

Madison Area Committee on
Southern Africa
306 N. Brooks Street
Madison 53715

March 8, 1971

Dear Fellow Churchman:

On Wednesday of this last week, Security Police of the South African white government raided the offices and homes of church leader throughout South Africa. This week, the Dean of the Cathedral of the Anglican (Episcopalian) Church of Johannesburg is appearing in court on charges linking him with the Communist Party. (Under South African laws, anyone who opposes the government and its apartheid policies is defined as a Communist.) The Dean of the Cathedral, a man known for his policies of non-violence and moderation, has been kept in solitary confinement in South African jails for eight days. Also last week a young American Methodist couple, working under a Presbyterian program in South Africa, were deported for inquiring into the conditions of Africans under the apartheid system. At the same time, the government is attacking the interdenominational Christian Institute, the South African Council of Churches, and the University Christian Institute, the South African Council of Churches, and the University Christian Movement--all groups actively opposing the Afrikaner Dutch Reformed Church biblical interpretations of the inherent inferiority of African to whites.

In a nation which has had three successive Prime Ministers who were Nazi-sympathizers, we should not be surprised that the church is under attack. Nor is it confined to South Africa. In nearby Rhodesia the Student Christian Movement in the schools has been banned as a subversive organization, and just a few years ago, the American Methodist Church in (Portuguese) Angola estimated that one-third of all their pastors and one-fourth of their members were killed by the Portuguese in reprisal for African attempts to achieve wider freedom.

What can the American Church do?

We have a very specific suggestion. Sunday, March 21, this year is the eleventh anniversary of the "Sharpeville Massacre" when the South African police killed almost 100 unarmed children, women, and men who were participating in a non-violent demonstration against racial discrimination. This day is the traditional day in which the United Nations and African peoples throughout the continent remember the continuing atrocities occurring in southern Africa. This day could be used to tell the plight of the church in southern Africa and to talk about Christian responsibility there.

One prominent Madison church already has asked that both March 21 and March 28 of the adult and children's Sunday School be given over to this topic. In Madison we are fortunate to have a number of persons who have worked for the churches in southern Africa or who have been members (Africans) of the churches there. They are ready and willing to come to your group or worship service, to talk or to preach on the topic. Cheap films are available, and a forty-page pamphlet just published is now available on "Is Southern Africa Wisconsin's Business?"

Here are some possibilities of programs which we can provide for you:

- 1) Individual speakers, panel presentations, preachers (including Americans and Africans) i.e.
What's Happening to the Church in Southern Africa?
What can a Christian Do About Southern Africa?
Apartheid and Discrimination--The Situation in South Africa
- 2) 50 minute CBS Reports film on the situation in South Africa
(only \$9 per rental)
- 3) Discussion of the new pamphlet: "Is Southern Africa Wisconsin Business?"
- 4) Information Materials for you to prepare for use in sermons on South Africa and Justice.

We urge you not to let this important date slip by without acquainting your congregation about the crisis which all Christians are now facing in South Africa. Please call us for scheduling speakers and other programs.

Sincerely yours,

Rev. Wandile F. Kuse