

PASTOR GENERAL'S REPORT

TO THE MINISTRY OF THE
WORLDWIDE CHURCH OF GOD



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CAN WE FELLOWSHIP THE DISFELLOWSHIPED?

by

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Are some of us trying to be more kind, merciful, and considerate even than GOD? Are we actually disobeying God in our soft, fence-straddling approach toward certain others?

To those disfellowshipped from the Church, Christ will say, "Depart from me..." (Matt. 7:23). There have been those disfellowshipped for cause who have tended to want to "hang around" the Ambassador College campus and God's Church--attend basketball games, fraternize with members, enjoy what is here to be enjoyed. They seem never to cease wanting to "GET" all they can from the Church. Yet they usually will spread false rumors against the Church, or in other ways speak against it.

One thing characteristic, it has been noticed, concerning many disfellowshipped, they continue to have MORE INTEREST IN THE CHURCH than even many members. They seek diligently every bit of news or information about Church activities. They seek every method to obtain our literature--to know "what's going on." WHY? They seek every bit of information to twist and turn against God's Church, God's people, and God's Work. They seek it because in their hearts they know they are wrong, and they seek self-justification by finding grounds by misrepresenting facts to falsely ACCUSE and CONDEMN the Church of GOD! Instead of seeking justification of their sinning past by the blood of Christ, they seek SELF-justification by persecution against, and false ACCUSATION of the Body of CHRIST!

Some time ago, without my knowledge and without any authority, someone started a category called "inactive members." It now appears this was done to benefit some who had been DISfellowshipped for cause. There never has been any official or recognized category called "inactive members." An announcement was made in this Report on that recently [April 3, 1981]. Such nonexistent category is officially declared nonexistent. Those who prior to that were DISfellowshipped are STILL DISFELLOWSHIPED.

Now what does the Word of God teach God's Church in this regard? Those who had become baptized and received as members, but who, for offenses, had been disfellowshipped, we are to "AVOID THEM" (Rom. 16:17).

Again, "Now we COMMAND YOU, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly," and, "if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him..." (II Thes. 3:6, 14).

We may have reason to have conversation or to eat with those of the world, but NOT with Church members or disfellowshipped ones who "walk disorderly."

We read, "I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators: yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world. But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is [or has been?] called a brother [Moffatt: "any so-called brother"] be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat" (I Cor. 5:9-11).

There have even been some, who have called themselves members and have been called such, who have been apparently preparing and recording "evidence" (improperly as brothers) to take before the courts of this world against Church members. The very next chapter, three verses later, begins, "DARE any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints?"

God is far more strict in all such matters within the Church than we have sometimes been inclined to be.

Since we are to AVOID THEM entirely, that means not only that we must not go to them, but they must not be allowed to come into God's Church, or on the Ambassador College campus.

We may, personally, very much dislike to appear to be harsh. But expelled members have always in the past sought to come on our property and enjoy its privileges when they had abused the right to such privileges.

We MUST NOT appear to try to be more kind than God. Christ will say, "Depart from me!" WE MUST NOT COMPROMISE! GOD DOES NOT! Rather than compromise with His Law a trillionth of an inch, "God GAVE His only begotten Son."

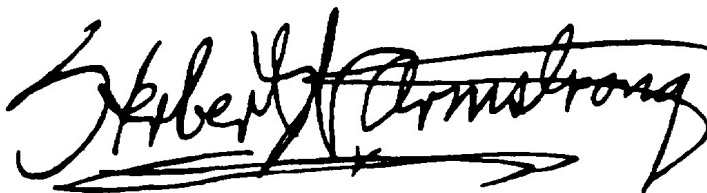
But we should PRAY for such former members. Jesus said to pray even for our enemies. I do pray for all such. I pray God will BLESS THEM--with whatever He in His supreme wisdom knows is BEST FOR THEM--even though that may be severe PUNISHMENT! God punishes every son whom He loves. God's punishment is NEVER REVENGE or desire to hurt and enjoy their suffering. It is always CORRECTIVE! It is for the purpose of HELPING them--of BLESSING them! God still does it in LOVE for the one punished!

But what about those former members who just of their own accord "dropped out?" I think we have to go to Jesus' parable of the sower and the seed. Jesus showed that a few--or it may be many--endure only for a little while. It is those that "ENDURE UNTO THE END" that shall be saved, and born into God's Kingdom. Perhaps those who lost interest and dropped out were never converted in the first place. God shows us no reason to avoid them, but we should not closely fellowship with any unless or until they are being led by God's Holy Spirit, and show the fruits of God's Spirit within them.

What about disfellowshipped relatives--or even close, such as father, mother, son, daughter, brother, sister, etc.? I covered that in an article in the April, 1980 GOOD NEWS, "Which Family Comes First?"

I showed you that we are to withdraw ourselves from every BROTHER-- or sister--son or daughter, etc. If it is a father or mother, we must still HONOR them, even in withdrawn fellowship.

Let us realize the JUSTICE of God's way, and that it is, truly, more just than the way that may seem right to a man.



FROM MINISTERIAL SERVICES

International News

From New Zealand Mail income for the month of March was easily the highest monthly income figure we have ever achieved! The total was a whopping 47.4% increase over the same month last year, bringing the year-to-date increase to 31.5%. The major reason for this excellent result was a very fine response to Mr. Herbert Armstrong's latest co-worker letter. God is certainly abundantly blessing His Work at this time, and we are very grateful to Him for that.

Excitement is mounting and preparations are well underway for Mr. Herbert Armstrong's proposed visit in May. Mr. Armstrong plans to conduct a Bible study in Auckland on the afternoon of May 17th, followed by a meeting with the New Zealand ministry and wives. We're making arrangements to establish a possible video link with Christchurch and audio links with other church areas so that brethren throughout the entirety of the area will have the opportunity to hear from God's Apostle.

In April we're launching a new series of promotions aimed at stepping up the size of our PLAIN TRUTH mailing list. This will consist of a full-color flier advertising the magazine, to be placed in leading newspapers nationwide. Late last year this promotion was tried in The Christchurch Star and The Otago Daily Times resulting in the addition of 11,400 new subscribers. In April it will appear in Wellington's morning paper, The Dominion, and after that it will be placed at two-week intervals in various newspapers in other centers.

German Office News Although the month of March showed a slight decrease compared to last year, our total mail for the year is still 75% more than in 1980. In March of last year we renewed our entire list and therefore our solicited mail was very high, accounting for the slight decrease in March 1981. However, the booklet requests in 1981 are continually increasing each month as our more than 35,000 new subscribers (resulting from 1980's advertising campaign) order more and more booklets with the convenient "booklet order card" placed in each KLAR & WAHR issue. We also sent out 5,000 US & BC IN PROPHECY booklets this month, as a result of advertising in the magazine.