

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

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5 **ON ESTABLISHING PROCEDURES FOR CULTURAL DIVERSITY TRAINING**
6 **FOR AUTHORIZED MINISTERS**

7
8 **A Prudential Resolution**

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10 **Submitted by the Missouri Mid-South Conference, St. Louis Association of the Missouri**
11 **Mid-South Conference and the Potomac Association of the Central Atlantic Conference of**
12 **the United Church of Christ**

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15 **SUMMARY**

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17 A resolution that a study of cultural diversity/sensitivity and institutional racism be included in
18 preparation for authorized ministry and for continuing education and required for maintaining
19 good standing for all persons engaged in authorized ministry within and on behalf of the United
20 Church of Christ.

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22 **BIBLICAL, THEOLOGICAL AND ETHICAL RATIONALE**

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24 From the beginning of our Biblical narrative all humanity has been declared good: Humankind
25 was created as God's reflection: "in the divine image God created them; female and male God
26 made them."¹ "God looked at all of this creation, and proclaimed that it was good - very good."²
27 The body of Christ is meant, instructed, and commanded to be radically inclusive, "In
28 Christ there is no Jew or Greek, slave or citizen, male or female. All are one in Christ Jesus."³
29 From its inception the United Church of Christ has declared itself a denomination devoted to
30 uniting all Christians in response to the Jesus prayer: "I don't pray for them alone. I pray also for
31 those who will believe in me through their message, that all may be one."⁴
32 The members of the United Church of Christ gather in worship and proclaim together in one
33 united voice: "God bestows upon us the Holy Spirit, creating and renewing the church of Jesus
34 Christ, binding in covenant faithful people of all ages, tongues, and races."⁵

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36 **TEXT OF THE MOTION**

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38 Whereas, in the year 1993, The Nineteenth General Synod adopted the "Statement of Christian
39 Conviction of the Proposed Pronouncement Calling the United Church of Christ to be a
40 Multiracial and Multicultural Church"; and

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42 Whereas, by adopting the above statement the church called itself in all settings to be a true
43 multiracial and multicultural church, "confessing and acting out its faith in the one sovereign
44 God who through Jesus Christ binds in covenant faithful people of all races, ethnicities and
45 cultures and to rejoice in these diversities as gifts to the human family in the variety of God's
46 grace"⁶; and

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48 Whereas, by the year 2045, the majority of United States citizens will be multicultural and
49 multiracial with African, Asian, Latino, Pacific Islander and Native American roots demanding
50 greater need for understanding and acceptance among all who claim through the Holy Spirit to
51 belong to the Body of Christ; and

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53 Whereas, in this year 2017, many United Church of Christ churches have been unable to fulfill
54 the commitment made at the 19th General Synod and continue to reflect ‘the most segregated
55 hour of the week’ leaving African Americans, Asian Americans, European Americans, Latino
56 Americans, Native Americans, and Pacific Islander Americans in primarily African, Asian,
57 European, Latino, Native, and Pacific Islander United Church of Christ churches isolated by their
58 own ethnicity, unable to understand, reach out or support those in other ethnic communities
59 affected by the widespread incidents of racial violence and injustice spreading across our country
60 and rendering many of us impotent in the process of dismantling institutional racism, a task to
61 which we are called as members of the body of Christ; and

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63 Whereas, as people of faith and witnesses of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus of Galilee
64 we are called to be a coalition of Easter people bound together by our support of one another,
65 showing up for each other where there is injustice and celebrating together where there is joy, for
66 “If one member suffers, all the members suffer with it, if one member is honored, all the
67 members share its joy”⁷; and

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69 Whereas, the realization of Jesus’ prayer, “that they may all be one,” is impossible without self-
70 reflection, serious study, and by engaging in safe, meaningful, substantive and bold
71 conversations on the brokenness and divisiveness created within the body of Christ by the
72 realities of institutional racism, and by the lack of understanding and the failure to nurture and
73 lift up our cultural differences and gifts; and

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75 Whereas, there is considerable evidence that when people actually begin to share their own
76 preconceptions, misunderstandings and fears about cultural diversity/sensitivity and institutional
77 racism in discussions groups, boundaries and walls are dismantled and healing occurs; and

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79 Whereas, the UCC’s Local Church Ministries and the UCC’s Ministerial Excellence, Support
80 and Authorization team (MESA) published in April 2009, a revised list of “The Marks of
81 Faithful and Effective Authorized Ministers of the United Church of Christ” and named in the
82 marks of “Personal and Professional formation for Ministry” (Section 3) Item 14c “to accept and
83 promote diversity, to inspire others to do so, and to minister in a multicultural and multiracial,
84 open and affirming, just peace, accessible to all, united and uniting church” and “to encourage
85 ongoing conversation regarding issues of ministry in the 21st century”; and

86

87 Whereas, the United Church of Christ and many seminaries, Conferences, Associations and local
88 churches currently have curriculum resources available to facilitate the study of cultural
89 diversity/sensitivity and institutional racism including a new curriculum, “White Privilege –
90 Let’s Talk,” published by the United Church of Christ’s Justice and Witness Ministries; and

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92 Whereas, the authorized minister called upon to serve in each United Church of Christ ministry

93 setting is the primary leader, teacher, and facilitator of such study and conversation,
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95 Therefore be it resolved, that the Thirty First General Synod of the United Church of Christ calls
96 upon all the judicatory and educational settings of the denomination to include the study of
97 cultural diversity/sensitivity and institutional racism in clergy preparation and continuing
98 education, and as a requirement for maintaining standing for all persons engaged in authorized
99 ministry within and on behalf of the United Church of Christ;

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101 Be it finally resolved that the Thirty First General Synod of the United Church of Christ requests
102 the United Church of Christ’s Justice and Witness Ministries, the UCC’s Local Church
103 Ministries and the UCC’s Ministerial Excellence, Support and Authorization team (MESA)
104 cooperate to support the implementation of such requirement and study.

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106 **FUNDING**

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

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111 **IMPLEMENTATION**

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

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116 **FOOTNOTES**

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118 1 The inclusive Bible: The First Egalitarian Translation (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and
119 Littlefield Publishers, Inc.). Genesis 1:27.

120 2 Ibid. Genesis 1: 31.

121 3 Ibid. Galatians 3:28.

122 4 Ibid. John 17:20-23.

123 5 “United Church of Christ Statement of Faith Adapted by Robert V. Moss,” Local Church
124 Ministries, Worship and Education Ministry Team, Book of Worship United Church of Christ
125 (Cleveland, Ohio: United Church of Christ 2002), 513.

126 6 “Statement of Christian Conviction of the Proposed Pronouncement Calling the United Church
127 of Christ to be a Multiracial and Multicultural Church” (General Synod 17, 1993), Section IV,
128 Paragraph A.

129 7 op. cit. I Corinthians 12.

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