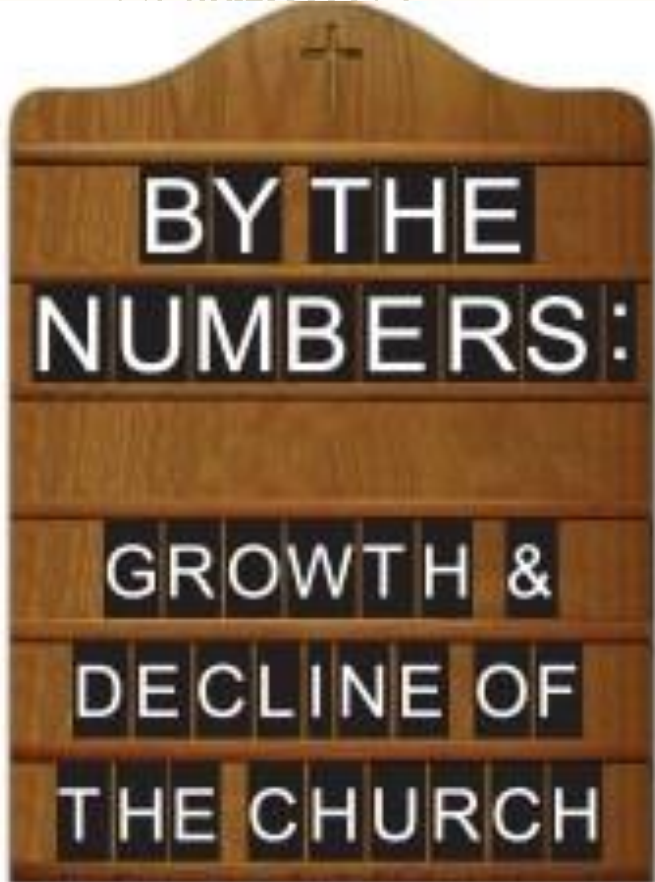


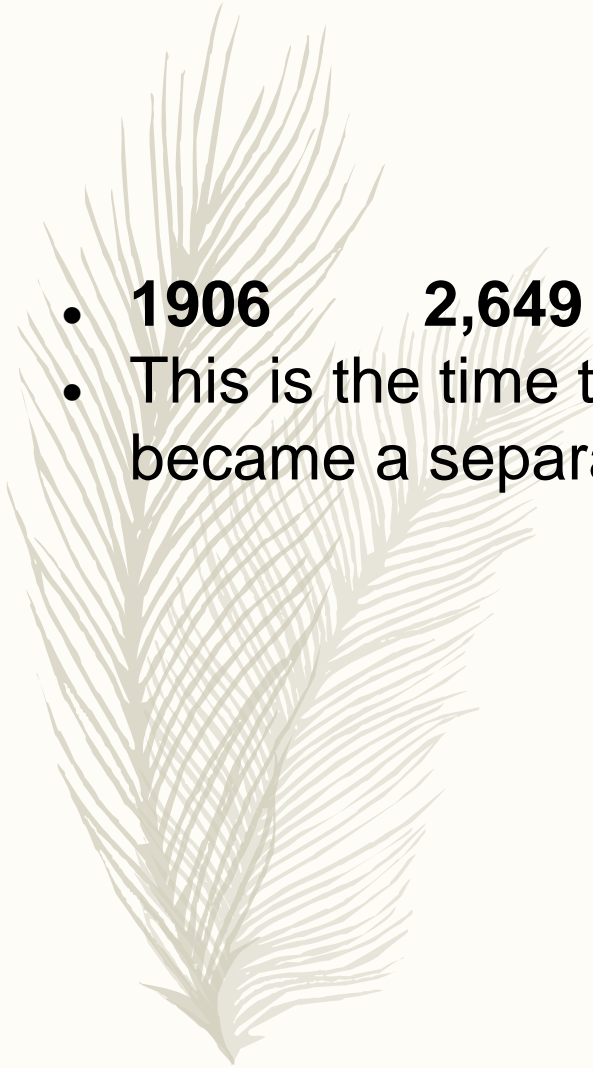
# Can We Grow Again?



We are hearing that many denominations are in sharp decline. What about the churches of Christ?

# Here are the facts

- **1906**      **2,649 Congregations**      **207,555 Members**
- This is the time the instrumental (Christian Church) divided and became a separate group.



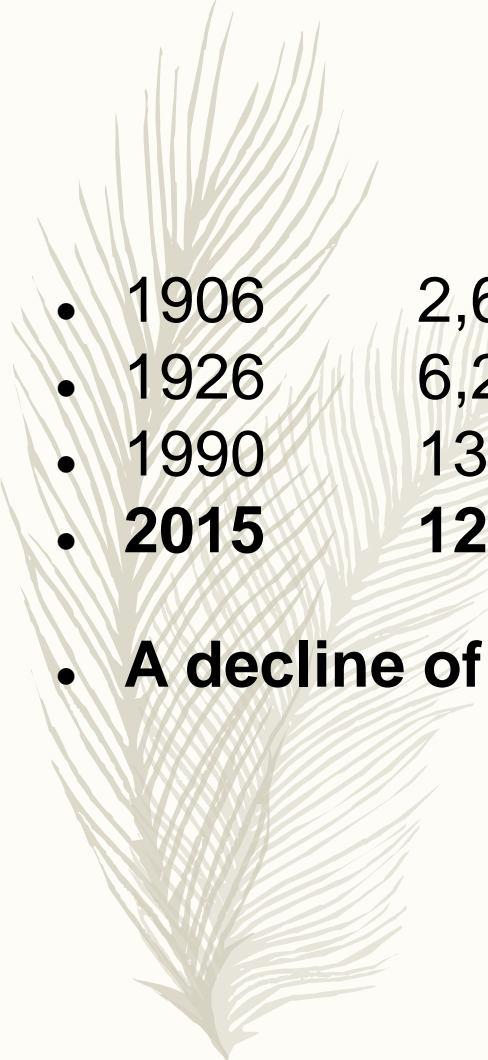
# Here are the facts

- 1906      2,649 Congregations      207,555 Members
- **1926      6,226 Congregations      563,828 Members**
- This marks the beginning of several issues – one cup, classes, located preacher, orphan homes, co-operation, etc.

# Here are the facts

- 1906      2,649 Congregations      207,555 Members
- 1926      6,226 Congregations      563,828 Members
- **1990      13,174 Congregations      1,684,872 Members**
- The high peak of growth.

# Here are the facts

- 
- 1906      2,649 Congregations      207,555 Members
  - 1926      6,226 Congregations      563,828 Members
  - 1990      13,174 Congregations      1,684,872 Members
  - **2015      12,300 Congregations      1,519,695 Members**
  - **A decline of -874 Congregations      -165,177 Members**

# Growing Unchurched

- **10 % Purely Unchurched** – Never attended a church
  - **33% De-Churched** – Once active but no longer
  - **8% Minimally Churched** – Attend infrequently
  - **49% Actively Churched** – Attend church at least once a month
- 
- 1990s 30% unchurched
  - 2000s 33% unchurched
  - 2014 43% unchurched

# Numbers are Important

- God counted Israel when they left Egypt
- God counted them again before they enter Canaan
- God counted 3,000 in Acts 2
- God counted each added daily (Acts 2:47)
- Numbers should be important to us. Not just for numbers sake.
- Numbers represent souls.
- However, numbers are not everything.

# Numbers are Important

- Many churches (denominations) and many congregations among the churches of Christ are in decline.
- Some are trying “Showtime” tactics to attract more people.
- Numbers are important, but not as important as following the will of God.



## Remove the thought - - -

- **REMOVE the thought** – I remember when we had x.
- Those were the “good old days”
- You don't go to heaven on the past
- The past can keep us from doing what we ought to

## Remove the thought - - -

- **REMOVE the thought** – I remember when we had x.
- **Haggai 2:3-4** 3 'Who is left among you who saw this temple in its former glory? And how do you see it now? In comparison with it, is this not in your eyes as nothing? 4 Yet now be strong, Zerubbabel,' says the Lord; 'and be strong, Joshua, son of Jehozadak, the high priest; and be strong, all you people of the land,' says the Lord, 'and work; for I am with you,' says the Lord of hosts.

## Remove the thought - - -

- **REMOVE the thought** “I remember when we had x.”
- **REMOVE the thought** that few is insignificant
- **Matthew 18:20** For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them.”
- If we are 2 or 2,000 we enjoy fellowship with Christ
-

## Remove the thought - - -

- **REMOVE the thought** “I remember when we had x.”
- **REMOVE the thought** that few is insignificant
- God used 1 man – Moses to lead Israel
- God reduced the army of Gideon (32,000 to 300)
- God used 1 man – Jesus to bring us salvation
- God can use 1 person (you) to do good for Him

## Remove the thought - - -

- **REMOVE the thought** “I remember when we had x.”
- **REMOVE the thought** that few is insignificant
- **REMOVE the thought** that few = failure
- Noah preached 120 years and only converted his family
- But he was a preacher of righteousness

## Remove the thought - - -

- **REMOVE the thought** “I remember when we had x.”
- **REMOVE the thought** that few is insignificant
- **REMOVE the thought** that few = failure
- **REMOVE the thought** that bigger is better
- Gideon's army
- Bigger does not mean better / more faithful

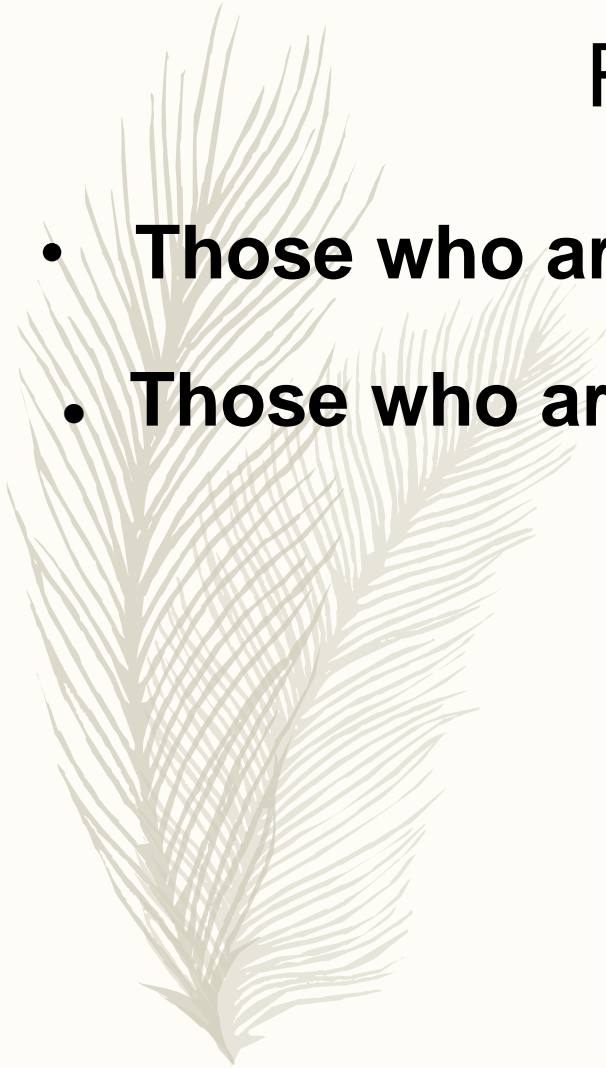
# Remember in Prayer

- **Those who are sick OF the congregation**



# Remember in Prayer

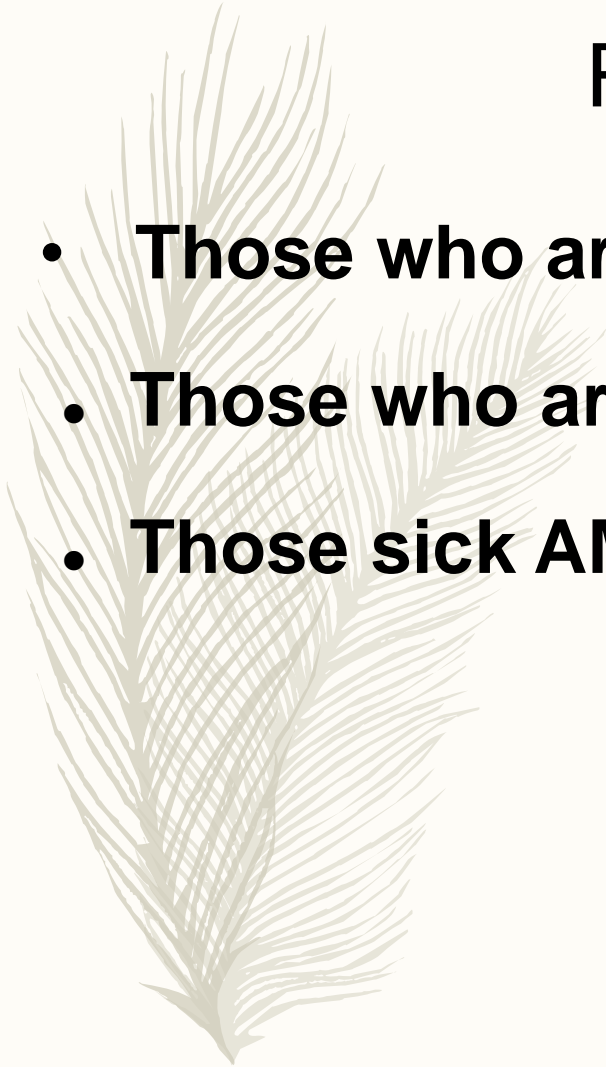
- **Those who are sick OF the congregation**
- **Those who are sick IN the congregation**





# Remember in Prayer

- **Those who are sick OF the congregation**
- **Those who are sick IN the congregation**
- **Those sick AMONG the congregation**



# Remember in Prayer

- **Those who are sick OF the congregation**
- **Those who are sick IN the congregation**
- **Those sick AMONG the congregation**
- **Those who are AWAY from the congregation**

## Recognize

- **The gospel is God's drawing power**
- **God gives the increase**
- **It takes time, effort, persistence to convert the lost**
- **The message can not be changed**

## Recognize

- **Growth does not occur with fleshly desires**
- **That growth begins with personal growth**
- **Salvation of one soul is worth the effort**