

# Basel Mission Archives

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"Obrecht's Report for the Year 1897"

**Title:** "Obrecht's Report for the Year 1897"

**Ref. number:** D-01.67.VI..137

**Date:** Proper date: 22.01.1898

**Description:** This is partly printed as an annex to the 1898 Annual Report pp 51.52. Additional material: The Obrechts arrived early in the year to take over from the Haasis family, due to go on leave. The Mission Festival in 1897 was held in Nkwatia at the same time that the new and enlarged Nkwatia chapel was consecrated. At the same festival 20 heathens were baptised, and 3 excluded Christians received back into full membership. Abetifi community: 9 heathens were baptised, 4 of them schoolboys. One man who had been under baptismal instruction for two years and had even built his house on the station had to have his baptism postponed because he undertook a slave-selling expedition into Akwapim for a heathen friend from Abetifi, taking there a child which was sold for £5-10. The missionaries have warned him to undo this deed or they will have to report it to the colonial government. 3 excluded Christians were re-accepted, including an elderly man, Daniel Ntim. He had earlier been excluded for quarrelsomeness and fighting while drunk, and had since foresworn all intoxicating drinks, taking for a time to coffee but giving that up because milk and sugar cost too much, and in the end drinking only water (It emerges from this man's story that in the course of the year a Christian had been killed in a hunting accident). He accounts for 25 of the 42 people who had moved away from Abetifi and thus been lost to the community under the headings moved to Asante 18, and to the Begoro Middle School 7. During the year there had been difficulty with the kindergarten in Abetifi. The longstanding teacher, Augustine Meyer, moved- away to Agogo to prepare for her marriage in the house of her father. Her successor was Regina Gyamera, daughter of Assistant Catechist Tieku of Asakraka. It soon emerged that she had had sexual relations with one of the missionaries' servants, at which Catechist Tieku went to the Okwahuhene for damages of £50 - hence his posting away to Akim. The missionaries felt that he had shown unnecessary lust for money in this situation, as well as having broken the regulations by going outside the mission's own judicial processes. Eventually a teacher's daughter from Akim, - Rosine Donko, was appointed. Of the 8 excluded, 4 were on account of sexual misdemeanours and 4 on account of unbiddableness. One of the former 4 was a man who had committed adultery with two Christian wives on the station, admitted the fault himself, and shortly afterwards lost his real wife in childbed. The community regarded this as a punishment from God. Mpraeso - new missions land has been bought on which the Christians from Mpraeso and Obimpekurom are at work - the Christians from Atibie have their own chapel on their mission land. This is partly because of tension between the Christians and the Obimpekurom people over a charge of murder preferred against Joseph Sesu, the Presbyter of the Mpraeso Christians. He had been seen in a part of the forest with his gun on the same day that an Mpraeso man his shot. It soon turned out, however, that the

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Obimpekurom people were doing their best to get this notable Christian found guilty and the missionaries spent some time in the various court proceedings in which it turned out that Sesu had not shot his gun that day, and that he was already at home when a shot, presumed to be the one which killed the man, was heard. The Kwahuhene sent the case to Accra, but after an 'unbelievably short hearing' he was sent back a free man. The Christians have even gone so far as to fear being poisoned now, however, hence their business to leave Obimpekurom. Obo - Obrecht estimates Obo's population at 5,500, and that of Tweneduruase at 1,500. The new catechist is Thomas Hall, a young man, in the early months of 1898 marrying Augustine Meyer. He has 7 Christian pupils and 2 heathens in the school - one old woman was baptised in the course of the year, while on the other hand 2 Christians died, and 3 were excluded. One of these was a woman who was caught stealing yams from a plantation - partly because of the anger of the townspeople at the whole community because of this she was not only excluded, but also had to walk around the town preceded by a Christian ringing a bell and shouting at intervals to the people to know that because of the theft she had been excluded. The Obo people have started to have a new chapel erected because the adult men are mostly away on the rubber trade, and because in any case Kwahu people do not know how to build in swish, they have brought people in from Krobo to do the work. Several young men have built their houses on mission land in the course of the past year. Akwasihu - no baptisms and two deaths, one of a leper. The community responded to the call to build their houses on mission land only when it was threatened to celebrate the Communion no more till they did. The new catechist Dwamena is energetic, and has built a model road from the village to his house. He has managed to collect 7 pupils for a school, but the chief here (as in Tweneduruase and Obo) has responded to requests for pupils only with promises. Asante Akim - Altogether over 240 Christians, and a fair number of catechumens. The first (perhaps Kwabi) local agent sent to Asante Akim returned after a short period and said that the people were so lazy, corrupt, and apathetic, that there would never be Christians there. They are not so industrious as the Kwahus, like the Akims they work in the forest, collecting rubber, which gives them enough money to enable them to spend a lot of time without working. But his forecast about Christian progress has been put to shame. In -Bompata a new chapel has been roofed, and 24 adults and 20 children baptised. Many of these are from deep in the interior - the 'Hausa lands', brought to Asante Akim as slaves. 18 Christians have moved away from Bompata in the course of the year, most have returned to places where they were resident earlier. Catechist Boateng is pleased with the work of the new teacher Isaak Kwakye, and regrets the damage caused by the 'fall' of the earlier teacher M. Donko. He (Boateng) enjoys great respect and trust in Asante-Akim. In Agogo there are 31 catechumens, some of whom have begun to build their houses on the mission land. Being away so much on rubber trading they have not come forward in baptismal instruction very much. Several important men have become catechumens. There is much struggle between the chief and Catechist Meyer, and indeed the chief and the Christians generally. Patriensa - only 3 baptisms, 2 of old schoolboys, and one of the wife of a Christian. 2

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Christians were excluded through sexual misdemeanours. Dwaso - after the large increase in the previous year numbers stationary - mission land has been built, but Assistant Catechist Doama has not building going on it very successfully, and indeed is asking for extra money to help build his own house. In Odumase things have taken a turn for the better with the death of the old and hostile chief, and the appointment of a new one who it seems has been for a time in Akwapim and understands rather more of the implications of the presence of the mission. He has cleaned the path to the teacher's house, is setting out to repair it, and since there is also a catechumen there the missionaries propose to transfer to Odumase Teacher W. Atara from Patriensa, and replace him by Assistant Catechist J. Aboa from Obogu. In Obogu there has been a teacher for a year, but he still lives in a dirty rented room, and has hardly any pupils. Of his 4 catechumens, only one - a cripple - is serious. So they have decided to take the teacher away again, the cripple will go to Dwaso to live, and when the Obogu people protested they set as minimum conditions for the re-installation of a teacher that he should have a proper house built for him by the town, and 20-30 children actually collected for the school.

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