



The Unification Task Force, after much prayer and joint work, has developed a proposed plan of union. The members seek input from membership of both denominations in the finalization process. A guiding principle to the work of the UTF has been that members of the UTF represent the membership, the people around the globe who must desire unity for this plan to be successful. The plan leaves much of the real work of unification in the hands of the people. With this proposed plan and a process of reflection in mind, the UTF also constructed a timeline of events for unification.

### ***Proposed Plan for Union of Cumberland Presbyterian Church and Cumberland Presbyterian Church in America (with Reflection Guide)***

"There is one, holy, universal, apostolic church. She is the body of Christ, who is her Head and Lord" (Confession of Faith 5.01). "The church is one because her head and Lord is one, Jesus Christ. Her oneness under her Lord is manifested in the one ministry of word and sacrament, not in any uniformity of covenantal expression, organization, or system of doctrine" (5.02). "The church, as the covenant community of believers who are redeemed, includes all people in all ages, past, present, and future, who respond in faith to God's covenant of grace, all who are unable to respond, for reasons known to God, but who are saved by his grace" (5.06). It is on this belief that the Unification Task Force recommends the union of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church in America (CPCA) and the Cumberland Presbyterian Church (CPC). We are one in Christ by the grace of God and the power of the Holy Spirit! We believe that becoming one will strengthen our witness as Christian believers in the world, and that together we will be able to accomplish more for the glory of God. United together in Christ by faith, we are united to one another in love. In this communion we share the grace of Christ with one another, bear one another's burdens, and reach out to all other persons (5.10).

#### **1.00 The Name of the New Denomination**

The name of the denomination shall be the United Cumberland Presbyterian Church.

*Reflect:* Do you think this is a good name? Why or why not?

#### **2.00 The Logo of the New Church**

A new logo will be fashioned by the new church.

*Reflect:* Do you have an idea for a new logo? Some suggestions of the survey included comments about maintaining the global nature of the new church and incorporating components of both denominations' current logos. What do you think about this idea?

#### **3.00 Mission Statement for the New Church**

The United Cumberland Presbyterian Church affirms the great commission of Christ: "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember I am with you until the end of the age" (Matthew 28:19-20). We celebrate our oneness in faith. As disciples, we seek through worship, global witness, and service to be the hands and feet of Christ and to live out the inclusive love of Jesus Christ to the glory of God.

*Reflect:* What would you add or remove from this statement, if anything? Is there another scripture text that you would suggest for a mission statement?

#### **4.00 The Confession of Faith and Government**

The United Cumberland Presbyterian Church will use the *Confession of Faith and Government of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church and the Cumberland Presbyterian Church in America*, approved by both General Assemblies of the former denominations in 1984 as its system of faith and government.

*Reflect:* Did you know that the Confession of Faith and the Government of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church and Cumberland Presbyterian Church in America include the following: the Constitution, the Rules of Discipline, the Directory for Worship and the Rules of Order? Find a copy and explore this important document! (Current printing Jan 2014)

*It should be noted that in the Constitution (4.6, 5.6p) the CPC allows for the session to request permission from Presbytery for a designated elder to serve communion for a one year period of time. This is an exception, NOT A RULE for general practice, for those presbyteries that have difficulty supplying each church with an ordained minister. The responsibility lies with presbytery for proper training and oversight of the designated elder. Again, is this an EXCEPTION. No presbytery is required to apply this exception.*

*Reflect:* Is this an issue in your presbytery? Are there ordained clergy in your presbytery who are not serving a church or could make arrangements to fill this need? How do you feel about elders being trained to serve communion?

**4.01** The United Cumberland Presbyterian Church will use the *Catechism for Cumberland Presbyterians* (2008) for instruction in the faith and will include it in an updated Confession of Faith.

*Reflect:* Does your church use the catechism for study? Do you know where to locate it? Ask your pastor or session clerk.

**4.02** The CP Digest (CPC) and Summaries of Actions (for both denominations) will continue to serve as resource tools. A new Digest will begin with the formation of the United Cumberland Presbyterian Church.

*Reflect:* These resources are interpretations of actions by both churches and there may be value in retaining them in the new church. What do you think? Why or why not?

#### **5.00 The Presbyteries and Synods**

**5.01** In an effort to make union something more than just an idea on paper, and to engage the grassroots in creating the new church, we recommend a restructure of the synod boundaries in the following way –

Mission	Midwest	Tennessee	Alabama
Angelina (6-107)	Cleveland, OH (4-315)	Columbia (34 – 3,003)	Birmingham (6-203)
Arkansas (60-3,343)	Covenant (42 – 5,133)	Elk River (11-89)	Florence (5-274)
Brazos River (9-432)	Cumberland (64-4,939)	Hiawassee (9-758)	Grace (38 – 3,946)
Choctaw (7-140)	Missouri (24 – 1,185)	Murfreesboro (43 -4,699)	Hope (10 – 1,502)
Del Cristo (11- 3,917)	New Hopewell (11-387)	Nashville (39 – 5,231)	Huntsville (18-3178)
East Texas (4-101)	North Central (35 – 2,548)	East Tennessee (37 – 5,199)	Robert Donnell (21 – 1,726)
Red River (27- 3,795)	Ohio Valley (4-128)	Tenn/Georgia (37 – 2,622)	South Alabama (6-328)
Trinity (23-2,689)	Purchase (3-44)	Cumber E Coast Korean (5- 194)	Tenn Valley (8-523)
Andes (10 – 1,917)	West Tenn (95 – 9,892)		Tuscaloosa (7-251)
Cauca Valley (20 – 2,972)			
Hong Kong (10 – 1,947)			
Japan (14 – 2,314)			

For relationship building during the first six years, all synods will be an annual general meeting (Constitution 8.2) as opposed to a delegated meeting. Synods may petition General Assembly at any point for a change in boundaries.

*Reflect:* In which synod is your presbytery? What is your opinion of this structure? Can you suggest a different synod structure? If you could redraw synod boundaries how might that look?

**5.02** Presbyteries will remain as they are constituted at the time of union for a period of six years, during which a study of restructure will be made by synods.

The constitutional processes for restructuring presbyteries will be applicable (Constitution 8.5c).

*Reflect:* If you were on a committee to restructure presbytery boundaries, what would be important to you? Look in your Confession of Faith to review the process for restructuring presbyteries. What are your thoughts? What are some of the benefits of restructuring? What are some challenges? What are some benefits/challenges to the current structure?

## 6.00 Commissioners and Youth Advisory Delegates to the General Assembly

**6.01** The current formula for representation will prevail for six years or until the restructuring of presbyteries occurs, whichever comes first.

CPCA		CPC	
1-200 active membership in Presbytery	1 minister/1 elder	1-1000	1 minister/ 1 elder
201-400	2 ministers/2 elders	1001-2000	2 ministers/2 elders
401-1000	3 ministers/3 elders	Above 2000	Continue in the above proportions
1001- above	4 ministers/4 elders		

*Reflect:* Did you know that CPCA representation at General Assembly is 52 and the CPC General Assembly representation is 120? What are your thoughts about the difference in representation? Once the new church is formed, what would be your suggestion for a new representation ratio?

**6.02** Each presbytery is entitled to send up to two Youth Advisory delegates to the General Assembly.

*Reflect:* Did you know that at the 2013 CPC General Assembly, the YADs voted unanimously in favor of unification when polled by the Moderator? What do the young people in your setting think about unification?

## **7.00 Moderator and Vice Moderator of General Assembly**

**7.01** The moderator/vice moderator will be elected each year during the first six years with both offices alternating between the two former denominations.

**7.02** The moderator and vice moderator of the United Cumberland Presbyterian Church will reflect its diverse nature, to include international representatives. The church expects the moderator and vice moderator to travel within the denomination, sharing and gathering information among its local churches. Travel expenses for the moderator and vice moderator will be paid.

*Reflect:* Currently, the CPCA provides an honorarium as well as travel reimbursement for the moderator and vice moderator. In the CPC, the moderators receive only travel reimbursements. What do you think would be fair in the new denomination?

## **8.00 Stated Clerk and Associate Stated Clerk of the General Assembly**

**8.01** The new church shall employ a Stated Clerk and an Associate Stated Clerk. Both positions will be full-time jobs. During the first six years of the United Cumberland Presbyterian Church, the Stated Clerk will serve six years and the Associate Stated Clerk will serve four years, after which each would be elected for a four-year period. One position will be filled by a former CPCA and the other position filled by a former CPC during their first terms. The subsequent election of each position will allow for continuity during transitions.

*Reflect:* After the initial six (6) years, these positions will be elected from the new church. Currently, there are no term limits in the CPC, but in the CPCA it is 12 years. Although they have the same title, the job duties of the Stated Clerk vary greatly between the two denominations. The CPC Stated Clerk includes many duties of the CPCA Administrative Director. The Associate Clerk position is a new position for both denominations. What type of leadership do you think would best serve the new church? How do you see these two roles being lived out in the new church?

## **9.00 Boards and Agencies of the General Assembly**

**9.01** Each church has programs in various stages of planning and implementation that are the result of commitment to ministry through the church. Insofar as possible, these plans and programs will be continued without interruption for a period of three years. The United Cumberland Presbyterian Church will continue ecumenical partnerships, such as the World Communion of Reformed Churches.

*Reflect:* There are already a number of joint ministries between the two denominations - Coalition of Appalachian Ministries, Federated Board of Christian Education, Unified Committee on Theology and Social Concerns, Historical Foundation, Memphis Theological Seminary, Commission on Military Chaplains & Personnel. Were you aware of how much we work together already? Have you served on any of these joint ministries?

## **9.02 Institutional Boards**

The General Assembly shall have the following institutional boards: Trustees of Memphis Theological Seminary to include the Program of Alternate Studies and School of Continuing Education Committee, and Trustees of the Historical Foundation. Representation on each Board of Trustees will remain as they are constituted at the time of union.

**9.03** The General Assembly shall have the following commission: Chaplains and Military Personnel. Representation on the commission will be merged as they are constituted at the time of union until natural rotation occurs.

**9.04** GA shall have the following standing committees: Theology and Social Concerns, Judiciary, Our United Outreach, Nominating, and Multi-Cultural Ministry.

Committee representation on Theology and Social Concerns will remain as constituted at the time of union until natural rotations occurs.

Judiciary and Nominating committees in both denominations will each be merged at the time of union.

Committee representation for Our United Outreach will be expanded to include two elected representatives from each new synod (one voting representative from each of the former denominations until natural rotation occurs).

Committee on Multi-Cultural Ministry is a new committee that will reflect the diversity of the United Cumberland Presbyterian Church.

*Reflect:* The Multi-Cultural Committee is a NEW committee. Representation will reflect the diversity of the United Cumberland Presbyterian Church. What voices do you think need to be around this table? What can you do in your local setting to promote education about cultural intelligence within the new denomination?

**9.05** The United Cumberland Presbyterian Church will have a Mission Programming Board to provide coordination and oversight for those ministries formally planned and implemented by the two former denominations. After the three-year period, the new programming and denominational structure will consist of the following ministries and entities –

- Christian Education & Nurture (Youth Convention & National Sunday School Convention, Discipleship Ministry)
- Missions (Evangelism, Missionary Auxiliary, Women's Ministry)
- Clergy Care & Development
- Communications (Cumberland Flag, Cumberland Presbyterian Magazine, Missionary Messenger, website)

*Reflect:* What would you call this new programming entity? What name would you give to each programming area of the new church? Are there any ministry areas missing? If so, describe other ministries that need to be included in this new entity.

## **10. Denominational Staff Personnel & Offices**

Currently, the CPCA employs two full time staff members; the CPC employs twenty-five staff members.

**10.01** The new organizational structure will discontinue the positions of Administrative Director (CPCA) and the Director of Ministries (CPC) and will create the position of Associate Stated Clerk. The Stated Clerk and Associate Stated Clerk will be elected during the General Assembly of 2018. The Implementation Task Force will make recommendations to the 2018 Assembly about the transition in staffing to be complete by the 2019 Assembly.

**10.02** Staffing for the United Cumberland Presbyterian Church will reflect the diversity of the new church. As new staff positions become available, equal opportunity employment practices will prevail.

**10.03 Denominational Centers** –During the first six years, steps are to be taken to assure that regional centers be located in a minimum of three and a maximum of five locations. Thus, neither the Center in Huntsville nor the Center in Memphis will be designated as “ the denominational center.” By placing regional centers in a variety of locations this will assure that all areas of the church will be served equally. (possible regional locations could be Memphis, Huntsville, Louisville, Texas, South America, Asia)

*Reflect:* What do you think about the possibility of regional centers? How do you envision these centers working for the benefit of the denomination? Are there certain regions that would be good areas for particular ministries?

### **10.03 Global Staff**

There will be endorsed missionaries and partner missionaries in the new church. The new church will continue to support the current and future missionaries and global work. Current missionaries include – Boyce & Beth Wallace (Colombia, SA), Glenn Watts (Hong Kong), Anay Ortega (Guatemala), Phanor & Socorro Pejendino (Guatemala), Daniel & Kay Jang (Philippines), Kenneth & Deligh Hopson (Uganda), Lawrence and Loretta Fung (Asian ministry USA), Carlos and Luz Dary Rivera (Mexico), Missionaries in undisclosed (6), CP missionaries supported by their presbyteries – Iwao Satoh and Keishi and Kazuko Ishitsuka

### **11.00 Stewardship and Finance**

**11.01** Legal control of assets of both churches will be transferred to the United Cumberland Presbyterian Church through appropriate legal transaction. The intent of all designated gifts and endowments will be honored.

**11.02** The United Cumberland Presbyterian Church will develop an approach to the financing of the programs of the church that reflects the stewardship understanding of the new constituency. Such a unitary approach will be developed as soon as possible after formation and no later than the end of the first six years.

*Reflect:* Within the CPC, ministries are funded through “Our United Outreach (OUO)” on a denominational level. Each congregation gives 10% to OUO based on their annual income. Presbyteries are funded by apportionments or the like, and synods are funded indirectly through the presbyteries. Within the CPCA, ministries are funded by a congregational tithe of 10%. 7% goes to the General Assembly, 2% to Presbytery, and 1% to synod. In both denominations, some income is exempt from the tithe calculation.

What does this new approach to giving in the United Cumberland Presbyterian Church mean? Does it mean churches no longer give to their presbytery or denomination? NO  
- Each local congregation will continue in their giving practices until a new plan is approved by General Assembly.

### **12.00 Recognition of Ordination**

**12.01** All ordinations, both clergy and lay (elders and deacons), of both denominations will be recognized by the United Cumberland Presbyterian Church. All future ordinations will be governed by the conditions specified in the Constitution.

## Proposed Time Line for Unification

### *Planning Phase*

1. Beginning June 2014: Individuals, groups, congregations, presbyteries, synods, and all others, study the proposed Plan of Union prayerfully. Comments and responses may be made online at [www.cumberland.org/unification](http://www.cumberland.org/unification) or sent to either General Assembly Office by July 1, 2015.
2. By the 2016 General Assemblies: The UTF will review responses to the proposed Plan of Union and formulate a revised Plan of Union. A draft plan of the bylaws and standing rules will also be presented to the General Assemblies. The Assemblies will be asked to approve the Plan of Union and send it to presbyteries for ratification. The Assemblies will form a Joint Implementation Task Force and dissolve the Unification Task Force.
3. Between June 2016 and June 2017: The Plan of Union will be sent to presbyteries in each denomination for ratification. The draft plan of the bylaws and standing rules will be available for study and response. Implementation Task Force will work with attorneys to finalize new bylaws and standing rules.
4. By the 2017 General Assemblies (concurrent called meeting of CPCA): Ratification Process for the Plan of Union will be complete. Revised bylaws and standing rules will be presented to Assemblies for approval. Both Assemblies will adjourn in 2017 to meet together as the United Cumberland Presbyterian Church in 2018.
5. 2018: Celebration of the United Cumberland Presbyterian Church!

### *Implementation Phase*

The first six years after unification (2017-2023), implementation of the plan for union for the new church (which will include chartering the new church, monitoring changes to synod/presbytery boundaries, development of unified denominational programming and staff, exploration of new regional centers).

*Reflect:* What are your thoughts on this time line? Does it need to be longer? Shorter?  
What are any additional tasks that need to be done during the implementation phase?  
What specific things will you do to help implement this plan?

