

Letter

Objektyp: **Group**

Zeitschrift: **The Swiss observer : the journal of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK**

Band (Jahr): - **(1973)**

Heft 1657

PDF erstellt am: **09.08.2024**

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promote the cohesion of Swiss communities and offer them the opportunity of giving their children an education conforming with Swiss mentality and maintaining links with the Motherland. Moreover, Swiss schools abroad greatly help Swiss firms in recruiting nationals "on the field". This good work can only be maintained with the help of more money. To this end, the Confederation should not only increase its subsidies, but be given a bigger say in the running of the schools.

The Study calls for a Federal Commission for Swiss schools abroad. This body would advise the Government on financial assistance and examine the didactical requirements of the schools.

The Federal Decree of 4th March, 1964 on Swiss schools abroad should therefore be amended. The Government has already received the Study, which outlines a proposed new bill.

At present, 19 Swiss schools abroad are recognised as such and receive federal assistance. Eight of them are in Italy, two in Spain and six in Latin America. The remaining three are in Accra, Bangkok and Singapore. During the 1971-1972 school year, they catered for 5,294 children, including 1,681 Swiss, and run by 254 teachers and headmasters, 160 of them Swiss.

Swiss schools abroad were originally set up and financed by Swiss communities either because of the absence of adequate local schools or because they were eager to preserve their children's cultural identity. With various well-known phenomena setting in (reduction of colonies, assimilation, growth of educational requirements, etc.) these expatriate communities have found it difficult to maintain their schools without support from home. The schools usually rely on donations from local Swiss communities. This just about pays for the wages of teachers barely closing the differential with wages applied in the country concerned. Many of the schools are in a decrepit state and urgently require new furniture. Some, as in Brazil, are brand new and ultra-modern design.

Now that only a third of their children are Swiss, the vocation of these schools has switched from being a purely Colony concern to becoming the spearhead of Swiss culture abroad.



ASSISTANCE TO SWISS ABROAD

The new bill on assistance to Swiss abroad referred to in connection with the meeting of the Commission for the Swiss abroad (p. 16) was passed in March by the National Council. It puts an end to the inequalities resulting from the cantonal and communal origin of individual aid to Swiss residents abroad. The federal state will now take this assistance in hand. However, cantons will be held to reimburse Berne for the money paid out to foreign states (particularly Germany) for assistance given in accordance with bilateral conventions.



Healing of Miracle?

Dear Mr. Béguin,

A sentence in your issue of 9th February, 1973 has puzzled me. In the report on Pastor Dietler's Farewell Service it is said: "Whatever one may think of the theological orthodoxy of healing by laying-on of hands, it certainly exerted a powerful attraction on the parishioners of the Swiss Protestant Churches". I do not think that this should imply that our parishioners are so uncritical that they fall for any out-of-the-way attraction, but it must surprise any theologian trying to take the words of Christ seriously.

If we open the Bible, Gospel of Marc 16:18, we come across the last words of Christ to his disciples - and the last words of any living person are usually regarded as very important in his own eyes. They read as follows: "These are the signs that will be associated with believers: In my name they will cast out devils, they will have the gift of tongues, they will pick up snakes in their hands and be unharmed should they drink deadly poison, they will lay their hands on the sick, who will recover." A Christian may well try to interpret these words according to his own perspective, wide or narrow, but can he think whatever he likes about them?

The expression "Miracle" can be misleading. In today's language it implies some sort of hocuspocus or superstitious magical beliefs. Neither Christ nor his disciples were "magical-workers" in this (distorted) sense. Christ did perform miraculous deeds and signs for those who had had faith in him and so did his apostles and their successors. They were, and still are, signs that he is alive and that his power in our world is a reality, even today.

Many doctors will agree with my experience that most of our diseases are the symptoms of the ills of a disordered and unbalanced mind. If God has become man in order to make good what man has destroyed through foolishness and evil, and has restored the balance between man and his Creator (he has done even more than that), should anyone be surprised that faith in him can also restore health of mind and body? This may be a "miracle" in the eyes of the unbeliever, but it is straightforward logic to anyone who combines real belief with some insight into the workings of the human mind.

Father Paul Bossard

Swiss Churches

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

PERMANENCE: chaque jeudi de 15h00 à dimanche du mois, matin et soir.

SAINTE-CENE: le premier et troisième 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 2e mardi du mois. LUNCH, tous les dimanches à 13h00.

VISITES: sur demande.

PASTEUR: A. Nicod, 8 Park View Road, London, N.3. Téléphone 01-346 5281.

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SWISS CATHOLIC MISSION: John Southworth Centre, 48 Great Peter Street, London, SW1P 2HA.

Sundays: Holy Mass at 6.30 p.m. with sermon in German, in the Club hall, ground floor.

(2nd floor at the same time, Protestant service in German).

CONSULTATIONS AND CONFESSIONS: by appointment.

SERVICES EN FRANCAIS: Notre Dame de France, 5 Leicester Place, W.C.2, on Sundays, 10.00, 11.00, 12.15, and 6.30 p.m.

SWISS CATHOLIC YOUTH CLUB: Open every Sunday from 3 p.m. to 11 p.m. (48 Great Peter Street). Discussions, dance, lectures (with members of other denominations), Sunday services and refreshments. See programme "Die Stimme."

During the week: open according to programme of the English Youth Club.

RESIDENCE OF CHAPLAIN: Bossard, Swiss Catholic Mission, 48 Great Peter Street, (2nd floor), London SW1P 2HA. Telephone: 01-222 2895.

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SERVICES IN GERMAN: at Eglise Suisse, 79, Endell Street, W.C.2, every Sunday at 9.45 a.m. Sunday school takes place on the first and the third Sunday in the month for children of all age groups. Children assemble in the church with their parents who attend the normal Service. Liturgical Service takes place every second Sunday in the month. Services also at John Southworth Centre, 48 Gt. Peter Street, S.W.1 every Sunday at 6.30 p.m.

HOLY COMMUNION: every first Sunday of the month at evening service at John Southworth Centre. Every second Sunday of the month at morning Services at Eglise Suisse. On major feasts at morning and evening services.

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

DISTRICT GROUP S.E.21 and SERVICES OUTSIDE LONDON: see "Stimme."

"KONTAKT" (Youth Group): every Wednesday 4-10 p.m. at Eglise Suisse. Supper at 7 p.m. Programme at 8 p.m.

WOMEN'S CIRCLE: every first Tuesday of the month from 12 noon onwards at the Eglise Suisse.

MOTHER'S REUNION: third Wednesday in the month, 1-1 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Eglise Suisse.

VISITS: by request.

MINISTERS: Pfr. U. Stefan, 1, Womersley Road, N.8. Tel: 01-340 9740.