

1 Funding for this action will be made in accordance
2 with the overall mandates of the affected agencies
3 and the funds available.
4

5 **7. RESOLUTION: PRESERVATION OF**
6 **THE MANDAN, HIDATSA, AND ARIC-**
7 **KARA LANGUAGES OF THE THREE**
8 **AFFILIATED TRIBES**
9

10 Mr. Brace, continued the report of Committee Six
11 introducing the resolution "Preservation of the
12 Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arickara Languages of the
13 Three Affiliated Tribes." He noted the following
14 changes made by the Committee:
15

16 line 30, column 2: replace "our" with "the Mandan,
17 Hidatsa, and Arickara,"
18 line 31, column 2: replace "our" with "these same,"
19 and
20 line 32, column 2: replace "our" with "these."
21

22 Mr. Brace moved adoption of the resolution.
23

24 Following considerable discussion, a friendly
25 amendment was offered by Ms. Deborah Shepard
26 (MASS) to "allocate a sum of \$30,000 to the Council
27 of American Indian Ministry to help support
28 the pilot language preservation program on the Fort
29 Berthold Reservation of North Dakota," Mr. Brace
30 indicated that this could not be received as a
31 friendly amendment. Ms. Shepard moved the
32 amendment. Following further discussion, the
33 amendment was defeated with abstentions. The
34 Moderator called for the vote.
35

36 01-GS-42 VOTED with abstentions: The Twenty-
37 third General Synod adopts the resolution "Pres-
38 ervation of the Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arickara Lan-
39 guages of the Three Affiliated Tribes."
40

41 **PRESERVATION OF THE MANDAN,**
42 **HIDATSA, AND ARICKARA LANGUAGES**
43 **OF THE THREE AFFILIATED TRIBES**
44

45 WHEREAS the Fort Berthold Council of Congre-
46 gational Churches has been aware of the steady
47 erosion of our mother languages and recognizes
48 that the loss of our languages has negatively im-
49 pacted our children, ourselves, and has destabilized
50 our communities;
51

52 WHEREAS the history of how this came about is
53 intertwined with the history of the church's delib-
54 erate actions of Christianizing by eliminating
55 Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arickara religious beliefs and
56 practices, languages, and culture in their totality;
57

58 WHEREAS the federal government policy of de-
59 liberately eliminating our cultural ways and lan-

guages enlisted the support of the church through its
Christianizing efforts among our people which, over
time, has succeeded in bringing our languages to the
brink of extinction;

WHEREAS the schools created and operated by the
church taught our children that speaking Mandan,
Hidatsa, and Arickara was savage and wrong, conse-
quently contributing to an internalized self-hatred that
has literally destroyed countless lives through levels
of depression and substance abuse and dependency;

WHEREAS in 1991 the United Church of Christ apolo-
gized to all American Indians, acknowledging its role
in accepting responsibility for the assault on all Ameri-
can Indian Tribes, but has not addressed how it can
rebuild trust and make reparation; and

WHEREAS our children deserve a life that is filled
with the richness and beauty of our culture, conveyed
through our mother languages, and deserve to speak
the language of their ancestors which reflects a posi-
tive self-image leading to self-assurance in life;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that the United
Church of Christ in all its settings examines and ac-
knowledges its role in the destruction of the Mandan,
Hidatsa, and Arickara languages and the dismantling
of these same cultures and explores how it can be sup-
portive of preserving and reversing the loss of these
languages;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that since time is of
the essence, a pilot program at Fort Berthold Reserva-
tion be established to begin recording the Mandan,
Hidatsa, and Arickara languages immediately (there is
one fluent Mandan speaker remaining) and to assure
the use of language retention strategies at the follow-
ing levels:

Individual. Native speakers must be supported to help
latent speakers and nonspeakers learn the native lan-
guages by utilizing existing language materials and
creating new materials;

Family. Language immersion activities are to be
organized along with church and family-based activi-
ties—recording hymns, prayers, and so forth, in the
three languages for use throughout the church;

Community. Connecting fluent speakers with
nonspeakers, for example, in senior centers, linking an
elder with a child or clan relative interested in learning
to speak the language or promoting community meet-
ings and conferences about native languages and mak-
ing the languages accessible in the community; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Twenty-third
General Synod of the United Church of Christ requests
that Justice and Witness Ministries and Local Church
Ministries work with the Council for American Indian

1 Ministry to address the concerns raised in this reso-
2 lution.

3
4 Funding for this action will be made in accordance
5 with the overall mandates of the affected agencies
6 and the funds available.

7
8 **8. PRONOUNCEMENT: A UNITED CHURCH**
9 **OF CHRIST MINISTRY AND WITNESS WITH**
10 **MICRONESIANS**

11 Ms. Jaramillo called on Mr. Angel Toro (FLA),
12 Chair of Committee Eleven, who introduced the
13 pronouncement and noted the additional paragraph
14 added to the Statement of Christian Conviction,
15 which was printed in the “yellow packet” distrib-
16 uted to delegates. Mr. Toro also noted the Proposal
17 for Action, also included in the “yellow packet,”
18 which includes three changes:

19
20
21 page 8, column 2, line 23: add the word “else-
22 where” between “and” and “the United States,”

23
24 a new paragraph following the one cited above to
25 read: “Request that Justice and Witness Ministries,
26 in cooperation with partner churches, work together
27 to advocate for health care for survivors,”

28
29 page 9, line 23: change “the Assistant to the Gen-
30 eral Minister and President for Pacific Islander and
31 Asian American Ministry” to “the Minister for Pa-
32 cific Islander and Asian American Relations.”

33
34 Mr. Toro moved adoption of the pronouncement.
35 There was considerable discussion. Two persons
36 from the Marshall Island, Ms. Ella Ben and Ms.
37 Elma Coleman, the latter translating for Ms. Ben,
38 shared their experiences of having lived in the area
39 being addressed. The Rev. Saitumua Tafaioalii
40 (RM), a Samoan, shared insights he gained as a
41 missionary to the Marshall Islands. The Asian Area
42 Secretary of the Common Global Ministries re-
43 ported on responses received from partner
44 churches, the Korean Christian Church in Japan
45 and Kyodan, after they had reviewed a draft of the
46 pronouncement.

47
48 Mr. Jason White (OH) moved to amend the reso-
49 lution by inserting in the final paragraph after “we
50 confess our silent complicity,” the words “and our
51 unfortunate ignorance of.” Following discussion
52 the amendment was defeated. The vote on the pro-
53 nouncement was then called.

54
55 01-GS-37 VOTED with abstentions: The Twenty-
56 third General Synod adopts the pronouncement “A
57 United Church of Christ Ministry and Witness with
58 Micronesians” and the proposal for action.

A PRONOUNCEMENT ON A UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST MINISTRY AND WITNESS WITH
MICRONESIANS

I. SUMMARY

For the last fifteen years, the United States of America’s relationship to the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) and the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) has been defined by Compacts of Free Association (CFA). The Compacts for the FSM and the RMI are up for renewal in the year 2001. Although Guam, Belau, and the Northern Marianas are considered part of Micronesia, this pronouncement will deal only with the FSM and the RMI because of the urgent nature of the present, ongoing Compact renegotiations.

When the Compact was signed in 1986, Micronesians were not aware of the dire consequences that serving forty years as U.S. colonies and another fifteen years as neocolonies would have for the long term self-sufficiency and true independence goals of the FSM and the RMI. Furthermore, because of “dependency” systems and inequities—in the areas of health, education, and jobs—exacerbated and enlarged by U.S. trusteeship of the FSM and the RMI, many Micronesians are in exile in Hawaii and on the continental U.S. by economic necessity. For example, many Micronesians have moved to North Carolina and other places in the south to work on corporate chicken farms and in low-wage fast food service jobs.

Since the United Church of Christ Marshall Islands is the major denomination in the RMI, and the Congregational Church in Kosrae, United Church of Christ in Chuuk, United Church of Christ Pohnpei, and the Namoneas Congregational Churches Association all have partner relationships with the United Church of Christ (U.S.A.), the majority of Micronesians living in the United States consider themselves members of the United Church of Christ. Accordingly, this Pronouncement calls upon the United Church of Christ and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) to welcome the Micronesians in our midst and to minister with our Micronesian sisters and brothers within our churches and our communities. The Pacific Islander and Asian American Ministries (PAAM) has seen the significant participation and growth of Micronesians in the activities of PAAM in the last four years.

This Pronouncement also calls upon our UCC local churches and regional and national bodies to commit themselves to work towards full and just compensation for Micronesian peoples and the overturning of unfair provisions in the agreements during this crucial period of Compact renegotiations in the year 2001.