

FOR
WITNESS
SOUTH
AFRICA

PRESS RELEASE

Date: May 16, 1985
Place: Lawrence Hall of Science
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Today at 3:00 p.m., the Rev. Dr. J. Alfred Smith of Allen Temple Baptist Church will release a statement signed by 90 leaders of major religious faiths and organizations representing millions of Americans. They have joined together in common opposition to the apartheid system and to call for TOTAL DIVESTMENT by the Regents of the University of California.

The signers range from national heads of religious faiths, to Directors of Councils of Churches throughout the U.S., to the California-based Bishops of national denominations, to highly respected leaders within the Greater Bay Area. The fact that these signatures were gathered in three days is testimony to the widespread support for the demand of total divestment by the University of California students, faculty and employees. In part this statement reads:

...For years we have questioned and challenged U.S. corporations regarding their role in the system of injustice and oppression called apartheid. Today it is clear that they have been unable to alter this system; they have only been able to make it a bit more comfortable for their own workers. Indeed, their corporate and financial involvement in South Africa has substantially strengthened the apartheid system while postponing the self-determination so long sought by the black majority.

Faced with the escalating misery and violence in South Africa, we must respond with deliberate action. If those businesses in which we participate refuse to end their activities in that country, as an act of conscience and witness we must divest from those companies.

- We call upon the regents of the University of California to adopt the policy of total divestment...

An INTERFAITH SERVICE AND VIGIL focusing on the theme "You Have Tarried Too Long on This Mountain" (Deut. 2:2) led by state and local religious leaders will accompany the release of this statement. While not physically present, the signers will be participating in the Service through prayer. It is the hope that this ecumenical spirit will guide the University of California Regents to a decision to invest the University's funds in socially responsible ways, and not in support of the apartheid system.

A PRESS CONFERENCE of representatives of the religious faiths signing the Statement will follow the Interfaith Service. Information regarding divestment actions will be available.