



## PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)

### Campaign for Fair Food

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Dear Friends:

With great joy, we write to let you know that on May 23, 2008, the Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW) and the Burger King Corporation signed an historic agreement to dramatically improve farmworkers' wages and raise human rights standards in the Florida tomato fields.

Building upon the precedents established in the CIW's agreements with McDonald's and Yum! Brands (which owns Taco Bell, Pizza Hut, KFC, Long John Silver's and A&W Restaurants), Burger King has committed to paying a net penny-per-pound increase to tomato pickers harvesting for the company's suppliers, nearly doubling their wages. To encourage grower participation in this increased wage program, Burger King will also fund incremental payroll taxes and administrative costs incurred by the growers as a result of their farmworkers' increased wages. Further the CIW-Burger King agreement establishes a zero tolerance policy for illegal acts and involves farmworkers in the creation and enforcement of a strong code of conduct for suppliers. The Stated Clerk has publicly commended the CIW and Burger King on reaching this accord.

Across the country, Presbyterians of all ages have been at the forefront of the Burger King Campaign, praying, writing letters, sending emails, hosting farmworkers during their Florida "truth tour," peacefully marching nine miles with the farmworkers to Burger King's Miami headquarters this past November, holding educational forums in congregations and on Presbyterian campuses. This spring, Presbyterians gathered thousands of signatures for the CIW's Petition to End Slavery and Sweatshops in the Fields and a PC(USA) delegation joined the CIW in presenting over 85,000 signed petitions to Burger King at the end of April. Further, the Office of the Stated Clerk and the PC(USA) Campaign for Fair Food, which is a ministry of the Presbyterian Hunger Program and supported by One Great Hour of Sharing, engaged Burger King executives through conversation and public statements. The farmworkers have expressed their profound gratitude for the church's partnership not only in this most recent campaign but since the CIW's formation in the early 1990s.

At the press conference and public signing of the agreement which was held at the U.S. Capitol in Washington, DC, the CIW announced that the campaign would focus next on Subway — an important client of Florida growers, as well as Chipotle and Whole Foods — two companies known for their socially responsible credos, but which have, thus far not moved to work with the CIW to advance human rights for the men and women harvesting tomatoes for their suppliers.

As some of you know, this past fall the Florida Tomato Growers Exchange (FTGE) threatened to fine its member-growers \$100,000 if they participated in the penny-per-pound wage increase with McDonald's or Yum! Brands. While the penny increase had been paid by Taco Bell to

farmworkers for two years, the FTGE's threat halted these payments. Since fall 2007, McDonald's and Yum! Brands have been paying money into an escrow account and the companies have been working together with the growers that supply them to find away to get the penny-per-pound increase to the farmworkers.

Until its recent agreement with the CIW, Burger King had publicly supported the FTGE's position. We are hopeful that with Burger King now joining Yum! Brands and McDonald's in working with the CIW, the FTGE will cease obstructing this desperately needed wage increase. Meanwhile in follow-up to Congressional Hearings held this past April, the U.S. Senate's Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee has called for a formal investigation into the growers non-cooperation and the poverty wages earned by farmworkers, bringing further pressure upon the FTGE.

While farmworkers harvesting for Yum! Brands, McDonald's and Burger King now have the promise of better wages and elevated standards for human rights, farmworkers harvesting for the rest of the fast-food and grocery industries are still earning on average 45 cents for every 32 pound bucket they pick (about \$10,000 a year). And this winter a *seventh* case of modern-day slavery in the Florida fields was exposed by the CIW. In January a federal grand jury indicted six people under the thirteenth amendment in this case. The existence of slavery in the United States of America in the twenty-first century is abhorrent to us all. But aside from the companies mentioned above, the rest of the restaurant and grocery industry continues their high volume, low cost purchasing practices which help to create the conditions in which modern-day slavery flourishes. By getting corporations like Burger King to use their considerable power to elevate human rights standards instead, we are addressing one of the root causes of modern-day slavery.

In 1 John 3:18, we are exhorted to "love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action." Today, we are seeing the first shoots of human rights germinating in what is rocky and perilous soil. Our prayers, our stewardship and our commitment are required if these shoots are to grow and blossom.

In light of the agreement between the CIW and Burger King, we encourage Presbyterians to write letters commending the agreement to both the farmworkers and the company. We also encourage you to send letters and postcards to Subway, Chipotle and Whole Foods, urging them to work with the CIW to advance human rights for farmworkers. Resources for education, action, and worship, as well as the latest news, are available on the PC(USA) Campaign for Fair Food website at [www.pcusa.org/fairfood](http://www.pcusa.org/fairfood). You may also wish to visit the farmworkers' site at [www.ciw-online.org](http://www.ciw-online.org) for further information.

With God's help, may this auspicious agreement between the CIW and Burger King bring about a new day in the fast-food and agricultural industries, in which the rights of all God's people are respected.

In peace,

The Rev. Dr. Clifton Kirkpatrick  
Stated Clerk of the General Assembly, PC(USA)

Ms. Linda Valentine  
Executive Director, General Assembly Council, PC(USA)

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

Encls: CIW-Burger King Joint Press Release,  
[http://ciw-online.org/BK\\_CIW\\_joint\\_release.html](http://ciw-online.org/BK_CIW_joint_release.html)  
Statement by the Stated Clerk on the CIW-Burger King Agreement,  
<http://www.pcusa.org/pcnews/2008/08421.htm>  
Resolution In Support of the Coalition of Immokalee Workers and the Campaign for Fair  
Food (216<sup>th</sup> General Assembly, 2006),  
<http://pc-biz.org/IOBView.aspx?m=ro&id=1139>