

Basel Mission Archives

"Report for the Year 1885 - the Boarding School in Abetifi (Written by Tschopp)"

- Title:** "Report for the Year 1885 - the Boarding School in Abetifi (Written by Tschopp)"
- Ref. number:** D-01.43.V..137
- Date:** Proper date: 09.02.1886
- Description:** The monthly payment received by boys in the higher classes was 2s (NB he gives an exchange rate of £4 to 100 Francs). Frequently he is badgered by relatives of the boys who want money from the mission because they are at school. He has even been asked for £4, the usual price of a man. Even Christians will make approaches of this kind. A Christian brought his nephew who would return to school on the condition that the missionaries would pay his (the uncle's) debt of £1. In the end they advanced him £1 on the agreement of his future service as a carrier. The holidays present a time of danger to the pupils - they return with evident damage to their souls. In the mid-year holidays 1885 one boy went to Accra, another to the Afram to catch fish, others to the Abetifi farming villages. After the holidays three were missing. One had smallpox and it was 3 months before he could return from the farming village where he was ill. Another was looking after his ill mother. Another had been pawned by his mother for £2. The second term was marked by an accident to one Kwaku Darefow of Tweneduruase - he lost the sight of his left eye and Tschopp was sorry to see him go because - unlike his colleagues - he was often to be seen in his spare time reading his Twi bible. A notable part of the school year is the not infrequent accompanying of the missionaries by the scholars on preaching journeys - their singing attracts crowds of people. The distribution of presents at Christmas gave him much work, but the Christians and the scholars much joy. They decorated the Christmas tree with red roses out of their garden, and little candles and biscuits. The presents consisted of clothes, handkerchiefs, little knives, mouthorgans and biscuits. Preaching journeys and Christmas make an important change for the boys, who are used to living almost without oversight in the country. They find schoolwork unpleasant, especially as few of them have any idea of the value of learning. Their time of leaving school too presents great dangers because while a few can learn a trade, most must simply sit around - they are not capable of learning a trade. Nevertheless the boarding school is a place where the Word of God is planted. In the report is an account of a typical day in which the notable points are that the boys were eating in the town, and that for two hours each day they were employed in cleaning the station.
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