

Basel Mission Archives

"Mohr to Basel"

Title: "Mohr to Basel"

Ref. number: D-01.32.XIV..155

Date: Proper date: 26.10.1880

Description: The first part of the report is taken up with complaints about the length of time which catechists Obeng and Sakyi have asked for their leave, and the fact that they have both overstayed their leave by a considerable length of time. Sakyi appears to be a close friend of members of the Akim royal family. A more extended account is given of Sakyi's work. The children of the community, who are the ones now coming to school, are all small, and so a four-day school week has been started, the object of the whole thing being to give them a liking for school rather than to teach them a great deal. In this connection Sakyi has been specifically ordered not to beat the children. Teacher Adu sinned greatly in this respect, and this helps to account for the unpopularity of the Begoro school. He is also supposed to hold classes for writing and reading for the adult Christians on Monday afternoons and Wednesday mornings. And there is some form of evening activity every day. Morning prayers are not for the whole community in the chapel - experience teaches that it is no use relying on housefathers to conduct morning prayers for their families reliably. The bulk of the second part of the report is taken up with a discussion of the Christian villages. Mohr is all in favour of them. All but of the adult Christians are now living on the station, and the elders have themselves suggested that baptismal candidates should during their instruction be asked to come onto the station and start building their houses. The effort to bring about the gathering of the Christians on the station has been severe, however - Mohr talks of warnings and threats being needed. Other forces bringing this situation about were annoyances suffered by the Christians at the hands of the heathen, and the death of Benjamin Nso. He was resident off the station, and then became subject to discipline because he went to the coast with the objective of trading in spirits. After his exclusion he fell ill, appealed to be allowed to take Holy Communion (this was allowed) and wanted to be taken onto the station. Mohr's own mind can the subject has been strengthened by his conversation with Nathaniel Amfo, recently baptised in Begoro, his house-boy. He is an orphan, and has been of considerable help to Mohr in his learning of the language, not simply because he can interpret, but also because he can and will explain things. Mohr complains that the average catechist keeps things hidden from the missionaries, partly out of false shame, partly out of a feeling that it is not necessary for a missionary to know such things. But it is clear from his conversation with Amfo that the corruption in the traditional culture is integral, and therefore that there must be separate Christian villages, not just separate quarters within the towns. Amfo, who was from fetish priests family, cut off all his links with his relatives other than one half-sister who had cared for him. (Mohr became convinced of his passage from death to life when during an illness he had great desire to hear the Bible read, and expressed himself as eager for death). Christians should be in separate

Basel Mission Archives

villages - thus their children can be brought up properly. He sees very little hope in the Akwapim situation where even the catechists live in the heathen town. Even on the Begoro station recently a 10 year old daughter of one of the Christians was found playing at sexual intercourse with a little boy - there is in fact a form of marriage-play with the sexual concomitants. Therefore people need to be in separate villages, and missionaries and catechists do not need to mince words in their ethical teachings and admonitions. His final comment is that in Begoro unmarried (men) Christians have a hard time: Girls will not marry Christians. This is partly because of the number of female fetish cult officials and their influence, and partly because of rumours that Christian men will prove infertile. Antipolygamy teachings are no enticement. Unfortunately they have only had one adult unmarried Christian girl on the station, and she 'fell' with teacher Adu. She is really still convinced of the truth of the gospel, but during an illness was to state that she had returned to the service of the fetish.

- 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-01.32 - Ghana 1880: D-01.32.XIV. - Begoro
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