

Ans 4/9/94

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The Archbishop
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24th August 1994

Very dear Sheila,

I am writing this whilst wearing one of my other episcopal hats and as Bill was for many years Chairman of the Missions to Seamen, it almost seems appropriate.

The news of his passing reached us during our Annual Chaplains Conference at Kempton Park and we were quite stunned. I had absolutely no idea that Bill was unwell, though I knew and prayed much about the diminishing sight. We stood for some minutes in silence and then prayed. On Monday evening in his old Cathedral here in Bloemfontein we shall be celebrating a Requiem for a fondly remembered diocesan bishop. Maud Gilbert, whom he must have known at Westminster died the same night and she had reached the good age of 97!

Like C.S. Lewis, I don't believe in saying anything other than the fact that I am sharing your grief, your loss and your pain.

However much I have loved Robert Selby Taylor, Bill came to Cape Town where I was Rector of Somerset West like a breath of fresh air. I found it difficult to slot into his pentecostal enthusiasms but came to respect and admire his consistent and faithful devotion to the dynamic power of the Holy Spirit. He was so close to the heart of our Lord that his writings in recent years spoke with the same zeal as St. Paul and will be extracted again and again to reflect the sanity of a holy man speaking truth into the apartheid situation.

When other bishops were busily demonizing everything, Bill saw the miserable futility of this and the permanent effect it would have upon God's little people who needed rather the assurance of the Gospel and the cleansing power of the Spirit. Bill affirmed me more than any other bishop after my move to Bloemfontein and his telephone calls were an inspiration in times of sometimes grave desparation. The demonizing has produced catastrophic results in our new society, especially amongst the young and the Church has to answer for a great deal.

Your last visit to the diocese with Bill to St. Andrew's School at Welkom was a very warm and happy one and I shall always appreciate our last meal together at the Netherlands Club following Robert Selby Taylor's 50th Anniversary of consecration.

A great man and a noble bishop has passed from us, but he leaves the scent and promise of the God who fulfils all.

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May God grant you the consolation of his great Love and help you through grace to bear the pain of worldly separation.

With sympathy and with much much affection,

Flora