

Ans
12. 9. 94

AUSTRIAN AIRLINES

Auf dem Flug

On the flight

Simon Middelton

von/from

nach/to

29 August 1994

Rte du Torat 142
1000 Lausanne 26
Switzerland.

Dear Sheila

Yesterday evening I heard the sad, yet paradoxically joyful news, depending on one's viewpoint, that Bill died last week. I don't have the details since I heard it while phoning my father-in-law, Rodney Davenport in Cape Town. He didn't have the details.

What does one say in such circumstances? Even though our paths diverged when I decided no longer to go into the ministry, I have had a deep affection for you both. Bill was a very important person in my life and his death has produced a sense of gap which is hard to describe. I am just 42 years old and have this growing feeling that I am, with many others, part of the new "leadership" generation. Bill's death merely underlined this growing sense which I find very hard to come to terms with. On an emotional level I want to say "not yet I'm not

ready.... leave it up to Bill and Stan (Edkins) and all those great men who were forged in WW II." Yet the reality is so different. It is rapidly coming to "our turn"; and I don't feel at all at ease. Somehow it seems safer with The Bill's of the world.

I think, on reflection, of considerable sadness for Bill since what he had to say was probably not heard. Somehow men and women refused to hear - or at least those in positions of ecclesiastical "power". It must have been a hard time for you both.

Strange as it may seem, he has been very present in my thoughts, particularly in July this year. Usually I know I should write or communicate when I get this sense, but like an idiot, I didn't act. The sense of Bill + you came while Marian, the kids + I were in Turcan for a week's holiday. I always recall Bill's enthusiasm for Perugia and how he was assisted there. Time and time thoughts about him bubbled up and I wanted to write and tell him that I had finally made it to the place where his future life was so obviously forged. It was a wonderful experience to live in Turcan (at Montefiore) and in particular to visit Assisi which was a very profound experience for me.

It was while in Italy that I wanted to write a kind of reflective letter to you both. I was, for Bill's sake, too late.

As you move into a different life, our thoughts will be with you. This isn't any easy time for you, and we cannot ever imagine what it will be like until it also happens to us. So, this will make it very lonely. We will pray that the Lord encourages you and be assured of our love.

I won't give you all the other info about family in this letter, other than to say that we are all well, + ~~live~~ live in Lausanne, Switzerland. I am in charge of a huge geographic region stretching from Switzerland to Kazakhstan + Cape Town for a company called Philip Davis. I am in charge of Training + Development. As I write I am flying to Lithuania this morning and aim to post this in Vienna.

God Bless you, Mary + Steve + Andrew.

Please don't feel under any obligation to write back + say "thanks" etc. When next time we meet we'll do that sort of thing.

Love from (and I know, Marian)

Simon