

Companion Piece to the Revised Proposed Plan of Union (June 2016)

Includes rationales for edits to the Proposed Plan of Union (June 2014)

The Unification Task Force received feedback from both denominations regarding the Proposed Plan of Union approved for study by both General Assemblies in June 2014. We used this feedback from individuals and groups, as well as information received through various regional meetings, to revise the document. This companion piece explains the reasoning behind the edits in an effort to promote transparency throughout the unification process.

1.00 Mission Statement for the New Church

We moved the mission statement to the first item in the plan, feeling that the plan ought to begin with our shared mission statement for the new church. We should celebrate our shared mission prior to moving forward with other details of the church. We made one change to the statement: we removed the word “inclusive” from the last sentence. While we do strive to live out the inclusive love of Jesus Christ, we recognize that some words become politicized in public debate. By removing the word, we hope to avoid polarizing language, with the ironic effect of being more inclusive without using the word “inclusive.”

2.00 The Confession of Faith and Government

The only edit is the order of placement in the plan.

3.00 The Presbyteries and Synods

Our original suggestion for synod structure followed the boundaries of the current CPCA synods, as we observed natural geographic overlay in that four synod structure. Comments followed regarding the challenge of travel, size of synod, etc. The resulting edit is an eight synod structure. We hope this makes participation in synod more realistic and examination of presbytery boundaries and relationships more feasible.

4.00 Commissioners and Youth Advisory Delegates to the General Assembly

Representation is one of the primary challenges of unification. We must be careful to understand what we mean when we use phrases like “equal representation.” Given the disparity of size between the two denominations and the various diversities represented by both churches as they unite as a global denomination, we feel the most equitable representation will be found in equal representation of two ministers, two elders, and two youth advisory delegates from each presbytery.

5.00 & 6.00 Moderator, Vice Moderator, Stated Clerk & Associate Stated Clerk of GA

There are functional differences in the particulars of each position between the two denominations. Rather than distinguishing the details through the UTF in the plan of union, we feel it will be better to do so through the Implementation Phase. The Standing Rules of the new church will delineate the particular duties and responsibilities of each position, to include selection process, expectations of each role, and remuneration.

7.00 Boards and Agencies of the General Assembly

7.01 We corrected a clerical oversight which omitted treatment of the existing covenantal relationships.

7.03 We corrected a clerical oversight which omitted existing Administrative Boards.

7.05 We added information regarding the constitution of Standing Committees. As a result of several questions about the new Committee on Multicultural Ministry, we added more information regarding its purpose and constitution. *This section includes a clerical oversight. OOU should include (due to increasing number of synods from four to eight) "one elected representative from each new synod with equal representatives from each former denomination."*

7.06 We added information regarding the composition of each of the ministry entities of the Mission Programming Agency. The formulation of the Mission Programming Agency is a change from the current selection process of the CPC Ministry Council. The main difference is including one staff member and an elected member from each ministry entity (elected by that entity) in an effort to improve communication and advocacy from each entity. The synod members will be elected at Assembly.

8.00 Denominational Staff Personnel & Offices

8.01 The revised plan includes an additional staff position from the 2014 Proposed Plan of Union, the Ministry Coordinator. The UTF feels the combined church will require the staff to foster growth, blending of ministries, and future visioning. The Implementation Task Force will help develop the particulars of this position, including the selection process.

8.03 We changed the phrase "regional centers" to "regional sites" in order to avoid confusion with the denominational center of either former denomination.

8.04 The list of Global staff has been updated.

9.00 Stewardship and Finance

The only edit is the order of placement in the plan.

10.00 Recognition of Ordination

We added a statement about grandfathering current probationers due to fear expressed by some that requirements would change after unification. We acknowledge this is an item of the proposed plan that needs to be communicated effectively in order to dispel rumors and fears.

11.00 The Name of the New Denomination

We learned of dissatisfaction with the proposed name from churches outside the United States. Based upon feedback on the proposed plan and discussion with global members, the suggested change (from plan feedback) seems not to have the same negative connotation while still conveying a positive description of the new denomination. The proposed change also removes the chance of confusion with Upper Cumberland. We also recognize many people got hung up on the name being the first item in the proposed plan and did not make it through the rest of the plan. We felt starting with the mission statement and ending with establishing our new identity in form of the name and logo are important revisions.

12.00 The Logo of the New Church

The only edit is the order of placement in the plan.