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NEWS FROM THE COLONY

AN HOUR OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY

The Swiss in London hold an Oecumenical Service

From the beginning of the century, certain Anglican circles began to put aside a week every year to pray for Christian Unity. It was in 1908 that the dates around 18th to 25th January were finally chosen. That was done in accord with the Roman Catholic Church, but only few Protestant Churches joined.

In 1936, the Reformed Churches, thanks to the meetings organised by l'Abbé Couturier, decided through their synods to take part in the movement. Since the Oecumenical Conference in Amsterdam in 1948, all the Churches have joined, and the unity of the Churches is making progress, witness the Vatican Council and oecumenical conferences in many countries on the problems of our time.

The Swiss Christians in London have their own difficulties. The Priest of the R.C. Community depends on two Bishops, one in Switzerland, one in London, and the Protestant Church is divided into two groups each with its own problem of language and culture. All this had to be overcome, but, at the initiative of Monsieur le Pasteur Nicod two years ago, difficulties have been ironed out, and the three communities met in common prayer at St. Ann's Church, Abbey Orchard Street, S.W.1, on Wednesday, 25th January, at 8 p.m.

The service was well attended, and both the Consistoire of the Swiss Church and the Committee of Swiss Catholics, as well as the Embassy, were represented.

The service was simple but impressive, and even the problem of language was solved by having the whole sequence of prayers, hymns and passages from the Holy Scriptures set out on paper.

And it was not only the five ordained Ministers of the three communities (Father Scherer and the Pastors Dietler, Ducommun, Nicod and Stefan) who took part in the ceremony, but lessons were also read by laymen of both denominations. Prayers and liturgy were shared equally between the clergy and the congregation. Some was in German, some in French, and the readings were from the Zurich Bible (Zwingli) and the new oecumenical translation of parts of the Bible which will be binding for all denominations.

So far the bare outlines. But to those who were present, the sincerity and simple solemnity, the jubilant singing and above all the humble prayers left a deep and lasting impression.

MM

Seigneur Dieu, tu réformes les erreurs, tu regroupes les efforts dispersés et du gardes ce que nous avons en commun; dans ta bonté, répand la grace de l'unité que tu veux sur le peuple chrétien; fais-nous rejeter la division pour être les vrais serviteurs, unis au vrai Pasteur de ton Eglise, Jésus-Christ, ton Fils, notre Seigneur, qui vit et règne avec Toi, dans l'unité du Saint-Esprit, un seul Dieu, au siècle des siècles.

GOLDEN WEDDING

We announce with great pleasure that Mr. and Mrs. Gustav Friberg, of 255 Kennington Road, London S.E.11, will be celebrating their Golden Wedding on 13th February. We join their children and grandchildren in sending them warmest congratulations and best wishes for the future.

SWISS CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PARTY

Acknowledgment of Generous Support

Somewhat belatedly, but no less warmly, the organising committee of the Swiss Children's Christmas Party wish to thank all those who have kindly contributed to the cost of the party.

It was held under the auspices of the Swiss Church on Saturday, 7th January, at the Y.W.C.A. Central Club, W.C.1., when over 100 children were entertained with Swiss films and by a very popular conjurer, followed by a happy tea party.

The smiles on the faces of the children, as they left the hall with their presents, was sufficient reward for those who had so freely given their help to make the party the success it was.

M.R.

ADOLPHE BLEIKER 70

It is with great pleasure that we announce the seventieth birthday of Mr. Adolphe Bleiker of 6 Hanworth Road, Feltham, Middlesex. He was born in Geneva on 11th February 1897. His parents came from Hochtogggenburg, and after studying in Geneva, he finished his training at the Lehranstalt Schiers, where he met the late A. Renou and Pastor Hahn formerly of the London Swiss Church.

He served an apprenticeship to a Geneva Bank, getting Fr.20.— a month during the last year! He arrived in this country on 20th November 1915 and joined the Banca Commerciale Italiana. In 1917, he entered commerce and began an interesting career with a number of merchant firms, joining Roura and Forgas in 1931. During the war, the company expanded, and their export business was taken over by a City group, trading as Rourafric. Again, Mr. Bleiker, its Managing Director, did a great deal of travelling in Africa, India and the Middle East.

Amongst his interests in the Swiss Colony, the Cercle Genevois was and perhaps still is dearest to him, and he was its active President until two years ago. He is also a member of the City Swiss Club and the Swiss Mercantile Society.

Mr. Bleiker retired from the City three years ago and hopes to enjoy, with his wife, a long and peaceful retirement in Spain in winter and in the New Forest in summer.

We join his family (married son and daughter and six grandchildren) and his many friends in wishing him a happy birthday and many more years to come.

MM

A REMINDER

Swissair, Swiss Centre, 10 Wardour Street, W.1. Telephone REG 6737.

Swiss Bank Corporation, Swiss Centre, 1 New Coventry Street, W.1. Telephone 734-0767.

Swiss National Tourist Office and Swiss Federal Railways, Swiss Centre, 1 New Coventry Street, W.1. Telephone 734-1921.