

Schedule of Meeting Times:

WKAC 1080 AM Sunday 7:30 AM

Study Sunday 10:00 AM

Worship Sunday Morn 11:00 AM

Worship Sunday Eve 5:00 PM

Singing every 2nd Sunday evening

Study Wednesday 7:00 PM

Preacher / bulletin editor:

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*"...I will build
My church; and
the gates of Hades
will not
overpower it,"*

— Matthew 16:18

**Servants during November:**

Songleader: Larry (7), Dwight (14), Larry (21), Dwight (28)

Reading: Stanley**Announcements:** Larry**Table:** Marty, Stanley, Mike**Wednesday Lesson:** Stanley (3), Kris (10),

Larry (17), Stanley (24), Kris (31)

Hays Mill church of Christ

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Elkmont, AL 35620

The Bible . Examiner

"Examine everything carefully..." 1 Thessalonians 5:21 NASB

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Investigate the What?

By David Smitherman

It's not at all uncommon to find websites belonging to various local churches of Christ with a link to an article entitled, "Investigate the church of Christ". And many tracts have been written and are in use under that same heading. I'm sure also that not just a few sermons have had that same title. I respectfully raise the question, "just what is it that you are urging people to investigate?" That might be a legitimate request to make if you are talking about some particular local congregation: "Come and visit with us and investigate what we do in our assemblies and what is taught in our Bible classes and sermons. Compare the things you see and hear with what the New Testament teaches." That is certainly a valid appeal to make. But I'm not sure that is always what is meant.

I fear that there is some thinking among many in churches of Christ that "the church of Christ" is a religious system/organization that

needs to be investigated. Much like one would investigate the Rotary Club or Kiwanis Club, civic organizations through which one might fulfill community responsibilities, I'm afraid "the church of Christ" has become that in a spiritual sense. Just as "the Kiwanis Club" is made up of local Kiwanis clubs around the world, in the same manner some evidently think that "the church of Christ" is made up of local churches of Christ around the world (hence the phrase "the congregations of the church of Christ").

The church that Jesus said He would build (Mt 16:18) has no unique name, has no organizational structure, isn't given any collective work to do, cannot be physically assembled, does not have a doctrine or teaching on any subject, and does not collectively worship. There are no such things (scripturally) as "church of Christ preachers," "church of Christ sermons," "church of Christ hymns",

etc. In short, there is nothing organizationally to “investigate.”

The church that Jesus built is a brotherhood: “Honor all people, love the brotherhood, fear God, and honor the king,” 1 Pet 2:17. Peter speaks of a “hood” of brothers, not local churches. “-hood” is “A termination denoting state, condition, quality, character, totality, as in manhood, childhood, knighthood, brotherhood.” “Brotherhood” looks at people who have in common the quality of “brothers” because they belong to the same family, having the same Father. No organization or religious “system” is indicated in the word and certainly not something to “investigate.”

The church is “first born ones”: “to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect,” Heb 12:23. “Firstborn” is not a reference to Christ but to those who have been “born again”. These people (both those living and having died in Christ) are only “assembled” figuratively in the Lord. Again, no organized religious structure is implied, simply a relationship of those who’ve been born again with the One who has given them life.

“Now you are Christ’s body, and individually members of it. And God has appointed in the church, first

apostles, second prophets, third teachers...” 1 Cor 12:27,28a.

This “brotherhood”—this “church of the firstborn”—is under consideration in these verses. It is here called a “body” and notice who comprises it: “you ...individually members.” Christ’s body is composed of people: “first born ones”, “brothers”. This body/church does not—as an entity—“do” or believe anything that one might probe. What is there to “investigate” about this?

How ironic is it that every one of these “investigate the church of Christ” web pages or tracts says “we” are not a denomination? There is no organized, systematized “we” and yet the plea to investigate “us”—the very language of denominationalism—is used.

There is no religious system called “the church of Christ”—at least not in the New Testament. There are many groups of Christians around the world that go by the name “church of Christ”, but they are not a part of some larger “Church of Christ” arrangement. The church Jesus promised to build (“my church”, Mt 16:18) and these local groups (“the churches”, Rev 1:4) are two entirely different concepts and the former is not composed of the later. Getting people to investigate Christ instead of “the church” will produce Christians (Acts 11:26) who are converted and dedicated to the Lord, not some institution. 

Brotherly Love

By James DeVoll

“Now concerning brotherly love you have no need for anyone to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love one another,” 1 Thess 4:9. The term love is vastly misunderstood by society today. To many, love means that you accept the actions of a person without question. You dare not criticize anyone for what they do, particularly in regard to moral conduct.

Jesus teaches us that we are to love our fellow man. As John the apostle wrote: “...God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him,” 1 Jn 4:16. This divine love, which we learn from God, always seeks the highest good of the other. Thus, we are to put God above self and our fellow man before self. This love cannot be selfish.

When a person learns this love which is from God, a noticeable change will occur in the life of that person. They will speak and act with greater kindness to their wife or

husband. They will speak more gently to their children. Speech directed to neighbors and friends will be “seasoned with salt,” Col 4:6. Learning this divine love will necessitate a change in your conduct toward other folks.

Also, this love will change your view regarding your friends and associates. Because you love them, and have their “highest good” in mind, you will be concerned about sin in their life. Through Paul, Jesus teaches us that “the wages of sin is death,” Rom 6:23.

Understanding the penalty of sin, you will be concerned about the moral conduct of others and will do what you can to help them overcome sin that will put their souls in jeopardy. Paul wrote in 2 Cor 5:11, “Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade others...”

Have you truly learned this divine love? 

Remember in Prayer

Betty was admitted to HH after AFIB on Friday, rm 372; no blockage was found. **Cindy** is doing well from her surgery. Please also remember

Carolyn; Deborah and Serenity; Hazel; John, Sylvia, and Paige Pollard; Joshua and Kayla V; Pam B, Kaylee, Julie and Violet; and Pam McNatt. 