

LEADER CONVERSATION GUIDE

How to Re-Engage Your Church in the Mission - Episode 204

An Unstuck Roundtable

We recently hosted a virtual roundtable event called **RE-ENGAGE: Carrying the Mission Forward in the New Normal** where Tony Morgan and pastors from across North America got together to share the successes and challenges their churches are experiencing as they begin to reopen and re-engage. Panelists included:

- Greg Hochhalter, Lead Pastor of [Sherwood Park Alliance Church](#) in Alberta, Canada
- David Meyer, Executive Minister of [The Hills Church](#) in Fort Worth, TX
- Andrew Brownback, Lead Pastor of [The Crossing](#) in Costa Mesa, CA
- Mark Stuenzi, Lead Pastor of [Parker Hill Church](#) in Scranton, PA

Although there are no real experts, there is a lot to be learned from the experiences of others who are walking alongside us through this unique season. Here's what these pastors had to say about church attendance, giving, serving and small groups, political division, soul care, and more.

Attendance and Giving

- “In churches where giving has increased through the last year, it’s often been directly tied to engaging their community in some way, and trying to address the specific needs that people are wrestling with in this season.” - *Tony*
- “There are some unique opportunities we’re offering that you can’t fully experience unless you’re in person. For most people, an online service is ‘close enough to the real thing,’ so we’re creating events that are baby steps back toward in-person gatherings and that you can’t experience to the same degree unless you’re there.” - *Mark*

Small Groups and Serving

- “We need to be on mission with the people that we currently have. We were having this analysis of ‘who’s here and who’s not here’ and it was paralyzing us and keeping us from moving forward. Now we’re looking around and asking, ‘Who has joined us?’ We’re not recreating what we had right before the pandemic hit, but looking to serve who we are today and where God is leading us now.” - *David*

- “We’re really trying to coach our staff and volunteers to focus on who’s here, not who left. And we’re taking it one week at a time and asking, ‘Are we stronger today than we were yesterday?’ Because we don’t look at all like we did pre-pandemic.” - *Andrew*
- “We try to be very intentional about thanking people publicly and telling stories about people who are serving, to remind people of the joy and the community of being on mission.” - *Mark*
- “We’ve been a church with an ethos around big events. So when Covid hit and we lost that ability to gather, our congregation realized the value of small circles. Now, for the first time in a couple of decades, we have real tangible momentum around our life groups.” - *Greg*

Political and Cultural Divisions

- “Of everything that’s happened over the last couple of years, the most difficult thing for us has been how to navigate obedience to our state government. Deciding what restrictions to put in place and how to explain them to people has been extremely divisive, and disappointingly so.” - *Mark*
- “We’re very aware that our congregation is being watched by our community. We feel like the long term witness in our community matters, and we leaned into that.” - *Greg*
- “We tend to forget that the media makes more money when we are more divided. So we’re battling something that’s completely contrary to what Scripture teaches us.” - *Tony*
- “When issues become people, hearts are transformed, and that only happens in relationship. There’s something that happens when you go from what somebody knows to what somebody feels in their heart, and empathy can be expressed there differently than if we’re just operating at the intellectual level.” - *David*

Pastoral Health and Calling

- “I’ve looked back and overall, God has really come through. Over the last year, the impact our church has made locally is incredible and I’m so grateful for how we’ve seen people step up. So I just look back on all the ways God has provided for us.” - *Andrew*
- “My prayer life has really changed and it’s not just me talking to God, but it’s me entering into the presence of God. I got a lot more honest with him through the pandemic. So whatever it is you’re wrestling with, express those things, because unexpressed doubts are what hurt faith.” - *David*
- “I’ve leaned into a community of pastors and engaged faithfully with a spiritual director, so those two things have probably been the most sustaining for me, but I’m still wondering what the psychological, emotional, mental, and spiritual impact of this long duration event is going to be.” - *Greg*

Resources Mentioned

- [Designed to Lead](#) by Eric Geiger and Kevin Peck
- [There's a Name for the Blah You're Feeling: It's Called Languishing](#) and [The Other Side of Languishing is Flourishing](#) from the New York Times
- [Essentialism](#) by Greg McKeown
- CISM: [Critical Incident Stress Management](#)

More Resources

Join us for Healthy & High-Performing: An Unstuck Teams Masterclass

A year of remote work, online church, quick pivots, compounding strategy changes, and unfathomable personal stress took a heavy toll on ministry staff teams—and the effects are lingering. In [this 1-Day Masterclass](#), Lance Witt, Tony Morgan, Amy Anderson, and special guests from churches across the U.S., will teach you the principles and the skills you need to get your team back on track. [Join us on August 19.](#)

Explore the Unstuck Process

Learn more about how [our process](#) can help you get perspective on where you are today, clarify a path forward, and start achieving wins in the first 90 days [here](#).

Listen to the episode on iTunes or at theunstuckgroup.com/episode204.