

# Basel Mission Archives

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"J. Müller to Basel"

**Title:** "J. Müller to Basel"

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**Date:** Proper date: 21.10.1890

**Description:** This is a translation of a Twi report of Philip Kwabi's dated 5 June 1890 on his work in Asante Akyem. He had been preaching in 32 Asante Aykem and 7 Kumawu villages. In Asankara on his way from Mpraeso to Bompata (on first going into the area to preach) he had preached to the people about the true freedom for poor sinners which is to be found in Christ, and the way to find it. In Bompata on the first Sunday he preached twice on the street, and the chief and his elders and the young people all listened attentively. Furthermore, the young men and the sub-chief Ata (with whom Kwabi lodged) were really enthusiastic. The chief himself is more cautious. Kwabi asked him once why he did not love the gospel, and he replied 'It is not that I have no joy in what you are saying. But I have to attend to the good of the whole district. If I arrange for you to settle here and good comes out of the arrangement, what more could I have done? It is not that I do not love the word of God.' Kwabi remarks, however, that this is all a lie: he is afraid that his slaves will seize their freedom and no longer obey him if a teacher settles here. Reporting a long trek: Kwabi travelled Wankyi-Moso-Patriensa (in Amanfo Yaw Spong is building a new town) Konongo-Odumase-Konongo. On this second visit to Konongo Kwabi met the chief Gyamebiri, a brother of Yaw Spong, who said 'You know that we are under Koforidua and that there are already teachers and preachers there who will come to us in good time. My town is not big enough to have, teachers from different missionary societies. I understand what you say, and know that you fear us because of the troubled in Akyem'. Dwaso, where he had to wait till evening to meet chief and people, everyone was out working on their farms. The chief said they would be interested in the Mission if Yaw Spong allowed this, they were the slaves of Yaw Spong. Obogu, where again it was evening before people returned to the village, they were not attentive when he preached, and refused to respond to his advances about mission work, saying their chief was absent, and without him they could not say anything. Dampon Asuboa (where they said it would be no use unless a teacher settled there with them), Asankore and Bompata. He also travelled to Kumawu and Agogo. The replies he got to his questions mostly followed the line that the mission should begin work in Kumasi. If they gave permission for mission work on their own authority, they would find themselves having trouble with Nsuta and Dwabeng. The Agogo chief was the exception; he would not even allow preaching, and Kwabi opines that he still holds to ritual murder, and fears he would lose his slaves if mission work started. Müller continues with a summary of Kwabi's report of 5 August 1890 on the subject of where in Asante Akyem it would be most suitable to centre mission work. Kwabi made a short list of possible centres from which Mission work in Asante-Akyem could be carried on: Bompata, Dwansa, Dome and Kyekyebisa. Bompata and Dwansa he selects as the most centrally placed of these two. Bompata is a

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good place from which to reach Asankara, Asuboi, Dampong, Wankyi Mooso, Krofua and all the other places in the direction of Obogu and Odumase. The chiefs in all these places allow to preach, but the chief of Bompata wants to know nothing about the gospel because he wants to put himself under Kumase again. His people and the sub-chiefs are against this. The chief of Adomfe would welcome a Basel Mission settlement in his town, and so would his people. There is a fetish priest in Adomfe, however, Kwame Pong, who exercises the same powers as Bowi extorting money from people, and having them killed. Dwansa is a good place from which to serve Krofua, Kykyebiase, Dome, Anisua, Anyabeneponase, Wiawso, Agogo, Patriensa. In Krofua the people are upset that it has been so long since the mission made a promise to them (probably to have someone posted in Asante-Akyem). Ampona, Agogohene, forbade Kwabi to preach in his town. Ramseyer had urged him to preach there, however, so he preached nevertheless, although the number of people listening turned out to be not so large as previously. Ampona ought to welcome him with real joy, because it was the mission who helped him when he was surrounded by Asante Akyems threatening to destroy his state, and arranged peace. The small population in Agogo would be happy if the mission placed a teacher there: They even promised him free lodging till a new house was built for him. Kumawu, Kwamang, and Bepow are all under King Prempeh in Kumasi. The people in each town listened with real attention to his sermon. But they are worried about being punished by the Asantehene because of this. The chief at Bepow would not allow him to preach a second time. On the grounds that he could not be punished for listening to a first sermon, having never heard the message, but a second sermon could be really dangerous. He and the other chiefs urged that things should be done in an orderly way, and that the mission should arrange things with Kumasi: this message should be passed on to Kwabi's superior and they would heed it 'if they mean well by us'. Kwabi remarks that he shared the same opinion they should try again in Kumasi since the Abetifi station has awakened great jealousy on the part of the Asantehene. Kwabi continues that if they are to try again in Kumasi it should be with someone other than Ramseyer, since everyone believes he is responsible for the destruction of the city by the English. 'It's the same the whole world over - no-one will admit his own mistakes, and everyone feels someone else is to blame'. 'The disadvantage in moving forward into Asante Akyem is that the Asantes are continuously planning to bring Asante Akyem under subjection again - at the moment Asante is planning an invasion in the area on the other side of the Tano in order to bring back tribes which have taken refuge in the Protectorate. Ramseyer adds the remark that the Kwahus also thought he as a town-destroyer once, but know better now, and peoples' minds can be changed. Kwabi makes the following comments on Odumase. They would like a teacher and listened very carefully to his preaching. But Yaw Sarpong will not let them 'He loves darkness' and fears with a teacher in Odumase the Governor would hear of his activities. Müller himself adds two comments. On Kwabi's posting to Adukrom Samuel Boateng went to Kwahu to take his place, and is not at all happy at being supposed to work in Asante Akyem. Müller wonders if Asante Akyem should be treated as a single mission area with Kotoku. But thinks that this would be a mistake since the

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direct route goes through the very difficult country of the Pra valley, and the practicable route from the Kotoku area goes along the Saltpond/CapeCoast-Kumasi road, which is outside the Basel Mission area.

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