If we continue as we are continuing, there is no question at all that we are going to end up in a blood bath. The route we are suggesting of more effective economic pressure is something with a chance.
On Friday September 20, 1985, Bishop Desmond Tutu addressed by telephone from South Africa a forum for the Indiana University Board of Trustees on Investment Responsibilities in South Africa. After some brief introductory words Bishop Tutu answered questions from the Trustees.

I greet you in the name of Our Lord, Jesus Christ, out of a situation in this land of a very serious crisis, deepening crisis, in a land that is very heavily polarized, with many deaths happening, many black people and others being detained as a result of the state of emergency, to express our deep appreciation to the many who are concerned about the situation in our land....

Before I [answer questions] I need to point out that I believe we are on the verge of a very serious catastrophe in our land unless we have the intervention either of a miracle, or the effective intervention of the international community in its pressure, political, diplomatic, but above all economic, to urge the South Africa government to go to the conference table to negotiate real change through the dismantling of apartheid and drawing up a blueprint for the new South Africa. Hardly any significant change in this country has taken place without the exertion of pressure from the outside world and therefore I myself believe that our last chance for reasonably peaceful change in South Africa will lie in the attitude and action of the international community.

Question: May I ask a question, your Grace. It seems to me, over the past few years, that each time you have spoken, you have spoken with more pessimism than the time before. I can remember a time when you did not favor disinvestment and at the present time your position is less clear. Have we seen a change in your position over the months and the years?

Bishop Tutu: Well I have obviously always believed that one of the strategies for peaceful change was the role of the international community. That has not changed. In fact, earlier this year when I was installed as Bishop of Johannesburg I pointed out that if by the end of 18 or 24 months apartheid was not dismantled, or in the process of being effectively dismantled, I would call for punitive sanctions.

I have subsequently said, as a result of the State President's [Botha] speech on August 15th that perhaps I would need to revise that 18-24 months timetable.

The situation has deteriorated quite drastically and often one has to hold on to an optimistic prognostication only by the skin of one's teeth. And it is only because I believe in the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ that I often am able to say we have to remain prisoners of hope, despite everything that points in a contrary direction.

Question: Is it true that many of the other Bishops in South Africa are opposed to disinvestment?

Bishop Tutu: I believe that there is, as on many another controversial issues, a variety of positions. I have held on to my own position not
because I was aware that I had the support of the bulk of either bishops or people. But I think it is important to note that very recently two quite important surveys have been published. One was published in the London Sunday Times, and the other in South African papers, with a remarkable coincidence between the results of these surveys. The London Sunday Times one showed that 77% of blacks supported sanctions and the one that appeared in the South African papers showed 73% [support]. So that, in a sense, it is maybe irrelevant what bishops feel. It is what the workers are saying. Today I was meeting with a delegation from the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, who have been visiting around in South Africa. The Vice-President of this Federation said he was amazed at how many workers from the shop floor upwards were declaring themselves in favor of disinvestment and sanctions.

**Question:** Is it not true that by investing in our multi-nationals, American institutions have an opportunity to assist in South Africa through the moral pressure they can put on the American company to abide with those moral and ethical principles which ought to be followed which are not being followed in South Africa? If they disinvest, will they not lose some of the effect that they can have by putting pressure on those companies?

**Bishop Tutu:** I think that there is merit in that line of argument where you have a great deal of time at your disposal. You will recall that these companies have been in this country for quite a long while. They began to realize that they had a political and social responsibility in this country only as a result of the buildup in the disinvestment campaign in your country, when the celebrated Sullivan Principles were enunciated.

Our problem obviously with the Sullivan Principles, the principles of the Code [of Conduct] is that basically it is ameliorative. It is seeking to make apartheid slightly more comfortable, and it has led to quite considerable improvements for black workers. It would be churlish to pretend that that had not, in fact, happened. But you can hear, I am talking about amelioration, I am talking about making apartheid more comfortable. Whereas what we want is not that, but something that is going to change apartheid, because, as Mrs. Motlana once said, "We do not want our chains made comfortable, we want our chains removed."

Now, I am saying that it may be true that if we had had a great deal of time available to us, your argument would have merit, in that you would be trying, over a period, to pursuade these companies to behave in the kind of way that would make a difference in South Africa.

We do not have that time. We need now to have sharp, and short and dramatic action which will knock sense into the South African government's head. Nothing has concentrated their minds more than the sharp drop in the value of the Rand in the foreign currency market. They have been forced to do something they had never believed could ever happen in South Africa, to have the Governor of the Reserve Bank going round the capitals of the world, cap in hand, and begging to be assisted, and coming back home empty handed. And he having to declare that the Rand position had very little to do with economic factors, that our economy is in fact basically sound, that what had happened was due, almost exclusively, to political factors.

Now that pushed the State President to make the kind of announcement
he made about citizenship, which he didn't make in his speech in Durban [Aug 15]. In Durban he warned the world not to push us too far. The world reacted to that and he had made very vague statements about citizenship, but now, after this sharp and short action he has been far more explicit and forthcoming, and he also made very vague statements about influx control in his Durban speech and after the experience with the fall in the value of the Rand, the President's council has come out with a far more clear and explicit statement on influx control.

Question: Now that the Sullivan principles have been expanded by the Rev. Sullivan to apply to an increased dimension of activities outside the workplace, such as support for ending of all apartheid laws, support for the freedom and mobility of black workers, it would seem to me that our pressure on American companies that are doing business in South Africa to actively push for those things would be helpful.

Bishop Tutu: I just need to say again that you are going to have to make two important decisions. The one is a moral decision, whether you are prepared to be seen, as blacks in South Africa are perceiving American companies particularly, as those who support a vicious, immoral and unchristian policy. Because there is no question at all, whether you like it or not, the presence of those companies in which you invest do [does] bolster the policy that I have characterized as the most vicious Nazism and communism. I am not alone in this [view] because the Mayor of New York City has said much the same thing before the United Nations.

You need to decide, quite unequivocally, whether you are going to align yourself in this kind of way with those who are the victims or with those who are the perpetrators. That is one decision which I cannot obviously influence you over.

The second decision that you are going to have to make is whether, given the unrest in this country, you believe that your investments are safe. We warned people a long while ago, when our warnings seemed to be without any foundation. Investing in South Africa is investing in a basically unstable situation. It is volatile, because whilst there is law and order it is a law and order that is based on injustice, just as you would get law and order in a totalitarian communist situation. Your investments are fundamentally insecure. [We warned] that there will come a day when the basic volatility of our situation will be clear to everybody and our words are being borne out by what is happening. The value of your investments is tumbling and it may be that before you can say Jack Robinson there won't be a very great deal for you to salvage. I am merely trying to say that you need to take those [two questions] into account.

And then the third item that you will need to put into your decision making process is precisely what black South Africans believe ought to happen. I referred in an earlier answer to those surveys, which are, in fact, surprising in many ways. [They show] that people are willing to sacrifice jobs because they say they are not prepared to be prosperous and slaves. They would much rather be unrich but free.

Question: Do you believe that divestment would result in violence rather than constructive change, and if so, how should we be guided by that?
Bishop Tutu: I think it is difficult to give a precise prediction. One thing that I can say is that if we continue as we are continuing, there is no question at all that we are going to end up in a blood bath, which no one would like to see take place. The route we are suggesting, of more effective economic pressure is something with a chance. I couldn't categorically say that we would exclude violence, but it is the one possible strategy that could well resolve our crisis with the minimum of violence.

In South Africa, at the present time, you've seen on your own [TV] screens that it is virtually impossible to protest against and oppose apartheid peacefully. When people protest peacefully the police and the security forces [army] react against them with incredible brutality. You've seen that for yourselves. When you are an effective opposition, quite non-violent in your method, you end up, as has been the case with Allan Boesak and others, being detained without trial or you then are made to face treason charges, as has happened with many members of the United Democratic Front.

Question: Let us go to the possibility of our actions creating chaos. I take it that you are saying that it is worth that risk.

Bishop Tutu: I am saying that we are moving into a chaotic period already, and that there is the chance that action which might knock sense into the government's head could just be the thing that stops the spiral.

What have we got as blacks in South Africa which we could use to change this system? You can change a political system one, by voting those you do not like, out of office. We do not have that method available to us because we do not have the vote. I am 53 years of age, I am a Bishop in the Church of God, I am a Bishop in the largest diocese in the Anglican Church in South Africa, I do not vote because of the color of my skin.

The other way in which you change a system you don't like is you fight, as did your thirteen colonies when they declared their independence.

We don't in fact want to go that route either.

Then the only possibility that is left is to seek non-violent ways. Our people, starting from about 1912 when the African National Congress was founded have tried to use the conventional non-violent methods, demonstrations, petitions, even passive resistance campaign, and the reaction of the authorities has been an escalation in their violent reaction to peaceful protest. So that in 1960, 69% of our people, protesting peacefully against the pass laws, were shot and killed at Sharpeville.

And then you've had 1976, and more violence now. Our people are saying "What price non-violence on our part, when we are left open to the harsh brutality of the South African authorities, without the world expressing more than just a rhetorical outrage." We are asking them [the world community] to translate their rhetoric of abhorrence of apartheid into effective action. Your government has not been coy in applying sanctions to Poland, it has not been coy at all in applying sanctions to Nicaragua, and there has never been, to my knowledge, any discussion about whether
those sanctions were going to be effective, whether they were going to increase violence, whether they were going to hurt most those you were trying to help.

But when it comes to our liberation in South Africa we get all this wonderful sophistry, and people suddenly become altruistic, who have been benefiting from black misery and suffering through black cheap labor, the black migratory labor system and so forth.

We then begin to wonder whether the signal that is being given us is that blacks are fundamentally expendable. That when it comes to the crunch you cannot really trust white people. That white people will band together because blood is thicker than water.

I hope that message is not the message being sent to us.

Thank you. God Bless All of You.