



Rockwood Church of Christ

The Proclaimer

October 7, 2012

P.O. Box 416
129 S. Chamberlain Ave.
Rockwood, TN 37854
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Elders:

Dana Carter
Kenneth Carter
Don Chandler

Deacons:

Bobby Bear
Kendall Bear
Larry Brackett
Roger Carter
Steve McCreary
Don Wicks

Minister:

Kirby Hinds

Secretary:

Susan Chandler

Service Times:

Sunday

Bible Study 10 am
Worship Service 10:45 am
Worship Service 6 pm

Wednesday

Bible Study 7:30 pm

Monday

Ladies Class 10 am

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Rockwoodchurchofchrist.com

NEVER GIVE UP

“I thought you would never become a Christian.” This was a statement made to me by one of my dear sisters in Christ a few weeks after I was baptized into Christ. She was confessing to me that she thought I was a hopeless case and that my heart would never be turned by the message of Christ. From her point of view, and surely for most of the Christians I had contact with, there was good reason to think I would never respond to the gospel. I was a professed agnostic. I was a Marine Biology major convinced that evolution was the answer, not God. I had pursued a course of living akin to **I Peter 4:3**. Over an 18-month period I only went to church once, and went to the college-age devotionals only for the food. My language was coarse and my thoughts self-centered. One begins to understand why she felt, “He will never become a Christian.”

I gave the Christians around me good reason to give up in their efforts to share Christ with me, but they never did. Instead, as a Christian wife to her unbelieving husband, they won my heart with their pure and respectful behavior (**I Peter 3:2**). As the light of the world, they allowed me to see my darkness and eventually glorify my Father who is in heaven (**Matthew 5:16**). Through their love for one another, I not only saw that they were disciples of Christ, but that I could be one also. Because they did not give up on me, I knew God wouldn't either.

We all know people who when we look at their lives we think, “Man, that one will never become a Christian.” That's when we need to stop and reflect on God's power to change lives...a Saul to Paul; fishers of fish to fishers of men; the demon-possessed to Holy Spirit empowered; the lost to “the saved.” Never give up, never quit praying, never stop modeling the love of Christ to the lost – for the world is full of children of God who were once considered unreachable.

Andy Miller

WHO SAYS HELL ISN'T THAT BAD A PLACE?

I have to say nowadays I am not surprised by what I hear and read. A few days ago I was given a newspaper article titled: "Hell Isn't That Bad A Place." It appeared in the Saturday, April 2, 2011 edition of The Tennessean. The article was written by Bob Smietana and in it he mentioned a book written by a "pastor" who is scheduled to speak at Belmont University. A quote from the "pastor" caught my attention. He said, "A God who (tortures people in hell forever) can't be trusted and is not good."

I have not read the "pastor's" writings or heard of him until I read The Tennessean article. What he said was not surprising because his message about hell and the afterlife is a comforting message to hear by some people. It is my opinion, we will hear more of this in the future as "churches" figure out a soft message about hell and punishment will help fill empty pews. The apostle Paul said, "*For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths*" (**II Timothy 4:3-4**).

As a full-time church worker and preacher for a local church, I understand the frustration created by the empty pew. (In fact, I have suffered greatly by what I call the Empty Pew Syndrome.) What are the signs and symptoms of EPS? Your preacher feels a sense of discouragement. He will manifest mild to severe agitation especially when he preaches his sermons. He may even lash out at those who are present for church services. Is there a cure for EPS? The only known remedy is a packed house for Lord's Day worship services. It is unfortunate that some preachers will compromise the Word of God for a bigger crowd.

I rarely preach on hell these days because most people I stand before are trying to go to heaven. I try to emphasize those Bible passages that reveal how to deal with life's daily challenges, in addition to that which gives hope and encouragement.

I became a Christian in October 1976 because I did not want to die and go to hell. I believed what the Bible reveals about that awful place then and I have found no reason not to believe it today. The Lord said in the parable of the Judgment, "*Then He will also say to those on His left, depart from me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels*" (**Matthew 25:41**).

My position, unlike the "pastor" so called mentioned in the newspaper article, is that the Lord is good in spite of the fact that souls will be lost. If it were not for His goodness we all would be lost. He sent His Son Jesus to die for our sins, "*so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God*" (**Ephesians 2:7-8**).

Friend, let us look forward to Sunday, the Lord's Day. Let us plan to pack the house, not because the preacher is suffering from EPS, but because it is right to come before the great God with praise and worship.

Rick Rolin