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THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the NINETEENTH GENERAL SYNOD of the United Church of Christ concludes that the NAFTA, as currently negotiated, is inadequate in protection for workers rights and the environment, compensatory support for those displaced as a result of the agreement, and protection of health and safety standards for workers; and that provisions on investment and taxation will further encourage the concentration of land holdings and the means of production in the hands of a few individuals and large transnational corporations and financial institutions to the detriment of the vast majority of the Mexican, American and Canadian people; and calls on the Congress and our administration to reject NAFTA.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the NINETEENTH GENERAL SYNOD calls on the Congress and the President to renegotiate hemispheric trade agreements that:

1. Require the total costs to environment, of labor and for resource depletion be accounted for when setting the price for raw materials;
2. Provide financing mechanisms for environmental monitoring and enforcement, and cleanup, starting with the U.S. - Mexico border;
3. Require labor standards and worker rights, including the guarantee to organize freely and bargain collectively;
4. Require environmental, consumer and worker health and safety standards;
5. Require enforcement mechanisms and standards to be harmonized to the highest, rather than the lowest existing standards among signatories;
6. Require full public dispute resolution mechanisms which are available to all sectors and that provide for visibility, accountability, and sanctions for those who violate the provisions;
7. Discourage concentration of land and means of production in the hands of a few individuals and transnational corporations and encourage the preservation of small and family-owned farms and businesses; and
8. Provide for fair taxation of transborder movement of capital, goods and services.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the NINETEENTH GENERAL SYNOD calls on all United Church of Christ churches, committees, and offices to initiate programs of prayer, study and action to inform the members of the UCC of the issues and options, and to encourage members to write, telephone and visit their elected representatives to

communicate the substance and recommendations contained in this resolution.

Subject to the availability of funds.

8. RESOLUTION "IN SUPPORT OF THE UNITED MINE WORKERS OF AMERICA"

Mr. Lee continued the report of Committee Thirteen. He introduced and moved the adoption of the resolution "In Support of the United Mine Workers of America."

93-GS-20 VOTED: The Nineteenth General Synod adopts the resolution "In Support of the United Mine Workers of America."

RESOLUTION "IN SUPPORT OF THE UNITED MINE WORKERS OF AMERICA"

Background

The United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) represents approximately 60,000 working coal miners and 120,000 retirees who are covered by the 1988 National Bituminous Coal Wage Agreement (NBCWA), a contract that is negotiated between the UMWA and the Bituminous Coal Operators Association (BCOA).

The average age of a UMWA member is 44 years old and the average life of a mine owned by the companies belonging to the BCOA is seven years. That means, on average, many UMWA miners will be in their late 40s or early 50s when their mines run out of coal and shut down. At that age, they will be too old to retrain and too young to retire.

Over the last decade, BCOA-member companies have developed complex corporate structures designed to avoid the UMWA contract and to deny their loyal, unionized workers job opportunities at newly-opened or purchased mining operations. Many companies have also avoided hiring the many thousands of laid-off union miners by bringing in non-union subcontractors to mine their coal properties.

Resolution

WHEREAS, the Second General Synod of the United Church of Christ affirmed the "role, rights, and responsibilities of both organized labor and management in the democratic functioning of an industrial society;"

WHEREAS, subsequent General Synods and UCC instrumentalities have reaffirmed support by the United Church of Christ for collective bargaining and fair labor practices;

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WHEREAS, the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries has a long record of participation in key labor-management disputes, including those involving the United Mine Workers of America;

WHEREAS, the collective bargaining agreement of the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) with the Bituminous Coal Operators Association (BCOA) has expired;

WHEREAS, the democratic institution of collective bargaining appears to be under attack both by the BCOA and by other employers who have permanently replaced striking workers;

WHEREAS, the UMWA struggle could have serious implications for the rights of all union workers in the United States, their families, and the communities in which they live;

WHEREAS, the United Mine Workers of America has called a selective strike for unfair labor practices against members of the BCOA to protest the practices of members of the BCOA and to seek to enter into a new collective bargaining agreement;

WHEREAS, the Commission on Religion in Appalachia (CORA) reaffirmed its solidarity with the UMWA, its striking miners, its 120,000 retirees and widows, and all the coal field communities for which the UMWA has played such an important historical role;

WHEREAS, the UCBHM is a covenantal partner with the CORA; and

WHEREAS, over 600 religious leaders have already endorsed the statement entitled "A Call for Justice in the Coal Fields:"

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Nineteenth General Synod of the United Church of Christ joins in solidarity with the UMWA and endorses "A Call to Justice In the Coal Fields;"

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Nineteenth General Synod of the United Church of Christ expresses its support for public policies that restore the rights of working people to engage in collective bargaining without fear of reprisal;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the President of the United Church of Christ communicate this resolution to the members of the Bituminous Coal Operators Association;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we call on the BCOA and the UMWA to negotiate a contract settlement which will bring true justice to the coalfields.

[Note: The text of "A Call for Justice in the Coal Fields" referred to in the Resolution is found in Appendix C.]

9. RESOLUTION "IN RECOGNITION OF TWENTY YEARS OF UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST MINISTRY WITH FARM WORKERS"

Assistant Moderator Enriquez asked Mr. Lee to continue with the final resolution considered by Committee Thirteen. Mr. Lee introduced and moved the adoption of the resolution "In Recognition of Twenty Years of United Church of Christ Ministry with Farm Workers."

93-GS-21 VOTED: The Nineteenth General Synod adopts the resolution "In Recognition of Twenty Years of United Church of Christ Ministry with Farm Workers."

RESOLUTION "IN RECOGNITION OF TWENTY YEARS OF UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST MINISTRY WITH FARM WORKERS"

WHEREAS, Jesus said that whatever we do for the least of our brothers and sisters, we do for him (Mt. 25);

WHEREAS, farm workers are among the lowest-paid members of the workforce, although they perform demanding and dangerous work;

WHEREAS, the Ninth General Synod of the United Church of Christ, meeting twenty years ago, also in St. Louis, Missouri, sent 95 delegates and visitors to Coachella, California, in solidarity with the organizing efforts of the United Farm Workers of America;

WHEREAS, the United Church of Christ has maintained its commitment to farm worker organizing efforts, passing resolutions in support of migrant workers in 1961, the boycott of Chiquita bananas and non-union iceberg lettuce in 1979, and the boycott of California table grapes in 1985;

WHEREAS, the work of the United Farm Workers of America (UFW) in California and the Farm Labor Organizing Committee (FLOC) in the Midwest have demonstrated the effectiveness of organizing efforts in improving working and living conditions for farm workers;

WHEREAS, through successful three-way negotiations among farm workers, family farmers, and processing companies, FLOC has obtained employee benefits such as Social Security, Unemployment Compensation, and Workers' Compensation for farm workers, without increasing the burden on family farmers in Ohio and Michigan;