



# **HOW TO ASSESS YOUR CHURCH'S HEALTH**

**BY** TONY MORGAN

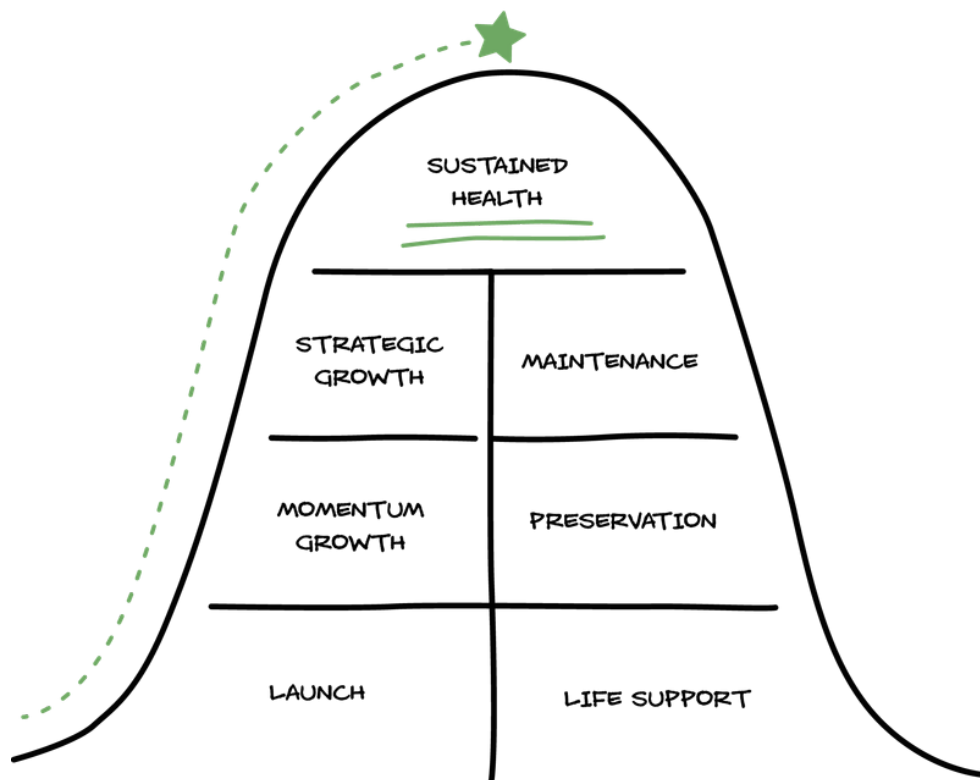
**THE UNSTUCK GROUP®**

When we notice an issue in our physical body, we have a couple of choices: We can Google it. We can ask a friend for advice. Or we can call a doctor. The first two options may help us address some of the more obvious symptoms, but they probably won't help us identify what's truly going on under the surface.

If we want to get to the bottom of what's causing the problem, we need to address the symptoms in context, because sometimes the initial presenting symptoms aren't the real issue. If you treat the symptoms without understanding the underlying cause, the issue could persist for a long time... so when considering a diagnosis, a doctor will take into account things like your family medical history, your bloodwork, and any previous injuries or diagnoses.

It's only after assessing your history, vital signs, and symptoms that doctors can provide a diagnosis and develop a customized path to move you back to health. **The same process should apply for churches that are stuck.**

Churches can get stuck in any phase of growth on their way to sustained health. They can also get stuck sliding down the other side of the life cycle, experiencing the pain of ineffectiveness and decline.



We all want healthy churches but, for some reason, taking time for a check-up isn't on most pastors' list of priorities. But just like our physical health, regular check-ups of our church's health can help prevent major health failures. In this short eBook, we'll walk you through **the four steps needed to properly assess your church's health today.**

## STEP #1: LEARN FROM YOUR STORY.

No church is exactly the same, so it's important to acknowledge your church's unique history, and how elements of that history could be affecting your health today and in the future. Before diving into assessing health, set aside a time with your full team to tell the story of your church and walk through this series of questions:

- What is the history of our church? What were the significant and defining moments in our past?
- What has God taught us and shown us already throughout the years?
- What has led to health in the past of our church? What has led to stuck-ness in the past of our church?

This exercise helps you clarify how your church got to where it is today, and makes sure every team member is up-to-speed on the full, nuanced history of how you got there, before you begin your full health assessment.

## STEP #2: ANALYZE KEY DATA METRICS.

When it comes to assessing our own health, it's easy to be biased—we often base our analysis on how we *feel* like we're doing, or on subjective events. While these feelings can sometimes point us in the right direction, they rarely paint the full picture. That's why it's vital to focus on objective data and metrics.

We use two objective assessment tools (that draw data benchmarks from the assessment results of thousands of churches) to help clarify the picture of where you are today:

- [The Unstuck Church Assessment](#) (totally **free**!) helps you discover: Where does our church currently sit on the lifecycle? What are the next steps for this phase?
- [The Vital Signs Assessment](#) (available through an Unstuck Resource Hub subscription) identifies where your church compares to other similar churches in over 20 key data points, including attendance, staffing, finances, and more.

There may be other helpful assessment tools available to you online. At the very least, we recommend pulling some key data points from various ministry areas (such as attendance, giving, small group/volunteer engagement, etc.) and conducting a year-over-year comparison to identify general upward or downward trends.

## STEP #3: EVALUATE YOUR GUEST EXPERIENCE.

A church that does not focus on reaching new people has already started to decline and will eventually die. We know that the mission of the church is to reach the lost and make disciples in our communities—but it's all too easy to become insider-focused if we aren't intentional.

Do you know what it's really like for a guest who attends your church for the first time? Once you see what an outside person sees, you can't "unsee" it. To get an accurate picture of what first-time guests are experiencing at your church, we recommend that every year or so, you or a member of your church staff team:

- Take a week to attend your current Sunday service experience through the eyes of a new visitor.
- Take a look at your web presence, service environment, sermon, and other key areas and ask:
  - Is it clear who we're trying to reach?
  - Is our current environment tailored to insiders or outsiders?
- If you can, visit another church in your area and experience what it feels like to walk into a new place with new people.

If your church is experiencing a decline in attendance or in the amount of new people visiting, this may help you identify why. This experiment is even more helpful when performed by an outsider to your church, or even better, an outsider to faith.

## **STEP #4: IDENTIFY FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES FOR HEALTH.**

After clarifying your story, analyzing key metrics, and evaluating your weekend service experience, you're ready to take a deep dive into the health and "stuckness" of each of your ministry areas and programs. This facilitated group time often reveals strengths and challenges in your ministry that your data and metrics may not have shown.

We recommend setting aside space to do this together as a full staff, as every team member provides a unique perspective. Take time, with honesty and openness, to consider:

- What parts of our ministry are working?
- What parts of our ministry are stuck or unclear?
- Where do we see potential opportunities for health and growth?

If you need a bit more structure, consider putting each of your ministry areas and programs into one of four categories: "What's healthy? What's stuck? What's unclear? What's missing?," then asking what those categories can tell you about future ministry opportunities or room for improvement and growth in existing areas.

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### **An honest health assessment provides a fresh perspective of the past and vision for the future.**

While some aspects may sound painful, the process can actually be encouraging and energizing—even for very stuck churches. And with an outside facilitator guiding you through this process, you can position yourself to more effectively assess your church's health now—and figure out a way forward for the future.

At The Unstuck Group, we help pastors grow healthy churches by guiding them through experiences to align vision, strategy, team and action. Over the last 10+ years, we've led over 500 churches through a [proven process](#) to help them assess ministry health, clarify the vision God's given them for the future, and create the team structure and action plans needed to see it through.

We'd love to partner with you and your team. [Start a conversation today.](#)

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## ABOUT TONY MORGAN



Tony was the Founder and Lead Strategist of The Unstuck Group. Started in 2009, The Unstuck Group has served churches throughout the United States and several countries around the world. Previously, Tony served on the senior leadership teams of three rapidly growing churches including NewSpring Church in South Carolina. He has five published books, including *The Unstuck Church*, and, with Amy Anderson, he hosted the The Unstuck Church Podcast which has thousands of listeners each month. Tony passed away in 2024, leaving behind a legacy of thought leadership, innovation, and a deep commitment to helping churches thrive.

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