

# Basel Mission Archives

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"Lehmann's Report"

**Title:** "Lehmann's Report"

**Ref. number:** D-01.61.VII..151

**Date:** Proper date: 24.08.1894

**Description:** Of the two men resident on the station at Vakpo, often one and sometimes two are away on trading journeys, during which their wives stay off the station with their mothers. The Christians at Bamme he describes as being in their first love, although their knowledge is not great. Bamme he describes as an Ewe speaking tribe Under Amfoi. The catechist at Vakpo has had difficulties visiting Bamme because rivalry exists between Amfoi and Vakpo and the Vakpo Christians do not like him leaving their town to visit an Amfoi village. In Kpando he saw bundles of fine wood on sale - no seller was present - the appropriate cowries were simply placed on the ground where the bundle had lain. In Tayi, a village they visited from Ntwumuru they found the men prepared for war. Hall advised them to do nothing wicked for fear of God's punishment. The cause of the tension was a dispute between a Tayi man and the king of Nkonya. A linguist from Alavnayo called in as arbitrator had found in favour of the king of Nkonya, while when the Tayi man had appealed to the king of Kpando the latter had decided in favour of him, and against both the king of Nkonya and the Alavnayo linguist. On his return to Alavnayo the linguist had dropped dead of a stroke. The Tayi people were suspected of poisoning him, hence the war preparations - for defence. He gives some indications of the contents of his preaching mostly in terms of proclaiming God as creator and lord, citing for example the omnipresence of the sun relative to the fetish (he seems to mean Dente since he talks about a pile of earth usually visible as he preaches) which cannot be seen in Salaga or Keta or when you are behind the houses, and also citing the relationship of a child and father group present. He writes that his reason for preaching in this way is that the people all accept the idea of a god and creator - though it is clear also that people regard themselves as already serving God, and cannot see the point of this new preaching. 'The Apostles preached Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the way to God. Thus our heathen will only find their way to God through Jesus. Our experience teaches us however, that there is nothing easy about teaching Jesus to the heathen in such a way that it makes an impression on them. They know absolutely nothing about him, and have no need for a saviour - they would willingly accept a healer of diseases, the text which Christians at home find so hard to resist 'This I have done for thee, what wilt you do for me?' is quite without content for our heathen who always recognise with surprise that Jesus has done so much, but feel not the slightest obligation to do anything for him. That they cause God sorrow with their fetish practices is not difficult to convey to them, but they are so insensible that they have not the slightest anxiety about this, and so feel no need to look about them for a saviour. On account of this it is not to be wondered that we have to be constantly warning our catechists to preach not only God but Jesus on the streets. The only preaching about Jesus which I have heard so far with which

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I have been fully satisfied were some words spoken by Pastor Hall when we came to a place where the people were involved just then in settling a palaver. He said something to this effect: You are in the middle of settling a palaver. One of the parties is guilty. The other will be pronounced innocent. The guilty party must pay. We men are all guilty before God, but we cannot pay for our guilt. But God in his mercy has paid theft debt himself in that he sent his son Jesus Christ to suffer the death to which we had been condemned.'

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