

Dr. Joel C. Hunter

Can people from various backgrounds work together constructively rather than negatively ... learning to serve rather than yell? Dr. Joel C. Hunter, senior pastor of Northland, A Church Distributed, says that it's not only possible, it's necessary. During Dr. Hunter's tenure, which began in 1985, Northland has grown from 200 faithful souls to a congregation of 12,000 that worships at four sites around Metro Orlando and around the world via interactive Webcast. Congregants take leadership of nearly every ministry effort inside the church, out in the community and around the world. Elders, pastors and paid staff don't try to control the initiatives of congregants or the connections they make, and they don't watch over their shoulders unnecessarily. Dr. Hunter encourages Northlanders: "Do what you can, where you are, with what you've got."

Before bringing his family to Northland, Dr. Hunter served as a United Methodist pastor for 15 years in Indiana. He and his wife, Becky, have been partners in the ministry since their marriage in 1972. Becky is the former president of the Global Pastors Wives Network and the author of *Being Good to Your Husband On Purpose* (Creation House). The Hunters are parents to three married sons: Joshua, CEO of Hunter Vision; Isaac, senior pastor of Summit Church's dynamic congregation of more than 4,000 in Orlando; and Joel, an ophthalmic surgeon. The Hunters have six grandchildren: Noah, Jada, Ella, Lincoln, Luke and Ava, who moved to heaven on September 4, 2010, at the age of 5. A longtime bridge-builder who seeks common ground for the common good, Dr. Hunter approaches today's issues in a biblical and balanced manner. He has become an internationally known spokesperson for "compassion issues" outlined in Scripture: sanctity of life, creation care, justice, poverty, and marriage and the family, and has been featured in national publications including *Time*, *Newsweek*, *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*. He has been interviewed on NPR and featured on programs such as "The Early Show," CNN's "American Morning," PBS' "Religion and Ethics," "Campbell Brown" and "Anderson Cooper 360."

Cooperation and partnership are hallmarks of Dr. Hunter's ministry. Together, he believes, we can accomplish more because of our differences than we would on our own—without giving up our unique identities. A respected leader in the Evangelical community, he serves on the board of the World Evangelical Alliance (420 million constituents) and the National Association of Evangelicals (30 million members). Dr. Hunter is also partnering with other groups to accomplish common goals. He is working with respected members of the scientific community to call attention to human-caused threats to the environment. *Grist* magazine named him among the top 15

religious environmental leaders in the world, along with the Pope and the Dalai Lama. Additionally, as a delegate to the U.S.-Islamic World Forum held in Doha, Qatar, he is seeking to build a dialogue between Muslim and Christian communities.

Dr. Hunter served in the inaugural year on the President's Advisory Council on Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships, which advised President Barack Obama on substantive policy issues, including interfaith relations, strengthening the role of fathers in society and reducing the number of abortions.

Dr. Hunter is the author of several books, including *A New Kind of Conservative* (Regal Books), which outlines a non-partisan approach to political involvement.

The church at large is missing a way to benefit from differences without compromising our beliefs, Dr. Hunter concludes. "Fear and suspicion of differences limit the church's spiritual maturity. Both spiritual and intellectual maturity grow from differences. A distributed church uses contrasts to accomplish kingdom purposes."

White House Appointments:

[President's Advisory Council on Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships](#), 2009-2010

Boards of directors:

- [World Evangelical Alliance](#)
- [National Association of Evangelicals](#)
- [The Global Pastors' Network](#)
- [Children's Environmental Health Network](#)
- Christian Peacemaking Resources, Inc.

International Forums

- Participant in the [Alliance of Civilizations](#) (United Nations) (2008 - 2010)
- Participant in the [U.S./Islamic World Forum](#) (2007, 2008, 2010)
- Participant in the [Parliament of of the World's Religions](#) (2009)

Organizing Director:

- [First Green Bank](#)

Advisory boards:

- [Belhaven College](#)
- [The Biologos Foundation](#)
- [Christian HELP](#)
- [Florida's Faith-based and Community-based Advisory Council](#)
- [Man in the Mirror Ministries](#)
- [U.S. Center for Citizens Diplomacy](#)
- * [Vernon C Grounds Institute of Public Ethics](#) (Denver Seminary)
- [Vision Orlando](#)

Education:

- Bachelor of Science in History, Ohio University, Athens, Ohio, 1970
- Master of Divinity, Christian Theological Seminary, Indianapolis, Indiana, 1973
- Doctor of Ministry, Christian Theological Seminary, Indianapolis, Indiana, 1974
- Doctor of Humanities (Honorary), Belhaven College, Orlando, Florida 2006

Author:

- [Inner State 80: Your Journey on the High Way](#) (Higher Life)
- [A New Kind of Conservative](#) (Regal)
- [Church Distributed](#) (Distributed Church Press)