

# Basel Mission Archives

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"Mohr's Second Quarter's Report for 1877"

**Title:** "Mohr's Second Quarter's Report for 1877"

**Ref. number:** D-01.29.XIV..248

**Date:** Proper date: 28.05.1877

**Description:** On the subject of peoples' attitudes to the Mission he reports a general disillusionment with the fetish priests. People often say to him that they do not believe in the fetishes but they are afraid. It is true that there are other problems hindering the development of the Christian community, especially the problem of indebtedness. Once in debt there is little chance for people to escape, since apart from working for the mission there is no way of earning money - there is no market in Begoro, and if they take up trade it can only be in spirits (They are very worried indeed about the question what economic activities to take up on the mission station). He speaks about the people, thus implying that he is speaking about the limits imposed on them by slavery. No mention is made of the salt or snail trade. Another reason for the slowness of the development of the Christian community is that the elders are unhappy about the prospect of the disappearance of dancing and traditional customs. The fetish priests are in a precarious position because they see that their religion is laughed at and no longer believed in, and they do not wish to lose their influence. Yet their efforts to impress people with their mad liturgies carry little weight with the younger people, and more and more people are conscious that they are not working for the good of the people. He had recently been asked to intervene by two of the Christians - Jacob Su and Petro Saw - because a relative of them had died, and an old fetish priestess has claimed that her fetish had killed him, and therefore his body should be thrown away in the bush and not buried. Mohr took the body and had it buried on mission land, to the joy of the family. At the same time he came to the conclusion that the man had been killed by poison. He was young and healthy, but had become suddenly ill, and died within two weeks. Since then 5 people from the same family had died, all in their prime. Mohr thinks that it is his grandmother who is indeed that same fetish priestess, who has caused the death. She is old and lame and sick, and since she can no longer take attendants with her by having them killed at her funeral, she is poisoning them beforehand. He visited her and accused her of this to her face in talking to people about her he seems to have stressed that he could only see in her a poor old woman who was a trouble to herself as well as to other people; that her activities were putting her in danger of the wrath of God; and that by the fetish was to be found only slavery and death, and that she could chose the peace of the Christian community (There is no information about the woman and her fetish except that it had a house with doors painted outside in with white earth, and apparently some men keeping the house who would not let Mohr in although the woman had invited him to see the fetish. There also seems a tendency to regard the woman herself as the fetish). Speaking about the surrounding villages Mohr reports interest, but also some misapprehensions. Many people think that to become a Christian is to become looked after. Many say openly that if their - say 10

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Thaler - are paid, then they will become Christians. There is also a widespread wish for the missionaries to come to individual villages and build new houses - the people would thus always have someone to serve. Nevertheless he considers, given healthy and one or two effective catechist, they could have outstations in every village between Begoro and Kibi and Begoro and Anyimam. Fankyeneko he has recommended especially as a site for a catechist. This partly because it is the crossroad where the Kukurantumi-Anyinam-Abetifi road crosses the Asiakwa-Begoro road. Of only the government would create some employment by sponsoring road building, things could go ahead faster, but there is no market centre in Akim and thus no future in each farming until the way to the coast is easier. Fankyeneko also seems a good site for a catechist in that 9 men have just come forward as baptismal candidates there.

- 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-01.29 - Ghana 1877: D-01.29.XIV. - Begoro
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