



## NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

May 10, 2007

Mr. John Chidsey, CEO  
Burger King Corporate Office  
5505 Blue Lagoon Drive  
Miami, FL 33126

Dear Mr. Chidsey,

I hope you will consider this an invitation for Burger King to dialogue and take concrete action to further the inexorable movement for fair food now transforming the fast-food industry for just wages and working conditions for the farmworkers who make your business and profits possible.

Now, Burger King has the tremendous opportunity to reverse decades of sub-poverty wages and human rights abuses inflicted on farmworkers whose working conditions in Florida were described by one federal prosecutor as “ground zero for modern-day slavery.” Burger King can and should partner with the Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW), a proven leader, and work for justice and dignity for the tomato pickers in its supply chain.

Providing training and employment opportunities for farmworkers, as Burger King has proposed, is not the answer to the egregious conditions facing tomato pickers. After all, someone will still have to pick the tomatoes at below poverty wages in 60-70 hour work weeks, without benefits, and lacking the right to bargain collectively. Mr. Chidsey, this is unjust and violates the moral imperatives that are at the heart of the gospel in the scriptures of the New Testament.

One penny per pound of tomatoes, this is the cost of the agreements reached by the CIW with Taco Bell and McDonald’s. The code of conduct, which is also included in the agreement, is effectively ensuring zero-tolerance for slavery and other labor abuses among Taco Bell’s and McDonald’s tomato suppliers. I submit, these changes represent a simple act of will, of conscience, and of justice that is of much greater import than the cost in time and resources your company would need to invest.

Representing the National Council of Churches, I joined the CIW to celebrate its recent agreement with McDonald’s. The CIW has established a working model to ensure more just wages and basic human rights for farmworkers in the tomato industry. I urge you to engage in serious negotiation with the leadership of the CIW to reach a similar agreement between Burger King and CIW.

Sincerely,  
Rev. Michael Livingston  
President, National Council of Churches