

the processes utilized in producing food, fiber, and fuel. One of the major ethical issues which is related to the use of the soil by agribusiness is the economic condition of the farm worker.

Historically, The Methodist Church has had a strong interest in the welfare of both the farmer and the agricultural worker. This interest was summarized in recent General Conference statements. "We believe farmers, other agricultural workers, and those displaced by mechanization should have opportunity to earn a fair income." "We would call attention to the economically disadvantaged everywhere, including the migrant laborers who are very essential in providing our nation's food. We pledge ourselves to the improvement of their conditions of life." Also, "We stand for the right of employees and employers alike to organize for collective bargaining, protection of both in the exercise of their right, the responsibility of both to bargain in good faith, and the obligation of both to work for the public good."

The agricultural sector of the United States' economy has so developed the production of food and fiber that it is possible to meet the basic needs of the population for these goods and to export food and fiber to meet needs in other countries. This is a moral good. However, it has been accomplished through the substitution of capital for people with the result of the displacement of farm-worker families and small farmers to an existence outside the economy. It has also been accomplished through low wages for workers who occupy a disadvantaged bargaining position. These inequities must be corrected and the social costs of agricultural efficiencies borne by the total society.

The General Board of Christian Social Concerns of The Methodist Church makes the following policy recommendations:

1. Agricultural workers, including migrant and other seasonal workers, should be included under the provisions of the National Labor Relations Act so that the worker may vote to join or not to join a union.
2. The coverage of agricultural workers, including seasonal workers, under federal minimum wage legislation should be expanded and the minimum brought up to the standards of other workers.
3. Federal child labor laws should be extended to include agricultural occupation.¹
4. Local, state and federal education and job training centers should be established and expanded to meet the needs of those agricultural workers and farmers who have been displaced from the economy by technological change.
5. Unemployment and workmen's compensation should be extended to cover agricultural workers.
6. Small farmers should be aided to become economically viable by expansion of governmental programs of loans, technical assistance, and aid to self-help developments such as cooperatives and housing.
7. Programs of the Office of Economic Opportunity and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act to aid migrants and other seasonal workers should be supported and extended.

We commend to the churches the social acceptance of our brothers, the farm workers, so that during a period of technological transition the worker and his family may find the support of community resources and at the same time make a contribution to the enrichment of society.

REPRESENTATIVE ACTIONS, OFFICIAL CHURCH BODIES ON POLICY, COMPILED BY
THE MIGRANT MINISTRY, NCC

MIGRANT LABORER

"Recognizing that mutual association with others to achieve legitimate ends is a basic need and right of all in a free society, we recommend prompt enactment and implementation of legislation which will extend minimum wage, unemployment compensation and National Labor Relations Act coverage to farm workers.

"We encourage local churches to set up study-action groups on collective bargaining so that the issues may be clear and policies determined."—Passed at Annual Meeting of the American Baptist Convention—May 1966

¹ No limitation, however, should be placed on the employment of children by their parents on the home farm, or someone standing in the place of a parent; provided that such work on the home farm does not jeopardize the health, education, or welfare of the child.