

Church Bodies Representing Millions Say No To Sanctions

Church bodies representing millions of South Africans of all races have come out in strong opposition to punitive sanctions, boycotts and disinvestment against South Africa. A forum made up of representatives of 970 church denominations and bodies was formed recently to take a firm stand against sanctions. The president of the Full Gospel Church of God, the Rev. M L Badenhorst, was elected chairman and has been authorised to form a committee representative of all the major groups and churches involved. The Full Gospel Church of God alone has 500 000 members in South Africa, about half of them Africans. The Indian membership is said to be the largest Indian Christian community in the country. The Church has challenged churchmen who support sanctions to produce scriptural backing for them. Pastor Badenhorst said in an interview widely published in South Africa that the General Moderature of the church had passed a resolution at a meeting in Durban saying they could not support any measures undertaken against South Africa by way of punitive sanctions, boycotts or disinvestment "as we find no scriptural authority for depriving persons of the means whereby they can earn a dignified livelihood or whereby they can be con-

demned to starvation through no fault of their own." The resolution also condemned the policy of apartheid saying it had no scriptural foundation whatsoever and was an offense to human dignity. The Moderature said: "We believe that a just and equitable dispensation should be instituted in our society in South Africa but by peaceful and non-violent means only." The General Moderature consists of 15 church lead-

would also drastically affect the finance of their churches, thereby hindering their ability to proclaim the gospel and help the needy. The forum's constitution strongly opposed discrimination based on colour, race, class or language. Referring to but not naming certain church leaders who support sanctions, Pastor Badenhorst said: "We have appreciation and respect for the whole Christian body of believers in South Africa

and worldwide, and it is sad there should be a division on such cardinal issues such as this. We strongly base our doctrine on the Bible, the Word of God, and we have observed that Christians who plead for sanctions have not submitted one verse of Scripture or one acceptable theological argument in favour of this. We can quote dozens of scriptural references to support our stand." Those who supported sanctions had a right to their own opinions but they needed to be

The National Christian Development Fund of Southern Africa - an anti-apartheid church alliance - has also come out in strong opposition to sanctions and the sweeping proposed US Dellums Sanctions Bill currently before congress.

The Chairman of the Fund, Bishop Mzilikazi Masiya, said recently that sanctions would "lead to revolution" in South Africa. "All those people pressing and lobbying for sanctions claim to be doing it for black people in South Africa and that blacks would not mind a bit suffering more. That is a lie," he said. The Fund was organising a multi-million signature petition against sanctions for presentation to the United States embassy in Pretoria. Bishop Masiya added that he expected the support of the four million member Zionist Christian Church.

ers representing the leadership from the black, coloured, Indian and white communities of the church. Pastor Badenhorst said that "from personal experience" the forum members could testify that the overwhelming majority of the people in South Africa were against sanctions and that these observations could be confirmed by a number of scientific surveys. He added that sanctions

challenged to come forward and to say: "Thus says the Lord and the Scriptures." It was "surprising" that churchmen who supported sanctions did not seem willing to have a theological discussion with their opponents. He said the forum believed sanctions were contrary to the word of God "which instructs us to feed the hungry, not to deprive them of food."