



# Rockwood Church of Christ

## The Proclaimer

December 20, 2020

P.O. Box 416  
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Rockwood, TN 37854  
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**Elders:**

Kendall Bear  
Dana Carter  
Don Chandler

**Deacons:**

Larry Brackett  
Aaron Evans  
Larry Hill  
Steve McCreary

**Minister:**

**Secretary:**

Susan Chandler

**Service Times:**

**Sunday**

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

**Wednesday**

Bible Study 7 pm

**Email:**

rockwdcc@gmail.com

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Rockwoodchurchofchrist.com

## Don't Let the Lights Go Out!

One of my favorite things about this time of the year is experiencing the beauty of Christmas lights. Ordinarily only dimly lit by dull street lamps, towns are now awash in brilliant displays of holiday cheer. So much more joyful than the rest of the year!

Eventually, however, those lights will be taken down, packed up, and put away again until next December. One of my least favorite times of the year is when those lights—and the accompanying joyful attitudes—are hidden for 11 months. Too bad! Wouldn't it be great if they stuck around all year long!

Even more sadly, some Christians only let their lights shine during special occasions. Currently there is a surging wave of good will toward our fellowman as we all seek to do something good for those in need. But what if we didn't just drag our Christian lights out only for holidays?

Jesus told His disciples that they were the light of the world (Matt. 5:14). Accordingly, He told them, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven" (Matt. 5:16).

Certainly we should do all the good we can during the holiday season, but let's refrain from packing up our Christian lights and putting them away for the rest of the year. The world needs the light of the church and God's word shining in the darkness! Will you be a light for Christ 365 days in the coming year? *Matt Clifton*

# To Give, or Not to Give?

It's that time of year again. You know...cold weather, Christmas decorations, long shopping lines, and "soldiers" in the Salvation Army standing at the entrance of nearly every major shopping area. These dedicated soldiers brave the cold while ringing a little bell, as they solicit donations to help the needy. These red kettles are responsible for collecting approximately \$150 million dollars each year to provide food, clothing, and shelter to the less fortunate. Such good deeds appeal to our sense of benevolence at a time when we are feeling particularly benevolent. Surely there would be no harm in making donations to these tireless workers who are willing to endure the cold winds of December, or is there? Through the years, people have asked me how they should respond to these door-greeters. The following is my advice. The Salvation Army was founded in 1865 by William Booth, a Methodist preacher. Booth believed that God had called him to minister to the outcast. His philosophy was "Soup, Soap, and Salvation." Booth believed that a person who was hungry or in need of a bath would not be interested in the gospel of Christ until those needs were met.

In the beginning, Booth intended for the people he reached with the gospel to return to their home churches, but he soon found these "converts" were unwelcome in their home churches, or unwilling to return to them. Therefore, in 1878, Booth and his wife Catherine, organized the "Salvation Army" as a new church denomination. Booth designated himself as General, his best leaders as lieutenants, captains, and majors, and faithful converts became soldiers.

Thus, the Salvation Army differs from other benevolent organizations such as "The Red Cross," or "The American Heart Association," etc. in that ***it is a church, a religious denomination***. As a religious denomination, it teaches a perverted plan of salvation accompanied by many other doctrinal errors. Like all religious denominations, the Salvation Army does some good. But does the fact that the Salvation Army does some good, mean that we should support them? Do the ends justify the means? Should a Christian, a member of the church that Jesus purchased with His own blood, support a man-made religious body, that rivals the Lord's church? Should we support, by our donations, a false religious organization that teaches a false plan of salvation, which if followed, will result in people unknowingly remaining in their sins when they think they're forgiven?

Don't lose sight of this important point. An organization that feeds the stomach but starves the spirit is not truly helpful. I certainly don't question their sincerity or their willingness to help the poor, but they have a zeal for God that is not according to knowledge (Romans 10:2). Instead of doing our benevolence through a false, man-made church, why don't we maintain a benevolent spirit, giving as we are prospered, and let Christ be glorified through His church (Ephesians 3:21)?

As the little bell is rung your direction during this holiday season, join me in politely saying, "I do my benevolent work through my local church."

**Steve Higginbotham**