

RESOLUTION ON FARM WORKERS  
PASSED BY THE 185th GENERAL ASSEMBLY (GA) (1973) OF THE  
UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, USA  
Omaha, Nebraska - May 23, 1973

The consideration of the farm workers issue was initiated by the Council on Church and Race which appointed a task force on the conflict between the United Farm-Workers Union (UFWU) and the Western Conference of Teamsters. The report of the task force was brought to the GA Committee on Combatting Racism.

The issue is appropriately the business of COCAR and the GA Committee on Combatting Racism because of its ethnic dimension. While the Committee acknowledges the many dimensions of the issue, it affirms the belief that the ethnic dimension makes it imperative for the Church to address this crucial issue.

It is urgent that the United Presbyterians speak to this issue because of the exploitation of the farm worker which is magnified in California by the conflict between the UFWU and the Western Conference of Teamsters. The question is not whether these farm workers should be unionized- this is an accomplished fact. Rather, the question is, which of these two unions will represent these farm workers. Although this specific issue is provincial, the concern it raises has national significance.

It is our judgement that the UFWU provides for greater self-determination by the farm worker in the collective bargaining process, while the Western Conference of Teamsters seems to negate self-determination.

This exploitation is further intensified by the lack of effective legislation to protect the farm worker locally and nationally. This legislative void permits the farm worker to be exploited in housing, working conditions, safety, and all other grievance areas involved in the collective bargaining process.

This oppression of powerless people demands action as well as words, therefore we recommend the following:

1. That the 185th GA (1973) encourage the Congress of the United States to create and enact new legislation which will enable the farm workers to effectively participate in the collective bargaining process; and that the 185th GA (1973) encourage the other judicatories of the Church to work for similar legislation at their respective governmental levels.
2. That the 185th GA (1973) reaffirm the action of the 184th GA (1972) supporting the work of the UFWU, and that this now include the urging of the United Presbyterians to consider ways in which this support may be expressed, particularly by participation in the boycotts of head lettuce and table grapes not produced under UFWU contracts.
3. That the 185th GA (1973) commend the AFL-CIO for its grant of \$1.6 million to aid the UFWU in its present struggles, and that the GA urge the AFL-CIO to continue and increase in every possible way the support of its affiliate, the UFWU.
4. And, in an effort to have the lowest appropriate judicatories exercise responsibilities relative to this specific issue, that the 185th GA (1973) encourage the synods and presbyteries within whose bounds this conflict between the UFWU and the Teamsters is taking place, as well as COCAR and the relevant mission service units of the Program Agency, to jointly invite the growers who are churchmen and women to explore with them the broad issues involved in this conflict; to become advocates for the farm workers in their efforts to achieve greater self-determination; and to report the results of implementing this recommendation to the 186th GA (1974) through COCAR.