

This document is the

Response of the UA08 Ecclesias

to

a presentation given by

the PRU Brethren

on

Tuesday, March 8, 2011

at the

Hamilton Greenaway Hall

Date of this Response – July 18, 2011

Discussion between UA08 and PRU Representatives

The format of the discussion between the UA08 and PRU Representatives is laid out below as follows:

Black Bold Font – The original statements from the UA08 Brethren

Inset Green Boxes – PRU responses (to original statement)

Inset Blue Boxes – UA08 answers to PRU response

Please Note: In order to answer the PRU’s responses in an orderly fashion, we have put numbers and letters to their points, with our answers corresponding to these numbers and letters.

The **yellow highlighting** is for convenient reference to PRU questions and UA08 answers.

1. The UA08 Amended Ecclesias have no doctrinal differences from the worldwide Amended community.

PRU Response (to #1)

- **1. A** We do not share this conclusion. The fellowship practice currently extended declares that you do not count clause 24 to be a first principle.
- **1. B** Your doctrine of fellowship is different than that of the worldwide Amended community.

UA08 Answer to PRU **1. A**

PRU Statement **1. A** - We do not share this conclusion. The fellowship practice currently extended declares that you do not count clause 24 to be a first principle.

UA08 Response - We stand by our statement, “The UA08 Amended Ecclesias have no doctrinal differences from the worldwide Amended community”.

Clause 24 is a statement about a principle. The clause itself is not the principle. The principle is Resurrectional Responsibility.

The PRU repeatedly make the mistake of equating “clause 24” itself as the first principle in its own right, and in so doing, seem to have ignored our consistent answer.

We have responded to this point a number of times and do so again here by quoting an excerpt from the document on the UA08.Com Website entitled “**Resurrectional Responsibility – A test of fellowship**”

UA08 Answer to PRU 1. A - Cont'd

Resurrectional Responsibility

Is it a first principle and a test of Fellowship?

All brethren agree that the only true tests of fellowship are the scriptures, and that no man-made document has equivalent standing. The BASF foundational premise, which precedes the numbered clauses, properly elevates the Bible as “the only source of knowledge concerning God and His purposes...” thus relegating the clauses that follow as convenient summaries of that knowledge.

“THE FOUNDATION—That the book currently known as the Bible, consisting of the Scriptures of Moses, the prophets, and the apostles, is the only source of knowledge concerning God and His purposes at present extant or available in the earth, and that the same were wholly given by inspiration of God in the writers, and are consequently without error in all parts of them, except such as may be due to errors of transcription or translation.”

Therefore, whether any doctrinal statement is a first principle and a test of fellowship must be measured against the teaching of the Bible.

On the question of whether *Resurrectional Responsibility* is a first principle and a test of fellowship,

Our answer – Yes.

We believe, as we always have, that an appropriate Bible understanding on the topic of resurrectional responsibility is of fundamental importance. We believe that just as the BASF clause 24 adequately summarizes an appropriate understanding of the principle at issue, so does the NASU and the UA08. In our written document entitled *Response by 10 Amended UA08 Signatory Ecclesias* we said:

When we declare that “We have not changed our cherished beliefs as summarized in the Scriptural principles in the BASF”, we include the first principle of Resurrectional Responsibility. We are confident that the mutual historical concerns between the Amended and Unamended Communities regarding Resurrectional Responsibility are adequately covered in NASU and the UA08.

To present our position otherwise is to seriously misrepresent our beliefs.

UA08 Answer to PRU 1. B

PRU statement 1. B - Your doctrine of fellowship is different than that of the worldwide Amended community.

UA08 Response - There is no “Doctrine of Fellowship” contained in the BASF nor is there a Doctrine of Fellowship for the worldwide Amended Christadelphian Community.

We follow the fellowship practice stated in most Christadelphian Ecclesial Constitutions:

That we recognize as Brothers and Sisters, and welcome in fellowship, all who have been baptized (by whomsoever) after their acceptance of the same doctrines and precepts.

UA08 Answer to PRU **1. B** – continued

The PRU refers to the “doctrine of fellowship” implying that this ‘doctrine’ is itself a first principle. This introduces some difficult questions:

- Would this not require that belief in this “doctrine of fellowship” is essential for a valid baptism?
- Would this not also imply that any who did not accept this ‘doctrine’ at baptism would need to be re-baptized?
- If this “doctrine of fellowship” idea were valid, would it not be logical to conclude that the PRU are departing from Central Christadelphian practice, where such a “doctrine of fellowship” has never been agreed as a first-principle, and has not been added to a statement of faith?

Giving the PRU the benefit of the doubt that they misspoke, perhaps the PRU brethren could clarify whether or not they are proposing that the “doctrine of fellowship” they refer to is a ‘first principle’. If so, do they believe that understanding, agreement and adherence to it are necessary for a baptism to be valid?

Finally, we consider that accusations such as ‘departing from Central fellowship practice’ are not helpful. We are all engaged in a process that is new whether we are UA08, PRU or unaligned, and all trying to do what is right. Therefore such accusations break down trust rather than build it up. It is hurtful to us that our integrity is being challenged, when we have with much prayer and searching of Scripture, acted in service to our Lord. We appeal for the inflammatory language to cease, and that we all strive to foster a spirit of Godliness, Brotherly kindness and Love.

2. That there is no Scriptural precedent or warrant for one or several Ecclesias to withhold fellowship from one or several other Ecclesias.

PRU Response

- **2. A** **Matthew 18:15-17** is directly drawn from the language and principle of Deuteronomy 17:4-7 and Deuteronomy 13:1-6; those same principles are applied in Deuteronomy 13:12-16 to “cities” or ecclesias. The practical outworking of these principles of ecclesias dealing with ecclesias is demonstrated in Joshua 22 regarding doctrinal matters and Judges 19 & 20 regarding conduct. Where the Old Testament uses the sword and death the New Testament uses withdrawal.
- **2. B** To emphasize that these two chapters in Deuteronomy were understood by Christ and the apostle Paul to teach principles relevant to fellowship in ecclesial life, Paul directly quotes from **Deuteronomy 13:6** in 1 Corinthians 5:13 as the reason for withdrawing fellowship from a brother on the basis of their walking in darkness. Therefore our God teaches us that ecclesias have a responsibility to ecclesias.
- **2. C** These principles are further demonstrated by the fact that the 7 letters of Revelation 2-3 were written to the arranging brethren of all 7 ecclesias even though they were individually addressed (see Revelation 2:23 “all the ecclesias shall know” and “he that hath an ear let him hear what the spirit saith unto the ecclesias.”)
- **2. D** 1 Corinthians 10:1-15 – Israel in the wilderness is a parallel of the ecclesia in the world

UA08 Answer to PRU 2. A (Matthew 18)

We do not believe it is valid to apply Matthew 18 to the disfellowship of one group of ecclesias by other ecclesias. Nor do we consider the Old Testament passages cited are appropriately connected to make the case for ecclesias to disfellowship one another.

We have reviewed the scriptures cited by the PRU Brethren in more detail below.

In this era, we live under the commands and principles taught by the Lord and the Apostles, whereas the Old Testament is for our instruction in a different way and from a different context.

The Old Testament passages cited in the PRU document deal with a phase of God's People that is past. The Law was fulfilled (Matt. 5:17). We are no longer under the Law (Col. 2:14). The Law was a curse (Gal. 3:13). Neither the Jews in the Old Testament nor Jews in the 1st Century were able to keep the Law (Acts 15:10). The Law was a shadow of things to come (Heb. 10:1). All of these quotations show clearly that we are not under the Mosaic Law. We do not punish one another or seek retribution. We do not keep provisions of the Mosaic Law. Old Testament laws were applicable to a people that lived as a nation, in a community setting, where civil, dietary, inheritance and medical laws were all part of the umbrella of laws that governed all aspects of daily life of the Israelites. Today, believers do not live together as a nation of people. We determine our own diet, dress code, inheritance provisions, medical treatment, etc.

It is therefore wrong to select a particular provision of the Mosaic Law and extend that specific provision to the New Testament Church and beyond.

MATTHEW 18

In responding to this point, we will look first at Matthew 18.

The context of Matthew 18 is primarily about avoiding offence between individuals and how brethren are to reconcile when offences do occur.

Point #1

The Matthew 18 passage contains **FIVE** "ifs". Given these "ifs" or variables, it seems a rather obscure reference to extrapolate hard rules on fellowship between ecclesias, when the "ifs" are themselves not applicable to ecclesias, and have no parallel in the context of the ecclesial world.

- *Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee - 18:15*
- *if he shall hear thee - 18:15*
- *But if he will not hear thee - 18:16*
- *And if he shall neglect to hear them 18:17*
- *but if he neglect to hear the church - Matt 18:17*

Point #2

Note: The Greek word for 'trespass' in verse 15 is the same word as 'sin' in verse 21.

If Matt. 18 is setting out hard and fast rules relating to fellowship & disfellowship, and speaking literally, then verses 21 and 22 should also be applied the same way.

- *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. - Matt. 18:15*
- *Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother **sin** against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? - Matt. 18:21*
- *Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven. - Matt. 18:22*

264. hamartano, ham-ar-tan'-o; perhaps from 1 (as a negative particle) and the base of 3313; properly, to miss the mark (and so not share in the prize), i.e. (figuratively) to err, especially (morally) to sin: — for your faults, offend, sin, trespass.

UA08 Answer to PRU 2. A (Matthew 18) continued

Matthew 18: 8-14 is dealing with recovery of “lost sheep”. The Old Testament passages are not dealing with recovery but with emphasis on judgment and punishment. In v 21-22 the Lord speaks of unlimited forgiveness for someone who sins against another. If this principle were followed, it would not be necessary to invoke the three-step procedure. This teaching doesn’t reconcile with the idea of one group of ecclesias disfellowshipping other ecclesias based on a perceived trespass.

The closing parable in this chapter – that of the Unmerciful Servant – ends with one of the most challenging and critical of Jesus’ commands. “So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not everyone his brother their trespasses.” Our forgiveness of others is a prerequisite of our own salvation.

Point #3

The quotation used in Matthew 18 by the Lord Jesus is that

- *...in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. - Matt. 18:16*

The principle of this quotation is that when there is a “trespass” by one Brother against another, it must be verified and confirmed by 2 or 3 witnesses before any subsequent action is taken. The Lord Jesus was teaching a procedure for use within the ecclesia when there was “trespass” or “sin” by one **Brother** against another **Brother**. This section in Matthew is not dealing with ecclesial discipline (between ecclesias) or how to deal with wrong doctrine. Such matters are of concern to the whole ecclesia.

Point #4

On the other hand, in the Corinthian ecclesia, there was a clear example of ecclesial discipline addressing an individual whose immoral behaviour was clearly un-Christ-like. In this case, immoral behaviour in the ecclesia was an ecclesial matter, not a personal trespass by one brother against another.

- *It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you ... In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ... deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. - 1 Cor 5:1-5*

Additional comments on Matthew 18

The context of Matthew 18 is clearly about avoiding offence between individuals and how brethren are to reconcile when offences do occur.

We stand by our assertion that there is no Scriptural precedent or warrant for one or several Ecclesias to withhold fellowship from one or several other Ecclesias. In fact, evidence in the New Testament under the commandments and teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the writings of the inspired Apostles show the opposite – for example:

- The Corinthian Ecclesia had many incorrect and false doctrines (e.g. Resurrection Chapter 15). yet no nearby ecclesias were instructed to withhold fellowship.
- The Galatian Ecclesias had false doctrine – a return to provisions of the Mosaic Law.
- The Ecclesia in Jerusalem had substantial numbers in their membership that retained belief and practice in the Mosaic Law.
- The seven Churches in Revelation 2 & 3 were each instructed to “overcome”. None were instructed to become involved in another ecclesia’s problems or to separate from them.

The primary focus of the Lord’s teaching was to address issues within each individual ecclesia. Action beyond the Lord’s instruction and the content of these important letters is by extrapolation and speculation. For something as important as withdrawal of fellowship between ecclesias that agree on doctrinal principles, there must surely be clear teaching – as there is in the case of withdrawal of fellowship from individuals within an ecclesia.

UA08 Answer to PRU to 2. A Old Testament references “OT - Deut. 13”

PRU statement - Matthew 18:15-17 is directly drawn from the language and principle of Deuteronomy 17:4-7 and **Deuteronomy 13:1-6**; those same principles are applied in **Deuteronomy 13:12-16** to “cities” or ecclesias. The practical outworking of these principles of ecclesias dealing with ecclesias is demonstrated in Joshua 22 regarding doctrinal matters and Judges 19-20 regarding conduct. Where the Old Testament uses the sword and death the New Testament uses withdrawal.

UA08 response - In this section, we address the viability of the Old Testament references in application to one group of Ecclesias disfellowshipping other Ecclesias that accept the same first principles. The highlighted reference from the PRU statement (above) corresponds with the answers (below).

Deuteronomy 13:1- 6; Deuteronomy 13:12-16

The PRU argument for these verses is that if after investigation, an individual is proven to be in a trespass (any trespass and not just one against an individual), they would stone the individual to death. Or, if the trespass is that of a city, they would burn that city. Both actions are intended to ‘put away the evil from among you’. Therefore the equivalent action today is to disfellowship the individual or ecclesia(s). Deut. 13:1-6 and 12-16 are said to be the basis of Matt. 18:15-17. These verses are also cited as support Paul’s reference against the man who had his father’s wife in 1 Cor 5.13. Furthermore, although Matthew 18 speaks only of an individual, it is claimed that since ecclesias are made up of individuals, then by extension this is a principle that should apply to ecclesia dealing with ecclesia.

Is this the correct understanding and intent of this passage?

No.

1. In Deut. 13, both the ‘individual’ and the ‘city’ examples are dealing with a specific trespass. The individual tells people ‘*let us go after other gods...*’. Verse 13 indicates ‘certain men, the children of Belial, are gone out from among you, and have withdrawn the inhabitants of their city, saying, *let us go after other gods...*’
2. Notice what is not contained in v1-11. There is no individual going to the one who trespasses, there is no process of taking 2 or 3 witnesses and there is no “if he doesn’t hear them, take it to the ecclesia” to try to work it out. Rather, it says don’t even listen to him, put him to death. Why not the Matthew 18 process?

This is not the same thing as Matthew 18. This is a man **rising up publicly** as prophet (teacher) or dreamer of dreams, **telling the people to go after other gods!** This is an example of a heretic.

There was no one-on-one, two-on-one, ecclesia-on-one process. There was no process of recovery in this matter prescribed in Deut. 13. This is the opposite of Matt. 18 which is about recovery of the lost and those that sin against another.

3. In Deut. 13:12-18 in regard to the situation in a City:
 - a. If you hear, then enquire. Why? Because you don’t yet know first hand.
 - b. What were they enquiring about? They were saying that certain men had tried to lead astray the inhabitants of their city saying, “*let us go and serve other gods.*”
 - c. There is no attempt to turn them around mentioned here (like Matt. 18 commands) but rather they are to destroy the inhabitants and the city and burn it with fire.

The point of Deut. 13 is not that of a ‘general principle’ being established. Rather, it is about enforcing the specific commandments ‘Thou shalt have no other god before me’ and ‘God is a jealous God’. This is to be honored.

UA08 Answer to PRU to 2. A

OT - Deut. 17

PRU statement - Matthew 18:15-17 is directly drawn from the language and principle of **Deuteronomy 17:4-7** and Deuteronomy 13:1-6; those same principles are applied in Deuteronomy 13:12-16 to “cities” or ecclesias. The practical outworking of these principles of ecclesias dealing with ecclesias is demonstrated in Joshua 22 regarding doctrinal matters and Judges 19-20 regarding conduct. Where the Old Testament uses the sword and death the New Testament uses withdrawal.

UA08 response - **Deuteronomy 17:4-7**

1. This passage must be connected to its context in the chapter. In Chapter 17 verses 2-3 clearly note the specific transgression involved that could be deserving of ‘death’. It refers to the ‘wickedness wrought’ by any that ‘hath gone and *servd other gods and worshipped them...*’.
2. Deuteronomy 17:4 describes the process by which idolatry was identified. This required 2 or 3 witnesses whereby death could follow. Murder was another charge that required multiple witnesses – Numbers 35:30. There was no repentance identified under the law for murder, yet Yahweh put away David’s sin of murder. (Mercy triumphs over judgment, James 2:13).

The important and general principle for multiple witnesses is to be found in Deut. 19:15.

One witness shall not rise up against a man for any iniquity, or for any sin, in any sin that he sinneth: at the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall the matter be established. - Deut. 19:15

Notice, in this context, there is no specific command about ‘death’ or ‘withdrawal’ of fellowship.

Again, this needs to be compared to Matt. 18:16, the context of which is restoration of a brother felt to be trespassing against another. This is quite a different context than Deuteronomy.

“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.” - Matt. 18:16

Of three Old Testament texts stating the requirement to have “two or three witnesses”, Deut. 19:15 would be the obvious reference Jesus had in mind in Matthew 18 NOT “directly drawn from the language and principle of Deuteronomy 17:4-7 and Deuteronomy 13:1-6” as the PRU document asserts.

The principle of obtaining “2 or 3 witnesses” is borne out in other Old Testament passages:

Whoso killeth any person, the murderer shall be put to death by the mouth of witnesses: but one witness shall not testify against any person to cause him to die. - Num. 35:30

At the mouth of two witnesses or three witnesses, shall he that is worthy of death be put to death; but at the mouth of one witness he shall not be put to death. - Deut. 17:6

The contexts of these passages are, respectively: murder and promoting the worship of false gods not matters related or applicable to current unity discussions.

The PRU document’s use of Deuteronomy 13 and 17 in connection with the Lord’s wise teaching for reconciliation is an inappropriate use of these Scriptures.

PRU statement - Matthew 18:15-17 is directly drawn from the language and principle of Deuteronomy 17:4-7 and Deuteronomy 13:1-6; those same principles are applied in Deuteronomy 13:12-16 to “cities” or ecclesias. (see comment above on the incorrect use of these two references in Dueteronomy) The practical outworking of these principles of ecclesias dealing with ecclesias is demonstrated in **Joshua 22** regarding doctrinal matters and Judges 19-20 regarding conduct. Where the Old Testament uses the sword and death the New Testament uses withdrawal.

UA08 response - **Joshua 22**

The whole situation in Joshua 22 is not that Ecclesias should be ready to judge and cut off or even engage other ecclesial/tribes/cities with challenges, but rather to be careful about reports that are told about another ecclesia/tribe/city and the risk of over-reacting.

Joshua 22 sets out a clear example of not being hasty and jumping to conclusions

*And the children of Israel heard say, Behold, the children of Reuben and the children of Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh have built an altar over against the land of Canaan, in the borders of Jordan, at the passage of the children of Israel.
And when the children of Israel heard of it, the whole congregation of the children of Israel gathered themselves together at Shiloh, to go up to war against them. - Josh. 22:11-12*

v.16 ...when Israel’s delegation approached the 2½ tribes it was with strong and unproven accusations, “what trespass is this that ye have committed against the God of Israel to turn away this day from following Yahweh...”

Thus saith the whole congregation of the LORD, What trespass is this that ye have committed against the God of Israel, to turn away this day from following the LORD, in that ye have builded you an altar, that ye might rebel this day against the LORD? Is the iniquity of Peor too little for us, from which we are not cleansed until this day, although there was a plague in the congregation of the LORD, But that ye must turn away this day from following the LORD? and it will be, seeing ye rebel to day against the LORD, that to morrow he will be wroth with the whole congregation of Israel. Notwithstanding, if the land of your possession be unclean, then pass ye over unto the land of the possession of the LORD, wherein the LORD’S tabernacle dwelleth, and take possession among us: but rebel not against the LORD, nor rebel against us, in building you an altar beside the altar of the LORD our God. Did not Achan the son of Zerah commit a trespass in the accursed thing, and wrath fell on all the congregation of Israel? and that man perished not alone in his iniquity. - Josh. 22:16-20

v.17-20 the children of Israel had their arguments all laid out and were prepared to start civil war with the 2½ tribes.

v.21-29 the 2½ tribes were shocked that their brethren accused them of ‘rebellion’ against God.

*“Far be it from us that we should rebel against the LORD and turn away from following the LORD this day, by building an altar for burnt offering, for grain offering or for sacrifice, besides the altar of the LORD our God which is before His tabernacle.”
¶ So when Phinehas the priest and the leaders of the congregation, even the heads of the families of Israel who were with him, heard the words which the sons of Reuben and the sons of Gad and the sons of Manasseh spoke, it pleased them. - Josh. 22:29-30*

The Children of Israel took the time to investigate properly (which was clearly the right thing to do) before taking precipitous action,. Following proper investigation they found that not only were the 2½ tribes not guilty as they supposed, but had shown extraordinary good faith and acted righteously in their intent to create a witness between themselves and Israel.

The lessons

1. Be careful of listening to an evil report about your brethren. "...they heard..." but their information was incomplete and misleading.
2. Don't jump to conclusions about your brethren
3. Don't get brethren fired up against other brethren. This could have ended up like the disaster in Judges 19-20 below, except worse, because in this case the 2½ tribes had not done anything wrong.
4. There is another important point to consider regarding the attitude of the rest of Israel. They thought the 2½ tribes were rebelling against God and going after other gods... It was not just any sin.

What is fundamental here is that the 9½ tribes thought that the 2½ tribes were setting up an altar for false worship and they were wrong!

PRU statement - Matthew 18:15-17 is directly drawn from the language and principle of Deuteronomy 17:4-7 and Deuteronomy 13:1-6; those same principles are applied in Deuteronomy 13:12-16 to "cities" or ecclesias. The practical outworking of these principles of ecclesias dealing with ecclesias is demonstrated in Joshua 22 regarding doctrinal matters and Judges 19-20 regarding conduct. Where the Old Testament uses the sword and death the New Testament uses withdrawal.

UA08 response - We recommend a full reading of these chapters – which we have not reproduced here for the sake of space. The following commentary addresses the key points of the chapter.

Judges 19-20

- 1) A great abomination had taken place by 'some' in the tribe of Benjamin in the city of Gibeah. It was clearly a serious moral issue. (Also note that the concubine who had been abused had played the whore against the Levite and she and the Levite were from Judah)
- 2)
 - a. The eleven tribes only hear from the Levite. They never entered into real dialogue with the people of Benjamin. Notice 20:4-6 leaves out telling Israel that he actually handed his concubine over to the wicked men (19:25) therefore he was also somewhat responsible for what occurred and this Levite was from Bethlehem-Judah.
 - b. Why didn't the Levite call upon God to intervene as He did on behalf of Lot when the angels went to Sodom and the men who came to the door were struck with blindness?
- 3) In Chapter 20 verse 3, the tribe of Benjamin 'heard' that Israel was amassing in Mizpeh, not that Israel came to speak with them as brethren. Rather, they approached in a threatening manner before they had heard everything. They used a very accusatory phrase in 20:12 "what wickedness is this that is done among you?"

UA08 Answer to PRU 2. A OT - Judges 19-20 – Cont'd

- 4) The eleven tribes decide to confront the tribe of Benjamin by challenge and telling Benjamin to turn over the 'wicked men' for the eleven tribes to judge.
- 5) Benjamin refuses to turn over the men (sons of Belial). We never get to find out why not. Did they want to investigate and deal with it themselves, as was their responsibility? Were the other tribes too impatient? Or perhaps because this wickedness impacted someone from Judah they thought Benjamin would go too light on those brethren from Benjamin that were at fault? We do not know.
- 6) Notice in 20:18 only now does Israel go up to ask counsel of God. Did they ask God what to do? No! They had already predetermined to attack their brethren. They just asked God who should go first. The reply is Judah. The Levite's concubine was from Bethlehem-Judah and Judah was therefore the accuser, so Judah must throw the first stone.

Judges 20-21

This is an example of what NOT TO DO! This is a very dark period of Israel's history where every man did what was right in his own eyes and their actions led to the near genocide of one of the 12 tribes of Israel. The lesson of Judges 19-20 is one of overreacting to incorrect assumptions. Judges 21 records the people in mourning as they realize they have almost destroyed an entire tribe in error.

In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes. - Judges. 21:25

The Rest of the Old Testament

There are many occasions after Judges where the law of Deut. 13 would have been appropriate to apply, but it never was. Many times Israel sunk into idolatry, but God never tells Judah to go and utterly destroy their cities.

Elijah had a Deut. 13 spirit when he bemoaned the idolatry of Israel. God rebuked him and told him to get back to the people and seek to help them, including the 7,000 righteous people who were living in throughout the cities of Israel.

Hezekiah did not seek to destroy the idolaters of the northern tribes, but sent an appeal to them to bring them to repentance.

For hundreds of years God sent prophets to appeal to His people – He never tells the prophets to stir up the righteous to destroy the evil cities. Rather, God gives an example of patient appeal and seeking to recover for hundreds of years. The lesson is one of education and appeal, not separation and extermination.

There is resounding silence of the law of Deut. 13 in the rest of Israel's history. This silence should be instructive about the wisdom of applying the law of Deut 13 today.

We feel particularly uncomfortable with Deut. 13 being applied among Ecclesias that share the same One Gospel.

2. That there is no Scriptural precedent or warrant for one or several Ecclesias to withhold fellowship from one or several other Ecclesias.

- **2. B** To emphasize that these two chapters in Deuteronomy were understood by Christ and the apostle Paul to teach principles relevant to fellowship in ecclesial life, Paul directly quotes from **Deuteronomy 13:6** in **1 Corinthians 5:13** as the reason for withdrawing fellowship from a brother on the basis of their walking in darkness. Therefore our God teaches us that ecclesias have a responsibility to ecclesias.

UA08 Answer to PRU 2. B OT 1 Cor. 5:13, Deut. 13:6.

The Old Testament quotation in 1 Corinthians 5:13 used by Paul is from Deuteronomy 22:24, not Deuteronomy 13:6 as stated in the PRU document..

The subject of Deut. 22:23 & 24 is that of adultery. This is the exact matter under consideration by Paul in 1 Corinthians 5 - individual immorality by members within the Ecclesia at Corinth. Paul's instruction to deal with this matter of immorality is "so thou shalt put evil away from among you".

Deut. 13 deals with a different matter – violation of the 1st of the Ten Commandments. The quotation found in Deuteronomy 13:5 "Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person" is in the context of the command to put to death false prophets. This is similarly addressed in the following chapters:

- Deut. 17:7 where the context is the command to put to death individuals that worship false gods.
- Deut. 17:12 relates to a man that "will not hearken unto the priest".
- Deut. 19:19 contains this phrase in connection with punishment of a false witness.
- Deut 21:20-21 deal with treatment of a rebellious son.

Deut. 22:23-24 has the phrase "...so shalt thou put away evil from among you". The context here relates to immoral behaviour and the need to remove it from Israel. Immorality is the context of 1 Corinthians 5, and therefore would be the appropriate connection Paul had in mind in quoting this phrase. To connect 1 Corinthians 5:13 with Deuteronomy 13:5 is incorrect.

The PRU brethren say:

"Therefore our God teaches us that ecclesias have a responsibility to ecclesias."

1 Corinthians 5 cannot reasonably be construed to mean, "Therefore our God teaches us that ecclesias have a responsibility to ecclesias," as suggested by the PRU brethren. Paul is dealing with the treatment of a Brother who has committed a serious moral sin and should therefore be excluded from the ecclesia "for a season". He is clearly not addressing fellowship matters between one group of ecclesias and others. To conclude this from Paul's statement in 1 Cor. 5:13 is not supported by this scripture and is a serious misapplication of this verse.

2. That there is no Scriptural precedent or warrant for one or several Ecclesias to withhold fellowship from one or several other Ecclesias.

- **2. C** These principles are further demonstrated by the fact that the 7 letters of Revelation 2-3 were written to the arranging brethren of all 7 ecclesias even though they were individually addressed (see Revelation 2:23 “all the ecclesias shall know” and “he that hath an ear let him hear what the spirit saith unto the ecclesias.”)

UA08 Answer to PRU 2. C

1. The letters to the seven Ecclesias in Revelation Chapters 2 & 3 would be the perfect opportunity for Jesus to instruct ecclesias to separate from ecclesias that had doctrinal and/or behavioural error. No commands are given to take any action in relation to what was taking place in other ecclesias. Revelation Chapters 2 & 3 does not support claims for actions against other ecclesias.

2. Responsibility of Ecclesias to other Ecclesias – Revelation 2 and 3 – If Ecclesias that are themselves in error are to cut-off other Ecclesias that are in error, most of the Ecclesias in Revelation would be cut-off from one another. It was Jesus Christ himself who would extinguish the lightstand or judge – it is not an Ecclesia’s responsibility to cut off another Ecclesia (Revelation 2:5,16,22,23 – 3:9,16,19)

2. That there is no Scriptural precedent or warrant for one or several Ecclesias to withhold fellowship from one or several other Ecclesias.

2. D 1 Corinthians 10:1-15 – Israel in the wilderness is a parallel of the ecclesia in the world

UA08 Answer to PRU 2. D

In 1 Corinthians 10:1 - 15, Israel in the wilderness is used as an example that we should not lust after evil things. The four situations cited are an example of what we, as disciples of the Lord Jesus, should not do. These are important lessons to be learned from Israel’s history and are not a New Testament extension of the Mosaic Law.

It is important to note numerous situations throughout Scripture that illustrate exceptions are made to exact application and enforcement of God’s Law. God clearly allows exceptions to rigid application of His Law.

- Rahab the Harlot – The spies swore an oath with a Gentile to spare Rahab and all that were in her house. The spies had no authorization to make this arrangement.
- The contract made with the Gibeonites contravened God’s Law yet it was honoured.
- Arrangements to give women to the tribe of Benjamin was outside provisions of the Law.
- David and his men ate the shewbread that was forbidden except for the Priests.
- According to the Law of Moses -the woman taken in adultery should have been stoned.

3. Division is anathema to the Father and His Son

- **3.A** Under certain circumstances this is correct. In 3 John 8-10 Diotrephes is condemned for causing division over matters of conscience spoken against in Romans 14
- **3.B** Interestingly Paul both condemns division and also solicits the same in Romans 16:17. Those that cause division and creating stumbling blocks for others are to be “avoided” – or put away. 1 Corinthians 3:3 links this type of division to envying and strife.
- **3.C** But this statement is far too broad. The second thing recorded in the Bible is that God divided light from darkness, which initiates a theme that weaves through the Word. God’s purpose to fill the earth with His glory is predicated upon calling out a people for His name. The very title we operate as bodies of saints reflects this purpose of God: the ecclesia is an assembly of called out ones; those separated from the world.
- **3.D** Therefore while division when there is a oneness of mind, speech and judgment is anathema to the Father and His Son, division where there is not oneness of mind, speech, and judgment is a scriptural imperative (see Galatians 1:8-9)

UA08 Answer to PRU **3. A**

The PRU’s distinction that Diotrephes was dividing over “matters of conscience” is not warranted by the text. The only indication we have from Scripture is that the separation he was involved in was a false basis, and by the Holy Spirit we are informed that the motivation was malicious.

Diotrephes was acting in an un-Christ-like way, i.e. malicious gossip and denying fellowship to brethren recommended by John. The link to Romans 14 is not merited by the context of 3 John.

Therefore we ought to support such men, so that we may be fellow workers with the truth. I wrote something to the church; but Diotrephes, who loves to be first among them, does not accept what we say. For this reason, if I come, I will call attention to his deeds which he does, unjustly accusing us with wicked words; and not satisfied with this, he himself does not receive the brethren, either, and he forbids those who desire to do so and puts them out of the church. - 3 John 8-10

- **3.B** Interestingly Paul both condemns division and also solicits the same in Romans 16:17. Those that cause division and create stumbling blocks for others are to be “avoided” – or put away. 1 Corinthians 3:3 links this type of division to envying and strife.

UA08 Answer to PRU **3. B**

Romans 16:17 is specific, and is talking about those that cause divisions based on actions which are the result of wrong/false doctrine.

*Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and **avoid** them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple. - Rom. 16:17-18*

The context is that they were ‘tares’ whose ‘God is their belly’ and they ‘walk’ as enemies of the cross of Christ (cf. Phil 3:18-19)

(For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.) - Phil. 3:18-19

3. Division is anathema to the Father and His Son

- **3. C** But this statement is far too broad. The second thing recorded in the Bible is that God divided light from darkness, which initiates a theme that weaves through the Word. God's purpose to fill the earth with His glory is predicated upon calling out a people for His name. The very title we operate as bodies of saints reflects this purpose of God: the ecclesia is an assembly of called out ones: those separated from the world.

UA08 Answer to PRU **3. C**

UA08 Response is the same as 3B above. We are not dealing with separation from the world. Our discussion is about how we treat each other as Brethren (of the Lord Jesus Christ) whose baptism into Christ we recognize.

- **3. D** Therefore while division when there is a oneness of mind, speech and judgment is anathema to the Father and His Son, division where there is not oneness of mind, speech, and judgment is a scriptural imperative (see Galatians 1:8-9)

UA08 Answer to PRU **3. D**

Galatians 1:8-9 – Another gospel was being preached to the believers in Galatia

*But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach **any other gospel** unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed. - Gal. 1:8-9*

This is identified a few chapters later in Galatians 3:1-2

O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you? This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? - Gal. 3:1-2

The “other gospel” was that of returning to adherence to the works of the law rather than the faithful acceptance of Jesus Christ. That is not the case today. A “different” gospel has NOT been adopted. We all embrace Paul's teaching to the Galatians. Consider Galatians 3:27-29

For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. - Gal. 3:27-29

The UA08 is not “another gospel”. It is wrong to apply Galatians 1:8-9 to the current situation.

There are plenty of first century examples of not being one in “mind, speech and judgment” in terms of perfect unanimity in doctrinal understanding. Most of the passages that address the topic of “oneness” refer rather to oneness of spirit, exhibiting love, compassion, mutual edification etc.:

... so that with one accord you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, accept one another, just as Christ also accepted us to the glory of God. - Rom. 15:6-7

UA08 Answer to PRU **3. D** - Cont'd

Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you. Greet one another with an holy kiss. – 2 Cor. 13:11-12

Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel; - Phil. 1:27

If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Phil 2:1-3

Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous: Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing. For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile: - 1Pet. 3:10

Compliance with specific standards of a subset of brethren out of fear of disfellowship is no substitute for faithful striving for perfection in an imperfect dispensation. The goal of oneness is clear.

Our community's difficulty in attaining that goal in the broadest sense does not justify erecting roadblocks or promoting block disfellowship. To the contrary, we must continue to strive for oneness, that the blessings of oneness and peace may be realized by all who humbly put their trust in God, and love their brethren as Christ loved us.

4. Unity is the expressed desire and commandment from the Father and His Son.

- **4. A** Indeed it is under the right circumstances; whereas under the wrong circumstances, unity is condemned. In 1 John 1:5 John teaches us that if we walk in the light we have fellowship with the Father and the son and each other. The converse is that if we don't have the light (true doctrine) and if we don't walk in it, we do not have fellowship with each other or the Father and the son.
- **4. B** 1 Timothy 4:16; Acts 2:42; Acts 8:12 and Romans 15:5-7 all teach that fellowship is predicated upon having a correct doctrine and walking in it. Further 11 Corinthians 7:10-11 teaches us that maintaining fellowship with those that walk in darkness can jeopardize our own salvation (see also 1 Samuel 3:13-14); and 11 John 9-11 teaches us that maintaining fellowship with those who do not maintain first principles can jeopardize our own salvation.

- **4. C** Indeed it is under the right circumstances; whereas under the wrong circumstances, unity is condemned. In John 1:5 John teaches us that if we **walk in the light** we have fellowship with the Father and the son and each other. The converse is that if we don't have the light (true doctrine) and if we don't walk in it, we do not have fellowship with each other or the Father and the son.

UA08 Answer to PRU **4. A**

Walking in the light

We will first address this point about “walking in the light”. It is true that walking in the light is essential and that if we don't walk in the light, we do not have fellowship with each other or the Father and the Son.

However, the primary thrust of the context must be reviewed. The above PRU quote defines the light as “true doctrine”. “**the light (true doctrine)**”

Although we agree that common saving doctrine is necessary among brethren, we need to review whether this was the primary intent of John's teaching about the definition of the “light” (and “darkness”).

- *This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that **God is light**, and in him is no darkness at all. 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. - 1John 1:5-7*

This passage shows that **God is light**. By walking in God (light) we have fellowship with each other.

- *Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you: because the **darkness** is past, and the **true light** now shineth. He that saith he is in the **light**, and hateth his brother, is in **darkness** even until now. - 1John 2:8*

These verses make the point that “darkness” is connected to hatred: if someone claims to be in the light but hates his brother, he is not in the light – but is in darkness. If “light” equals “true doctrine”, substituting those words into the sentence makes no sense. John's use of “light” is therefore different from how the PRU define it.

- *He that loveth his brother abideth in the **light**, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him. But he that hateth his brother is in **darkness**, and walketh in **darkness**, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that **darkness** hath blinded his eyes. - 1John 2:10-11*

So love is connected to abiding in light, while hate is connected to walking in darkness.

John's usage and meaning of the word “light” is clearly about the character of God, not “true doctrine”. By examining all the references to the “light” in these verses, we rightly conclude John's message was that we must walk in God's character. (The character aspect is borne out in other passages from the gospel of John in reference to Christ.)

Therefore, the PRU interpretation of 1 John 1:5 does not mesh with John's message. Their understanding and conclusion of the text therefore varies from ours, as follows:

UA08 Answer to PRU 4. A - Cont'd

PRU understanding of 1 John 1

If we walk in the true doctrine we have fellowship with the Father and the son and each other.

Conversely

If we don't have true doctrine and if we don't walk in it, we do not have fellowship with each other or the Father and the son.

UA08 understanding of 1 John 1

If we walk in the character of God we have fellowship with the Father and the son and each other.

Conversely

if we don't have the character of God and if we don't walk in it, we do not have fellowship with each other or the Father and the son.

The above conclusion is that purity of belief is seen as the key connection to fellowship with God and each other.

The above conclusion is that behaviour befitting God's character is the key connection to fellowship with God and each other.

This is not to say that we think the PRU believe abiding in God's character is unimportant to fellowship. Nor does our conclusion imply we believe doctrine is unimportant to fellowship. However, the conclusions that grow from these core understandings are important.

Recap. We have examined the passage cited by the PRU to test their premise that unity is predicated on strict, commonality on a particular and exclusive phrasing of doctrine. We found this passage does not support the viewpoint that "light" is defined as "true doctrine".

- *Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the **light** of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the **light** of life. - John 8:12*
- *As long as I am in the world, I am the **light** of the world. - John 9:5*

These other passages show by Jesus' teaching that he was the "light" of the world, and that as long as he was in the world, that "light" (character of God) was seen to be present – in him. If "light" meant "true doctrine" then it would have disappeared when Christ left the world.

The PRU interpretation of 1 John 1:5-7 seeks to establish the idea of absolute doctrinal purity and then make fellowship contingent on it. We know from the rest of the Bible that such teaching is simply not correct.

- **4. B** 1 Timothy 4:16; Acts 2:42; Acts 8:12 and Romans 15:5-7 all teach that fellowship is predicated upon having a correct doctrine and walking in it. Further 2 Corinthians 7:10-11 teaches us that maintaining fellowship with those that walk in darkness can jeopardize our own salvation (see also **1 Samuel 3:13-14**); and 2 John 9-11 teaches us that maintaining fellowship with those who do not maintain first principles can jeopardize our own salvation.

UA08 Answer to PRU **4. B**

Romans 15:5-7 Paul is urging the brothers to "...receive one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God." That is what the UA08 is doing. The brethren that are being received are known to accept the same One Gospel as we do.

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. - Rom. 15:7

1 Samuel 3:13-14 does not apply to our current situation. Eli was held responsible for not instructing his sons in Godly conduct and for not reprimanding them for their un-Godly behaviour.

For I have told him that I will judge his house for ever for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not. And therefore I have sworn unto the house of Eli, that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be purged with sacrifice nor offering for ever. - 1Sam. 3:14

It is important to be careful about how we apply scripture as it may pertain to other Brethren. The context of the passage in 1 Samuel is about two wicked "sons of Belial" – whose sin was "very great before the Lord". This is described in 1 Sam. 2:12, 17.

1100. bliya'al, bel-e-yah'-al; from 1097 and 3276; without profit, worthlessness; by extension, destruction, wickedness (often in connection with 376, 802, 1121, etc.):—Belial, evil, naughty, ungodly (men), wicked.

Now the sons of Eli were sons of Belial; they knew not the LORD. 1Sam. 2:12

Wherefore the sin of the young men was very great before the LORD: for men abhorred the offering of the LORD. 1Sam. 2:17

This passage is about an extreme situation of two wicked and self-indulgent men who "abhorred the offering of the Lord." We don't believe the brethren of the PRU think that the Unamended Brethren and Ecclesias of the UA08 are the moral equivalent of these men. Therefore to try and connect this specific egregious sin broadly to the current situation is not warranted by either the text or by moral equivalence.

1 Tim. 4:16

As with all scriptures, we must take context and intent into account in order to moderate potential extrapolations that are unwarranted by the text. The passage below cited as a stand-alone verse is instructive by itself.

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. 1Tim. 4:16

However, its application to the current situation is not justified by the context in which Paul intended his instruction to Timothy.

UA08 Answer to PRU 4. B - Cont'd

...1 Timothy 4:16...

As we see in v16, Paul instructed Timothy to take heed to himself and continue in the doctrine. As evidenced in that verse, there is obviously a situation that prompted Paul to warn Timothy. The specifics of that situation are found earlier in the same chapter.

Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth. – 1 Tim. 4:3

Timothy was being cautioned to “take heed unto [himself], and unto the doctrine; continue in them” in the immediate context of those in the ecclesia that would be associated with the following serious errors:

- Departing from the faith
- Seducing spirits
- Doctrines of devils
- Speaking lies in hypocrisy
- Consciences seared with a hot iron
- Forbidding to marry
- Commanding to abstain from meats

Are these issues applicable to the current debate? Do we have problems of seducing spirits, doctrines of devils, forbidding to marry etc?

It could be argued that principles can be extrapolated and applied to other situations. However, unless there is some reasonableness in such application of a principle, we may come to a very wrong conclusion.

For example, one brother may say if the Resurrectional Responsibility principle is expressed in any way other than the BASF clause 24, that it is a departure from the faith, and therefore in the same category as “consciences seared by a hot iron”, or “speaking lies in hypocrisy”, etc. Another brother may say that unless one holds the same precise view on marriage and divorce as himself – they are in the same category as those “departing from the faith”, etc.

Unless there is some measure of how far a principle can reasonably be extrapolated or applied, there are no limits - except those one would impose on himself.

We have been given such measures. Invariably it is found in the context of the principle being cited. This is the case in 1 Timothy.

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness – 2 Tim. 3:16

In 2 Timothy, we see that “all scripture is given by inspiration of God...for instruction in righteousness.”

The extraction and application of a single verse, standing alone, should not be used to illustrate a principle, without all the qualifying context. The context (which is part of all scripture) helps us to measure the principle, properly apply it and thus rightly divide the word of truth.

UA08 Answer to PRU 4. B - Cont'd

Acts 2:42 – Acts 8:2

And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. - Acts 2:42

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. - Acts 8:12

These passages present the picture of Brethren active and unified and in their new found faith in Christ and with one another. This was an exciting period of growth and maturity of the early ecclesia in Jerusalem. It was a particularly blessed and wonderful time of the acceptance of our Lord and the gospel. Continued instruction was necessary well beyond the point of baptism in all four topics mentioned in Acts 2:42. It is clear that fellowship is a component of doctrine and behaviour.

It is important, however, to acknowledge that fellowship wasn't directly discontinued when doctrine was not correct. {Note: The NT use of the word "doctrine" entails behavior, i.e., it is not simply teaching; see 1Tim 1:10 RSV}

There are sad accounts of New Testament ecclesias in which some Brethren did not believe in the resurrection, some insisted that circumcision was essential for salvation, some wanted to re-institute adherence to the Mosaic Law. And there was Judas – all were retained in fellowship. We all strive for the ideal and appreciate that it is a great blessing. However, we must understand the imperfections of first century ecclesias and draw lessons from them equally.

2 John 10-11

Preliminary Points

The three epistles may be summed up in two themes:

1. Sound doctrine and the danger of false doctrine
2. Love which occurs 33 times in 20 verses in the three epistles

There is a connection with the dual theme of grace and truth (Exodus 34:6). The message and commandment about love is easily overlooked in discussion about doctrine.

Hospitality to Teachers

This epistle warns against the same false teaching that is discussed in the 1st Epistle of John. The second epistle is addressed to a congregation and its focus was on incorrect understanding in the matter of hospitality.

Paul pointed out that:

"In the same way, the Lord commanded that those who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel." - 1 Cor. 9:14, ESV

This was probably based on the Lord's words:

Acquire no gold nor silver nor copper for your belts, no bag for your journey, nor two tunics nor sandals nor a staff, for the laborer deserves his food. - Matt 10:9-10, ESV

The false teaching that John was talking about was that Jesus had not come in the flesh – i.e. he was either not a human being or that he was some kind of spirit being, (such as the angels?). This of course attacked the foundation of the Christian faith. John writes:

If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into your house or give him any greeting, for whoever greets him takes part in his wicked works. - 2 John 10-11, ESV

UA08 Answer to PRU 4. B - Cont'd

...2 John 9-11...

John here is referring to preachers who did not bring this teaching` (i.e. ``that Christ is come in the flesh`` v7) and should not be given hospitality - or even a greeting - that would have been offered to other preachers. In other words they are not to be regarded as true believers!

In the KJV the Greek for Godspeed is a single word *chairō χαίρω*, 5463 and is common in the NT. It is generally translated as rejoice, or joy or “hail”. John is saying that Christ is the standard and hospitality should not be shown to the wrong people.

The Doctrine of Christ

The phrase occurs in Hebrews 6:1 (once) and 2 John 9 (twice)

Therefore let us leave the elementary doctrine of Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, and of instruction about washings, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. - Hebrews 6:1-2, ESV

There are five points in relation to the elementary (*arche*; ἀρχή, = beginning) doctrine (“logos” Greek) of Christ:

1. Repentance from dead works & faith toward God
2. Instruction about washings (*baptismos* -βαπτισμός, 909) – this could have been the process of purifying as in John 3:25 or baptism in the accepted sense of the word as in Act 8:36-38
3. Laying on of hands (appointment for specific tasks - Acts 6:6)
4. Resurrection of the dead (Acts 17:31)
5. Eternal judgment (Acts 17:31)

The context of Hebrews 6 on the “doctrine of Christ” is that there are deeper matters of faith that are important to understand. The picture might be of taking a person who has been in the faith for 20 years and giving them a lesson at a Sunday school level on the “beginning” principles of the faith, such as belief in God or the inspiration of the Bible, etc.

In 2 John, the phrase is used in relation to Jesus having come “in the flesh”. This was and is a fundamental point in the gospel and to have been drawn away on the basis of this teaching would mean embracing apostasy.

UA08 Answer to PRU 4. B - Cont'd

The context of 2 John 9-11 begins in verse 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. - 2 John 9, KJV

“Transgress” = *parabaino* (παρβαίνω, 3845) = to fall away – to fall away in the sense in which it is used here means that they do not “abide” in (*meno μένω*, 3306 s.w. in many other places means to dwell or live in) the doctrine (*didache* (διδασχῆ, 1322 = teaching) of Christ.

The second point of verse 9 is that a person who does abide in the doctrine of Christ *has* the Father and the Son. There is no difference between these words about abiding in the doctrine of Christ and abiding in Christ (1 John 2:6)

What John is talking about here is a **fundamental departure from the faith in terms of teaching and behavior** – however the departure of which John speaks in his first and second epistles is not just in “teaching” but also in the failure to love one another as the following will show:

And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him. He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked. Brethren, ... He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him. But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes. - 1 John 2:3–11

In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother. -1 John 3:10 KJV

Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. - 1 John 4:7–11 KJV

The deceivers of which John speaks (2 John 6-7) are not walking according to the commandment of love.

The application of 2 John 9-10

1 John 2:22 adds to the definition of ‘antichrist’ – he who denies that “Jesus is the Christ”, and he who “denies the Father and the Son”.

The key question of the PRU brethren, based on the use of 2nd John, in the current context is:

Are the members of the UA08 Amended ecclesias among those who are classified as teaching that Jesus did not come in the flesh? No, they do not allow that false teaching!

Overall Conclusions and Appeal

Conclusions

The UA08 Ecclesias asked the PRU Brethren for Bible teaching that justifies one Ecclesia taking action against another Ecclesia.

The Bible references supplied by the PRU Brethren do not support their position or justify the following behaviors:

1. To ask members of UA08 Ecclesias not to Break Bread at PRU Ecclesias
2. To correspond with Ecclesias throughout North America and beyond, indicating that UA08 Amended Ecclesias are no longer part of the Worldwide Central Christadelphian Community
3. To assert that there is a 'doctrine of fellowship' and treat it as a 'first principle' and be used as a 'test of fellowship' against the UA08 Amended Ecclesias

In fact, the above actions go against the predominate teaching of the New Testament to seek unity, to seek peace and pursue it, to seek the lost, to work together and to prefer one another.

Appeal to our PRU Brethren and Ecclesias to prayerfully consider the following:

1. Recognize the Amended and Unamended Ecclesias of the UA08 on the basis of the Bible teaching that extends full fellowship where there is common belief and the absence of any evidence of doctrinal error.
2. Recognize the soundness and utility of the NASU Document as a basis for unity in the household of faith in North America.
3. Recognize the progress that has been made towards unity thus far. If in good conscience, members of PRU Ecclesias cannot agree to work together with UA08 Ecclesias to help unify the body of Christ, then peacefully stand aside and let others continue with this effort.

Commitment by the UA08 Brethren and Ecclesias

1. We will continue to respect Ecclesias not supporting UA08 as beloved Brethren in the Lord and continue to work together with you in all ways for the mutual building and strengthening of the Household of God as we await the coming of the Lord.
2. We will not diminish our care for preserving the first principles of the Faith as summarized in the BASF. As we have been diligent on this matter in the past, we will continue to be so in the future.