

America's best days could be ahead if churches step up

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by [Randy Bright](#)



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Last Sunday, my pastor shared a sobering prediction regarding America's churches. Within a decade, six out of ten our churches will close their doors. Not exactly a surprise, but sobering just the same.

Now I don't know where this prediction came from, but I have read about or heard these kinds of things before. It's not that I don't believe them. If things don't change, they may very well come true.

I have also heard the rhetoric that the church is irrelevant to society. Sometimes it is not words so much as it is expressed in terms of absence. There are just a lot of people, Christians included, that simply don't think about the church anymore. The government has all but usurped the role of the church in society, or at least one could draw that conclusion.

I think that it is more accurate to say that some churches have become irrelevant, and others have not. The question is, will those who belong to the six migrate to the other four, and if so, why? Or will they simply stop attending church altogether? Why will the other four survive?

Of course, it is unacceptable for six out of ten churches to close their doors. We need more churches, not fewer, and we need better churches.

There are many groups working to make the church more relevant. Some are on the offensive, such as Wallbuilders, who proactively tries to get Christians to be more educated and active in furthering Christianity and the church, while others are on the defensive, defending churches and individuals from lawsuits and actions that are decidedly anti-Christian. Both are vitally needed to maintain a place for Christianity in American society. There is no shortage of those whose goal is to see the churches in America disappear.

Yet there are few who are making a determined effort to define what the church's role should be in society and community, especially in regard to the built environments church congregations inhabit, or to the ministries that they provide that make society and community a better place.

As such, little is being done on a proactive basis to preserve the church's place in society, or to preserve the property rights that churches possess. Possession is relative, however. In urban settings, churches are losing the battle in the land-planning arena to the greatest degree, and those in suburban, exurban and rural areas suffer fewer losses, in that order. In fact, the four out of ten churches that survive will likely be in these last three categories. What kind of place will urban settings be without the presence of churches?

It is likely that those areas that become void of churches will suffer in quality of life issues. I have heard, and I believe it is true, that people who are Christians tend to be happier and healthier than those that are not, but of the goals that land planners hold, creating happy, healthy communities are at the top of their list – without churches.

Churches have been a vital part of American community since the founding of our country, and it has been the Christian/Judeo religions that have been the foundation of the exceptionalism of America, creating the most free and beneficent power the world has ever seen, yet so many of us are rejecting that system in favor of one that has repeatedly failed throughout human history.

Have our citizens forgotten the role of the church in all this? Or did they never know because of the dumbing down of American history in our schools? Or should we be honest enough to say that the timidity of our churches has played an equal or greater role in the loss of corporate memory of the principles and morals that made this country great?

Over the past century, our country has slowly lost its moral compass, and with it the power to collectively reason and resist tyranny disguised as enlightened thought. We are losing our ability to take risk, a key component of entrepreneurship, because of the fear of unknown and expedient rules, and along with that the ability to increase mankind's quality of life, all because those who say what should be so are so dishonest.

This is why the church must reclaim the moral high ground, and why the presence of effective churches is so important. They must bring up a new generation of thinkers who understand why the church is so important to America and the world, even for those who choose not to believe.

If churches take their role in society seriously, if they accept the challenge of protecting their right to exist, then perhaps America's best days are still ahead.

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