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## The past instead of the future?

The Schwing- and Aelplerfeste are more popular than ever. More and more they are frequented also by townies, young people and women, who are fascinated by the archaic aspects of these traditions that are said to represent "real" Switzerland.

Where does this enchantment with Schwingen and shotput, with yodelling and flagthrowing all of a sudden come from, a celebration of Switzerland as if modernity had never happened, as if we were still a whole nation of cowherds and cheesemakers?

The increasing admiration for tradition and ancient customs has to be interpreted as a reaction to modernity. Internationalisation and European tendencies, migration, www and globalisation have changed our lifestyle and our culture – and they question our national identity.

Many people react to these challenges with a turn to the past and its traditions: Old standards give identity and security in these times of change. That might also be the reason why we are so fond of jubilees, whether it is the Simplon tunnel or the Gotthard railway.

Of course there is nothing wrong with remembering our roots and acknowledging the achievements of our forbears. Many virtues of the past are useful in the present and will be useful in the future. But we still have to face the tasks of our times: "playing ostrich" will not bring back the so-called good old times.

*after Helmut Stalder, TA*

## Swiss Christians criticise Pope

Some Swiss Catholics have echoed Protestant criticism of Pope Benedict XVI's reassertion of the primacy of the Roman Catholic Church. A 16-page document by the Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith released in July 2007 stated that other Christian communities were either at fault or not true churches and that Catholicism was the only true path to salvation.

Catholics in Lucerne reacted angrily. The governing body of the city's Catholics wrote in an open letter that it was sorry that other Christian denominations were discriminated against by the Church's hierarchy. Most Catholics could not agree with the Vatican's position, and that, if anything, it should encourage more ecumenical dialogue at the local level.

For Swiss Protestants, the publication is an unwelcome move by the pope, who only a few days earlier made a gesture towards traditionalist Catholics by making it easier to celebrate Mass in Latin.

*from swissinfo*

## Rüebli-RS wird wieder eingeführt

Gymnasiasten sollen wieder haushalten lernen. Die grosse Mehrheit des Kantonsrats ist für die Wiedereinführung der «Husi». Eine Volksabstimmung ist kaum mehr nötig.

## Firnelicht

Wie pocht das Herz mir in der Brust  
trotz meiner jungen Wanderlust,  
Wann, heimgewendet, ich erschaut  
die Schneegebirge, süss umblaut,  
Das grosse stille Leuchten!

Ich atmet' eilig wie auf Raub,  
der Märkte Dunst, der Städte Staub.  
Ich sah den Kampf. Was sagest Du,  
mein reines Firnelicht dazu,  
Du grosses stilles Leuchten?

Nie prahlt' ich mit der Heimat noch  
und liebe sie von Herzen doch!  
In meinem Wesen und Gedicht  
Allüberall ist Firnelicht,  
Das grosse stille Leuchten!

Was kann ich für die Heimat tun,  
bevor ich geh' im Grabe ruhn?  
Was geb' ich, das dem Tod entflieht?  
Vielleicht ein Wort, vielleicht ein Lied,  
Ein kleines stilles Leuchten!

*Conrad Ferdinand Meyer*

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