



150, ROUTE DE FERNEY P.O. BOX No. 66 1211 GENEVA 20 • TELEPHONE (022) 916111 • TELEX: 23423 OIK CH • CABLE: OIKOUMENE GENEVA

WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

PROGRAMME UNIT ON JUSTICE AND SERVICE

Commission on Inter-Church Aid, Refugee and World Service

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DIRECT DIAL: (022) 91 6316

Dear Friends,

At the recent WCC Consultation on Resettlement in Miami there was considerable interest in the issue of multi-culturalism and its relationship to refugee resettlement and asylum-seekers. Certainly many countries have experienced, to varying degrees, cultural change as a result of the arrival of refugees and asylum-seekers. In some countries, general acceptance of the need to become multi-cultural has been directly influenced by the presence and contributions of refugees. In other countries, the presence of refugees has engendered a backlash against cultural pluralism. In some countries, multi-culturalism is a major political issue in which the churches are deeply involved; in other countries it's not an issue at all.

We would like to encourage churches and church-related agencies to share their experiences with each other on this subject and are planning to produce a special issue of the Refugee Newsletter on Multi-Culturalism. I am writing to ask you to contribute to this newsletter. Specifically, we are asking each of you to write 2-4 pages on the issue. (English preferable, but Spanish, French, or German OK). The following questions may be useful in guiding your thoughts.

- † To what extent is your society moving toward multi-culturalism?
- ‡ How do you see the impact of refugees and asylum-seekers on this multi-culturalism?
- ‡ What are the main obstacles to the development of multi-culturalism?

Your article may be personal (i.e. your own observations on this dynamic) or general (perhaps your organization has already written a paper on this). While some background information may be useful (e.g. numbers of refugees resettled or asylum-seeker arrivals in the past years), do not feel like you have to present an overview of the whole asylum/refugee issue in your country. Rather your reflections on multi-culturalism should be the dominant theme.

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I plan to publish this issue in February or March and would appreciate receiving your contributions by 1 February. If you feel you cannot do this or know someone you think would be more appropriate, please either ask that person directly and/or contact me.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth G. Ferris
Information and
Interpretation Secretary



Jennifer Riggs, Christian Church (Disciples) USA
Tom Clark, ICCR, Canada
Helen Hunter, ACC, Australia
Keith Taylor, ICCI, New Zealand
René Albek, Denmark
Liliane Biascsko-Harts, Belgium
Laurent Giovannoni, CIMADE, France
Peter v. Bethlenfalvy, FRG
Gnana Robinson, Madras Theological Seminary, India
Raul Macín, CECOPE, Mexico
Martin Knoblauch, CAREF, Argentina
Richard Murigande, AACC