

Ruud van Hoogevest
57 rue de Moillebeau
CH-1209 Genève / Switzerland

04-8605

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Geneva, March 17, 1986

Dear friends,

On March 1st I joined the ranks of the "retired"! From the little I have experienced so far I can say that it feels very good and that I really look forward to a future which, I hope, will bring many new chances and challenges.

Apart from wanting to share this news personally with you, I would like to express in this way my warm gratitude to all those I have been associated with during the 10 1/2 years of my employment with the World Council of Churches as Coordinator of the Refugee Service. I have always been very conscious of the fact that without the co-operation, commitment and support of numerous women and men around the globe it would never have been possible to demonstrate in many different ways the deep concern of the ecumenical movement for the world's refugees. I am also conscious, however, that in the years ahead the churches are bound to be called to do even more in fighting the restrictive trends and protectionist attitudes which threaten the life and future of so many refugees and asylum seekers and in advocating humane policies for their protection and assistance.

The international refugee-assisting family is a large and diverse one. Obviously my responsibility was in the first instance geared to working with the churches and related agencies, but the wider contacts with inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations have been a very important and enriching part of my work. I therefore want also to convey my thanks and appreciation to all friends in the international "extended family" whose advice and collaboration have meant so much to me. I am thinking in particular, but by no means exclusively, of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the Inter-governmental Committee for Migration and the wide network of the International Council of Voluntary Agencies.

I am extremely pleased that I was able to hand over my responsibilities to my former colleague and close friend, Melaku Kifle, well-known to many of you. I am convinced that he may count on your full support.

For the time being I am keeping my residence in Geneva (see address above) though I will soon start to rediscover my own country because I do intend to eventually settle "back home". As the ecumenical movement and the refugees have significantly shaped my life, I have no doubt that in some way they will continue to do so wherever I will be.

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Let me end by sending you my sincerest good wishes for your future efforts and by assuring you of my continued thoughts and prayers.

With warm greetings,

Geneva, March 17, 1988

Yours,

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Apart from what I have said in this new personal letter to you, I would like to express to you my warm gratitude to all those I have been associated with during the 15 years of my employment with the World Council of Churches as Coordinator of the Refugee Service. I have always been very conscious of the fact that without the co-operation, commitment and support of numerous women and men around the globe it would never have been possible to demonstrate in many different ways the ecumenical movement for the world's refugees. I am glad to do even more in lighting ahead the churches are being asked to do more in lighting the restricted freedom of many refugees and to help in their life and future of many refugees and to help in their calling humane policies for their protection and assistance.

My special fond wishes to all CAREZ friends.

It has been a privilege to work with you all.

To you, Maria, all the very best for the future.

Rud

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