



# St. Luke is Not Alone, But How Did We Get Here?

The Decline of Mainline  
Protestantism

# Churches are stressed today by:



- Church Changes
- Cultural Factors
- Generational Challenges
- Birth Rates
- Financial Difficulties



# CHURCH CHANGES

# *The Great Emergence –* Phyllis Tickle

- Bishop Martin Dyer -- Every 500 years the church has a “rummage” sale
- Based in systems theory: Church is part of the larger cultural system; religion and church react to and are shaped by the culture
- Results: New, more vital forms of Christianity emerge; old is still present, but is purer and less incrustated

# 500 Year Cycles

- 150 years prior (“Peri” period)
- 100 years of working out the solution
- 250 years of the new “authority” even if not everyone likes the solution -- relative stability

# Periods

- 500 -- Gregory the Great and the Birth of Monasticism
- 1054 -- The Great Schism
- 1517 -- The Great Reformation
- 2001 -- The Great Emergence

# Authority – The Big Question

- Prior to the Reformation – authority was lodged in the papacy
- Reformation – *Sola Scriptura*
- Emergence – ????

# Immediate Future

- Relational
- Social Justice
- Communal
- Virtual
- Story/Narrative – biblical and personal





# CULTURAL CHANGES

# MOVE FROM MODERN TO POSTMODERN

- STRAUSS WALTZ vs. STRAVINSKY:  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s7pV2cXoqxs>
- OKLAHOMA vs. WICKED

# CONTRASTS



# There is a shifting attitude towards “organized” religion



- 65% of the US population cannot remember a time when clergy were respected.
- Denominational loyalty means nothing to most people.
- The average person believes that no particular religion has claim to truth.

# Unchurched USA

- Since 1991 adult population in the US grew by 15%.
- During that same period the unchurched population grew by 92%! 75 million US adults do not attend church
- **'Unchurched' Americans say church is 'full of hypocrites'** and consider Christianity to be more about organized religion than about loving God and people.  
*Unchristian*





# GENERATIONAL CHALLENGES

# Congregations have more multiple generations than ever before . . .

- Gen z (Born after 1996)
- Millennials (Born 1977 – 1995)
- Gen x (Born 1965 – 1976)
- Baby boomers (Born 1946 – 1964)
- Silent generation/builders (Born 1925 – 1945)



# BIRTH RATES



# Birth Rates:

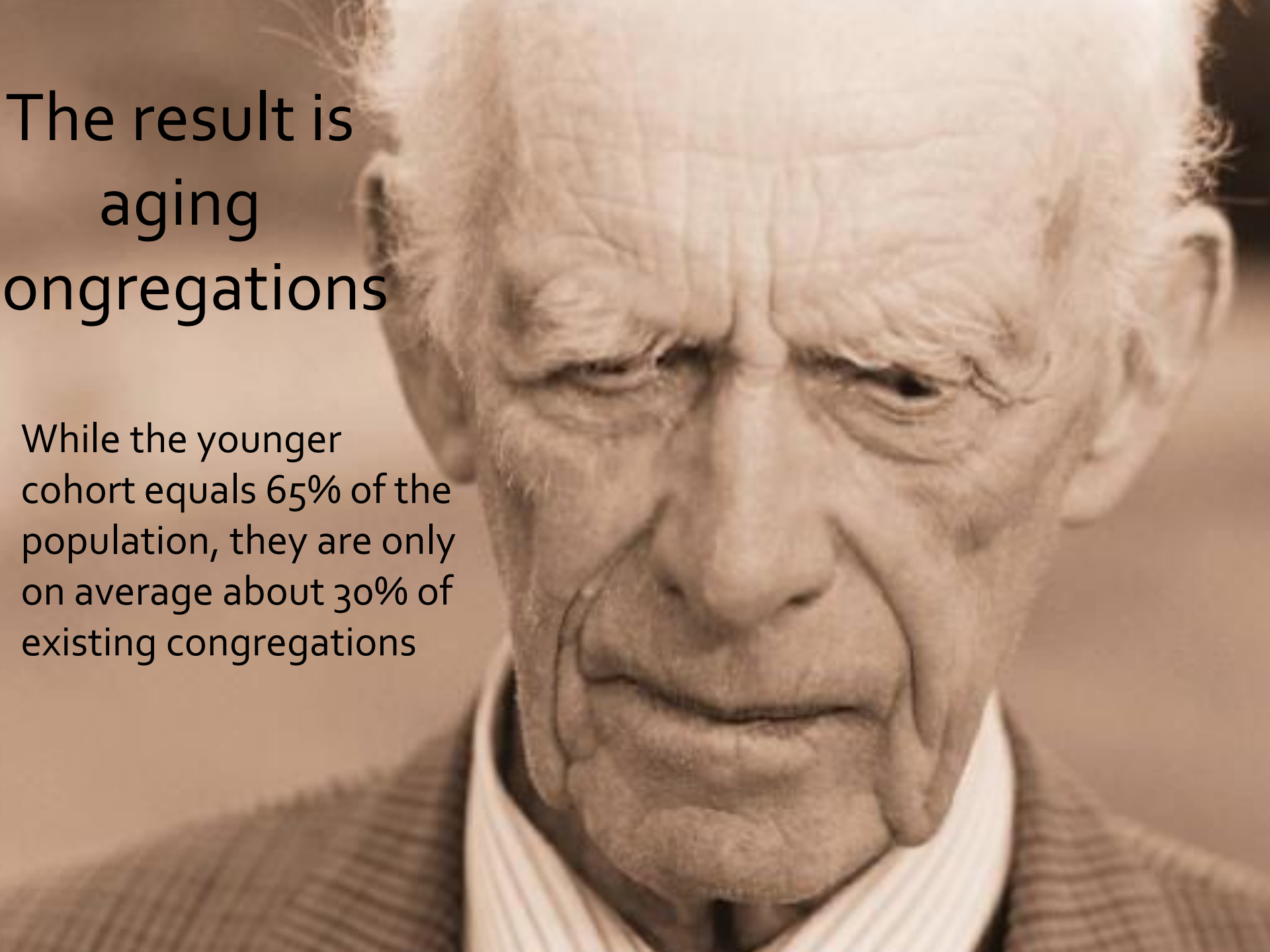
- Since “the pill” Anglo birth rates dropping
  - 1960 24/1000
  - 2000 13/1000
  - 2002 **11.7**

Mainline Anglos  
have a very low  
birth-rate due to  
aging populations

**VERY Little Biological Growth!**

# The result is aging congregations

While the younger  
cohort equals 65% of the  
population, they are only  
on average about 30% of  
existing congregations



# Age of Protestant Populations

	18-29	30-49	50-64	65+
Total Population	20	39	25	16
Total Protestants	17	38	26	20
Nondenom Evangelical Churches	19	51	22	8
American Baptist Churches	18	36	23	23
Southern Baptist Convention	13	37	27	22
African Methodist Episcopal	14	31	30	25
United Methodist Church	11	34	29	26
Ev. Lutheran Church of America	8	36	29	27
Disciples of Christ	10	33	21	35
Presbyterian Church in America	12	29	32	27
Episcopal Church in the USA	11	29	34	25
Presbyterian Church USA	8	31	30	32
United Church of Christ	11	27	34	28

# Racial Ethnic Birth Rates:

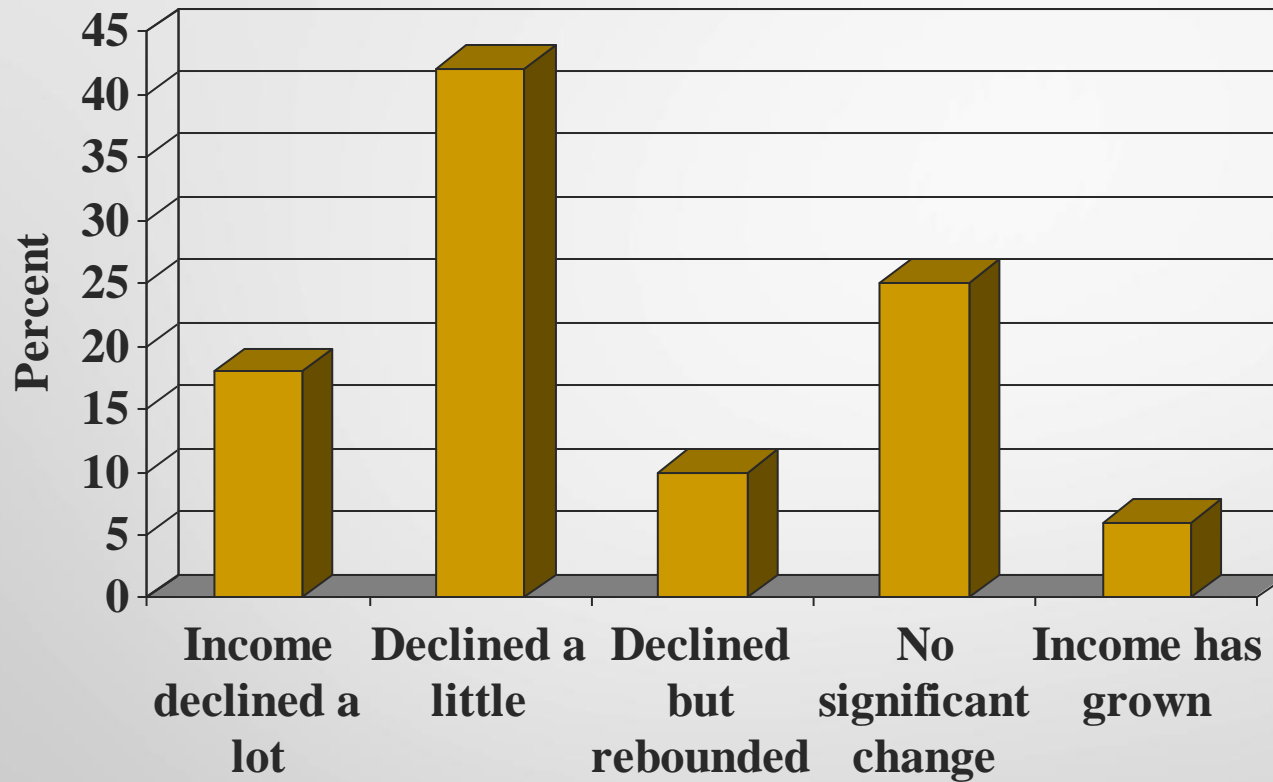


- African Am. 16.1
- Native Am. 13.8
- Asian Pac. I. 16.5
- Hispanic 22.6
- (Anglo 11.7)
- Per 1000
- Most future growth will be in Racial Ethnic congregations

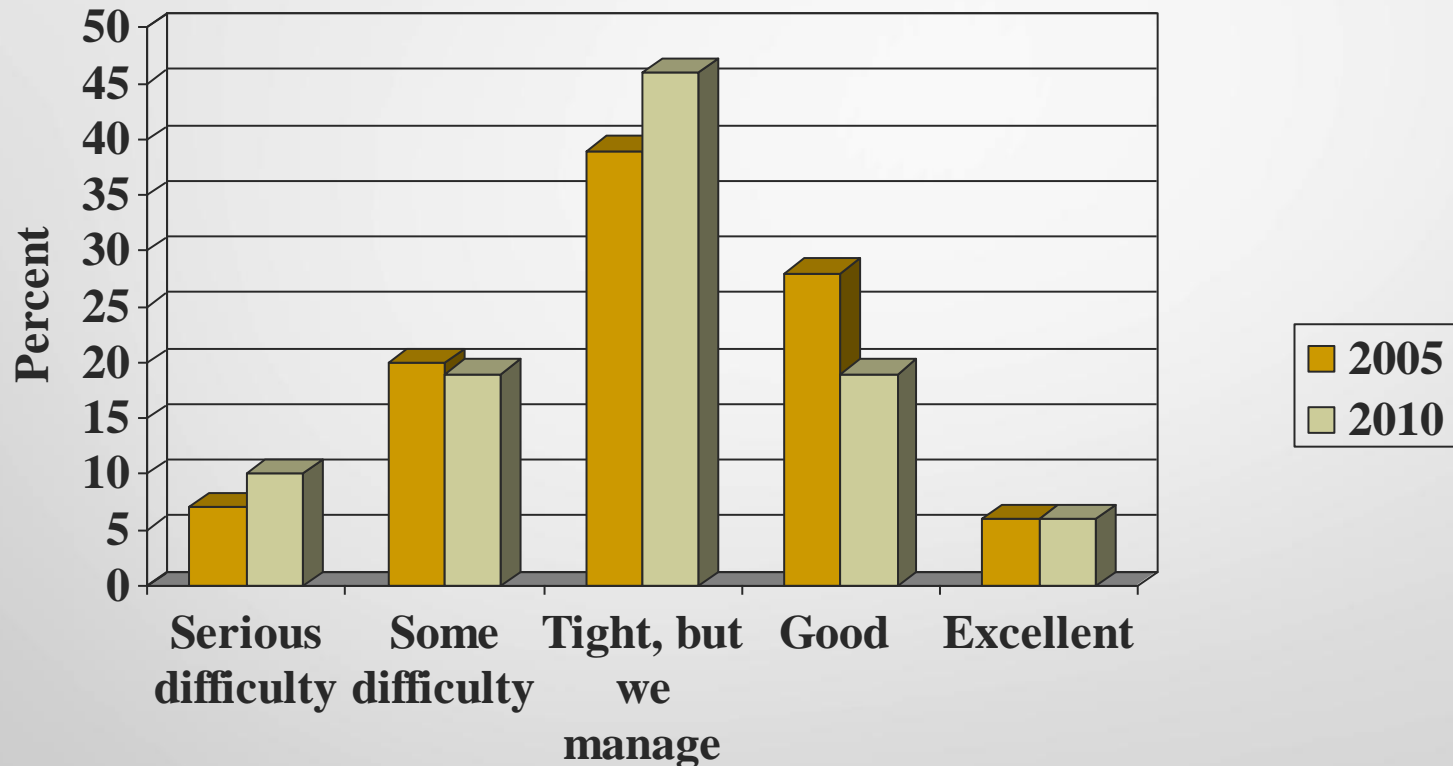



# FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES

# Holy Toll: Impact of 2008 Recession on Congregations



# Change in Financial Health, 2005-2010





# What does it all mean to St. Luke?

*We are all at a threshold, a 'kairos' moment.*



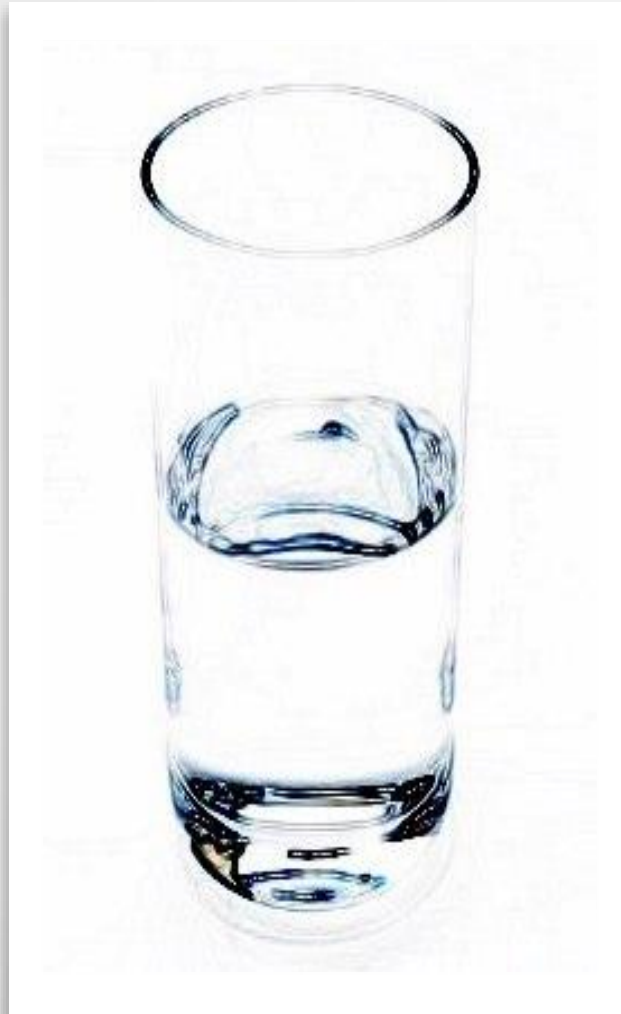


# What does it all mean to St. Luke?

- What do you think?



It means **CHANGE!**



**Change = Opportunity**



This is a time of great opportunity.

BUT WE ARE BUILDING THIS PLANE AS WE ARE FLYING IT.