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AN UNUSUAL CONVERSATION

We get surprising phone calls at the Swiss Observer. Our Mr. Thomson, who takes care of the paper's interests as well as those of other companies housed in the same building, had a curious call recently and the conversation ran something like this:

(The telephone rings, Mr. Thomson answers and a serious, lady-like voice is heard at the other end of the line).

"My name is Mrs. Doris Munday. You may have already heard of me as I have made a television appearance on the BBC and written a series of articles in the National Press. I have a profession which may sound rather new to you, I am a professional rain maker".

(Mr. Thomson, very politely):

"Oh yes?"

"I have been in contact with many foreign governments and have been called upon on numerous occasions to bring down rain. I have just read in the Press that Switzerland was worried that the excess snow of this winter had not yet been dispersed. I could easily arrange to settle the matter in two or three days, but I would have to know beforehand in which direction the Swiss wanted the snow removed".

(Mr. Thomson, with utter seriousness):

"I must point out, Madam, that it is quite outside our terms of reference to interfere with the natural elements in Switzerland, quite apart from the fact that we do not know if the Swiss people actually want their snow removed. The only people who could authorise anything of this nature would be the Swiss Government, which I am afraid you can only reach through the Swiss Embassy".

(Mrs. Munday):

"You may be interested to know that I was called to Peru last year to make the rain fall because of a drought. Never had there been so much rain in Peru. But they never wrote to thank me, and my name was never acknowledged in their newspapers. They begged me for rain again this year, but I flatly refused".

(Mr. Thomson):

"This is most remarkable. If this is all right with you, we should be delighted to consider an interview and make a mention of your achievements in the Swiss Observer. But you must understand our position: we cannot by ourselves authorise you to remove all the snow in Switzerland. If this should be done against the will of the Swiss people and if it were known that we had given you the authorisation, the Swiss Observer might get into serious difficulties. You do understand that, don't you?".

(Mrs. Munday):

"Yes, of course, I appreciate your position".

(Mr. Thomson):

"I suggest that you ring the Embassy. Perhaps you may be able to ar-

range something with them. I'm awfully sorry at not having been able to help you but you must understand us".

(Mrs. Munday):

"Not at all, I'm very obliged to you. Thank you very much indeed. Good-bye".

(Mr. Thomson):

"Good-bye Madam, thank you very much".

(PMB)

THE LIFE OF THE SWISS CHURCHES

The French and German-speaking churches of London held their respective parish assemblies and their joint Church Assembly on Sunday afternoon, June 14th. Unfortunately, the attendance was rather poor, especially in the German-Swiss assembly, where the faithful who turned up were nearly all members of the Church Council already. The beautiful weather outside and the rather unappropriate time of the year went a long way in explaining this lack of presence.

The problems of the two churches were very similar in many respects. The reporter from the German-Swiss parish assembly to the joint assembly mentioned that attendance on Sunday was diminishing rather than increasing. But attendance at the German-Swiss Sunday school was fortunately in sharp progression and there was question of creating a third class of children. Sunday school at the French-speaking church was on the other hand at low ebb.

Pastor Nicod derived some interesting statistics from his parish files. There were, for example, 170 to 200 persons from the 712 recorded in the files who were over 70. The files indicated the presence of only 46 families with children (many of whom lived far away from the heart of London and the Swiss Church, thus explaining the smallness of the effectives at Sunday school). There were moreover 16 young Swiss couples. The conclusions which could be drawn from these figures were that the already strong separation of the two parishes into young and transiting Swiss on the one hand and doyens and elderly residents on the other will become yet sharper.

The future of the residential parish does not appear therefore particularly bright. The future of the church appears more promising in the field of work with the young, where both parishes have had an encouraging year.

The Swiss Churches in London are not immune to the fact that costs rise universally and had to take note of a total deficit of £1,910 in 1969. Much of this could be accounted for by the cost of renovating the hall and by the fact that no Swiss Church Sale took place in 1969. There will be one this coming October and it is hoped that its proceeds will help to strengthen

SWISS CHURCH

SERVICES EN FRANÇAIS: à l'Eglise Suisse, 79 Endell Street, W.C.2, tous les dimanches à 11h15 et 19h00.

SAINTE-CENE: le premier et troisième dimanche du mois, matin et soir.

PERMANENCE: chaque jeudi de 15h00 à 18h00.

REUNION DE QUARTIER: huit veillées en automne et au printemps: voir "Le Messager"

CLUB DES JEUNES: tous les dimanches de 12h00 à 22h30, tous les jeudis de 15h00 à 22h30.

REUNION DE COUTURE: le 2^e mardi du mois.

LUNCH: tous les dimanches à 13h00.

VISITES: sur demande.

PASTEUR: A. Nicod, 7 Park View Road, London N.3. Téléphone 01-346 5281.

* * *

SERVICES IN GERMAN: at Eglise Suisse, 79 Endell Street, W.C.2, at 10 a.m. At St. Ann's Church, Abbey Orchard Street, S.W.1. at 7.30 p.m.

HOLY COMMUNION: every first Sunday of the month at evening service only. On major feasts at morning and evening services.

CONSULTATIONS: every Wednesday 4-6 p.m. at Eglise Suisse.

DISTRICT GROUPS (W.4 and S.E.21) and SERVICES OUTSIDE LONDON: see "Gemeindebote".

SERVICES IN ENGLISH: every fourth Sunday at 7.30 p.m.

"KONTAKT" (Youth Group): every Wednesday 4-10 p.m. at Eglise Suisse. Supper at 6.30 p.m. Programme at 8 p.m.

SWISS Y.M.C.A.: see Forthcoming Events.

WOMEN'S CIRCLE: every first Tuesday of the Month.

MOTHERS' REUNION: 1st Wednesday in the Month, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

VISITS: by request.

MINISTER: Pfr. M. Dietler, 1. Womersley Road, N.8. Telephone 01-340 6018.

SWISS CATHOLIC MISSION: at St. Ann's Church, Abbey Orchard Street (off No. 25 Victoria Street), S.W.1.

SATURDAYS: Ecumenical Service at 6.30 p.m.

SUNDAYS: Holy Mass at 9 and 11 a.m. (in English).

At 6.30 p.m. (mostly in German)

CONSULTATIONS AND CONFESSIONS: preferably on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays in the afternoon or by appointment.

SERVICES EN FRANCAIS: Notre Dame de France, 5 Leicester Place, W.C.2. on Suns. at 9, 10, 11 a.m. 12.15, 6, 7 p.m.

SWISS CATHOLIC YOUTH CLUB — Meeting every Sunday after Evening Mass (8-11 p.m.) at Westminster Ball Room, 30 Strutton Ground, S.W.1.

CHAPLAIN: Paul Bossard, St. Ann's Church, Abbey Orchard Street, S.W.1. Tel.: 01-222 2895.

the financial situation of the churches. The Federation of Swiss Protestant Churches had continued to help the material life of the church at Endell Street and offered to pay the salaries of the assistant pastors. The main expense which the parishes will have to face in the near future will be the modernisation of the kitchen. At well attended youth evenings there are sometimes as many as fifty youths who come to have supper together in the Church hall. The preparation of such large meals and the ensuing washing-up will be made much easier and expeditious when the facilities will have been improved. But the matter rests with the Consistoire where some prolonged discussions can be expected.

On the spiritual side of the life of the Swiss churches, the highlights of the year had been their increased ecumenical gatherings and services. These were most encouraging and were to continue particularly in the French-speaking Church. It was noted however that although Catholic and Orthodox priests were permitted to come to speak to us (the French-Swiss) from the pulpit, our own pastors were not at present allowed to speak in Catholic and Orthodox churches. The exchange was therefore rather unidirectional. The French-speaking parish assembly opted to have Communion on every Sunday. The motion was by no means unanimously adopted and some members felt that Communion would be somewhat desecrated if it were celebrated too frequently.

The Parish magazine "Die Stimme" is not paying for itself. This is another point which the Consistoire

will have to examine. Also to be discussed will be a proposal put forward at the end of the Church Assembly to change the order of these three meetings so that they can be terminated earlier.

The Church Assembly 1970 was closed with a short prayer by Pfarrer Dietler.

(PMB)

MESSAGE BY A READER

"Her Pfarrer Spoerri hat recht. In London is ein Wunder geschehen und unser Dank geht an Alle, die dieses Wunder vollbracht haben. Wie beglueckend ist es, dass nun endlich auch die deutschsprachige Gemeinde in unserer schoenen Kirche in Endell Street die Gottesdienste halten kann.

Und als Folge der Sonntagspredigt von Herrn Pfarrer Dietler moechte auch ich seinen Appell an die Gemeinde unterstuetzen. Lasst diesem Wunder noch weitere Wunder folgen! Besucht den Gottesdienst und bringt jedes Mal Freunde mit. Wie wuerdet Ihr Euch fuehlen, wenn Ihr eine gute Predigt vorbereitet haettet und dann fast zu leeren Baenken predigen muesset? Ihr werdet viel Schoene und Neues in unserer Kirche finden. Jedes Sonntag ist fast wie eine Familien Reunion und je oeffter Ihr kommt, desto vertrauter und groesser wird der Familienkreis. Ich war auch eine von denen, die jahrelang immer Ausreden fand fuer das Nichtgehen in die Kirche, aber von jeher habe ich gesagt, dass, wenn es

einmal so weit kommt, dass auch wir in Endell Street unseren Gottesdienst halten duerften, ich regelmassige Kirchenbesucherin werden wuerde. Es ist nun fast zu spaet dafuer, denn mein Mann und ich sind oft abwesend ueber des Weekend, aber ich freue mich ueber jede Gelegenheit eines Kirchenbesuches in Endell Street. Man hat Gelegenheit zu einem "Schwatz" nach dem Gottesdienst mit einer Tasse Tee und die Kinder unserer Sonntagschule sind eifrig beschaeftigt, einem Biscuits anzubieten. Ja, sogar die Sonntagschule ist wieder lebendig und die Kinder gehen mit der groessten Freude zu ihrer Sonntagschule, nachdem sie uns in unserem Gottesdienst ein Lied gesungen haben.

Wir schulden Herrn und Frau Pfarrer Dietler und Herrn Pfarrer Stefan einen gossen Dank fuer die rastlose Arbeit, mit der sie unsere Kirche so lebendig gemacht haben".

(H.S.)

SWISS NATIONAL DAY COLLECTION

"Is there in the whole world another country which has a finer name than Switzerland?: Swiss Confederation by Oath — to be exact. Nobody can think about this name without realising the great significance, the serious implication which it contains. It reminds us that Switzerland has grown into a State by federations and oaths and thus by the liability of all members to mutual loyalty . . ."

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