

Basel Mission Archives

"Ramseyer's Annual Report for the Station in 1882"

Title: "Ramseyer's Annual Report for the Station in 1882"

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Description: Apart from one case of fever, the missionaries have not been stopped from working by health problems at all in 1882. The Census figures are a result of 16 baptisms (13 of them baptisms of adult heathens). However, it is not so easy to answer the question which Ramseyer regularly asks himself, i.e. what sort of spiritual growth is occurring. He reckons in the minority of cases a real change is occurring, although quite often he is cheered by the child-like faith, or humble attitude which is revealed during the prayer hours on the station. In some cases there is a real increase in self-knowledge. On the other hand in many of the young adult members of the community worldliness, lust for possessions, pride and disobedience exist, and he is afraid that there will be exclusions in the coming year. There has been a decline in morale over the last few-months, especially over the marriage problem. Almost all the married Christians have heathen wives, and while some of them visit service occasionally, the others remain positively hostile to their husband's new religious attitudes. The husbands often come to Ramseyer for advice. He says they should reason with their wives, and see that the problems between them which often the husbands do not tell him about, are settled. They badly need a catechist on the station who can do the detailed pastoral work which a foreigner cannot do. Another great cause of anxiety is the financial situation of the Christians, They have no regular economic commitment, and live hand to mouth. He has suggested coffee plantations - and some have indeed taken his advice. But these take three years to come to fruit, and in any case there is the portage. Oil palm cultivation is of little use for the same reason, and when he has advised increasing their food cultivation they ask him who will buy their extra produce. An idea which he is considering is introducing a broader loom. The members of the community on the other hand have as their main project for earning journeys to Salaga. Ramseyer is worried however about the moral effect of such a long absence from the Christian community. 6 new houses are in the process of being put up on the mission land. They have travelled busily, helped by their good health. No especial success has occurred - they have decided in Kwahu that they should concentrate especially on Sakaraka and Obo. They have chosen these two because of their geographical centrality and the size of their populations. Little response has been obtained in Sakaraka. In Obo, however, there are 3-4 youths who regularly meet Catechist Kwabi when he goes to stay there, and are taking baptismal instruction from him; he is also trying to teach them to read. They visit the services at Mpraeso from time to time. Two of them have had to put up with considerable opposition from their families. They plan to have a resident catechist or teacher in both as soon as possible. Ramseyer writes that they must use the opportunity offered to them to work here outside the

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protectorate - times may change. And people here are beginning to adopt the arrogant attitude of the coastal people to Europeans - that is to say the unwillingness to allow the mission to buy land in Mpraeso, David Asante made Ramseyer aware of this problem. In Mpraeso in July the first baptisms took place - one old man and three young ones. The old man, Kwasi (baptised. Abraham) had been a native doctor and fetish priest in his younger days, but now he is old and frail, and his following has deserted him, also he is somewhat feared because of his earlier activities. Catechist Kwabi has taken him into his house as an act of charity. Ramseyer is delighted with his childlike faith. There is also a catechumen Odame from Atibie who in the Asante war received a wound on the head which has made it impossible for him to carry heavy loads. He earns his living by hunting at the foot of the Kwahu scarp. The other catechumens are all young men. Asante Akim has been visited twice, including Ramseyer's visit on his return journey from Kumasi. Bompata he feels each time he goes there is the place for a mission station - it is only a day's journey from Obogu, including in the day preaching at Asankare and Asuboa. At Obogu they were received in a very friendly way, as in all the Asante-Akim villages, although Ramseyer found that the people felt they had less to fear from Asante, and so were less pressing about the need for a teacher. Ramseyer tried to convene a meeting of the A.A. chiefs in order to get a firm answer about whether they needed a teacher or not. They did not turn up to time, so he left, but a messenger was sent to him from the meeting saying that for two years they had wanted a teacher, and they had set aside the land for his house. Ramseyer had two experiences of interest to the secular history of the district. In Obogu he was present when a boy died (and took the opportunity to preach on Christian beliefs about life and death). It was widely believed in Obogu that the death was a result of poisoning by the fetish priest, the poison having been smuggled into the town by a fetish priest who had fled from or to Asante several months before. In a village called Mooso they found a great uproar because the Bompata people had put three of their people in the block. Mooso being a village still loyal to Kumasi was vulnerable to this. Ramseyer tried to reason with the Bompata people, and indeed they were set free after 2 days. He looks forward to the day when the few villages in this district who remain loyal to Kumasi will also break free, and there will be peace in this beautiful area. Taking a different way back to Abetifi from that with which they were familiar, they discovered the existence of 15-20 Kwahu farming villages of which before they had had no inkling. While writing the report Ramseyer notes a rumour from Kumasi that there has been a coup on the part of the elders against the Asantehene.

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