

Basel Mission Archives

"Henke to Reverend Kissling in Liberia"

Title: "Henke to Reverend Kissling in Liberia"

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Description: 2 pages and two pages of a commenting letter by J.C.L Handt, London. Thanks for a letter received from Kissling telling of the death of Rev. Wulff and giving news. Hopes that Sessing soon will come to Liberia and that he will bring as planned the mission vessel he was told to purchase in America also to Danish Guinea. Glad to hear that Kissling plans a sea journey to the Gold Coast in order to recuperate his health. Sad news of the death of the three other missionaries told in short and moving sentences. Henke longs for the fellowship of brethren. Henke reports about his work, giving an account of how he spends the day: "I rise at 5 a.m. and meditate over my Danish Bible and the hymnbook of Döring, then I have my coffee or tea. From seven onwards I go to the Mulatto school, consisting of about 100 children which are clothed by the Danish Government. The mutual instruction is the custom here as everywhere in Denmark. From 7-9 the children must memorize Danish nouns, whose significance is explained to them in the Accra language. From 9-10 they either write or have arithmetic School begins again in the afternoon at 2 p.m. I explain the words of the lists ("Tabellen") to them from 2-3, and from 3-4 they read the lists, whilst I give religious instruction to 22 young Mulattos of both sexes which I shall probably baptize on Easter Monday or Pentecost Monday. It is now more than 1 year that they receive religious instruction daily from me, but unhappily their hearts are not yet as I would like them to be and the worst is that most of them do not understand enough Danish and that therefore I must use the interpreter in teaching. But if it so pleases the Lord, this evil will soon cease, since they learn to read Danish from the two Mulatto teachers, in the same way as a parrot is taught, i.e. without understanding the least of what they read. I rarely return from lessons before 4.30 p.m. into my little room (Henke has hired a room in town). From 4-4.30 and from 10-11 or 11-12 I take a bath, and at 12 I eat lunch. From 4.30-6 p.m. I usually go for a walk. When I am back I have tea and a piece of bread and butter, sometimes together with the Governor, who has many good characteristics, but unfortunately is a strict rationalist. In the evening I write my diary or work on my sermon or read. Often I am so exhausted from the day's work that I just do nothing." Henke writes of his appointment as Danish chaplain and his reasons for accepting it - otherwise a rationalist might have got it and hindered further missionaries or even persecuted them. There are also pure negroes in the school. Greetings to the missionaries in Liberia. (The accompanying letter gives an account why Rev. Handt left Liberia)

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