

Spirit-Filled Megachurch Pastor: We Need a Plan for the Trouble Ahead

I continue to be shocked by the rate of change happening around us. Things I thought would take place over decades seem to happen within the context of a week now.

Economically, our nation is now more than \$30 trillion in debt, yet our leaders on both sides of the aisle continue to promise us free things, which will only intensify the economic turmoil we're beginning to experience.

The discussion around gender confusion continues to become more pervasive, and it's not based in logic or good science—but on ideology and a worldview—and it's rapidly gaining momentum.

Recently, the National Education Association, the largest teachers' union in the United States, proposed a resolution that would change the word "mother" in contracts to "birthing parent." I grew up on a farm in Tennessee—it's not that complicated.

The reality is that this sort of change doesn't happen in a week, or two, or a month—it takes time to permeate our culture. The only conclusion I have is that the church has been asleep. Sleep is a normal part of a healthy lifestyle, but when you're asleep, you're unaware, unconcerned and uninvolved. You don't know what's going on.

There has been a lot going on while we've been asleep, and I take it as an expression of God's mercy that we're a bit more awake today than we were a few years ago.

We shouldn't imagine we're experiencing some new depravity at

the beginning of the 21st century, and the world has plunged into realms it's never seen before. I learned a principle of biblical interpretation long ago when I was in formal study.

They told us that if there was a biblical prohibition that gave instructions about what to do when your ox gores your neighbor, you can be certain there was a persistent problem with oxen who gored neighbors, or it would have never made it into the Bible. Deuteronomy 22:5 says, "A woman must not wear men's clothing, nor a man wear women's clothing, for the LORD your God detests anyone who does this." If Moses gave instructions on who should wear what kind of clothing, I promise you, it was an issue during that time.

What we're experiencing is not new, but it is surprising, unsettling and disorienting, and it will likely get worse—isn't that a great little nugget to consider? I suspect many of you know that the Bible ends with the story of a great tribulation at the "end of the age" that will ultimately be resolved by the return of our King.

But between where we are and that ultimate tribulation, there will be expressions of trouble and disruption. The Bible describes it as "the beginning of birth pains," and as the son of a veterinarian, I grew up watching the birth of many different animals. I can tell you, once that process is initiated, those birth pains continue to increase in both frequency and intensity until the conclusion.

So, the question becomes, what do we do with that? Do we wring our hands? Are we filled with panic? Are we anxious or angry? Do we ignore it? Do we just whistle more loudly? What do we do?

I don't believe we should hide from the storms but confront them, because it's going to take a determined, persistent response from us in the public square. Do we have the courage to adopt a biblical worldview and talk about it, even if it's

not popular or well received? Do we want to honor the Lord more than we want the affirmation of the people around us? I believe we do.

I wrote a new book, "Big Trouble Ahead," to provide a response of hope and purpose in the midst of this confusion. If you are wearied by the cultural conflict, or if you suffer from "tragedy fatigue" and have chosen to ignore the media, I have good news! Jesus is triumphant, and He established His church to provide light in the darkness.

God has provided a solution, and the Bible gives us the pathway we need.

I believe the hearts and responses of God's people will determine the opportunities available to our children and grandchildren. We can navigate this difficult season.

In John 8:31, Jesus told us, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

You know the Truth; you are not alone; and you are not without resources—the Creator of Heaven and Earth has selected us for this season to make an eternal difference. Our assignment is to help those around us know, recognize and embrace God's Truth so they can flourish through this time of fear and deception—and so can we!

Allen Jackson is senior pastor of World Outreach Church, a congregation of 15,000, and founder of Allen Jackson Ministries, which broadcasts his biblical messages across the world on TV, radio, and the internet. He is the author of *Intentional Faith*, and his new book, "Big Trouble Ahead," just released from Thomas Nelson Aug. 16.