

orients them briefly on the Visit; then he escorts them to the home and makes the introductions. The escort can also support the conversation leader and help keep the conversation on racial matters, should a visitor tend to move the talk away. It must be remembered, though, that the Negro conversation leader is the key person in the discussion. The less the escort needs to say, the better the job is done! Often the escort is a member of the organizing group; it seems to make no difference to the Visit whether he is white or Negro.

When a Visit is held in a white home, usually the host performs the functions of the escort. And when many Visits in Negro homes are arranged at one time, as on a citywide day, the press of numbers may require that the role of escort be eliminated. In that case a spokesman can be chosen by each visiting group.

The Conversation

THERE is no set structure or outline for the conversation. The discussions, in any case, take their own individual course, depending upon the interests of the participants. A sampling of ideas that have been raised in various Home Visits suggests the variety possible:

"Would there be any difficulty in getting service in our city's restaurants today?"

"Have you always felt welcome to churches and religious groups?"

"Were there special problems in obtaining your home?"

"Were there jobs you wanted that were closed to you because of racial discrimination?"

"Do you have facts on school segregation?"

"A friend noticed Negro patients were placed together in rooms—is this a common practice in hospitals?"

"How do parents of Negro children prepare them to face segregation?"

"How can one prevent prejudice growing in children?"

"In the back of many peoples' minds is the fear of interracial marriage. How can this be answered?"

"How about moving into a white neighborhood? Do Negroes you know fear doing this—or want to?"

"Crime and welfare are bugbears one hears about."

"Does vacationing or traveling present special hardships?"

"Do many Negroes have prejudice, too?"

"How do you feel about the Black Muslims?"

"Do Negroes think alike?"

To get these and other questions answered, the Home Visits bring the questioners to those best qualified to answer—informed, articulate Negroes.

The Organizers

THOSE who devote themselves to organizing Home Visits do not see these as a total or only program for racial change, but they recognize their worth as an effective method of opening minds and hearts of whites to the challenge of race, beginning the change from "bystander" to "committed." They know they will usually not have the satisfaction of seeing the final fruits of their efforts, for like any educational program the Home Visit is in many ways a "work of faith."

The groups offering the Home Visit program in cities throughout the country are always interracial but vary in structure. Some were formed just to do this program; others are committees of an existing (usually, a civil rights) organization. All but the Home Visit committee of the Washington, D.C., Conference on Religion and Race and the committee at the National Home Visit Center are volunteer groups without paid staff or office. Planning meetings often are held in the members' homes. Offering a well-organized program of Interracial Home Visits under such limitations is no small accomplishment.

A new group needs to build a list of available conversation leaders and escorts. Initially this list can be very small as both leader and escort can serve for many Visits, since each visiting group is new. As the number of Visits held in-