

# An Appreciation

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## AN APPRECIATION

As readers of *The Swiss Observer* will already have noted from a previous number, the Swiss colony in Great Britain is about to lose one of its prominent members, the Rev. Claude Reverdin. It is therefore fitting that in the pages of this journal we should try to assess briefly, in a spirit of gratitude, what the sojourn of Mr. Reverdin, as pastor of the Swiss Church in London, has meant for the Swiss colony as such. For it has been one of the characteristics of Mr. Reverdin's ministry here that he sought to establish and cultivate as many and as frequent contacts with the various activities of the colony as his service in the Church would allow.

We are easily inclined — we lay people — to look upon our pastors only as representatives of the Church. There are many occasions when we feel it proper that the Church should be present: it is a spiritual force in our colony, as well as in our country; it incarnates a part of our cultural heritage; its presence is a reassuring sign of our own recognition of the place of spiritual values in our world. And Mr. Reverdin has fulfilled this role fully, courteously, graciously.

But his presence in the midst of our various gatherings has meant much more. In regarding him on such occasions as only the representative of the Church, we should have restricted what he himself considered his task amongst us ought to be. Mr. Reverdin's activities in the colony have to be seen and understood as a witness to and a reminder of the claim of Jesus Christ to be Lord over the earth as well as in heaven. Mr. Reverdin recalled this very clearly and powerfully in his farewell speech at the last Christmas dinner of the City Swiss Club: Jesus Christ claims his Lordship over us to be recognised and embodied not only on Sunday and at Church but all the week, through and in all our activities. Our pastor's presence in the non-church activities of the colony was more than the presence of the Church, it was the symbol of that divine claim.

Seen in that perspective, Mr. Reverdin's stay in Britain and his faithfulness to that aspect of his ministry have been paramount. In this way too, he has been a true messenger of that Gospel which was never meant to be for the Church alone, but primarily for the world. And for this faithfulness, by which he helped us to see ourselves and our lives in a truer perspective, and by which he also reminded us, with authority and patience, of our own promises as baptized and confirmed members of the Church, we thank Mr. Reverdin most sincerely.

Mr. Reverdin's simplicity, his easy contacts, his readiness to listen and to help, his encouraging smile, will not easily be forgotten. In a way too they were a symbol and a representation of that humanity which manifested itself perfectly in Jesus Christ and which He called us all to reproduce in the greatest possible measure in our own lives. Sensitivity to and care for the problems and sufferings of all members of the Swiss colony who may have called upon him for help, or whose need may have become known to him, have been an aspect of Mr. Reverdin's service which, long after his departure, will leave a deep sense of gratitude and joy among our compatriots in London.

This is not the place to evoke our pastor's fruitful activity in the Swiss Church itself; it has been a

blessed ministry which will leave its mark on the life of our Church, and we can only wonder how our spiritual leader was able to summon the energy and find the time to undertake and carry out all that he did. But we should not want to close these notes without recalling also what an invaluable help for her husband Mrs. Reverdin has been. Not only has she accompanied him at many of the functions of the Swiss colony and cheered all those she met with her charm and friendliness, but she has also provided him with the home and family life and spirit in which he could renew his strength and recover from his exhausting activities. The secret of a successful and dynamic ministry for the pastor — as for many others — lies with the hidden and humble but no less efficient and essential part his wife plays in the background. For having so ably supported a husband whose stay in London we shall always remember with thankfulness, we also thank Mr. Reverdin.

To both of them, and to their children, we wish a happy return to Geneva and much joy and encouragement in their new life and ministry.

O. Béguin.

## SWISS HOLIDAYS FOR UNITED KINGDOM SWISS CHILDREN

The Foundation "Pro Juventute" in Zurich is again organising a holiday for children of 7-14 years, of Swiss parentage who live in the United Kingdom, provided always that there is a sufficient number of participants.

As usual these holidays will start at the best and most attractive time to enjoy Switzerland, i.e. towards the end of July, and are scheduled to last some four to eight weeks according to arrangements made by "Pro Juventute". It is hoped that the journey London-Switzerland and return may again be carried out in an aeroplane of Swissair. Should this not be possible this time, the journey would be undertaken by rail.

As regards board and lodging in Switzerland, "Pro Juventute" offers various schemes, such as:

- (a) Board and lodging at reduced prices of about 12/- to 15/- per day in a recognised children's home, selected by "Pro Juventute", available for children up to 12 years of age, only for children holding Swiss passports.
- (b) A stay of about 4 weeks in various holiday camps, available for children of about 12-14 years of age, only for children holding Swiss passports.
- (c) Free board and lodging with Swiss families for a limited number of children up to 14 years whose parents are unable to pay either the whole or part of the cost. Only children holding Swiss passports can be considered under this scheme.
- (d) Children who are in the happy position of holding a written invitation from relations or friends in Switzerland are welcome to join the party for the journey both ways. Age limit: 14 years.

Parents who are not able to pay the whole of the cost, which is kept as low as possible, are entreated most earnestly to contribute as much as they possibly can in order to reduce the strain on the funds of the Benevolent Societies and "Pro Juventute".

In cases where parents would value such holidays for their youngsters but are not in a position to defray the cost of the journey, the Swiss Benevolent Societies