

# Basel Mission Archives

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"Mohr's Third Quarterly report for 1876"

**Title:** "Mohr's Third Quarterly report for 1876"

**Ref. number:** D-01.28.IX..234

**Date:** Proper date: 05.10.1876

**Description:** They are using an asphalted sheet as a temporary roof for the chapel. Over labour and labour troubles; all their Larteh people have left them at the end of August - their most skilled, most hard-working, and most reliable men. Only one skilled mason remains. They have to pay him 2/-per day, most of it has gone on rum. The Begoro people are very angry with him. It was hunger which drove the Larteh people home, so there is some hope that they will return, though there is some danger also that they will find work with the government. Shortage of foodstuffs is widely felt however, not only in terms of meat supplies but also plantains. Palmwine is the only thing in good supply. The trouble seems to be that during the Asante war they did not make any more farms in Begoro. In August they had a strike of their unskilled labour force. At the beginning they had paid the boys a half-dollar each week. But quite soon the supply of labour outstripped the demand in this particular field, and although each Monday they took on 30-40 boys they had to send many away without work. They were thus able to reduce the wages, taking people who were willing to accept 1/3d per day. On Monday 21 August no boys came to work, and they soon heard that the youth of Begoro had sworn an oath or made a law that no further work should be done unless the old payment of 2/3d per week was revived. Anybody working for the missionaries would be fined 2/3d. The missionaries carried on for two weeks without these people (they seem to have worked especially with the masons). Then they tried to get individuals who wanted to work, to come to work, but they were punished. Mohr got the chief to call them to him and tell them to go back to work, but they said they would not. Mohr then took steps to make a formal charge against them (he explains to the reader that to do this one gave accusation money to the chief, and they were reimbursed by a like sum being fined from the defendant if he were found guilty; it is not clear exactly what the charge was). The accusation money in this case was one dollar and the four ring-leaders were called to answer the charge. The palaver was a long one and Mohr stated in it that he was concerned to see the 4 ringleaders punished because they had prevented people who wanted to work for 3d a day working, and had punished some who had worked. He wanted to see their law against working for less than 6d per day repealed. He also pointed out that it was a pity for Begoro itself that all work had stopped on the station - it turns out from a parenthetical comment that Mohr had forbidden any Begoro man from working on the station unless he brought a boy with him. This failed however, because the older ones were the plaything of the young ones. He went on to ask the king as his friend if it were not true that by his own free will he had come from Europe because the Begoro people wanted a mission station - and whether he had not done good for the town, teaching people to do work they had never done before, and paying them for their work? He

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could also point to people standing around the palaver place by name, and asking them how much they had earned each day explained to the king that some people were skilled, some people were unskilled but hard-working and reliable, and some were unskilled and lazy. He made his point, and the boys came back to work to scales of 3d daily for boys, 6d daily for men, 9d daily for people on particularly demanding work like stone breaking, and digging up Odum stumps. Lawyers and Masons from other towns are paid 1/- and 2/-

Discussing the building of the Christian community Mohr says that in view of Glatzle's illnesses in this third quarter all the baptismal instruction has been undertaken by the catechist. He has instructed the catechist to lay especial emphasis on reading, so that all Christians can read the Bible. He is not sorry to see' people proceeding slowly to baptism; as he has more experience on the station he knows more and more about -the mistakes and failings of the people, and so can give them more and more pointed instructions. In any case several of the baptismal candidates will have to be struck off Ewabena Dako, for example, -has slept with two of the king's wives, and has been fined 36 dollars. This is an impossible sum, and he will find it hard to turn back. Kwasi Kuma, an apprentice carpenter, had never made a good impression. Though outwardly friendly he has a streak of the barrack room lawyer,-and-is in his element playing the master. At his first announcing himself as a baptismal candidate he said he had only one wife from whom in any case he had been separated for a long time. But now Mohr has heard, quite by coincidence that he is maintaining his wife in Begoro and has another in Asiakwa. Also he is often drunk, and one Sunday beat Catechist Obeng in the public street, on the grounds that Obeng was giving him a bad name with the missionaries. (Obeng asked to be allowed to lay a charge against the man in Accra, Mohr thought it better to send the matter to the General Conference, and for them to send it on the Accra. The British Commandant has sent Obeng a present, and Kuma a sharp warning.) On the other hand the small community of the already baptised gives the missionaries much joys, and stands on its own feet in deciding what is best, and they give also to announce the reacceptance of a Christian previously excluded. Timotheo Late, from Lartey, Glatzle's main support in the carpentry shop. He was excluded a time ago from the Larteh congregation by Asante, for 'falling' in Akim. Opoku from Larteh had written to them that he was sincerely hoping to be re-accepted, and the missionaries have been entirely at peace with him. At the service the sermon was based on Luke 19v 20 and his reacceptance was signified by shaking of the hand. In his concluding paragraph Mohr talks about the usefulness of having the Christians on the station as they soon will. It will enable the missionaries to notice how they conduct themselves in their home life. And he is looking forward to another baptismal service. (There is a footnote from Buck to Christiansborg that the workers on the Fort had recently struck for a rise from 9d to 1/- per day.)

**Subject:**

[Archives catalogue]: Guides / Finding aids: Archives: D - Ghana: D-01 - Incoming correspondence from Ghana up to the outbreak of the First World War: D-01.28 - Ghana 1876: D-01.28.IX. - Begoro

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