

Basel Mission Archives

"Mohr to Basel"

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Description: Reporting a visit to Fankyeneko in the new year. The people had been unhappy about the arrangements for building the catechist's house - they had hoped to earn money from the mission in this connection to pay off debts, which the mission's allowance for building did not allow. Also the Harmattan period was the major period for clearing farms. Mohr agreed to pay the balance of the money left after contracts for boards, shingles etc. had been concluded as day-wages as long as it lasted. He also had problems getting people to pay the church tax, which had been announced to them in the last quarter of the preceding year. A threat to withhold communion from people who had not paid resulted in quick payment, however, There were 8 baptisms at Fankyeneko in the new year, 6 were children - 5 sons, belonging to the family of Abraham Benefo. Benefo himself was also baptised - a man in his sixties, who owned a hill with huts on it, where his people could 'stay when at the farms - it is called Anoma. Catechist Obeng had rented a room in his house, one son and several nephews were already Christians, and he himself had expressed the wish a long time ago to become a Christian. However his wife had s severe attacks of madness, and it is only recently after she awoke one morning apparently healed after dreaming that someone had given her a certain medicine during the night that he decided to apply for baptism. The other adult was Petro Obako. He is a slave from hausa country who speaks such bad twi that neither Mohr nor the Christians can understand him easily. You see many slaves like him, especially in Kwahu. He had been with several other slaves in the service of the high priest of Atia Yaw, the much feared fetish of Nkwatia-Kawhu. 3 of his comrades were executed by the High Priest in Sept 1879, at which he ran away to Akim, He worked for an important man in Anyinam, who had a message from the priest that he should keep the slave and look after him. The slave fears that this would mean that he would in the end be taken back to Nkwatia for sacrifice. So he ran away again at the end of October and came to the Begoro station. The Anyinam people were anxious about his loss - Mohr went back on the road to Begoro with an escort of men whose job it was to seek out the refugee and. recapture him. In fact he was on the Begoro station when Mohr got there; he took him on as a day labourer, and has now baptised him. Mohr was astounded to see him in Begoro - the whole countryside had been looking for him and he had never been that way before. He also notes that the Akims and Akwapims call such people 'dogs' and 'thieves' - though that kind of abuse is used between the twi tribes too. He has heard a Larteh workman at Begoro say that while the Akwapims were Europeans now, (abrofo) the Akims were still Africans. He adds concerning Petro Obako that he was sold into slavery from his people owing to war, and worked for master in Fankyeneko from about 20 years ago. After 10 years his master died. With difficulty he has learned parts of the catechism.

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Previously when Mohr asked him about his beliefs it is true that he had no faith in fetishes, but his main religious act was to pray each morning 'Dear Lord, look on me, and protect me and let no debts or arguments hurt me'. And occasionally he would sacrifice a chicken.

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