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Suggested Title: Elimination of Racism in Church Organizations and Practices

Book of Resolutions

Financial Implications: None

General Agency: General Council on Ministries

Add new resolution to the *Book of Resolutions*

WHEREAS, the annual conferences ratified a constitutional amendment adopted by the 2000 General Conference, pledging to work toward the elimination of racism within the society, the church, and its policies and organizations; and

WHEREAS, “The United Methodist Church acknowledges that all persons are of sacred worth. All persons without regard to race, color, national origin, status or economic condition, shall be eligible to attend its worship services, participate in its programs, receive the sacraments, upon baptism be admitted as baptized members, and upon taking vows declaring the Christian faith, become profession members in any local church in the connection.” (Constitutional Amendment IV, Division One, ¶4, Article IV); and

WHEREAS, “Racial Justice -The United Methodist Church proclaims the value of each person as a unique child of God and commits itself to the healing and wholeness of all persons. The United Methodist Church recognizes that the sin of racism has been destructive to its unity throughout its history. Racism continues to cause painful division and marginalization. The United Methodist Church shall confront and seek to eliminate racism, whether in organizations or in individuals, in every facet of its life and in society at-large. The United Methodist Church shall work collaboratively with others to address concerns that threaten the cause of racial justice at all times and in all places.” (Constitutional Amendment V, Division One ¶5, Article V); and

WHEREAS, racism is an evil that knows no borders, affects people of all socio-economic backgrounds, spares no one person as its victim, creates resentment and rage among those affected and erases the circle of humanity replacing it with dividing lines between the races. While the potential for racism lies in all of us, through the power of Jesus Christ, the potential to eliminate it is well within our reach; and

WHEREAS, Christians must work together to help eliminate the lines of division and establish that all of God’s children are members of the human race, regardless of racial and ethnic origin or the color of one’s skin; and

WHEREAS, The United Methodist Church must acknowledge that steps have been made toward the goal of eliminating racism, celebrate and salute the groups that have made proactive efforts to alleviate tension caused by racism; and

WHEREAS, in love, the Church must hold accountable the groups in our midst that have not made efforts to alleviate racism and to bring together the children of God to live and be treated as Jesus intended; and

WHEREAS, Christians have a duty to spread the good news of Jesus Christ who loved each of us, died for us and was resurrected to prove His ultimate victory over death to win our souls. This duty requires the household of faith to live in love with one another and to eliminate the destructive and life-taking sin of racism;

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Therefore, be it resolved, that the 2004 General Conference will affirm the work of the Joint Task Force on Racism by recommending continued efforts to eliminate racism in church organizations and practices through the following steps:

- 1. All agencies within districts, annual conferences, and the general church will assign a person with the specific responsibility to work on the elimination of racism.**
- 2. All districts, annual conferences, and general agencies will establish a covenant that reflects how its members will live out its life in the performance of assigned responsibilities with the goal of eliminating racism. Each member and staff will be asked to sign the covenant as an outward sign of making this commitment.**
- 3. All local churches, districts, annual conferences, and general agencies will find ways to celebrate diversity through Jesus' prophetic, redemptive and incarnational presence throughout the Church.**

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Rationale: The Interagency Task Force on Racism was formed during 2001-2004. The members of the Task Force concluded that the church should be continually aware of its role in eliminating racism in the practices and the work of the agencies. This resolution attempts to keep the issues before the church and serve as a reminder that racism is an issue at every level of the life of the church. The church must be intentional to work on elimination of racism and celebrating diversity throughout the church.