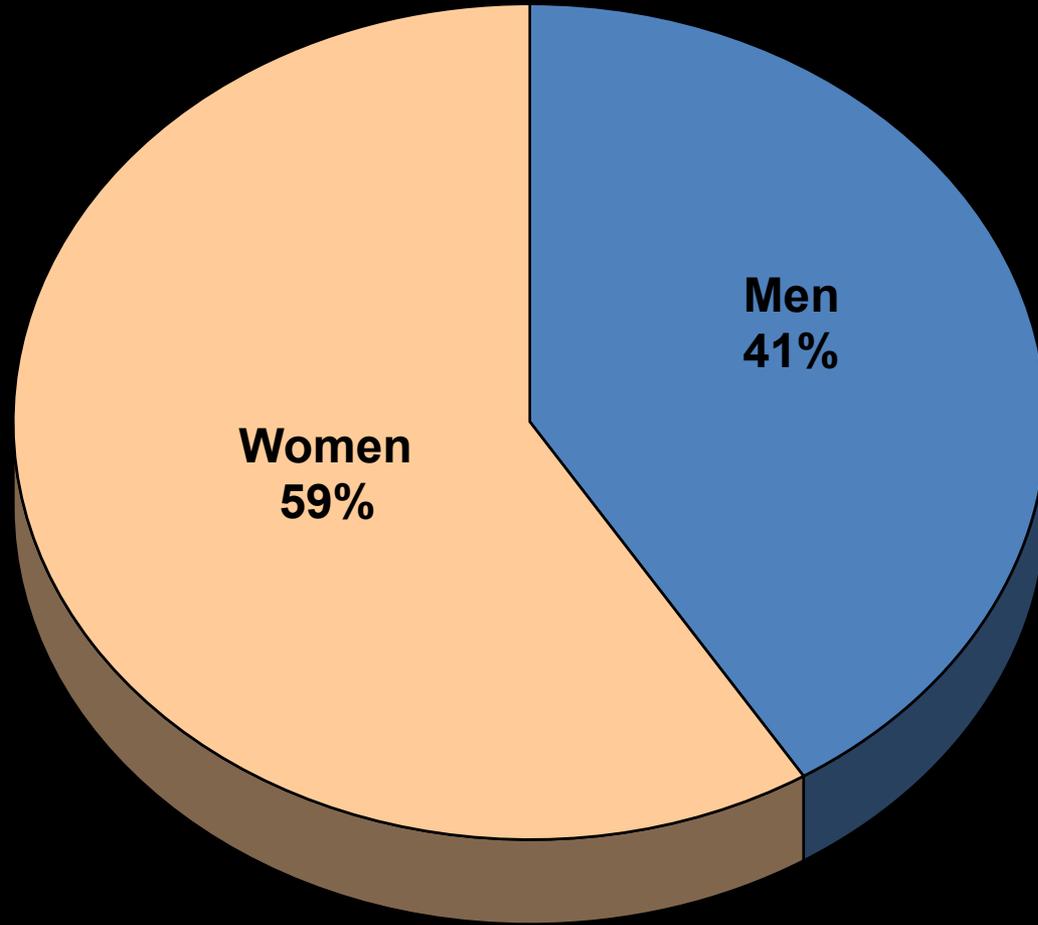
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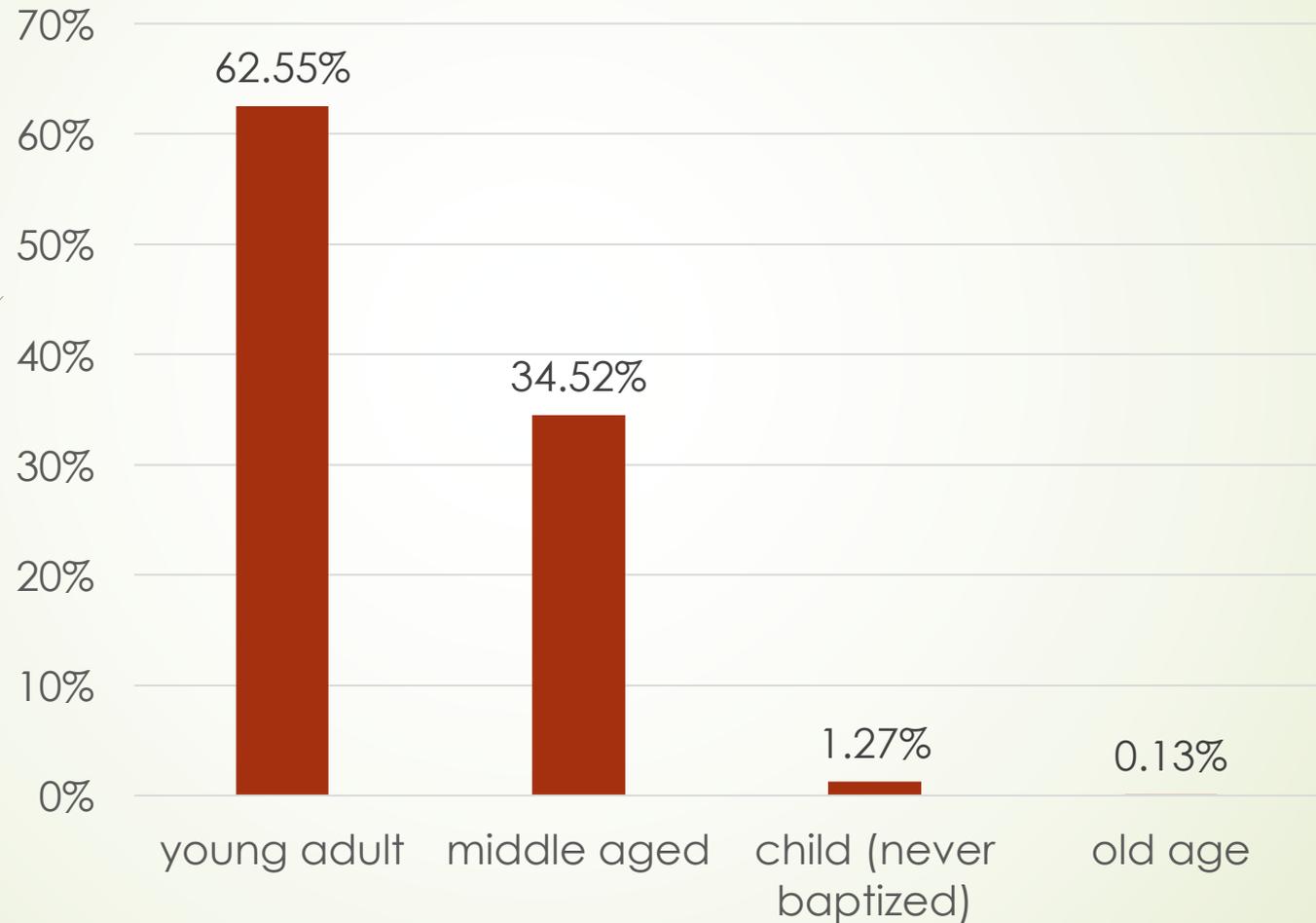
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Demographics: Gender



Global church membership: Women 57% Men 43%

Stage of Life at Departure



How ADVENTIST *were* they?

Were they *well grounded* in our faith?

Were they spiritually *active*?



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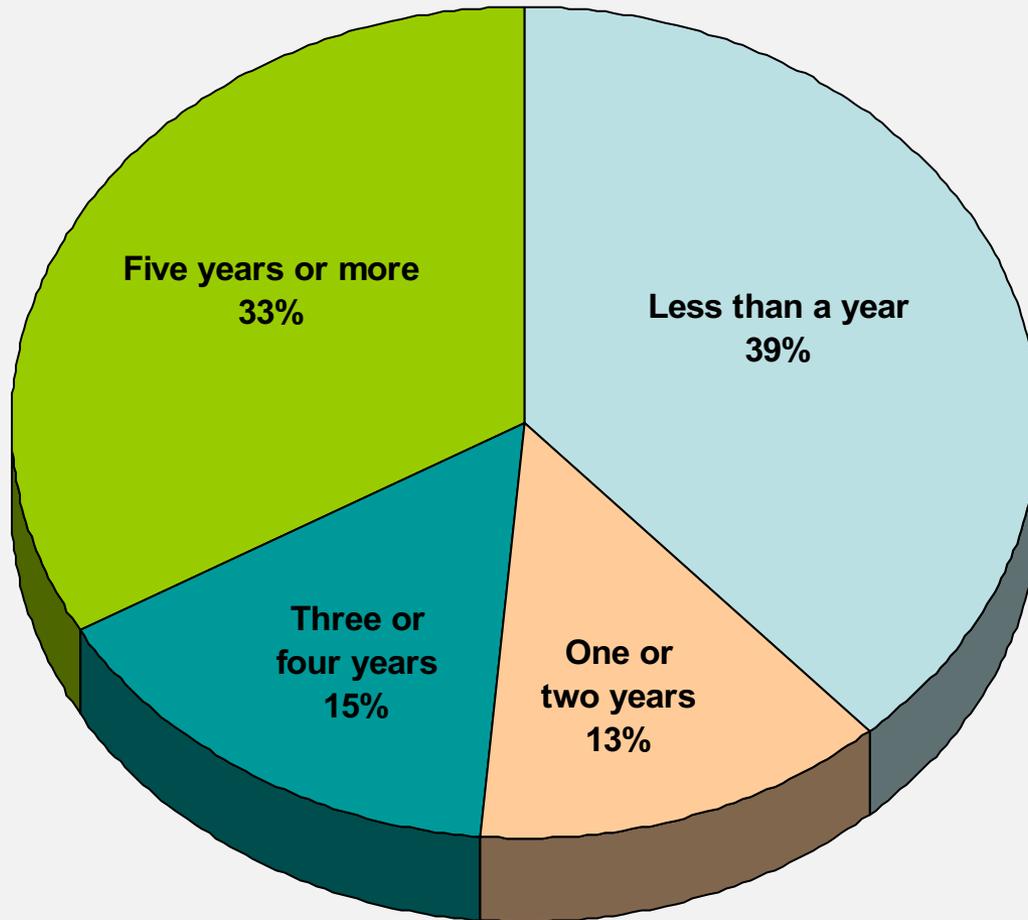
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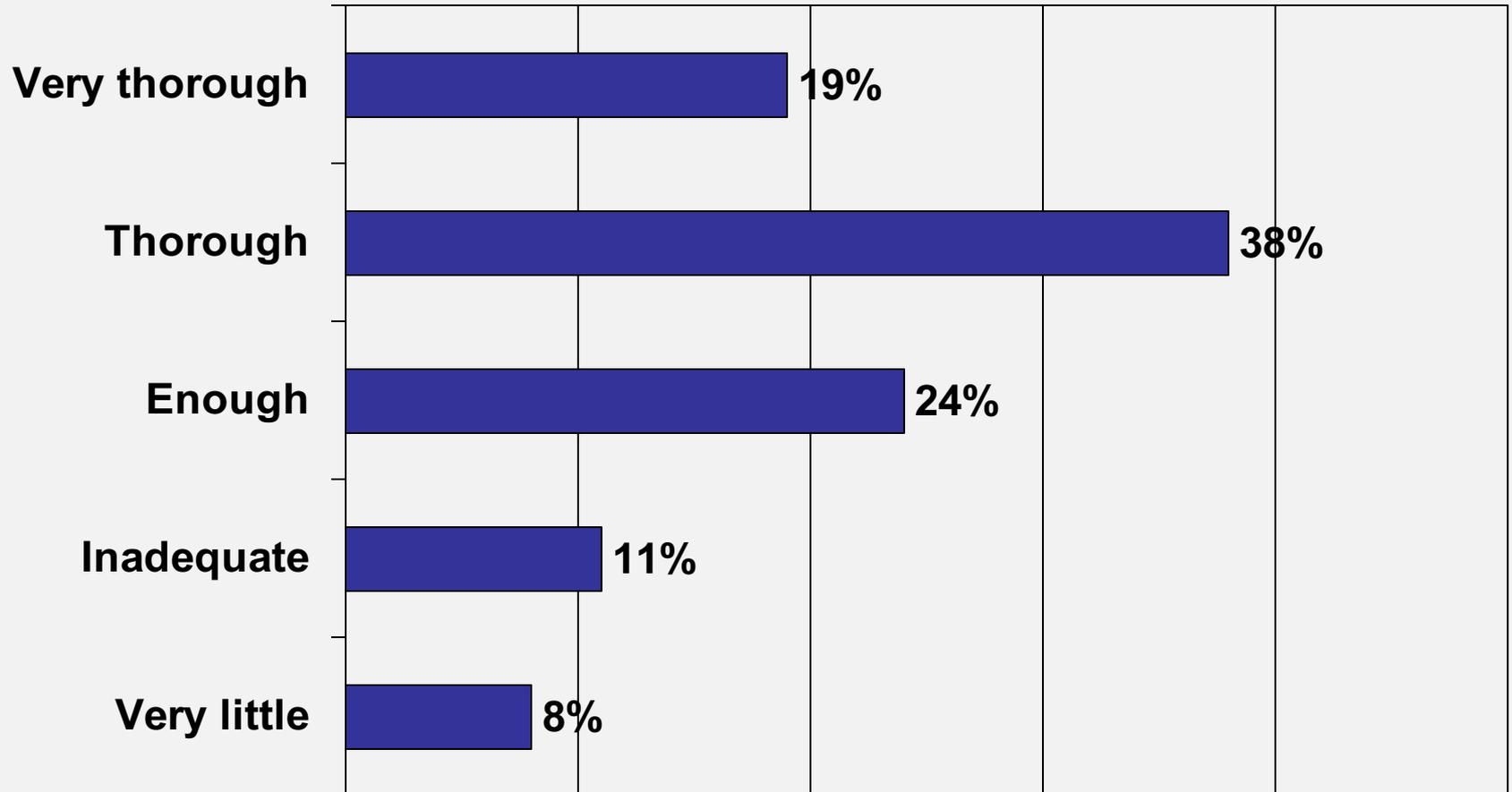


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Time from First Contact to Baptism



How would you describe the instruction given when you joined the church?

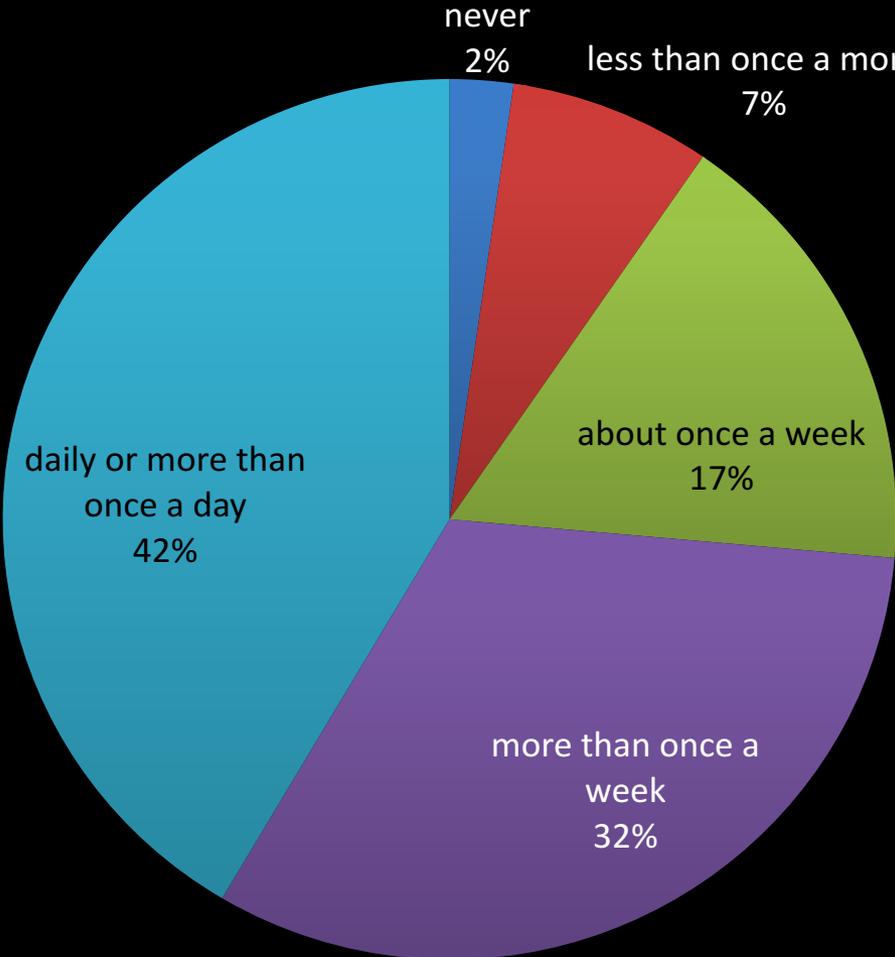


**Former members: Frequency of engagement in spiritual activities
while Adventist: Personal Bible study**



Multiple
times per
week =
70%

Current church members: personal Bible-study



Multiple times per week = 74%

How ADVENTIST are they *now*?

Since many seem to have been active and faithful SDAs, the question arises:

How sympathetic are these ex-Adventists
to what we believe?

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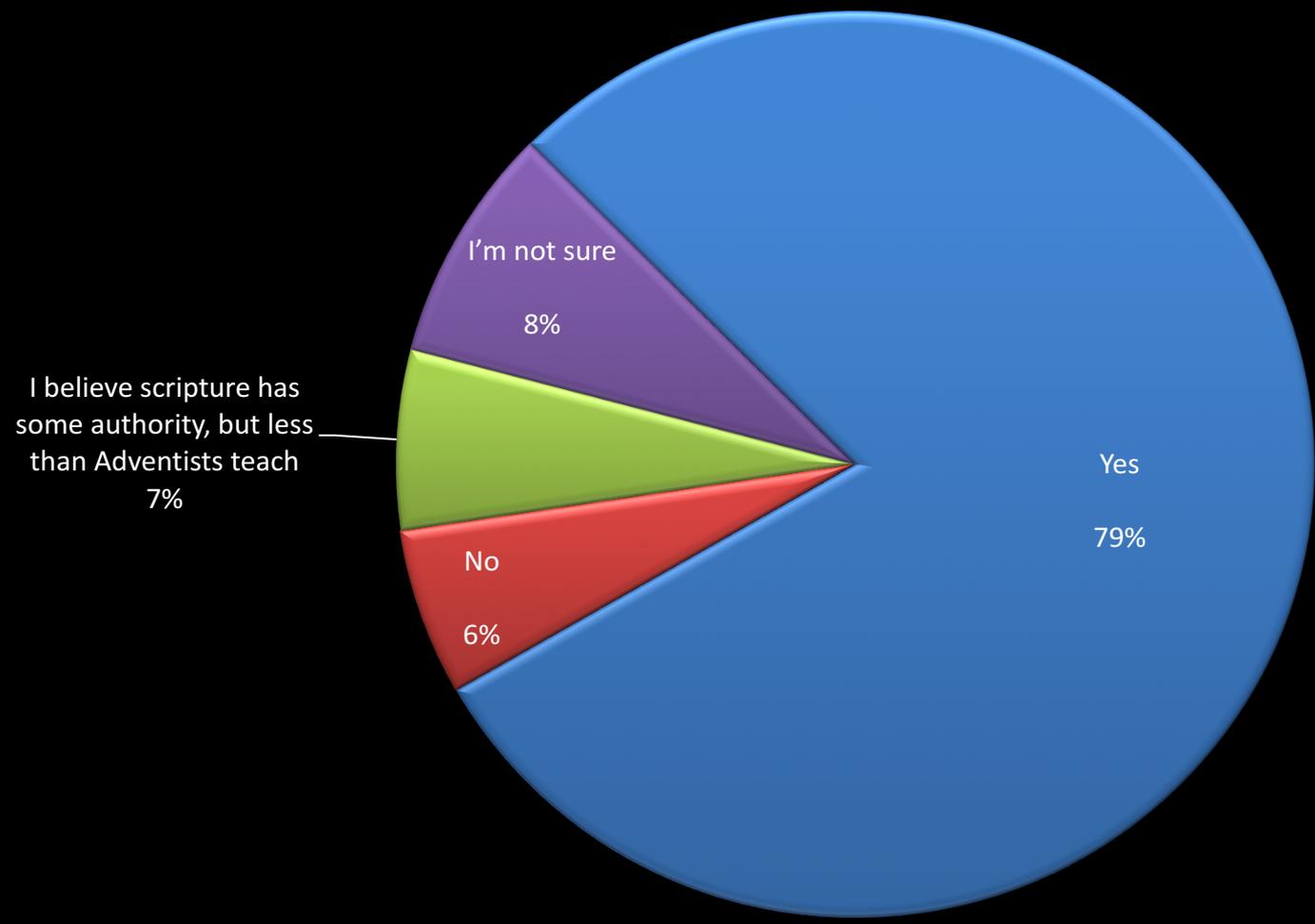
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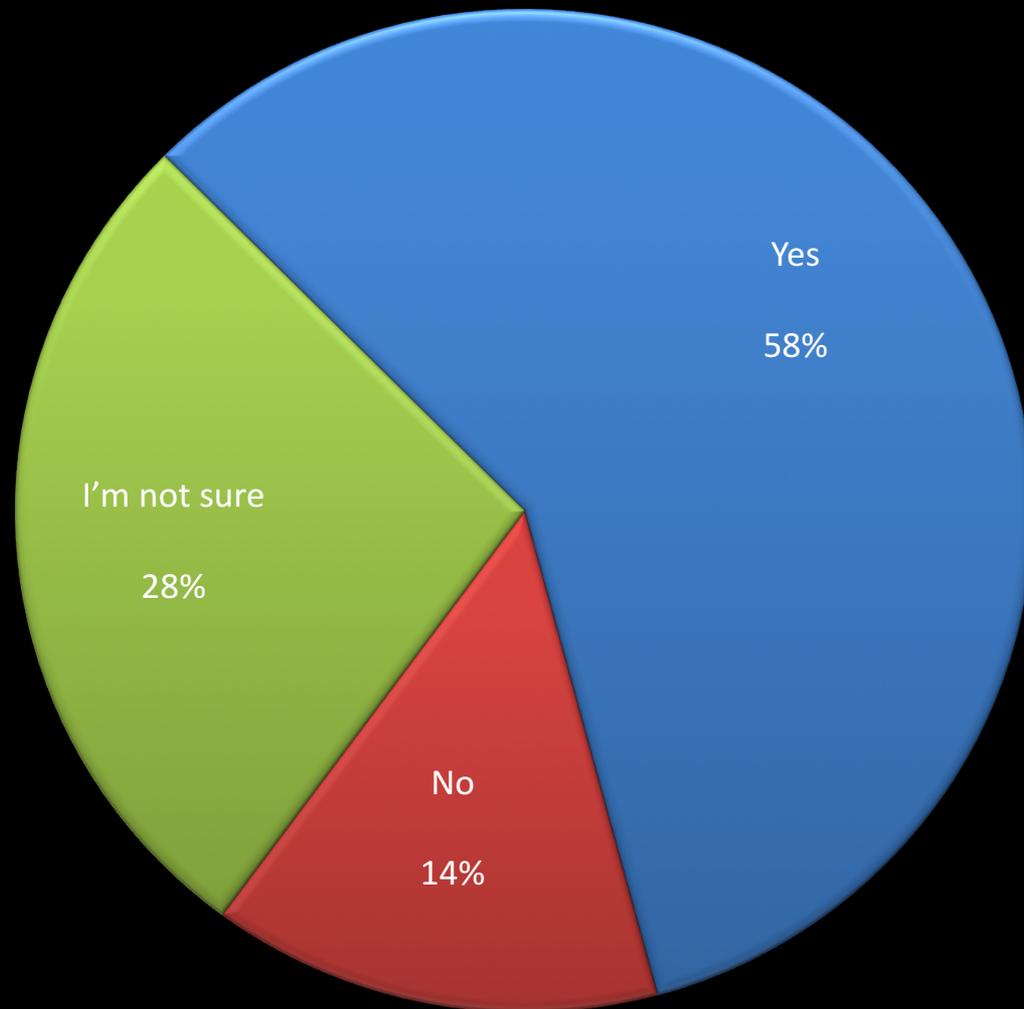


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Do you still believe in the authority of Scripture, as taught by the Seventh-day Adventist Church?



Do you still believe in the gift of prophecy manifested in Ellen White?



What did you think of the Adventist church at the time you left it?

