

## What the UA08 Ecclesias Stand For

- Our ecclesias stand for lines of fellowship being set, based on sufficient understanding of the One Gospel and right behaviour befitting disciples of Christ
- We are satisfied that the NASU is such an expression that represents a sufficient common expression of the One Gospel
- We are satisfied in the process that resulted in the NASU - a process of unprecedented consultation throughout major areas of the brotherhood that involved many hundreds of brethren working together with open bibles directly addressing the issues with our Unamended counterparts.
- The NASU process was ecclesially based, with bulletins regularly reporting progress and the NASU itself being made available to all brethren for scrutiny long before it was voted on at the continental level.
- We are confident that the majority of the Amended community in North America indicated acceptance by a significant majority vote in favour of the NASU as a sound doctrinal basis. Over 88% of Amended respondents indicating such acceptance.
- We are satisfied that the NASU clearly disallows the issues historically related to the division.
- We are likewise confident that the UA08 is an acceptable common expression of understanding, as it is based on (and includes the whole content of) the NASU, with additional Final Clarifications addressing the concerns of some local brethren.
- We accept the Unamended ecclesias that have accepted the UA08 and are confident that their ecclesias do not believe or teach any of the doctrines historically associated with the division. We trust their word (repeated in their letter of April 21,2006) that they will not allow such doctrines to be taught in their ecclesias.
- Our Unamended brethren, by accepting the NASU and the UA08 have suffered withdrawal from fellowship from some other Unamended ecclesias who do not accept their position – whether out of ignorance or doctrinal disagreement.
- Our Unamended partners have explained their position on fellowship (below):

1. Our ecclesias accept the whole UA08, including the announcement, which we have posted in accordance with the UA08 (page iii) as prescribed by the agreement. We intend to continue posting it for the foreseeable future as a measure of continued good faith.

2. As signatories to the UA08, we are committed to seeking out, extending, and enhancing the unity of, and with the Amended ecclesias who are also signatories to this agreement. In the spirit of the unity agreement, we will with due care be sensitive to the needs and well-being of these other signatory ecclesias, and all ecclesias, especially during its critical and challenging implementation.

3. Our ecclesias view loving fellowship among fellow believers as a matter of scriptural directive (John 13:34-35, 14:21-24, 15:12-14, 1 John 1:3) and many members believe that refusing fellowship to brothers and sisters of the Lord Jesus Christ could be an offence against Christ himself (Mark 3:33-35, Matt. 25:40, 45, Rom 14:1-4, 10-13, 23, Rom 15:7, Jas 4:17; also Prov.17:15)

4. A number of ecclesias have declared their rejection of NASU and of our ecclesias due to our support for NASU, finding the expressions on doctrinal issues fundamentally unacceptable. Accordingly, we are no longer in fellowship with these ecclesias. We continue to consider members of other Unamended ecclesias to be in fellowship with us, provided they do not declare their rejection of our ecclesial position. We believe we have spiritual obligations to them as our brothers and sisters for whom Christ died. Thus, we will engage in a process to encourage these ecclesias to participate fully in unity. This is similar to the concerns and approach of our counterpart Amended ecclesias regarding other Amended brethren not part of the UA08. Should these withdrawing ecclesias seek fellowship with us at some future point, we would continue to view them as out of fellowship, thus requiring comprehensive discussions with them to satisfy ourselves that we are indeed walking together on a sound common scriptural basis.

- although we don't have the same knowledge of the broader Unamended community as our partners do, and have not accepted them in fellowship, we respect the views of our partners and trust them to work with their Unamended brethren and honour the spirit and intent of the agreement and their explanations to us (above).

**In summary**, it should be noted that in exchanges between parties with different views - often, exaggerated ideas are assumed of one side of the exchange or the other. We would like to indicate that we understand the concerns brethren have about lines of fellowship and false doctrine becoming accepted and tolerated.

We sympathize with those concerns, but are satisfied that they have been adequately addressed by both the (now) 15 year-long NASU process, and the NASU-based UA08.

We are satisfied that our ecclesias have been well-informed by way of many meetings, resulting in votes that have directed our arranging boards, which took that direction and executed the will of the ecclesia.

We accept that some Amended brethren from ecclesias that are not party to the UA08 have residual concerns and we have been willing to continue working with and meeting with them.

Further, we continue to respect their concerns and accept them in fellowship on the unchanged basis of the BASF, as the recognized basis for inter-ecclesial fellowship in the Central community worldwide.

Finally, we feel that with 15 years of direct engagement with our Unamended brethren, and with the strong support for the resulting NASU doctrinal expressions indicated in the Amended community, that a sound basis has been established and recognized broadly. Having gone line-by-line through the relevant issues and scriptures with our Unamended partners, we feel we have garnered adequate direct experience and first hand information to ascertain with confidence that our Unamended partners are truly our brethren in Christ who share the same One Gospel.

We stand for unity in our local area facilitated by acceptance of the UA08. We continue to stand for unity and fellowship with our Central Brethren world-wide on the unchanged basis of the BASF.