

Temple, or the Jehovah's Witness Watchtower Society. To give money to the Salvation Army says, in essence, "I place my stamp of approval on what you are teaching and doing, and I want to help." Christians need to remember that if they support the Salvation Army, they are supporting the spread of false doctrine.

This Christmas season when the bell rings and the cry for help comes forth, may that little bell remind faithful children of God of two things: (1) our command to support the needy on an individual and congregational level (Jas. 1:27; Gal. 6:10; Acts 6); and (2) the millions of souls who are going to eternity unprepared—and our need to warn them (Ezek. 33:1ff.). We as Christians must "prove all things" (1 Thess. 5:21), lest we inadvertently send false teachers on their way with our moral and financial blessings (2 Jn. 9-11).

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Can a Christian Support the Salvation Army?

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The bells will start ringing. The call will come forth. As you exit the doors of Wal-Mart, you may hear someone say, "Sir, can you give your change to the Salvation Army?" With a little change in your pocket anyway, surely it would be good to support the needy. Or would it? Does God approve of Christians supporting the Salvation Army? What exactly is the Salvation Army? If Christians are not careful, they can inadvertently support false teaching by donating to the Salvation Army. I know that this principle may come as a shock to some. Like most of the world, the only image you may have of the Salvation Army is that of helping the needy. Let me introduce to you another side of the Salvation Army.

Many people fail to realize that the Salvation Army is not primarily a benevolent organization. The primary goal of this group is evangelism. This is clearly seen in the mission statement of the Salvation Army: "The Salvation Army, an international movement, is an evangelical part of the universal Christian Church. Its message is based on the Bible. Its ministry is motivated by the love of God. Its mission is to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ and to meet human needs in His name without discrimination" (<http://www.salvationarmyusa.org>, click first on "About Us," then click on "Beliefs"; retrieved October 6, 2005). It is evident from this statement that the Salvation Army is denominational in nature (as "an evangelical part of the Universal Christian Church") and that it is evangelistic in its mission. Herein lies the problem with the Salvation Army.

Does it teach the biblical plan of salvation? To answer this question we need only look at the doctrines of the Salvation Army. The following is a list of the beliefs of the Salvation Army, as found on their website.

1. We believe that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments were given by inspiration of God, and that only

they constitute the Divine rule of Christian faith and practice.

2. We believe that there is only one God, who is infinitely perfect, the Creator, Preserver, and Governor of all things, and who is the only proper object of religious worship.
3. We believe that there are three persons in the Godhead - the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, undivided in essence and equal in power and glory.
4. We believe that in the person of Jesus Christ the Divine and human natures are united, so that He is truly and properly God and truly and properly man.
5. We believe that our first parents were created in a state of innocence, but by their disobedience, they lost their purity and happiness, and that in consequence of their fall, all men have become sinners, totally depraved, and as such are justly exposed to the wrath of God.
6. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ has by His suffering and death made an atonement for the whole world so that whosoever will believe may be saved.
7. We believe that repentance toward God, faith in our Lord Jesus Christ and regeneration by the Holy Spirit are necessary to salvation.
8. We believe that we are justified by grace through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ and that he that believes has the witness in himself.
9. We believe that continuance in a state of salvation depends upon continued obedient faith in Christ.
10. We believe that it is the privilege of all believers to be wholly sanctified, and that their whole spirit and soul and body may be preserved blameless unto the coming of our

Lord Jesus Christ.

11. We believe in the immortality of the soul, in the resurrection of the body, in the general judgement at the end of the world, in the eternal happiness of the righteous, and in the endless punishment of the wicked. (<http://www.salvationarmyusa.org> click on beliefs, retrieved October 6, 2005).

As one initially looks at these beliefs, there are several that are biblical. For example, the divine inspiration of the Scriptures, nature and worship of God, and the trinity are all correct, biblical beliefs. However, the Salvation Army advocates a number of false doctrines. Look, for example, at their fifth belief. It is within this statement that the Salvationists state clearly their advocacy of the Calvinistic view of total hereditary depravity. This view is in direct contradiction to what the Bible teaches. The Bible says that we were created upright until iniquity was found in us (Ezek. 28:15). Jesus likened the inhabitants of the heavenly kingdom to little children (Lk. 18:16-17). What was Jesus saying in this text? Was he saying that the kingdom of Heaven is full of a bunch of little depraved sinners? Absolutely not! Yet, if we support the Salvation Army we align ourselves with such false teaching. While this alone would be enough not to support the Salvation Army, there are additional reasons why a Christian cannot support the Salvation Army. For example, the Salvation Army teaches a false plan of salvation. In #6, #7, and #8 in the list of beliefs (above), it is evident that the Salvation Army clearly teaches that salvation comes by belief and repentance alone. This is in direct conflict with what the New Testament teaches (e.g., Acts 2:38; 22:16). Jesus Himself made it very clear that confession and baptism also are essential to salvation (Mt. 10:32-33; Mk. 16:16). A Christian must not support the Salvation Army for the same reason he or she would never give money to the Southern Baptist Association, the Mormon