

Who CAN Feed
the Flock?

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From Web Site
God's Spiritual Nation

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.

Does preaching the Gospel in the way Christ told His disciples to do it lead to riches and fame? Do we have any Bible example where this happened? Do men have the ability to call men and open their minds to understand God's spiritual truth? Does the success of God's plan of salvation depend on men. Let's with an open mind examine what God's holy Bible tells us about who are the ones who have the ability to feed His flock.

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 o 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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Anyone who has been involved with things “religious” for any amount of time, is familiar with the Bible verses where Christ tells His disciples to feed the flock. Jesus had just spent 3 1/2 years teaching them and the knowledge He had given them was fresh in their minds. It was something they could pass on to those whom the holy spirit God the Father would call starting on the day of Pentecost.

Those coming to conversion in the lifetime of the apostles and of those directly trained by them, could benefit from the knowledge He had given the apostles. However, Christianity began to be persecuted almost from its beginning; persecutions which grew in intensity to the point where Christians had to flee into the wilderness to avoid being put to death by a new and different Christianity which came to dominate all other religions.

As a result of true Christians having to flee and be scattered, the truth given them by the apostles became lost for the most part. Christ did not come back to again teach the truths He had given His disciples. The persecution of true Christians continued for many centuries and the Bible tells us that this religious power succeeded in “wearing out” the saints.

Dan 7:23 Thus he said, The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, **[the Roman Empire]** which shall be diverse **[different]** from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces.

Dan 7:24 And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings [kingdom] that shall arise: and another [king or kingdom] shall rise after them; and he shall be diverse from the first, and he shall subdue three kings.

Each horn on the beast Daniel saw in a vision represents a king or a kingdom. In this instance, this is the Roman Empire which was to have 10 kings. The Empire almost fell but was revived by a new power, the papacy, under whose influence 3 kings or horns were subdued. These were the Ostrogoths, the Herulis and the Vandals who following their defeat, ceased to exist as a people. The papacy then ruled over the Roman Empire and this is why it became known as the “holy” Roman Empire.

This new religious force dominated the civil authorities and was successful in wearing out “...the saints of the most high....” (Dan 7:25)

Dan 7:25 And he shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time.

Essentially, over the centuries of persecution, God’s saints lost much of the truths Christ had given to the First Century Church of God and they remained lost until Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong (HWA) restored many but, most likely not all of them, to those truly converted who were part of the Worldwide Church of God (WCG) organization founded by him. How many were not restored is impossible for us to know as the Bible does not give us a full account of the truths Christ gave to His disciples. Be it as it may, those teachings of HWA that can be fully proven with God’s holy Bible are HWA’s legacy to true Christians today.

HWA always cautioned those who heard him to prove all things with their Bible and if it was found he had unintentionally made a mistake in what he taught, he emphasized they were to follow the Bible and not him. HWA never claimed that what he taught was the absolute truth of God which no one could question or that it was impossible for him to ever have been in error in what he taught. HWA was just a man subject to all the shortcomings common to mankind.

The Foundational Truths of God's Church

We are some 2,000 years away from the time Christ taught His disciples. There is no detailed written record of all Christ taught His disciples. This information was transmitted by word of mouth throughout the centuries and it is a sure thing that the fullness of the original messages became lost. Those parts which remained became distorted as it is unavoidable that the oral transfer of this information would always result in some parts being amplified, others being diminished and some parts being forgotten. No one recalls things the same way even if they really want to do so; some parts are lost and some are changed.

There is a parlor game that is sometimes used to illustrate how a message gets changed as it goes from one person to another. A message is given to one person or a group of ten. The message is to be passed on from person to person without any of the others hearing what is being said. The result is always the same. The message received by the 10th person is very different from the original message given to the first person.

In a perfect world, the truth taught by Christ to His disciples would have been transmitted without error from one generation of Christian to another and we, today, would know what they were; but they weren't.

The Bible does not give us what were the foundational truths of God's Church Christ taught His disciples. The disciples knew them all and taught them to those called and chosen by the holy spirit God the Father. And those the apostles appointed to assist them as teachers to the congregations that had formed, also knew them fully but since over the centuries they were transmitted by word of mouth and not in writing, today we don't know how many there were nor how many we do not have today.

Shortly after its foundation on the day of Pentecost God's Church came under persecution first from the Jews and then by a new and great false Christian church. The early Church of God had to flee into the wilderness to escape death and imprisonment. They lost contact with each other and with their leaders and the truths they had been given got lost except for certain basic knowledge such as the requirement to keep the Sabbath and the 10 Commandments.

This is mentioned because the fact that the foundational truths of God's Church were lost over the centuries of persecutions that came upon

it is directly relevant to the ability of men to preach and teach other men. The problem is that they don't know what were the truths given by Christ to His disciples and God's First Century Church. But some will say, we have the Bible so we know what Christ's teachings were. If the Bible is sufficiently clear on what it was Christ taught, then why is it that there are so many different Christian churches? If the Bible is clear and easy to correctly understand, there should be only one Christian church but there are hundreds if not more of them.

Christ's Command to His Disciples to Feed His Sheep

In Chapter 21 of the book of John we read the following:

Joh 21:15 So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, **Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these?** He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, **Feed my lambs.**

Joh 21:16 He saith to him again the second time, **Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?** He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, **Feed my sheep.**

Joh 21:17 He saith unto him the third time, **Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?** Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, **Feed my sheep.**

In these verses, we find Christ's command to Peter to feed His sheep. He was speaking directly to Peter and this for a very specific reason. Peter had renounced Him 3 times the night He was taken to be crucified. Christ had told Him he would do this.

Mar 14:30 And Jesus saith unto him, **[Peter] Verily I say unto thee, That this day, even in this night, before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice.**

In Matthew 26, we read of Peter denying 3 times he knew Jesus.

Mat 26:69 Now Peter sat without in the palace: and a damsel came unto him, saying, Thou also wast with Jesus of Galilee.

Mat 26:70 But he denied before them all, saying, I know not what thou sayest.

Mat 26:71 And when he was gone out into the porch, another maid saw him, and said unto them that were there, This fellow was also with Jesus of Nazareth.

Mat 26:72 And again he denied with an oath, I do not know the man.

Mat 26:73 And after a while came unto him they that stood by, and said to Peter, Surely thou also art one of them; for thy speech bewrayeth thee.

Mat 26:74 Then began he to curse and to swear, saying, I know not the man. And immediately the cock crew.

Mat 26:75 And Peter remembered the word of Jesus, which said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out, and wept bitterly.

When Jesus after His death and resurrection appeared to Peter and 6 other disciples who were with him, He had Peter confirm his love for Him 3 times to undo the 3 times he had renounced Him. In this way he was rehabilitated (to cause to be regarded again in a positive way; reestablish esteem for) to do the work Christ wanted him to do and that was to feed His sheep (those called, chosen and faithful).

So let's start examining what the Bible says about the requirement to feed the flock, who are those who can do it and how it can be done today.

False Prophets

At the very beginning of God's Church there were false prophets who were seeking to come into the congregations of God's Church teaching falsities to have Christians follow them instead of the truth they had received.

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

1Jn 4:1 Beloved, [believe not every spirit, but try the spirits](#) whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

Initially, the false prophets were mostly Jewish. Judaism was the religion of the day, Christianity was new and the Jews were opposed to it.

Tit 1:5 For this cause [Tit 1: 10-11] left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders [1 Tim 3:6] in every city, as I had appointed thee:

Titus had been ordained by Paul as an elder and he was to appoint elders in every city where they were bigger or smaller congregations of God's Church. Why would these elders be needed? The answer is given us in the following verses:

Tit 1:9 Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.

The gainsayers are those who were preaching for money. They can come from the unconverted world and they can arise right from within the congregations of God's Church. When someone preaches as a means to make money, God calls that man a false prophet and the money he makes, filthy lucre. Men are not to use preaching as a means of making money and even less, as a way of enriching themselves.

Tit 1:10 For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision:

Those of the circumcision were the Jews who in the days of the apostles and the early church were the religious elite and Judaism was the mainstream religion of Israel. They saw Christians as infidels and a menace to them and worked at destroying them. One of the ways was by them trying to draw Christian converts away from the truth and to get them to follow them and make money off of them.

Tit 1:11 Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake.

The role of the elders in the faith was to counter and prevent the false prophets, the Jews in this instance, from drawing away the truly converted from the truth they had received in order to exploit them financially or for filthy lucre sake as the Bible states it.

Preaching for money is evil in God's eye and this is why one of the main requirement for being ordained as an elder is the following:

Tit 1:7 For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, **not given to filthy lucre**;

1Ti 3:1 This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work.

1Ti 3:3 Not given to wine, no striker, **not greedy of filthy lucre**; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; **[having a strong desire for material possession]**

Greediness or being greedy is having or showing a strong or excessive desire to acquire money or possess things, especially wishing to possess more than what one needs or deserves.

Another requirement for elders was that they should not be newcomers to the faith.

1Ti 3:6 **Not a novice**, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil.

1Pe 5:1 The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, **[Peter was an elder]** and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed:

An elder is someone who has known the truth for a long time; he is not a newcomer to the faith. Peter described himself as also being an elder even though he was not only an apostle but the chief apostle. Being an elder is not always and necessarily an ordained office; it is simply someone who is a long time member of God's Church who has remained faithful and is growing in knowledge and understanding of the truth and in the perfect righteous character of Christ.

1Pe 5:2 **Feed the flock of God** which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; **not for filthy lucre**, but of a ready mind;

Who are the ones who in the days of the First Century Church were to feed the flock? 1Pe 5:2 tells us it is those who have been long time faithful members of God's Church and who are not doing so for filthy lucre. They are doing so because it is something they have chosen to do to help their brethren not to make money.

Elders are to watch over or have oversight of local groups of faithfuls. The apostles did not exercise a centralized top-down control of the sev-

eral little groups of converted individuals spread all over Israel, and later on among the Gentiles, they rather asked local elders to voluntarily do so. The primitive means of travel and communication that then existed made it impossible for Peter to be physically present among the geographically dispersed congregations of God's Church

1Pe 5:3 Neither as being **lords** over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.

The elders are not to lord it over those whom they are to oversee. They are not to expect nor want to be treated in any special way by those with whom they are sharing the truth of God that they have. They are owed no more or less respect than what is customary and traditional between men. They are to be examples of good Christian living to their flock which includes not being filled with vanity because of their status as elders. Their reward will be in the resurrection.

1Pe 5:4 And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.

Being a faithful elder full of care for those they teach will result in their becoming an immortal holy spirit being by a resurrection from the dead at the time of Christ's 2nd Coming.

1Pe 5:5 Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.

The younger in the faith (this verse here is not talking about chronological age) are to willingly submit themselves unto the elder. They are not to oppose, resist or undermine him. In fact, Peter says, they are all to be subject to one another. In other words, none are to consider themselves higher in authority, prestige or importance than others. All are to be treated the same with the elders not being above those who are newcomers to the faith; the younger in the faith.

1Pe 5:6 Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:

Obey God's command for all to be treated in the same way whether an elder or a newcomer to the faith. None are to lord it over anyone in God's Church.

This was very true for the First Century Church but as we have seen

much of the original truth given the apostles by Christ has been lost or distorted because of persecution and having had to be transmitted by word of mouth. Nowadays, more than 1,900 years after the foundation of God's Church, we can safely say that there is no man or organization of men who has all the knowledge initially given to the apostles.

Who is it then that can feed God's sheep? What is it that they can teach them? Before continuing with this study, I think a few words should be said about the importance of money to God's Church and especially with respect to those who say they have a calling to be teachers in God's Church.

Money

When Christ sent the 12 disciples to preach that the Kingdom of God was at hand, He gave them the following instructions.

Mat 10:5 These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, **Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not:**

Mat 10:6 **But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.**

Mat 10:7 **And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand.**

Mat 10:8 **Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give.**

Mat 10:9 **Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses,**

Mat 10:10 **Nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves: for the workman is worthy of his meat.**

Mat 10:11 **And into whatsoever city or town ye shall enter, enquire who in it is worthy; and there abide till ye go thence.**

Mat 10:12 **And when ye come into an house, salute it.**

Mat 10:13 **And if the house be worthy, let your peace come upon it: but if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you.**

Matthew 10:8 is possibly the definitive Bible verse that makes it clear that preaching is not to be used as a means of earning a living.

The spiritual truth of God was given to all those called and chosen as a free gift from God. It is not through the efforts or labor of any man or organization of men but they are many who think that knowledge and understanding of God's spiritual truth depends on there being human teachers or preachers to teach it to men. There are men who think they are indispensable to the success of God's plan of salvation for mankind; that they have a special calling from God to bring salvation to the masses; to preach the Gospel, to give out a warning message and to feed God's sheep.

Paul was an apostle personally trained by Christ and here is what he said to the Corinthians:

1Co 3:4 For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?

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

It is God who gave those who heard Paul, Apollos, etc. to believe what they preached.

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

1Co 3:7 So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase.

What Paul is basically saying here is what Christ had told the multitude that He had fed with the 5 loaves and the 2 fishes and who were following Him because they wanted more food. Jesus told them the following:

Joh 6:35 And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.

They could not understand in its spiritual dimension what He had just told them. Jesus gave them more information but it just made matters worse; they still didn't understand what Jesus was really saying. Jesus then tells them why it is they couldn't understand.

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.

In other words, no one can understand the God level spiritual truth that Christ spoke unless he has been called by God the Father. Or still, as another Scripture states it:

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

The understanding of God's spiritual truth is not made possible by men. Only God can open men's minds to accept and understand spiritual truth. It is not, and cannot ever be, the doing of any man.

So who then is feeding God's church which is a spiritual nation spread all over the nations of the world. They are truly converted individuals who are by themselves or in small unorganized groups?

In the 14th Chapter of the book of John, Christ is telling His disciples that He would go away but for them not to be fearful or discouraged, He would come to them.

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

How would He come to them?

Joh 14:21 He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.

How would He manifest Himself to them?

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

Christ would come to them and to all truly converted Christians remaining faithful to their calling. He would come to them as the holy spirit God the Word and Spokesman who is responsible for teaching all things to those called and chosen by the holy spirit God the Father.

The knowledge and understanding of God's truth is by the holy spirits

of the Godhead. God's plan of salvation for mankind does not and has never depended on men.

Feeding the Flock

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

So what is involved in feeding God's flock. One thing for sure is that God's truth doesn't originate from human preachers/teachers and its understanding is not by any man's doing as we have just seen.

Each and every truly converted members of God's Church have dwelling in them the holy spirit God the Word and Spokesman who teaches them all things. Preachers and teachers are not the source of God's truth and God's spiritual truth is made understandable to them by the holy spirit God the Word; not men. God's truth is to be found in God's holy Bible which all true Christians are to attentively study. As they study it, the holy spirit God the Word and Spokesman gives them understanding of the truths it contains.

As we have already seen, it is God that gives the increase in understanding of the truth; not men (1Co 3: 5-6).

Christ's command to feed His flock has been generally interpreted to mean that God would reveal His spiritual truth to specific men who would then have the responsibility of teaching it to others. They are the ones saying they are being used by God to be current day apostles, evangelists and prophets.

Nothing could be further from the truth.

God is working out His plan of salvation through the holy spirit being who faithfully does everything God the Father tells Him to do, the holy spirit God the Word and Spokesman. He is God the Father's holy spirit who does the work; He is God's spirit.

In God's plan of salvation, the resurrected and glorified Christ is the holy spirit God the Word and Spokesman who has the responsibility of teaching all things to God the Father's called and chosen ones. He is the spirit from God and the spirit used by God to build His Church; He is God's spirit who does what is needed to accomplish God the Father's will whether it be the creation of the universe, the restoration of the

surface of the Earth after Satan's rebellion caused it to be disrupted or the building of His spiritual temple which is God's Church (Zec 4:6).

God the Father created all things through Him (Heb 1:2).

Heb 1:2 [God] Hath in these last days spoken unto us [truly converted Christians] by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he [God the Father] made the worlds;

God's Son, Christ after His resurrection and glorification is the holy spirit used by God the Father to speak unto truly converted Christians. He is the holy spirit who teaches them all things.

In the book of Zechariah, we read of Israel under the leadership of Zerubbabel being involved in building the 2nd temple of God. A physical temple was being built but God tells Zerubbabel that He is building a spiritual temple and that it is not being built by men but by His spirit.

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

The truly converted are the temple of God and the Word.

God is building this spiritual temple, not men and this is being done by God the Father calling men to salvation and God the Word teaching (feeding) all things to the Father's chosen ones. Essentially, feeding God's sheep involves a process of fellowshiping as opposed to one where God reveals truth to a single person who then is required to teach it to the non-ordained members.

1 Jn1:3 That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our [the apostles and all members of God's Church] fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.

All members of God's Church are to have fellowship with each other, God the Father and God the Word. This is not a teacher-student relationship where there is only one person to whom God is revealing truth and who is responsible to teach it to others. No, all members of God's Church are being taught by the holy spirit God the Word and they are not all being taught exactly the same truths. Different truths are given to different members as they study their Bible. When they come together, is the time when in spiritual fellowship with each other, they share

and review among themselves the various truths given them as a way of growing their individual knowledge and verifying the validity of their Bible study findings always using the Bible as their standard of truth.

In doing so, truly converted Christians are effectively fellowshipping with God the Father and His Son Jesus-Christ through the truths of God they are reviewing together with the Bible as the criterion they use to verify the validity of their individual Bible study findings.

Being a Christian is not a matter of sitting in a room listening to a sermon, stopping at a restaurant for a meal with friends on the way home and then waiting for the following week's meeting to arrive and start the process all over again.

Church members are not to sit idly by while someone pours information into their heads without ever spending any time in personal study of their Bible checking out the truthfulness of what they are being taught. Conversion is not a spectator sport; its rather a full participation sport. Sitting on the sidelines results in no spiritual gain and ultimately leads to loss of salvation. Feeding the flock is a fully shared process between God the Father, God the Son and each and every member of God's Church.

This is precisely what Paul taught the First Era Church.

Prophesying

God through Paul tells the truly converted that they are to do something which was never talked about in the WCG and which is avoided in all the current organizations of men presenting themselves as being true churches of God. But, Christ said He would build His Church not churches but the so-called current several churches of God are ignoring this truth as they compete with each other to become the one and only true Church of God.

God tells all true Christians that they are to do the following:

1Th 5:20 Despise not [prophesyings](#).

1Th 5:21 [Prove all things](#); hold fast that which is good.

1Co 14:39 Wherefore, brethren, [covet to prophesy](#), and forbid not to speak with tongues. [\[if there is someone who can translate so that those listening can profit from what is being said; if not that person is not to speak.\]](#)

What is God saying when He is telling His called and chosen ones that they should not despise prophesying and that even, they should covet to prophesy?

What!!!

Is it not only certain specially chosen men who can prophesy?

Isn't prophecy always about events that are to take place far into the future which God has revealed to only certain specially chosen men?

Let's see what the Bible says about what it means to prophesy.

In the book of Exodus, God tells us that Aaron is to be a prophet for Moses.

Exo 7:1 And the LORD said unto Moses, See, I have made thee a god to Pharaoh: and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet.

And how was Aaron to be a prophet for Moses?

Exo 7:2 Thou [Moses] shalt speak all that I command thee: and Aaron thy brother shall speak unto Pharaoh, that he send the children of Israel out of his land.

God would have used Moses to be His spokesman or prophet to Pharaoh but Moses had a speech impediment.

Exo 4:10 And Moses said unto the LORD, O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant: but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue.

Exo 4:11 And the LORD said unto him, Who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? have not I the LORD?

Exo 4:12 Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say.

Exo 4:13 And he said, O my Lord, send, I pray thee, by the hand of him whom thou wilt send.

Exo 4:14 And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Moses, and he said, Is not Aaron the Levite thy brother? I know that he can speak well. And also, behold, he cometh forth

to meet thee: and when he seeth thee, he will be glad in his heart.

Exo 4:15 And thou shalt speak unto him, and put words in his mouth: and I will be with thy mouth, and with his mouth, and will teach you what ye shall do.

Exo 4:16 And **he shall be thy spokesman** unto the people: and he shall be, even **he shall be to thee instead of a mouth**, and thou **shalt be to him instead of God**.

God would speak to Moses and he would be as a god to Aaron. He would relay God's word to Aaron and Aaron would speak to Pharaoh on behalf of Moses and in this way be Moses' prophet.

In the book of Nehemiah we are given more information on what is a prophet.

Neh 6:7 And thou **[Nehemiah]** hast also appointed **prophets to preach of thee** at Jerusalem, saying, There is a king in Judah: and now shall it be reported to the king according to these words. Come now therefore, and let us take counsel together.

In order to understand what is going on here, we will have to go through the following verses:

Neh 6:1 Now it came to pass, when Sanballat, and Tobiah, and Geshem the Arabian, and the rest of our enemies, heard that I had builded the wall, and that there was no breach left therein; (though at that time I had not set up the doors upon the gates;)

Neh 6:2 That Sanballat and Geshem sent unto me, saying, Come, let us meet together in some one of the villages in the plain of Ono. But they thought to do me mischief.

Neh 6:3 And I sent messengers unto them, saying, I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down: why should the work cease, whilst I leave it, and come down to you?

Neh 6:4 Yet they sent unto me four times after this sort; and I answered them after the same manner.

Neh 6:5 Then sent Sanballat his servant unto me in like manner the fifth time with an open letter in his hand;

Neh 6:6 Wherein was written, It is reported among the heathen, and Gashmu saith it, that thou and the Jews think to rebel: for which cause thou buildest the wall, that thou mayest be their king, according to these words.

Neh 6:7 And thou hast also appointed prophets to preach of thee at Jerusalem, saying, There is a king in Judah: and now shall it be reported to the king according to these words. Come now therefore, and let us take counsel together.

Nehemiah's enemies were trying to get him to go to them so they could kill him as they didn't want the walls of Jerusalem to be restored. They accused him of wanting to become king of Judah and oppose the king that was ruling over the land, Artaxerxes (King of Persia). Nehemiah had been given permission by the king of Persia to go to Jerusalem and rebuild the walls and Nehemiah's enemies who didn't want to see the walls of Jerusalem rebuilt were falsely accusing him to wanting to proclaim himself as king over Judah.

And here is the point of interest to us, their accusation was that he had appointed prophets to preach, proclaim that there is a king in Judah, namely himself, Nehemiah. This was not true but what did they say these prophets were doing?

Who were these prophets? Had they been sent by God? No. Who were they representing, on whose behalf were they speaking, God; no, they were speaking on behalf of Nehemiah. Was their message a message from God? No, their message was supposedly from Nehemiah.

In this context, prophesying meant that some men had been appointed by another man to represent him and proclaim a certain message on his behalf.

Basically, a prophet is someone representing and giving out a message on behalf of another and that other is not necessarily and always, God as we just saw. Let's look at another example that illustrates this point.

In the book of 1 King we have the story of the confrontation between the prophets of Baal and Elijah, the prophet of God.

1Ki 18:17 And it came to pass, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said unto him, Art thou he that troubleth Israel?

1Ki 18:18 And he answered, I have not troubled Israel; but thou, and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the LORD, and thou hast followed Baalim.

1Ki 18:19 Now therefore send, and gather to me all Israel unto mount Carmel, and the prophets of Baal four hundred and fifty, and the prophets of the groves four hundred, which eat at Jezebel's table.

1Ki 18:20 So Ahab sent unto all the children of Israel, and gathered the prophets together unto mount Carmel.

1Ki 18:21 And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word.

1Ki 18:22 Then said Elijah unto the people, I, even I only, remain a prophet of the LORD; but **Baal's prophets** are four hundred and fifty men.

Baal was a pagan god that Israel was following rather than the true God. Baal had his prophets who were speaking to the people on his behalf and giving out his message to them. Elijah was God's prophet who was speaking to Israel and giving them God's message for them.

Both Baal and God had prophets but their messages were quite different from one another. One represented the true God and the other a made-up god from the imagination of men. The point of importance we need to notice is that being a prophet basically means to be someone who represents and speaks on behalf of another to give out that person's message to others. The prophets of Baal were the spokesmen for the imaginary god, Baal and Elijah was the spokesman for the one true God.

The word "prophet" does not always refer to a person who has a message given him by God regarding events that are to occur in the future. And, it does not always have a religious meaning. As we have seen in the book of Nehemiah, the prophets were men that Nehemiah had supposedly appointed to represent him and be his spokesmen in telling the people that he was the new king of Judah. Their message was not religious but social and political.

The essential definition of the word "prophet" is that it is someone who represents another and speaks on their behalf. God's prophets are given truth by God and they speak it to others on God's behalf.

This understanding of what is a prophet as provided by God's holy Bible will allow us to better understand how God is feeding His flock in NT times.

One last Scripture which is important in understanding what it means to prophesy, is Joel 2: 28 which speaks about the time when all men will be called.

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

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

The same message was repeated by Peter in his sermon on the day of Pentecost to the Jews from all nations dwelling in Jerusalem (Act 2:5).

Act 2:17 And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams:

Act 2:18 And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy:

What does it mean for their sons and daughters to prophesy? Will they all begin to speak about events that will occur in the future? Or, is it that of all those who will have followed their calling when the holy spirit God the Father calls all men, will begin to speak to each other about the amazing truths of God they have been given to know while being taught by the holy spirit God the Father when they were being called.

If we recall what happened at the time of our calling, we couldn't believe that we had never understood the truths revealed to us by God and for a while, we couldn't understand why others didn't also as it was so very clear to us. We tried sharing this new knowledge with our family and friends only to be astounded that none of them believed what we said and even became hostile towards us if we kept trying to explain it to them.

When all are called during the Millennium, those who follow their calling — not everyone will and this is the way it has always been (Mat 20:16; 22:14; 7:13) — they will do what all new converts do and that is speak eagerly to each other about the wonderful truths of God they have been given to know and about which they are completely amazed. They will prophesy.

Those called out and chosen are the only ones with whom God's revealed truths can be shared as they are no longer hostile to it as they were before (Rom8:7). Their minds have been regenerated by the presence in it of the holy spirits of the Godhead.

Tit 3:5 Not by works of righteousness which we [who have been called and chosen] have done, but according to his [God's] mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;

Those called and chosen who are remaining faithful will prophesy to each other during the Millennium in the same way that those who have been called, chosen and faithful since the day of Pentecost have been doing and are doing now. Those who will rise up in the 2nd resurrection at the beginning of the Last Great Day if faithful to their calling will also be prophesying to each other.

Prophesying to Each Other?

In the Bible, God tells Christians not to despise prophesying and even, to covet to prophesy.

1Th 5:20 **Despise not** prophesyings.

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

Why should Christians covet to prophesy?

Note this does not say that only true preachers or teachers, the ones who are not preaching for filthy lucre sake and who are not greedy of filthy lucre, are the only ones that are to prophesy. God's truth is not taught exclusively to them. All truly converted Christians are being taught by the holy spirit God the Father while being called and by the holy spirit God the Word if they accept their calling. God's truth does not enter God's Church through specific men who then are to teach it to others. In the Scriptures we will review together, we will find an explanation of what it means for Christians to prophesy. To do so, we will focus on an epistle addressed to the Corinthian congregations but which is wholly applicable to all Christians: 1Co 14: 27-39.

Small congregations of true Christians in the early days of God's Church were scattered and of course, distance and the number of congregations that then existed, made it impossible for Paul to be at every meeting and even to be at some of their meetings. In the verses we will re-

view, there are no apostle, evangelist or elder acting as a moderator for the group; they are meeting on their own.

Wouldn't that be something that God through Paul would forbid Christians from doing as mistakes could be made in their discussions with no one in authority to correct them? Let's read on.

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.

These Christians were meeting possibly on the Sabbaths and on God's annual holy days and they all had something they wanted to share with their group. Paul's only concern was that when they met, things should be done to edify and in the following verses, he tells us what he means.

1Co 14:27 If any man speak in an unknown tongue, [speak in a language unknown to the majority of the group] 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, [translator] let him keep silence in the church; and let him speak to himself, and to God.

Contrary to popular belief in the world, speaking in tongues is not someone suddenly breaking out in incomprehensible gibberish and saying that this is God speaking through him. It is clear that if there is no one who understands the foreign language being spoken and who can translate for the group, then that person is to remain silent. If what is said can be translated then it means that when speaking in "tongues" is mentioned in the Bible it is referring to one of the world's languages. If a "tongue" is not one of the languages spoken in the world, no one could translate what is being said so the others could understand.

Unintelligible gobbledygook is not a human language which can be interpreted or translated. Incomprehensible noise coming from someone's mouth, it is not to be part of any meetings of truly converted Christians. The goal is to edify and what is being said must be understood by those who are listening.

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

Here is that word again, prophet. Why is Paul calling true Christians prophets? They are prophets because when they relate to the group the truths God has given them as they studied their Bible, they are speaking on behalf of God in the same way that God spoke to Moses and Aaron spoke to Pharaoh on behalf of Moses.

The prophets or speakers are to present their Bible study findings to the group and the group is to judge or evaluate their presentation against what the Bible says. Two or three are to speak but of course not at the same time as the goal is always that everybody be able to understand what is being said (1Co 14:31).

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

Notice here that Paul is talking about things being revealed by God to some of those who are sitting silently listening to what is being said. Something in what the speaker said brought something new to the mind of one or more of those in the meeting but what are they then to do.

They are to remain silent and in the following verse, we are told why.

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

There are only to speak one at a time so that the whole group may learn from what is being said.

Something interesting here, truly converted Christians can learn from one another by sharing with other truly converted Christians the truth God the Word has revealed to them in their personal Bible studies. But isn't it that God reveals truth to only one person at a time to prevent confusion and division in what is believed?

No, all truly converted Christians are being taught all things by the holy spirit God the Word as they study their Bible. They are being taught by God; not men.

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.

Let's continue with our review of 1Co 14.

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

Each meeting attendee is to respect the other attendees; they all have the holy spirits of the God family dwelling in them and revealing truth to them as they study their Bible in obedience to God's command to study (2Tim 2:15).

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

And in 1Co 14:33 we have the main caution Paul is giving to Christians when they get together. Things are to be done in an orderly fashion so that their meetings do not become chaotic and no one can profit from what is being said.

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.

This Scripture has been interpreted to mean that women cannot say anything when attending meetings with their husbands. This is a bit extreme and I would say that it is not so much that they are not allowed to talk as they are not permitted to enter into the group's discussion and evaluation of the Bible findings of the group.

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.

Again, what is forbidden in my estimation, is women participating in discussions and seeking to dominate the group or strenuously argue to validate their points of view on the Scriptures or to engage in heated disputes of certain points with which they personally disagree. It would appear the time for them to debate is with their husbands and not with other members of the group.

In the following verses, Paul introduces another topic which is directly related to the prophesying done by members when meetings occur.

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.

If any man sees himself as someone to whom God is revealing truth as he studies God's Bible, and that would be all truly converted Christians,

then he has to recognize that Paul's teachings are the commandments of the Lord. They are truths which he learned directly from Christ and they are not to be the subject of debate by the group when they meet or by individual Christians.

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

This Scripture, in my opinion, is not clear in what it is saying and is subject to being variously interpreted. It is doubtful that Paul is saying that if any of them do not know that what he teaches is not to subject to debate then he is to remain in his ignorance. It may be that Paul is saying that if someone participating in a meeting has not at that time had any revelation from God then he does not have to make something up so as to have a contribution to make to the group.

For the moment, the actual meaning of this verse remains unclear to me but the next one is very clear.

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

To covet is to have a very great desire for something or to really want to do something. Christians are to have a very great desire to prophesy and they are not to forbid speaking in tongues if there is someone who can translate for the group.

Essentially, prophesying as described in these verses is having spiritual fellowship with other truly converted Christians for the purpose of increasing each others knowledge and understanding of the Scriptures. All true Christians have the holy spirit God the Father and the holy spirit God the Word dwelling in them and when they engage in spiritual fellowship with one another they are fellowshiping with the Father and the Son who teaches them all things.

When spiritually fellowshiping the following requirements must be observed: first, everything must be done in order; second, no speaking in a language or tongue not spoken by the majority of the group if there is no translator and; three, Paul's teachings are not to be debated by the group as they are directly from Christ. They are absolute truths which are part of the foundational truths of God's Church Christ taught His disciples.

The verses we have just examined also are an indication that there wasn't any requirement for the many little congregations to come together as one congregation on the weekly and annual holy days. There

is also nothing in the NT that would lead us to believe that individual congregations were controlled by a central organization headed up by Peter the chief apostle which set doctrine for all of them and prescribed what could be taught in them.

There was no headquarters congregation which administered all other congregations of God's Church. Congregations administered themselves according to the standards given them by Paul and the other apostles. The apostles had received truth from Christ but since Christ returned to the glory He knew with His Father before His incarnation, all truly converted Christians are being taught by God the Word. The apostles didn't possess all knowledge so that they could be arbiters of the validity of truths given to others God would also call. This was true in the lifetime of the apostles and is even more true today. No man can be the criterion of truth for other men called and chosen by God the Father.

Who is responsible for ensuring Christians are not believing falsities.

Study and Prove all Things

Is it necessary for Christians to study the Bible on their own? Can they sit back and rely on others to study for them and then tell them about the truths they say they have discovered in the Bible? Do Christians have any responsibility for verifying with their Bible the truthfulness of what they are being told is the truth? Are they to blindly place their trust in men who impress them because they are great speakers who give them an emotional lift, they consider them to be their intellectual equal or smarter than them or because they agree with everything they say? Can any man be their criterion for determining whether a given belief is true or false.

What does God tell [every](#) Christian to do?

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

1Th 5:21 [Prove all things](#); hold fast that which is good.

You will notice that Paul is not saying that Timothei should ask him if he has any questions rather he is told to study. Questions can be asked to those who are more senior in the faith but none of their answers can be considered to be the absolute truth. Each and every Christian has to become able to prove things out with their Bible and this doesn't happen by just listening to what others say.

There is no downside to Christians studying the Bible on their own rather than relying on what others say is the truth.

God Himself clearly tells us so in the following verses of 1Co 3 which we examined earlier in this study but we'll go through some of them again as it is necessary to highlight the point that there is no disadvantage for Christians to study the Bible on their own.

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 says he laid the foundation. What foundation? The foundational truths of God's church He was personally taught by Christ. This information was given to those whom God called in the days of the apostles.

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

No man can come along and establish a foundation that is different from the one Christ gave His Church. And now we come to the point of interest to us in this study.

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

Paul laid the foundation and those who received it are to build on it. How are they to do so? Christians using the truths they had received directly from the apostles and those personally trained by them are to use them as a base to grow their knowledge and understanding of God's truth by studying God's word, the holy Bible. But, a word of caution is given. In building on the foundation, Christians have to be careful and in the next verse, Paul tells us why.

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.

At the time of the resurrection of God's saints, the quality of every man's work will be evaluated against the full truth of God which is likened to it being tested by fire. The spiritual quality of men's building on the foundation is likened to material things of different value: gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay and stubble. The value of these various materials represent the spiritual quality of the building that a Christian can do on the foundation with gold being of higher quality than hay and

stubble. And, not everybody's work will be all gold or all stubble; some will be gold, some precious stones, some wood and some stubble. Some will be more careful and have more consistency in how they build so that more of their work will be gold and silver and less of it will be hay and stubble.

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

The work that will abide is that whose spiritual value is gold, silver and precious stones which will not be burnt up by the fire of God's truth when the quality of the building work done by Christians is revealed at the time of their resurrection as glorified spirit beings. Those Christians whose building work was gold, silver or precious stones will receive a reward; their findings will be proven to have been true.

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.

In some cases, or maybe many instances, some of the works an individual has will be burnt. They were wood, hay and stubble and in the resurrection, this will become evident to him but here is the important point for all of us to notice. Although some of his spiritual works will be lost as now he realizes they were errors, himself, he will not lose his salvation. He will be as a man who went through a fire and escaped with his life. He will have lost some hair and have burns here and there on his body but he will have kept his life.

God does not take into consideration nor does He consider it to be sin when a truly converted Christian in obedience to His command to study and build on the foundation of truth that is available at the time, makes good faith errors in understanding. He was not willfully trying to undo any of the truths of the Bible though he may have done so unintentionally and unknowingly as he tried to grow his knowledge and understanding of the truths contained in the Bible.

God wants all true Christians to study and He wants them all to be continuously proving all things with their Bible. He tells us ahead of time that good faith errors will not lead to loss of salvation so there is no reason not to be studying and every reason to do so especially that salvation requires having grown the talents received at the time of our conversion

Mat 25:24 Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping

where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed:

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

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

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

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

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

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

Christians are to study and prove all things so as to have growth in knowledge and understanding of God's truth and in the perfect holy righteous character of Christ as they study their Bible and put forth effort to apply in their lives the truth that they learn. Their salvation depends on them doing so.

The Passage of Time and the Loss of Original Truths

The truths Christ taught His disciples, the foundational truths of God's Church, have not survived intact through the many centuries from Christ to us today.

The apostles knew them and taught them to those called by God the Father and who became the congregations making up God's First Era Church. Persecutions began on Christianity at first mostly by the Jews and then by a new, false Christianity. With the destruction of Jerusalem and the mass slaughter of both Jews and Christians, and the destruction of the 2nd temple Israel ceased to exist as a stand alone separate and identifiable nation in the world. The Levitical priesthood ended as did the OT law of offerings and the symbolic rituals and ordinances that were specifically for physical Israel.

The survivors scattered away from the urban centers and to other countries to save their lives. After the death of the apostles and of those they had taught, many of the truth that they had been taught by Christ were lost. The common people were mostly uneducated and could not read or write, books were not widely and easily available, books had to be copied by hand (manuscripts) and only the rich could afford them. There was no written list of the truths Christ taught the disciples; they were transmitted by word of mouth which is a very inaccurate way of preserving information. As a message goes from person to person, it inevitably gets changed and the longer the process is used the more the original message gets changed and is ultimately be reduced to a few pieces of information that remain constant.

The Bible was written in Hebrew and in Greek and was later translated into Latin which are languages that were not spoken by the common people who were mostly peasants. It was only in the 16th century that the printing press was invented and the Bible translated in English. And even then that excluded all other countries who didn't speak English from benefiting from this English translation.

The net result is that the original truth given the disciples were lost to a very great extent. It is only with Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong, that a number of them were restored but how many others there may be we don't and can't know. It is possible that we never will in this life.

This of course has serious implications for the men who claim they have a mission to feed God's sheep. They too don't have the truths given the apostles and, they were not personally trained by Christ nor will they ever be. In NT times God is revealing truth to all His called and chosen ones as they study His holy Bible. No man can say that what he preaches is the absolute truth of God which no one can or should ever question.

And, most importantly, God's Church is not an organization of men headed up by a supreme leader (Pastor General) who claims to be the one receiving truth from God, who sets doctrine for the group, controls what can be taught, and who holds all administrative and financial powers.

God's Church is first and foremost as HWA said many, many times, a spiritual organism or organization. It is a spiritual organization whose teachers are the holy spirits of the Godhead, whose only mediator between them and God is Christ and whose worship of God is in spirit and in truth.

Joh 4:23 But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for

the Father seeketh such to worship him.

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

Preachers and Teachers

The current many “true” churches of God and many of those who frequent them, say that the form of government established in the WCG is God’s form of government and they point to Eph 4:11 to support their contention.

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

This listing of possible offices of responsibility they say means that evangelists report to apostles, and that pastors and teachers report to evangelists. However, there is nothing said in this verse that anyone reports to anyone. It is just saying that some, not everyone, were given to hold certain offices of responsibility. What it also does not say nor imply is that these different offices of responsibility would always all be found in any organization calling itself church of God or that there would always be apostles, evangelists, pastors and teachers.

It also does not say there would exist a headquarters organization administrative group headed up by a pastor general through whom the truth would enter into God’s Church and in whom all powers would be centralized and who would manage the financial and material aspects for all congregations wherever they may be located in the world.

There was a time in the history of God’s Church when indeed some were given to be apostles and evangelists but since the death of the original apostles there are no other ones to come as there is no process given us in the Bible of how others could be appointed. Christ will not return to appoint any more apostles and no man has the authority to do so as there are no examples of any man ever having appointed another man to be an apostle in the Bible. And, when there are no apostles, there can be no evangelists as they were appointed by the apostles to assist them in the work they did.

Furthermore, in NT times, God says the following to His called and chosen ones.

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;

God says, in the last days which started on the day of Pentecost, that He is no longer sending prophets to speak to His called and chosen ones (His spiritual nation of Israel). The apostles and evangelists were sent to physical Israel and to the Gentile nations that existed in their days but God now speaks to “us” His spiritual nation of Israel, His Church, by His Son.

Teachers and preachers are also prophets as they are providing a message from God to God’s spiritual nation. But again, God says He is not speaking to His spiritual nation, the “us” mentioned in Heb 1:2 by prophets which in this case are men who would have directly received a message from God that they are to give to God’s Church. This doesn’t happen anymore in NT times if you will believe your Bible.

So what is the process being used by God that will allow His spiritual nation to have growth in knowledge and understanding of the Scriptures which is what spiritual growth is all about. Who will provide new knowledge and understanding of the Scriptures to God’s Church? Who will feed God’s sheep. This mission was originally given to the apostles but there are no more apostles to come to God’s Church . So how can the sheep be fed and who can do it?

Preachers According to God’s Heart

We read in the Bible that God was quite dissatisfied with the way those entrusted with feeding His sheep had behaved and He says He will cause them to cease from feeding His flock.

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

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

Eze 34:10 Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I am against the shepherds; and I will require my flock at their hand, and [cause them to cease from feeding the flock](#); neither shall the shepherds feed themselves any more; for I will deliver my flock

from their mouth, that they may not be meat for them.

God says He will give them pastors according to His heart.

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

The knowledge and understanding of God's spiritual truth is possible only by revelation from God the Father while being called and by the God the Word once chosen. It is not something any man can do.

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.

And what will Christ do with those the Father gives Him?

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 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 dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

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

The holy spirit God the Word and Spokesman would come to the disciples after His death and resurrection and He would teach them, and all true Christians throughout the duration of God's plan of salvation, all things.

The holy spirit God the Father and the holy spirit God the Word and Spokesman are the true pastors according to God's heart who will never exploit the sheep for their own financial and material well being. They are the only true pastors who will feed the flock and they are the only ones who can do it as God's spiritual truth can only be known and understood by revelation from God.

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

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.

1Co 3:7 So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but **God** that giveth the increase.

God's truth as we have just stated is spiritual and can only be known by revelation. It can only be known by those who have been called and chosen by the holy spirit God the Father. Once called it becomes the responsibility of the holy spirit God the Word and Spokesman to teach them all things as they study the word of God, God's holy Bible.

Organizations of men, preaching for money, have no ability to feed God's sheep and God has personally taken on the work of doing so. No man can call another man and no man can enable another man to understand God level spiritual truth. This is something only God can do and He is the one who decides who is going to be called and when they are going to be called.

God's one, true Church started on the day of Pentecost and has existed without interruption through the ages unto our day and will continue to exist until the time of the Great White Throne Judgment at the end of the Last Great Day. God's Church is all those who have been called, chosen and faithful who are growing in knowledge and understanding of God's spiritual truth as they study their Bible and congregate with others that are called, chosen and faithful without any organization of men exercising control over what they are to believe. Their source of truth is God's holy Bible and their pastors and teachers are the holy spirits of the Godhead. Christ is the author and the finisher of their faith, not men.

Heb 12:2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

It is no loss at all if Christians have never learned and come to believe the ideas of men preaching for money about what the Bible means. God's one true Church is all those called, chosen and faithful wherever they may be in the world, whatever language they may speak, whether alone or in small local groups, organized or not. And they are being fed by God the Word; not men. God the Father is the only one who can call men to salvation and God the Word is the only one who can feed God the Father's sheep.

Concluding Thoughts

We are presently living in a time when several organizations of men are claiming to be a true church of God. All of them are preaching for money. None of them are in the freely you have received, freely give mode. God's spiritual truth is to be freely given to others because God freely gave it to those who have it. It is not to be a means of making money.

In all these so-called "true" churches of God there is never ending and constant reminders of the need for money to do "The Work." However, the example given us in the Bible is that money was not of any importance in doing "The Work." When Christ sent the disciples out to preach, He made it clear that money and material goods were not essential nor vital to preaching the Gospel.

The logical end result of this approach is that no true preacher of the Gospel could ever become rich.

It was the responsibility of those who God was calling and who became believers to provide those who taught them with food and shelter, not money while they did "The Work." Food and shelter were things that satisfied their immediate needs and could not be accumulated to increase their material well being. They could not become rich from receiving food and shelter. And even when they were doing "The Work" some like Paul and his associates had jobs to sustain themselves. They didn't want those whom God was calling to think they were preaching for personal gain as this would make them less credible.

This is quite different from what is happening with the current group of "true" churches of God where money is all important. And, what do we see them doing with all the money they extract from those who follow them. Why, they acquire land, build impressive buildings on them, pay themselves and their close circle of enablers large salaries, live lives of the rich and famous, travel internationally and even have enough money leftover to buy an executive jet for the use of the Pastor General. Executive jets are very costly to buy and very expensive to use. No detailed accounting is ever given of how much of the money is used in doing "The Work" and how much they are spending to provide a luxurious lifestyle for themselves (finely tailored suits, new houses and late model cars).

No matter how much money they get it is never enough and there is always a constant and urgent need for more money to do "The Work." In some of these organizations, the ability of the members to give ever more money has been exhausted and those who say they have a calling to preach the Gospel are working at convincing their elderly members

to sign over their children's inheritances to them since they think the work they do is of such great importance that it is acceptable to rob their children of their inheritance but God says:

Pro 13:22 A good man leaveth an inheritance to his children's children: and the wealth of the sinner is laid up for the just.

In other words, those who make a show of being strict observers and defenders of God's law give themselves permission to break the law. God, the almighty creator and sustainer of the universe, without these men, would seemingly be incapable of carrying out His plan of salvation for mankind.

What they are doing should be raising a lot of red flags in the minds of their followers but this is not happening to any great extent. They are being financially exploited, personally disrespected and cowed into never questioning those who govern them. But the Bible says that true ministers are to treat those who follow them like they would treat their own family members but the ministers in these "churches of God" are harsh and tyrannical towards them and totally intolerant of anyone expressing the least bit of disagreement with what they say and do.

Doesn't sound like God's Church to me.

Just on that basis, it should be evident to their followers that these are not true shepherds full of care and concern for the welfare of their flock. They are the indifferent and self-serving shepherds who abuse their flock and exploit them mentioned in Ez 34.

Eze 34:1 And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

Eze 34:2 Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD unto the shepherds; **Woe be to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! should not the shepherds feed the flocks?**

Eze 34:3 **Ye eat the fat, and ye clothe you with the wool, ye kill them that are fed: but ye feed not the flock.**

Eze 34:4 The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up that which was broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost; but with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them.

Eze 34:5 And they were scattered, because there is no shepherd: and they became meat to all the beasts of the field, when they were scattered.

Eze 34:6 My sheep wandered through all the mountains, and upon every high hill: yea, my flock was scattered upon all the face of the earth, and none did search or seek after them.

Eze 34:7 Therefore, ye shepherds, hear the word of the LORD;

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

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

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

This has been fulfilled in that after the death of the apostles and those they personally taught, their scattering into the wilderness when persecutions came upon true Christianity and the consequent loss of the original truths taught the disciples, God the Father and God the Word became the true pastors that would never mistreat the sheep and always teach them the truth.

Christ says you would know them, the false prophets, by their fruits.

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

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

Mat 7:17 Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.

Mat 7:18 A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

Are God's true prophets greedy of money and preaching for filthy lucre? Is money an all important consideration for them? Are they living a life of luxury from the money they get from those who follow them? Is the Bible example that we have is that those sent out by Christ to preach the Gospel would become rich?

Being part of one of the several organizations of men with the words "church of God" somewhere in the title of their organization is not the same thing as being a member of God's one, true Church which is not a physical organization. It is first and foremost a spiritual organism.

Those who are members of God's one true Church; yes, there is only one, are only those who have been called and chosen by the holy spirit God the Father, who are being taught by the holy spirit God the Word and Spokesman as they study God's holy Bible, who from year-to-year are growing in knowledge and understanding of God's spiritual truth, and who are having spiritual fellowship with God the Father and God the Word through their spiritual fellowship with other truly converted Christians.

Your salvation depends on what you do; no one else can do it for you. It requires work, time and effort on your part. It is wholly a matter between you and God. Your mediator is the resurrected Christ not any human being. Your relationship with God is not through any man.

Being excluded from an organization of men calling itself "church of God" in no way means you have lost your salvation. Only God can make that judgment and any man that says that not being part of his organization means that you have lost your salvation is a liar.

Salvation is not a matter of belonging to the right group headed up by the right man; salvation is not a group effort. Salvation depends on what you do, on your obedience to God's command to study and to prove all things and to hold on to the truth. It depends on you having the courage and faith to stop associating with organizations of men you know are not holding on to the truth. It depends on you having the strength of character to be on your own, if need be, to hold on to the truth. However, it can and does happen that other truly converted Christians can come to be known with whom you can associate and have spiritual fellowship.

The big differences between the many organizations of men calling themselves "church of God" and God's one true church is that money will be irrelevant and no one will be asking for donations. There will be no headquarters group of men dictating what it is you are to believe. All

will be guided by the holy spirits of the Godhead as they spend quality time in studying their only sure source of truth, God's holy Bible and sharing their findings with other truly converted Christians (See page 20-24 of this study if you need to refresh your memory).

It is all up to you as it has always been.

Will you keep wasting your time being lulled to sleep and tolerate being abused and impoverished by false prophets or will you stop relying on men, start studying your Bible and allow God the Father and God the Word to teach you?

Your salvation hangs in the balance.

