

#238 - The Right To Organize And Bargain Collectively – United Methodist Church

The United Methodist Church through its Social Principles recognizes and supports the right of workers to organize into unions of their own choosing and to bargain collectively regarding hours, wages and conditions of employment. The theological basis for this has been presented in the resolution on the "Rights of Workers."

The national policy of the United States since 1935 has codified procedures through the National Labor Relations Act for the selection of labor unions by workers, for the recognition of these unions by management, and for collective bargaining. However, at the start of the new millennium, workers are finding it harder and harder to form labor unions to achieve economic and social justice in the workplace. Many employers interfere with employees efforts to exercise their right to unionize by threatening to close their facilities, to fire union activists, or otherwise retaliate against them.

Therefore, The United Methodist Church:

- (1) urges all employers to allow their employees to freely choose whether to unionize or not, without intimidation or coercion;
- (2) urges all employers to clearly communicate to their employees that they are neutral on their employees choice, and will deal fairly with any union they select;
- (3) calls all employers to abide by their employees decision when a majority has signed union authorization cards or otherwise indicated their desire to be represented by a union, and to refrain from using National Labor Relations Board hearings, elections, and appeals as a means for delaying or avoiding representation for their employees;
- (4) supports efforts in the U.S. Congress to amend the National Labor Relations Act to (a) expedite workers efforts to organize and bargain collectively and (b) cover workers, such as farmworkers, who are presently excluded; and
- (5) urges annual conferences, local congregations, and clergy to actively affirm the right of workers to organize for collective bargaining by involving themselves in efforts to support workers who desire to exercise this right. United Methodist institutions and organizations have a Christian responsibility to exemplify the teachings found in the Social Principles and to support the right of their employees to organize for collective bargaining. The United Methodist Church through its boards and agencies, conferences, and local congregations will publicize this resolution among members of the church.

ADOPTED 2000

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