

Catholic Community Services

DIOCESE OF LANSING • 228 N. WALNUT STREET, LANSING, MICHIGAN 48933 ☎ (517) 372-8540

SOCIAL SERVICES
SENIOR CITIZENS
HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

To: The University of Michigan Regents
From: The Committee on Human Development: Diocese of Lansing
Re: Investments in Southern Africa

" Our gathering is not in support of any government; it is religious because we work for justice. We do so in the understanding that the entirety of human life is of concern to God. Hence, the Christian community must confront any forces that deny human dignity, equality, freedom of life itself. Most especially, we affirm our conviction that institutions, political or otherwise, which deny human worth on the basis of race are evil."

This statement is from a message given by the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. and the United States Catholic Conference at the conclusion of a convocation called to consider the subject of 'The Church in Southern Africa'.

In a further statement addressed to the problem of U.S. investments in Southern Africa the convocation said:

" We reject the claim of corporations that investments, changes in corporate wages and working conditions act as a force for the fundamental social change that is necessary in Southern Africa. Corporations should withdraw such business or credit as soon as practicable. Future new investments, loans or expansion of current investments should be opposed."

It seems to us that such statements apply also to institutions like the University of Michigan. Is solvency so important to the regents that ethics should be disregarded in the search for financial security? Financial security in this place cannot be regarded apart from the financial security of those who suffer in other parts of the world! The University of Michigan has as its own students and alumni, persons from these very suffering countries who come and go and live among us. How then, are we to consider our own financial health apart from these, our friends? And if we separate ourselves from them simply because they have not the power to place leverage for change on our U.S. based corporations, how does this make us here in Ann Arbor their friends any more?

A Diocesan Services Appeal Agency

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It seems to us that we need to place ourselves with the black poor in Southern Africa and to stand with them as they pursue what we have always regarded as our rights.

If financial investments in Southern Africa contribute to the oppression of our friends, then we ought to divest from such investments as a sign to these friends of ours that we care for them as we care for ourselves. We urge you to separate yourselves from this system so that universal equality can be more readily achieved.

Anne R. Laurance

Anne R. Laurance
Committee on Human Development
Catholic Diocese of Lansing, Michigan
March 16, 1978.

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