

WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

in association with the International Missionary Council

DIVISION OF INTER-CHURCH AID AND SERVICE TO REFUGEES

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Dr. Leslie E. Cooke
Director

9th August, 1961.



Dr. Z. K. Matthews,
P.O.Box 81,
Alice,
Cape Province,
South Africa.

Dear Mr. Matthews,

I think you will be somewhat surprised to receive this letter, but I am asked by the unanimous vote of the Administrative Committee of the Division of Inter-Church Aid and Service to Refugees and also by the unanimous vote of the Staffing and Executive Committees of the World Council of Churches to convey to you an invitation to become a member of the staff of the World Council of Churches in this Division of Inter-Church Aid and Service to Refugees as the Area Secretary for Africa.

You will, I think, already know something about the work of this Division in its ministry to homeless people, to those who are the victims of emergencies, in its concern for helping the churches to develop their service to those in need, and in its main task of developing relationships between the churches of the world through the ministries of mutual aid. It is a very great undertaking indeed and the range of its work is very varied and is continually extending. We expect to have on the Divisional staff after the Assembly in New Delhi 18 members. There will be Regional Secretaries for Europe, Asia, Latin America, Orthodox Churches and Countries, and for Africa. There will also be Secretaries responsible for the programmes which the churches carry out centrally through the Division in the fields of refugee service, health, scholarships, fraternal workers, etc. The fundamental task of the Area Secretaries is to help develop church relationships within their region, the entree to this task being the discovery and presentation of the needs of the churches and peoples of the region and the seeking and coordinating of resources from around the world to meet those needs. In pursuance of this task the Area Secretaries have also the responsibility of coordinating the work of the Programme Secretaries.

It is only within the last few years that this work of inter-church aid - which began in Europe - has been extended by action of the Assembly of the World Council of Churches and the Central Committee to lands outside of Europe, and only more recently have the opportunities and the work begun to develop rapidly in Africa.

We have never had within this Division a Secretary for Africa and this approach to you is the first that has been made to any one.

9th August, 1961.

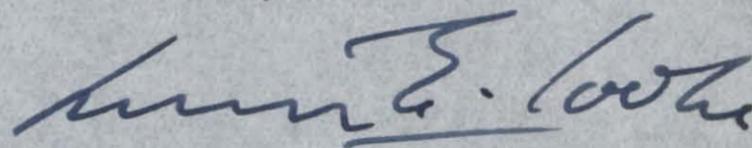
I think I should point out that the staff of this Division is not just of this Division only, but of the whole World Council, and even though, if you considered accepting this invitation, you would be located within the Division of Inter-Church Aid and Service to Refugees, your help and counsel would be needed in all aspects of the World Council's work. That is why this invitation is couched in the terms of an invitation to join the staff of the World Council.

I think I may say not only on behalf of this Division therefore, but as an Associate General Secretary of the World Council, that there is a great and eager desire to have you in the fellowship of the staff of the World Council, and I know that Dr. Visser 't Hooft - who made the original suggestion of your name to the Administrative Committee of this Division - will want to give his own urgent and wholehearted endorsement to this invitation.

I am sure that there is no need for me to underline the deep concern which is ours about the churches and peoples of Africa, nor our own conviction concerning the wide ranging and effective ministry which you could exercise through the World Council in your continent.

We realise that this proposal will raise some serious questions in your mind in view of the significant position of leadership you hold among your own people, but we none the less cherish the hope that you will feel that through the World Council there is an opportunity of service to the people of all the African nations which will lead you to give this invitation favourable consideration.

Yours,



Leslie E. Cooke,
Director.

P.S. I understand that my colleague Dr. Bilheimer will be in South Africa at the end of the month and I hope that you and he might meet together to discuss this question.