

## **A Resolution on Uprooting Racism in Vermont**

Presented by: The Department of Mission

At the annual meeting, June 1999

WHEREAS, in the Book of Genesis (1:27), we are called to recognize the oneness of all of humanity created equally in the image of God; and

WHEREAS, God's gift of humanity in creation is full of the richness of unity and diversity; and

WHEREAS, in the Gospel according to John (17:21), Jesus Christ revealed the importance of Christian unity and diversity, praying, "That all may be one – that the world may believe that thou has sent me"; and

WHEREAS, America's first human rights organization, the **American Missionary Association**, was formed in 1846 as a response to the Amistad event, and continues today in spirit and actions in the programs of the UCBHM (then, "Local Church Ministry" after June 2000 in the new structure); and

WHEREAS, the 4<sup>th</sup> General Synod of the United Church of Christ, in 1963, called upon the United Church of Christ to be "radically committed" to "uproot intolerance, bigotry, and prejudice within our own living and to replace them with goodwill and the determination to strike down immediately the barriers which divide (people) on account of race", and

WHEREAS, the 19<sup>th</sup> General Synod of the United Church of Christ, in 1993, adopted the pronouncement on calling the United Church of Christ to be a true Multiracial and Multicultural Church in all its settings, in all its members, congregations, associations, conferences, instrumentalities, national bodies, and related institutions; and

WHEREAS, the Vermont Advisory Committee to the United States Commission on Civil Rights (February 1999) found racial harassment to be "widespread and pervasive" in and around public schools, and the media in the state have reported many incidents of ongoing racism, and the Southern Poverty Law Center has documented the existence and activity of the Green Mountain Knights (Ku Klux Klan) within Vermont (1998); and

WHEREAS, we acknowledge our need to confess the sin of racism in our own hearts and minds.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Vermont Conference of the United Church of Christ through its Department of Mission formulate plans for decade-long (annual meeting 2000 to annual meeting 2010) education and training activities to identify and seek to eliminate racism within all elements of the Vermont Conference of the United Church of Christ and our communities; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Vermont Conference of the United Church of Christ continuously encourage full inclusion and participation of people of color within our churches by intentionally including non-European traditions of worship, music, and language and affirming that the God of creation has equally called all humanity into being and by thanking God in worship and in our devotional life for the diversity of the human family and for our covenant with each other; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Vermont Conference of the United Church of Christ actively and openly seek and implement ways to eliminate racism within ourselves by promoting, for local church Christian Education use by persons of all age groups, curricula that have an emphasis on racism and cultural diversity and will challenge contemporary manifestations of racism within our churches and our communities; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Vermont Conference of the United Church of Christ in all of its elements will support and stand in solidarity with those who face racism within the church and wider society and participate actively in the political process on behalf of public policies which result in greater justice, and equality for all; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Vermont Conference of the United Church of Christ in all of its elements will support by its prayers, organizational skills, and money, religious and other organizations in formulating actions designed to eliminate racism with Vermont; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Vermont Conference of the United Church of Christ in all of its elements will seek and develop ongoing opportunities for the mutual sharing of diverse histories, experiences, cultures, and spiritual gifts of all peoples; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Vermont Conference of the United Church of Christ will support the national United Church of Christ in all of its settings within and beyond Vermont in identifying and eliminating racism from itself and all society; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that individual members of the Vermont Conference of the United Church of Christ be urged to acknowledge the ways in which we have benefited, and continue to benefit, from the racial exclusion and exploitation of others in our political and economic systems; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Vermont Conference of the United Church of Christ and its members commit to do self-reflection to find ways to identify and eliminate racist habits and actions within ourselves in our daily personal activities and interactions.