

Basel Mission Archives

"Jost's Report on the Boys' Boarding School in Abetifi and other Kwahu Schools in 1898"

Title: "Jost's Report on the Boys' Boarding School in Abetifi and other Kwahu Schools in 1898"

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Description: In a long passage about the experiences of a young missionary Jost remarks how rewarding it is to be involved with youth in schools - for there one is helping to modify the way of life of the people. During the year the numbers of pupils increased from 109 to 111, with 55 boarding pupils (27 from the Abetifi community, the rest from outstations or from heathen families) and a further 15, mostly from outside Abetifi living with the missionaries and the rest of the station staff, and mostly in receipt of some financial help. The teaching personnel changed - Catechist Hansen being transferred to the Evangelists' school, and S. Agyei, the first Kwahu to pass through the seminary, being appointed teacher Evangelists, both to the Boarding School and the Evangelist School. For a time the two youngest classes were given over to the Evangelist School pupils for practice teaching, but this did not work at all well, and eventually J. Atua was posted to Abetifi for this work. As a result of these changes, that the scholarly achievements were satisfactory, discipline was not, missionaries often having to call pupils back to their classrooms. Theft was also a problem (Jost cites 3 cases, including one of pineapples) - only two boys ran away, however, one was sent back from Kumasi, the other fled because he had been found out as the thief of someone's palm-wine. 8 hours per week are given to the teaching of 'pure' religious subjects - bible knowledge, texts etc. Jost writes that, other than English, no subject awakes so much interest, and feels that Catechist Adaye who does this teaching, has the right gift for awakening that interest. Instances are given of this - a boy who no longer needed Barth's Bible Stories because he was reading the stories out of the bible direct. Another could be examined successfully on every story in Acts 28. Another question absorbed the pupils for several days until the question was brought before the missionaries knew the answer - the harmonising of Mat 11 and 5 Moses 34.10 They had no luck with the farming - a load of coffee costs more to transport to Accra than they could raise for it there. A corn farm was destroyed by a swarm of locusts. Jost reports an instance of Government support for the schools on the occasion of Hull's visit to Kwahu to be involved with the choice of a new chief. They had been having difficulty when Christian children were removed from school either (a) by a separated wife of an ex-polygamist, now Christian, whose mother the child was (b) by mothers or fathers who were excluded from the station and took their child with them. In a speech after the choice of a chief Mr. Hull praised the work of the mission, and set forth a law that such parents may in the future not take their children away from the school, there was no question of punishing the child. The use of products of humans with small-pox as protection against the illness was promoted by a so called 'medicine-man'. In the Obo school some movement was achieved by Perregaux who on his return to Abetifi

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refused to accept two hens sent him by the Obohene unless he also sent scholars to the school. 16 were sent, with a written undertaking from the Obohene that they would stay in the school - but only 9 remain, and they are all youths, and it is difficult to begin anything with people already at that age. A school was started in Bepong when it was felt that to have 37 Christian children of school age in the village with no school needed serious steps taken to correct the situation. On account of this teacher Safori was taken away from the Abetifi Boarding School. He started with some heathens among a school roll of 50, this has since declined, and the heathens all left. In Pepease a somewhat similar situation exists - 27 Christian children of school age, and no teacher.

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