

We Didn't Sign Up For This

Pastor's Perspective Column

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By Pastor Tim White

Has life ever taken you in different directions than you ever expected? Maybe you found yourself in the middle of an unexpected conflict or situation that demands your attention. Without asking your permission, circumstances in life force a rearrangement of your schedule, priorities, and how you must focus your energies. You could try to resist by keeping your head down and working as if nothing has changed. Still, you become aware that to do so would be even more harmful.

These are the times in our lives we want to cry out, "I didn't sign up for this!" This sentiment is how I feel at times as a pastor living in a time of unprecedented levels of corruption, insane sexual and gender ideologies, and witnessing the many ways the powerful and influential are determined to destroy our children's souls, bodies, and futures – behind parent's backs if at all possible.

When I entered Bible College in the fall of 1976, I was eager to fulfill my calling to preach and teach the Word of God in a local church. I envisioned being a pastor like thousands of pastors before and after me. I considered the "pinnacle" (God's ultimate purpose) of that pursuit to be when I entered into full-time local church ministry. Over 40 years later, I see my role as a local pastor as not the pinnacle of my calling but more like being "positioned" by God for work I had not expected.

In the fall of 1976 (or as recent as January 1, 2000), most of us would never have imagined we would be battling over the racial, sexual, gender, marriage, and family structure issues as we are today. Who could have predicted that Drag Queens would be allowed to groom the youngest of our children in public libraries by reading thinly veiled gay and trans-themed stories to them? Who would have guessed that under the guise of sexual health, our public schools would have books describing sexual encounters between young people that are nothing less than pure pornography?

Let us consider the story of Esther, the young orphaned Jewish girl raised by her elder relative, Mordecai. One would think that her story's pinnacle (God's intended purpose) was becoming the Queen of Persia and "living happily ever after." However, we know that as she took her royal place beside the King, she had not yet reached her story's pinnacle. Instead of the "pinnacle," it was the divine "positioning" her for an even greater purpose: The saving of the Jews from the genocidal decree of death by the wicked, power-hungry government official named Haman.

In Esther's story, once Haman's edict to exterminate the Jews went out across the kingdom, she faced the unexpected – she had to choose whether to speak up for the Jews at the risk of her own life or keep quiet. At that moment, she could have said, "I didn't sign up for

this.” But when Mordecai sent her this message in chapter 4, verse 14, her God-ordained purpose (pinnacle) became clear:

“For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father’s family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to royal position for such a time as this?”

“For such a time as this.” Esther’s position was part of God’s larger plan – a plan that was not on her “radar” when she moved into the palace. The question was simply, “Will you stay silent or take the position God has given you to speak up for the truth”? She did the latter and saved her fellow Jews.

We believe life comes from God, so it is reasonable to say that He purposely places each life in certain times of history. Therefore, as God positioned Esther in her day “for such a time as this,” why should we not think that God, in His foreknowledge, has similarly positioned us here in America “for such a time as this?” To my fellow pastors of large and small churches, we all need to hear the Holy Spirit-inspired words of Apostle Paul, “Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them” (Eph. 5:11). Staying silent is not an option.

Too often, when pastors try to address the evils ripping our nation apart and destroying lives, many churchgoers do not want to hear it because they believe this is just being “political.” What these good people miss is that it is precisely by that political process by which godless people are changing our laws and the definition of what is moral and acceptable in our society. Therefore, when confronting these so-called political issues, we are, in fact, dealing with morality and truth, which the Church must safeguard and promote.

In his book, “Letter to the American Church,” Eric Metaxas wrote that it is a “pernicious lie” to say that fighting evil “politicizes Christianity.” Several years earlier, Metaxas wrote an extensive biography of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the German pastor in Hitler’s Germany who tried to wake up the Church to expose and oppose the evils being perpetrated by the Nazi regime.

Bonhoeffer was unsuccessful. Primarily due to roughly 12,000 out of the 18,000 pastors choosing to keep their heads down and not get involved, rationalizing their cowardice by saying the Church needed to stay out of politics. Metaxas contends that the parallels between the Church in Germany in the 1930s and today’s American Church are unmistakable.

He surmises how different Germany would have been in the 1930s and 40s (and be today) if only a more significant portion of the pastors had stood up against such a corrupt, violent, and murderous regime. Then he asks the logical question, “Will the American Church learn the lesson of history and not repeat the failure of the German Church?” Will we, indeed?

I have to repeat it, “We didn’t sign up for this” kind of battle in our nation, once founded upon Christian/Judeo principles and a biblical worldview. But in this battle, we are. What gives us hope is that we are not alone in this battle, “If God is for us, who can be against us?” (Rom. 8:31), and God’s eternal covenant to forgive and restore us as a nation if we come to Him on His terms (2 Chron. 7:13-15).

We are here for a reason. May our children and grandchildren be glad we were alive because we refused to be silent when it mattered the most.