



PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)

Campaign for Fair Food

17 Dyke Rd. ~ Setauket, NY ~ 11733

631-751-7076 ~ fairfood@pcusa.org

www.pcusa.org/fairfood

THE REV. NOELLE DAMICO, NATIONAL COORDINATOR

John P. Mackey, Co-Founder and CEO
Whole Foods Market
550 Bowie Street
Austin, Texas 78703

June 27, 2008

Dear Mr. Mackey:

As attendees at the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) General Assembly, we are writing to urge your company to work with the Coalition of Immokalee Workers to improve wages and working conditions for farmworkers harvesting tomatoes in the fields of Florida.

Tomato pickers toil long days for poverty wages, earning an average of 45 cents per 32-lb bucket of tomatoes – about \$10,000 a year according to the U.S. Department of Labor. They have no right to overtime pay, no health insurance, no sick leave, no paid vacation, and no right to organize to improve these conditions. In the most extreme cases, workers are held against their will and forced to work in conditions of modern-day slavery. The CIW has worked with the U.S. Department of Justice to successfully prosecute six cases of slavery and free over 1,000 slaves. A seventh case is in process. These conditions are shameful, but they can be addressed if all of us do our part.

As followers of Jesus Christ, who announced good news to the poor and freedom for the oppressed, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) endeavors to witness clearly about the forces that exploit our human family as well as about those actions that help to heal the brokenness of our world. For many years the PC(USA) has been a partner with the farmworkers in calling upon the fast-food and grocery industry to do their part to end these terrible conditions.

Burger King, McDonald's and Yum! Brands corporations have all made agreements with the CIW farmworkers that are advancing human rights for farmworkers. These companies have taken reasonable steps to address the grievous exploitation which their high-volume/low-cost purchasing practices have helped to create. We urge your company to embrace the principles found in these agreements within your own supply chain. Specifically we call upon you to work with the CIW to:

- 1) Pay a penny more per pound for tomatoes and ensure that the increase is passed on to tomato pickers in the form of increased wages; and
- 2) Work with the CIW to establish and enforce a human rights-based code of conduct, including zero tolerance for forced labor, to ensure fair and safe working conditions

With your company's commitment, we can hasten the day when farmworkers enjoy the human rights they deserve and consumers have the confidence that the food they purchase promotes human well-being.

Sincerely,

The Rev. Noelle Damico
National Coordinator, PC(USA) Campaign for Fair Food and attached signatories