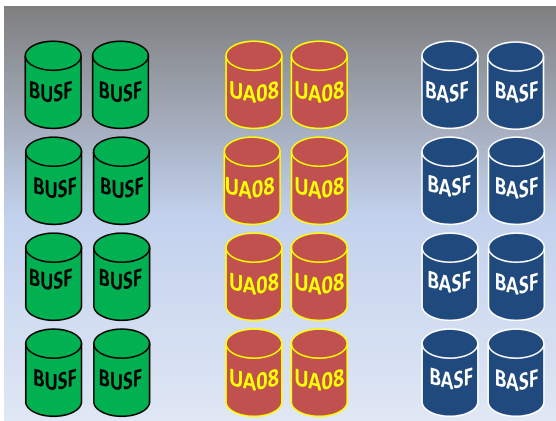
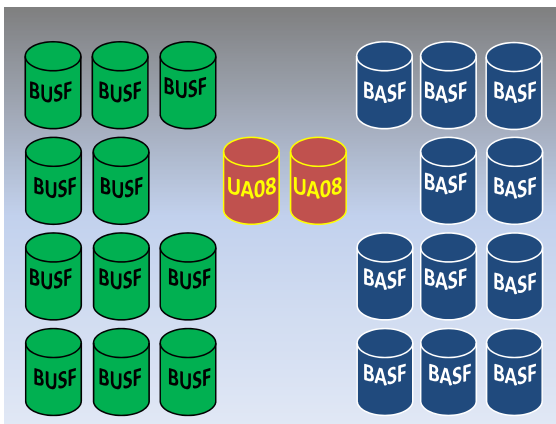
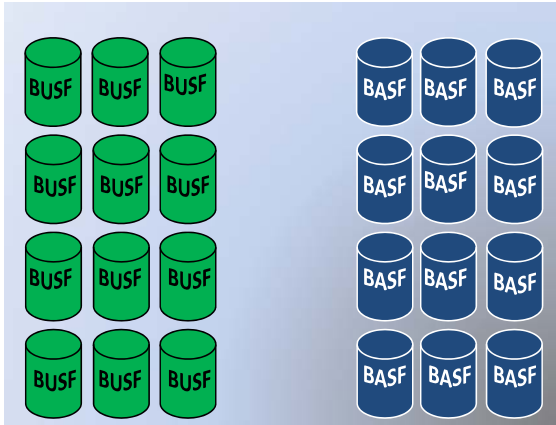


CRISIS IN CENTRAL FELLOWSHIP!



UNITY
BY
DIVISION

Psalm 119:130 KJV

*The entrance of thy
words giveth light; it
giveth understanding
unto the simple.*

CRISIS IN CENTRAL FELLOWSHIP

2 Tim 3:1-5 **“This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.”**

‘the end justifies the means’

‘it doesn’t matter what you believe’

‘the BASF is merely the words of men’

‘fellowship before agreeing on what the Scripture says’

‘leadership without accountability’

‘partial disclosure of the facts’

‘acting out of impatience’

‘discounting the obligations of a Central Fellowship ecclesia’

‘more access to knowledge – less understanding achieved’

‘love that has gone cold’

‘no one is going to tell me who I can or cannot fellowship’

‘every man doing that which is right in his own eyes’

‘situation ethics’

‘statements of faith should be trashed’

‘the Bible is the only statement of faith’

‘no respect for eldership’

‘we don’t need elected serving brethren’

** Ideas current in our ecclesial world **

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*Produced in the
cause of Unity
through
one-mindedness,
and in the hope
of a stronger
Central
Fellowship.*

*Prepared and
presented by
Brother
Frank Abel,
assisted by
Brethren
Wayne Cooper &
Graeme Wilson
and supported by
Sisters*

*Dorothy Abel,
Sylvia Cooper &
Carol Wilson,
Grand Valley,
Ontario, Canada,
February 20, 2010*

REASONS FOR DEBATE

Acts 18:4 “And he **reasoned** in the synagogue every sabbath, and **persuaded** the Jews and the Greeks.”

- **Reasoned** NT:1256 *dialogomai* middle voice from NT:1223 and NT:3004; to say thoroughly, i.e. discuss (in argument or exhortation):
- **Persuaded** NT:3982 *peitho* a primary verb; to convince (by argument, true or false); by analogy, to pacify or conciliate (by other fair means); reflexively or passively, to assent (to evidence or authority), to rely (by inward certainty):

“UA08 is an option for ecclesias who wish to adopt it. But we still meet under the BASF and we are still an ‘Amended ecclesia’.”

- The statement above comes from a Q&A document sent to me by way of an unrequested email. When it was found that it had been sent from the Toronto East ecclesia and for the benefit of the members of the Shelburne ecclesia, I read it closely. There were many things in the document that I felt were either incorrect or needed further investigation, but I disagreed strongly with the statement cited above. After considerable thought, I sent an invitation to Brother Ken Curry, a co-author of the document to explain that statement in particular. The letter I sent to him is appended to this set of notes. He declined to debate.

“The Unamended are correct, the added parenthetical expression has corrupted clause 24. By agreeing to UA08, we are actually being given a graceful way out of this flawed statement. Let’s take it!!”

- Within a short time after Brother Ken declined, I was sent another unsolicited email which contained the statement cited above.
- This statement comes from Brother Don Styles who responded to a letter sent by Brother Matt Trowell to Brother Ken Curry, who was likewise challenging Brother Ken’s statements.
- Brother Don’s statement answered one of my most important questions concerning the real meaning of the NASU document. However, at the same time of having a brother of Brother Don’s understanding of the issues making such a clear statement about the meaning of NASU, I was shocked to know that he had been converted to the Unamended position. Hence, I sent Brother Don an invitation to explain his thinking by means of a debate so the opposing point of view could also be heard. The letter that was sent is appended to these notes. He declined to debate.

This left me with a dilemma. Why should brethren from Amended ecclesias who have been converted to Unamended thinking on a key issue be leading the UA08 movement? And why are they avoiding an opportunity to explain their position publicly? However, how do you conduct a debate when one side refuses to show up? Neither of them offered to change the approach I was suggesting and explain their position another way – it was just NO debate!

Talking this over with a few brethren and sisters it became apparent to me that we had a real crisis of leadership in the Amended fellowship in the region. Leadership without accountability is totally unacceptable in world about us. Think of the questions candidates running for public Office are required to answer in front of a TV camera. Why is it that brethren wanting to show leadership to our community would avoid an opportunity to answer questions?

1 Peter 3:15 *“But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:”*

Answer NT:627 apologia; from the same as NT:626; a plea ("apology"): KJV - answer (for self), clearing of self, defence.

Upon further thought and prayer about this, it occurred to me that the debate could go on. If the brethren had nothing more to say in their defence, then that already in print, that would have to be sufficient - so we decided to continue and debate with their empty chairs.

NOTE: *Please remember that this is a snapshot of the events of the day, February 20, 2010. Brethren and Sisters do not always maintain the same viewpoint. There are a lot of names of brethren in these notes and it was felt necessary to do this that the reader might make better sense of what is happening and why it is that we should be paying attention to what some brethren are saying. Those that are spoken of critically are leaders in the sense that they are taking action that is directly influencing those outside of their ecclesia. It was our original thought that by means of a debate they would have taken the opportunity to explain their actions and likewise, be critical if necessary, of what I am saying and doing. The scene may radically change in the future and brethren may choose to abandon their present positions. We must all be understanding, and forgiving of each other, in order to receive the forgiveness of our Heavenly Father in that greater day that lays ahead.*

INTRODUCTION:

CRISIS IN CENTRAL FELLOWSHIP!

Many Christadelphians in Central fellowship and presently living in the Great Lakes area have fifty years or more invested in what we lovingly refer to as ‘The Truth’. Most of those years have been spiritually productive and where we have witnessed the number of ecclesias increase dramatically. Our children have stayed with the Faith and many are now passing it on to their children. We have come to know by experience the very lovely words:

3Jn 4 “I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth’.

Other members of our Brethren and Sisters however, have no similar experience, having only recently come to the knowledge of the Truth or being too young to have had such experiences. Whatever position you may be in, we have entered into a much more challenging period now, and we ask for your patience and understanding as you read these notes and the appeal from older brethren and sisters who are trying to find a way through the crisis that has engulfed our community.

This is an era where everything seems to be changing and stability is hard to find. Change is okay where it is warranted and welcome where it is needed, but it is not always necessary. ‘The Truth’ for instance, can be further discovered but it does not change:

Jude 3 “the Faith has been once for all delivered unto the saints”.

Furthermore the Scriptures warn us against change involving the presumption of ‘adding’ or ‘taking away’ from that which our God has revealed. (Rev. 22:18,19)

The world in which we live does not provide a healthy environment for those trying to preserve ‘The Truth’. It is a requirement of every one of us to monitor ‘change’ as it relates to the area of doctrine where we believe our Christadelphian pioneers reassembled the components of the ‘original Gospel’. (1Tim 5:17) The Bible instructs the reader:

1Jn 4:1 “believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world”

When our community is being asked to ‘change’ like it is, through the adoption of the UA08 and the NASU, it is both reasonable and proper that each of us carefully assess the nature and implications of the ‘change’.

OUR VULNERABILITY

Remarkably the Central fellowship has existed and flourished inter-ecclesially for 100 years on a system of honour and trust within the brotherhood. We respect the fact that the Lord Jesus Christ is our leader and that he is active both inter-ecclesially and at a personal level among all of us for he said;

Matt 18:20 “For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.”

When it comes to inter-ecclesial disputes we have no human arbiter, no governmental authority, no independent body to appeal to, but we have the Lord, Scripture and the ‘Ecclesial Guide’. In Ontario, in the Central Fellowship, it is our view in retrospect that we would have been in a better position to deal with the challenges we are now facing if we had established a representative ‘Standing Committee on Reunion’ to act as a buffer in dealing with matters of unity with the Unamended community. We could have been better prepared.

Those who originally thought of the idea of the NASU must have known that they were going to have to convince brethren and sisters that their agreement was sound in all of its aspects and implications. The onus of proof that any changes to the understanding of the BASF or BUSF were warranted was clearly required by those advocating the change. There was an equal responsibility on these brethren to be prepared to answer the questions of those who were unconvinced the changes were needed or welcome. It has also been the responsibility of the older and more experienced brethren to assess whether the work was done well and whether the NASU was worthy of the intended objective of uniting the Central and Advocate Communities.

One of the anomalies associated with the Unamended ecclesias that are seeking unity with us is their claim to believe exactly like us. The obvious reaction to such a statement is, “Why then do we need the NASU or UA08?” Also, “If you believe exactly like us why don’t you accept the BASF and join us?” The reply that many Central brethren and sisters have received from these same Unamended brethren is, “We don’t want to join you”. This obviously poses another question, “If you say that you believe exactly like us, but you don’t want to join us, what is it that you are trying to achieve?” Answers to these questions ought to be ready and easy to come by, but in fact, our experience has been that the door closes fairly quickly when questions like that come to the surface. Just this week (Feb 14, 2010) we were excluded from a meeting with those leading the NASU movement because it was thought that we might be disruptive through the asking of questions.

THE NASU (North American Statement of Understanding)

That it was felt patches of assurances were needed to be added to the original NASU document made it appear that something was not right about the original document. This action developed a suspicion about the wording which has dogged it since that decision was made. Even the brethren from the Amended side of the original NASU Steering committee expressed doubts about what parts of it were saying, calling the wording disingenuous. It is important to be cautious when committing to a written agreement that is not easy to understand. Due to this fact the Central fellowship in Ontario is now in the embarrassing position of having BASF ecclesias, signed-on un-paused UA08 ecclesias, and signed-on paused UA08 ecclesias. Some brethren and sisters see this as the necessary evolution involved in the emerging UA08 fellowship arrangement, while others see this as unwelcome confusion resulting from unclear objectives and uncertain documents.

While this struggle for accommodation with the three Advocate ecclesias continues, the confusion continues to increase and ecclesias, instead of preparing members for the coming of the Lord are being consumed in preparation for future Unity meetings. At any one time there are a lot of 'little ones' in the flock who are in no condition to face the extra strain this is putting on their developing spiritual life. The Lord was not fooling when he amply described the cost of offending a 'little one':

Matt 18:6 “But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.”

What started off as 'Reunion' between the Central and Advocate communities in North America is now leaning towards dividing both groups and possibly launching a new fellowship, which for the want of a better title, we are calling the 'UA08' fellowship. The obvious question is how brethren and sisters could get so far off track from their original mission as to believe that unity can be achieved through division? Have we lost sight of the words of our God:

Pro 6:16-19 “These six things doth YHWH hate: “... and he that soweth discord among brethren”?

GOOD ENOUGH was not GOOD ENOUGH

In April 2008, the following appeal went out to ecclesias in the Ontario area and in the Central community from the Amended Hamilton Greenaway ecclesia,

“We have never been closer to a solution to overcome this tragic separation that has afflicted our community for so many years. Dare we let this opportunity pass us by? We believe that there are no scriptural reasons why we should remain separated from brethren who believe as we do. Have faith my brethren, all things are possible with our Heavenly Father”!

We do not wish to judge the wisdom of that declaration, but to just draw your attention to what the ecclesial scene looks like almost 2 years after this ecclesia declared their acceptance of the NASU and welcomed others to follow.

The implementation of the NASU amongst just a few ecclesias has caused a major disruption at all levels in the Central fellowship. It is certainly causing stress amongst families, creating unwanted stress in marriages, setting children and parents on opposite sides and putting siblings at odds with one another. It has become a device to split ecclesias; In fact, there are few, if any, ecclesias in the area which are totally united on the issues. Even at the inter-ecclesial level, our activities are being curtailed or disrupted by the strife. Yet, some in the Brotherhood continue to say the NASU agreement is good enough. The former Ontario Regional Unity committee called it quits when they realized that the Unamended fellowship practice would not be acceptable to the Amended community. Why did some of the same Amended brethren continue on anyway?

The warning of the Lord is clear,

Matt 24:48-51 “But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; And shall begin to smite his fellowservants, and to eat and drink with the drunken; The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, and shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

The UA08 has now been in place for about eighteen months. It has not led to a landslide of support from interested ecclesias. Those who started it off with the courageous unilateral declaration of fellowship should seriously reassess whether their courage was well placed. The Central community had a considerable degree of ‘unity’ prior to September 1, 2008. Now in February 20, 2010 we have an abundance of confusion and the very real prospect that things will get much worse. The warning of the Scriptures is clear:

Jam 3:1 “My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation.”

CENTRAL FELLOWSHIP:

LET THE TRUTH DECIDE!

There is something that we have in common with the members of the Unamended community that is of more value than common pioneers, common writings and common historic meeting places. Our pioneering brethren taught us the value of knocking, seeking and asking for the TRUTH. They were not afraid to challenge the beliefs of the time that they felt contradicted Bible teaching; they didn't hide from those who resisted; they debated them, in public, so that others might know the Truth. Having 'agape' for truth and a conviction that the Word of God will lead us to the Truth is sorely needed now.

Isaiah 8:20 *“To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.”*

Proverbs 23:23 *“Buy the truth, and sell it not; also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding.”*

2 Thess 2:10-11 *“And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:”*

Resurrectional Responsibility Section of NASU, pg.7

General Principle:

1. Rejection of God's knowledge and calling are grounds of condemnation and punishment by God. The following are a few of the references that reveal this principle: Prov.1:20-23; Luke 10:13-16; 12:47,48; John 3:19; 9:39-41; 15:22; Acts 17:30-31; James 4:17.

Application of General Principle to Resurrectional Judgment :

2. Divine wisdom and justice alone will determine who should be raised from the dead to be condemned and punished on these grounds. It is certain that His will is righteous and shall be done.

3. No human can identify or quantify individuals in this category with certainty.

Why is it that no Bible passages are given to support points 2 and 3 in the part of the NASU document as displayed on the preceding page?

- One possibility is that there are none – no Bible passages can be found to support these statements. A second reply is that the answers given are incorrect – hence no Bible passages. A third reply is that this is all that the Unamended brethren are prepared to state concerning this answer. Consider the following ...

No Bible Passages Found! - WHY NOT?

The Unamended brethren of the ecclesias we are dealing with cannot cite a Bible passage that states knowledge and calling are grounds for resurrection to judgment. They also reject that this first principle teaching is taught in the Scriptures. This was brought to our attention by one of the present leaders of the Unamended UA08 committee in January 2005.

- We are well aware of the use of the words of Brother Robert Roberts in his article “True Principles and Uncertain Details” which is often referred to by the Unamended brethren we are dealing with, but where is their appeal from the Scriptures?
- Although Brother Roberts in the article supports the idea that it is difficult to tell who in particular may be raised from the group of ‘enlightened rejectors’ he firmly believed that the Scriptures taught that some would rise as is supported by the following quote from the same article.

“There is no quarrel as to the men who recognize the Bible as the word of God, and understanding it, are aware of its demands upon them to repent and submit to the service of Christ; and yet refuse submission because of present inconveniences of submission. The responsibility of these men to the resurrection of condemnation is without doubt ...”

(True Principles and Uncertain Details; Robert Roberts: The Christadelphian; 1898)

- The question before us, is not who in particular from the unbaptized will be raised from the dead, but does the Scripture teach that any of this class will rise from the dead? When you see the argument from this position, you can see much more clearly why we view it as a first principle. The evidence we have in support of the Amended position is found in these notes in the section entitled “Support for the Amendment to Clause 24”.

- It may also help the reader to know that both Brethren Ian McPhee and Doug Finlay, present leaders of the UA08, belong to the Unamended ecclesia in Guelph Ontario. The late Brother Ken McPhee, father of Ian and long standing member of the Guelph ecclesia wrote a booklet entitled “Responsibility” in which he attempted to answer all of the Amended brethren’s Scriptures used to support their belief in the resurrection of responsible unbaptized people. The following quote from the summary included in that booklet may help brethren and sisters to understand the real difference of belief.

“It has yet to be shown that the enlightened rejecter will certainly be raised and judged. God has not revealed any such intention. The Unamended brotherhood does not maintain that God cannot or will not raise some who are not in covenant. It is for God to decide this and this decision should be left to him.” (K.G.McPhee, August 1985, Responsibility, pg. 53, CAPCO)

- Brother McPhee was not arguing from the atonement towards responsibility. Many wrongly assume this is only way the argument can be reasoned. He was reasoning from the position that no Bible passages can be found to support the Amended position.
- When you recognize this starting point for the reasoning in the NASU, you will see it with different eyes, and quite possibly make more sense of our objection to the wording.
- The Unamended brethren simply do not believe the Bible teaches that unbaptized people will be raised from the dead.
- Until we see a Bible passage applied to the section in NASU entitled “Application of General Principle to Resurrectional Judgment” we will not be able to accept that the NASU properly represents the Truth and the Amended position.

To support what Central Fellowship believes on this point the following is more like what we would have expected to see in NASU:

Application of General Principle to Resurrectional Judgment

2. Those that die having rejected God’s knowledge and calling will be raised from the dead for judgment, whether or not they were baptized. (Jn.12:47-49)

- Ask an Unamended brother if he would accept that wording!

Psalm 119:105 KJV

*Thy word is a lamp unto
my feet, and a light unto
my path.*

THE BOUNDARIES OF CENTRAL FELLOWSHIP

The Scripture teaches that every one of us should be fully persuaded concerning our beliefs. It may require a lot of study, energy and late nights for that objective to be achieved.

*Rom 14:5 “One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man **be fully persuaded in his own mind.**”*

The Scripture also teaches that concerning our collective beliefs, in our separate ecclesias, we should try to be of one mind. This, likewise, will take a lot of study, energy and late nights.

*Rom 15:5-6 “Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be **likeminded** one toward another according to Christ Jesus: That ye may with **one mind** and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.”*

When it comes to inter-ecclesial work, we have certainly found there to be a third application of the same principles. At no level can we allow the need to act in accordance with conviction to break down. It is not difficult to find brethren and sisters with strong opinions on a number of topics, but conviction based on Scripture is another matter and that is a big problem when it comes to resolving divisive issues.

This section of the notes is intended to illustrate the need for some discipline in our inter-ecclesial arrangements to help maintain the behaviour required for our mutual benefit. To belong to the Central fellowship and to be a recipient of its main advantage, that of enjoying the fellowship of many others throughout the world, there are some details to which we must pay attention. Since we have no direct revelation in the Scripture on inter-ecclesial standards and not recognizing any other single authority amongst ourselves, we submit the following from our various magazines of Central fellowship to provide some direction.

THE CHRISTADELPHIAN

*“Even though each ecclesia has its own statement of faith (sometimes with wording produced locally), ecclesias are part of the Central fellowship because they recognize the BASF as a faithful description of the One Faith. It is therefore, a very serious matter if a brother or sister cannot accept the teachings listed in the statement of faith. We do not simply accept that these doctrines are based on the scriptures, but that they are first principle teachings, and therefore provide solid ground on which there can be fellowship with other believers. **We do not fellowship anyone who believes differently about these critical teachings, anyone who does not treat them as first principles, or anyone who wants to add further doctrines as test of fellowship.**”*

(What is a Christadelphian?, The Christadelphian, Nov. 09, pg. 401)

FAITH ALIVE

*“Our Christadelphian brotherhood came into existence to uphold the same sound doctrinal principles. Our Statement of Faith sets out those things we understand are taught in the Scriptures – both the things which should be believed and things which contradict those beliefs. The pattern of sound doctrine is saving truth. It is what forms our basis of fellowship. **We understand and believe it when we are baptized. We break bread only with those who agree with its teachings.** We witness to its truths to those around us. Because it faithfully sets out what we believe, we do not have to keep interviewing others when we go to Christadelphian meeting in our fellowship anywhere in the world. **We can assume that those who meet on the same basis are honest in assenting to those beliefs.** In this way, our submission to the teachings of Scripture promotes unity and harmony. We can build each other up in love, with Christ as our head and God exalted above all. It is a precious heritage. We must hold it fast until the coming of the Lord.”*

(The Pattern of Sound Doctrine, Faith Alive, Summer 1999, pg 1)

THE CHRISTADELPHIAN TIDINGS

*“The ecclesia declares itself to be in the Central community, and represent itself in ways that confirm this declaration. For example, following the pattern in the Ecclesial Guide, the ecclesia’s constitution, if it has one, states that it is a Christadelphian ecclesia, and that it accepts and professes the first principles of the One Faith as revealed in the Scriptures. **As such, its ecclesial statement of faith, which forms its basis of fellowship, summarizes the same principles of those defined in the BASF (or equivalent statement of faith).** This is the means by which Central ecclesias associate themselves with “The One Body”.*

*“In its role as a basis of fellowship, the BASF functions in two ways: **On the one hand it includes those who agree with the basis of fellowship. On the other hand it excludes those who do not agree with it. On the one hand, differences are not allowed on the agreed essential principles, what they are or what they mean. We must agree to all the principles and cannot selectively “overlook” any of them (e.g. resurrectional responsibility) as if they were not included in our “test of fellowship”.** On the other hand, friendly brotherly differences are allowed on issues that are not covered, because we have deemed them to be non-essential. (e.g. Who wrote Hebrews? When was Revelation written? Where will the Judgment be?).*

On the one hand, we insist that others who are in fellowship agree to uphold the same principles. It is not sufficient merely to agree personally with them, but rather we uphold the principles and be willing to insist that our brothers and sisters do likewise. (Otherwise, we would have to accept a Baptist who happened to agree with us.) On the other hand, we cannot impose additional tests of fellowship, making them incumbent on our brethren (e.g. specific views of prophecy, the age of the earth, specific divorce and remarriage criteria.)

(Fellowship Practice of Central Ecclesias, The Christadelphian Tidings, Dec. 08, pg. 530)

THE LAMPSTAND

*To be a Christadelphian Ecclesia one definition of the Christadelphian faith must be answerable to that of ecclesias everywhere. Historically this has been proved at all times of controversy or crisis when it has been necessary to make a clear declaration of the basis upon which one's ecclesia met. In practice many ecclesias over the years have adopted the Birmingham Basis or signified their acceptance of it as a true definition. **Indeed, in every successful effort to reunite brethren in this century it is the content of the B.A.S.F. which has been accepted as "a true definition of the Scriptures which we believe and teach".** Moreover, the Guide has become the accepted norm of practice in establishing ecclesias and above all in the dealings of one ecclesia with another. Thus the local ecclesia is linked, as in apostolic days, in a world-wide fellowship. A genuine attempt has been made to "let all things be done decently and in order" and to "let all our things be done with charity" (1Corinthians 14:40 with 16:14)*

*Throughout its history, then, the Brotherhood, with no head other than the Lord Jesus Christ, no central authoritative organization, has maintained its witness and worship centred upon the local ecclesia, **autonomous in its own affairs yet mutually subject in love to others in a wider relationship, aided by the documents which set forth the basis of its common faith and general organization.** This similarity in diversity enables the traveller to feel at home in a distinctive Christadelphian atmosphere even where "thy brother be not nigh unto thee, or if thou know him not" (Deut 22:2). May the Lord grant that it be so until we all come together unto that "general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant" (Heb. 12:23-24) (Quote from Brother Alfred Nicholls, *The Lampstand*, May-June 2009, pg. 136)*

IN SUMMARY – AN ECCLESIA IN CENTRAL FELLOWSHIP SHOULD:

- 1.** Recognize the BASF to be a faithful description of the One Faith.
- 2.** Understand and believe the BASF and when members are baptized, they should break bread only with those who agree with its teachings.
- 3.** Agree to all the principles and not selectively "overlook" any of them (e.g. resurrectional responsibility) as if they were not included in our "test of fellowship".
- 4.** Not fellowship anyone who believes differently about these critical teachings, anyone who does not treat them as first principles, or anyone who wants to add further doctrines as a test of fellowship.
- 5.** See itself as autonomous in its own affairs yet mutually subject in love to others in a wider relationship, aided by the documents which set forth the basis of its common faith and general organization.

CENTRAL FELLOWSHIP AND THE BASF

Central fellowship is defined by the BASF. Any unity agreement with Central Fellowship must recognize the BASF as the touchstone document. This allows equivalence so that one could say that with the NASU and the BUSF there is an equivalence with the BASF, but that is not what the UA08 states. It claims to correct the BASF by adding new understanding. It does so by nullifying the sense of clause 24, the very clause which gives the BASF its name.

Ecclesias in Central fellowship should object to the wording of the UA08 and in particular the intention to change the understanding associated with Clause 24. It is our intention to further develop this issue in the next few pages.

THE UA08 DOES NOT SQUARE WITH THE BASF

The undersigned Christadelphian Ecclesias declare our acceptance and endorsement of the “2003 North American Statement of Understanding” (NASU) document and in particular the following clause:

“It is understood and agreed that the doctrines to be believed and taught by us are the first principles of the One Faith as revealed in the Scriptures. The two principal statements of faith, The Birmingham Amended Statement of Faith (BASF) and The Birmingham Unamended Statement of Faith (BUSF) as set out herein (including the Doctrines to be Rejected and the Commandments of Christ) **understood as expressed in this document** (NASU) represent a true and common definition of the One Faith”

THE UA08 DOES NOT COMPLY WITH CENTRAL FELLOWSHIP

THE DEBATE – ISSUE 1

THE NASU versus THE BASF

*“As has been pointed out forcibly to me in personal conversation and public challenges, the amendment goes too far. We tend to read Clause 24 through Amended glasses. I suggest you read it through with Unamended glasses. As amended the clause says that the responsible – who are those who know the truth and have been called upon to obey it whether or not they have been baptized – will appear at the judgment seat of Christ with the possibility of receiving “good” based on their “works”. In other words, the grammar of the amended clause says that a good living unbaptized person may be saved. “Oh no” you say, “no Central Christadelphian believes that!” But they do. We had a Central Christadelphian in our living room trying to convince us of this very point. He was part of a movement that you and I would eschew but it is an existing group of folks in our Central community. **The Unamended are correct, the added parenthetical expression has corrupted clause 24. By agreeing to UA08, we are actually being given a graceful way out of this flawed statement. Let’s take it!!”***

- A public statement made by Bro. Don Styles who is one of the most distinguished Amended brethren in matters relating to reunion with the Unamended Community. (January, 2010)

Thankfully we do not decide what we believe by the testimony of guests we invite to our house, but rather on what the Word of God reveals. The argument we have on this issue is not with the wording of clause 24, it is whether or not **the Scripture teaches** that unbaptized people will be raised for judgment. Even if the wording of the clause were changed it would still have to say the equivalent to properly represent what the Bible states.

Note what brother Don is saying in his last two sentences above; we agree with his assessment that those ecclesias that have signed-on to the UA08 ecclesias have, by doing so, rejected belief in the parenthetical section of Clause 24 as cited below. We strongly disagree, however, that the UA08 is right in doing this; due to brother Don was so enthusiastic about getting away from the flawed statement, we invited him to explain his belief and join in debate over the issue.

“BASF CLAUSE XXIV – That at the appearing of Christ prior to the establishment of the Kingdom, the responsible (namely, those who know the revealed will of God and have been called upon to submit to it), dead and living – obedient and disobedient – will be summoned before his judgement seat ‘to be judged according to their works’; and ‘receive in body according to what they have done, whether it be good or bad’ (2 Cor.5:10; 2Tim 4:1; Rom 2:5,6,16; 14:10-12; 1Cor. 4:5; Rev 11:18).

- We state our belief according to the way it is presented in the Scripture. Clause 24 is properly qualified by the phrase “obedient and disobedient”, and following the use of those terms in the New Testament, our brethren have appropriately phrased the clause.

*Rom 2:8 “But unto them that are contentious, and **do not obey** the truth, but **obey** unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, ...”*

*John 3:36 “He that **believeth** on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that **believeth not** the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.”*

- It is the Lord who said that a person will be judged according to their works.

*Rev 2:23 “And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you **according to your works.**” (work - ergon – 2041 to toil, work)*

- It is the apostle Paul that stated a person will ‘receive’ at the judgement seat according to what he has done.

*2 Cor 5:10 “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, **according to that he hath done**, whether it be good or bad.” (“done” suggests ‘practise as a habit’)*

- It is very important to note what brother Don says the NASU does to the BASF. “It gives us a graceful way out of this flawed statement”.
- His remarks illustrate that the words of NASU have been crafted to dissect clause 24 of the BASF and remove the amendment.
 - This explains why the UA08 states that one must accept the understanding of the NASU over the understanding of the BASF.
 - This explains why there are no verses given to support the NASU view of whom, apart from the baptized, will rise from the dead for judgment.
 - This explains why this group of the Unamended want the NASU.
 - This is reason why UA08 ecclesias cannot also claim to be BASF.
- Brother Don’s statement indicates that he himself has become Unamended on this vital point of difference between our communities. This in turn prompts further questions.
 - If in all of his investigation he really believes he has found that the parenthetical section has corrupted the clause, why hasn’t he enlightened his own brethren about this before acting as an advisor in Unity matters?
 - Why does he continue to lead and influence the Amended community in this area?
 - Why does he still belong to an Amended ecclesia?
 - Those who continue to believe that the Scriptures teach what the BASF clause 24 states need a leader at the helm who also believes it.

THE DEBATE – ISSUE 2

THE BASIS of RESURRECTIONAL RESPONSIBILITY

*“At one point, I decided to study all the proof texts we use to defend the position that everyone raised at the return of Christ will be resurrected to judgment on the same basis (i.e. light). What I found is that scripture reveals a variety of factors which effect God’s reaction to sinners. * There is no biblical proof that “light” is the sole ground of accountability to the judgment seat of Christ. **We have reached that conclusion by inference and not direct scripture. We therefore, have no legitimate basis for making our inference a test of fellowship.***

- A public statement made by Bro. Don Styles who is one of the most distinguished Amended brethren in matters relating to reunion with the Unamended Community. (January, 2010)

*(see ‘Factors Effecting God’s Reaction to Wrong-doing’ below)

*“**BASF CLAUSE XXIV** – That at the appearing of Christ prior to the establishment of the Kingdom, the responsible (namely, those who know the revealed will of God and have been called upon to submit to it), dead and living – obedient and disobedient – will be summoned before his judgement seat ‘to be judged according to their works’; and ‘receive in body according to what they have done, whether it be good or bad’ (2Cor.5:10; 2Tim 4:1; Rom 2:5,6,16; 14:10-12; 1Cor. 4:5; Rev 11:18).*

But we do have a legitimate basis for making it a test of fellowship. Firstly, enlightenment is essential for all of those who are validly baptized. God would not recognize our baptism if we didn’t first know, understand and believe the Gospel. Could anyone repent prior to baptism without knowing what sin was and what he was required to do about it? Light, (knowledge and understanding) is the only means we have of knowing God and what he requires of us.

*Acts 2:37-38 “Now when they heard this, **they were pricked in their heart**, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.”*

It is also the grounds on which the Lord says the “Word” will judge people in the day of resurrection.

*John 12:48-49 “**He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day. For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak.**”*

How could anyone reject the words of God without first having heard them, recognizing their demands, and then making a mental decision to refuse to comply? The Greek word for rejecteth is ‘atheteo’, which means to set aside, to despise.

If light or knowledge and understanding of God’s expectations are NOT involved in the resurrection for Judgment then we are led to believe that God will also raise the heathen, the idiots and immature children because of reasons related to persecution or privilege. Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?

FACTORS EFFECTING GOD'S REACTION TO WRONG-DOING

(Submitted by Brother Don Styles to illustrate that there are bases, other than 'light', for which God may raise people from the dead for Judgment) (The bullet points are my comments – not his.)

1. **OPPORTUNITY** – John 15:22,24 “If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloak [mg. Excuse] for their sin ... If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin ...”

- *There is no mention of the judgment seat of Christ in this passage, and it certainly required that they be first enlightened by the words and actions of the Lord.*

2. **KNOWLEDGE** – Luke 12:47-48 “And that servant, which knew his lord’s will and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not and did commit things worthy or stripes shall be beaten with few stripes.”

- *These people were his servants and in a New Testament context. It is not possible that a person could be the Lord’s servant and not be baptized. The reference to what he did not know must be to something other than the knowledge needed for baptism.*

3. **BELIEF** – John 9:41 “... now ye say, We see therefore your sin remaineth.” 1Tim.1:13 “but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.”

- *There is no mention of the Judgment seat of Christ in either of these two passages and as such they do not provide evidence for responsibility to the Judgment seat of Christ.*

4. **COMMITMENT** – Deut. 23:21-22 “When thou shalt vow a vow unto the LORD thy God, thou shalt not slack to pay it: for the LORD thy God will surely require it of thee; and it would be sin in thee. But if thou shalt forbear to vow, it shall be no sin in thee.” Eccl. 5:4 “Better is it that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay.” Heb. 10:26-32 “If we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth their remaineth ... a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation ... how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden underfoot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant ... an unholy thing ...”

- *The first two of the above quoted passages do not relate to the Judgment seat of Christ and are, therefore, inadmissible evidence for the issue we are trying to resolve. The third passage is dealing with someone who has already received the knowledge of the truth, or is already baptized, proving that knowledge is a factor.*

5. **PRIVILEGE** – Amos 3:2 “You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities.” (In this regard consider the double-edged aspect of 1Cor. 7:14 “the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife ... else were your children unclean; but now are they holy”).

- *Neither of these passages mentions the Judgment seat of Christ. They may show how God deals with certain people, but they are inadmissible as evidence for what is needed to prove that there are grounds, other than 'light', for which God will raise people from the dead for judgment.*

6. **ATTITUDE** – Deut. 7:10 “(God) repayeth them that hate him to their face, to destroy them; he will not be slack to him that hateth him, he will repay him to his face.”

- *This passage was directed to the people in Moses day and says nothing about being raised from the dead to face the Judgment seat of Christ. It is hard to imagine the reason why anyone could hate God without having any knowledge of him or of his expectations of human behaviour.*

7. **TEACHING OTHERS** – James 3:1 (RSV) “Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, for you know that we who teach shall be judged with greater strictness.”

- *The people in question here are brethren. They know the Truth and will be raised to be judged on whether or not they have been faithful or unfaithful to the demands of the Gospel.*

8. **PERSECUTING GOD’S ELECT** – Luke 18:7 “Shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him?” 2Thess.1:6 “Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you.”

- *Finally, this is a passage which meets the criteria. This is a Scripture that teaches some will be raised from the dead for judgment apart from those who are baptized. The passage from the letter to the Thessalonians goes on to say, “In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Verses 6-9 develop the context for the remarks and hence the whole section needs to be taken together. The people being raised to be judged are those who obeyed not the gospel, were not baptized and persecuted those who were.*
- *If the people obeyed not the Gospel they must have known what it demanded of them in order to disobey.*

We conclude that not a single passage that Brother Don raises in his ‘Factors’ essay proves the thesis that, God will raise unbaptized people from the grave and for judgment on a different basis than their knowledge of God’s law.

THE POWER OF INFERENCE

One of the meanings of inference is to ‘draw a conclusion as by reasoning’ and that is what we mean while using it here in this section. Brother Don’s claim is that, **“We have reached that conclusion by inference and not direct scripture. We therefore, have no legitimate basis for making our inference a test of fellowship.”** We take his words to mean that there is less power in an ‘inferred’ argument, so much less, that one is not to conclude it is not binding on the receiver. To see what the Scripture has to say about that conclusion we only need to look at Romans chapter 1.

Romans 1:18-23 ESV “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. **For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them.** For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. **So they are without excuse.** For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles.”

- God held these people responsible for their actions based on what he had revealed about himself in nature. There is no mention of a direct command of God, it was all inference. Look at the next section in Romans ...

Rom 2:3-5 ESV “And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God? Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; **not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?** But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God;

- God held these people responsible for their actions based on His goodness and forbearance and longsuffering. The Apostle states that the goodness of God should lead people to repentance, and clearly that is by inference. The record goes on to say that if people don’t make the connection and repent, they incur the wrath of God to be met on the day of wrath, which will necessitate their resurrection. God knows the ability of the human mind and the level of evidence He has provided. He expects repentance.

The wording of clause 24 in the BASF is right, and its truth should continue to be made a test of fellowship just as our brethren have viewed it for the last 100 years.

Psalm 15 KJV

*1 Lord, who shall abide in thy
tabernacle? who shall dwell in
thy holy hill?*

*2 He that walketh uprightly, and
worketh righteousness, and
speaketh the truth in his heart.*

*3 He that backbiteth not with his
tongue, nor doeth evil to his
neighbour, nor taketh up a
reproach against his neighbour.*

*4 In whose eyes a vile person is
contemned; but he honoureth
them that fear the Lord. He that
swareth to his own hurt, and
changeth not.*

*5 He that putteth not out his
money to usury, nor taketh
reward against the innocent. He
that doeth these things shall
never be moved.*

THE DEBATE – ISSUE 3

THE STATISTICAL LEVER

In 2004 when the ecclesias in North America voted concerning the NASU document many of us, ourselves included, did not take the vote serious enough. If we had only known then that members of both the Amended and Unamended communities would later quote the results as they have, and continue to do so, we would have been more diligent in preparing the ecclesia for a decision we could live with.

“We ask you to consider helping us by requiring no more of your Lord’s brethren than the NASU 2003 which was approved by the preponderant majority of the Amended ecclesias in North America.”

- Unamended member at PTRU meeting on January 27, 2010.

The quotation stated above is just an example of how the majority of Christadelphians seem to view the statistics resulting from the vote taken in 2004. Viewed in this way it has been used, and is being used as a lever to influence the Amended community into believing that we have already given an overwhelming approval to the NASU 2003, and therefore, the time for questions is over.

The statistics quoted above were obtained from the ecclesias continent-wide during the Phase 1 of the vote on NASU. We were told by means of an accompanying letter that Phase 1 would not be a binding vote. It was to be understood as a ‘none binding’ or ‘straw vote’ and the quotation below clearly states that intention. **Phase 2, the stage where another vote would be taken and where the vote was to be binding was never taken.** It amazes us, therefore, how some members of the NASU steering committee* could clearly forget what they wrote and now declare that the Amended ecclesias in North America have approved NASU 2003. Both Amended and Unamended ecclesias have been misled by this action.

Important Note

- *Any decision in Phase 1 does not bind any ecclesia to a course of action.*
- *It is not until Phase 2 that ecclesias will be asked to express their support for a definite course of action.*

- Cover Letter for the NASU Proposal – November 1, 2004

*(the member making the above statement was one of those on the NASU steering committee)

It is not proper to use statistics as evidence that one's view of a matter is correct unless the conditions of the vote, the number voting, the number who could have voted, etc. have all been provided for equal assessment. The statement that NASU was "***approved by the preponderant majority of the Amended ecclesias in North America***" distorts the facts. Given other equally legitimate ways of looking at the same numbers, one could not justify the use of the phrase 'preponderant majority.'

At the time of the vote on NASU, it was not disclosed publicly that if the vote was not successful continentally, the document would then be used in the 'local' and divisive way it is being used now. The vote for NASU did not include a mandate for what is happening presently.

At the time of the continental vote, it was not disclosed that the NASU effectively denied the parenthetical section of Clause 24 of the BASF.

At the time of the vote on NASU, it was not known that the Unamended ecclesias involved would continue to fellowship those of the Unamended community that would fellowship them.

The claim that a preponderant majority of the Amended community supports the NASU and UA08 should be challenged.

THE DEBATE – ISSUE 4

THE BASF or THE NASU – Make a choice!

The following question and answer is presented for further analysis. It was sent to us unsolicited by someone in another ecclesia. This particular question and answer is part of a document sent out by members of the Toronto East ecclesia and shows the thinking of those who are presently in the group considered to be a “signed-on un-paused NASU” ecclesia. It was because of this question and answer publication being sent outside of his ecclesia that we invited Brother Ken Curry to not only explain publicly the content of what that document revealed and answer questions concerning it, but also to explain the wisdom of having it circulate amongst brethren and sisters of non-NASU ecclesias.*

Questions and Answers about Unity

(Respectfully prepared by Bro & Sis Atkin, **Bro. & Sis. K Curry**, Bro. & Sis. S Curry, Bro. & Sis. D Dawes, Bro. & Sis. R Dawes)

Question: So what fellowship practice is currently used at Toronto East?

Answer:

- We meet under the BASF – as stated in the Toronto East Constitution.
- We accept at the memorial table others who accept the BASF including all UA08 Amended ecclesias and any others from around the world who have different, but equivalent, statements of faith – also as stated in our constitution.
- We do not police the fellowship practices of the groups with whom we meet. We do not police the fellowship practices of our own individual members.
- Members of the Toronto East ecclesia are accepted on the basis of the BASF. This will not change by implementing UA08. **We will still be a BASF ecclesia.**

(* The Arranging Brethren of the Toronto East ecclesia have very recently (Feb 2010) sent out a disclaimer that states the following: “Over the past few months, the document entitled ‘Questions and Answers about Unity’ has circulated among some individuals and ecclesias. This document was prepared by ten members of the Toronto East Ecclesia and reflects their personal views, not those of the membership. It was intended for internal use within the Toronto East Ecclesia. Please contact the authors directly if you have any questions concerning the content of this document.”)

We do not cite these statements of the Toronto East ecclesia to isolate them in any way, for their stated understanding of the UA08 is apparently quite satisfactory to the other signatory ecclesias. What we are saying applies to all ecclesias who have signed on to the UA08. We cannot accept that ecclesias can make the following two statements at the same time and still consider that acceptable to other members of Central fellowship.

“We have not changed our cherished beliefs as summarized in the Scriptural principles in the BASF, which is appended to our Constitution.”

“We welcome into fellowship members in good standing from the three Unamended Christadelphian Ecclesias that have accepted the Unity Agreement 2008.”

The Statement Ecclesias must agree to in order to become a UA08 ecclesia

“It is understood and agreed that the doctrines to be believed and taught by us are the first principles of the One Faith as revealed in the Scriptures. The two principle statements of faith, the Birmingham Amended Statement of Faith (BASF) and the Birmingham Unamended Statement of Faith (BUSF) as set out herein (including the Doctrines to be rejected and the Commandments of Christ) **understood as expressed in this document (NASU)** represent a true and common definition of the One Faith.”

Assuming that the NASU has some meaning and does add a new understanding to the BASF, on what basis can one still claim to be a BASF ecclesia? Keeping to the basic rules of logic it is not possible to reason that the **BASF + UA08 = BASF** as the Toronto East ecclesia does in their answers to their questions. The NASU changes the understanding of the BASF just as it claims to do in the agreement ecclesias are required to sign cited above. The NASU nullifies the wording of the parenthetical section of the BASF clause 24 as is pointed out in Issue 1 of these notes. Those who sign-on with integrity are signing-off to the long standing Central belief that knowledge and understanding is the basis of resurrection to Judgment.

To be considered an Ecclesia in Central fellowship one has to agree to the principles identified in each of the clauses in the BASF, or in one’s own Statement of Faith that is deemed to be equivalent. You can see from the wording of the NASU that there is no use of the word equivalent, for the NASU corrects the BASE. Those who sign-on to the NASU can no longer lay claim to believe the BASF as they did before, and should not say they do. The teaching of the Apostle is clear on this:

“Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds”. (Col 3:9)

THE DEBATE – ISSUE 5

ARE THE UA08 ECCLESIAS A 3RD FELLOWSHIP?

***QUESTION 3:**

- Are the UA08 Ecclesias a 3RD Fellowship?

RESPONSE:

- No. UA08 is an option for ecclesias who wish to adopt it. But we still meet under the BASF and we are still an “Amended ecclesia”.
- Because we are a BASF ecclesia, we are in fellowship with all other Amended Christadelphians worldwide (about 43,000), whether or not they make use of the UA08. This is confirmed by the Christadelphian Office.

***Taken from the public document, Questions and Answers published by members of the TE ecclesia. (Circulated in January 2010)**

This question and answer puzzled us – for on what basis would any ecclesia in Central fellowship feel it had the authority to give the response provided above? Central ecclesias are in fellowship together and shouldn’t act in arbitrary ways concerning our fellowship together without due consultation.

Luke 6:31 “And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise.”

Assuming that the UA08 ecclesias are serious about the UA08 agreement, there must be an acknowledgement that they now meet on the understanding of the NASU document which supersedes the BASF. It is not grammatically correct, not logically correct, and not morally correct to say that an ecclesia which has committed itself to change its Statement of Faith to acknowledge the new understanding of the NASU document still meets on the BASF. It simply does not – see Issue 4.

The NASU stands for North American Statement of Understanding and initially ecclesias continent-wide were consulted in order to get an opinion of its worth. With the recent information that has come to light about the true meaning of statements in the NASU and the fellowship policy of the Unamended ecclesias, the Amended ecclesias continent-wide should be the only ones deciding whether UA08 ecclesias constitute a third fellowship.

Brother Ken Curry, a long standing member of the Toronto East Amended ecclesia and one of the original NASU Steering committee members, was one of those who authorized the Questions and Answers document. Seeing the contentious nature of that document and given the fact that it was being used to lobby support in another uncommitted ecclesia, we asked him to come and explain his answers to the broader Amended community in a debate format. Brother Ken refused the debate, and in our opinion, also refused to be held accountable.

Several months before the publication of the Q&A's Brother Ken also co-authored the following statement that was sent out to all the ecclesias in the region.

**Letter from the Ontario Amended Regional Unity Representatives
March, 2008**

"After three years of prayerful discussion we were unable to find a path forward that would not seriously disrupt ecclesias in one or both communities. We recognize that many Brothers and Sisters will be disappointed to receive this news. Everyone should be assured that the best and prayerful efforts of many Brethren over a long period of time were expended to try to formulate a scriptural and workable solution. It is our strong view that we are living in the last days prior to the Lord's return. This was a serious consideration and led to the conclusion that it would be inappropriate to take any action that could possibly cause fragmentation and upset as we prepare for the coming of the Lord."

Brother Ken's present recommendation to the Amended community, that they now accept the UA08, represents a complete change in thinking from what he had several months earlier. In laying out a preparation for this debate, Brother Ken was asked to explain the answer given to Question 3 on the previous page. The Unamended members involved haven't changed their fellowship policy which "could possibly cause fragmentation and upset", so what has happened that changed his recommendation to our community? He needs to explain! If a debate is seen to be too harsh a way of being held accountable, he can still send out a communication, even by email, to explain this matter. Meanwhile, the fragmentation has started - the UA08 appears to be the start of a new fellowship!

THE DEBATE – ISSUE 6

THE CHRISTADELPHIAN OFFICE

“Because we are a BASF ecclesia, we are in fellowship with all other Amended Christadelphians worldwide (about 43,000), whether or not they make use of the UA08. **This is confirmed by the Christadelphian Office.** - Cited from the Q&A document Q 3, see Issue 5

Attaching the above bolded statement to such a sensitive issue and thereby claiming international recognition for the UA08 immediately caught our attention. We had strong reasons however to doubt the claim, and so sent a request to the Christadelphian Office in the UK to verify whether it was true. One would have thought that the authors of the letter would have certainly checked that out before putting it writing. When we contacted the Christadelphian Office about this claim we received the following reply on January 14, 2010:

CORRECTION STATEMENT

Correction to “Q & A’s about Unity”

In October 2009, a document was made available to members of the Toronto East Ecclesia entitled “Q & A’s about Unity.” This document unfortunately contained an incorrect statement. The Christadelphian Office and the CMPA have consistently refrained from commenting on the UA08 and have not made any statement related to UA08. We sincerely apologize to The Christadelphian Office and the CMPA for any misunderstanding this statement may have created.

Because we are a BASF ecclesia, we are in fellowship with all other Amended Christadelphians worldwide (about 43000), whether or not they make use of UA08. This is confirmed by the Christadelphian Office.

The Statement should read instead:

Because we are a BASF ecclesia, we are in fellowship with all other Amended Christadelphians worldwide (about 43000, according to current data). Our worldwide fellowship is based on this common use of the BASF.

You can see by the way the letter is written that Brother Michael Ashton intended that the letter go out with an apology to the Christadelphian Office. Brother Michael Ashton assured us that those who had sent out the Q & A's document had agreed to send out this acknowledgement to all those who received the original incorrect letter.*

You can also see in the revised wording of the Statement, there was an agreement that no association be made between the UA08 and the BASF. The fact that the Toronto East ecclesia continues to make this association in later inter-ecclesial correspondence is reason for concern that a new Fellowship is in the making.

*(To the day of the Debate, we have not received such a letter from the Toronto East ecclesia.)

THE DEBATE – ISSUE 7

THE NECESSARY CHANGE IN THE CONSTITUTION

One of the requirements of a NASU ecclesia is to change their Constitution to say that they are now a ‘NASU’ ecclesia, that is, they now believe the BASF through the new understanding of the NASU document. Note the following statement from the NASU as it was sent out to the ecclesias in 2004.

A System of Rules Embodying The Foregoing Suggestions

(Commonly referred to as the “sample constitution”)

1. That we are a Christadelphian ecclesia.
2. That we accept and profess the doctrines and precepts of Christ, as taught in the apostolic writings, and defined in the annexed Statement[s]* of Faith [understood as expressed in this document]* and Epitome of the Commandments of Christ.
3. That we recognize as brethren, and welcome to our fellowship, all who have been immersed (by whomsoever) after their acceptance of the same doctrines and precepts.

* Square brackets above [] indicate an editorial note added to the original text

- NASU October 2003, pg. 11

- The writers of this section of the NASU document, cited above, recognized the significance of the changes the NASU would make to the understanding of the BASF and BUSF. As a result, they indicated the need to change the wording of the Constitution of all ecclesias accepting the NASU agreement. This action is largely one of integrity, and causes the ecclesia to honourably acknowledge the new paradigm.
- If you take the UA08 for what it says; if you take the statement that is posted concerning the fellowship position of UA08 ecclesias; if you take the UA08 agreement itself; the ecclesias that adopt it have changed their understanding of the BASF or BUSF. A NASU ecclesia that denies this change in their constitution must square up with the Scripture that says:

1 Cor 14:40 “Let all things be done decently and in order.”

Galatians 1:11-12 KJV

***But I certify you,
brethren, that the gospel
which was preached of
me is not after man.***

***12 For I neither received
it of man, neither was I
taught it, but by the
revelation of Jesus
Christ.***

THE DEBATE – ISSUE 8

KEEP THE COMMANDMENT WITHOUT SPOT

“A wide range of views is tolerated respecting how to handle cases of divorce and remarriage. This has resulted in some divorced and remarried couples avoiding certain meetings. On the other hand, some brethren avoid attending ecclesias, gatherings and Bible schools where divorced and remarried couples will be breaking bread. Somehow this seems to work without splitting the fellowship.”

- Brother DS in response to Brother MT January 6, 2010

- This reasoning is to suggest that because we live with different views of divorce and remarriage in Central Fellowship it is okay therefore, to live with the Unamended ecclesias and their differences of belief on resurrectional responsibility. This reasoning appears to be equating apples with oranges.
- Central fellowship requires that member ecclesias ensure the individual clauses of the Statement of Faith are upheld, but they do not allow member ecclesias to require specific divorce and remarriage criteria of other ecclesias. That’s why we get along with differences on divorce and remarriage.
- The differences of belief on resurrectional responsibility are covered by a clause in the Statement of Faith. Due to our ability to find ample supporting Scriptures we have always believed it should be made a test of fellowship.

“A wide range of views is accommodated in Central on the atonement. You are correct that the root difference which led to the Amended – Unamended division stems from divergent views on the atonement. BUT, the working premise in Central is that this difference is sufficiently academic that unless it leads to some practical error (e.g. that only baptized people can be raised from the dead), we’ll live with the different points of view.”

- Brother DS in response to Brother MT January 6, 2010

- For compliance with Central Fellowship ‘the wide range of views’ on the atonement must not exceed what is specified in the BASF. If it does, and it is tolerated, then the ecclesia involved is simply not walking honourably with respect to the requirements of Central Fellowship. If the ‘wide range of views’ on the atonement does not exceed the belief articulated in the BASF, then it is an allowable view.
- There is some appeal in Brother Don`s words relating to being consistent, but the latter end of consistently allowing wrong teaching, if it does not lead to some practical error, would eventually take us back to the churches in doctrine.
- Our decision on whether or not to allow a divergence of belief is primarily decided by our mutual statement of what we (Central fellowship) feel the Truth is on a matter and how we have stated it in the BASF. As lovers of truth, the importance of our belief about responsibility to resurrectional judgment is primarily related to the Truth revealed in the Scriptures and not to the severity of the practical consequences.

- Being able to find no Bible support for the teaching concerning the resurrection of the unbaptized does lead to serious practical error. It leads people to refuse to acknowledge what the Bible teaches. It leads people to believe that YHWH, who has defined himself around what he will do, is undecided when it comes to the vital aspect of who will be raised from the dead. It leads parents to avoid warning a rebellious son of the need to prepare to stand before the Lord and give an account of his disobedience, etc.

BIBLE TEACHING ON THE SUBJECT:

1 Tim 6:14 “That thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ:”

- Each of us has an obligation to uphold the truth – in fact to keep it without spot. We should never allow a wrong view because other people do, but should be diligent about our service for the Lord and search out the truth of the matter. What we pass on to others by our words and deeds must be unrebukeable until the coming of the Lord.

John 12:48 “He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.”

- These words of the Lord are not limited to the Jews that immediately heard them. They relate the same power and authority to the reader today as they did in the first century and there is a great personal danger to those who dismiss the commandments of the Lord, as applying to them, for any reason. As watchmen of the Lord, we have a responsibility to exhort one another and especially those who appear reluctant to ‘do’ what the Lord requires of them.

Gal 5:7-9 “Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth? This persuasion cometh not of him that calleth you. A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.”

- The Apostle was trying to show the Galatians that were moving away from the pristine Truth that they had been taught. With his application of the analogy of ‘leaven’, he was warning them of how error works. It starts small and eventually infects the whole. Allowing error to exist allows it to grow. The way to treat error is to remove it.

1 Cor 15:33-34 ESV “Do not be deceived: “Bad company ruins good morals.” Wake up from your drunken stupor, as is right, and do not go on sinning. For some have no knowledge of God. I say this to your shame.”

- The Apostle was trying to show the Corinthians how deception works. Keeping company with those who do not share our belief wears away our moral standards slowly. The slow progress of sinful ways will eventually take its evil toll. We must learn to avoid doing things that are wrong no matter how slowly the influence works.

1 John 1:6-7 KJV

6 If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth:

7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

THE DEBATE – ISSUE 9**FELLOWSHIP WITH OTHERS:**

“If joining Central means cutting off our brethren then this won’t work”

“I think we naively thought if we got the doctrine taken care of the fellowship issues would fall into place.”

“These brethren (UA) are my brothers, my conscience says – I must fellowship.”

“How can we cut brethren off in order to have fellowship with other brethren”

“We are not trying to join Central – but to have unity”

“When someone comes to our ecclesia we will tell them that we meet under the BASF – but we won’t look into their backgrounds to see if they are up to par”

“The gold standard of fellowship practice has been ecclesial affiliation”

“Once the door of fellowship is open, it will be very difficult to go back”

“The UA have made it clear that if an Amended ecclesia isn’t doctrinally aligned it can’t participate in the Fellowship Study”

“The Regional Unity Effort failed because the UA would not agree to our fellowship practice”

“I have witnessed Amended who are not part of the signatory ecclesias breaking bread with the UA in Guelph. Do we measure up to what we’re asking them to measure up to?”

“I find it unacceptable that many are choosing to change fellowship to an individual decision”

“There is no reason to request the UA to sever ties to their UA brethren in other ecclesias.”

Statements made by Amended and Unamended members regarding Fellowship

AMENDED ECCLESIA-BASED FELLOWSHIP

“So what does “ecclesial-based fellowship” mean in practice? There are three criteria that form the general policy for an ecclesia to be part of the Central fellowship:

- (1) The ecclesia declares itself to be in the Central community, and represents itself in ways that confirm this declaration. For example, following the pattern in the Ecclesial Guide, the ecclesia’s constitution, if it has one, states that it is a Christadelphian ecclesia, and that it accepts and professes the first principles on the One Faith as revealed in the Scriptures. As such, its ecclesial statement of faith, which forms its basis of fellowship, summarizes the same principles as those defined in the BASF (or any equivalent statement of faith). This is the means by which Central ecclesias associate themselves with “The One Body.”
- (2) The ecclesia restricts fellowship (i.e. the partaking of the emblems) to those with the same basis of fellowship, that is, to members in good standing of Central Christadelphian ecclesias. In other words, Central ecclesias practice a “closed” fellowship, as taught in the Scriptures.
- (3) The ecclesia is recognized and accepted as being in the Central community by neighbouring ecclesias. The size of the Central community, in which it is essentially impossible to “know everyone,” depends on this local recognition criteria as a pragmatic and preferable alternative to the establishment of a centralized governing authority determining the fellowship status of ecclesias. The publishing policies of the two primary Central fraternal magazines (The Christadelphian and The Tidings) both require local recognition before ecclesial news is accepted for publication. By following this policy, the magazines do not determine fellowship status; rather, they report it based on the judgment of the consensus of the surrounding ecclesias.

These three actions form the established practice of the Central Christadelphian community. If any one of them is in question, the standing of the ecclesia within the Central community will be in doubt.”

(Fellowship Practice of Central Ecclesias, Christadelphian Tidings Publishing Committee, The Tidings, December 2008, pg. 526)

Do the Unamended ecclesias qualify for fellowship with ecclesias in Central Fellowship as specified in the above statements?

- The BUSF is not equivalent to the BASF. The NASU does not make the BUSF equivalent to the BASF. By changing the understanding of clause 24 of the BASF, it makes the BASF equivalent to the BUSF. These Unamended Ecclesias do not qualify for fellowship under the guideline (1) above.

UNAMENDED ECCLESIAL FELLOWSHIP PRACTICE

“The accepted practice of the Central community worldwide has always been to extend Fellowship on an Ecclesial basis. This prevents individuals from establishing their own personal fellowship practice simply by circulating among the various communities of the Brotherhood. The position of the unamended ecclesias with which we have been working has remained unchanged throughout our discussions. The unamended brethren have made it clear to us that their intent is to break bread with individual members of unamended ecclesias, whether that ecclesia has accepted and declared the NASU as their ecclesial position or not. Ultimately this was the point that brought our recent efforts to their disappointing conclusion.”

(Excerpt from a letter sent by Brother Tom Wilson on behalf of the Cambridge Arranging Committee to Brother the Hamilton Greenaway Ecclesia., May 11, 2008)

- The three Unamended ecclesias that we are dealing with have shown to us that they will fellowship members of ecclesias that will fellowship with them even though those members do not come from UA08 ecclesias. We were personally very disappointed when a number of brethren and sisters from the Shelburne ecclesia went to the Unamended ecclesia in Guelph and were welcomed to break bread there. At that time the Amended ecclesia in Shelburne was not a signed-on UA08. Obviously, the fault was on both sides, but it indicated that the Unamended ecclesias do not comply with point 2 on the previous page.
- It is worth observing the comments made by Brother Tom Wilson in the letter from the Cambridge ecclesia. The Amended ecclesias that have chosen to fellowship with the Unamended ecclesias, on the basis of NASU without agreement on fellowship, do not qualify under point (3) on the previous page. Their fellowship practice must be found to be acceptable to their neighbouring Amended ecclesias.

1 John 1:6-7

“If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.”

- This is a guarantee from the Lord. If we walk in the light (light of his Word) we will achieve the fellowship we are seeking. (Contrary to what is being commonly reported, we do not yet agree sufficiently on what the Word teaches to have fellowship together.)

QUESTIONS ANSWERED

Question 1 Are Unamended Christadelphians really our Brethren?

It has been stated that if we recognize a person's baptism we are obliged to welcome them into fellowship. It is true, generally when an individual from the Unamended fellowship seeks to become Amended, after an interview, we recognize their baptism and do not ask them to be baptized. But, if we consider some of them brethren in this sense, does that necessarily mean that we are obliged to do the same for them all?

- This is an important question to answer as it appears to be a commonly held position by many of those who are actively promoting the unity cause.
- None of us who can read these words were around when the division with the Unamended commenced. We have 'inherited' the present situation from a former generation in which we now 'discover', that some people our community generally refers to as brethren, are actually in another fellowship. The Word cautions us against making quick decisions and this is an area where some forethought is needed.
- The Scriptures teach that it is possible to be a brother and not to be in fellowship.

*1 Cor 5:11 "But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man **that is called a 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."*

- The Brethren in Corinth were dealing with a particular brother who was to be disfellowshipped in the sense of not 'eating' with him. If this has application to literally having a meal with the person, how much more does it apply to eating the Lord's Supper with him?
- That verse alone should illustrate that we are not compelled to fellowship with brethren simply because we recognize their baptism.

It has also been stated that when members transfer between Unamended and Amended ecclesias rebaptism is not required – therefore baptism in either community is a valid baptism "in Christ".

- In my experience I know of no Unamended member who has been 'transferred' to an Amended ecclesia. We may check with members of the Unamended ecclesia from which the person came to see if they were in good standing, but an interview is required. The interview would seek to ascertain what they believed when they were baptized and then what beliefs they may have acquired since that would put us out of step in our walk towards the Kingdom.

- Our Constitution states: “That we recognize as brethren, and welcome to our fellowship, all who have been immersed (by whosoever) after their acceptance of the same doctrines and precepts.” It is important that they believed what we believe prior to their baptism, and an interview is needed to assess that.
- It might also be helpful to note that Brother J.J. Andrews was re-baptized before his death as he no longer recognized his former baptism as a Christadelphian to be adequate. That being said, and noting that many of the Unamended still hold to his teachings, we should not be assuming that anyone of another Community necessarily believed what we believe before their baptism.

We have been told that since marriage between an Unamended and Amended is not considered marrying outside of “the Truth” – therefore members of both communities are “in-the-Lord”.

- But that is distorted reasoning. Think of it as relating to some other group - would the fact that some of our members allowed their children to marry into that other group be justification to say that the other group is “in-the-Lord”?
- One of the couples working with us on these notes had a related experience. One of them was Amended and one was Unamended prior to their marriage. The Amended person was told that they could not be married in their Ecclesial hall unless both were members of the Amended fellowship, in fact, there was mention of disfellowship if they didn't.
- What parent, knowing the great problems that such an arrangement has brought upon members of the community in the past, would ever want that for their children?

1 Jn 1:7 “If we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another.”

- This is the standard for having fellowship together. Hence, we ought to know the Truth and be in the same fellowship before marriage begins.

Note: In some parts of these notes we have referred to the Unamended as brethren. We have done this out of courtesy, as they do of us. Having talked to some of the Unamended who will not fellowship other Unamended members, we have found that they too struggle with this question.

QUESTIONS ASKED

Question 1:

In the light of seeing no Bible references relating to the resurrection of the unbaptized in the NASU, we would like to ask whether the members of Unamended ecclesias that we are dealing with, believe that the words of the Lord recorded in John 12:48 can be considered evidence that some unbaptized people will rise from the dead for Judgment? Their answer may lead to more questions.

Question 2:

We would like to ask our Amended brethren, who have assumed leadership on matters of unity with the Unamended community: Do they still consider belief in the BASF (all clauses) to be a test of fellowship?

Question 3:

If the Unamended brethren we are dealing with are prepared to meet on the basis of the BASF alone in the UK, why can't they do so in North America?

Question 4:

After the 'Mutual Assurances' section of the NASU and the assurances that were added later, what new understanding does the NASU add to the BASF?

Question 5:

Noting the wording of the statement in the UA08 agreement, that representatives of an ecclesia must sign, how does one support the idea that an ecclesia can be both BASF and NASU at the same time?

SUMMARY:

1. The Unamended brethren that we are dealing with will not concede that enlightenment to the commandments of God is the basic reason for God raising the dead for the purposes of judgment.
2. Members of the Unamended community do not believe that any Bible passage can be found that teaches the unbaptized will be raised for judgment.
3. Central Fellowship is defined by a belief and compliance with the doctrinal points set out in the BASF.
4. Members of Central Fellowship do not fellowship (break bread) with those who disagree with the teachings outlined in the BASF.
5. The NASU is designed to correct the understanding of the BASF.
6. The UA08 does not comply with the requirements of Central Fellowship.
7. In some cases, God expects us to comply with His will, even if it is by inference.
8. The statistic (87% approval) often being used to show the present approval of Amended ecclesias is not valid.
9. Rather than accept the decision of one 'signed-on' Ecclesia, we need a 'higher court' to judge the validity of the UA08.
10. The Christadelphian Office has not given its approval for a BASF ecclesia to use the UA08.
11. Ecclesias signing-on to the NASU are required to change the wording of their ecclesial Constitution.
12. The fact that the Amended community allows for different views on divorce and remarriage is not to be viewed as a license to allow for different views on resurrectional responsibility.
13. Our Amended brethren have worked for years trying to get the Unamended to change their fellowship policy. This fact alone should not be seen as reason to give up and accept their position.

CONCLUSION:

Is the difference between what ‘God will do’ and what ‘God may do’ really so important as to warrant keeping two groups of people from fellowship around the table of the Lord?

If we worshipped a God, in the sense of the dictionary definition of ‘God’, it would appear ridiculous to even suggest we could discriminate between choices that belong to the realm of a Supreme Being. Using the dictionary definition, by being supreme, God can decide to do as he pleases, including changing his mind. How then could anyone be so arrogant as to claim to know what ‘God will do’ in contrast to what He might do?

The response so far, is just about where the NASU document leaves us.

“Divine wisdom and justice alone will determine who should be raised from the dead to be condemned and punished on these grounds. It is certain that His will is righteous and shall be done.” (NASU; Discussion Notes on Resurrectional Responsibility, pg.7)

However, we as Christadelphians, both Amended and Unamended do not worship a ‘God’, we worship YHWH.

Mal 3:16-18 “ Then they that feared YHWH spake often one to another: and YHWH hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared YHWH, and that thought upon his name. And they shall be mine, saith YHWH of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him. Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not.

YHWH’s name implies that ‘He will be’ or ‘He will do’. An example of how YHWH speaks of Himself and what He will do is found in the following passage:

Ex 6:6-8 “Wherefore say unto the children of Israel, I am YHWH, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will rid you out of their bondage, and I will redeem you with a stretched out arm, and with great judgments: And I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God: and ye shall know that I am YHWH your God, which bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. And I will bring you in unto the land, concerning the which I did swear to give it to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob; and I will give it you for an heritage: I am YHWH.”

Just think of the difference it would make to the meaning of the passage cited above if all the ‘I will’ references were replaced with ‘I may’. First it would be almost humorous because it would lack any real significance. Neither would it be something we would trust, because we would never know if God would really do what He said He might do. Most importantly however, there would be no play upon His name of YHWH. Saying what YHWH ‘may do’ has no similar significance to what YHWH says He ‘will do’.

Note the use of the name of YHWH in this sense in the New Testament:

Luke 20:34-38 “*And Jesus answering said unto them, The children of this world marry, and are given in marriage: But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection. Now **that the dead are raised**, even Moses shewed at the bush, when he calleth **the Lord** the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. For he is not a God of the dead, but of the living: for all live unto him.*”

Now the quotation the Lord is using for the evidence that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are sure to be raised clearly includes the name of YHWH as is suggested by being included in his remarks. YHWH, whose name means ‘who will be’ that is, will be the God of the forefathers of the nation of Israel, is said to speak, therefore, of the resurrection of these men. That illustrates how strongly the name of YHWH refers to what ‘He will do’. There is simply no way the same point could be made on the basis of what YHWH may do.

Rom 4:17 “*(As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, even God, **who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were.***”

Our God, YHWH, has therefore, a characteristic not acknowledged in the general concept of God; but one that we as Christadelphians need to remember. He does not speak in terms of what He may do.

Deut 18:17-19 “*And **YHWH** said unto me, They have well spoken that which they have spoken. **I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him.***

The passage in Deut 18 is typical of the way our God speaks; it is all definite and about what He will do. Again, think of what meaning this would have if God only spoke in terms of what He may do. YHWH does not speak in terms of maybe; His words are definite. Why should we speak of the resurrection of the unbaptized therefore, in terms of what YHWH may do? What has YHWH said He would do? He has said that those who would not hearken unto His words spoken by the prophet who was to come would be held accountable; ‘**I will require it of him**’.

We are very privileged to have the comments of the Lord on Deut 18 recorded for us:

John 12:46-49 “*I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness. And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came*

*not to judge the world, but to save the world. He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: **the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.** For I have not spoken of myself; but **the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak.**”*

From this Scripture we learn the following:

- Jesus was the prophet referred to in Deut 18:18.
- Jesus was speaking the words of God, not his own words.
- Jesus confirmed the accountability attached to those who heard God’s words.
- He stated that the accountability was related to appearing for judgment – in the last day, thus necessitating the resurrection of a lot of people. Notice also that the accountability mentioned here was attached to how one received the message initially, and not to whether they were faithful after baptism.
- He was sent to save the world, Jews first and then the Gentiles. He could only save us Gentiles now, through the preservation of the Gospel message made available to us today.
- Jesus didn’t talk in terms of what God may do; he spoke the words of YHWH stating with certainty what He would do.

It is a vindication of our God, YHWH, that we continue to proclaim that He will raise the enlightened rejector. It is part of the healthy environment of God’s word that we grow up with the belief that YHWH demands respect, and obedience to His Word. Buy the Truth, never sell it!

RECOMMENDATIONS OF A BETTER WAY!

The present situation in the Ontario Amended community is untenable and heading in the wrong direction. It is one that will lead to a level of harm that may take generations (if we had that time) to heal. Our ecclesias need to step back from making independent decisions about joining the UA08. Brethren and sisters that find they can, or cannot, accept the UA08 are also facing the prospect of having no nearby and like-minded ecclesia to attend. Those concerned with the present situation need to take action immediately. We suggest the following steps be taken:

1. The NASU was designed for continent-wide approval. Let's take it back to the 'big' ecclesia; the same group who looked at it in 2004.
2. The non-UA08 ecclesias need to take the initiative. They should create an official and representative committee to continue the handling of issues related to fellowship with UA08 ecclesias.
3. This new committee should then create a document which fairly evaluates the UA08 agreement from the Ontario perspective. Upon approval, it should be sent, together with UA08 documents, to all of the Amended ecclesias in North America to see if a preponderant majority of ecclesias will accept it as part of Central Fellowship.
4. By putting the direction of the Amended community in the hands of a group of representative brethren who fully subscribe to the teachings of Central fellowship, we should be able to somewhat relieve the ecclesias of the present distress, allowing us to immediately concentrate on preparation for the imminent return of our Lord.
5. Meanwhile the non-NASU ecclesias need to put some time and energy into preparing the brotherhood for living in the new ecclesial climate that UA08 has created in Ontario.

SUPPORT FOR THE AMENDMENT TO CLAUSE 24 of the BASF.

There is no question about the great debt we owe to our God that we have had pioneers that opened our understanding to the overall message of the Bible. One of the greatest lessons that we have learned from our pioneers, besides the understanding of God's word that they so ably set forth in their writings, involves the method they used to find truth. Rather than merely researching the writings of other men and searching for appealing reasoning, they did original research with their Bibles. Their method for success was simple, but required a careful and tedious comparing of Scripture with Scripture as is recommended in 1Cor. 2:13.

If Brother Thomas is to be quoted at all in trying to find help in understanding the issues before us, our attention is to be focused on his application of Isaiah 8:20; "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." Brother Thomas is honored when we apply ourselves with time, effort and spiritual methods to make a diligent search of the Scriptures to establish the truth of a matter.

The 'amendment' was added to our Statement of Faith to further define the truth about who would be raised for judgment. If it was based upon the revealed truth in the Bible in the 19th century, it should still be based on the truth of the Bible today; for no new information has come to light since. The wisdom of the Brethren at the time was only to use wording that was directly supportable by the Scriptures. So now that their conclusions are being questioned, we are able to turn to the Scriptures to defend them. The principle involved is of a great significance to our present dilemma – define beliefs around what the Scriptures state and not around what they don't state.

Long before I knew there were other Christadelphian fellowships or the real significance of the amendment to clause 24, I was instructed that the Scriptures declared some unbaptized people would be raised from the dead for the purpose of judgment. Study helps that assisted me at that time included Christendom Astray, The Christadelphian Instructor and Index Rerum. Like most of the early 'works of the Truth', the writing was amply supported by passages from the Bible that were clear and easily understood.

SUPPORT FOR THE AMENDMENT TO CLAUSE 24 of the BASF Cont'd.

In the particular crisis facing Central Fellowship in Southern Ontario, once again we find that the wording of Clause 24 is being challenged. Did our brethren from 100 years ago get it wrong, or has our generation 100 years later failed to appreciate the significance of their wording? The following citations are taken from the 2003 NASU where the relevant clauses in both the BASF and BUSF can be easily compared. Note the sections that are highlighted as they relate to the differences in what otherwise are identical statements.

BASF - Clause 24 *“That at the appearing of Christ prior to the establishment of the Kingdom, the responsible (**namely, those who know the revealed will of God, and have been called upon to submit to it**), dead and living – obedient and disobedient – will be summoned before his judgment seat “to be judged according to their works,” and “receive in body according to what they have done, whether it be good or bad.”*

(2Cor.5:10; 2Tim.4:1; Rom.2:5-6,16; 14:10-12; 1Cor.4:5; Rev.11:18)

BUSF – Clause 25 *“That at the appearing of Christ prior to the establishment of the kingdom, the responsible (**faithful and unfaithful**), dead and living **of both classes**, will be summoned before his judgment seat “to be judged according to their works;” and “receive in body according to what they have done, whether it be good or bad.”*

(2Cor.5:10; 2Tim.4:1; Rom.2:5-6,16; 14:10-12; 1Cor.4:5; Rev.11:18)

It should be pointed out that the phrase in the **BUSF** statement, “**faithful and unfaithful**” is referring to baptized people only for neither ‘faithful’ nor ‘unfaithful’ describes those who are unbaptized. On the other hand, the phrase ‘obedient and disobedient’ includes those who are unbaptized. The clauses are meant to be somewhat mutually exclusive.

The key difference, however, is the part of the **BASF** that amplifies the meaning of the word ‘responsible’. The brethren who wrote this statement obviously felt that the Bible supported the view that the responsible were those who knew what God’s Word was demanding of them and decided to either reject it or comply with it. Note also that the words ‘**of both classes**’ is missing in the **BASF** because it’s referring to three classes. (i.e. faithful, unfaithful and disobedient)

What follows is an analysis of various sections of the Scriptures which are offered in support of the wording of Clause 24 in the BASF. The author fully agrees with the wording of the clause and has written the following according to his convictions on the matter.

Clause 24 was written lucidly enough for all of us to read it and accurately assess the meaning of the parts and the united whole. Whenever there is sufficient understanding to enable a person to comprehend the call of the Gospel and be obedient, there must also be sufficient grounds for someone else to comprehend the same message and to be disobedient. If obedient people have been found in all ages then it is only reasonable to conclude there were disobedient people in all ages as well.

Those who habitually read the Bible will know the impact the Word of God has on our conscience. It was designed that way, so that we might know in ourselves when we are not doing what we should (James 4:17) and doing what we shouldn't (Rom 14:22).

In order for the truth of Clause 24 to be verifiable, the following points should be found together in the Scriptures that address the subject. Knowing the 'divine style' in writing, it will be found that in some references one or more of the points might only be inferred.

- Point 'a':** The event should be referring to the time of the return of Christ and prior to the establishment of His Kingdom.
- Point 'b':** The people involved would have to be able to respond to God's authority over them (i.e. informed adults, capable of forming an opinion).
- Point 'c':** Some of the people involved would have to be resurrected.
- Point 'd':** The passage should relate the people involved to the jurisdiction of Christ's judgment.
- Point 'e':** The Scripture should indicate that some people involved were not baptized or obedient to the Gospel.
- Point 'f':** The passage should indicate that the people involved could not be limited to those who were baptized.

In what follows and for each of the Scriptures cited as 'proof' of the text of clause 24, items 'a' to 'f' are separated out so that the reader can more easily see that these Scriptures are the foundation evidence for what the clause states.

1. **THE PROPHECY OF ENOCH** (*Jude 14-15; Gen.5:21-24; Heb.11:5,6*)

“And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.”

- (a) Since the Lord has not yet come in judgment with ten thousands of his saints, the fulfillment of this passage must relate to the future.
 - (b) The people being referred to were not just ignorant, undisciplined barbarians. The charge was that their hard speeches were directed against the Lord. They appeared to hate God’s control and openly spoke against Him.
 - (c) (d) In order for these people to be judged by the Lord they will have to be raised from the dead and appear before this seat of judgment.
 - (f) There is no obvious mention that any of these people of whom Enoch is speaking being baptized. The reason stated for their resurrection is not because they were baptized but that they might be judged for their ‘ungodliness’.
 - (a) A companion prophecy illustrating that this will happen at the beginning of Christ’s kingdom can be found in (*2Thess.1:6-10*)
 - This prophecy was likely made during the lifetime of Adam and hence is one of the oldest prophecies in the Bible, relating to all periods of history.
 - Thousands of years after the prophecy was uttered, Jude takes the same prophecy and says that it applies to some of the people of his day.
 - Jude states that the prophecy concerning them was ‘before of old’ v.4
 - (f) Jude states that these people were “certain men who crept in unawares” or entered the ecclesia by stealth. If one assumes that they had to be baptized to enter the ecclesia, then their baptism would have gotten them wet, but nothing more. However, they could have entered the ecclesia with false claims to have been baptized.
 - The days of Enoch and Jude are not the only days in history when people have spoken blasphemously against God. It is quite likely this prophecy fits all ages including our own.
- (c) Since the time of the judgment referred to has still not occurred, this prophecy will now require the resurrection of many others that have committed the same acts of ungodliness.

2. THE END OF THE UNGODLY (*Psalm 73*)

Ps 73:3-4 “For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. For there are no bands in their death: but their strength is firm.”

- Notice how the Psalmist claims the wicked have it so good as to almost make the righteous envious of their reward.
- This observation illustrates that the wicked are often not judged for their wickedness before their death.

Ps 73:8-9 “They are corrupt, and speak wickedly concerning oppression: they speak loftily. They set their mouth against the heavens, and their tongue walketh through the earth.”

- (b) Like those in Enoch’s prophecy these people are charged with the folly of speaking against God.

Ps 73:12 “Behold, these are the ungodly, who prosper in the world; they increase in riches.”

- (b) Like those in Enoch’s prophecy these people are charged with ungodliness.

Ps 73:17 “Until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end.”

- There was no human observation that a person could make to see that God ever judged these people for their ungodliness.
- (c) (d) As the Psalmist comments when he went into the ‘sanctuary of God’ he was able to see the acts of God against the wicked that to this day are not yet observable.
- Since it is clear that the dead have no experiences, it is imperative that these people rise from the dead to receive the judgment of God.
- (a) Implied in the resurrection is the return of the Lord prior to his kingdom. (*2Ti.4:1*)
- (e) (f) The charge against these people is the wickedness of “setting their mouth” against the heavens. One does not have to be baptized to be guilty of that charge.
- A similar argument to that in Psalm 73 is to be found in Malachi 3:13-18 where it states that it will only be in the time when God ‘makes up His jewels’ (involving resurrection) that one will be able to see the difference in the way God views the righteous and the wicked.

3. THE JUDGMENT OF THE WICKED (*Job 21*)

Job 21:7 “Wherefore do the wicked live, become old, yea, are mighty in power?”

- (b) Job is adding his own testimony to those who likewise have viewed the wicked as seeming to prosper and ‘get away’ with their wickedness.

Job 21:13 “They spend their days in wealth, and in a moment go down to the grave.”

- (b) Job concludes that the wicked are not judged for their wickedness in this life.

Job 21:14-15 “Therefore they say unto God, Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways. What is the Almighty, that we should serve him? and what profit should we have, if we pray unto him?”

- (b) The wicked view this apparent lack of concern of God for their wickedness as justification for wickedness and they defy Him. This summary of the matter is also found in Eccl.8:11.

Job 21:29-30 “Have ye not asked them that go by the way? And do ye not know their tokens, That the wicked is reserved to the day of destruction? they shall be brought forth to the day of wrath.”

- (b) (d) Like the Psalmist, Job could see that the end of the wicked is not yet apparent, for their end is reserved for the ‘day of destruction’ and the ‘day of wrath’ to which they will be brought forth.
- (a) The day of wrath is linked to the coming of the Lord in Judgment in (*2Thess.1:9-10*)
- (c) The ungodly will be resurrected to face judgment concerning their arrogant rebellion against the ‘goodness of their Creator’.
- (e) The charge against these people is bound up in despising the Almighty and foolishly claiming there is no advantage in praying to Him.
- (f) There is no mention of these people having once been in the favor of God in any sense.

4. **THE TIME OF GOD'S WRATH** (*Job 21:30; John 3:36; 1Thess 1:9-10; Rev. 11:18*)

Job 21:30 "That the wicked is reserved to the day of destruction? they shall be brought forth to the day of wrath."

- (c) (d) That there is a day in the future of the wicked called 'the day of wrath' is the consistent message of the Scriptures.

John 3:36 "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."

- (b) Not everyone hath the wrath of God abiding on him – but those 'who believe not'.
- (b) These are the people who weigh the evidence and exercise their choice to 'believe not' or disobey the command to repent.
- (b) (d) This statement of Scripture is every bit as effective today as it was when first spoken.
- (f) There is nothing in the record to suggest that the condemning part of this statement applies to people who once believed and then turned to disbelief.
- (e) The straight-forward, logical way to read this passage is that when these people now considered subject to 'the wrath of God' gave due consideration to the implications of the Gospel message, they took the road of disobedience.
- This conclusion becomes an important part of the Gospel message – believe it, or perish at the time of the unleashing of the wrath of God.

1 Thess 1:9-10 "For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come."

- (b) (d) (e) For the Thessalonians involved in this statement 'the wrath to come' can only have reference to those who disobeyed the command to repent from serving idols.
- (f) The statement does not fit the template of those who once believed and then turned to disobedience. The 'wrath to come' mentioned here had no reference to baptized believers as they had been delivered from it.
- (a) (c) The time when this wrath would come is indicated by linking it with 'waiting for his Son from heaven.' To be fulfilled it would require the resurrection of everyone included in the statement.

Rev 11:18 “And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth.”

- Since this verse prophetically states ‘thy wrath is come’, it is reasonable to conclude that this is the time which the other verses alluded to.
- (a) Note all the events that this passage ties into the same time period: God’s wrath; angry nations; resurrection; judgment of the dead; reward for the saints; destruction for the corrupters of the earth.
- (c) This could only be referring to the time of the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ at the beginning of His kingdom.
- (b) (d) Notice that the destruction of those who corrupt the earth is speaking about what will happen at the ‘bema’ of Christ and the giving of rewards to his saints.
- (f) There is no justification for limiting the dead who are said to be raised to those who have been baptized.

5. HE THAT BELIEVETH NOT SHALL BE DAMNED (Mark 16:15-16)

Mark 16:15-16 “And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.”

- In direct relation to this statement, Paul claimed to have preached the gospel to every creature. (*Col.1:23*)
- The Gospel was therefore, preached to Gentiles as well as to Jews.
- This verse could not reasonably be read to mean that those ‘that believeth not’ refer to people who first of all believed.
- Neither could it be reasonably argued that this verse involves everybody living, for not everyone is in a position to either believe or disbelieve.

- It can be argued from this verse that those who hearken to the Gospel today, and subsequently submit to the righteousness associated with baptism, can expect to be saved.
- It must be understood that the merit of their being saved is in reference to eternal life and not to some temporary salvation.
- (c) The granting of eternal life will however, require the resurrection of many, if not most of those who will receive it.
- (b) (d) (e) Similarly, those who choose not to believe, or not to repent, can expect to be damned. (judged against)
- (c) To have any real significance, the sense of being condemned in this passage must have reference to eternal death.
- (a) Since judgment in the eternal sense follows death, (*Heb.9:27*) the judge involved must be the Lord Jesus Christ. (*Jn.5:22*)
- (a) Since the judgment follows death and involves the Lord, it must occur at the time when he judges – at his appearing and kingdom. (*2Ti.4:1*)
- (f) Since the context of this verse is in reference to people not yet baptized limiting those involved to those already baptized would be unreasonable.

6. **RESURRECTION OF THE UNJUST** (*Acts 24:15; 1Cor 6:1; 1Pe 3:18; 2Pe 2:9*)

Acts 24:15 “And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust.”

- The question needing an answer in this text is “Who are the unjust that shall be resurrected?”
- How could it be reasonably argued from this passage, or combined with any other passage, that the word ‘unjust’ must be limited to those who were once ‘justified’ through baptism?
- What passage of Scripture can be found anywhere that teaches that the group called ‘the unjust’ must be limited to people who have become ‘just’ by their association with Jesus, but subsequently become ‘unjust’?
- In the Scriptures, the word “unjust” is almost always referring to people prior to baptism.

- (b) This interpretation does not force one to admit universal resurrection for it is clear from other passages that babies, some of the mentally challenged, and uneducated pagans will not be raised for judgment.
- (c) This verse clearly teaches that the resurrection of the dead will involve ‘unjust’ people, but we will take advantage of other passages to help us understand who the word ‘unjust’ is referring to.

1 Cor 6:1 "Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints?"

- (b) This use of the word ‘unjust’ here clearly refers to people who are unbaptized.

1 Peter 3:18 "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit:"

- (e) The sense of this verse is that Jesus died for the unjust (unbaptized) so they could become justified in due process.
- It is clear from the (*Hebrews 6:4-6; 10:26*) that Jesus did not die for people who were once justified and then turned back.
- (f) It is important to be impressed by the fact the word “unjust” as it is used in this quotation could not be referring to those who were baptized.

2 Peter 2:9 "The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished:"

- Since the only description of ‘the unjust’ is that they are a group of people reserved for punishment on ‘the day of judgment’, it forces us to direct more attention to the group being described.
- (c) (d) The ‘unjust’ are reserved unto the day of punishment.
- (a) The ‘day of judgment’ is clarified in other passages to be referring to the day of the coming of the Lord.
- This verse elaborates Peter’s earlier statement that God spared not the ‘angels’ which sinned but reserved them unto judgment. (*2Pe 2:4*) They have been in that condition for a long time.
- (a) Unjust people will therefore be among those resurrected and judged at the time of the Lord’s appearance and kingdom. (*2Ti.4:1*)

- To conclude that the ‘unjust’ referred to in *Acts 24:15* must be limited to those baptized is to force an interpretation upon this passage that does not fit.
- To conclude that the ‘unjust’ must involve some unbaptized people is to admit the point that the Amendment to clause 24 teaches.

7. THE WORD SHALL JUDGE HIM IN THE LAST DAY (*Jn 12:48; 6:40; 11:24*)

John 12:48 “He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.”

- The idea behind ‘rejecteth me’ is to despise or to set aside the Lord himself.
- The idea behind ‘receiveth not my words’ is to refuse to submit to the call of obedience in the words that Jesus spoke.
- **(b) (d)** The Lord is saying that people will be held accountable for this in the last day.
- **(c) (d)** As the ‘last day’ speaks of the time of resurrection and judgment, those who reject Him and His word must be resurrected.
- If it is held that this statement of the Gospel is not as applicable today as it was in the day it was first spoken, the problem intensifies.
- **(b)** If the power of the Word is so weak today that it is doubtful if one could be convicted of failing to submit to its command, then how can we also say it is powerful enough to convince candidates for baptism to submit and enter the way of salvation? The two views hold equal power.

John 6:40 “And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.”

John 11:24 “Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.”

- **(a)** This use of the ‘last day’ in these passages by the same Gospel writer provides the essential information of what he meant by the ‘last day’ – it can only refer to the day of resurrection and judgment.
- In what Jesus told his audience 2000 years ago, and by being recorded in John 12:48, in Canada in the year 2010, we are being told: “Don’t despise His words.” The receiving of

them will lead to the fulfillment of our greatest aspirations; the rejection of them will lead to giving an answer to him at the time of the Judgment of the living and dead. (*Thus necessitating the resurrection of unbaptized people.*)

- This is a very important part of the Gospel message and we cannot afford to lose it.

8. **BECAUSE HE HATH APPOINTED A DAY** (*Acts 17:31*)

Acts 17:30-31 “And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.”

- **(b) (e)** This speech given at ‘Mars’ Hill’ in Athens was addressed to a group of unbelieving Gentiles.
- **(b)** Whatever else the Apostle may have said, He certainly made it clear that God was now commanding Gentiles to repent from idol worship.
- **(d)** Had these words not applied to the immediate audience his speech would have been just idle talk.
- **(c)** His reference to the day of God’s appointing for the judgment of the world would have necessitated the resurrection of some of those who listened. Because the point of his argument was so personal, it may have been the reason why some mocked when their resurrection was implied.
- **(e)** Since the audience was made up of believers, mockers and procrastinators, it is reasonable to believe that some of that audience will be raised in the day of Judgment to give an account of their disobedience.
- **(a)** The day in which God will judge the world by Jesus Christ still lies in the future.
- **(a)** Since the only seat of authority at the time of their judgment will be that of the Lord’s, they will have to face the ‘bema’ of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- **(f)** It is totally without support and wrong to conclude that in this speech the Apostle was only referring to those who were baptized.

9. **I NEVER KNEW YOU** (*Matt 7:21-23*)

Matt 7:21-23 “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.”

- We would normally think that these words applied to the Brotherhood in some age and in some place, but do they?
- Has the Christadelphian community ever been so characterized by those who claim to ‘prophesy in his name’, ‘cast out devils’, or ‘do wonderful works in his name’ that we could say many have done so? We know this claim is true today and in ages past for pseudo-Christians, but not for people that we consider had a valid baptism.
- (e) If Jesus “never knew them”, it is reasonable to conclude that he ‘never at any time knew them’. If then these people were baptized at all, they were never validly baptized and their names were never recorded in the book of life.
- (b) These people obviously thought they knew the Lord, but their works were iniquitous.
- (c) (a) (d) “In that day” must be considered the Day of Judgment for it involves people talking to the Lord and being judged with the judgment associated with the ‘bema’ judgment.
- (f) Since the Lord never knew these people, then the grounds of their resurrection and appearance at His judgment seat must be on some other basis than baptism.
- This group of people is distinctly different from those of whom he says, ‘I know you not’. Disciples may have their names blotted out of the book of life, but it could not be said of them that Jesus never at any time knew them.
- Jesus stated there would be ‘many’ of them and quite possibly it refers to the multitudes associated with the many false churches that have grown up in Christendom and continue to make these false claims to indicate their approval of the Lord.
- Once again, this interpretation does not require one to concede to the belief in universal resurrection. Children, idiots and pagans, do not make these claims.

10. THE GOSPEL AND JUDGMENT TO COME (Acts 24:24,25; 2Cor 5:10-11; Rom 13:2-3)

Acts 24:24-25 “And after certain days, when Felix came with his wife Drusilla, which was a Jewess, he sent for Paul, and heard him concerning the faith in Christ. And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee.”

- (e) (f) Felix was not a Jew neither was he a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- (b) Something involving ‘the faith in Christ’ caused Felix to tremble; what was it?
- (c) (d) Since the doctrine of resurrection and ‘judgment to come’ was certainly a part of ‘the faith in Christ’, there was good reason for Felix to tremble, for in his present unrepentant position he would certainly be rejected.
- (a) The “faith in Christ” that the Apostle talked to him about would also have involved the time of the coming again of the Lord. (2Ti 4:1.)
- The fact that the Apostle used this point in communicating the faith in Christ, to the degree that Felix trembled is an indication of how the Gospel was preached in the first century.

2 Cor 5:10-11 “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences.”

- (a) (c) Normally, we would only associate believers with “we must all” appear before the judgment seat of Christ.
- (e) (f) The logic of this verse does not however, lead us to conclude that only baptized believers will be there. Unbaptized people who have rejected the command to repent also meet the requirements of these two verses.
- Verse 11, which associates the ideas of ‘the judgment seat’; the ‘terror of the Lord’ and ‘we persuade men’ strongly suggests a cause and effect argument.
- (b) (d) Knowing the terror of the Lord that people will face at the resurrection to judgment must have greatly strengthened the Apostle’s appeal to them to repent.

Rom 13:2-3 “Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same:”

- The reasoning in this passage and that of **2Cor 5:10,11** are similar.
- Authorities, including the Lord, are a terror unto works that are evil.
- **(e) (f)** Thus it is reasonable to conclude that the reasons for trembling in the unbaptized Felix was related to the understanding of his position relative to future resurrection and judgment.

11. THE DAY OF JUDGMENT (Rom 2:4-6; 8-9; 16)

Rom 2:4-6 “Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?”

But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; Who will render to every man according to his deeds:”

- **(b)** The goodness of God is a basic principle leading unbelievers to repentance.
- Despising the goodness of God is not a failure unique to a few or to any single generation; rather, it is a root of the ungodliness associated with the wicked of all ages.
- **(f)** There is no suggestion in this passage that the people he is referring to are baptized believers who must be led to repentance a second time. People in that category are mentioned in **Hebrews 10:26** and are given little to encourage them that repentance is even possible.
- **(f)** Again, if he was referring to baptized believers who had just wandered into sin, why would he charge them with having a hard and impenitent heart?
- **(c) (d) (a)** The ‘day of wrath’ and revelation of the righteous judgment of God must be in reference to the Judgment Seat of Christ mentioned in **(2Ti 4:1.)**
- **(b) (c) (e)** In that day God will render to every man, who has treasured up wrath against himself, according to his deeds.

Rom 2:8-9 “But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile;”

- Since the Scriptures teach that Jew and Gentile become one in Christ Jesus (*Gal 3:28*) it is very unlikely that this reference to Jew and Gentile is speaking of ecclesial members. Rather its reference to ‘every soul of man’ is an indication of the scope of God’s command to repent.
- **(b) (e)** The contentious, disobedient and ungodly Jew or Gentile will have to face the wrath of God at some future date.

Rom 2:16 “In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.”

- **(a) (c)** The day when these disobedient ones will face the wrath of God will be the same day when Jesus Christ judges the thoughts and motives of the responsible.
- **(e)** This verse illustrates that the Day of Judgment for the responsible was a part of the Gospel which Paul taught.
- **(c)** Obviously, for such a day to occur there will have to be a very great number of people raised from the dead. Is anything too hard for YHWH? If we believe that God will raise the righteous of all ages, is it beyond him to raise any number of unrighteous ones as well?
- **(a)** If the judge is Jesus Christ, then the jurisdiction and judgment seat (bema) is that of Jesus Christ.

12. WHO SHALL GIVE ACCOUNT TO HIM (1Pe 4:3-6)

1Peter 4:3-6 “For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries: Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you: Who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead. For for this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.”

- (b) (e) Those being charged with speaking evil of the brethren were not fellow brethren.
- (e) These people were members of the Gentiles that the ecclesial members left behind when they were baptized and became members of the ecclesia.
- The Apostle Peter charges them with speaking evil of the brethren. They mocked their former fellow Gentiles for repenting and not continuing to live an ungodly life. In consequence of their actions, the Apostle says they will have to give an account of their actions.
- (d) This accounting must be given to Jesus Christ, for he is the one who will judge the living and the dead. (2Tim 4:1)
- (c) (a) (e) They must be raised from the dead in order to appear before the judgment seat of Christ.
- It is quite likely that a further elaboration on what this means is found in the judgments that the Lord pronounced against the enemies of the ecclesia at Philadelphia (Rev 3:9)

13. GOD’S VENGEANCE ON THE WICKED (2Thess 1:6-10; Rom 12:19; Psa 149:6-9)

2Thess 1:6-10 “Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day.”

- (b) (d) (e) This judgment was to be carried out against those who troubled the ecclesia in Thessalonica.

- The context clearly shows that these trouble makers were not fellow brethren for the whole ecclesia there was commended for the fact that their love for one another was growing. **(1:3)**
- **(e)** These ungodly ones were charged with troubling the ecclesia.
- **(a) (c)** Their judgment was to happen when the Lord Jesus would be revealed from heaven, hence this required their resurrection.
- **(a)** Since the record states that this event happens at the time when he shall come to be glorified in the saints, it must take place prior to the Kingdom at the time of the resurrection.

Rom 12:19 “Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord..”

- We and fellow Christians of all ages have been commanded not to avenge ourselves against the ungodly. It is not because God is willing that unrighteous people live a full life without punishment and godly people suffer through his chastening. We must take note of what the Bible says about the end of the wicked, which for many will result in a resurrection to punishment.
- **(c)** God has so ordained that all vengeance against evil people be postponed until He unleashes it when the time of his wrath shall come.
- As such, judgments against acts of wickedness may appear to be unnoticed by God. Saints must be patient and trust that the Lord will vindicate a righteous cause in due time.

Ps 149:6-9 “Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a twoedged sword in their hand; To execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments upon the people; To bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron; To execute upon them the judgment written: this honour have all his saints. Praise ye the LORD.”

- **(c) (a) (d)** The vengeance that is carried out will be assisted by the saints.
- The idea that the brethren and sisters, who were oppressed by the respective persecutor of their age, will meet those same people again at the time of God’s wrath is entirely consistent with the Bible’s, view of ‘God’s vengeance’.

R.R. #1 Grand Valley, ON, L0N1G0

December 26, 2009

This is an OPEN LETTER sent to Brother Ken Curry.

Re: An Invitation to a Public Debate

Dear Brother Ken:

Loving Greetings!

Since you have taken a leadership role in the NASU movement from the very start I could not think of anyone more knowledgeable, or responsible for what is happening in this area than yourself. As a result I am now asking you to join me in a public debate concerning problems originating with the use of the UA08.

During the last couple of weeks a document which originated in the Toronto East ecclesia has circulated amongst the members of the ecclesia in Shelburne. This document was entitled "Questions and Answers about Unity" and your name was one of those on the list as having prepared it.

It gives me much concern to see your document being circulated to the uncommitted members in Shelburne, or any other ecclesia. In some cases the answers to questions are quite misleading and in other cases the document only partly discloses the facts.

Although there isn't any reference to it in your questions and answers, you must be aware of how the UA08 has divided the ecclesias in Shelburne and Orangeville. Isn't that relevant material to be considered by those still making up their minds? Despite your comments to the contrary, you must also be well aware that our whole Amended community is in real danger of division as a result of the UA08.

Your assertion that the "UA08 is an option for Central ecclesias who wish to adopt it" is a challenge to all of the ecclesias of Central fellowship, world-wide, and must be established by a better method than the unilateral declaration of a few members of your ecclesia.

The average brother and sister in Christ, seeking to understand what is involved in adopting the UA08 ought to know much more than the information resulting from the questions and answers that you have distributed in your ecclesia, and now in ours. The object of the debate therefore, is to provide the brotherhood with a fair and full disclosure of the facts associated with the UA08, both the pro and the con.

It is not without some personal regrets that I say these words to you as I and others have remained silent for too long and thereby shoulder some responsibility for the condition of the brotherhood at this time. It is my sincere desire that you will accept this offer to come and publicly display the merits of the UA08 to those interested. To help ensure your acceptance of this offer the Resolution chosen is taken from your own words and the debate arranged so that you can affirm.

The Offer to a Public Debate: (If the Lord is willing)

RESOLUTION

The UA08 is an option for ecclesias who wish to adopt it, while at the same time meeting under the BASF and still being considered an 'Amended ecclesia'. *

Date: **Saturday, February 20, 2010**

Place: **To be decided.**

Time: **1:00 pm – 4:30 pm**

01:00 – 01:15 pm **Opening Remarks:** (Moderator)

01:15 – 02:00 pm **1st Affirmative Address** (Your task)

02:00 – 02:45 pm **1st Negative Address** (My task)

02:45 – 03:00 pm **Break**

03:00 – 03:15 pm **Questions from the Affirmative** (Your task)

03:15 – 03:30 pm **Questions from the Negative** (My task)

03:30 – 03:45 pm **Affirmative Rebuttal** (Your task)

03:45 – 04:00 pm **Negative Rebuttal** (My task)

04:00 – 04:05 pm **Affirmative Summary** (Your task)

04:05 – 04:10 pm **Negative Summary** (My task)

04:10 – 04:15 pm **Closing remarks** (Moderator)

*Taken from "Questions and Answers about Unity", pg.1

GUIDELINES:

1. The Affirmative side is to be represented by one or two brethren who personally agree to the 'signed-on' and 'unpaused' UA08 position. Although this letter is addressed to you Brother Ken, it is not necessary that you take the position of the debater, but you need to take the responsibility for what is said.
2. The Negative side is to be represented by one or two brethren who personally disagree with the 'signed-on' and 'unpaused' position and I plan to be one of them.
3. The cost associated with the venue of the debate is to be covered by the Negative side.
4. The Brother to be designated as 'Moderator' should be acceptable to both sides.
5. The decision to accept or decline this offer to debate is to be made by January 5th in order to find a replacement, if necessary.

Sincerely, your brother in Christ,

Frank Abel

P.S. This initiative is independent of any other being taken in the area at this time.

January 8, 2010

Dear Brother Ken:
Loving Greetings!

After giving your response some thought, I am now sincerely asking you to consider changing your mind. Your concern over the contention and disruption that the UA08 is causing among Brethren and Ecclesias is somewhat reassuring because we at least share that view about the reality of what is happening.

Why should processes be respected that have got us into this inter-ecclesial quagmire? For instance, why should we respect a process that gives Brethren immunity from answering concerns for over a year while at the same time encouraging us to proceed with Unity? We have been told that the fellowship talks have not started because they cannot agree upon who is to be at the meetings - why should we respect that process? Now the Cosburne Ave. ecclesia appears to have decided to return to fellowship with the Unamended without having ever engaged in the proposed meetings on fellowship. The process is so faulty it needs to be exposed.

Why should you think that because you have limited the process to ecclesial delegates that you are honouring the Scriptures? What about the TRUTH? Why do you refuse to answer questions that relate to the 'key' documents as was promised in the original documentation? The role of leadership demands accountability and you should be more than willing to answer questions about such a serious matter that is facing the ecclesias at this time.

Brethren and Sisters will be very understanding of leaders who make mistakes in judgment if it is found they are open about their mistakes, but there is little to be said for any leader who after making mistakes refuses to be held accountable.

Brother Ken, please reconsider, however if I don't hear from you by Sunday, January 10, my plan is to pursue the option of a debate with others.

Sincerely, your Brother in Christ,
Frank

R.R. #1 Grand Valley, ON, L0N1G0

January 17, 2010

Re: An Invitation to a Public Debate

Dear Brother Don:

Loving Greetings! May the day soon dawn when our Lord will return to His household and rescue us from the vanity of human endeavour.

No doubt you have seen the invitation to debate that I sent to Brother Ken Curry and likewise, you will be well aware that he has declined. My decision to offer to debate the subject matter of the Toronto East's 'Questions and Answers' document was primarily made because of the documents' use outside of their ecclesia. Last week I checked with the Christadelphian Office and found that the comment made in their document concerning the support of the CMPA that has been sent to Brethren near and far was untrue. The supporters of the "Question and Answer" document ought to be ashamed.

Now, this week, someone sent me by email, a document that you sent to Brother Matthew Trowell, in response to his response to the Toronto East 'Questions and Answers'. This is the second time someone has sent me an email that I did not request, but that again, indicates your leadership role in the UA08 unity effort.

After reading your reply to Brother Matthew I am convinced that your assessment of the situation is very wrong. And your willingness to distribute your advice to the uncommitted members of the Shelburne ecclesia leaves me very concerned.

You say, "The Unamended are correct, the added parenthetical expression has corrupted clause 24. By agreeing to UA08, we are actually being given a graceful way out of this flawed statement. Let's take it." Further, you also said, "We therefore have no legitimate basis for making our inference a test of fellowship."

In my judgment, that kind of advice will turn Brothers and Sisters away from the truth of the Scriptures and from what Central Fellowship has taught for over 100 years. As you rightly say, many Brethren and Sisters have somewhat differing views on what we believe, but when someone like yourself turns 180 degrees in their beliefs and starts advocating what we have always considered to be the teaching of the Unamended, red lights and sirens should be warning our Central community.

Brother Don, if you feel you can support your belief on the Amendment, come out of the shadows and openly declare your views before the Brethren and Sisters of Ontario. You obviously feel strong enough in your position to publicly trash the Amendment and I feel strong enough to show it is stating the Truth. Let the Brethren and Sisters of Ontario decide what view is right, but only after they have listened to Brethren speak from both sides of the issue.

Please call me about this offer to debate, or email me, but I need to know a definite 'yes' or 'no' by Sunday, January 24.

Sincerely, Your Brother, in Christ, Frank Abel

January 23, 2010

Dear Brother Don:

Loving Greetings!

Thank you for your response to the offer to debate. Needless to say, I am disappointed with your decision.

You object to me suggesting that you are working in the shadows, but your refusal to debate only confirms my feelings.

In all your work in the Tidings, I never noticed that you stated "the Unamended are correct", or that "the added parenthetical expression has corrupted clause 24", or that "by agreeing to UA08 we are actually being given a graceful way out of this flawed statement". If I missed it, I'm very sorry that we did not pay better attention. Throughout those years, Sister Dorothy and I subscribed to the Tidings and we did not notice it.

How many of the UA08 members, even now, really know that this is the sum of the matter concerning what they agreed to when they signed on?

Anyway, I thank you for stating what you did at this time as it provides an answer to a question that I have been asking for years.

Question: What new understanding does the NASU bring to the BASF?

Answer: Among other things, the Amendment to clause 24 no longer applies!

Am I right?

With some modifications, I am considering the possibility of still conducting the debate on the same resolution, Lord willing, and with or without, you being present.

Sincerely, your Brother in Christ,

Frank