

Proposed Visitation For
Dialogue With South African Churches

It is proposed that a select group of church people, representing business, education, and labor as well as the churches, visit South Africa for the purpose of:

- (1) engaging in a series of two-day conferences on the social responsibility of the churches in the United States and South Africa in the 1980s;
- (2) exchanging program models and strategies for education and action, particularly in the area of religion and race;
- (3) reporting back to the Rochester community with a call for greater understanding of and involvement in the quest for racial justice and peace in Southern Africa and in the Rochester area.

The visit will be co-sponsored by the Genesee Ecumenical Ministries and the South African Council of Churches. The SACC has agreed to set up the South African sponsorship, has suggested an itinerary, and is willing to take care of the arrangements in South Africa. The group would visit four or five cities in a three week period. At each place the American visitors would engage in intensive consultation on issues of religion and race in both South Africa and the U.S. for two or three days. Focus would be on the theological and ethical positions of Black churches in both nations and the ways in which White and Black churches can collaborate in joint strategies for overcoming racial prejudice.

It is expected that there would be sufficient time in each locale to visit Black townships, local congregations, homes and work places to learn more about the conditions of life and the attitudes and opinions of ordinary persons.

This proposal is conceived as an experiment in international/intercultural friendship and education with the purpose of acquainting Rochesterians with the role of religion and the churches in the search for a solution to the problem of race in South African and American societies.

It would seek to open up possibilities for fellowship, exchange and person-to-person collaboration between the people of Rochester and the people of South African communities. In terms of South Africa it would seek to acquaint South African church leaders with the experience of church groups in the United States in their effort to make religion more effective in bringing about racial justice in all aspects of American society. It is assumed that some elements of the American experience would be useful to churches in South Africa.

Funds for this project would be raised locally and nationally from churches, foundations and individuals.

As soon as an invitation is proffered from South Africa GEM will proceed to raise funds for the trip. It is anticipated that the group might depart sometime before the end of the summer of 1980.