

The Foundation

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I John 2:24 states, "*Let that, therefore, abide in you which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father.*" Jude 3 (LB) states, "*...but now I must write of something else instead, urging you to stoutly defend the truth which God gave, once for all, to his people to keep without change through the years.*" There are many other scriptures which state the same basic principal of holding fast to what was given in the beginning.

What do the scriptures mean by beginning? Does this mean the time of Adam and Eve, the start of the New Testament church, the start of the Philadelphian church, or something else? Before we deal with the issue of the definition of the beginning, let's first acknowledge that many scriptures point out that there is something we are to hold fast to. The point of this article is to look at depth into the question of what one should hold fast to.

In looking at the history of God's people we often see a 40-year time cycle involved. I think an overall analogy of these periods would be to say, God intervenes and works in a special way with a group and as time continues there is a gradual departure from what God originally gave. Paul wrote to the Galatians, "I marvel that you are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel?" (Gal. 1:6) The reason I bring this up is of course what occurred within the WCOG. One can't deny that after approximately 40 years there were some major doctrinal changes made. God does say in II Peter 3:18 to grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ, however, in the two verses before this (16-17), He tells us to beware of those who would twist the scriptures to their own destruction. So I ask the question, "What is it we are to hold fast to?", and, "How, when, and to whom does God reveal His truths?"

In the past as changes occurred within the churches of God most justified the change by using II Peter 3:18. They explained that new understanding had been given, that we were growing in grace and knowledge. After all, HWA was only a man studying the Bible, and was bound to make many mistakes. He didn't have the help that is available today in this modern era of mankind. Following this reasoning one must then ask, what was inspired and what did HWA come up with on his own? Was the calling of HWA the start of another church era?

Concerning foundational doctrines, would God just partially reveal His truth? If HWA was just partially inspired of God, then how does one determine inspiration from mere human reasoning? One might answer this question by saying, "If it's not in the Bible it isn't inspired of God." Although this answer sounds good, what do you do when something isn't spelled out in a simple manner? For instance, the counting of Pentecost. If this were so easily understood by just reading several passages then why so much controversy? So simply saying, if it's not in the Bible then it's not inspired, can be misleading. One can't determine to understand the Bible by their own efforts. It is God who calls and who through His inspiration leads us into the knowledge of the truth (I Cor. 2:9-14, I Pet. 2:9, II Tim. 1:9). God also says in Isa. 28:13 that He has put the Bible together in such a way that most will stumble and fall.

In John 16:13 God tells us that by the power of His holy spirit He reveals ALL truth. If there aren't foundational truths, then why are there so many scriptures telling us to hold fast to the beginning? If there aren't foundational truths that are sacred, that will never change, then when does one know when they have come to the knowledge of the truth? Dr. Hoeh was asked this question in the midst of doctrinal changes back in 1974 and his answer was an amazing, never! In Eph. 4:14 God tells us to not be tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine. Such talk is foolishness, there is a foundation that we are to hold fast to. We live in a society today where many would have you believe there are no absolutes, there is no real right or wrong, that everything is up for debate. This line of reasoning leads to the continual watering down and erosion of God's truth over a period of time.

Often when one attempts to hold fast to a foundation, sooner or later they are accused of following a man. I'm sure there are many people guilty of idolizing a man, but if one believes that God worked through an individual and raised up an end time era of the church, are they following a man or are they putting faith in God that He does in fact reveal His truths? If God was going to raise up an end time era of His church then I would assume God chose someone to reveal His truths through. HWA wasn't a perfect man. In fact HWA had committed some very heinous sins, however, we aren't wiser than God. God chose HWA for a reason and HWA fit the mold for Gods purpose.

Let's start with the question of, "How does God reveal His truths?", because unless you believe that God does reveal His truth through His servants, then the question of what is the foundation becomes a mute point. If God doesn't reveal His truths in the beginning of a church era then everything is up for debate. How could one be sure as to what was truth and what was error? An illustration of this principal is found in II Tim. 3:16, "*All scripture is given by the inspiration of God.*" If the entire Bible is not inspired then who's to say what is versus what isn't? The same logic follows in regards to the foundation, either God gave it or He didn't. If God didn't give us the foundation, then why are there so many warnings to hold fast, and why are there so many warnings to be wary of change as the trend is to fall away from the truth over a period of time.

A key scripture is found in Gal. 1:11-12. Paul wrote, "*But I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.*" God reveals His truths to His servants and His servants are then responsible to teach and exhort the brethren. It is up to me as a lay member to prove doctrine. In Acts 17:11 we read of the Bereans who "*searched the scriptures daily whether those things were so.*" As a lay member it is my responsibility to "*know them which labour among you*", and to "*make full proof of the ministry*" (I Thes. 5:12, II Tim 4:5). When God calls and opens our eyes to understand His truth we become accountable. It is our responsibility to hold fast to that truth. We are responsible via the spirit power of God working in our lives to see and understand those whom God has inspired, and is continuing to inspire. Only God opens minds to see His truth. Since only God can open ones mind to His truths, then it should be obvious that we can not come to the knowledge of the truth through our own efforts, that only through His inspiration does truth arrive. This is hammered home in the scripture I Cor. 2:9-15.

In looking at the many factions of the Church of God, many are untrusting of the ministry. Many are quietly trying to obey God in the privacy of their own homes. God does say the shepherds have neglected His flock and that they will be scattered (Jer. 10:20-21, Jer. 23:2, Ezek. 34:6). As

one observes the conditions of the various churches of God these scriptures have reached the ultimate fulfillment in this present day.

It takes faith to believe that God works through a ministry. Heb. 11:6 states that it's impossible to please God without faith. God wants us to depend on Him. We should have faith in God and believe in God that He works through His ministry, that God reveals His truths in the beginning of a church era. **A foundation is laid in the beginning, it can be no other way.** What follows afterwards is knowledge that builds upon the original foundation. If God only gave us partial foundational knowledge, then how are we to build upon that foundation? How are we to hold fast to the beginning if part of the foundation might be wrong? Logic would follow that anyone who tries to build upon a faulty foundation will eventually end up in spiritual ruin. How can one grow in grace and knowledge if they start with a faulty foundation? If God didn't reveal His truths in the beginning, then all will come to naught.

I base my beliefs on the fact that God revealed the foundational truths in the beginning and that we are commanded to hold fast to them. I do not worship HWA, I only believe that he was a man used by God to start another era of His church. HWA made many mistakes, especially in his later years. I do not believe and hinge upon every word spoken by HWA. For example, in the area of prophecy HWA made many erroneous statements. He predicted many things which never came to pass, therefore I can conclude that prophetic knowledge is not part of the foundation. I believe HWA wanted to be known as a prophet, however, that is not an office that God gave to HWA. HWA was called to be an apostle, to raise up an end time era of God's church.

The basis for this article is of course the calling of HWA. Did God really reveal His truths to HWA or did God just give him guidance and allow HWA to make mistakes. After all, most know of the many sins of HWA, and wouldn't God see these mistakes and therefore allow HWA to make spiritual mistakes. As far as foundational doctrine, I don't believe so, but in other areas I believe HWA made many mistakes. The reason I believe this is based on what I've already stated. God either revealed and gave us the foundation or we are wasting our time.

Some argue, the beginning was the founding of the New Testament church, and that is what we are to hold fast to. They then reject doctrines which they believe were not given by inspiration to HWA. This in a sense is a denial that God does reveal his truths through his servants. This is a tricky area, because we must look to both as beginnings and believe that they are in total agreement with each other. God is a consistent God, not a God of change. The foundational doctrines followed by the apostles and early New Testament church are in total agreement with the foundation revealed once again to HWA, in raising up an end time era of God's church.

So now we come to the all-important question of, "What is the foundation"? In speaking of the foundation one must always start with Christ. Eph. 2:20 (LB) "*What a foundation you stand on now; the apostles and the prophets; and the cornerstone of the building is Jesus Christ Himself.*" Christ is the chief cornerstone, but along with Christ as the foundation are the doctrines which compose God's truth, the foundation which we are responsible to hold fast to and obey. I believe that there are foundational truths which will never change. All doctrine is not up for debate. Once God has called and opened your eyes to certain foundational truths you can not go back and study these truths with the assumption that they might be in error. There's nothing wrong with studying to obtain a deeper understanding of the foundation given, but if one starts questioning the foundation then they most certainly will change. There are absolutes, there are

truths and untruths just as there are rights and wrongs.

As I have pondered this question of what is the foundation I keep coming back to the Sabbath and the Holy days. When one properly keeps the Sabbath and Holy days one is led into a deeper understanding of Gods plan. Back in the 50's and 60's when the Church was growing at about a thirty- percent rate, of which HWA was ever so proud, generally the first step of conversion one took was to observe the Sabbath. When one started observing the Sabbath they then were gradually brought along to see and understand other truths. Observance of the Holy days usually coincided with Sabbath keeping. When one stepped out in faith and kept the Sabbath and Holy days other basic doctrines were gradually added to ones foundation. The keeping of the Holy days is one thing that really made us stand out in the eyes of world.

The Sabbath is our weekly reminder of our need to rest and worship God. The Sabbath was made for our benefit (Mark 2:27). The Holy days portray God's plan. Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread picture individual repentance, our calling and coming out of sin. Pentecost follows with the outpouring of Gods spirit which is essential to grow in grace and knowledge after one's conversion. Trumpets pictures the second coming of Jesus Christ, the day which we all look to amid these difficult end times. Atonement pictures that time when we become one with God. The first resurrection following the return of Christ when we become a part of the God family. Then the Feast of Tabernacles follows picturing the 1000-year time period. A time of rebuilding the earth without the evil influence of Satan. Then the Last Great Day, a time which portrays the great events beyond of which we know so little.

In regards to the Holy days, I not only believe God gave HWA understanding of the importance of observing them but also on which day to observe them. How did HWA come to understand Passover was to be kept on the 14th, not the 15th? How did HWA come to understand a Monday Pentecost as opposed to a Sunday? If in fact the Holy days are part of the foundation, then how could God have not revealed the day on which they were to be kept? Many believe we are foolish to keep Passover on the 14th. Many also now believe we are foolish to persist in a Monday Pentecost.

What if God gave HWA the inspiration of which day to keep Pentecost on and not necessarily the method of how to count? What if HWA made mistakes in his method of counting but still arrived on a God given Monday? What if the Church did in fact see a mistake in HWA's method of counting, but also failed to see another mistake that was made? What if God allowed this to test His people? If this were true, then certainly the many have failed the test. The prophesied spiritual falling away has occurred. The flock of God is scattered. And what a paradox, the focal point of the falling away centers on the observance of Pentecost, which pictures the very outpouring of Gods spirit so that one may understand his truth.

I believe that God did something special in the life of HWA. I believe God used HWA inspite of his sins. I believe that there was an end time era of Gods church which was raised up and flourished with the truth of God. I believe that God gave the foundation upon which we are to build and hold fast to. I believe that the doctrinal foundation is the proper keeping of the Sabbath and Holy days.