

1919

Native Conference

The Native Teachers with their missionaries met at Matepe Mission Sept. 17, 1919. R.P. Steigewald, Chairman, H.J. Frey, Secretary. After prayer and the reading of Scripture, the following questions were considered.

Art. I

What shall be done with members who continually refuse or neglect to contribute of their substance to the cause of Christ?

All seemed to see the necessity of universal and systematic giving; but no one was able to state a means of reaching this goal, satisfactory to all. Some thought those who continually refuse should be suspended from full fellowship in the Church. Others questioned this plan. For the present, the sentiment seemed to be, to pursue a course of enlightenment on the line of giving, that all might feel their responsibility on this line.

The General Superintendent gave a statement of receipts and expenditures for the year 1918, which was as follows:

<u>Receipts</u>	<u>Expenditures</u>
Bal. from 1917 ... 55.6.6	Teachers' Wages... £302.14.5
From Native Contributions..... 167.12.0	Furniture Par. 30.19.3
Gov. Grant..... 21.10.0	Office, etc.
Other Sources.... 7.12.6	Total..... £333.13.8
Tuition..... 8.7.0	
Total..... 260.8.0	
Balance Borrowed, 73.5.8	
£333.13.8	

Contributions for 1917 were £ 265.2.0

Art. II

Is the new drink, "Imbeka" suitable for Christians to drink?

There were lively discussions on both sides. All agreed that there is a mild form of Imbeka which is harmless. On the other hand, all agreed that some forms are harmful, and should be refused. Apparently, this Imbeka is a revival in perhaps a new form of the drink used by the Abenyube before the advent of the Mandebela. The majority seemed to think that all Imbeka should be shunned because of the danger of the stronger forms, though it was evident that a strong minority were in favor of the milder forms.

Art. III

What shall be done with a member of the class who is not diligent in attending?

The concensus of opinion seemed to be that the names of such should be dropped from the class book.

Art. IV

What about dancing and the beating of the Kaffir drums (Isikupu)? Apparently all were agreed that dancing is wrong, and the beating of the Isikupu especially is attended with many dangers. The old people in general are opposed to these things, as well as some of the indunas.

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Art. V

What about the wearing of jewelry and bright-colored clothing?

There was not the open-hearted freedom of discussion on this subject one would like to see. There seemed to be some reserve, suggesting that some were afraid that some of their liberties might be infringed upon. Nevertheless, the meeting as a whole spoke against extravagance in dress. The chairman gave a plain scriptural statement of the question. Evidently there is great need for sane, Christian teaching on this subject, both to the teachers and evangelists, and also to the lay members.

Art. VI

Question of parties arranging to be married going to town without a responsible person to accompany them, etc., etc.,

All seemed to see the danger, but not the remedy. They say the people are exposed continually in their homes and elsewhere. Self-control was the only remedy suggested.

Art. VII

What about the growing evil of fornication, which is coming to be committed with so little compunction of conscience?

Decided by unanimous vote that all who commit fornication shall be excommunicated from the Church, with the understanding that when they have given satisfactory proof of true repentance, they may be received again into full fellowship. They shall not be required to enter the Enquirers' Class.

Art. VIII

Questions in regard to the Training School were discussed and answered. There is still some dissatisfaction concerning certain things connected with the school. It will take time and wise and skillful management of the school in the immediate future to remove this distrust, and secure the hearty cooperation of all concerned. Still, all things considered, we think the position is hopeful.

H. J. Frey, Secretary.