

# **BASIS OF UNION OF THE CONGREGATIONAL CHRISTIAN CHURCHES AND THE EVANGELICAL AND REFORMED CHURCH WITH THE INTERPRETATIONS**

## **PREAMBLE**

We, the regularly constituted representatives of the Congregational Christian Churches and of the Evangelical and Reformed Church, moved by the conviction that we are united in spirit and purpose and are in agreement on the substance of the Christian faith and the essential character of the Christian life;

Affirming our devotion to one God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our membership in the holy catholic Church, which is greater than any single Church and than all the Churches together;

Believing that denominations exist not for themselves but as parts of that Church, within which each denomination is to live and labor and, if need be, die; and

Confronting the divisions and hostilities of our world, and hearing with a deepened sense of responsibility the prayer of our Lord "that they all may be one";

Do now declare ourselves to be one body, and do set forth the following articles of agreement as the basis of our life, fellowship, witness, and proclamation of the Gospel to all nations.

## **I. NAME**

The name of the Church formed by this union shall be UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST.<sup>1</sup>

This name expresses a fact: it stands for the accomplished union of two church bodies each of which has arisen from a similar union of two church

<sup>1</sup>If the name "United Church of Christ" seems presumptuous, it should be remembered that any good general name must seem so, since it would apply equally well to other groups. A name, however, quickly becomes a mere means of classification, and it is hoped that the world will soon come to know that the Churches uniting under this name do not pretend to be more than they actually are.

(The purpose of this and other footnotes in this instrument is purely explanatory. They are designed to throw light on the text, but are not part of the Basis of Union.)

bodies.<sup>2</sup> It also expresses a hope: that in time soon to come, by further union between this Church and other bodies, there shall arise a more inclusive United Church.

## II. FAITH

The faith which unites us and to which we bear witness is that faith in God which the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments set forth, which the ancient Church expressed in the ecumenical creeds, to which our own spiritual fathers gave utterance in the evangelical confessions of the Reformation, and which we are in duty bound to express in the words of our time as God Himself gives us light. In all our expressions of that faith we seek to preserve unity of heart and spirit with those who have gone before us as well as those who now labor with us.

In token of that faith we unite in the following confession<sup>3</sup>, as embodying those things most surely believed and taught among us:

We believe in God the Father Almighty, Creator and Sustainer of heaven and earth and in Jesus Christ, His Son, our Lord and Saviour, who for us and our salvation lived and died and rose again and lives for evermore; and in the Holy Spirit, who takes of the things of Christ and shows them to us, renewing, comforting, and inspiring the souls of men.

We acknowledge one holy catholic Church, the innumerable company of those who, in every age and nation, are united by the Holy Spirit to God in Christ, are one body in Christ, and have communion with Him and with one another.

We acknowledge as part of this universal fellowship all throughout the world who profess this faith in Jesus Christ and follow Him as Lord and Saviour.

We hold the Church to be established for calling men to repentance and faith, for the public worship of God, for the confession of His name by word and deed, for the administration of the sacraments, for witnessing to the saving grace of God in Christ, for the upbuilding of the saints, and for the universal propagation of the Gospel; and in the power of the love of God in Christ we labor for the progress of knowledge, the promotion of justice, the reign of peace, and the realization of human brotherhood.

Depending, as did our fathers, upon the continued guidance of the Holy Spirit to lead us into all truth, we work and pray for the consummation of the

<sup>2</sup>A brief history of the two communions is planned for publication as soon as possible.

<sup>3</sup>This confession expresses the content and meaning of the faith held generally by the members of the two uniting communions. It is not to be considered a substitute for any confession of faith which may be used in any congregation today. Like the ampler statement called for in Article IV, Section F, it is designed to be a testimony, and not a test, of faith.

Kingdom of God; and we look with faith for the triumph of righteousness and for the life everlasting.

## III. PRACTICE

A. The basic unit of organization of the United Church of Christ is the Congregation; that is, the local church.

B. The Congregations, through their ministers and through delegates elected from their membership, may organize Associations for fellowship, mutual encouragement, inspiration, and such other functions as may be desired.

C. The Congregations, through their ministers and through delegates elected from their membership, constitute Conferences for fellowship, counsel, and cooperation in all matters of common concern. The Conferences exist to make cooperation effective (a) among their Congregations and (b) between their Congregations and the General Synod, the Boards, commissions, agencies, and instrumentalities<sup>4</sup> of the Church.

D. The Conferences, through delegates elected by them from the membership and ministers of the Congregations located within their respective bounds, constitute the General Synod.

E. Officers, Boards, councils, commissions, committees, departments, agencies, and instrumentalities are responsible to the bodies that elect them.

F. The government of the United Church is exercised through Congregations, Associations, Conferences, and the General Synod in such wise that the autonomy of each is respected in its own sphere, each having its own rights and responsibilities. This Basis of Union defines those rights and responsibilities in principle and the constitution which will be drafted after the consummation of the union shall further define them but shall in no wise abridge the rights now enjoyed by Congregations.

G. Individual communicants have the right of appeal, complaint, or reference to their Congregations, Associations, Conferences, and ultimately to the General Synod. Ministers, Congregations, Associations, and Conferences have similar rights of appeal, complaint, or reference. Decisions rendered in consequence of such appeals, complaints, or references are advisory, not mandatory.

H. Each Congregation, Association, and Conference has the right of retaining or adopting its own charter, constitution, by-laws, and other regulations which it deems essential and proper to its own welfare. This right includes the holding and operation of its own property.

I. The freedom of worship and of education at present enjoyed by the

<sup>4</sup>The Basis of Union employs both the word "agencies" and "instrumentalities" in order to meet legal requirements.

Congregations of the negotiating communions will be preserved in the United Church. Other freedoms at present enjoyed are not hereby abridged.

J. Men and women enjoy the same rights and privileges in the United Church. It is recommended that at least one third of the members of the national administrative bodies be women.

K. Baptism and the Lord's Supper are the recognized sacraments of the Church.

#### IV. FUNCTIONS OF THE GENERAL SYNOD

A. The General Synod shall initiate action for the preparation of a constitution of the United Church. This constitution shall be based upon the principles set forth in this Basis of Union. When prepared, it shall be submitted to the General Synod; and the General Synod shall declare it in force when it shall have been ratified by not less than two thirds of the former Congregational Christian churches voting, and by not less than two thirds of the former Evangelical and Reformed Synods.

B. The General Synod shall elect its officers and assign them their duties.

C. The General Synod, directly or through an executive committee, commissions, and other committees, shall carry on the general work of the Church which is now conducted by the General Council of the Congregational Christian Churches and the General Synod of the Evangelical and Reformed Church; and through the instrumentality of Boards, commissions, and other organizations as needed, shall meet the responsibilities of the Church for foreign missions, home missions, education, publication, the ministry and ministerial relief, evangelism, stewardship, social action, and institutional benevolence.

D. The General Synod shall have power to receive overtures and petitions; to give counsel in regard to cases referred to it; and to maintain correspondence with other communions.

E. The General Synod shall promote the reorganization of Conferences, Associations, and Synods into Conferences and Associations which shall be constituted on a territorial basis and enjoy a status similar to that of the former Conferences, Associations, and Synods. This reorganization shall be effected by the Conferences, Associations, and Synods concerned, with the counsel and confirmation of the General Synod.<sup>5</sup>

F. If and when the Basis of Union is regularly adopted, the General Synod shall appoint a commission composed of an equal number of representatives of the two uniting communions to prepare a statement of faith based in principle

<sup>5</sup>It is expected that the Conferences and Synods will take the first steps necessary to this reorganization as soon as practicable after the consummation of the union, forming non-competitive units without overlapping boundaries capable of continuing all the work carried on by the present Conferences and Synods, together with such other work as may prove to be desirable. The formation of Associations, as deemed advisable, would follow.

upon Article II of this document, which shall be submitted for approval to the General Synod, Conferences, Associations, and Congregations. This statement shall be regarded as a testimony, and not as a test, of faith.

G. The General Synod shall meet in regular sessions, determine their time, place, frequency, and program, and provide for extraordinary sessions as may be necessary.

H. The executive committee of the General Synod shall be called the Executive Council. Its functions shall correspond to those of the present Executive Committee of the Congregational Christian General Council and of the present General Council of the Evangelical and Reformed General Synod. While it shall not be charged with the administration of the Boards and other agencies and instrumentalities of the communion, it shall be its duty to consider their work, to prevent duplication of activities, to effect all possible economies of administration, to correlate the work of the several organizations, including their publicity and promotional activities, so as to secure the maximum of efficiency with the minimum of expense. It shall have the right to examine the annual budgets of the several national organizations and have access to their books and records. It shall make report of its actions to the General Synod at each stated meeting of that body and present to that Synod such recommendations as it may deem wise for the furtherance of the efficiency and economical administration of the several organizations. It shall study the relative needs of these organizations, including the Conferences, and recommend the apportionment percentages for the distribution of benevolent contributions.

I. For the interim between the effecting of the union and the adoption of the constitution, the membership of the Executive Council shall be twenty-four, with equal representation of the uniting communions.<sup>6</sup>

J. This Executive Council shall have a budget under its control, with income for it derived from the present sources of revenue of the General Council of the Evangelical and Reformed Church and the Executive Committee of the General Council of the Congregational Christian Churches. It shall carry out faithfully all obligations of both of these bodies and conserve as separate funds all funds of both bodies until otherwise provided.

K. There shall be a central receiving treasury for all funds contributed to the General Synod and all the national agencies and instrumentalities. Each Conference will decide whether its Congregations shall be encouraged to send their moneys for these organizations direct to the central treasury or through the Conference treasurers.

<sup>6</sup>Paragraphs describing arrangements for the interim between the consummation of the union and the adoption of the constitution, while constituting part of the Basis of Union, are [set off by rules] to distinguish them from the rest of the text.

L. No attempt will be made to set up a detailed plan for the solicitation, collection, and disbursement of missionary, benevolent, and administrative funds before the union is effected, but the General Synod shall be requested at its first meeting to appoint a special committee adequately representing all interests to deal with these matters and to report at a later date. In any plan it is understood:

1. That all property rights and trust funds shall be scrupulously protected as provided in Article IX, Sections A and C, of the Basis of Union.
2. That an adequate budgetary system will be established which will be voluntary in character on the part of the Congregations, Associations, Conferences, and Synods but in which due emphasis will be placed on the moral responsibility of all to support the general work of the Church.

M. Pending the report of the committee to be appointed by the General Synod and until new policies are adopted, present practices in apportionment allocations, per capita assignments, and kindred matters shall be maintained.

N. The choice of location of headquarters for the United Church of Christ shall be left until after the union is effected.

## V. CONFERENCES, ASSOCIATIONS, AND SYNODS

Until, according to Article IV, Section E, it is otherwise determined, the Conferences, Associations, and Synods shall continue; and each shall conduct its business in its own way. Whatever action is submitted to them by the General Synod shall be disposed of in the same way as these bodies respectively disposed of such action by the General Council of the Congregational Christian Churches or the General Synod of the Evangelical and Reformed Church prior to the union.

## VI. MINISTERS AND CONGREGATIONS

A. The ministers of the two communions shall be enrolled as ministers of the United Church. Candidates for the ministry, after the union, and until a standard method is provided by the constitution, shall have the same status, and be licensed or ordained as ministers by the Associations or Conferences and Synods in the same way, as before the union. The standard method shall provide for ordination by authorization of the Conference or Association and normally upon the call to a Congregation. Similarly the formal induction of a minister into his parish, which is recommended as normal procedure, shall be by authority of the Conference or Association at the request of the Congregation.

B. A minister of another denomination shall not be accepted by any body of the United Church in which ministerial standing is held without recommendation from the body to which he belongs; if, however, a denomination refuses to recommend a minister in good and regular standing, he may be accepted after

proper examination by the Conference or Association in which his standing would be held.

C. The calling of a minister to a Congregation is a concern of the Church at large, represented in the Association or Conference, as well as of the minister and the Congregation. Ministers and churches desiring to maintain a system of pastoral placement in which the Conference or Association shall have little or no part, shall be free to do so; but the recommended standard of denominational procedure shall be one in which the minister, Congregation, and Conference or Association cooperate, the Conference or Association approving candidates, the Congregation extending and the minister accepting the call. The new communion will appeal to all Congregations not to call or dismiss their ministers, and to all ministers not to respond to calls or resign, until the Association or Conference shall have given approval. In all relationships between minister and local church or Congregation, the freedom of the minister and the autonomy of the church are presupposed.

## VII. MEMBERS

All persons who are members of either communion at the time of the union shall be members of the United Church. Men, women, and children shall be admitted into the fellowship of the United Church through baptism and profession of faith according to the custom and usage of each congregation prior to the union. When they shall have been admitted they shall be recognized as members of the United Church.

## VIII. ORGANIZATION OF BOARDS

*[This article has been ratified (subject to the adoption of the entire Basis of Union by the negotiating communions) by the Executive Committee of the Congregational Christian General Council, by the Evangelical and Reformed General Council, and severally by the governing authorities of all Boards, agencies, and instrumentalities involved.]*

A. The Boards, commissions, and other agencies and instrumentalities shall proceed to correlate their work under the General Synod as rapidly as their charters, constitutions, property rights, the effectiveness of their program, and the laws of the State will permit. In the original personnel of the Boards, commissions, and other agencies and instrumentalities, when consolidated, due representation shall be given to each of the consolidating communions.

B. At each regular meeting of the General Synod each Board and commission shall submit for review a report of its operations during the time elapsed since the last regular meeting of the General Synod.

C. Except in the case of the Pension Board, the members of the Boards shall be nominated and elected by the General Synod. They shall be represented through corresponding members, with voice but without vote, in the General

Synod itself. They shall elect their own officers. The executive committees or other governing groups of the Boards shall have a sufficient number of members to provide for geographical distribution, representation of both of the uniting Churches (see *Section A above*), and the inclusion of persons qualified to render specific services, as for example in the field of investment, medicine, education, etc., as the Boards may require.

D. The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions and the Board of International Missions shall be united under the name of the AMERICAN BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS FOR FOREIGN MISSIONS.<sup>7</sup>

1. The Board thus constituted shall from the time of the consummation of the union until the adoption of a constitutional plan of organization consist of two hundred and twenty-five members, one hundred and thirteen of whom shall be chosen from the Evangelical and Reformed Church and one hundred and twelve from the Congregational Christian Churches, all to be elected by the General Synod of the United Church. One third of these members shall be women.
2. This body is smaller than the present Congregational Christian Board and larger than the present Evangelical and Reformed Board. Through its members its work will be related to the Conferences and Congregations. The traveling expenses of members incurred in connection with meetings will be borne in part by the Board and in part by the members themselves. It is believed that the additional interest and effectiveness in promoting the program resulting from these large group meetings will immeasurably outweigh the cost involved in the proposed plan of organization.
3. On the adoption of a constitution and by-laws for the United Church, the term of office of all Board members elected under these provisions shall terminate on the date designated by the General Synod for their successors to take office under the permanent plan of organization of the Boards.
4. Among the duties of this Board shall be the following:
  - a. To receive and consider the reports of the board of directors (see *Paragraph 5 following*) and the executive officers and to give them any necessary directives.
  - b. To determine long-range policies to be adopted by the Board.
  - c. To nominate and elect the general officers of the Board, the members of the board of directors, and the executive officers.
  - d. To report fully to the General Synod of the United Church concerning operations and finances of the Board (see *Section B above*).

<sup>7</sup>It is the intention of the present American Board to amend its Charter and By-laws to conform to those of the Board of the United Church.

5. The Board shall elect forty-five members who, with five persons ex officio, shall serve as a board of directors. The members ex officio shall be the President and the two Vice-Presidents of the Board and the two highest administrative officers of the General Synod of the United Church.

E. The homeland Boards, agencies, and instrumentalities of the Congregational Christian Churches and of the Evangelical and Reformed Church, exclusive of the Pension Board and the agencies for social action, from the time of the consummation of the union until the adoption of a constitutional plan for their organization, shall function by means of a single corporate body. The name of this corporate body shall be the BOARD FOR HOME MISSIONS OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST. In order to provide the appropriate corporate structure for this enlarged and consolidated work, the charter of The Board of Home Missions of the Congregational and Christian Churches shall be amended so that it may be used for this purpose.

#### **CORPORATE MEMBERSHIP**

1. There shall be two hundred and twenty-five corporate members of the Board for Home Missions of the United Church of Christ elected by the General Synod of the Church.<sup>8</sup>
2. These corporate members shall represent the United Church of Christ in the promotion and administration of the work of home missions. The term "home missions" as here used shall include the founding, support, and building of churches, education, educational institutions, publication, ministerial relief, evangelism, stewardship, institutional benevolence, and other home services.
3. They shall elect a board of directors as hereinafter provided.
4. They shall meet periodically, but at least annually, to review the proceedings of the board of directors, to study the status of the work of home missions, and to plan for its further development. In the interim between meetings they shall be alert to inform themselves as to the progress of the work and shall individually seek opportunity to bring the work to the attention of the Congregations and members of the United Church of Christ.
5. The corporate members shall give careful consideration to all recommendations from the General Synod or its Executive Council, and in the field of home missions, as defined above, shall have responsibility for determining matters of promotion, administration, and policy.
6. The terms of these corporate members shall be six years and they shall

<sup>8</sup>Note that this Board, in size and structure, parallels and complements the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (see Article VIII, Section D, Paragraph 1).

be elected in three classes of seventy-five each, one class being elected every second year at the regular biennial meeting of the General Synod of the United Church of Christ. At the first meeting of the General Synod of the United Church, the two hundred and twenty-five persons shall be divided into three classes of seventy-five each, one class designated to serve two years, one class designated to serve four years, and one class designated to serve six years; provided however that, on the adoption of a constitution and by-laws for the United Church, the term of office of all Board members elected under these provisions shall terminate on the date designated by the General Synod for their successors to take office under the permanent plan of organization of the Boards. This paragraph is subject to amendment if it is decided that the General Synod shall meet otherwise than biennially.

7. In order that there may be continuity of operation during the years of reorganization the first list of corporate members shall include persons who are members of the Boards, agencies, and instrumentalities of the two uniting bodies at the time the union is consummated, as follows:

Members of the Board of National Missions of the Evangelical and Reformed Church .....	14
Members of the Board of Christian Education and Publication of the Evangelical and Reformed Church .....	12
Members of the Commission on Evangelism of the Evangelical and Reformed Church .....	10
Members of the Board of Business Management of the Evangelical and Reformed Church .....	12
Members of the Commission on Benevolent Institutions of the Evangelical and Reformed Church (excepting the representatives appointed by the institutions) .....	4
Members of the Commission on Higher Education of the Evangelical and Reformed Church (excepting the Presidents of Colleges) .....	12
Forty-eight persons elected at large from the membership of the Evangelical and Reformed Church .....	48
Sub-total .....	112
The President, three Vice-Presidents and thirty-six other members of the Board of Directors of The Board of Home Missions of the Congregational and Christian Churches .....	40
Members of the Commission on Evangelism of the Congregational Christian Churches (excluding the four persons elected to the Commission by The Board of Home Missions) .....	12

Three persons designated by the association of Congregational Christian Colleges .....	3
Fifty-eight persons elected at large from the membership of the Congregational Christian Churches .....	58
Sub-total .....	113
TOTAL .....	225

8. The particular class to which each individual belongs will be indicated by the General Synod at the time of election.

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

9. The board of directors, as constituted at the time of union, shall consist of the Chairman and the two Vice-Chairmen of the Board for Home Missions of the United Church of Christ, the two highest administrative officers of the General Synod of the United Church of Christ, and forty-five members who shall be chosen from and elected by the corporate members of the Board for Home Missions. At least one third of those elected shall be women.

10. In order that all interests may be represented, the first board of directors shall be nominated by a joint committee composed of an equal number of persons to be designated in advance by the appropriate bodies of the two uniting communions.

11. Of the first board of directors, twenty-four shall be chosen from the Evangelical and Reformed Church and twenty-four from the Congregational Christian Churches.

12. The board of directors shall immediately elect committees as follows:  
 a. An executive committee composed of thirteen persons, among whom shall be the chairman of the board of directors and the chairmen of the divisional committees. At least four of this committee shall be women.

This executive committee shall exercise such powers as are conferred upon it from time to time by the board of directors.

b. An investment committee consisting of five members, including the Treasurer, at least three of whom shall be members of the board of directors, who shall have power to invest and reinvest the funds of the corporation, or trust funds held by them, and to select investments and reinvestments of the said funds, and to change the in-

vestments of such funds, and such other powers as may be given them by the Board.

- c. Such divisional committees<sup>9</sup> which specialize in the founding, support, and building of churches, education, educational institutions, publication, ministerial relief, evangelism, stewardship, institutional benevolence, and other home services, as the interests of the work require, who shall have such powers as may be given them by the directors.
- d. Such other standing committees as the interests of the work require, who shall have such powers as may be given them by the directors.

<sup>9</sup>It is at present believed that the Board for Home Missions will require the following Divisions in order to care for all the interests involved:

**Division of Christian Education—continuing**

- CC Division of Christian Education
  - ER Board of Christian Education and Publication (education and curricular editorial functions only)
  - ER Commission on Higher Education
  - ER College and Seminary interests
  - CC College and Seminary interests
- Certain aspects of the higher education interests to be lodged with a College Seminary Council composed of representatives of the Division of Christian Education, the American Missionary Association Division, and of the Colleges and Seminaries.

**Division of Ministerial Relief—continuing**

- ER Relief functions of the Board of Pensions and Relief
- CC Division of Ministerial Relief

**Division of Evangelism and Church Extension—continuing**

- CC Church Extension Division
- CC Commission on Evangelism
- ER Board of National Missions
- ER Commission on Evangelism

**American Missionary Association Division—continuing**

- CC American Missionary Association Division

**Division of Publication—continuing**

- CC Pilgrim Press Division
- ER Board of Business Management

The Division of Publication (*continuing the Pilgrim Press Division and the Board of Business Management*) will proceed forthwith to develop and recommend particularly to the board of directors of the Board for Home Missions a plan for consolidating and unifying the publication and merchandising interests of the United Church.

F. The Commission on Christian Social Action of the Evangelical and Reformed Church and the Council for Social Action of the Congregational Christian Churches shall be united under the name, the COUNCIL FOR CHRISTIAN SOCIAL ACTION.

**MEMBERSHIP**

1. From the time of the consummation of the union of the communions until the adoption of a constitutional plan of organization, there shall be twenty-four members of the Council for Christian Social Action elected by the General Synod of the United Church of Christ. Of the first members of the Council, twelve shall be chosen from the Evangelical and Reformed Church and twelve from the Congregational Christian Churches. The terms of these members shall be six years and they shall be elected in classes of eight each, one class being elected every second year at the regular biennial meeting of the General Synod of the United Church of Christ. At the first meeting of the General Synod of the United Church, the twenty-four persons shall be divided into three classes of eight each, one class designated to serve two years, one class designated to serve four years and one class designated to serve six years. On the adoption of a constitution and by-laws for the United Church, the term of office of all Council members elected under these provisions shall terminate on the date designated by the General Synod for their successors to take office under the permanent plan of organization. This paragraph is subject to amendment, if it is decided that the General Synod shall meet otherwise than biennially.
2. The Council for Christian Social Action may choose as advisory members, with voice but not vote, representatives of other Boards, agencies and conferences, and of the men's, women's and youth fellowships.

**COMMITTEES**

3. The Council for Christian Social Action shall immediately elect such standing committees as the interests of the work require. They shall have such powers as shall be given to them by the Council.

**FUNCTIONS**

4. The Council for Christian Social Action shall be an agency under the General Synod of the United Church of Christ, and shall have power to take over, unify, and operate the activities carried on by the Council for Social Action of the Congregational Christian Churches and the Commission on Christian Social Action of the Evangelical and Reformed Church.

**STAFF**

5. The Director and other staff members shall be elected by the Council for Christian Social Action.

G. The pension activities of the United Church shall be administered by one corporation, the name of which shall be left for later decision by mutual agreement. It is here referred to as the MERGED FUND.

1. Provision shall be made in the by-laws of the Merged Fund whereby the General Synod of the United Church shall from time to time make examinations of the practices and developments of the Merged Fund.
2. The Trustees shall be chosen from eligible persons whose names have been presented to and approved by the General Synod of the United Church.
3. The Merged Fund shall be a non-profit membership corporation in which control lies in the members of the Fund through a Board of Trustees, elected by the members. Congregations and other employing agencies shall be included as participating members.
4. The maximum annuity<sup>10</sup> provided by the Pension Fund of the Evangelical Synod, the Sustentation Fund of the Reformed Church, and the Original Plan of the Annuity Fund for Congregational Ministers (hereafter referred to in this statement as the three "original plans") shall be in each case \$500.00.
5. The liability of the Merged Fund to the members of the three "original plans" shall be set up on the books of the new corporation for the funded portion of their respective annuities only.
6. Sufficient money shall be designated in advance by the United Church as a prior claim upon apportionment to meet the indicated annual requirements for the unfunded portion of the annuities under all three "original plans" and to make cumulative provision for their funding.
7. This prior claim upon the apportionment<sup>11</sup> shall be for not less than

<sup>10</sup>By "maximum annuity" is meant the annuity paid to a member who has completed the full term of service or membership defined by the rules of the fund to which he belongs. The annuity of a member who has completed less than the full term of service or membership is a percentage of the maximum, stipulated by the rules of the fund in question. The annuity of the widow of a member of any of the "original plans" shall be 60% of the annuity to which her husband would be entitled.

<sup>11</sup>In 1945 the amounts received from the apportionment of the two denominations for similar purposes were as follows:

From the Evangelical and Reformed Churches.....	\$210,741
From the Congregational Christian Churches.....	117,025

Total..... \$327,766

This amount does not include \$176,846 contributed by the Congregational Christian Churches through the Unit Plan.

\$500,000 in each year in which the apportionment giving of the United Church for the year immediately preceding equals or exceeds \$3,300,000. The prior claim may be proportionately reduced in any year in which the apportionment giving for the preceding year is less than \$3,300,000, but the prior claim shall in no case be for less than an amount sufficient to meet the requirements of the year in question for the unfunded portion of the annuities under all three "original plans" plus the necessary expense of promotion and administration. The prior claim upon the apportionment shall continue until the total liabilities of the three "original plans" are completely funded.<sup>12</sup>

8. Liability for payment of the unfunded portion of "original plan" annuities in any year shall be limited to the money received as applicable to such unfunded portion. In the event that in any year there shall not be sufficient money to pay the annuities which the denomination has designated, the legal liability of the Merged Fund shall be completely satisfied and fulfilled when such applicable money as is available has been disbursed to the "original plan" annuitants.
9. The assets and liabilities in the Merged Fund pertaining to members of the Ministers' Retirement Annuity Fund of the Evangelical and Reformed Church and of the Expanded Plan of the Annuity Fund for Congregational Ministers shall be consolidated as completely as legal requirements and considerations of equity permit.
10. Ministers enrolling in the Merged Fund other than those who are members of one of the present plans at the time of the union, shall be received under a new form of certificate.
11. The assets received by the Merged Fund from the present funds shall all be pooled into a common unit of investment and, together with investment of future receipts, shall be collectively available from time to time to meet the liabilities of the various Departments of the Merged Fund. No particular assets shall be segregated against the balance in any particular fund, except for conditional gift accounts and other accounts which may be required to be segregated by law.

**PILGRIM MEMORIAL FUND INCOME**

12. In the operation of the Merged Fund the Pilgrim Memorial Fund<sup>13</sup> In-

<sup>12</sup>It is estimated that the time required to fund the "Original Plan" annuities upon the above basis will be approximately thirty years.

<sup>13</sup>The Pilgrim Memorial Fund, consisting of about \$5,500,000, is an endowment fund held for the benefit of The Annuity Fund for Congregational Ministers, the income of which is at present used for the administrative expenses of the Annuity Fund and the benefit of its members.



come received in any year shall be allocated in the succeeding year in the following manner:

- a. A specific sum determined before the merger shall be allocated to the Original Plan of the Annuity Fund.
  - b. A further specific sum determined before the merger shall be allocated to the Merged Fund to meet the expenses incurred in the operation of the Original Plan of the Annuity Fund.
  - c. An amount determined from year to year shall be allocated to the Merged Fund to meet the expenses incurred on account of Congregational Christian members of the consolidated "expanded plan."
  - d. Such an amount shall be allocated for the benefit of the members of the Expanded Plan of the Annuity Fund as shall provide \$45 for each unit sharer among the members of such Expanded Plan, according to the rules of the Annuity Fund, or as nearly this amount as can be provided after allocations a, b, and c have been made.
  - e. Any balance after the above four allocations shall be used for the strengthening of the whole Merged Fund, or in such manner as the Trustees believe most beneficial for the benefit of ministerial members of the Merged Fund and their families who do not fall within the four following categories:
    - I. Congregational Original Plan members
    - II. Evangelical Pension Fund members
    - III. Reformed Sustentation Fund members
    - IV. Congregational Christian Expanded Plan members
  - f. If allocations under heading e shall exceed \$45.00 per member, members under heading d shall be entitled to further allocation.
13. The pension boards of the two denominations shall give careful attention to the continuance and extension of a plan to provide retirement income for lay workers of the churches and other organizations of the United Church.

#### IX. LEGAL OBLIGATIONS

A. The property rights of all bodies such as Congregations, Associations, Conferences, Synods, and corporations shall be scrupulously observed.

B. The theological seminaries, colleges, academies, denominational boards, benevolent institutions, and other corporations shall be controlled under the terms of their respective charters and other governing documents. Those institutions, however, which were under the supervision of the national bodies of the uniting communions shall, at least until the constitution is adopted, pass under the supervision of the General Synod. While they are under the supervision of the General Synod, the interests of the previously supervising groups shall be properly recognized.

C. Due protection shall be given all trust funds, including pension funds.

#### X. APPROVAL AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BASIS OF UNION

A. The Basis of Union shall be submitted to the General Council of the Congregational Christian Churches and the General Synod of the Evangelical and Reformed Church. Each shall proceed according to its own polity in the approval or disapproval of the Basis of Union. When the Basis has been approved by the regular action of the two bodies, each shall designate an equal number of its membership, approximately three hundred, with power to represent it at a joint meeting which shall constitute the first meeting of the General Synod of the United Church of Christ.

B. The joint meeting being duly called and assembled, to it the final report of the action of the communions upon the Basis of Union shall be made; and by joint resolution it shall be declared that the union of the communions is effected at that time, the General Synod of the United Church of Christ being the successor to the General Council of the Congregational Christian Churches and the General Synod of the Evangelical and Reformed Church, the joint meeting becoming the first meeting of the General Synod of the United Church. Then the delegates shall be led in a constituting prayer, effect an organization by the election of officers, and proceed to the transaction of business. From the time of the organization of the General Synod of the United Church until a constitution of the United Church has been adopted, this Basis of Union shall regulate the business and affairs of the United Church.

C. At the joint session referred to in the foregoing paragraph when the Union shall be formally effected, such action shall be taken as will unite the General Council of the Congregational Christian Churches and the General Synod of the Evangelical and Reformed Church: the further union of Conferences, Associations, Synods, and other bodies within the uniting communions shall proceed with the approval of the groups concerned, according to the principles laid down in this Basis of Union.

D. The General Synod of the United Church of Christ at its first meeting shall also take any and all appropriate steps necessary to insure the continuity and to effect the consolidation of the Boards, commissions, and other agencies and instrumentalities as described in Article IV, Section C, and to make effective an interim plan for their consolidation and operation, as more explicitly set forth in Article VIII.

E. The General Synod at its first meeting shall be made up of representatives elected as set forth in Article X, Section A; but at subsequent meetings, until a constitution shall have been adopted, the General Synod shall be composed of delegates elected by the present Conferences and Synods, or their successors, one delegate representing each three thousand communicants or major fraction thereof, so that the total number will be about six hundred.

F. Upon the consummation of the union the general officers of the former

Congregational Christian General Council and the former Evangelical and Reformed General Synod not connected with the Boards shall become the staff of the General Synod of the United Church of Christ until other arrangements are perfected by the General Synod.

G. Revisions and amendments of the constitution shall be made by the General Synod and ratified by the Conferences in collaboration with the Associations and Congregations.

## **XI. REVISIONS AND AMENDMENTS**

Revisions and amendments of the Basis of Union while it is in force before the adoption of a constitution may be made by consent of ninety per cent of the members of the General Synod of the United Church of Christ duly assembled.

### **THE INTERPRETATIONS OF THE BASIS OF UNION**

(a) The Basis of Union calls for a union of the General Council of Congregational Christian Churches and the General Synod of the Evangelical and Reformed Church to form the General Synod of the United Church of Christ.

(b) The constitution for the United Church of Christ provided for in Article IV-A of the Basis of Union: (1) will not come into force until it has been ratified by two-thirds of our churches voting; (2) is to be based on the principles set forth in the Basis of Union; (3) is in no wise to abridge the rights now enjoyed by the churches; (4) will define and regulate as regards the General Synod but describe the free and voluntary relationships which the churches, associations, and conferences shall sustain with the General Synod and with each other.

(c) The Basis of Union calls for a union of the Boards of Home Missions, the Boards of Foreign Missions, the Annuity Boards, the Councils for Social Action, and similarly all related Boards, commissions, agencies, and instrumentalities of the two denominations.

(d) Churches, associations, conferences and the General Synod, being self-governing fellowships, possess autonomy in their own spheres, which autonomy is acknowledged and will be respected.

(e) Synods, conferences, associations and churches are to retain their present status until they are united by their own action and when mutually agreeable.

(f) Congregational Christian churches do not go out of existence at the time of the union of the two communions. In consummating this union the Congregational Christian Churches and the Evangelical and Reformed Church are uniting without break in their respective historic continuities.

(g) The United Church of Christ will be a union of two denominations joined in fellowship and cooperation without involving any invasion of the rights now enjoyed by local churches or congregations.

(h) With the constituting of the General Synod of the United Church of Christ, the General Council of the Congregational Christian Churches [and the General Synod of the Evangelical and Reformed Church] will remain in existence in order to fulfil necessary legal functions, but shall transfer to the General Synod all of its functions which do not for legal reasons need to be retained.