

Basel Mission Archives

"Ramseyer's Annual Report of the Abetifi District for 1887"

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Description: Abetifi at the beginning of the year they had to exclude from the station four people including Johannes Wiredu who had earlier been sent away from the Bekoro Middle School because of laziness, and Rosina Gyemfa, the wife of, the late elder Nathaniel Beko. The former for sexual irregularities, the latter for approaching a fetish in her home town Mpraeso, though she had never been a satisfactory member of the community, except perhaps when she was treating her husband harshly (one piece of circumstantial evidence of her use of fetishes was the discovery of three hidden pots in her house - this was taken to mean that she had hoped that they would be means to protect her). The other two excluded were men -they hoped by this to have purged the station of the wicked elements. The school is attracting little support - the scholars are teased for sitting with their books for a mere 2 marks a month, though there are some heathens who see more what the school is for, and what it is aiming at. Concerning the married life of the community, the question of 'ayefare' has come up due to the influence of the Akim Christians who told the Abetifi Christians that in Akim if a heathen wife committed adultery, the Christian husband sought ayefare. Ramseyer (as Schmid had to in the previous year) explains that this cannot be, and that although a weapon of defence against the habits of their heathen wives, the best weapons are love by which she realises what a stroke of luck it is to marry a Christian and prayer. They are trying to repair the problem of the lack of suitable girls for marriage by starting a school for small children on the station to which some heathens are sending their daughter. During the year 4 adults have been baptised - one of them the 'quiet and friendly' wife of the elder Moses, another a 'friendly' and 'industrious' carpenter - his industry is greatly to be prized. (They have now 7 carpenters in the community). In addition one child has been baptised, and 4 boys from the school. Evaluating the latter point Ramseyer says that although there have been scholars who have been baptised and are now lost and forgotten, nevertheless 'a good number' of the members of the community are young married men who were baptised while at the boarding school. 2 other members of the community were re-accepted after being excluded from Communion for 2 years. Ramseyer also thinks there has been a step forward in the atmosphere of the community, evidencing partly better attendance at weekday services, and the fact that again more Christians have moved onto the mission land (a feature of the exclusion of Rosina Gyemfa was that she thereby lost the use of her farm on mission land). Outstations. The Nkwatia conflict was regarded as Atia Yaw versus God. In Nkwatia at the end of the year 4 adults were baptised - although the Nkwatia people were, on the whole, out on their farms, Ayiripe and his court were present. One was a 22 year old man, brother of one of the Christians, another an elderly mother, who received the name Hanna. She was able to learn little from the

Basel Mission Archives

baptismal instruction, and there was some doubt as to whether she should be baptised, but Ramseyer writes that on her examination she said she wanted to be holy and only belong to Jesus and that she didn't want to have anything more to do with fetishes which were always troubling her and doing nothing for her. The other two were youths from Aduamboa. One of them is actually from Kumasi. In addition 2 Christian children were baptised, and the community was also strengthened by the reception of one Peter Asare, his wife, his mother, and a child. He had been driven from Nkwatia by the persecutions of the priest of Atia Yaw, fled to Anyinam, and was baptised there. Asare is a hunter. In Obo things are not progressing. Ramseyer reports that the greater number of the Obo people in fact spend 10 months of the year in their farms at the foot of the scarp. Only in the Adae festival are large numbers present. Nevertheless three youths have attached themselves to Mensah, and are receiving instruction from him and helping him to build his house. Mpraeso remains stony ground - 4 adults and 2 children were baptised in the course of the year, but one youth had to be excluded, and Christians moved away (including two to Nkwatia) so the total increase was only one. Nevertheless two elderly men have come into the catechumenate late in the year. In Bepong in August 2 men, three women, and a boy who later came into the Abetifi Boarding School were baptised, and they have 5 more attending baptismal instruction. The school has not been very successful - there are 4-6 pupils. In Bukuruwa 2 men of mature age are taking baptismal instruction. Since Kwahu is an area with a small compass they have not only been able to care for the progress of the outstations by frequent visits - they have had 5 conferences for all the Christians of Kwahu in the course of the year.

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