

January 2022

Hello Michael,

I acknowledge receipt of your letter of October 14, 2021 as well as the books you sent me. It has taken me some time to contemplate how best to reply, hence the slower response time.

You are correct in suggesting that some of your comments are blunt in nature, which in my experience is not uncommon when interacting with people of German origin. The ancestral roots of both my wife and I also lie in Germanic lineage, albeit likely with some Dutch influence. German is not only my mother tongue but also that of many generations of my ancestors. I have lived and studied in Germany several years, understand the culture quite well and have an office with 50 staff in Darmstadt and Stuttgart. My wife Ruth and I have always appreciated our German heritage, however of much greater importance to us is the vibrant Christian faith that, despite extreme hardship and persecution at times, was modeled for us in previous generations.

Having read with interest the description of your ancestral roots, I would add that ironically, one of my sons-in-law is a descendant of the Brockhaus family, albeit in no way currently involved in the book industry.

I appreciate your interest in the Gold Medal address I gave in London. It was a most special occasion which I will cherish for a long time. However I am also reminded that 'die Blume verwelkt, und das Gras verdorrt' and that our life is but a vapour that is here today and gone tomorrow. Notwithstanding that both our firm and myself have reached the upper echelons of reputation in the engineering and architectural world, not to mention the professorship I currently enjoy at the University of Illinois, the status I or my children enjoy remains largely unimportant to me relative to the forgiveness, love and hope we enjoy in Jesus Christ our Saviour. I would gladly forfeit all I have achieved and own for the sake of the One I have come to love and know. Having come to know your son Kevin, he would also be the first to acknowledge a similar sentiment and reject any notion that he is a self-made man. I have been moved to tears when considering the grace of God manifest in his life. Where he should, in light of both his birth and childhood circumstances be a bitter, angry young man, he is, since becoming a Christian at the age of 18, developing into an evermore selfless person that at times puts me to shame. We are blessed to have him in our family.

Having read not only your letter but having done a light read of your book describing your experiences in Kasachstan (a country I have also visited, along with annual visits to Russia relating to work amongst orphaned children), I sense lingering bitterness in regard to events that have taken place in your life. Regarding the circumstances surrounding your separation from Kevin and Ryan, there is no need to elaborate as I do not allow this to have any bearing on my relationships with those involved. Furthermore, while I appreciate your pain of separation from the boys, I can also attest that both the circumstances of their incestual birth and the placement in foster care were most hurtful and have resulted in short and long term pain.

It may well be that you consider yourself free of any wrongdoing in this respect. In this case, I would suggest that there is no point in pretending that everything is in order and expect a father-son relationship to develop.

Given that these types of wounds penetrate deep into the soul, healing and ultimately reconciliation is only to be found in addressing matters at a root level. As one who also falls far short of perfection, I can only encourage you as a fellow traveler quickly approaching the end of our journey of life here on earth, to ask God to reveal to you the condition of your heart and lead you to freedom. I share with you two promises of Scripture that are precious to me:

'If we confess our sins, he (Jesus) is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.' 1 John 1:9

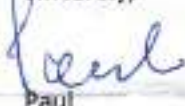
And from the Luther Bibel,

'So Euch nun der Sohn frei macht, so seid ihr recht frei.' Johannes 8:36

In the meantime, I would humbly submit that there is no point in sending gifts and letters to your son Kevin together with Andrea, nor visiting with them as it only pricks and agitates what is a very vulnerable wound.

I trust you will receive these words not as from someone that considers himself morally superior, but rather one who, being in need of mercy has experienced forgiveness in the crucified and resurrected Saviour of the world, Jesus Christ, who will at the appointed time judge the motives and hearts of everyone.

Sincerely,



Paul