

# Statistical Report Annual Council 2017

Mission progress  
and trends

David Trim, Ph.D.

Director of Archives,  
Statistics & Research



astr

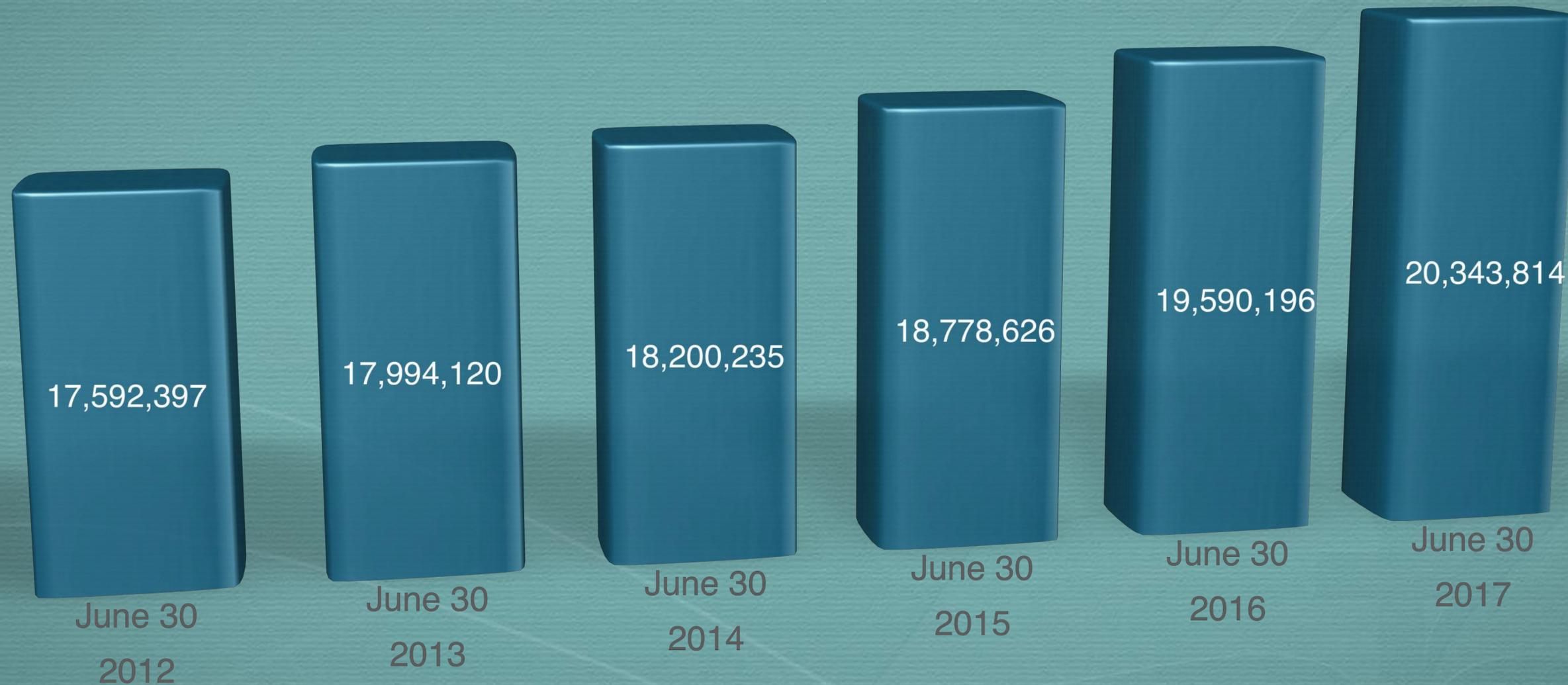
# RESOURCES

[www.AdventistStatistics.org/](http://www.AdventistStatistics.org/)

[www.AdventistResearch.org/blog](http://www.AdventistResearch.org/blog)

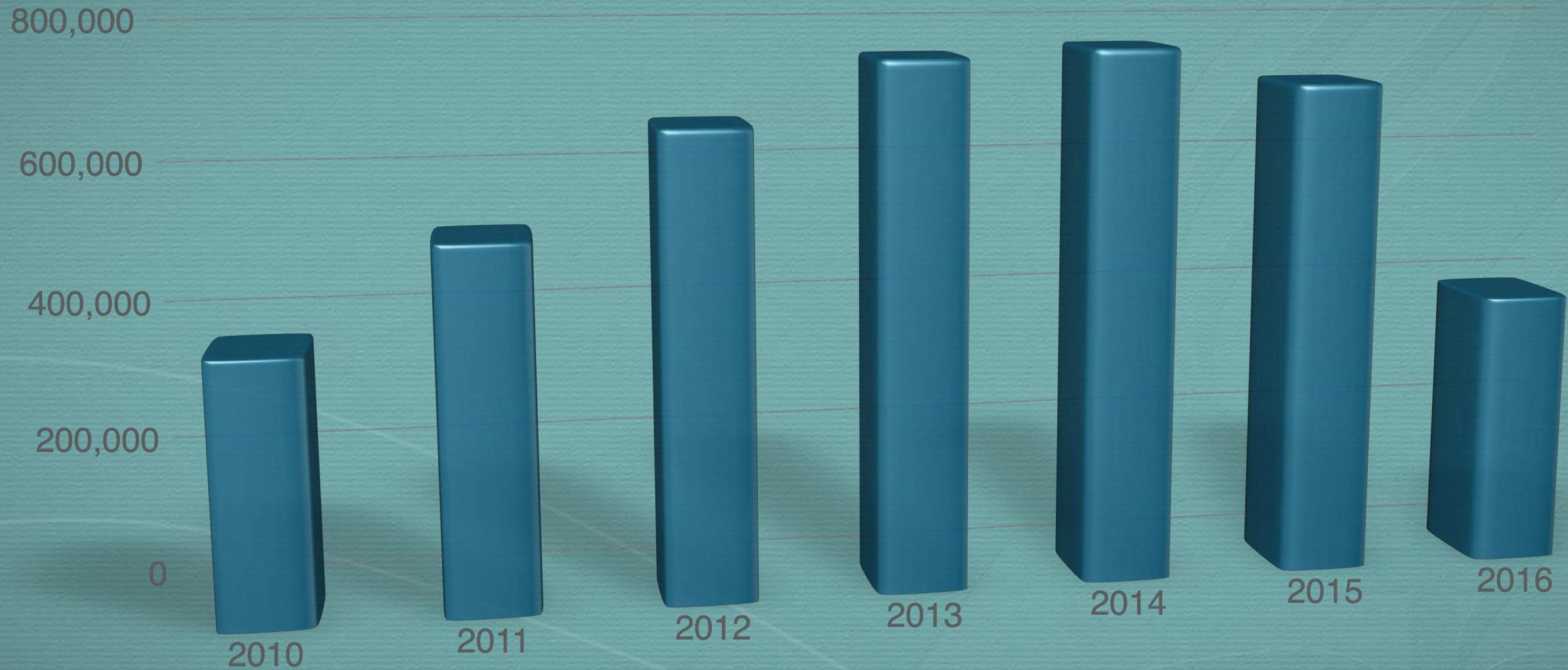
astr

# MID-YEAR MEMBERSHIP



astr

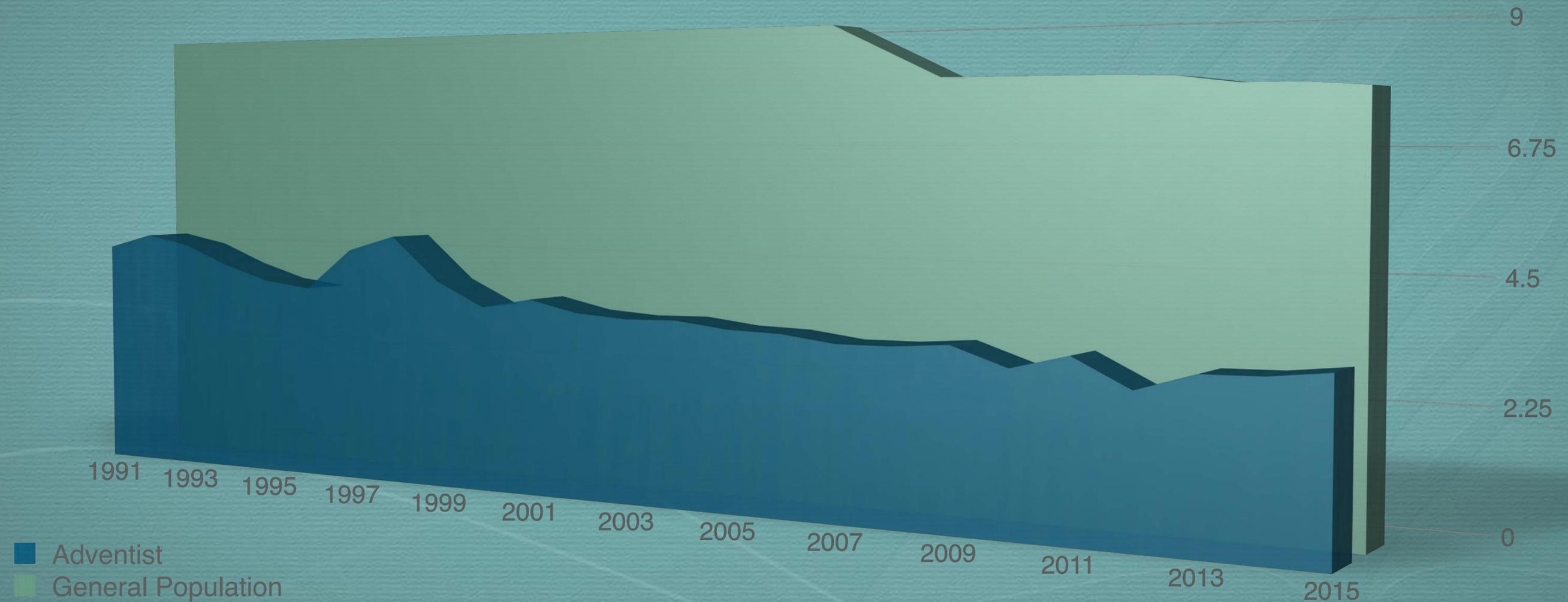
# LOSSES



astr

# MORTALITY RATES

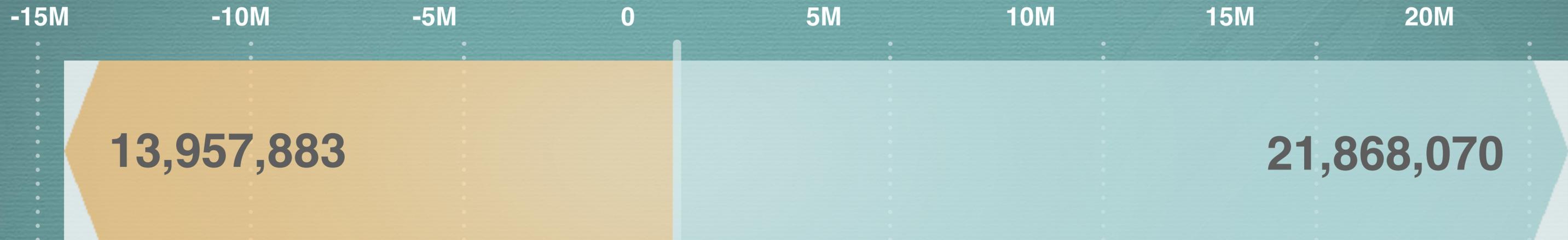
(Lower is better)



■ Adventist  
■ General Population

astr

# MEMBERS WHO LEAVE



- Members who left
- Members who stayed

Since 1965, 35,825,953 people have been members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Of those, 13,957,883 have chosen to leave.

**Our net loss rate is 38.96%.**

In effect, **four of every ten** church members are slipping away.

astr



# Why members leave

- Not because of theological differences
- It's usually because they go through a crisis in life
- Or experience conflict in the church community
- They feel un-missed, un-cared for, unimportant
- Most don't decide to not be a Seventh-day Adventist
- It just happens...They slip through the cracks

astr



# Why we often don't count members when they leave

- Economists, psychologists, sociologists, and statisticians: all have recognized a problem
- Whenever organizations try to measure how well people are doing, they switch to optimising for whatever is being measuring, rather than putting their best efforts into doing good work.
- In fact, this phenomenon is so well known and understood that it's been given at least two different names. . . .

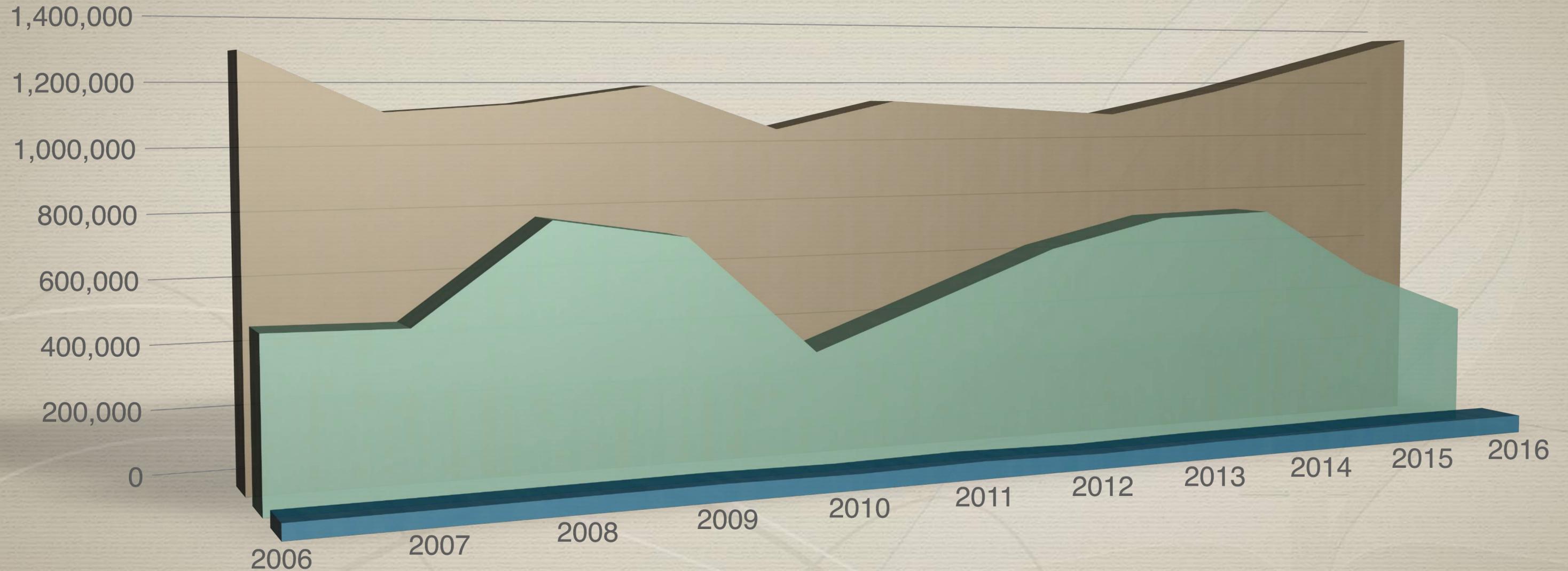
astr



# Why we often don't count members when they leave

- “Campbell’s Law” (the most explicit):
  - \* *The more any quantitative social indicator is used for social decision-making, the more subject it will be to corruption pressures and the more apt it will be to distort and corrupt the social processes it is intended to monitor.”*
- “Goodhart’s Law” (more succinct):
  - \* *When a measure becomes a target, it ceases to be a good measure.*

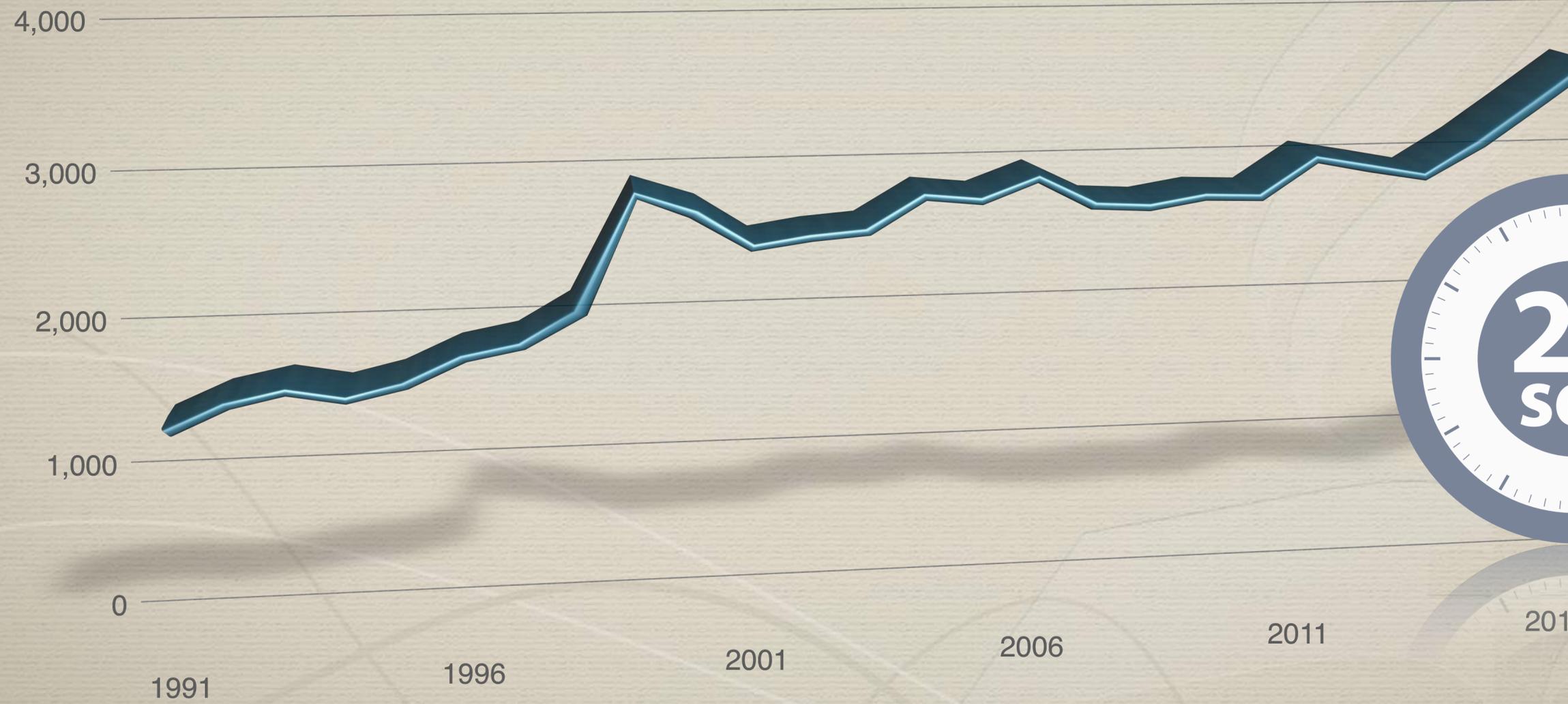
# CHANGES IN MEMBERSHIP



- Deaths
- Losses
- Accessions

astr

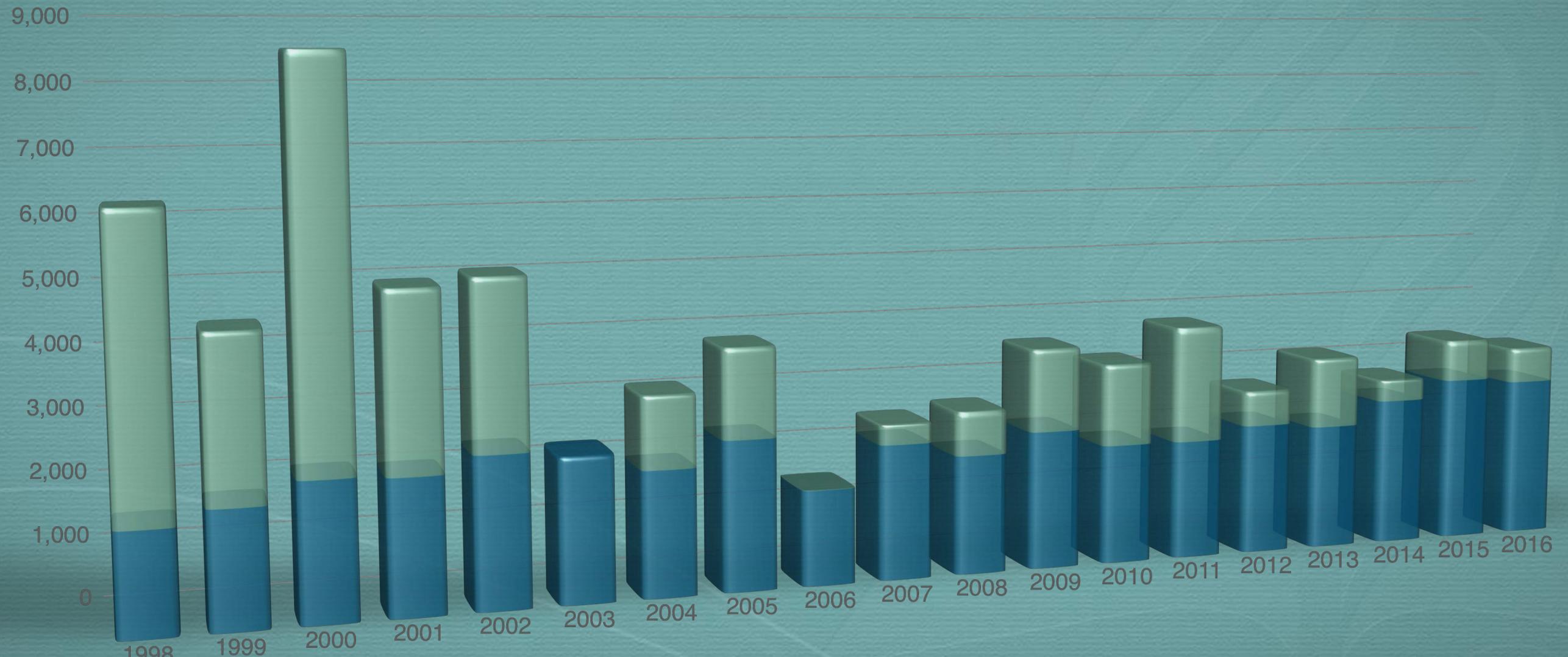
# ACCESSIONS PER DAY



EVERY  
**23**  
SECONDS  
SOMEONE  
BECOMES AN  
ADVERTISER

astr

# NEW CONGREGATIONS



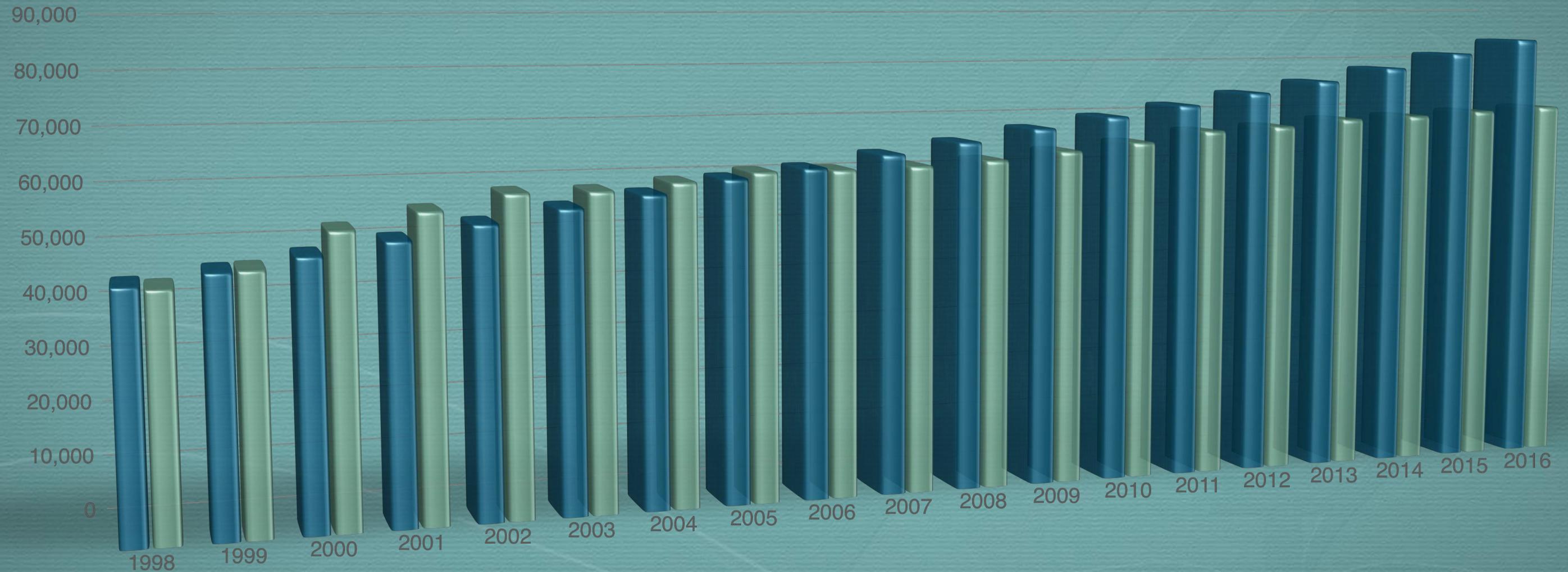
New Companies



New Churches

astr

# TOTAL CONGREGATIONS

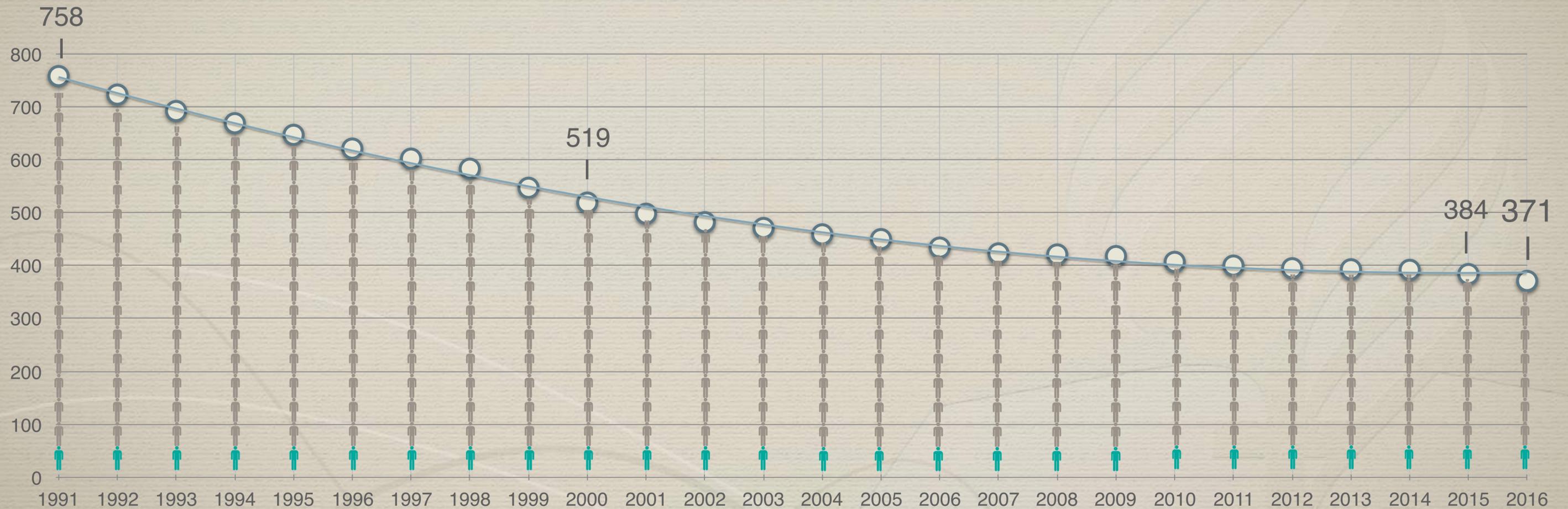


 Total Companies  
 Total Churches

astr

# POPULATION RATIO

(Worldwide ratio of one Seventh-day Adventist  to every \_\_\_\_ people .)

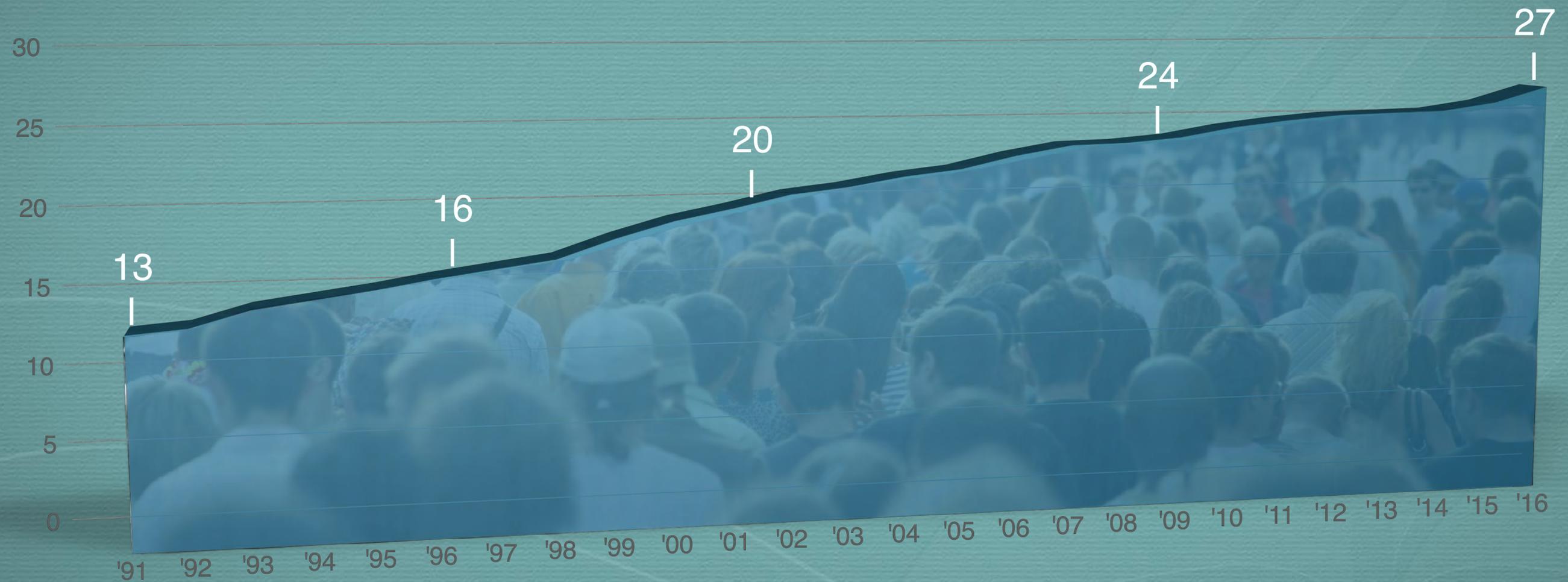


(Lower numbers are better)

astr

# MEMBERS PER 10,000

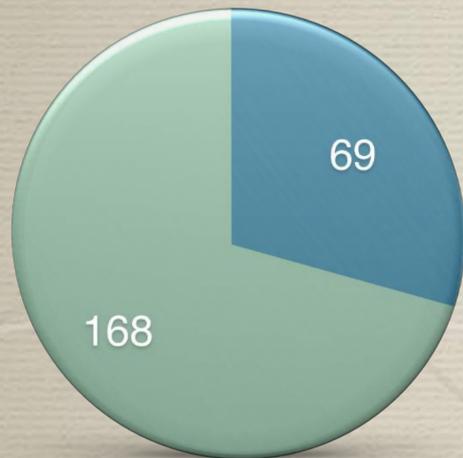
(of General World Population)



astr

# INSIDE VS. OUTSIDE THE 10/40 WINDOW

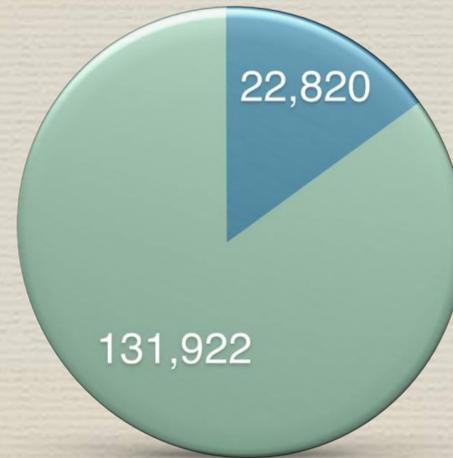
Number of Countries



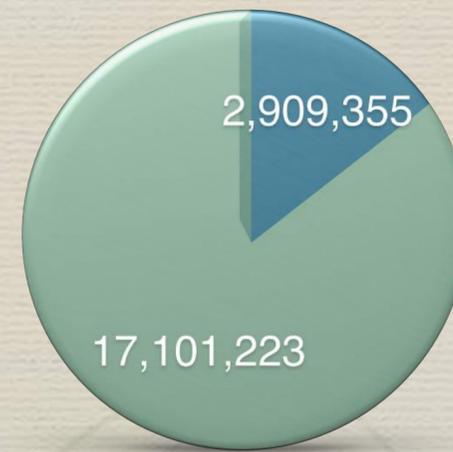
Ordained Ministers



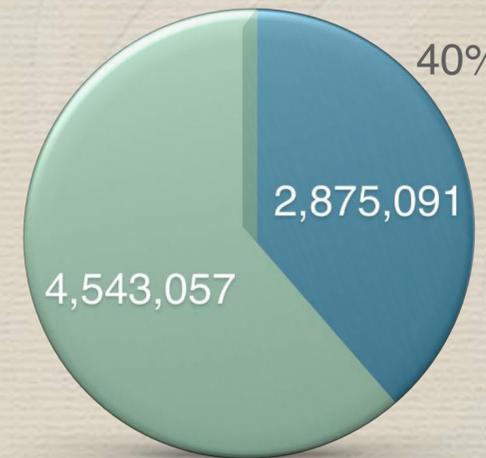
Churches & Companies



Church Membership



Estimated Population



Population per Member Ratio



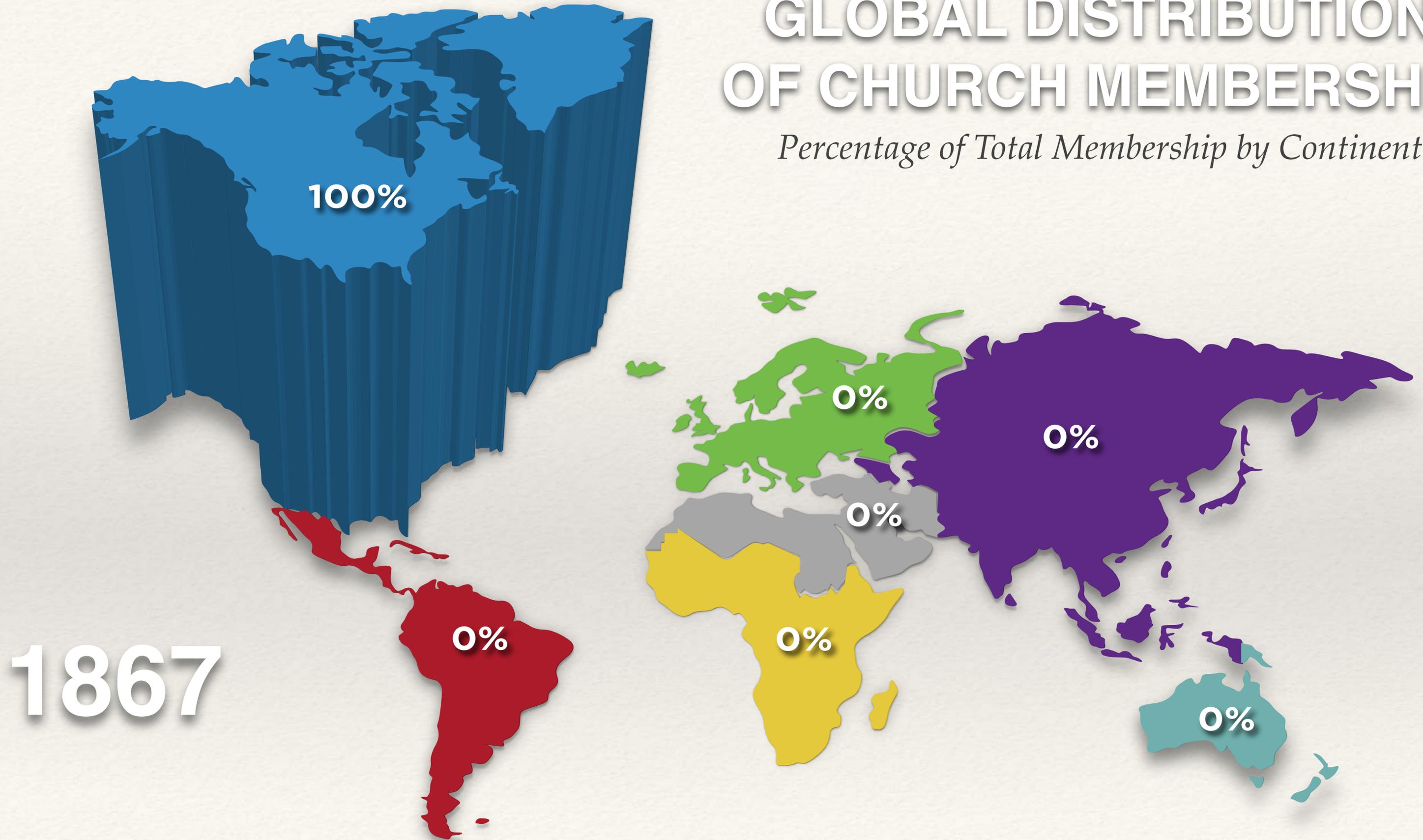
- Inside the 10/40 Window
- The Rest of the World

astr



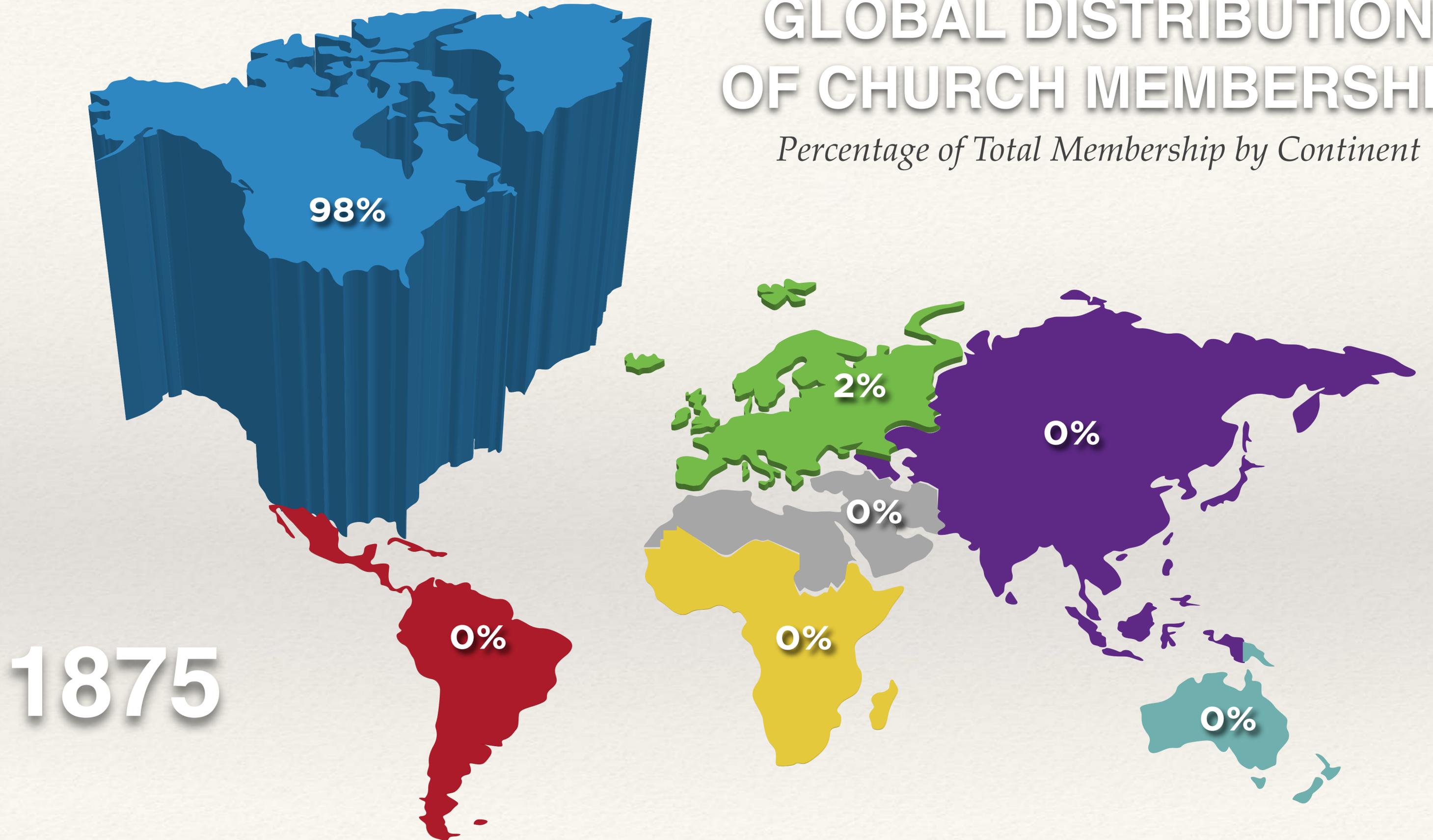
# GLOBAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

*Percentage of Total Membership by Continent*



# GLOBAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

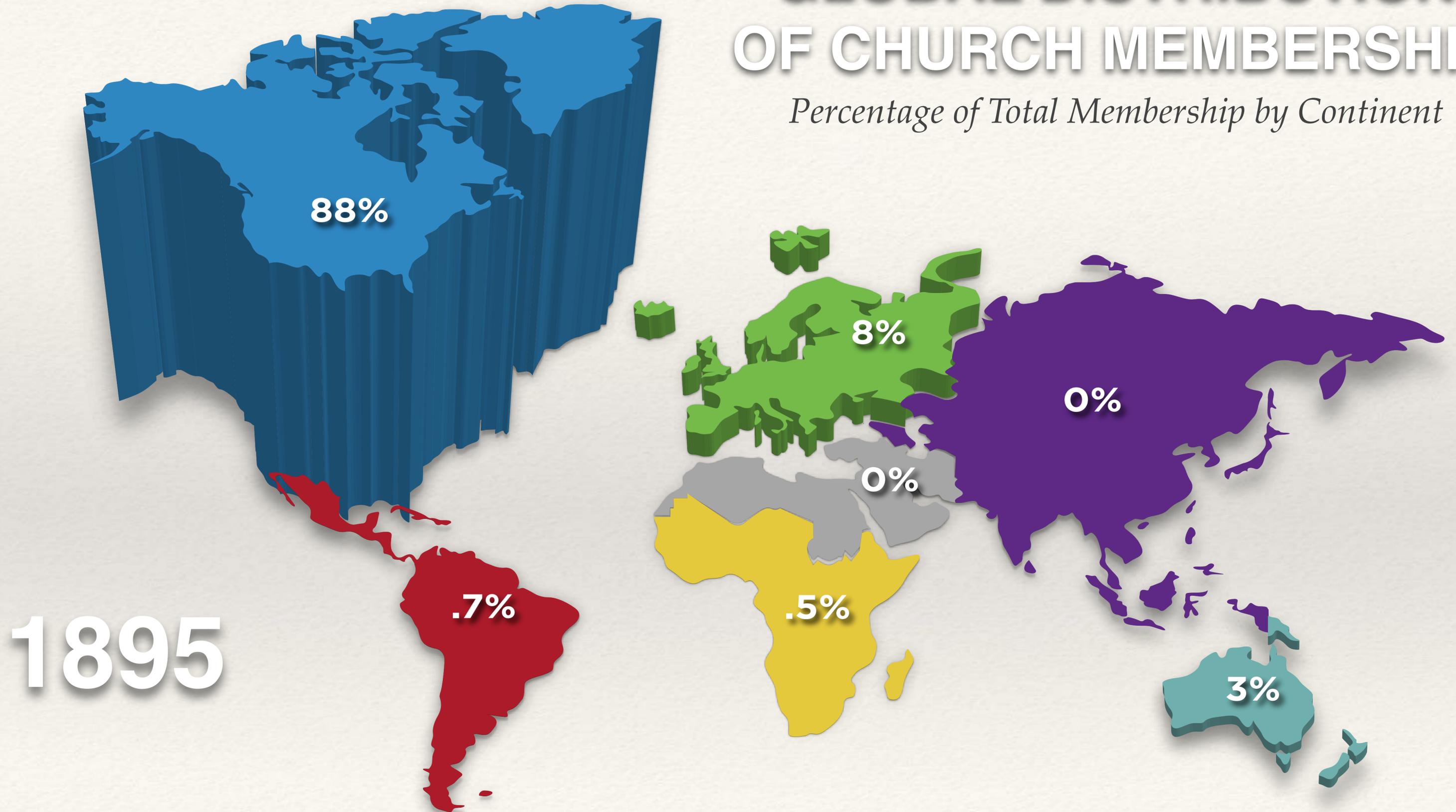
*Percentage of Total Membership by Continent*



1875

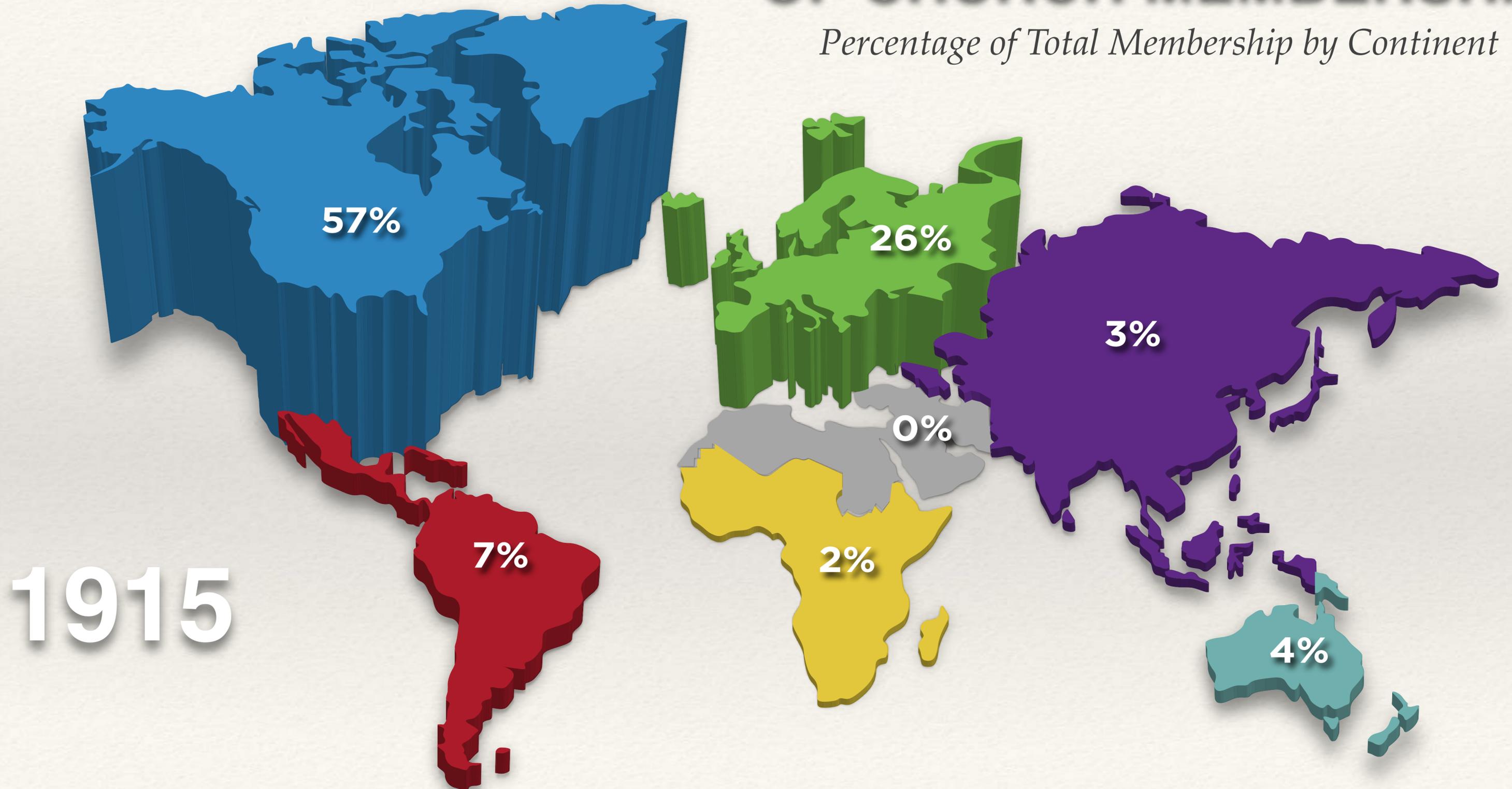
# GLOBAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

*Percentage of Total Membership by Continent*



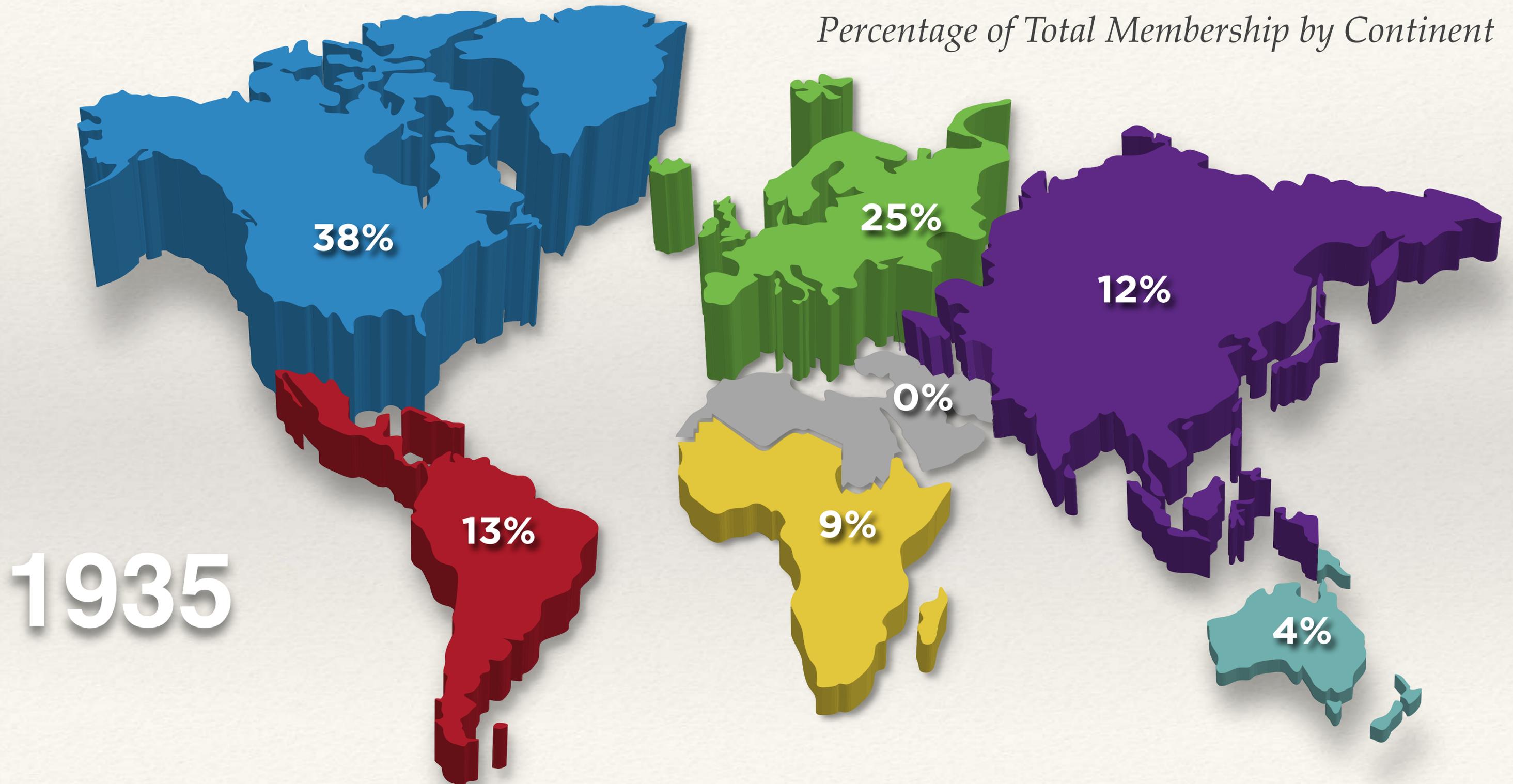
# GLOBAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

*Percentage of Total Membership by Continent*



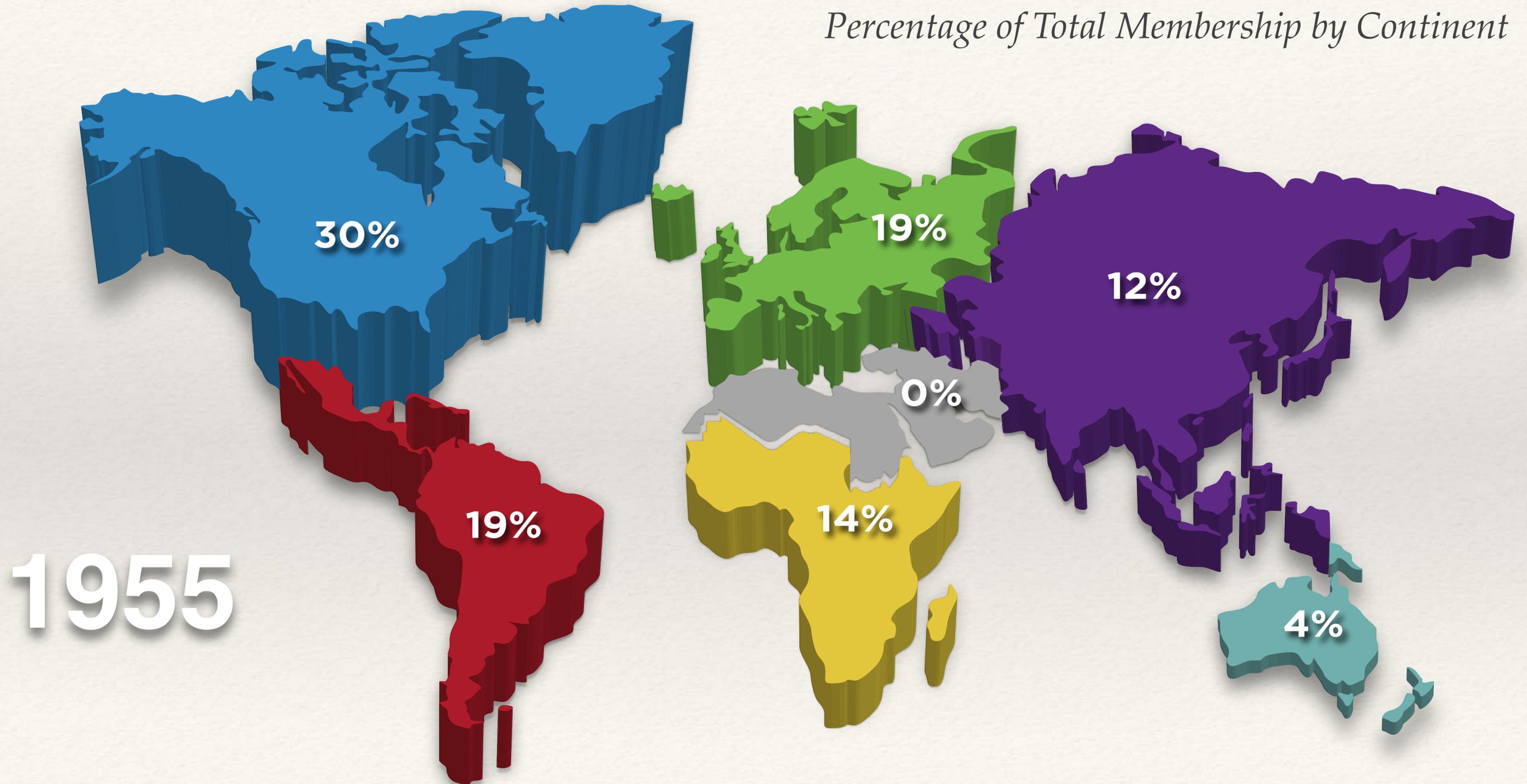
# GLOBAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

*Percentage of Total Membership by Continent*



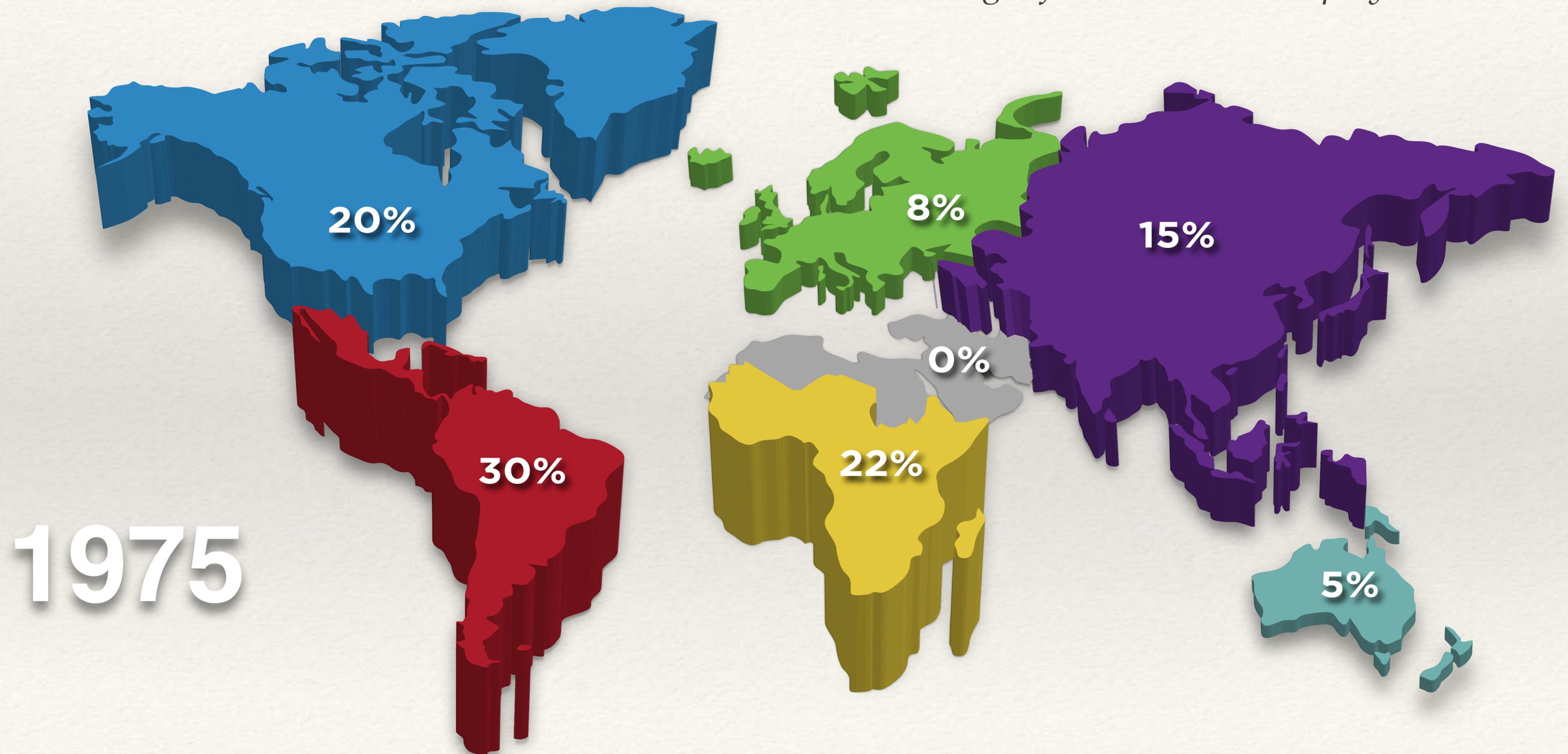
# GLOBAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

*Percentage of Total Membership by Continent*



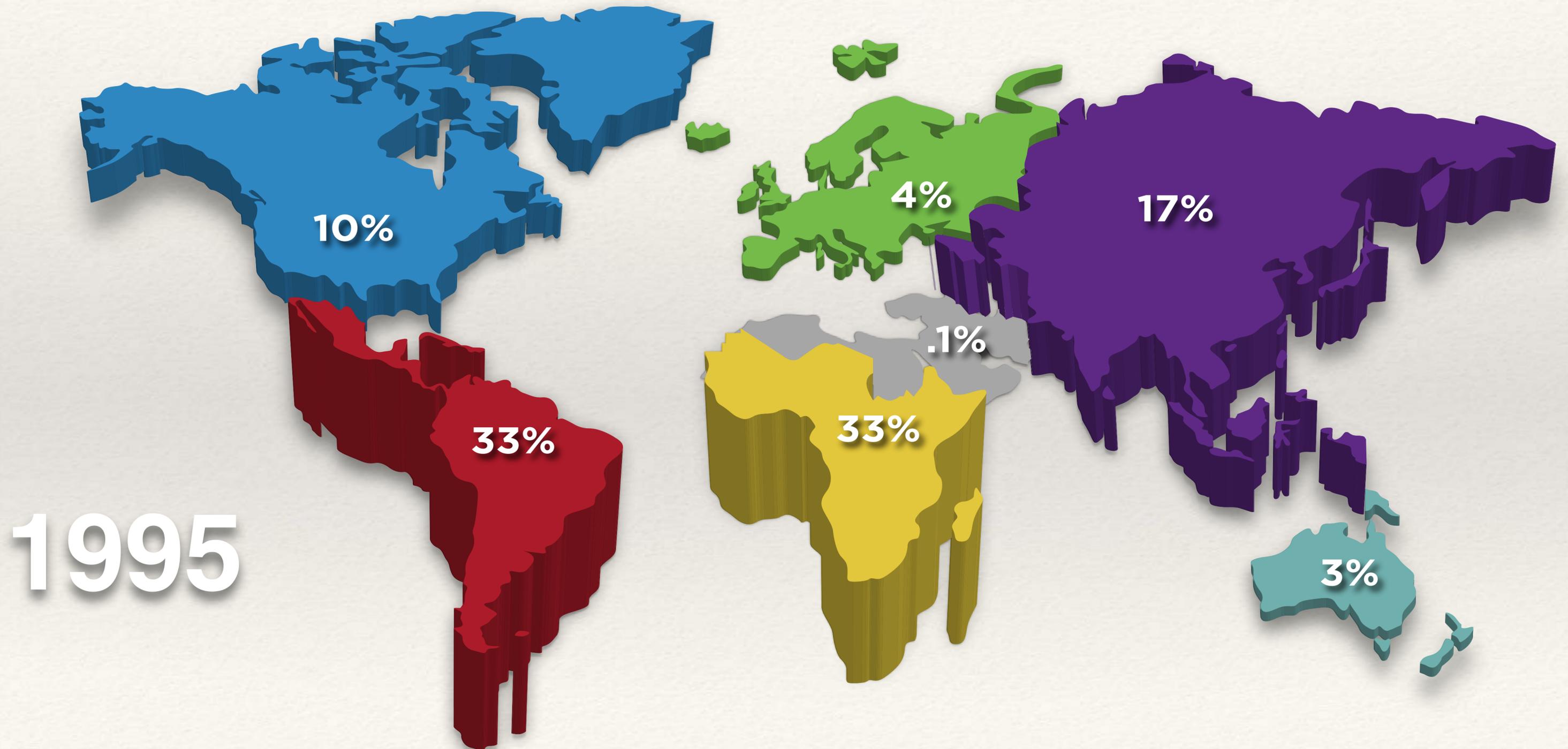
# GLOBAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

*Percentage of Total Membership by Continent*



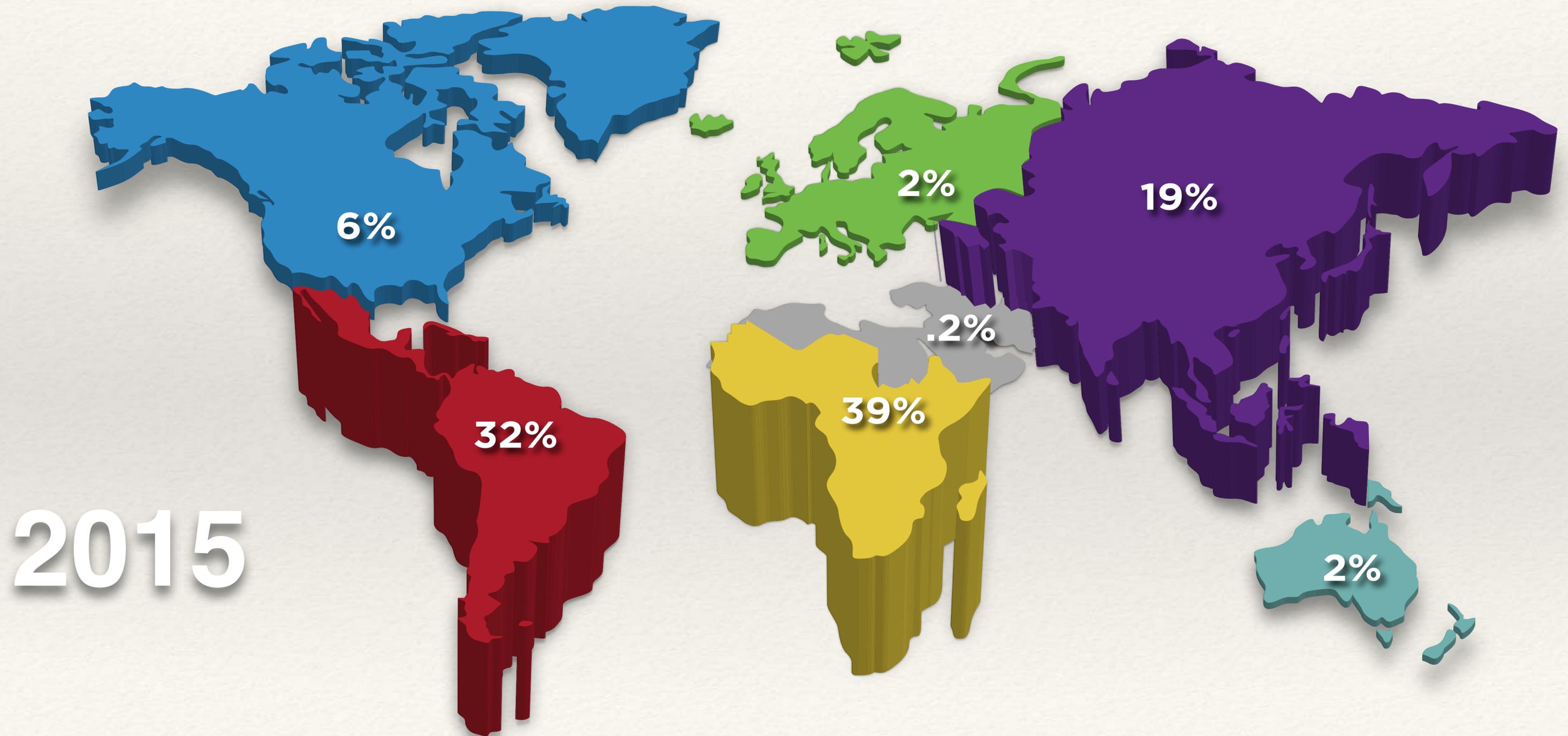
# GLOBAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

*Percentage of Total Membership by Continent*

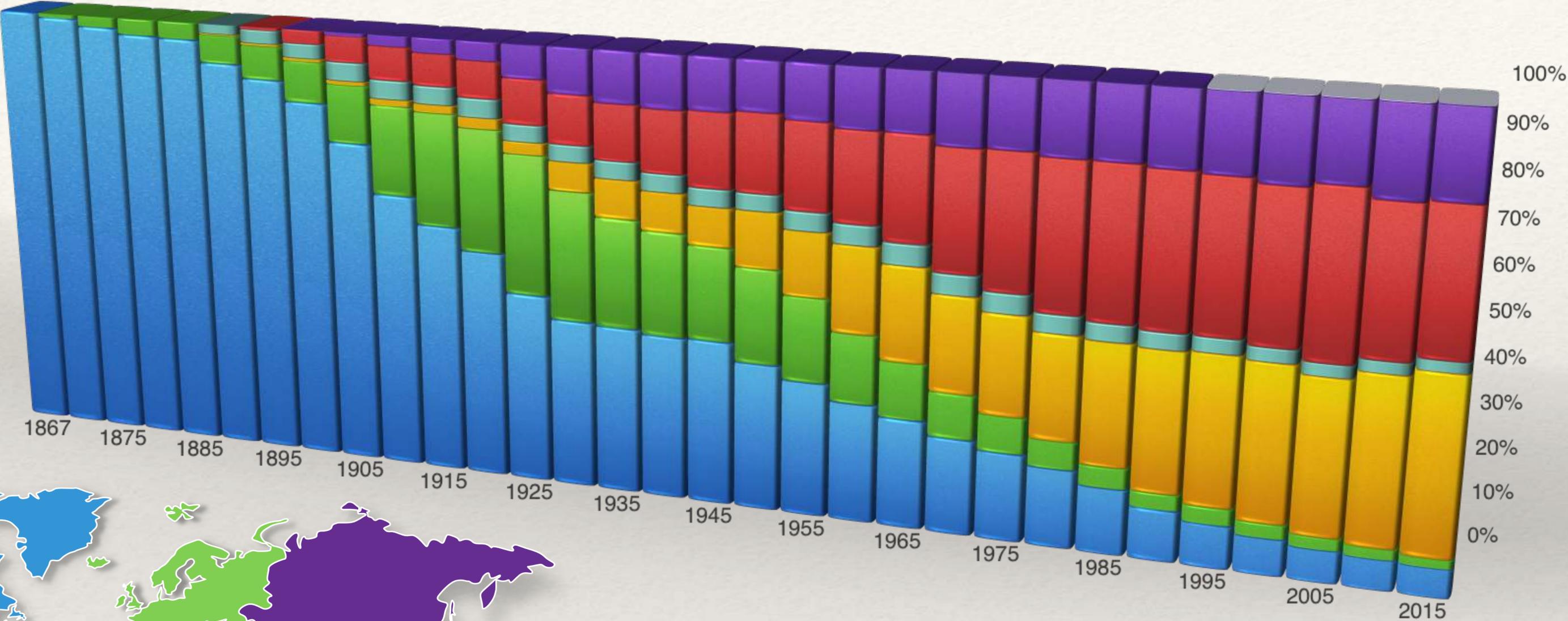


# GLOBAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

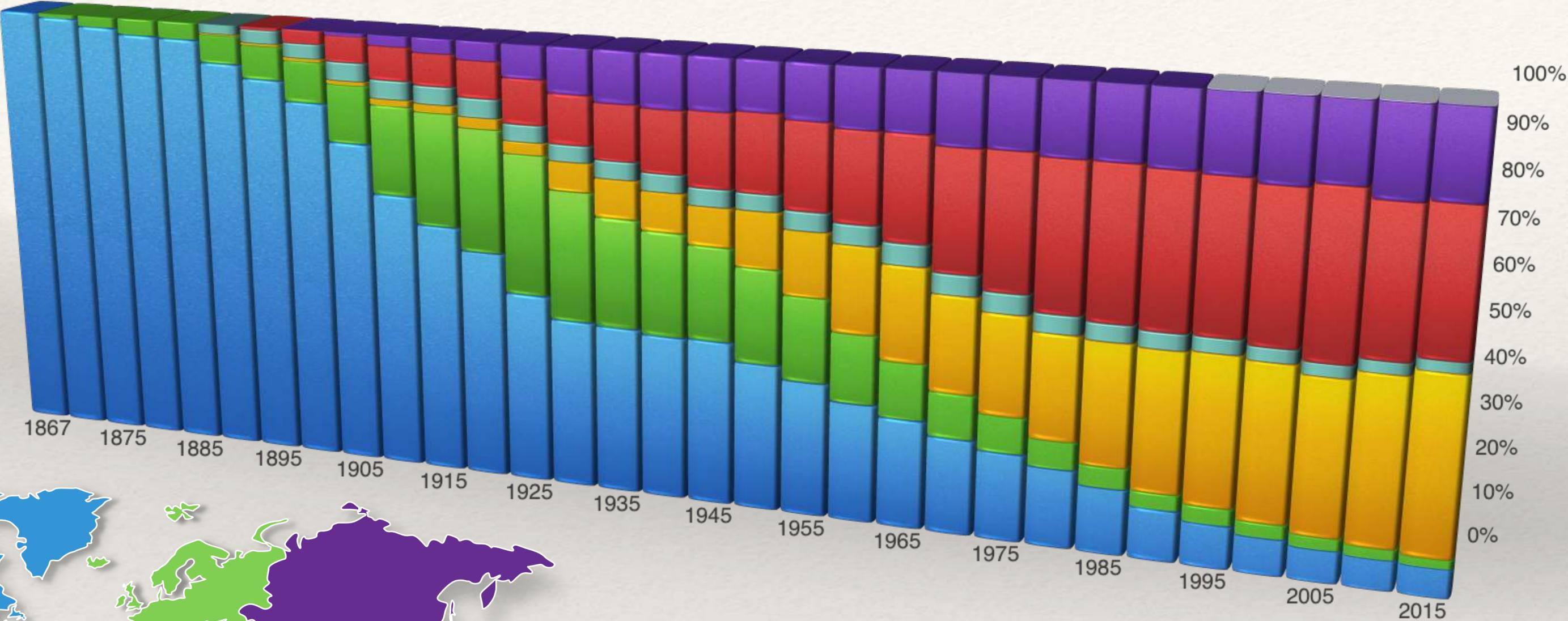
*Percentage of Total Membership by Continent*



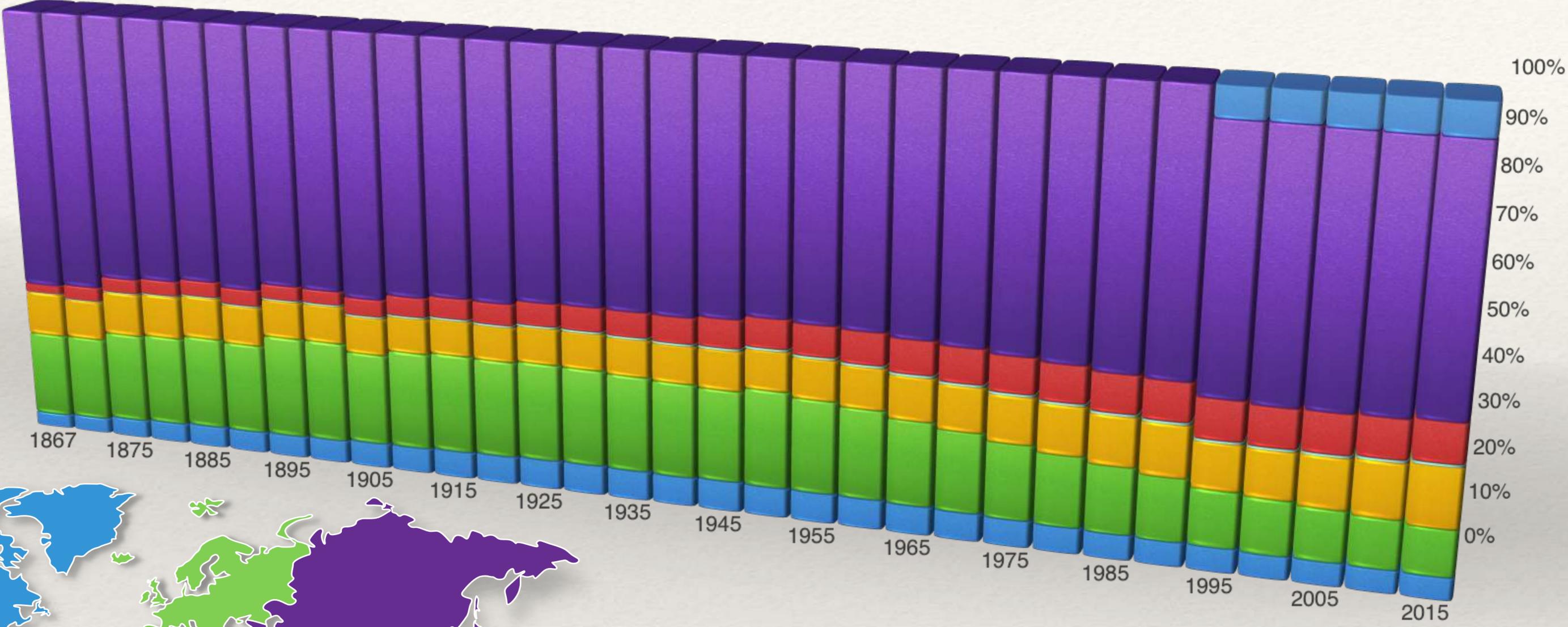
# DISTRIBUTION OF MEMBERSHIP BY CONTINENT/REGION



# DISTRIBUTION OF CHURCH POPULATION BY CONTINENT

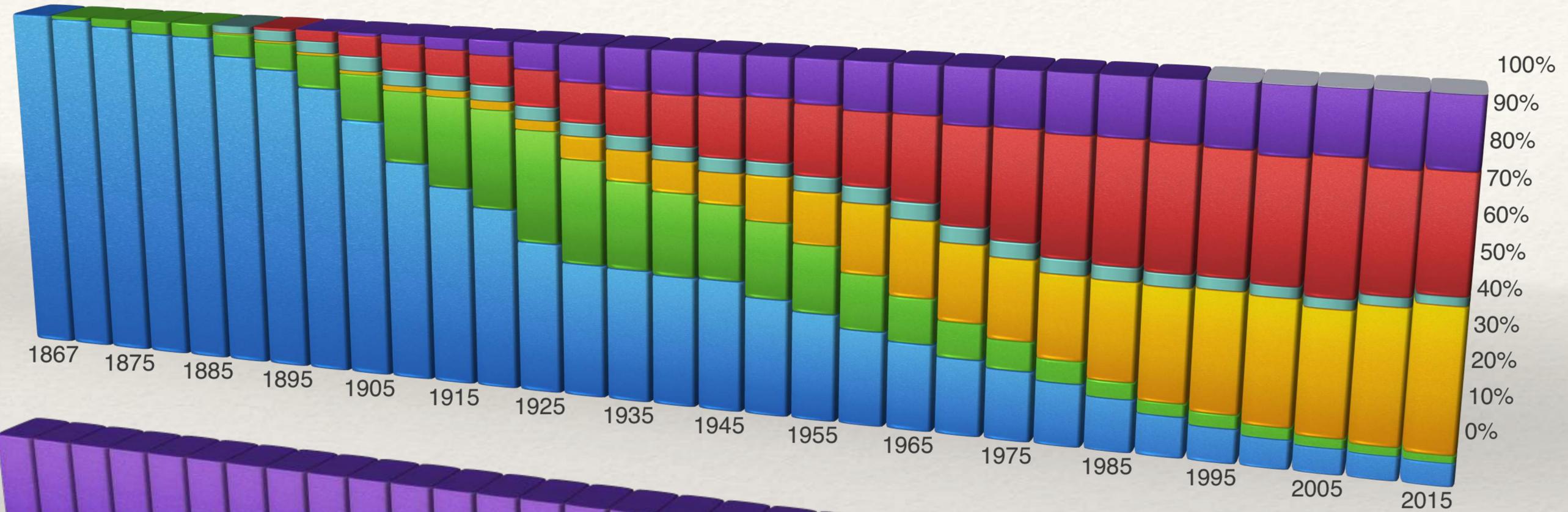


# DISTRIBUTION OF WORLD POPULATION BY CONTINENT

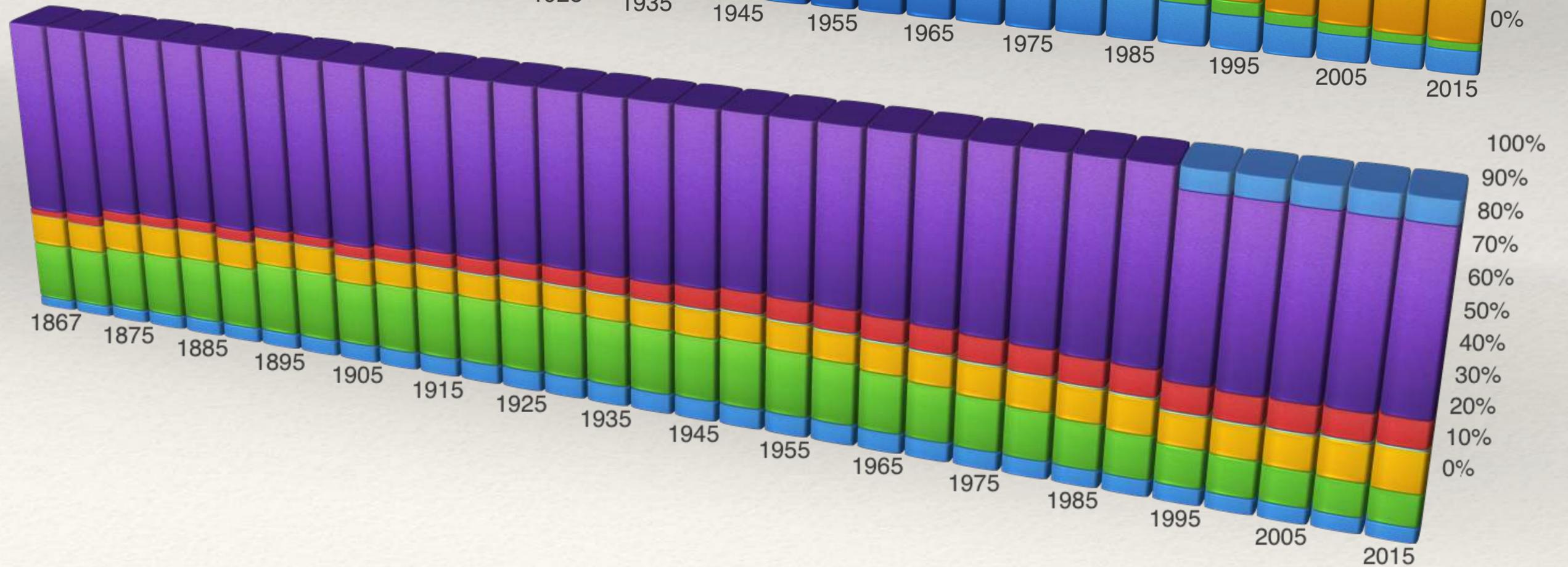


# MEMBERSHIP AND POPULATION BY CONTINENT/REGION: TREND

Membership



Population



# Conclusion

Counting baptisms and members is a means, not an end in itself

A way to tell us how we are doing in reaching our greater goal

# Conclusion

If we **use** numbers to identify trends in mission, they can **help** us

If we **rely** on numbers to shore up our identity, they **will** harm us

**Not by might, nor by power,  
[nor by numerical strength] *but*  
*by my Spirit* [Zech. 4:6]**



**astr**  
Office of  
Archives, Statistics,  
and Research

