

# ESSENTIAL FACTS THAT EVERY MINISTER SHOULD KNOW ABOUT THE ASSEMBLIES OF GOD

To My Dear Brethren,

In this e-mail, you will find some essential facts about the Assemblies of God fellowship. As your brother in Christ, I am writing to share these facts with you.

Some time ago, I contacted a nationally known expert on the topic of spiritual abuse, after researching the behavior patterns of cults. I asked him to review my extensive documentation on our website [www.timefortruth.com](http://www.timefortruth.com) on my experience and that of many others with the A/G leadership in Springfield, Missouri and in New York. These issues involved serious matters of unethical and [sometimes] illegal behavior directed at A/G ministers and A/G churches. I held credentials with them for over 24 years as a pastor. You can read that documentation at - <http://www.timefortruth.com/church.php> under the heading of "State of the Church."

The crux of what I discovered through my personal experience with the A/G Presbytery, research, and the personal testimonies of many other credible A/G ministers and missionaries was an extensive pattern of exploitation and manipulation of authority within the Assemblies of God. This is especially the case with regard to psychological and spiritual abuse employed by Assemblies of God leadership against ministers throughout the U.S. Most of the testimonies related to me are in writing since my story's publication. {Please read reporter Jim Brown of the Agape Press report} at – <http://www.timefortruth.com/church/AgapePressAGAbuse.pdf>

I uncovered case after case of blatant violations of A/G polity and practice, as well as plain defiance of the A/G Constitution and Bylaws on the dismissal and discipline of ministers. Anyone who has dared to raise questions about suspicious activities or decisions made by the A/G hierarchy is either stonewalled or dismissed. As you know, dismissal is a serious punishment for an A/G minister, reserved only for those who have sinned and violated God or man.

Other improprieties and misdeeds include the commandeering of churches and their properties away from their lawful guardians – the local congregation - by the A/G leadership. All A/G churches are guaranteed by law to have total and complete sovereignty and autonomy as you know. This guarantee is in the A/G Constitution. Yet ministers are typically dismissed by the A/G for the sole purpose of seizing the assets of various local A/G churches. **[I insert here portions of a letter from Texas attorney Dennis Brewer, written to me on my precarious predicament with the NYDAG in 2005]**

Brewer, Asiatico, and Associates  
Irving, Texas  
August 8, 2005  
Via E-Mail

Dear Pastor Barnett:

Greetings in Jesus wonderful name!

I must very respectfully advise you and your board that you and your board have made a regrettable decision if you wish to preserve for your congregation the assets of Calvary Assembly; the New York District is going to gobble them up like a counterfeit thief in the night. Districts throughout the nation are commandeering churches to an almost epidemic number. The General Council, at least for the most part, doesn't approve, but feels that if it (the General Counsel) is going to retain its congregational rather than hierarchical position, its "hands are tied" and the same applies to the epidemic of certain districts declining to accept resignations in favor of a kangaroo trial and conviction to punish the local pastor that dares buck the "Sanhedrin" (extreme emphasis mine).

I was saved 31 years ago in Don George's Assembly of God church in Irving, Texas and continue to serve on the Board, Finance Committee and teach and represent the church and the North Texas District from time to time. I wish wonderful District was the template but such is not the case; the situation is brutal in your case. A number of members of the General Counsel are extremely upset with a sizable number of districts that are attempting to commandeer the local churches that refuse to bow and scrape to their every wish and command. You should not tender your papers to the District.

The District would have a hearing at which they will not permit you to have council and you would simply hear them out and not make any defense in the same manner that Jesus did and offer to tender your papers if they will accept them but make it clear that you are not relinquishing the churches property as it belongs to the congregation and not the District or General Counsel. The District will then declare that you are not permitted to resign but that they are taking your papers and effectively "kicking you out". The New York District claims to be to be congregational. There is a possibility that we would advise you to file a lawsuit seeking a declaratory judgment. Under Article 20, there are two separate paragraphs guaranteeing you autonomy, self government, independence and sovereignty which are fatally inconsistent with the actions of the New York District.

In my case, my investigation began with the pressured resignation of a godly New York District Superintendent named Saied Adour. In December of 2004, he was offered a bribe by Thomas Trask, positioned against a threat of dismissal as a minister with the Assemblies of God if he did not "voluntarily resign" his legally elected position as District Superintendent. It was obvious to many of us as ministers in the A/G that Rev. Adour's resignation was anything but voluntary. This is an egregious breach of A/G polity and practice. {Please read A GENUINE LETTER OF CONCERN TO ALL ASSEMBLY of GOD CREDENTIAL HOLDERS FROM REV. RAYMOND M. BARNETT - <http://www.timefortruth.com/church/openletter.pdf>}

As I protested and continued to explore Rev. Adour's case, demanding answers from the New York District Executive Presbytery about Rev. Adour's expulsion from office, I was brought up on formal charges and brought to a hearing where I was not allowed any witnesses. I brought my wife and my board secretary with me, who were not allowed into the room. The absence of witnesses for the accused minister is, by the way, standard practice in every A/G hearing when charges are preferred. {Please see my published article entitled "The Transformation of the Assemblies of God- From Christian Brother to Big Brother - In Less Than 100 Years"}  
<http://www.timefortruth.com/church/transformationOfTheAG.pdf>

After more than an hour of answering questions about why I was looking into Rev. Adour's case, I tendered my resignation as an A/G minister. However, they would not let me resign, but instead, immediately dismissed me in less than 24 hours. This yet another flagrant violation of the protocol outlined in the A/G Constitution for dismissal of ministers. I was expelled from the denomination without any formal notice or warning, as required in the A/G Constitution. Eventually, this cost me my pastorate of over 18 years, as well as the building and properties for which we as a congregation had invested over \$1,000,000 of our tithes and offerings. My only "sin" was speaking up, asking questions, and insisting on reasonable evidence and answers from the leadership of the Assemblies of God on Rev. Adour's forced resignation. {Please keep in mind, Rev. Adour never had any charges leveled against him by the A/G.}.

However, the reason I contacted the nationally recognized expert in spiritual abuse was because I discovered a clear pattern of behavior by the A/G leadership that closely resembles the tactics used by many cults. Methods used to force obedience to their leadership. Such likenesses would be -

1. The threats of divine judgment for those who do not kowtow to "orders" from the A/G Presbytery, orders that is, that have no foundation whatever in Holy Scripture.
2. The willful disruption of personal relationships by the A/G Presbytery between brethren, and sometimes family members, as the disciplined minister is "cutoff" from fellowship with his friends. Those within the denomination are forbidden to have anything to do with the dismissed minister.
  - a. {I had an A/G Presbyter show up at my Sunday morning service 72 hours after my hearing. He came to announce to all 250-300 people present [including my wife, my 5 children, and my brothers and sisters in Christ], that I had been "dismissed" by the A/G. He then was going to announce that the pulpit of Calvary Assembly of God was now "open." They had planned to take the pulpit and church from me – THAT DAY! This is A COMPLETE AND DELIBERATE contravention of A/G Constitutional law; not to mention the unethical, illegal, callous, uncharitable, unmerciful, and most of all - the unbiblical side of it.
  - b. In addition, the New York District had already been notified by a unanimous decision of my deacon board that they would keep me as their pastor regardless of how my hearing turned out.}.

3. The suspension and denial of critical thinking by any minister if he dares to query the A/G leadership on dubious, questionable, and suspicious decisions or practices.
4. The refusal of answers to valid questions for the A/G minister who is then judged as being "uncooperative" and "unwilling to receive counsel" by the A/G Presbytery, as was the case with me.
5. Abusive, manipulation of ministers through tactics of yelling and screaming at them without warrant, provocation, or intelligent rationale.
  - a. {Please read reporter Jim Brown's personal experience with Thomas Trask after he published his article with the Agape Press entitled "Trask Initiates Angry Diatribe at Reporter" at <http://www.timefortruth.com/church.php>
6. The fear of many A/G ministers who are too afraid to come forward with what they know to be wrong. They recoil at the very thought of questioning their leaders when such queries are necessary to preserve the truth and integrity of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The most oft repeated phrase I heard when dealing directly with many A/G ministers was – *"Well, I don't know what is going on. All I know is that we have to trust our leadership."* This I found to be one of the most compelling and startling pieces of evidence the A/G is behaving more and more in a cult like fashion, and as a psychologically abusive sect. Ministers, who know better [or ought to know better] about what is right and wrong, are fearful to speak up for fear of being disciplined or dismissed.

Brethren, time will fail me to relate all of the evidence I have gained in the past 2 years. It is documented and shows a disturbing pattern that the A/G is becoming more abusive of its constituents and is behaving frighteningly in a cult like fashion. This includes acting against their own Constitution in dealing with churches and ministers. Sometimes, they are acting against the laws of the various States.

Please pray that God would act on the behalf of all of those who have suffered such horrible abuse and its devastating results. These terrible acts have had far-reaching effects on ministers' marriages, families, and churches at the hands of unfeeling and unscrupulous men in positions of authority in the Assemblies of God.

Also, I pray that you will have the courage and moral fortitude to bring these things to light through the rights granted you in the A/G Constitution.

I write so you may spare yourself from the certain apostasy and backsliding toward our Holy God and His Christ, whom we all want to represent in a worthy fashion. This falling away is now a real and present danger in the Assemblies of God.

Love in Christ,

Pastor Ray Barnett