

Resolution Number: 64

Financial Implications: None

Women's Division, General Board of Global Ministries

1 Revise Resolution 64 as follows:

2

3 64. Eradicating Abusive Child Labor

4 In the Gospels, the disciples' attitude towards God was measured by their attitude toward

5 children and their ability to "become as a little child." The protection of childhood and

6 the nurture of children are, therefore, among our most sacred human responsibilities.

7 Reflecting this, the Social Principles of The United Methodist Church uphold the rights

8 of children to growth and development, adequate nutrition, health services, housing,

9 education, recreation, protection against all forms of racial discrimination, cruelty,

10 neglect, and exploitation.

11

12 However, throughout the world, childhood itself is under assault by new as well as

13 historic forces. Today's child, in too many parts of the world, must not only cope with

14 warfare, famine, and pestilence at an early age, but is too often denied basic childhood

15 itself by being forced into labor under abusive and destructive conditions. Many millions

16 of children around the world labor in work that is coerced, forced, bonded, enslaved or

17 otherwise unfair in wages, injurious to health and safety, and/or obstructive of education

18 or moral development.

19

20 WHEREAS, the majority of child labor is found in informal sectors of the world's poorest

21 economies, a growing element in global competition is the employment of children in

22 developing-country export industries making products such as vegetables, fruit, tea,

Page

Resolution Number: 64

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Women's Division, General Board of Global Ministries

23 ~~coffee, glass, garments, brassware, leather goods, and hand-knotted carpets for sale on~~
24 ~~the international market. The oriental carpet industry employs one of the most abusive~~
25 ~~forms of bonded child labor, involving perhaps as many as one million children in South~~
26 ~~Asia.~~ **2 harvesting crops such as coffee, tea, cocoa, vegetables, seafood, and fruit;**
27 **mining and shaping raw goods, such as gemstones, leather, gold, silver and**
28 **diamond; and making products such as garments, leather goods, brassware and**
29 **glassware, jewelry, and hand-knotted carpets for sale on the international market.**
30 **As many as 300,000 South Asian children between the ages of 4 and 14 are**
31 **kidnapped, trafficked, or sold into bondage in the hand-knotted carpet industry.**

32

33 In the United States, as many as ~~200,000~~ **400,000** children work in agriculture as paid or
34 unpaid labor, often under dangerous conditions without adequate protection, and at
35 significant risk to their education. **“Children working in agriculture in the U.S.**
36 **represent only 8% of the population of working minors, yet account for 40% of**
37 **work-related fatalities among minors. An estimated 100,000 children suffer**
38 **agriculture-related injuries annually in the United States.”**

39

40 The United Nations and the International Labor Organization (ILO) have established
41 universal principles to protect children from such abuse, including the U.N. International
42 Covenant on the Rights of the Child and the ILO Convention No. 138 for
43 Minimum Age for Admission to Work. These international conventions have been
44 ratified by many countries, **but** not including the United States. **The United States has**

Page

Resolution Number: 64

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Women's Division, General Board of Global Ministries

45 **ratified ILO Convention No. 182 concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action**
46 **for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour.**

47

48 ~~There is growing awareness in international development agencies that child labor is not~~
49 ~~a byproduct of generalized poverty, but is rooted in specific policies that~~
50 ~~disproportionately neglect or disadvantage certain populations—ethnic, caste, or gender~~
51 ~~groups—and that unbalanced development policies have contributed to the exacerbation~~
52 ~~of child labor.³~~

53

54 We therefore call on The United Methodist Church:

55 1. to support public policies that include the ratification and enforcement of international
56 labor conventions regarding child labor, affirmed by the United Methodist Church in the
57 resolution on the "Rights of Workers" (adopted ~~2000~~ 1988), and the **United Nations**
58 **Convention on the Rights of the Child**, affirmed by the United Methodist Church in the
59 resolution on ~~the "Ratification of Human Rights Covenants and Conventions"~~
60 **"Globalization and its Impact on Human Dignity and Human Rights"** (adopted in
61 **2004**);

62 2. to work to eradicate the evils of child labor through encouraging the appropriate
63 agencies and units to join the Child Labor Coalition, a broad-based coalition of medical,
64 welfare, religious, consumer, labor, and human-rights organizations in the United States;
65 ~~and;~~

66 **3. to join the Education Campaign of the Global March Against Child Labour, a**

Page

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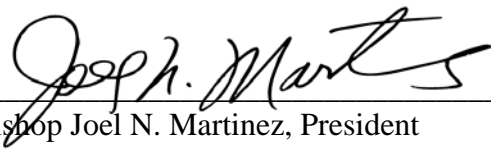
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67 **movement to mobilize worldwide efforts to protect and promote the rights of all**
68 **children, especially the right to receive a free meaningful education and to be free**
69 **from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be**
70 **harmful to the child's physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development, and**
71 **4. to support such consumer initiatives such as the RUGMARK campaign which was**
72 **established by a coalition of nongovernmental organizations, businesses,**
73 **government entities, and multilateral groups such as UNICEF** ~~initiated in India by~~
74 ~~UNICEF, the South Asian Coalition on Child Servitude, and others to label and market~~
75 ~~oriental carpets made without exploited child labor;~~
76 ~~3. 5. to support legislative and administrative measures to enforce bans against the~~
77 ~~international trafficking in goods made by child labor;~~
78 **4. 6. to support unilateral and multilateral aid and development policies that attack the**
79 **root causes of child labor, such as lack of basic education; gender, religion and caste**
80 **prejudice; and unbalanced development schemes that disadvantage certain populations;**
81 **and**
82 ~~5. 7. to work toward the reform of United States labor laws to provide better protection of~~
83 ~~farm workers' rights and to bring child labor restrictions into conformity with~~
84 ~~international standards.~~

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89 Bishop Joel N. Martinez, President
General Board of Global Ministries

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88 Rev. R. Randy Day, General Secretary
89 General Board of Global Ministries

Page

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