

**TITLE: A Resolution in Support of Centro de Trabajadores Unidos en Lucha**

DATE SUBMITTED: February 28, 2011

SUBMITTED BY: Justice & Witness Team – contact information, Chair, Rev. John Guttermann, 651 485-3104; [mnconfjusticewitnessteam@gmail.com](mailto:mnconfjusticewitnessteam@gmail.com).

SUMMARY OF INTENT: This resolution declares the Minnesota Conference United Church of Christ an ally and supporter of CTUL's [Centro de Trabajadores Unidos en Lucha (Center of Workers United in Struggle)] campaign for fair pay, dignified working conditions, and justice in their places of employment. The campaign's goal is an agreement with retail grocery store chains SuperValu (including Cub Foods and Jerry's Foods), Target, and Lunds & Byerly's to partner with workers by establishing a code of conduct ensuring fair wages and working conditions for contract cleaners. It further declares that the Minnesota Conference will use its moral voice to call for justice for these workers.

BACKGROUND AND SUPPORTING STATEMENT: WHEREAS there is general agreement among people of faith that economic life is to be shaped by moral principles and that all people have a right to the basic necessities of life, including food, clothing, shelter, education, health care, a safe environment, just compensation, decent working conditions, and to organize for their common good.

FISCAL NOTE: the Justice & Witness Team will budget \$50 for expenses related to fulfilling this resolution. If needed, it will consider budgeting additional funds.

WHEREAS the codes of conduct of many of the stores subcontracting with cleaning contractors declares a commitment to positive values and their communities, and

WHEREAS it is reported that the contract cleaning companies have lowered wages from between \$10 and \$11 per hour to between \$7.25 and \$8 per hour over the last ten years while increasing, even doubling, the workload, and

WHEREAS workers who speak up about job conditions are threatened with retaliation, and

WHEREAS there are documented reports of wage theft or late payment of wages, and

WHEREAS these actions threaten the dignity, livelihood, and economic well being of the families and workers who clean the stores we patronize, and

WHEREAS General Synod XXI (1997) in Resolution GS 21 affirmed "democratic principles in an emerging global economy," reaffirmed the heritage of "the United Church of Christ as an advocate for just, democratic, participatory and inclusive economic policies," including "the responsibility of workers to organize for collective bargaining with employers regarding wages, benefits, and working conditions, and also declare it the responsibility of employers to respect not only worker rights but also workers' dignity, and to create and maintain a climate conducive to the workers autonomous decision to organize," and

WHEREAS the Biblical narrative inspires our commitment to prophetic principles of worker justice (NRSV):

A. "Then the Lord said, 'I have observed the misery of my people who are in Egypt; I have heard their cry on account of their taskmasters...'" - Exodus 3:7-8,

B. "You shall not withhold the wages of poor and needy laborers..." - Deuteronomy 24:14,

C. "If a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food, and one of you says to them, 'Go in peace; keep warm and eat your fill', and yet you do not supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that?" - James 2:14-17,

1 BE IT RESOLVED that the 2011 annual meeting of the Minnesota Conference of the United  
2 Church of Christ directs the Conference Minister, in consultation with the Justice & Witness  
3 Team, to prepare and send within 30 days of the adoption of this resolution a letter to the  
4 workers of the Centro de Trabajadores Unidos en Lucha (CTUL, the Center of Workers United  
5 in Struggle) Campaign for Justice in Retail Cleaning. This letter is to declare the respect and  
6 gratitude of the Annual Meeting of the Minnesota Conference United Church of Christ and its  
7 members for the cleaning workers serving in the stores that its members and congregations  
8 patronize. It will also declare support of their campaign. The letter is to be on Conference  
9 letterhead and is to be signed by the Conference Minister.

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11 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the 2011 annual meeting of the Minnesota Conference of  
12 the United Church of Christ directs the Conference Minister, in consultation with the Justice &  
13 Witness Team, to prepare and send within 30 days of the adoption of this resolution a letter to  
14 the corporate leadership and the Board of Directors of SuperValu (including Cub Foods and  
15 Jerry's Foods), Target, and Lunds & Byerly's. The letter is to declare that the Annual Meeting  
16 of the Minnesota Conference United Church of Christ supports the CTUL campaign's goal of  
17 creating with these companies a code of conduct ensuring fair wages and working conditions for  
18 their contract workers. The letter is to be on Conference letterhead and is to be signed by the  
19 Conference Minister.

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21 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Justice & Witness team of the Minnesota Conference  
22 United Church of Christ will post on its Conference web page a link to the CTUL web site, post  
23 on its web page occasional information about the campaign, and submit occasional articles to the  
24 COMMAntary about the campaign, along with occasional updates and invitations to  
25 Congregations to support and participate in the campaign.