

**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.**

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## Roadblocks and Antidotes: Models for Ministry

As I write this *Church Doctor® Report*, the world is—what? Shaky? Uncertain? Scary? Ukraine and Israel (and some of their neighbors) are at war—or threatening. In the US, protesters are for or against the nation’s involvement in these wars. This moment in time reflects an unsettled world.

God chose to send the promised Messiah when Israel—the land God gave to His people—was occupied by the feared Romans, who taxed the people and sent the money to a pagan emperor. And we say God’s timing is perfect?

Oh yes! Troubled people are hungry for hope. Jesus is the hope of the world. In Jeremiah 29:11, Scripture says, “For I know the plans I have for you,” says the Lord, ‘plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.’” This is a great time to grasp—and share—what really matters. First Peter 3:15 says, “Always be *prepared* to make a defense to anyone who calls you to account for the hope that is within you, yet do it with gentleness and reverence” (emphasis mine).

### Chaos Breeds Receptivity

No Christian *likes* chaos, disruption, and uncertainty. Yet, God does some of His best work in tough times. Challenges soften the hearts of unbelievers. Hopelessness breeds a hunger for help. Fear helps those far from God face the facts concerning their eternal future.

Kent R. Hunter is an enthusiastic missionary focused on helping Christians to look in the mirror, point to themselves with both



thumbs, and say, “I am a missionary.” Kent says, “You don’t have to cross the sea; just see the cross.” Kent’s passion is to help believers in Jesus follow Him in the mission and ignite their churches to effectively reach others for eternity. He is the author of 35 books including: *A Nation Reclaims Respect: One Person at a Time*, *The Amazing Power of God Stories: Share What God Has Done in Your Life*, and *Church Politics: Pain-Free Decision-Making*. Kent is the founder of Church Doctor Ministries, now led by Dr. Tracee J. Swank.

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Many church leaders are handicapped for mission effectiveness. That included me at one time. In my training for ministry, I was required to complete four years of college. Some of the courses I was required to take were helpful for ministry, but most were not. In four years of seminary, I had a similar experience. My exposure to mission training was very limited.

Thinking I must have missed something, I stayed on for graduate school at the seminary, earning a PhD. Yet, I still didn't get training in *missiology*: the study of effective mission.

Having run out of courses at my denomination's seminary, I was sent to an inner-city church in Detroit. It had declined 67 percent in the previous 10 years. It was located in a changing neighborhood. Many of the members were moving to the suburbs. My new neighbors were mainly unchurched African Americans. In the first two years, we tried to reach out to them—and failed to attract any.

I called my district office and asked for help. The mission executive told me, "We don't know what to do in your situation. We've already closed a number of churches like yours in Detroit. We'll likely end up closing your congregation as well." My thought? "That is unacceptable! I refuse to believe we can't reach our new neighbors." Yet, I was depressed and discouraged. In my prayers, I cried out to God.

God responded with a postcard sent to pastors across America. It was a notice about a seminary in California that developed a faculty of American missionaries who had served effectively in various mission fields around the world. They had returned to the United States to equip pastors to become "missionaries" to their own country. The training was two weeks at a time, three to four times a year, for three years. Numerous books of assigned reading were required before each two-week session. Afterward, I was required to write a paper that described how I would implement what I learned in my church.

In this process, my life was dramatically changed. (1) I became a missionary to my own country. (2) Our church grew cross-culturally. (3) The denomination sent outreach leaders to our church to learn how God was working. Today—decades later—that church is a vibrant African American congregation.

The chaos of ministry made me receptive to learn, grow, and change. There are many church leaders today who have never been properly trained to reach the secular side of America. That is why I launched Church Doctor Ministries. The need to develop mission-trained pastors and key lay leaders is greater than ever!

The decline of the Christian movement increases every year. It has accelerated over the last 20 to 25 years. We live on a dominant mission field. The majority of Americans are unchurched. Yet, they are more receptive than most church leaders could imagine. The challenge is not the Good News about Jesus Christ. It is the delivery systems that suffer from a lack of mission training.

As a short summary, I have developed a list of key issues every Christian, every church leader, and every denominational executive should consider.

## 10 Roadblocks and Antidotes: Models for Ministry

1. **Pastor Model:** Is your pastor a doer or a developer? As a young Christian, I was influenced by a great, loving pastor who spent most of his time *doing* ministry for the people in our church. His training was to do ministry well. He was *not* trained to equip church members to do ministry.
2. **Membership Model:** In many churches, the majority of people self-identify as “members,” not “ministers.” Scripture calls Christians the “priesthood of all believers.” Everyone is equipped to use their spiritual gifts for ministry.
3. **Facility Model:** For many congregations, the church building is the destination. In Scripture, the local congregation is more like a launchpad. The church is the training platform to equip God’s people to take the world for Jesus.
4. **Momentum Model:** The mission of your congregation is not “y’all come.” We come to go. We gather to scatter. The Good News of Jesus is the greatest message ever told.
5. **Multiplication Model:** Not addition, but multiplication. The Christian life is an exponential movement. The primary focus is to “be fruitful and multiply.” Every Christian is a multiplier. We multiply people, churches, style of worship, languages, music, and cultural approaches.
6. **Ministry Model:** Not “volunteers,” but a priesthood that includes every Christ-follower. Every believer is a minister. Leaders help believers discover, develop, and use their spiritual gifts. Every Christ-follower is a missionary.
7. **Evangelism Model:** Not a “board” or a “committee.” Not a program. A movement in which every believer shares their own personal “God stories” with those in their social network who are not yet Christ-followers.
8. **Governance Model:** Not Robert’s Rules of Order, but Scripture. Not votes, but unanimous consensus. Not politics, but prayer. Not elections, but selections—based on spiritual development.
9. **Attitudinal Model:** Not retreat, but respect. Not debate, but discipleship. Not contentious arguments, but biblical agreements.
10. **Posture Model:** Not maintenance, but mission. Not “We’ve always done it that way,” but “Jesus did it this way.” Not “the board voted,” but “Scripture says.” Not “the constitution requires,” but “the Bible directs.”

## RECOMMENDED CHURCH DOCTOR MINISTRIES RESOURCES

- ◆ *The Amazing Power of God Stories: Share What God Has Done in Your Life* (book)
- ◆ *An Apple a Day: A Daily Dose for Everyday Faith* (book)
- ◆ Church Government Consultation (service)
- ◆ *Church Politics: Pain-Free Decision-Making* (book)
- ◆ *The J-Dog Journey: Where is Life?* (book)
- ◆ Leading From the Center of God’s Will (workshop)
- ◆ *A Nation Reclaims Respect: One Person at a Time* (book)
- ◆ *Who Broke My Church? 7 Proven Strategies for Renewal and Revival* (book)
- ◆ *Your Spiritual Gifts: Discover God’s Plan for Your Life* (book)
- ◆ Your Spiritual DNA: Discover God’s Plan for Your Life (workshop)