

Trends, Challenges, and Opportunities in the European Adventist Church

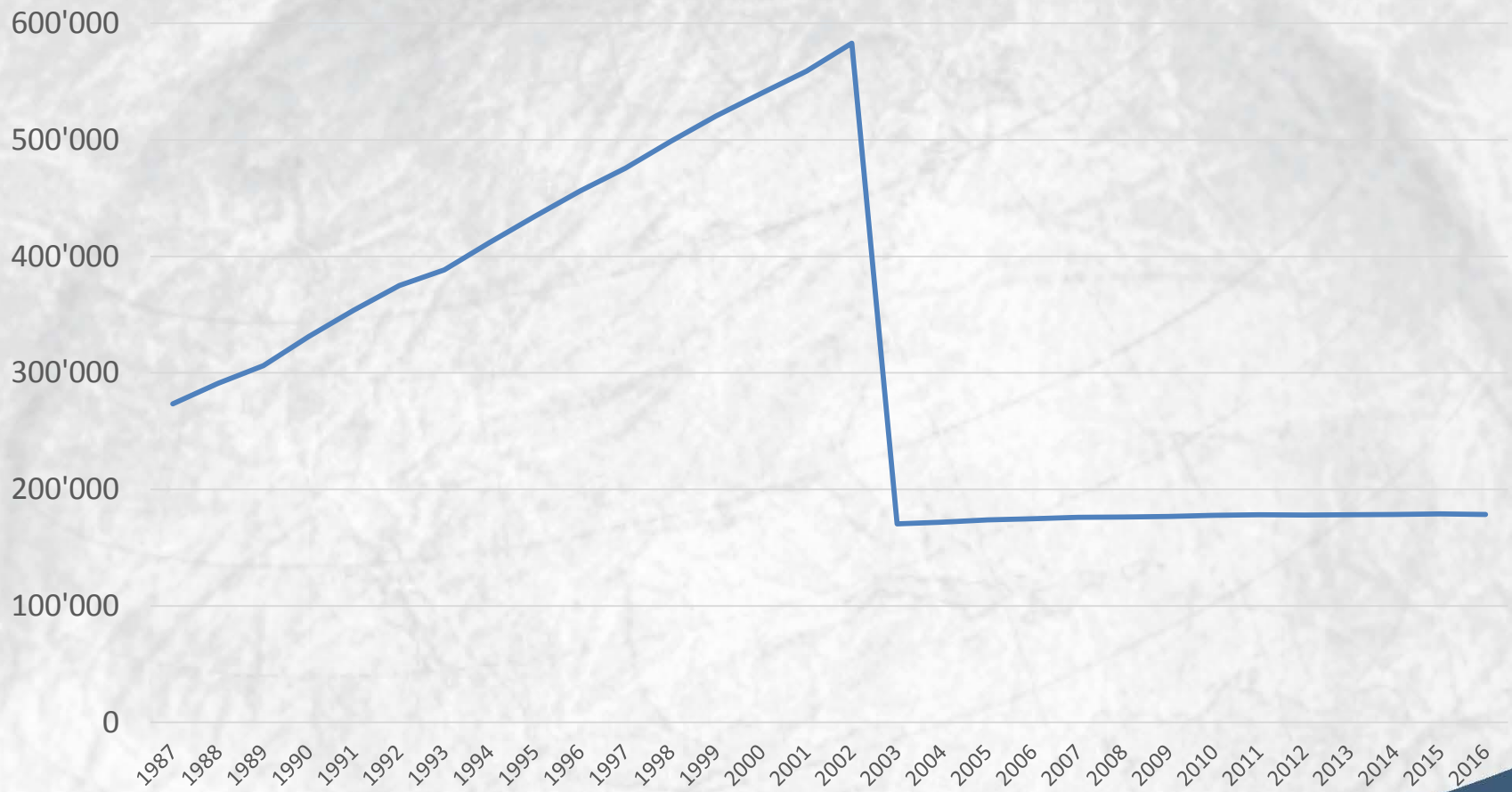
David Trim

Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research

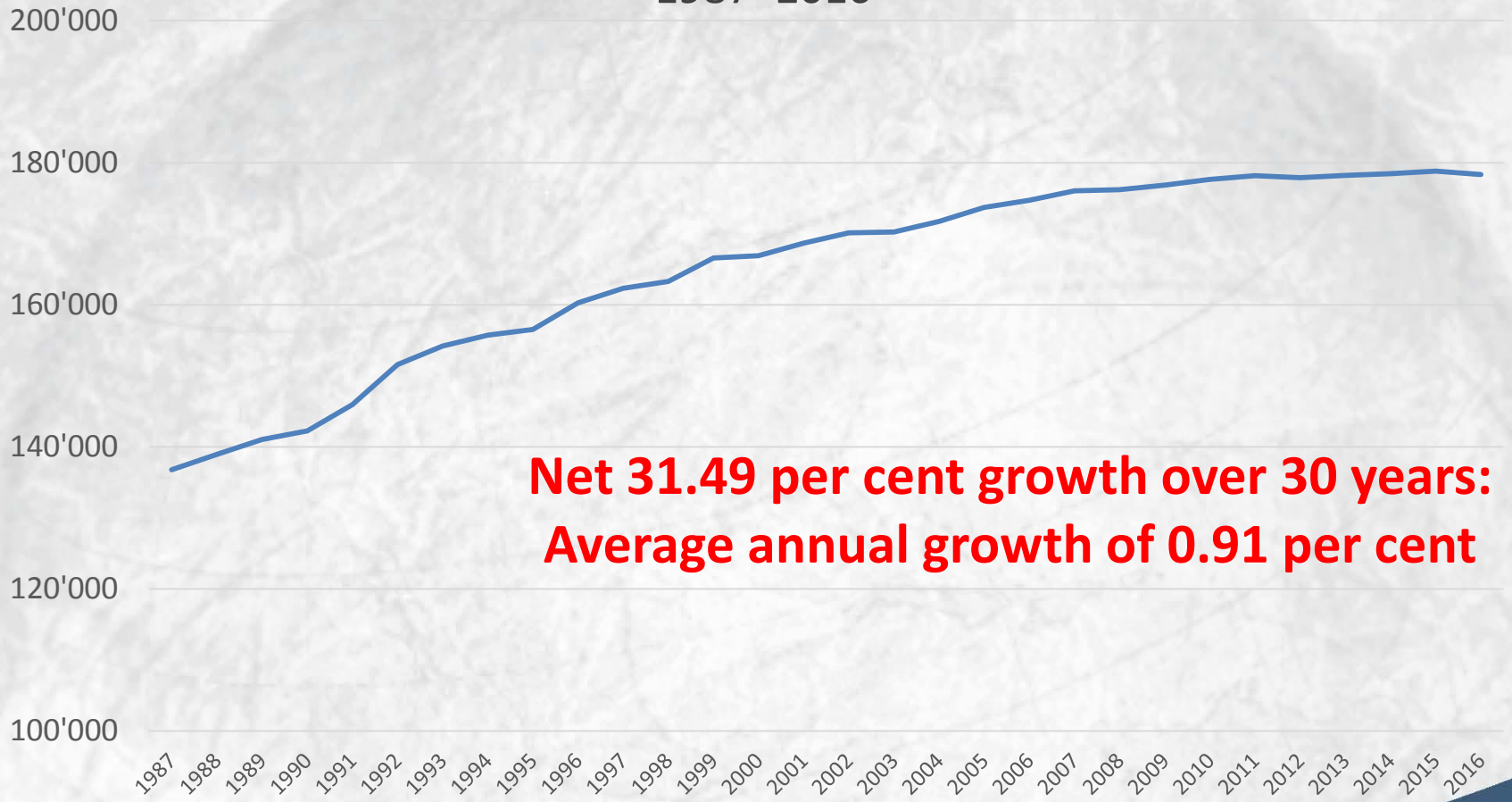
Friedensau, 2017



Thirty-year Trend in EUD Membership, 1987–2016



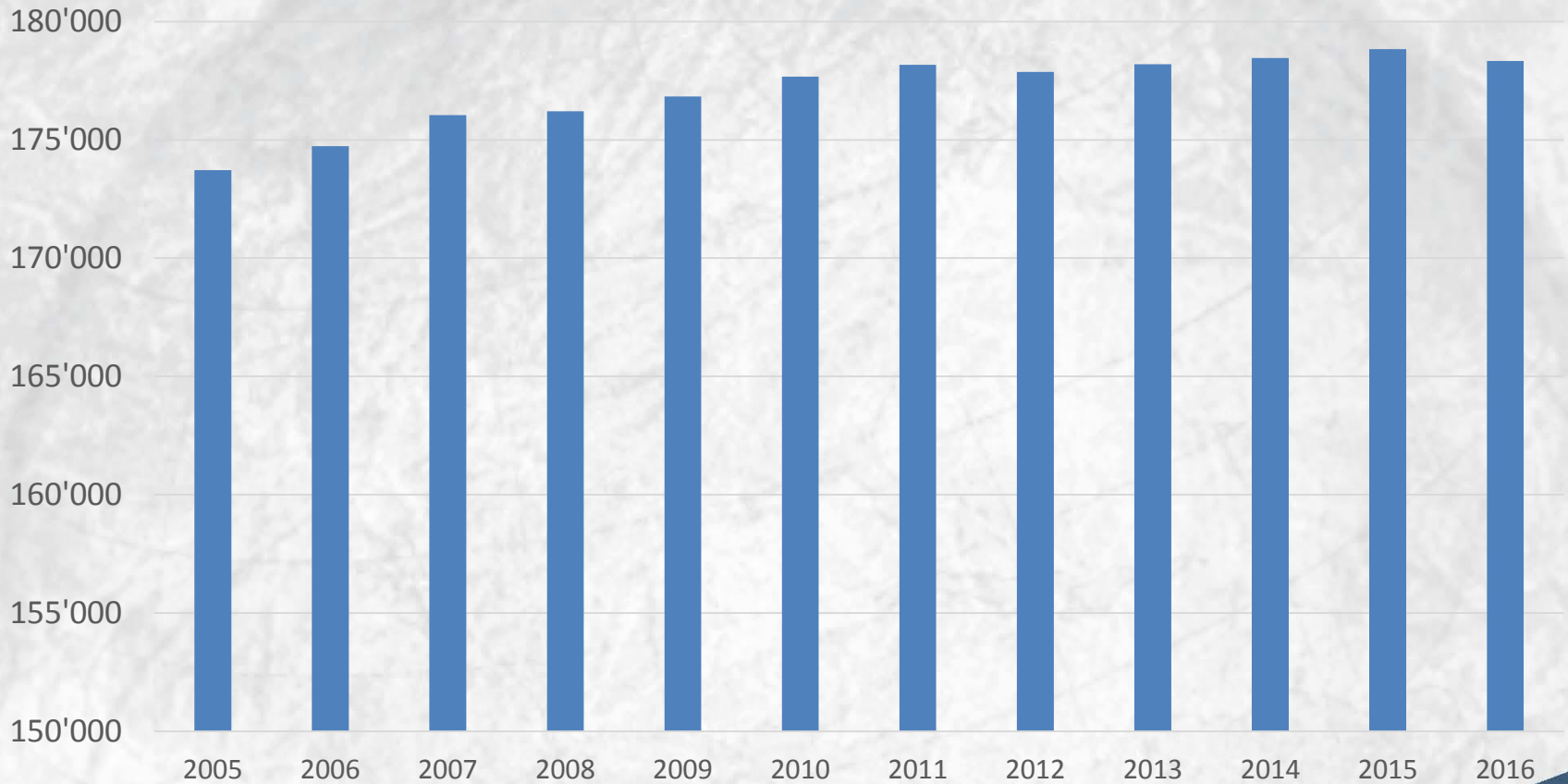
Thirty-year Trend in Membership, EUD's **Current** Territory, 1987–2016



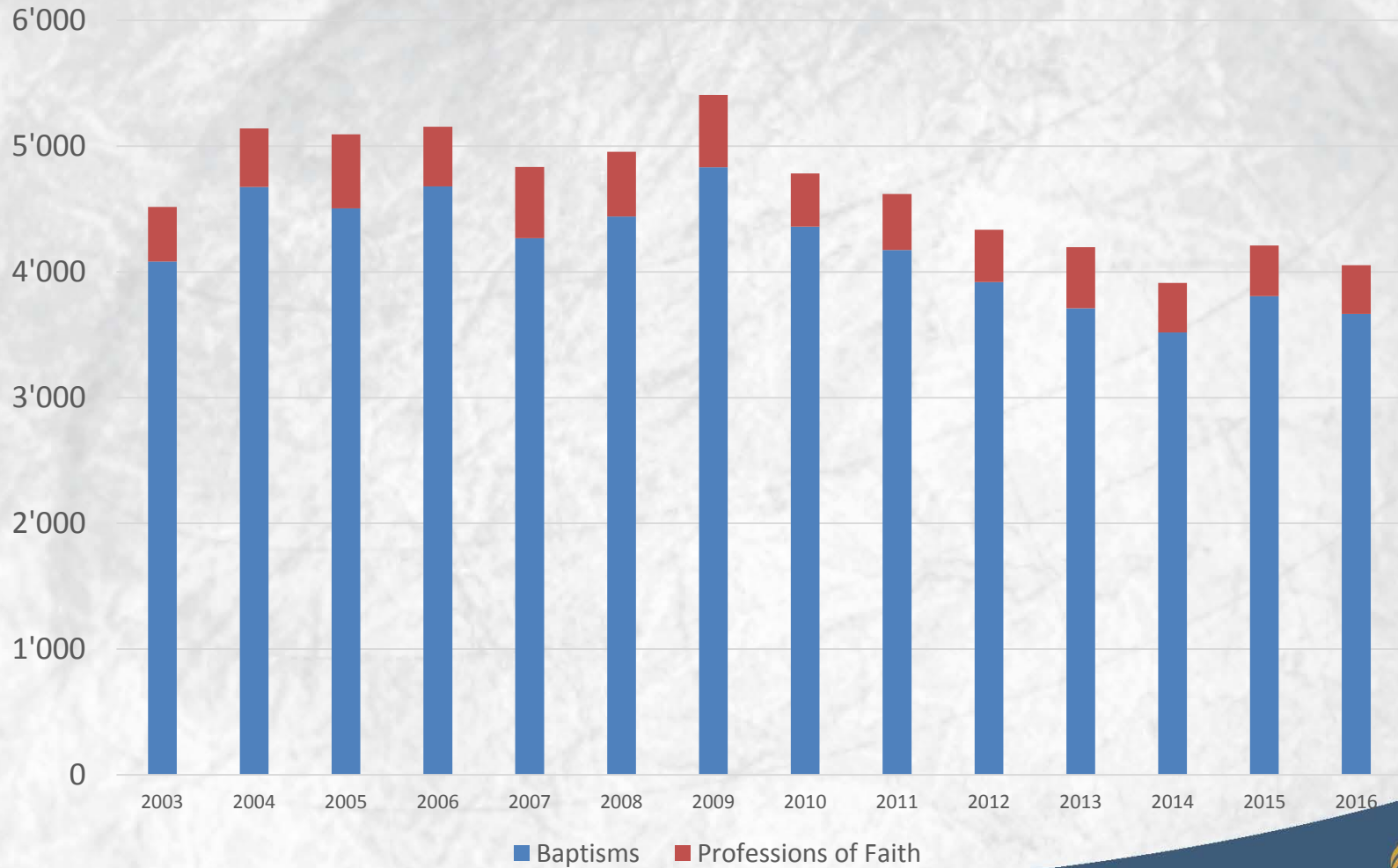
**Net 31.49 per cent growth over 30 years:
Average annual growth of 0.91 per cent**



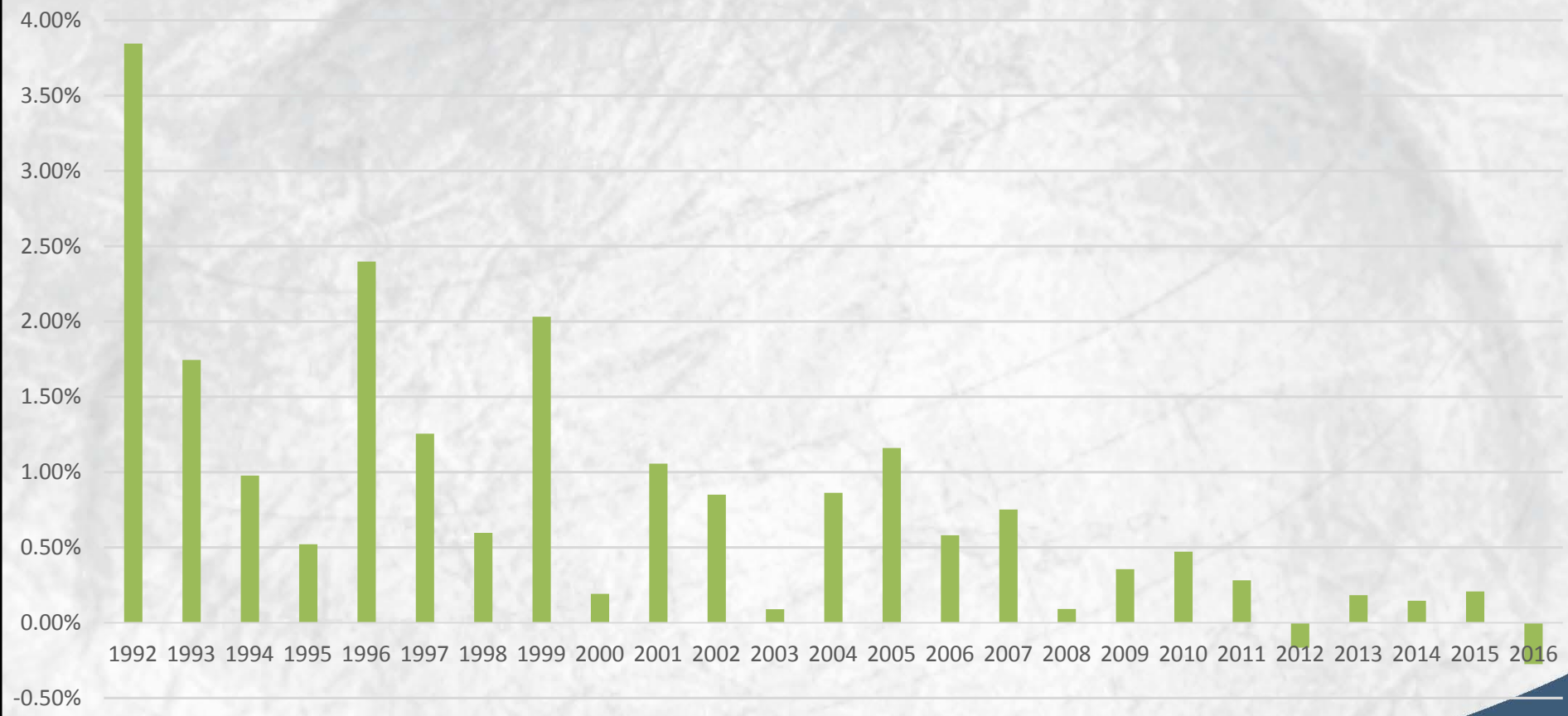
EUD Division Membership: Last Dozen Years, 2005–16



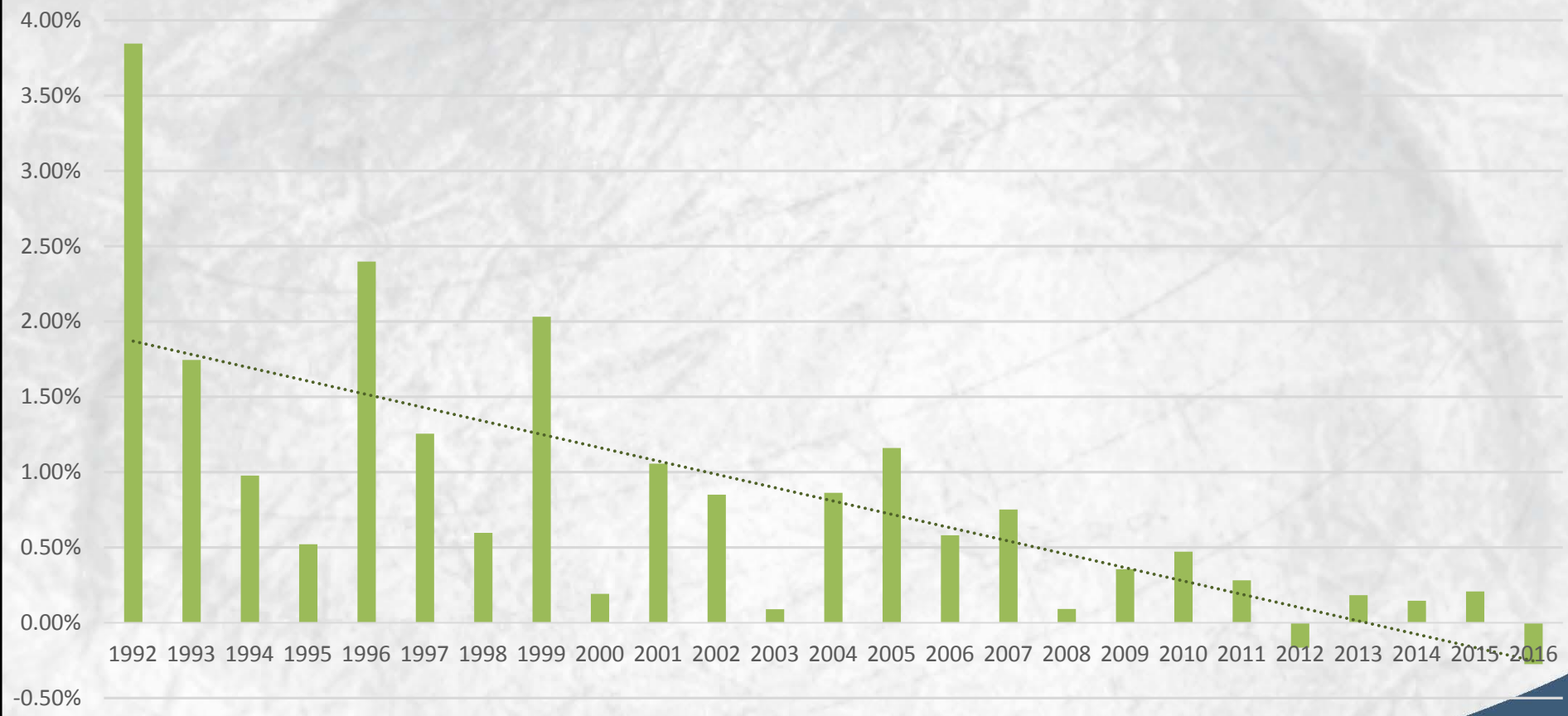
EUD annual accessions since African territories moved to SID, 2003–16



Annual Growth Rates Last Quarter Century (1992–2016) EUD's **Current** Territories)



Annual Growth Rates Last Quarter Century (1992–2016) EUD's **Current** Territories)



Plateauing Unions by Growth Rate (Last 10 Years)

Criteria:

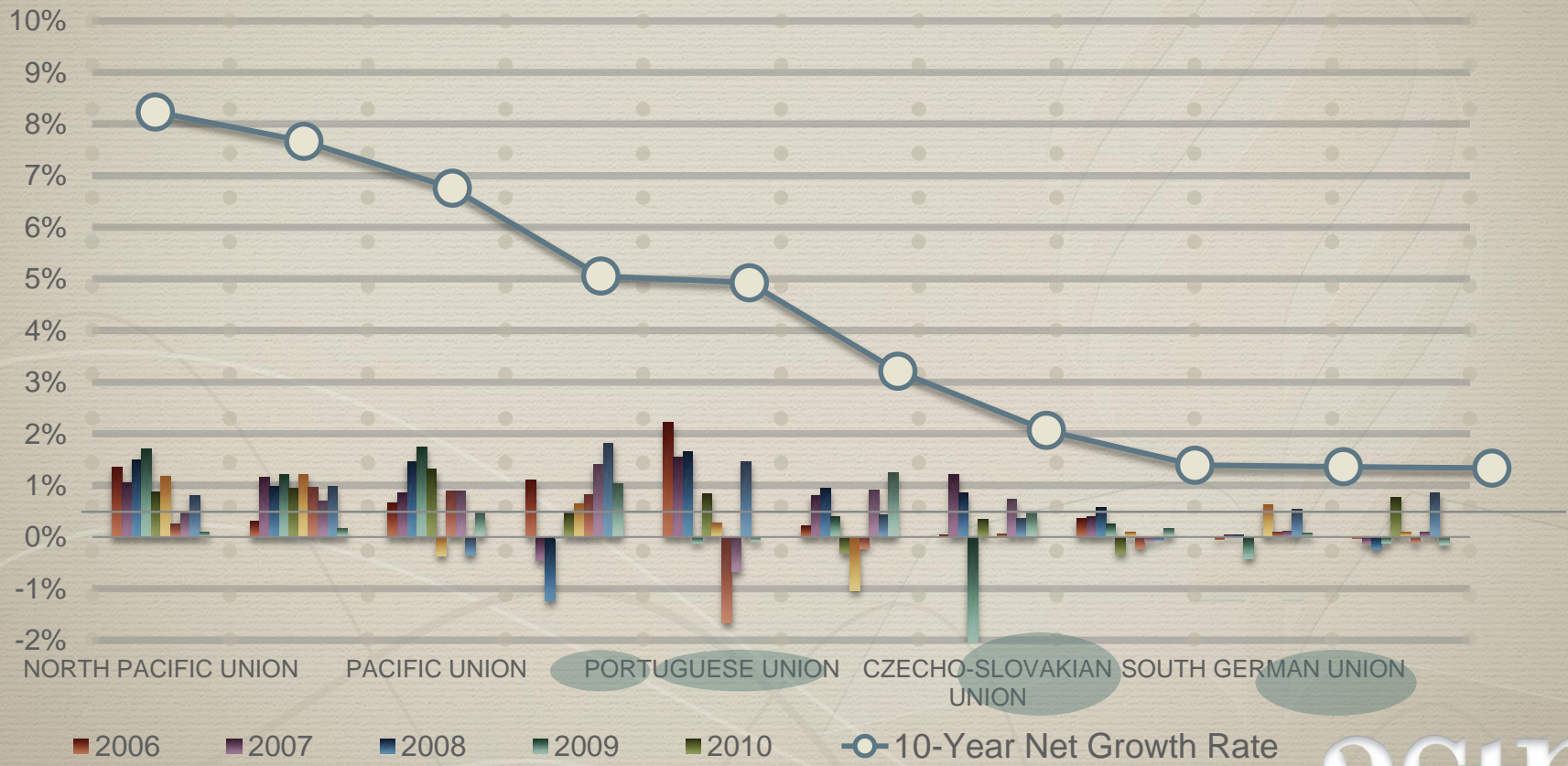
Membership Growth Rate less than 12% over the whole period.

Admin Fields undergoing major membership audits have been excluded.

Note:

World Population Growth Rate is estimated at 11.35% for this period.

ANNUAL GROWTH RATES OF TOP 10 PLATEAUIING UNIONS



Declining Unions by Growth Rate (Last 10 Years)

Criteria:

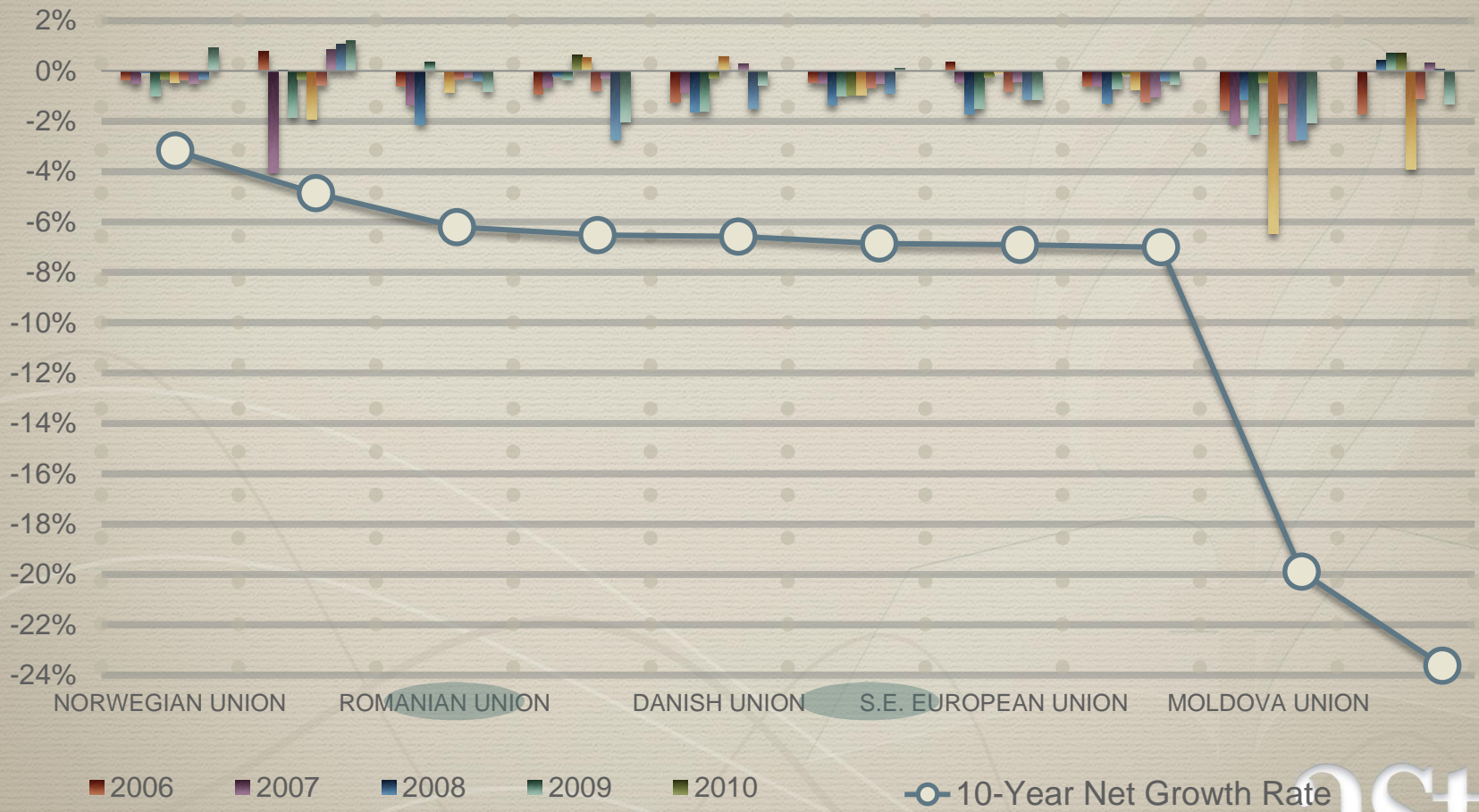
Negative Membership Growth Rate over the period as a whole.

Admin Fields undergoing major membership audits have been excluded.

Note:

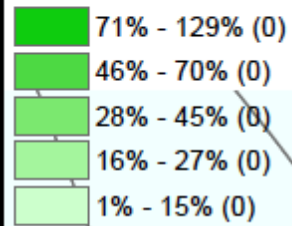
All of these Admin Fields experienced ***four or more years of membership loss*** within the ten-year period.

ANNUAL GROWTH RATES OF 10 UNIONS WITH GREATEST NEGATIVE GROWTH

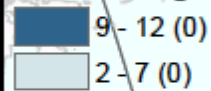


Decennial Growth Rate (2003 - 2012)

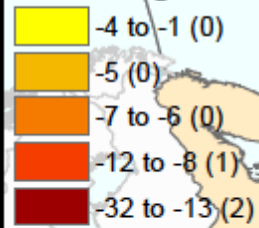
Growing



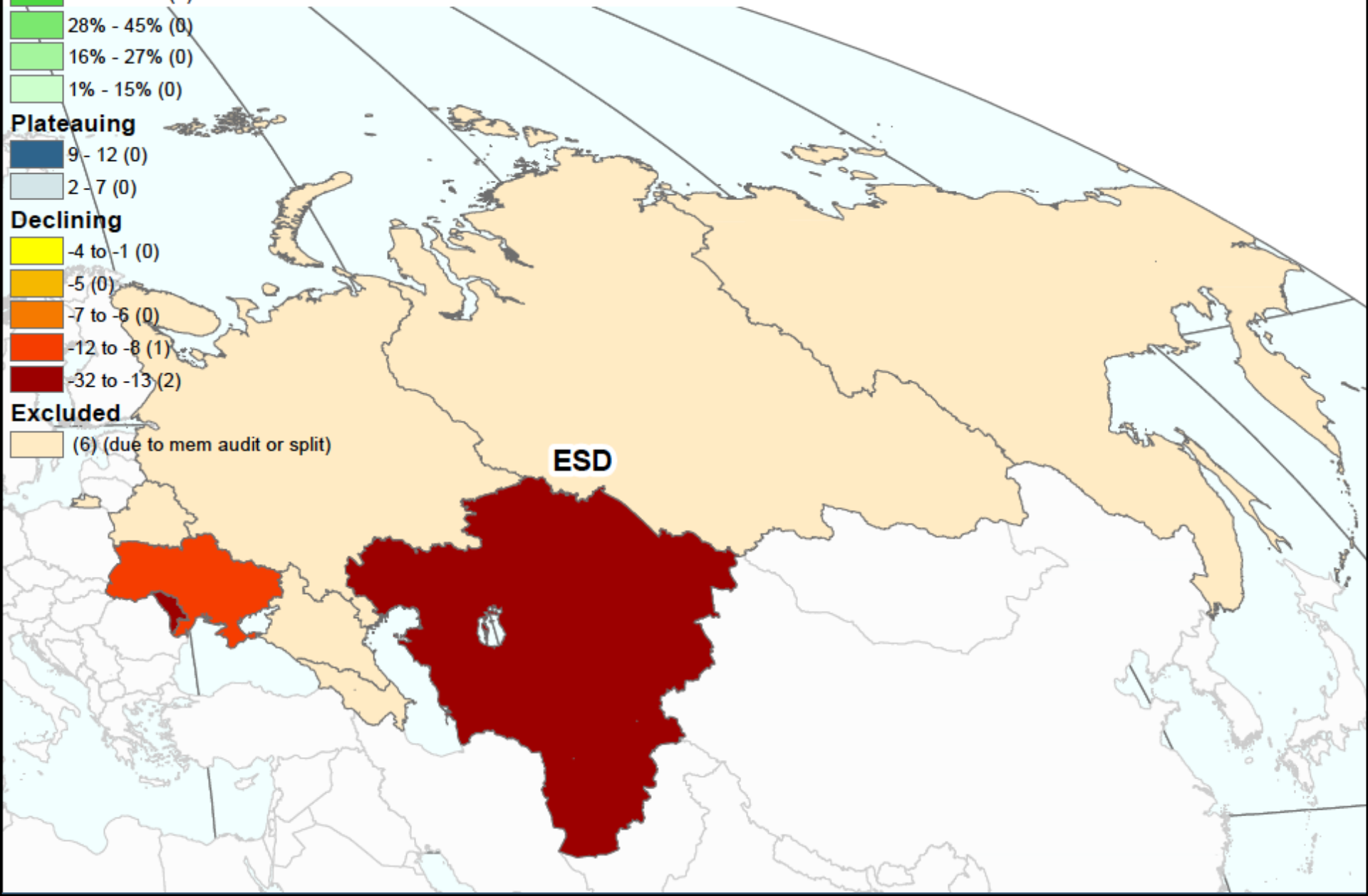
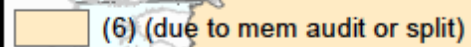
Plateauing



Declining

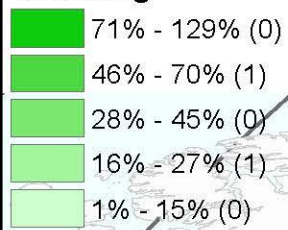


Excluded

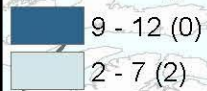


Decennial Growth Rate (2003 - 2012)

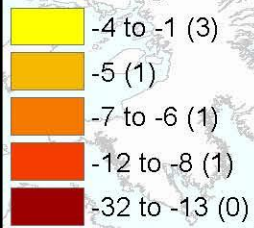
Growing



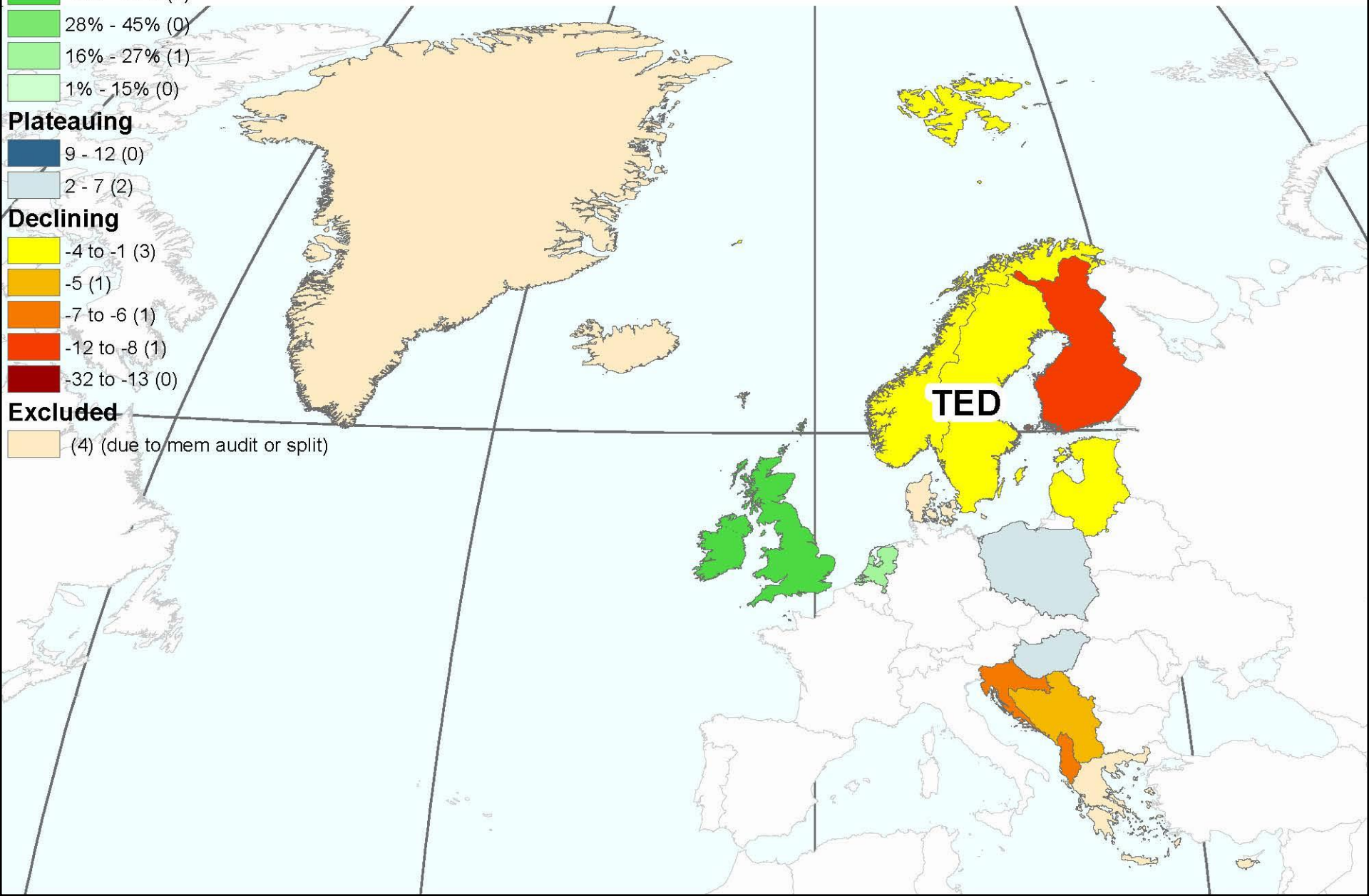
Plateauing



Declining



Excluded



Decennial Growth Rate (2003 - 2012)

Growing

- 71% - 129% (0)
- 46% - 70% (1)
- 28% - 45% (1)
- 16% - 27% (1)
- 1% - 15% (0)

Plateauing

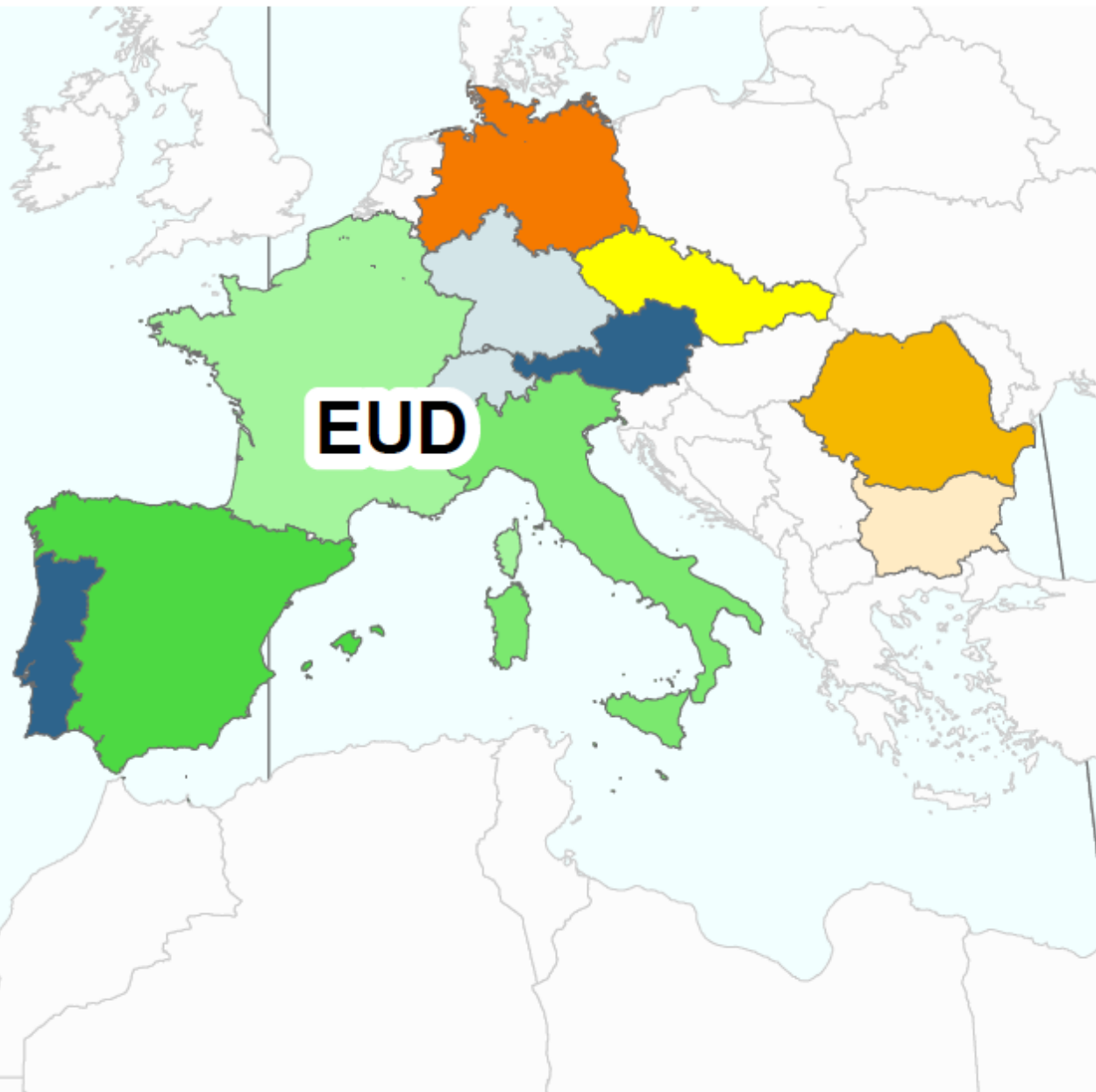
- 9 - 12 (2)
- 2 - 7 (2)

Declining

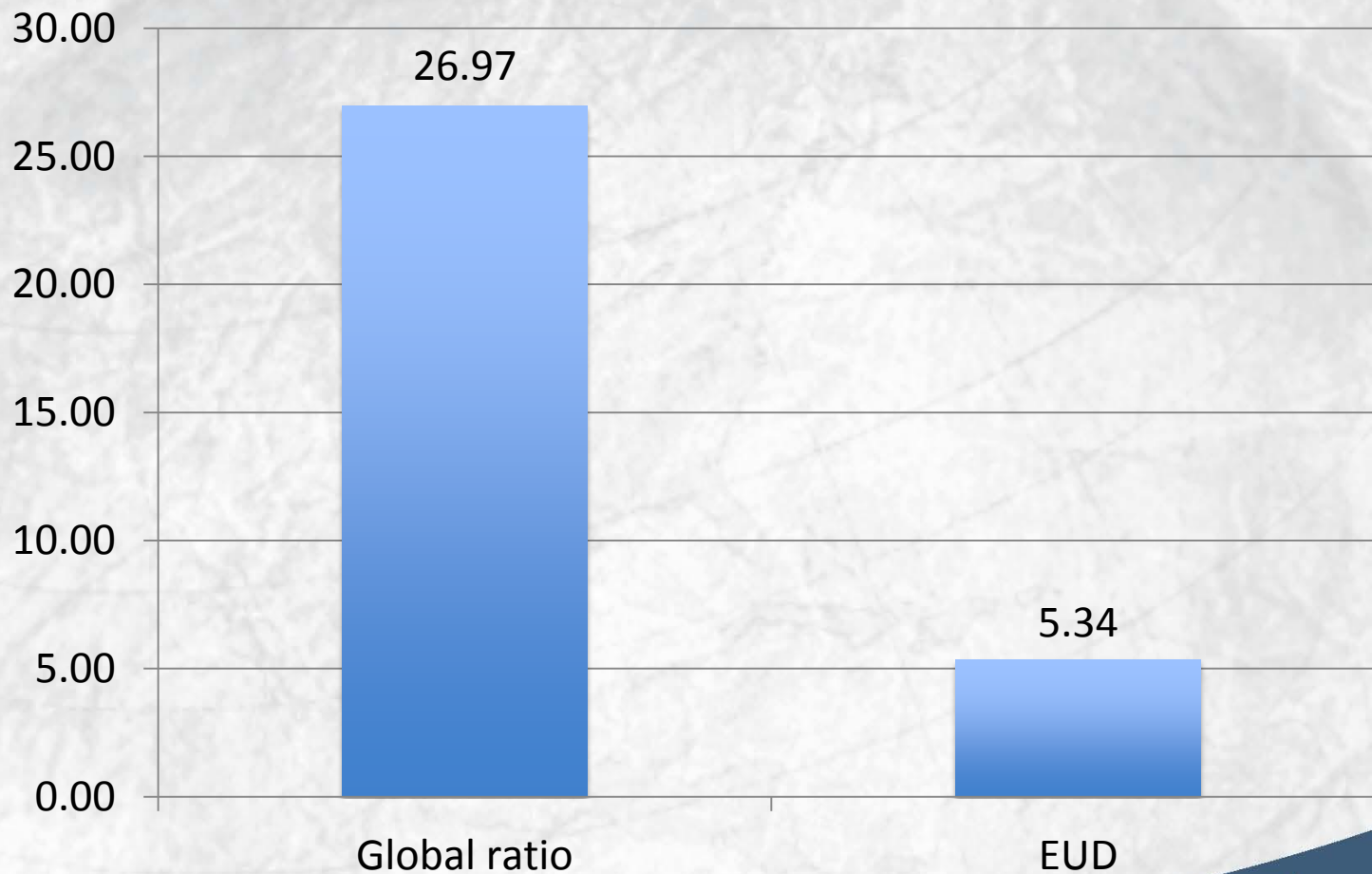
- 4 to -1 (1)
- 5 (1)
- 7 to -6 (1)
- 12 to -8 (0)
- 32 to -13 (0)

Excluded

- (1) (due to mem audit or split)

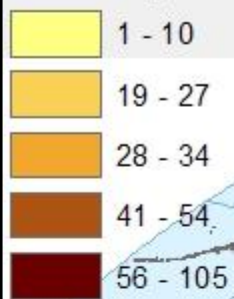


Members per 10,000 people: Global vs EUD (2016)

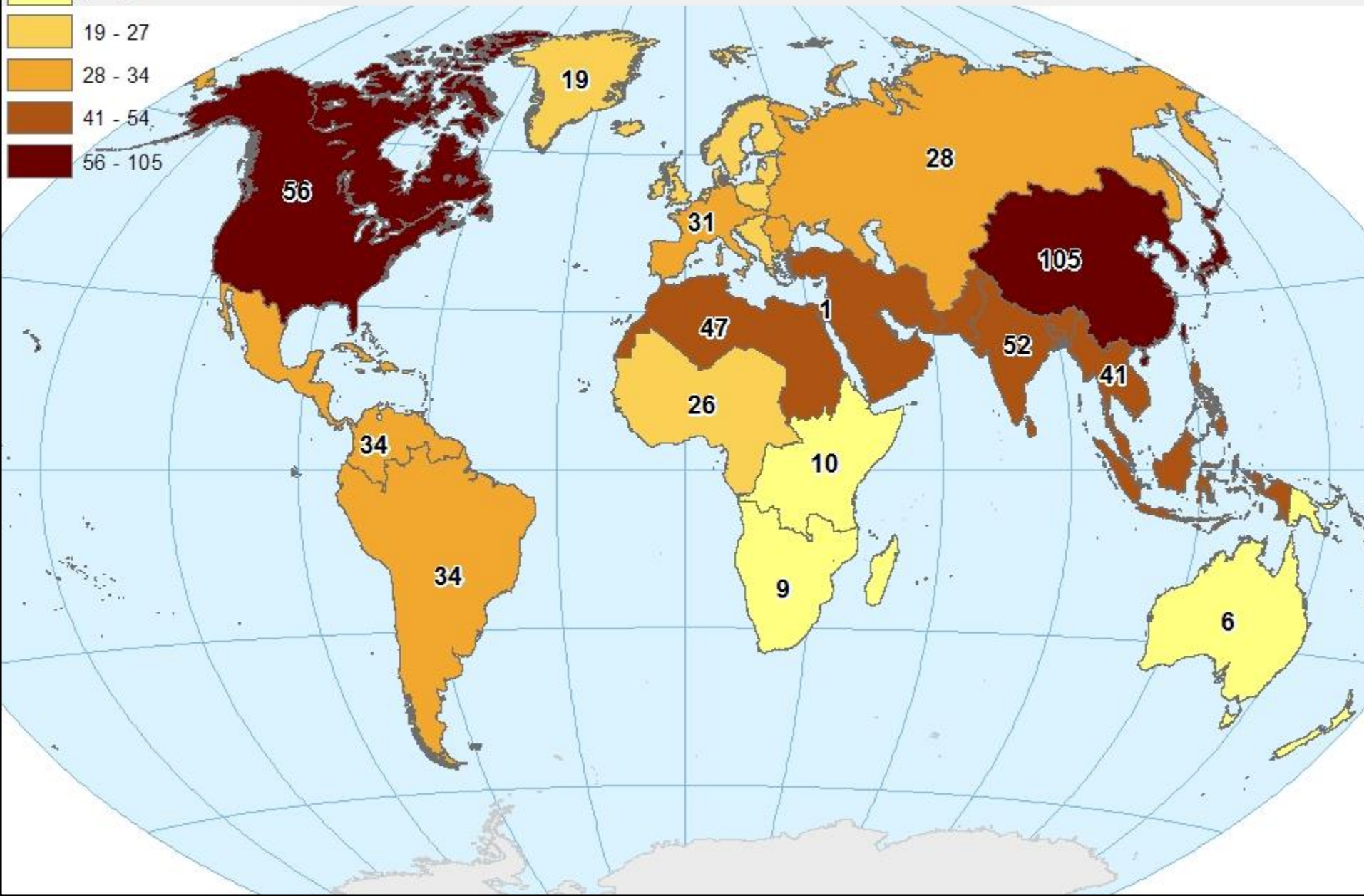


Cities of 1 Million or More

Count by Division



Forty-nine million-plus cities in Europe: more than in South America or Africa; **thirty-one of these are in EUD.**



Church members per 10,000 people in million-plus urban areas

| | |
|---------------------------------------|--------|
| SOUTHERN AFRICA-INDIAN OCEAN DIVISION | 97,576 |
| INTER-AMERICAN DIVISION | 68,540 |
| EAST-CENTRAL AFRICA DIVISION | 64,245 |
| SOUTH AMERICAN DIVISION | 51,540 |
| WEST-CENTRAL AFRICA DIVISION | 25,633 |
| NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION | 24,710 |
| SOUTH PACIFIC DIVISION | 23,666 |
| SOUTHERN ASIA-PACIFIC DIVISION | 9,595 |
| SOUTHERN ASIA DIVISION | 6,354 |
| TRANS-EUROPEAN DIVISION | 5,530 |
| NORTHERN ASIA-PACIFIC DIVISION | 4,889 |
| INTER-EUROPEAN DIVISION | 4,452 |
| EURO-ASIA DIVISION | 3,291 |
| MENA | 150 |

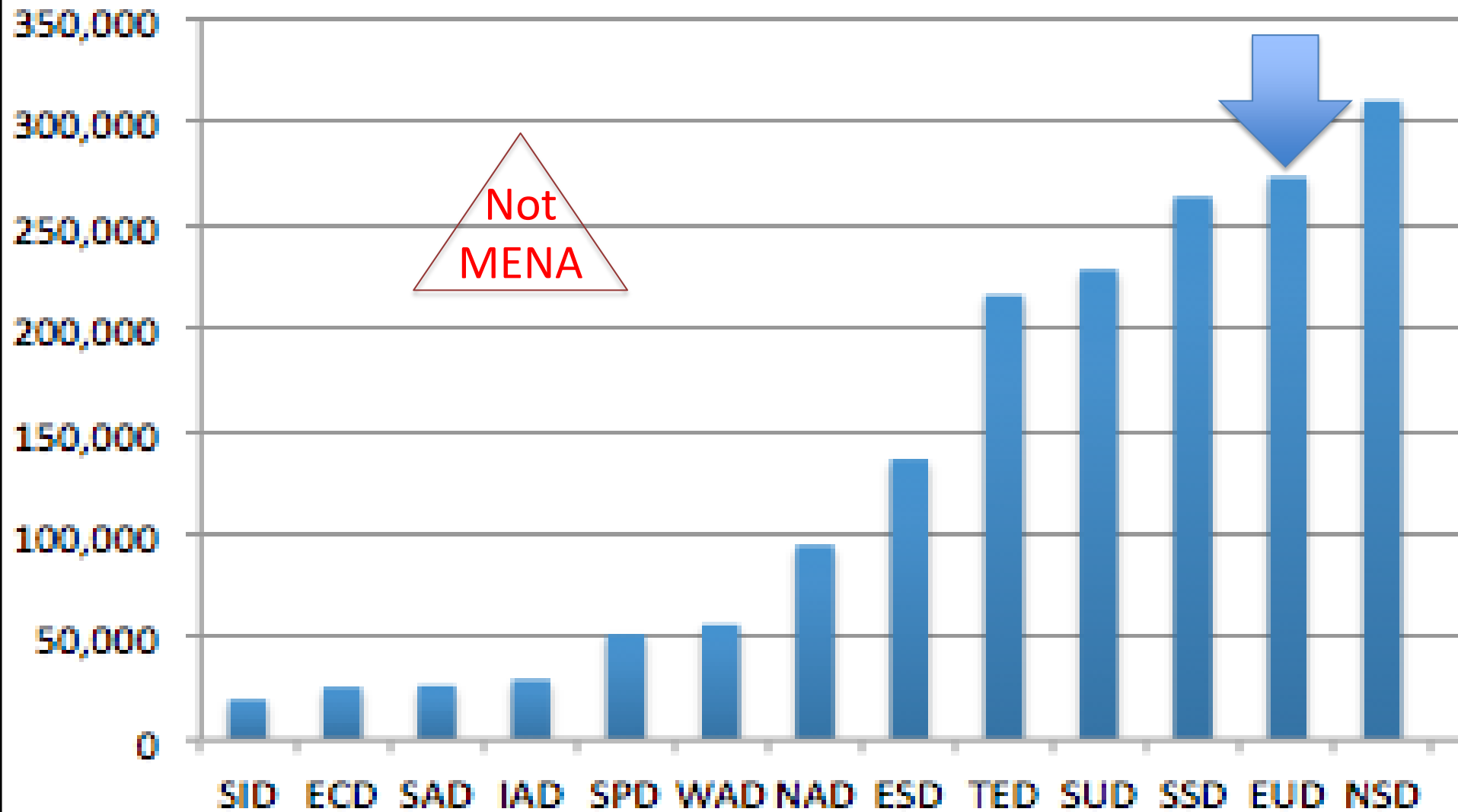


Population to congregations ratio in million-plus urban areas

| | |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|
| SOUTHERN AFRICA-INDIAN OCEAN DIVISION | 19,448 |
| EAST-CENTRAL AFRICA DIVISION | 25,517 |
| SOUTH AMERICAN DIVISION | 26,330 |
| INTER-AMERICAN DIVISION | 29,094 |
| SOUTH PACIFIC DIVISION | 51,322 |
| WEST-CENTRAL AFRICA DIVISION | 55,931 |
| NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION | 94,356 |
| EURO-ASIA DIVISION | 136,100 |
| TRANS-EUROPEAN DIVISION | 215,873 |
| SOUTHERN ASIA DIVISION | 228,288 |
| SOUTHERN ASIA-PACIFIC DIVISION | 263,611 |
| INTER-EUROPEAN DIVISION | 273,213 |
| NORTHERN ASIA-PACIFIC DIVISION | 310,161 |
| MENA | 4,366,912 |



Million-plus urban areas: population to congregation ratio per Division

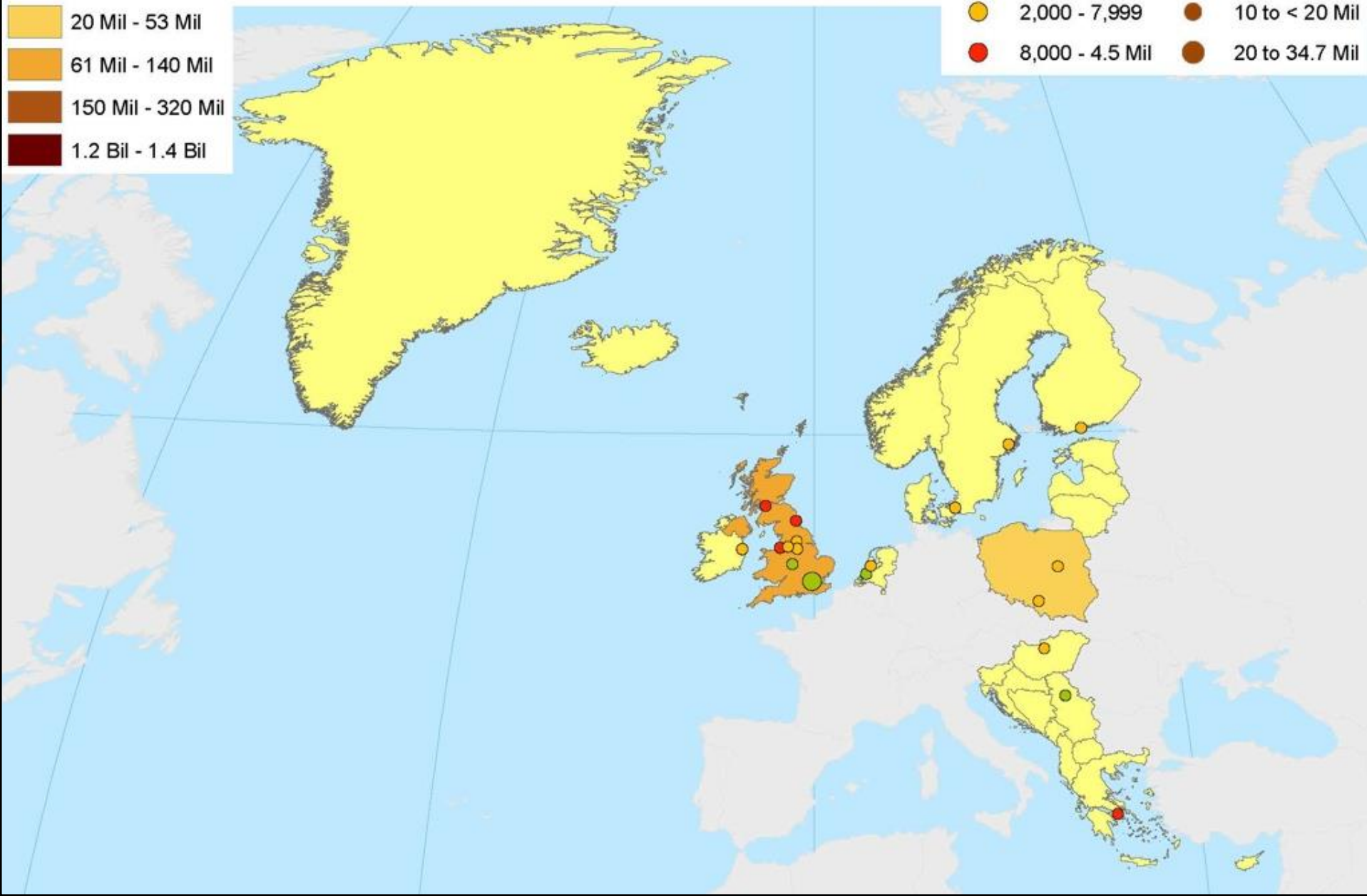


Countries in TED

Population



Pop/Mem (Color) City Pop (Size)



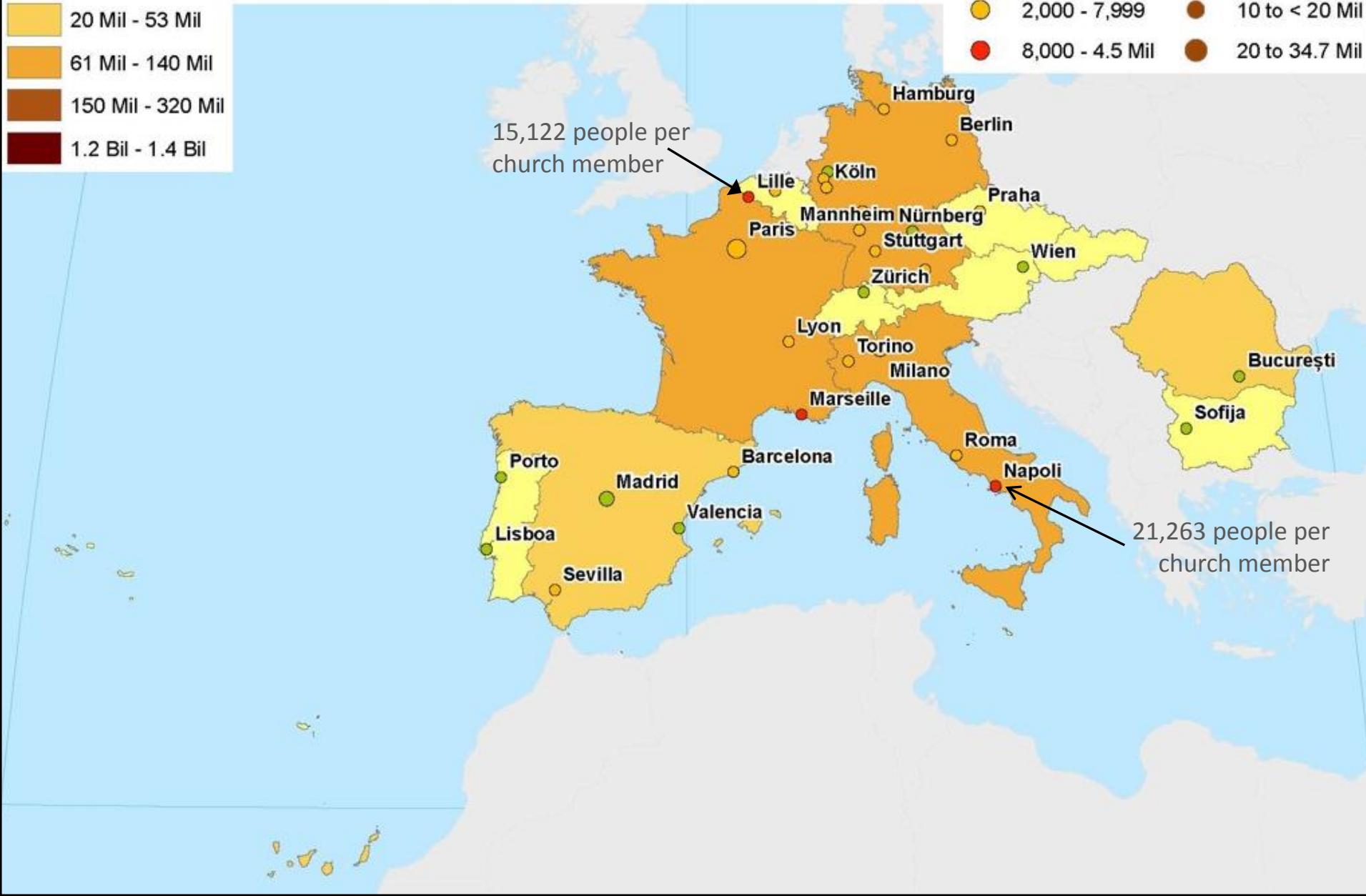
Countries in EUD

Population



Naples and Lille have the worst ratios, worse than any cities in the Americas, Australasia or Sub-Saharan Africa

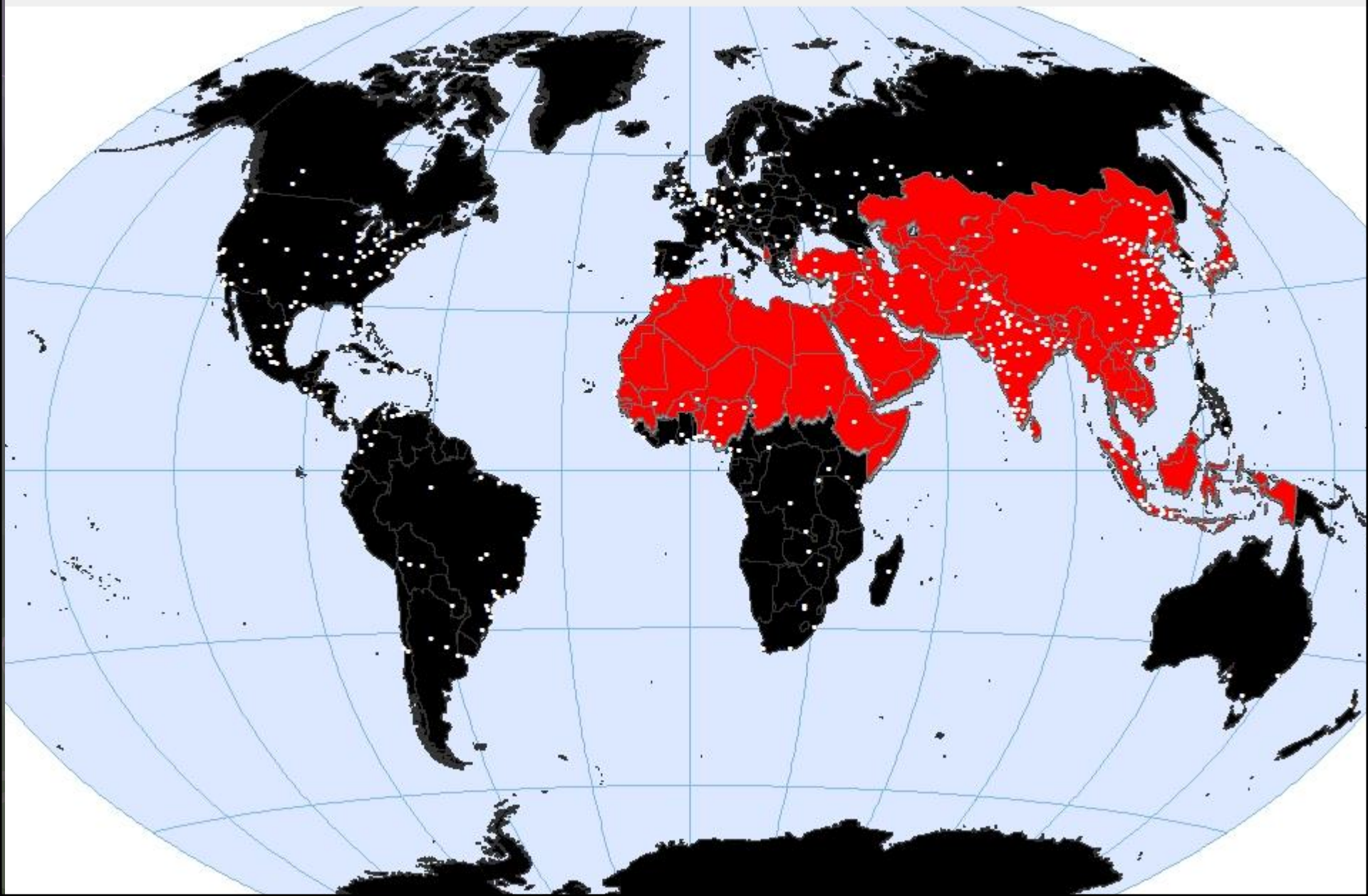
Pop/Mem (Color) City Pop (Size)



67 Countries in 1040 Window

1040 Window

236 Cities of a Million or More in 1040 Window





The POST-CHRISTIAN TRIANGLE

Opportunities: Spirituality

- Many Europeans are “spiritual not religious”
- A recent analysis of three major surveys (56–60,000 respondents each time) of Europe in 1981, 1990 and 2000 concludes that “post-Christian spirituality is on the rise” [Houtman & Aupers, *JSSR*, 46 (2007): 305-20]
- But except in, e.g., Czech Republic, opinion polls do not show that atheism is either popular or on the rise



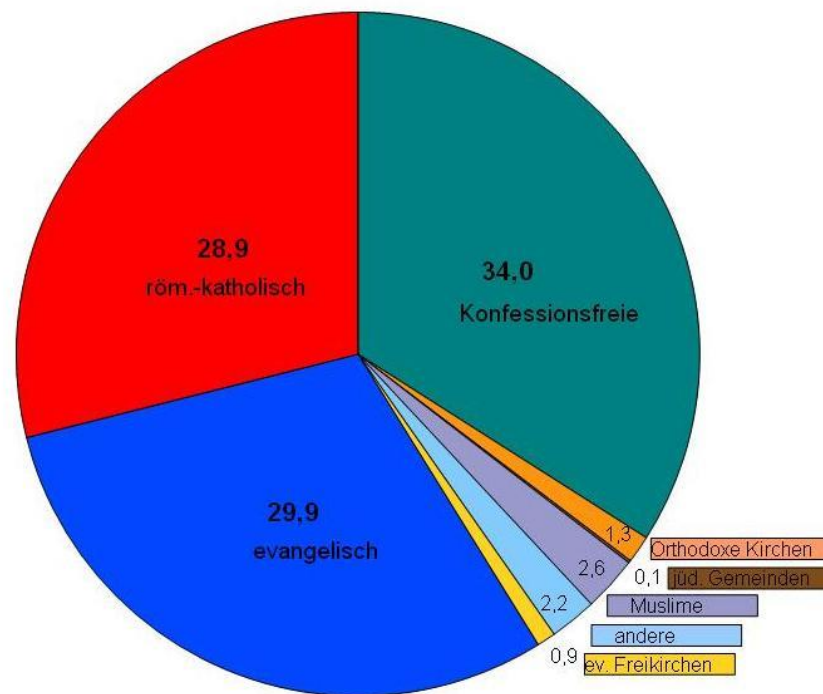
Opportunities: Spirituality

- Many Europeans still instinctively self-identify as religious
- E.g., the Pew Centre's 2012 "Global Religious Landscape" Study shows that 75.2% of Europeans identify as Christians
- A more specific example



Spirituality: e.g. Germany

Religionszugehörigkeit Bevölkerung Deutschland - 2014



Statistisches Bundesamt 2014, EKD, Katholische Bischofskonferenz,
Veröffentlichungen der Religionsgemeinschaften

Aufbereitung, Grafik, Copyright fowid/ste

Only 1.8 million (out of 80 million identified as “other”)



Opportunities: Spirituality

- This is superficial religiosity, not deep (attendance at church likely to be only at Easter and Christmas, plus christenings, weddings, and funerals)
- In a 2011 survey (Gothenburg University), citizens of the EU reported attending church more often than the cinema or theatre (but not quite as frequently as they ate out at restaurants)



Opportunities: Spirituality

- Why does spirituality (even nominal self-identified religiosity) persist?
- *Europeans have what they want; but not what they need*
- *And many are aware of this: atheism and materialism do not fill the God-shaped hole in their heart*
- But they continue to be wary of organized churches and thus “are spiritual not religious”



Opportunities: Immigrants

- Adherents of other world religions more open to conversion in Europe than in their homelands
- Not just Christianity affected by secularisation
- France said to have a population of five million Muslims
- *But*, North African immigrants to France “have been broadly secular and indeed often hostile to religion.”
- In a 2011 survey by Ifop, “only 40 percent identify themselves as observant Muslims, and only 25 percent attend Friday prayers.”

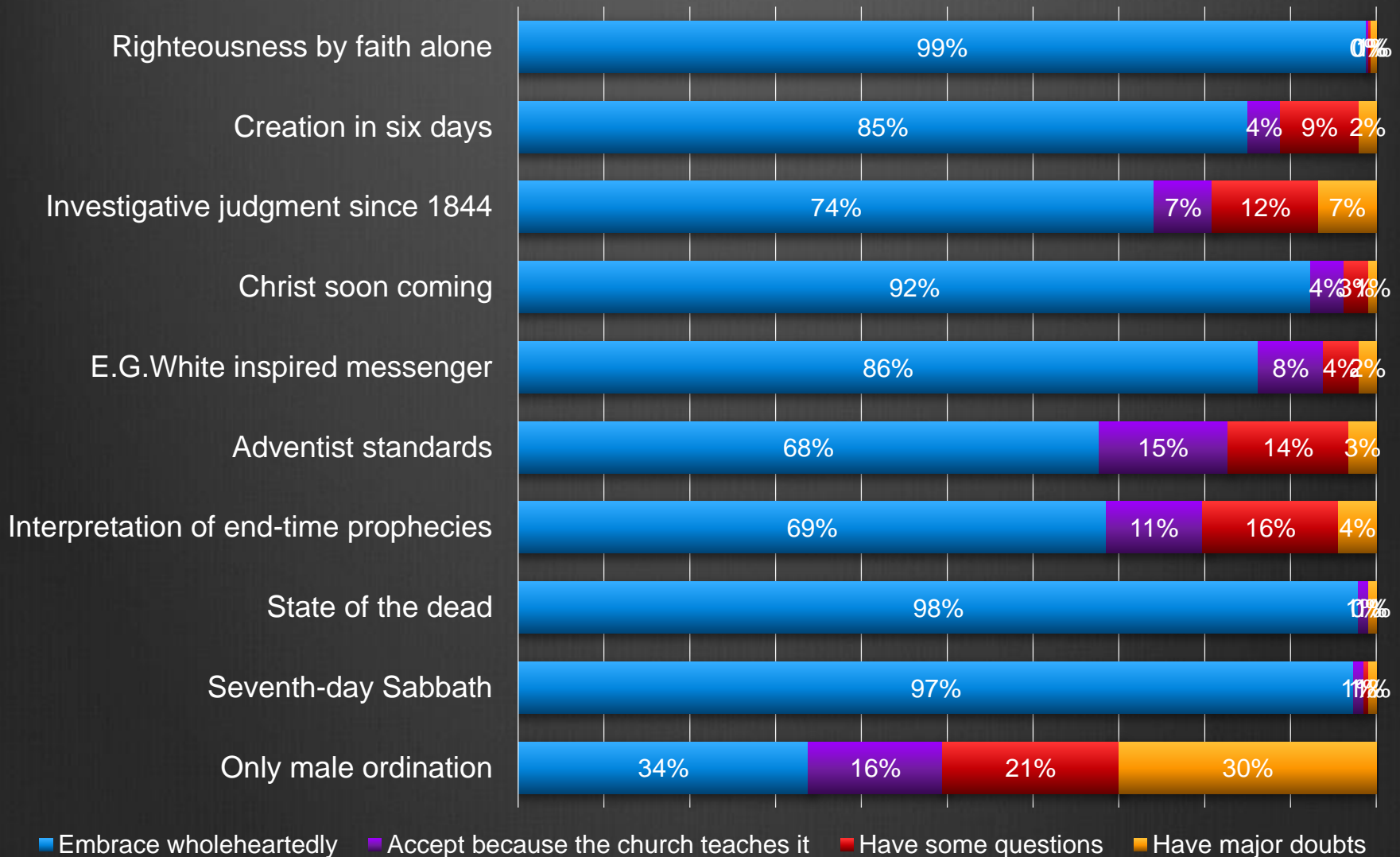


Opportunities: Pastorate

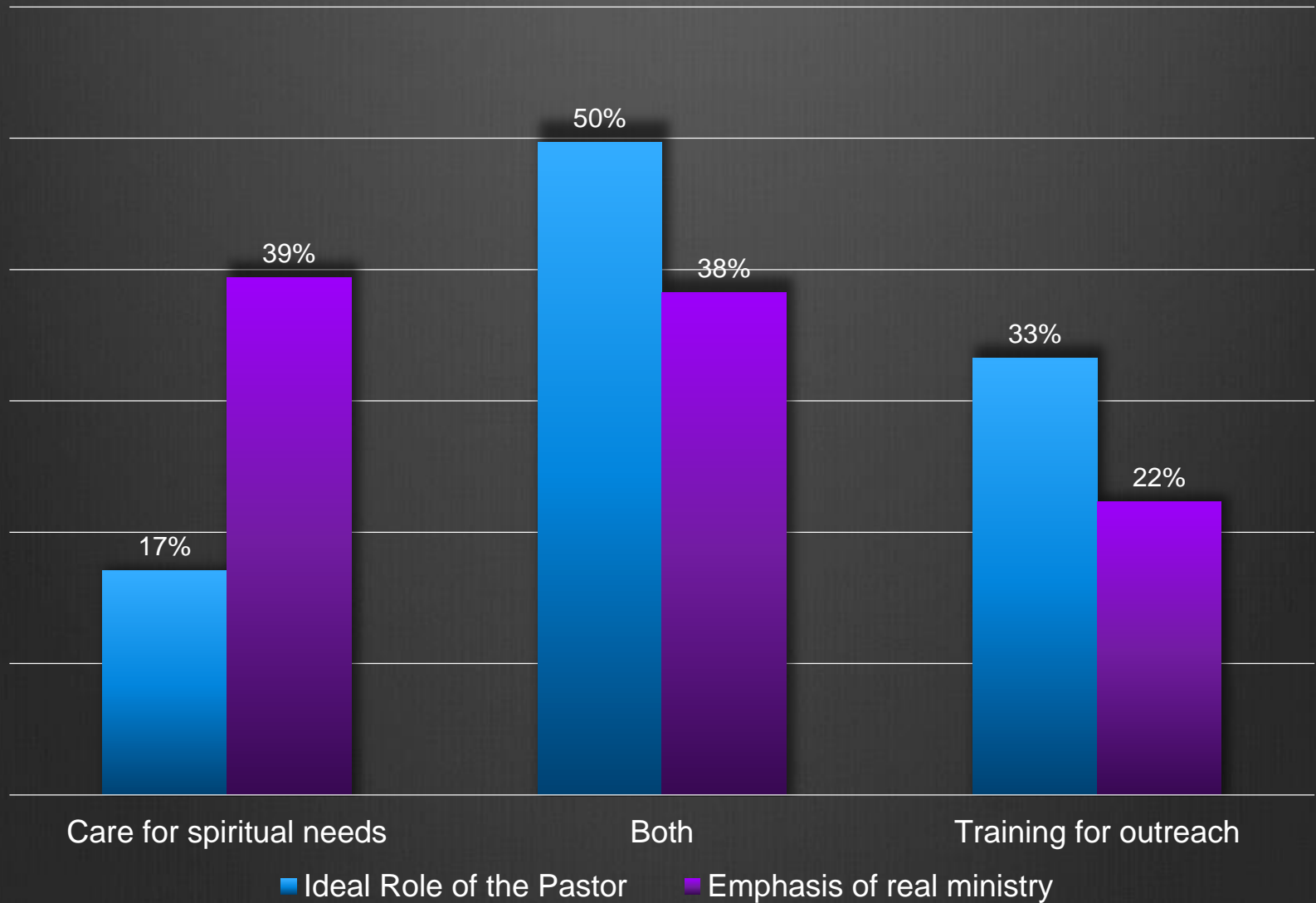
- Pastors in EUE are comparatively well educated and with a good grounding in Adventist education
- They are relatively loyal to the Church's doctrinal positions and they are well-balanced in their approach to ministry
- They have strong habits of Bible study and prayer



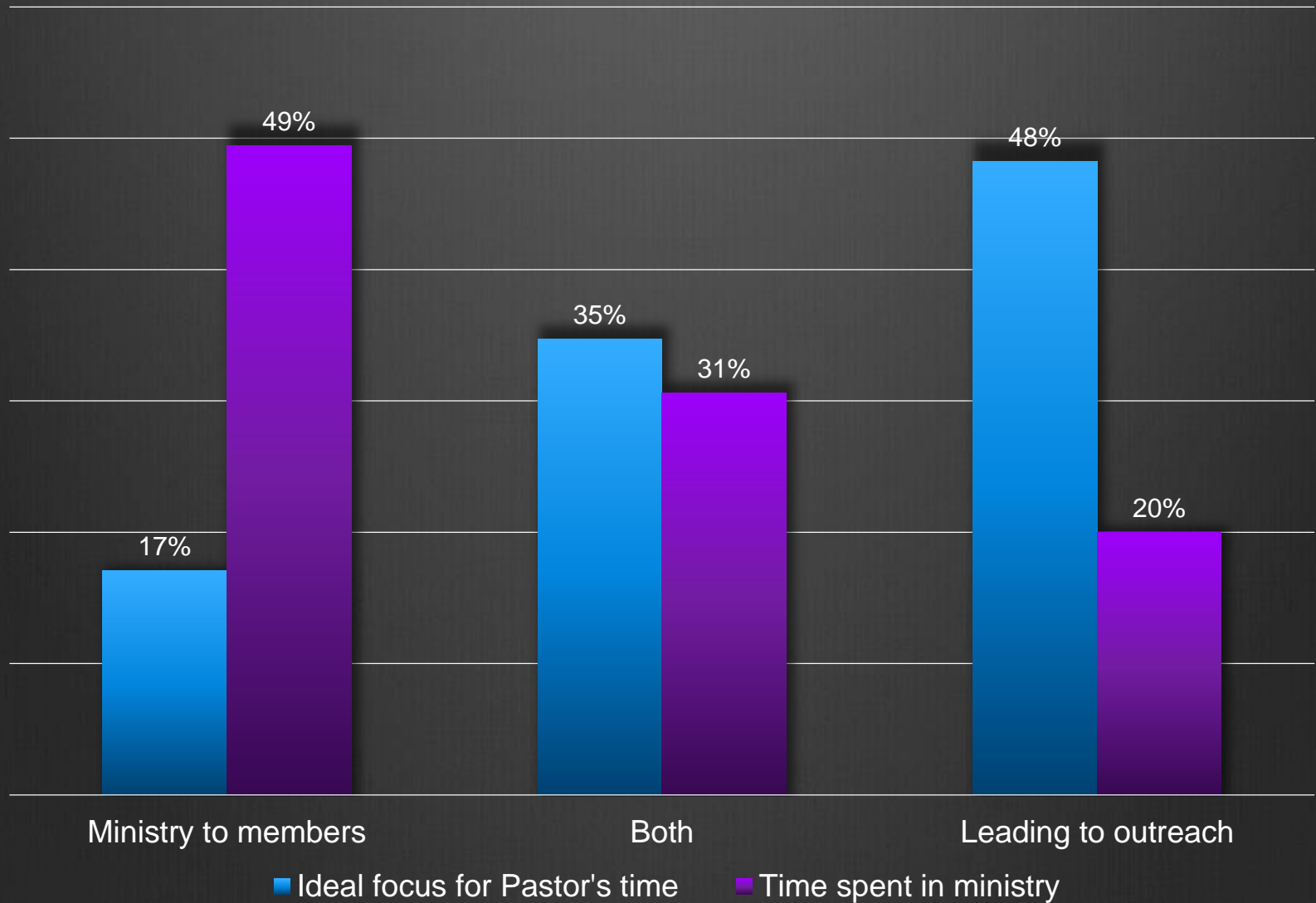
Pastors: Acceptance of SDA Teachings



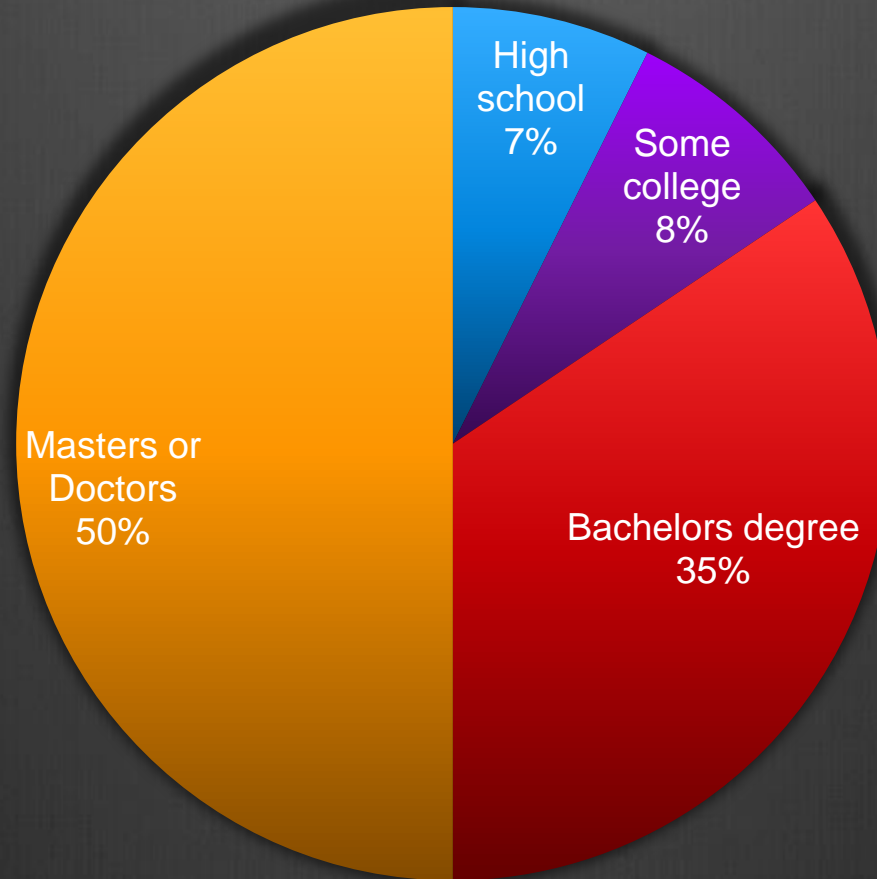
Primary Role of Pastor



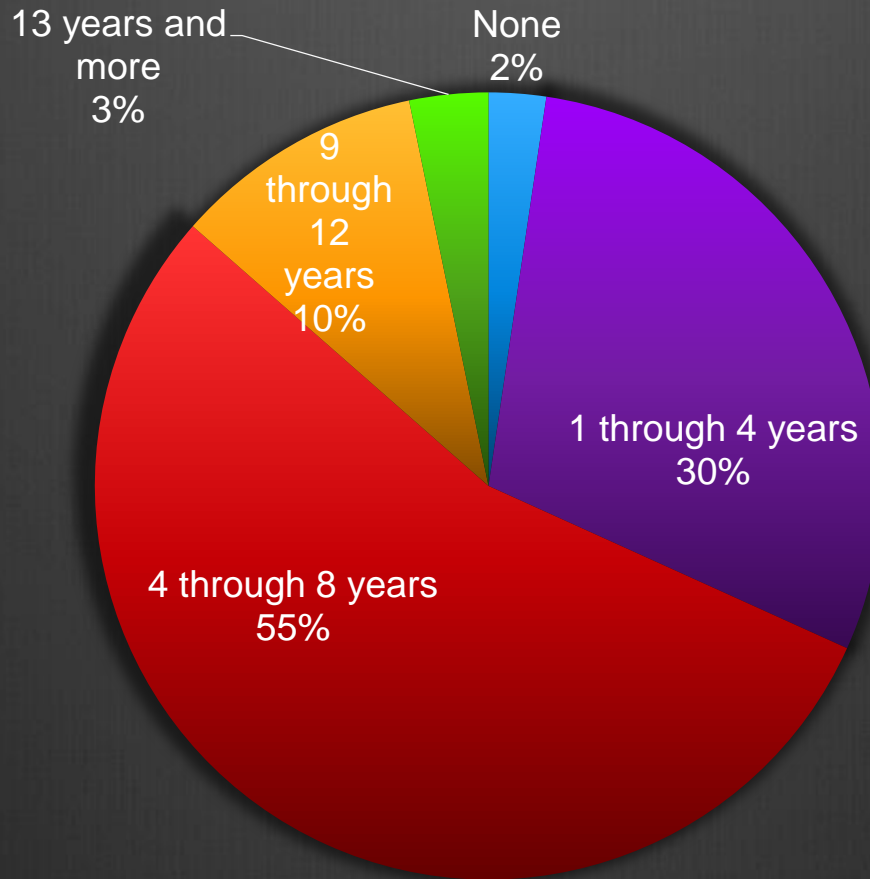
Primary Use of Pastor's Time



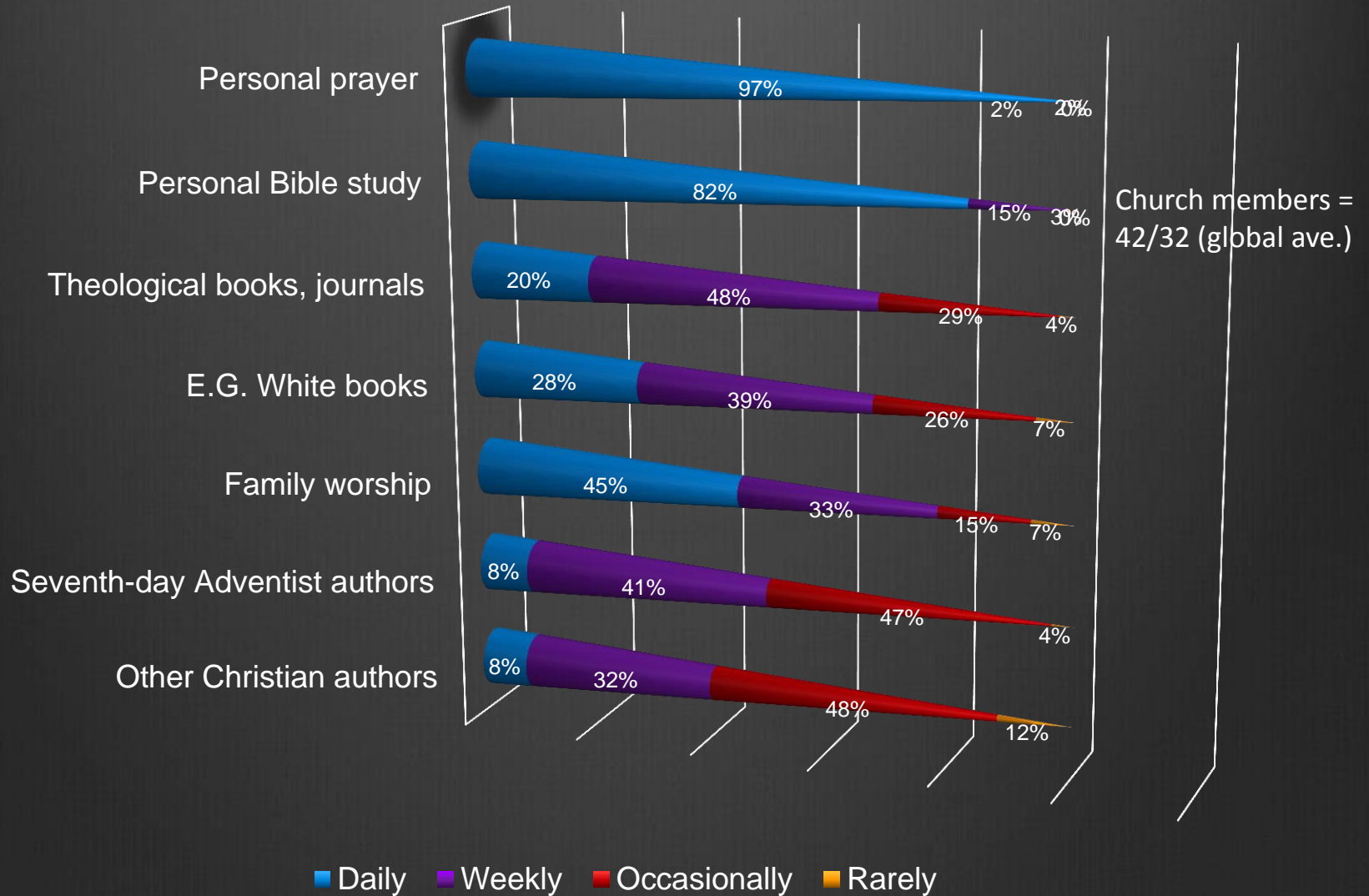
The Highest Academic Training



Years of Education in Adventist Schools



Pastor's Devotional Life



Conclusion

- God is working in the Inter-European Division and in Europe
- But we need to be realistic and authentic about the actual degree of success we have achieved and are achieving in Europe as a whole and this Division in particular (especially in big cities)
- We need to find ways to offer the meaning that is missing from many Europeans' lives, the spirituality that they crave, which material prosperity does not provide, and lead them to an encounter with the divine and transcendent



Conclusion

- Take advantage of the recent tide of immigrants to win people to Christ who probably would not listen in their usual contexts.
- Innovatively offer: the meaning that is missing from the lives of many Europeans; the transcendent and sense of the spiritual that they crave, which material prosperity does not provide; and the prospect of (divine) rest.

