

Trends to Watch in 2007

The war with religious extremists is the No. 1 trend to watch in 2007.

Now that we're into 2007, it's time to take inventory. Through the years we've written about trends in the body of Christ and in the culture around us. Many of the trends remain the same. Others are just emerging.

Here are some of the current trends I see:

1. According to the revised edition of John Hagee's Jerusalem Countdown, we are on a collision course with World War III. Though we enjoy peace on American soil, our country is at war with religious extremists who want to end life as we know it. The war in Iraq has dragged on now longer than World War II.

Whether this is a portent of the end times, no one knows, but it is the No. 1 trend to watch in 2007. What happens in the war on terrorism will affect life on this planet more than any other issue this year. As believers, we must pray that another 9/11 is averted and that the forces of righteousness will prevail.

2. With the rise of anti-Semitism and the threats by the president of Iran and others to annihilate Israel, Christians are standing with Israel as never before. It's been barely a year since John Hagee founded Christians United for Israel. The enormous support by evangelical Christians—especially in the charismatic community—is one of the most positive trends I see continuing in 2007.
3. Christians are also becoming more involved in the political process. The recent defeat of candidates with strong

traditional values such as Katherine Harris in Florida and Keith Butler in Michigan was a wake-up call for many Christians, who previously had been content for others to do the work of organizing, fund-raising and running for political office.

4. The culture continues to spiral downward, becoming more and more accepting of what God calls sin. Having a few godly leaders in power has merely slowed the pace of degradation in the media, the government and ordinary society.

Just look at the divorce rate, the fact that “living together” and having children out of wedlock now barely raise eyebrows, and the redefinition of marriage. Who would have thought that men would legally marry men or women marry women?

It has been reported that the divorce rate in the church is about the same as it is among the general public. Indeed, divorce among ministers is tolerated as never before. If those of us who place a high premium on a stable, godly marriage can't keep our marriages together, how can we expect the secular culture to do so?

5. Another trend is an increase of ungodliness in the church and a resulting call for righteousness among leaders. More and more, we will see leaders on parallel tracks: those who are calling for godliness and those who are in the ministry for other reasons, such as money and power and the adulation of men.

There must be a return to holiness and accountability. We are beginning to see this in the apostolic movement, in which groups are submitted to one another both horizontally and vertically. Leaders in various streams are also beginning to voluntarily submit their lives to peers who can challenge and

encourage them, strengthen them in times of trouble, and bring correction.

6. Look for more leaders to come from the so-called Third World—missionaries from not only Africa and the former Soviet Union but also Asia. These are ones who say they feel called by God to reach an increasingly pagan West. They will bring an anointing and a zeal badly needed in America as well as in Europe.
7. Other trends include technological advances that allow us to take the gospel to places we could not penetrate before. Through satellite technology and the Internet, we can now reach the Muslim world. I see more television ministries rising and soon, prominent Internet ministries.

Space doesn't allow us to mention all the trends here, but we cite more on our Web site and provide space for you to tell us what trends you see. Add your comments to the blog on our Web site, and we'll choose the best few to put in our letters to the editor.

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