**Fronto, Stoic Philosopher**

This is a fictional letter that represents the views of Stoic and how they might advise Marcus Aurelius at this critical time period.

**Background Information:** You are a Stoic philosopher and close friend of Marcus Aurelius. You have received many letters from Marcus Aurelius, which discuss his inner most thoughts about himself and his stoic beliefs.

My dear friend and Emperor,

I have enjoyed our correspondence over the past few years. Your self examination of your emotions has been very beneficial to me and there is no doubt that it has been beneficial for you. I am writing to you because of your last correspondence, which was filled with confusion and anger both of which is very uncharacteristic of such an insightful Stoic as yourself. Therefore, I am writing to you with the most objective and logical words of a Stoic who believes in an Emperor who will follow the path of reason.

As I understand in your last letter, you are faced with many problems that are causing major turmoil for the empire. I need not remind a Stoic such as you that the universe has a purpose for all of the turmoil the empire is experiencing. Moreover, our short sightedness as human beings prevents us from understanding the purpose of the turmoil. But the problem that seems to frustrate you the most is the problem of the barbarians. My dear friend, you have much weighing on your shoulders and I would like to offer a logical solution for the barbarians.

I suggest that you send trusted generals, who have had some interaction with our northern neighbors, to begin some negotiations with some of the tribal chiefs. I believe that you will be able to appeal to their inner reasoning and make them clients of Rome. And think of the benefits that both the empire and our northern neighbors would receive from the alliances! For instance, the plague has depopulated the countryside and left huge tracks of land fallow, which need to be farmed. The alliance would allow the Germans to settle in the countryside and farm the land for the benefit of Rome and themselves. Secondly, it is unlikely that all of our northern neighbors will be willing to negotiate, which means that defending the borders may continue to be a priority for you. In this case, the tribal chiefs, who choose to become clients, could be persuaded to join our legions and help defend our empire. In return, we would help protect them from their enemies in the north.

In closing, I would like to remind you of a quote you once wrote in a letter to me. You wrote:

“The Greek word for part is “meros” and the word for limb is “melos”. If by changing one letter in the word, you call yourself merely a part, rather than a limb, you do not yet love your fellow man from the heart, nor derive complete joy from doing good; you will do it merely as a duty, not as doing good to yourself.”

This is a great opportunity you have to follow your own words and treat our neighbors to the north as a limb, rather than a part. Not to mention, you would be fulfilling your duty to the empire and defending what your predecessors have fought so hard to build.

Your humble friend,

Fronto

Guiding Questions:

1. What is Fronto suggesting that Marcus Aurelius do?
2. What reasons does Fronto give for his position?
3. What are some possible positive consequences of his advice?
4. What are some possible negative consequences of his advice?
5. Are there any other terms that should be negotiated with the Germans who would like to immigrate into the empire?