

MICHAEL ADAM BECK
ALAN HIR**S**CH
LEONARD SWE**E**T
BRIAN SAND**D**ERS
GREGORY COLES
JAY Y. KIM
RICH ROBIN**S**ON
ONEYA OK**U**WOB**I**
DEBRA HIR**S**CH
TYLER KLEEB**E**RGER
MICHAEL FRO**S**T
MARK DEYMAZ
LISA RODRIGUEZ-
WATSON

10 ESSENTIAL
CONVERSATIONS
EXPLORING OUR
FUTURE AS THE
CHURCH

A COLLECTION OF
VOICES CURATED BY
L. ROWLAND SMITH

RED SKIES

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First published in 2022 by 100 Movements Publishing
www.100Mpublishing.com

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ISBN 978-1-955142-15-1 (print)

ISBN 978-1-955142-16-8 (ebook)

100 Movements Publishing

An imprint of Movement Leaders Collective

Cody, Wyoming

www.movementleaderscollective.com

www.catalysechange.org

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And in the morning, "It will be stormy today, for the sky is red and
threatening." You know how to interpret the appearance of the sky,
but you cannot interpret the signs of the times.

MATTHEW 16:2-3 NRSV

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FOREWORD

ALAN HIRSCH

Prophecy, of course, does not mean foretelling the future but knowing what God's righteousness demands in any particular instant; knowing how, from the standpoint of God, to assign to things and to human beings, to events and their configurations, their place in the overall pattern. The tangled threads of time are unravelled, and "the system" is laid bare. But one cannot wish to play the role of the conscience of the age without being oneself involved centrally in it.

HANS URS VON BALTHASAR

As I write this foreword to a book exploring the possible future for the church in relation to various issues, I am convinced that within my lifetime there has not been a more appropriate moment to take these matters seriously. Way back in the 1980s, Alvin Toffler warned us of what he called *future shock*, but it is increasingly apparent that this is *exactly* what we are experiencing today.¹ The future is coming at us so fast that we can't seem to readily integrate it, let alone respond to its challenges.

It appears that in our times we are experiencing eschatology at a conscious level. Certainly, I have little doubt that we are indeed in an era that can be labeled *apocalyptic*. Apocalyptic in the biblical sense simply means "revelation"; "an unveiling" of things previously veiled; "an exposing" of the way of life that we previously understood as normal but is now shown to be fragile, defunct, even blatantly unfaithful in light of that revelation. One doesn't have to look far to sense apocalypse.

Take for instance the painful *apocalypse of the American soul* in the last five years or so. Deep fissures, unresolved shadows, political ideological resentments are now common and have led America to something of an

ideological cold war—one that could no doubt turn pretty hot at any given moment. Who, reading this book, has not sensed this? And then there has been what I call *the apocalypse of the evangelical soul*, as vast sectors of the church are at times shown to be at odds with the person of Jesus, as well as his explicit agenda in this world. One only need do a casual reading of the Sermon on the Mount to get a sense of how much the contemporary church is at odds with the way of its Founder. Who now does not feel this to be true?

Jesus himself warned us that in apocalyptic times the powers of the heavens would be shaken and all kinds of distress and anxiety would ensue on earth.² In some sense this is always true, but we are only seldom aware of it. In this “post-truth” world in which we live, one can almost feel that the very foundations of liberal democracy are being shaken! There is a rattling of the powers that underlie our sense of normalcy.

Am I alone in experiencing this? I don’t think so. Our social media feeds are filled with conspiracy theories fueled by vitriol and fear. Each one of these conspiracy theories are in turn funded by radicalized ideologies that demand something akin to religious allegiance and action. Some involve an explicit call to take up arms and protest against apparent enemies that no one has ever really met. It’s hard *not* to take Jesus’ warnings of apocalyptic madness on the earth with the utmost seriousness.

I want to introduce a word to somehow describe the intuitions of the future that we tend to experience in apocalyptic times. *Eschatothesia* is made up of the words *eschaton* (end time, the end of an eon) and *esthesia* (the capacity for sensation and feeling; the perception that is derived from the senses). Combined, these words describe the sensing of a future evolution within a dynamic system; where the shockwaves of the eschaton can be perceived as sensations, feelings, and visions. It involves a feeling of some hugely significant event that is fast approaching. It does not necessarily involve the absolute “end of time,” but rather the end of an eon, after which nothing will be quite the same. Can you feel it? As such, eschatothesia is a decidedly prophetic sensibility, and—akin to what Michael Beck describes in the pages of this book as *contextual intelligence*—one that looks to find the threads of meaning and of God’s will in the apparent chaos of current experience.

This book is a prophetic take on the future and its impact on the present.

But, as I suggested in *The Permanent Revolution*, it is prophetic intelligence that is given for apostolic architecture.³ It is given to guide the apostolic mission of the church and enhance the impact of the gospel. The writers within these pages use prophetic insight constructively with a view to equipping the church. You will find some suggested ways forward, toward a church properly aligned to its mission to transform society with the gospel of Jesus.

The issues we face are complex and are becoming more so as I write. Consider the environmental crisis, which is increasingly unavoidable with every new generation. What of the ominous impact of artificial intelligence (AI)? We are moving toward what scientists call “the technological singularity”⁴—the hypothetical point in time at which technological growth becomes uncontrollable and irreversible, resulting in unforeseeable changes to human civilization. Add to this the various other rapidly changing features of society and culture explored in this book—the post-truth search for authority, the unresolved issues of race, a confusion of genders and alternative sexualities, the divisive impact of social media, and the hidden complexities of global economics. And then consider that the increasing convergence of these in a relatively short time frame serves to radically increase the complexity, as well as the attendant anxiety that seems to have become a permanent feature of the collective psyche.

But apocalypse is not all chaos and evil. The adversary does not have the last word. In and beyond all the apparent chaos of human history as it unfolds, the sovereign God is *always* at work, his purposes weaving their way throughout. The *macrocosm* (human society) is transformed through changes in the *microcosm* (the prefigurative society that is the church). The seeds of God’s future are being sown in and through the church—which, as Newbigin and others have rightly pointed out, is the sign, the foretaste, and instrument of his kingdom. Judgment begins with the people of God,⁵ and so the church, as well as broader society, is being aligned with God’s purposes. This too is not something that should be novel or strange to us. The *Logos*, the eternal Word of God, is always speaking; it is just that in times of apocalypse, God uses events to jolt us out of our slumber and gives us a glimpse of what we have not been seeing, because we were all too invested in the not-seeing. Now we get to see behind the curtain ... a cosmic *peekaboo!*

What was so very familiar and normal is now exposed as illusory and, in fact, problematic in terms of our relationship with God. This, like all of God's revelation, is a grace; an invitation to a different way of being human in the world. And because the church is the chosen instrument of God's kingdom, God has deeply vested interests in getting the message out through us. He continues to address us, shape us, expose the flaws and unfaithfulness in the system, call us to greater integrity in relation to his purposes, and to deeper relationship—to the recovery of our first and defining love.⁶

And so, we can see that apocalyptic events involving God's people are never neutral. In fact, they are experienced as a *kairos moment*; an irruption of vertical time into horizontal time, an event that precipitates a *krisis* (literally a “turning point” or “decision”) that calls us to existential responsibility before God. Another Greek word, *metanoiete* (“repent!” or “change your ways/thinking!”) was the word given to the seven churches of the Apocalypse,⁷ and it is the word likewise given to all who experience genuinely revelatory events. Because we are dealing with the ever-greater God, we are always called to *reframation*; to paradigm shift, to radical reorientation, and to un/learning.

Because of all this, the book in your hand is not *just* about some sort of technical prediction of the future, something you might find at a secular futurist forum. While no doubt the contributors here reference broader scientific theories in their writings, as a distinctly Christian take on things, *Red Skies*—as the name itself implies—is more about reading the signs of the times. These remarkable leaders are not just predicting the future but also seeking to find the meaning of the portentous events that are occurring in our day. They are asking: *What is God saying to his people? How can we even recognize his authentic voice amid the babel of voices in social and mainstream media? How do we discern good in the tumult of evil? How can we respond in faith and obedience?* This book is comprised of many amazing voices in the global church. And although acknowledging the increasing problems we face, they also point us to the apostolic possibilities that can be taken advantage of if we are open to the challenges inherent in the apocalypse we are experiencing. It's a wet-cement moment if ever there was one!

The truth is that the church has found itself somewhat unprepared (yet again!) even though we are called to an unrelenting and scrupulous

watchfulness,⁸ to the discernment of spirits, and to an understanding of the signs of the times.⁹ We need to be able to discern God's voice and direction in the cacophony of voices calling for our attention and allegiance. We need to be a people willing to learn by unlearning, by having our minds and hearts blown regularly through ongoing experiences of conversion and *metanoia*. We need to keep the faith. This book is dedicated to just that purpose.

September 2021

INTRODUCTION

The Signs of Our Times

L. ROWLAND SMITH

Red sky at night, sailor's delight. Red sky in morning, sailor's warning.

OLD PROVERB

I've always appreciated old proverbs and sayings, sometimes pondering their origins and what made them markers of a particular era. Many have stood the test of time, passed down from generation to generation, from one culture to another. Some have risen to become clichés or gained the notable title of “old wives’ tales.” Others hold merit, storing within them an immutable nugget of truth.

We don't know the exact origin of the sailor's proverb above, forecasting the weather by means of “red skies,” but in attempting to track down its roots, I discovered some fascinating truths.

In the poem *Venus and Adonis*, Shakespeare poetically implies that a red sky will signal a storm that could wreck a seaman or damage fields and flocks. With a nod to this “red skies” proverb, he writes, “Like a red morn, that ever yet betoken'd, Wreck to the seaman, tempest to the field, Sorrow to the shepherds, woe unto the birds, Gusts and foul flaws to herdmen and to herds.”¹ It seems, by Shakespeare's understanding, that watching the skies could help forecast coming storms, gusts, and “foul flaws.”

If we go even further back, we find this proverb nestled amid first-century writings hailing from Nazareth. A group of Pharisees and Sadducees, two primary religious sects within the Jewish faith, confront a Rabbi prophet named Jesus, asking him to show them a sign from heaven. Jesus responds with an answer based on this “red skies” adage:

He answered them, “When it is evening, you say, ‘It will be fair weather, for the sky is red.’ And in the morning, ‘It will be stormy today, for the sky is red and threatening.’ You know how to interpret the appearance of the sky, *but you cannot interpret the signs of the times.*”

Matthew 16:2–3 NRSV (italics mine)

Though I’d read over this passage, perhaps hundreds of times over the years, I had always assumed this old sailor’s proverb was born from the era of nautical exploration and the days of pirates. For some reason I’d failed to connect this proverb to biblical times. My first, and obvious, question was whether or not this old weather-forecasting method has any merit. You might be surprised to learn, as I was, that this supposed old wives’ tale is, in fact, consistent with science. It goes something like this: if a sky is red, then it is sending light through the thickest part of the atmosphere. Since red light is being filtered through, it shows that the sky is filled with dust particles and therefore signals high pressure. Because weather typically moves from west to east, a red *sunset* would signal high pressure is coming your way, thus fair weather the following day. A red *sunrise* in the east would signal that fair weather (high pressure) has passed by, and so there’s a chance of a low-pressure storm following. This is all based on the natural progression of weather patterns moving west to east and demonstrates that this everyday saying is rooted in early scientific observations. It also explains its existence from before Jesus’ time, when weather forecasting was very basic but essential to a number of occupations.

Regardless of whether or not it’s consistently reliable, we do know that this weather lore was not only entrenched in nautical culture but was also used in shepherding, farming, and other trades in which weather was an important factor. And because science gives it credibility, the adage exists with some merit even today, and, I would argue, is metaphorically important for us in our current cultural milieu.

DISRUPTING TRADITION

Scripture shows several occasions when the religious leaders of Jesus’ day attempted to theologically discredit him, or at the very least, trip him up

in some way. Many of these confrontations resemble this pattern we see in Jesus' response in Matthew 16:2–3, with Jesus using a story, an illustration, or sometimes a touch of sarcasm or anger.

I often look at these confrontations with Jesus and ask myself why the Pharisees and Sadducees were so against him. The irony is that these religious factions supported the Old Testament prophecies concerning the coming of a Messiah and a new King who would bring a new kingdom. Yet, right from the outset, every time Jesus taught with authority, he was met with resistance from the religious leaders of the day. It's perhaps surprising they don't seem to show any excitement that the Messiah had finally come.

Or is it?

Could it be that their response was primarily rooted in fear and a desire to protect their religious systems and institutions? Because, not only did these religious leaders have position and authority, they were also the ones who spiritually guided and directed the people. They were the gatekeepers of a religious framework and tradition that brought consistency and certainty during a time of chaos under Roman occupation.

Enter Jesus, and their world is turned upside down. He not only disrupts their theology but their hierarchy. Their interpretations of the Scriptures are called into question, and Jesus threatens the patterns and structures that are in place for religious rhythm and spiritual life.

No wonder the religious leaders were infuriated!

But I wonder if we too found ourselves in first-century Galilee, would we respond any differently? Do we not also build traditions and structures in an attempt to maintain a certain level of control over our life, especially our spiritual life? We strive for clean answers from well-studied sermons. Our motives are often good—our heartfelt desire is to bring a sense of unquestioning dependence on God. However, rather than asking deeper questions, or even admitting we don't always have answers, we tend to consider ourselves "successful" when we present neat solutions to people's problems. We have built these structures and expectations into the fabric of our ecclesiology; they are in the wallpaper and paint of our churches, where people come to sit and discover the answers to life. Any disruption to that framework, and we might just find ourselves uncomfortable, or even threatened.

Jesus is, in fact, *the* great Disrupter. Yes, he is our Lord, our Savior, and our Prince of Peace. But more often than not, our first encounter with him is as Disrupter. He is the One who often challenges our expectations, conventions, and status quo. For example, we usually only truly discover Jesus the Prince of Peace when our earthly idols are disrupted, when our reliance on them is painfully revealed. Peace follows chaos.

Remember that Jesus launched his ministry with a disruptive phrase, “*Repent*, for the kingdom of heaven has come near” (Matthew 4:17, italics mine). In the foreword to this book, Alan Hirsch referred to *metanoia*, the Greek word translated as *repent*. It literally means “to change one’s mind.” Although the Latin-influenced church of the early centuries attempted to translate it to reflect more of a penance of physical action, the original meaning points to a deep-rooted change of mind and heart, which then would usher in a new way of living.² I’ve always found it interesting that Jesus preached “a change of mind” to people, leaders, and a culture that was embedded in religious understanding. Perhaps their “systems” of religion did not reflect the true heart and mind of those participating. Jesus wanted more than structural habits and frames of belief; he wanted their minds and hearts to turn toward God and the good news of a new kingdom. Jesus was disrupting what they assumed God wanted from them. They were busy managing and maintaining a religious system that connected the people to the temple, but Jesus wanted their hearts connected to his. In Jesus’ context then, true repentance (change of mind) was to turn from dependence on religious systems and to center one’s mind and heart on a relationship with him. It was Jesus, not a religious structure, that would save them. The same is true for us today.

Often, just when we think we have God figured out, Jesus will show us something we didn’t readily see: the flip side of the story, the truth we least expected, the disruption to our preconceptions. Following Jesus will, at points, go against every desire in our bones, because our humanness will always yearn for simple formulas and defined structures where every question has an answer. But when we study the Scriptures, it becomes clear that Jesus is not necessarily prone to providing answers.³ In fact, he will often raise frustrating questions that cause us to keep moving forward, seeking him and his kingdom, even at the expense of religious structures and cultural norms. It was true with the religious leaders in Matthew 16, and it’s

still true today. Jesus was upending their expectations and quizzing them on reading the “signs of the times.” But they resisted the new thing he wanted to do because it required repentance, a “change of mind,” a disruption of their religious understanding. They rejected his invitation to relationship, and as a result, to the mission he had planned. At risk was their religious system, and I would suggest that, just perhaps, we might respond the same way if he attempted to deconstruct our religious systems today.

WEATHER FRONTS

I live in Colorado, where the joke is, “If you don’t like the weather, just wait two hours.” Living up against the Front Range of the Rocky Mountains can bring several weather changes in a week, and sometimes in one day. After living here for fifteen years, I can now sense—and sometimes even smell—when snow is coming. Because of these sudden weather variations, we are sometimes gifted incredible sunsets and sunrises. We call them “Bronco sunsets/sunrises” because our professional football team’s colors are bright orange and blue.

I’ve now become accustomed to Colorado weather changes, but these days I sense, along with many others, a very different kind of weather change. The skies of ecclesiology are revealing something important to us, if we will only pay attention.

Many adhere to the adage, “If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it,” as if to correct those who overthink or interfere in places they don’t need to. But we know, for example, that though a car may be seemingly running fine, a good mechanic can hear and observe things within an engine that suggest something is off, out of balance. Similarly, a good doctor can diagnose things that are happening within our bodies even when all appears okay. Jesus was insisting that the religious leaders pay attention to some underlying issues within the structures that guided religious life of the day. It was the announcement of a new kingdom, a repentance (change of mind) that ushered in a reminder of relationship over behavior, love over legalism. It was the reminder that ecclesial systems were not the point, but that our deep-rooted reliance on God was. Jesus wasn’t on the scene just to change the system from law to grace; he was insisting on a change of mind, a repentance that was embedded in a love of God and neighbor.⁴

Over several decades, the church of our lifetime has shifted its methods and structures in small ways in an attempt to respond to a more modern and

consumerist world. Yes, for a time the Western church found a relevant voice and resulting growth. Small groups, seeker-friendly services, contemporary worship, and other attractional methods have all contributed to the rise of the megachurch growth movement. However, as many of us are acutely aware, those methods are now waning. All signs point to the church losing its attractional power. For those whose calling it is to read “the signs of the times”—the pioneers, the innovators, the statisticians, and the prophetic voices of church mission—it seems a more significant weather change is on the horizon. For many of us, the sky looks red. But perhaps this time it can’t be fixed with a simple adjustment in church methodology. What we’ve lost as the church is not just the attraction to our methodology, it’s a loss of attraction to our message. Just maybe, this requires a bigger call to ask a bigger question, the same question orbiting Jesus’ “red skies” discussion with the Pharisees and Sadducees: *What exactly is good news to our future world?*

Many would agree that among wider culture the voice of the church is no longer perceived as appealing or attractive. The church is not generally viewed as a body of good-news people. We already know that the average person does not go to a church building or event to seek answers to the existential questions they are asking. In fact, quite the opposite, the so-called “Dones” of our congregations are slipping out the back doors of our buildings, not to find another church, but to find a faith journey on their own.⁵ Yet, many church leaders still spin their wheels, trying to innovate new strategies for returning to the “glory days” of filled church sanctuaries and Sunday-centric gatherings. The COVID-19 global pandemic may have hastened this impending shift toward church attendance in the minority.⁶ As churches were forced to stop meeting, perhaps many of the on-the-fence-Dones found new rhythms of life and a faith that doesn’t include Sunday morning events.

But the church faces a much bigger problem than declining attendance. The more important issue is *our inability to live and speak the gospel (good news) into the cultural storms of our day*. We have lost our voice of *shalom*. Though *shalom* is often defined in English as “peace,” this crucial Hebrew term carries a much deeper meaning.

Shalom is one of the key words and images for salvation in the Bible. The Hebrew word refers most commonly to a person being uninjured and

safe, whole and sound. In the NT, *shalom* is revealed as the reconciliation of all things to God through the work of Christ: “God was pleased ... through [Christ] to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through [Christ’s] blood, shed on the cross” (Col 1:19–20). *Shalom* experienced is multidimensional, complete well-being—physical, psychological, social, and spiritual; it flows from all of one’s relationships being put right—with God, with(in) oneself, and with others.⁷

Shalom therefore speaks to a greater wholeness, a completeness, where a person is at rest—yes, at peace—but from a position of fullness and blessing. Based on this definition, is our current culture a place of *shalom*? If not, then how can the church display and bring *shalom* into the contexts that feel so very chaotic?

THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN’

In the 1960s, Bob Dylan addressed the tensions of the political climate, civil rights, and equality across races, and became a voice of contemporary culture when he announced, “The times they are a-changin’.”⁸ Change can be scary, because it is unknown. However, sometimes change is the only choice we have if we wish to not only survive, but to thrive. Over the recent years, the arenas of politics, race, technology, economics, and culture, have become increasingly unstable. The church has fought to find its voice in these cultural disruptions, but sadly, has only lost its invitation into the conversation; the church may be speaking—and loudly—but no one is listening. What is clear, if we read the signs correctly, is that something must change if we wish to carry the good news of the kingdom into our future.

So consider these questions: How will we start shaping the voice of the church to carry good news to a culture that is quickly shifting and changing before our very eyes? How will we as kingdom people engage in these societal shifts in such a way that we carry the healing presence of the kingdom into cultural tensions, providing hope and a new and different way of life, one in Jesus? Can we sound a different voice, one that echoes the original announcement from Jesus, declaring the presence of his kingdom?⁹ Can we actually lead with an informed and sensitive spirit, where we

understand the challenges ahead but seek to bring the greatest change agent we have: love?

To accomplish this, there are many facets of cultural shifts to which we need to pay close attention. There are discussions we can have surrounding our responses to societal issues of racism, marginalization, the poor and disenfranchised, biblical justice, sexuality, and gender equality. These are perhaps obvious, but there are also other important issues, such as leadership paradigms, the challenges of technological innovation, and our dependence on outmoded funding models of ministry and partnership.

The changes that are coming—and some are already here—are enormous. They dwarf conversations surrounding church growth strategies and better worship services. Our response to these coming patterns will determine the church's posture and voice for years to come. It's time to start thinking about the next two decades of change, not in terms of our strategy, but in terms of our foundational calling to be a voice of hope that is announcing a kingdom, one *not* of this world.

Whether you're a missional practitioner in your neighborhood or workplace, a senior pastor of a church, or simply a follower of Christ who wants to ask kingdom questions, this book is for you. It's a meteorological guide, your primer for some of the questions arising from reading "the signs of the times," and a possible future of the church two decades from now. At the very least, it's your invitation into a bigger conversation and a kingdom discussion about good news for a future world.

The adventure of following Jesus will take you into unknown territory, but isn't that the very nature of adventure? Isn't following him what you've given your life to? Without some amount of dreaming, risk, and adrenaline, it's no adventure at all; it's status quo. And that is exactly what Jesus showed up to disrupt. So, you're invited into this discussion of sign readers, those who don't disregard the changing nature of the kingdom of God but are determined instead to follow Jesus into new weather, and into red skies.

SIGN READERS

In the pages to come are the voices of some (not all) of today's best readers of "the signs of the times." It was important to invite a mixture of voices, with

a diversity of contexts, each of whom are leaders in their respective fields. These are the missiologists and ecclesiologists, missional practitioners and church innovators, pastors and prophets, who are shaping important conversations about the future of the church. They feel a weather front on the horizon; they think they see red skies, and intuitively know, as Dylan prophetically announced in his day, “The times they are a-changin’.” They will present the tensions and issues the church must be aware of over the next twenty years. These discussions will raise some questions but will also propose some paths forward. You will read about both the losses and gains we may feel as the church, but this awareness will also uncover the leverage points for the kingdom, should we choose to navigate these coming trends with open eyes and hearts.

Back in 2003, two of our contributors to this book, Michael Frost and Alan Hirsch, noted the following in their seminal work, *The Shaping of Things to Come*:

It is likely, in our home of Australia at least, that [simple evolution of methods] will spell the church’s demise as a significant spiritual force in our land, and the church will be consigned to being a footnote in history. The statistics bear this out right across the West. This is not a time for evolution, as if another desperate reworking of the old model is going to fix our problems and start a revival. It is time for a revolution in the way we do and are church.¹⁰

The trends of their prophetic forecast have remained, reported and measured by polls, statisticians, and the culture alike. Nearly twenty years later, we find ourselves in the same storms Frost and Hirsch foretold. The church has lost, and could continue to lose, its platform as the sound of hope and a better future. This book is a clarion call to leave the programmatic innovations of Sunday church, in search of a larger discussion—one of God, his kingdom, and how we speak good news to our future world.

If you are looking for a book of answers, you will need to look elsewhere. This isn’t a selection of new strategies for church growth. It’s not a collection of tips to make church more exciting and relevant. What this book *does* offer is a stimulating conversation from sign readers, each

adding their observations of the weather to come, and then bringing a prophetically apostolic voice to the possible ways the church may respond to what's ahead. These are significant voices from those who are earnestly seeking to listen to the Holy Spirit and sense a way forward for all of us. They love the church, they love God's people, and they love you as a leader. So don't let the prophetic tones in this discussion irritate you. Instead, let them propel you, invigorate you, and cause a deepening search for innovation and transformation. No one throughout biblical history was a fan of prophetic forecasts. As we've already noted, none of us like to feel we're losing control, or for our familiar patterns or practices to be disrupted. If you feel unsettled or irritated, remember that at the heart of this book is a love for the King and his kingdom, and a desire to join him in announcing it. It's in that prophetic irritation and space that we may just find the voice and repentance (change of mind) we need for the future of the church. We cannot simply surrender to cultural impasses and fade into comfortable buildings adorned with crosses. So let us all engage with this conversation together. Sit with me, and let's listen as some smart, wise, godly individuals read "the signs of the times."

Why, you may ask?

Because the skies are red.

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OFTEN, JUST WHEN WE THINK WE
HAVE GOD FIGURED OUT, JESUS
WILL SHOW US SOMETHING WE
DIDN'T READILY SEE: THE FLIP SIDE
OF THE STORY, THE TRUTH WE LEAST
EXPECTED, THE DISRUPTION TO OUR
PRECONCEPTIONS.

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