



H-CHA30 R871

Community Chapel and Bible Training Center  
DISFELLOWSHIP PROCEDURES AND POLICIES

This is private information for our church government and counseling staff.  
File in a safe place for your reference.

This file is a reiteration of our long-standing policies regarding putting individuals out of the church. (For the sake of clarity, the person being disfellowshipped is called the "respondent," referring to the fact that he is the respondent to the charges against him.)

1. Reasons for disfellowship: A person may be put out of the church if one or more of the following is true.
  - a. He is continuing in repeated acts of sin despite warnings and admonitions. Examples: theft, fornication, adultery, lying, homosexuality, use of drugs or alcohol, etc.
  - b. He is continuing in actions which seriously threaten life, property, personal well-being, and/or orderly church conduct.
  - c. He fails to demonstrate a spirit of true repentance for previous sin, despite warnings and admonitions. Example: failing to make reasonable attempts at restitution when needed.
  - d. He is willfully and repeatedly engaging in actions which damage the name or reputation of our church, pastor, elders, ministers, or church members; or he is attempting to influence others against the church.
  - e. He is seeking a divorce without Scriptural grounds.
  - f. He is willfully violating our directives concerning previously disfellowshipped persons.
  - g. He is manifesting chronic and gross irresponsibility incompatible with Christian standards, despite warnings and admonitions.
  - h. He is manifesting continued criticism of the church, pastor, elders, counselors, or teachers.
  - i. He is manifesting continued rebellion and/or disrespect toward the church government, pastor, elders, or counselors in matters of authority delegated to the church government by Scripture.
  
2. Standard procedure: Because we must act fairly and carefully when putting an individual out of the church, whenever possible, the following procedure shall be followed. Exceptions must be approved by the Vice President.
  - a. The counselor informs the respondent that he may be put out of the church if he does not repent and mend his ways.
  - b. The normal course is to seek to work with the respondent through counsel and with grace, giving him time to repent and mend his ways. However, if, in the opinion of the person authorized to take the action, the offense is grave enough to warrant it, the respondent may be put out for a first-time offense.

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- c. The counselor fully explains the charges against the respondent, allowing him to ask questions and to make his defense.
- d. It shall be fully explained to the respondent what is expected of him.
- e. The counselor shall obtain the Counseling Center Manager's concurrence (or in his absence, the Assistant Manager's) before seeking approval from the Vice President to put a person out.
- f. Approval by the Vice President (or in his absence, the pastor) is required before an individual is put out of the church.
  - 1) If neither the Vice President nor the pastor can be reached and, in the opinion of the counselor, the situation needs immediate action; the Counseling Center Manager, Assistant Manager, or any Senior Elder can expel and bar the person from church property, pending ratification of the action by the Vice President.
  - 2) If neither the Counseling Center Manager, Assistant Manager, nor any Senior Elder can be reached and if a respondent represents an obvious threat to the security of the church or the orderly conduct of a service and if immediate action is necessary, the Operations Manager, Assistant Manager, or Security Sergeant can expel the person and bar him from church property, pending ratification of the action by the Vice President.
- g. Exceptions and Extenuating Circumstances in which a person may be put out of the church without counseling and warnings, and without regard to repentance or apology.
  - 1) The person is deemed to be potentially dangerous or to be an imminent threat to people or property, by reason of violence, intimidation, threatening physical harm, robbery, etc.
  - 2) A manifestly improper and unchristian attitude and spirit, lack of cooperation, or overt unwillingness to obey God and/or the church.
  - 3) Overt rebellion, unsubmitiveness, antagonism, or lack of respect for the church, pastor, or God.
- h. Notification and Correspondence: The respondent is to be notified that he is put out of the church (with the Vice President's concurrence).
  - 1) A letter of dismissal is standard procedure, regardless of whether or not the respondent has been orally informed of his dismissal. Several versions of the standard form letter are on file; the broad language makes one of them easily usable in most cases. The letter is signed by the Vice President. The versions are:
    - Standard version (used in most cases)
    - For youth 14 and under (sent only if parent is critical of our action)
    - For those who dissociate themselves
    - For those divorcing without Scriptural grounds
    - For those who dissociated themselves and later joined the dissidents

- 2) In some cases, the standard form letter will not suffice. In such cases, the Vice President may elect to write a special letter or ask the counselor involved to write a special letter.
  - 3) In those rare cases when no letter is sent, such a decision must be approved by the Vice President (or in his absence, the pastor).
- i. Right to Appeal: For our legal protection, it must be explained to the respondent, either orally or by letter (usually the latter), that he has a right to appeal the action to the Senior Elders as determined by the Vice President, or by the pastor if it is the Vice President's decision which is being appealed. An explanation of the right to appeal is included in all versions of the standard form letter, except for the versions designed for those who have dissociated themselves from the church.

While appeal has always been available to any respondent in the past, the following procedure was adopted in March, 1980:

- 1) If a respondent who has been or is about to be expelled from the church feels that the decision should be reconsidered, he may request an appeal. This request for appeal is to be directed to the Vice President in writing, briefly explaining his reasons for appeal. (If the respondent fails to provide such written appeal, the Vice President may elect to accept a verbal request for appeal.)
  - 2) The Vice President shall direct the request to the Board of Senior Elders for consideration.
- j. Bulletin Announcement: For the protection of the church, for the need of the people to know with whom they may not have fellowship, and in accordance with the Bible; the church is notified of those who sin and are put out of the church in a timely manner via the Sunday bulletin.
- 1) A bulletin notice is standard procedure. The announcement is automatically authorized when the Vice President (or in his absence, the pastor) approves the disfellowship. If the respondent has indicated he wishes to appeal the decision to put him out, the bulletin notice will be withheld pending the results of the appeal, unless such notice has already been given and the editorial deadline of the bulletin has passed. In this case, the announcement will be run even though an appeal is in progress.  
If the respondent does not make his appeal within two weeks of indicating that he wants to appeal, the bulletin announcement will be run.
  - 2) In those rare instances when no bulletin announcement is made, the Vice President (or in his absence, the pastor) must approve such a decision and the reasons for it.

3. If an elder or counselor writes a letter about such matters to someone outside this church representing Community Chapel's official position, it is to go through Publications first for review to make sure that the presentation is well-organized and clear. If Publications makes anything other than grammatical changes, they will contact the author. Our policy is that all church correspondence must 1) accurately reflect the church's position and 2) be written in good literary and grammatical form.
4. Disfellowships by the Seattle church and by the satellite churches are effective in all of our churches. In other words, disfellowshipped persons are considered to be disfellowshipped from all churches and fellowships of Community Chapel and Bible Training Center. An exception to this policy may be made by mutual agreement between the pastors involved.
5. **Information Flow:** The Counseling Center Manager is responsible to have on file the records of disfellowships and reinstatements (including copies of the "Summary of Status and Verification" forms) and to be sure that policy is followed and proper approvals obtained in every case. Aiding him in this is the Status Files Custodian, who works for him as a central information gathering point and who maintains the status files.
  - a. The counselor completes the first page of the "Disfellowshipped Person Form" (form CH62). This form asks for the following information:
    - 1) Respondent's name, address, and telephone.
    - 2) Summary of reasons.
    - 3) Special conditions for reinstatement, if any were given.
    - 4) Whether or not the person is considered a security and/or criminal threat and, if so, in what way.
    - 5) Who recommended the action, and the date.
    - 6) The Counseling Center Manager's concurrence, and the date given.
    - 7) The Vice President's approval, and the date given.
    - 8) Who orally dismissed the person, and the date.
    - 9) Request for standard letter.
    - 10) Request for bulletin announcement.
    - 11) How advice of right to appeal was given.
  - b. The form then goes to the Status Files Custodian, who does the following:
    - 1) Prepares the letter of dismissal for the Vice President's signature, and mails it.
    - 2) Notifies Security, the Senior Elders, and other key office and ministry personnel in writing of the disfellowship.
    - 3) Submits the name for the Sunday bulletin.

The form then goes to the Vice President for his initials.

The form goes to the Counseling Center Manager for sign-off and then back to the Status Files Custodian for copying, distribution, and filing. The original goes to the status file (Publications); the copy goes to the respondent's file.

Approved by Vice President, 1/30/87

Revisions must be reviewed by Counseling Ctr. Mgr. and approved by Vice Pres.