

BLESSINGS ALWAYS

September 22, 2021

Association Minister Message

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SIDE. "If it had not been the Lord who was on our SIDE..." (Psalm 124:1) There are many claims today about who God supports: politically, sports teams, religious assemblies, country, companies, military establishments, etc. Years ago religious leaders were invited to give an invocation at high school sporting events. Some teams invited a spiritual leader to pray just for the team and God's power was invoked on that team for a victory with God on their *SIDE*. Ironically, the other team also prayed for God to be on their *SIDE* and the game began.

Historical wars have been fought praying for God to lead their *SIDE* to victory. The Crusades, for example, were initiated, many thought, with God's blessings to rid the Holy Land of followers of unholy gods, false religions, counterfeit and bogus religious practices. Today in our country, there are those who claim God is on their *SIDE* of politics, business and, yes, even Christian groups. So many claim visions from God to support their faith understanding. Christian history shows many so called denominations have been formed by claiming a vision from God or a phrase or two from the Bible for the basis of their group. Cult leaders such as Jim Jones, Charles Manson, David Koresh, and Victor Paul Wierwille (New Knoxville) have claimed God on their *SIDE*. They gave their followers a strict regimen of religious and living practices to follow. Many cult followers have been abused and even killed because they did not live up to the expectations of the cult leader.

The "*God is on my/our SIDE*" is not the way of Christian faith. It is not about God on MY *SIDE* or on OUR *SIDE*, rather, are we on GOD'S *SIDE*? There is a hymn from mid 1800s that asks, "*Who Is on the Lord's SIDE?*" that offers a challenge to serve God, to be God's helpers, to hear the call of mercy by God's grace divine. We are called to proclaim by our words and deeds the love of God, the grace of Jesus Christ, and live in fellowship and communion of the Holy Spirit. Jesus summarizes the commandments and calls us to "*love God with our heart, mind, soul, and strength and our neighbor as ourselves.*" "*OUR help is in the name of God, the maker of heaven and earth.*" (*Psalm 124:8*). Not our *SIDE* but together we are on God's *SIDE*. "*Blessing and honor, glory and power be unto God.*" BLESSINGS ALWAYS.