

Peter and Paul - Memories of my friends Peter Koch and Paul Werner

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Alice and Gary Fleisher

Peter Koch is a great guy. I was impressed by him before I ever met him because of his hiking Germany condition, when he arrived as Europe's first missionary. I'm sure you've heard about how he wouldn't stop, even when his shoes filled with blood.

(<http://tparents.org/Library/Unification/Talks2/Koch/Koch-631110.htm>)



Peter Koch

In 1981 I was in the Orange Room of the New Yorker Hotel where I was witnessed what happened when Father replaced Peter as Austrian leader.

Father asked Peter who should replace him. Peter answered, "Father, no one is more qualified than I."

I thought that Father would get angry, but he didn't. He got a kind look on his face. Father asked Peter if he was 100% perfect. Peter said, "No, Father I am not."

Father explained that if Peter were 99% perfect then Peter couldn't raise the Austrian members to be 100% perfect. Father told him that if he appointed an Austria leader that was only 1% perfect, and it was the 1% that Peter lacked, the new leader could make the Austrian members 100% perfect.

I don't recall who Peter named as a replacement.

I used Father's 99% idea when I had to replace people. It worked remarkably well.

When I replaced other leaders I would always explain to the members that if I were only 1% perfect... It made it easier for those who loved the old leader to accept what Father had done.

After Danbury, Mother was buying a Chinese herb for Father to help him control his weight. She told both Peter and I to use it. (I was obese in those days.) I went to buy it and it was more than US\$200 an

ounce! (That's about US\$700 in today's money.) It was so expensive that I never bought it. I think Peter tried it, but had trouble getting it in Europe.

I'm sorry I never thought to ask Peter about his experiences in World War II. Any chance I had I would pester him about his life in the USA church in the 1960s.



Paul Werner

I was a religious Jew before I found Father. When I was a child, my family was looking for European family members, hoping they were still alive. Slowly, one by one it turned out they were dead. We had a lot of books about the Holocaust in my house. The photos of survivors still trouble me.

I learned about the suffering of Germans through Paul.

Paul joined the Hitler Youth as soon as he was old enough. (He didn't have a choice.) He was drafted into the Wehrmacht (Army) and was sent to Dresden in February 1945. He was assigned to help clean up after the fire-bombings of the city by the USA and Britain. He was haunted by the smell of burning people after that. Not just the 25,000 non-military citizen casualties but the thousands of survivors who had terrible burns from their wounds.

A couple of months later, Paul was captured by the US Army. The soldiers who caught him did not take him to an American POW camp. The US soldiers sold him to the Free French Army. The French Army put him to work as a slave coal miner. He had just turned 17. Even after Germany surrendered, Paul was enslaved in the mines. The leg injury that plagued him for the rest of his life was from the mines. Eventually he was freed and went home to an annihilated hometown.

I ran across this quote about the German POWs being held by the French: "They were taken to France in cattle cars," said Fabien Theofilakis, a 44-year-old historian who teaches at the Pantheon-Sorbonne University in Paris. "During the stops en route, they were spat upon or beaten up by the local people."

I hope those who know Peter and Paul better than I will share their memories and correct any errors in what I recall.