

HR 9041

2009

1 House Resolution

2 A resolution recognizing March 31, 2009, as "African
3 Methodist Episcopal Church Day" at the Capitol.

4
5 WHEREAS, the African Methodist Episcopal Church grew out of
6 the Free African Society, established by Richard Allen, Absalom
7 Jones, and others in 1787 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and

8 WHEREAS, facing discrimination at the hands of white
9 American Methodists at the St. George Methodist Episcopal
10 Church, members of the Free African Society transformed their
11 mutual aid society into two church congregations, one of which
12 was the Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church, and

13 WHEREAS, while the African Methodist Episcopal Church is
14 doctrinally Methodist, its clergy, scholars, and lay persons
15 have written many important works that demonstrate the
16 distinctive theology and praxis which have defined this Wesleyan
17 body, and

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

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

25 WHEREAS, the geographical spread of the African Methodist
26 Episcopal Church prior to the Civil War was mainly restricted to
27 the Northeast and Midwest, and

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28 WHEREAS, the most significant era of denominational
 29 development occurred during the Civil War and Reconstruction,
 30 when Union army officials would allow African Methodist
 31 Episcopal Church clergy to move into the states of the
 32 collapsing Confederacy to pull newly freed slaves into their
 33 denomination, and

34 WHEREAS, the history of the African Methodist Episcopal
 35 Church in Florida began June 22, 1865, with the appointment of
 36 Rev. William G. Steward as the founding pastor in Florida, and

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

39 WHEREAS, Bishop Henry M. Turner pushed African Methodism
 40 across the Atlantic Ocean into Liberia and Sierra Leone in 1891
 41 and into South Africa in 1896, and

42 WHEREAS, by the 1990s, the African Methodist Episcopal
 43 Church included over 2,500,000 members, 8,000 ministers, and
 44 7,000 congregations, with 21 bishops and 9 general officers
 45 comprising the leadership of the denomination in more than 30
 46 nations in North and South America, Africa, and Europe, and

47 WHEREAS, in Florida and the Bahamas, the African Methodist
 48 Episcopal Church boasts over 105,000 members in the Florida,
 49 East, Central, West Coast, South, and Bahamas Conferences, who
 50 are currently led by Bishop McKinley Young, the denomination's
 51 109th elected and consecrated bishop, NOW, THEREFORE,

52
 53 Be It Resolved by the House of Representatives of the State of
 54 Florida:

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56 | That the Florida House of Representatives recognizes March
57 | 31, 2009, as "African Methodist Episcopal Church Day" at the
58 | Capitol.