

DRAFT

A Note on Wrongful Disfellowshipping and Suspensions

**Craig White
Version 1.0**

"Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them." (Ephesians 5:11, ESV)

Introduction

Many people associated with or members of the Worldwide Church of God (and offshoots) are not aware of the extent of suspensions, disfellowshipping or pushing people out of the Church.

I have been there and seen this going on and have listened to the horror stories. On the other hand, friends of ministers or those who know how to be sycophants were protected or sins ignored – even homosexual tendencies!

But wait, there is more!

I know the reasons for these actions and in most cases, they were illegitimate. And I have talked with many ministers who know about all of this and have said that “there is a cultic and abusive streak within the Church” bringing it into disrepute.

One member told a group of us on a couple of occasions decades ago that he would not wish to ever leave or be hounded out of the Church because, once you leave, false rumours giving the ‘reason’ for this occurring would be spread around the congregations, making it difficult to return.

Sadly, some ministers have been taught by their predecessors to believe that they were inspired and that any decision they made was directly from God and ‘backed up by Church Government.’ This led to massive amounts of abuse because of, amongst other things, the lack of checks ‘n balances, impartial panels to investigate issues and such like. Cover ups are often the order of the day.

Abuse can take many forms, so let’s get it out into the open and not continue to pretend this was minor or seldom occurred or been resolved. It certainly hasn’t been:

- Shouting, screaming, brow-beating for extended periods, even hours.
- Heavy-handed and threatening words or behaviours.
- Methods used to intimidate, frighten or instil fear. But Paul, inspired by God states: "There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love." (1 John 4:18)

- Using psychological methods to slowly grind one down to admit to things they are not guilty of. Good on those who advised they refused to do so. They were suspended or disfellowshipped anyhow, but at least it wasn't for what they were falsely accused of. These sessions of working on someone to destroy them could go on for hours!
- Lying about and spreading false rumours about a member behind their backs – we can call it slander or even defamation

Cultic Behaviours

I recall the behaviour of a minister and his associate in 1986 was so carnal and disgusting that I commented to a friend that I wonder if this man was ever called into the Church, let alone the ministry. It was as if they did not know that God existed – that what they did to so many went on unseen by Him. Perhaps they were atheists after all, filling a position but not fulfilling it. They were not the only ones, but regardless, the disgusting and sinful way they behaved, the greater the darkness came upon them.

Both of them and others who were part of their wicked and carnal circle fell into apostasy and rebelled against God. Some died horrible deaths. Others have suffered but refused to repent. Self-willed and darkened by their sins, they have gone into apostasy, now blinded to God's Plan.

Behaviours were so extreme against so many; so cultic; so disgusting; so evil – that they exposed themselves before God even claiming that they were 'as Christ before you;' the priests (elohim or gods) of Psalm 82 (I kid you not); with a double portion of God's spirit!

As some have said, every minister who made such claims were amongst the most carnal and sinful. Yup, the drunkenness, lying and practicing a 'two-tier' system (i.e. favouritism) was not merely unScriptural, but in breach of contract – not approved by their own most senior hierarchy.

After one leaves or is pushed out, they pile on all sorts of accusations about one behind their backs to justify their actions. Don't they know that slander is a punishable offence (Romans 13:1-7)?

Jealousy is just one of many reasons for their behaviours

There are quite a number of passages showing that genuinely faithful people can be rejected, expelled, or excluded by religious authorities who are themselves in the wrong. In fact, this is a Biblical theme: being expelled from a religious community is not, by itself, proof that the person expelled is spiritually wrong.

NB: I have copious notes and many witnesses to these awful behaviours.

A Shocking Example

In the early 1990s we had one of Satan's wolves tear apart and scatter much of the congregation. He inherited a happy congregation with a lot of church organised activities, private fellowship and even had more women in attendance than men (which was unusual for this balance for almost every congregation). The stress level was low and there was no fear, intimidation tactics or spies.

The good minister was shanghaied away and replaced by the best friend of the minister (or rather wolf) in the nearby congregation who orchestrated all of this.

As soon as the jealous wolf had him shanghaied away to another area of the country and was replaced, the congregation was turned into a hell-hole. Satan unleashed his wolves who tore apart and spiritually raped the church leaving it mauled and bleeding.

They evidently enjoyed being tough guys,' throwing their weight around, breaking God's Laws and the laws of the land (Romans 13:1-7). There were terror campaigns, suspensions and excommunications galore over literally nothing, spies, lying, revenge by this member against that member, slander, nervous break-downs, people leaving in droves, young women fleeing/leaving to get away from the hell and other women moving congregations – even moving interstate to find comfort and solace. There was no peace or love, just hate, spitefulness, devastation and scattering by Satan's wolf. All sorts of policies not promulgated by the head office were being implemented such as women must not go to university or have a career; or that you would be disfellowshipped for dating outside of the church; or you could not write books and much more. This left the wolves vulnerable to legal action.

I can give you so many examples, but here is just one.

There was a young lady in her 20s attending the congregation, from the northern parts of New South Wales. She had no family here but was eager to be involved in the church and to be part of a church 'family.' What she encountered was terribly carnal and sinful. The woman she was living with was jealous of her. Instead of amicably parting company and just being nice, she threw her out of the unit they were living in, in the inner Western suburbs of Sydney. The jealous one packed up her things and left them outside the front door, so that when this young lady returned from work in the evening, she was not allowed in and had to find an emergency dwelling. This was in early 1991.

Her antagonist went lying to the new minister who then took her side and berated, brow-beat and destroyed the abused young lady. She had nowhere to turn so contacted me and her father also rang me to ask for financial assistance for her. I couldn't help, but he was able to send her some money. The minister suspended her for no reason because Christ inspired him he claimed.

The callousness was beyond belief. The refusal to apologise and repent is ghastly. The hatred for God's little ones is evil.

She was able to find a room in a boarding room, and I took her out once or twice where she told me everything about what happened. Her family and I are witnesses to the demonic inspired experience. The shouting, screaming etc for over 2 hours and the scorching, cutting feeling of something weird coming at her is the same I and others have experienced: a full-frontal attack by demons. You can almost see the demons looking at you from behind the wolf's eyes. I have experienced such eyes all those years ago and more recently. You can actually feel the cold, dark negative energy emanating from them – this can only be a demon. It certainly wasn't the warm love of God!

Other members and former members have come forth to reveal the cultic and illegal behaviours. Nothing isolated about this in churches, but Australia was the worst hit by all

this madness and still is. Demons seem to have their favourite places and people they work through.

This same minister covered up for homosexual activity even though there were witnesses. These have exhibited the negative qualities that Paul lists below. Cunning, under-handed and ruthless behaviours:

“They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, **malice**. They are full of **envy**, murder, strife, **deceit**, **maliciousness**. They are **gossips**, **slanderers**, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, **inventors of evil**, disobedient to parents, foolish, faithless, **heartless**, **ruthless**.” (Romans 1:29-31)

One of these attributes is deceitfulness – just like Satan. Deceiving others (including ministers) and being deceived – Satanic agents and tools of the Devil. Slanderers – in fact guilty of serious defamation, hiding behind others or their positions. Protecting one another and in effect perjuring themselves.

I think some of these actually know that they are not called into the ministry and decide to carry on, treating it as a normal profession, living off the membership while doing very little. Filling a job under a title, but not fulfilling the job.

They think they are being subtle, but Christ can and does permit leaks of their lying and sharing false information to deceive other ministers and members.

The strongest examples are in the New Testament, but there are significant Old Testament precedents.

Old Testament Scriptures

Isaiah 66:5

“Hear the word of the LORD, you who tremble at his word: ‘Your brothers who hate you and cast you out for my name’s sake have said, “Let the LORD be glorified, that we may see your joy”; but it is they who shall be put to shame.’” (Isaiah 66:5)

In other words these are faithful people who have been rejected by their religious brethren and leaders - rejection supposedly done in God's name. Yet God ultimately vindicates the rejected.

1 Kings 22:7-27

Micaiah was a prophet of God surrounded by prophets who told the king (or authorities) what he wanted to hear. Micaiah said:

“As the LORD lives, whatever the LORD says to me, that I will speak.” (1 Kings 22:14)

He subsequently gave the unpopular message that Israel would be defeated. The king's officials rejected him, and Micaiah was imprisoned. The king's religious advisers were accepted as legitimate while the true prophet was treated as the problem.

Amos 5:10

“They hate him who reproves in the gate, and they abhor him who speaks the truth.” (Amos 5:10)

Someone who speaks truthfully can become hated precisely because he confronts wrongdoing! The religious/social leadership does not necessarily welcome correction.

Jeremiah 26:8–11

Jeremiah was threatened with death because he proclaimed God's message in the temple. The priests and prophets told the people:

“This man deserves the sentence of death, because he has prophesied against this city, as you have heard with your own ears.” (Jeremiah 26:11)

Yet Jeremiah was God's messenger. Again, religious authorities can wrongly condemn God's servant or His child.

Psalms 37:32

“The wicked watches for the righteous and seeks to put him to death.”
(Psalm 37:32)

The Bible warns that the righteous can become the target of people who are themselves wicked. Christ is the prime example of attacks upon the righteous by wicked rulers.

New Testament Scriptures

John 9:22

Believers could be excommunicated for confessing Christ! In this context, this verse is probably the most direct passage on the issue.

“The Jews had already agreed that if anyone should confess Jesus to be Christ, he was to be put out of the synagogue...”

“Jesus heard that they had cast him out, and having found him he said, ‘Do you believe in the Son of Man?’” (John 9:22, 35)

Notice what was happening: Confess Jesus as the Christ and lead one to be expelled from the religious community. This principle of persecution for backing the real Jesus has continued over the centuries and in particularly these last days. See the rest of this sad story in chapter 9.

John 16:2

Here is a direct example of Jesus predicting wrongful religious expulsion and he warned the disciples accordingly:

“They will put you out of the synagogues. Indeed, the hour is coming when whoever kills you will think that he is offering service to God.” (John 16:2)

This is perhaps the most important general principle: Jesus didn't merely say believers would be persecuted by atheists or outsiders, rather He said they would be expelled by religious people who believed they were serving God!

This serves as an example for any Sabbatarian community – doing terrible things to God's children thinking that they are so close to Him that they know His mind and this is what He wants them to do. They claim they are inspired to do so, and no one can question them. Or to let others know what they do because they will meet the same fate.

Matthew 23:34

Religious persecution of God's people is a continuing theme throughout the Bible:

“Therefore I send you prophets and wise men and scribes, some of whom you will kill and crucify, and some you will flog in your synagogues and persecute from town to town.” (Matthew 23:34)

Notice again that the persecution occurs “in your synagogues” or today within the congregations. Jesus was warning that God's own servants could be persecuted within the religious institution itself. Has anything changed?

Luke 6:22

Our Lord provides an even broader principle:

“Blessed are you when people hate you and when they exclude you and revile you and spurn your name as evil, on account of the Son of Man!” (Luke 6:22)

The phrase “exclude you” and “spurn your name as evil” should be noted. It is quite amazing that Jesus pronounces a blessing upon people who are rejected for His sake!

3 John 9–10

Concerning a church leader or minister expelling genuine Christians for no real reason, John writes:

“I have written something to the church, but Diotrephes, who likes to put himself first, does not acknowledge our authority.” (3 John 9)

This is like some ministers pushing back at the COE or GCE and wanting to implement their own policies, in breach of contract.

Then the evil continues:

“And not content with that, he refuses to welcome the brothers, and also stops those who want to and puts them out of the church.” (3 John 10)

And John immediately follows with:

“Beloved, do not imitate evil but imitate good.” (3 John 11)

Don’t emulate the wolves who will meet a terrible fate before Christ at His judgment seat (Hebrews 10:31; Matthew 18:6).

Diotrephes was apparently exercising authority within a congregation, but John condemned his behaviour. He was preventing genuine brethren from being received and putting these people out of the church. This is one of the strongest passages I can find on wrongful excommunication.

I have personally helped members in such dire and disgraceful situations.

2 Corinthians 1:24

Paul shows us that leaders aren't supposed to dominate believers or bully them. Policing or threatening them; or have spies reporting back to them.

“Not that we lord it over your faith, but we work with you for your joy, for you stand firm in your faith.” (2 Corinthians 1:24)

Church leadership is not given unlimited authority over a member – rather it is meant to nurture or lead, like a shepherd. Not being a bully, or destructive, jealous, preventing gifts and talents being used.

Conclusions

So Scripture does not teach that “if someone is disfellowshipped/excommunicated, that proves God has rejected that person” or that the decision was legitimate. Quite the contrary: there are Biblical examples, as we have seen above, where religious authorities rejected people whom God accepted.

There are those who have gotten away with their cultic and extreme behaviours toward the members. Unknown to many, there are even those who have gotten away with shocking conduct (eg homosexuality) and stayed on perpetuating their ways protected by ministerial friends. In certain cases there were definite cover-ups by ministers for this.

“... and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error. And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done. They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless. Though they know God's righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, **they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them.**” (Romans 1:27-32, ESV)

It raises questions why someone with those issues would be protected.

Wolves can be terrible creatures. Circling as a pack against God's anointed children, waiting for an error, a slip-up or means to viciously leap in and attack leaving His sheep mauled and bleeding. They appear one way to some and another way to others. Via this tactic, others are not exposed to the wolf-like aspects of their nature and thereby they deceive and get away with their behaviours. Unless members stand up and take actions (Romans 13:1-7).

They may excuse and cover up each other's abuses; but God sees all and remembers what they did to drive one out of the Church and even possibly to lose salvation.

They are sneaky, operating behind your back with fellow wolves, attempting to undermine you to bring you down. Lying, setting you up, talking with the leadership overseas. Doing everything they can to destroy you – until they front up to the magistrate.

"For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed." (John 3:20, ESV)

The end result for the wolf by His hand is sad.

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GPO Box 864, Sydney, Australia 2001

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