

28. August 1994

To our dear Sheila and your family,

Christopher telephoned us and gave us the very sad news about the death of your dear husband Bill. We write to you to express our sympathy to you. We feel grieved and are unhappy and our thoughts are much with you in these days. Bill and Sheila, you have been so good friends to us and helped us to take further steps forward specially in those first years when the bereavement started, but think too of all the love and caring you gave to Christopher when Bill called him to Bishopscourt to make the vital decision in his life to offer himself for priesthood. Just to say thank you does say little what we feel for you and we pray that our God will bless and comfort you.

I want to add my love to what Hans Peter has written & we think back of very happy & stirring times we had in the library

2 and dear Sheila, I wish to add a few thoughts I carry with me about your Bill and pass them on to you now whilst I can do so. I am by now 88 and want to follow this impulse to write. We live at present in Tokai in the home that really belongs to my elder son Michael and family. I found a letter written November 1982 by you and Bill. I hope that I had thanked you for it. What I want to say is the few great moments I had which left deep impression on me. The first Lenten addresses given at the Cathedral, probably on Wednesdays. Bill made us sit around the throne and spoke to us, quite different from usual Lenten addresses. He had chosen many important parts from the epistle. After each address we were given chance for prayer in St. John's chapel and Bill prayed with us, each of us and assisted with Ivan's blessing. At the first evening Ivan introduced Beth and me to Bill: "that are Christopher's parents". Later followed invitation to those lovely Thursday evenings at the library in Bishopswood. How can I ever forget that time. Special were when Bill shared an experience as prisoner of war in Italy. After he and some others had escaped and hid them in the forest whilst Italian soldiers hunted for them, but could not find them. At night they heard steps and some Italian women had noticed them and brought them food. asked whether she was not afraid of being found out by her own soldiers she replied that her two sons had been killed in the war.

2 and what she wants to do is to help some sons of
some other mother in these dreadful days, for their
mother's sake". Bill said this changed his life
completely and offered himself to God. Perhaps that was
Another important evening on a Thursday was when Bill could
not lead that evening and you played on a tape recorder
Lorrie Ten Boom witness of forgiveness. Since then I have
read it many a time. She could not forgive the concentration
camp guard who had so badly treated her and her sister
and only following God's command of stretch out your hand to
him brought to her obedience that forgiveness required.
I should like to share: I often questioned myself? Have I
actually forgiven what made me to leave my old German
home in 1936. I was several times in Germany again
together with Bill. and I thought it was not difficult to say
there is not any more ill feelings. only very recently I had
a bad experience. I read in the paper that the German Club
opened their restaurant to any body. I said to Beth:
never in my life shall I go there. Why? I do not want any
make an antisemitic remark to me. and then God was
good. That same evening I read in Madeleine L'Engle's
book "Higher than the Rock" something like this:
true forgiveness given or received is a gift from God
not the work of our mind. A good test of true
forgiveness is: does it still hurt? yes it did.
I had not really allowed to be honest abt my feelings.
There is still lots of feeling not expressed from those
years 1933-1936. But I thank God that he directs me

and does not allow my running away from it and Beth is a good wife to assist in it.

The last great moment at Thursday's at Bishop's Court was when Bill had shared much about the power of the Holy Spirit and the pouring out in to us. These evenings always ended always with prayer, silent, and on that particular day I suddenly found that Bill and Ivan had come and knelt and prayed over me for the gift of the Holy Spirit - and I am sure that this prayer was answered & God has been looking after me in a most wonderful way.

This letter was in my mind to write to Bill and now I have written it to you Sheila and I wished I had written earlier when I felt prompted to do so. I am glad I could do it now. I pray that you may be aware of God's great love and comforts in these days.

Should you ever come to Capetown - we should be glad and to look forward to welcome you.

Much love, Harold.

This envelope contains the letters
of Hans & Beth Ahrends.

Hans, Jewish, left Germany in 1936
and talks in his letter of his discovery
that he had not
been able to
forgive the Nazi's. Mrs. J. BURNETT.
He says forgiveness
is a gift from
God.

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