

RESOLUTION OF FORGIVENESS, UNITY, AND RESOLVE

WHEREAS, We Cumberland Presbyterians are considering the call of God as we embrace our 2017 Theme of “**Connecting With Our Neighbor**” (*Luke 10: 29-37*) during the 142nd convening of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church in America (CPCA), General Assembly; and

WHEREAS, Jesus commands his followers with specific instructions: go, teach, baptize, forgive and make disciples. (*Matthew 28:18-20*), and

WHEREAS, the *Colored Cumberland Presbyterian Church* was formed in May of 1874 as a result of the racism and segregation practices that existed within the Cumberland Presbyterian Church and directed towards its African-American membership. Where, in defense of Cumberland Presbyterian institutionalized segregation and resulting unequal representation, African American members petitioned the Cumberland Presbyterian Church for assistance in organizing a separate body for African Americans, allowing the African American membership) to become independent and self-reliant, to develop its own clergy and other leaders, and maintain its own church buildings, all with encouragement and financial support from the parent denomination. The resulting predominately African American (black) church was re-named as the *Second Cumberland Presbyterian Church* before assuming its current name; and

WHEREAS, we proudly celebrate the faith and conviction of our early CPCA fathers, our committed African American Presbyterians ancestors. We recognize their witness as fellow pilgrims on the journey of faith and as our spiritual ancestors who “earnestly contended for the faith that was once delivered to the saints” (*Jude 1:3*). We commend them for their vision and proclaim those Church Fathers as our spiritual ancestors who taught us not only to reverence the mystery of God through word, thought, and deed, but also to celebrate the African American heritage of Christianity through witness in the tradition of those few, but brave and faithful men and women of color: and

WHEREAS, we joyfully acknowledge that God is truly the sustainer of us all! We recognize that fact as evident in that the CPCA and CPC entities both are still in existence and are both focused, working to carry out the Great Commission; and, although in many ways working separately in God’s vineyard, both CPC and CPCA congregations have a willingness and desire to live in His heavenly will as is evident in their continued partnership; and

WHEREAS, relations between the two Cumberland Presbyterian Churches have for the most part been very cordial, with many of the CPCA ministers having received training at Memphis Theological Seminary. The two denominations continue to share a Confession of Faith and cooperate in many common ministries; and

WHEREAS, in true Christian fashion the 186th General Assembly of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church does recognize, confess, and condemn and repent of past failures to

love brothers and sisters from minority cultures in accordance with what the Gospel requires, as well as failures to lovingly confront their brothers and sisters concerning racial sins and personal bigotry, and failing to “learn to do good, seek justice and correct oppression (*Isaiah 1:17*);” and

WHEREAS, the 186th General Assembly of the CPC has resolved to apologize to us, their African American brothers and sisters, and seeks our forgiveness, and has further resolved to work to restore the broken relationships their sin has caused. The CPC has resolved to recommit itself to the gospel task of racial reconciliation, diligently seeking effective courses of action to further that goal, with humility, sincerity and zeal, for the glory of God and the furtherance of the Gospel; and

WHEREAS, we also seek the healing of our division as Cumberland Presbyterians. We know, not just in our hearts and minds, but where our faith resides, that the path of forgiveness is the direction we are meant to take. “All of this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ, God was reconciling the world to him...and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us.” (**2 Corinthians 5:18–19**); and have therefore hereby

RESOLVED, the Cumberland Presbyterian Church in America in its entirety hopes and prays that the Apology will be words of action and sincerity not only in the sanctuary, but in every facet of our daily lives. In the new spirit this Apology has created, let us unite our hearts and minds in the wholeness of life that God has given us. May God grant us strength and vision for the journey towards right relations and wellbeing and see the possibilities and promise of healing; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Cumberland Presbyterian Church in America accepts the CPC apology and we extend to you our forgiveness in the name of our lord and savior, Jesus Christ. **Ephesians 4: 31-32**, says, “let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and evil speaking be put away from you with all malice, and be kind, one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God, for Christ's sake, hath forgiven you”; and be it further

RESOLVED, because of Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior and His great love toward us, we extend that same love, forgiveness, grace and mercy towards you. We pray that the genuineness of your repentance and our forgiveness will be reflected in the attitudes and actions of all. We forgive you, for Christ's sake, **amen**.

-Adopted by the 187th General Assembly of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, meeting in Palm Harbor, Florida on June 22, 2017.