

LEADER CONVERSATION GUIDE

# Key Data Trends from Nine Months of Pandemic Ministry Episode 181

*The Unstuck Church Report Q4 2020*

What does it mean to be a healthy church now? So much has changed in the last year and churches are starting to sense that they need to figure out what their next steps look like. We can't wait for Covid to end or things to go back to normal. Churches need to take steps towards health and growth *now*.

After talking with hundreds of pastors across the country over the last year, we're seeing some common themes in the areas pastors are thinking about: how to plan for the future, how to regain pre-covid momentum, how to build a hybrid church, multisite and merger strategies, and digital ministry strategy. We had more than 550 church leaders join us for our last masterclass digging into some of those themes.

And we refreshed our Vital Signs Assessment to get a better idea of where churches are today. The Unstuck Church Report grew out of a frustration with churches only looking at attendance and giving to define their church health. But we know one of the most common factors of a church in the Maintenance Phase is actually being financially healthy but stuck.

**So we wanted to provide a broader view, based on data, of what it means to be a healthy church.** The things we measured pre-Covid aren't the same things we need to measure now. So this week, we are digging into the key findings of what churches need to measure for online and in-person ministry after surveying 130 churches.

## *New Metrics That Every Church Should Track*

- Churches need to measure their online engagement. You need to figure out how you're going to measure it and then continue measuring it. This helps you monitor trends over time.

- The number of volunteer leaders in your ministry (people leading other people). This is a critical metric to monitor church health.
- Like we always say—**measure the things that help you make decisions**. Don't just measure what's easy to measure.

## *Key Findings from The Unstuck Report*

- 30% decline in attendance year over year.
- 5x increase in online service viewership. Overall, churches did a good job embracing the pivot to digital ministry.
- 40% decrease in the number of new people connecting to churches in the last year. This is the biggest red flag we see in the data.
- Baptisms were down more than 50% in the last year.
- 59% of adults and students are still participating in small groups (in-person and online).
- Volunteer engagement has dropped about 20% in the last year. Most churches are still trying to find new rhythms and ways to connect and mobilize volunteers.
- Churches on average have one volunteer for every 12 people in attendance (in-person). If you include online engagement, that number is one volunteer for every 24 people. We recommend about one volunteer to every 10 people in attendance.
- The data shows a slight increase of 1.2% in giving over the last year, although the number of giving units is down close to 10%.
- Pre-pandemic churches had on average about 15 weeks of cash reserves. That number actually increased and now churches are reporting an average of 22 weeks in reserves.
- Churches tend to be slow making staffing adjustments when attendance flattens or declines. If that extends beyond a few months, you need to pay attention and adjust your staffing dollars.

## *Next Steps*

- Download the full [Unstuck Church Report](#).
- Subscribe to [the Unstuck Toolkit](#) to get access to the masterclass replay.
- Podcast Episode 171: [How to Make Disciples Online](#).
- Podcast Episode 172: [How to Measure Online Disciple Making](#).
- If you're looking for help navigating this season, take a look at our [Unstuck Leadership Coaching](#) or our [Strategic Planning for Digital Ministry](#).

Listen to the episode on iTunes or at [theunstuckgroup.com/episode181](https://theunstuckgroup.com/episode181).