

1916

Native Conference

Our native brethren and sisters of S. Rhodesia, in number approximately 125, met in Conference with their missionaries at Matopo Mission, Mar. 13, 1916. H.P. Steigerwald, Moderator, H.J. Frey, Secretary.

Art. I

Question concerning wedding feasts. It is evident that some do not obey the decision of 1915, Art. 4, and at the wedding gatherings continue their singing until far in the night. The songs sometimes are such as are improper to be sung at a Christian gathering.

After full discussion, the decision of last year was unanimously reaffirmed, with the further provision that the native teachers shall report to their respective missionaries any who disobey this injunction.

Art. II

Question of Offerings.

Seeing that the work in Africa is growing, and the expenses of carrying on the same are continually increasing, the question of support of native teachers and of bearing other expenses is becoming a serious one; it being estimated that the native teachers alone will require 150.0.0 for the year 1916.

After full and free discussion both by the missionaries and the native Church, it was unanimously agreed that the African Church ought to be responsible for the support of their own teachers and evangelists; and agreed further that all would put forth a special effort to help raise the needed funds.

Art. III

Reports are confirmed concerning young men who are too intimate with the opposite sex on their way from Church, etc. Also, remaining in a girl's hut until far in the night.

The Conference was outspoken against such actions, and decided that any who are guilty in the future should be reported to the missionary in charge, who shall arrange for said parties to be brought before him.

Art. IV

Miscellaneous questions.

Question in regard to marriage fees was satisfactorily answered by the Moderator. It was also explained that it was wrong to wear gold and other ornaments. Also, as in former councils, that the manufacture and use of Kaffir Beer is wrong; but that Amahewa may be taken if not too strong.

Conference pointed out the evils of neglecting to attend evening prayers, and warned the members against it.

Closed with prayer and a spirit of unity. The missionaries were made to feel more deeply than ever the tremendous responsibility resting upon their shoulders in guiding the infant Church through its formative days; but were deeply thankful for the manly, noble, and straightforward manner in which the growing Church are willing to shoulder responsibility.

H.J. Frey, Secretary.