

# Basel Mission Archives

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"Rösler's Report for the Year 1894"

**Title:** "Rösler's Report for the Year 1894"

**Ref. number:** D-01.61.VII..155

**Date:** Proper date: 30.01.1895

**Description:** 121 baptisms (90 adults +31 children) of heathen over the whole area, a new spirit in many communities, and 23 exclusions. European missionaries - Obrecht and Lehmann left for work in Akwapim, Martin returned to the station from his furlough in Europe. There was also much illness on the station. Edward Ohene and Edward Bediako joined the Anum station, James Afari was transferred from Boso to Kpando, Chr. Tenkorang from Vakpo to Boso, Jon. Okyere from Anum to Vakpo. Jeremias Opoku went to Kpalime, Jakob Agyei was posted to Worawora, Amfoe had to remain without an agent, and the shortage of staff was acutely felt as the doors were open especially in Nkonya and Buem. He wishes they would make their work more something they care about deeply, and would allow Christ's love to drive them to it. Some description is given of catechists' conferences. The first had as its theme 'Concerning the work of the Holy Ghost', and the following questions were discussed: 1. What is his work? John 16 8-11, 14 26 2. The promise of the Holy Ghost - has it been fulfilled? 3, Do we discern the work of the Holy Ghost among the members of the communities and among the heathen? 4. What is birth in the spirit (John c3) and the evidence of the spirit (Rom c8)? 5. What is the sin against the Holy Ghost? The second subject was Communion and preparations there-for. 1. What experience should our Christians have during preparation for Holy Communion? Have our Christians a real consciousness of sin? Do they speak openly? How can one succeed in speaking to the hearts of the Christians? Are the Christians receptive to warning and encouragement not only in general but also when specific sins are under discussion? 2. Do the Christians have an understanding of Communion and a real longing, for it? 3. What sort of texts and subjects should be treated during preparatory services? 4. What can be done to give the Christians a better understanding of communion? The discussions were lively, and Pastor Hall and Catechist Awere made especially notable contributions. The European missionaries travelled 116 days and the local agents about 400 days during the year. In rarely visited places hearers were usually many and attentive - in places where street preaching is common there were often not many people present. Personal conversation was not very effective - urging people of the sinfulness of spirits drinking was usually met by the observation that the Europeans bring the liquor - many have given up a belief in fetishism but are held back by the desires of the flesh. Politically the position is clearer after the expedition into the interior by the Togo regime at the beginning of the year and the stationing of an officer of the regime at Krakye, following which the priest of Dente and an assistant of his were shot. Several tribes between Vakpo and Krakye have now accepted the German flag. The communities - discussing the regular round of exclusions and his experience of talking closely to people who are under consideration for exclusion, Rösler writes - 'What is so painful in so many of

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our Christians is their scanty consciousness of sin, their superficiality in spiritual matters, they have so little fear for the holy and righteous God, and so little understanding of the salvation, which has taken place through Christ, and so little longing for it.' Many in conversation claim to have no sin, and feel they are Christians when they have paid their church tax (and any other moneys the church may demand) and been to church on Sundays. On the other hand they do not scruple to be present at Funeral customs, drink spirits and palm-wine and still less guard against disturbing the peace. The latter especially applies to Christian family life, and the bringing up of children leaves much to be desired also. At the same time the Christians still observe superstitions and fear spirits (Rösler offers an example of the latter without placing it geographically. An elder who could not be argued out of his belief that there was a wicked spirit in his house - nor be satisfied with the idea he should pray about it. So secretly he went to an Osumanni who sold him some medicine to strew around the house and an amulet. The Osumanni also gave it as his opinion that the wife (a sturdy Christian) was the source of the trouble, at which the wife's family accused the Osumanni before the chief and elders. Another problem in the community is that husband and wife usually regard each other with such suspicion that there cannot be love between them - still less Christian fellow, though they are shining exceptions to this rule. Rösler says that of course different peoples have their different customs and usages, but if any of these are against God's Word, then they must work against them. He writes this, he says, because many of the local agents say about many things that that they are simply a custom. In Anum - 19 adult heathens and 6 heathen children baptised; the first substantial number of baptisms for several years; and there are 100 communicants in the town. Further the Sunday services are well attended by heathen, and the chapel is sometimes so full that some people are forced to sit outside. An evening school has been going along steadily with 34 heathen and 20 Christian pupils, mostly young men and youths concerned to learn English. Many of these heathens come to the Sunday services. One problem is that Christians stay for months at a time on their farms on towards the river. In the past Christmas and New Year's Day have been excuses for noisy celebrations not only in the Christian village but also in the town - in the Christian village this time all was quiet after serious warnings from the missionaries. A school started in Anum by a dismissed Wesleyan teacher has collapsed after he was forced to flee the town in secret because the elders complained to the DC that he had been settling disputes. In Toseng the Christians have resettled themselves down on the plain on the route to Boso in a village with a wide street, at one end of which is a temporary chapel - they have bought with their own money a bell costing £2. In Boso 17 members - mostly young - moved away in the course of the year. The community is in great difficulties with its new chapel, still unfinished. They decided, having failed to get enough work out of themselves to levy a tax of 15/- per adult male and 6/- per adult female, but have not got this in. The main point about Kpalime was 5 exclusions, including 4 Christian girls who 'fell' and married heathens. The community in Tsatei is composed of motivated people most of whom have learned to read though with that comes the problem that they like European clothes, and

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have little money to build themselves another chapel - which they need, or a bells, or the furniture for Communion. Vakpo - apart from the people from the Amfoi village of Bamme there are only Christian families in the town. Kpando has been frequently visited by German colonial officials in the course of the year.

- 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-01.61 - Ghana 1894: D-01.61.VII. - Anum
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