

Unity in God's Church

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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 there must be no division in the Church. All must know and understand God's truth in the same way. But, what does the Bible say? Is there room for variations in understanding of the Scriptures among the brethren and if so, how does the process work? What is the unity that must exist in the Church as revealed in the Bible?

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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This is a topic which to many will seem to be self-evident. Of course, all will readily agree, there must be unity in God's Church to prevent creating confusion in the minds of the faithful. And, is it not that God only reveals truth to the leadership in the Church as they have a special relationship with God that the non-ordained members do not have? The ministry they say is there to teach the lay members, is it not? God is not the author of confusion and it certainly stands to reason that God's Church should not and cannot exist in a state of doctrinal confusion with every member having his own beliefs.

These thoughts all seem to make a lot of sense but what does the Bible, which is the only sure criterion of truth for true Christians, have to say about unity in the Church?

As stated in the Introduction to this Web site, studies are conducted assuming that you the readers, have mastered the truths restored to God's Church by Mr. Armstrong (HWA), that you are no longer a babe-in-Christ and that you have become a spiritually mature Christian capable of understanding the strong meat of the Scriptures. Many of the doctrines that will be mentioned in this study should already be very familiar to you and if they aren't then you should go back through the studies contained on this web site and refresh your memory as needed.

God's Thoughts and Ways

The truth contained in the Bible is spiritual i.e., for the Bible to be correctly understood in its spiritual dimension it is necessary to have the presence of another spirit in our minds, the spirit of the God being called the Spokesman or the Word. [What is the Holy Spirit? Cliff Notes Version](#)

Why?

Because the thoughts or mind of God is so very different from our own that it is not possible for us to understand God's mind or thoughts without God giving us the ability to do so. They are God level, spiritual truths inaccessible to mankind as stated in Isa 55:8-9.

Isa 55:8 For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD.

Isa 55:9 For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

They remain a mystery until they are revealed or rendered understandable to the human mind by the holy spirit God the Word and Spokesman dwelling in a truly converted Christian.

Mankind on its own cannot understand God's truth and this is why though there is only one Holy Bible, we have a great variety of Christian religions all claiming to be following the Bible but all with significant and irreconcilable doctrinal differences among them.

So what is the situation in God's Church? Does all truth come into the Church through the Pastor General? Through ordained ministers? Or, would we be finding people holding on to different doctrines and beliefs which would be their personal understanding of the Bible given that true Christians have their minds enabled by the holy spirit God the Word and Spokesman to understand spiritual truth? In other words, does God also reveal truth to the lay members of the Church?

The Church's Foundational Truth

God's Church was given several truths directly from Christ who was God the Word made flesh. Christ came the first time to accomplish many things and one of them was to teach His disciples truths that Paul refers

to as being the foundation of God's Church.

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.

All men are unreliable and there was only one man which could ever be fully trusted not to mislead us and that is the God being called the Word who became a man born of the flesh for the express purpose of teaching His disciples the foundational truths of God's Church. Christ personally laid the foundation and no man can lay any other foundation. The First Century church transmitted that same foundation of truths to all those whom God called and chose in their days.

This foundation of truth was to be transmitted from generation to generation in God's Church by God's ministry (the original one being the apostles and those they trained to be ministers) until the time of the Great White Throne Judgment and the end of God's plan of salvation.

The foundational truths of God's Church are the truths of the Bible given directly by Christ to men. They are sure and cannot be put in doubt.

These foundational truths were lost because of the centuries of persecutions that came upon God's Church but some of them have been restored to God's Church by HWA (how many we don't have, we don't know) who was a type of the second Elijah who is to come to the descendants of the physical nation of Israel to restore all things to them. (See the following study for more information on this topic: [Did the Second Elijah Already Come?](#)) But, are they the only truth that can be known?

Growth in Spiritual Truth

God in the Bible makes it very clear that true Christians are to grow in knowledge and understanding throughout their lives. Most of the book of Proverbs is about the need to have growth. So how can we reconcile the fact that God through Christ personally laid the foundation of truth for His Church, which is basically a set number of truths which all Christians are to master and which are not to be changed, with the requirement for individual Christians to have growth all through their lives.

How is growth in knowledge and understanding to occur if there are no other truths to be known than those given at the foundation of God's Church?

A Christian's life is to be one of growth from being a babe-in-Christ to becoming a spiritually mature adult who can no longer be swayed by the many winds of false doctrines coming their way.

Eph 4:14 That we [true Christians] henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;

Paul tells us why God gave His Church these foundational truths.

1Co 3:12 Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble;

1Co 3:13 Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.

1Co 3:14 If any man's work abide which he hath built there-upon, he shall receive a reward.

1Co 3:15 If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

Please notice that these verses are not in any way saying that the ministry is responsible for building on the foundation and then for teaching the Church the truth they have uncovered in their Bible studies. The requirement is for "any man" and "every man" to work at building on the foundation.

All true Christians are to build on the sure foundation of truth given the Church by Christ who was God the Word in the flesh. All true Christians have the mind to be able to understand spiritual truth. Mastering the foundational truths of God's Church makes it possible, for Christians whether ordained or not, to go off into the Bible on their own and to discover truths which are not part of the foundation and which Paul calls the "meat" of the word (Heb 5:12).

The foundational truth are the milk of the word which one learns while a babe-in-Christ and the "strong meat" of the word are those other

truths contained in the Bible which can be discovered by those who have mastered the truths restored to God's Church by HWA (the ones that can be proven with your Bible) and are of full age (Heb 5:13); they have become spiritually mature adults.

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.

True Christians are not taught God's spiritual truth by men; they are taught by God and the only ones that God can teach are:

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

And how does God teach those that are weaned from the milk i.e., that have mastered the truths given to God's Church by God through HWA (the milk of the word) and who have become able to absorb meat?

Is it through the ordained ministry?

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.

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 Father is the one that calls men by teaching them spiritual truths that brings them to the crossroads i.e., it brings them to the point where they know they have to make the decision to either follow God's calling or return in the world. God the Father sets life

and death before them and they must choose either one. (Deu 30:19)

1Th 4:9 But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for **ye yourselves are taught of God** to love one another.

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?

1Co 3:6 I have planted, Apollos watered; but **God gave the increase.**

Joh 14:22 Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?

Joh 14:23 Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and **we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.**

The holy spirit God the Father and the holy spirit God the Word and Spokesman will love all those who are keeping Christ's words and the two of them will come and dwell in them enabling their human minds to understand God level spiritual truth.

Joh 14:24 He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me.

Joh 14:25 These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you.

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 spirit God the Father's called and chosen ones are taught by the holy spirit being called God the Word and Spokesman who dwells in the minds of the truly converted. [What is the Holy Spirit? Cliff Notes Version](#)

The Ministry Source of Spiritual Truth?

Can the ministry who are but men subject to the same conditions for salvation as all other members of God's Church impose on their assembly what it is they are to believe?

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

Paul tells the Corinthians and Christians of all ages that he, Paul and the ministry, does not have the authority nor the ability to impose on Church members (have dominion) what it is that they are to believe. Their only role is to be helpers of their joy (the joy of having the truth of God) which they have because they have been called and have freely and self-willingly believed the truth God revealed to them. They stand by their faith i.e., by what **they have chosen to believe** as no man can force another man to believe anything he has not chosen to believe. (Free moral agency)

True Christians start off their spiritual life as babes-in-Christ needing to learn the truths placed in God's Church by God with the holy spirit God the Word and Spokesman giving them understanding. The ministry, when there is a true one in existence, can teach knowledge **but understanding is from God** (1Co 3:5-6).

Christians are to study their Bible to have growth in knowledge and understanding which includes the ministry which does not enjoy a special relationship with God where any and all growth in truth can only and always come from them. Christians are not to rely on men, including the ministry, as their criterion of truth but rather search their Bible to determine the truth of a matter. And as we have seen (John 14:26; Isa 28:9), God says that He is the one that teaches true Christians.

So, are there other truths in the Bible that can be known by true Christians in addition to the foundational truths even if we had them all?

Is it acceptable for true Christians to do their own Bible studies and to discuss their findings among themselves in spiritual fellowship to determine **based on the Bible** whether new truth they have discovered as they study their Bible are Scripturally sound or not?

What does God have to say about it?

Covet to Prophesy

In 1Co 14:26-40 Paul is telling the congregations of God's Church that he raised up how they are to conduct themselves when discussing truths found by Church members when they get together. Notice, that Paul is not telling the lay members of the Church to not discuss among themselves their personal findings from their Bible studies; this was not a problem. What mattered to Paul was that things be discussed in an orderly way so that all who are listening may profit from what is being said.

Paul had been taught the foundational truths of God's Church but he didn't think he was the only one along with the apostles to whom God revealed truth. The holy spirit God the Word and Spokesman reveals truth to all truly converted Christians as they study their Bible, the word of God, Christ in writing. So, Paul gives the following instructions to the truly converted of his days.

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.

1Co 14:27 If any man speak in an unknown tongue, let it be by two, or at the most by three, and that by course; and let one interpret.

1Co 14:28 But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church; and let him speak to himself, and to God.

1Co 14:29 Let the prophets [one bearing a message or speaking on behalf of another] speak two or three, and let the other judge.

Baal has his prophets i.e., men speaking on his behalf and God has His prophets. In the case of true Christians to prophesy is to share with other true Christians the truth they believe God gave them through their personal Bible studies. When they do so, they are speaking on behalf of God who spoke to them through as they studied their Bible. Prophesy is not solely God through men announcing future events.

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

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. [Those things that are spoken (by the prophets) are to be judged by the others who are listening (who are also prophets) using the Bible as their criterion to determine the truth of what is said. All true Christians are prophets in this sense that whenever they speak about the truth of God they are speaking on behalf of God; it is God who gave it to them.]

1Co 14:33 For God is not the author of confusion, [regarding the manner in which things are done when truly converted Christians meet to discuss their personal Bible findings.] but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.

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.

Then, starting with the next verse, Paul introduces something which does not seem to follow with what has been said so far, but it does. The lay members of the Church can and should discuss their Bible study findings when they meet but although, this is a good and necessary thing, they all need to be aware that certain things are not up for debate: the foundational truths of God's Church taught them by Paul who received them directly from Christ (1Co14:37).

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

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.

1Co 14:38 But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant.
[If any member of the congregation does not have any Bible study findings to share with the congregation; it is not a problem.]

And here is the conclusion of the matter (1Co 14:39), the brethren are to covet to prophesy. They are to have a strong desire to prophesy i.e., share and discuss with their fellow Christians in an orderly way their Bible study findings. It is a good and profitable thing to do for themselves and those listening to them. Prophesying in this context simply refers to the Christian fellowship all truly converted members of God's Church should be eager to have; fellowship which is not about worldly matters.

1Co 14:39 Wherefore, brethren, covet to prophesy, and forbid not to speak with tongues. [Speaking in a language which is not understood by some in meetings is allowed providing there is someone who can translate so that the others listening can understand what is being said; if not, that person is to remain silent.]

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

A detailed explanation is given in the following study found on this web site of the meaning of 1Cor 14 [The Ministry and God's Truth](#)

Here, in order to help you follow the line of thought of this study, I will give you an abbreviated explanation of the essential meaning of these verses which you can supplement by reading the above-mentioned study.

God wants to see Christians have works i.e., to be found spending time studying their Bible and making efforts to live their lives according to the truth they have. God says Christians are rewarded according to their works and for a Christian's faith to be true, it must have works.

Jas 2:20 But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?

Jas 2:26 For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

Individual Christians must have works and cannot be saved by the works of others; it has to be by their own works some of which entails studying God's Bible to uncover truths that are not part of the foundational

truths given the Church by Christ. Going over the same truths over and over again, past a certain point, does not result in growth. Growth is the result of learning something new and in the case of Christians, it is finding new truths and gaining new and better understanding of the Scriptures.

This greater understanding of the Scriptures is God's doing and not ministers who also must study their Bible to have personal spiritual growth. All true Christians have their minds enabled by the holy spirit God the Word and Spokesman to understand the spiritual truth of God's Holy Bible. The mission of the ministry is to teach the truths given by God to the church, to newcomers to the faith. Growth in knowledge and understanding beyond these truths, in their lives and that of the brethren, will come from personal Bible study. Mr. Armstrong is an exception i.e., he was a source of new truth for the Church because he was a type of the promised Elijah that is to come but he is not the promised second Elijah whose coming will be to the physical descendants of the ancient nation of Israel. ([Did the Second Elijah Already Come?](#))

Paul in 1Cor 14, explains to his congregations and to us today that when true Christians assemble they can discuss their findings among themselves to determine if indeed what they have found can be justified with the Scriptures. Two conditions were imposed on them: things had to be done decently and in order so that all may profit (1Cor 14:40) and the foundational truth given them by Paul who received them from Christ were not to be questioned (1Cor 14:37).

Were Christians discussing their Bible findings among themselves something dreaded by Paul and which he would have preferred they didn't do?

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

Not only was it permissible for them to discuss the results of their Bible studies in meetings with other true Christians but it was something that all of them should covet i.e., they should have a great desire to do so.

So, we have the foundational truths given Paul which are not to be subject to discussion and then, all the Bible findings from Church members which the members were to verify among themselves to determine whether they fit perfectly or not on the foundation of truth given the Church by verifying them against the Bible. True Christians build on the foundation by adding to it truth that does not undo any of the biblically- proven foundational truths.

On the one hand, we have the truths God gave to His Church and on the other hand, we have the different new truths being uncovered by true Christians as they study their Bible.

But would that not lead to different Christians having different truths and God says there is to be no divisions in the Church?

1Co 1:10 Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.

How can these two things be reconciled?

Unity in God's Church

The unity that must exist in the Church has to do with the requirement for all to fully accept the foundational truths given by Christ to the Church as they become known. HWA restored some of them. There can be no division regarding them. However, Christians are to have growth in their understanding of the Scriptures and this is where one will find true Christians having different understandings of certain verses of the Bible as a result of their personal Bible studies. Church members are to discuss their findings with other true Christians in an orderly fashion to test out the validity of their findings against the Scriptures. In numbers there is wisdom and different members of God's Church have more knowledge of certain parts of the Bible than others who also have more knowledge of other parts of the Bible. Altogether, they possess a lot of knowledge which can be brought to bear on determining the validity of their individual findings as explained by Paul in 1 Cor 14. The Bible is the criterion of truth; not the collective judgment of the group or of one or more outspoken men who at times may attempt to dominate the group.

When it comes to [non-foundational truths](#), there can exist differences among members in understandings of the Scriptures but these differences are not to change any of the foundational truths. And, it must be agreed and understood that individual members' Bible study findings are to be tested out by discussing them in an orderly fashion when meeting with other truly converted Christians.

There must be unity of mind on the foundational truths as they become known and on the process to be used to validate personal study Bible findings. Christians are encouraged to discuss their personal Bible study findings in meetings with other truly converted Christians who are also studying their Bible.

This is the unity that must exist in God's Church.

The foundational truths of God's Church are not the only truths that can be known. Paul says clearly they are a foundation on which others (true Christians) are to build. The foundation is the means to have growth in knowledge and understanding; it is not an end unto itself. It is a set of tools that can and is to be used to dig into the Scriptures and discover truths which are not part of the foundation but which fit perfectly on it.

The foundational truths provide Christians with the means to grow in knowledge and understanding all their lives as they study their Bible which is how God speaks to mankind since the passage of Christ.

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 Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Israel, etc. by the prophets but in these last days in which we live, He speaks to the truly converted who are spiritual Israel or His Church by His Son, Jesus-Christ who is the holy spirit God the Word and Spokesman who dwells in all true Christians. The Bible is the Word of God or Christ (the Word) in writing and it is through the Bible that God today speaks to the truly converted.

Conclusion

As contradictory as it may seem, unity in God's Church does not mean that all must believe the same things. True Christians have their minds enabled by the holy spirit God the Word and Spokesman to understand the spiritual truth of the Bible and all are commanded to study and have growth in knowledge and understanding.

The purpose for having the holy spirit God the Word and Spokesman dwelling in the minds of the holy spirit God the Father's called and chosen ones is not so that men will understand the preaching of other men; it is to enable true Christians to understand the Bible which allows them to verify the truthfulness of what the ministry of God's Church teaches (when there is a true one in existence) including their teaching of the foundational truths of God's Church. The criterion of truth is not how many agree that something is true or not or that it came from an ordained minister or the Pastor General. The criterion is whether it can be shown that the Bible

supports it or not regardless of the rank of the individual saying it or of how many individuals agree or disagree with it.

The fundamental truths of God's Church (the fully Bible-provable truths) are something that all must agree with AFTER having themselves proven them with their Bible. The holy spirit God the Word and Spokesman dwelling in true Christians makes it possible for them to do so and not only is it something they should do, it is something they **MUST** do. Christians have to prove all things.

1Th 5:20 Despise not prophesying.

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

1Th 5:20 God also states clearly that Christians are not to despise prophesying and in 1 Cor 14:39 God also greatly encourages the brethren to prophesy.

1Co 14:39 Wherefore, brethren, covet to prophesy, and forbid not to speak with tongues. [i.e., in another language than that of the majority of those attending a meeting, if there is someone to interpret so the others will understand]

All members are greatly encouraged by God to prophesy which in this context means to speak on God's behalf to the congregation about a truth that God has revealed to them as they study their Bible so as to have personal growth in knowledge and understanding as all Christians are commanded to have. For a full explanation of what is a prophet according to the Bible I refer you to the following study: [The Ministry and God's Truth](#) You need to really know what is a prophet according to the Bible to understand 1Th 5:20 and 1Cor 14:39 which is the key to understanding the unity that is to exist in God's Church.

Christ laid the foundation, the faithful are to build on it; God greatly encourages them to do so and the means to do so is through individual Bible study resulting in the discovery of new truths whose validity is tested out against the Scriptures in spiritual fellowship in meetings with other true Christians (see 1 Cor 14:26-40).

There can be no division in God's Church regarding the foundational truths of God's Church but there can and will certainly be different understandings and beliefs in the Church which to be valid need to be shown to not change any of the foundational truths given God's Church by Christ, using the Bible to do so.

The means of resolving differences is in discussion with other true Christians using their Bible in determining the validity of a new understanding. If new understandings cannot be shown to be true against the Scriptures or are ultimately found to be in error, they are not to be maintained.

Individual Bible study, after having fully mastered the truth placed by God in His Church, is the only means through which spiritually mature Christians can have the growth in knowledge and understanding they need to remain live spiritual embryos that can be born again as glorified holy spirit beings at Christ's 2nd Coming.

The unity that has to exist in God's Church is with the foundational truths given the Church by Christ Himself as they become known to the Church and with the understanding that God is revealing truth to all members of God's Church as they study their Bible.

It cannot be any other way as Christians all have minds enabled by the holy spirit God the Word and Spokesman to understand the spiritual truth or God-level truth of the Bible. All true Christians are taught of God through the holy spirit God the Word and Spokesman dwelling in them. The Scriptures do not say that converted individuals would be taught God's spiritual truth by men. The ministry's commission, when there is one in existence, is to teach the truths God's has placed in His Church but the understanding of these truths in their spiritual dimension is by the in-dwelling presence of the holy spirit God the Word and Spokesman. New truths can and will come into God's Church from individual Bible studies. The ministry, like the non-ordained members of God's Church, has to study their Bible just as much as any of the other members of God's Church.

Why study the Bible if it is impossible to get any new truth from it or if the only way truth enters the Church is by the ministry who are but fallible men who are quite capable of straying from the truth and who have done so abundantly even in our recent past.

God tells true Christians to trust no man and that God is speaking to true Christians through His Son, the Word or Spokesman who became Christ. The Bible is Christ in writing and the only sure criterion of truth that all true Christians have. The criterion of truth is not any man including the ordained ministry, but the sure Word of God.

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;

Unity is God's Church does not consist in following men such as the ordained ministry or even the Pastor General but in believing the fully Bible provable truths given by God to His Church. It should also be commonly understood that individual Christians can and will discover new Scripturally valid truths as they study their Bible with their minds enabled by the holy spirit God the Word and Spokesman to understand spiritual truth. The criterion of truth is not men but Gods' Holy Bible.

All members of God's Church are taught by God; not men and their salvation is between them and God; not between God, a minister and them; the ministry are but men including the Pastor General.

There can be no headquarters Church or single individual which rules spiritually over local congregations nor is that possible given that members of God's Church stand by their faith i.e., what they have chosen to believe and that no one can force them to believe something they have not chosen to believe.

2Co 1:24 Not for that we [apostles and other ministers appointed by them] have dominion [can impose on you what it is you are to believe] over your faith, but are helpers of your joy: for by faith ye stand. [you remain a Christian by those things which you have chosen to believe as no man can force you to believe something you have not chosen to believe]

God's Church is a worldwide community of individuals called and chosen by God who have had their minds enabled by the holy spirits of the God family to understand the Bible. They have in common the truths placed by God in His Church but they will all individually discover new truths as they study their Bible which they are to discuss in spiritual fellowship with other true Christians to prove them out against the Bible whether they be true or not.

Unity in God's Church is the requirement for all to agree with the fully Bible provable truths of God's Church and with the process that is to be followed to validate individual Bible study findings. Individual findings are to be discussed with other truly converted Christians when they get together in study groups as a means of proving them out using the Bible as their one and only criterion of truth to do so. This is the Godly spiritual fellowship that true Christians are to have and which helps all those participating in growing in their knowledge and understanding of the truths contained in God's holy Bible,

