

The following resolution was approved by the delegates at a plenary of the Thirty-Fourth General Synod of the United Church of Christ, held in Indianapolis June 30-July 4, 2023.

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

### **A Resolution of Witness**

#### **TEXT OF THE MOTION**

1  
2  
3 WHEREAS the institution of slavery is internationally recognized as a crime for which there is  
4 no statute of limitations.<sup>1</sup>

5  
6 WHEREAS the enslavement of Africans fueled the prosperity of our young nation, allowing its  
7 economy to reap the benefits of unpaid labor of untold value.<sup>2</sup>

8  
9 WHEREAS the ministry of the One we follow, Jesus, speaking in the tradition of the prophets of  
10 Israel that was his tradition, called his followers to a project of political transformation to a God-  
11 centered society, including forgiveness of debts and equitable distribution of resources.

12  
13 WHEREAS we fervently strive to enact the prayer Jesus taught his followers, “On Earth as it is  
14 in Heaven.”

15  
16 WHEREAS the United Church of Christ affirms in its bylaws (Justice and Witness Ministries  
17 section 268) that the Church in all its expressions is encouraged to speak prophetically on  
18 matters of justice, power, and public policy; to confront expressions of injustice and alienation in  
19 the Church and in society.

20  
21 WHEREAS in 1991, the United Church of Christ issued the *Pastoral Letter on Racism and the*  
22 *Role of the Church*<sup>3</sup> that called the Church to advance issues of racial justice.

23  
24 WHEREAS at the 23rd General Synod of the United Church of Christ (2001), the Synod adopted  
25 the Resolution, “A Call for Study on Reparations for Slavery.”<sup>4</sup>

26  
27 WHEREAS at the 24th General Synod of the United Church of Christ (2003), Executive  
28 Minister Rev. Bernice Powell Jackson presented the study and discussion guide, *Reparations: A*  
29 *Process for Repairing the Breach*.<sup>5</sup>

30  
31 WHEREAS in 2008, the UCC Collegium issued *The Pastoral Letter on Racism* that articulated  
32 “the challenges and opportunities of a Sacred Conversation at this time in our nation’s history  
33 and the life of our church.”<sup>6</sup>

34  
35 WHEREAS the late Rep. Conyers Jr. (D MI-13) introduced to the 115th Congress of the United  
36 States (2017-2018), the Commission to Study Reparation Proposals for African Americans Act.<sup>7</sup>  
37

38 WHEREAS in the wake of Rep. Conyers passing, Representative Sheila Jackson Lee (D TX-18)  
39 introduced into the first session of the 117th Congress (2021-2022), the Commission to Study  
40 Reparation Proposals for African Americans Act<sup>8</sup>.

41  
42 WHEREAS in April 2021, United Church of Christ leaders supported the Commission to Study  
43 Reparation Proposals for African Americans Act, publishing, “UCC Leaders Laud Historic  
44 Legislation on Reparations, Heading to House Vote<sup>9</sup>.”

45  
46 WHEREAS in 2022, the United Church of Christ launched the *Join the Movement*<sup>10</sup> campaign  
47 that stated, in part, “As followers of Jesus, we believe it is our mandate to work for and seek  
48 justice, love, and compassion, as we join with and become our own Spirit-led movements toward  
49 racial justice.”

50  
51 THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Thirty-Fourth General Synod of the United Church of  
52 Christ publicly proclaims its support of the *Commission to Study and Develop Reparation*  
53 *Proposals for African Americans Act* and like-legislation that establishes a commission to study  
54 and develop reparation proposals for African Americans as defined in Section 3 of the referenced  
55 Act.

56  
57 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Thirty-Fourth General Synod of the United Church of  
58 Christ encourages all settings of the United Church of Christ to study the *Commission to Study*  
59 *and Develop Reparation Proposals for African Americans Act* and like-legislation that  
60 establishes a commission to study and develop reparation proposals for African Americans as  
61 defined in Section 3 of the referenced Act.

62  
63 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Thirty-Fourth General Synod of the United Church of  
64 Christ requests that the United Church of Christ Board support new and ongoing commitments  
65 and actions to further the work of the Reparatory Justice and Reparations Ministry of the United  
66 Church of Christ National setting.

67  
68 BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the Thirty-Fourth General Synod of the United Church of  
69 Christ requests that the United Church of Christ Board form a Reparations Legislative Task  
70 Force, with input from the United Church of Christ Washington DC Office and the Reparatory  
71 Justice and Reparations Ministry of the United Church of Christ National setting.

72 The duties of this taskforce shall include but not be limited to:

- 73 (a) designing and developing an advocacy toolkit that will equip all settings of the UCC to  
74 ask members of Congress to take-up the Act for floor debate and ultimately to pass the  
75 *Commission to Study and Develop Reparation Proposals for African Americans Act* and  
76 like-legislation;
- 77 (b) issuing an open call to all settings of the UCC to monitor and communicate legislative  
78 actions, and participate in advocacy actions to enact the *Commission to Study and*  
79 *Develop Reparation Proposals for African Americans Act* and like-legislation.

80  
81  
82 **FUNDING**

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

85

## 86 **IMPLEMENTATION**

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

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

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

<sup>3</sup> [http://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/unitedchurchofchrist/legacy\\_url/388/Pastoral-Letter-on-Racism-NEW-small.pdf?1418423752](http://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/unitedchurchofchrist/legacy_url/388/Pastoral-Letter-on-Racism-NEW-small.pdf?1418423752)

<sup>4</sup> <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>

<sup>6</sup> [http://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/unitedchurchofchrist/legacy\\_url/388/Pastoral-Letter-on-Racism-NEW-small.pdf?1418423752](http://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/unitedchurchofchrist/legacy_url/388/Pastoral-Letter-on-Racism-NEW-small.pdf?1418423752)

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

<sup>8</sup> [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.)

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

<sup>10</sup> <https://jointhemovementucc.org/>