

**A Resolution of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A.  
Mount Olive Pickle Boycott**

**Adopted Nov. 6, 2003, by the NCC General Assembly  
Meeting in Jackson, Miss.**

Whereas, all people have been created in the image of God, redeemed through Jesus Christ, and called to share in a ministry of justice that shapes our world according to God's intention of *shalom*;

Whereas, over time the Christian community has learned the valuing of life, the structuring of a just and humane society, and the use of creation's resources are as much concerns of faith as they are of economics and public policy. As churches, our faith in these matters is guided by major biblical themes:

- Each person is created in God's image (Genesis 1:26). Our personal lives and our social structures are called to reflect the radical unity of humanity in God.
- "The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it" (Psalm 24:1 NRSV). We are stewards, not owners of the resources around us. God's creation is for the good of all God's people, for all ages.
- Poverty is not merely a personal tragedy; it is an attack upon the solidarity of the people of God. "The Lord enters into judgment with the elders and princes of his people: It is you who have devoured the vineyard; the spoil of the poor is in your houses. What do you mean by crushing my people, by grinding the face of the poor? Says the Lord God of hosts" (Isaiah 3:14-15 NRSV).

Whereas, the National Council of Churches believes it is an act of justice to seek a negotiated agreement to improve the lives and working conditions of the farm workers who pick the cucumbers used in Mt. Olive's products;

Whereas, the National Council of Churches through its policy statements, and a resolution passed by the General Assembly, November 17, 2000 supported the Farm Labor Organizing Committee (FLOC) and authorized the endorsement of a boycott if progress was not made;

Whereas, a team including Robert Edgar, General Secretary, Winston Carroo, Agricultural Missions Director, and Virginia Nesmith, National Farm Worker Ministry Director, went to North Carolina to deliver news of the resolution to William Bryan, Mt. Olive CEO;

Whereas, National Farm Worker Ministry Board members, including denominational representatives from around the country, met in North Carolina in 2002, visited North Carolina labor camps and met with William Bryan to urge negotiations with FLOC;

Whereas, citing insufficient progress, a letter was sent by Dr. Edgar to Mr. Bryan in the spring of 2002 that included an offer to facilitate negotiations between Mt. Olive and FLOC. Mt. Olive remained unwilling to do so;

Whereas, in refusing to participate in the initial mediation, Mt. Olive noted a “partnership” they had entered into with Duke University that addressed the problem;

Whereas, in a recent visit to North Carolina, the United Methodist Peace and Justice Working Group found serious flaws in the Duke agreement; Duke itself acknowledges that they have not followed up or filed complaints about any violations they have observed in their visits to Mt. Olive labor camps;

Whereas, FLOC compiled information from work in North Carolina in the summer of 2003 that indicates how bad conditions remain for North Carolina’s farm workers, including those who are employed by growers selling to Mt. Olive;

Whereas, contracts providing workers with a voice in the industry and a process to address grievances without fear of firing have proven to be farm workers’ best hope for improving conditions;

Whereas, member communions of the NCC, the United Church of Christ, the Alliance of Baptists, and the American Friends Service Committee have endorsed the boycott of Mt. Olive;

Whereas, on September 13, 2003, the General Board of Church and Society (GBCS) of the United Methodist Church (UMC) agreed to “join the boycott of Mount Olive Pickle Company as soon after January 1, 2004, as certified by the GBCS Executive Committee, unless there is substantial movement between now and then...”;

Whereas, the NCC resolved in November 2000 to recommend further action if necessary;

Therefore be it resolved that the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA move to endorse the Mt. Olive boycott, effective immediately, Nov. 6, 2003.

Submitted by: Justice and Advocacy Commission

-----

Policy Base

“Ethical Goals for Agricultural Policy” (Policy Statement adopted by NCC General Board 6/4/58)

“The Concern of the Churches for Seasonal Farm Workers” (Policy Statement adopted by the General Board 12/3/66)