

# With God's favor, the United States can be great again

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2017 looks to be shaping up to be a very interesting year. President-elect Trump is promising big changes, and if the lineup of people he is proposing for key posts is approved, we have a chance to see government abandon the insanity that Obama imposed upon us and our freedoms. A chance, that is, because Obama has made numerous appointments in the federal government that will need to be found and fired.

We should see the economy improve, and one thing that economists never watch but should are our nation's architects. The reason is simple. Architects are one of the first people who see an economic shift based on the number of inquiries about potential projects and the number of contracts signed giving them the go-ahead to begin drawing. When business for architects expands, the economy usually expands and the converse is true. What I have seen in my business in the past month is very encouraging.

I also look to see big changes coming among our nation's churches. We have been in the middle of a major paradigm shift for the better part of a decade now. A lot of churches are closing their doors, and there are some new ones, but there are not as many opening as there are closing. The church at large is reinventing itself, and it is arguable what the end product will look like after another decade of change. My hope for the reinvented church is that it will shift toward the model that was set in the early church.

As for the churches that are closing their doors, I think those denominations that are embracing progressive and liberal ideals will continue to close their doors in increasing numbers. Ironically, in their quest to become more like the unchurched, they will lose those among their membership who don't accept their ideals, and those that remain likely won't remain for long. As Jesus said, "A house divided against itself is doomed."

But it is not just those churches that will diminish in numbers. We like to think of our church buildings as more than just a building, and spiritually speaking they are. But the truth is, our nation is filled with aging buildings and aging people, and many of them are not replacing or maintaining their buildings, and young and old people alike are being culturally drawn to newer facilities, more modern services, and the community feel of newer congregations. We can argue whether this is natural or unnatural, right or wrong, good or bad, but it doesn't negate the fact that it is happening. So one of the things that I will be looking into this coming year is how this will affect us.

The good news is that some churches are beginning to address some of the concerns that I have held regarding this new emerging church model. Among my most urgent concerns were the lack of teaching and the literal abandonment of adult education. I am encouraged by the fact that I am

hearing more from the pulpit about this very thing, and I think that church leaders are beginning to recognize that it is not enough to simply draw large numbers of people, to have great music and a great worship service or to make church less boring. All of these things are important, but a congregation is not sustainable when they neglect to learn about the very One that they believe in.

I am still very concerned at the direction that city planning is taking, and intend to continue exposing things that I believe take us further from our Constitution and the rule of law. Watching the news on particular websites, there are few days that I don't see another court case that involves property rights, or to be more accurate, the violation of someone's property rights. It is my hope that we will see less of this if and when new Supreme Court justices are appointed that are more conservative and who reject the idea that the Constitution is a living document, real improvements can be made.

Eventually, if enough of us are vocal and demand to be heard, our nation's citizens will once again understand how critical property rights are to their freedom and well-being. For most young people, this is a completely foreign concept.

We have heard a great deal over the past year about making America great again, and I agree we should do so, but for the right reasons and with the right attitude. America should be great because it lives under God's favor, not to be great because we made ourselves great without Him. That will take some humility that won't come easily.

These, among other topics, are the things that I will be writing about over the coming year. My best to all of you and my hope for you is that this will be a better year than the past.



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