

Basel Mission Archives

"Müller's Report for the Year 1889"

Title: "Müller's Report for the Year 1889"

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Description: In Anum a cistern and a goat-stall are listed as mission buildings. Building is going in on most of the outstations, and in Anum the mission house has been held up by a four month absence of Brethren Lieb with yellow fever. There are 24 houses in the Anum Christian quarter. Müller notes that the people mostly go to Clerk with their problems - they look on the missionaries as strangers rather - he compares this sorrowfully with the Pauline situation, but notes that St Paul never had to build anything or maintain his own household (They studied St Paul's missionary situation in their second half yearly conference of catechists etc. However, Müller remarks, unfortunately, this was followed by a request from the catechists and teachers that they should be allowed regular periods of rest in Akwapim, and if it should be the expected thing that they return to Akwapim. Müller seems not to have had much difficulty dissuading them from these ideas.) Reporting on the work in Nkonya Müller says that with such an industrious farming people you have to choose your times for preaching cleverly if you are to have any hearers - just as you have to in Europe - otherwise they are all out in their fields. The major issue is fetishes, however - speaking as oracles, or with the use of a proverb, they can bring chiefs to ruin. And Hall discovered that, though he usually has good and attentive congregations, on a certain day in Wurupong the people ran away when he rang his bell, and an acquaintance reckoned him into his hut and told him that this was the day for offering to Sia, and no-one must make a noise - no bells were to be rung and no preaching was allowed. Amfoi is a disappointment the only help given in building the house which the people promised to build themselves was the work of 5 youths. Müller analyses the difficulty as partly that a part of the people are quite given up to the traditional religion, and partly that they have to build for themselves and work hard in agriculture in an area that is not very fruitful. No children have been given for the school. In Vakpo children are coming into the school, but the elders do not believe the possibility of a new birth for themselves. On difficulty in this whole area is that liquor is now penetrating from the German settlements, e.g. via Kpando and Amfoi. 'An Anum Christian has recently remarked that without hard liquor you cannot settle anything with an Nkonya chief'. In Tsate though the community and school are increasing, the chief of the village and a fetish priest lapsed from the catechumenate - the people in this community are many of them from Kaira and Tudome. Kpalime has increased by 3 elderly converts. The local people are rather hostile. In Kpalime and Tsate they are having to use ordinary household receptacles for Communion. Boso has increased by 3 adult baptisms, and Anum by 12. Two of the catechists with their numerous family are cited as providing a good example of Christian family life. In Anum at the beginning of the year there were frequent threats that people would leave the Christian village - and indeed a number did, Müller listing the reasons:

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One because he was in conflict with the community Another took a second wife A third lost his only a child and seemed not likely to get another A fourth wanted to marry, and no heathen will marry a Christian Two other Christians have sent their wives away and remarried. The Christian village is not a good example of living in true love. Among these who were converted was an old man called Friedrich Obuobi, who had been resident in the same house as the missionaries at the time of the first starting in Anum in 1864. He had been regularly attending services for a long time and taking baptismal instruction, and indeed had often pressed to be baptised, but the missionaries were consistently worried about him because his attitudes were not clearly those of a convert - especially in that he could not admit to being a sinner. The missionaries had stressed to him that his time was short - and indeed during a serious illness he asked again for baptism, admitting that he had been a hypocrite pursuing only the outer advantages which followed from associating with the Europeans. He also acknowledged that he was a sinner. He was baptised and died several months later peacefully as a Christian. Another convert was Kwaben Otopa who in his time had been accused of sorcery and condemned to a heavy fine. He called the community elders to him in his last illness and confessed to them that he was a sinner and wanted baptism - and in fact was baptised in his house before his whole family. Towards the end of his life when he could no longer speak his heathen wife spoke prayers for him. Clerk baptised a man in a similar situation in Tsate. Among the baptismal candidates at Christmas was a fetish priestess (Müller writes ' or soothsayer') who had fallen into debt and need, and who appealed to the Christians for help. She was prepared to acknowledge that her old office was a sham. Müller writes that the chief and several elders were present at the service as if this was unusual - the chief was called Kumi.

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