

Basel Mission Archives

"Mohr's Annual Report for 1878"

Title: "Mohr's Annual Report for 1878"

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Description: The report is partly printed as an appendix to the Basel Mission Annual Report 1879, pp70-71. Looking back over the period in which they built the station, Mohr reckons that 'hundreds' of boys, young women, and men were involved in the work. In the course of the year Catechist Obeng was posted to Fankyeneko, and Catechist Benjamin Ntow from Aburi came to Begoro as catechist. Elements in the report on the station liturgy - women come rarely to morning liturgy. Sunday and sometimes Wednesday evenings street preaching in Begoro accompanied by the Christians and the school children. The Begoro people do not come to the chapel services as much as the missionaries would like. Thursday evenings there is bible study, Friday evenings a prayer meeting, Saturday evenings the catechist gathers the adults to go over the order of the community. They have been carrying on house-visiting in Begoro, and carrying on conversations with people they meet on the street - they describe the growth of the Christian community by 10 catechumens soon to be baptised, and the many heathen who, although part of them are still timid, have compared the fetish religion with Christianity and found in the latter 'truth and sweetness'. Work outside Begoro in the course of the year has been limited by the amount of building which remained to be done. Mohr made one 3-day journey through the villages at the foot of the mountain, and made four long visits to Fankyeneko in connection with the instruction and baptism of the new Christians there. In the course of this, activity he has pioneered a new and more comfortable way from Begoro to that town. The two catechists together have done 86 days' travelling, and have visited Osino, Samang, Anyinam, Adasawaase, Akantease, Abompe, Dwenase, Gyanpomani, Dome. In most villages the catechists are well received - in the area around the old Gyadam station people say they have already been promised a teacher but none has come, and now many villages want a teacher and in many people have come forward for baptism. They are being served from Fankyeneko, Osino and Dwenase - Catechist Oben goes to the latter towns on weekday. Fankyeneko: 11 baptised in May, 1 woman and 2 children baptised early in January 1879. At the date of writing the Christian community numbered, 11 adults and 8 children (including the catechist and family). (Dome is only 10 minutes away, Gyampomani 1/2 hour away, and Sunday evening services are held in them by turns). Since mid-November there has been a school with 4 children. They are having difficulty getting children into the school in Begoro. The local people equate school and Christianity, and fear that if a child goes to school the family will be visited by ill-luck or death - and the child will make himself free of the family too quickly. (This latter is expanded as the children becoming unwilling to be pawned, or sold into marriage once they have been to school. Girls are wanting to come into the Christian community in order to escape marriage to a heathen). So far they have had

Basel Mission Archives

7 boys and 2 girls in the school - 4 of them will go on to the Kibi boarding school's higher classes. From the beginning of 1879 it will be obligatory for Christians to send their children (whether baptised or not) to school so that should give a total of 18 pupils for the new term. (The teacher is Andreas Adu). Numerically the Christian community in Begoro has increased by a total of 16. 12 adult heathen and 5 heathen children were baptised, and so were 2 new-born children of Christian parents. 5 more Christians from other places came to Begoro. 5 were lost to the community through moving away, and 3 were excluded. Total in the Christian community at the end of 1878: 66. Mohr is content that the community should not grow too quickly - he thinks that people whom it has cost something to become Christians are more likely to prove faithful. The opposition experienced by the Christian community at the end of 1877 continued in 1878 on account of the accusation that they were responsible for the wave of deaths in the town through the cutting down of Odum trees. For a time people forbade the heathen from selling salt and foodstuffs to the community, and still the Christians have to pay extra. He also offers a case history of fetish opposition to one convert — a horn-blower (one of two) to one of the Begoro fetishes whose priest was a woman regarded by the people as a witch. The priestess was not a party to the situation since she was away from Begoro at a farming village. The man's family were panic stricken and would not allow him to become a Christian because they feared he would die. Mohr emphasises this by saying that he was not seeking his freedom (he was a slave of the priestesses' family) - he wanted to become a Christian and knit to continue to serve his master truly - though he would no longer blow the fetish horn. Christianity was 'sweet' to him. He came onto the station for an afternoon, but at the end of the time went to see his relatives again who softened his resolution. But it is known in the town that he no longer believes in the fetishes. (In the printed section there is an account of one Kwasi Kuma's threat to poison the Christians, of which he was convicted by the evidence of heathen witnesses, and imprisoned for several months. One p3 of the manuscript is added the point that this affair disrupted the smooth running of the station liturgies and catechising for much of the second half of the year, and this because (p.9) he and all the witnesses had had to go to Accra where the affair had gone before an English judge. Kuma had received 3 month's sentence. He also offers a case history of fetish opposition to one convert — a horn-blower (one of two) to one of the Begoro fetishes whose priest was a woman regarded by the people as a witch. The priestess was not a party to the situation since she was away from Begoro at a farming village. The man's family were panic stricken and would not allow him to become a Christian because they feared he would die. Mohr emphasises this by saying that he was not seeking his freedom (he was a slave of the priestesses' family) - he wanted to become a Christian and knit to continue to serve his master truly - though he would no longer blow the fetish horn. Christianity was 'sweet' to him. He came onto the station for an afternoon, but at the end of the time went to see his relatives again who softened his resolution. But it is known in the town that he no longer believes in the fetishes. (In the printed section there is an account of one Kwasi Kuma's threat to poison the Christians, of which he was convicted by the evidence of

Basel Mission Archives

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