

LEADER CONVERSATION GUIDE

You Don't Need a Mission Statement - Episode 265

Four things churches don't need, and what they really need instead (Part 1)

When The Unstuck Group first began, most churches reached out to us because they wanted to clarify their mission, vision, and values. And in many cases, they were right—there were certainly some gaps in those areas that were contributing to their “stuckness.”

However, we learned that *just* clarifying mission, vision, and value statements and running an improved version of the same old playbook for reach and spiritual formation strategies did not necessarily help churches get unstuck.

It's possible to have clarity and alignment and still be doing the wrong things to get the results that you want. In other words, alignment isn't the win—more people following Jesus and becoming more like Christ is the win. **So how do we get there?**

Why You Don't Need a Mission Statement

Let's start with **why** organizations develop mission statements. Mission statements clarify why we exist and what our purpose is. For churches, this is usually some variation of the Great Commission—go into the world, make disciples, and baptize them.

Back in the day, we would spend hours with churches crafting their mission statements. But as time went on, we came to realize that having a mission statement on the wall or repeated in Sunday services didn't help churches experience health.

In other words, **it's possible to have a great mission statement, etch it in stone, ensure that everyone in the congregation knows it... and still be stuck.**

Many times the churches we engaged with were stuck, not because their mission wasn't clear, but because of the *way* they were engaging their mission. Because of that, they weren't getting results. So, through the years, we've shifted the [Unstuck Process](#) to focus on the **way** churches need to engage their mission.

We couldn't find a link between having a great mission statement and becoming a healthy church. At the end of the day, there are other more important aspects of our mission that require focus in order for a church to experience health and make a greater Kingdom impact.

What You Need Instead

You can be a healthy church without a great mission statement, but you can't be a healthy church without knowing your mission field—and, more specifically, **who** you're trying to reach within your mission field.

Churches tend to hyper-focus on *how* they are going to engage their mission regardless of *who* they are trying to reach. They tend to get married to preferences around ministry strategies and then they hope and pray new people connect with the church and faith.

Healthy churches, on the other hand, think about *who* before *how*—they think about people before preferences of ministry strategies.

That's why our current [Unstuck Process](#) begins with a deep-dive into the mission field by looking at the community around the church, answering the questions:

- Where has God placed your church?
- Who are you trying to reach within that mission field?
- What's important to the person you are trying to reach?
- What questions are they asking about life and faith?

So how can churches determine whether or not they're winning when it comes to this focus on their mission field?

Measure it. Ask: What is the current profile of a person who is connecting with your church, and does it match the profile of the person you are trying to reach? Here are some ways to be sure:

- Ask new people to share their demographic information when they commit to membership or partnership.
- Periodically survey your congregation in a service on a normal Sunday morning.
- How would your First Impressions/Guest Services teams describe the profile of the new people who are visiting your church for the first time?
- What does the demographic data from website traffic and social media engagement tell you about who is connecting with your ministry?

It's almost impossible to know every single person who is connecting with your church for the first time either online or in-person, but a **combination** of these strategies will give you a good sense of who you are actually reaching.

Once you have the data, here are two key questions to ask:

1. If we **are** engaging the person we hope to reach in our mission field, what's working?
If you don't know *why* you're winning, you might unintentionally drift away from the strategies that are helping you fulfill your mission.
2. If we **aren't** connecting with the person we hope to reach in our mission field, how does our ministry strategy need to change?
You can't keep using the same ministry strategy and expect different results. Something has to change.

Listen to the full episode on Apple Podcasts, Spotify, or at theunstuckgroup.com/episode265.

Special Thanks to Our Sponsor for This Episode:



[Planning Center](#) is an all-in-one church management software where you can organize your ministries and give your congregants a place to connect and get involved. With a unified platform of products, you can keep people from falling through the cracks by creating workflows to follow up with first-time guests, accept online donations, and empower your staff and volunteers to run individual ministries smoothly.

Learn what else you can do at planningcenter.com and get a 30-day free trial to start exploring for yourself!