

**I AM A CHURCH MEMBER**

# CHURCH IN AMERICA

**9 out of 10 churches in America are declining or growing at a rate slower than their community**

**2/3 of the Builder generation (born before 1946) identify as Christians compared 15% of Millennials (1980-2000) are Christians.**

**Between 2007 and 2014, there was a 3.7% decline in weekly church attendance (based on poll respondents). Meanwhile, the U.S. population increased by over 16 million during that same time frame.**

Pew Research Center



We Blame the Decline on...

Secular Culture

Godless politics of our nation

Hypocritical members &  
uncaring ministers

# Perhaps we only need to look into the mirror....



**Congregations across America are weak because many of us have lost the biblical understanding of what it means to be a part of the body of Christ**

**We join expecting others to serve & cater to us**

**We don't like hypocrites in the church but fail to see our own hypocrisy**



**MEMBERSHIP HAS ITS  
PRIVILEGES**

**Many churches are weak because its members have turned the meaning of membership upside down!**

**Why as God placed you here at LV?**

**God placed us at Lebanon Valley to serve, to care for others, to learn, to teach, to give, to pray for others.**

**IT'S TIME TO GET IT RIGHT!**

### ***First – Renew Our Attitude About this Church.***

- The joy of being last instead of seeking to be first.
- Instead of whining and complaining about what's wrong with the church, you'll be a unifier seeking what's best for the church

### ***Second - This Church will Begin to Change***

- It will become healthier because one of its members are healthier.
- As the church gets healthier, it will have a greater impact on this community.

# 6 Strategies for all of us to do to impact this church





# **CHURCH MEMBERSHIP or COUNTRY CLUB MEMBERSHIP?**

**Tragically many have a misunderstanding of church membership**

**This is my church and I only want certain songs sung.**

**We sing too many songs or we sing too few songs.**

**Look minister just remember who pays your salary.**

**I've been a member of this church for 40 years, so I have the right to do whatever I want.**

**I don't contribute to listen to sermons that are this long.**

**What's wrong with this kind of thinking?**

A wooden picture frame with a white center containing text. The frame is made of light-colored wood with a multi-layered, beveled design. The text is centered in the white space.

**1 Corinthians 12 – 14**

**A Portrait of Church Membership**

## Unity and Diversity in the Body

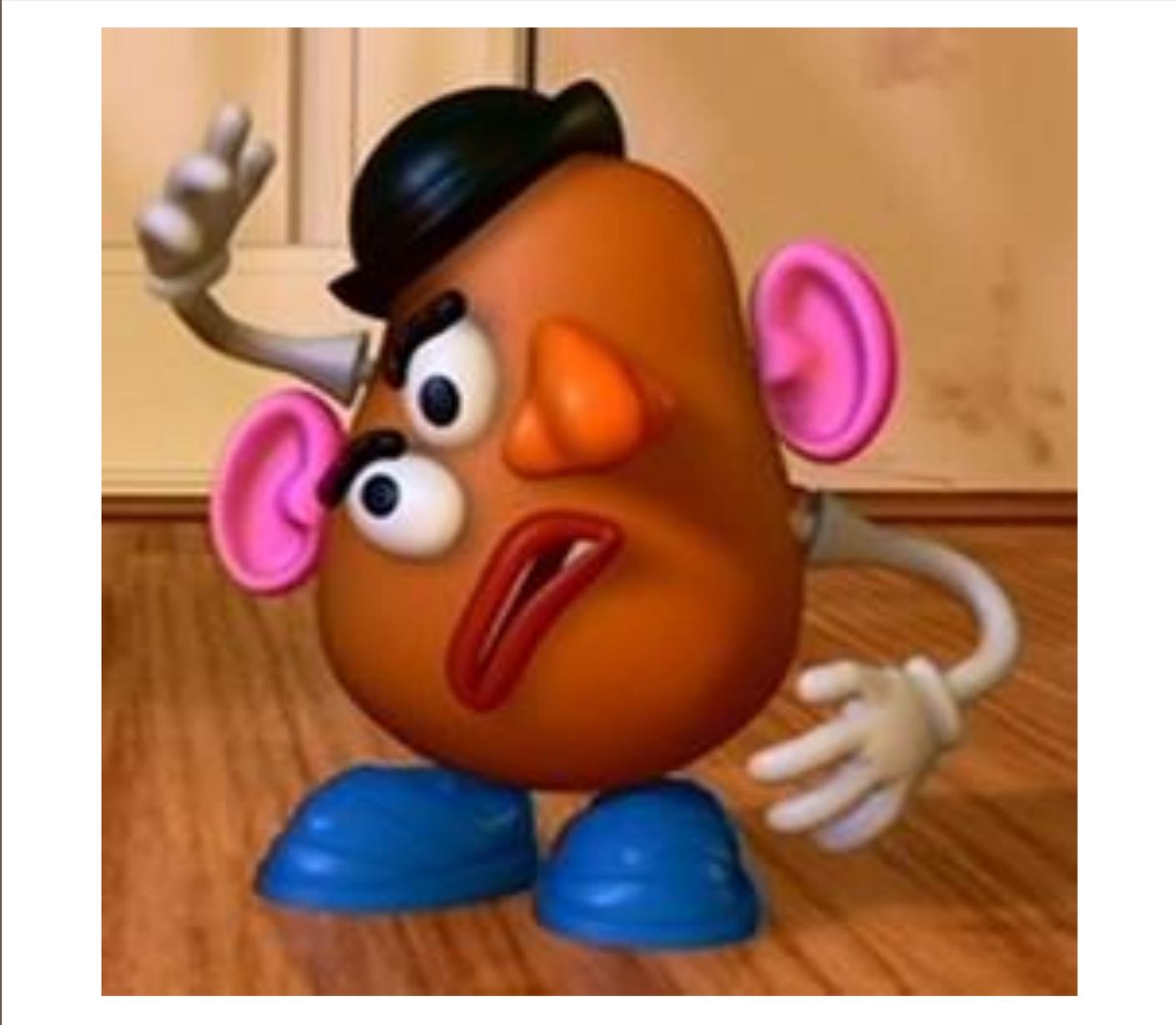
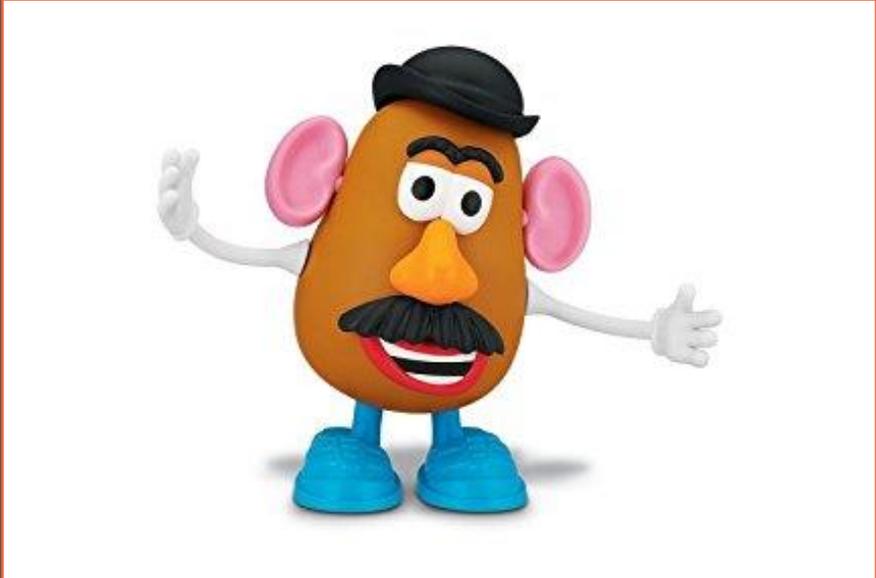
<sup>12</sup> Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. <sup>13</sup> For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. <sup>14</sup> Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many.

<sup>15</sup> Now if the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. <sup>16</sup> And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. <sup>17</sup> If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? <sup>18</sup> But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. <sup>19</sup> If they were all one part, where would the body be? <sup>20</sup> As it is, there are many parts, but one body.

## Unity and Diversity in the Body

<sup>21</sup> The eye cannot say to the hand, “I don’t need you!” And the head cannot say to the feet, “I don’t need you!” <sup>22</sup> On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, <sup>23</sup> and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty,<sup>24</sup> while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has put the body together, giving greater honor to the parts that lacked it,<sup>25</sup> so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. <sup>26</sup> If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.

1 Cor. 12:21-26





**MEMBERSHIP MEANS WE ARE  
DIFFERENT BUT WE WORK TOGETHER**

1 Corinthians 13

It's not just about  
weddings!



## Love for Each Other

4 Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. 5 It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. 6 Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. 7 It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

1 Cor. 13:4-7

What would happen in the church if we truly embraced these principals?



**How do you retain your membership at the country club?**



**How do you remain a BIBLICAL member of the church?**

***GIVE abundantly & SERVE without hesitation!***



## **UNBIBLICAL MEMBERSHIP**

**CEO “christians”**

**“christians” that “curse on Monday  
& pray on Sunday”**

**Donating \$ without lifting a finger  
in a ministry**

**Putting in time on Sunday**

**This approach to membership is man made  
and it not biblical. It is totally contrary to  
what the Bible teaches and has no place in  
this church**

## **BIBLICAL MEMBERSHIP**

**Give without qualification**

**Serving & Giving is seen as a joy**

**Never any strings attached**

**Serve & ministering becomes a  
natural way of life!**

# Paul's metaphor of the body illustrated 2 principals (1 Cor. 12)

1. The body is a unified whole

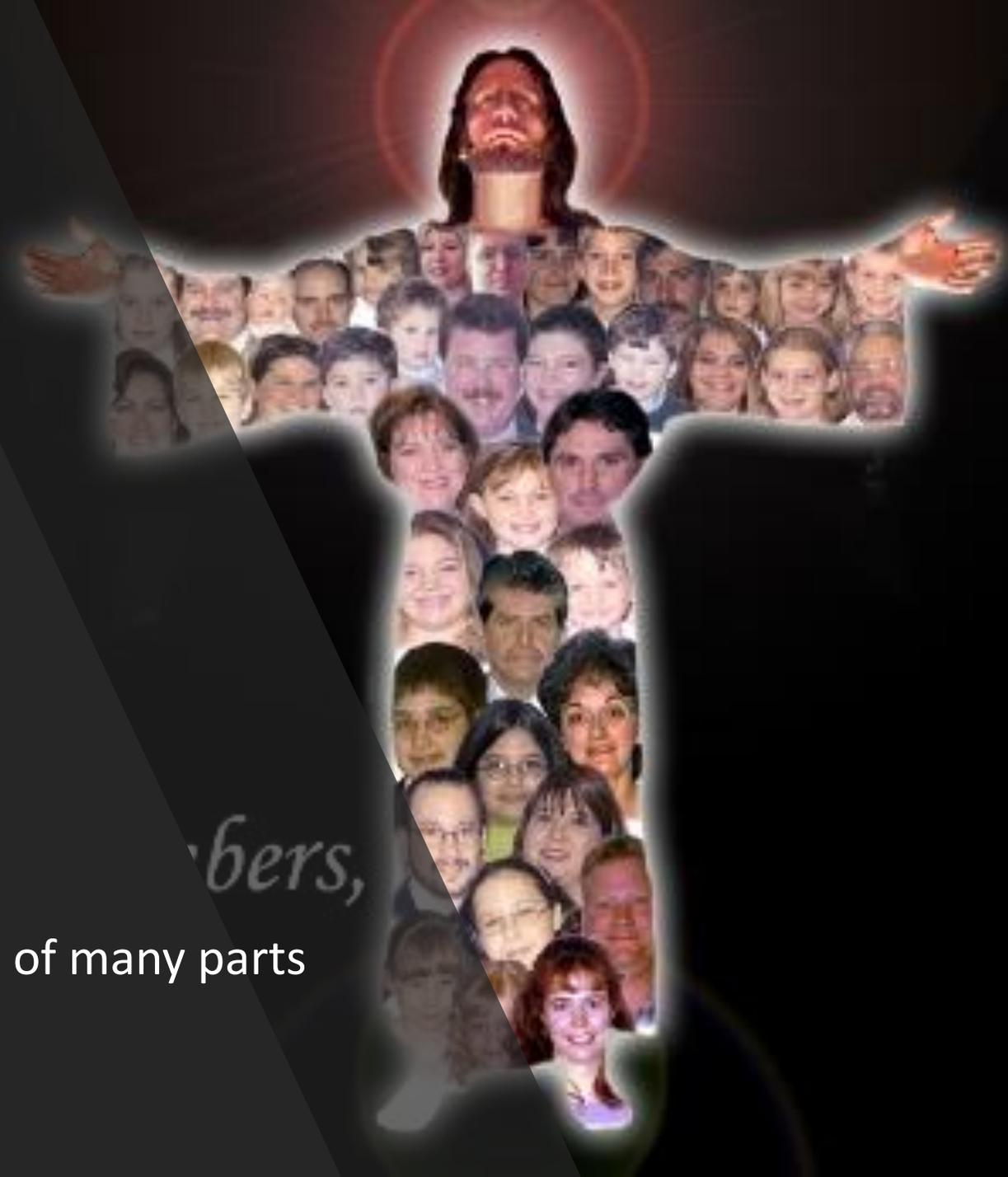
Mission

Purpose

Ministries

Activities

2. The body is not only unified, it is made up of many parts



bers,

# 1 Corinthians 12



**All Parts Are Supposed to Function**

A photograph of a man in a dark suit and red tie sleeping in a church pew. He has his eyes closed and his head tilted back. Other people are visible in the background, some looking towards the camera and others looking away. The scene is set in a church with wooden pews.

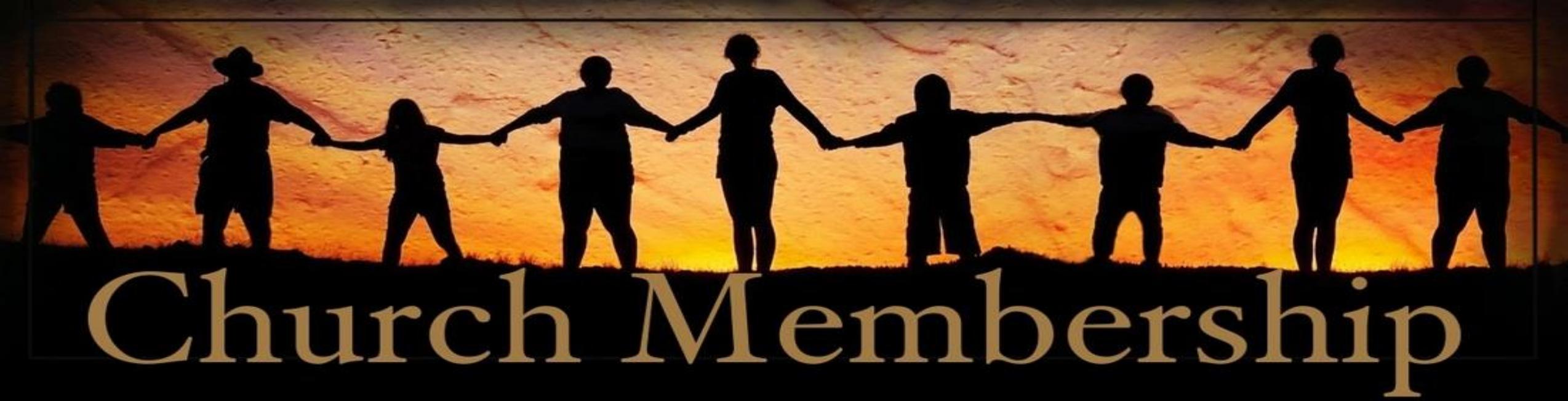
The Concept  
of an Inactive  
Church  
Member is an  
Oxymoron

**Biblically, no such member exists**

**One of the ongoing questions that you should ask yourself & God in prayer is:**



**HOW CAN I BEST SERVE THE LORD'S CHURCH?**



**Know your gifts so you can use them to best serve the church for God's glory**

**Everyone has a function**

**For the church to be healthy, everyone MUST be healthy & function**



**COMMITMENT**

**Most church roles are inflated  
by a factor of 3**

**1 in 3 “members” are actually  
biblical members**

**LVCOC members are  
pledging to be different**





## **The First Pledge...**

**Today we ALL commit to being a Functioning Church Member**

- To give cheerfully & abundantly.**
- To serve & minister without hesitation**

