

## **SACBC STATEMENT**

### **ON**

### **AMERICAN SANCTIONS (3/10/86)**

The American government has taken its stand on sanctions firmly and unequivocally. Whatever the moral or political motivations, the action is in keeping with the American character. It wants action. If apartheid has to go – and the whole world agrees on this, except an infinitesimal proportion of the population consisting of repentant, white South Africans – it is in the American character to do something about it. The only tangible option open to the Americans was sanctions. They have decided.

They were encouraged in this by strong voices from South Africa, the voice of Archbishop Tutu, of Allan Boesak, Dr. Beyers Naude and the South African Council of Churches and of a wide range of black activists in political movements and the trade unions. Church leadership generally has been hesitant on the issue and most churches have not responded to the recommendation of the South African Council of Churches.

The South African Catholic Bishops' Conference dealt with the issue in their Pastoral Letter on Economic Pressure for Justice of May 1986 (cf pp 15-19).

It is not easy to make a quick judgement on whether the American decision conforms to these criteria or not. As far as one can judge the American decision aims at giving South Africa a real jolt without doing too much harm to the economy. Clearly there could be tougher jolts in future if South Africa does not make more serious attempts to dismantle apartheid.