

TRUMP

...NYC Encounter...

by Kat Rowoldt

Four hundred pastors and spiritual leaders were invited to a private meeting with Republican presumptive nominee Donald Trump in New York City this past week. I had the opportunity to sit down with one of them, my friend, Pastor Steve Branson with Village Parkway Baptist Church in San Antonio, just hours after he returned. He was invited by Liberty Council to attend and was part of their delegation.



Dr. Steven Branson

The four hundred invitees had swelled to a thousand before the event opened its doors. The place was packed with countless numbers being turned away. For the most part, they had come with hope, hoping to hear something that would encourage them that Donald Trump was their candidate. Many in this crowd were former Ben Carson and Ted Cruz supporters - Branson was one in that category.

It was obvious to everyone in the crowd that both Carson and former Gov Mike Huckabee are extreme supporters of Trump. Huckabee shared his perspective from having watched him during the debates and how the man he saw backstage was incredibly close with his family, his children, more so than most. While we are aware of Trump working with his children and that all seems to go well, he does not strike the American public as a family man. His TV persona gives us a much different impression.

While there were some positive statements that most were delighted to hear, the overall reaction would probably fall into the disappointed category. It doesn't sound like Trump won over the crowd, nor did they really leave encouraged. But it was a start, an open door, to possible future discussions.

Trump stated that he realized that the church is under attack and he would put a stop to that. He would also like to remove the threat that has hung over the church about losing their 501(c)3 if they speak openly about candidates from the pulpit. Those statements were well received.

Questions remain on his transgender standing, including in the military. Can he overcome the perceived hatred toward Mexicans based on comments he has made and the wall? It sounds like as many questions may remain as they had going into the meeting.

Branson's opinion is that 80% of the attendees would vote for Trump over Hillary. They understand that Hillary is not an option. Hillary means socialism, and we only have to look to Cuba and Venezuela to see that socialism does not work. In addition, Trump did not strike him as a man who is a Christian by the definition of salvation, but one who does have respect for the church.

While many other leaders addressed this group, one brought some sobering facts to the table for these church leaders. George Barna reported:

- church attendance has dropped from 45% to 33% in the last 10 years
- atheist have risen from 5% to 19% in the same time frame
- the unchurched has risen from 34% to 50%
- pastors are now rated just above congressman. They are less trusted, not willing to preach about political issues, and do not prepare people to vote.

We are in such a critical time in our country. An awakening must happen or what remains of the America that we once knew will quickly be destroyed in the next few years. We must not give up hope, but we must begin to take action. It's going to be a fight to retake America. It's a fight we must fight. We have no other options. There is nowhere else to go.

Please take the time and listen to Pastor Steve Branson's complete interview on ChristianReporterNews.com.

Until next time...

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