

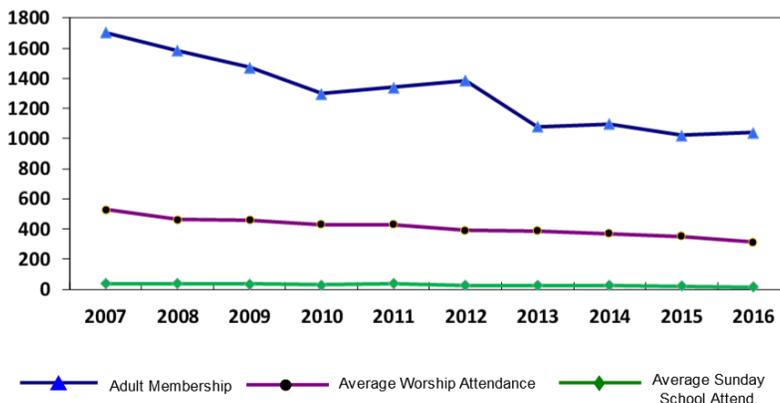
Purpose: To connect with those who have an active relationship with Church Doctor Ministries as peers in ministry, clients, and partners in prayer and support.

The Church Doctor® Report provides a quick read of strategic and influential information. This information is free to share as long as the source is respected: *The Church Doctor® Report*, www.churchdoctor.org. (To sign up: e-mail johnwargowsky@churchdoctor.org)

The Power of Kingdom: Spiritual Culture for Renewal and Revival

How is your church growing in members, attendance, and those in Sunday school/ Bible class/small group Bible studies over the last 10 years?

In our research with hundreds of churches, there is a familiar picture:



Perhaps your church looks better. “A picture is worth a thousand words,” someone once said. If you don’t have a “picture” of your church like this one, why not make one?

Kent R. Hunter is the founder of Church Doctor Ministries. He is frequently requested as a conference speaker on the subject of “Reaching the Unchurched.” His just released book written with Tracee J. Swank, *Who Broke My Church? 7 Proven Strategies for Renewal and Revival*, is published by Hachette, the third largest publisher of trade books in the world. This book is released through the FaithWords division.



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MULTIPLYING MINISTRY

- ▶ The *Church Doctor® Report* is provided at no cost. Forward it to those in your network of influence and add value to their lives!
- ▶ Forward it to staff and leaders in your church, denomination, network, or fellowship.

Research shows 90 percent of the churches in America are plateaued or declining, or growing at a rate slower than their communities. Most churches are also aging: the median age of the members is rising, the number of youth present and active declining.

Any Good News?

There is hope on the horizon! If you study the history of Christianity, impact and growth of the church is cyclical: (1) Christianity flourishes. (2) Christians and churches subtly and unconsciously drift from the culture of God's Kingdom. (3) The church loses effectiveness. (4) Decline becomes evident. (5) God gets our attention. (6) Christians become open to self-examination. (7) The Holy Spirit works in the lives of some believers. This is called *holy discontent*, a work of the Holy Spirit among some people. Those with *holy discontent* have a spiritual restlessness. (8) They become the early adopters for spiritual renewal in their churches. (9) If they are refreshed with Kingdom culture, the church begins to turn around. (10) If they are equipped to influence those in their social networks of fellow believers, the momentum in the church grows. (11) This momentum begins to restore, by God's power, the Kingdom atmosphere in the church. When this reaches a tipping point, it's called an *awakening*, like a wake-up call — a return to the kind of church Jesus had in mind. (12) The church begins to offload some secular drift that has crept into the congregation over many decades. This occurs slowly and subtly. It represents drift from the Scriptural way of *doing and being church*. (13) When this awakening occurs in a critical mass of churches in a geographical area, or network of churches, it becomes a *revival*. In a revival, God works in a way that is unexplainable. Churches grow with new believers at a rate that is, from a human perspective, unexplainable. (14) The growth of people results in the growth of churches in a dimension, called *geometric progression*. This reflects a movement of spontaneous multiplication. This is God-driven and miraculous. It begins when the Kingdom culture of your church is biblically nurtured in a guided process over a period of about three years.

Elements of Kingdom Culture

Take a look at how Jesus, the King of the universe, the Son of God, led the greatest movement in the history of the planet:

- He gathered 12 ordinary, somewhat uneducated guys and spent most of His time with them for a period of about three years.
- He demonstrated and taught Kingdom culture.
- He used stories (parables) that began with “The Kingdom of God is like....”
- Occasionally, He clarified: “The Kingdom of God is NOT like this world.”
- The disciples learned and relationally experienced Kingdom culture from Jesus.
- Kingdom culture is more caught than taught.

- People catch Christianity from being up close and personal with people who have this *holy infection* of faith.
- This is primarily a movement, not a program.
- It occurs *mainly* through relationships, not institutions, classes, sermons, or programs.
- Church is not meant to be a hierarchy of high control. It is a flat organization operating with high accountability.
- The primary role of leaders is not to do ministry, but to equip Christians to do the work of ministry.
- Leaders equip others by relationally discipling them while they do ministry.
- The lifelong lifestyle of every Christian is to continually disciple others.
- The discipleship process includes discovering, developing, and using the gifts of the Holy Spirit. No nominations, elections, votes — like the world.
- The discipling process includes equipping other Christians to grow into a 24/7 lifestyle of witness. Christians are equipped to identify receptivity in others and share their “God stories”: what God has done in their lives.
- The primary mission field for Christians is the unbelievers in their social networks.
- Since every Christian is “sent” by Jesus to impact others for the Kingdom, everyone is a missionary (a sent one). A trip to the grocery store is a short-term mission trip.

Fundraising is displaced by biblical teaching of proportionate giving grounded in the spontaneous lifestyle of radical generosity.

KEY RESOURCES

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- Peters, George W. *A Biblical Theology of Missions*. Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1972.
- Pink, Daniel H. *Drive: The Surprising Truth About What Motivates Us*. New York, NY: Riverhead Books, 2009.
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The Jesus Epidemic

This culture is counterintuitive to most people, even many Christians. As human beings, we have a tendency to **do** things. Yet, we are not human *doings*. We are human *beings*.

When God brings new life and turns around a church, it is never, primarily, what you *do*. It is who you *are* and who you *become*. The Apostle Paul wrote to the Christians in the church at Rome, “Do not be conformed to this world. Let God transform your mind,” the way you think (Romans 12:1-2).

Your church is supposed to be radically different than your job and everything else outside the church. However, like the church in Rome, the church in Corinth, the one in Ephesus, and the believers in Colossae and Philippi — drift happens! And it cripples Kingdom impact.

This is what happened to the churches in the New Testament. It is why the letters of the New Testament were written by the apostles. It is the challenge for churches today. Drift impacts effectiveness. Effectiveness drives church decline. Church decline impacts nations. Healthy churches impact civilization at every level. This is the power of the Kingdom — the power of Kingdom culture.

10 KINGDOM ISSUES FOR CHURCH RENEWAL THAT LEAD TO DIVINELY POWERED REVIVAL

1. Returning to the culture Jesus taught is the key element for effective churches.
2. Programs do not help churches systemically until the cultural environment resembles the Kingdom teaching of Jesus.
3. The breakthrough for a mission-minded church begins with the belief that Christians do not grow the church. Jesus said clearly, “I will build My church.”
4. What Jesus did tell His disciples is “Go, make (other) disciples.”
5. The busyness of many churches (in areas that do not impact the spiritual destiny of people) is one of the greatest deterrents to the health and vitality of churches.
6. The church birthed at Pentecost represented a dramatic change from the Old Testament view: “Y’all come.” The temple was the epicenter of a centripetal movement. Jesus, in the New Testament centrifugal view, said, “You are the temple of the Holy Spirit.... Go!” Most churches need to be turned inside out. The worldview change? The church is NOT a destination but a launchpad.
7. In Kingdom culture, everyone is a minister. Everyone is a missionary. Church leaders are called to “equip God’s people” for the work of ministry.
8. Discipling, in New Testament culture, defines a Kingdom operational distinctive: as people do ministry, they should be discipling others to do that ministry. Ideally, Christians never do ministry alone.
9. When Jesus said, “The harvest is large, but the workers are few,” He projected an optimistic worldview: People are more receptive (“ripe for the harvest”) than most Christians think.
10. Jesus’ Kingdom command is to “pray for workers for the harvest.” In the Kingdom, there are no volunteers, just ambassadors of the King of the universe!