

Basel Mission Archives

"Haas to Basel"

Title: "Haas to Basel"

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Description: A reply to a question sent by the Basel Committee to all missionaries concerning the life of Christian married couples. Concerning the question whether they eat together and pray together, that is difficult to answer from his own observation. It is true that Catechist Date and his wife and teacher Ako and his wife eat together - out of the same dish - and say grace before their meal. But as for the others first of all if a missionary is present it means they may not behave as usual, and secondly there is no order about the way they live, and so one cannot be sure at any time of finding them at a meal. The place where most difficulty occurs, however, is in relations between parents and children. In Kibi at least, children are prized at their worth in money, and in any case belong not to the parents but to the wife's family. Unless this kind of thing is broken down Christian family life will be virtually impossible. How little even their catechist understand what they are teaching about marriage may be instanced by the fact that he once remarked that children should be divided between husband and wife. Difficulties occur in this connection if a marriage breaks up with the wife the guilty party - for she takes the children with her. 'Should we struggle against this custom with all the means at our disposal, or delivery the younger generation resignedly to a hopeless future?' The Christians do not cut themselves loose from their families - indeed, they take on themselves parts of the family debts as they are supposed to do under custom. Another problem is that husband and wife do not have a common purse.

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