

By Senator Joyner

18-05141-08

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## Senate Resolution

A resolution recognizing March 25, 2008, as "African Methodist Episcopal Church Day" at the Capitol.

WHEREAS, the African Methodist Episcopal Church grew out of the Free African Society, established by Richard Allen, Absalom Jones, and others in 1787 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and

WHEREAS, facing discrimination at the hands of American Methodists at the St. George Methodist Episcopal Church, members of the Free African Society transformed their mutual aid society into a church congregation, and

WHEREAS, in 1794, the Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church was dedicated with Richard Allen as pastor, and

WHEREAS, to establish the Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church's independence from interfering white Methodists, Richard Allen successfully sued in the Pennsylvania courts in 1807 and 1815 for the right of his congregation to exist as an independent institution, and

WHEREAS, with the geographical spread of the African Methodist Episcopal Church prior to the Civil War mainly restricted to the Northeast and Midwest, the most significant era of denominational development occurred during the Civil War and Reconstruction, when Union army officials would allow African Methodist Episcopal Church clergy to move into the states of the collapsing Confederacy to bring newly freed slaves into their denomination, and

WHEREAS, by 1880, African Methodist Episcopal Church membership reached 400,000 members, and

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29 WHEREAS, Bishop Henry M. Turner propagated African Methodism  
30 across the Atlantic Ocean into Liberia and Sierra Leone in 1891  
31 and into South Africa in 1896, and

32 WHEREAS, while the African Methodist Episcopal Church is  
33 doctrinally Methodist, clergy, scholars, and lay persons have  
34 written many important works that demonstrate the distinctive  
35 theology and praxis which have defined this Wesleyan body, and

36 WHEREAS, by the 1990s, the African Methodist Episcopal  
37 Church included more than 2 million members, 8,000 ministers, and  
38 7,000 congregations, with 20 bishops and 12 general officers  
39 comprising the leadership of the denomination in more than 30  
40 nations in North and South America, Africa, and Europe, and

41 WHEREAS, in Florida and the Bahamas, the African Methodist  
42 Episcopal Church boasts over 105,000 members in the Florida,  
43 East, Central, West Coast, South, and Bahamas Conferences, who  
44 are currently led by Bishop McKinley Young, NOW, THEREFORE,

45

46 Be It Resolved by the Senate of the State of Florida:

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48 That the Florida Senate recognizes March 25, 2008, as  
49 "African Methodist Episcopal Church Day" at the Capitol.