

The Messenger

Michaelmas, 2019

The Church of the Messiah

114 North Third Street at Madison

Pulaski, Tennessee 38478

The Episcopal Diocese of Tennessee

John C. Bauerschmidt, Bishop

*The mission of the Church of the Messiah is to be a growing witness of
our Faith in Jesus Christ in the midst of the community
through worship and sacrament in the Episcopal tradition.*

Our leadership:

- ✠ The Rev. Jess Reeves, Priest-in-Charge
- ✠ Pat Woolard, Music Director
- ✠ Senior Warden, Dr. Grace Meier ('20)
- ✠ Junior Warden, Patsy Bryant ('21)
- ✠ Secretary to the Parish, Marquenda Forrester
- ✠ Clerk of the Vestry, Sandy Ring Hall
- ✠ Treasurer, Kristi Watson
- ✠ Vestry members: Pat Dunnavant ('19), Angela Hallmark ('19), Solon Holt ('20),
Hatherine Steever ('19), Andy Hoover ('21).

The Right Side of History by William Farley

The expression "on the right side of history" is an important tool today used by the progressive elite to silence biblically faithful Christians. Never mind that it rests on significant religious assumptions. After all, no one can prove that history is inexorably going somewhere. Large segments of the world's population reject this idea. The better part of the non-Christian world believes that history is circular. Since it can't be proved that history is going somewhere, it is *de facto* a religious assumption. The progressives *hold it by faith*, and by doing so they are acting contrary to their own secular presuppositions.

Nevertheless, we are grateful that the progressives now agree with Christians that history is heading somewhere, and that its end will be just and morally beneficial. Nevertheless, they have borrowed this assumption from the Christian worldview, and now ironically uses it to pound us into submission. Believers have solid grounds to push back.

Whenever someone says "I am on the right side of history" they are presuming that their understanding of right and wrong is the same as *whoever* or *whatever* is in control of history. Since a large number of those who have adopted this phrase are self-avowed atheists, agnostics, or religious liberals their use of this phrase is fundamental hypocrisy. If there is no personal God, history is going nowhere, or at best it is moving randomly. And even if it is going somewhere, on the basis of the left's confessed worldview, they should have no way of knowing where it is going.

In effect the speaker is saying, "If you're smart, you will get on my side before it's too late, before the inevitability of history tramples you under its hobnailed boots." The secular world assumes "that history marches with them," writes Jay Nordlinger. "Get out of the way or be crushed." The phrase is used to bully those who

doubt the rightness or wrongness of gay marriage, abortion, firearm ownership, LGBT rights, taxing the rich, ending the death penalty, advancing socialism or a variety of any other progressive causes.

A Need for Humility

However, because most that have employed this expression in the past have been dead wrong, it would behoove the secular world to use it with humility. For example, The French Revolution at the end of the 18th century was utterly convinced that it was on the "right side of history." It dissolved the French Monarchy, and devastated Europe with the Napoleonic Wars, but the progressive changes that the "revolution" assumed were on the "right side of history" were dead on arrival within a few decades.

Oxford historian Andrew Roberts observes that the phrase, "the right side of history" is "profoundly Marxian." The followers of Karl Marx insisted that a Communist Worker's Paradise was history's inevitable terminus. Alas, as I write there are only a handful of Communist countries remaining, and communism will soon be shown to have been, not on the right side of history, but on the dust bin of history. Jesse Jackson, while running for president in 1984 said that the Sandinistas in Nicaragua were on the "right side of history." The Sandinistas are now a soon-to-be-forgotten footnote to history, and it has only been a few decades.

The truth is just the opposite. "The right side of history" is a useful expression, but only Christians have a *spiritual* right, an *historical* right, and the *duty* to say that they are on "the right side of history."

A Spiritual Right

First, only Christians have a *spiritual* right to this phrase. The God of the Bible is the God of history. He created time and space "ex nihilo."

Because only He is in control of history, only He can determine the future. That is one reason God foretells the future through the prophets--to prove to us that he is in control of the future--that it is actually going somewhere, and that only He knows when and where it will arrive.

For example, through the prophet Isaiah, several decades before it happened, God predicted the destruction of Israel at the hand of Assyria. He called the Assyrians a "tool" of judgment (Isaiah 10:5-19). Then, 150 years before it happened, he predicted that Babylon, whom he would also raise up, would destroy Judah and Jerusalem (Isaiah 14:3-23). Then around 740 BC, 250 years before it happened, he predicted that Cyrus, king of Persia, would return the Jews from captivity. All of these events occurred exactly as predicted.

Most importantly, in great detail, centuries before it happened, through his prophets, God predicted the life, death, and resurrection of the Messiah. How could God do this? God could do this because he alone is in total control of history. His ability to predict the future certifies this truth. (See Isaiah 44:7-8, 45:21, 46:9-10 for God's claim to be Lord of History). Since he alone knows the beginning from the end, only those aligned with his will and purposes have a *spiritual* right to say that they are on the "right side of history."

A Historical Right

Second, only Christians have a *historical* right to this phrase. Since the time of Christ, the Christian religion has dominated world history. God also predicted that this would be the case.

Jesus likened his kingdom to a mustard seed, the smallest of seeds, which would slowly mature throughout history into a dominant tree in whom the birds (symbolizing the nations) would eventually make their nests (Matthew 13:31-32). And, in fact, this is exactly what has happened. From where did the industrial revolution, the

scientific revolution, and political freedom arise? Western Christian culture. From what culture have the dominant nations come in the last millennium? Not from Muslim culture. Not from Hindu, Buddhist, or Shinto culture. Not from the Enlightenment Culture. Why not? Because only Christ is the Lord of History. Because Jesus died and rose from the dead, God has given him "all authority in heaven and on earth," and he exercises that authority on behalf of cultures sympathetic to, and influenced by, his gospel.

That is why only Christians have an historical right to the phrase, "The right side of history."

A Moral Duty

Last, Christians have a *moral* duty to use this phrase. There is a "right side of history," and it has a terminus--a Day of Final Judgment. On that Day those not reconciled to God by faith in the work of his Son Jesus Christ will "enter the caves of the rocks and the holes of the ground, from before the terror of the Lord, and from the splendor of his majesty, when he rises to terrify the earth" (Isaiah 2:19). Though we may find this an unpleasant thought, it does not for a second mitigate its truthfulness.

A day of final reckoning quickly approaches. Will you, your loved ones, and your friends be on "the right side of history?" Wise men and women tremble at the thought of being on the wrong side.

For this reason, God's people--and only God's people--have a moral imperative to use this term. Why aren't we? Why do we cower in fear before our opponents when they talk about being on the "right side of history?" In other words, we need to urge our neighbors to be on the right side of history--the biblical side of history.

I sometimes fear that the culture warriors are motivated more than we, and this should not be

the case. Why? Because eternity hangs in the balance. "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ," warned the great apostle, "so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil" (2 Corinthians 5:10).

In the end, the progressive spokespersons are correct. There is a right side of history. But they must first admit that their own worldview gives them no right to use this phrase. They have essentially borrowed from the Christian worldview. According to Scripture, only true Christians are on the right side of history.

The only people on the "right side of history" are those who have humbled themselves, confessed their sin, and believed the gospel.

FALL MESSIAH CHRISTIAN CLASSICS BOOK CLUB

On the fourth Sunday afternoon in September, November, and December, and the third Sunday in October, of necessity, we will meet to discuss our reading of some seminal Christian classics. Here's the list and dates:

September 22, Sunday, 4:30. In *The Dangerous Duty of Delight*, John Piper turns our heart toward the one true object of human desire and happiness: God. Piper shows from Scripture that pursuing our happiness in Christ is not optional for the Christian, but essential. Fr. Reeves has four copies available. If more are desired, they can be ordered once these are spoken for. 121 pages.

October 20, Sunday, 4:30. *A Tale of Two Cities*, Dickens, is not only a riveting world classic but one of the underlying motives in Charles Dickens' novel of 1859 is the reinforcement of Christian values in 18th century Victorian England. A must read or read again. Copies abound, from library to ThriftBooks.

November 24, *Your God Is Too Small*, J.B. Phillips. At 128 pages, this inspirational work tackles tough topics and inspires readers to reevaluate and connect more deeply with a God that is relevant to current experience and big enough to command respect and admiration. 5 copies available.

December 22, at Rectory. *Mr. Ives' Christmas*, by Oscar Hijuelos is a lovely, poignant seasonal read that is a magnificently sad and enchanting novel, a celebration, ultimately, of giving and of grace. We'll order as many as needed; readily available used.

Gospel grace has taught them "to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age." We alone hope in the true culmination of history, "the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:12-13). On that Day God will create New Heavens and a New Earth. There those on the "right side of history" will join him with "joy inexpressible and full of glory" (1 Peter 1:8).

Only Christians have a *spiritual* right, an *historical* right, and the *moral* duty to say they are on "the right side of history." Let's use this phrase with solemnity, humility, and perseverance.

Serving our Worship, ---- The Church of the Messiah:

PLEASE CONTACT ME IF THIS ORDER IS INCONVENIENT OR MIGHT BENEFIT FROM YOUR ADVICE. JLR

September 1: Acolyte: Logan Muth; Chalice bearer/reader: Teresa Hughes; Altar Guild: Gay McKinney/John Davis; Greeter: Grace Meier; Flowers: Joe & Patti Stagner to the Glory of God in thanksgiving.

September 8: Acolyte: Mia Hallmark; Chalice bearer/reader: Andy Hoover; Altar Guild: Catherine Dunnivant/Rebecca Billard; Greeter: Patsy Bryant; Flowers: Bob & Patsy Bryant in thanksgiving for Joann Bryant's birthday and in memory of Edith A. Petty.

September 15: Acolyte: Calum Lavacot; Chalice bearer/reader: John Hughes; Altar Guild: Marqueda Forrester/Connie Baker; Greeter: Pat Dunnivant; Flowers: Samantha & Donny Muth in thanksgiving for their wedding anniversary.

September 22: Acolyte: Logan Dubberley; Chalice bearer/reader: Lewis Foster; Altar Guild: Gay McKinney/John Davis; Greeter: Angela Hallmark; Flowers: Charly Wood.

September 29 – Morning Prayer: Acolyte: Logan Muth; Chalice bearer/reader: Rich Woolard & Cathy Roberts; Altar Guild: Catherine Dunnivant/Rebecca Billard; Greeter: Solon Holt; Flowers: Joe & Patti Stagner in thanksgiving.

October 6: Acolyte: Mia Hallmark; Chalice bearer/reader: Crystal Woolard; Altar Guild: Gay McKinney/John Davis; Greeter: Hatherine Steever; Flowers: Marqueda Forrester in thanksgiving for Lollie Elizabeth Schmidt.

October 13: Acolyte: Logan Dubberley; Chalice bearer/reader: Mary Dubberley; Altar Guild: Marqueda Forrester/Connie Baker; Greeter: Patsy Bryant; Flowers: John Davis for the United States Navy's birthday.

October 20 – Bishop's Visit: Acolyte: Calum Lavacot; Chalice bearer/reader: Cathy Roberts; Altar Guild: Catherine Dunnivant/Rebecca Billard; Greeter: Grace Meier; Flowers: Patsy Bryant in thanksgiving for Bob Bryant's birthday.

October 27: Acolyte: Logan Muth; Chalice bearer/reader: Cynthia Low; Altar Guild: Gay McKinney/John Davis; Greeter: Pat Dunnivant; Flowers: Joann Bryant in thanksgiving for family.

November 3 - All Saint's Sunday: Acolyte: Logan Dubberley; Chalice bearer/reader: Lewis Foster; Altar Guild: Marqueda Forrester/Connie Baker; Greeter: Angela Hallmark; Flowers: Grace Meier in thanksgiving.

November 10: Acolyte: Mia Hallmark; Chalice bearer/reader: Rich Woolard; Altar Guild: Catherine Dunnivant/Rebecca Billard; Greeter: Solon Holt; Flowers: John Davis for the United States Marine Corps birthday.

November 17: Acolyte: Calum Lavacot; Chalice bearer/reader: Teresa Hughes; Altar Guild: Gay McKinney/John Davis; Greeter: Hatherine Steever; Flowers: Solon & Liz Holt in thanksgiving for Solon Holt, Jr.'s birthday.

November 24 – Christ the King Sunday: Acolyte: Logan Muth; Chalice bearer/reader: Andy Hoover; Altar Guild: Marqueda Dunnivant/Connie Baker; Greeter: Grace Meier; Flowers: Crystal Woolard in thanksgiving for Isom's birthday.

INDIA: WHEN PERSECUTION RISES



² *Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds,* ³ *for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness.* ⁴ *And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.* ^{James 1}

Perhaps nowhere in recent memory has persecution against Christians been more visible in its increasing scope and brutality than in India. In the annual report by the best assessors of the most difficult places in the world to follow Jesus, India has risen from #28 in 2014 to #10 in the present year. That's a large and disturbing jump in just five years. These figures are validated by international studies by sources such as the British government, Pew Research, and the like.

Much of the spike is owing the swell in Hindu nationalism after Prime Minister Narendra came to power in 2014. Enforcement against attacks and the number of recorded assaults has skyrocketed as avowed Hindu nationalists attack Christians with out consequences and blatantly. The nationalists assert that to be Indian is to be Hindu, so any other faith is considered non-Indian and to be purged. In many regions converts to Christianity from Hinduism experience extreme persecution, discrimination, and violence.

Although assured by their constitution of religious freedom, that is not being guarded or protected. The government increasingly turns a blind eye to the assault on those deemed not true Indians. There is intense persecution from a radical Hindu movement that is afraid of the growth of Christianity. You hear of churches being burned, of pastors being persecuted — and occasionally killed. But, in a way, Hinduism is its own worst enemy. It is based on a caste system in which the top 15% dominate the country. Christianity proclaims that "the gospel is a message of deliverance, not just for heaven. It is a message of freedom. The truth is that God made man in his image." And that message of deliverance seems to be catching on across India.

Interesting to note that Christianity though suppressed has grown from 2.5% of the population ten years ago to more than 5% today (some estimate it is higher but covert). The growth in churches has been tenfold. While about 18% is Muslim and the rest Hindu, it is particularly Christians who are assaulted, killed, driven out of their home, and churches burned. In joy and sorrow these facts affirm the ancient wisdom of the Church that the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church.

This report was excerpted from OpenDoorsUSA.org. Other information on persecution is available at the sites for Voice of the Martyrs, Christian Freedom International, the Persecution Project, and many others easily accessed on the internet.

Messiah Ministries

- *Morning Prayer, Monday-Saturday, 7 a.m.*
- *Sunday, Holy Eucharist, 10 a.m.; refreshments following service*
- *Wednesday, 7 p.m., Holy Communion*
- *Seasonal Bible Study, Wednesday, 5:45 p.m.*
- *Vestry meeting, Second Monday of the month, 6:30 p.m.*
- *Luncheon, Second Sunday of the month as announced, except special occasions.*
- *Nursing Home Ministry: First Tuesday, NHC, 10:30 a.m.; Second Tuesday, Keestone. 10 a.m.; Third Wednesday, Ivy Crest, 10 a.m.; Fourth Wednesday, Meadowbrook, 10 a.m. Ref. the Hines.*
- *ECW First Thursday, 11:30 a.m., lunch at various locations TBA.*
- *Adult Christian Classic Book Club, fourth Sunday of the month, 4:30-5:30 p.m.*

Church of Messiah's Cookbook...

A Slice of Heaven cookbook has arrived and the cost is \$12.00 each. They will be on display in the parish hall for you to see and to purchase; the cookbooks will make awesome Christmas gifts. This is an ECW project; all proceeds from the sale of the cookbooks will go to its scholarship fund.

Community Rural Food Delivery....

RFD was awarded the 2020 WKSRR Radio Auction, February 9th and 16th. An organization meeting for all volunteers is scheduled for Tuesday, September 10, 5:00 pm at the Giles County AG Park, 2030 Elkton Pike, Pulaski. Your help is needed to make the auction a success. For more information, speak to Pat Dunnivant.

Cursillo #77....

Cursillo #77 will be October 3-6 at Dubose Conference Center in Monteagle, TN. Please pray for a successful weekend for the candidates and for the team, which includes Catherine Dunnivant (Observing Lay Leader), Pat Dunnivant and Pat Woolard. For more information about Cursillo contact Father Reeves or Catherine.

ECW Bake Sale....

ECW will be having their fall bake sale Saturday, October 26, 8:00 am. Women are asked to help with set-up on Friday, October 25, 5:00 pm. Information sheets are available in parish hall along with a sign-up sheet for those who choose to participate. Please help make this event successful, especially since this is one of the fundraisers to replace our garden luncheon. For further information or questions, please contact Patsy Bryant.

Bishop's Visit....

Bishop John Bauerschmidt's annual visit will be October 20; details forthcoming.

RFD Schedule: September 19, Thursday, 6:00 p.m. sorting/repacking food, Sharp Annex; September 21, Saturday, 8:30 a.m., distribution, **Richland Elementary School**; October 17, Thursday, 6:00 p.m., sorting/repacking food, Sharp Annex; October 19, Saturday, 8:30 a.m., distribution, **Minor Hill School**; November 21, Thursday, 6:00 p.m., sorting/repacking food, Sharp Annex; November 23, Saturday, 8:30 a.m., distribution, **Bodenham Head Start Center**.

REFRESHMENT SERVERS:

| | | |
|------------------|-----------|---------------------------------|
| September | 1 | Rich Woolard & Rebecca Billard |
| | 8 | Andy Hoover |
| | 15 | Pat Dunnivant & Kelly Hallmark |
| | 22 | Ken Vickers |
| | 29 | Donny & Samantha Muth |
| October | 6 | Allen Dubberley & Gene Hines |
| | 13 | John Hughes & John Davis |
| | 20 | Reception for the Bishop |
| | 27 | Rich Woolard & Rebecca Billard |
| November | 3 | Andy Hoover |
| | 10 | Covered Dish Luncheon |
| | 17 | Pat Dunnivant & Kelly Hallmark |
| | 24 | Ken Vickers |

We ask each of you to please wipe off the tables, counter tops, and take out the trash.. The cleaning crew only comes twice a month. This will help to keep our parish hall neat and clean.

ALTAR FLOWERS:

| | | |
|------------------|-----------|-----------------------|
| September | 1 | Joe & Patti Stagner |
| | 8 | Bob & Patsy Bryant |
| | 15 | Donny & Samantha Muth |
| | 22 | Charly Wood |
| | 29 | Joe & Patti Stagner |
| October | 6 | Marquenda Forrester |
| | 13 | John Davis |
| | 20 | Patsy Bryant |
| | 27 | Joann Bryant |
| November | 3 | Grace Meier |
| | 10 | John Davis |
| | 17 | Solon Holt |
| | 24 | Crystal Woolard |

GOD TURNS THE BAD TO HIS OWN GOOD

Some raise the objection that God's foreknowledge and foreordination of the fall damages man's freedom. In other words, if God created mankind with full knowledge of the impending fall into sin, how can man be responsible for his sin? The best answer to that question can be found in the Westminster Confession of Faith:

"God, from all eternity, did, by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will, freely, and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass; yet so, as thereby neither is God the author of sin, nor is violence offered to the will of the creatures; nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established" (WFC, III.1)

In other words, God ordains future events in such a way that our freedom and the working of secondary causes (e.g., laws of nature) are preserved while incorporated. Theologians call this "concurrency." God's sovereign will flows concurrently with our free choices in such a way that our free choices always result in the carrying out of God's will (by "free" we mean that our choices are not coerced by outside influences). It's a complex interaction of wills and choices, but the Creator God can handle any amount of complexity.

God foresaw Adam and Eve's fall. He created them anyway, in His own image, to bring glory to Himself. They were given freedom to make choices. Even though they chose to disobey, their choice became the means by which God's ultimate will was carried out and by which His full glory will be seen and the greatest glory realized.

What really opened my eyes of understanding was learning that Christ is the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world (Rev 13:8). This means that God provided a remedy for the problem [death] of sin even before creation. In fact Scripture tells us that eternal life through Christ was promised before the world began (Tit. 1:2). And that the precious blood of Christ, as the lamb was foreordained before the foundation of the world.

But with **the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb** without blemish and without spot, Who verily **was foreordained before the foundation of the world**, but was manifest in these last times for you, Who **by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God.** 1 Peter 1:20

How does this knowledge answer your question regarding free will? God gave Adam & Eve a choice, knowing the outcome of their choice would result in death, because death through sin was to be the way that A&E, and all mankind would learn their need for God. A&E having free will in the garden clearly demonstrates how man with complete freedom of will always choose to be god unto themselves. Mankind would never submit to God, never give Him all glory, honor and praise, never worship Him of their own free will. Mankind will always choose to be "as gods" when given a choice of whether to submit or not. It was necessary that man be tempted and experience death, otherwise man would never have knowledge of good or evil, which is what they lacked at creation. If man has no knowledge of good, how could he ever know of his need for God, Who alone is good? Luke 18:19

God foreknowing all of this before creation allowed sin, and death through sin to enter in by sending the serpent, who was made more cunning and crafty than any other created being. Now since mankind through A&E freely chose to listen to the voice of the serpent, and disobey the command of God, mankind can no longer of his own free will choose Christ for life. That too was part of the consequences that befell man through sin (the way to the tree of life blocked). Now mankind is in bondage to death, and sin, and by nature chooses to remain separated from Christ until God's grace is found in them. Man, since the fall can only choose that which is natural to them. So until a supernatural work of grace is done upon his heart, man will never of his own free will choose to submit to God since the fall.

WHAT IS THE STANDARD OF TRUTH – THE BIBLE?

- ✘ The testimony of **Jesus** Himself. What did He say [*ipsissima verba* in theology-talk]? How did He treat it? Isn't He our model?

He used it to answer Satan;
He said it would last forever;
He quoted it;
He loved to refer to it.

- ✘ What is **Jesus** authority? Do you trust Him in this? It comes back to a question of His own authority. He spoke with unique authority. *Heaven and earth will pass away but My words will never pass away!* No normal person maintains that. So the reliable record of what He says carries this authority.
- ✘ What about rest of NT? The authority of the appointed **APOSTLES** by Jesus. They are His plenipotentiaries. End of Matthew – Great Commission. The letters of the NT are constantly explaining and referring to the Old Covenant. 2 Timothy 3:16 – ALL SCRIPTURE is God-breathed.... The Old Covenant is the very expression, self-exhalation of God Almighty to His Creation. And these apostles wrote realizing that they were channeling Jesus/God's authority by word.
- ✘ What the Bible asserts about itself, which it does. More than that, it has attributes that have been attested by the Church and the Saints as God's direction and creation. It reflects God in many facets. Isaac Newton said, *I find more sure marks of authenticity in the Bible than in any other sacred texts that exist anywhere.* The power of the Bible in our lives to encourage, convict, to

empower, to reveal and enlighten. *For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.* ^{Hebrews 4:12} The Bible reads us more than we read it! ^{1 Corinthians 2} As some people are tone deaf, so they cannot themselves hear it spiritually!

- ✘ The testimony of **HISTORY**. The Bible's historical credentials are very impressive. The quantity of NT manuscripts we have in our possession. The more copies the more authentic and comparable, the more certain. The number of verified copies of NT in antiquity from 50 – 250 AD we have more than 5000! Amazing so overwhelming compared to anything else. Even skeptical historians find corroboration overwhelming. It stands up to the keenest scrutiny.

Why does it matter? The claims of Jesus there and the truths asserted there are either right or wrong, and our salvation and meaning depend of the veracity of the Word of God. Surely God does not want us stumbling around without guidance. Only He can tell us how to live, love, and treat each other: *teaching them to obey all that I have commanded you.* These were Jesus final directions.