

# World Council of Churches

(in association with the International Missionary Council)

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In reply refer to: J.13-4.a.

Your ref.: February 4th, 1953

Dr. Z.K. Matthews,  
Union Theological Seminary,  
3041, Broadway,  
NEW YORK, 27.

Dear Dr. Matthews,

Re: Preparatory Commissions for the Evanston Assembly.

1. Thank you for your letter of December 24th, which reached me at Lucknow. We are delighted to learn that you accept membership on the Commission on "Inter-Group Relations - The Church amid Racial and Ethnic Tensions", with special reference to the situation in South Africa. We do regret, however, that for the reasons you indicate it seems impossible for you to attend the important conference of the preparatory Commissions at Bossey, near Geneva, August 11-19. If any possibility should open up of your deferring your return to S. Africa for some time, I would suggest that you try to attend this Conference. I am proposing to the Secretary of the Commission, the Rev. R. Bilheimer, 156 Fifth Avenue, New York, 10., to keep in touch with you on this matter.

We are grateful for the names you gave of African ministers in South Africa who might be asked to cooperate in the work of this Commission. I transmitted them to Mr. Bilheimer.

2. I am adding some information about next steps. The purpose of the Conference will be:
  - (a) to undertake a substantive discussion of the problems singled out for attention in each subject-area;
  - (b) to scrutinise and revise the drafts of the Factual Surveys which are to be sent out to the churches and Assembly delegates in the autumn of 1953;
  - (c) to prepare the first draft of a working paper, which will be submitted to the Assembly as a basis for its deliberations.

The Commissions will conduct their own meetings, apart from joint opening and closing sessions.

According to the directives of the Central Committee, the main theme of the Assembly - the Christian Hope - is to be taken as the over-arching perspective of the subsidiary topics. The task of clarifying the individual subjects will therefore have to go hand in hand with an effort to shape such an integrated programme. This will be a major preoccupation of the Conference.

3. The first four of a set of introductory study leaflets (on "Evangelism - The Mission of the Church to those outside her Life", "Social Questions - The Responsible Society in a World Perspective",



Dr. Z.K. Matthews.

4.2.1953.

"Inter-group Relations - The Church amid Racial and Ethnic Tensions" and "The Laity - The Christian in his Vocation") were despatched to you from our New York office some time ago. The two remaining leaflets ("Faith and Order - Our Oneness in Christ and our Disunity as Churches" and "International Affairs - Christians in the Struggle for World Community") will be available soon. These leaflets, together with the second report on the Main Theme, will give you a general picture of the preparatory programme for the Assembly.

4.

Over the next few months the officers of each Commission will prepare a first draft of the Factual Survey. We plan to send you the survey on the subject of your Commission about June 1st, for careful study and criticism. We venture to ask you already now to take note of this, as we shall have to work to a very strict time-schedule. Your comments will be required about June 20th, so that the officers of your Commission can codify and evaluate all the comments, and produce a revised draft if need be, in time for the Conference in August.

Yours very sincerely,

*N. Ehrenström*

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Director of the Study Department

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