

Basel Mission Archives

"Buck's Report for the Year 1878"

Title: "Buck's Report for the Year 1878"

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Description: Part of this report is printed as an annex to the 1879 Annual Report (pp 66-70). Statistics - there are 12 Christians' houses on the mission land at Kibi, and 14 at Kukurantumi. Asiakwa, Kwabeng and Asunafo-Abomosu are listed as established outstations, in Asiakwa and Asunafo-Abomosu the mission owns land, and in the latter the community have already built a chapel. In Kibi only one person was excluded in the year, 4 temporarily suspended from Communion, and 1 excluded Christian re-accepted. He remarks about the 14 Christian marriages that few have any idea of the way Christians should live together in marriage, nor have many much understanding of Christian concepts of the upbringing of children. In discussing the impact of the fact that husband and wife have separate property, Buck writes that he could give two examples of husbands borrowing at large interest sums which the wives could have made available to them. He looks forward, however, to more and more members of converts families following the first converts onto the station apparently with some hope of success. He is refusing to move in response to the Kibi community's request for funds to build a new chapel until they themselves say how much they are prepared to contribute. Eight school continues teaching reading and writing. Street preaching in Kibi is held more rarely and instead there is a fix Sunday afternoon catechising of the community. The relationship with the King has changed to the extent that though Buck thinks his fundamental antagonism has not changed towards the Christians, his attitude to individuals is very friendly, and the result of this is that, for example, a number of Christians have not in fact moved out onto the station as they should. When Buck first went to Kibi the rest of the people despised the Christians as ex-slaves - they now respect them rather more, and that partly because Buck took steps to stop the Christians from taking great offence at every little instance of friction between town and mission. Since August Buck himself has carried on his contacts with the Okyenhene in a friendly enough way, but at 3rd hand. This was because whenever Buck went to see him about a problem, the session was dragged out with excuses and annoyances. Buck in the end said he would no longer visit the Okyenhene unless the latter returned his visits. At the same time he told him that of all the chiefs on the Gold Coast he was the only one opposed to the Mission - this, Buck thinks still rankles. Describing and justifying his stand, Buck writes that he would no quarrel with the assertion that at times he has acted strongly, not only to the Okyenhene and the Christians, but also towards other hostile chiefs. He has always been careful, however, to offer them no weakness through which they could attack the Christians, and, especially since the court case in Accra at the end of 1877 it is necessary for the European to dominate - if you show fear, or indecision, then the game is lost

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once and for all. Commenting further on the problem of strife between the Christians, Buck points out that it was not to be wondered at - hardly any older members of the community are present in it, and during the year 70 members joined, most were ex—slaves with their servile, jealous and rancourous attitudes. In September the position was aided by a decision promulgated by Buck and the presbyters that any parties found in open dispute on the streets would each be fined 2/- . This was never invoked, as its results were to bring disputes before the presbyters or Buck himself. Copper coins are now in use. Buck has tried to persuade the members to make themselves a living farming, but it goes slowly - some have started to clear coffee plantations, but the changes in the organisation of the Basel Mission agricultural work at Akropong have caused suspicion to spread, and they have not gone on with the work over the last part of the year. Outstations Apapam - this place needs a catechist otherwise, although alternately at weekends the members visit Kibi, and a catechist or teacher visits Apapam, without a resident presence instruction does not go forward. Kukurantumi - slaves who run away from their masters anywhere in Aklm or Kwahu come to the mission station at Kukurantumi, and a good proportion find there not only bodily but spiritual freedom also. The community is primarily recruited from among such people. At the moment there are 20 such people on the station who visit services without even having become catechumens. It says a lot for the 'free' local Christians that they not only tolerate such people on the station, but are also learning to love them as brothers. He is also impressed by the way that Kukurantumi Christians are bringing in boys from the surrounding area and sending them to school, giving them their food and other necessary support. He regrets in passing that Kukurantumi is not the main station. The hill there is the highest point in the plain, and could be cleared and something made of it. Also there is no lack of food. In Kibi hunger reigns, and anyone who has seen the Berem swamps will not be surprised to learn that no European has been able to survive long in Kibi. Asiakwa - the community is very much prepared to be led by Cat. Mullings. He in turn works zealously, though is too anxious about the attitudes of the local chief and the people. Only three members of the community are independent, the rest are all dependent of heathen masters or relatives. Kwabeng - settled partly because they needed a station between Kibi and Abomosu. The direct way from Kibi to Abomosu through Tumfa is too swampy to be used in any months but February and March. Cat. Meyer contracted debts in the mulatto way at his wedding during the years and is finding things very tight on his catechist's salary. Abomosu - (Benoni, to which Buck refers in his first sentence on Abomosu is a town east of Johannesburg). 4 of the community are Wesleyans. The evangelist Imm. Boakye has been installed in Abomosu, though in fact two men are needed, one to care for the community, and the other to run the school. Buck remarks that if you want to read or write, you must go into the tiny room which you have been given to sleep in when you visit Abomosu. It is a very poor congregation - they cannot gather small contributions to pay for benches etc. simply because the people do not have money, and even if the missionaries encourage them to farm, still they will be poor for several years till this activity begins to bear fruit. The community consists mainly of people

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dependent on their families - young pawns and slaves. There is however an (independent presumably) man as presbyter, with many members of his family in the church also. 3 children, his mother, and two of his brothers. (Abraham Bugyei). He notes finally the size of the Abomosu congregation, points out that it is partly composed of people from Asunafo, which will in its own time want to ask for a teacher. At the end of the report is a section devoted to preaching to the heathen. It is mostly devoted to Buck's concept of how the Akim mission can best develop. The preaching journeys were carried on conscientiously, and Buck obviously had a high opinion of his subordinate activities in this field, instancing the problems of travelling in Akim as evidence of their willingness. Apedwa, Tumfa, Apapam, Apinamang and the Kibi-Banso-Kwabeng-Asunafo-Abomosu road were most visited. Apedwa and Apapam offer an opportunity for achievement, and both ask repeatedly and urgently for a teacher. Banco shows 'traces of life' and Tumfa always offers a group of enthusiastic hearers. You get the general impression that Christianity has begun to be popular, and is no longer something half-understood. One factor of importance is that an elder of the Kibi community, Salerno Botwe, is taking every opportunity to spread the news of the gospel, but privately, so that for a long time Buck did not realise he was doing this. One problem is that many Akims do not understand an Akwapim speaking. 3 or four new men are needed - another for Asiakwa, 2 for Abomosu/Asunafo, and one for Apapam, though it is true that Apapam could be served by Imm. Boakye from Abomosu. 'Dwabang ought to be settled too (Buck sees its potential rise out of its geographical importance quite clearly) - he would nominate for this Deacon Date, whom he says could be put into such a place to work independently with absolute trust placed in him - and European missionaries travelling through Dwabeng would find him a pleasant and considerate host. The fact that the Mission is making no grant towards building the catechist's houses at Asiakwa and Abomosu is somewhat of a hindrance to the development of the mission.

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