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MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY  
CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDIES  
50 MEMORIAL DRIVE  
CAMBRIDGE 39, MASSACHUSETTS

October 19, 1959

Professor Z.K. Matthews  
Fort Hare University College  
P.O. Alice, Cape Province  
Union of South Africa

Dear Z.K.:

I can now report to you the following:

(i.e. here!)

1. Union Theological Seminary is prepared to extend to you an invitation to come again as Henry Luce Visiting Professor for 1960-61. Attached to this invitation would be a first condition strictly limiting it to a single year and a second condition requiring you to limit your public speaking commitments outside of the Seminary "to academic and church engagements" without, however, any restriction, naturally, on the content of anything you might say. Dr. Van Dusen has written me that this invitation would be forwarded to you "only if we receive full assurance from you and other friends who are interesting yourselves actively in his welfare that you will fully respect this condition of the appointment and will take no steps whatsoever which might conceivably involve Professor Matthews in political complications or controversies." I have tried to meet this rather difficult and vague request with the letter of which I attach a copy. As you can see it has been my object to do my best to make sure that nothing impedes the invitation. The rest is entirely up to you. Another "small" decision for you to make! There seems to me to be no point in discussing details before any definite larger decisions have been made. If you decide you wish to accept such an invitation and the time comes to deal with its details that will be the time to think about that. In the meanwhile it does present you with a first concrete alternative to consider. (The reason for the "condition" as given by Van Dusen: "This condition is laid down not at all because Union Seminary fears such involvement for itself but simply...that we believe the Seminary can render its most significant service to the future of South Africa by keeping wide open the channels for South African theological students of all types to come here.")

2. A proposal to invite you as Visiting Professor -- without any conditions -- will be up before the appropriate body of the New School for Social Research in New York City this week. Because of technical difficulties the decision may be only provisional, but I have high hopes that it will be favorable. The New School, as you may know, got its real start and achieved major distinction when it provided faculty positions for refugee scholars from Europe in the Hitler period. Dr. Hans Simons, the President, was himself one of this number. He has taken a lively interest in your problem and your situation.

3. Other possibilities are still under consideration at several other places including Harvard (outlook dim), Brandeis University here in this area (outlook not bad), and Roosevelt University in Chicago (outlook unknown). I understand also that Hartford Theological Seminary is interested.



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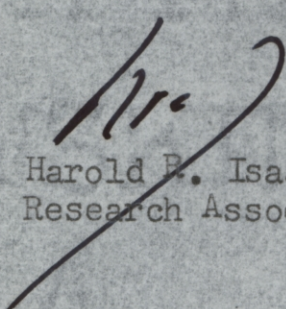
4. Finally, there is absolutely no question but that a whole group of Negro colleges and universities would be greatly interested in having you for lectures and perhaps for more. I discussed this with Dr. Frederick Patterson of the Phelps Stokes Fund. He is not in a position to make any commitment about this but he is certain that such arrangements would be forthcoming if sought and desired.

As you can see, there will be no lack of opportunities here, although I must emphasize again that these are all of a short term nature. At the same time I am bound to say that I am certain that in later appropriate circumstances other types of arrangements could be found. I might point out that even those invitations now already in view, if taken consecutively, would cover a sizeable interim period during which further decisions could be considered and made.

Obviously all of this is subject to your own major choices at this moment, and I assure you that everyone I have spoken to has a deep and lively appreciation of just how painful and difficult these decisions are going to be. This is not the kind of matter on which advice can be offered from afar. I will wait to have further word from you and then see what the next steps might be.

One further matter. I have placed in the hands of Appleton-Century the full manuscript of the book as it now stands, including all the pieces that you have sent, without correction or revision of any kind. I have asked them for their judgment on publishing it as is or perhaps just with cuts and editing. I fear they will think that the material is weak on the personal side and since this is to be an autobiography they will probably wait to see if there is a chance that you will be in this country and will be able to work on it here along these lines. However, I made a strong plea for considering the material in its present form, partly on the basis of its own merit and partly out of consideration of time. Even if you were to come over here and we were to manage to spend the necessary working hours together, I argued it would be more than another year before a finished manuscript could possibly emerge. I hope I persuaded them. I should have an answer in a few weeks. If their answer is negative I would certainly urge making the manuscript available to other publishers, especially the publisher in England who is interested. On the other hand if you do decide on a major change in your situation now this must obviously be the new starting point of your book. This too, waits on your present decisions.

Yours,

  
Harold B. Isaacs  
Research Associate

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