

Scripture: Acts 20:13-38
Singing: 177 – 183 – 131 -- 276

COF. 29 (1)

Intro: The local church is to be *the embassy of Christ's Kingdom* in our nation
A. All who belong to this 'embassy' are in duty bound to represent the King and serve His Kingdom (CoF 28)

B. Refresh yourself regularly on the 11 aspects of your *covenant commitment to God and His Church* locally

1. The 11th commitment:

To unite, if through work or other providential reasons we move from this place, with another local, Biblically sound or true church, where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and live out the principles of God's Word to His glory and the benefit of other saints and sinners.

2. Art. 29 gives timeless and Biblical guidance *how to decide where to unite*

YOUR CALLING WITH REGARD TO THE TRUE CHURCH (1)

I. You are to examine if a church is true or false

II. You are to examine the three non-negotiable aspects

III. You are to examine the presence of true Christians

I. Each one of you are to examine whether a church is true or false

A. This is God's call: 1 John 4:1; Acts 20:29-30; 2 Peter 2:1; Matt. 7:15; 24:5, 24

B. Reviewing all these Biblical warnings, learn:

1. Be careful to inspect the quality of the ministry

2. Don't be misled by the name

3. Don't be misled by the history of the church

4. Don't be misled by your feelings

5. Don't forget there are wolves in sheep clothing

C. You need to examine the body (*marks*) & communion (*members*) of Church

1. The body is *structure*: is all managed according to God's Word?

2. The communion is *members*: are there living saints?

D. You need to examine whether a church is *true or false*: how?

1. Focusing on the 3 Biblical hallmarks – norms: *these are non-negotiable*

a. preaching ministry: *pure doctrine of the Gospel preached*

b. sacrament ministry: *pure administration of sacraments (33-35)*

c. medicine ministry: *pure church discipline of believers (30-32)*

Reflect & Act

A. Bear in mind: a ‘true church’ is not the same as a ‘perfect church’

B. Be committed to your local church to as living member of Christ’s body

1. Don’t stand on the side-lines

2. Don’t separate yourself from a true church

3. Don’t remain ununited to a local true church if you moved new area

Worthy Gems about Church

He cannot have God for His Father
who refuses to have the church for his mother. (Augustine)

Those who would enjoy the dignities and privileges of Christ’s family
must submit to the discipline of it. (M. Henry)

Those whom God leads, he leads to His tabernacles. Those therefore who
pretend to be led by the Spirit and yet turn their backs upon instituted
ordinances, certainly deceive themselves. (M. Henry)

Nothing will so avail to divide the church as love of power.
Nothing will so avail to unite the church as the power of love.