

WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES, Executive Committee, August, 1966

Dr. Z. K. MATTHEWS

It is with deep regret that the Divisional Committee has learned of the decision of Dr. Matthews to resign from the service of the World Council of Churches on his appointment as Ambassador in Washington and Permanent Representative to the United Nations of the newly independent country of Botswana.

Dr. Matthews joined the staff of the WCC in the Division of Inter-Church Aid, Refugee and World Service on September 1, 1961. When he came to the World Council of Churches he was already widely known not only throughout Africa but throughout the world as a distinguished African leader, a champion of the rights of his people, for whom he had endured personal hardship and suffering, and as an educationalist of high repute as well as a pioneer in the development of secondary and university education in the continent of Africa.

Dr. Matthews joined the staff of the Division at a time when the Division was moving somewhat diffidently and tentatively into Africa. He gave himself without reserve to all the careful negotiations and detailed work necessary to develop the ministries of the churches through the Division in Africa. The respect and esteem in which he was already held in Africa, not only by the churches but by leaders in political, academic and other areas of African life, meant that he could give to the work of Inter-Church Aid a dimension which it could not otherwise have achieved and command for it a confidence and trust beyond all reasonable expectation. He has also proved a much honoured interpreter of his people and their needs to the churches of other parts of the world and a wise and gracious guide to the World Council in general and the Division of Inter-Church Aid, Refugee and World Service in particular in the decisions they have had to take and the policies they have been called upon to formulate concerning the churches and peoples of Africa.

The Divisional Committee and his colleagues, however, will always remember him not only for his distinguished service but for the privilege they have had in being under the influence of his sterling Christian character, his gracious personality, his intellectual eminence and his wise understanding of life, men and affairs. He has won for himself a lasting place in the affection of all who have worked with him. His departure is for all of them an impoverishment of their corporate life in the Division as well as for each one personally and individually.

As Dr. Matthews takes up his heavy responsibility to which his people have called him, the Committee wishes to assure him of its gratitude for all that he has done and all that he has meant, and of their continuing prayers for him and Mrs. Matthews in their new sphere of service.

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