

February
2002

CHRISTADELPHIAN NASU STEERING COMMITTEE

NEWSLETTER

THE UNITY INITIATIVE

By now you have probably received the North American Statement of Understanding (NASU). A covering letter was sent from the NASU Steering Committee. All material was sent to Recording Brethren/Ecclesial Secretaries in 140 Amended and 91 Unamended ecclesias. Enough copies were sent for 2,480 Amended households and 1,241 Unamended households.

WHAT PROMPTED THIS?

Many of us have agonized over our disunity for years, and there have been efforts in the past to rectify it. Some ecclesias have recently started what has turned out to be a grass-roots effort. It started out with two ecclesias and has grown over a six-year period. At this point, discussions have been going on among the arranging brethren of approximately 40 ecclesias. The ecclesias concerned are in Ontario, and the mid-West and mid-Atlantic States. Evidently, hope for unity is growing across the continent.

TO THE GLORY OF GOD

The Apostle Paul wrote, *"Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God."* (Rom. 15:7) This should be the objective of a unity effort. We must glorify God, not ourselves. If we seek the Almighty's blessing – if we "each esteem other better" than ourselves – if we seek to manifest the Spirit of Christ, then we glorify God. Unity requires this mindset.

A SCRIPTURALLY-BASED PROCESS

The effort started with the arranging brethren of an Amended and an Unamended ecclesia sitting down with Bibles open. The goal was to see if we could come to a common understanding over the issues that have historically divided us. This wasn't easy because of historical misunderstandings. Once we removed these misconceptions, as well as our traditional jargon, progress started. The focus at all times was to let the answers come from God's Word. With God's blessing, and the help of many brethren from near and far, a statement of understanding began to develop. At the outset, we never intended to start a general reunion effort. Agreement between two ecclesias led to agreement with others. The process grew. The result is the statement that has been distributed.

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.

1 Cor. 1:10

SEEKING UNITY - DO WE HAVE AN OPTION?

Those involved in this effort see unity as a fundamental Scriptural principle. Many passages could be cited: John 17:20: *"That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me."* John 13:35: *"A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another."* 1 Cor. 1:13: *"Is Christ divided?"* Ps. 34:14 *"Seek peace and pursue it."* Eph. 4:13 *"Till we all come in the unity of the faith"*

With unity, divided families can worship together. Small, struggling ecclesias can merge. Young people can find new friends in the Truth. Outreach can be strengthened. The stigma of division will be gone. Fellowship with our brethren will have been achieved!

WHO IS THE STEERING COMMITTEE?

The Committee developed from the initial participants in the discussions. As discussions progressed, the Committee met to assess and incorporate recommendations for improving the Statement. Changes recommended by one group of ecclesias were then reviewed with other participating groups. The committee has now expanded, representing a wider geographical area. Its current work is to help other ecclesias and brothers and sisters across the Continent with the NASU statement. The Committee members are listed at the bottom of this newsletter.

UNITY PROGRESS

Ecclesias are studying the Statement. Activities include a meeting with Committee representatives to explain the document, ecclesial meetings to discuss the document and questions sent to the Committee for clarification. The Steering Committee is available to help your ecclesia.

WEB SITE

The web site is now open. Its address is www.NASU.ca. You will find the NASU document there in its entirety. There is also an e-mail address, info@NASU.ca, for any who wish to send a question or comment to the Committee. Information updates will be posted on this site please check periodically.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Question: Is this an emotional appeal?

Answer: The NASU was compiled after nearly six years of careful study of "those things most surely believed among us". With Bibles in hand, many brethren revisited the doctrinal understandings of both Amended and Unamended positions. It was, of necessity, largely an 'academic', in-depth study to appreciate each other's position. It was a serious biblical examination, not a superficial or emotionally based effort.

Question: Must we make a decision now?

Answer: No decision is needed at this stage.

Question: What can I do to help?

Answer: Of first importance, pray! We know that if God doesn't build our house, we labour in vain. Your prayers and the prayers of your ecclesia are important. Next, study the NASU with your Bible open. Check

the references. Discuss it with others in your ecclesia.

Question: Where do I go with my questions?

Answer: First go to the arranging brethren of your ecclesia or you can send your questions to the committee by mail or e-mail. The Steering Committee stands ready to respond to written questions, are prepared to travel to your ecclesia to talk about the agreement. Please be patient. It will take time to answer all the questions. Through God's grace, all this will be accomplished.

Question: How does anyone contact the Committee?

Answer: They can write to it in care of the address at the bottom of this newsletter. You may also wish to use our e-mail address.

Brethren of the Christadelphian NASU Steering Committee:

Ken Curry; Don Davies; Don Elliott; Doug Finlay; Ian Finlay; Rod Ghent; George Jackson; Ian McPhee; Ron McPhee; Noel Peare; Andrew Pearse; Ron Waye; William Yake; Paul Zilmer; Colin Badger, Advisor to the Committee.

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