

## Call on McDonald's to Work with CIW



Florida tomato pickers earn 45-50 cents per 32-lb bucket of tomatoes, a rate which has not risen significantly since 1978. They toil long hours without overtime pay or any benefits. In the most extreme conditions, workers are held against their will in modern-day slavery rings. The Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW), a Florida

farmworker organization, has uncovered and assisted the Department of Justice in prosecuting 5 slavery rings, freeing over 1,000 workers.

In March of 2005, the CIW and Yum Brands, Taco Bell's parent company, achieved a ground-breaking agreement to nearly double workers' wages for Taco Bell's tomatoes and work together to enforce a code of conduct for conditions in the fields.

For over a year, the CIW and the religious and human rights communities have called upon McDonald's to follow Taco Bell's lead and work with the CIW to address sub-poverty wages and exploitative working conditions in McDonald's own tomato supply chain. Unfortunately, McDonald's has refused to work with the CIW to develop an enforceable code of conduct and take responsibility for the downward pressure its high-volume, low-cost purchasing places on farmworker wages. Instead, McDonald's has launched public relations efforts that aim to cover up abuses in the fields rather than change them.

It is disappointing that McDonald's has not embraced the opportunity to work with the CIW to ensure fair wages and respect for human rights in its tomato supply chain. As stewards of God's creation, which includes our economic life, let us call on McDonald's to work with the CIW to create change in the fields.

### United Methodists call for justice

**Bishop Whitaker of the Florida Annual Conference**, where the farmworkers live, and **Bishop Jung of the Northern Illinois Conference**, where McDonald's is headquartered, have both written letters to McDonald's calling on them to work with the CIW to ensure dignity and justice for tomato pickers.

The **General Board of Church & Society** of the United Methodist Church has recently endorsed **the Alliance for Fair Food**, a network of religious and other organizations who work in partnership with the CIW to promote principles and practices of socially responsible purchasing. To learn more, visit: [www.allianceforfairfood.org](http://www.allianceforfairfood.org)

## Precedents Set by the CIW-Yum Agreement

The CIW-Yum Brands agreement establishes several important precedents for corporate supply chain responsibility, including:

- (a) An ongoing payment by a fast-food industry leader to directly improve farmworkers' sub-poverty wages—Taco Bell pays one penny more per pound of tomatoes, nearly doubling the rate workers receive for its tomatoes;
- (b) The first-ever *enforceable* Code of Conduct for farmworker conditions in the fast-food industry's supply chain, with the CIW involved in monitoring;
- (c) Market incentives for agricultural suppliers willing to respect their workers' rights, even when those rights are not guaranteed by law;
- (d) 100% transparency for Taco Bell's tomato purchases in Florida, enabling the CIW to verify and monitor the improved wages and conditions

## Prayer

God who labors and rests, we give thanks for the agreement between CIW and Taco Bell. We give thanks for the church's role in witnessing with the farmworkers and in bringing our world closer to your vision. We have seen faith-made-visible through the improvements in Taco Bell's supply chain. We ask that you would strengthen us and the farmworkers as we work to encourage other fast-food companies to ensure human rights, for we remember the many workers who still labor, exploited and enslaved.

We especially pray that McDonald's would lend its weight to the ground-breaking work CIW and Taco Bell have begun and ensure that farmworkers in its tomato supply chain enjoy the human rights they deserve as your children. Give us strength to be an effective witness for good work, fair pay, and human dignity. Help us as a church to be faithful to your gospel that brings good news to the poor. Amen.

## What you can do:

- 1. Send a letter or postcard to McDonald's Headquarters:** Mr. Jim Skinner, CEO, McDonald's Corporation, McDonald's Plaza, Oak Brook, IL 60523
- 2. Share worship materials and postcards to McDonald's with your faith community.** Request materials from [info@interfaithact.org](mailto:info@interfaithact.org)
- 3. Learn more** about farmworker conditions and the McDonald's Campaign at [www.ciw-online.org](http://www.ciw-online.org) or [www.nfwm.org](http://www.nfwm.org)