

Taco Bell Boycott and Victory, 2002-2005

In April of 2001, the Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW) called for a national consumer boycott of Taco Bell restaurants and products. Florida Presbyterians, who had been praying with, marching with and providing for the survival needs of farmworkers for years, brought an overture to the 214th General Assembly in Ohio. The GA voted to support the boycott in June of 2002. The PC(USA) played a critical role in educating other faith communions and encouraging them to join the boycott.



Dr. King famously said, **"What does it profit a man to be able to eat at an**

integrated lunch counter if he doesn't have enough money to buy a hamburger?"

He knew that genuine equality was impossible in a

climate of dramatic economic inequality. During the boycott Presbyterians across the country wrote letters, marched and refused to eat at Taco Bell.

In 2003, fifty farmworkers along with church, union, and student supporters held a hungerstrike outside of Taco Bell headquarters in Irvine, CA. It lasted 10 days. The following month, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) was able to convene initial talks between executives from Yum Brands, the parent company of Taco Bell, and the CIW.



These talks continued over the next two years and eventuated in an historic agreement between Yum and the CIW in March 2005 to improve workers' wages and working conditions. The CIW declared the boycott over. The PC(USA) hosted the victory celebration at the Church Center in Louisville. In 2007, Yum extended the Taco Bell agreement to all its brands: KFC, Pizza Hut, Long John Silver's, A&W.



Jonathan Blum, EVP of Yum Brands and Lucas Benitez, co-founder of CIW seal the agreement.



Farmworkers and hundreds of their allies celebrate the victory for human rights at the PC(USA) Center, March 2005.