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REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON CHAPLAINS/HISTORICAL FOUNDATION

I. REFERRALS

Referrals to this committee are as follows: The Report of the Board of Trustees of the Historical Foundation and the Report of the Commission on Chaplains and Military Personnel.

II. PERSONS OF COUNSEL

Appearing before this committee were: Ms. Susan Knight Gore, Archivist, Historical Foundation; Reverend Lisa Oliver, Board Representative, Historical Foundation; Navy Chaplain Lyman M. Smith (CAPT, CHC, USN), Director of the Presbyterian Council for Chaplains and Military Personnel, and Reverend Charles McCaskey, representative to the Presbyterian Council for Chaplains and Military Personnel.

III. CONSIDERATION OF REFERRALS

A. REPORT OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE HISTORICAL FOUNDATION

The Chaplains/Historical Foundation Committee commends the work of the Historical Foundation, giving thanks for their passionate leadership and dedication to the preservation of the history of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church in America and the Cumberland Presbyterian Church. The committee recognizes the difficulties in attempting to retrieve and preserve all kinds of history and memorabilia from the ministry of these churches, and we applaud the dedication of the Historical Foundation for their tireless service. We are especially thankful for Mrs. Susan Knight Gore and Reverend Lisa Oliver for appearing before and sharing with our committee.

1. HISTORY INTERPRETATION AND PROMOTIONAL ACTIVITIES A. 1810/1874 Circle

RECOMMENDATION 1: That Recommendation 1 of the Report of the Historical Foundation, “that the General Assembly instruct presbyteries to make congregations aware of the 1810/1874 circle and encourage new members to support this endeavor annually,” be adopted

2. DENOMINATION DAY OFFERING

RECOMMENDATION 2: That Recommendation 2 of the Report of the Historical Foundation, “that the General Assembly instruct presbyteries to encourage their congregations to have a special offering on the Sunday designated as denomination day to help support the special project designated for that year,” be adopted.

3. PUBLICATION SERIES

RECOMMENDATION 3: That Recommendation 3 of the Report of the Historical Foundation, “that the General Assembly make presbyteries aware that the Historical Foundation is interested and has funds to publish books on topics concerning the Cumberland Presbyterian Church and Cumberland Presbyterian Church in America, and instruct them to share this information with the churches and individuals of their presbytery,” be adopted.

B. REPORT OF THE COMMISSION ON MILITARY CHAPLAINS AND PERSONNEL

The Chaplains/Historical Foundation committee was grateful to hear from the new leadership of the PCCMP, Navy Chaplain Lyman M. Smith, and wishes to thank Chaplain Smith for appearing before the committee, especially given his tight schedule and many other responsibilities. We applaud the work of the PCCMP and are grateful for their role as “Chaplain to our Chaplains,” serving the role of pastoral care for the women and men called by God to serve as chaplains in the military.

We discussed the global nature of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church and the different ways military is viewed in ecclesiastical bodies outside the United States. For this reason, and for the reason that the observations suggested by the report are important historical days for the United States and not for other nations, and the PCCMP endorses chaplains to United States military only and not to other military bodies in the world, the committee felt it was appropriate to encourage the observation of the date suggested to be only for congregations in the United States.

1. Support of the PCCMP

RECOMMENDATION 1: That Recommendation 1 of the Report of the Commission on Military Chaplains and Personnel, “that each Cumberland Presbyterian Church provide an opportunity for their congregations to receive an offering on the last Sunday of May, or another special day, to support our ministry through the PCCMP,” be denied.

RECOMMENDATION 2: That General Assembly instruct presbyteries to encourage congregations in the United States to receive an offering on the last Sunday of May, or another special day, to support our ministry through the PCCMP.

The committee recognized that we are not empowered to make changes to the budget of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, and felt it was not appropriate to pass a resolution that suggested we had that authority.

RECOMMENDATION 3: That Recommendation 2 of the Report of the Commission on Military Chaplains and Personnel, “that the budget line item of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church designated for the PCCMP be increased by 2 % beginning in 2020,” be denied.

RECOMMENDATION 4: That the office of Our United Outreach be encouraged to increase the 2019 budget designated to the PCCMP by 2% for fiscal year 2020.

RECOMMENDATION 5: That Recommendation 3 of the Report of the Commission on Military Chaplains and Personnel, “that individual congregations of the Cumberland Presbytery determine and designate special days through the year to hold up the Chaplains and their families in the service to which they have been endorsed,” be denied.

RECOMMENDATION 6: That the General Assembly instruct presbyteries to encourage congregations in the United States to determine and designate special days through the year to hold up the Chaplains and their families in the service to which they have been endorsed.

Respectfully submitted,
The Chaplains/Historical Foundation committee

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THEOLOGY AND SOCIAL CONCERNS/ UNIFICATION TASK FORCE

I. REFERRAL

Referrals to this committee are as follows: The Report of the Ministry Council, Section 1.B.6 and Appendix A Questions for the Unification Task Force; The Report of the Unified Committee on Theology and Social Concerns; and The Report of the Unification Task Force.

II. PERSONS OF COUNSEL

Appearing before this committee were: Reverend Mitchell Walker (CPCA) and Reverend Joy Warren (CPC), representatives of the Unification Task Force; Reverend Byron Forester, board member and Reverend Richard Morgan, representative, Theology and Social Concerns (CPC); Reverend Carolyn Goins and Reverend Mike Cooper, Theology and Social Concerns (CPCA); Reverend Ron McMillan; Reverend Chris Warren; Mr Ben Diaz; Ms Edith Old, Director of Ministries; and Ms. Victory Moore, representative Ministry Council.

III. CONSIDERATION OF REFERRALS

A. REPORT OF THE MINISTRY COUNCIL, SECTION 1.B.6 AND APPENDIX A QUESTIONS FOR THE UNIFICATION TASK FORCE

The committee considered the reports, and after consultation with representatives of the Unification Task Force and the Ministry Council, the committee believes better communication between the Ministry Council and the Unification Task Force is needed.

RECOMMENDATION 1: That the Ministry Council and the Unification Task Force be encouraged to meet together as early as the August 2018 meeting of the Ministry Council and no later than the end of 2018 to establish a viable network of communication between those entities so that they may continue to work for a successful unification of the CPC and the CPCA.

RECOMMENDATION 2: That Item I.B.6 and Appendix A be referred to the Unification Task Force for its continued work.

B. UNIFIED COMMITTEE ON THEOLOGY AND SOCIAL CONCERNS

The committee concurs in the report. The committee questions the wisdom of including mention of specific unpublished study papers.

RECOMMENDATION 3: That the Unified Committee on Theology and Social Concerns make available to the church at large its guidelines for the panel described in its report.

C. UNIFICATION TASK FORCE

The committee received the report. The committee shares the concerns of the Ministry Council over legal and logistical issues. We affirm the care and thought that have already been put into the work of unification by the task force and have full confidence that they will provide appropriate answers to the council's questions.

We would affirm the formation of a separate Implementation Task Force might be helpful with the creation of the new denomination after unification occurs.

We affirm the steps already taken by the CPCA in amending its constitution to facilitate a move toward unification.

RECOMMENDATION 5: That Recommendation 1 of the Report of the Unification Task, “that the General Assembly of the CPC accept, with gratitude for her faithful service to the Unification Task Force, the resignation of Pam Phillips-Burk from the UTF,” be adopted.

RECOMMENDATION 6: That Recommendation 2 of the Report of the Unification Task, “that the General Assemblies of the CPCA and CPC approve the proposed timeline for action,” be adopted.

The detailed timeline for consideration of the plan of union reads as follows:

- 2018 General Assemblies – Meeting concurrently in Norman, Oklahoma, the assemblies propose any changes to the Plan of Union that will need to be incorporated before the vote at the two General Assemblies in 2019.
- 2018-2019 – The Task Force makes final revisions to the Plan of Union, writes Draft Bylaws, Standing Rules, and Constitutional amendments based on the final version of the Plan to be distributed for study in April 2019.
- 2019 – Meeting concurrently in Huntsville, Alabama, the two assemblies vote on approving the Plan of Union, Bylaws, Standing Rules, and Constitutional Amendments, pending approval of a majority of presbyteries of the two churches. Any Constitutional amendments are sent to the Joint Committee on Amendments for review and preparation of final wording.
- 2019-2020 – If approved by a majority of both assemblies, the Plan is sent to the Presbyteries of both churches for approval.
- 2020 – The two Assemblies, meeting concurrently, announce the vote of their Presbyteries, and if approved by a majority of both, vote on final approval of Bylaws and Standing Rules for the General Assembly of the new church (2/3 vote of approval necessary). Constitutional amendments reviewed and prepared by the Joint Committee on Amendments are approved (3/4 vote of approval necessary to refer amendments to Presbyteries for approval, and 3/4 of presbyteries, voting by simple majority, needed to approve amendments). If both assemblies approve Bylaws, the two assemblies vote to adjourn sine die, and immediately meet to organize the new Assembly of the united Church. The Unification Task Force is dismissed, and an Implementation Task Force is elected to guide the transition for the first few years to the new denomination.

RECOMMENDATION 7: That Recommendation 3 of the Report of the Unification Task Force, “that the fourth Sunday in June 2019 be recognized in the CPC and the CPCA as Unification Sunday, and that all churches be encouraged to pray for our unity in Jesus Christ, and for discernment as we seek to express our unity more fully in the future,” be denied.

RECOMMENDATION 8: That the 4th Sunday in June 2019 be recognized in the CPC and the CPCA as Unification Sunday, and that all presbyteries encourage their churches to pray for our unity in Jesus Christ, and for discernment as we seek to express our unity more fully in the future.

IV. RESOLUTIONS

A. Resolution from Reverend Chris Warren of Murfreesboro Presbytery regarding the importance of welcome for those who are “strangers in the land” at the southern border of the United States.

The committee heard and questioned Reverend Warren regarding the resolution. The committee supports the intent of the resolution but questions the author’s use of the phrase “demand that those with the authority to do so” in the final paragraph.

RECOMMENDATION 9: That the resolution from Reverend Chris Warren that states:

“WHEREAS the foundational texts of the Christian Church, found in the Old and New Testaments of the Holy Bible emphasize the importance of welcome for those who are strangers in the land;

Deuteronomy 10: 17-19 “For the LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who is not partial and takes no bribe, who executes justice for the orphan and the widow, and who loves the strangers providing them with food and clothing. You shall also love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.”

Job 29: 11-16 “When the ear heard, it commended me, and when the eye saw, it approved; because I delivered the poor who cried and the orphan who had no helper. The blessing of the wretched came upon me, and I caused the widow’s heart to sing for joy. I put on righteousness, and it clothed me; my justice was like a robe and a turban. I was eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame. I was father to the needy, and I championed the cause of the stranger.”

Psalms 146:7b-9 “The LORD sets the prisoners free; the LORD opens the eyes of the blind. The LORD lifts up those who are bowed down; the LORD loves the righteous. The LORD watches over the strangers; he upholds the orphan and the widow, but the way of the wicked he brings to ruin.”

Matthew 25 :34-40 “Then the king will say to those at his right hand, ‘Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.’ The the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?’ And the king will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.’”

WHEREAS the Scripture teaches that people of God should love our neighbors as ourselves (Leviticus 19: 18, Matthew 22:39) and Christians have interpreted this command to apply to people both near and far away, and Romans 13: 10 teaches “Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law;”

WHEREAS our Lord Jesus taught the Golden Rule, “In everything do to others as you would have them do unto you; for this is the law and the prophets;”

WHEREAS the Cumberland Presbyterian Church is a global church, with members in many different countries, all members of which, from whatever place they come, are loved and cherished by God;

WHEREAS the Confession of Faith of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church states in section 6:15 that “God created the family as the primary community in which persons experience love, companionship, support, protection, discipline, encouragement, and other blessings ... “

WHEREAS the Confession of Faith of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church states in sections 6.30- 6.31 that “The covenant community, governed by the Lord Christ, opposes, resists, and seeks to change all circumstances of oppression--political, economic, cultural, racial-by which persons are denied the essential dignity God intends for them in the work of creation. The covenant community affirms the lordship of Christ who sought out the poor, the oppressed, the sick, and the helpless. In her corporate life and through her individual members, the church is an advocate for all victims of violence and all those who the law or society treats as less than persons for whom Christ died. Such advocacy involves not only opposition to all unjust laws and forms of injustice but even more support for those attitudes and actions which embody the way of Christ, which is to overcome evil with good.

WHEREAS the current policy at the southern border of the United States is to detain adults who approach the border whether seeking asylum or other entry into the United States and to separate the children of those adults from their parents without any indication when their children will be restored to them, thus violating the command to welcome the stranger and the importance of the family life as the primary place in which people find love, including the love of God;

WHEREAS the way of Christ, overcoming evil with good, is violated by these denials of human rights and essential dignity; and

WHEREAS the Cumberland Presbyterian Church serves the one true God who is not limited or biased in love to people of any race, creed, nation, or any other factor used by humanity to divide;

BE IT RESOLVED that the 188th General Assembly of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church denounces the abhorrent treatment of those attempting to apply for asylum to the United States or enter the United States from its southern border;

BE IT RESOLVED that an attempt to justify this treatment of any human by use of the scripture of the Holy Bible is a gross misuse of scripture;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the 188th General Assembly of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church demands that those with the authority to do so stop these practices, particularly the practice of dividing children from their parents, contributing to terror, uncertainty, and unnecessary cruel suffering to families of God’s beloved.

Respectfully Submitted, Reverend Chris Warren, Minister Commissioner to the 188th General Assembly of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, Murfreesboro Presbytery,” be denied.

RECOMMENDATION 10: That the 188th General Assembly of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church joins with the chorus of other denominations denouncing the abhorrent treatment of those attempting to apply for asylum or enter into the United States from our southern border, particularly the practice of dividing children from their parents, contributing to terror, uncertainty and unnecessary cruel suffering to families of God’s beloved.

B. Resolution from Reverend Ron McMillan of West Tennessee Presbytery regarding human sexuality.

The committee heard and questioned Reverend McMillan regarding the resolution. The committee affirms the need for a timely loving, Biblical response from the church on the issues presented. We further affirm that the Confession of Faith and Constitution hold us all to seek to support one another. Following lengthy discussion and deliberation, the committee recognizes that there are several judicial implications and a great many theological questions which deserve proper study and consultation before an informed vote can occur.

RECOMMENDATION 11: That the resolution from Reverend Ron McMillan regarding human sexuality, which states:

“Whereas in 1996 the General Assembly adopted a theological and judicial statement on homosexuality (General Assembly Minutes, page 313), and
Whereas since that time the cultural conversation and judicial decisions about marriage, sexuality, and gender identity have expanded well beyond homosexuality to include the broader LGBTQ+ movement since the 1996 General Assembly Statement on Homosexuality, necessitating a loving biblical response from the church, and
Whereas the general revelation of Creation reveals the binary sexuality (despite certain genetic anomalies) of human beings in the natural world; the specific revelation of the Scriptures (Gen. 1:27; 2:18-23) affirms the creation of humanity as male and female in God’s image as being very good and consistently treats biological sex and gender as the same; and our Confession of Faith affirms “Among all forms of life, only human beings are created in God’s own image. In the sight of God, male and female are created equal and complementary” (1.11), and
Whereas the connectional nature of our church, as defined by the Confession of Faith and Constitution, and demonstrated in meetings of the judicatories, churches, and lives of our members, holds us all to seek to live and support one another, holding one another accountable according to the Scriptures and our understanding of its truths as expressed in the above documents, and
Be it resolved that the General Assembly of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church reaffirm and adopt the resolutions made in the 1996 General Assembly Statement on Homosexuality as binding on our presbytery, sessions, ministers, elders, and deacons with the following adaptations:
Be it further resolved that the General Assembly of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church go on record affirming that Biblical teaching makes it clear that the practice of homosexuality or any sex act outside of monogamous marriage between a man and a woman is a sin, yet with the understanding that while God loves the sinner, He hates the sin, and His grace is available to all, ‘For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him’ (John 3:17)
Be it further resolved, that since the practice of homosexuality or any sex act outside of monogamous marriage between a man and a woman is incompatible with a Christian life style and since officers of the church must be ‘examples to the flock’, General Assembly affirms that the Cumberland Presbyterian Church does not condone the ordination of practicing homosexuals or those practicing a lifestyle other than monogamous marriage or celibate singleness as Deacons, Elders or Ministers of Word and Sacrament, nor does it condone or allow the officiating of such weddings by ministers, nor the official sanctioning of such weddings by sessions/ churches, and
Be it further resolved, that the General Assembly, state as its position that we, as Christians who are ourselves sinners redeemed by the grace of God and who continue to struggle with temptation and sin in our own lives (Phil. 2:12-13; 1 Car. 10:12), must reach out to those persons who are struggling with homosexuality or any LGBTQ+ identity, offering them Christian love, education, friendship, therapy and intercession to the end

that they and we may experience true wholeness through the freeing, renewing grace of God in Jesus Christ (Gal. 6:1-3; Jude 22-23),” be denied.

C. Resolution from Reverend Chris Warren of Murfreesboro Presbytery regarding human sexuality.

Received the resolution. The committee heard and questioned Rev. Warren regarding the resolution.

The committee affirms the need to take time to think, study, learn and reflect before developing a position statement on issues of human sexuality.

RECOMMENDATION 12: That the resolution presented by Reverend Chris Warren which states: “WHEREAS Cumberland Presbyterians do not agree on interpretation of scriptural passages, few as they are, that refer to sexuality;

WHEREAS Biblical scholars have offered many different interpretations that are inclusive of sexuality outside a traditional male/female binary;

WHEREAS a resolution to exclude based on sexuality is mean spirited;

BE IT RESOLVED that the General Assembly of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church take time to think, study, learn, and reflect before taking a step to disenfranchise and exclude persons who have a heart to serve Christ and persons who are already serving in leadership roles in the Church.

Respectfully Submitted, Reverend Chris Warren, Minister Commissioner, Murfreesboro Presbytery,” be denied.

V. FURTHER ACTIONS

A. CPC STATEMENT ON HUMAN SEXUALITY

The committee recognizes deficiencies and potential constitutional issues in the resolutions for which we recommend denial. Furthermore, the committee believes there is a need for a great deal more study prior to a vote on issues regarding human sexuality. Yet, it is our desire that the Cumberland Presbyterian Church develop an appropriate response to these critical issues. We strongly urge the denomination to begin with the Statement on Homosexuality adopted by General Assembly in 1996 and consider other pertinent information from various perspectives in order to set forth a loving, Biblical and theologically sound response to these very important questions.

Therefore, we make the following recommendation:

RECOMMENDATION 13: That the Permanent Judiciary Committee and the Unified Committee on Theology and Social Concerns work jointly to develop a position statement on issues of human sexuality to be presented to the 189th General Assembly for its consideration.

B. The committee recognizes the miscommunication regarding joint meetings of the Committees on Theology and Social Concerns of each denomination that were to take place during our General Assemblies. We deeply regret the miscommunication and look forward to future meetings together with our sisters and brothers in Christ.

Respectfully Submitted,

Committee on Theological and Social Concerns/Unification Task Force

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY COUNCIL

I. REFERRALS

Referrals to this committee are as follows: The Report of the Ministry Council, except shaded section 1.B.6 and Appendix A Questions for the Unification Task Force, which are referred to the Committee on Theology & Social Concerns/ Unification Task Force; and the Resolution from Arkansas Presbytery Regarding the Mission and Purpose of the Encounter Publication.

II. PERSONS OF COUNSEL

Appearing before this committee were: Mrs. Edith Old, Director of Ministries; Ms. Victory Moore, Representative from Ministry Council; Reverend Elinor Brown, Discipleship Ministry Team; Reverend Milton Ortiz, Missions Ministry Team; Reverend Drew Gray, member of the Ministry Council; and Reverend Alan Meinzer, Reverend Gordon Warren, Reverend Jo Warren from Arkansas Presbytery.

III. CONSIDERATION OF REFERRALS

A. REPORT OF THE MINISTRY COUNCIL

We commend the Ministry Council for all of their hard work and make the following recommendation:

RECOMMENDATION 1: That Recommendation 1 of the Report of the Ministry Council, “that the 188th General Assembly interpret the phrase “a degree in a graduate school of theology” Constitution 6.34 to be inclusive of Master’s degrees in other forms of Christian ministry (for example MA Youth Ministry, MA Christian Ministry) and not restricted to Master of Divinity,” be adopted.

B. RESOLUTION FROM ARKANSAS PRESBYTERY REGARDING THE MISSION AND PURPOSE OF THE ENCOUNTER PUBLICATION

After reviewing the resolution by the Arkansas Presbytery regarding the mission and purpose of the Encounter Publication, We, the Ministry Council Committee, would like to commend the Arkansas Presbytery on their heartfelt desire to make the Encounter Publication the best tool that it can be for the growth of the CPC Church. We would also like to commend the DMT for having an open-door policy and encourage all congregations to communicate directly with the DMT when concerns arise.

RECOMMENDATION 2: That the Resolution from Arkansas Presbytery which reads:

WHEREAS the Cumberland Presbyterian Church is founded on the teachings of Jesus Christ as expressed in Scripture and the Cumberland Presbyterian Confession of Faith.

WHEREAS the Encounter is a publication of the Cumberland Presbyterian and as such is considered as expressing the beliefs of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church.

WHEREAS the Encounter is in the position to influence Christians in their understanding of scripture and belief, and thus this position places its writers in a position of authority to speak on scripture and belief.

WHEREAS the writers of the Encounter Publications have at times spoken from this position of authority in ways that might be considered as expressing views that are not supported in the Confession of Faith.

WHEREAS in these writings, the author’s may have had the desire to promote thought, they in turn failed to express the point of view found within the Confession of Faith. Such a failure never gave the readers the opportunity to think about the Cumberland Presbyterian View Point. The omission could be troubling because the writers are speaking from a position of authority.

For many churches in Arkansas Presbytery, the most recent examples became quite troubling, as they see the Encounter Publication as a Cumberland Presbyterian Publication. These examples are listed below.

On page 16 of the June, July, August, 2017 Encounter has the following quote:

“For Christians, Jesus is the supreme example of loving kindness. To affirm this belief does not lessen the role of Moses

for Judaism, Mohammed for Islam, or Buddha for Buddhism. It does not deny the positive influence of other important religious teachers. Buddha said often, "My religion is kindness." When anyone relates to the God of creative possibilities, transformation occurs, bringing harmony and peace. Gathering around the gentle teachings that are present in all religions offers a pathway to peace in our global, pluralistic age."

WHEREAS on page 17 of the June, July, August, 2017 Encounter has the following quote:

"Human kindness when grounded in the kindness of God revealed in Jesus' teachings and empowered by God's Spirit is a healing force for good. This healing kindness is also found in the teachings of Buddha."

WHEREAS the above two quotes may appear to elevate the teachings of Buddha and Islam to an equal position of Christ, and also as a way of salvation separate from that of Christ. If we are all kind, however we come to that kindness, then we are doing what God asks us to do, and thus we all find ourselves in a relationship with God.

There may be issues of interpretation and intent with these scriptures, but such interpretation and intent would have been unnecessary if a reference would have been made to our Confession of Faith.

Our Confession of Faith states in

3.07, "God's mighty act of reconciling love was accomplished in Jesus Christ, the divine Son who became flesh to be the means by which the sins of the world are forgiven."

4.10, "When persons repent of sin and in faith embrace God's salvation, they receive forgiveness for their sin and experience acceptance as God's children."

5.29, "Growth is natural to the church's life. The church is called into being and exists to reach out to those who have not experienced God's grace in Christ, and to nourish them with all the means of grace."

5:30, "In carrying out the apostolic commission, the covenant community has encountered and continues to encounter people who belong to religions which do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as Lord. While respecting persons who adhere to other religions, Christians are responsible to share with them the good news of salvation through Jesus Christ."

As Cumberland Presbyterians the "Who So Ever Will" doctrine is central to our faith, understanding, and practice as Cumberland Presbyterians. John 3:16-17 KJV states: *"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that that the world through Him might be saved."*

It is with a want for understanding of the Mission and Purpose of the Encounter Publication that Arkansas Presbytery petitions the 2018 General Assembly to take the following action.

Arkansas Presbytery petitions the 2018 General Assembly of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church to form a Committee to study the mission and purpose of the Encounter Publication in an effort to determine if this publication of the Cumberland Presbyterian is promoting a theology and understanding that supports and upholds our Confession of Faith. In an effort to gather this information the Committee will be asked to review the Adult Encounter Publications for the last 3 years. In this endeavor the Committee will also be instructed to study the subscription list of the Encounter Publication to determine how many of the Cumberland Presbyterian Churches listed in the Yearbook, subscribe to the Encounter. The Committee will also be instructed to inquire of at least 50% of the Cumberland Presbyterian Churches that do not scribe to the Encounter Material, as to why they do not.

After the Committee has completed its task, it will prepare a report to be presented at General Assembly in 2019 that includes all the information that it was asked to gather," be denied.

RECOMMENDATION 3: That the 188th General Assembly request the Discipleship Ministry Team to conduct a census/survey of all congregations in regards to particular churches use of the Encounter Publication with the results of that census/survey disseminated through the stated clerks of each presbytery by the 190th General Assembly.

Respectfully submitted,
The Ministry Council Committee

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON STEWARDSHIP/ELECTED OFFICERS

I. REFERRALS

Referrals to this committee are as follows: The Report of the Moderator; The Report of the Stated Clerk; The Report of the Board of Stewardship, Foundation and Benefits; The Report of the Our United Outreach Committee; The Report of the Place of Meeting Committee; and The Line Item Budgets Submitted by General Assembly Agencies.

II. PERSONS OF COUNSEL

Appearing before this committee were: Reverend Robert Heflin, Mr. Mark Duck, and Board Representative, Mr. Randy Davidson (Board of Stewardship); Reverend Cliff Hudson, and regional representatives: Colatta Edsell, Jeff McMichael and Bruce Hamilton (Our United Outreach Committee); Reverend Michael Sharpe, Stated Clerk; and Reverend Kevin Brantley, Board Representative, Memphis Theological Seminary.

III. CONSIDERATION OF REFERRALS

A. REPORT OF THE MODERATOR

Concurred in the moderator's report and expressed gratitude for Reverend Lancaster's service as moderator. We agree with his assessment that column 5 in the yearbook is the best sign of health and wellness in our churches.

B. THE REPORT OF THE STATED CLERK

The 187th General Assembly submitted to the presbyteries a Constitutional Amendment: Constitution changing 9.5 and inserting 9.6. The necessary number of presbyteries voted in the affirmative.

RECOMMENDATION 1: That Recommendation 1 of the Stated Clerk's report, "that the 188th General Assembly declare that the Constitutional Amendment has been approved," be adopted.

RECOMMENDATION 2: That Recommendation 2 of the Report of the Stated Clerk, "that the 188th General Assembly approve the following dates for the 2018-2019 Church Calendar:

CHURCH CALENDAR 2018-2019

July-2018

- 7 Program of Alternate Studies Graduation
- 7-21 PAS Summer Extension School, Bethel, McKenzie, Tennessee
- 14 Children's Fest
- 14 Middle Schooler's Event
- 21 Children's Fest East

August-2018

- 4 Bethel University Commencement
- 5-Sept 30 Christian Education Season
- 19 Seminary/PAS Sunday
- 20 Bethel University Fall Semester Begins
- 25 MTS Fall Semester Begins (tentative)
- 28 MTS Opening convocation (tentative)
- 30 Bethel University Spring Convocation

September-2018

- 9 Family Sunday
- 9 Senior Adult Sunday
- 16 Christian Service Recognition Sunday
- 16 International Day of Prayer and Action for Human Habitat

23	Seminary Sunday
October-2018	
	Clergy Appreciation Month
7	Worldwide Communion Sunday
7	Pastor Appreciation Sunday
21	Native American Sunday
November-2018	
	Any Sunday Loaves and Fishes Program
1	All Saints Day
2	World Community Day (Church Women United)
4	Bethel University Sunday
4	Stewardship Sunday
11	Day of Prayer for People with Aids and Other Life-Threatening Illnesses
18	Bible Sunday
25	Christ the King Sunday
December-2018	
	Any Sunday Gift to the King Offering
2-24	Advent in Church and Home
8	Bethel University Commencement
24	Christmas Eve
25	Christmas Day
January-2019	
6	Epiphany
7	BU Spring Semester Begins
7	Human Trafficking Awareness Day
7-8	Stated Clerks' Conference
15	Deadline for receipt of 2018 Our United Outreach Contributions
February-2019	
	Black History Month
1	Annual congregational reports due in General Assembly office
3	Denomination Day
3	Historical Foundation Offering
3	Souper Bowl Sunday
10	Our United Outreach Sunday
17	Youth Sunday
March-2019	
	Women's History Month (USA)
6	Ash Wednesday, the beginning of Lent
6-April 21	Lent to Easter
14	Palm/Passion Sunday
17	Children's Home Sunday
24-30	National Farm Workers Awareness Week
April-2019	
18	Maundy Thursday
19	Good Friday
21	Easter
May-2019	
3	Friendship Day (Church Women United)
5	Bethel University Commencement
12	MTS Closing Convocation & Graduation
27	Memorial Day Offering for Military Chaplains & Personnel for USA churches
June-2019	
9	Stott-Wallace Missionary Fund Offering/World penMission Sunday
9	Pentecost

- 16 **CPC Ministries Sunday**
- 10-14 **General Assembly, Huntsville, Alabama**
- 11-13 **CPWM Convention, Huntsville, Alabama**
- 23 **Unification Sunday**
- 23-28 **Cumberland Presbyterian Youth Conference, Bethel University, McKenzie, Tennessee**

July-2019

- 6 **Children's Fest**
- 6 **Middle Schooler's Event**
- 7 **Outdoor Ministries Sunday**
- 13 **Program of Alternate Studies Graduation**
- 13-27 **PAS Summer Extension School, Bethel, McKenzie, Tennessee**
- 16-20 **Presbyterian Youth Triennium**

August-2019

- 4 **Bethel University Commencement**
- 4-Sept 30 **Christian Education Sunday & Season**
- 18 **MTS Fall Semester Begins (tentative)**
- 22 **Seminary/PAS Sunday**
- 22 **Bethel University Fall Semester Begins**
- 25 **MTS Fall Semester Begins (tentative)**
- 28 **MTS Opening convocation (tentative)**
- 30 **Bethel University Spring Convocation**

September-2019

- 4 **MTS Opening convocation (tentative)**
- 8 **Family Sunday**
- 8 **Senior Adult Sunday**
- 15 **Christian Service Recognition Sunday**
- 15 **International Day of Prayer and Action for Human Habitat**

October-2019

- Clergy Appreciation Month**
- 6 **Worldwide Communion Sunday**
- 6 **Pastor Appreciation Sunday**
- 20 **Native American Sunday**

November-2019

- Any Sunday Loaves and Fishes Program**
- 1 **All Saints Day**
- 1 **World Community Day (Church Women United)**
- 3 **Bethel University Sunday**
- 3 **Stewardship Sunday**
- 10 **Day of Prayer for People with Aids and Other Life-Threatening Illnesses**
- 17 **Bible Sunday**
- 24 **Christ the King Sunday**

December-2019

- Any Sunday Gift to the King Offering**
- 2 **PAS Advisory Council**
- 2-24 **Advent in Church and Home**
- 8 **Bethel University Commencement**
- 24 **Christmas Eve**
- 25 **Christmas Day," be adopted.**

C. THE REPORT OF THE BOARD OF STEWARDSHIP, FOUNDATION, AND BENEFITS

We commend the work of the Board and appreciate their hard work on behalf of ministers, churches, and all others they serve.

RECOMMENDATION 3: That Recommendation 1 of the Report of the Board of Stewardship, Foundation, and Benefits, “that the General Assembly approve the amended plan and updates of the Cumberland Presbyterian Retirement Plan #2,” be adopted.

Below is the amended portion:

“As a Participant, you may elect to defer a percentage of your compensation each year instead of receiving that amount in cash. There are two types of pre-tax contributions that you can make under the plan: basic contributions and elective contributions. You may defer up to 5% of your pay as a basic contribution. Once you have reached the contribution limit for the basic contribution, you may defer an additional percentage or dollar amount of your pay as an elective contribution. However, the total deferrals that you can elect to defer from your pay in any taxable year may not exceed certain dollar limit which is set by law. The limit for 2018 is \$18,500.”

D. THE REPORT OF THE OUR UNITED OUTREACH COMMITTEE

Although some ministries occasionally ask for additional offerings, the committee wishes to emphasize that OOU is the primary funding source for all denominational ministries.

Every member of the committee committed to support and promote OOU in our own congregations and presbyteries. We challenge every commissioner and attendee of the 188th General Assembly to do the same.

RECOMMENDATION 4: That Recommendation 1 of the Report of the Our United Outreach Committee, “that General Assembly adopt the following Our United Outreach allocations for 2019:

The allocation is to be as follows:	\$2,600,000.00	
Development Coordinator Office and OOU Committee		92,044.00
Unification Task Force		35,000.00
Sub-total	127,044.00	
(Amount to be allocated)	2,472,956.00	
Ministry Council	\$1,236,478.00	50%
Bethel University	123,648.00	5%
Children’s Home	74,189.00	3%
Stewardship	148,377.00	6%
General Assembly Office	197,836.00	8%
Memphis Theological Seminary/ Program of Alternate Studies	173,107.00	7%
Historical Foundation	74,189.00	3%
Shared Services	408,038.00	16.5%
Contingency	12,365.00	.5%
(Next four items total 1%)		
Comm. on Chaplains	9,570.00	.387%
Judiciary Committee	9,026.00	.365%
Theology/Social Concerns	3,363.00	.136%
Nominating Committee	2,770.00	.112%
	2,472,956.00	

Our United Outreach Goal \$2,600,000.00,” be adopted.

RECOMMENDATION 5: That Recommendation 2 of the Report of the Our United Outreach Committee, “that the OOU committee meeting in an executive session requests General Assembly to direct the Unification Task Force and Development Coordinator Office of OOU to account for expenditures to this committee,” be adopted.

Despite adequate promotion, the reality is that many Cumberland Presbyterians are unaware of the work and importance of OOU.

RECOMMENDATION 6: That Recommendation 3 of the Report of the Our United Outreach Committee, “that the OOU committee requests that the General Assembly challenge churches to invite an OOU Representative or member of the OOU Committee to speak in their congregations,” be denied.

RECOMMENDATION 7: That the OOU committee requests that the presbyteries challenge churches to invite an OOU Representative or member of the OOU committee to speak in their congregations.

RECOMMENDATION 8: That General Assembly By-Law 11.06.01 be amended to read, “The Committee shall consist of five (5) persons elected by the corporation in such a manner, that immediately following any election, the committee shall have one person from each synod. Seven (7) additional members will include a member of the Ministry Foundation and Benefits, a member of the Board of Trustees of the Historical Foundation, and a Cumberland Presbyterian member of the Boards of Trustees of Bethel University, the Cumberland Presbyterian Children’s Home, and Memphis Theological Seminary. The executives of the above named denominational entities shall serve as non-voting, Resource/Advocacy members. *In addition, the committee shall elect Three (3) Youth Advisory Members who shall be between the ages of 15-17 and be elected for One (1) year terms, with eligibility for re-election for one additional term.*”

Recognizing that different generations receive information via distinct media, we are encouraged to hear that the OOU committee is developing a promotional DVD and challenge the committee to continue to innovate.

RECOMMENDATION 9: That the OOU utilize all forms of communication and technology in order to reach every generation.

E. THE REPORT OF THE PLACE OF MEETING COMMITTEE

The committee concurs in the Place of Meeting Committee Report

F. LINE ITEM BUDGETS SUBMITTED BY GENERAL ASSEMBLY AGENCIES

The committee expresses appreciation for the hard work in preparing ministry budgets, and recognize the uncertainty involved in this task. We were quite concerned over the unbalanced budget of Memphis Theological Seminary but were encouraged by the assurance that there will be a balanced budget by 2021.

Respectfully submitted:
The Committee on Stewardship/
Elected Officers

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

I. REFERRALS

Referrals to this committee are as follows: The Report of the Permanent Committee on Judiciary and The Report of the Joint Committee on Amendments.

II. PERSONS OF COUNSEL

Reverend Lynn Thomas, Director of Global Missions; Elder Pamela Brown, representative of the Permanent Judiciary Committee; Stated Clerk, and Reverend Mike Sharpe appeared before the committee. Elder Jamie Jordan, counsel for the Office of the General Assembly, consulted by telephone.

III. CONSIDERATION OF REFERRALS

A. REPORT OF THE PERMANENT JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

RECOMMENDATION 1: That Recommendation 1 of the Report of the Permanent Judiciary Committee, “that the Preamble to the Constitution be amended by inserting the following paragraph between the first and second existing paragraphs: “Cumberland Presbyterian congregations are found around the world. While the mission of the church is the same everywhere, the forms and structures of the Constitution do not always fit seamlessly with the cultures, traditions, and legal systems of some countries. In countries other than the United States the provisions of the Constitution should be applied so far as possible, but the Constitution is, at its heart, a document which exists to promote spiritual objectives. If there are instances in which the letter of the Constitution cannot be applied without compromising the mission of the church and the spiritual objectives identified in the Confession of Faith, it is the spirit of the law, rather than the letter, which must prevail,” be denied.

Our *Confession of Faith* and Rules of Discipline are written specifically for U.S. laws, where churches do not pay taxes and pastors are exempted from many labor laws. This is not the case in other countries. Also, some provisions of our Constitution are incompatible with property laws of other countries. The Committee agrees with the intent of this change to the preamble. It must be noted that, although bound in the same printed publication, the Rules of Discipline and Constitution are, in fact, different documents. We therefore make the following recommendations to change the above wording to treat the Rules of Discipline appropriately as a separate publication.

RECOMMENDATION 2: That the Preamble to the Constitution be amended by inserting the following paragraph between the first and second existing paragraphs: “Cumberland Presbyterian congregations are found around the world. While the mission of the church is the same everywhere, the forms and structures of the Constitution and *Rules of Discipline* do not always fit seamlessly with the cultures, traditions, and legal systems of some countries. In countries other than the United States the provisions of the Constitution and *Rules of Discipline* should be applied so far as possible, but the Constitution and *Rules of Discipline* are, at heart, documents which exist to promote spiritual objectives. If there are instances in which the letter of the Constitution and/or *Rules of Discipline* cannot be applied without compromising the mission of the church and the spiritual objectives identified in the *Confession of Faith*, it is the spirit of the law, rather than the letter, which must prevail.”

The Committee acknowledges that, more often than not, oversight of lower judicatories is in the form of review of minutes or appellate decision. As was stated in the Permanent Judiciary Committee Report, the higher judicatories exercise their “review and control” of lower judicatories through review and appellate authority.

RECOMMENDATION 3: That Recommendation 2 of the Report of the Permanent Judiciary Committee, “that Constitution 3.03 be amended from “The authority of each level of church government is limited by the stated provisions of the church’s constitution. Although each judicatory exercises exclusive original jurisdiction over all the matters specifically belonging to it, the lower judicatories are subject to the review and control of the higher judicatories in regular gradation.” to read “The authority of each level of church government is limited by the stated provisions of the Constitution. Although each judicatory exercises exclusive original jurisdiction over all the matters specifically belonging to it, the lower judicatories are subject to the review and appellate authority of the next higher judicatory,” be adopted.

RECOMMENDATION 4: That Recommendation 3 of the Report of the Permanent Judiciary Committee, “that Constitution 3.35 be amended from “A particular church shall not sell, nor lease its real property used for purposes of worship, nurture or ministry, without the written permission of the presbytery in which the particular church is located, transmitted through the session of the particular church.” to read “A particular church shall not sell, convey, lease, pledge, mortgage, or encumber its real property used for purposes of worship, nurture, or ministry without the written permission of the presbytery in which the particular church is located, transmitted through the session of the particular church. In granting its permission, the presbytery does not become a party to the church’s agreement, nor a guarantor of any indebtedness,” be adopted.

This adds another layer of protection for a Presbytery in the event that a church defaults on a mortgage on its property.

RECOMMENDATION 5: That Recommendation 4 of the Report of the Permanent Judiciary Committee, “that Constitution 7.06, which refers to the relationships of pastor, assistant/associate pastor, stated supply, and interim pastor, be amended from “A person shall enter into one of these relationships with a particular church only with the approval of the presbytery in the bounds of which the particular church is located. The presbytery may authorize its board of missions to act on its behalf in examining the call and to give tentative approval to a relationship between a particular church and a minister, licentiate, or candidate, subject to formal approval at a meeting of the presbytery.” to read “A person shall enter into one of these relationships with a particular church only with the approval of the presbytery in the bounds of which the particular church is located. The church session shall bear responsibility for the selection of the person, and the presbytery’s approval shall relate to the person’s ministerial credentials, commitment to the theology and government of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church/ Cumberland Presbyterian Church in America, and standing in his or her current presbytery, if any. The presbytery may authorize its board of missions to act on its behalf in examining the call and to give tentative approval to a relationship between a particular church and a minister, licentiate, or candidate, subject to formal approval at a meeting of the presbytery,” be adopted.

This proposed change helps clarify the language regarding the differing roles of the session and presbytery in the calling of a pastor.

This Committee agrees with the Permanent Committee’s Recommendations 5, 6, 7, and 8, which clarify the language related to the relationship between General Assembly and lower judicatories and denominational entities.

RECOMMENDATION 6: That Recommendation 5 of the Report of the Permanent Judiciary Committee, “that Constitution 8.5(f) be amended from “In general, to order with respect to the presbyteries, sessions, and churches under its care according to the government of the church, whatever may seem to edify the church;” to read “In general, to order with respect to the presbyteries, sessions, and churches under its care according to the government of the church, whatever pertains to their spiritual welfare and the edification of the church,” be adopted.

RECOMMENDATION 7: That Recommendation 6 of the Report of the Permanent Judiciary Committee, “that Constitution 9.4 (d) be amended from “Institute and oversee the agencies necessary in its work;” to read “Institute and review the work of denominational entities,” be adopted.

RECOMMENDATION 8: That Recommendation 7 of the Report of the Permanent Judiciary Committee, “that Constitution 9.4(g) be amended from “Take care that the lower judicatories observe the government of the church and redress what they may have done contrary to order;” to read “Take care that the lower judicatories observe the government of the church and exercise its review and appellate authority to redress what they may have done contrary to order,” be adopted.

RECOMMENDATION 9: That Recommendation 8 of the Report of the Permanent Judiciary Committee, “that Constitution 9.4(m) be amended from “Oversee the affairs of the whole church;” to read “Keep watch over the affairs of the whole church,” be adopted.

RECOMMENDATION 10: That Recommendation 9 of the Report of the Permanent Judiciary Committee, “that Bylaw 10.07 of the General Assembly Corporation be amended from “The corporation shall elect the twenty-four (24) directors of Memphis Theological Seminary as provided in its charter. The corporation shall elect the directors in such a manner that, immediately following any election, there shall be at least eleven (11) directors who are members of ecumenical partners of the Seminary.” to read “The corporation shall elect the twenty-four (24) directors of Memphis Theological Seminary as provided in its charter. The corporation shall elect the directors in such a manner that, immediately following any election, there shall be eleven (11) directors who are members of denominations other than the Cumberland Presbyterian Church,” be denied.

The Committee found a typographical error in Recommendation 9 of the Permanent Judiciary Committee’s report. The Bylaw being amended is actually 10.06.

RECOMMENDATION 11: That Bylaw 10.06 of the General Assembly Corporation be amended from “The corporation shall elect the twenty-four (24) directors of Memphis Theological Seminary as provided in its charter. The corporation shall elect the directors in such a manner that, immediately following any election, there shall be at least eleven (11) directors who are members of ecumenical partners of the Seminary.” to read “The corporation shall elect the twenty-four (24) directors of Memphis Theological Seminary as provided in its charter. The corporation shall elect the directors in such a manner that, immediately following any election, there shall be eleven (11) directors who are members of denominations other than the Cumberland Presbyterian Church.

B. REPORT OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE ON AMENDMENTS

The Committee reviewed this report, which contains no recommendations. Pertaining to section II, we are supportive of the possibility of and look forward to the formation of union congregations between the CPC and CPCA.

Respectfully submitted,
The Judiciary Committee

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN'S HOME AND HIGHER EDUCATION

I. REFERRALS

Referrals to this committee are as follows: The Report of the Board of Trustees of Memphis Theological Seminary, The Report of the Board of Trustees of Bethel University, the Board of Trustees of the Cumberland Presbyterian Children's Home,

II. PERSONS OF COUNSEL

Appearing before this committee were: from Cumberland Presbyterian Children's Home, Reverend Duane Dougherty (Board of Trustees), Dr. Jennifer Livings (Interim President), and Mary Dickerman; from Bethel University Dr. Walter Butler (President), Reverend Nancy McSpadden, Nancy Bean and, Reverend Elton Hall Sr. (Board of Trustees); Reverend Anne Hames (Senior Chaplain) and Reverend Garrett Burns (Associate Chaplain); from Memphis Theological Seminary Reverend Daniel Jay Earheart-Brown (President), Reverend Kevin Brantley, (Board of Trustees), and Reverend Michael Qualls (PAS).

III. CONSIDERATION OF REFERRALS

A. THE REPORT OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE CUMBERLAND PRESBYTERIAN CHILDREN'S HOME

The Cumberland Presbyterian Children's Home (CPCH) was established in 1904. The ministry has continually focused on service to children and families since its opening. We commend CPCH for their continued focus and the efforts they make to change their programs to meet the ever changing needs of children and families they serve. Currently CPCH has an interim President and a search is being conducted to fill that position.

Since CPCH bears the name of Cumberland Presbyterian the committee would like to know what percentage of the CPCH income comes directly from OUO, churches and individuals associated with the Cumberland Presbyterian Church.

Based on the conversations between the Committee and the representatives of the Children's Home the Committee suggested the Children's Home to provide a summary of contributions from Cumberland Presbyterian sources detailed into OUO, churches and individuals to General Assembly yearly in their annual report. This report may include what percentage of the overall income of the Children's Homes is from Cumberland Presbyterian sources.

Currently there are no Cumberland Presbyterian employees at the Children's' Home. Advertising through the Communication Ministry team will allow the entire church to know the job openings as well as other opportunities to assist this institution in meeting the needs of the children and families they serve.

RECOMMENDATION 1: That the Communication Ministry collaborate with the Children's Home to advertise open positions, volunteer opportunities, service trip opportunities or other areas of need of the Children's Home.

By increasing the Cumberland Presbyterian involvement in the activities of CPCH and providing opportunities for the children and families to be involved at Cumberland Presbyterian activities we will strengthen the ties to the Cumberland Presbyterian denomination.

The Committee feels that maintaining a Cumberland Presbyterian presence in the work of the Children's Home is important.

RECOMMENDATION 2: That all Presbyteries, and especially those close by, seek opportunities for support of and participation in the work of the Children's Home.

B. THE REPORT OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF BETHEL UNIVERSITY

Bethel University has served as the Flagship University of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church for 176 years. Its commitment to providing a quality private education at a reasonable cost is demonstrated by it being ranked in the top 10% of most affordable private colleges in Tennessee. Bethel has shown consistent growth. Its academic excellence has

been demonstrated by the distinguished accomplishments of its alumni. For example, the Nursing Department achieved a pass rate of 100% 3 of the last five years, and a pass rate above 90% the other two years. Some of the most highly placed law enforcement officials in the state of Tennessee are graduates of the Criminal Justice program. Bethel students are not waiting until after graduation to achieve excellence as evidenced by their being recipients of the NAIA Champions of Character award, and just recently, their Bass Fishing team won the National Championship and finished the year ranked No. 1 of schools of all divisions and sizes. Bethel University has demonstrated a strong commitment to serving the Jesus Christ and the Cumberland Presbyterian church.

RECOMMENDATION 3: That Recommendation 1 of the Report of the Board of Trustees of Bethel University, “that the General Assembly of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church encourage the churches and individuals to pray for Bethel University and send names of prospective students (both high schoolers and adults) to Bethel University,” be denied.

RECOMMENDATION 4: That the General Assembly of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church urge the presbyteries to encourage the churches and individuals to pray for Bethel University and send names of prospective students (both high schoolers and adults) to Bethel University.

C. THE REPORT OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF MEMPHIS THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Since 1852 Memphis Theological Seminary has played a vital role in the education of the ministers and leaders of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church. The Seminary continues to minister in an ever changing world as it strives to meet the challenges and opportunities of ministry in the world today. We are grateful for the vital work of Memphis Theological Seminary and especially its trustees who have served with honor.

RECOMMENDATION 5: That Recommendation 1 of the Report of the Board of Trustees of Memphis Theological Seminary, “that the General Assembly express its gratitude to trustees Henson, Newell, White, Brantley, Maddox, and Shirai for their faithful service to Memphis Theological Seminary and the Cumberland Presbyterian Church,” be adopted.

The Ministry for the Real World campaign is a vital strategy to insure that Memphis Theological Seminary continues to fulfill its calling.

RECOMMENDATION 6: That Recommendation 2 of the Report of the Board of Trustees of Memphis Theological Seminary, “that the General Assembly encourage individuals, churches, and groups across the Cumberland Presbyterian Church to consider investing in the development of future leaders through the “Ministry for the Real World” campaign,” be denied.

RECOMMENDATION 7: That the General Assembly encourage Presbyteries to encourage churches, groups, and individuals across the Cumberland Presbyterian Church to consider investing in the development of future leaders through the “Ministry for the Real World campaign.

It has been noted that the number of Cumberland Presbyterian Students graduating from Memphis Theological Seminary and PAS has been in decline.

RECOMMENDATION 8: That Recommendation 3 of the Report of the Board of Trustees of Memphis Theological Seminary, “that the General Assembly encourage all probationers to consider Memphis Theological Seminary and the Program of Alternate Studies as their first options for meeting educational requirements for ordained ministry,” be denied.

RECOMMENDATION 9: That the General Assembly request all Presbyteries to encourage their probationers to consider Memphis Theological Seminary and the Program of Alternate Studies as their first options for meeting educational requirements for ordained ministry.

RECOMMENDATION 10: That the third Sunday in August, (August 19, 2018 and August 18, 2019) be included in the General Assembly Calendar as Seminary/PAS Sunday, and that the General Assembly instruct presbyteries to encourage all churches to share information about MTS and PAS and receive a special offering on

that day, or on a more convenient day of the session's choosing.

This recommendation was referred to the Committee on Stewardship and Elected officials.

The Committee notes the recent resignation of Dr. Daniel Jay Earheart-Brown. Dr. Earheart-Brown has been a consistent advocate for both the seminary, its students and the denomination. Therefore, we make the following recommendation:

RECOMMENDATION 11: That 188th General Assembly express it's gratitude to Reverend Daniel Jay Earheart- Brown for his 13 and one-half years of faithful service to Memphis Theological Seminary.

The Committee recognizes that while Memphis Theological Seminary is the Cumberland Presbyterian seminary, the actual presence of Cumberland Presbyterians in leadership and on the faculty has declined. Therefore it seems important that we seek out and recruit additional Cumberland Presbyterian leadership, faculty, and staff. With this in mind, the Committee makes the following recommendation:

RECOMMENDATION 12: That the 188th General Assembly encourage the MTS Board of Trustees to hire a qualified Cumberland Presbyterian to fill the office of interim and permanent president.

The Committee on Higher Education and the Children's Home makes the following recommendation based on the recommendation adopted by the 2013 General Assembly for the creation of periodic Evaluation Committees to assess the entities and programs overseen by the Cumberland Presbyterian Church. The Committee recognizes and appreciates the mission and work that the Memphis Theological Seminary in preparing the future ministers and leaders of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church. We commend them on their efforts for diversity and relevance in our modern and every changing world. We express our concern over the financial deficits incurred by the Seminary over the last six years. We commend the Trustees for their decision to balance the budget within the next three years. We recognize that enrollment in the Seminary, and in Seminaries nationwide, is declining and endorse the measures taken by the Board of Trustee and the Faculty to increase the educational opportunities available to the student body of the Seminary. In recognition of General Assembly's responsibility to maintain oversight of the Memphis Theological Seminary, and in partnership with them, the Committee makes the following recommendation to ensure that General Assembly has the necessary information to effectively compete it oversight responsibilities.

RECOMMENDATION 13: Pursuant to the previously adopted recommendation of the 183rd General Assembly, that an Evaluation Committee be appointed to conduct an assessment of the Cumberland Presbyterian Historical Foundation and the Memphis Theological Seminary. This Committee recommends that an assessment of the Historical Foundation and the Memphis Theological Seminary be completed. This assessment shall of the Seminary shall be divided into two separate assessments: 1.) the Board of Trustees and 2.) the Seminary Faculty and Staff. The Evaluation Committee shall conduct, and complete their assessment for presentation to the 189th meeting of the General Assembly of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church.

The assessment of the Historical Society may include, but not be limited to:

1. An assessment of the stated mission of the Historical Foundation;
2. Assessment of the progress towards completion of their stated mission;
3. Assessment of the procedures, tools and equipment used and/or needed by the Historical Foundation to complete their stated mission;
4. Recommendations to the General Assembly related to the Historical Foundation; and
5. Any other relevant area of inquiry as determined by the Evaluation Committee.

The assessment of the Memphis Theological Seminary shall include, but not be limited to:

1. An assessment of the make-up of the Board of Trustees of the Memphis Theological Seminary;
2. Assessment of the short and long term goals of the Board of Trustees;
3. Assessment of the Board's fiduciary responsibilities and the governance of the Seminary;
4. Assessment of the financial sovereignty and stability of the Seminary;
5. Assessment of the recruitment and hiring procedures of the faculty and staff of the Seminary;
6. Recommendations to the General Assembly related to the Board of Trustees;
7. An assessment of the curriculum and theology taught at the Memphis Theological Seminary as it relates to the practices and beliefs of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church as set forth in the Confession of Faith;
8. Assessment of the make-up (theological/diversity) of the faculty (full-time and adjunct) and staff of the Seminary;

9. Assessment of the practical preparation and skill set training provided by the Seminary to equip and prepare seminary students to become and succeed as ministers of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church;
10. A statistical review of the placement of recent graduates of the Seminary in churches within the Cumberland Presbyterian Church;
11. Assessment of the relationship between the Seminary and the Presbyteries of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church;
12. Recommendations to the General Assembly for improvement of the Faculty, Staff, curriculum and programs provided by the Seminary based upon the above assessment.
13. Any other relevant topic as it relates to the Board of Trustees, the Faculty or Staff, curriculum and programs of the Memphis Theological Seminary as determined by the Evaluation Committee;

If the unification of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church and the Cumberland Presbyterian Church in America is not completed by the conclusion of the 189th General Assembly the Evaluation Committee shall continue their work and complete an evaluation of the current boards and agencies of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church for the 190th General Assembly. Any replacement members of the Evaluation Committee which shall be required shall be made by the current General Assembly Moderator and the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly. Should the unification process occur the entities of the denomination to be evaluated may need to be re-defined and will be determined by the Evaluation Committee in consultation with the Stated Clerk and the General Assembly Moderator at the time.

The Evaluation Committee shall be comprised of a minimum of one member of the previous Evaluation Committee, one member from each of the five Synods, one “at large” member, and any other members with technical or professional experience deemed necessary for the Evaluation Committee to conduct and complete their evaluation in a timely and efficient manner. The Evaluation Committee members shall be appointed by the General Assembly Moderator and the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly. However, due to the position of the current Moderator of General Assembly, and pursuant to Rule 12.5 of the Rules of Order (See also: Robert’s Rules of Order, Section 45), the appointment authority of the General Assembly Moderator shall be exercised, in this instance, by the Board of Directors of the General Assembly Corporation.

The Committee on the Children’s Home and Higher Education makes the following recommendation based on the need to ensure that future General Assemblies have the required information to perform their oversight responsibilities of the entities and programs overseen by the Cumberland Presbyterian Church.

RECOMMENDATION 14: Contingent on the passage and adoption of Recommendation 13 by the General Assembly, it is recommended that the 188th General Assembly encourage future General Assemblies of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church to conduct an assessment of the Boards and Agencies of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, the Historical Foundation, and the Memphis Theological Seminary. These assessments should be completed every five years beginning with the close of the 188th General Assembly, or as directed by the General Assembly Moderator. Specific questions, or areas of inquiries, may be added or removed by the Stated Clerk or the Moderator of the General Assembly at the time.

The Committee notes the strong leadership of Reverend Michael Qualls in the PAS program. The program has shown great initiative and creativity in identifying needs and solutions for ministerial candidates who need an alternative route to ordination. It is also noted that Reverend Qualls has implemented increased rigor in the curriculum. One area that that committee notes improvement might be made is in clarifying class expectations. Therefore, the Committee makes the following recommendation:

RECOMMENDATION 16: That the PAS use a standardized template for class syllabi.

(Note: August 20, 2017 and August 19, 2018 as the date of Seminary/PAS Sunday are included in the Stated Clerk’s Report under Church Calendar 2017-2018)

Respectfully submitted,
The Committee on Children’s Home/Higher Education

**The
 Proceedings
 of the**

**ONE HUNDRED EIGHTY-EIGHTH
 GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

of the

CUMBERLAND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

session held in

NORMAN, OKLAHOMA

June 17 - 21, 2018

At Norman, Oklahoma and within the facilities of the Embassy Suites, there the seventeenth day of June in the year of our Lord, two thousand eighteen, at the appointed hour of seven o'clock in the evening, Minister and Elder Commissioners from the various presbyteries, youth advisory delegates and visitors assembled for Concurrent meetings of the General Assemblies of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church and the Cumberland Presbyterian Church in America.

FIRST DAY – SUNDAY – JUNE 17, 2018

OPENING WORSHIP

At Norman, Oklahoma and within the Conference Center of the Embassy Suites Hotel, the one hundred eighty-eighth General Assembly of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, the one hundred forty-third General Assembly of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church in America, the Convention of Cumberland Presbyterian Women's Ministry, and visitors gathered for worship at 7:00 p.m. Liturgists for the service were Ms. Yvonne Frierson, National Missionary Society President (CPCA), and Elder Lewis Leon Cole, Moderator (CPCA). The Music Leader was Ms. Brenda Ross, Red River Presbytery (CPC). Special Music was offered by Reverend Joe E. Howard, III, Brazos River Presbytery (CPCA) and Elder John Rainey, Cleveland Ohio Presbytery (CPCA). The Pianist was Ms. Robin McCaskey Hughes, Red River Presbytery (CPC). An offering of \$2,870.94 was taken to be shared between the Choctaw Ministries (CPC) and Sickle Cell Disease Association of America, a designated CPCA project.

Reverend David Lancaster, Moderator, West Tennessee Presbytery (CPC) presented the sermon, "What About These Bones," taken from the scripture passage Ezekiel 37:1-14. The Sacrament of Holy Communion was led by Co-Celebrants Reverend Melissa Malinoski, West Tennessee Presbytery (CPC) and Reverend Tramaine Snodgrass, Huntsville Presbytery (CPCA). Serving communion were Naomi King, Vanessa Midgett, Glenn Strain, Anthony Johnson, Michael T. Cooper, Kay Ward-Creer, Tom Jones (CPCA) and Ron Lewis, Chris Warren, Linda Drylie, Gloria Diaz, Hannah Bryan, Jerry Smyrl, Christy Cooper (CPC).

SECOND DAY – MONDAY – JUNE 18, 2018

THE ASSEMBLY IS CONSTITUTED

The Moderator, the Reverend David Lancaster, called the assembly to order at 10:35 a.m. The Constituting Prayer was offered Elder Roy Shanks, North Central Presbytery.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

Moderator Lancaster asked for a motion that the agenda, as found in the Preliminary Minutes, be adopted. On Motion, the agenda was adopted.

REPORT OF THE CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE

Gloria Diaz presented the Report of the Credentials Committee. There were forty-four (44) ministers, forty-two (42) elders, for a total of eighty-six (86) commissioners present at 8:30 a.m. There were twenty (20) Youth Advisory Delegates present. On motion, the report of the Credentials Committee was received, marked Appendix "A" and filed.

ELECTION OF THE MODERATOR

Moderator Lancaster declared the floor open for nominations for the Office of Moderator of the one hundred eighty-eighth General Assembly. Reverend Jay Earheart-Brown, Nashville Presbytery and Reverend Lisa Scott, North Central Presbytery, were nominated. A Motion was made and seconded that nominations cease. Motion passed.

Reverend Ralph Blevins North Central Presbytery, spoke on behalf of Reverend Lisa Scott. Reverend Perryn Rice, Red River Presbytery, by Motion was granted permission to speak to the body. Reverend Rice spoke on behalf of Reverend Jay Earheart-Brown.

The Moderator called for delegates to cast their votes. The ballots were collected by the Credentials Committee who met with the Stated Clerk to count the ballots.

While the ballots were being counted, Mrs. Edith Old, Director of Ministries, introduced the two newest team leaders: Reverend Steven Shelton, Nashville Presbytery, Communications Team Leader and Reverend Pam Phillips-Burk, Pastoral Development Ministry Team Leader.

The Engrossing Clerk, Vernon Sansom, shared announcements and introduced the following Board/Agency Representatives:

Bethel University	Nancy Bean
Commission on Military Chaplains	Charles McCaskey
Children's Home	Duane Dougherty
Historical Foundation	Lisa Oliver
Judiciary	Pam Brown
Memphis Theological Seminary	Kevin Brantley
Ministry Council	Victory Moore
Our United Outreach	Bruce Hamilton
Stewardship	Randy Davidson
Theology & Social Concerns	Richard Morgan
Unification Task Force	Joy Warren (CPC)
	Mitchell Walker (CPCA)

Gloria Diaz, Credentials Committee Chair, announce that by vote, Reverend Jay Earheart-Brown was elected Moderator of the 188th General Assembly of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church. Former Moderator David Lancaster presented the Moderator's Cross, Gavel and Stoles to newly elected Moderator Jay Earheart-Brown. Moderator Earheart-Brown thanked the body for the honor of being elected and thanked the former Moderator for his service to the denomination.

Moderator Earheart-Brown introduced his family: wife, Mary; elder son, Paul; younger son, Carter (who was not present); step-mother Beth Brown; and nephew Houston Brown. The Moderator thanked the denomination for prayers that were offered for Houston who was seriously injured in an accident at Bethel University. He also thanked the faculty and staff of Memphis Theological Seminary for the support he received as president. He announced that he will leave MTS July 31, 2018 and will become the pastor of Faith Cumberland Presbyterian Church, Bartlett, Tennessee.

ELECTION OF THE VICE-MODERATOR

Moderator Earheart-Brown opened the floor for nominations for Vice-Moderator. Reverend Charles (Buddy) Pope, Columbia Presbytery, was nominated to be Vice-Moderator of the 188th General Assembly of

the Cumberland Presbyterian Church. There being no other nominations, a motion was made and seconded that nominations cease and that we move to elect. Motion passed. By vote, Reverend Charles (Buddy) Pope was elected Vice-Moderator of the of the 188th General Assembly of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church. Vice-Moderator Pope was escorted to the podium by Reverend Sherry Ladd, Columbia Presbytery. Vice-Moderator Pope addressed the body and thanked the body for the honor of being elected as Vice-Moderator of the General Assembly. He pledged to do his very best in service to the Cumberland Presbyterian Church.

PRESENTATION BY THE STATED CLERK

The Stated Clerk, Reverend Michael Sharpe, invited Retiring Moderator David Lancaster to the podium. The Stated Clerk thanked Moderator Lancaster for his service to the 187th General Assembly. The Stated Clerk presented the Former Moderator with replicas of the Moderator's Cross and Gavel, representing the ones used in the 187th General Assembly of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church.

The Former Moderator thanked the General Assembly for the opportunity to serve. He spoke about the important role that the Cumberland Presbyterian Church played in his family, first bringing his parents to faith before he was born, and all through his life as he was raised in the Cumberland Presbyterian Church.

COMMUNICATIONS

The Stated Clerk reported that there were no communications.

WELCOME, PASTOR HOST, LOCAL OFFICIALS

The Moderator introduced Co-Pastor Hosts Reverend Marian Sowtowski and Reverend Leslie Johnson, Red River Presbytery. Both Co-Pastor Hosts welcomed the General Assembly to Oklahoma and thanked all who had worked hard to help with the organization of this meeting.

COMMISSIONER RESOLUTIONS

A Resolution was presented on the floor by Reverend Ron McMillan, West Tennessee Presbytery calling for the 188th General Assembly to reaffirm and adopt the 1996 General Assembly Statement on Homosexuality as binding on presbyteries, sessions, ministers, elders, and deacons with listed adaptations. Reverend Chris Warren, Murfreesboro Presbytery, presented a resolution to the body dealing with the separation of immigrants from their children at the Southern border.

The Stated Clerk advised that both resolutions as well as a copy of the 1996 Statement Dealing With Homosexuality would be printed and distributed to all Minister Commissioners, Elder Commissioners and Youth Advisory Delegates.

The Moderator referred both Resolutions to the Theology and Social Concerns Committee.

Reverend Terra Sisco, Red River Presbytery, addressed the body, reminding the body that there is a display table representing Oklahoma with information that she hopes all commissioners will take advantage of as well as a free book each day by written by Reverend Tom Spence, Red River Presbytery.

Reverend Chris Warren, Murfreesboro Presbytery, presented a second Resolution to the Body calling for a study before taking action which was also referred to the Theology and Social Concerns Committee. Copies of this Resolution will be made available to all Commissioners and Youth Advisory Delegates.

RECESS

Moderator Earheart-Brown declared the General Assembly of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church in recess. The committees will meet at 7 p.m. The General Assembly will reconvene Thursday at 9:30 a.m.

AFTERNOON ACTIVITIES

At 2:00 p.m., a Joint Choctaw Anniversary Celebration was held including A Service of Celebration on the occasion of the 200th Anniversary of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church Ministry with the Choctaw as well as several cultural heritage demonstrations on breadmaking, pottery, Choctaw hymns and dancers.

Participating in the service were Reverend Virginia Espinoza, song leader; Mrs. Robin McCaskey

Hughes, pianist; Mr. Tim Maxville, Native American Flutist; and Choctaw Chief Gary Batton, guest speaker. Other participants were Reverend Hannah Bryan, Reverend Linda Scott, Ms. Faith Jacob Parra, Tvli Jacob, Mr. Dennis J. Parra, Elder Ronald Lewis, Councilman Tony Ward, and Roy Robinson. Also participating were members from the following churches: Coal Creek, Atoka, Oklahoma; Lone Star, Wardville, Oklahoma; McGee Chapel, Broken Bow, Oklahoma; Panki Bok, Eagletown, Oklahoma; Pigeon Roost, Boswell, Oklahoma; Pine Lake, Broken Bow, Oklahoma; Rock Creek, Honobia, Oklahoma; and Round Lake, Centrahoma, Oklahoma.

A Joint Moderator and Anniversary reception was held at 4:30 p.m. honoring the Moderators of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church in America and the Cumberland Presbyterian Church 500th Anniversary of Ministry with the Choctaw.

EVENING ACTIVITES

The Committees had their first meetings at 7:00 p.m.

SECOND DAY – TUESDAY – JUNE 19, 2018

The General Assembly began the day with Joint Devotions and the FUN RUN & WALK at 7:00 a.m. at Legacy Park. The devotion was presented by Moderator Jay Earheart-Brown based on Proverbs 24:30-34.

The day was devoted to committee work from 10:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. and an evening session at 7:00 p.m. The attendance for the day: forty-four (44) Minister Commissioners, forty-two (42) Elder Commissioners for a total of eighty-six (86) Commissioners and nineteen (19) Youth Advisory Delegates.

EVENING PROGRAM

At 8:30 p.m. in Ballroom G & H, commissioners and visitors participated in a joint reception honoring Women in Ministry. Attendees enjoyed rich fellowship and refreshments, and wonderful door prizes and as we celebrated Women in Ministry.