

DIOCESE OF SAN JOSE

OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

July 10, 1990

Maxine F. Singer, President
Carnegie Institution of Washington
1530 P Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Maxine,

Before I apologize for the delay in responding to your letter of April 25, I must note that I did in fact respond immediately but the text was somehow "swallowed" by my computer, or my secretary's, or the communication link between us. I know this is becoming a fashionable excuse for many things, but it happens to be the fact.

Once your letter got caught in the backlog from unusual spring travel and absence from my office, I found myself composing an apology as well as a response. Let me go directly to the response.

I appreciate the careful and candid expression of your misgivings about the announced "PR campaign" around the abortion issue. I think your concern is quite understandable, especially in view of the media handling of the matter. I think you also correctly surmise a degree of discomfort on the part of many bishops about the course this strategy may take.

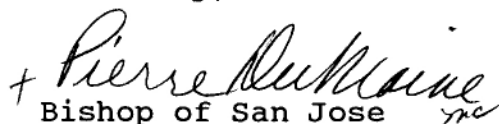
Speaking only for myself and not for my fellow bishops or members of our Committee, I am willing to wait for clearer delineation of the proposed public information strategy. Media accounts do not accord with my original understanding of the proposal when it was first presented to the Administrative Committee of our Conference, of which I am a member. I hope to have fuller information directly from the Conference before our next Administrative meeting September 11-13 in Washington.

You should have received notice by now of a meeting of our Committee on Science and Human Values on Monday afternoon, September 10, immediately preceding the Administrative meeting. I think your concern is a legitimate agenda item for our Committee, whose tasks include, in my view, consultation to other Committees of the Conference on any issue in which accurate and objective handling of scientific data and principles must be assured. I do not think we need or can give extensive time to the announced campaign, but we perhaps can delineate, somewhat in the fashion of your letter, the legitimate concerns that scientists (and theologians as well) might have about responsible handling of intricate and complex issues.

I do not know if this will allay your concern, but I hope it will maintain the climate of candid and careful dialogue which you appreciate in our Committee deliberations and to which you have personally made an indispensable contribution.

I hope you can join us on September 10, and I will welcome your further observations in this matter as the announced strategy takes shape. Meanwhile, my thanks again for your service to our Committee and for your gratifying assessment of our progress.

Sincerely,

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Bishop of San Jose *mc*

PDM/mc

cc: Dr. David Byers