

January 27, 2005

Dear Friends in Christ:

This past year has been an exciting time for the justice ministry of the National Council of Churches when it comes to workers' rights. Because of the pressure from the Mt. Olive pickle boycott, the Farm Labor Organizing Committee and Mt. Olive Pickle achieved a historic settlement guaranteeing better wages and working conditions for thousands of cucumber pickers. It is a reminder of the power of boycotts, as a non-violent witness to change, to establish partnerships between consumers and workers that, as Dr. King famously said "bring justice into business."

We're writing to make sure that you know that from **February 28 – March 14, the Coalition of Immokalee Workers will be holding a Taco Bell Truth Tour**. Farmworkers who pick tomatoes for Taco Bell and Yum Brands' suppliers will begin their tour in Immokalee, Fla., travel throughout the South and Midwest, and participate in a culminating "Week of Action" in Louisville, Ky., the location of Taco Bell's parent company, Yum Brands. On **Saturday, March 12, people of faith and conscience from across the nation will converge for a peaceful mass rally at Yum Brands' headquarters** at 1441 Gardiner Lane in Louisville. For detailed information on the Taco Bell Truth Tour visit [www.ciw-online.org](http://www.ciw-online.org) and contact Damara Luce at 239-867-9160 or [damara@interfaithact.org](mailto:damara@interfaithact.org). For information on needs at specific stops on the Truth Tour itinerary, contact Tiffany Van Eck, [tiffany@sfalliance.org](mailto:tiffany@sfalliance.org) or [tiffany@sfalliance.org](http://tiffany@sfalliance.org).

With your help we can encourage thousands of people from Louisville and across the nation to witness to the company with a strong message that Christians are serious about their commitment to fair food and to ending exploitation in the fields. **We hope that you will mobilize churches in your state to participate in the March 12 event in Louisville and welcome the Coalition with hospitality and educational opportunities if the tour passes through cities in your region.**

Last year's protest brought top executives at Yum to the table. As they judge the rally this year, they will be asking if their customers really care or if they can continue with business as usual. Friends, it is not a matter of whether we will win, it is a matter of when. This is history in the making and we, as the ecumenical community, are at the heart of it. Will this be the year Yum decides to use its power to end the exploitation? It's really up to us.

We all have many responsibilities (including mobilizing for Advocacy Days, March 11-14!) but there are moments in our lives when an opportunity comes for us to make a significant contribution through our presence and our witness. This is one of those moments. It may require reprioritization or speaking out in difficult circumstances or making a sacrificial effort but as, Dr. King reminds us, "the ultimate measure of a person is not where s/he stands in moments of convenience but where s/he stands in moments of challenge, moments of great crisis and controversy." So we write to you with urgency and sincerity to ask for your commitment to do all you can to make March 12 at Yum Brands the biggest, most intergenerational, most energetic peaceful protest yet.

Yours in Christ,

Bishop Thomas L. Hoyt, Jr. Hoyt, President

Rev. Dr. Bob Edgar, General Secretary

Encl: Taco Bell Truth Tour Itinerary 2005/Taco Bell Boycott in Brief