The Business Committee of the Thirty-first General Synod has recommended this proposed resolution be sent to a Committee of the General Synod.

ON ENHANCED SUPPORT OF AMERICAN MISSIONARY ASSOCIATION FOUNDED CHURCHES THAT PARTICIPATED IN THE MERGER FORMING THE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

A Prudential Resolution

Submitted by Ministers for Racial, Social, and Economic Justice

SUMMARY

This resolution is intended to be an expression that recognizes the importance of the historic mission of a predecessor body of the United Church of Christ, which was to support and advance persons of African descent through the means of church development, Christian education, and leadership training. Furthermore, it seeks to call relevant agencies and expressions of the current denomination back to a focus on the aforesaid mission, in light of racial, social, and economic exigencies that confront the African American constituency within the United Church of Christ, including challenges to the very survival of these churches, which are in need of support and encouragement.

BIBLICAL, THEOLOGICAL AND ETHICAL RATIONALE

Amos 9:7 is particularly striking witness for remembrance and inclusion, with its bold proclamation, “Are you not like the Ethiopians to me, O people of Israel? says the Lord. Did I not bring Israel up from the land of Egypt, and the Philistines from Caphtor and the Arameans from Kir? (NRSV)” Here, Israel is reminded, as should the United Church of Christ be also, of the critical role of people of African descent in its history. The United Church of Christ has seen African Americans make critical contributions as prophetic voices, spiritual innovators, and embodiments of our unique faith, whether that be Lemuel Haynes (in Colonial times), Andrew Young and Yvonne Delk (in Civil Rights times) or Otis Moss, III (in contemporary times). Accordingly, in the midst of many AMA founded churches facing fiscal, logistical, and operational challenges in the present time, we ought to be compelled to “Love each other with genuine affection, and take delight in honoring each other” (Romans 12:10, NLT) and take concerted action to assist them with their needs.

TEXT OF THE MOTION

Whereas, the recent murder of the Charleston Nine by Dillon Roof, and the extrajudicial killings of persons of color at the hands of police, such as Gregory Gunn, Akiel Denkins, Walter Scott, and Keith Scott, demonstrate that the words W.E.B. DuBois spoke in an an earlier time still ring true. A major problem in American life is the issue of race. While we have, by order of law, come to physically share many public and private spaces, not enough people have come to the point of
sharing hearts, minds, and spirits around a uniting vision of freedom, justice, and equality.

Whereas, if the color line in America is to be fully broken, there must be a change in understanding and attitude. That will be a work of capacity building that moves individuals where they live; in areas and communities where these historic American Missionary Association (AMA) founded African American churches are located, such as Montgomery, Alabama and Charlotte, NC. If these churches are given more resources and attention aimed at vitality and excellence, they can be the needed impact to move people and communities along a spectrum of empathy that begins with cognition and develops into compassion, and prophetic social action; and

Whereas, the United Church of Christ, as a denomination has numerous entities and agencies that are capable of providing focused and enhanced support of these small to medium sized congregations with low to no cost options within a comprehensive denominational initiative. Among these are: UCC Building and Loan, UCC Insurance Board, Pension Boards of the United Church of Christ, Local Church Ministries, and Justice and Witness Ministries; and

Whereas, once strengthened by this enhanced support, these churches are then empowered to begin or increase giving to Our Churches Wider Mission through financial contribution and more active participation, which would be a measurable and quantifiable outcome.

Therefore be it resolved, that the Thirty First General Synod of the United Church of Christ commits itself to bringing the resources of the various agencies and expressions of our church to an enhanced and focused program of supporting the development of the churches that were founded through the anti-racism work of the American Missionary Association, and who remain affiliated with the United Church of Christ.

Be it further resolved that the Thirty First General Synod encourages all settings of the United Church of Christ to seek ways to understand the needs of, provide aid and assistance to, and work in partnership with these historic AMA churches by framing local initiatives that advance the purposes for which they were founded;

Be it further resolved that the national setting of the United Church of Christ provide, with appropriate representation and input from each setting, both the human and capital resources necessary to spur this initiative;

Be it finally resolved that members and settings of the United Church of Christ be encouraged to join and/or partner with Ministers for Racial, Social, and Economic Justice as they seek to speak out against and remedy racially motivated hatred, violence and actions, and systemic injustices such as gerrymandering, voter disenfranchisement, police brutality, and regressive public policies when and where they occur.

FUNDING
Funding for the implementation of the resolution will be made in accordance with the overall mandates of the affected agencies and the funds available.

**IMPLEMENTATION**

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