

VITAL SIGNS



**WHY CHURCH HEALTH
MATTERS AND 14 WAYS
TO MEASURE IT**

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WITH RYAN STIGILE

2018 EDITION

Vital Signs: Why Church Health Matters and 14 Ways to Measure It

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Your examples are an inspiration to leaders everywhere:

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INTRO

Your Church Needs a Checkup

If I know anything about church leadership, I know you have a lot going on. From worship services to outreach events and everything in between, the work of ministry can quickly turn into a whirlwind of activity. In the midst of it all, attempts to gauge how well you are doing can feel like trying to check the oil of a speeding car. How do you know if your productivity is creating progress? How can you tell if your church is actually healthy?

You could try relying on the opinions of yourself and others. But like it or not, our opinions are influenced by emotion and tradition. (Just ask anyone about his or her favorite sports team.) The health of your church is worth more than an opinion. You need a proven tool to properly assess it.

Once a year, I visit my doctor for a routine health checkup. It is never something I want to do. Many times I don't even feel like I need it. But regardless of how I "feel," I know it is important. My doctor assesses a variety of areas, knowing that different parts of my body may be at different levels of health. He takes a number of measurements and uses pre-established benchmarks to determine the health of each area. When he is finished, he uses the results to help me develop a plan to improve the areas where I am weakest.

I wonder if the body of Christ could benefit from an occasional check up. Maybe its leaders could plan better with a fuller understanding of the health of their churches. Is it possible that a set of measurements could help you lead more effectively?

I realize there are some who fear using numbers and statistics in something as organic as a church. I admit, the idea can seem a little "corporate" at first. But metrics do not turn a church into a business any more than a check up turns my body into a machine. Like a doctor's thorough report, metrics equip leaders with critical information to make better decisions for the health of their churches.

In 2014, I released the first edition of this eBook to help you step back from the whirlwind and see your church with greater perspective. It was packed with benchmarks from the analysis of every church [The Unstuck Group](#) had ever worked with. Of all the eBooks I've ever written, this is the one that has created the most questions. I think that's because leaders want a clearer understanding of how their churches are really doing. They're tired of inflated numbers that create unfounded pride. And, they're longing to know if all their effort is actually making a difference. If you feel that way, this resource is going to give you the clarity you've been craving.

This updated and expanded edition is packed with benchmarks from the analysis of more than 200 churches nationwide. This is the same information The Unstuck Group uses with each of our clients to help determine their health. We are making it available to you because we believe the quality of your leadership is enhanced by having a better perspective of your reality. This edition also includes the addition of stories from pastors of "Top 10% Churches." These are churches that sit in the top 10% range of one or more metrics. In other words, these leaders are building highly effective churches, and in this eBook, they share the practical details of what they are doing differently.

So grab a cup of coffee (and maybe a calculator) and use this resource to determine the true health of your church. Once you do, you can begin focusing your energy on the areas that need it the most.

CHAPTER 1
GETTING STARTED

If you have ever taken steps to improve your personal health, you understand the importance of identifying your starting point.

A couple of years ago, I set a goal to run a 5K. It had been quite a while since I had run consistently, and I was uncertain about how far I could go. Three days before the race, I finally decided to give it a “trial run.” After a mile and a half, I was lying on my back porch gasping for air. I had made an assessment as to the distance I would attempt to run, but I had failed to recognize my current level of health. Without an understanding of my starting point, all efforts to make progress came to a screeching halt and left me in worse shape than before I began.

Over the years, I have watched a number of leadership teams make a very similar mistake. Leaders develop a vision for the future and set out to pursue it with the best of intentions. But they fail to assess their church’s current level of health and end up exhausted before anything significant changes. Underlying issues are never resolved and the status quo returns as the measure of success. In order for a team to make long-term progress, it must begin with a clear understanding of its starting point.

A good set of metrics gets a team off to the right start in at least five ways, allowing it to:

1. Share an Understanding of Strengths and Weaknesses

Have you ever noticed that when you are sick, everyone around you suddenly assumes the role of a doctor? They will say things like, “It sounds like you have . . .” or “You need to try . . .” Though each individual forms a different opinion, a report from an actual physician brings everyone to the same conclusion about your health. Likewise, various leaders will hold different opinions of the strengths and weaknesses of your church until an objective report brings them to a shared understanding. This clarified starting point unifies a team to move forward together.

2. Set Better Goals

No one sets a weight loss goal without stepping onto the scale for the first time. You need to take the “before” picture. In the same way, a team must measure its current state before it can set accurate and achievable goals to pursue. Metrics define the starting point and enable a team to establish checkpoints to strive for. Later, they ensure that everyone is of the same opinion regarding whether or not those goals were met.

3. Identify Early Warning Signs

Early warning signs of future problems are critical to both personal and organizational health. Many teams experience crisis moments when they suddenly realize their discipleship programs are ineffective, finances are distressed, or one of many other significant problems exists. These underlying issues could surface much sooner with a clear system that regularly monitors important areas. In the same way a checkup can reveal early warning signs of personal health issues, metrics show leadership teams the organizational problems that need to be addressed before it is too late.

4. Chart a Clear Course Forward

Personal trainers know each individual body is different. They use detailed information to develop personalized plans to help their clients get healthier. Similarly, a great leader avoids one-size-fits-all approaches to ministry and charts a fitting course to improve the health of his or her specific church. Just because it worked for the pastor who spoke at the last conference you attended doesn’t mean it will work for you. Metrics provide the unique details needed to develop an intentional plan for long-term progress.

5. Celebrate the Details of What God Is Doing

Metrics reveal more than just unhealthy components. They also provide evidence of the healthiest areas. These signs of success fuel leadership teams with the energy

they need to continue moving forward. It is impossible to hear every story of life change in a church. But like a family receiving a good doctor's report, teams that utilize metrics find reasons to celebrate.

So what are the actual indicators of health in a church? After working with more than 200 churches, our team has identified five vital areas consistent in them all. We'll spend the next few chapters exploring those areas along with the specific metrics I believe are most helpful. Included with each metric is a range of health benchmarks based on the churches The Unstuck Group has served.

Additionally, in this expanded version of Vital Signs, I want to introduce you to some of the most effective churches around the country. These churches rank in the top 10% in key areas of health. You'll be both inspired by their stories and equipped with the strategies they're using to make an impact.

This eBook contains everything you need to clarify your own church's starting point as you plan for the future. Let's dive into the first key area of health: Growth & Guests.

(By the way, in case you're wondering how my 5K turned out, I actually came in 4th place! . . . Out of 5.)

CHAPTER 2

GROWTH AND GUESTS

It is impossible to have a healthy church without reaching new people. Jesus commanded us at the dawn of the Church to “go and make disciples” and to “teach these new disciples.” (Matt. 28:19-20, NLT) Nowhere did he say, “It’s ok if your church stops reaching new people as long as you continue helping existing Christians mature.” Maybe Jesus just forgot to mention it. Or maybe Matthew forgot to write that part down. It seems to me, however, that the Church is intended to grow.

Is your church teaching new disciples or just maturing its membership? The vital signs of Attendance Change and Guests can help you decide.

VITAL SIGN #1: ATTENDANCE CHANGE

If there is one metric that every church already tracks, it is weekend attendance. Attendance growth does not tell the entire story of who a church is reaching. We’ll dig deeper into that in Chapter 3. But for now, it is the natural starting point when assessing a church’s health.

In this chapter, you’ll meet three churches that rank in the Top 10% of all those we surveyed for attendance change—each with its own set of challenges and its own unique approach to reaching people.

The first one is Freedom Church in Acworth, GA.

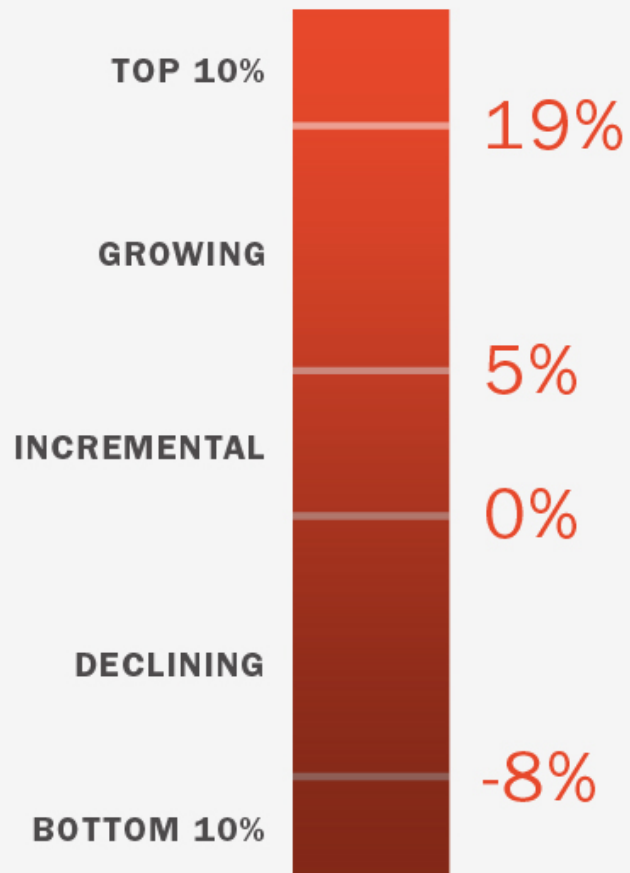
The Top 10%: How Freedom Church Encourages People to Invite

FREEDOM CHURCH

- Lead Pastor: J.R. Lee
- Location: Acworth, GA
- Attendance: 1,820
- Growth Rate: 110%

Freedom Church is among the top 10% of all churches in the area of Attendance Growth, recently more than doubling in just 12 months. When asked about the key

ATTENDANCE CHANGE



YTD Avg. Attendance

YTD Attendance of Prior Year

drivers of this growth, Operations Pastor, Todd Lollis shared,

"We have created a culture where those that call Freedom Church 'home' bring their friends/family/co-workers with them to church. Word of mouth is the single largest way that people hear about our church."

In other words, an invitation is an expectation for the people who attend.

Freedom uses the hashtag #BeABringer to further emphasize this point. Many churches encourage attendees to "Serve One and Worship One," meaning volunteer at one service and attend another. However, the team at Freedom has raised the bar, encouraging people to "Serve One and Bring One." It is hard to attend this church and not know inviting others is a key part of the mission.

We asked Todd to share what changes have been made to set the church up for continued growth:

"We are constantly evaluating everything. There have been times when the answer was to move locations. Other times it has been to change worship experience times. Sometimes it has been the need to remove a staff member. And other times we have needed to address some systems issues that were bottlenecking our growth."

It is a key reminder that there is no plug-and-play solution to breaking growth barriers. To break them, you must first evaluate deeply in order to identify what is truly holding you back. The same level of evaluation is true even during growth. As Todd pointed out,

"It is necessary to step back from time to time to evaluate systems and make sure they will serve you in the next season of ministry. We also do our best to ride the waves of momentum and keep things moving ahead. The tendency is to rest during those seasons. We tend to 'press the gas pedal,' which has yielded great results."

Every church in America tracks weekend attendance; in fact, for many this is the only regularly evaluated metric. I believe healthy churches will grow larger as they effectively reach their communities. Some churches blame their lack of growth on external factors that are supposedly out of their control. Great leaders own the responsibility to reach a community and do whatever it takes to overcome those barriers. They also engage their entire congregation in that mission just as J.R., Todd, and the entire team at Freedom Church has done.

The Top 10%: How Immanuel Baptist Reversed the Decline

IMMANUEL BAPTIST CHURCH

- Lead Pastor: Ron Edmonson
- Location: Lexington, KY
- Attendance: 2,238
- Growth Rate: 19%

I realize not every pastor has the same story as Freedom Church. There are many who find themselves in a church with a deeply rooted history and a declining attendance. That is the situation Ron Edmonson was in when he became the Lead Pastor of Immanuel Baptist Church in 2012. As Ron put it,

“Our church was in decline for almost a decade. It had become very internally focused.”

That’s what makes his story so incredible. Just a few years later, Immanuel Baptist was growing by 19% annually with over 2,200 in average weekend attendance. Ron attributes this newfound momentum to the following:

“Intentionality in getting outside our walls, learning the needs of [our] community, and engaging the church in reaching them.”

Regardless of your situation, healthy growth is possible with the right focus.

VITAL SIGN #2: GUESTS TO ATTENDANCE

It is impossible to grow in attendance without attracting and connecting with first-time guests. Your Guests-to-Attendance ratio can help you determine how effective you are in this area. If you find your ratio to be lower than average, it may indicate that your current attendees are not inviting friends and family. It may also indicate that your guest connection process is ineffective. When guests do walk through your doors, are you aware they are there?

The Top 10%: How RockPointe Church Draws Guests to a Difficult Location

ROCKPOINTE CHURCH

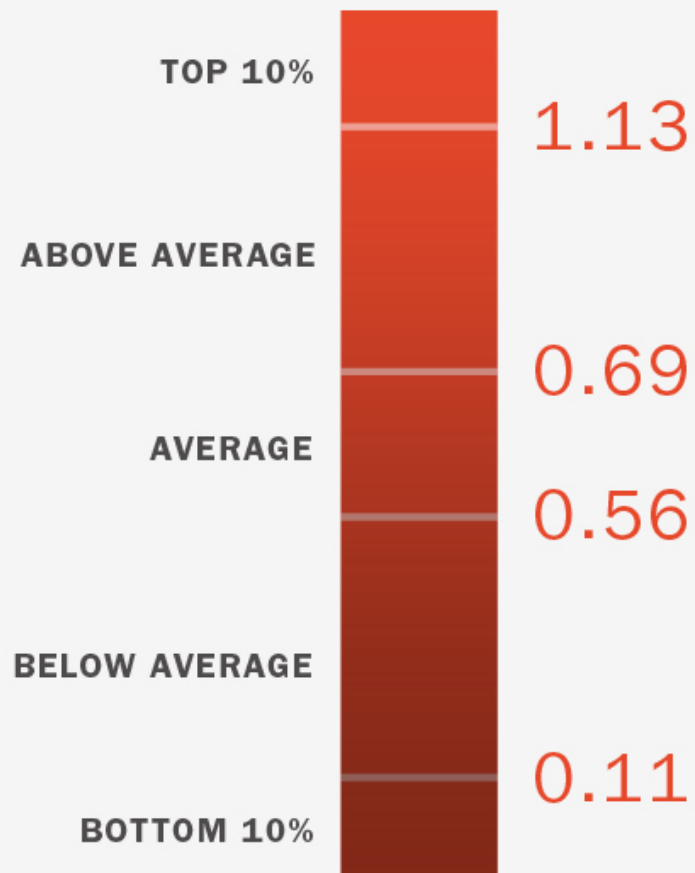
- Lead Pastor: Shayne O'Brien
- Location: Leander, TX
- Attendance: 963
- Guests-to-Attendance: 2.34

RockPointe Church has a guests-to-attendance ratio of 2.34. In other words, with 963 in average weekend attendance, they have over 2,200 guests a year!

With so many people coming through their doors, it would be easy to assume that RockPointe sits on a major roadway with thousands of cars passing each day. However, it is quite the opposite. Lead Pastor, Shayne O'Brien admits the church's location is bad and its road signage is even worse. However, he's convinced that when you create a welcoming place where people are loved no matter what, people will not be able to stay away. In fact, they'll invite others to join them.

"When you just authentically take people for who they are and stop asking them to be something different, even if that takes years, they will tell the world for you," he says.

GUESTS TO ATTENDANCE



First Time Guests in the past 12 months

Average Attendance

Shayne is also convinced the environments they create at their location play a significant role in their effectiveness at drawing guests.

"We refuse to bore people. If it's walking in to Eye of the Tiger with Everlast gear on and crawling into the octagon on-stage, or throwing beach balls to the crowd as the band plays Kool & the Gang during a series on happiness or coming to play in 40,000 pounds of snow during a Christmas series in Texas' 75 degree winter weather... we refuse to bore you. People will tell your next new guest for you with the phone in their hand. It's actually easier today than ever!"

RockPointe's success is not simply based on an attractive environment. Shayne and his team work hard to model personal invitations to the church. As he put it, "[Lead Pastors] set the pace. How many people have you invited? How many people on your street attend your church now that you live there? The answer to that question will tell you why you are struggling."

It should not be surprising that RockPointe Church is not just one of the most effective at reaching guests. They are also one of the most effective at baptizing people. We'll talk more about that metric in a moment. But here you should note the importance of monitoring your vital signs collectively, not individually. When a church is experiencing attendance growth without a high rate of baptisms, I question whether it is reaching people far from God or attracting people from other churches. That is why it is so important measure who, not just how many.

CHAPTER 3

WHO > HOW MANY

While attendance growth is incredibly important, it doesn't tell the entire story. The health of a church cannot be determined by its size any more than the health of a family can be determined by how many members it has. If you want to understand the true health of your church, you have to ask, "Who are we reaching?" just as often as you ask, "How many are attending?"

Let's explore three key groups that indicate the health of your "Who":

- **Nonbelievers (Baptisms)**
- **Young Families (Children)**
- **The Next Generation (Students)**

VITAL SIGN #3: BAPTISMS

Jesus commanded us to "make disciples" and "baptize them." (Matt. 28:19) That's another indication that his instruction to make disciples was more focused on the people outside our churches. To determine the degree to which your church is reaching nonbelievers, consider your number of baptisms as a percent of average attendance. I prefer to track baptisms rather than salvation commitments because they indicate follow-through beyond a single decision for Christ.

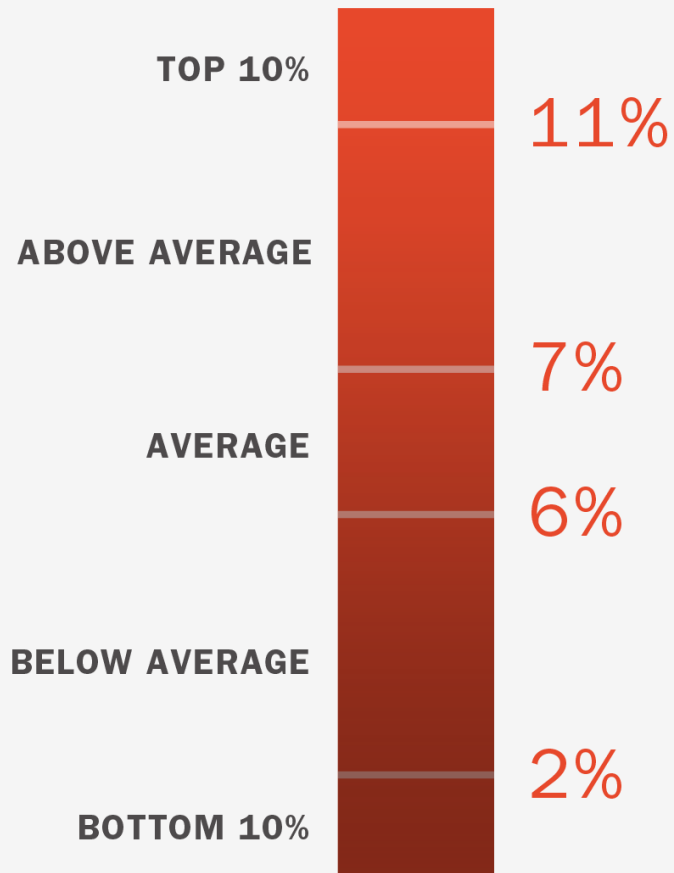
The Top 10%: Southside's Focus on Reaching Unchurched People

SOUTHSIDE CHURCH

- Lead Pastor: Mike Mannes
- Location: Chilliwack, BC, Canada
- Attendance: 982
- Percent Baptisms: 13%

Southside Church in Chilliwack, BC, Canada is in the top 10% of churches when it comes to reaching this group. Led by Mike Mannes, Southside baptizes 13% of their average attendance annually. Mike attributes their effectiveness in this area to a singular focus on reaching unchurched people. As he puts it, they are "making

PERCENTAGE OF BAPTISMS



Previous 12 Months Baptisms

YTD Avg. Attendance

decisions that always prioritize 'reaching people' over 'keeping people.'" He works hard to ensure his team keeps the unchurched person in mind when deciding everything from what kind of coffee to serve to what sermon series to preach. When a mission affects the choice of coffee, you know there is focus!

Mike shared with us a long list of practices Southside is using to reach nonbelievers. For example, they provide a highly welcoming lobby experience with plenty of people to answer questions. They dim the auditorium lights and have a short worship segment so unchurched guests feel inconspicuous. They build their teaching series around felt-need questions people are actually asking.

Those are all great, but the practice I find most impressive is this: Mike has an editor go over his sermon every week to ensure he is using simplified language geared toward "outsiders." That's an incredible statement to his team. It says that every detail of the ministry should be constantly evaluated and executed with a focus on unchurched people. No one and nothing should be off limits.

This was a common theme among churches with high baptism levels. Everyone we heard from seemed to be doing everything they could think of to join God in capturing the hearts of nonbelievers. These churches are not just praying for people to come to Christ. They are filtering everything they do through the perspective of the unchurched person.

If you're disappointed with the number of people your church is currently baptizing, you might be encouraged to know that not every "Top 10% Church" has always been that way. Mike Mannes admits that Southside Church had to go through a significant season of change:

"When I became Lead Pastor, our church considered themselves 'seeker-friendly,' but there was a lot of room for improvement. Every strategy [we use] came with push back and many people left our congregation. But these people were 'insider-focused,' and we knew we had to keep 'reaching' rather than worry about 'keeping.'"

With intentional change led from a heart for the lost, it is quite possible to regain health in this area.

VITAL SIGN #4: YOUNG FAMILIES

Nearly every church, at some point in the past, was filled with young, energetic people pursuing a vision for their community. But as they grew older, many church leaders turned to pass the baton and found no one to take it.

Reaching young parents and their kids is not simply about trying to be trendy. It is about creating a sustainable organization that is reaching its community long after you are gone. If you are not reaching young families today, you may not actually feel the effects for several decades. But a generational gap in the life of your church will eventually lead to its decline. Future-focused leaders recognize this and regularly evaluate their ability to reach young families with kids.

The Top 10%: Stonecreek Church Is Helping Parents Own Discipleship at Home

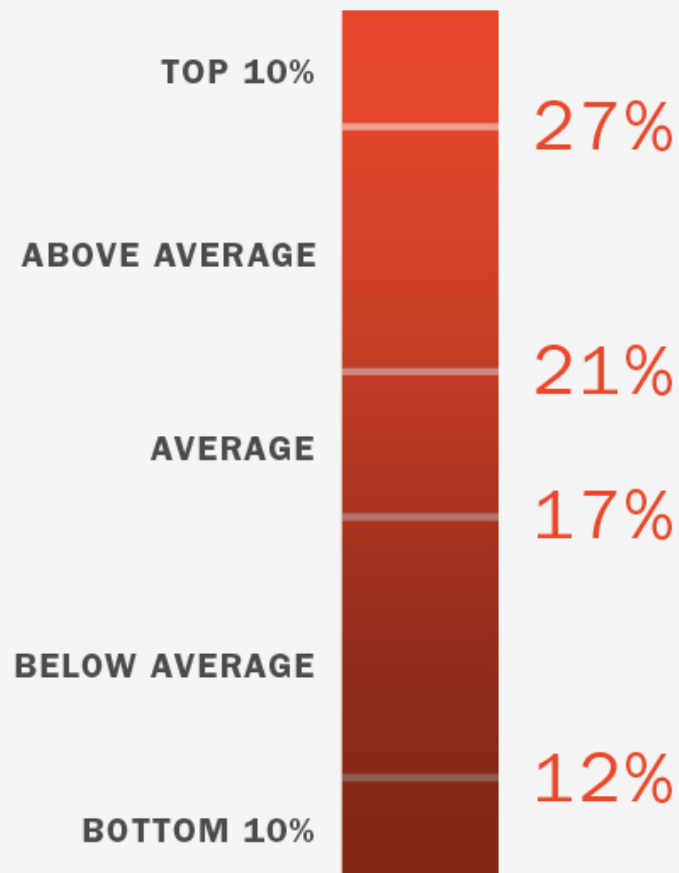
STONECREEK CHURCH

- Lead Pastor: Steven Gibbs
- Location: Alpharetta, GA
- Attendance: 1,243
- Percent Children: 29%
- Percent Students: 20%

When it comes to reaching young families, Stonecreek Church in Alpharetta, GA is one of the most effective we know. Nearly 30% of their weekend attendance is in their children's environments. Ryan Martin, Director of Operations, credits much of that success to a dual-audience in their children's ministry. He puts it this way:

"Our communication is both to the children and to the parents, helping parents to know how they can communicate the truth of the gospel at home. We only get

PERCENTAGE OF KIDS



YTD Avg. Kids

YTD Avg. Attendance

the children a few hours out of the year, where the parents are present and have a much greater opportunity to influence. We want to help instruct and lead so that parents are actually the ones discipling their children."

They also make the most of the time they do have with children by investing in small group leaders who invest in kids, rather than expecting paid staff to disciple everyone. They encourage those small group leaders to plan events for both the kids and parents connected to their group. Ryan describes it as yet another opportunity to connect parents, children, and the church. Stonecreek is not building a great children's ministry. They are building a great family ministry that engages multiple generations.

Wondering how your church is doing with this group? The best way to determine if you are building a church for the future is to calculate the percentage of your weekend attendance that is comprised of children.

(Lead pastors, resist the urge to hold your children's ministry staff solely responsible for reaching young families. It requires an intentional partnership across ministries to engage both parents and kids.)

VITAL SIGN #5: STUDENTS

Every generation brings a new context for ministry. Many things change between them, including learning styles, uses of technology, and beliefs about God. Healthy organizations anticipate these culture shifts and adjust their models rather than react after it is too late.

Not surprisingly, Stonecreek Church is also a leading church in the area of student ministry with 20% of their average attendance in that demographic. That is about twice the average. When I asked Ryan Martin what advice he would give to other churches, he said, "Continuous learning. Don't be afraid to make a change."

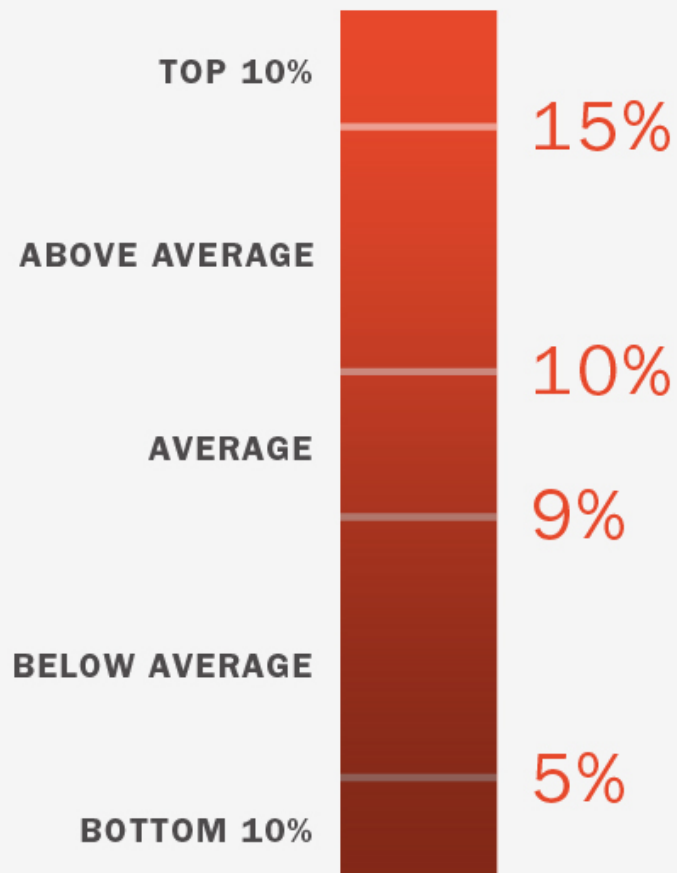
Stonecreek recently practiced this when they shifted their high school service

from Sunday morning to Wednesday evening. Doing so helped them engage more students, have more available space, and extend their small group discussion time. It also gave students a better opportunity to serve in other ministries. It is evidence of the importance of trying new approaches to reach students. What worked for Stonecreek may not work for you. But the underlying principle is in the changing, learning, and discovering what is effective.

Your ability to reach students today is an indicator of your ability to reach your community a few years from now. Measure the percent of students in attendance as if your future depends on it. (Because it does!) And when your student ministry staff discovers a method that works, make sure your adult ministry staff knows about it so they can prepare for a coming shift in their ministries.

Who you are reaching is far more important than how many are attending. Recognizing this is the first step to evaluating the health of your church. With a more detailed picture of your congregation, you can make the adjustments necessary to establish a sustainable organization that is reaching your community for years to come. But reaching individuals through weekend services is only the first step toward genuine life change. With a better understanding of who you are reaching, you are ready to consider how well you are connecting them to opportunities for spiritual growth.

PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS



YTD Avg. Students

YTD Avg. Attendance

CHAPTER 4

MORE THAN MEMBERSHIP

Every January, new gym memberships across the nation spike as people make New Year's resolutions to get healthier. Yet as many as 80 percent of individuals do not follow through with their plan. Gym memberships alone do not get people into shape. It is not until those people get involved with different opportunities for exercise that they truly make progress.

Healthy churches are comprised of spiritually healthy people—people who recognize simply becoming a church member does not move them closer to God. Leaders of these churches understand that if their weekend service becomes the “main event,” it will be the first and final destination on the discipleship path for most attendees. They instead recognize the weekend service as a starting point from which a number of spiritual next steps can be taken.

The health of your church is determined in part by the degree to which individuals get involved beyond weekend attendance. In my experience and through the study of Scripture, there are two primary ways in which healthy churches develop healthy people: community and serving.

VITAL SIGN #6: SMALL GROUP COMMUNITY

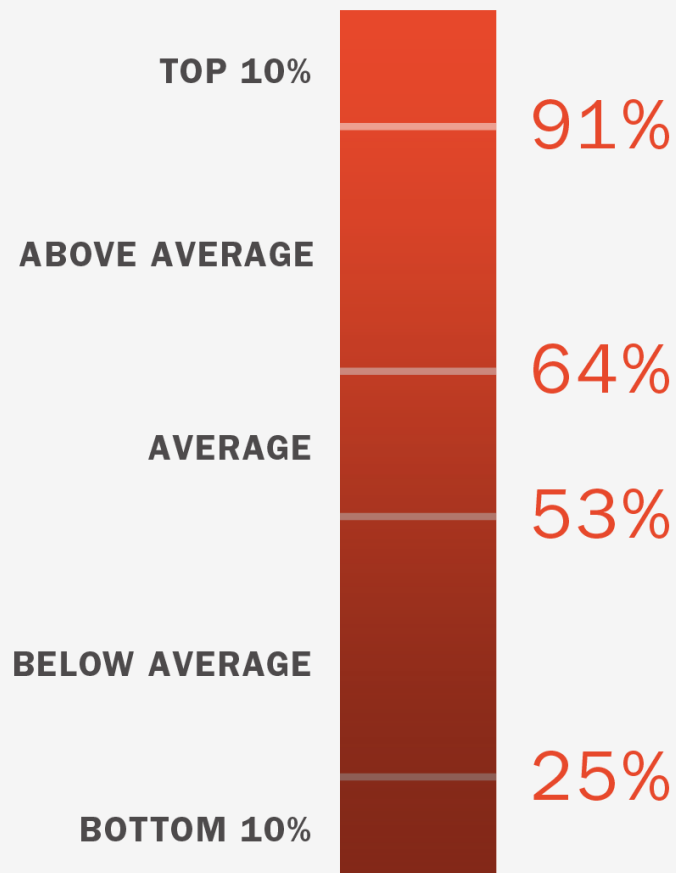
Jesus' model of discipleship focused on smaller groups. Acts 2 describes the early church continuing this model. If we want to create true disciples of Christ, we must follow His example of creating genuine relationships for support and encouragement.

The Top 10%: How Victory Church Established Groups Through Empowerment

VICTORY CHURCH

- Lead Pastor: Ed Crenshaw
- Location: Audubon, PA
- Attendance: 770
- Percent in Groups: 98%

PERCENTAGE OF ADULTS & STUDENTS IN GROUPS



Total Adults & Students in Groups & Classes

YTD Avg. Attendance - YTD Avg. Kids

When Ed Crenshaw arrived at Victory Church (Audubon, PA), he immediately began teaching the value of small groups. It was a constant theme in his messages and vision for the church. In his words, “After four years of this, my dynamic leadership had produced a grand total of three groups!” Obviously not the results he had envisioned.

However, momentum shifted when a revival began in 1996. While the church was having services every evening, the people in his own small group wanted to keep meeting. They didn’t actually keep meeting together as one group. Instead, the individual members each formed their own small groups and met with them! This was the moment small groups gained momentum at Victory Church. That momentum eventually carried them to a present-day small groups engagement rate of 98%! While Ed admits the nightly worship services were the most visible aspect of the season, he believes the small group dynamic was a big part of what God was doing in that time.

I love the story of Victory Church because it highlights two things I believe at my core. The first is that authentic community is a big piece of God’s plan for the local church. He’s not just interested in dynamic services. He desires for people to do life together. Secondly, momentum around small groups is created when individuals are empowered to initiate and develop them. There is a fine line between equipping leaders and controlling them.

The Top 10%: Leveraging Systems, Simplicity, and Strategic On-Ramps

WESTSIDE COMMUNITY CHURCH

- Lead Pastor: Gabe Kolstad
- Location: Beaverton, OR
- Attendance: 700
- Percent in Groups: 110%

Like Victory Church, Westside Community Church (Beaverton, OR) is another

example of a highly effective small groups church that has not always been so successful. While listening to the stories of both churches, three key strengths emerged. I'm convinced these strengths serve as the foundation for their effectiveness with groups. They include equipping systems, extreme simplicity, and strategic on-ramps.

1. Equipping Systems

Both Victory and Westside credit their success to a clear system that equips small groups and leaders, instead of controlling them. In other words, they have developed a plan, they are working the plan, and because there is a clear plan, they are able to easily engage volunteers to advance it. Ed Crenshaw of Victory Church says they aim to "institute practices that can be easily reproduced."

2. Extreme Simplicity

Another similarity between both of these churches is their extreme simplicity in the ministry model surrounding groups. They've made small groups the environment for community and growth, rather than one environment amidst many. Gabe made it clear that at Westside, small groups are one of the two things they've built the ministry around. And Ed warned, "If you want a high group participation rate, you have to clear the calendar!"

In my own experience, the simplified ministry models being used at Westside and Victory are exceptions to the norm. I'm convinced that is why their results in this area are so exceptional. Healthy and engaging churches simplify their ministries around a discipleship path that prioritizes small groups. Plain and simple.

3. Strategic On-Ramps

With a simplified ministry model, Westside and Victory are able to heavily promote small groups, frequently encouraging people to take this step and engage. Westside provides a clear on-ramp three strategic times a year in January, May,

and September. During those months, they encourage everyone from the first-time guest to the seasoned member to join a group. Ed Crenshaw at Victory takes it as his personal responsibility as lead pastor to constantly cast vision for groups and keep them at the forefront in the life of the church. I know many pastors who get bored after talking about small groups for a while. Ed isn't one of them. He's been doing it for over 10 years, and you can see the impact it's made.

If you're wondering if small groups offer enough to the spiritual life of believers, Scripture is full of examples. Jesus' model of discipleship focused on smaller groups. Acts 2 describes the early church continuing this model. If we want to create true disciples of Christ, we must follow His example of creating genuine relationships for support and encouragement. Fostering community is vital to the health of your church. The percentage of adults and students engaged in small groups is an indicator of your current ability to connect people to community.

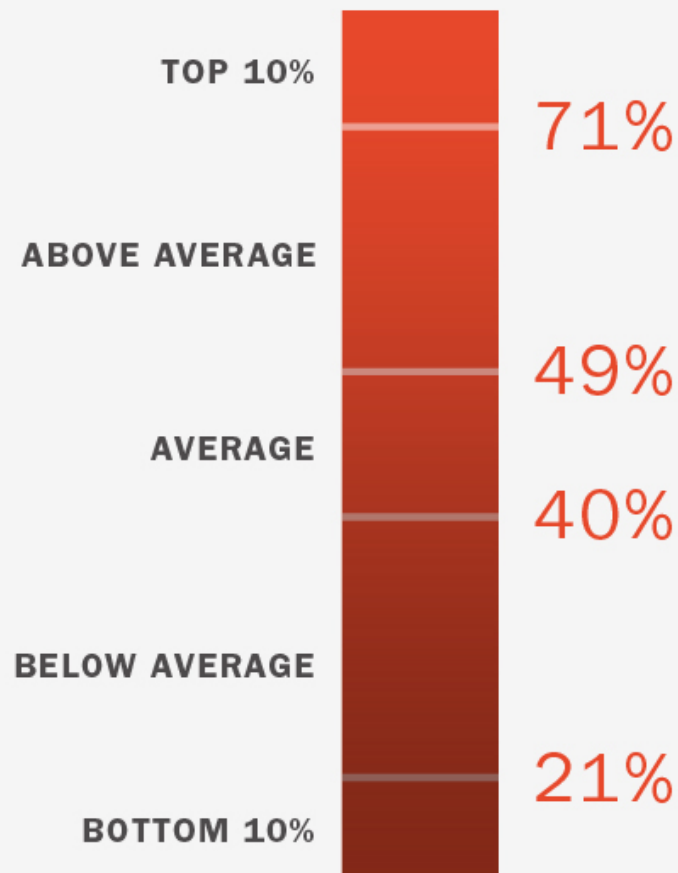
For churches currently unhealthy in this vital sign, Ed Crenshaw offered this advice:

"The pastor has to decide whether or not they really want to do what is necessary to foster groups...[In] churches with high commitment levels, the tendency is to expect everyone to participate in everything, and then the pastors often wonder why people won't be faithful to small groups on top of that. Clear your calendar, train and release your leaders, and be the small groups champion of your church."

VITAL SIGN #7: VOLUNTEERS

Paul explains that we must engage every part of the body of Christ in order for it to be healthy (1 Cor. 12). In Ephesians, he states that it is the responsibility of pastors and teachers "to equip God's people to do his work and build up the church" (4:12). The percent of volunteers serving reveals how well you're fulfilling this responsibility.

PERCENTAGE OF ADULTS & STUDENTS SERVING



Total Adults & Students Volunteering

YTD Avg. Attendance - YTD Avg. Kids

VITAL SIGN #8: ATTENDANCE TO STAFF

Unfortunately, many churches box out volunteers from opportunities to serve by hiring additional staff to do the work of ministry. The ratio of staff to attendees illustrates the degree to which your church relies on paid staff. The average among the churches I've worked with is one staff member for every seventy-seven attendees. However, I regularly encourage leaders to strive for one staff member for every one hundred attendees. While this may feel like a stretch for some, a ratio much less than that suggests an over-reliance on staff and an underutilization of volunteers.

The Top 10%: How Churches Are Doing More Ministry with Less Staff

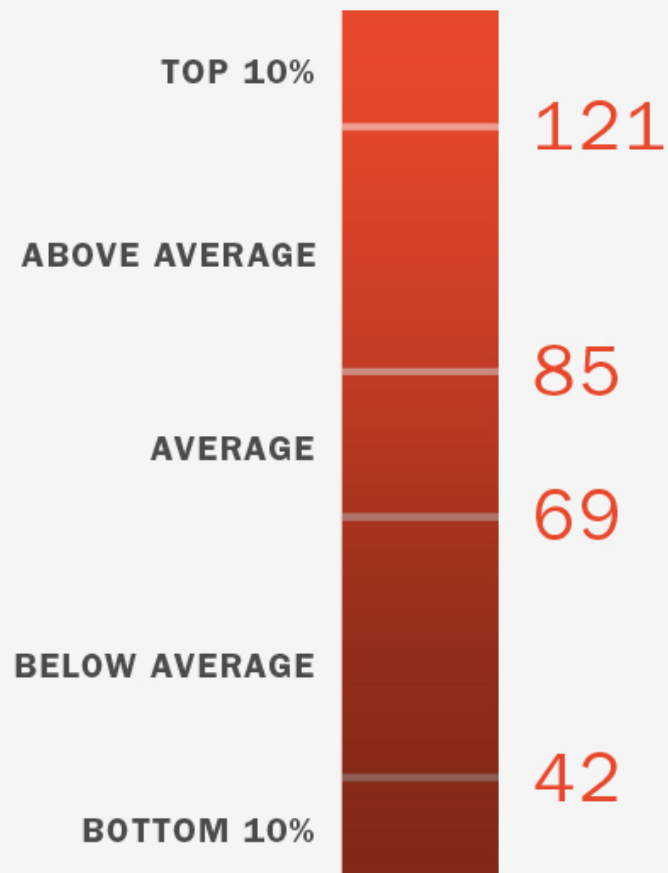
EPIKOS CHURCH

- Lead Pastor: David Parmelee
- Location: Milwaukee, WI
- Attendance: 1,600
- Attendance to Staff: 1 Staff for every 123 Attendees

Epikos Church in Milwaukee, WI is one of the most effective churches I've encountered when it comes to engaging people to serve. What is interesting about Epikos is when you talk to their leaders, you'll hear them say very little about "volunteer recruiting." Instead, you'll find yourself in a conversation about calling, impact, and giving away authority. Caleb Smith, Executive Pastor at Epikos, describes it like this:

"Above anything else, our Board and Lead Pastor are committed to creating the space for the church to be the church. They spend time praying for people to rise up...being called by God to lead and serve in the ways that He desires for them and for His body. Whenever felt needs begin to be recognized, we ask, 'To what level could this be accomplished by a team of volunteers?' This demands holding the tension between competing forces: 1) Employing more staff to make sure

ATTENDANCE TO STAFF



YTD Avg. Attendance

Full-Time Staff Equivalents

ministry is being accomplished; and 2) Handing off our particular keys to the kingdom."

That heartbeat is a far cry from the statements I hear in many of my visits with church leaders:

"We don't have enough workers."

"It's difficult to get people to commit to our ministries."

"People want to serve on their own time."

I'm convinced it is that very mindset of "not enough" that holds these churches back. As Joel Dryden, Executive Pastor of Richwoods Christian Church warned, "Nobody wants to jump on a sinking ship."

RICHWOODS CHRISTIAN CHURCH

- Lead Pastor: Jim Powell
- Location: Peoria, IL
- Attendance: 1,274
- Percent Serving: 75%

Richwoods is in the top 10% of churches with 75% of its attendees serving. Joel credits that success to a changing mindset among the staff.

"One of the shifts we have made with our staff is to help them lead differently. Rather than having a 'scarcity' mindset, all scrambling to snag fish out of the same pond, the staff are learning to see the volunteers they have as a blessing and gift from God, to work on developing them to lead the ministry, as the staff member supports them."

FREEDOM CHURCH

- Attendance to Staff: 1 Staff for every 182 Attendees

Notice how both Epikos and Richwoods are focusing their attention on equipping volunteers for personal ministry. We introduced you to Todd Lollis of Freedom Church (Acworth, GA) earlier; I like how he described the heart of his own Top 10% team:

"We want people to understand that our goal is not to recruit people to our ministry but empower them for theirs."

As I've gotten to know these churches, there are a few key strengths that seem to be contributing to their success with volunteer teams:

1. Extreme Empowerment

The most effective churches in this area look at their staff with a very different mindset -- not to do the work of the ministry, but to equip others for the work of the ministry. That is a mentality built on the Apostle Paul's job description for church leaders in Ephesians 4:12. It is also the mentality that has enabled churches like these to grow with some of leanest staff teams I've ever seen.

2. Staffing Leaders & Equippers

While Paul directs church leaders to "equip the saints," most churches still hire staff members to "serve the saints." If you want to get better at engaging volunteers, you likely need to change your hiring process.

Epikos Church looks for a key trait in every staff candidate: passion for helping others find their place in the body. They are willing to re-open searches as much as needed until they find it. Additionally, whenever an existing position opens up on staff, they re-evaluate it to determine if it is still necessary. They do not just assume that a vacancy on the organizational chart must be filled by another paid staff member.

3. Leadership Development

To operate with a lean staff and a large volunteer team, leadership must be pushed down as far as possible. Doing so requires high intentionality and constant investments. As Todd Lollis shared, “Leadership development is necessary to create a pipeline. Our desire is to always have leaders that we can promote up to open opportunities.”

If you desire to engage more people to serve, you must engage and equip more people to lead.

4. Discipleship Pathway

Joel Dryden at Richwoods credits a clear discipleship pathway for their success at engaging people to serve. He shared that, “As we have become better at communicating the values of the path instead of trying to convince people they need to join and support the programs we created for them, there has been greater ownership of the church.” In other words, Joel and his team are giving people a few, simple steps to engage in discipleship and become a part of the local church. This approach re-centers staff leaders on their ultimate purpose: helping people grow in their relationship with Jesus.

How healthy is your church in the area of serving? These two vital signs can help you decide. The Percent of Adults and Students Serving clarifies just how well you are doing at helping people take this spiritual next step. And, your Attendance to Staff ratio is an indicator of whether or not you are building a staff team of “equippers” or “doers.”

Connecting people beyond the weekend service is vital to their spiritual development. Having a clear discipleship path is key to helping them engage. What are you doing to create community and provide places to serve? Are those methods on the same level of priority as your weekend service? Do people understand how to get involved with them? As each individual takes a step to get healthier, so will your church increase in health.

CHAPTER 5
DOLLARS AND SENSE

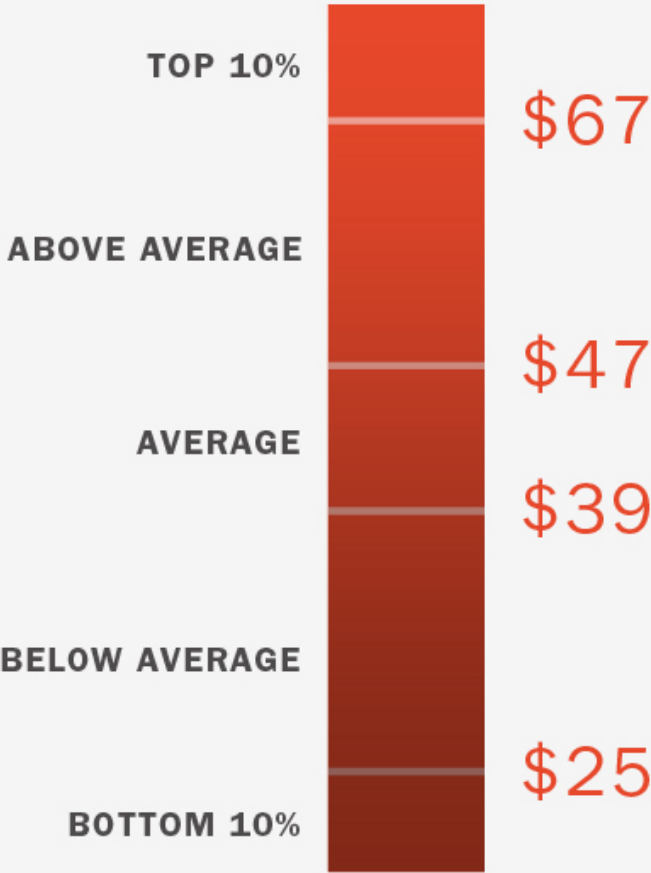
The American Psychological Association reports money is the number one cause of stress among Americans. Many leadership teams experience this same stress as they manage the finances of their organizations. With immediate financial pressures, leaders often create a more comfortable present at the expense of a healthy future. Later, when the church feels the effects of poor decisions, departments are forced to compete for resources, and givers begin to wonder about the value of their investments in God's kingdom. Establishing healthy financial practices today will lay a foundation for an even stronger future. Four metrics can help you assess financial health.

VITAL SIGN #9: PER CAPITA GIVING

The level of giving in your church tells far more than the amount that is available to spend. It reveals two things about overall church health. The first is the degree to which people understand the biblical concept of stewardship. As you successfully teach financial giving, the amount being given should increase. If you complete a series on the topic and this number remains stable, you might reconsider the way you are teaching it.

Giving levels may also reveal the degree to which individuals are willing to invest in your vision. Jesus taught us that people align their investment of "treasures" with the passion in their hearts (Luke 12:34). The more your vision captures the hearts of your people, the more they will be willing to commit their own resources to it. If the level of giving is low in your church, it may be time to clarify your vision and find more compelling ways to communicate it.

**ADULTS & STUDENTS
PER CAPITA GIVING**



General Fund Budget / 52
(YTD Attendance - YTD Kids)

VITAL SIGN #10: WEEKS IN RESERVE

Personal financial coaches teach the importance of an emergency fund. The same principle should be applied to every organization. I have heard pastors talk about the financial stress they experience when inclement weather forces them to cancel services and forfeit passing an offering bucket. Living weekend to weekend, like living paycheck to paycheck, is not a healthy position to be in. On the other hand, I have seen equally unhealthy churches holding onto a pile of cash with no clear plan for it. Those excess dollars represent potential lives that could be changed if they were intentionally spent to further pursue the vision.

I recommend keeping six to eight weeks' worth of your total budget in cash reserves. (This is calculated by taking your total expenditure budget and dividing that by fifty-two and then multiplying by six to determine the desirable amount.) If you have less than that, begin looking for expenses to trim and add to your savings. If you have much more than that without a clear purpose for it, identify and invest in the greatest need that lines up with your vision.

VITAL SIGN #11: DEBT TO ANNUAL GIVING

An appropriate use of debt can help churches acquire the resources they need to better reach their communities. But falling into the trap of overborrowing sets up a church for financial struggles. Consequences may not be experienced for a couple of decades, but the effects of poor loan decisions are sure to be felt. The level of debt you are prepared to manage is proportionate to the size of your annual giving. I encourage leadership teams to take caution when their debt exceeds twice their annual giving. Anything less than that is usually very manageable for most churches.

If you already have a high level of debt or are looking to raise funds for a large project, I recommend you invest in support outside your organization. My friends at [INJOY Stewardship Solutions](#) have helped thousands of churches. They would be a good first call.

NUMBER OF WEEKS IN CASH RESERVES



General Cash Reserves

$(\text{General Fund Budget}) / 52$

DEBT TO ANNUAL GIVING



Total Debt

General Fund Budget

VITAL SIGN #12: PERCENT OF STAFF BUDGET

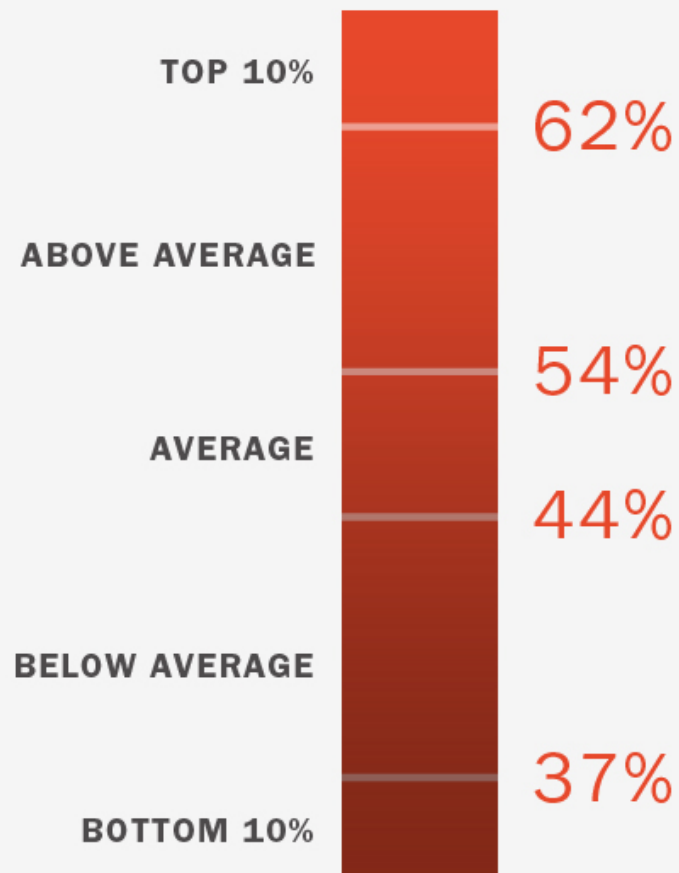
A great team is invaluable to any church. But an overreliance on staff members to accomplish the vision can create a financial burden that actually hinders it. And as we've already discussed, over-hiring reduces the number of opportunities for people to volunteer their gifts and serve in the body of Christ. A general standard is to spend no more than 50 percent of the total budget on all personnel expenses. I encourage many of the churches that I work with to strive for as low as a 40 percent staff budget while increasing their utilization of volunteers. Not surprisingly, the churches with the lowest percent staff budget tend to have the highest percentages of people serving.

Some leadership teams seek to "staff ahead of growth," hiring additional staff members to prepare for an expected increase in attendance. This is a fine tactic as long as you already have a winning strategy proven by current growth. But expecting that new staff members will inject the energy and ideas necessary to get unstuck is a poor leadership decision. It is similar to a basketball team with a terrible playbook expecting the signing of an all-star to improve the win column.

If you are looking for ways to cut back your staff budget, you might want to consider outsourcing. As an example, [Belay Solutions](#) offers excellent bookkeeping and executive assistant solutions designed to reduce budgets.

It is easy to allow immediate demands to dictate the financial decisions of your organization. But responding to stress with a short-term perspective trades a healthy future for a comfortable present. As you evaluate the financial health of your church, how can you improve your giving, saving, borrowing, and staffing? Take the right steps to manage your finances with the future in mind.

PERCENTAGE OF BUDGET SPENT ON STAFF



Staff Budget

General Fund Budget

CHAPTER 6

MAKE ROOM FOR MORE

A few summers ago, one of my favorite bands was coming to Atlanta. My friends and I looked for tickets, but they had sold out well in advance. The day of the concert, I found two tickets for sale just hours before it started. I quickly called someone, and we agreed to go. The only problem was that there was no room for the rest of our friends. We didn't even bother inviting them!

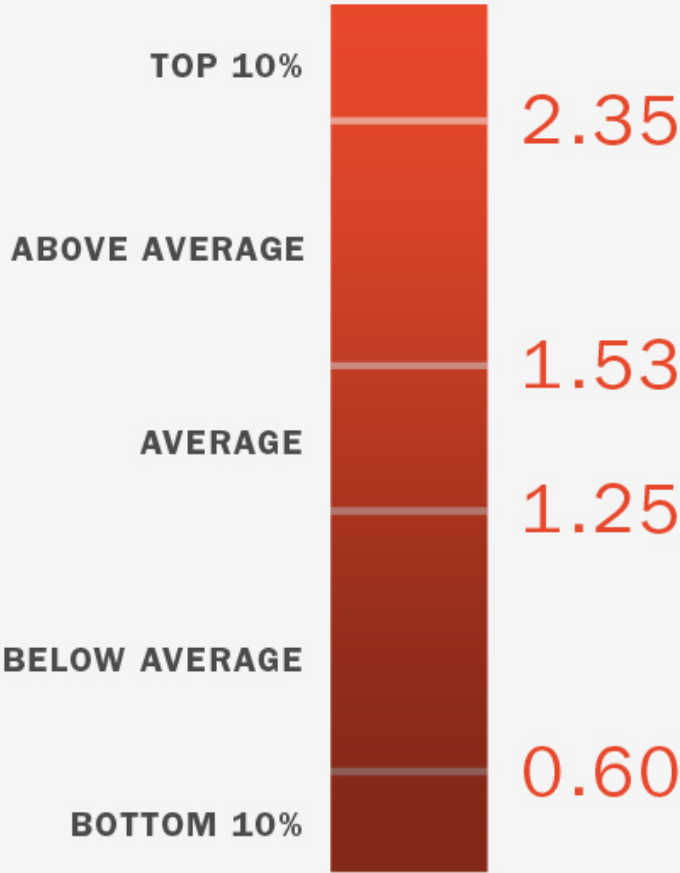
That kind of environment is great for a concert. But it is one of the simplest ways to reduce the health of a church. When a church runs out of room, the people who are already a part of it lose the opportunity to invite their unchurched friends. On the chance that some of them show up anyway, visitors are hard-pressed to believe they are actually wanted. Without room for more, a church is positioned to turn its focus inward. When they leave the issue unresolved, leaders unintentionally send a message that the unchurched are no longer wanted.

Healthy churches work hard to prepare a place for everyone—even the ones who have yet to attend. Their leaders are excited by a full auditorium but at the same time recognize it can put restraints on a vision. Two simple metrics can help you determine if your church is ready to make room for more.

VITAL SIGN #13: ATTENDANCE TO SEATS

Every auditorium has a limited number of seats. Attendance to seats reveals the level to which those seats are utilized. In other words, it lets you know if there is enough room for everyone attending, and those who have yet to attend. As this ratio approaches one attendee (total attendance, including kids) for every seat, you should begin considering a second service or venue. Likewise, a third service may be in order as you near two attendees for every seat. Keeping an eye on your attendance to seats is the easiest way to identify the right time to make room for more.

**ATTENDANCE
TO SEATS**



YTD Avg. Attendance

Auditorium Seats

VITAL SIGN #14: SEATING AND PARKING

Few church leaders actually see the parking lot through the eyes of the normal attendee. Most arrive early to prepare and are one of the last people to leave. With that, leaders never struggle to find a parking spot or sit in traffic on their way in or out. On the very same days, the experience for most attendees may be very different.

Andy Stanley often reminds us that “the sermon begins in the parking lot.” Healthy churches ensure everyone feels there is room for them the moment they drive onto the campus. To do this effectively, leaders must monitor the relationship between the number of parking spaces and the number of seats in the auditorium. In my experience, a church should provide 1 parking spot for every 1.5 auditorium seats. If the ratio of parking spaces to seats is lower than 1 to 1.5, it may be time to create additional spaces. You might consider expanding the lot or shuttling some committed attendees, staff, and volunteers from an offsite location.

Church leaders love a packed auditorium. It is a visual representation that the vision and strategy are working! In the midst of that energy, leaders should try to ensure everyone’s experience is as exciting as their own. To do so, provide room for more. Open seats give everyone a visual reminder there are still more people in the community to reach!

CHAPTER 7

OPERATING DIFFERENTLY FOR DIFFERENT RESULTS

In addition to assessing the metrics of over 200 churches, we asked 74 of those churches to complete a robust Health Opinion Survey. Through it, the leadership teams at these churches shared their level of agreement with 25 statements that might describe the church. We were surprised to see how the fastest-growing churches described themselves differently from the rest. In fact, this information surfaced a key insight:

Healthy churches operate in fundamentally different ways from the rest.

They did not stumble into success, nor are they riding the wave of a single personality. These churches have developed organizational disciplines that enable them to make progress more quickly and more effectively. I'd be willing to bet that if you dropped any of these teams into a different industry, they would still find a way to succeed. I like them best right where they are, leading more people to Jesus.

Wondering exactly what sets them apart? Below are some of the ways the fastest growing churches described themselves differently. The church leaders rated their level of agreement with these statements on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 indicating "strong agreement" and 1 indicating "strong disagreement."

Scale:

1 - Strongly Disagree | 2 - Disagree | 3 - Neutral | 4 - Agree | 5 - Strongly Agree

Statement	Top 10% Fastest Growing*	All Other Churches
We have very few, if any, congregational votes. And, when they do happen, people are typically in full agreement.	4.62	3.90
We are unified. There is no division within our church.	3.90	3.28
We fully utilize web and social media strategies to reach our primary "customer".	3.88	3.15

With the exception of lay leadership board or elders, we do not have any other boards or committees.	3.67	3.06
Our staff, elders, and board members are required to demonstrate they tithe in order to serve.	3.52	2.85
We have an action plan in place to prioritize a focused set of initiatives/objectives for the next 6 months.	3.49	2.88
We have a defined strategy for leadership development for both staff and volunteers.	3.39	2.77

*Top 10% growth rates for this survey ranges from 19% to 69%.

The Top 10%: What Waterlife Church Does Differently to Reach More People

Waterlife Church (Lenoir, NC) is one of these churches that is operating differently for different results. Last year, they grew by 43%, had above average engagement levels in small groups, and involved 71% of attendees in volunteer teams. They continue to grow beyond 700 as a portable church meeting in a school.

WATERLIFE CHURCH

- Lead Pastor: Todd Braswell
- Location: Lenoir, NC
- Attendance: 754
- Growth Rate: 43%

As I consider the story of Waterlife and other churches like it, a few key themes stand out to me:

1. Congregational Unity

The top two statements in the list above point to the importance of congregational unity. The fastest growing churches have greater unity, but they also are least likely

to take congregational votes. Many pastors feel like they have to get everyone's expressed opinion and buy-in to gain church unity. The opposite is actually true. Every time you take a vote you are inviting division by asking people to take sides.

Todd Braswell, Senior Pastor of Waterlife Church shared, "We have always connected unity to our mission.... We have always been very clear about our mission and in inviting others to join with us in service. When people serve, they feel part of the team."

When you lead with a clear mission and vision in a healthy way, you give people something to unify around. Unity is developed through mission and vision, not votes.

2. Simplified Church Boards

The fastest growing churches are not filled with boards and committees to represent each function of ministry. They have a single lay leadership board and/or elders. Additionally, those board members truly care about the ministry of the church, evidenced through their tithe. I'm becoming convinced that dysfunctional boards are one of the greatest contributors to stuck churches. Every church needs a single board that empowers the staff and holds the lead pastor (only) accountable. Anything more and your governance is a growth barrier.

3. Embracing Web and Social Media

I often hear church leaders talk about "meeting people where they are." Today, they are online and we must continue pushing the limits to get to them. Too many churches treat technology like "one and done" projects. They develop a website, set-up a few social media accounts, and declare their presence in the digital age. Top 10% churches understand that technology is always changing. They dedicate resources to ongoing development, continually adapting in order to reach people. For example, Waterlife uses a schedule to plan great content well ahead of time. They also have a professional photographer serving each week so they can be sure

they'll have great images to share.

4. Defined Action Plan

Churches experiencing success did not get there by accident. They went through the process of filtering their opportunities and needs then set a clear action plan to tackle them.

Todd Braswell put it like this: "When we have a goal or task to accomplish, I like to think in clear action steps that build upon one another to get the job done. This is communicated and agreed upon during staff/team meetings and is followed up on in weekly meetings until completed."

Through focused initiatives and weekly accountability, they've made great strides in pursuit of their vision. It is that mindset that leads me to expect they will continue growing. It is also a discipline any church must adopt in order to improve its health.

5. Leadership Development

I've already shared the importance of a leadership development pipeline to developing great staff and volunteer teams. Here, I will simply remind you: growing churches require growing leaders. And growing leaders requires an intentional strategy. Healthy churches have a pipeline for development. Waterlife defines that pipeline with three stages: Identify, Invite, and Invest. Any team leader can use that framework to identify potential leaders, invite them to take on greater leadership responsibility, and invest in them along the way.

How is your own church doing in these distinctive components? What would your staff have to say about them? If you really want to know, ask them to rate their own level of agreement with the statements above on a scale of 1-5. Then begin a conversation about the ones that scored lowest. You just might find yourself defining an action plan to address them!

CHAPTER 8

FROM DIAGNOSIS TO NEW DIRECTION

Suppose you went to the doctor and received a diagnosis that revealed significant health problems. After hearing all of the ways in which you need to improve, you went home and continued business as usual. You didn't bother to change a thing about the way you lived. When you returned for your next checkup, would you expect a better report? Surely not! In fact, you would probably find that your health had continued to decline.

A diagnosis is not enough to change the direction of your life. Nor does a health assessment of your church change the direction of its future. You simply will not drift toward health. The only way to experience better results is to do something different. You need a clear plan to address critical issues and improve organizational health. With that in mind, here are a few steps to turn your church's diagnosis into a new direction:

1. Check Your Vitals

Your church exists with a unique vision and strategy. Only you and your team can identify the right metrics to diagnose it. Determine which of the metrics in this eBook are most vital to you. Are there any others that you need to develop? Once you have established your vitals, calculate how well you measure up. Based on the benchmarks in this eBook, how healthy is your church? How healthy will it be in 12 months if nothing changes?

Some areas you consider vital may seem impossible to measure. Intangibles like creativity, trust, and teamwork can be difficult to quantify. A great way to measure the health of such indicators is to put them on a board and have staff label them each with a green, yellow, or red card. A green card means you are very healthy in that area; yellow means there is room for improvement; and red identifies a critical issue. By enabling your team with colors instead of numbers, you can get an accurate assessment of health in areas that are otherwise unmeasurable.

2. Set Future Goals

With a clear diagnosis of the health of your church, set specific goals for all necessary improvements. For instance, if your assessment revealed that you are at 8 percent children and red-level creativity, you might set goals to achieve 20 percent children and green-level creativity by a specific point in time. I recommend setting goals that inspire immediate action along with a clear future vision that keeps the team moving in a consistent direction over time.

3. Make an Action Plan

I have shared before that hope is not a strategy. You cannot simply hope to achieve your goals. You must plan out specific steps to accomplish them. The following questions can help you define the steps between your current level of health and the future you desire.

- **What could we do to accomplish our goals?**

Think outside the box and brainstorm possible solutions.

- **What will we do to accomplish our goals?**

Choose a course of action and establish specific tasks to implement it.

- **Who will take each step?**

Empower specific individuals to lead each task.

- **When will each step be taken?**

Set specific deadlines for completing each task.

After discussing these questions, record your plan as concisely as possible. The shorter the plan, the more likely it is to be followed. Distribute it to the team and keep everyone updated as you make progress together.

If you're looking for help, [The Unstuck Group](#) offers a facilitated [Strategic Planning](#) process that can help you not only clarify your future plans but also make sure you have intentional action steps in place to move forward.

4. Schedule Regular Checkups

The only way to tell if you are actually getting healthier is to continue checking your vitals over time. Assign a specific person the responsibility of collecting data and calculating your metrics on a regular basis. Ask him or her to report the progress of each goal every three months so the entire team continues to share the same understanding of your church's health. Those metrics together will serve as a common dashboard as your team collectively steers your church in the right direction. [Life.Church](#) has created a fantastic online tool to help you easily maintain a dashboard. I highly encourage you to check out [Church Metrics](#).

5. Re-Evaluate the Action Plan

It is not uncommon for a patient to be given several remedies to try before the right one is found. In the same way, your team may not have the perfect plan from the start. With every three-month report ask, "What changes to the plan would help us make better progress?" I regularly encourage leaders to beta-test ideas. Take a few risks and adjust them along the way. If you are constantly re-evaluating and willing to make improvements, over time you will improve the remedy your church needs to get healthier.

A diagnosis is only as valuable as the degree to which it is acted upon. Begin taking these steps to see clear improvements on your church's next checkup. Just imagine how much healthier it will be if you do!

CHAPTER 9

EVERY NUMBER TELLS A STORY

Unless your favorite college course just happened to be statistics, all of this talk about numbers can start to feel lifeless. After all, you work in ministry because you care about people, not data. It is important to remember that every metric represents a group of valuable people, each with a unique story of God's work in their lives. When it comes to fully understanding the health of your church, those stories are just as important as metrics.

Some leadership teams fail to focus on stories. They analyze everything by the numbers and base their decisions on data alone. While their course of action always makes logical sense, they unintentionally hurt others at points along the way. More often, church leaders sit on the opposite end of the spectrum, making most decisions based on the last few stories they heard. While their hearts are in the right place, they are constantly swayed by recent feedback and lead inconsistently.

Great leadership teams hold both metrics and stories in a careful balance. They value calculated numbers but look to confirm them with real-life examples. The following three principles can help your team find and keep that healthy balance of metrics and stories:

Metrics Enable the Mind. Stories Encourage the Heart.

Metrics reveal important details of a church that would not otherwise be discovered. These insights are invaluable to leaders who want to make informed decisions. But few people are truly encouraged by numbers and graphs. Instead, they are inspired by stories of personal growth within the people they are trying to reach. Your team needs a good set of metrics to make wise decisions, but it also needs to hear examples of how those decisions are impacting lives. Encourage the hearts of leaders, both staff and volunteers, with stories to give them the motivation they need to follow through with your action plan.

Metrics Provide Big-Picture Perspective. Stories Provide Personal Perspective.

A good set of metrics gives leaders a bird's-eye view of total church health. Stories

provide personal examples of the people represented by each of those numbers. Without stories to keep them in check, leaders can easily misinterpret numbers to fit their own preferences. On the other hand, when leaders become consumed by a few personal stories, they lose sight of what is best for the majority of their church. To fully see and understand your church's health, balance the big picture of metrics with the personal perspective of individual stories.

Metrics Are Collected Systematically. Stories Are Captured Relationally.

It takes a clear system to collect data and track metrics over time. Stories are uncovered in a much different way. They are never predictable and often appear when you least expect them. To capture stories, you must form genuine relationships with the people who hold them. Encourage everyone on your team to listen closely as they interact with church attendees. Small groups, volunteer teams, baptisms, and times of prayer can all reveal great narratives that illustrate your vision in action. As you discover great stories, dedicate time in staff meetings to share them with one another. Doing so will encourage the hearts of your staff and give everyone the opportunity to see personal perspectives.

As long as your church is larger than one person, there are stories out there that you have yet to discover. Those personal experiences within your church could unlock a whole new perspective for your team. As you begin to utilize your new set of metrics, take time to balance it with valuable stories that will give your team inspiration and insight to move forward.

CONCLUSION

**THE POWER OF
FRESH PERSPECTIVE**

There's a reason our doctors encourage us to schedule annual check-ups. We need someone outside ourselves with the right knowledge and experience to help us see the health issues we cannot see on our own. It's not uncommon for a person to visit the doctor with a pain he or she has "learned to live with" only to find out it's a more serious issue. That's the power of fresh perspective.

Even the most successful pastors I know look beyond themselves to others who have been where they're going and know what it takes to get there. They have discovered the value of an outside voice as they're assessing the health of their churches.

[The Unstuck Group](#) was created to help more churches get a true sense of their health and develop the strategies required to grow their impact. Our team works hard to provide fresh perspective. We don't pretend to have the "magic cure," going around telling churches what they should be doing. Instead, we help churches assess where they are in relation to where God is calling them.

If you feel your church would benefit from fresh perspective, we'd love to serve you in one of the following ways:

1. Vital Signs Assessment

For several years, the Vital Signs Report has been the first step taken by every church we serve at The Unstuck Group. Pastors found it so helpful that we're making it available *free of charge* to everyone who reads this eBook. This complimentary report provides a quick way to gauge the health of your church based on all the metrics we've covered in this eBook. Within days, you'll be equipped to present your staff team or elders with an objective evaluation of your church's health in 14 key metrics. Bringing everyone to a shared perspective is the first step toward getting unstuck.

[\[Click to See a Sample Vital Signs Report\]](#)

2. Ministry Health Assessment

The Ministry Health Assessment is a two-day, on-site experience that provides a deeper evaluation of your church's health. It combines your metrics with service observations, team exercises, and one-on-one meetings with leaders. This immersive approach enables our team to provide you with an even greater level of clarity. We'll help you see fully where you are today in light of where God's called you to be.

[\[Click to Learn More About the Ministry Health Assessment\]](#)

So now you have everything you need to begin improving the health of your church. These metrics will give you an overview of your current position. The planning process will help your team turn those metrics into health-improving action. If you find yourself in need of any help along the way, you also have access to a few great tools. With all of this, I am excited to see how God leads you to address the health of your church. I have no doubt He can use you to give your church a check up and improve the diagnosis!

NOTES

<http://www.ihrsa.org/home/2012/12/5/new-year-brings-new-members.html>

<http://www.apa.org/news/press/releases/stress/2012/report-summary.aspx>

<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/heart-attack/DS00094/DSECTION=symptoms>

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RYAN STIGILE serves at the Executive Pastor of Rock Bridge Community Church. Previously, he served in leadership at NewPointe Community Church (NE Ohio), Mount Paran Church (Atlanta, GA) and as the Director of Strategic Resources at The Unstuck Group. With a Master of Business Administration and experience in local churches, Ryan helps visionary pastors lead with strategy. His thoughts have been included in various publications such as Outreach magazine and Orange Leaders.