



Rockwood Church of Christ

The Proclaimer

December 21, 2014

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

Dana Carter
Kenneth Carter
Don Chandler

Deacons:

Kendall Bear
Larry Brackett
Roger Carter
Steve McCreary

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

NOT A SCROOGE

Doug Tooley, revised

I want to point out that some of the things that people believe about Christmas, such as the date, do not correspond with the Biblical account of the birth of Christ. Fanciful movies and culture have clouded this subject. Here is a list of other things not found in the Biblical account:

- ❖ We don't know if Mary rode into Bethlehem on a donkey (**Luke 2:1ff**).
- ❖ Jesus was not necessarily born the night they arrived (**Luke 2:16**).
- ❖ An innkeeper is not mentioned (**Luke 2:7**).
- ❖ We do not know how many wise men came to see Jesus (**Matthew 2:1-2, 11**).
- ❖ We do not even know how old Jesus was when the wise men arrived (**Matthew 2:16**).

Here are some other things that should be considered. First, the name comes from two words, Christ's Mass. The holiday is also sometimes referred to as X-Mas. This comes from the use of the Greek initial letter "chi" (X). The name of Christ in the Greek is Xplotos (Christos). It is likely that the practice of celebrating the birth of Christ in December was started by Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic churches around AD 325. It is also likely that they did this to keep their members away from pagan ritualistic festivals that occurred around this time. The problem is that there is not Bible authority establishing this as a practice of worship.

It is clear that God knows how to establish a practice of commemoration. That is exactly what we do when we partake of the Lord's Supper. We do it in the remembrance of Christ (**Luke 22:19**). Certainly, the birth of Christ was important, but the Bible gives much more weight to the importance of His death and resurrection (**I Corinthians 15:1-4**). Therefore, to declare and celebrate the birth of Christ as a special religious event is to overstep our authority. We must always respect both the commands and the silence of the Scriptures. Silence does not give us authority.

Now the question comes up, "Can Christians take part in celebrating Christmas?" I believe they can if it is not done as a religious celebration of Christ's birth. Christmas is one of many practices that originated under certain circumstances, but has lost significance (Jackson). For instance the Catholic church considers the wedding ceremony to be a sacrament. Is this what we are practicing when we have a wedding ceremony? No, I do not believe so. Are we honoring St. Valentine when we buy flowers for our loved one on Valentine's Day? Again I believe the answer is no. Paul speaks on a similar matter when he gives instruction on eating meat offered to idols (**I Corinthians 8:1-13**). To one person it had significance, but to another it had none. Even some of our days of the week bear the names of idols. For instance the name Thursday came from "Thor's Day." We are not worshipping Thor. I believe we can safely and happily enjoy the holidays as a civil holiday, but separate from an unauthorized religious event.

GOD IS ON THE THRONE, NOT THE STAGE

The God we serve is an august, spiritual being both deserving and desirous of our deepest respect. Though described in Scripture as a friend to man (**Isaiah 41:8; James 2:23**), He is not some sort of “good buddy” to joke with or about.

Our God is still on the throne (**Psalm 45:6**); His ways remain higher than our ways (**Isaiah 55:9**), and His authoritative Word still promises to judge us in the Last Day (**Revelation 20:12**).

No measure of self-appointed, flippant familiarity with the God of heaven detracts one bit or whit from His inherent majesty. Our God is eminently worthy of our reverence; thus we must serve Him “*acceptably with reverence and godly fear*” (**Hebrews 12:28**). Truly, reverence is the “*very first element of religion.*”

Moreover, our periods of public worship should express this spirit of reverence. “*God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be held in reverence of all about Him.*” (**Psalm 89:7**). Worship performed “*in spirit and in truth*” (**John 4:24**) suggests a demeanor of awe and reverence.

We agree that our worship services should be permeated with expressions of joy and thanksgiving – they should not come to resemble a congregational visit to the dentist, but neither should the reverent worship of our heavenly Father be confused for a carnival or rock concert. Whether our worship is that offered during a Sunday morning service, that which involves a lectureship assembly, or that which is engaged in by a zealous throng of young people attending a youth rally – regardless where, when, or by whom the worship is performed – it must be characterized by reverence and decorum. “*Let all things be done decently and in order*” (**I Corinthians 14:40**).

The worship assembly is not the proper setting for screaming, whistling, clapping, and stomping the feet in response to a speaker’s message. We do not gather to pay homage to men but to worship God. We do not come together as we would at football games or at a stage-band concert; we come to worship God. We do not assemble with the intent of being entertained or sensually excited; we come to worship God. Any assembly of saints with the intent of worshipping and praising the God of heaven should reject that which emphasizes the carnal emotions and minimizes the spiritual man. An outsider would be able to attend one of our many youth gatherings, and see a marked difference between the worship of God and the Jimmy Fallon show.

In the realm of worship, zeal without knowledge (**Romans 10:2**) paves a dangerous road toward pagan, flesh-oriented, and riotous assemblies. Most of our denominational neighbors have long gone this route, with services geared more toward entertaining man than worshipping God. May we learn to temper our joy in Christ with a Christ like reverence for things holy. And may we teach our children so.

Remember, our God is on the throne – not on stage.

Dalton Key, revised