

Questions and Answers

Related to the 2006 Unity Proposal

1. Why do we need a statement of belief? What about the danger of creeds?

The following reasons indicate why we advocate such statements. 1) The apostolic church and succeeding generations expressed core convictions whenever it was called for. 2) Others will misrepresent us if we do not represent ourselves. 3) Declaring them in advance hinders those of hidden belief systems from rising up in times of uncertainty. 4) The consensus among our fellowship is for us to stand together for greater truths and cherished values and to express them honestly.

The creed fear is understandable but probably a fundamental point of disagreement in the end. We still had at the eleventh hour a few folks (truly just a few) who felt that any writing was automatically a "creed" and somehow unscriptural. No doubt we can be a slave to our writings and that must be said and fought against. At the same time, just as the Jerusalem council issued a simple (but radical) statement to clarify a controversy, this doc also seeks just to bring clarity to our recent chaos.

2. What exactly are you asking us to sign up for?

We are simply calling for those churches that are unified on the statement of beliefs, general practices and connections to begin the process of rebuilding a stronger and more unified brotherhood. We are also proposing that if a church does "sign up" that they will participate with a regional group either based on geography or relationships.

3. Do you have a proposal for a fellowship leadership group? If so, what model?

Much of that will be decided when the first group meets. It is likely that a chairman will be selected and certain committees or task forces set up to address certain needs such as a smaller group to help coordinate the fellowship of churches. Questions about length of service and selection process are ongoing discussions.

It is important to keep firmly in mind that such a leadership team or sub-committees or task forces only exist to serve the trans-regional or trans-congregational needs that are beyond the scope of an individual church leadership. Such structure is for facilitation of unified decisions where needed, and not for the creating of an authority that oversees congregations.

4. Who could make proposals?

Any representative from a participating church could submit a proposal to the Leadership Team. Currently so many needs have gone overlooked or been neglected that it will take some time for this group to catch up, so to speak.

5. What if a church decides later to join or not participate?

The door should never be closed for a church to later join or withdraw their association at anytime for any reason.

6. How should those churches be treated that choose not to sign up?

There may be many different reasons why some churches may not sign up. They are still our brothers and sisters in Christ, and we need to continue to respect, love, and cherish one another in the Lord. But it does give us an awareness of those churches that want to take part in an active fellowship amongst one another.

7. Would our church ever be coerced to give up leaders, people, or money to other churches or mission efforts?

No. These coercive practices are not respectful, loving, and considerate and must not ever be tolerated. Great respect and love must be freely given between congregations that both give and receive training and input. We are proposing cooperation not independence. There still is much to do that will require our united efforts.

8. Would churches ever be required to give a specific amount to missions support?

No, we do not believe that any amount should ever be given under compulsion (2 Corinthians 9:7). Certainly appeals would be made as needs come up, strategies are formed and consensus is formed.

9. Does our commitment of the older women training the younger women mean that the women must be paid staff?

The woman's section merely means churches CAN (that it's not unscriptural--that we won't teach in our churches that it's a sin to do this) hire women, not that they must. Although that may be preferred and encouraged, the commitment is not one of compensation, but believing that women have a God-given ministry with other women—one of training, counseling, and studying with other women. This document doesn't even say that men must be paid as staff. Those decisions are local not church wide.

10. Does “remembering the poor” mean that our church must give to a particular charity such as HOPE Worldwide?

Not necessarily. That is a decision of the local church leadership, though we commend all the good works that HOPE Worldwide has accomplished in helping the poor and involving so many disciples in that endeavor.

11. Are you saying that the fellowship is against members marrying non-Christians?

No. We are saying that God is against it. Scriptures such as 2 Corinthians 6:14ff give us principles from which biblical inferences can be drawn. Marriage and romantic interests need to be pursued within the boundaries of biblically defined disciples.

12. Will this document ever need revising?

Yes, in the future. This is just to meet the needs that we are dealing with now. There is undoubtedly much more of New Testament Christianity that we need to restore.