

# JOINING & REMAINING

---



## A Look at the Data on the Role of Adventist Education

**Larry Blackmer, EdD**

*[larryblackmer@nadadventist.org](mailto:larryblackmer@nadadventist.org)*

**John Wesley Taylor V**

*[taylorjw@gc.adventist.org](mailto:taylorjw@gc.adventist.org)*

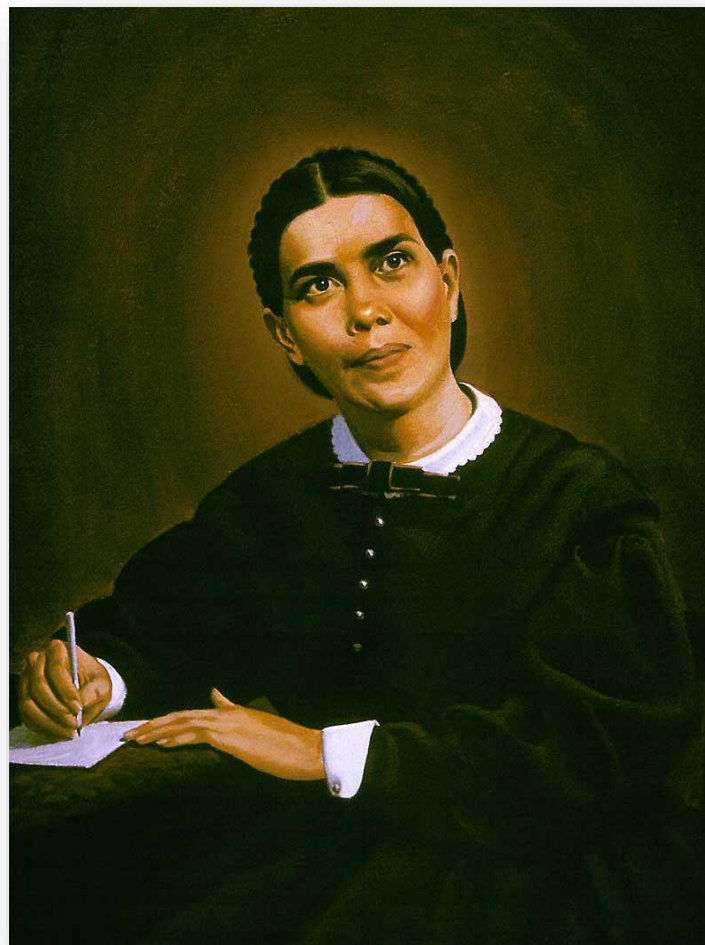
# Our highest priority...

The all-important matter in education “should be the **conversion of the students.**”

*Fundamentals of Christian Education, p. 436*

**Conversion**

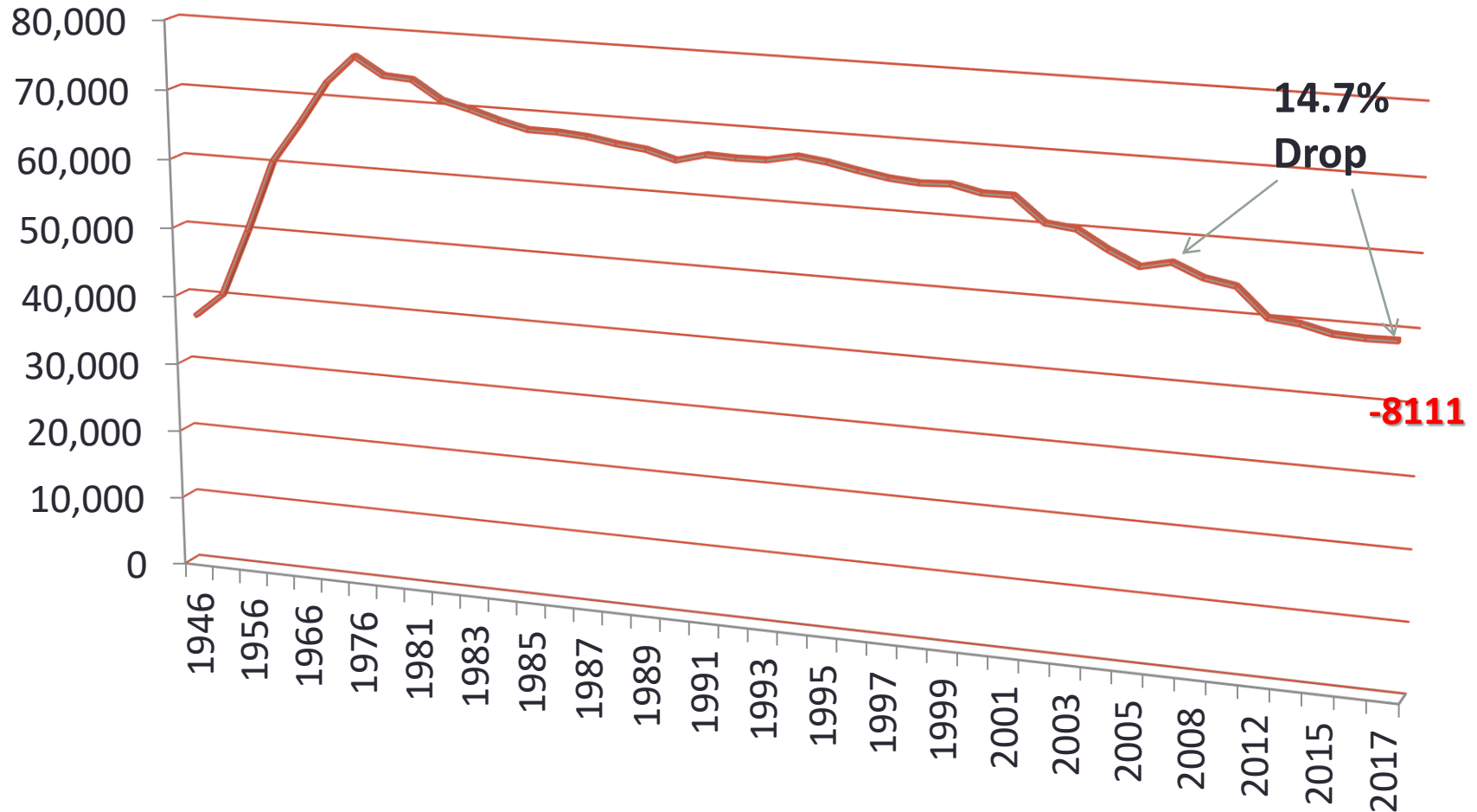
↳ **Baptism**



# NAD Membership

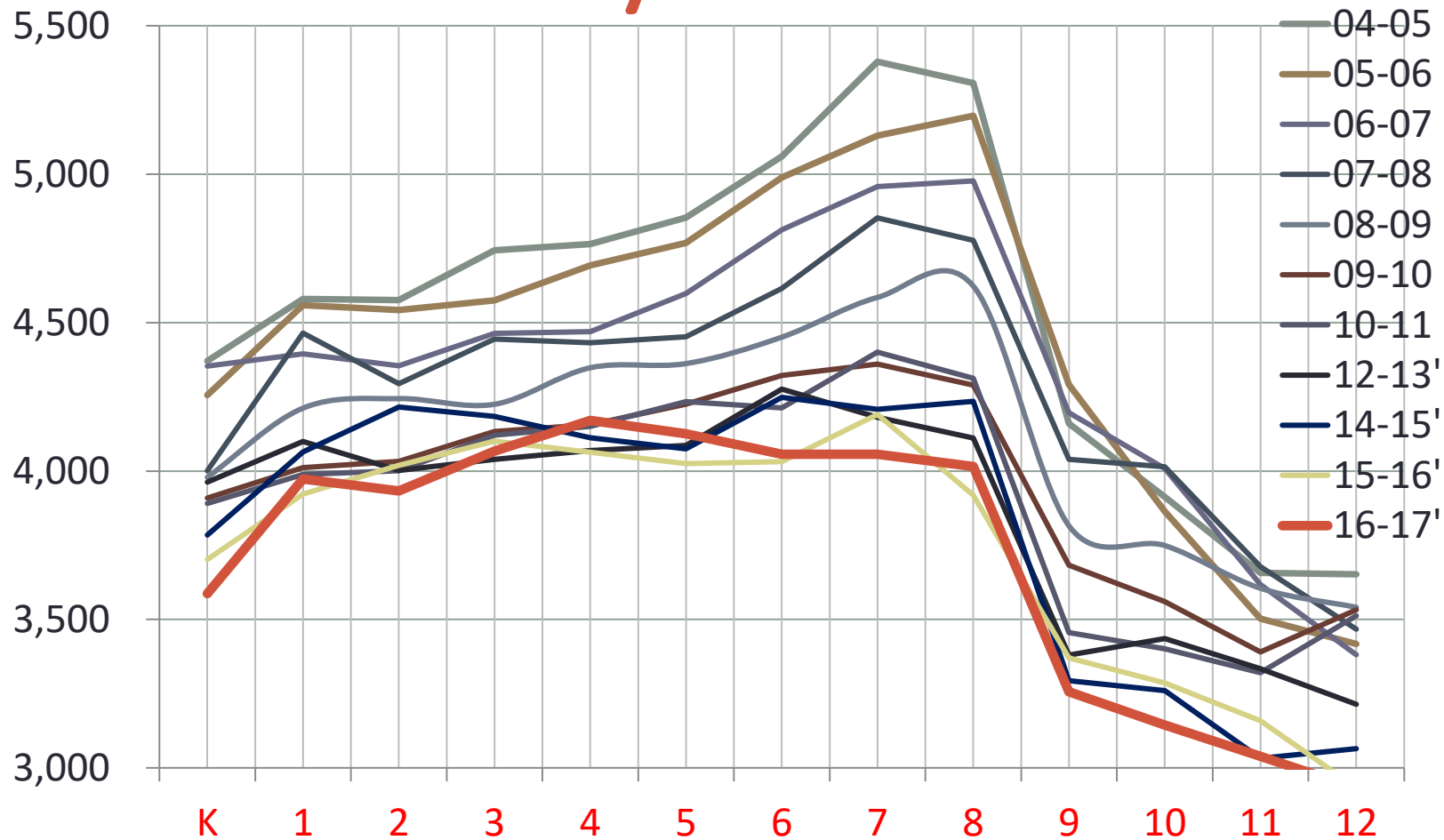


# NAD School Enrollment

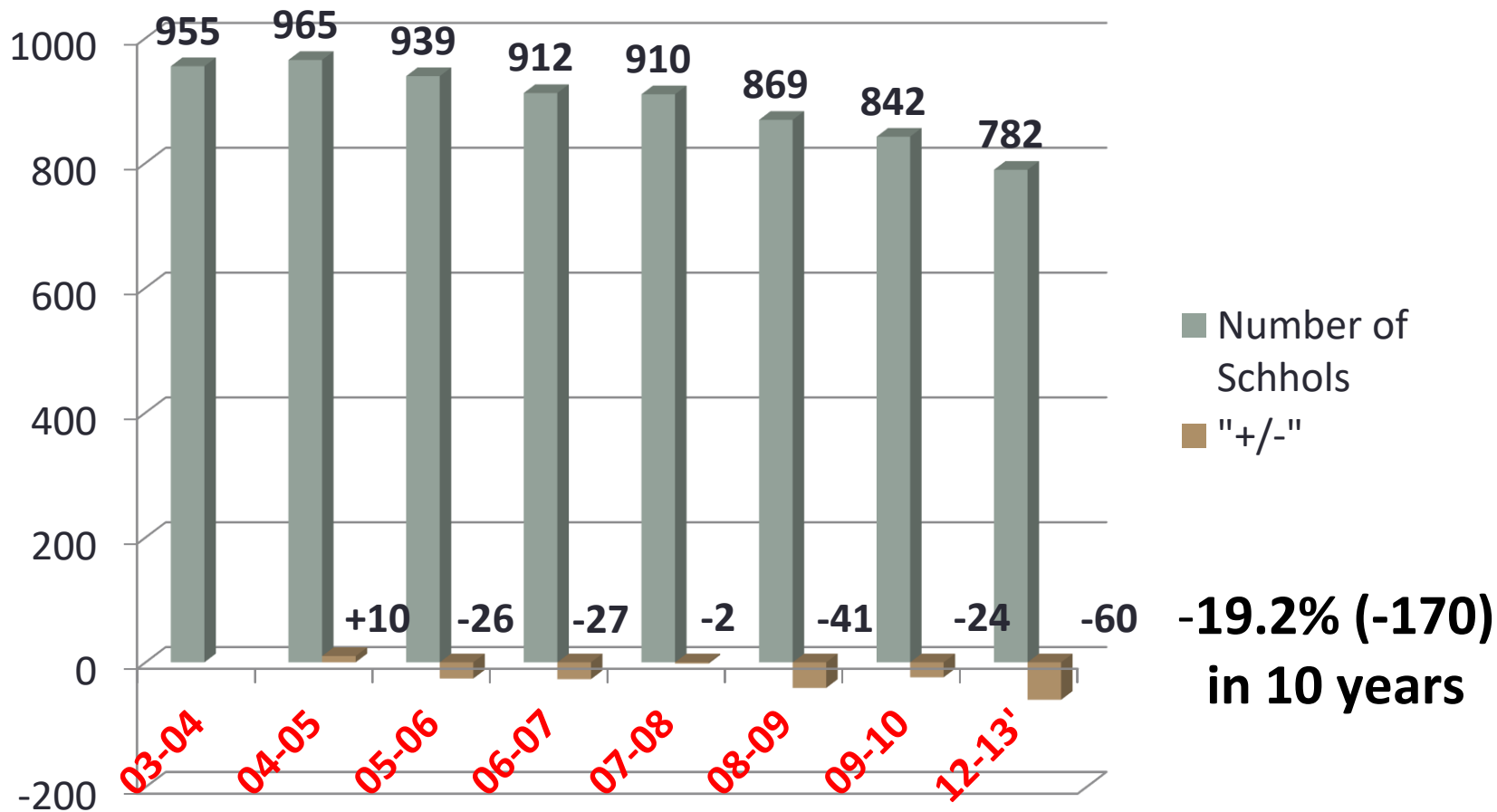




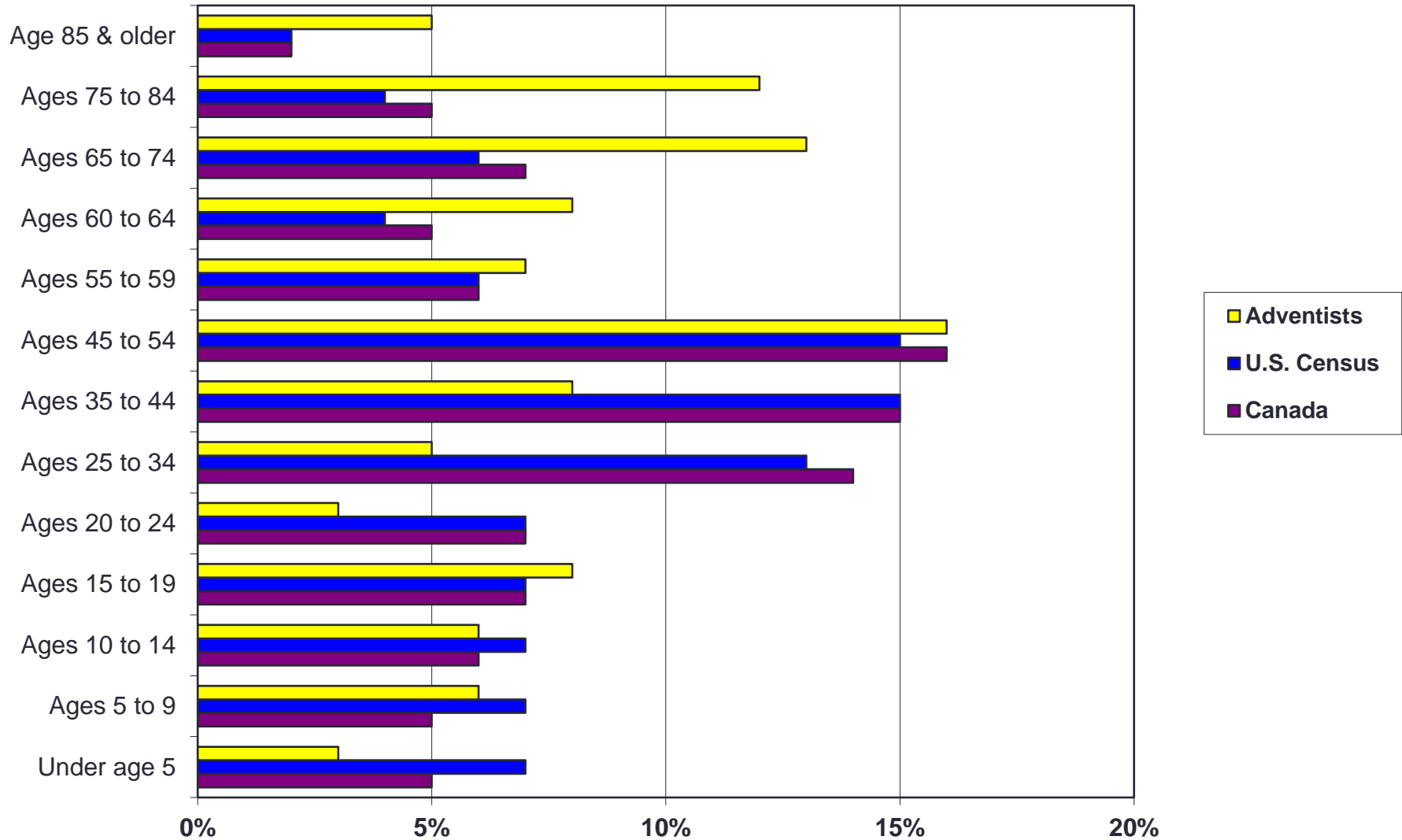
# Enrollment by Grade



# Number of Schools

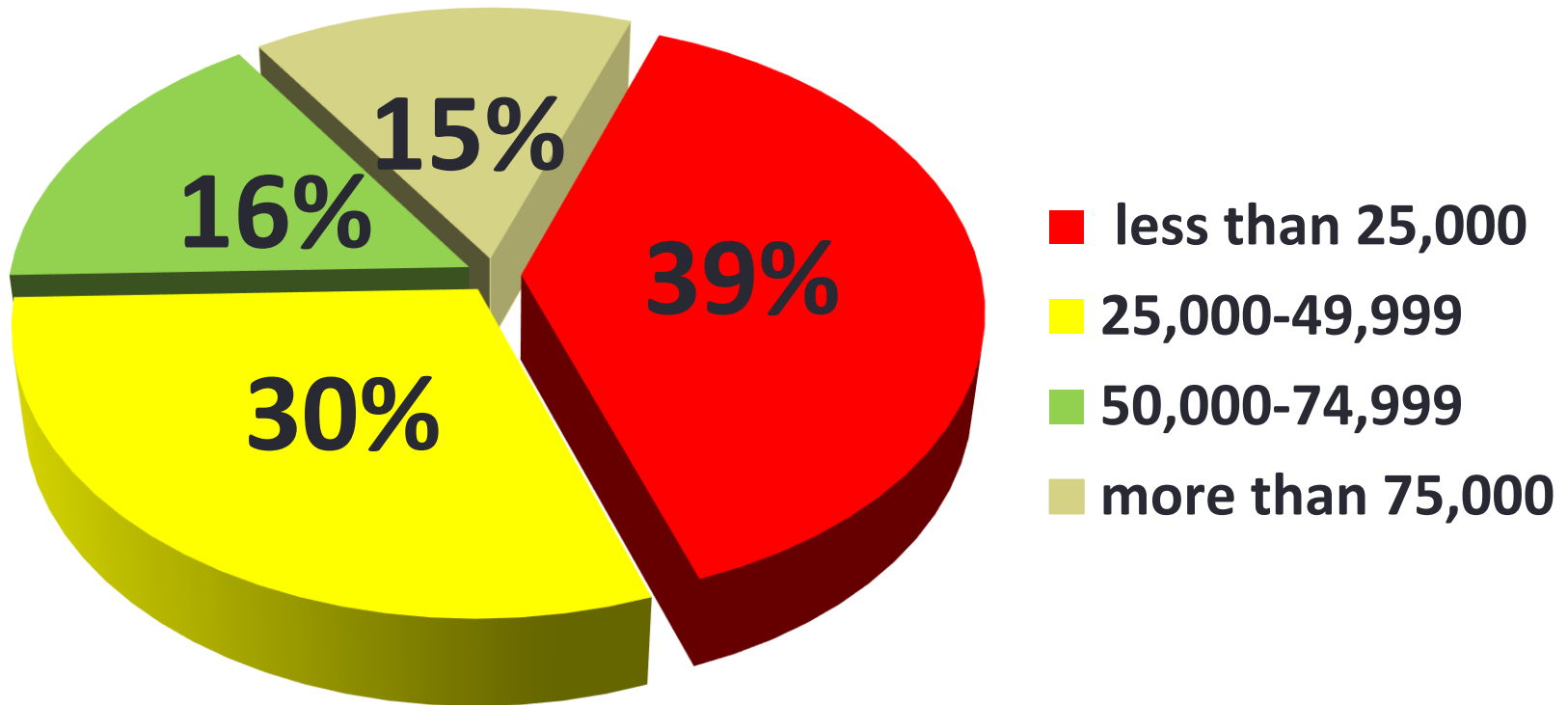


# Demographics





# Household Income



K-12 = \$5,229

Elem = \$4,489

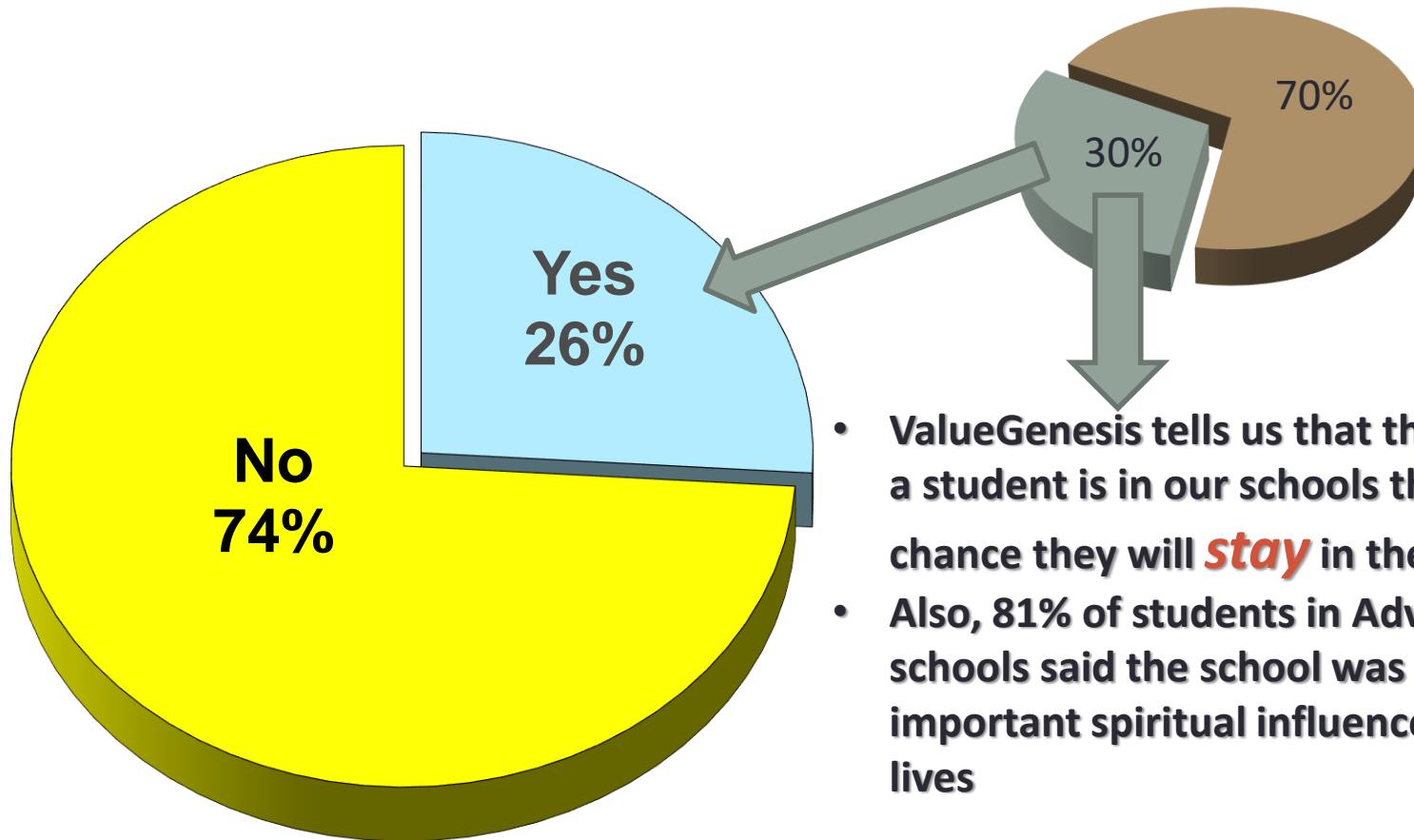
Day = \$6,500

Boarding = \$9,650 + \$6,112 = \$15,762

Colleges ~\$30,000

# School-aged Children in the Home

- In Adventist Schools
- Not in Adventist Schools



- ValueGenesis tells us that the longer a student is in our schools the better chance they will *stay* in the church!
- Also, 81% of students in Adventist schools said the school was the most important spiritual influence in their lives

# ACCESSION TO THE CHURCH

---

The Role of Adventist Education

# Baptisms in Adventist Education

Year	Baptized
2006	30,778
2007	33,766
2008	33,138
2009	40,415
2010	49,176
2011	50,752
2012	49,774
2013	48,604
2014	47,435
2015	43,475

**427,313**

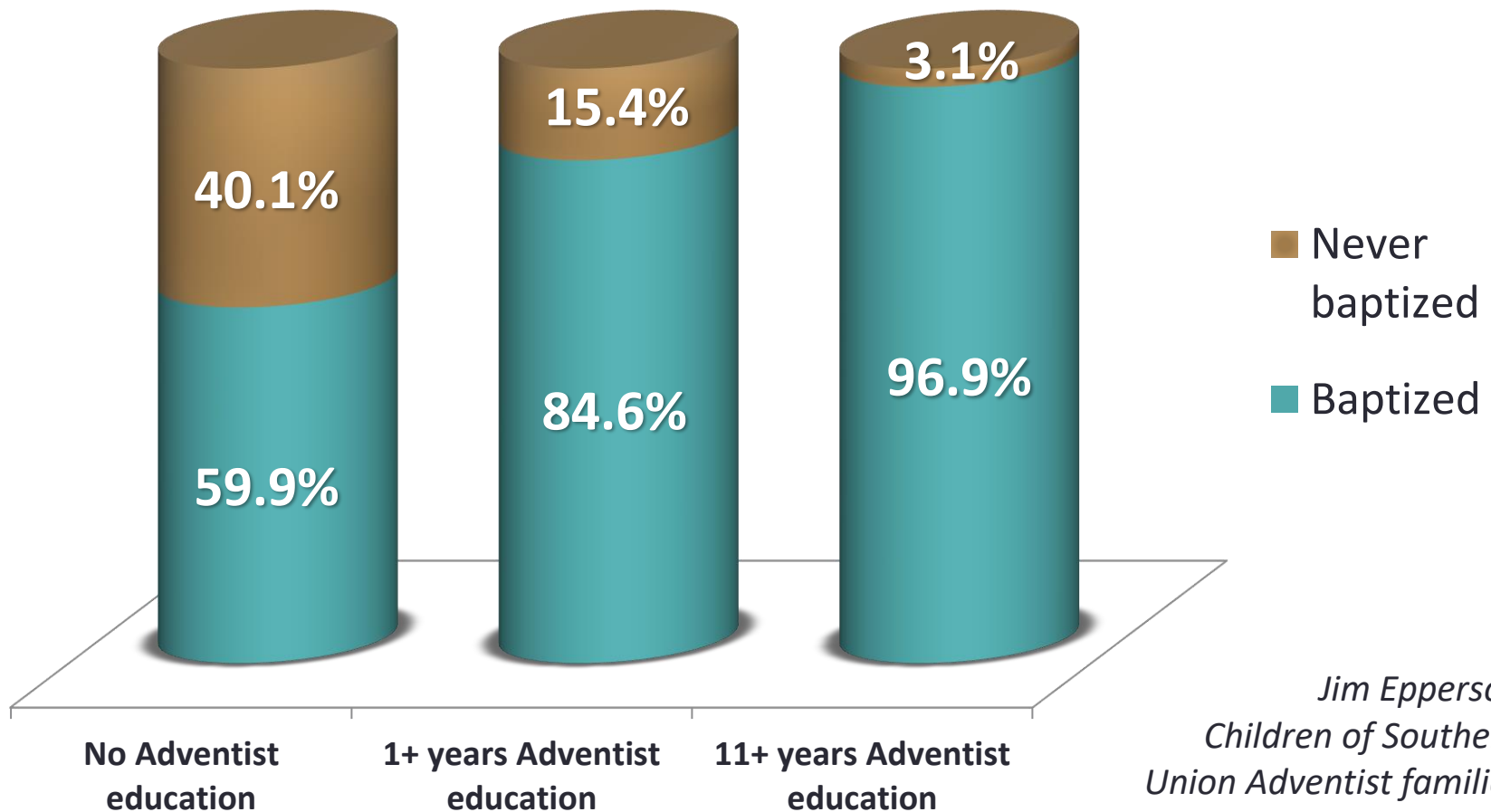
**baptisms**

**A conference**

**established**

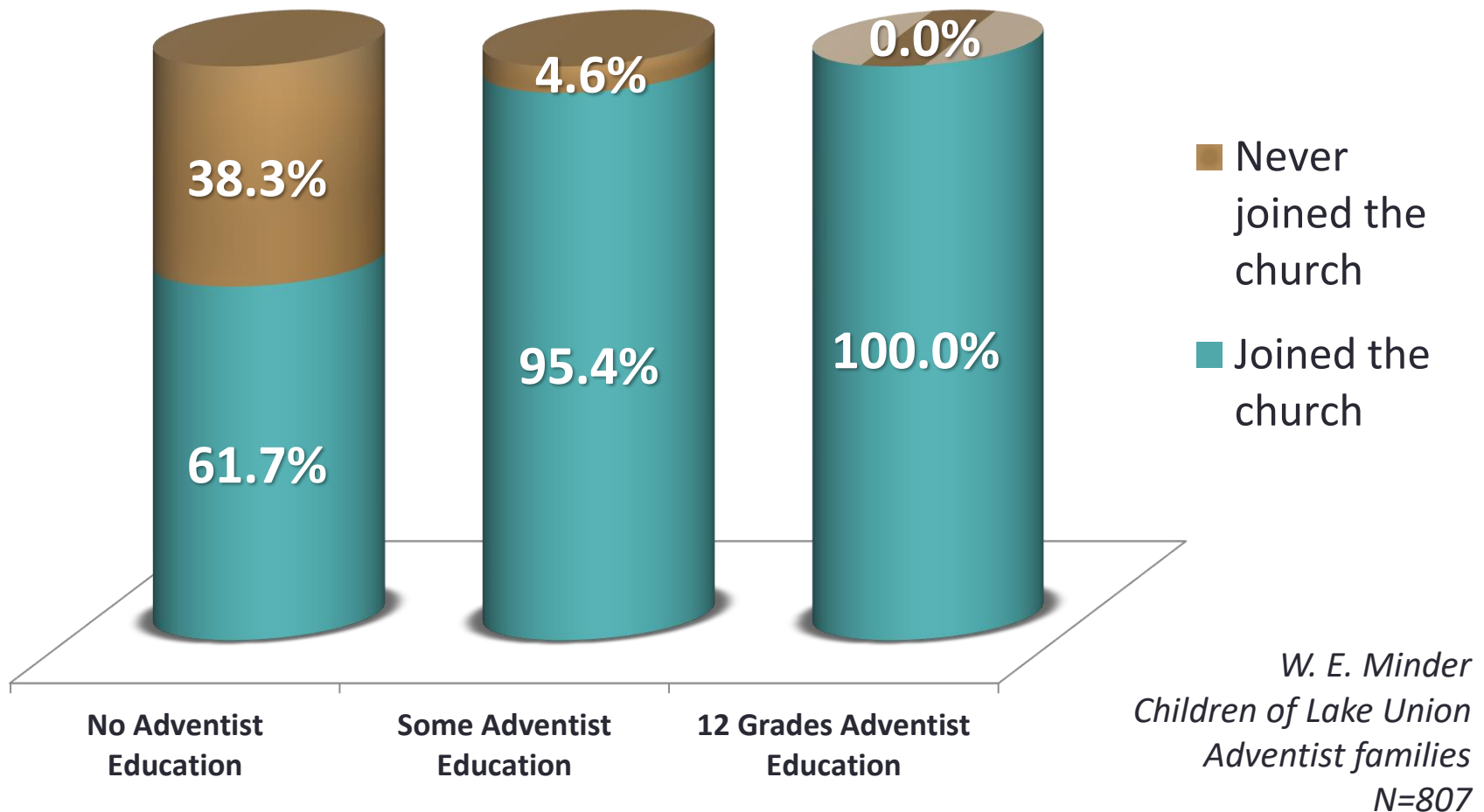
**each year**

# Does Adventist Education make a difference?

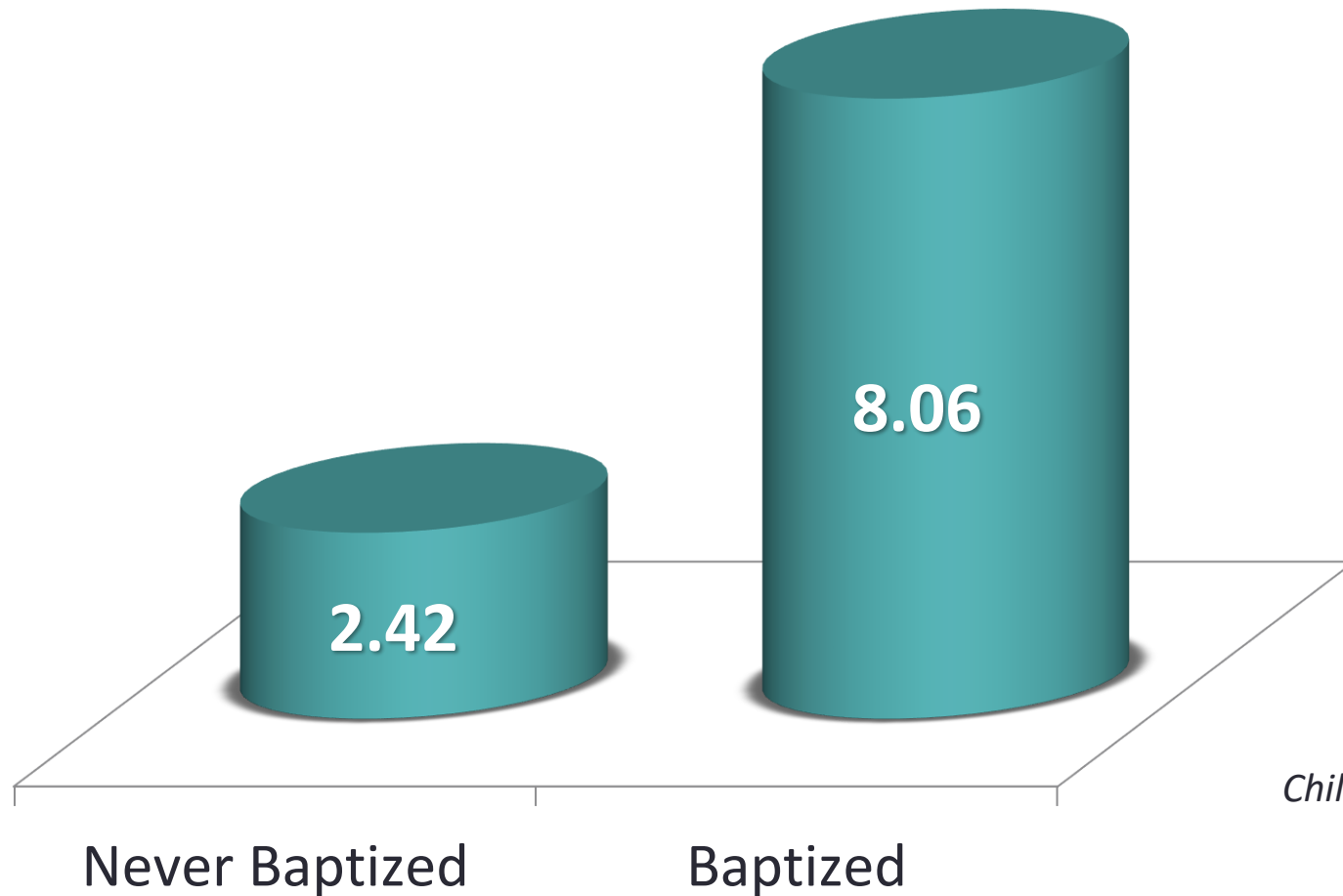


*Jim Epperson  
Children of Southern  
Union Adventist families  
N=844*

# Does Adventist Education make a difference?



# Average Years Attendance: Adventist School



*W. E. Minder  
Children of Lake Union  
Adventist families  
N=807*

# Adventist Education Is Mission

**“The work  
of education  
and the work of redemption  
are one.”** *Education*, p. 30



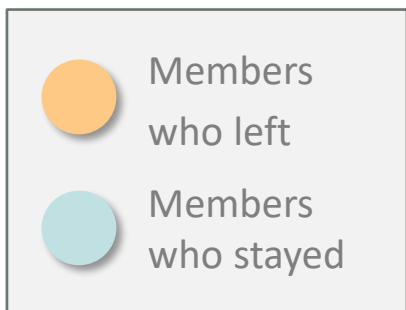
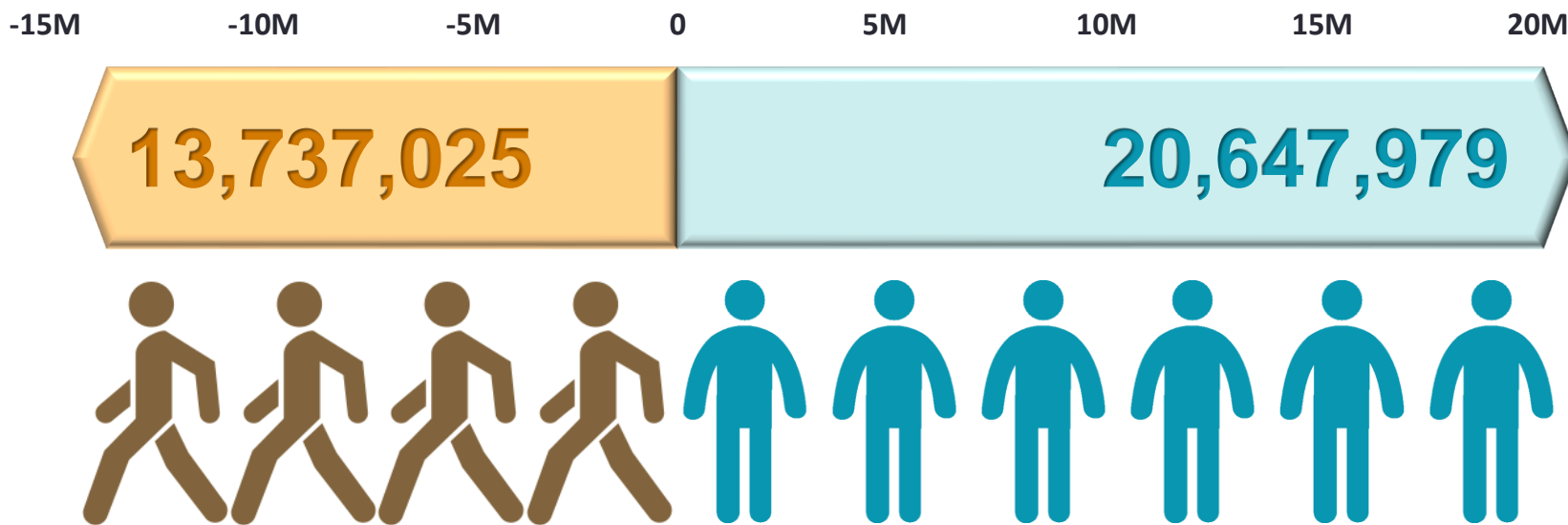


# RETENTION IN THE CHURCH

---

The Role of Adventist Education

# Members who leave

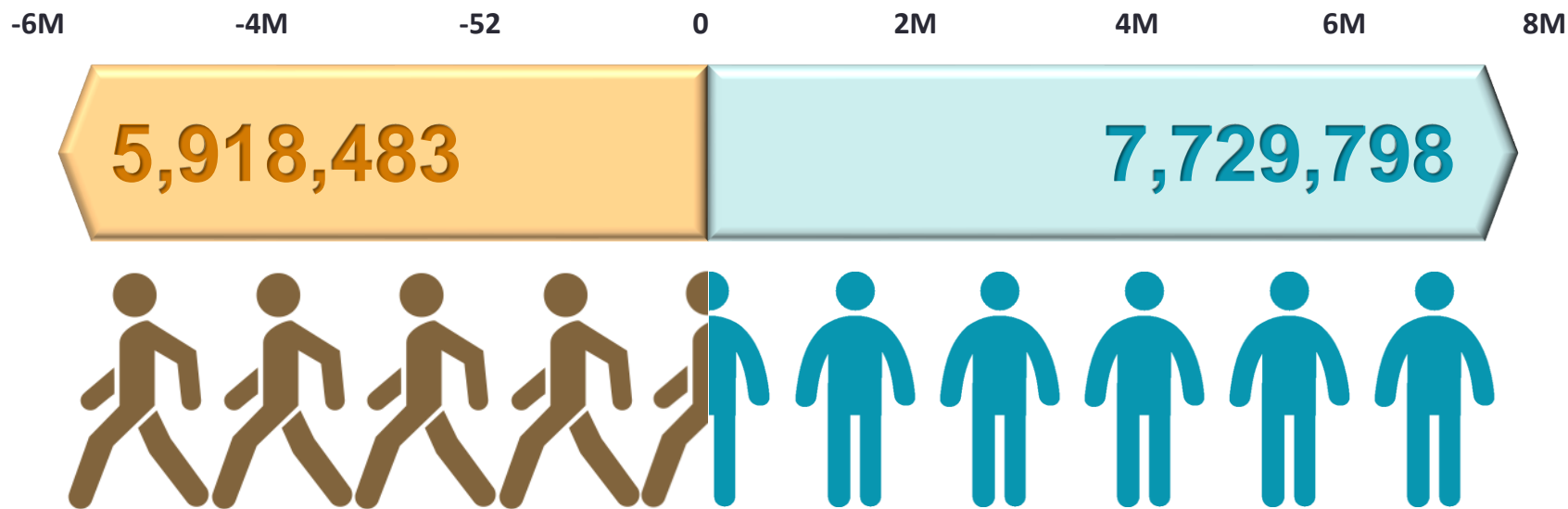




Since 1965: **34,385,004** church members

**Net loss rate: 39.95%**

Of 10 members, **4** have slipped away.

# Members who leave



-  Members who left
-  Members who stayed

In 2000-2012, there were 13,648,281 accessions

Our net loss rate: **43.36%**

# Youth who leave

## Landmark “Youth Retention” study

- Over **1,500** baptized 15- and 16-year-olds
- **Representative** of Adventist youth:  
Large & small churches, small towns & big cities,  
public schools & Adventist schools, all ethnic groups
- Interviewed each year for the next **10 years**

## How many left the church by age 25-26?

Many demographic groups, approaching:

**50%**

**Where is  
the flock  
that was  
entrusted to you,  
your beautiful flock?**

Jeremiah 13:20

# Seven Studies

**Retention and Adventist Education:** (many are dated, but valid)

1. Valuegenesis Study (multi-year)
2. Youth Retention Study (longitudinal)
3. Epperson Study (dissertation)
4. Rice Study (dissertation, longitudinal)
5. Minder Study (dissertation)
6. Center Creative Ministry Study (global, qual)
7. ASTR “Leaving the Church” Study (global)

# Valuegenesis Study

Data from 2,267 12<sup>th</sup>-grade Adventist students in Adventist schools showed that the more **years of Adventist schooling**, the greater the person's

- ✓ **Denomination loyalty**
- ✓ **Adventist orthodoxy**
- ✓ **Intention to remain an Adventist at age 40**

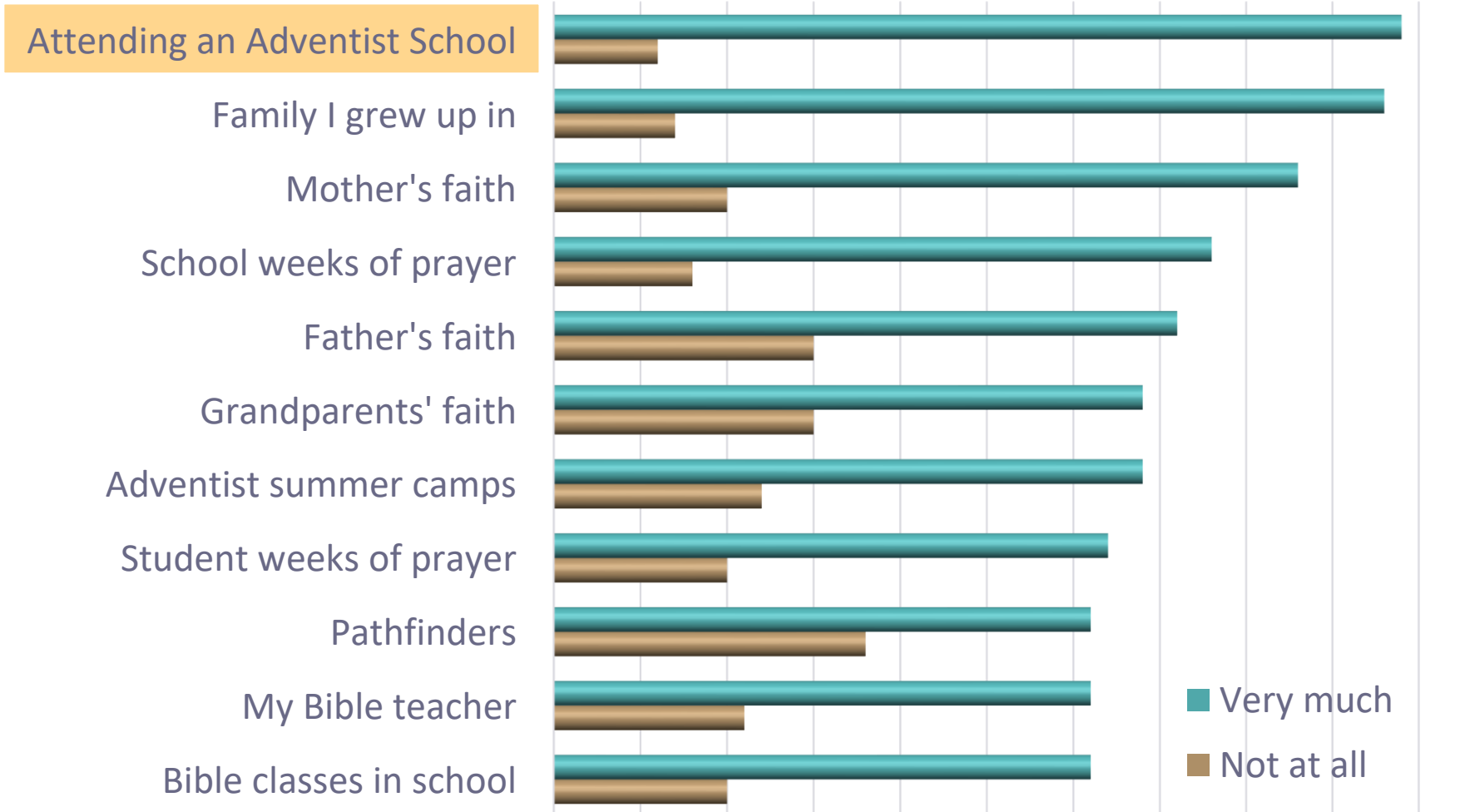
Dudley, R. (1992). *Valuegenesis: Faith in the balance*.

La Sierra University Press, Riverside, CA.

Thayer, J. (2008). Valuegenesis reanalysis. Unpublished manuscript. Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI.

# Factors that Develop Religious Faith

0% 5% 10% 15% 20% 25% 30% 35% 40% 45% 50%



-Valuegenesis3 Study



# 81% of all students said...

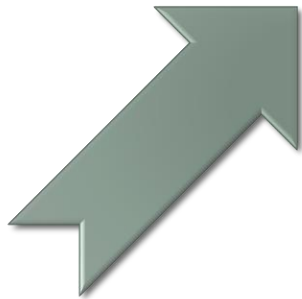
“Attending an Adventist school is the **most important** thing that has helped me **develop my religious faith.**”



–Valuegenesis3 Study

# Youth Retention Study

- A **10-year study** of youth (N=1523), beginning at ages 15-16
- Sample was about **evenly divided** between students in Adventist schools and students in non-Adventist schools
- Key finding: **Number of years** in an Adventist school was positively related to:

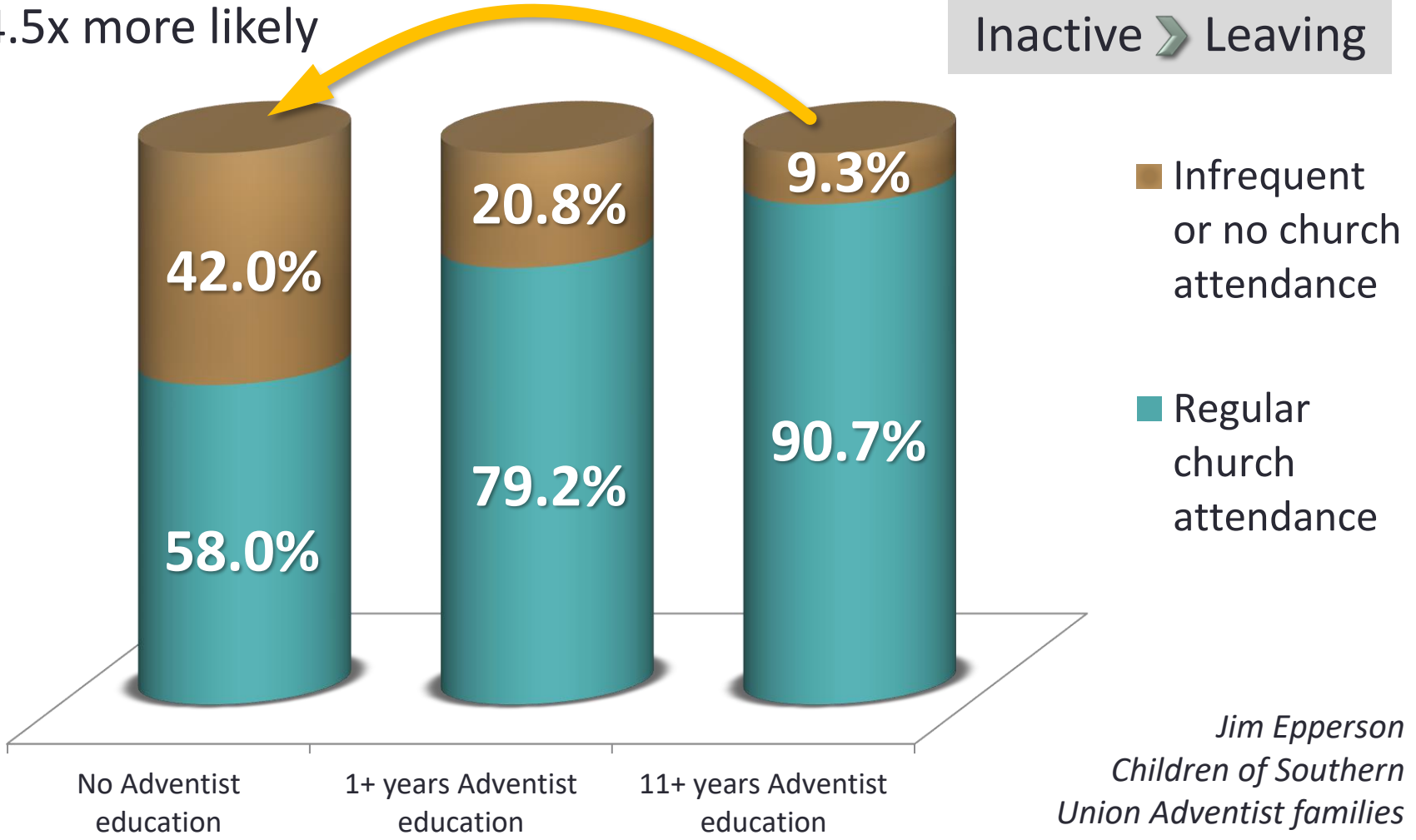


- ✓ Commitment to Jesus Christ
- ✓ My relationship with Christ is stronger now
- ✓ Religion is important in my life
- ✓ Commitment to personal Bible study

# Does Adventist Education make a difference?

4.5x more likely

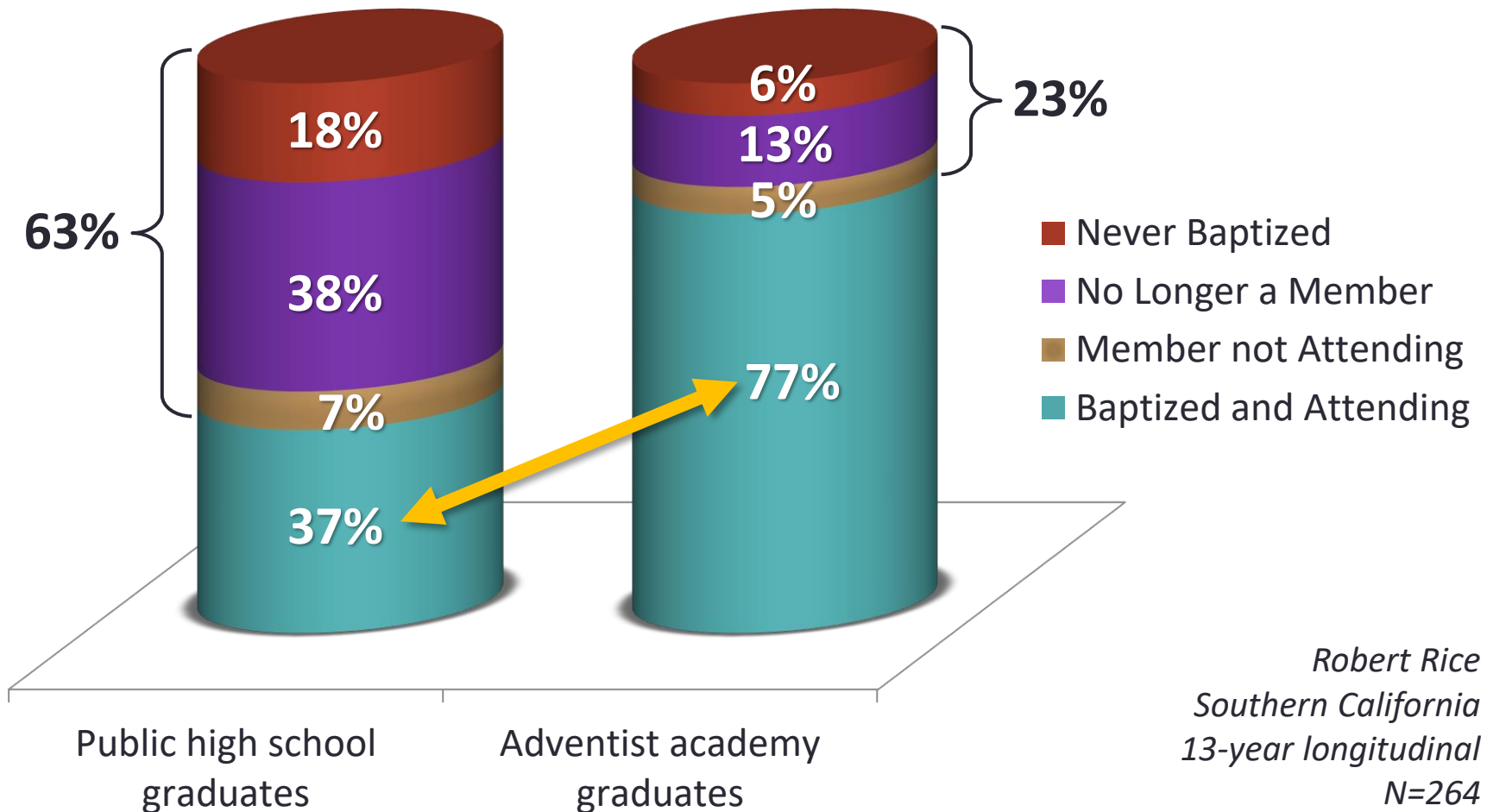
Inactive ➔ Leaving



*Jim Epperson  
Children of Southern  
Union Adventist families  
N=844*

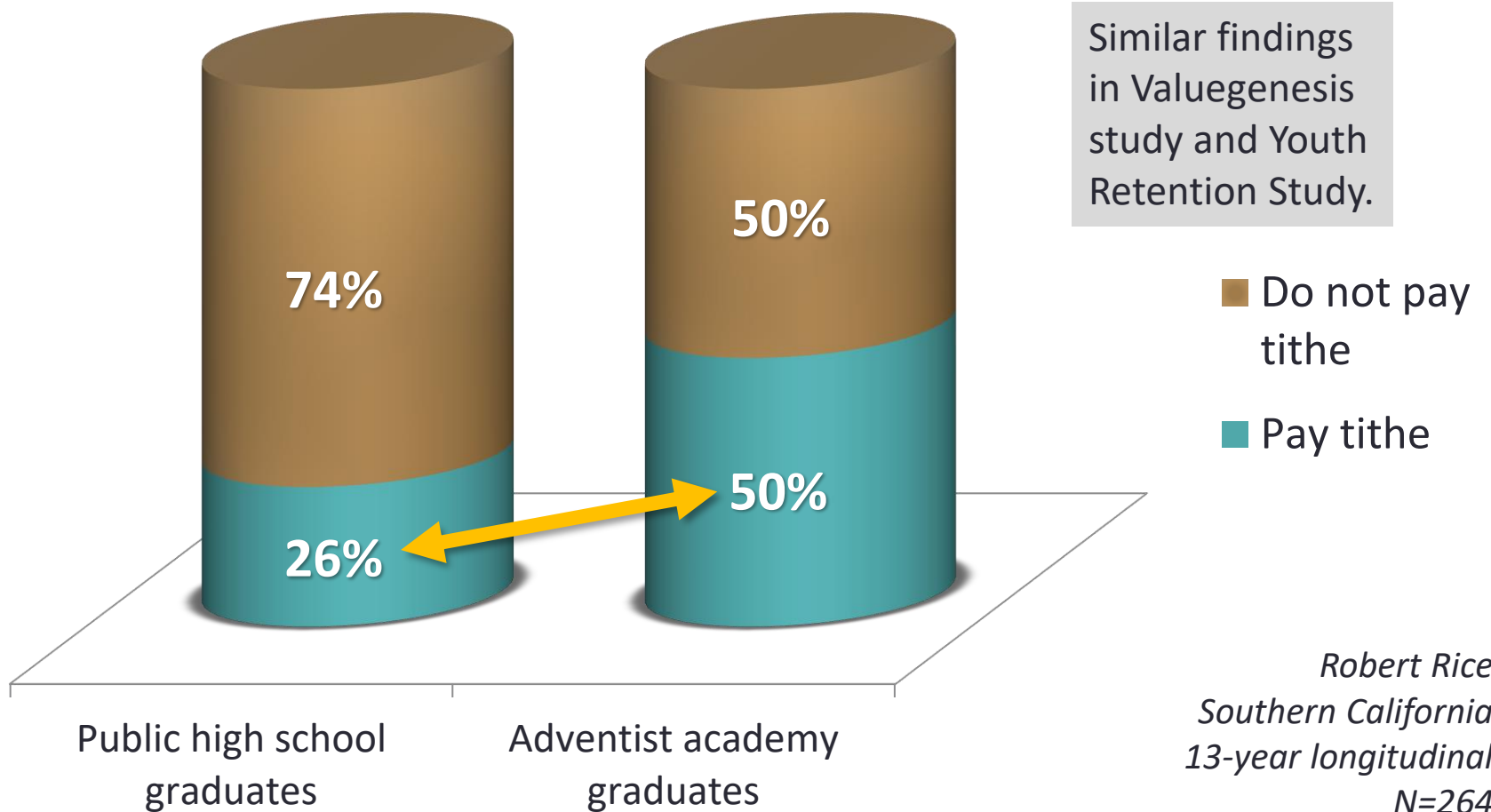
# Does Adventist Education make a difference?

## 2x more likely to stay



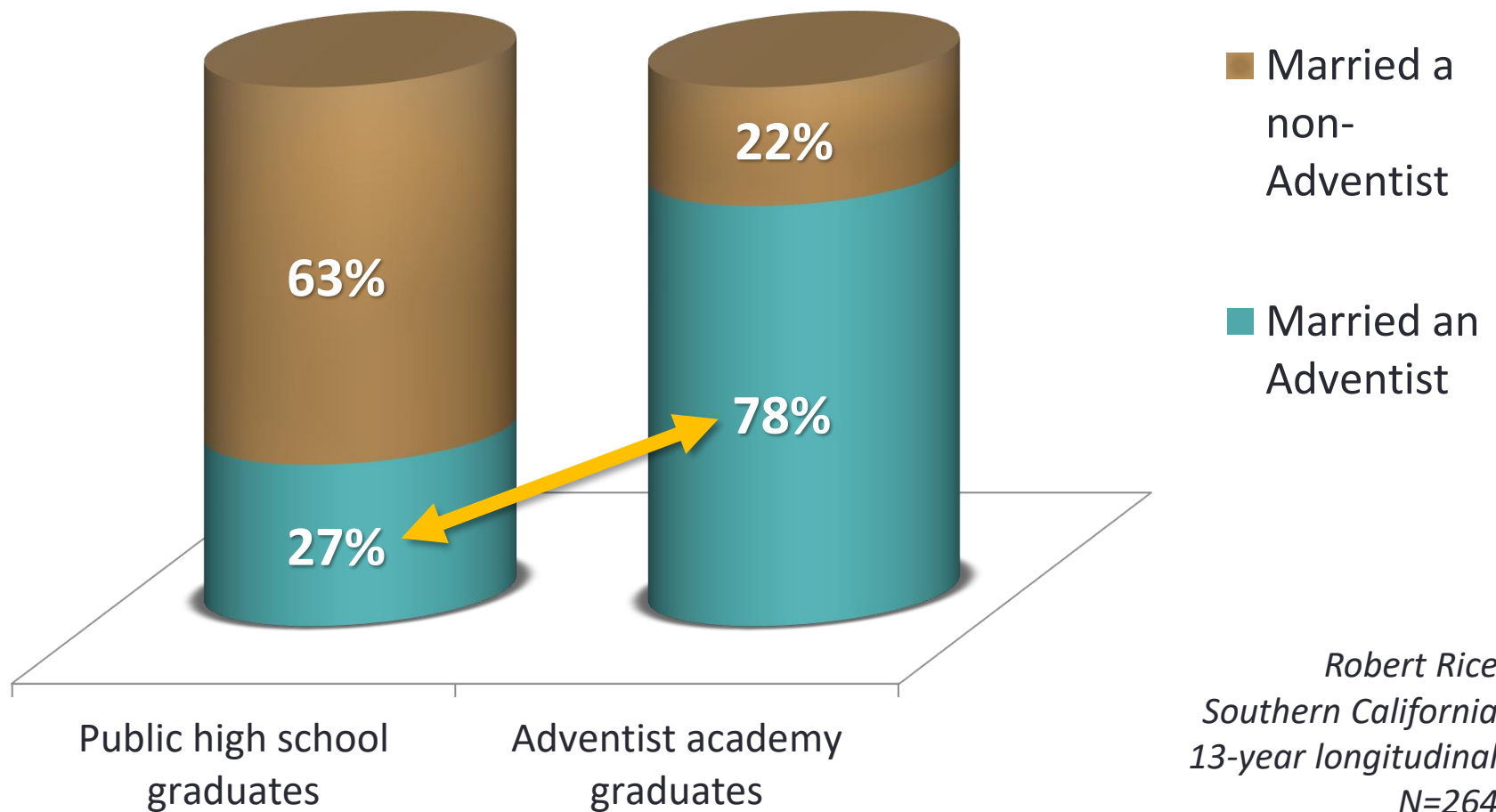
# Does Adventist Education make a difference?

## 2x more likely to pay tithe

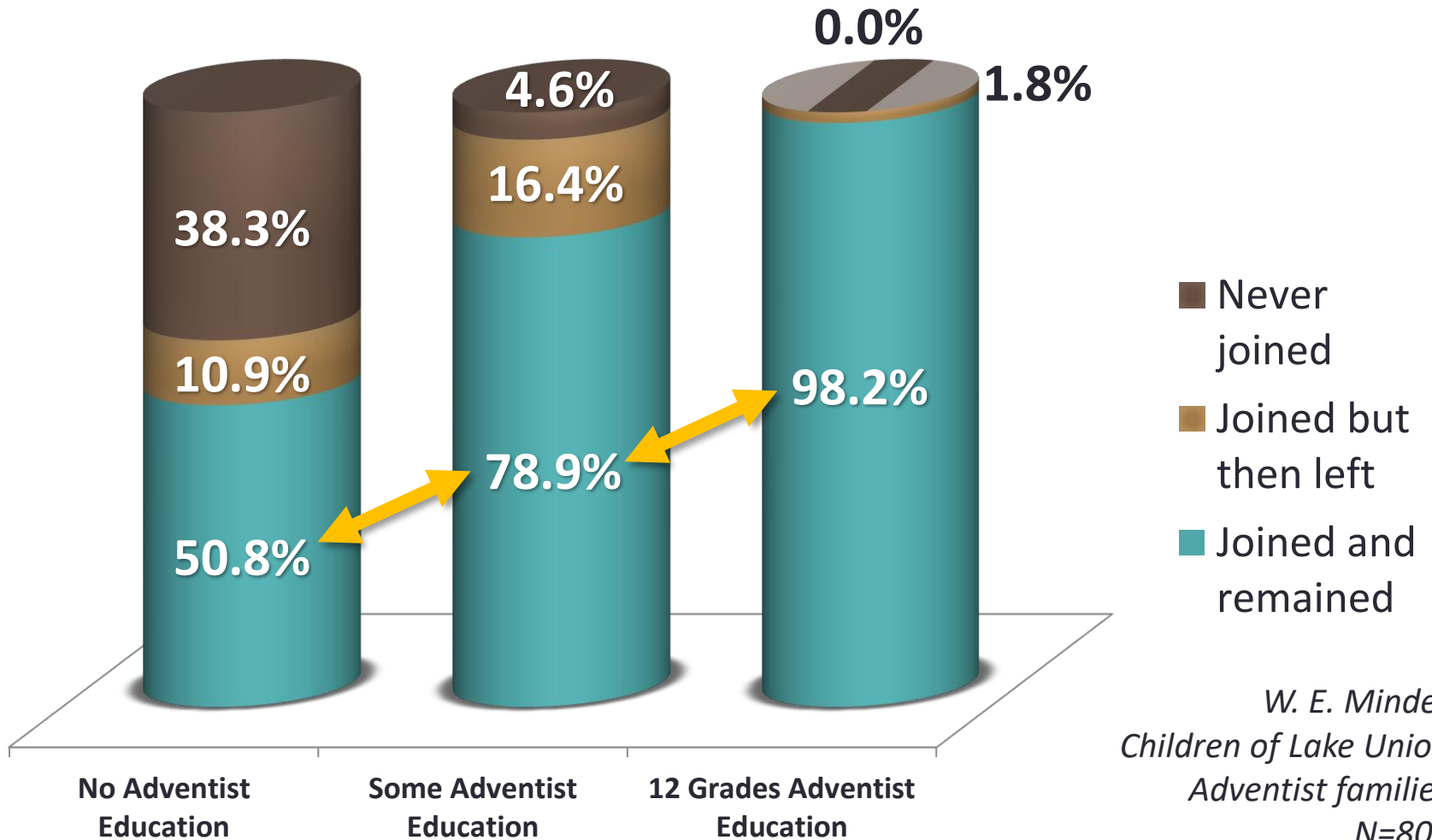


# Does Adventist Education make a difference?

## 3x more likely to marry an Adventist



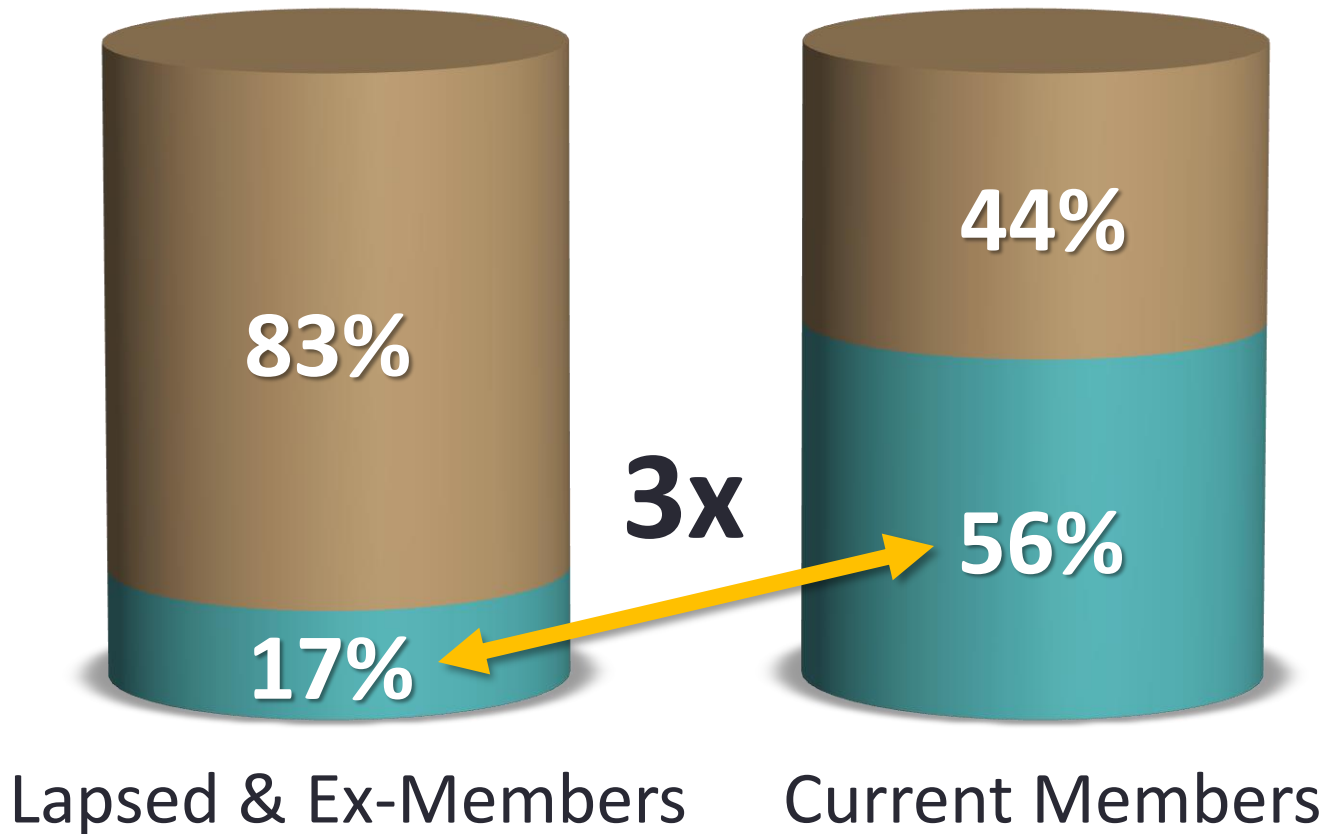
# Does Adventist Education make a difference?



# Ex-Members vs. Current Members

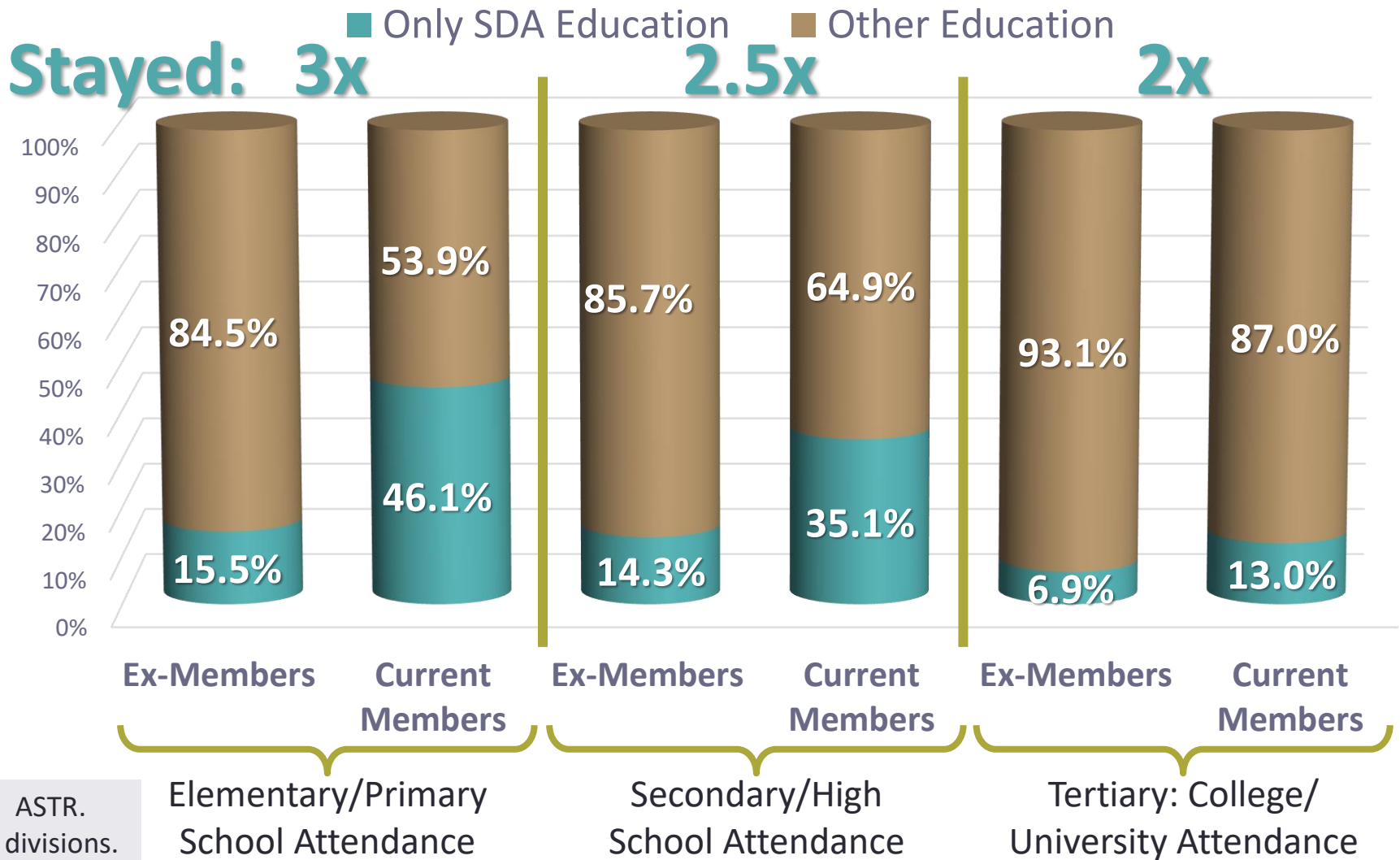
P. Richardson,  
Qualitative.  
Global. N=925.

■ SDA Education ■ Other Education





# Ex-Members vs. Current Members



ASTR.  
9 divisions.

# BARRIERS TO THE REDEMPTIVE PURPOSE

---

of Adventist Education

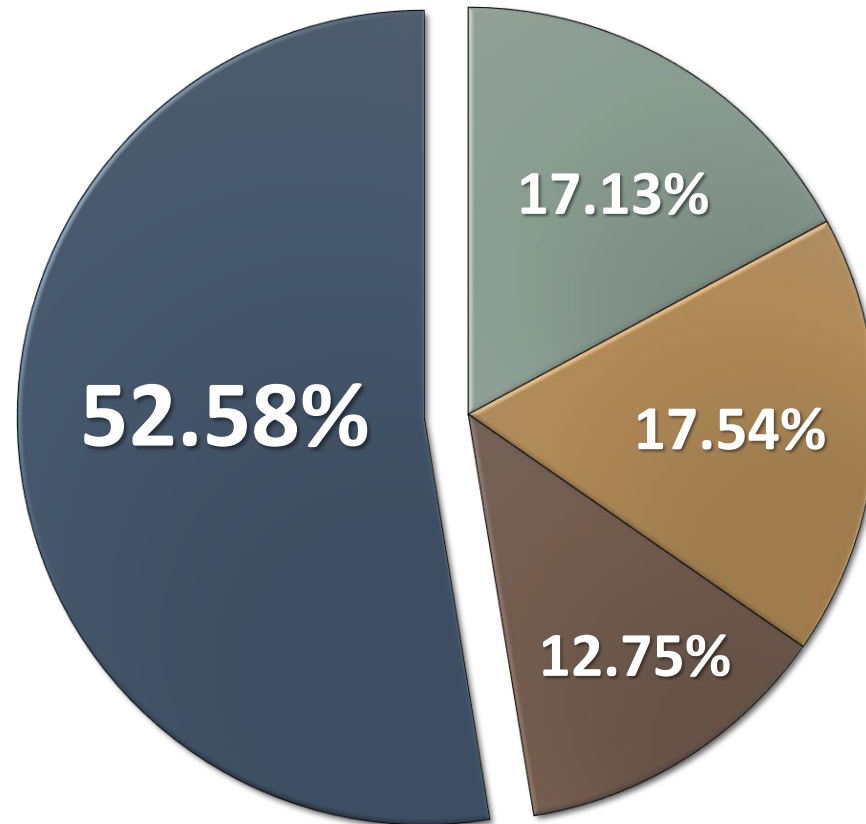
# Barrier #1

Many children and youth from Seventh-day Adventist homes are not receiving Adventist education

-

# Adventists and Adventist Education

Over half of global church members report **no experience** of Adventist Education

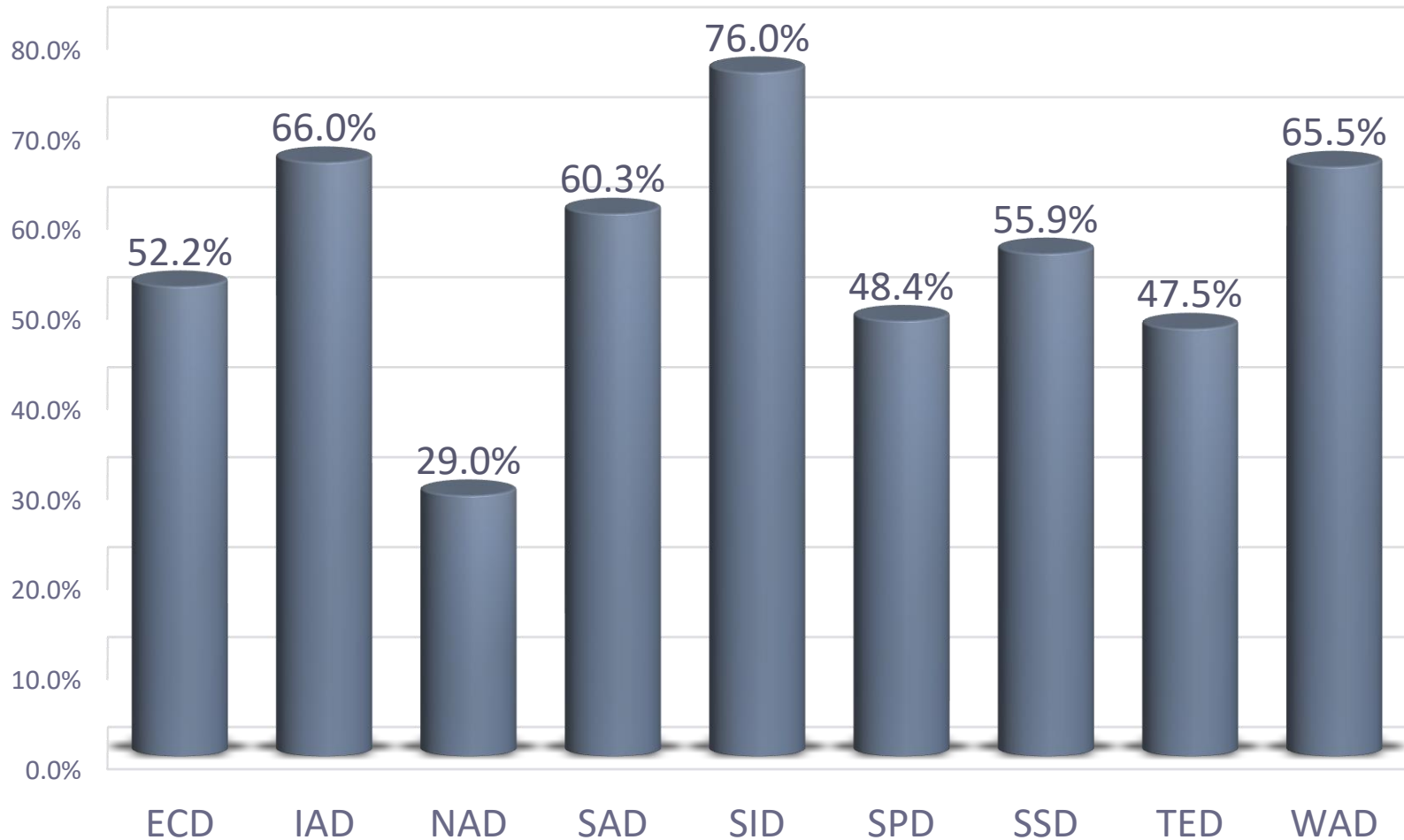


**Percentages:**  
Highest level of  
Adventist education  
experienced

- Elementary/Primary School
- Secondary/High School
- Tertiary/Higher Education
- No Adventist Education

2014 data.  
9 divisions.

# Proportion with No SDA Education by Division



**“All our youth** should be permitted to have the blessings and privileges of an **education at our schools**, that they may be inspired to become **laborers together with God.**”

E. G. White. *Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 44.

# Dismantling Barrier

- ✓ Administrators, Pastors and educators must find methods to instill the values of Adventist education on our administrators and pastors.
- ✓ 60% of seminary students – second career- no Adventist education
- ✓ Seen as detriment not advantage

# Dismantling Barrier

- ✓ Administrators, Pastors and educators proactively **share with parents** the positive relationship between Adventist education and the proportion of children and youth joining and remaining in the Church



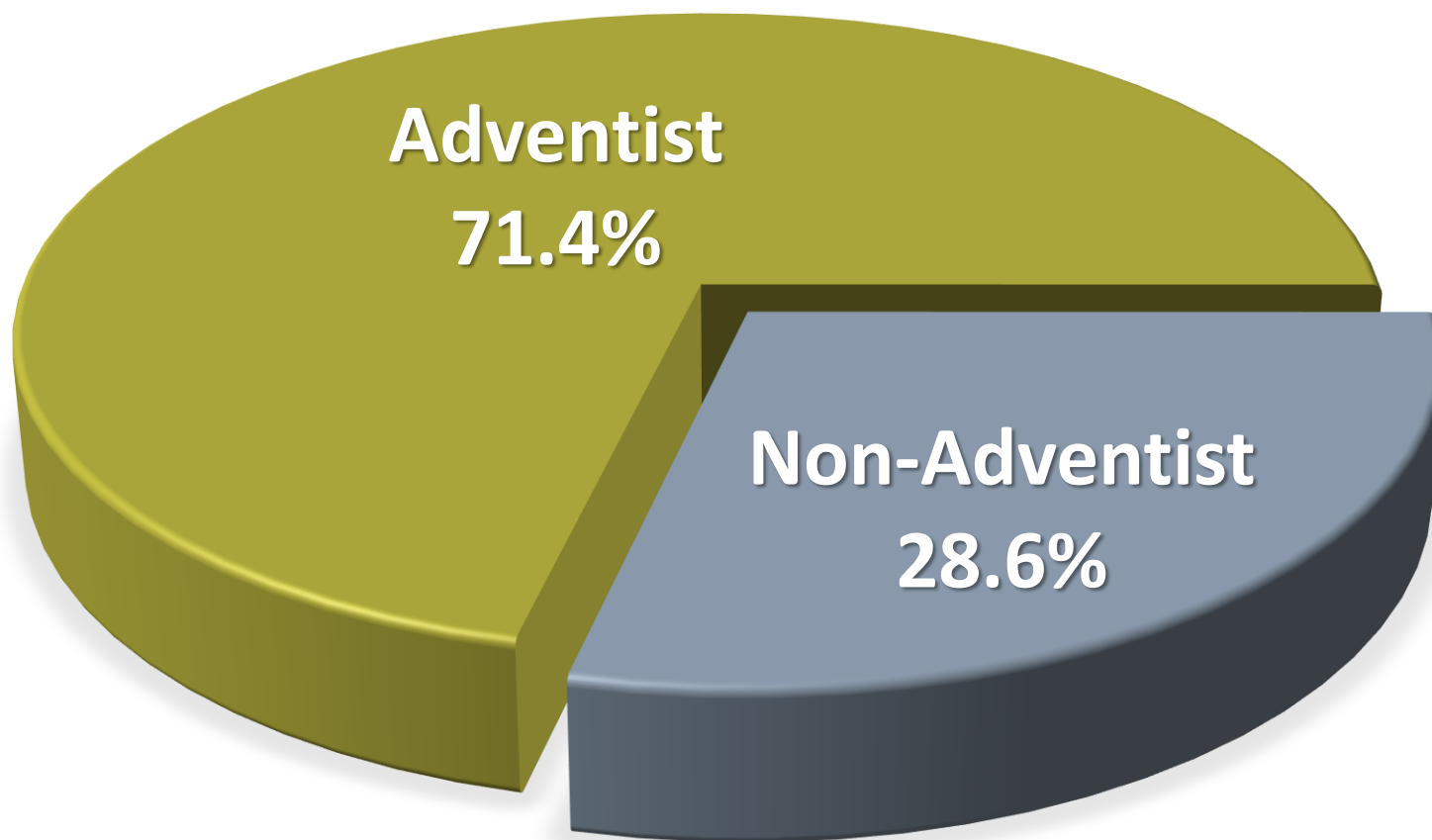
# Dismantling Barrier

- ✓ Church leaders intentionally **establish initiatives**, that provide Adventist education to the group that will not attend an Adventist school. Use quality distance education to supplement traditional brick and mortar schools.

## Barrier #2

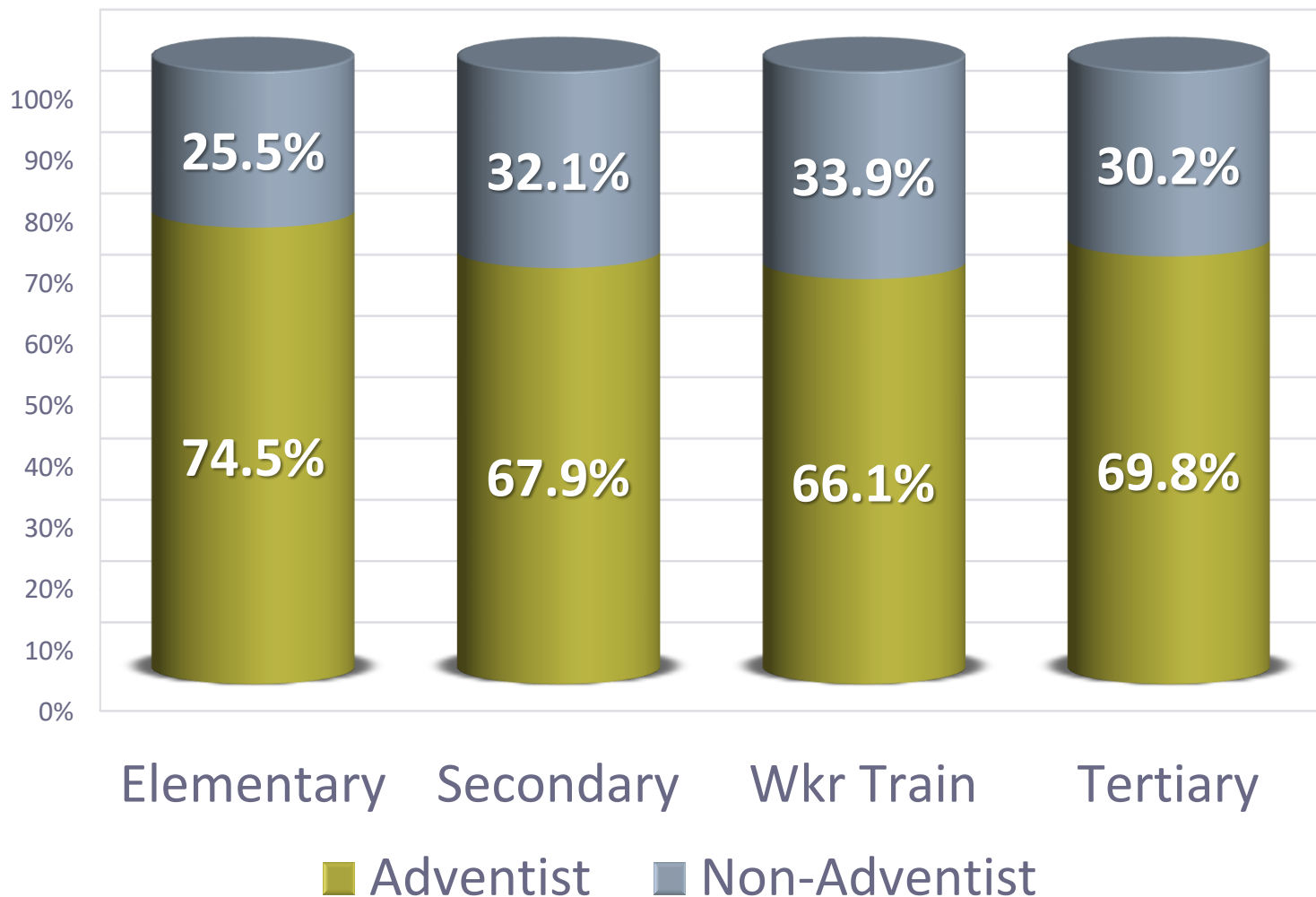
- Increase the number of Adventists in our schools
- Ensure that all of the Adventist teachers have something to catch (Infectious for Jesus)

# Teachers in Adventist Schools



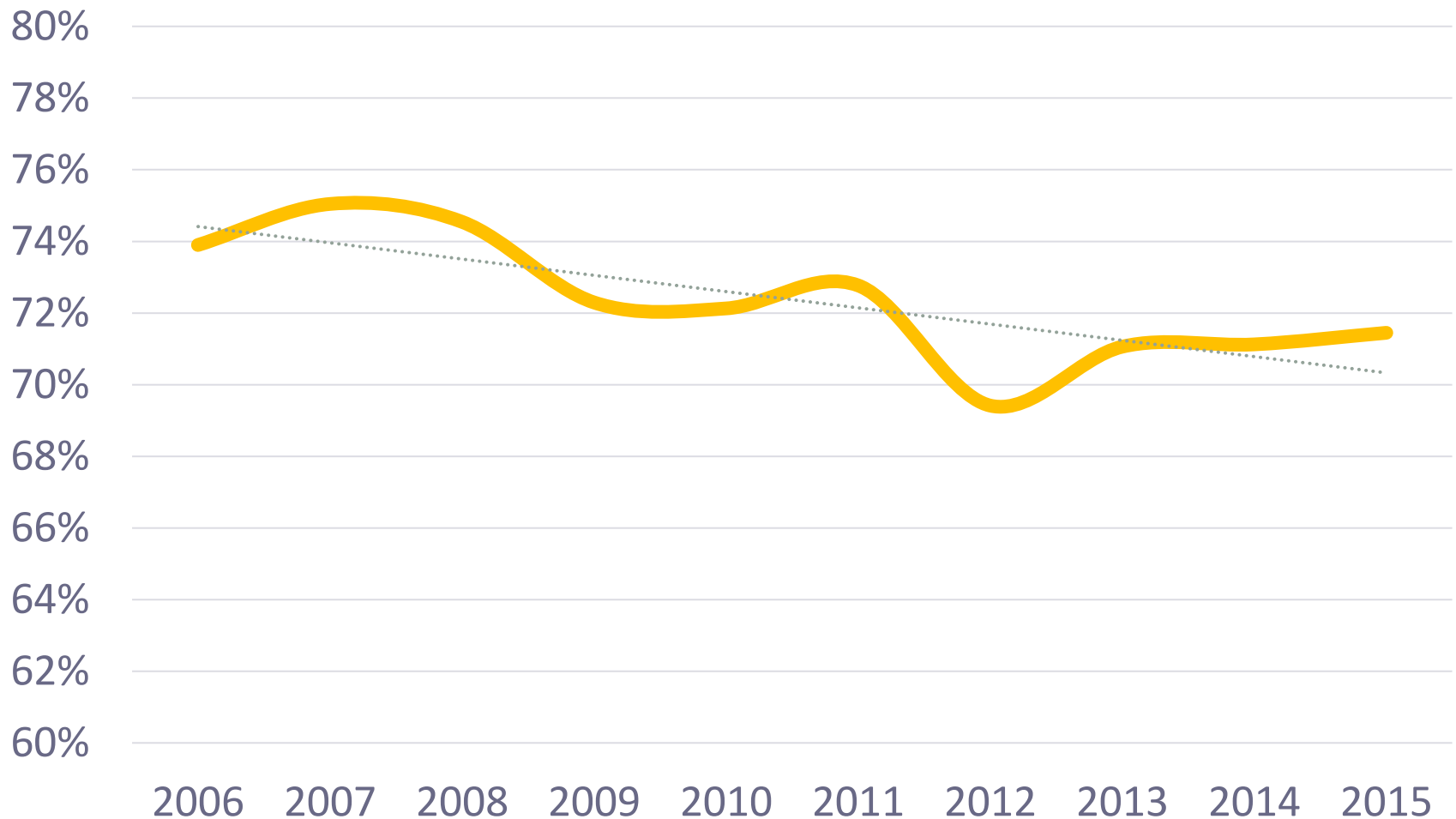
December 31, 2015

# Teachers in Adventist Schools



December 31, 2015

# Proportion of Adventist Teachers



The mission of  
the Church is  
**evangelistic**

Adventist education  
must **fulfill** the mission

To be effective...

An evangelist  
must first be  
a believer

It is **essential** that **teachers be trained** to act **well** their part in the important work of educating the children of Sabbathkeepers, not only in the **sciences**, but in the **Scriptures....**



“If the instructors have a **religious experience themselves**, they will be able to communicate to their students the knowledge of the love of God that they have received.

These lessons can be given only by those who are **themselves truly converted.**” (Caught not Taught)

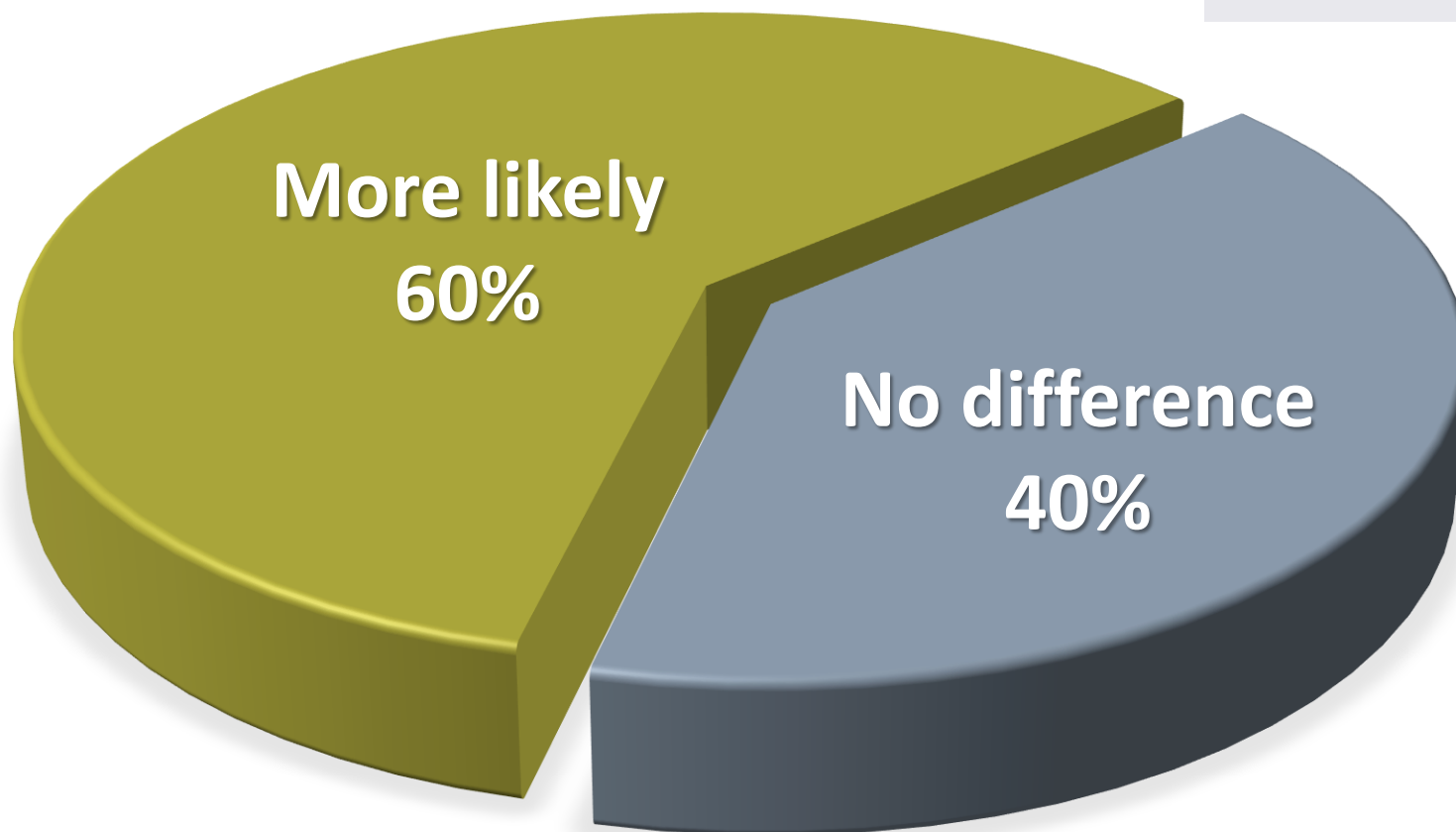
E. G. White, *Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 168

## Barrier #3

Many pastors are not aware of the evangelistic role of Adventist education, nor perhaps convinced of its efficacy.

# Pastors Believe...

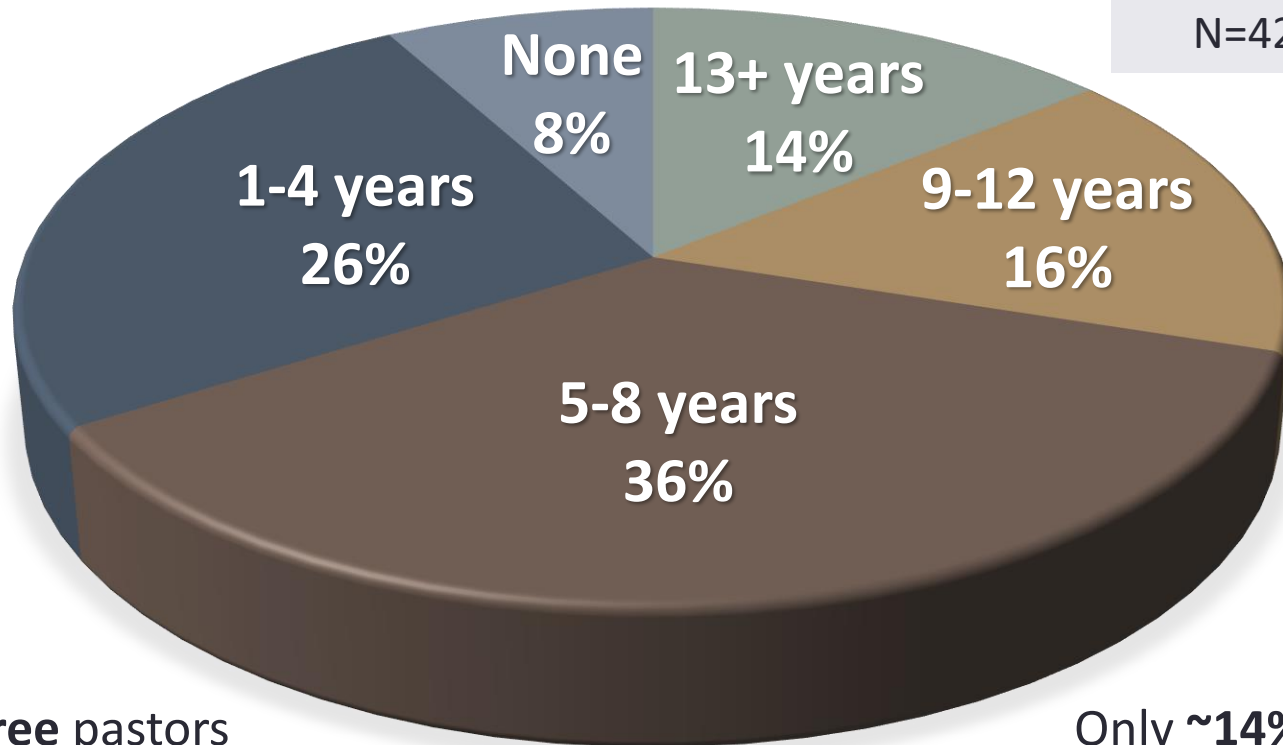
Random sample  
from world divisions.  
N=4260. 2013.



Members who have not experienced Adventist education and their likelihood of leaving the church.

# Pastors' Years of Adventist Education

Random sample  
from world divisions.  
N=4260. 2013.



**One in three** pastors have had **fewer than five years** exposure to Adventist education.

Only **~14%** of pastors have completed **all of their education** in Adventist institutions.

# Dismantling Barrier #3

- ✓ Adventist Seminaries and Schools of Religion incorporate **required courses in the Ministry of Christian Education** in the programs of study for all students specializing in pastoral ministry, religion, or theology

# Dismantling Barrier #3

- ✓ Ministerial and educational leaders emphasize through publications and at meetings of Adventist pastors the **evangelistic effectiveness of Seventh-day Adventist education**, especially in terms of accession & retention
- ✓ Pastors become the agent of Adventist education through ALC and distance education.

# In Adventist Education

Children and youth experience...



“In the **highest sense**, the work of **education** and the work of **redemption** are **one**.”

*Education*, p. 30

All your children  
shall be taught  
**by God.**



And great  
shall be the  
**peace**  
of your  
children.

Isaiah 54:13



# TAUGHT BY GOD

---

Seventh-day Adventist  
Education