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Photos by Peter Main



Nelson Mandela Visits Home of the *Monitor*

Early Sunday morning, June 24, Nelson Mandela, deputy president of the African National Congress, paid a surprise visit to the home of *The Christian Science Monitor*, The Mother Church, The First Church of Christ, Scientist in Boston.

Just the day before, he had delivered a speech in Boston to more than 200,000 people, recognizing Boston's part in encouraging divestment of holdings in South Africa.

But this Sunday morning visit was quiet, unannounced, and not part of his "official" schedule. Mr. Mandela appeared on the Church plaza with members of his visiting party and several secret service agents. Even though it was well before the Church doors were open for the Sunday service, he asked if he could go into the Church and was welcomed inside. He said, "I had to see the interior of the Church that has had such an impact on the people of black Africa."

When Richard Cattani, Editor of the *Monitor*, who was busy preparing Monday's edition of the newspaper, was notified that Mr. Mandela was in the Church, he went to meet him. Mr. Mandela greeted him enthusiastically, expressing great appreciation for the *Monitor*.

As they came out of the Church, Mr. Mandela observed how interesting it was that in a time when many other denominations were debating the issue of women as church leaders, here was a church that was founded by a woman. Mr. Cattani presented him with a copy of the Christian Science textbook, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, written by the founder, Mary Baker Eddy. Mr. Mandela asked if he would add an inscription, which he did as follows:

"To Nelson Mandela,
With best wishes for your continued
spiritual mission to bless mankind,
Richard J. Cattani, Editor"

On the steps of The Mother Church, the next few minutes turned into an exchange of respect and gratitude between Mr. Mandela and several *Monitor* staffers who had gathered there. Each had an opportunity to greet Mr. Mandela personally.

Mr. Mandela spoke of the warm reception he has received from the U.S. media in general, and then specifically focused on the *Monitor* and how it has been one of the more important voices covering events in South Africa. He revealed that it was one of the publications he was able to read in prison. He expressed gratitude for the fairness and honesty of the paper. He said, in substance, that the *Monitor* gives the kind of coverage that uplifts the spirit, that provides people a view of the world that gives them reason for hope.

He also spoke of the need to end the sense of division between people and repeated how important it is to see everyone as a child of God. He thanked the *Monitor* staff members for their work.

And as Richard Cattani observed later, "That was a very special moment. We had a sense of sharing a mission and purpose."



INSIDE

- 1
GENERAL
- 2
TELEVISION
- 6
RADIO
- 7
MAGAZINE
- 8
NEWSPAPER

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