

# PASTOR'S REPORT

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## SHOULD GOD'S PEOPLE TAKE ACTIVE PART IN LOCAL COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES?

by Herbert W. Armstrong

We need to go to GOD'S WORD to understand our relationship in and with our respective local communities. Misunderstanding had started creeping into God's Church.

Some have thought God's people, and His ministers in particular, ought to start taking a more active part in local community activities. It was even urged by one who is no longer in God's Church that the Worldwide Church of God ministers ought to become active in local social and community affairs -- join various clubs, perhaps take a stand on political issues, become an integral part of the community.

But what does the Word of God say? What did Jesus teach?

Jesus said to those who formed the starting nucleus of God's Church -- the same church Christ has called us out of the world and baptized us into: "These things I command you, that ye love one another...if ye were of the world, the world would love his own..." (John 15:17, 19).

Let's face it! Is not the underlying motive in unthinkingly recommending that we -- and especially our ministers who are our local leaders -- begin fraternizing more with the local community -- taking more active part in community activities -- isn't this an unrealized desire to win the approval of the world which "loves its own"? But Jesus continued, "...but because ye are not of the world" (participating in its activities), "but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.... If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you..." (verse 20).

Brethren, and fellow ministers, I know that God has called me out of the world. Jesus Christ committed to me His GREAT COMMISSION -- to GO FORTH as His Apostle, to the world with His message. Yet, though we must live in the world, Jesus said we are not to be of it -- participating in its activities!

And Jesus Christ made this a COMMAND! Do we want to break His COMMAND?

It is true that one of the qualifications of an elder (minister) is, "...he must have a good report of them which are without..." (of the world) (I Tim. 3:7). He must be "blameless" (verse 2). But that does not mean being a participant with the world in its affairs and its activities.

This I know: Jesus Christ commissioned me to go TO the world with His gospel, but not to be OF it!

We should all live blameless before the world -- let our light of Godly character so shine before the world, that they may see our

good works. But that does not mean to be of them.

The admonition, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers ..." (II Cor. 6:14), applies not only to marriage or business partnerships, but in social or fraternal contacts as well. Notice the remainder of that same verse: "for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?" The passage continues on to say that we of the Church are the very TEMPLE OF THE LIVING GOD, to which Christ shall come, in His GLORY!

This same passage continues, referring to the worldly community in which we live, "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord ..." (verse 17).

We are called into the FELLOWSHIP with Christ (I Cor. 1:9), and also of God the Father (I John 1:3).

Notice God's instruction to us, His Church, in Ephesians 5:11: "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness...."

So, what is the sum of Christ's teaching to us in His Church? We of necessity must live in the world -- but must not be of it. We must let the world see our GOOD WORKS -- we must be friendly, courteous, polite -- yet not be a friend of the world. "...Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God"! (James 4:4.)

God's COMMAND and instruction to us is DEFINITE! That is why I never (since conversion 51 years ago) have "joined" or affiliated with any of this world's activities. That is WHY, when I was sole leader, and God's Church was smaller, our ministers did not in any way participate, fraternize, or fellowship with the world in their local communities.

But when I say there has been a tendency to water down God's TRUTH in the Church -- to see just how close to this world, and to Satan's way, we can come and still "make it into God's Kingdom," this is one specific illustration of what I was talking about!

JESUS CHRIST is the HEAD of this Church. But I am His representative, and not Satan's representative! JESUS CHRIST is putting God back into His Church and College!

Listen to what Christ inspired Peter to say: "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a PECULIAR PEOPLE...."! (I Peter 2:9.) Notice --a "PECULIAR people" -- UNIQUE -- DIFFERENT -- unlike those around us in our communities. We have been called out from them -- and yet one who was taking to himself authority never vested in him, was encouraging our ministers to go back into them -- be like them -- participate with them -- become the ENEMY OF GOD! This take-over of unauthorized authority had put inter-collegiate competition in the basketball courts of God's College.

One of the fruits of Satan's way, along with vanity, lust and greed, envy and jealousy, is COMPETITION -- rivalry -- "party spirit" as Moffatt translates it.

Once again, Christ through me, has put that competition with the world out of Ambassador College! And our Church basketball teams should NOT compete with the outside world!

There has been a TURN-AROUND in God's Church and College! To those ministers who have joined local activities or clubs, Christ commands, "Come out from among them and be ye separate"!

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Greetings Fellow Ministers:

Greetings again to the entire ministry worldwide. Thanks to all of you who have taken the time to write the many letters I have received over the past few months.

Your expressions of support for God's Work and its leader, Mr. Herbert Armstrong, and your love, your backing and your loyalty are very much appreciated by Mr. Armstrong, by myself and by all the rest of us who are involved in directing this Worldwide Work.

It has been my intention to keep up with my correspondence by personal replies to all of you who write. This way I had hoped we could keep communication at this personal level on a two-way street. I am sorry that keeping up with paperwork is such a continual "war" that this results in belated replies to many of you. But, we'll do our best to keep as current as possible.

In order to effectively respond to Mr. Armstrong's leadership of the Church, we here at headquarters are setting up systems enabling us to work together in a well coordinated way. In the first meeting held recently by the Executive Coordination Team for the purpose of discussing the entire subject of media as utilized by the Work, I was impressed how totally this Work is one Work. Every facet of it overlaps, and impinges on every other area. For example, it is impossible to effectively discuss the programs that disseminate the gospel to the general public without at some point discussing the ministerial role in the personal contact (prospective member visits) that is ultimately generated by the Work's media efforts.

The last Pastor's Report contained an article by Robert Kuhn outlining the objectives of these coordination meetings. We are including in this issue of the Report a summary of the first meeting.

We in Pastoral Administration have also begun a more effective means of coordinating the functions of the Church worldwide. We intend to have weekly meetings of the key personnel here at Pasadena representing all facets of the Church in order to discuss collectively all current activities, needs and problems. This team will provide me with the "multitude of counsel" that God tells us gives safety.

In no way are we the "policy-making" team. We are responsive to Mr. Armstrong's leadership and recognize him as the one who establishes policy and major procedural matters.

Our meetings will isolate particular problems, needs for clearer definition, recommended changes in procedure, etc. We will then submit