

Basel Mission Archives

"Annual Report for the Station Abetifi for the Year 1878"

Title: "Annual Report for the Station Abetifi for the Year 1878"

Ref. number: D-01.30.XIX..258

Date: Proper date: 29.01.1879

Description: A part of this report is printed as an appendix to the 1879 Annual Report of the Basel Mission. Buss in his journey to Salaga purchased a horse and some cattle for Abetifi - no information is offered as to their survival. The church was consecrated and the first baptisms celebrated at Whitsun 1878. Discussing the people baptised Ramseyer says he has never seen people so serious at their baptismal service. Certainly some of them have caused the missionaries anxiety through their restricted knowledge, and have needed directions and warnings to keep them on the right lines, nevertheless they are willing and obedient and intend to be Christians in the true sense of the word. He offers an example of the sort of difficulty which has arisen - one of the baptised men Benjamin Osee announced to Ramseyer that he had sent his wife away (Ramseyer explains that the sign of this is throwing white earth onto the wife's foot, or making a white-earth streak on her back). The trouble was that although his wife, who was a heathen, wanted to have their young child baptised her mother did not and the wife and he had argued fiercely about the matter, at the end of which he had taken the advice of a heathen woman bystander and sent the wife away. Ramseyer explained to him that the Christian loves his wife and mother-in-law and in spite of the difficulties prays that God will bring them to wanting to have the child baptised, and advised him to go and sort things out. This he did after a few days, and some months later the mother in law was content to see the child baptised, this made a good impression on the families who saw thereby that the mission stood on the side of what they saw was right in the situation. This same woman is the mother of the most earnest of the new Christians, (Nathaniel) and almost a year ago sent her youngest daughter into the service of the missionaries. But she will not let her third child become a Christian (this is Benjamin Osee's wife) since if she does there, will be no-one to perform the customs for her when she dies. After the first baptisms they had expected to find themselves with a class of three baptismal candidates, but it turned out that two of the people involved thought that at baptism their debts would be. Paid. Only one went on with a long course of baptismal instruction and was baptised on 20th October, Daniel Dente. A slave born in the house and consecrated to Dente at an early age. His master was opposed to his baptism until he saw that the Christians are not outside the traditional law providing it is not in opposition to Christianity. Services on the station on Sunday morning are not well attended by people from the town - but they are at their farms. In the evening there is usually about 300 people at the evening service held under a great tree in the main street. They listen very attentively, and it was through street preaching that the five baptismal candidates were brought into the church. He reports a case which appears to represent Dente reactions to the Christians. One of them, Johannes Ata had been helped by Missionary Werner several months ago to pay a debt. He had

Basel Mission Archives

incurred it several years before living in Kibi. In October Ata's brother came to Abetifi from Krakye - he seems to be the right hand man of the fetish priest there - and therefore his financial position is sound. For several weeks nothing happened, and then the brother explained to Johannes that he would pay the debt if he gave up being a Christian. The latter refused although this was discussed several times, and in the end the brother threatened to shoot him if he ever came into the town. The missionaries persuaded him not to flee to Akira, and complained about the behaviour to the Chief, but it seemed that the man had such power in Abetifi and was so angry everyone was afraid of him. In the end little trouble occurred only on Christmas day, when the Christians were going out of the station to the town dressed in the clothes which they had obtained for themselves. He rushed on them - one was slapped in the face, another had his hat destroyed. The Christians returned to the station, the missionaries complained to the chief, and the man promised not to molest his brother or the Christians again. In 28 days of preaching journeys the missionaries have travelled through the whole of Kwahu, and many of the main towns have been visited 6-8 times. Kwahu has 5 real towns, 6 large villages, 12 little villages, as well as a number of hamlets. They have failed to visit only one of the little villages Peteko on the other side of the Afram, 5-6 hours from Abetifi, and the seat of the well-known fetish Fofie - a very influential fetish to whom each year a great number of Kwahus make pilgrimage (Ramseyer has been using the horse now that it has got acclimatised to lighten the burden of the travel). Ramseyer describes a journey to the fetish Buruku - the tall rock pillar in Kwahu, in early November. The way led through the village of Bakuruwa (nearby is a beautiful waterfall called Ko Abena), Tafo (where they avoided revealing the purpose of their journey, since the Buruku priest lived in that village) and afterwards the Ahenase way branched from the track they were on. They reached a strongly flowing stream, and then after 2-3 minutes the plantation of the slaves of Buruku. Ramseyer describes these as being from the interior, living in a hamlet of 10-12 houses, He explained to them that it was not necessary for missionaries to ask permission to go to places and there seems to have been no opposition to his visit among these few villages, although Ramseyer later heard that the priest in Tafo had fined them a sheep for allowing him to go up to the rock face. From the village the rock face was 4 hour of tough climbing away - Ramseyer reckons the slope at 50°. They first visited it by moonlight on the night of their arrival in case by morning some messenger from Tafo should have come to prevent them. The only signs he saw of sacrifices etc. under the rock were the actual sacrificial rock with an overhang acting as a roof, and the yellow splashes of eggs. By day at this level the view was hemmed in by trees. The rock itself was too vertical to be climbed.

Subject: [Archives catalogue]: Guides / Finding aids: Archives: D - Ghana: D-01 - Incoming correspondence from Ghana up to the outbreak of the First World War: D-01.30 - Ghana 1878: D-01.30.XIX. - Abetifi

Type: Text

Basel Mission Archives

- Ordering:** Please contact us by email info@bmarchives.org
- Contact details:** Basel Mission Archives/ mission 21, Missionstrasse 21, 4003 Basel, tel. (+41 61 260 2232), fax: (+41 61 260 2268), info@bmarchives.org
- Rights:** All the images (photographic and non- photographic) made available in this collection are the property of the Basel Mission / mission 21. The Basel Mission claims copyright on the images in their possession and requires those - both individuals and organisations - publishing any of the images, to pay a users fee.