

# A GRACE-HOLY CROSS

Pastor Richardson will lead a group of members and friends to South Africa on August 17-27, 2010. Our church's annual international trip is always an exciting educational tour for all those who participate. The trip to South Africa this summer will be extraordinary for many reasons. One of the most historical moments of our trip will be a three-day revival led by Pastor at the Holy Cross Anglican Church in Soweto. It will also be the launching of the Grace-Holy Cross Educational Initiative.

Soweto, like Harlem, is historically known as the epicenter of black culture. The world was introduced to Soweto during the violent years of apartheid. Soweto, a very large community within Johannesburg, South Africa, was laced with the blood of its children from 1948 to 1994 under white South African rule. One of its most famous stories was portrayed in the Broadway play *Sarafina* in 1988. The world of music has been blessed by Soweto's many sons and daughters, such as Miriam Makeba and Hugh Masekela. With over two million residents, Soweto is a mosaic of art, beauty, luxury, and poverty. Soweto is also home to the only street in the world where two Noble Peace Prize winners were born and grew up. Do you know who they are? I will tell you later!

Since the ending of apartheid in 1994, much has changed in Soweto; however, much also remains the same, such as overwhelming poverty. My first visit to Soweto was in 1995. When I returned in November 2009, I was thrilled to visit several newly established historical sites, such as Nelson and Winnie Mandela's Homestead and the Hector Peterson Museum commemorating the killing of hundreds of schoolchildren who protested learning the Afrikaans language as their primary language. The museum is located across the street from Holy Cross Anglican Church. Of course, I was also excited to visit the Mandela family restaurant.

So much of African American history is mirrored in black South African history. Their history is our



history. As in the African American community, their children are often left behind in education, health, and the justice system. From year to year, the lack of education, food, and shelter continues to breed another generation of impoverished children and adults. There is no public school system in South Africa. Because many families are unable to afford school fees, which are approximately \$100 per year, thousands of South African children go uneducated.

The Grace-Holy Cross Educational Initiative will support (adopt) a hundred children per year. We are asking a

# REVIVAL IN SOWETO



Soweto Gospel Choir

hundred Grace members to adopt a child. The support of these children will assist Holy Cross's efforts to decrease the tremendous number of street children and support parents who are unable to pay school fees. More information will be forthcoming about the Grace-Holy Cross Educational Initiative.

Holy Cross Anglican Church choir is well-known throughout South Africa. The choir's exceptional artistry is sought after throughout the region. Unfortunately, I had to gently tell Father Steve Moreo that there is another

choir in our global village whose artistry is beyond exceptional as well! I hope that members of our choir will travel with Pastor Richardson in August so that South Africans can witness my claim. This is going to be a grand revival. Holy Cross seats two thousand people, and it is expected that every seat will be filled each night that Pastor Richardson preaches. The Grace-Holy Cross Revival in Soweto will be a transforming moment in Soweto and for the lives of all who attend. I will be there!!

Holy Cross Anglican Church is led by Father Steve Moreo, who is the rector of the parish and an archdeacon of the Anglican Church of South Africa. Father Steve is a long-time friend of Grace Baptist Church. We were first introduced to Father Steve in 1999 when the Balm in Gilead hosted "From Harlem to Soweto," a live simulcast between St. Marks United Methodist Church in Harlem and St. Mathew's Anglican Church in Soweto, where Father Steve was the rector at the time. On that great day when Harlem met Soweto via satellite, Grace Baptist Church Choir rendered the music for the program and Pastor Richardson officiated. I am sure every choir member who sang remembers that magical moment when we first saw our African brothers and sisters in Soweto. In 2002, Father Steve was a guest preacher at Grace. He remembers that Sunday as one of the greatest moments of his ministry.

Finally, to answer the question that I asked earlier: former president Nelson Mandela and Archbishop Desmond Tutu were born and grew up on the same street in Soweto. Thus, it is the only street in the world that gave birth to two Noble Peace prize-winners.

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By Pernessia C. Seele