

Presentation of the

Proposal to Restore Unity

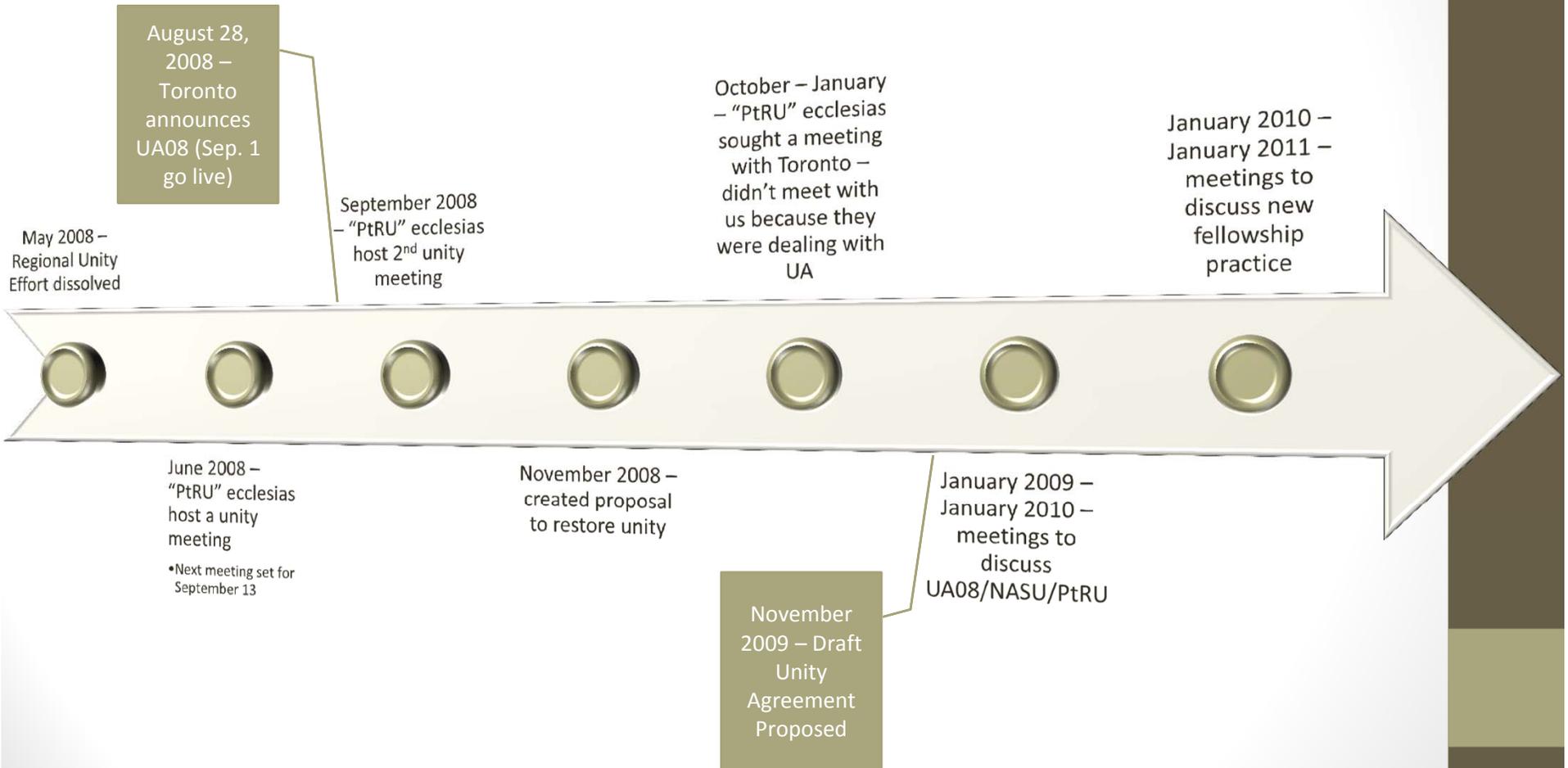
February 2011

Scriptural Impetus for True Unity

- I Corinthians 1:10

“Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.”

Timeline – Overview



The Amendment

- 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 Corinthians 5:10; 2 Timothy 4:1; Romans 2:5, 6, 16; 14:10–12; 1 Corinthians 4:5; Revelation 11:18.
- BASF – knowledge and calling the basis of responsibility
- BUSF – covenant relationship the basis of responsibility

Unamended Community

Those who believe covenant relationship is the basis of responsibility and will not fellowship us

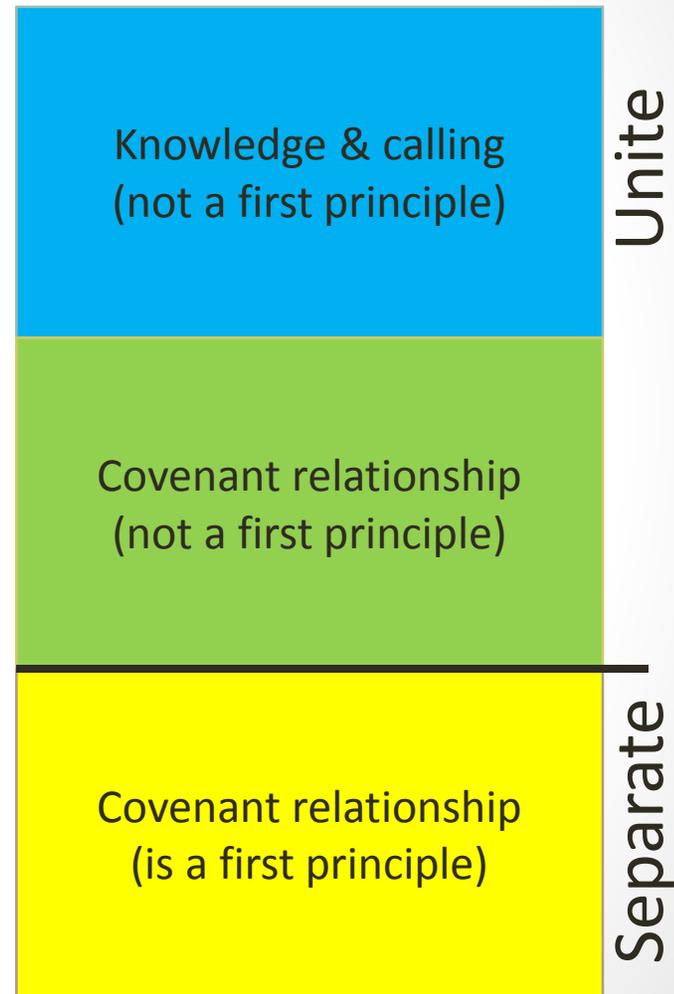
Those who believe covenant relationship is the basis of responsibility and will fellowship us & all unamended

Those who believe knowledge and calling is the basis of responsibility and will fellowship us & all unamended

(including those who believe covenant relationship is the basis of responsibility)

NASU – National Reunion

- Unite with those who believe the same as us
- Separate from those who did not believe the same as us and would not fellowship with us
- Those who believe differently but would fellowship us would have to make a decision – some would join us and some would not

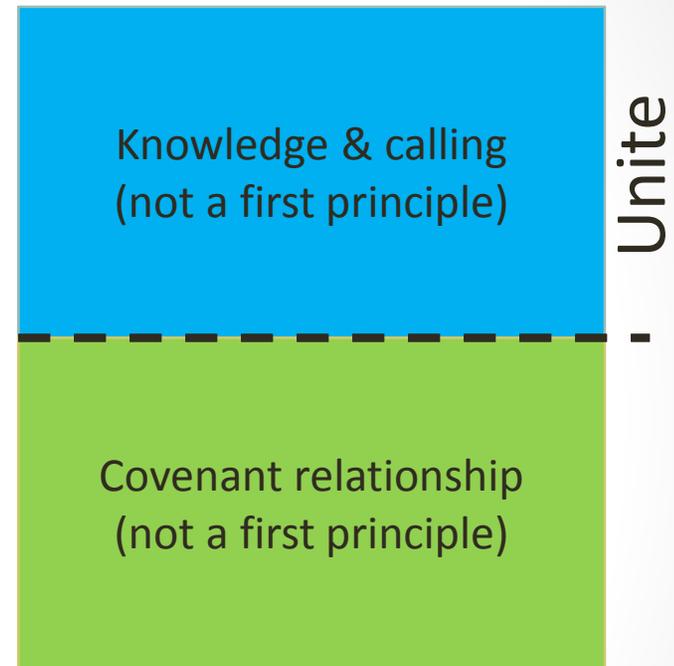


Unamended Fellowship

- “Many Amended ecclesias in North America have lines of fellowship, traditionally drawn around those ecclesias that accept the BASF. Many Unamended ecclesias have historically accepted Christadelphians in good standing from both the Unamended and Amended communities, thus illustrating in practice the historical position that Unamended brethren didn’t feel the issues associated with the division were issues that should divide brethren at the table of the Lord.”
 - Committee member: NASU, UA08 (January 23, 2010)

NASU – Local Reunion

- Unite with those who believe the same as us in our local region
 - Intent is that the reunion would spill out to other ecclesias that believed the same as us
- Unamended use NASU to fellowship with ecclesias that don't believe the same as us but will still fellowship them and us



National vs. Local

- Did the NASU do its job of excluding those who believed covenant relationship was the basis of responsibility and made it a test of fellowship (purpose in a national reunion)?
 - **YES**
- Does the NASU do its job of making it clear that our belief on clause 24 is a first principle and a test of fellowship (purpose in a local reunion)?
 - **NO**

Ian McPhee to NASU S.C.

- “It has not been our intent to make the two statements equivalent. We have repeatedly stated publicly that our intent is to express what common understanding we can agree upon, thereby distilling the difference to its essence, and then see if what remains justifies remaining apart. It is true that the NASU interprets the two statements (as per the first paragraph of the Fellowship section re Statements of Faith) in a manner that reflects what we can agree upon as common understanding. The Mutual Assurances explicitly acknowledge respect and tolerance for different viewpoints on aspects of RR *{Resurrectional Responsibility}*.”

We have not agreed that K&C *{knowledge and calling}* are “the” criteria for resurrectional responsibility. We have acknowledged them as “a” basis for condemnation and that God will raise those whom His justice demands from those who have rejected His K&C. The second bullet of RR acknowledges a causal relationship between baptism/covenant and appearing at the judgment seat of Christ (“therefore”).”

- “We took great pains to only mention the judgment seat of Christ in connection with the saints bullet #2) while bullets #1 and #3 *{page 6 of NASU}* speak of being raised for condemnation without being specific as to time and place”

Toronto UA08

- Toronto ecclesias recognized that the NASU came short in defining doctrine in 2 areas when used for a local reunion and thus added 2 clarifications
- However:
- UA08 did not define fellowship practice clearly enough
- NASU (nor the UA08) did not clarify sufficiently that Clause 24 is a first principle and a test of fellowship.

Proposal to restore unity

Summary

- Modify the Toronto Unity Agreement (including the NASU) to remove ambiguity, strengthen the doctrine and fellowship practice proposed.

Proposed Modifications

- Cover Page
- Cover Letter
 - *Minor textual changes to make consistent with the following changes*
- Unity Agreement
 - *Endorsement of the NASU as a clarifying statement*
 - *Remove quote from fellowship section of NASU*
 - *The BASF is the touchstone document*
 - *Inter-ecclesial fellowship is on the basis of the BASF*
- Final Clarifications
 - *Additional clarification inserted rejecting inherited alienation*
- NASU 2003
 - *Remove “Mutual Assurances” – pages 7-8*
 - *Insert of “Responsibility” chapter from “True Principles and Uncertain Details” by R. Roberts*
 - *Remove “Inter-Ecclesial Fellowship Practice” from Page 9*

Proposed UA10

- Response received: No interest in “opening” the NASU – make changes to the clarification section of the UA08
- UA10 proposed with 2 additional clarifications and a modified introduction
 - 3) The Mutual Assurances were added late in the development of the NASU as discussion notes intended to clarify understandings, not establish doctrinal positions. They provide an historical perspective of how each community has viewed the key doctrinal issues and are written accordingly. It is for this reason that the Mutual Assurances should not be understood to supersede pages 3-6 of the NASU nor the Unity Agreement clarifications pertaining to doctrinal issues.
 - 4) “We reject the idea that a man is guilty for Adam’s sin or that he has received any resultant sentence (other than his mortal, sin prone nature) and must receive some kind of forgiveness or removal of this through baptism”

Proposed UA10

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, of which the Birmingham Amended Statement of Faith (with positive and negative clauses, and the Commandments of Christ) gives a true definition. The two principal statements of faith, The Birmingham Amended Statement of Faith (BASF) and the Birmingham Unamended Statement of Faith (BUSF) including the Doctrines to be Rejected and the Commandments of Christ, as understood and expressed in the North American Statement of Understanding (NASU), and the Final Clarifications of this Unity Agreement, represent a basis of Christadelphian unity in North America.

- 3. The following fellowship practice will be implemented by the participating Ontario ecclesias who accept this Unity Agreement 2010.

Amended ecclesias and Unamended ecclesias who implement the Unity Agreement 2010 will welcome to participate in their breaking of bread service, only visitors from ecclesias which use the BASF* as their basis of beliefs and Unamended ecclesias who implement the Unity Agreement 2010.

When visiting other ecclesias, members of Amended ecclesias and Unamended ecclesias who implement the Unity Agreement 2010 will attend and break bread only at ecclesias which use the BASF* as their basis of beliefs, including Unamended ecclesias who implement the Unity Agreement 2010.

- 4. The BASF continues as the basis of inter-ecclesial fellowship within the Amended Community in North America and World-wide.

Scriptural Basis for our Proposal

- Acts 15:28-31
- “²⁸ For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things; ²⁹ That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well. ³⁰ So when they were dismissed, they came to Antioch: and when they had gathered the multitude together, they delivered the epistle: ³¹ *Which* when they had read, they rejoiced for the consolation.”

Response to the proposal

- Are you willing to present to your ecclesia as a path forward?
 - Cambridge Yes
 - KW Yes
 - Hamilton Book Rd Yes
 - Hamilton McNab Yes
 - London Yes
 - Brantford Yes
 - Mississauga West Yes
 - Toronto West Yes
 - Church St Yes
 - UA08 signatories No because rejected by unamended

Reason for Rejection

Fellowship too restrictive

- “All our unity partners have acknowledged that at no time did we ever set an expectation that we understood that our fellowship with Unamended brethren was to be reduced to only the three Unamended ecclesias that signed the UA08.”

UA08 was already a compromise

- “We see no conflict between the UA08 “Final Clarifications” and the NASU. Rather, we see them as synonymous and equivalent. Accordingly, we see no barrier to accepting ecclesias that accept the NASU.”
- “The unamended felt that the 2 clarifications in the UA08 were redundant and would cause a stumblingblock to unamended that they are seeking to have join.”
- “So our understanding all along was that the basis of the Scriptural Principles of the One Faith were those principles defined in NASU – period.”

A New Path

UA10 was dead

Unamended signatories had made it clear that they would continue to break bread with unamended brothers and sisters who believed different first principles

Amended signatories would continue to extend fellowship (after 4 pleas to pause) with the unamended regardless of their fellowship practice

Amended signatories were challenging the validity of Clause 24 as a first principle

Dealing with Ecclesias

- “We agree that the relations of one ecclesia with another are conveniently considered in items 41 and 42 of the Ecclesial Guide. The general point is: “there ought to be no interference by one ecclesia with another. At the same time, ecclesias have reciprocal rights. Ecclesial independence is a principle essential to be upheld.” And further, “An ecclesia has no rights to judge except for itself. This is the independence not to be interfered with; but a similar right to judge for itself must be conceded to all ecclesias, and the exercise of it, tempered with a respectful and proper procedure, would never offend an enlightened body anywhere.” **However, when an ecclesia officially renounces any of the first principles of the One Faith and persists in teaching false doctrine, it shall by its own action separate itself from the reunited community and the community shall so regard it as outside the community. In these circumstances, it is the duty of faithful members to absent themselves from such an ecclesia.”**
- NASU – Fellowship – Ecclesial Autonomy

Challenging a First Principle

- The amendment is not a first principle and therefore not a test of fellowship.
 - Member, Greenaway Ecclesia
- “Our doctrine of resurrectional responsibility is based upon weak Bible study.”
 - Member, Brampton Ecclesia
- “I agree there are differences but I do not agree they are fundamental.”
 - Member, Kingston Ecclesia
- “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.”
- “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.”
 - Member, Ann Arbor Ecclesia

First Principle = Test of Fellowship

- Hebrews 5:12, 6:1-2

“12 For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.”

“1 Therefore leaving the principles of the **doctrine of Christ**, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, 2 Of the **doctrine of baptisms**, and of **laying on of hands**, and **of resurrection of the dead**, and **of eternal judgment**.”

- **1st principles include baptism, resurrection of the dead, judgment**

- II John 9-11

“9 Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the **doctrine of Christ**, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. 10 If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: 11 For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.”

- **If 1st principles are not shared there is no fellowship**

Amended UA08 Response

Affirmed that clause 24 is a first principle and that they make it a test of fellowship

Recanted statements which were contrary to the above statement

Reaffirmed that Amended UA08 signatories would not pause fellowship with Unamended brothers and sisters even though they persist in breaking bread with those who believe contrary to clause 24.

Provided their scriptural basis for challenging Central fellowship practice

Current Concerns

- Same concerns which lead to:
 - NASU steering committee dissolved
 - Cambridge efforts with Guelph & Picton dissolved
 - Regional Unity Effort dissolved
 - “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.”
 - 4 Toronto ecclesias paused (2 remain, 1 stepped back)
- Quote from Cambridge letter to Greenaway ecclesia, 2008
 - “While we found our unamended brethren to be of one mind with us on the matters discussed in the NASU, we were not able to persuade them of the necessity of altering their current Fellowship Practice.”
 - “The unamended brethren have made it very 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.”

Midwest Expansion

5 unamended ecclesias in Midwest have open fellowship with 10 Churches of God of the Abrahamic Faith (CGAF)

5 CGAF churches in unity discussions with Midwest 14 Amended ecclesias – will forego immortal emergence

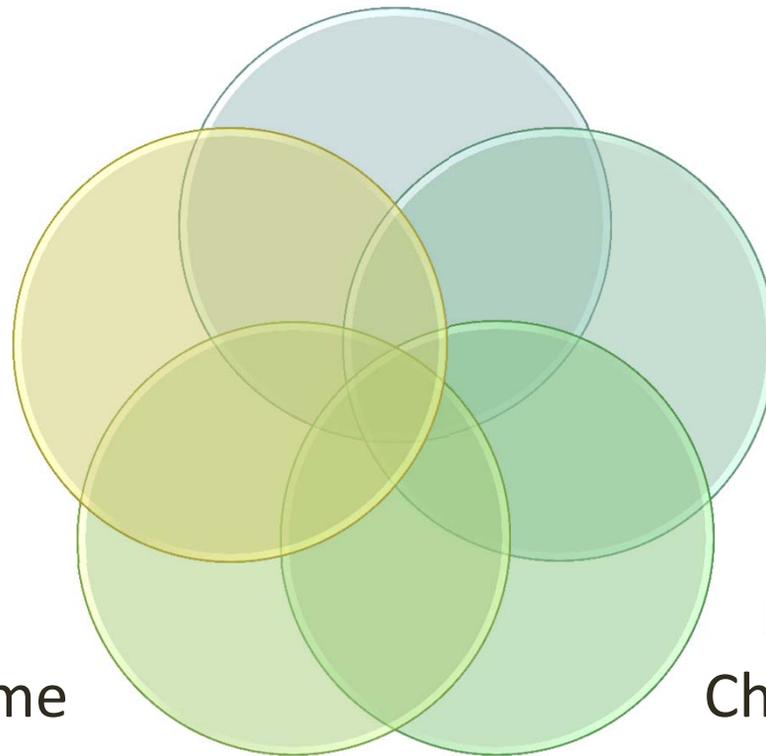
5 CGAF churches still believe that we are resurrected immortal – no accountability to the judgment seat of Christ for the saints

Reality of Current Fellowship – UA08

Amended
Christadelphians

CGAF – Different
Belief

Unamended
Christadelphians
– Same Belief



CGAF – Same
Belief

Unamended
Christadelphians
– Different
Belief

Teaching position of UA08

- Teaching position of UA08 as it is currently implemented:

Clause 24 (i.e. knowledge and calling is the basis of resurrectional responsibility) is not a test of fellowship



First principles define our fellowship boundaries



Therefore cannot in sincerity teach that Clause 24 is a first principle

Midwest Letter Rejects UA08

- “We have concluded that the ecclesias participating in the UA08 have abandoned the established fellowship practice of the worldwide community meeting on the basis of the Birmingham Amended Statement of Faith (BASf). We cannot condone the UA08 fellowship practice. We do not recognize the Unamended signatories of the UA08 as members of the Central community, and we fear that the Amended signatories’ departure from Central fellowship practice will cause division within our community if the ecclesias involved do not step back and reconsider their actions. It is our heartfelt prayer that they will do so.”
 - December 29, 2010

Unamended signatories not Central

1. The ecclesia declares itself to be in the Central community, and represents itself in ways that confirm this declaration.

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.

3. The ecclesia is recognized and accepted as being in the Central community by neighboring ecclesias.

Scriptural Imperative: Unity

- 1 Timothy 4:16

“Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.”

- 1st: Doctrine
- 2nd: Walk (directed by doctrine)
- Salvation

- I John 1:3,6,7,9

“That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life;”

“That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship *is* with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.”

“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.”

- **Fellowship with the Father and the Son and each other contingent on doctrine (word of life) and walk.**

Scriptural Imperative: Unity

- Acts 2:42

“And they continued stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.”

 - 1st: Doctrine
 - 2nd: Fellowship
 - 3rd: Breaking of bread and prayers
- Acts 8:12

“But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.”

 - 1st: Doctrine
 - 2nd: Fellowship
- Romans 15:5–7 (AV)

“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. Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God.”
- **Unity of doctrine is the basis for fellowship**
- **1st principles are tests of fellowship**

Scriptural Impetus: Error

- God condemns people who teach error and who tolerate error
- 2 John 9-11
 - Don't bid God speed – error severs fellowship
 - Partaker of his evil deeds – tolerating error is akin to having error
- 2 Cor 7:10-11

“For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death. For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge! In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter.”

 - A matter of salvation
 - Cleared themselves (in whose eyes?)
 - Approved themselves (in whose eyes?)
 - What if they hadn't disfellowshipped the brother over the matter of conduct in Corinth?

Scriptural Impetus: Error

- Matthew 18:15–17

“Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear *thee, then* take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell *it* unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.”

- Old Testament basis for this teaching?

- Deuteronomy 17:4-7

- One on one diligently inquire
- Inquire with two or three witnesses
- Take him before the congregation to be cut off

- Deuteronomy 13:12-16

- Same responsibility of ecclesias to each other

Scriptural Impetus: Error

- Romans 16:17 (AV)
- “Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.”
 - Suggested that the commandment here is to “shun them”
 - Same word used in Romans 3:12 “gone out of the way” and I Peter 3:11 “eschew evil”.
 - Those out of the way have no fellowship with God – Exo. 32:8-12
 - Do we “shun” evil? We are to have nothing to do with it.
- Revelation 2-3
 - Suggested that because Jesus Christ did not explicitly command disfellowship that neither should we.
 - If you received a letter telling you that you were permitting false doctrine to be taught in your ecclesia, that left unresolved would result in your light stand going out, what would you do?
- I Samuel 3:13-14
 - Because Eli tolerated the error of his sons the sins of his house not forgiven

Conclusion

- What ought we to do at this crisis?
 - Diligently inquire
 - Requested mediators
 - Warn others of divisiveness
 - Earnestly contend for the truth
 - Continue to seek for a path to restore unity