

# Basel Mission Archives

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"Müller's Annual Report for 1866"

**Title:** "Müller's Annual Report for 1866"

**Ref. number:** D-01.18b.VIII.3

**Date:** Proper date: 09.01.1867

**Description:** Statistics give four buildings: A house for two married missionaries, a store for trade goods, a range of rooms for the missionaries' servants, the catechist, the scholars, and a room 'outside the courtyard' used for the school. Three missionaries, the catechist Tim. Obobisa, 8 pupils, and 15 members of the community (of whom 12 are communicants), most of them seem to be members of other communities in Anum on account of the mission buildings or its trading activities. Most of the mission land is and will remain simply grassland, since the workers who have been planting maize will soon be leaving Anum (presumably this refers to the people involved with building). A coffee plantation would be very nice, but there is little prospect of the Anum people being interested. Some have already started to plant coffee, but most only farm for the food they need, and hardly enough for that. The station is cut off from the other stations for a quarter of the year. He particularly wants to be able to speak to the people without an interpreter, but is finding it hard to get on with Twi because he hears it spoken so little. The workers on the site all speak Ga, and the people in the town Kyerepong. He had initially hoped for considerable success from the considerable time he was spending in street preaching, since his hearers were usually numerous and attentive. But no consciousness of the need for a saviour and rescuer showed itself, 'and it seemed especially hopeless when I was on the way back to the station, and there was a hellish noise to be heard in the town.' Curiosity brings most people to listen to preaching, and the women hold themselves aloof still. 'Most people seem to believe that our main object is trade'. On his preaching journeys the whole population of the towns and villages turns out to hear what he has to say, but there is little longing to hear the gospel. Kwabi was transferred away from Anum in October, at his own wish. He worked industriously, and wanted to learn Greek, since his training took place under the old conditions in which no Greek was learned. However, he could not remember or understand the Declensions, so 'I advised him to give up, and offered instead to work through one of the Epistles with him'. He suffered a little from the 'chief mistake of our Mission' - the desire to be paid for everything, the lack of readiness to do things willingly for the Lord's sake. Obobisa, the new catechist, is fresh from the Seminary and now has to prove himself. He knows more than Kwabi, and knows how to apply his knowledge in the school and in catechising. He also wants to learn some German, but he has had little time for that with his mornings taken up with the school, his late afternoons with the catechumens, and the job of teaching Müller Twi in addition. 9 people were baptised on New Year's Day 1867. Müller discusses each case in turn. 1. Maria Meansa, mother of Philip Kwabi, about 60 years old, from Ahudome, '5 hours east of Anum'. She asked for baptism first on Christmas Day - or rather, her son said that he believed that she was ready

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for baptism, and no more able to undertake instruction on account of her age. Müller could not bring himself to baptise someone who was quite uninstructed and quite untested. After that she attended services a number of times, but was then called back to Awudome to attend to a sick daughter. Every now and again she would reappear for short periods, and after about 6 months asked herself to be given baptismal instruction. After instruction: 'I asked her if she believed Jesus Christ would accept her, and make her holy, she said she did, and did not trust in her own righteousness and right doing. I was convinced she said this for Christ's sake.' During the course of baptismal instruction Müller learnt biographical details: As a girl she was captured by an Akwamu man, and sold into slavery in Akwapim. Of course, she could not marry: her master took her as a concubine, and she bore him children. 'As she thought back over that period in her life, and told me about it, she could scarcely stop herself openly weeping: she must often have experienced blows and rough treatment'. She was, however, allowed to send one son to be educated as a catechist. When her husband, or master, died, she ought to have become the wife of one of his brother's. But she knew he was even crueller than her old master, and since she was still in the land of her slavery, decided to flee back to her home town. Müller writes that he does not exactly know what happened afterwards, though he does know that the case came up before the Government she was declared free, though her children were only to become free if they bought their freedom. 'I tried to show her that this time in slavery was the way of Salvation for her, since her children had become Christians because of her being in Akwapim, and so had she through her son Philip; but she could scarcely understand she was so consumed with grief.' 2. Michael Kwami Sai, son to Maria Meansa: announced himself as a catechumen in 1866. On his first visit with this news Müller asked him why he wanted to be baptised. He replied that he wanted forgiveness for his sins. 'I asked him what sins - and after a long hesitation he replied that he had committed adultery.' He had in fact received some baptismal instruction in Akropong, but led a dissolute life, returned to his home town, and 'sank still further'. At Anum at first he was not ready enough to accept teaching, nor obedient enough, but accepted Müller's correction. Aged 25. 3. Friedrich Bernhard Akrofi from Late - had been Müller's house boy for a year. 15 years old, no living parents. His relatives had given him to the Mission to bring up. Had a good knowledge from his schooling in Late, and with his firmness, Müller baptised him very readily. 3. Joseph Kwami Dapa aged about 13 from Anum. Very ready to be instructed in Baptismal Classes; willing to perform whatever tasks he was given unlike his fellows, no thief; has permission from his relatives for his baptism; is somewhat undergrown. He has already helped Müller explain bible pictures, a job he enjoys, while his fellow pupils are ashamed to try. Another baptism on Easter Day 1866 — Robert Obodai, son of David Obodai and a heathen wife. The father is one of the Ga Christians in Anum. Of the Christians in Anum from the Ga and Akwapim areas they attend services regularly, and know how to pray. One, a trading servant from Ada is a true Christian, praising God openly when he has the opportunity. The others, however, are lukewarm and slack, would spend the whole Sunday together drinking Palm wine if given the opportunity and in their own affairs make almost no difference between

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Christian and heathen. Müller gives some extended account of the contents of his baptismal instruction. 'On the basis of (an explanation of) God's law I showed them what sin is from God's point of view, and what God wants from us, and so began an examination of their own lives. Then they were given instruction about the Saviour, his conception and birth, and his story to the time of his ascending the throne of glory, and his being the only means of salvation for this them in their sinful state. I also showed them that it was only on account of his spilt blood that their sins could be forgiven and that they could receive the Holy Ghost: only because of him could they receive new hearts and be made children of their heavenly father. So they should cast themselves entirely on Jesus, must love him more than anything in the world, hate their own lusts, and in everything surrender themselves to him. If they wanted all that I would baptise them. They wholeheartedly agreed, and when I asked them again why they wanted to be baptised, they mostly answered: They had acknowledged that God's Word is true, and in it is written. He who believes and is baptised will be made holy'. That their faith is still weak cannot be doubted, but I truly believe that in their hearts there is a living longing for Grace, and so I decided to baptise them.' There is an extended comment by Josenhans on this report. 1. He notes the opposition of the lack of farming of the mission land and the unhealthiness which Müller believes the grassland vegetation brings with it. Could not men be brought in from other stations who would cultivate the mission land, perhaps not paying rent, but anyway not being paid for their work, simply farming for themselves? 2. He reckons Müller's worry about the lack of response his preaching gets is simply a result of his weakness in Twi - in a year or two he and the people will understand each other, and then the response will be more positive. 3. Since the Anums all speak Kyerepong, when Müller has learned Twi he should devote his attention to learning this other language also, though he should already be asking advice of missionaries who are expert in language questions on the subject of Kyerepong.

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