

1 **A Resolution to Study and Develop Reparations Proposals for African Americans**

2
3 **A Resolution of Witness**

4
5 **TEXT OF THE MOTION**

6
7 WHEREAS the institution of slavery is internationally recognized as a crime for which there is
8 no statute of limitations.¹

9
10 WHEREAS the enslavement of Africans fueled the prosperity of our young nation, allowing its
11 economy to reap the benefits of unpaid labor of untold value.²

12
13 WHEREAS the ministry of the One we follow, Jesus, speaking in the tradition of the prophets of
14 Israel that was his tradition, called his followers to a project of political transformation to a God-
15 centered society, including forgiveness of debts and equitable distribution of resources.

16
17 WHEREAS we fervently strive to enact the prayer Jesus taught his followers, “On Earth as it is
18 in Heaven.”

19
20 WHEREAS the United Church of Christ affirms in its bylaws (Justice and Witness Ministries
21 section 268) that the Church in all its expressions is encouraged to speak prophetically on
22 matters of justice, power, and public policy; to confront expressions of injustice and alienation in
23 the Church and in society.

24
25 WHEREAS in 1991, the United Church of Christ issued the *Pastoral Letter on Racism and the*
26 *Role of the Church*³ that called the Church to advance issues of racial justice.

27
28 WHEREAS at the 23rd General Synod of the United Church of Christ (2001), the Synod adopted
29 the Resolution, “A Call for Study on Reparations for Slavery.”⁴

30
31 WHEREAS at the 24th General Synod of the United Church of Christ (2003), Executive
32 Minister Rev. Bernice Powell Jackson presented the study and discussion guide, *Reparations: A*
33 *Process for Repairing the Breach*.⁵

34
35 WHEREAS in 2008, the UCC Collegium issued *The Pastoral Letter on Racism* that articulated
36 “the challenges and opportunities of a Sacred Conversation at this time in our nation’s history
37 and the life of our church.”⁶

38
39 WHEREAS the late Rep. Conyers Jr. (D MI-13) introduced to the 115th Congress of the United
40 States (2017-2018), the Commission to Study Reparation Proposals for African Americans Act.⁷

41
42 WHEREAS in the wake of Rep. Conyers passing, Representative Sheila Jackson Lee (D TX-18)
43 introduced into the first session of the 117th Congress (2021-2022), the Commission to Study
44 Reparation Proposals for African Americans Act.⁸

45
46 WHEREAS in April 2021, United Church of Christ leaders supported the Commission to Study
47 Reparation Proposals for African Americans Act, publishing, “UCC Leaders Laud Historic
48 Legislation on Reparations, Heading to House Vote⁹.”

49
50 WHEREAS in 2022, the United Church of Christ launched the *Join the Movement*¹⁰ campaign
51 that stated, in part, “As followers of Jesus, we believe it is our mandate to work for and seek
52 justice, love, and compassion, as we join with and become our own Spirit-led movements toward
53 racial justice.”

54
55 THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Thirty-Fourth General Synod of the United Church of
56 Christ publicly proclaims its support of the *Commission to Study and Develop Reparation*
57 *Proposals for African Americans Act* and like-legislation that ~~mirrors establishes a commission~~
58 ~~to study and develop reparation proposals for African Americans as defined in~~ Section 3 of the
59 ~~referenced Act. Commission to Study Reparation Proposals for African Americans Act~~
60 ~~“Establishment and Duties” (a) Establishment: There is established the Commission to Study~~
61 ~~and Develop Reparation Proposals for African Americans.~~

62
63 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Thirty-Fourth General Synod of the United Church of
64 Christ encourages all settings of the United Church of Christ to study the *Commission to Study*
65 *and Develop Reparation Proposals for African Americans Act* and ~~like-like-legislation that~~
66 ~~establishes a commission to study and develop reparation proposals for African Americans as~~
67 ~~defined in Section 3 of the referenced Act. that mirrors Section 3 of the Commission to Study~~
68 ~~Reparation Proposals for African Americans Act “Establishment and Duties (a) Establishment:~~
69 ~~There is established the Commission to Study and Develop Reparation Proposals for African~~
70 ~~Americans”.~~

71
72
73 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Thirty-Fourth General Synod of the United Church of
74 Christ requests that the United Church of Christ Board support ~~new and~~ ongoing commitments
75 ~~and actions~~ to further ~~the ministry work of the~~ Reparatory Justice and ~~Reparations Ministry of~~
76 ~~the United Church of Christ National setting. Reparations.~~

77
78 BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the Thirty-Fourth General Synod of the United Church of
79 Christ requests that the United Church of Christ Board form a Reparations Legislative Task
80 Force, with ~~partnership input from~~ of the United Church of Christ Washington DC Office and the
81 Reparatory Justice and Reparations Ministry of the United Church of Christ National setting.
82 ~~The duties of this taskforce shall including include but not be limited to:~~

- 83 ~~(a) designing and developing an advocacy toolkit that will equip all settings of the UCC to~~
84 ~~ask members of Congress to take-up the Act for floor debate and ultimately to pass the~~
85 ~~Commission to Study and Develop Reparation Proposals for African Americans Act and~~
86 ~~like-legislation;~~
87 ~~(b) issuing an open call to all settings of the UCC for participation, to to monitor and~~
88 ~~communicate legislative actions, and participate inr and communicat advocacye~~
89 ~~legislative actions for to A-enact the Commission to Study and Develop Reparation~~

90 *Proposals for African Americans Act and like-legislation. Call for the Study of*
91 *Reparations for African Americans Act and*

92
93 ~~— to design and develop an advocacy toolkit made available for all settings of the UCC to~~
94 ~~ask members of Congress to take up the Act for floor debate and ultimately to pass the~~
95 ~~Call for the Study of Reparations for African Americans Act.~~

96 97 **FUNDING**

98 The funding for the implementation of the Resolution will be made in accordance with the
99 overall mandates of the affected agencies and the funds available.

100 101 **IMPLEMENTATION**

102 The Officers of the Church, in consultation with appropriate ministries or other entities within
103 the United Church of Christ, will determine the implementing body.

¹ <https://www.icc-cpi.int/sites/default/files/RS-Eng.pdf>

² <https://naacp.org/resources/reparations-unpaid-labor-rendered-enslaved-persons-african-descent-0>

³ http://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/unitedchurchofchrist/legacy_url/388/Pastoral-Letter-on-Racism-NEW-small.pdf?1418423752

⁴ <http://uccfiles.com/synod/resolutions/CALL-FOR-STUDY-ON-REPARATIONS-FOR-SLAVERY.pdf>

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<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/552a993ce4b0c842cdb585ad/t/627d92037f6d991914a0528a/1652396549042/Reparations+A+Process+for+Repairing+the+Breach.pdf>

⁶ http://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/unitedchurchofchrist/legacy_url/388/Pastoral-Letter-on-Racism-NEW-small.pdf?1418423752

⁷ <https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/house-bill/40>

⁸ [https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-bill/40#:~:text=Introduced%20in%20House%20\(01%2F04%2F2021\)&text=This%20bill%20establishes%20the%20Commission,present%20and%20recommend%20appropriate%20remedies.](https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-bill/40#:~:text=Introduced%20in%20House%20(01%2F04%2F2021)&text=This%20bill%20establishes%20the%20Commission,present%20and%20recommend%20appropriate%20remedies.)

⁹ <https://www.ucc.org/ucc-leaders-laud-historic-legislation-on-reparations-heading-to-house-vote/>

¹⁰ <https://jointhemovementucc.org/>