

The Ministry and God's Truth

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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.

The Worldwide Church of God taught that truth came into the Church through the Pastor General. The Bible tells us that all members of God's Church have the in-dwelling presence of the holy spirit God the Word and Spokesman who teaches them all things. Does God also reveal truth to them?

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 (Php 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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This is a topic which has been mentioned here and there in the studies posted on this site but which I had never completely explained or put all the relevant elements together in the same study. This study endeavors to do that and it should make it easier for you to understand how it is that the ministry can be a source of truth but *not* the only one although it does have basic, foundational truth which all true Christians need to master to become able students of their Bible as we will see.

Truth Held by the Ministry

The original disciples who became apostles were taught directly by Christ a number of truths which Paul calls the foundation (1Cor 3:10).

1Co 3:10 According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.

Paul's conversion occurred after that of the disciples but he was also personally trained by Christ as the other apostles were. The apostles were given truth directly by Christ that was to be transmitted to all newcomers to the faith from generation to generation. All newcomers to God's Church are babes-in-Christ whose first task is to learn and master those foundational truths that were restored to God's Church.

These foundational truths need to be mastered through a process of attentive, careful and sustained study requiring that the babes-in-Christ prove all things taught them by the ministry with their Bible which is the only sure criterion of truth. They cannot rely on any man not even the ministry.

**Isa 2:22 Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils:
for wherein is he to be accounted of?**

Paul told Christians in the congregations he had raised up that they were only to follow him as he followed Christ.

1Co 11:1 Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.

How would they know if Paul was following Christ? By proving Paul's teachings against their Bible like the Bereans did.

**Act 17:11 These were more noble than those in Thessalonica,
in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and
searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.**

Although Paul was an apostle, he taught that he was not to be taken at his word; those listening to him had to check out his teachings with their Bible.

1Th 5:21 Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.

Even the apostles who personally were with Christ for some 3 1/2 years knew and taught that they did not have the authority to impose their teachings on those who heard them. No one can be forced to believe something against his will.

**2Co 1:24 Not for that we have dominion [not that we can
impose on you] over your faith [what you believe], but are
helpers of your joy: for by faith [what you choose to believe]
ye stand.[you continue to be or not, part of God's Church]**

Every man must prove them for himself to his satisfaction with his Bible the teachings of the ministry. If the Bible confirms the truth of what is taught by the ministry, then they are to follow them; if not, they are not to do so. Why? Because salvation depends on what individuals **choose** to believe. Individuals remain Christians based on what **they choose** to believe and there is no power in the universe that can force them to believe something they have not chosen to believe.

Why?

Because of the absolute free moral agency God gave man.

God commands man to choose life or death and leaves him entirely free to choose one or the other with no power in the universe, except God Himself, being able to force him to choose contrary to his will.

Deu 30:19 I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore **choose** life, that both thou and thy seed may live:

However, God will not force man to choose life instead of death because, and this is of the greatest importance, in order for man to be a being of C-H-A-R-A-C-T-E-R i.e., to be able to freely and self-willingly choose good or evil after coming to the knowledge of the truth, it is essential that he be fully free to choose one or the other. If a stronger power could impose its will upon man, he would not be free to choose and he could not be held responsible for the good or bad choices that he makes. They would simply be the choices of the stronger power working its will through the man and God could not have commanded man to choose.

God will not force man to choose life but He urges man to choose life; however, should man choose death, God will respect his decision even though it is unto eternal death. Salvation is an informed and individual decision and not a matter of belonging to the right group, having trust in the right man, believing what everybody else around you believes or sitting comfortably in one of the many so-called churches of God. A simple to understand Biblical truth is that God does not have several, different "true" churches. Being part of one of these so-called "true" churches of God does not in any way lead to salvation.

Once newcomers to the faith have mastered those foundational truths that God's Church has they are no longer babes-in-Christ but have become spiritually mature Christians who are drawn from the breast and weaned from the milk, (Isa 28:9). They have attained a level of spiritual maturity which makes it possible for them to learn the strong meat (Heb 5:12-13) of the Bible through their personal Bible studies (2Tim 2:15).

Isa 28:9 Whom shall he **[God]** teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts.

The milk of the Word is the foundational truth given the apostles by Christ

that were partially restored and that all must master to become able to seek out, find and understand the strong meat of the Word as they engage in a lifelong and careful study of the Scriptures.

What is the skill level of a Christian who has failed to master the basic truths of God's Church (which Paul calls the "milk of the word")? What is their ability to explore the Scriptures so as to get growth in knowledge and understanding? Paul tells us in Heb 5:12-13.

Heb 5:12 For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.

Heb 5:13 For **every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness**: for he is a babe.

These Christians of Paul's days had not made the effort to learn and keep fresh in their minds the foundational truths of God's Church they had. They were back to having to have the basics taught them all over again. As a result, they could not study the Scriptures and discover the strong meat that it contains which is spiritual truth Christ did not give the apostles and which individual Christians can find through personal study of their Bible. When studying their Bible Christians enter into a conversation with Christ and only spiritually mature Christians can have a conversation with Christ. It is not possible to have adult conversations with babes.

Isa 28:9 Whom shall he [**God**] teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts.

It is only once becoming mature Christians that an adult-to-adult conversation can occur with Christ who can then give them new knowledge and understanding from the pages of the Bible.

Paul, urged Timothei to study.

2Ti 2:15 Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman [**a Christian's work is to study the Bible**] that needeth not to be ashamed, [**because he correctly understands the Bible**] rightly dividing the word of truth. [**he can discover new truth which is the meat of the Word left by God for spiritually mature Christians to have growth in knowledge and understanding**]

What was he to study and why?

He was to keep on studying His Bible using the foundational truth given him by Paul who received them directly from Christ and which provides him with the means to study the Bible on his own and to get the correct and intended meaning out of it. A workman or student of the Bible who need not be ashamed because he is "rightly dividing" i.e., correctly understanding, the word of truth.

God's command to Christians of all ages is to have growth in knowledge and understanding throughout their Christian lives.

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 16:16 How much better is it to get wisdom than gold! and to get understanding rather to be chosen than silver!

The individual Christian is primarily responsible for his own salvation. His salvation does not depend upon following the right man; being part of the right organization or; believing what the majority believes. The ministry, when there is a true one, is there to teach the foundational truth given by Christ to the apostles. These truths were to be transmitted in an unbroken chain from generation to generation of Christians but because of persecution coming upon the Church, much of these foundational truths were lost. Mr. Armstrong restored many truths to God's Church but he was not the promised Elijah. For more information on this topic please see the following study: [Did the Second's Already Come?](#)

God's truth is spiritual i.e., it requires for men to be able to understand it, that the holy spirit God the Word and Spokesman dwell in them. This makes it possible for them to understand in their spiritual intent, the foundational truths taught new converts by the ministry and once they have been mastered, for the individual Christian to go into the Bible and discover truths not part of the foundational truth which Paul calls "strong meat" (Heb 5: 12; 14).

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.

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**.

All through their lives, the faithful are essentially taught by the holy spirit God the Word and Spokesman (John 14:26) in them that gives them understanding of God's spiritual truth contained in the Holy Bible some of which they learned while babes-in-Christ and others which they will learn after becoming spiritually mature Christians.

Joh 6:45 It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me. [the holy spirit God the Word and Spokesman]

The unconverted read the same words as the converted but come to very different understandings as to what they mean. We only have to consider what the churches of this world believe it means to be born again; who and what is God, what is faith, etc. to realize how true this is.

Christians have to become spiritual adults. This is the purpose of their absorbing the foundational truths of God's Church. Christians are not ever to place their trust in men. They have to become able to correctly read their Bible on their own and get the information they need from it. These next verses of Hebrews make plain that if as Christians we are still at the milk of the word level of knowledge of the Scriptures then we are unskillful in the word of righteousness i.e., we are not able to study our Bible and get the correct meaning out of it. We are still not weaned from the milk and drawn from the breasts and God cannot teach us.; He cannot have an adult conversation with spiritual babes.

Heb 5:11 Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing.

Heb 5:12 For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.

Heb 5:13 For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe.

Heb 5:14 But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

Being a Christian is a life of growth that begins with our being taught the basics of God's truth as a first and necessary step. God requires growth and this all through our lives. We are not to remain at the same level of knowledge and understanding going over and over the same knowledge and never growing. Mastering the foundational truths of God's Church will enable us to go into the Bible on our own and through personal studies of the Scriptures enter into a conversation with God who will open our minds to different things that were always there but which we had not seen before because we didn't yet have the required spiritual maturity.

Salvation is an individual and spiritual process between God and the faithful not between God and the faithful through the ministry. Ministers also have to work on their salvation in the very same way as the non-ordained members of the Church.

1Co 9:27 But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, [when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.](#)

The ministry must develop and maintain a relationship with God who is as much their teacher as He is for the lay members.

On Individual Members Receiving New Truth

It was understood and expected as stated in 1Co 14:29-40 that members of God's Church could and would discuss their discoveries in the Bible with other members of God's Church when they came together on the annual and weekly Sabbaths or in Bible study sessions. We see this being mentioned in 1Co14:26.

1Co 14:26 How is it then, brethren? [when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying.](#)

The problem as we will see as we go through 1Co 14: 26-40 was not that they were discussing their Bible findings among themselves when they gathered; it was how they were doing it that was the problem. Ev-

eryone was quite eager to speak about what they were finding in their studies of the Bible and everyone wanted to talk at once but Paul tells them that everything they do must serve to build up and help others in the group who don't have the same understanding and if they are all trying to talk over one another, no one hearing them will understand much of what they are saying,

1Co 14:29 Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge.

At this point is it necessary to explain what is a prophet. A prophet is simply a messenger from God or someone who when he speaks is speaking God's truth as indicated in Joel 2:28.

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:

God's words sometimes are about future events but most of the time it is simply God speaking through the mouths of the converted as they discuss His truth among themselves. The Christian is then prophesying in the sense of Joel 2:28 "your sons and your daughters shall prophesy." They have received God's Spirit and are speaking God's truth to other converted individuals and sometimes but rarely, to their unconverted friends and family.

Baal, one of the pagan gods of the Old Testament also had men speaking on his behalf and the Bible also refers to them as being prophets (2 King 10:19). Called out individuals and converted individuals when they are speaking to others the truth of God they are being prophets. A prophet is a man speaking the truth of his God to others; sometimes, some of the words given to prophets are about future events but in most instances, they are simply truly converted Christians discussing or sharing God's truth with each other in Christian fellowship.

In the instance of 1Co 14, Paul says that non-ordained members of God's Church through their studies and prayers can and will uncover truth, knowledge and understanding that effectively build on the foundation of truth taught them by the ministry (see 1Co 3:10-15 and [Do Christians have to Grow in Knowledge?](#) Heading: What About Today?).

1Co 14:30 If any thing be [revealed](#) to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace.

As stated in the verse above, God is revealing truth to true Christians whether ordained or not. Members bringing this information to the

whole congregation are then speaking to others truth they have received by revelation from God and are thus prophets as per 1Co 14:31.

1Co14:31 For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted.

One who prophesies is a prophet and, as previously stated, a prophet is not always and exclusively someone whose message from God is about events that are to occur in the near or far future.

It was expected that members would be given truth not part of the foundational truth taught them by the ministry and it was understood that they could and would share their findings with their individual congregations whenever they assembled. The purpose of sharing with other truly converted Christians was for members to test the validity of their findings through discussions with others using Scriptural references (not personal opinion) to confirm or invalidate their findings. BUT, and this was Paul's concern, they were not to all speak at once creating confusion and making it hard or impossible for others to understand what they were saying and be comforted when some new insight into the Scriptures was being confirmed.

1Co 14:31 For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted.

1Co 14:32 And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.

1Co 14:32 explains, clarifies and supports all that has been said so far and that is that those who receive new understanding of the Scriptures should verify their findings with other members of the Church in their local congregations: "the spirit of the prophets" those who have received new understanding, are to be subject to the prophets i.e., the other members of their local congregations to prove out, using the Scriptures, or invalidate the members' new knowledge and understanding.

1Co 14:33 For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.

Everything must be done in order and all new knowledge and understanding has to be validated using the Scriptures in discussion with the whole congregation when it assembles.

1Co 14:34 Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law.

1Co 14:35 And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church.

The woman was created for man and not man for the woman; he is the head and she is the helpmeet, an authority structure established by God and which is not to be abused by men (Eph 5:25; Col 3:19). Women have a reciprocal requirement to honor their husbands (Eph 5:22). The purpose of this authority structure in marriage is to ensure harmony and peace will exist for both the husband and the wife because 2 cannot walk together unless they be agreed (Amos 3:3). It does not diminish the importance, intelligence, and natural abilities of the husband or the wife. But I digress, so let's go back to the focal point of this study.

1Co 14:36 What? came the word of God out from you? or came it unto you only?

Another word of caution from Paul to the members regarding prophesying. A very important warning to those who are given new knowledge and understanding not to start thinking that they are the only ones who receive truth from God and that this gives them a special status in the Church or makes leaders out of them.

1Co 14:37 If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord.

And here is the critical factor that all in the Church have to remember and that is that the teachings of Paul are directly from Christ. They are those things Paul learned directly from Christ as the other apostles did and they are not subject to discussion or debate by the congregation using the Scriptures as individual members' findings are. They are the foundational truths of God's Church on which they are to build (1Co 3:10); they are not debatable.

1Co 14:38 But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant.

But if any man does not have any new knowledge to give to the congregation this is not a problem; he does not have to make something up; let him be ignorant until such time as he does receive some new truth from God as he studies the Scriptures and prays.

1Co 14:39 Wherefore, brethren, **covet to prophesy**, [seek earnestly to speak the truth of God to others in the congregation whether it be existing or new truth] and forbid not to

speak with tongues. **[as long as there is someone in the congregation that can interpret so that the others will understand what is being said as all things must be done in order as God is not the author of confusion.]**

1Co 14:40 Let all things be done decently and in order.

The source of truth and doctrine in the Church is not the Pastor General, not the ministry, not other non-ordained members but God through the Bible (Heb1:1-2). Once some new discovery in knowledge and understanding has been demonstrated to be Biblically sound then it is to be adopted by the Church regardless of who in the Church found it. The Bible is the criterion not the ministry and all true members of God's Church can through their studies uncover new and Scripturally valid truth.

Building on the Foundation

What is being said in 1Cor 14 follows from what Paul said in 1Cor 3:10-15.

1Co 3:10 According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, **I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon.** But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.

1Co 3:11 For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

God through Paul tells us that once the foundation has been mastered, individual members are to build on it i.e., add truth to it as they study and grow in knowledge and understanding as God commands all true Christian to do all through their lives. In the Book of Proverbs God through Solomon tells His sons that they are to grow in wisdom which is in knowledge and understanding of His truth. They are not to continuously study the same things over and over again and never actually study the Bible.

Mr. Armstrong restored many foundational truths and Christians have to use this foundation as a means to go into the Bible and build onto this foundation by adding to it truth fully supported by the Bible.

A Christian's life is to be one of continuous growth in knowledge and understanding.

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

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**.

Pro16:16 How much better *is it* to get wisdom than gold! and to get **understanding** rather to be chosen than silver!

In Conclusion

The history of the true Church reveals that for most of its existence over the centuries, it has been small and invisible to the world. When it was noticed by the world, it was often persecuted and had to flee for its life. It has also often not been well organized with a fully functioning ministry composed of pastors, elders, and deacons like it was for the First Century Church under the leadership of Peter assisted by the other apostles.

Early in the existence of God's Church persecution set in forcing the Church to flee into the wilderness i.e., away from the great population centers where the great false church that had arisen shortly after the foundation of God's Church, held sway over the civil authorities which it used to persecute all those who held on to beliefs other than theirs.

Despite these persecutions, God's Church has continued to exist without interruption up to our days and will continue to exist without interruption until the time of the 3rd Resurrection. It was never to die out.

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 recent history, many of us has seen the dissolution of the Worldwide Church of God after the death of its Pastor General, Herbert W. Armstrong. For a time, this Church existed as a well-organized corporate entity with a fully functioning ministry with congregations all over the world.

Since the destruction of the Worldwide Church of God, God's Church has gone back to being small and invisible to the world as it has been for most of its existence. Church members are by themselves spread out all over the world and for the greatest part do not know each other and even when they do, there is often reluctance, in many cases very great reluctance, to engage in Christian fellowship. When engineers meet with other engineers they talk about engineering, when architects meet other architects they talk about architecture, when true Christians meet other true

Christians, they talk about the weather, how well my garden grows, the latest hockey game, etc. etc. etc. They will not discuss spiritual matters.

This brings us back to the main topic of this study and which is that the ministry even when there is one, is not "the" source of truth. If it were, then it would be impossible for true Christians who now find themselves without a true ministry of the Church of God to be able to continue having growth in knowledge and understanding which they need to have to remain live spiritual embryo that can become glorified holy spirit beings.

The source of truth is God's Holy Bible and the way men come to have access to the truth is through the holy spirit God the Father calling them and revealing to them truth which they had always before rejected but which now they realize they had been wrong in doing so. God the Father gives them in ways which differ from individual to individual, enough truth for them to be brought to the point where they clearly realize that they have to make a decision. The alternative is now very clear, they are standing at the crossroads and they must decide which way they will go. God has set before them as He did for Israel a clear choice.

Deu 30:19 I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live:

Making the decision to submit to God and live a life of obedience to Him to the best of our abilities will lead to life. Refusing to change our lives to bring them in agreement as much as possible with the requirements of God' law after having been given to know the truth, leads to death.

If the decision is made unto life, then the newly spiritually begotten son of God becomes the responsibility of Christ who from the beginning has been the Word or God the Father's Spokesman to His chosen ones.

Joh 6:37 All that the **Father** giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.

Christ reassured His disciples (and this applies to true Christians across the ages) before His crucifixion that He would always be with them and that He had to go so the Comforter could come.

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 [Christ] dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. [after his glorification (John 7:39)]

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

Joh 14:19 Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also.

Joh 14:20 At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.

Christ and the Father will be in them. Christ as God's Spokesman and the Word is the holy spirit of the God family that will work in their minds in the same way that Satan is the evil spirit that works in the minds of the children of disobedience.

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:

Christ's actions will be unto life while those of Satan are unto death.

Joh 16:7 Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.

The glorified Christ (John 7:39) is the Holy Spirit that dwells in the truly converted and as God the Father's Spokesman, He is the means whereby Christians can grow in the knowledge and understanding of the truth all through their natural lives as they study their Bible.

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;

In Old Testament times, God spoke to Israel through the prophets He sent them. Since the First Coming of Christ, we have been in the "last days" where God the Father speaks to true Christians through His Son.

Christ is God the Father's Spokesman to God the Father's spiritually-begotten sons and is the One who teaches them all things.

Joh 14:26 But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost , [“Spirit” it should read] 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.

Christ, returned to His glorified state after His resurrection by God the Father, (John 7:39) is the spirit that works in the minds of the truly converted revealing to them truth as they study their Bible.

As God's Spokesman, the holy spirit the Word who became Christ is the spirit that inspired the prophets and who personally taught the apostles and inspired the Old Testament prophets who wrote the Old Testament (the prophets) and the New Testaments (the apostles). Therefore, the Old and the New Testaments though written by several different people over the centuries are in fact the message of a single person. It is the holy spirit God the Father's message to mankind given it through Christ who as the holy spirit the Word inspired men to put these things in writing.

Since the foundation of God's New Testament Spirit-begotten Church on the day of Pentecost, God through Christ in writing, the Holy Bible along with the in-dwelling presence of the holy spirit God the Word and Spokesman in truly converted Christians, are the means used by God the Father to speak to and teach true Christians.

The ministry, when there is a true one in existence, is there only as helpers of the joy of true Christians. Their joy is knowing God's spiritual truth and having the hope of salvation.

2Co 1:24 Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy: for by faith ye stand.

This is a critical point to understand, the ministry does not have the authority nor the ability to impose on their congregations what it is they are to believe.

WHY?

Because each member of God's Church stands or is found acceptable by God, based on what he has freely and self-willingly chosen to believe when given to know the truth. No man can force another man to believe something contrary to what he has chosen to believe. No man can be taught against his will; he cannot be made to believe something he has not chosen to believe.

This is why the role of the ministry can only be as helpers to those who have accepted the same truth as the one they teach. Ministers are but

men and have had to personally and freely believe God's truth when it was given for them to know it just like any other man. They have no more special powers or insight into the truth than non-ordained members. They learned the truth in the same way they did. This is why Paul says the following:

1Co 3:5 Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?

God in the First Century Church used men to teach the converted but the converted understand the spiritual content of what is taught them as the Lord or God gives to every man to understand the truth. The converted understand what is taught them by the work of the holy spirit God the Word and Spokesman in them; not due to the excellence of the teachings they receive from the ministry.

1Co 3:6 I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. [That is to say, the increase in spiritual understanding.]

1Co 3:7 So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase. [God's spiritual truth is by revelation from God; it is not by the works of men.]

1Co 3:8 Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: [they are the same] and every man [whether in the ministry or a non-ordained member] shall receive his own reward according to his own labour. [In other words, they will be rewarded according to their labour or works of obedience to God as is the case for all true Christians.]

1Co 3:9 For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building.

The ministers when true to their mission are co-workers with God; they plant and they water but the growth in understanding of God's spiritual truth is from God only. Individual Christians are God's husbandry i.e., God is the one really doing the cultivation and nurturing and it is God building up their understanding of the truth; He is the One doing the building.

Christians are saved through faith which is an unmerited and unearned gift from God. God the Father imputes Christ's perfect, holy, righteous character to those whom He calls and who follow and endure in their calling.

Eph 2:8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:

Christians are God the Father's workmanship created in Christ i.e., through Christ. Men do not come to know and believe the truth as a result of the works of any man; it is possible only through God.

Eph 2:9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.

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

Hopefully, the explanations and Scriptures quoted in this study have made it possible for the reader to understand how it is that God works with each Christian to give him knowledge and understanding of the Scriptures as he studies his Bible. *Differently from what I would say most of us have believed, ministers are not the source nor the criterion of truth for Christians.* The source and the criterion is God the Father through Christ who opens up the minds of Christians to correctly understand the truth contained in the Bible as they spend time in carefully and attentively studying it.

As time goes by, certain findings may need to be revisited as more understanding of the Scriptures is achieved. Correcting errors in understanding as they are uncovered is one of the identifying characteristic of God's true Church. The churches of this world's understanding of the Bible never changes no matter how evident it may become over the years that certain of their beliefs are clearly erroneous.

Salvation is a process that is principally between God and the individual through the action of the holy spirits of the God family making it possible for the truly converted to study their Bible and discover new truth with the ministry being helpers of their faith when there is one in existence.

All are encouraged to prophesy.

1Co 14:39 Wherefore, brethren, **covet to prophesy**, and forbid not to speak with tongues.

