

God's Church After its Scattering

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THIS BOOKLET IS NOT TO BE SOLD. The information provided is for the benefit of former members of the congregations of the Worldwide Church of God (WCG), and of current and prospective members of God's Church.

God's first century church had apostles, evangelists, preachers, teachers and deacons. Then the persecutions came and it had to scatter into the wilderness or countryside to escape being put to death. Did God's Church ever again become a visible organization of men with apostles, evangelists, preachers and teachers?

Preamble

Please Note: All comments in brackets [] or in parentheses () as well as highlighted text (bolded and/or in blue) are from the author of this study. Bible quotations are in maroon.

I think it is essential to clarify the question of the “Holy Spirit” before we begin this study. If we say that who or what is the “Holy Spirit” is the question that needs to be answered, we are starting from the assumption that there exists such a being as the Holy Spirit and that it is a separate and distinct being from God and the Word. The question which should be asked is who are the beings the Bible tell us are holy, whose composition is spirit and who have existed eternally? Either the Bible plainly tells us who are the separate and distinct beings that existed from all eternity who created all things (spirit beings and the material universe) or we have no way of getting an answer to our question.

The Holy Spirits of the God Family

The Bible tells us in Gen 1:1 that:

Gen 1:1 In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

The Hebrew word translated “God” is “Eloheem” which is the plural form of “Eloah which means “God”. The word “Eloheem” refers to “gods.” It is a uniplural noun like family, group, team, etc. In the beginning, there was therefore more than one God being in existence but how many were there?

Joh 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

Joh 1:2 The same was in the beginning with God.

Joh 1:3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

In the beginning when God created the heaven and the earth there was God and there was another being with God who was also God, the Word. How can these two beings both be God; isn't that impossible?

The word God indicates the kind of existence of these 2 beings: their nature is to be God in the same way that all human beings have the same human nature. However, having the same nature does not mean that all human beings constitute a single being; indeed, they are all separate and distinct beings with their own personalities. God and the Word have in common the same nature or, level and type of existence, but they are separate and distinct beings just like all human beings who have the same human nature are separate and distinct beings.

God the Father

We read in the Bible that God became a father when the Word became flesh (Phi 2:5-8) by being born of woman after having been conceived in the virgin Mary by the holy spirit being called God (Luke 1:35). God from that point on became God the Father and the Word, who was born as the flesh-and-blood Jesus of Nazareth became God's Son or the Son of God. He was both fully God (his father was God and fully human (his mother was the virgin Mary).

Jesus was God the Father's only begotten son at the time when He was conceived in Mary's womb but He was not to be the only one begotten of the Father. God the Father is the holy spirit being in the Godhead that calls men to salvation.

Joh 6:44 No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.

Joh 6:65 And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father.

Joh 18:9 That the saying might be fulfilled, which he spake, Of them which thou [God the Father] gavest me have I lost none.

1Pe 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

God the Word and Spokesman

The Bible term for being called is to be spiritually begotten by God the Father (1Pe 1:3). When we are begotten, we become a spiritual embryo that can be born again as a glorified spirit being with eternal life. Those begotten of the holy spirit God the Father who follow their calling are then able to come to the holy spirit being called the Word and Spokesman (John 6:44; 65; 18:9) who then teaches them. The glorified Jesus-Christ as God the Father's Word and Spokesman is the holy spirit being that works in the minds of God the Father's called and chosen ones.

Joh 7:39 (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)

Jesus had to first be glorified for it to be possible for Christians to have access to the holy spirit called the Word and Spokesman because the glorified Christ is the holy spirit being who works in the minds of God's saints (John 14:17) in the same way that Satan is the evil spirit that works in the minds of the children of disobedience (Eph2:2).

Joh 14:17 Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he [Christ] dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. [On the day of Pentecost, it would be in them and in all true Christians.]

Eph 2:2 Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, [Satan] the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:

The holy spirit God the Father calls men and those who follow their calling are then taught by the holy spirit called the Word and God the Father's Spokesman.

Joh 14:26 But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

The Holy Ghost

The expression “Holy Ghost” used in the Bible is in error as there are no ghosts in the Godhead but rather 2 beings that are holy (John 17:11; Isa 6:3) and spirit (John 4:24).

Joh 17:11 And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are.

Isa 6:3 And one cried unto another, and said, **Holy, holy, holy**, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.

Joh 4:24 **God is a Spirit:** and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

These 2 God beings who are holy and spirit are the holy spirit beings of the God family who existed in the beginning at the creation of all things.

Joh 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

Joh 1:2 The same was in the beginning with God.

Joh 1:3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

And, the Word who was with God is before all things i.e., *nothing* existed before He created them whether made of spirit or matter.

Col 1:15 [Christ] Who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature:

Col 1:16 For by him [the Word who became Jesus-Christ] were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:

Col 1:17 And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.

In the beginning before anything either physical or spiritual was created, there was God and the Word who existed before all things and no other being is mentioned as having existed with them. There is no bib-

lical evidence that there ever existed a third, separate and distinct personage in the Godhead called the “Holy Spirit” who dwelt in eternity with God and the Word.

God is a Family

Throughout the Bible we can find many verses which clearly indicates the existence of family relations between God and the Word and God’s called, chosen and faithful.

Mat 11:27 All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.

Mat 12:50 For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.

Joh 20:17 Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.

God is clearly a family in which many can be ultimately born again by a resurrection from the dead to eternal, glorified spirit life in God’s Kingdom.

Rom 8:29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he [God’s Son] might be the firstborn among many brethren.

Col 1:18 And he [the glorified Christ] is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.

Christ was the first to be born again by a resurrection from the dead to be followed by many brethren.

Bible Writing Convention

The practice in the Bible has been to simply use the expression “the Holy Spirit” without indicating which God personage in the Godhead the expression represents. Over time, because of this practice, just about everybody has come to believe that the Holy Spirit is a separate and distinct God being in the Godhead but, there is no single verse or group of verses in the Bible that prove the existence of such a third being in the Godhead. The words “holy” and “spirit” are adjectives that describe the nature of

God the Father and of God the Word i.e., they are holy beings made of spirit.

Whenever we encounter the expressions the “Holy Spirit” or simply the “Holy Spirit” in the Bible we must look at the context to determine of which holy spirit being of the Godhead the Bible is talking about: the holy spirit, God the Father or the holy spirit, the Word and Spokesman.

The Word is the holy spirit being in the Godhead who carries out the instructions and wishes of the holy spirit, God. He is the faithful son who seeks to do his father’s will in all things. He is the member of the God family that did the work of creating the heaven and the earth, who ruled over ancient Israel through Moses and his human successors, He is the one who became a man who suffered and died to be God the Father’s perfect sacrifice for sin and make the salvation of mankind possible, etc. and He came to reveal the Father to those who follow the Father’s calling.

Making Things Clearer

In this study, when referring to God’s spirit who, depending on the circumstances can be the holy spirit personage called God the Father or the holy spirit personage called God the Word and Spokesman, I will not capitalize either of the adjectives “holy” and “spirit”. This is in order to not perpetuate the false impression in the minds of readers that there is a 3rd being in the Godhead called the “Holy Spirit.” Instead, I will refer to either of the holy spirits in the God family as being God’s spirit without capitalizing the word “spirit” to make it plain that we are not referring to a third God being in the God family called the “Holy Spirit” but to one of the 2 God beings in the Godhead.

God’s family is presently made up of 2 holy spirit beings to which are to be added thousands and possibly millions of other holy spirit beings when God’s plan of salvation for mankind has reached its end. The saints that endure in the faith until the end of their natural human life, will be resurrected as individual holy spirit beings in God’s Kingdom when it is established.

There are two studies which you can read regarding what is the “Holy Spirit” and decide for yourself in light of the Bible-based evidence offered if such a being exists in the Godhead. These studies are: [What is the Holy Spirit? Cliff Notes Version](#) and [Who or What is the Holy Spirit?](#)

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Those of us who have been part of the Worldwide Church of God (WCG) whose Pastor General was Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong (HWA) were taught that God's Church was first and foremost a spiritual organization.

HWA also taught the Church could at times exist as a visible organization in the world set up according to the laws of this world for the creation of corporate entities or organizations. It was considered that there would be times when God's Church would have all of the offices mentioned in Ephesians 4: 11-13.

Eph 4:11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

Eph 4:12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

Eph 4:13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:

HWA stated that the WCG was one of those instances in the history God's Church where God had allowed the existence of a big church with a full ministry. He knew and said that God's Church in the Bible is spoken of as being the "little flock" and that it was invisible to the world and persecuted whenever it came to its attention. But, it became set in

Church members' minds that the way the WCG was structured was the way God's Church had always existed and should exist. This led to the belief that any religious groups claiming to be God's true Church would be organized just like the WCG.

After the death of HWA and the transformation of the WCG into one of the false Christian churches of this world, the former members of the WCG set out to find where God's Church had gone as they knew it was never to die out. So, they started looking for visible organizations of men which most closely resembled the way the WCG had been set up in the days of HWA.

Many of the former ministers of the WCG created new churches of God such as the Global Church of God, the Living Church of God, the Church of God International, the Philadelphia Church of God, the Restored Church of God, etc. Many of these same ministers had been secretly opposing HWA and far away from the Pasadena headquarters of the WCG, were not preaching the same things as HWA.

Even while HWA headed up the church, WCG ministers defected and took with them many members of WCG congregations to set up their own "Church of God." HWA's own son, founded a new "Church of God," the Church of God International made up of members of the WCG who followed him after he was put out of the WCG by HWA himself because of his gambling, womanizing and misuse of Church money. He was a gifted orator and many were so impressed with his verbal abilities that they overlooked or refused to believe the accusations made against him and his expulsion from the WCG.

HWA had always made it very clear that the name of the true Church as found in the Bible was the "Church of God." It should therefore be no great surprise that organizations of men wanting to attract to their group former members of the WCG and also newcomers from the general public would be sure to have the words "Church of God" somewhere in the title of their organization.

The former members of the WCG have, in great numbers, gone into these new "Churches of God" after having reviewed them all to determine which one, in their estimation, looked and felt the most like the WCG under HWA. Some others have found Web sites whom they feel are speaking God's truth and are participating in on-line groups and there are some who move around from one "true" Church of God to another after having become dissatisfied with the ministry for one reason or another. As far as they are concerned, they are all true churches of God and to ensure their salvation, they feel they have to belong to one of them.

A search of the Worldwide Web reveals there are around 10,000–12,000 congregations and organizations that include the words “Church of God” in their title across the U.S. and Canada. The question then becomes, which one is the one true church God said would exist until the end of the ages? Christ said He would build His Church not churches.

Mat 16:18 And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

In this document, we will, using the Bible, try to come to a definite answer as to who, what and where is God's one true Church in our days.

Becoming Part of God's Church

God's Church began on the day of Pentecost some 2,000 years ago when Christ's disciples who were together in an upper room were waiting as Christ had told them to do, to be endued with power from on high.

Luk 24:49 And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.

Act 2:1 And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.

Act 2:2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.

Act 2:3 And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.

Act 2:4 And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, [spirit it should say] and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

When this happened, the disciples became part of God's Church.

1Co 12:13 For by one Spirit are we all baptized [become part of] into one body, [the body of Christ, God's Church] whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

How did others after the disciples become part of God's Church?

Act 2:38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. [spirit]

What needs to happen for someone to become part of Christ's body or church?

Joh 6:44 No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.

Is God's Church something that one can choose to join after having checked out the different churches in their neighborhood or, after the death of HWA, by comparing the many "churches of God" to one another and then choosing the one that best meet their expectations of what is God's Church?

God the Father very clearly says that no man can come to Christ unless He draws him. Why must the Father draw him?

Rev 12:9 And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which **deceiveth the whole world**: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

Unless and until called by God the Father, all are deceived by the Devil, the god of this world.

2Co 4:4 In whom the god of this world hath **blinded** the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

Eph 2:2 Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, **the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience**:

When God the Father calls someone, by a great one time miracle, their spiritual blindness is removed. God then gives him enough information to come to the realization that He exists and that he has to abandon his current life and begin living a new life where he wants to try to obey

Him in all things as much as he can.

If this person follows God the Father's calling by choosing to obey Him as best he can, he then becomes chosen and part of God's Church. His spiritual blindness will not return unless he decides to go back into the world. If ever he makes that decision, he will lose his salvation.

God the Father is the one who makes it possible for men to become part of His Church. This process occurs in the mind of the one being called. It is the holy spirit God the Father enabling him to understand truth which before he had always rejected.

Rom 8:7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

The unconverted mind that we are all born with is hostile towards God and cannot be subject to God's law.

When are people to be called? Can someone choose to be called?

Eph 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:

Eph 1:4 According as **he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world**, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:

Eph 1:5 Having **predestinated** us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, **according to the good pleasure of his will**,

Eph 1:11 In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being **predestinated** according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of **his own will**:

If you will believe your Bible, God the Father is the one who decides who and when someone is to be called. Those called were predestinated to be called. They were chosen before the foundation of the world. Since the day of Pentecost, only some are being called but during the Millennium and the Last Great Day all will be called.

Joe 2:28 And it shall come to pass afterward, that **I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh**; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions:

Joe 2:29 And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit.

It should be noted that being predestinated to be called doesn't mean that someone's salvation is assured. It only means that someone is given an opportunity for salvation and whether he will be saved or not depends on what he does with his calling.

An important point to keep in mind then is that only God the Father can call men and He is the one who determines when someone will be called; not any man or organization of men.

The Link Between God and Converted Men

As human beings we all relate to the physical world in which we live by our 5 physical senses and we can relate to each other because we all have the same spirit in us, the human spirit.

1Co 2:11 For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the **spirit of man** which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.

We know and understand the world in similar ways which makes it possible for us to understand the physical sensations and feelings of other human beings as they are similar to our own.

However, this spirit in man does not make it possible for us to know God level spiritual truth. For the unconverted man, the existence of God is a fairy tale, a creation of man's imagination, an emotional crutch for those who are scared of the unknown and of death. Another spirit has to be added to man to make it possible for him to know and accept the existence of God-level spiritual truth.

And, this is what is clearly stated in the 2nd part of 1Co 2:11: "....even so the things of God knows no man, but the Spirit of God." In other words, no man can know the things of God but by the Spirit of God or by revelation.

1Co 2:9 But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.

1Co 2:10 But God hath **revealed them unto us by his Spirit:**
for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.

This occurs when the holy spirit God the Father calls men. His spirit is then with the one being called. If he follows his calling, he then becomes chosen. The holy spirit God the Word and Spokesman then comes to him and teaches him all things. It is then in him as opposed to simply being with him.

Joh 14:16 And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another **Comforter**, that he may abide with you for ever;

Joh 14:17 Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he [**I, Christ**] dwelleth **with** you, and shall be **in** you.

Joh 14:18 I [**Christ**] will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.

Christ was the Comforter who was **with** the disciples and after His resurrection and glorification, He would be the Comforter and Spirit of Truth that would come to them and be **in** them.

What would this Comforter and Spirit of Truth do?

Joh 14:26 But the **Comforter**, which is the Holy Ghost, [spirit] whom the Father will send in my name, **he shall teach you all things**, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

John 14:26 makes it very clear that the Comforter mentioned in John 14:16 we have just read is Christ who would teach all things to the disciples and all true Christians.

So, God's Church is all those who were predestinated to be called, who have followed their calling, who are remaining faithful and who are growing in knowledge and understanding of God's truth as they are taught by the holy spirit God the Word and Spokesman.

God's Church is a spiritual organization not a physical one. Its teachers are holy spirit beings not men and those who become and remain part of God's Church is by the holy spirits of the Godhead.

Why God's Church?

God's Church can be defined as those individuals who have been called and chosen because they have committed themselves to obeying God as best they can until the end of their lives. Why did God call them?

2Pe 3:18 But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.

Pro 4:5 Get wisdom, get understanding: forget it not; neither decline from the words of my mouth.

Pro 4:7 Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding.

Pro 9:10 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding.

2Ti 2:15 Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

Those called and chosen are to grow in knowledge and understanding of the Scriptures and they are to grow in grace i.e., in the perfect holy righteous character of Christ as much as is possible for a human being. This they do by studying God's holy Bible with a mind enabled to understand God-level spiritual truth. The overall purpose of their calling is for them to demonstrate to God their continuing attitude of obedience to Him as they live out their lives. What God wants to know is if they will maintain their attitude of obedience to him in all things as they do their best to apply in their lives the truth they are learning as they study their Bible.

This is what those called and chosen by God the Father have to do and collectively, those who are doing so, are God's Church.

Small Scattered and Persecuted

Contrary to popular belief, even in the many false "churches of God" in existence today, God's Church would be small, scattered, invisible and

persecuted whenever it came to the attention of the world. Here are several Scriptures where this is prophesied.

John 15: 20 If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you,

II Tim. 3:12 All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution

Mark 14:27 And Jesus saith unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered.

The persecutions and scattering began early.

Acts 8:1 And at that time there was a great persecution against the Church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles."

And in Daniel we read:

Dan 11: 33-35 And they that understand among the people shall instruct many: yet they shall fall by the sword, and by flame, by captivity, and by spoil, many days. Now when they shall fall, they shall be holpen with a little help: but many shall cleave to them with flatteries. And some of them of understanding shall fall, to try them, and to purge them, and to make them white, even to the time of the end

Nowhere is there any prophecy that the one true Church would be a great and powerful organization visible to the world and seeking to change it for the better. Rather, Jesus called it the "Little Flock."

Luk 12:32 Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

A little flock despised and scattered which had to remain invisible to the world to escape being persecuted. It should be realized that truly converted Christians don't have any outwardly visible distinguishing sign that makes them recognizable to either the unconverted or the converted. This is why God's Church is not to be found in large, visible to the world organizations. The truly converted don't know where other truly converted members may be and so cannot organize themselves into large groups.

God's Church in the unconverted world is to be like sheep (a little flock) among wolves.

Mat 10:16 Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.

Mat 10:17 But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues;

Christians are not to act in such a way as to attract the attention of the unconverted who are naturally hostile to God nor are they to attempt to teach them against their will the spiritual truth that they have.

Mat 7:6 Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.

They will turn on them and try to destroy them. For the unconverted the truth of God is foolishness.

1Co 2:14 But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

Rom 8:7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

God-level spiritual truth can only be known by God revealing it to those who He has called and chosen.

Co 2:9 But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.

1Co 2:10 But God hath **revealed** them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.

The Loss of Truth

God's Church would be scattered because of the persecutions that would come upon it. They became so intense that it had to flee into the wilderness i.e., far away from the great cities to escape the wrath of a new, great false church which persecuted all those who didn't share its religious beliefs.

After Pentecost, the apostles trained men to be evangelist, pastors, ministers and teachers as mentioned in the following verses:

Eph 4:11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

Eph 4:12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

These ministers were trained by the apostles who were trained by Christ. They were given the same knowledge that Christ had given the apostles. They were then able to feed their flocks with the truth of Christ they had. However, after the scattering of the Church in the wilderness, the ministry and regular members of God's Church lost contact with each other. And, after the death of the apostles and the ministers taught by them, much of the truth that they had began to be lost.

The members of God's Church were often not able to read and write; they were and are the little people of the world.

1Co 1:26 For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called:

1Co 1:27 But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty;

1Co 1:28 And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are:

1Co 1:29 That no flesh should glory in his presence.

The truth they had could only be transmitted by word-of-mouth which is an imprecise process. In the retelling from person to person, some information is omitted while other parts of the message are exaggerated. Over time, there remains but a few common bits of outstanding knowledge that stay unchanged like the necessity to keep the Sabbath and the 10 commandments.

Those who would be called and chosen would then only have a few truths that they could follow. After their scattering, they were on their own and much of the time didn't know any other truly converted Christians. They had to hold on by themselves to the truth they had.

Another major difficulty to maintaining the truth given the apostles was that books were not commonly available as any book that existed had to be copied by hand (manuscript) which was an expensive process available only to rich people. And, the Bible was originally written in Hebrew and in Greek which are languages that were not commonly spoken.

It is only in the 14th century that there first was a complete English translation of the Bible but of course, there are many other languages and having an English Bible did not reach any of them. Printing would only be invented in the 15th century and until then there was no easy way of duplicating documents and making them cheaply accessible to a great number of people.

From the time of the scattering of God's Church after the fall of Jerusalem in 70 AD until our time, there have been only isolated instances where organized congregations of God's Church arose. They were persecuted and faded from view. When HWA came in among those he believed to be a Sardis Era congregation he found they were uneducated and had but a small amount of truth. If the truth given the apostolic church had been faithfully transmitted throughout the ages from one generation of believers to another, wouldn't this congregation of God's Church have had abundant truth?

Nowadays, there are laws that protect religious groups from being persecuted by the civil authorities. These laws are mostly to be found in north American countries and in Europe although Christianity still continues to be under attack in other areas of the world. The freedom of religion laws that we have today is the reason why we can have so many different churches, Christians and non-Christians, including several "Churches of God."

Recent History of God's Church

With the coming of Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong (HWA) and the foundation of the Worldwide Church of God, some of the foundational truths given the apostles by Christ and taught to the First Century Church were restored.

These truths constitute a foundation on which truly converted Christians can build today. However, as HWA often reminded everybody, they must first be sure to prove with their Bible what he taught the Church. He knew he was just a man and that it was possible for him to make mistakes. If ever we would find he had made a mistake, he told us very clearly that we were not to follow him but our Bible.

After the death of HWA, the WCG was destroyed by false prophets who mostly arose from within and became a church of this world preaching falsities. The many who attended the services of the WCG found their way into the several false churches of God raised up by former ministers of the WCG. These are the same ministers who secretly opposed HWA and sought to change the doctrines of the Church.

They are also the ones who preached the new truths introduced in the Church after HWA's death which undid some of what he had taught. If they were true ministers of God who supposedly knew their Bible better than those they taught, they should have been able to prove the new "truths" coming from a new Pastor General and not accept those that were false. No, they just preached them with the same enthusiasm and vigor they had preached the doctrines introduced into the church by HWA. They stayed with the WCG while it was being transformed into a false church of this world until the changes became too much for even them to accept.

They started their own "churches of God" and, as prophesied, most of those who had been part of the WCG followed them.

2Pe 2:1 But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers **among you**, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.

One of the things not accepted nor understood today by the former members of the WCG is that there would be false teachers and prophets among them not just in the unconverted world. They would preach lies that would sound so good and so reassuring that they would follow them as they established new, "true" churches of God in which salvation would be easier.

2Pe 2:2 And **many** shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.

And why would these false prophets and teachers be setting up new "Churches of God?"

2Pe 2:3 And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not

As Peter tells us, they would do so only as a way to enrich themselves because of their great love for money.

These are the men spoken of by Paul who are trying to pass themselves off as being apostles and true ministers of God. (Last part of 2Co 11:12.)

2Co 11:12 But what I do, that I will do, that I may cut off occasion from them which desire occasion; that wherein they glory, **they may be found even as we.**

2Co 11:13 For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ.

The false teachers would come among the congregations of God's Church claiming to having been sent by Christ to give them "new truths."

2Co 11:14 And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.

2Co 11:15 Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.

Truly converted Christians should not be surprised that false prophets and false teachers would present themselves as bearers of God's truth. They certainly wouldn't act in such as way as to make it evident they are only preaching and assembling congregations to satisfy their lust for money.

And so it is that the Global Church of God, the Living Church of God, the Philadelphia Church of God, and the Restored Church of God came into being.

With the creation of these new "churches of God" came the introduction of new doctrines never taught by HWA which undo what he originally taught. Also, there are doctrinal differences between the different churches of God which are irreconcilable and keeps them apart. The result is that there are now several different "churches of God" all claiming to be the true church founded by Christ yet being divided.

1Co 1:13 Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?

Are there as many different churches of God as they are teachers? Those who are part of God's Church belong to it not because of any preacher but because Christ's sacrifice made it possible for their sins to be forgiven. God's Church is not made up of quarreling sects each calling themselves God's one, true Church and calling all others Laodicean.

1Co 12:13 For by **one** Spirit are we all baptized [**become part of**

into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

There is only one possible body of Christ or Church as all those called were called by one spirit, the holy spirit God the Father, and those accepting their calling, are all being taught by one spirit, the holy spirit God the Word and Spokesman.

If all true members of God's Church are taught by the same spirit they should then believe the same things and having the same beliefs, be one body, one church, not many.

Col 1:17 And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.

Col 1:18 And he [Christ] is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.

Christ is the head of a single body, one church.

Act 20:28 Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

God's one church exists and was made possible by Christ dying as God the Father's perfect sacrifice for sin. It is something precious and which was bought at great price, the death of Christ. So, those who are watching over it, the overseers, have to be very careful about what they teach so as to be sure that it is the truth they were taught by the apostles who received it directly from Christ.

However, as we have previously seen, the truth Christ gave the apostles was not successfully transmitted unchanged from generation to generation of true believers. Today, anyone presenting himself as a true minister of God, cannot honestly claim to know it. In our days, there are no great teacher of God's truth whose teachings can be considered to be the absolute truth of God that no one can question. Anyone thinking so is either dishonest or deluded and is not a true minister of God.

All these new "churches of God" are organized in exactly the same way as the WCG. They all have given themselves the authority to appoint men as evangelists, preachers, teachers, elders, etc. They all see themselves as inheritors of the Great Commission given the apostles to preach the Gospel in all the world as a witness unto all nations which is something they

call "The Work." However, the Bible is clear that the Great Commission was given to the apostles, not the Church; even HWA said as much which supposedly all those false churches of God are following in his footsteps.

But, what is the big, insurmountable problem they all have which cannot be explained away?

Spiritual Knowledge

If anyone is to present himself or an organization they lead as being authoritative preachers of God's truth, it goes without saying, that it is necessary for them to know what is the truth Christ gave the apostles and that the First Century Church had until its scattering.

Christ did not appear to any of today's preachers in dreams or in visions to instruct them nor will He because in the last days which started on the day of Pentecost, God is speaking to truly converted Christians by his Son.

Heb 1:1 God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,

Heb 1:2 Hath in these **last days spoken unto us by his Son**, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;

Self-appointed human teachers of God's truth are not the means used by God in NT times to give knowledge to His called and chosen ones; God's Church.

In NT times, all those called and chosen by the holy spirit God the Father are taught all things by the holy spirit God the Word and Spokesman not men.

John 14:26 But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, [spirit] whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

Each and every truly converted Christian has the holy spirits of the God-head dwelling in them and revealing truth to them as they study God's holy Bible. But, the leaders of the several "true" churches of God will say that those called and chosen by God the Father must be taught by men and be part of one of their groups if they are to be saved as supposedly the knowledge they have is essential for salvation.

But, is there a specific amount of knowledge needed for salvation?

The parable of the talents makes it easy to understand that not all Christians receive the same amount of knowledge at the time of their calling and regardless of the amount of knowledge God the Father gives them, it is sufficient for salvation but on one condition. Christians must increase the knowledge they received at the time of their calling no matter how much or how little it was by their own efforts, not that of others.

In the parable of the talents, the amount of knowledge received is symbolically referred to as being "talents."

In the parable, every servant who had increased the talents the Master had given him, was rewarded but there was one servant who only had been given 1 talent and had not made it grow.

Mat 25:24 Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed:

This servant knew his Master expected growth.

Mat 25:25 And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast that is thine.

Mat 25:26 His lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful [lazy] servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed:

Mat 25:27 Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury. [interest]

The Master tells him that if he didn't want to spend the time and effort to grow the talent given him, he should at least have given it to the exchangers and have it earn interest which he could have given Him. But he didn't even do that even if it would not have required any effort on his part.

Mat 25:28 Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents.

Mat 25:29 For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath.

The servant who did not grow the talent given him had it taken away from

him and given to another who had grown his talents. In other words, those who are not studying and making an effort to increase the truth given them, will lose it. Those that are working at increasing the knowledge given them will be given more knowledge. The holy spirit God the Word keeps working with them as they study God's holy Bible and those who are not studying eventually lose the holy spirit God the Word and the knowledge they had.

So what happened to the servant who did not increase his talent?

Mat 25:30 And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

The unprofitable and lazy servant didn't lose his salvation because he only had one talent i.e., a small amount of knowledge; no, he lost it because he didn't make any effort to grow the knowledge he was given at the time of his calling.

At the time of our calling God the Father gives us enough knowledge for us to be able to choose to obey Him or to remain in the world. We are then responsible to grow this knowledge by continuing study of God's holy Bible. Christians have to have works and the works they must have are to grow in knowledge and understanding of the Scriptures and in obedience by their own efforts.

Only God the Father can call men and only God the Word can give those called and chosen, understanding of the Scriptures. Without understanding, we have no knowledge of the holy, we simply have knowledge of the Bible like the unconverted world can have knowledge of the Bible.

Pro 9:10 The fear [obeying God] of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding.

Our commitment to obey God in all things at the time of our calling is the first step needed for us to acquire wisdom. Wisdom is the right way of doing things according to God as revealed to us in the Bible. And knowledge of the holy, knowing the minds of God and the Word who are both holy, is understanding of the truth contained in the Bible.

God is the one doing the work of calling, choosing and teaching and in doing so He is the one who is building His Church (the collectivity of those who have willingly committed themselves to obeying Him as best they can when God the Father called them).

Eph 2:10 For we are his [God's] workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, [of obedience to God] which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

And, God's Church which is God's temple is not being built by men but by God's spirit.

Zec 4:6 Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of the LORD unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but **by my spirit**, saith the LORD of hosts.

This was said to Zechariah after he had been shown a vision of God's temple; here is the vision.

Zec 4:1 And the angel that talked with me came again, and waked me, as a man that is wakened out of his sleep,

Zec 4:2 And said unto me, What seest thou? And I said, I have looked, and behold a candlestick all of gold, with a bowl upon the top of it, and his seven lamps thereon, and seven pipes to the seven lamps, which are upon the top thereof:

Zec 4:3 And two olive trees by it, one upon the right side of the bowl, and the other upon the left side thereof.

This is a vision of God's Church as it would exist throughout the ages and what we see is that it is fed by the holy spirits of the Godhead represented by the two olive trees. God and the Word are the ones making possible the existence of God's Church which are all those called, chosen and faithful wherever they may be in the world, by themselves or in small groups.

The State of True Christianity Today

It being that the original knowledge given the apostles and the First Century Church have been lost for the greatest part and that Christ will not personally teach anyone in NT times, is it possible today to have churches with the same type of organization that existed at the foundation of God's Church?

The apostles taught by Christ appointed evangelists, pastors, etc. and taught them the same truth they had been personally given by Christ. But, since the scattering of the First Century Church, there are no men who have the knowledge given the apostles. All they can teach is what they think the Scriptures mean. And, how did they get to be appointed as ministers, teachers, preachers, etc.?

It was done by men who gave themselves the authority to do so. The continuity between the apostles and current day organizations of men calling themselves churches of God has been lost a long time ago. These organizations of men and the men they appoint to be preachers, teachers, etc. don't have knowledge which is any more sure than what anyone called and chosen by God may have.

The spiritual truth of God does not come into God's Church through a single man who then through ministers he has appointed, teaches it to the Church. All of God the Father's called and chosen ones are being taught by God the Word as they study God's holy Bible.

God's Church was to be scattered because of persecutions and it would be small (the little flock) and invisible. It would not be a large, visible-to-the-world organization of men or even several of them, engaged in preaching the Gospel to the unconverted world to whom it is impossible to teach spiritual truth.

The change of greatest importance in NT times is that the true pastors of God's Church are not men.

Eze 34:8 As I live, saith the Lord GOD, surely because my flock became a prey, and my flock became meat to every beast of the field, because there was no shepherd, neither did my shepherds search for my flock, but the shepherds fed themselves, and fed not my flock;

Eze 34:9 Therefore, O ye shepherds, hear the word of the LORD;

Eze 34:10 Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I am against the shepherds; and I will require my flock at their hand, and cause them to cease from feeding the flock; neither shall the shepherds feed themselves any more; for I will deliver my flock from their mouth, that they may not be meat for them.

Eze 34:11 For thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I, even I, will both search my sheep, and seek them out.

Jer 3:15 And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding.

The pastors of God's NT Church are God the Father and God the Word who are the only ones we can fully rely on to always feed us with knowledge and understanding.

Conclusion

It is acknowledged that not having men as teachers of God's truth goes counter to our understanding of how people are taught knowledge. But here the situation is one where knowledge is to be transmitted from spirit beings who cannot be perceived by our physical senses but who yet, just the same, are quite capable of giving us not only knowledge but understanding of the Scriptures which is something no man can do.

The example of how God's Church was organized and functioned when it first came into being is not something that can be replicated today. For a brief amount of time, men had been trained by God-in-the-flesh, Jesus Christ. Their knowledge was sure and unquestionable. They could as authorities teach it to those called and chosen by God the Father. They could also appoint evangelists, preachers, pastors, teachers, etc. as they, the apostles, had without a doubt been chosen by God the Father and trained by Christ. But since the death of the apostles and those they trained, and since the scattering of God's First Century Church because of persecutions, there are no men today of whom we can be sure they were called and chosen by God to teach God's Church.

One thing is certain, they don't have the truth given the apostles nor can they ever have it. And, having appointed oneself as a pastor or being appointed by an organization of men who gave itself the authority to appoint pastors does not by any means make them a true pastor in whom we can have confidence they are preaching the truth.

Christ said we would know the false prophets by their fruits.

Mat 7:15 Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.

Mat 7:16 Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?

The several "churches of God" today are divided because they don't preach nor believe the same things. Many of them are teaching "new truths" which cannot be proven with the Bible. Some believe "speaking in tongues" as being an outburst of incomprehensible gibberish from someone who is supposedly truly converted and that, that gibberish is a God level language unknown to men.

Some are having women covering their heads with a hat or scarf during services as they believe that when Paul says a woman is not to pray with her head unconverted it means she has to cover it with something.

1Co 11:5 But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head: for that is even all one as if she were shaven.

1Co 11:6 For if the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn: but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered.

But, Paul is speaking about the hair on the head of woman and that it should not be overly short and if it is, she might as well have her head shaven. In the following verse, it is made clear that Paul was talking about hair; not the requirement for women to cover their heads with a hat or a scarf.

1Co 11:15 But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her **hair** is given her for a **covering**.

Many “churches of God” believe the Gospel is a message about Christ taking over the governments of this world at His Second Coming and that this will result in a world of peace, security, safety, abundance and joy the likes of which the world has never known. According to them, it will be the establishment of heaven on earth over flesh-and-blood human beings which is an impossibility.

Men cannot enter or become part of God’s Kingdom unless they are born again by a resurrection from the dead to glorified spirit life. God’s Kingdom is wholly composed of glorified spirit beings.

Joh 3:3 Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be **born again**, he cannot **see** the kingdom of God.

Joh 3:5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be **born of water and of the Spirit**, he cannot **enter** into the kingdom of God.

And, what does it mean to be born again? Christ was the first to be born again by a resurrection from the dead.

Col 1:18 And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, **the firstborn from the dead**; that in all things he might have the preeminence.

One of the leaders of one of these several “churches of God” thinks he is Elijah and that he will never die; another one, says he is “that prophet” mentioned in Act 3:23.

Act 3:23 And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear **that prophet**, shall be destroyed from among the people.

But this prophet is clearly Jesus Christ according to Act 3:20.

Act 3:20 And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you:

He is to come to the physical nation of Israel, not to an organization of men calling itself God's Church. Peter was talking to physical Israelites in the 3rd chapter of the book of Acts.

Another of the many “churches of God” has adopted the Systematic Theology Project (STP) as the basis for what they preach to their members. That particular document was rejected by HWA because it was liberalizing the Church’s teachings.

Other churches of God are asking those who attend their services to invite their friends and neighbors to their meetings thinking this may motivate some of them to join their group. It used to be that not just anyone could attend church worship services. The ministry had to have been working with them to make sure they knew, understood and accepted the basic teachings of the church.

These glaring misunderstandings of the Bible, and they are not the only ones, prove that these organizations of men are not God's Church. They are unable to read God's Bible with understanding and are spreading error among those who follow them.

These erroneous comprehension of the Bible should be ringing alarm bells in those who are attending their services but this is not what is happening. They continue to financially support them while they wait for Christ's 2nd Coming to occur. They seem to be incapable of proving what is taught them with their Bible or are simply uninterested in doing so having put their full faith in the men who are teaching them.

Christians are rewarded according to their works, not that of others. They are to be students of their Bible.

2Ti 2:15 Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

Idly sitting in a hall listening uncritically to men who claim to be true ministers of God and accepting everything they say will not ensure their salvation.

God's Church exists in all those called and chosen by God the Father and who are being taught by God the Word wherever they may be in the world, by themselves or in little groups of faithful, organized or not. They are invisible to the world and to each other as conversion is not something outwardly visible which is why they are not usually found in large groups.

Whether by themselves or in small groups, wherever they may be in the world, and whatever language they may speak they are the living stones of God's temple in which God the Father and God the Word dwell.

1Pe 2:5 Ye also, as **lively stones**, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

2Co 6:16 And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for **ye are the temple of the living God**; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

They are the royal priesthood of God's Church offering themselves daily as living sacrifices putting their old man of sin to death and striving to live in newness of life.

1Pe 2:9 But ye are a chosen generation, **a royal priesthood**, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:

Rom 6:4 Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk **in newness of life**.

Rom 6:6 Knowing this, that **our old man is crucified with him**, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

God's Church in NT times is a spiritual organization which is something a lot of people agree with but don't really know what it means. For them, organizations of men calling themselves churches of God are spiritual organizations. But, actually, they are not.

In NT times, there are no human mediator or organizations of men between God and His called and chosen ones.

1Ti 2:5 For there is one God, and **one mediator** between God and men, the man **Christ Jesus**;

Christians' great high priest is not any men or organization of men.

Heb 4:14 Seeing then that we have a **great high priest**, that is passed into the heavens, **Jesus the Son of God**, let us hold fast our profession.

The holy spirit God calls men, and upon accepting their calling, it is the holy spirit God the Word who teaches them all things. And, belonging to God's Church is based on continuing to grow in knowledge and understanding of the Scriptures, having growth in the character of Christ, and remaining faithful.

Being part of a physical organization of men having the words "Church of God" somewhere in the title of their organization and which is preaching falsities does not make anyone part of the spiritual organization which is God's one and only true Church in which God the Father calls, God the Word teaches and Christ is the high priest.

Final Words

Since nowadays no one has the absolute truth of God, the most that any man can be is a student of the Bible with the holy spirits of the Godhead revealing truth to him. No man can credibly nor honestly set himself up as being "the" one who has the truth that all are to follow without questions.

It is possible for organizations of men who have been called and chosen to exist today who are interested in learning more of God's truth. But there cannot be anyone among them that sets himself up as the criterion of truth for everyone. All have to understand that their beliefs are subject to being tested against the Bible and they must be willing to change when proven wrong.

If anyone's attitude is that their teachings/beliefs cannot be questioned, then they should not be part of any group of truly converted Christians interested in having spiritual fellowship with other truly converted Christians to improve and increase their knowledge and understanding of God's truth.

Truly converted Christians should not remain with organizations calling themselves "church of God" who claim that what they teach is the abso-

lute truth of God that all have to unquestioningly accept.

Christians are to prove all things and try the spirit of those who would want to teach them. It is their safeguard against being financially exploited by the false prophets who were prophesied to arise not just in the world but also right within God's Church. Not only is it possible for false churches of God to come into existence, it is something that has been happening since the foundation of God's Church.

Salvation requires growth in knowledge and understanding and this happens through regular and attentive study of the Bible and when possible, in spiritual fellowship with other true Christians when some are known.

It is not the result of sitting in a hall with other people listening to someone who claims to have the absolute truth of God and then going home, not studying all week and going back the following week to hear another sermon.

Being part of God's one, true Church is not a matter of following the right man, associating with the right group or believing what everybody else around you believes.

The only true pastors of God's Church in NT times are God and the Word and your responsibility is to study your Bible to grow in knowledge and understanding of God's truth by your own efforts.

