

THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF GHANA  
1835-1960: A YOUNGER CHURCH IN  
A CHANGING SOCIETY.

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## INTRODUCTION.

### The Geographical and Historical Background.

The Republic of Ghana, the former British Colonial Territory of the Gold Coast, lies on the West Coast of Africa between five and eleven degrees north of the equator. Its three hundred and fifty miles of coastline on the Gulf of Guinea forms the southern boundary, on the east it has Togoland as its immediate neighbour, on the west the Ivory Coast and on the north Upper Volta; a total area about the size of the United Kingdom. (1)

The coastline on which the Atlantic surf breaks unceasingly is low and sandy, but here and there, particularly in the areas of Keta, Ada and Assini, the littoral is broken by lagoons separated from the sea by narrow sandy strips. (2) The coastal plain, up to sixty miles in depth, is mainly covered with 'thicket' bush, scrub or grass, according to the amount of rainfall. Further inland lies the tropical forest belt which extends northwards along the western border and into Ashanti for some one hundred and seventy miles, and is broken by the hills and ridges of the Akwapim-Togo ranges, the Kwahu plateau and the Southern Ashanti uplands. The average height of these hills and ridges is between 1,000 and 1,500 feet. (3)

The forest belt is the source of the wealth of Ghana. The rainfall, usually between 50 and 80 inches a year, and the moist, shady conditions make it excellent cocoa-growing country. (4) A flourishing timber industry has also developed, the chief species for export being mahogany, odum, wawa and

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- (1) United Kingdom land area, 94,205 square miles; Ghana, 91,842.
  - (2) E.A. Boateng, A Geography of Ghana, C.U.P. 1959 p.21.
  - (3) In Togoland, isolated peaks attain altitudes of up to 3,000 feet.
  - (4) The average annual crop over the past 13 years is 230,000 tons, one third of the world's supply, produced by peasant farmers on holdings of 2 to 5 acres. This crop provides well over half the total revenue of the country.

sapele. (5) Everywhere, food crops such as yam, plantain, cocoyam, cassava, maize, bananas, rice, peppers, garden eggs, onions and tomatoes, avocado pears, oranges, and pineapples are grown, mainly on a family subsistence basis, the surplus finding its way to the local market. Swamp rice is also grown in the forest zone, while the oil-palm and kola are everywhere found. (6) The forest zone is also the home of most of Ghana's mineral wealth, gold, manganese, industrial diamonds and bauxite. The area of greatest concentration of mining lies in the Western Region and Ashanti within a radius of sixty miles from Dunkwa. (7) On the coastal plain south of the Akwapim-Togo hills, East of Accra the chief occupations are sea fishing, cattle rearing, cassava, maize and vegetable growing. (8) In the northern savanna region, north of the forest zone, there is a dry season from November to March and agriculture is then almost entirely confined to the rearing of livestock; yams, cassava, maize in the wetter areas, millets, guinea corn, pulses, beans and groundnuts being grown in the rainy season. There is an export of cattle and yams to the south and a considerable sale of shea butter obtained from the fruit of the shea tree found growing wild all over the region.

Ghana is thus an agricultural country, less than one sixth of its population of six and a half millions living in urban areas, the rest being

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- (5) The average annual export over the past 10 years is 15 million cubic feet.
  - (6) Cocoa farms are fixed and often cultivated by hired labour; the food farm is based on a shifting cultivation system and rotates around the cocoa farm.
  - (7) Mining contributes about one quarter of the total value of the country's exports and employs a labour force of about 35,000, mostly from the Northern Region. Boateng op.cit. p.90.
  - (8) The tsetse fly is the obstacle to cattle raising in the forest zone although sheep and goats thrive.

scattered throughout the country in small towns and villages. (9) There is a concentration of people in the roughly-triangular area, Axim-Kumasi-Keta; then a region of very low density in the basin of the middle Volta and its tributary the Black Volta, but north of a line Wa-Tamale-Yendi there is an increase in density particularly in the Navrongo and Bawku districts.

Ghana has two seasons, a rainy season (April-October) and a dry season (November-March) depending upon the dominance of either the south-westerly moist winds from the sea or the dry north-east winds known locally as the harmattan. It is always hot, night and day. From the coast to the northern edge of the forest zone there is very little range of temperature - mostly it is between 70°F. to 85°F. - or humidity, which is invariably about 80%. In the north, days are hotter, nights are cooler and the relative humidity is much lower. The equable damp heat of the south and the drier scorching heat of the north are alike enervating and make the climate, through its effects on human and comfort, as important a factor in history, as hills and vegetation. (10)

Almost all the inhabitants of Ghana are of Sudanese Negro stock with a small admixture of Hamites in the north. Oral traditions give reason to believe that they came mostly from the Sudan area although the Gas, Adangmes and Ewes reached Ghana from the east. Three immigrations are distinguished, that of the Guans who came down the Black Volta and the Volta, probably as early

(9) Population at the 1960 census: Accra (including Teshie) 355,000, Kumasi 190,000, Sekondi-Takoradi 86,000, Cape Coast 40,000, Koforidua 28,000, Tamale 40,000, Obuasi 23,000, Winneba 25,000, Nsawam 20,000, Oda 20,000. Tema, the newly-constructed harbour, east of Accra, is growing rapidly and already has a population of 20,000.

(10) See Appendix II; the mortality figures of the Basel Mission.

<u>Place</u>	<u>Annual Rainfall (inches)</u>	<u>Mean.Max. Temperature °F.</u>	<u>Mean.Min. Temperature °F.</u>	<u>Mean Relative Humidity % 9 a.m. G.M.T.</u>
Accra	29	86	73	81
Axim	84	85	74	87
Kumasi	59	86	69	88
Navrongo	43	94	72	56

The highest recorded temperature was 108°F. at Navrongo, and the lowest 53°F at Kumasi.

as 1200 A.D., and whose movements have been traced from Bole through Salaga, Krachi, Anum, the Akwapim Ridge and as far west as Winneba; the second wave, from which the Fantis are descended, followed the river Tano and reached the coast between the rivers Offin and Pra about 1300 A.D. spreading eastwards thereafter from Cape Coast; the third wave, the Twi peoples (Ashantis, Akims, Akwapims and Akwamus), came due south in the sixteenth century and occupied almost the whole of the forest country between the Tano and the Volta. As the coastal strip was already possessed by the Fantis and the Guans the Twis stopped about twenty to thirty miles from the sea. The Dagombas, Moshis and other northern tribes entered Ghana in medieval times, during and after the fall of the two great kingdoms of Melle and Songhai in the western Sudan and penetrated as far as Salaga. These groups brought the Moslem influence so widely dispersed today in the south of the country. (11)

The principal people of the southern half of Ghana is the Akan, a generic term for those groups which speak a variant of Twi, including the Fanti, Ashanti, Akim and Akwapim tribes. Twi is thus spoken by three-fifths of the people of Ghana and is gaining ground as an auxiliary language east of the Volta and in the north. (12)

In the south-east corner of the country and in the southern section of the Togoland Region Ewe is spoken, and on the plains from the Volta to Accra the Ga language is found in two main dialects, Adangme and Accra. The greater part of the north is inhabited by peoples speaking variant forms of the Moshi-Dagomba language.

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(11) W.E.F. Ward, *A History of Ghana*, Allen & Unwin 1958, Chs. II and III passim. E.A. Boateng, *op.cit.* pp.104-109.

(12) Most Ga and Adangme people speak Twi, while thousands of labourers from the north learn it during their sojourn in the south. All the Guans speak Twi. Cf. E.L. Rapp, *Zur Ausbreitung einer Westafrikanischen Stammesprache (Das Twi)*, Akademie-Verlag, Berlin 1955.

The social organisation of the Akan people, except in the large commercial towns, is on a lineage basis, a cluster of lineages forming the typical settlement, a 'town' of between one and five thousand people each of which has its own chief and 'stool'. A number of such 'towns' are grouped into a larger unit, the Oman, or state, whose natural ruler is termed the Omanhene. Surrounding the towns are villages (akuraa) which are temporary settlements for agricultural purposes, but some may become permanent and eventually possess their own stool. The unit of society is the extended family, the abusua, embracing grandparents, brothers, sisters, nephews and their wives and children often living in the same or neighbouring compounds.

Land is held communally by each abusua and every member of the community is entitled to share in the stool lands, not by outright ownership, but simply by usage. Because stool land is ancestral land, it can not in theory be finally alienated or sold in the Western sense. The chief is the custodian of stool lands, allotting such portions to the families as they request or require.

By the time the Portuguese landed in 1482 tribal migrations, (apart from the expansion of the Ashanti kingdom) had largely ceased, and the first contacts were made with the Fantis. So profitable was the trade in gold dust that in 1482 Elmina Castle was built on land rented from the local people and a number of other subsidiary forts were also established.<sup>(13)</sup> By a papal order, the Portuguese were given monopoly rights on the Guinea Coast and were held responsible for converting the inhabitants to the Christian faith. In spite of solitary efforts by French and English voyagers Portuguese domination was not seriously threatened until the arrival of the Dutch at the end of the

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(13) Claridge, W.W. A History of the Gold Coast and Ashanti, London, 1915, Vol.I, p.100. The Portuguese accounts of Jaao de Barros, Ruy de Pina and Duarte Pacheco Pereira are printed in Wolfson, Pageant of Ghana, Oxford, 1958, pp.37-46. Other forts were built at Axim, Shama and Accra.

sixteenth century. (14) The planting of English and French colonies in the West Indies, however, in the early years of the seventeenth century and their concentration on the production of slave-grown sugar enormously increased the demand for West African slaves. This demand was met initially by the operations of the Dutch West India Company, who, after 1598, built the forts of Mouri and Butri to the east and west of Elmina and slowly wrested the trade in gold and slaves from their rivals. The Dutch West India Company captured Elmina in 1637 and by 1642 had driven the Portuguese from the Coast. (15)

Other European nations hastened to engage in this profitable 'triangular' trade which consisted in exchanging European goods for gold and slaves on the Gold Coast, shipping them to the West Indies or Brazil, selling the slaves there and returning to Europe with a cargo of sugar, rum and spices. These nations followed the Dutch pattern of granting monopolies in the trade to chartered companies and over the next half century the Swedes, the French, the Brandenburgers, the Danes and the English established trading forts. (16) In 1631 the first English fort was built at Koramantin, not far from the Dutch headquarters at Mouri, and from this time until 1821, English trade with the Gold Coast was controlled by a series of companies chartered by the King or

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- (14) The first recorded English voyage was made in 1553 by Thomas Windham followed a year later by Captain John Lok.
- (15) The Portuguese made unsuccessful attempts to resettle at Christiansborg between 1679 and 1682.
- (16) The Swedes (1640-57) built Fort Wisten at Takoradi, a fort at Cape Coast and occupied the abandoned Portuguese fort at Christiansborg. The Danes drove them out in 1657 and made Christiansborg their headquarters building forts at Teshie, Ningo, Ada and Keta. The Brandenburgers built forts at Cape Three Points, Akwida and Takrema after 1682 but left the Coast in 1708, the fort at Cape Three Points falling into the hands of the Dutch in 1725.



(17)  
set up by Acts of Parliament.

In 1662, Cape Coast Castle became both the headquarters of English interests on the Coast and after 1750 the centre of commercial and political administration among such coastal tribes as had treaties with the English. The African Company's chief officer was the Governor at Cape Coast who had under his Commandants in the other forts at Accra (James Fort), Winneba, Anomabu (Fort William), Kommenda, Dixcove, Beyin and a house at Sekondi. In these forts were the Secretaries and Writers, Factors and military garrisons. The position remained much the same until 1807 when the agitation for the abolition of the slave trade directed attention in England toward the cost of maintaining the forts while the Company itself came in for strong criticism.

The Act prohibiting the 'dealing and trading' in slaves in British ships, under penalty of fine and confiscation, became law on the 25th of March, 1807. The effect was far-reaching - in one day nine-tenths of the trade on the Gold Coast became illegal and the whole organisation for the collection and sale of slaves became redundant. The sale of British goods dwindled alarmingly since the African Company was expected by the British Parliament to stop the very trade upon which African purchasing power depended. Added to these difficulties the coastal tribes were harassed by Ashanti attacks whose armies reached the coast for the first time in 1807. There was much illegal trading

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(17) The first was the 'Company of London Trading into Africa' which lasted until 1662 when the 'Company of Royal Adventurers of England Trading into Africa' came into being. This gave way in 1672 to the formation of a powerful new company called the 'Royal Africa Company' which was replaced in 1750 by the 'African Company of Merchants'. The last named was in effect an association of English traders which received a grant from Parliament of £10,000 to £15,000 a year to maintain the forts. An Act of Parliament dissolved the Company in 1821 and transferred its possessions to the Crown. (R.M. Cave, Gold Coast Forts, Nelson, No date. passim).

in slaves which the 'Preventive Squadron' of the British Navy did its utmost  
to intercept. (18)

The situation was clearly beyond the competence of the Company. As a result of the report of a Parliamentary Committee the African Company of Merchants was abolished in 1821 by Act of Parliament, the Crown assuming direct control of the settlements which were then placed under the Governor of Sierra Leone, Sir Charles McCarthy. No clear relationship between the British Crown and the Gold Coast peoples existed apart from treaties with local chiefs for the purpose of trade and the new factor of the rise of the power of Ashanti dominated the situation.

The confederation of Ashanti tribes on which this power was based was consolidated in the reign of Osei Tutu who became Asantehene in 1698. (19) At the opening of the nineteenth century, the Ashantis were beginning to look south, and the Fanti tribes, who now became the object of their attacks, turned for protection to the British. In 1806 began the series of seven Ashanti wars, which ended only with the campaign of 1900. (20) The first three were directed mainly against coastal tribes but led to some conflict with the British.

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- (18) The Danes had abolished their slave trade in 1804, the Dutch in 1814, and the French in 1815. Spanish, Portuguese and American ships as well as English privateers continued carrying slaves. Slowly the European nations outlawed slave trading until the United States was the only nation left in the trade. (Sherrard, *Freedom from Fear*, London, 1959, p.169). At the most critical period of the war with Napoleon, one-sixth of the effective strength of the British Navy was on 'preventive duty' off the Guinea Coast. (Cave, *ibid.* p.43).
- (19) During the reign of Osei Tutu (1698-1731) Kumasi was founded and the priest Okomfo Anokye linked the Ashanti nation by the religious bond of the Golden Stool. (Ward, *ibid.* pp.114-119).
- (20) The main cause of the expansionist policy of Ashant was economic, a desire to obtain European goods, especially firearms. The one export commodity Ashant could produce in large quantities was slaves, which were obtained by wars. (Ward, *ibid.* pp.142-3).

In 1817 the Company concluded a treaty with Ashanti by which the latter undertook not to attack any tribe allied to the British without first lodging a complaint with the Company's Governor. (21) The failure of the Governor to mediate between the Kommenda people and the Ashantis three years later led to the breakdown of the treaty.

Relations with the Ashantis were at a critical point when Sir Charles McCarthy landed at Cape Coast in 1822. He received little help from the former officers of the Company and was left without experienced advice. He strengthened ties with the Fantis and the Accras and, wrongly concluding that it was useless to attempt to negotiate with Ashanti, began to prepare a small militia, a hostile policy which led to the Ashanti attack of 1824 and the defeat of English troops and Fanti levies at Nsamankow near the mouth of the River Pra. The Governor was wounded in the battle and took his own life in order to avoid capture and no fewer than 186 of the militia were killed. (22) Although the British and their tribal allies retaliated two years later by winning the battle of Katamanso near Dodowa, fifteen miles north-east of Accra, the British Government decided to end its official connection with the country. A Committee of three London merchants was authorised to administer the forts through the Committee's own Governor in Cape Coast. Thus commercial interests again ruled the trading forts and from 1830 to 1843 the Gold Coast was really governed by George Maclean, the president of the Committee. (23)

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(21) This is the subject of Bowdich's *Mission from Cape Coast Castle to Ashantee*, London, 1819.

(22) Wolfson, *ibid.* pp.110-115 quotes Major H.J. Rickett's eyewitness account (*Narrative of the Ashantee War*, London, 1831).

(23) £4,000 was granted to maintain the forts at Cape Coast and Accra which were to be free ports; the settlements were to be governed by a Governor and Council who were only empowered to rule the forts, roadsteads and harbours. Ward, *ibid.* p.189.

Under Maclean's jurisdiction the first real social and political impact of Western institutions made themselves felt on the Gold Coast. Peace was made with the Ashantis and he then set himself the task of improving the economic position of the country and of establishing internal peace and security. (24) In spite of a revenue of only £4,000 a year and a police force of a mere one hundred and twenty men Maclean's personality and influence were such that his reputation as a judge spread far outside his court at Cape Coast. An extra-legal jurisdiction sprang up and chiefs from all over the Coast brought their disputes to him; and in spite of the fact that his position was unofficial his judgement was hardly ever questioned. (25) From this time onwards British influence spread to the entire area between the Pra and Volta and as far north as Akim, though the Danes still held Christiansborg and Keta, and the Dutch held the forts at Elmina and Axim. (26)

Maclean's policies were so successful that in 1843 the Crown resumed direct responsibility for the British settlements on the Gold Coast. Under the authority of the Foreign Jurisdiction Act of the same year, a series of eleven treaties, or 'Bonds', was negotiated between the British and the Fantis and other tribes, which regularised the exercise of a limited jurisdiction over

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(24) In ten years he more than trebled the country's trade, especially in palm oil; cowrie shells replaced gold dust as currency. Exports in 1831 were valued at £90,000; by 1840 they were worth £325,000. In exchange for palm oil and kernels people bought textiles, guns, gunpowder and gin. (Claridge *ibid.* p.419).

(25) Ward, *ibid.* p.191. "It was the beginning in practice of the British protectorate on the Gold Coast which was given a legal basis by the Foreign Jurisdiction Act of 1843" (Wight M. *The Gold Coast Legislative Council*, London, 1946, p.22).

(26) "...until 1874 its inhabitants were entirely independent of the British Crown. The position of the country was anomalous in that its independent peoples were voluntarily submitting to a restriction on their independence in the one particular of judicial matters". Ward, *ibid.* p.192.

them. (27) Maclean was appointed Judicial Assessor and in this capacity he judged cases together with Fanti chiefs involving African customary law and principles of British equity. (28) From 1843 to 1850, the British settlements were administered by a Lieutenant Governor under the Governor of Sierra Leone. In the latter year, however, the Gold Coast was constituted a separate government with its own legislative and executive councils, a Supreme Court being established by Ordinance in 1852. At this time the Colony consisted only of the forts: the Fanti lands were vaguely referred to as 'protected territory'.

Meanwhile, in 1850, the Danes sold all their forts to the British for £10,000, and Danish influence from Christiansborg to Keta and their vague 'protectorate' over Akwapim, Krobo and parts of Akim, passed to the British Government. The Governor moved from Cape Coast to Christiansborg and serious thought was then given to the raising of revenue, but the continued existence of the Dutch forts made it almost impossible to impose customs duties and the attempt to collect the Poll Tax of 1852 of one shilling per head annually caused riots in Christiansborg.

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(27) The Bond of 1844 was signed by the Governor, Commander Hill, R.N. and eight Fanti chiefs. It is quoted in full in Ward, *ibid.* p.194. It established British jurisdiction, forbade human sacrifices and panyarring, and declared that 'murders, robberies, and other crimes and offences, will be tried and inquired of before the Queen's judicial officers and the chiefs of the districts, moulding the customs of the country to the general principles of British law'. No territorial suzerainty was granted.

(28) Maclean died in Cape Coast Castle in 1847. His moral authority was such that only one in thirteen years did he need to use force. Claridge, *ibid.* Vol.I. pp.447-9.

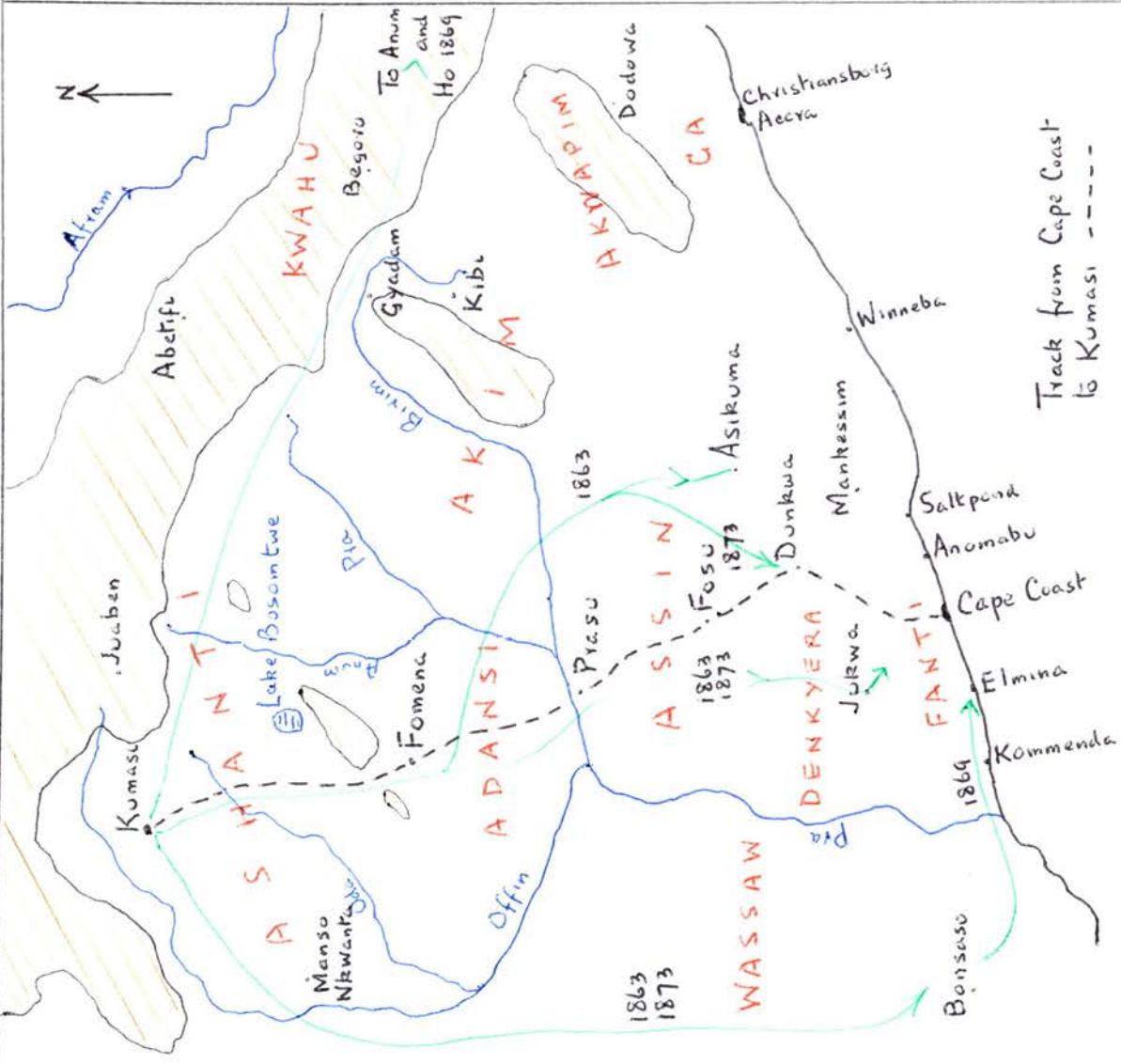
After the death of Maclean, British relations with the Fantis and Ashentis began to deteriorate, the position being made more difficult by the fact that the Dutch at Elmina sold guns and powder indiscriminately. The fifth Ashanti war of 1863-65 led the British Government to contemplate once again the abandonment of the Gold Coast, and, in 1865, as a step towards this ultimate aim, the colony was placed under the Governor of Sierra Leone.

The widespread unrest and fighting, especially in areas over which the Dutch exercised influence, ruined trade. The Ashentis were the chief supporters of the Dutch, although they were cut off from Elmina, the most important fort in Dutch hands. (29) The Ashanti alliance with Elmina was a constant threat to stability and when in 1869 the Elmina people asked for help against their Fanti rivals, the Ashanti rose against the coastal territories once again. They invaded Akwamu capturing the Basel missionaries Ramseyer and Kühne at Anum and a Frenchman, Bonnat, at Ho. In the same year, a second Ashanti army reached Axim and marched to Elmina. At this stage the Netherlands Government opened negotiations with the British Government for the cession of all its forts. (30) The Asantehene refused to accept the Dutch claim to hand over Elmina, and although the actual transfer took place in 1872 both of Elmina and the other Dutch forts, the Ashantis marched against Cape Coast and won victories at Dunkwa and Jukwa. At length, Major General Garnet Wolseley was sent from Britain as Governor and Commander-in-Chief with a large body of troops. He drove the Ashentis from the area south of the Pra, and pursued them as far as Kumasi which he totally destroyed.

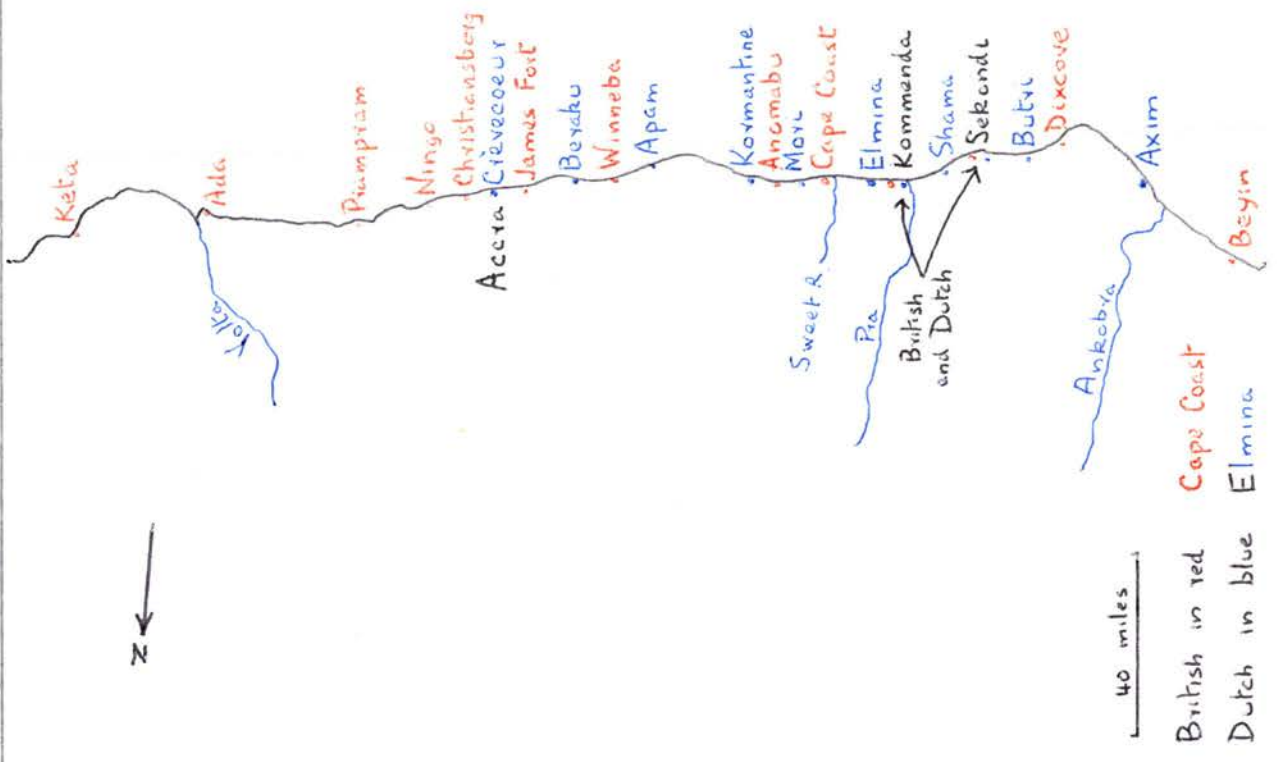
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(29) Negotiations between Britain and Holland had begun in 1863 but an agreement in 1867 to exchange settlements on the coast led to tribal warfare along the coast from Cape Coast to Beyin. The proposal was for the British to cede the Beyin, Dixcove, Sekondi and Kommenda forts to the Dutch, and to receive the Mori, Kommantine, Apam and Accra forts in exchange. Unfortunately the local people were never consulted.

(30) The forts were ceded free of charge, the British paying £3,790 for the stores. Ward, *ibid.* p.248.



Sketch Map to illustrate the Ashanti Wars of 1863 and 1874



British and Dutch Forts on the Gold Coast 1867

By a peace treaty at Fomena, the Ashantis undertook to maintain perpetual peace, to pay an indemnity, to withdraw their forces from the south, to abandon all claims to Elmina, and to allow freedom of trade. (31)

The departure of the Dutch, which left the British the only European nation with settlements on the Gold Coast, made possible the establishment of a regular and permanent administration. In 1874, the Gold Coast was again separated from Sierra Leone and a new Colony of the Gold Coast and Lagos was constituted. (32)

The Ashanti problem was not yet, however, solved. "The policy of the Government towards Ashanti from 1874 to 1900 was utterly timorous and vacillating, and the fruits of the campaign of 1874 were completely lost in an incredibly short time". (33) The reasons were that the Government did not realise that military defeat had shaken apart the tribes making up the Ashanti Confederation, a number of which began to declare their independence of the Asantehene. Refugee groups were recognised as casting off their allegiance to the Asantehene by crossing the Pra, yet at the same time the Government tried to insist that the Asantehene restored his authority and kept peace in his territories. There was no effective military occupation of Ashanti by the British. It was understandable therefore that the Asantehene should endeavour to build up his former position and the policy of non-interference in Ashanti affairs aided this process. In 1881 the Ashantis demanded the surrender of a political refugee, a request which was refused by the Governor who gained the impression in spite of Ashanti denials that war was intended.

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(31) The Sixth Ashanti War of 1873-4 is often known as the Sagrenti war, the Twi version of 'Sir Garnet'.

(32) The Gold Coast was administratively assigned to Lagos, and did not achieve separate administrative status until 1886. The Colony was limited to the forts and settlements, but other territory under British influence was declared a protectorate, which, in 1874 was the subject of an order in Council under the Foreign Jurisdiction Act. (Colonial Reports, Gold Coast 1954. H.M.S.O. London, p.142). In 1895 the term 'protectorate' was given up and the entire area south of Ashanti was termed a 'Colony'.

(33) Ward, *ibid.* p.286.



Differences were temporarily settled after prolonged negotiations but internal strife continued in Ashanti and at last in 1895 the Governor sent an ultimatum to the Asantehene requiring him to accept a British Resident in Kumasi and charging him with violating the Treaty of Fomena, of hindering trade, of permitting human sacrifice and of failing to pay the indemnity for the war of 1874. (34)

The Ashantis failed to comply with this ultimatum and in 1896 a British Force marched unopposed to Kumasi where, in spite of the Asantehene's submission, he, the Queen-mother, his father, his two uncles and his brother, together with a number of sub-chiefs, were taken prisoner and removed to Cape Coast and thereafter exiled to the Seychelles. (35)

Four uneasy years ensued. The Ashantis were by no means reconciled to the loss of their leaders, and when Sir Frederick Hodgson, the Governor, at a formal meeting with chiefs in Kumasi, demanded the surrender of the Golden Stool, the chiefs retired in disgust and prepared for war. (36) The Governor and his wife, the Basel missionaries, twenty-four other European soldiers and civilians, and 750 troops were besieged in the Kumasi fort while thousands of refugees crowded beneath the walls. The Governor had sent a request to Accra for military help before the single telephone line was cut, but the siege lasted for two months until a sortie was successfully made, the party reaching Cape Coast in mid-July. The remaining garrison was finally relieved and by

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(34) The Asantehene, Kwaku Dua III, (Prempeh I), had sent an embassy to Queen Victoria in England at the end of March 1895, only two weeks before the ultimatum. Ward, *ibid.* p.303.

(35) In 1924 Prempeh was allowed to return from the Seychelles and was installed as Kumasihene in 1926. His successor, Prempeh II was made Asantehene in 1935.

(36) The war of 1900-01 is known as the Yaa Asantewa war. Yaa Asantewa, the queen-mother of the town of Ejisu inspired the chiefs to fight. The Kumasi people were aided in the rising by only eight sub-chiefdoms; the remainder stayed neutral or actively helped the British. Ward, *ibid.* p.311. Yaa Asantewa and fifteen other leaders were deported to the Seychelles to join the Asantehene.

October fresh troops had split up the main Ashanti force into guerilla bands which however were not defeated until the end of the year. Peace was slowly established and in 1902 Ashanti was formally annexed and was placed under the authority of a Chief Commissioner responsible to the Governor.

From 1896 onwards, the British had concluded treaties of trade and protection with several tribes north of Ashanti, largely to safeguard Ashanti trade and also to form a buffer against French and German advance.<sup>(37)</sup> The situation was complicated in the north by the activities of two slave dealers, Samori and Babatu, who raided up and down the Sudan maintaining large, well-equipped armies. French attacks forced Samori into the Gyaman-Wa area and when a British expedition occupied Bole and Wa in 1896 it was attacked and defeated by Samori's men.<sup>(38)</sup> After this, Samori moved westwards into the hinterland of the Ivory Coast, where he came into conflict with a small French force in 1897; but it was not until two years later that they at last succeeded in capturing him. Thereafter, the way was clear for Franco-British Boundary Commissions in 1889, 1893 and 1898 to define the frontiers in the north as they are today. The eastern boundary was confirmed with the Germans in 1899.<sup>(39)</sup>

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(37) The French had settled on the Ivory Coast and were rapidly pushing inland having made a treaty with Gyamang in 1888. In 1885 the Germans had settled in Togoland and the following year annexed lands directly north of Keta. A series of treaties was quickly made by the British with Akwamu, Krepi and other eastern states.

(38) The leader of the expedition, Lieutenant Henderson, was held prisoner and later released, but George Ekem Ferguson, a Fanti surveyor and one of the most remarkable men ever to serve the Colony was wounded and abandoned by his carriers to the enemy and was shot. Claridge II, pp.425-30. Cf. Commonwealth Challenge, Vol.7, No.2, January 1959, pp.29-41 for a full account of Ferguson's work.

(39) Samori's colleague Babatu was hunted down about the same time and on his death many of his followers joined the battalion of the Gold Coast Regiment stationed at Gambaga.

This northern portion of the Gold Coast became known as the Northern Territories Protectorate until after independence in 1957 when it was divided into the Upper and Northern Regions. At the end of the first World War the western strip of Togoland was attached to the Gold Coast to be held by Britain on a mandate from the League of Nations. This now forms the Volta Region of Ghana.

The year 1900 thus marked the final establishment of British jurisdiction over the Gold Coast and began a new era of rapid economic and social change. Domestic slavery had been abolished in 1874; the first steps to develop gold mining had been taken in the closing years of the century; the first export of cocoa beans (eighty pounds) had been made in 1891; a proper Education Ordinance had been promulgated in 1887; in 1903 the railway line from Sekondi had reached Kumasi. Now that the Pax Britannica was a reality, the country reached, during the next sixty years, a level of prosperity unmatched elsewhere in tropical Africa. (40)

Cocoa has been responsible for extensive social changes. The old traditional food crop farming remains at a domestic subsistence level and the concentration on cocoa as a cash crop has meant that Ghana has become a large importer of rice, tinned meat and fish. Much land has been placed under a semi-permanent crop creating a new owner class with a vested interest in land, many of whom rely entirely on hired labour. To a great extent, however, in the rural areas the traditional pattern of land tenure has been sustained. (41)

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(40) Gold production rose from 7,237 fine ounces valued at £32,866 in 1880 to 599,340 fine ounces valued at £7,488,781 in 1956; in the same year (1956) 234,406 tons of cocoa were exported worth £51,062,516, while diamonds and manganese production each exceeded £7 million and timber over £9 million. (Boateng, op.cit. p.132).

(41) At the same time, cocoa-growing has fostered much land litigation.

The political development of the country since 1900 is marked by successive constitutional changes marking increasing African participation in Government. Power lay at first in the hands of the Governors assisted by an Executive Council and a Legislative Council of ex officio and a few nominated members. Under the constitution of 1925, nine of the fourteen unofficial members were Africans representing the provinces of the Colony proper, the three large coast towns and the three Provincial Councils of chiefs.<sup>(42)</sup> A second constitutional change in 1946 introduced a non-official majority for the first time in any African colonial legislature. Representation was widened to include Ashanti and Southern Togoland, but the Governor continued to legislate alone for the Northern Territories. The executive power still, however, lay in the hands of permanent officials, who were appointed by the Governor on the nomination of the Secretary of State.<sup>(43)</sup> The 1946 constitution, the work of the Governor, Sir Alan Burns and the Secretary of State in consultation with African leaders, was hailed by Africans as a great step forward but in fact there was no real shift of power and the mood of the country quickly changed to bitter criticism both of the constitution and of the Government's economic policy.

The criticisms focussed on the threat to the cocoa industry by the swollen shoot virus for which there was no cure apart from cutting out diseased trees, and upon the inflation brought about by the shortage of goods after the war.<sup>(44)</sup> The grievances of the Gold Coast soldiers returning home from

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- (42) There were fifteen official members who were bound to vote in accordance with the Governor's declared policy. Ward, op.cit. Ch.XIV, passim. The authority of the Council was limited to the Colony.
- (43) These were the Colonial Secretary, the three Chief Commissioners, the Attorney-General, and the Financial Secretary.
- (44) The farmers did not understand the necessity for cutting out diseased trees and regarded it as a deliberate attempt to cripple the industry. The cocoa tree continues to bear for a year or two after it is diseased. A farmer indignantly said to the writer in 1947, 'No one kills a sick child'.

Burma who felt it difficult to readjust themselves to civilian life, exaggerated the tension. Under Dr. J.B. Danquah's leadership, the Gold Coast Convention, the chief opposition party, led the agitation against the large European importing firms who were regarded as being in league with the Government in buying cocoa cheaply and in selling European imports as dearly as possible. On the 28th of February 1948 a protest march of ex-servicemen ended in the marchers, joined by large crowds, leaving the prescribed route and approaching Christiansborg Castle to demand an interview with the Governor. Half a mile from the castle the police halted the crowd but could not disperse it; during the fracas six shots were fired by the police killing two and wounding five of the ringleaders. Rioting broke out in Accra, many of the large expatriate stores were looted and burned and the central prison was burst open and its inmates set free. (45)

The Gold Coast Convention then sent a long telegram to the Secretary of State alleging that the civil administration had broken down and that an interim Government should be formed by Dr. Danquah and his party. He and five of his colleagues were arrested and Government appointed a Commission to enquire into the causes of the disturbances. (46) Ward correctly sums up the situation in asserting that the Government was too remote from popular feeling and that there had grown up a general popular suspicion of its motives, a 'Government which it could not move, could not understand, could not trust'. (47)

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(45) Ward, Ch.XIV, *passim*. Similar outbursts took place at Kumasi and in a few other large towns.

(46) This was the Watson Commission, under the chairmanship of Mr. Aiken Watson, K.C. The causes are listed as, the discontent of ex-servicemen, political frustration regarding the Burns constitution, the concentration of economic power in European and Syrian hands, high prices, unequal distribution of consumer goods, the cutting out of diseased cocoa, undue centralisation of the Cocoa Marketing Board, housing shortage, Government delays in implementing Africanisation in the public service, the apparent absence of development plans in agriculture and education, and the Government's tolerance of dangerously inflammatory speeches. Report of the Commission of Inquiry into Disturbances in the Gold Coast, 1948, Colonial No.231, *passim*.

(47) Ward, *ibid.* p.335.

Gradualism as a policy failed largely for economic reasons, and the situation could only be mended by a further constitutional change which would produce a legislature directly responsible to the people. The Coussey Commission, presided over by Sir Henley Coussey, composed entirely of Africans, sat during 1949, proposed far-reaching constitutional changes which came into effect in 1951. By this new constitution there was set up an Executive Council of three ex-officio Ministers and eight representative Ministers approved by the Legislative Assembly. Of the 84 members of the Assembly 75 were elected by popular vote to represent the chiefs and the people.

The person who now emerged as the leader of Gold Coast political aspirations was Dr. Kwame Nkrumah.<sup>(48)</sup> The United Gold Coast Convention led by Dr. Danquah, 'suffered from its inability to symbolize the public demands of large sections of the population', and from the moment he returned from Britain as Secretary of the party in December 1947, Dr. Nkrumah became the spearhead of a popular mass movement, formed his own party, the Convention People's Party, and under the new constitution became Prime Minister in 1952. In 1954 a further constitutional change eliminated the block of members elected to represent the traditional native authorities, and provided for an assembly

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(48) Kwame Nkrumah was born in 1909 near Axim, was trained as a teacher at Achimota and after 1937 studied economics and sociology at Lincoln University and later theology and education at the University of Pennsylvania. He worked in shipyards in the U.S.A. to support himself. In 1945 he came to London and associated himself closely with African student and political organisations and became general secretary of a pan-African congress. Called to the secretaryship of the U.G.C.C. in 1947 he organised party cells all over the country and finally in June 1949 set up the Convention People's Party, which, in a few months became the dominant political party. His campaign of Positive Action (peaceful non-co-operation) led to a general strike and to his own imprisonment together with other C.P.P. leaders. The only effect was to heighten his popularity. The elections under the new Coussey Constitution in 1951 gave the C.P.P. a huge majority and the prisoners were released to take their seats on the executive council. In 1952 the constitution was amended by which Nkrumah as leader of the majority party became Prime Minister. (Autobiography of Kwame Nkrumah, Nelson, 1957, passim). In 1960 he became President of the new Republic.

of a Speaker and 104 members, all elected on ordinary party lines. The Governor, Sir Charles Arden-Clarke, still had certain reserve powers, but after the elections of 1956 had again returned the C.P.P. to power, the way was clear for the granting of full independence. (49) The British Government fixed Independence Day for the 6th March, 1957, the anniversary of the Bond of 1844. (50)

The Presbyterian Church of Ghana has been closely linked with the development of the country from the arrival of the first Basel missionaries in 1827. The earliest activity of the mission from 1827 to 1850 lay in the Ga and Akwapim areas over which the Danes claimed an ill-defined influence. Many of the political difficulties which beset the mission during this period arose from the endeavour of the Danes to assert their rights against the growing English influence in Maclean's time.

The mission welcomed the prospect of working in a British Colony but was seriously perturbed at the prospect in 1865 of the withdrawal of the British, a possibility which the memorandum of the Basel missionary Elias Schrenk helped to avert. (51) The Ashanti War of 1869 and the imprisonment of Basel missionaries in Kumasi for almost five years involved the mission

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- (49) The opposition parties, the National Liberation Movement and the Northern People's Party, together won 27 seats in a house of 104, while the C.P.P. had the support of 72 members. The opposition seats were won in Ashanti and the North. Since 1956 the number of seats held by the opposition has steadily dwindled and now hardly exists. The main critics of Government policy in debate are the C.P.P. back-benchers.
- (50) The medieval kingdom of Ghana flourished in the western Sudan from the fourth to the eleventh centuries. It was overthrown by Berbers in 1076. The unproven theory is that the people of modern Ghana are the descendants of emigrants from ancient Ghana. For a full discussion see Ward, *ibid.* pp.45-50.
- (51) See below, Chapter III for an account of the Memorandum.

directly and revealed to the general public in Britain the necessity of settling the Ashanti question. After 1900 the Mission was finally free to pursue its work in Ashanti, while in the south its evangelical, commercial and educational activity played a significant part in the development of the country. The expulsion of the missionaries in 1917, the entry of Scots missionaries to take up the work, the subsequent return of the Basel Mission in 1926 and the growth of an independent Presbyterian Church are events which form an integral part of the social history of the country.

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THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF GHANA. 1828 - 1960.

A YOUNGER CHURCH IN A CHANGING SOCIETY.

SYNOPSIS.

Chapter 1.

The beginnings in Europe and Africa.

The foundation and inspiration of the Basel Evangelical Mission Society; the revival of interest in overseas missions; Württemberg Pietism; the ecumenical and international character of the Basel Mission; the prospects of a mission on the Gold Coast in 1828; earlier Christian activity; the chaplains at the English and Danish forts; some outstanding African converts; the Moravian attempts on the Gold Coast; ideas of agricultural Christian settlements; Isert's venture at Akropong; the first four Basel missionaries 1828; the pioneering work of Andreas Riis; the first mission settlement at Akropong; its political difficulties; Riis's visit to Kumasi; the Wesleyan Mission at Cape Coast; Riis returns to Europe.

## CHAPTER 1.

### The Beginnings in Europe and Africa.

The story of the Presbyterian Church of Ghana covers the period from the landing in 1828 of the first missionaries of the Basel Evangelical Mission Society to the present day. Assisted by immigrant converts from the West Indies, by a long line of devoted African evangelists, and after 1918 by missionaries from Scotland, the Church owes its foundation and its ethos to the sacrificial endeavours of men and women sent out to the Gold Coast under the aegis of the Basel Society. What was the nature of this Society and the particular inspiration of its founders?

At the close of the Napoleonic upheaval in Europe, the sponsors of the Society founded in Basel in 1815, a seminary for the training of men, who, inspired by zeal for the propagation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, would thereafter serve with existing Protestant missionary societies in any part of the world. <sup>(1)</sup> The inspiration of the founders was fivefold: the deep personal devotion to Christ fostered by the so-called German Society for the Advancement of Christian Truth and Godly Piety which was begun by Dr. J.A. Urlsperger in 1780 and which was centred in Basel; <sup>(2)</sup> the Pietism of the Lutheran Churches of South Germany, particularly in Württemberg; the example of almost a century of missionary enterprise by the Moravian Brethren and of the Danish-Halle Society,

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(1) Steiner, P. Hundert Jahre Missionsarbeit, 1815-1915, Basel 1915, pp.4-17.

(2) "Der Deutschen Gesellschaft zur Beförderung christlicher Wahrheit und Gottseligkeit"; this is often referred to as the "deutsche Christentums-gesellschaft".

and of the more recent activities of English and Dutch missionary Societies;<sup>(3)</sup> the success of the Mission Seminary of Pastor Jänicke in Berlin;<sup>(4)</sup> and the awakening of Christians within the Protestant Churches of Western Europe to missionary responsibility, in particular towards Africa which had suffered so much from the horrors of the slave trade.

Uralsperger's German Christian Society had brought into being in all parts of the German-speaking world, groups of sincere and earnest Christians, not dissimilar to the Methodist Societies in England, whose aim was the cultivation of a personal devotion to Christ through a deep reverence for the Scriptures, and whose main concern was for the furtherance of the Kingdom of God on earth. It was within the 'German Christian' circle in Basel that discussion of the project of founding a missionary-training seminary first arose. In Berlin, the Mission Institute of Pastor Jänicke, himself a member of the German Christian Society, had trained and sent out between 1800 and 1807, thirty young men for work with the English Societies. The continental blockade and the pressure of Napoleon upon Germany had, however, made it impossible for Jänicke's training centre to continue; contact with England was difficult and money was in short supply.<sup>(5)</sup> It was reasonable, therefore, to hope that a Seminary in Basel would fulfil the need of a missionary-training institution which would provide trained men for service with the Protestant missionary societies. The reconstitution of the Moravian Brethren in 1727 under the leadership of Graf von Zinzendorf had made Herrnhut in Saxony a hive of missionary activity the influence of which had spread

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(3) The English Baptist Missionary Society was founded in 1792, followed by the London Missionary Society in 1795, and by the Church Missionary Society in 1799. The Netherlands Missionary Society was begun in 1797.

(4) Schlatter, W. Geschichte der Basler Mission, 1815-1915, Vol.1. p.12.

(5) Schlatter, W. Ibid Vol. 1. p.13.

throughout Europe. Moravian missionaries were to be found in the difficult places of the earth, not least on the Gold Coast where they had made two unsuccessful attempts to preach the Gospel in the eighteenth century. Similarly, the zeal for missions at the Pietistic centre of Halle had produced no fewer than sixty foreign missionaries in the same period, most of them from the University, for work in Danish territories in India.

The Pietism which characterised the Basel Mission was of the Württemberg variety, a combination of religious emotion and deep thought, of individual conversion and strong Christian fellowship, its life rooted in a profound reverence for the Bible. Within the Lutheran Churches of South Germany, Pietism had shifted the emphasis, in spite of the Aufklärung, from concern with arid dogma and from a rationalistic, deistic outlook, to the personal relationship of the saved sinner to his Lord, to the responsibility for saving souls and for spreading the Kingdom of God on earth. From the outset the Basel Mission has retained these characteristics. The so-called Inspector or Director of the Mission was always an ordained Württemberg Pietist, its Committee Chairman or President, a distinguished Basel Christian layman, while at any given time almost half of its missionaries were from Württemberg. (6) Although it operated from Basel, the Mission drew its members and its support from the Churches of both Lutheran and Reformed Confessions, and while it refused to be bound by any dogmatic formula or Synodal decision, it remained always in the closest connection with the Churches. Thus, from the beginning, the Basel Mission showed a biblical, evangelical, ecumenical and international character which it has never lost.

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(6) Schlatter, W. *ibid.* Vol.1. p. 159. The breakdown of the figures of missionaries trained at Basel shows that roughly 80% were Germans, of whom more than half were from Württemberg. The remainder were mainly Swiss.

Grounding its life on the Bible as the sole Word of God, it asked only to be free to pursue the one all-absorbing Christian task, the conversion of the heathen and the spread of the Kingdom of God on earth. (7)

The ecumenical and international character of the Mission is illustrated by the sphere of labour entered into by men trained at the Seminary. In 1818 the first seven joined the Netherlands Missionary Society, while between 1818 and 1861 no fewer than eighty-six gave service to the Church of England Missionary Society: (8) Basel-trained missionaries began to be found everywhere: one was chaplain to the English Niger Expedition of 1842; Samuel Sobat became Bishop of Jerusalem; Johann Ludwig Krapf explored East Africa; Andreas Gollmer pioneered in Lagos, to mention only three; while between 1822 and 1835 the Mission began work in the Caucasus and in Liberia, the former sphere of activity to be brought to an end by an edict of the Czar, the latter by disease and death.

Awakening interest in Africa and the desire among Protestant Christians to make restitution for the evils of the slave trade, turned the attention of the Society, in spite of tragic failure in Liberia, to the Gold Coast; in particular to that eastern section of its coastlands then controlled by Denmark. The Danish Government had prohibited the slave trade in 1792, (the first European country to do so), to be followed by the British in 1807, so that there was the probability of evangelical work in that area in conditions of reasonable political stability.

What were the prospects of a Christian mission in the Gold Coast at that time? That the Gospel had been preached there earlier is evidenced by the

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(7) Steiner, *ibid.* p. 108.

(8) Steiner, *ibid.* p.17. The Society also provided missionaries as pastors to emigrant German-speaking communities in South Russia, North America, Brazil and Australia, and in 1834 the Basel Mission opened its own field in the Mangalur-Kanara coastal district of S.W. India.

work of the chaplains in the various European trading forts and by the attempts of the Moravians in 1737 and 1770. Faint traces of former Roman Catholic activity were still to be found around Elmina but any effective Christian influence from the period of Portuguese domination had completely disappeared.<sup>(9)</sup> The nations controlling the forts in 1827 were Protestant, namely, Holland, England and Denmark; and though the chaplains had not been able to achieve much they had gained some knowledge of the religious and social life of the people and of their languages, information which was available to Protestant missionary groups in Europe.<sup>(10)</sup>

At Cape Coast Castle between 1752 and 1824, English clergymen had been sent out by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel at the request of the Royal African Company.<sup>(11)</sup> The first of these, Thomas Thompson, remained in the country for five years and recorded his impressions in a short journal, *An Account of Two Missionary Voyages*, in 1758. He gave a sympathetic account of indigenous beliefs and practices and in particular called attention to the necessity of coming to grips with the Fante language if effective missionary work was to be done.<sup>(12)</sup> In spite of his calling, Thompson saw nothing evil in the slave trade and in 1772 even published a pamphlet in its defence.<sup>(13)</sup> On his return to England, he took with him three Fante boys to be educated in that country, two of whom died, but the third, Philip Quaque, was eventually ordained in the Church of England and

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- (9) Cardinall, A.W. *The Gold Coast*, 1931, Accra 1931, pp. 60-61. A reference to the titular deity of Elmina, the so-called Ntuna, a corruption of St. Anthony, whose shrine was then in existence but which had lost any Christian features. Roman Catholic Missions recommenced in 1880, cf. Wiltgen, R.M. *Gold Coast Mission History, 1471-1880*, Divine Word Publications, Techny, Illinois, 1956.
- (10) Debrunner, H. *Anfänge evangelischer Missionsarbeit auf der Goldküste bis 1828*, *Evangelisches Missions-Magazin*, Basel, Jan/Mar. 1954, passim.
- (11) Groves, C.P. *The Planting of Christianity in Africa*, London, 1948. Vol.1.
- (12) Groves, *ibid.* p. 174f. p.152.
- (13) Cf. Wolfson, F. *Pageant of Ghana*, Oxford, 1958, p.10.

returned to Cape Coast in 1765 to serve as schoolmaster, catechist and missionary, a position which he held until his death in 1816.<sup>(14)</sup> The S.P.G. continued to supply chaplains and teachers but made no effort to organise systematic missionary work among the people of the area, the focus of their endeavour being the school for African and mulatto children which was supported by the Royal African Company and later by the Colonial Government.<sup>(15)</sup> It was a group of former pupils of this school which, through their request to a sympathetic English sea captain for Bibles, was instrumental in bringing out the first Wesleyan missionary to the country in 1834.<sup>(16)</sup>

In the Danish sphere, centred upon the great fort at Christiansborg, or Osu, there had been a succession of garrison chaplains from the seventeenth century, who, although not missionaries, ~~intested~~ <sup>interested</sup> themselves in African life and customs and constantly urged the need for serious missionary endeavour. Their main task lay among the fort soldiers and traders, and among the numerous mulattos, the offspring of the Europeans and African women. These soldiers and traders were concerned mainly in exchanging their gin, gunpowder and other wares for gold and slaves, in surviving their tour of service, and in reaching Europe again with health intact and with money in their pockets. Few of the Governors set a Christian example, so that the chaplains fought a losing battle for the Christian faith. /re

Wilhelm Johann Müller, chaplain at Fort Frederiksborg near Cape Coast, from 1662 to 1670, urged a definite missionary approach to the people and instanced the need for a translation of the Bible into the local languages. His collection of eight hundred useful words and phrases, and his understanding

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- (14) Bartels, F.L. Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana, Vol.1. Part 5, pp. 153-174.  
(15) McWilliam, H.O.A. The Development of Education in Ghana, London, 1959, pp. 13ff. cf. Wiltgen, *ibid.* pp.108-109. The Church of England did not resume missionary work on the Gold Coast until 1906.  
(16) Reindorf, C.C. The History of the Gold Coast and Asante, 1839. Reprinted 1954, pp. 226-227.

of indigenous religion, must rank as the first serious effort to appreciate Gold Coast ways of life and thought.<sup>(17)</sup> Johann Rask and H. S. Mourad, both stationed at Christiansborg, the former during the years 1709 and 1712 and the latter between 1805 and 1809, also left written accounts of their service.<sup>(18)</sup> Separated by a century, they tell substantially the same story: the degradation produced by the slave trade; the problem of the pastoral care of the mulattos and of bringing some sort of order into the relationships between the Europeans and their concubines. Danes serving on the coast were permitted to live with one African woman on condition that they urged her to adopt the Christian religion and permitted her to accompany them to Europe if she so desired; in addition, at marriage, the man had to pay half a month's salary into the mulatto school fund which paid for the schooling of children born of such unions.<sup>(19)</sup>

Under such conditions it is not surprising that the Chaplains' influence was limited and that their efforts were therefore concentrated on the youngsters in the school, some of whom showed great intelligence and ability. We have already mentioned the name of Philip Quaake, Thompson's protege, but there were others who excelled and who made it clear beyond doubt that the academic abilities and sensibilities of Africans were no whit less than those of Europeans. During the eighteenth century, William Amo of Axim gained his doctorate at Wittenberg, Jacob Capitein studied in Holland and at his graduation gave a Latin discourse on the theme that 'Slavery and Religious

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(17) Debrunner, *ibid.* pp. 25-26.

(18) Debrunner, H. Notable Danish Chaplains on the Gold Coast, in *Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana*, Vol.2, Part 1, 1956, pp.13 ff.

(19) Debrunner, *ibid.* p. 22. A similar system of concubinage in Brazil between Portuguese soldiers and indigenous women was permitted and regularised by the Roman Catholic Church, cf. Pearson, *Negroes in Brazil*.



Freedom are not incompatible';<sup>(20)</sup> Frederick Pederson Svane graduated in Arts and Philosophy at Copenhagen, proudly latinising his name to 'Fredericus Petri Svane Africanus', while Christian Jacob Protten, after his studies at Copenhagen and Herrnhut, was selected by the Moravians as a missionary to his own people.

With Pederson Svane and Jacob Protten we find a link with the later Moravian attempt at evangelisation on the Gold Coast. The former, befriended by the Moravian Carl Adolph von Plessen, felt a desire to return to his people as an independent missionary. Trusting in von Plessen's continued support, he sailed with his Danish wife and landed at Christiansborg in August, 1735, the first African Protestant missionary to his fellow countrymen.<sup>(21)</sup> He had not forgotten his mother-tongue, Ga, but his formal Latin and Danish educational background made it difficult for him to make contact with the local people, so much so that he became convinced that the Ga language was incapable of giving adequate expression to the Gospel scheme of salvation. He finally took service at Christiansborg as a catechist and teacher and returned to Denmark in 1746. Meanwhile, the Moravians set aside Jacob Protten and Heinrich Huckuff as their pioneer missionaries on the Gold Coast and these two landed at Elmina in 1737 with the intention of beginning a mission under Dutch protection.<sup>(22)</sup> Hardly had they begun to plan their work however, when Huckuff died, a month after their arrival. Protten's movements thereafter

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(20) Lochner, N. Trans. Hist. Soc. Ghana, Vol.3, Part 3, pp. 169-179, and Bartels, F. L. Trans. Hist. Soc. Ghana, Vol.4, Part 1, pp. 3-13. Amo became a Prussian councillor for a time, and on the death of his patroness, the Princess of Brunswick, returned to the Coast where he lived an isolated life. Capitein became chaplain at Elmina, despised by the whites and rejected by the Africans. On being forbidden by the Amsterdam Presbytery to marry a non-Christian African he thereupon married a European woman. Before his death he translated the Apostles' Creed into Fante.

(21) Debrunner, H. Frederick Pederson Svane, 1710-1789, in E.M.M. Feb.1957, passim

(22) Steiner, P. Ein Blatt aus der Geschichte der Brudermission, Basel, 1888, passim.

are somewhat obscure: he is known to have visited Anecho in Togoland and after a further period in Germany we find him once again on the Gold Coast as catechist and schoolmaster at Christiansborg between 1756 and 1761, and from 1765 until his death four years later. (23)

An interesting comment at this juncture comes from the pen of a Danish trader, L. F. Römer, who had interested himself in the wider missionary problem. (24) Römer proposed the setting up of a Christian agricultural institution on an island in the river Volta, in which African boys would be brought up from the age of seven. In comparative isolation they would be instructed in all kinds of agricultural and manual work as well as in the Christian faith. "I do not believe," he goes on, "that it would be offensive to any nation, if we laid out cotton and coffee plantations in the river Volta region, and made it possible for the Africans to earn something, for it is as necessary to accustom African youth to steady work as it is to bring them to a knowledge of God .....The execution of this project would be costly but I believe that these young Africans would be able to support themselves in ten years' time". Without doubt, Römer's views influenced the appeal in March 1767 from the Directors of the Danish Guinea Company to the Moravian Brethren to send to the Gold Coast "a few missionaries to preach the Gospel to the heathen and make out of them decent, faithful and industrious persons as in St. Thomas, Croix and St. Jan", a reference to the work of the Moravians among the African slaves in these Danish West Indian islands. (25)

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(23) Reindorf, *ibid.* pp. 214 - 216.

(24) Römer, L.F. *Nachrichten von der Küste von Guinea*, Copenhagen, 1762. Cited by Debrunner in 'Anfänge Evangelischer Arbeit', pp. 51-52.

(25) Debrunner, *ibid.* p. 23.

In the June of that year, the Conference at Herrnhut set aside five men, who arrived in the year following and who were joyfully welcomed by Protten and the Danish Governor at Christiansborg. (26) Within three months three of them had succumbed to the dreaded Coast fever. A further group of four in 1770 began with high hopes at Ningo, thirty miles east of Christiansborg, but scarcely had they laid the foundations of their house when again fever struck and within a short time all were in their graves. (27) The sad news did not reach the brethren at Herrnhut until 1773 and a further request for missionaries from the Danish Guinea Company was refused the Moravians being convinced that the deaths were a sign from God that the time was not yet ripe.

It is to the credit of the Danes that they alone at this period persisted in efforts to improve the social conditions of the people. R mer's view of an agricultural and Christian settlement found a champion in Dr. P.E. Isert, doctor, botanist, natural scientist and disciple of Rousseau, who entered the service of the Danish Guinea Company in 1783. (28) The Directors of the Company at that time were much influenced by the 'romanticism' of Rousseau and supported Isert in his project of a Christian colony to be founded among Africans 'unspoiled' by the worst features of European life at the coast. An exploratory journey in 1786 along the forested Akwapim Ridge gave Isert a wonderful impression of a people living a happy life in harmony with their natural surroundings. Although his impressions were coloured by the ideas he had imbibed from Rousseau, his views of the dignity, humanity and grace of indigenous African life and his emphasis of the fact that European

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(26) Jacob Meder, Daniel Lemke, Gottfried Schultze, Sigmund Kleffel and Sanyek Gakk. Reindorf, *ibid.* pp.216-217. The first three were dead by the September.

(27) The four in the second group were: M. Schenk, R. Bradley, S. Watson and J.E. Westman. The last-named survived long enough to embark for Europe but died at sea.

(28) Debrunner, H. Ein Rousseau-Sch ler in Afrika, E.M.M. Heft 2/1959, Basel, *passim*. His references are to Isert, P.E. *Voyages en Guinee*, Paris, 1793.

activity on the coast had done much to deprave the African, reinforced the missionary appeal. As soon as he arrived home he lost no opportunity in spreading his ideas; his book, written in German and published in Copenhagen in 1788, was an instant success, and during the ensuing nine years it appeared in two editions in Germany as well as in Danish, Swedish, French and Dutch translations. (29)

It was Isert's firm conviction that the answer to the degradation wrought by the slave trade was to set up 'plantation colonies' in conjunction with missionary enterprise. So well did he plead his case that in 1788 he was empowered by Royal Proclamation to found a plantation in the Gold Coast under the direct authority of the Danish King. Count Ernst von Schimmelmann, one of the directors of the Guinea Company, (30) gave Isert detailed instructions: the 'colony' should aim at becoming self-supporting by the introduction of West Indian crops; former slaves should be given their own piece of land and no European should be allowed to acquire land for himself; as soon as the enterprise was under way Moravian missionaries should be invited to join the community. (31)

Dr. Isert rejected a site near the Volta river on the grounds of climate and soil and finally approached Nana Atiemo, the chief of Akropong, the capital town of Akwapim, who readily granted him land near the town and signed a contract treaty with him. (32) This 'African Mission Establishment' (33)

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(29) Debrunner, *ibid.* p.78.

(30) The other directors were: Count J.G. Moltke, Admiral A. F. Moltke and C. D. Reventlow. Debrunner, *ibid.* p.77.

(31) Debrunner, *ibid.* p. 79.

(32) The treaty, previously prepared with a site in the Volta area in view, referred to the 'Krobo Republic' as the name of the colony.

(33) 'Afrikanische Missionsanstalt!'

comprised five Europeans and thirteen Africans and was well provided with goods and supplies. In his first and last report, dated January 16th, 1789, Isert describes the cutting of a new path to the coast at Ningo, the laying-out of agricultural plots, and the beginning of the erection of a stone house. He suggests the recruiting of artisans and farmers from Denmark and north Germany and recommends the sending of missionaries to join the 'colony'. Isert took his report personally to Christiansborg and there suddenly died, a mere six weeks after the start of the enterprise. The new leader, J. N. Flindt, guided the settlement and reasonable success seemed assured when he was recalled to the coast by the Danish Governor, and in 1794 the project was abandoned. (34)

When therefore, the Basel Mission Committee turned its attention to the Gold Coast as a possible sphere of activity, there existed the example of the Moravian attempt, the experience of the chaplains, some acquaintance with the language, religion and customs of the various tribes, and the knowledge of Isert's ill-fated settlement at Akropong. Bowdich's detailed report of his journey to Kumasi which appeared in English in 1819, filled out the picture and drew attention to the dominant military power of the Ashanti tribes in the heart of the country. (35) There were also encouraging reports from the Basel missionaries working with the C.M.S. in Sierra Leone, so that when Governor Richelieu, having first won the approval of the Danish King, approached the Committee in Basel with a request for missionaries, it seemed right that a fresh attempt in West Africa should be made. (36)

The first four Basel men to be selected, in March 1827, were three

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(34) Debrunner, *ibid.* p. 83. Schimmelmann sent a German botanist, Dr. von Rohr, to take over the colony but he and his sister were lost in a shipwreck on their way out.

(35) Bowdich, T.E. *Mission from Cape Coast Castle to Ashantee*, London, 1819.

(36) Eppler, P. *Geschichte der Basler Mission, 1815-1899*, Basel, 1900, p.37f. Schlatter, *ibid.* Vol. 3, pp. 19-22.

Germans, Karl F. Salbach, Gottlieb Holzwarth, Johannes Henke and a Swiss, Johannes Gottlob Schmidt. In the light of experience gained through working with other societies and from the Liberian attempt, the missionaries were given carefully thought-out priorities: to become acclimatized, to take time over the selection of a permanent site for the mission, to master the local language at all costs, to begin actual mission activity by founding a school, and lastly, to present the Gospel with love and patience. "You are obliged to show to the people an inexhaustible forbearance and an excess of beneficent love, even though only a few of the thousand bleeding wounds may be healed which greed of gain and the cruel craftiness of the European have caused".<sup>(37)</sup> With these instructions and in this spirit the first four went out to begin the work of restitution, reparation and renewal in the name of Christ.

Taking ship from London, they landed at Christiansborg on December 18th, 1828, and settled near the Castle, turning their attention first to the mulattos and to the people of the nearby village of Osu where they opened a school.<sup>(38)</sup> Circumstances were more difficult than they had foreseen: from the Dutch fort at Accra slave-trading still continued; their missionary ideals and attempts to learn Ga were mocked at by their fellow-Europeans; the numerous mulattos were much affected by the dissolute lives led by the traders and soldiers; it was no wonder that, like the Moravians before them, the missionaries decided to make Ningo their base in order to get away from the depraved conditions of Christiansborg.<sup>(39)</sup> Hopes were high when death intervened; by the end of August, three of them were in their graves, and, almost in despair, Henke wrote that he had taken refuge in the Castle where he had accepted the temporary post of Chaplain and teacher. The disastrous news did not reach Basel until the following June, Henke's first letter being lost in a shipwreck.

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(37) Eppler, *ibid.* p. 43-4.

(38) Schlatter, *ibid.* vol. 3. p.24. The sources are M.M. 1829, 1830 and 1874.

(39) Schlatter, *ibid.*, vol. 3. p. 24-25.

It was a terrible blow for the Home Committee but they were still convinced that the attempt should be renewed.<sup>(40)</sup> On the 31st October, 1831, Henke wrote his last letter to Basel and died three weeks later, but even before the news of his death reached Switzerland, three new missionaries were on their way out: Andrea Riis and Peter Petersen Jäger, both Danes, and Christian Frederich Heinze, from Saxony. Riis and Jäger were ordained in the Lutheran Church at Lórrach, just across the Rhine from Basel, and Heinze gained official Danish approval of his medical training.<sup>(41)</sup> After a long wait in London for a ship, the three landed at Christiansborg in March 1832, having been kindly received on their way by Governor Maclean at Cape Coast when their vessel dropped anchor there.<sup>(42)</sup> They hired a house in Osu and were warmly befriended by a trader named George Lutteródt, a man whose ready help and advice were invaluable to Riis during the ensuing critical years. Scarcely had they begun the study of the Twi language with the eventual intention of working in Akwapim when Heinze, the doctor, became a malaria victim, and on the 18th of July, the solitary Riis stood by the grave of Jäger. Two months later, the life of Riis was despaired of; his recovery being due to the ministrations of a native herbalist during a long period of rest at the inland plantation of Lutteródt.

At this juncture the Home Committee left the decision with Riis whether he would remain or abandon the mission attempt, but before receiving the Committee's letter he had already decided to stay, and like Heinze before him, he took up the post of chaplain at the Castle, little realising that two years

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(40) M.M. 1830, pp. 408-410.

(41) The earlier missionaries had been ordained by Bishop Münter of Seeland in whose diocese the Danish territory on the Gold Coast lay. He objected to the ordination at Lórrach and the matter was only resolved by an appeal to the Danish King. Oelschner, W. *Landung in Osu*, Stuttgart, 1959, pp. 25-30. cf. Schlatter, *ibid.* vol. 3. p.21.

(42) M.M. 1874, pp. 241-2.

would elapse before the appointment of a new chaplain would leave him free to pursue the missionary project.<sup>(43)</sup> It was only in 1835 that he was free to set out for the Akwapim Ridge, twenty miles inland, thus putting into effect a firm decision that he had reached during this period of waiting, namely, to begin the mission in the interior.<sup>(44)</sup> This decision fulfilled three desirable conditions: first, the need of a healthier, higher location in view of the six deaths; secondly, to work among a truly indigenous people as yet largely unaffected by the demoralising influence of Europeans on the coast; and thirdly, to be free of the suspicion in the native mind that the mission was a Danish political agency. It seems reasonable to assume also that Riis had been influenced by Dr. Isert's glowing account of his experiences at Akropong.

Accompanied by George Lutterodt, Riis reached Akropong in January 1835, and the two were warmly welcomed by the Chief Adow Dankwa, the Omanhene of Akwapim.<sup>(45)</sup> He stayed four days in the town and was given permission to settle there provided that he had the approval of the Danish Governor; in March he was back again with a mulatto interpreter, two houseboys and a soldier from Christiansborg. His reception was again friendly, the Chief requesting only that Riis would not bring dogs into the town, would not farm on Mondays and Fridays, and would not kill the python or the black monkey. Having spent an uncomfortable rainy season in a one-roomed hut Riis began to build a stone and timber dwelling for himself but it was not until February 1836 that he could move into it. African help, in cutting timber and in the actual building, was spasmodic as he refused to give payment in brandy or gin, but the finished

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(43) The sources for the life and work of Andreas Riis, and for this period are: Missions Magazin 1836, 1837, (extracts from the diary of Riis); 1839 (Riis' account of his journey in Akwamu); 1840 (Riis' record of his journey to Kumasi); and 1874. Heidenbote (Basel Mission popular journal) for 1877, (a review of the first forty years at Akropong.) Oelschner's Landing in Osu is a vivid narrative account of the life of Andreas Riis for the general reader.

(44) M.M. 1836, p. 510.

(45) Omanhene (Twi), compounded of Oman (state) and Ohene (chief or king).



house so impressed the Akropong people that Riis was afterwards referred to by the Twi sobriquet, 'Osiadan' or Housebuilder. The much-needed help for the pioneer arrived in November 1837: Johannes Mürdter and Andreas Stanger, both from Württemberg, and Anna Wolters, a twenty-year old Danish girl, chosen by the minister of the Moravian settlement at Christiansfeld in Denmark, as a bride for Riis. Before they reached Akropong, however, Riis suffered much inconvenience and mental distress by becoming involuntarily involved in political questions. (46)

The Danish Governor, F. S. Mörck, alarmed at the spread of English influence in the eastern area of the Gold Coast, sought to enforce Danish hegemony over the Akwapim and Krobo states. An invasion of Krobo by the Akwapims provided him with an opportunity to intervene and to compel both sides to submit to his arbitration. Riis was forced by the Governor to accompany the Danish soldiers as chaplain and attended to the wounded on both sides winning much good will. Suspicious of his influence with the Akwapim chief, who had shown an inclination to turn to the English, Mörck detained Riis at Christiansborg from April to June 1837 ostensibly for his own protection but really to prevent his having any contact with Akropong. In the struggle for trade with the interior Mörck seemed to be fighting a losing battle against the genius of Maclean; more and more of the Akim-Akwapim trade was passing into English hands, while the English began to be better known in the interior through their contacts with Ashanti. Bound up with this struggle was the civil strife within Akwapim itself: rival claimants for the chieftaincy at Akropong and quarrels between the two main groups in the state, the Guans and the Twis.

Although Riis was careful not to take sides his very neutrality convinced Mörck that the missionary had persuaded Chief Adow Dankwa to favour England. Finally, Mörck took the step of arresting the Omanhene who, however, managed to

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(46) Schlatter, *ibid.* Vol. 3. pp. 29-30.

escape and to find refuge with the English at James Fort, Accra. Riis was unjustly accused by the Governor of being involved in the escape. During this difficult period, the Home Board in Basel supported Riis' assertion of the neutrality of the Mission and suggested the possibility, if matters became too difficult, of changing the location of the mission from Akropong to the chief town of Ashanti, Kumasi. (47)

The political situation made the proper organisation of mission work particularly difficult although the pioneers were able to pursue serious language study, to make useful contacts with the people, to attend to minor ailments brought to them, and to improve their house and vegetable plot. In spite of the untimely death of Stanger on Christmas Eve, 1837, Riis and Mürdter, undeterred, made two extensive exploratory journeys to the Shai Hills, through Krobo and across the Volta into the Akwamu district. A report to Basel from Mürdter revealed that the Governor had forbidden the missionaries, on pain of banishment from exercising any ministerial duty, and that Chief Adum, Mörck's nominee in place of Adow Dankwa, had discouraged the people from having any connection with the missionaries. (48) In view of the obstacles to their freedom of work, the Home Board could not see its way clear to send reinforcements to Akropong although it promised to make an appeal to the Danish King. The missionaries devoted themselves to language study; with the help of a mulatto interpreter they prepared a Twi word-list of 1200 words; but this relative inactivity irked Riis. The civil strife between the supporters of Adow Dankwa and Adum made settled life impossible; many people took refuge on their plantations and Akropong became semi-deserted.

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(47) Schlatter, *ibid.* Vol. 3. p.30.

(48) Schlatter, *ibid.* Vol. 3. p.30.

Personal tragedy in the deaths of Mürdter and of his own infant daughter at the close of the year 1838 finally determined Riis to leave Akropong. Before leaving, however, he made a journey through Akim to Kibi and then resolved, with his family in Lutterodt's care in Christiansborg, to visit Kumasi. The Home Board once again gave him permission to return to Europe, but he was determined to complete his survey of the country and towards the end of 1839 he set off, poorly-equipped, to Cape Coast en route for Ashanti. (49)

At Cape Coast he was warmly received by Governor Maclean and was favourably impressed by the English attitude towards the Wesleyan Mission led by Rev. Thomas Birch Freeman, compared with the treatment that he had received from Governor Mörck. He was able to meet Freeman, who had visited Kumasi in March 1839, and to gain first-hand information from him. It was a time when, like that of the Basel Mission, the fate of the Wesleyan Mission was in the balance: its first missionary, Joseph Dunwell, had died six months after his arrival in 1834; in 1836 two married couples, Rev. & Mrs. Wrigley and Rev. & Mrs. Harrop, arrived to restart the mission but all four were dead within a year; Freeman's wife died two months after their landing in 1838. With T. B. Freeman, however, the son of an African father and an English mother, the Wesleyan Mission began to take root. On leave in England after his visit to Kumasi and accompanied by William de Graft, a mulatto convert, he aroused so much interest among missionary circles in England in the prospect of a mission to Ashanti that £5000 was raised within a short time and placed at the disposal of the Wesleyan Methodist Mission Committee. (50) A fresh group of missionaries was halved by death, but Freeman, accompanied by two Ashanti princes who had been educated in England, Owusu Anseh and Kwantamissah, and by Robert Brooking,

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(49) M.M. 1840, passim.

(50) Freeman, T.B. Journal of Two Visits to the Kingdom of Ashanti, London, 1843, pp. 6-9.

reached Kumasi again in 1841. On this occasion he gave a wheeled carriage which had been conveyed with great difficulty through the forest for almost two hundred miles to the King of Ashanti, a present from the Wesleyan Missionary Society. (51) Permission was granted by the Asantehene, Kwaku Dua I, for the opening of a mission station in Kumasi which lasted, with varying fortunes, until 1872. By 1843, the Wesleyans also had mission churches at Anomabu, Accra, Cape Coast, Dixcove and Dominase with a total of over six hundred converts, and from these centres the Wesleyan Mission spread in the west of the country and took root in the chief towns of the Central and Eastern Provinces. (52) Until 1881, when the Roman Catholic Church began work again at Elmina, the Wesleyan and Basel Missions were the only Christian agencies in the Gold Coast.

To return to Andreas Riis. In much less state than Freeman, he reached Kumasi on the 29th December, 1839, where he was ceremoniously welcomed, but although he was permitted to stay in the town for fourteen days he was unable to gain a private audience with the Asantehene. Unlike Freeman, and rightly as events proved, Riis was convinced that the time was not yet ripe for beginning a Christian mission there. (53) Early in 1840 the Riis family sailed home and on the 7th July the pioneer made his report to the Committee in Basel. Twelve years had elapsed since the mission in the Gold Coast had been begun and eight missionaries had died; in spite of four years at Akropong Riis could not report a single convert to Christianity.

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(51) Freeman, *ibid.* pp.125-6. The princes had been delivered to Maclean as hostages in 1831; Ward, *History of Ghana*, pp.187-8.

(52) Southon, A.S. *Gold Coast Methodism*, London, 1934, *passim*.

(53) M.M. 1840, p.174.

## Chapter II.

### The Second Attempt 1843 - 1850.

A new strategy adopted; the West Indian immigration plan; volunteers chosen in Jamaica; their contract of service; the Christian settlement at Akropong; political strife; the contribution of the West Indians to the Mission; Riis leaves the Mission; the first baptisms and schools; difficulties of climate, language and personnel; determination of the Basel Mission to continue; the sale of the Danish forts to Britain.

## CHAPTER II.

### The Second Attempt 1843 - 1850.

What was to be the future of the mission on the Gold Coast? Some Basel Mission supporters reproached the Committee for squandering lives and there were those in favour of abandoning an attempt in a country which exacted such a toll. <sup>(1)</sup> That the attempt was renewed was due to the conviction of the new Director of the Mission, Wilhelm Hoffmann, that in spite of the climatic difficulties success was possible as the C.M.S. mission in Sierra Leone had shown. The missionaries in training at the Seminary all volunteered to go out and Riis strenuously urged the continuation of the mission. <sup>(2)</sup> Nothing was clearer to Hoffmann than that the policy of sending a few missionaries at a time to struggle unaided in such a country would have to be abandoned and a new strategy adopted if the work were to go forward. He therefore put forward a plan to settle in Akropong a group of second and third generation liberated Christian African slaves from the West Indies, as the base and support of a renewed attempt. <sup>(3)</sup> The possibility of Jamaican Christians assisting in the founding of missions in West Africa had been suggested by H. M. Waddell in 1840 at the Mission Presbytery of the Scottish Missionary Society in Jamaica. <sup>(4)</sup> It was envisaged that such a group would be able to assist the European missionaries in building and

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- (1) Steiner, *ibid.* p. 27. Cf. Eppler, *ibid.* p. 47.  
(2) Hoffmann, W. *Elf Jahre in der Mission*, Stuttgart, 1853, p.57f. The first Inspector was C.G.Blumhardt who directed the Mission enterprise and the Seminary from 1816 to 1838. Hoffmann was in charge from 1839 to 1850, followed by Joseph Josenhans (1850 - 1879), Otto Schott (1879 -1915). These men were mainly responsible in the formative years for the policy and strategy of the Mission.  
(3) Schlatter, *ibid.* Vol. 3. pp. 32-35.  
(4) McFarlan, D.M. Calabar, Nelson, 1946, pp.7 and 12-13. Was this the suggestion which gave rise to Hoffmann's plan? Cf. Schlatter, *ibid.* p.32, "Englischer Anregung entsprang Hoffmanns neuer Plan....."

agriculture, would ensure the continuity of the enterprise and would demonstrate that Christianity was a religion for the African.<sup>(5)</sup> Full emancipation from slavery had come in the British West Indies in August 1838 so that volunteers would be free to travel, and the fact that the Christians could be chosen from among the Moravian converts also appealed to the Committee.<sup>(6)</sup> Although such West Indians would be English-speakers it was felt that the victory of the English language over the Danish was inevitable.

After much discussion it was decided in Basel to put the new plan into effect. The Moravian Conference at Berthelsdorf declared its agreement but pointed out that while the Jamaican African Christians showed enthusiasm for the project, their perseverance was an unknown quantity; there was the danger that they might themselves lapse from their faith. The Conference also insisted that the Mission obtain clearly-defined safeguards of the personal freedom of the immigrants from the Danish Government and permission to pursue the scheme from the British authorities in the West Indies as since emancipation there had been some opposition to Africans leaving the islands.<sup>(7)</sup> The Moravian missionaries in the West Indies also pointed out that they had not many suitable recruits among their converts and advised the Committee to send Andreas Riis to select the volunteers personally. Hoffmann's zeal overcame these and other preliminary difficulties: he gained the interest of Sir T.F Buxton, then President of the English African Civilisation Society and the moving spirit behind the Sierra Leone experiment;<sup>(8)</sup> won the grudging permission of the Danish Government which was prejudiced by Mörck's reports of Riis;<sup>(9)</sup> and tirelessly worked out the innumerable problems involved in the scheme.

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(5) Eppler, *ibid.* p. 85. M.M. 1847, p. 236.

(6) Schlatter, *ibid.* p.53.

(7) Eppler, *ibid.* p. 86.

(8) Schlatter, *ibid.* Vol.3, p.33.

(9) Riis visited Copenhagen and was received in audience by the King.

Schlatter, *ibid.* p.34.

The Committee made a careful choice of Riis's new colleagues: Johann Georg Widmann from Tübingen, Hermann Halleur, a craftsman from Mecklenburg, and George Thompson, a young Liberian who had been brought to Europe by the Basel missionary, J. F. Sessing, and who had been educated in the Seminary.<sup>(10)</sup> After being welcomed in London by friends of the C.M.S. and by the Moravian community, the group, with the exception of Halleur who was to make arrangements for supplies and then proceed direct to the Gold Coast, sailed for Antigua in May 1842.

On their arrival in the West Indies, appeals for volunteers went out but of those who came forward most were found to be unsuitable: some were lapsed Christians, one wished to dig for gold, another had an ailing wife who could not travel, and many others wished merely to return to Africa, the mission being a secondary consideration in their minds. It seemed so difficult to obtain the right sort of recruit that the missionaries almost lost hope in the project. Widmann wrote to Basel: "It is clear that we shall have much worry in Africa with a small community (sc. of West Indian Christians) and I cannot dismiss the thought...that it might have been as good or even better to have taken Christians from Sierra Leone or quite simply and quietly to have begun where brother Riis had left off".<sup>(11)</sup> Riis, too, became impatient; he had been three years away from Akropong and still there seemed no possibility of a real start to the mission. Finally, in Jamaica, where the Governor, Lord Elgin, showed interest in the scheme, and with the help of Rev. J. F. Sessing, Rev. J. Zorn, the superintendent of the Moravian Mission in Jamaica, and the Rev. J. Miller, the agent of the African Civilisation Society, suitable people were recruited.

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(10) After his service in Liberia, Sessing worked with the C.M.S. in Sierra Leone and later in Jamaica.

(11) Eppler, *ibid.* p. 87.



The party finally selected, six families and three bachelors, were: John Hall, his wife and boy Andrew; John Rochester, his wife and two children, Nana and John; Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Miller and three children, Rosina, Robert and Catherine; Mr. & Mrs. James Gabriel Mullings and their child Elizabeth; Mr. & Mrs. John Edward Walker; Mr. & Mrs. James Green; David Robertson and Alexander Worthy Clerk, all from Jamaica, and from Antigua came Jonas Hosford.<sup>(12)</sup> In addition, Thompson had found a wife in the person of Catherine Mulgrave, who at five years of age had been taken from Africa, adopted by an English lady and trained as a teacher by the Moravians.<sup>(13)</sup>

A contract of service with the Basel Mission was signed by the emigrants in January 1843. This agreement contained five clauses:

- (a) The form of public worship and the rules of the Moravian Church in regard to church discipline were to be adhered to;
- (b) The West Indians were to undertake to serve the Mission in all its needs in return for which the Mission would support them entirely for the first two years;
- (c) The Mission would undertake the responsibility of providing houses for the settlers as well as land for gardens on which they could work at least one day of the week;
- (d) At the end of the first two years the West Indians could choose either to follow their own employment or to work for the Mission at a reasonable wage;
- (e) Those who wished to be repatriated at the end of five years would have their passages paid provided they had not been guilty of a moral offence during this period.<sup>(14)</sup>

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(12) Church Session Records, Akropong.

(13) Schlatter, *ibid.* Vol. 3, p. 35.

(14) Quoted in Schlatter, *ibid.* p. 35-36 from Home Board Minutes of 15th Mar. 1843.

Foodstuffs, seeds, tools and equipment of all kinds were bought and loaded aboard the Irish brigantine, the Joseph Anderson, which was hired for the sum of £600. Many Christian congregations in Jamaica took a great interest in the scheme and made collections in support of it, and on the 7th February 1843 the party set sail. (15)

For five days the ship fought a Caribbean storm, then in calmer seas contrary winds made progress slow; the passengers found the heat oppressive and suffered from a shortage of fresh water, but at length on the 17th April, the emigrants landed at Christiansborg and received a warm welcome from Governor Carstensen and the friend of Riis, George Lutterodt. It took time to arrange for their goods to be head-loaded to Akropong but in the following June, Riis, Widmann, Halleur and five of the West Indians formed an advance party. They found the mission house neglected and the outbuildings in ruins; Akropong itself wore the air of an abandoned town owing to the continued strife between the supporters of Adow Dankwa and Adum. (16) Accommodation was found in the town, repairs were begun to the mission house, and the foundations were laid of stone houses for the West Indians. The rest of the party reached Akropong in July.

Thus the second and effective period of the Basel Mission on the Gold Coast began: a period which covered the final years of Danish control of the eastern seaboard and which saw the permanent establishment of the mission at Akropong and Christiansborg.

The first concerns at Akropong were with building: houses for the West Indians and for the missionaries and a simple chapel which also did duty as a school. Slowly the little Christian settlement of thirty-two houses on the

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(15) Ringwald, W. Stafette in Afrika, Stuttgart, 1957, p.17.

(16) Heidenbote, 1877, pp. 30ff.

south side of the town took shape; a straight street later shaded by mango trees bisecting the village, on each side of which were the small dwellings with their own garden plots. Secondly, Widmann addressed himself with such energy to the Twi language that by the middle of 1844 the first Twi hymn was sung and the first sermon was preached without an interpreter. In the September the first Twi school in the Gold Coast was begun, (the West Indian children were taught in English), with nine boys, one of whom was David Asante, the son of Nana Owusu Akyem, a prominent citizen and a friend of Riis. Mr. and Mrs. Thompson were sent down to Christiansborg to open a school there, a move prompted by the need for a missionary at the coast to arrange for supplies and by a request of the Wesleyan Mission to the Danish Governor to begin work in the district. Governor Carstensen considered it fair to offer the opportunity first to the Basel Mission. (17)

Andreas Riis was responsible for the direction of the entire enterprise, a burden which taxed his endurance and patience to the limit. The carpenter Halleur proved a tragic failure and was recalled home at the end of the year but not before he had sown disaffection among his colleagues against Riis. The latter had problems enough: difficulties in obtaining stores and building materials; the day to day concerns of the young community; and a fresh outbreak of political strife in Akwapim.

Chief Adow Dankwa had committed suicide in Accra and during the funeral custom for him in Akropong slaves were killed inspite of Riis's efforts to prevent the sacrifices. The Danes declared Adum destooled and approved of the installation of Owusu Akyem as vice-regent. Adum, however, took refuge in Mampong, five miles away, and fomented the already bitter quarrel over the succession. Governor Carstensen summoned both men to Christiansborg to

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(17) Schlatter, *ibid.* Vol. 3. p.37.

settle the dispute but unaccountably allowed the Osu chief and elders, who supported Adum, to intervene in the affair, with disastrous results.

Owusu, his two brothers and two of his sons, were murdered and riots broke out in Christiansborg against the Danes. The latter took drastic action: the village of Osu was shelled and Adum and a confederate, Seban Akim, were exiled and imprisoned in Copenhagen.<sup>(18)</sup> These events gravely hindered the progress of the mission: the schools lost their children for a time; it was almost impossible to obtain carriers to bring up goods from the coast; while the ensuing social and political confusion upset the West Indians.

In January 1845 some of the immigrants wrote to Basel requesting repatriation to Jamaica and when this was refused according to the signed contract a few left the mission. A few others were repatriated three years later but five families remained to form the nucleus of the African Christian community: John Hall was the senior elder at Akropong, Alexander Clerk deacon and teacher of the colonists' children, and from their families and from those of John Rochester, James Mullings and Joseph Miller, came a number of faithful teachers and catechists to serve the young church.<sup>(19)</sup>

The experiment of bringing Christian converts from the West Indies clearly justified itself although this was not evident at the beginning. Their requirements in housing and feeding were a constant burden to Riis; they did not possess, in the main, a pioneering frame of mind and found it difficult to adjust themselves to life in Akropong; they spoke only English, a fact which restricted their intercourse with the local people. At first, the crops they brought did not do well but when later they managed to produce reasonable

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(18) Reindorf, *ibid.* pp. 315-317. Since this tragedy the great oath of Akropong has been the name of Owusu Akyem.

(19) Schlatter, *ibid.* Vol.3. pp.36, 42. A.W. Clerk spent many years at Aburi, his son Nicholas was active in Larteh and Worawora; Peter Hall, the son of John Hall pioneered in the Anum district; Rosina Miller became one of the first female teachers.

yields of coffee, cocoyam, bananas and plantain they were more content, David Rochester, in particular, showing a special interest in agriculture. They were, however, soon acclimatised; only one, David Robertson, had died. With the arrival of fresh missionaries from Basel in 1845, Hans Nicolai Riis (a nephew of Andreas), Ernst F. Sfbald and Frederich Schiedt, the Mission grew less dependent upon the West Indians, yet without them progress would have been slower. The immigrants formed at once a congregation of African race, provided an example of Christian family life free from polygamy and domestic slavery, and gave an illustration of steady industry in house-building and on their plantations. (20) In November 1943, the Church celebrated the centenary of the arrival of the West Indians, when tributes were paid to their courage and faith at a service of thanksgiving in Hanover Street, Akropong, the street of little stone houses built by them which now runs parallel to the north boundary of the present College. (21)

Riis grew difficult to work with: the death of his child, the political unrest, the burden of leadership, coupled with his own and his wife's failing health, led him to become overbearing and intolerant. He became exasperated with the slow progress of the mission; in eleven years' labour, one convert had been baptised at Christiansborg. He was criticised by his colleagues for his autocratic attitude towards both Africans and Europeans; he had been warned by the Home Committee for the private purchase of a plantation at Abokobi on which he employed eight slaves, for his undue interest in political matters and for trading in powder and muskets. (22) Persistent reports from his fellow missionaries critical of his leadership finally determined

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(20) Ringwald, *ibid.* pp. 15-20.

(21) Ringwald, *ibid.* p.19.

(22) Schlatter, *ibid.* Vol.3, pp.38-39.

the Committee at the end of 1845 to recall him to Basel for discussions. By the time the letter reached Akropong, however, Riis had left of his own accord in a bitter frame of mind. He and his wife embarked at Christiansborg in August 1845, Mrs. Riis so weakened by protracted illness that she died during the homeward voyage. At home he was adjudged by the Committee to have disobeyed their express instruction not to use gunpowder and muskets as articles of barter and his services were dispensed with. He became a travelling mission preacher of the Norwegian Church in the Stavanger area until his death in 1854. (23)

With all his faults, Andreas Riis was a missionary pioneer of the first rank: without his faith and endurance the mission would not have been begun; without his energy, his planning and leadership the second venture would not have been established. Steiner's verdict is that if he had ever lost his courage and conviction to persist with the mission without doubt the attempt would have been permanently abandoned by Basel. (24)

In the year of Riis's departure, the Mission Yearly Report was able to inform the supporters of the Mission in Europe that a group of fourteen adults was being prepared for baptism at Akropong and that services in the little chapel were crowded. (25) The first baptisms, however, were of older boys and girls who had been taken into the households of the European missionaries as servants and protégés; from among these, on Whitsunday 1847, came the first two baptisms, followed by four others at Christmas. By the end of 1850 the congregation at Akropong numbered thirty-one, twenty-five West Indians and six young Africans, of whom eighteen were communicants. (26) The schools began to flourish and in 1848 a far-sighted step was taken with the beginning of a seminary for the training of catechists and teachers.

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(23) Oelschner, *ibid.* pp.213-223.

(24) Steiner, *ibid.* p.29.

(25) J.B. 1845; M.M. 1854, p.111.

(26) Schlatter, *ibid.* p.43.

Yet the problem of continuity was not solved. In spite of the strengthening of mission personnel by the arrival in 1847 of J.G.Dieterle, F. Meischel, J. Stanger and J. Mohr, all from south Germany, losses from death, illness and defection, reduced the number of missionaries on the field in 1850 to three, Mohr, Stanger and Dieterle.<sup>(27)</sup> The Home Board found themselves questioning once again whether West Africa could be considered 'mission territory'. At the special conference held to discuss the matter during the Mission Anniversary celebration of 1850, strong doubts were expressed about the possibility of converting the African. Were not the climatic factors and the language difficulties additional indications from the Lord that the time was not yet ripe?<sup>(28)</sup>

Joseph Josenhaus, the new Director, had no doubts that the work must go on whatever the cost: "Our mission on the Gold Coast has...suffered more heavily from the unhealthy climate than for many years....Some have raised doubts whether the African will ever be converted and whether the European will ever penetrate into this land of death. We for our part cannot confer on the Mission the privilege....of winning the victory over the enemies of the Kingdom of God without conflicts, privations and defeats....Instead of despairing over the final success of our twenty-two years' work, we feel called upon to challenge ourselves with the questions, has our Society really given its all for Africa, have our missionaries worked with all the courageous trust, sacrifice and faith that they might have done?"<sup>(29)</sup> He was convinced that although the Gold Coast had exacted a heavy toll of consecrated lives, "this

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(27) Sebald had died, Thompson had left the Mission, Widmann, H.N.Riis, Meischel and Schiedt had been forced to return to Europe for health reasons.

(28) Schlatter, *ibid.* Vol.1.p.217.

(29) M.M. 1850, p.187.

harvest of death....is yet a blessing to the Mission's existence. It is the most serious defect in the Mission, if no one is in a position to face death for the sake of the Gospel. Great blessing for Basel has flowed over from Africa".<sup>(30)</sup> In such faith, the Gold Coast mission continued.

After 1850, the Mission found itself working in British territory, the Danes having sold their forts to Britain for £10,000.<sup>(31)</sup> In view of the transfer the Mission requested security and permission to continue its work, eliciting the reply from the Danish Office for the Colonies that: "The Basel missionaries in Guinea may count on the co-operation of the Governor in regard to the measures which they consider necessary. He has been ordered to render every possible assistance to the missionaries so that they may receive from the British Government the assurance that they will be able to continue unhindered their present activity of the spreading of Christianity and civilisation among the natives".<sup>(32)</sup> Although the attitude of the Danes had been very friendly towards the Mission after the departure of Riis and they had even invited the Mission to take complete responsibility for its schools and chaplaincies, the Home Committee welcomed the change in the hope that Britain would do more for the country and that greater political stability would result.

What had been achieved by 1850? At Akropong the little Christian settlement was in being, the coffee plantation had begun to yield well, progress had been made with the Twi language although there was much uncertainty as to its structure, the school had begun to flourish, and a beginning had been made with the training of catechists. Similarly at Christiansborg, in a large house in the native town which had been purchased

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(30) *ibid.*

(31) See introduction p.xii.

(32) Letter in B.M. Archives dated 13th Feb. 1850, quoted Schlatter, Vol.3, pp.47-48.



cheaply from a former Danish Governor, children were being taught, four catechists were being instructed, an effective start had been made with Ga, thirteen adult baptisms had been reported, and a chapel had been built.

From the beginning the missionaries were convinced that a Christian community could only be built up in the future from among the children in the schools. Adult converts were very few and indigenous social and religious conditions were considered to be so depraved that the Mission made no attempt to work within the existing African social framework or to present the Gospel in African terms. The aim of the Mission was to build up separated Christian groups dedicated to a completely new way of life, and it was accepted as axiomatic that such groups would emerge eventually through the education of the younger generation.

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(33) M.M. 1849, p.138f; M.M. 1850, pp.190ff; M.M. 1851, pp.218ff.

## Chapter III.

### The Period of Consolidation 1850 - 1870.

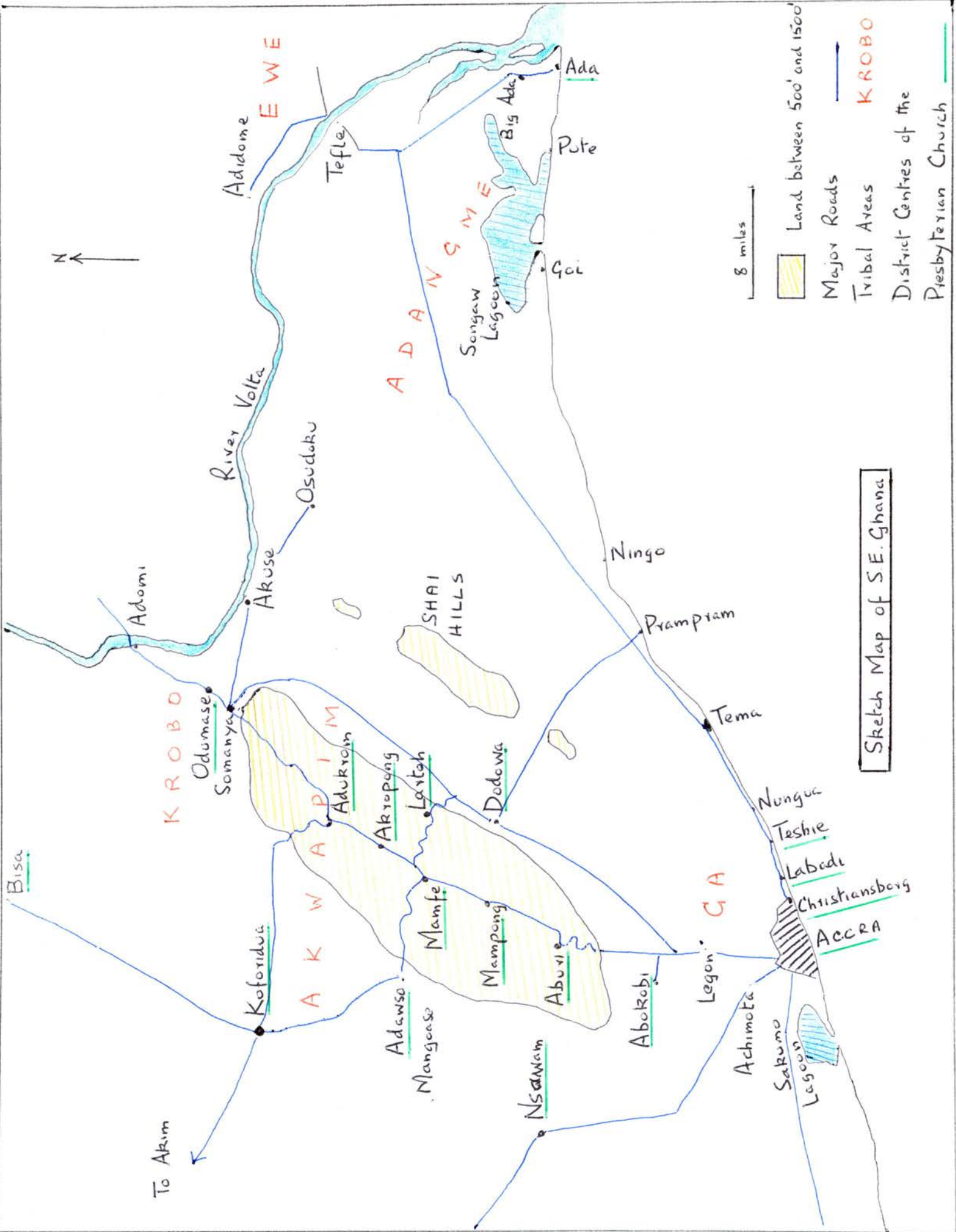
The Mission is firmly established; Christiansborg and Abokobi; friendly reception in Krobo; developments at Akropong; the Christian Salem village; its separation from the wider community; the importance of the schools and the Seminary; the Gospel is preached throughout Akwapim; Simon Süss in Akim; his mission theory; Gyadam and Kibi; the first attempt across the Volta; the mastery of the Twi and Ga languages; Christaller and Zimmermann; the educational system of the Mission; Auer and the Middle Schools; the Mission Trading Factory; the workshops at Christiansborg; agricultural enterprise; road-making; a verdict on the Mission's work; anxiety about the political future of the Gold Coast; Schrenk's Memorandum to the Parliamentary Select Committee; the assurance of British control.

### CHAPTER III.

#### The Period of Consolidation, 1850-1870.

Under Josenhans' direction there ensued a period when on a relatively narrow but intensely active front, the Mission established its position in the Gold Coast and made possible the advance after 1870. This consolidation was achieved by a concentration upon the mastery of the Twi and Ga languages, by a gradual extension of evangelical activity in the main towns in the Ga, Akwapim and Krobo districts, by a careful training of indigenous personnel, and by the development of agriculture and trade. It is a period during which certain names stand out: David Asante, Alexander Clerk, Nicholas Clerk, Jonathan Palmer, Theophilus Opoku, Edward Samson, Joseph Mpere, Paul Mohenu, John Hall, Peter Hall, Esau Ofori, Jonas Martinson and Carl Reindorf among the Africans, and J.G. Christaller, J. Zimmermann, Simon Süss, J.G. Widmann, J.A. Mader, J.G. Auer, J.D. Dieterle, E. Schrenk, A.L. Rottmann and A. Lang among the missionaries. By 1870 their endeavours had resulted in the firm establishment of a Christian mission which not only through its evangelical work but also through its educational, agricultural and commercial enterprises, had begun to make its presence strongly felt.

The achievements during this period were remarkable: eight main stations were established, Christiansborg, Abokobi, Aburi, Akropong, Kibi, Odumase-Krobo, Anum and Ada; the Twi and Ga tongues were reduced to writing; there was the nucleus of a properly ordered educational system; a seminary for the training of African leaders of the new Christian groups was flourishing; many experiments had been made with cash crops, notably cotton, coffee and cocoa; the first road in the eastern province had been constructed from Christiansborg across the plain and along the Akwapim Ridge; artisans were being trained in well-equipped workshops; and organised commerce in local commodities and European goods had



8 miles

- Land between 500' and 1500'
- Major Roads
- Tribal Areas
- District Centres of the
- Presbyterian Church

Sketch Map of S.E. Ghana

been begun. Although in 1870 the total number of converts on all stations was less than two hundred with seven hundred children in the schools, in the area bounded by Accra, Kibi and Ada, the Basel Mission had begun to exert a strong spiritual, moral and social influence upon the people.

From the two centres of Christiansborg and Akropong the mission moved out, across the plain to Abokobi and Odumase, along the Akwapim Ridge to Aburi and Larteh, and during the sixties to Kibi and Anum.

At Christiansborg, or Osu, indigenous religion and customs were strong and gave little immediate prospect of a response to Christian preaching. Although by the end of 1850 there had been fourteen adult baptisms, the hopes of the missionaries were centred mainly on the schools. Expectations of greater political stability with the British in control seemed premature when an outbreak of violence in 1854 against the Poll Tax Ordinance resulted in the bombardment of the town by a British warship.<sup>(1)</sup> The loss of life was not great but the two houses of the Mission were damaged and later plundered. Zimmermann moved with his family, his students, (one of whom was Carl Reindorf) and some of the Christians to Abokobi, a large village twelve miles inland. Here, with the assistance of A. Steinhauser, Zimmermann built up a small Christian community. The people were friendly and receptive to the Gospel, and while the number of conversions at any given time was not spectacular there was such a steady growth that Christianity began to predominate over the old religion.<sup>(2)</sup> One reason for this was the conversion in 1857 of a local obosom priest, Paul Mohenu, who was baptised at the age of sixty.<sup>(3)</sup> He learned to read, became an itinerant preacher, and over a period of almost

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(1) Reindorf, *ibid.* Ch. 29, *passim.* cf. Ward, *ibid.* pp.196-198. The Poll Tax Ordinance of 1852 was an attempt to raise local revenue. It was sixpence, or fifteen strings of cowries per head. A proper monetary system was not introduced until 1880. The British had also withdrawn the subventions paid to local chiefs by the Danes.

(2) J.B. 1877, p.74. By 1870 there were 253 Christians at Abokobi compared with 240 at Christiansborg.

(3) Mohenu, *der bekehrte Fetischpriester*, Stuttgart, u.d. pp.9-13 cf. Ringwald, *Stafette*, pp. 36-41. Mohenu died in 1886.

twenty years helped to found and build up congregations in Odumase, Ada and in many small villages on the Accra plain.

In 1855 Zimmermann and Locher penetrated into the Krobo district as far as Odumase where they were warmly received by Chief Odonkor Azu.<sup>(4)</sup> The chief was so friendly that he entrusted one of his sons, the twelve year old Tei, to Zimmermann to be brought up as a Christian.<sup>(5)</sup> The signs were favourable; many men, including the chief, attended baptismal instruction and it seemed at one time that the entire tribe would be won to the new faith. Three times the chief drew back from the decisive step of baptism: the pressure of the old religion and ancestral custom proved too great.<sup>(6)</sup> This pattern persisted over the years in Krobo: signs of great promise; much hearing of the Gospel but few baptisms; the people always waiting for the chief to declare himself a Christian. In 1867 Nene Odonkor Azu died still unbaptised. Yet by 1870 there existed a Christian community of ninety, a girls' boarding school with twelve pupils taught by one of Zimmermann's daughters, twenty-three children in a day school, and outstations manned by catechists at Sra and Ada.

In keeping with its position as the nerve centre of the Mission, Akropong was strongly-manned. Slowly the missionaries learned to survive the climatic conditions better and although there were still to be many untimely deaths and much interruption of work on account of sickness, only one missionary died at Akropong during this period.<sup>(7)</sup> A glance at the roll of Basel missionaries who died on the field (Appendix III) shows an average of at least one death per annum throughout the Mission between the years 1829 and 1913. The worst period, after the beginning, came during the years 1880 to

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(4) The eastern and north-eastern parts of the Accra plain, bounded by the river Volta, are inhabited by the Adangme-(Krobo)speaking peoples. Zimmermann considered Adangme the 'mother-dialect' of Ga.

(5) Eppler, *ibid.* pp. 189-190. After some time at Abokobi, Tei entered the Seminary at Akropong.

(6) Steiner, P. *Die Saat der Mohren*, Basel, 1914, p.13.

(7) M.M. 1885, p.396. *Die Gesundheitsverhältnisse der Goldküste.*

1863 when no fewer than nineteen mission personnel died. The climate itself is not to be blamed. The combination of heat and humidity may reduce the powers of resistance to disease, but the most important factor is the great number and variety of insects which transmit malaria, yellow fever, sleeping-sickness, typhoid fever, dengue, helminthic infections and filariasis. The situation was only significantly changed by the medical discoveries of the first World War and after. The missionaries were no doubt helped by the type of house they built according to Josenhans' pattern, still in use all over the country; a standard one-storey type with thick stone walls plastered with the red laterite sub-soil and whitewashed and roofed with wooden shingles. Each floor had four to six large rooms surrounded by a wide wooden veranda, the house being sited E-W so that the sun never reached the walls. The living rooms were upstairs and the front and rear of the house faced onto quadrangles of garden flanked by outbuildings.<sup>(8)</sup>

The Christian 'suburb' at Akropong slowly increased in size;<sup>(9)</sup> a roomy church was dedicated in 1868 and other substantial buildings for the schools and seminary were erected. In 1853 the first five females were baptised and the first indigenous Christian marriage was celebrated. Between 1853 and 1859 there were eight Christian marriages and slowly a truly indigenous congregation began to emerge. There was a tendency which became more and more noticeable and which the missionaries encouraged, for Christians to build their houses in or near the mission quarter, the so-called 'Salem'.

This Salem pattern was repeated wherever the Basel Mission was established.<sup>(10)</sup> It was the Mission's answer to the problem of trying to live a Christian life in a non-Christian environment in which the new convert

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(8) Eppler, *ibid.* p. 185.

(9) cf. Heidenbote 1877, pp.42 ff. J.B. 1858, pp.112-3; 1868, p.107, for this period.

(10) Boateng, E.A. *A Geography of Ghana*, Cambridge, 1959, p.161f.

was isolated, exposed to non-Christian practices and customs, and without privacy for personal devotions. When the Committee in Basel raised this question with the missionaries on the field in 1866, the replies were overwhelmingly in favour of a separate Christian quarter. Life in the native town seemed to the missionaries to be the antithesis of ordered and disciplined Christian community living. Mohr refers to the crowded native huts, to the all-pervading noise and to the 'shameless heathen behaviour' among which the Christian converts lived; Dieterle argues that the children would be much better fed and cared for in the Mission settlement; and Müller enthuses over the organised, ordered, quiet and secure Christian village at Abokobi.<sup>(11)</sup> It seemed that quite often the local people expected such a break, as it was the normal practice for alien groups to live together;<sup>(12)</sup> in other instances the converts had been forced to move from the native town, while in any case, the pattern of the West Indian missionary settlement at Akropong was that of a separated group. The missionaries pointed out that pastoral care of the converts was made much easier; in the unified Christian settlements the community gathered for devotions every morning and for the Friday evening prayer-meeting and organised this life around the mission.<sup>(13)</sup> The Home Board ordered that such 'Salems' should not be promoted in any special way which offered material advantages, that its permission should be obtained before land was acquired and that settlement on Mission land should be by lease.<sup>(14)</sup>

The Christians in their 'village' were directly under the eye of the missionaries, a position described as 'a real patriarchal dependence', and were 'ruled' by indigenous elders of the church.<sup>(15)</sup> This 'court' of elders settled cases both of a spiritual and of a social nature according to the

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(11) Schlatter, *ibid.* pp. 72-73.

(12) At a later time the Moslem Zongo suburbs arose in all the large towns.

(13) Ringwald: *Die Religion der Akanstämme*, pp.272-273.

(14) Schlatter, *ibid.* p.74.

(15) Eppler, *ibid.* p.197.



rules of the church and was sometimes consulted by the non-Christians.

The presbyters thus occupied within the Christian fold a position analogous to the 'mpanyimfo' or council of elders in the native community, a position of personal honour and influence.<sup>(16)</sup> This 'gathering' of Christians in a separated group seemed right at the time but it was an implicit decision against the christianisation of indigenous African life and its effects have been profound. Ward comments: "The Basel Mission, and to some extent other missions as well, adopted a policy of separating their converts entirely from the old life for fear lest the social and artistic attractions of the old life should lead them to forget their new religion: a policy which may have been inevitable from the point of view of the Christian evangelist, but which led to a most unfortunate cleavage in the life of the community".<sup>(17)</sup>

Notwithstanding the baptism in 1856 at Akropong of two members of the stool family, William Oforiba and Theophilus Opoku, and the first head of an abusua, Kwaku Sai, the growth of the Christian community came mainly from the schools; comparatively few adults broke with the ties of the old life.<sup>(18)</sup> Although the chief and his elders were ready to listen to the Gospel and expressed satisfaction with the educational work of the mission they demurred at the break with ancestral religion, the very bond which in their view held society together.<sup>(19)</sup> Such is the pressure of social solidarity in Akan society that the vast majority preferred to wait for a move first from the side of their chief and elders, a move which was never made.<sup>(20)</sup>

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(16) Ansah, J.K. Centenary History of Larteh Presbyterian Church, published by the congregation, 1955, pp.35-36.

(17) Ward, W.E.F. A History of Ghana, London, 1958, pp.205-6.

(18) Eppler, p.192. William Oforiba: this name is given in Eppler and Schlatter as Oforikai. cf. J.B. 1882. Both Oforiba and Opoku were sent to Basel for training; the returned ill and died of consumption in 1862, the latter was ordained in 1872. Kwaku Osae was baptised along with his three wives and allowed to keep his domestic slaves.

(19) Ringwald, *ibid.* pp.161-2.

(20) Compare the totally different situation in Buganda where the mission began with the chiefs. Taylor, J.V. The Growth of the Church in Buganda, p.39, pp. 68-73.

All the same, by 1867, the Christian community at Akropong numbered 369 while there were almost three hundred baptised Christians in other towns and villages in Akwapim.

After 1853 the first stream of trained catechists and teachers began to flow from the Seminary, a fact which enabled the Church to spread to practically every part of Akwapim. At Larteh (Late, Date), a hill town situated on a ridge parallel to that of Akropong, five miles to the south, the catechist Edward Samson is said to have restored a dead boy to life by prayer, an event which occasioned a sudden response to the Gospel. Within six months there were thirteen baptisms and many enquirers, while the consent of the chief, formerly withheld, was now obtained for the opening of a school.<sup>(21)</sup> In 1862, David Asante was placed in charge and within five years could report a congregation of two hundred.<sup>(22)</sup> At Aburi, on the extreme west of the Ridge, Alexander Clerk baptised seventeen young men in 1856 and on Dieterle's return to the Coast in the following year, the two worked together in establishing a Christian congregation and school. By 1869 the Christians in Aburi and district numbered 368. Theophilus Opoku and Nathanael Date took charge of the mission at Mamfe, while in Adukrom the young Joseph Mpere gave himself, after his conversion, entirely to the furtherance of the Gospel in his home town. In the Ga-Adangme area Paul Mohenu, Carl Reindorf, Adolf Brandt, Carl Quist and others were active in preaching and in caring for the new Christian groups. Thus Africans themselves played a notable part from this time onwards in the spread of the young church; in village after village the pioneer of the new movement was the catechist-teacher, the 'young' man from the Seminary at Akropong.

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(21) Ansah, J.K. *ibid.* p.20 and p.45. Cf. J.B. 1858.

(22) Eppler, *ibid.* pp.192-3. H.B. 1861, p.12.

From the Akwapim Ridge one looks westwards and northwards over the hilly, thickly-forested area of Akim, whose chief town, Kibi, Andreas Riis had visited, though he had not felt that the way was open at the time for a mission attempt there. From the moment of his arrival in Akropong in 1851 however, the missionary Simon Süss, in his eagerness to break new ground, looked north.<sup>(23)</sup> He early mastered the Twi language and adopted an independent approach to the African, taking a group of youths wholly into his house, living communally with them, working, teaching and praying with them day by day. His idea was to share his life so completely with them that in all the circumstances of daily life they might come to see that Christianity was not only a faith to be believed but also a life to be lived, and that idleness and Christianity were incompatible.<sup>(24)</sup> He tried to work out a rational system of farming: with his young men he cleared an area of forest, dug, manured and planted. He reared a herd of goats for milk and planned to bring up cattle from the Accra plains. From sunrise to 8 a.m. he worked on the farm, then his young men went to school until the late afternoon after which there was Twi conversation, discussion and prayers. Süss was convinced that the evangelical task and the raising of material standards of life belonged together. His colleagues thought him restless and feared for his health but Süss felt that the time was ripe for advance and for new methods.

Without having revealed anything of his plans to his colleagues, he left Akropong in 1853 in the direction of Akim accompanied by two Africans, with the intention of founding a mission station on his own accord. He declared in a letter to Basel that his action was not meant as a breakaway

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(23) Steiner, P. Auf Einsemen Pfaden, Basel, 1906, passim.

(24) Steiner, *ibid.* p.19.

from the Mission but only from its financial support. He was received by the chief of Gyadam, near Anyinam, and settled there, making a farm and preaching.<sup>(25)</sup> The little money he had from his brother in Germany was soon used up and he suffered great privations.

In June 1854 he appeared suddenly at the missionaries' conference in Christiansborg and convinced his colleagues that systematic work was possible at Gyadam. He was supported by fresh recruits from Europe and at the end of 1857 the first converts were baptised. Unhappily, during a tribal conflict between Akim Abuakwa and Akim Kotoku, Gyadam was destroyed, the missionaries taking refuge in Kukurantumi and later beginning work at Kibi. Süss seemed constitutionally incapable of working in harmony with his colleagues and was recalled home in 1862.<sup>(26)</sup>

Süss had his own ideal of the missionary's task and worked with amazing self-sacrifice to realise it, and although he was in advance of his time, his pioneering pointed the way through Akim to Ashanti as well as to the Volta, while his convictions regarding agricultural and artisan training later became a firm objective of the trading side of the Mission.<sup>(27)</sup>

The outcome of the failure at Gyadam was the settlement of Basel missionaries at Kibi.<sup>(28)</sup> This new venture, led by the Wurttemberger, David Eisenschmidt, posed two problems: the location proved to be unhealthy for Europeans so that there was much sickness and the need for constant changes of personnel; while in addition, there was overt hostility from the chief, Amoako Atta I, which was to have serious consequences in later years.<sup>(29)</sup> However, a

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(25) J.B. 1856, p.101 f. Der Einsiedler in Gyadam.

(26) Süss later joined the American Episcopal Mission in Liberia until 1865 after which he emigrated as pastor to German colonists in Illinois and later in Texas. He died in 1904, aged 83. Steiner, *ibid.*

(27) After a disagreement with his colleagues at Gyadam, Süss lived for a while on the right bank of the Volta at a place he named Dauromadam.

(28) M.M. 1877, p. 235.

(29) Schott, O. Retrospect on Fifty Years of Mission Work, Basel, 1879, p.35. "Of all the kings and chiefs of the Gold Coast with whom we live, King Atta only has the doubtful honour to be an enemy of mission work".

beginning was made in spite of opposition: by 1869 there were fifty-eight converts and a poorly-attended school as the people were not willing to allow their children to go. (30)

The furthest outpost in this period was Anum, peopled by Guans but Twi-speaking; a town at the foot of a hill on the east bank of the Volta where the river breaks through the Akwapim-Togo ranges. (31) As a mission centre it seemed to offer certain advantages which at the time more than offset its isolation; Zimmermann regarded the river as a way to the interior and with the opening of a mission trading-post at Akuse the prospect seemed hopeful. A gift from Sweden of 10,000 Swiss francs with which to open a new station was utilised for this purpose. (32) There was however, little response to the Gospel. The district was unsettled owing to tribal quarrels and scarcely had a beginning been made when in 1869 the mission house was destroyed by the Ashantis and the Ramseys and Kühne were taken prisoner to Kumasi. (33)

The consolidation of the work of the Mission was immeasurably assisted by the mastery of the Twi and Ga languages and the production of Bibles, catechisms, service books, and school-text books in these vernaculars. By contrast, the Wesleyans in Fante country used English; Freeman himself, throughout his fifty years of untiring effort, never preached a sermon in Fante. (34) The Basel Committee insisted that, at all costs, the African was to hear the Gospel, to read the Bible, and worship and to be taught, in his own tongue. In this endeavour the names of Christaller and Zimmermann stand out.

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(30) J.B. 1862, pp.109ff; J.B. 1869 (Kibi and Kukurantumi).

(31) The Guang people seem to have spread from the Gonja area in the north from Bole, through Salaga, Kete Krachi, Anum, Akwapim to the coast at Winneba. Their speech is related to Twi but is different. They were the original inhabitants of Akwapim and were conquered by the Akims in 1733. These Guang Akwapim towns are Larteh, Memfe, Mampong, Tutu, Obosomase and Adukrom. Ward, *ibid.* pp. 39-41.

(32) J.B. 1867.

(33) Schlatter, Vol. 3. p.100. See Chapter VI below.

(34) Ward, *ibid.* p. 205. cf. McWilliam, *ibid.* pp.21-25. Rev. A.W. Parker, an African, did however, produce a Fante version of two Gospels in 1877. Generally speaking, the Wesleyans Church was characterised by its 'Englishness'. The Basel Christians were often dubbed 'Germans'.

Johannes Gottlieb Christaller, <sup>(35)</sup> was commissioned by the Home Board to devote himself solely to the Twi language, the most widely-spoken in the Gold Coast. In Europe H.N. Riis had worked on the grammar, vocabulary and proverbial sayings but there was still uncertainty regarding the basic structure of the language. <sup>(36)</sup> Six years after his arrival in Akropong, in 1859, Christaller was able to publish the four Gospels and the Acts, and cater for school and worship needs in the shape of Bible portions, hymns and catechetical passages. His residence in Kibi from 1865 enabled him to study the Akim dialect, which he thought to be nearer the basic form of the language. <sup>(37)</sup> Three years later he brought his translation of the entire Bible in manuscript to Europe, an outstanding piece of work which showed him to be a linguist of the first rank. He saw it through the press in 1870/71 and followed it by a comprehensive Grammar in 1875 and by his monumental Dictionary in 1881, the last being a veritable encyclopedia of Akan life, thought and custom still authoritative after a lapse of eighty years. <sup>(38)</sup> R.S. Rattray, the greatest anthropologist to study the Ashanti people refers continuously to Christaller in his volumes and hardly ever differs from him, while J.B. Danquah points out that, "but for Christaller's foresight in recording in permanent form the scattered elements of the beliefs, hopes and fears of the Akan people at this particular juncture...the Akan people of the Gold Coast in West Africa would have failed to bring their indigenous contribution to the spiritual achievements of mankind". <sup>(39)</sup> Christaller's

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(35) M.M. 1896, pp.62-71; 1864, J.B. p.106; 1867, p.119. Missionar J.G. Christaller, *Erinnerungen aus seinem Leben*, Stuttgart, 1929, passim. (Author's name not given).

(36) Twi (pronounced Chwee), in one or other of its forms (Ashanti, Akim, Akwapim, Fante), is spoken from the northern boundary of Ashanti to the coast and is widely understood in the north. It is a Sudanic language of the so-called Kwa group.

(37) *Erinnerungen*, p.25. It was in Kibi that Mrs. Christaller died.

(38) Christaller, J.G. *Dictionary of the Asante and Fante Language called Tshi*. 1st ed. Basel 1881, pp. 1-607.

(39) Danquah, J.B. *The Akan Doctrine of God*, London, 1941, p.135f.

work achieved three things: it raised the Twi language to a literary level and provided the basis of all later work in the language; it gave the first real insight into Akan religious, social and moral ideas; and it welded the expression of Akan Christian worship to the native tongue.

Johannes Zimmermann was not only the moving spirit in the establishment of the Mission in the Ga-Adangme area but his work in the Ga language was also almost of the same calibre as that of Christaller. His translation of the four Gospels appeared in 1855, followed two years later by a Grammar and a Dictionary. By 1866 he had completed the translation of the entire Bible, finished the Ga Hymn Book begun by Steinhauser, and issued a translation of Luther's Smaller Catechism, the Württemberg Confirmation Book, and a Catechism and Bible Stories in Adangme; an incredible output from a busy missionary in such difficult times. (40)

This emphasis on vernacular languages became and remained a marked feature of the work of the Basel Mission.

By 1870, the educational activity of the Mission began to take a definite form. On all the main stations schools were begun and as catechist-teachers were trained it became possible to open schools on the out-stations in the smaller towns and villages. The motivating factors were four: to inaugurate Christian communities; to offer to the African the full measure of Christian civilisation which he could not enjoy without education; to enable him to read the Bible for himself and to ground his life in the Word of God; and to train the future leaders of the church. The primitive buildings which did duty both as school and church became the first outward sign of the new way of life; Christians were 'school-people' (sukuufo) and thus the school became an effective way of gaining an opening for the Gospel simply by

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(40) Ringwald, Stafette, pp.31-2, 35. Eppler, *ibid.* p.209.

beginning the process of weaning the child from the ties of the old life.<sup>(41)</sup>  
In some districts, for example at Anum and Kibi, there was a prejudice against the white man's schooling, usually out of ignorance of his intentions, and pupils were scarce, but as the value of literacy came to be realised there was generally no shortage of children in the Mission's schools.

In the early days, the Mission developed two types of school, first, the so-called 'Erziehungsanstalten' or boarding schools, and secondly, the 'Gemeindeschulen' or day schools. The former developed out of the practice of taking children into missionaries' households semi-permanently where they were trained in western ways and given some instruction this concern for their total welfare resulting in the establishment of boarding schools for each sex at Christiansborg, Akropong, Aburi, Odumase and Abokobi.<sup>(42)</sup> The interest in the education of girls was a marked feature of the Basel Mission from the beginning and after 1856 female teachers began to be appointed for the girls' boarding schools.<sup>(43)</sup>

The Gemeindeschulen or day primary schools accepted both Christian and non-Christian children and were staffed by Africans; pupils in the boarding schools were usually those showing special promise and were selected by the missionary in charge. The proper organisation of the day schools had to wait for J.G. Auer, a Württemberg schoolmaster, who between 1858 and 1861 gave the Basel Mission school system a distinct pattern, one which was adopted by the Government and which remains substantially the same to this day. His problem was that of bridging the gap between the elementary schools and the Seminary, which he solved by the creation of Middle Schools.<sup>(44)</sup> These

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- (41) Sources: reference in the Jahresberichte from 1859 to 1875, especially 1872 and 1875. M.M.1875(Auer)  
(42) Eppler, *ibid.* p.205.  
(43) The first three were Wilhelmina Maurer, Katharina Ridi and Anna Furrer, the first-named serving 30 years with the Mission. Eppler, p.205. J.B. 1857. cf. McWilliam, H.O.A. *The Development of Education in Ghana*, London, 1959. p.20.  
(44) M.M. 1875, p.177f. J.B. 1864, p.103.



Middle Schools were boarding schools and slowly took over the role of the Erziehungsanstalten, becoming key centres of the Mission's educational work on each main station. They were the secondary schools of their day and offered a four year curriculum comprising Arithmetic, Geometry, Geography, History, Natural History, English, and Bible study. In the last class, at the age of seventeen or eighteen, Greek was begun.<sup>(45)</sup> Auer's report for 1861 strongly criticises the unenlightened, mechanical teaching being done in many of the schools and the easy-going atmosphere of the boarding schools, blaming both on the fact that few of the missionaries knew anything of educational methods or had any special talent for teaching. He therefore requested the appointment of properly-trained educationalists both for the Seminary and for the oversight of the schools.<sup>(46)</sup> His outspokenness and zeal upset his colleagues but his reforms were carried through.<sup>(47)</sup> J. A. Mader took over the position of school inspector after the departure of Auer.

The crown of the Mission's educational scheme was the Seminary, founded with great foresight by Widmann and Dieterle in 1848. Zimmermann had set up a similar catechist-training school at Christiansborg (later removed to Abokobi) which was absorbed into the Akropong Seminary in 1856. Here the student was given a thorough grounding in Teaching, Biblical Studies, Homiletics, Music, Church History, English and in the care of a congregation. To some extent, this Predigerseminar as it was called, was modelled on that of the Mission House at Basel in which the missionaries had themselves been trained.<sup>(48)</sup> The teacher training was also given at the Seminary; eventually, the two courses

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(45) Eppler, p.207.

(46) Schlatter, *ibid.* Vol.3. p.97f.

(47) Auer joined the American Episcopal Mission in Liberia and became Bishop of Cape Palmas. He died in 1874.

(48) Schlatter, *ibid.* Vol.1. pp. 246-250.

were combined and the best students were selected for the catechists' course after their teacher's course. Thus by 1870 the Mission's educational system resolved into the form it has maintained for almost a century, "a vital enterprise competently organised and devoutly maintained".<sup>(49)</sup>

The agricultural, commercial and industrial activities of the Mission began during this period, and were the expression of the prevailing view in humanitarian and Christian circles in Europe at the time, namely that proper commerce was one of the best means of promoting civilisation and Christianity in Africa. Trade in agricultural products must take the place of that in slaves while Christian teaching must develop a sense of the dignity and virtue of manual labour and so foster the production of commodities for legitimate commerce. In the case of the Basel Mission on the Gold Coast, however, this aim was never in the forefront of their minds.<sup>(50)</sup> How then did the Mission come to develop one of the largest trading enterprises in the country, to undertake extensive research into possible cash-crops, and to establish workshops for artisan training? The answer lies in the circumstances of the time: there was the necessity of supplying the needs of the Mission in a country where nothing was obtainable locally apart from certain foodstuffs, and where there was no coinage, no transport, no postal system and no roads; secondly, there were no artisans to assist in building operations; thirdly, the Mission was concerned from the beginning to support both the immigrant West Indians and the new Christian groups as much as possible by the sale of agricultural produce. We shall look at these points in turn.

The commercial enterprise of the Mission, which became known as the Basel Mission Trading Factory, arose from the problem of obtaining supplies. So much of the time of the missionaries was consumed in this task that in

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(49) Groves, C.P. *Planting of Christianity in Africa*. Vol. 2, p.228.

(50) Steiner, P. *Kulturarbeit der Basler Mission in Westafrika*, Basel, 1904. passim.

1854 the Committee sent out Hermann Ludwig Rottmann, aged twenty-two, to take control of the Mission's imports and finances. (51) He opened a store in Christiansborg, purchased the coffee grown in Akropong for export, (52) stocked general goods and school materials, and despatched up country the requirements of the various stations. In 1859 the business had flourished so well that it was put under a special Trading Commission established by the Home Board on a share-holding basis. The Missionary Society itself held shares and prominent Basel laymen also subscribed; the profits accruing to the Mission being used in the development of its work. According to the registration notice of the Commission in Basel its aims were to fulfil the requirements of the Mission with European goods, to supply raw materials to the mission workshops and to Christian groups at the most advantageous terms, to promote the welfare of the people by giving an example of Christian industry in honest commerce. (53) In a country where there was little organised commerce the Mission Factory filled a great need; further stores were opened at Ada, Akuse, Accra and ultimately on every main station and the enterprise became a potent factor in the total missionary effort. The European employees of the Trading Factory and at the workshops in Christiansborg were termed 'lay brothers'; they had to be convinced Christians and had a vote at the missionaries' conference. In 1909, as the number of stores grew and the undertaking became a large business, a separation took place in respect of the personnel who were now paid more and ceased to be called missionaries. For fifty years, however the Mission and the Trading Company were part of the one enterprise, the vast majority of the lay brothers setting a fine example of industriousness, moral life and honest trade. (54)

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(51) Raaflaub, F. Zum Hundertjahr-Jubiläum der Basler Handelsgesellschaft. Der Auftrag (Basel Mission Journal), Sept. 1959, pp.105-112.

(52) In 1858 the Akropong coffee plantation contained 5000 bushes. Steiner, *ibid.* p.16.

(53) Raaflaub, *ibid.* p.106. cf. Wanner, G.A: Die Basler Handels-Gesellschaft. A.G. 1859-1959, Basel, 1959. pp.1-677, Chs. I and II. This is the definitive history of the development of the present Trading Company from the Basel Mission Trading Factory. Unfortunately the book is not on public sale.

(54) Raaflaub, *ibid.* p.109. Rottmann spent 42 years on the Gold Coast and died at work in his office in Basel in 1899 at the age of 67. Wanner, *ibid.* p.27-31. J.Binder served the Company on the Coast from 1866-1893.

In addition to the Trading Commission, an Industry Commission was formed which made itself responsible for the organisation of artisan training. After 1858, workshops were erected at Christiansborg for the training of Africans; attempts were made at shoemaking, bookbinding, pottery and basketry but finally the workshops concentrated on training joiners, carpenters, blacksmiths and masons. Africans trained at Christiansborg were much in demand and were found eventually practising their craft all along the West Coast.<sup>(55)</sup> After learning their trade, many men returned to their villages to set up little workshops of their own. During the Sagrenti War of 1874 many Africans from the workshops, and from the Mission in general, saw service with the Expeditionary Force under Captain Glover and earned great praise.<sup>(56)</sup> The apprentices were trained for three years and were paid from one shilling and sixpence to six shillings a week; no Government assistance was received by the Mission for this work, although it was the only effective technical training being done in the Colony at the time.<sup>(57)</sup>

From the time of the arrival of the West Indians at Akropong strenuous efforts were made to find a cash-crop suitable to the soil and climate. The immigrants brought with them coffee, cocoa, tobacco, cocoyam, the mango, the avocado pear and bread fruit, of which coffee was the first to succeed. Between 1857 and 1878 agriculturalists from Basel set up what may be termed a 'farm-school' with the object of training Africans in the scientific cultivation of the soil and for experimentation with as many crops and fruit trees as possible. Practically everything was tried which might become a

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(55) J.B. 1868, 1871, 1875. Steiner, *ibid.* p.9. The King of Bonny, George Pepple, as well as the English Resident in Lagos requested the Basel Mission to begin similar training in their districts.

(56) A Letter from the British Foreign Office to the President of the Swiss Confederation dated 12th May, 1874, concerning these Africans from the Mission said: "They provided first-rate mechanics such as armourers, blacksmiths, farriers, carpenters, shoemakers and signallers and sent into the field ten companies of men who did good service, and, as Christian soldiers, presented a striking contrast to their pagan comrades". Cited by Wanner, *ibid.* p.572.

(57) Basel Mission Report, 1900 (English edition), p.33.

cash-crop or be of special food value; gum arabic, rice and tobacco succeeded for a time but coffee was the stand-by, followed by cotton in the Anum district, until in the 1890's everything gave way to cocoa.<sup>(58)</sup> Although official recognition is given to Tetteh Quarshie as the introducer of cocoa to the Gold Coast, the crop which became responsible for the major part of the wealth of the country and which brought about a social revolution, it is clear that it was first grown at Akropong by the Basel missionaries. In 1858, over twenty years before Tetteh Quarshie came from Fernando Po with cocoa seeds, Johannes Haas, the first mission-agriculturalist, reported that cocoa beans which he had obtained from Suriman, had died. J.J. Lang received seeds from Auer in Cape Palmas and in 1868 he stated that he had a small cocoa plantation in existence.<sup>(59)</sup>

The profits from the trading side of the Mission helped to subsidise new mission houses, schools and churches, the artisan-training, the development of agriculture, and road-building.<sup>(60)</sup> Much money went into the construction of the first proper road from Christiansborg to Odumase-Krobo via the Akwapim Ridge. A branch to the Volta was begun but not completed. Elias Schrenk tried to collect funds in England to help to pay for the road (after a petition to the Governor had been refused) but with little success. Until 1874 therefore, when the Gold Coast became a Colony, the Basel Mission bore the financial burden of the maintenance of this road.<sup>(61)</sup>

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(58) Steiner, *ibid.* pp.14-17. J.B. 1858.

(59) Wanner, *ibid.* pp. 208-216. Cocoa was tried on other stations and pods were supplied to African Christians, particularly by A. Mohr in Akim.

(60) Steiner, P. *Kulturversuche der Basler Mission auf der Goldküste*, M.M. 1902, pp. 133-153. Fischer, F. *Kulturelle Wandlungen an der Goldküste*, (Geograph-Commerciellen Gesellschaft, St. Gallen) 1911, pp. 29-30.

(61) Steiner, *Kulturarbeit*, pp. 13-14. Schlatter, *ibid.* Vol.3, pp.88-89. The Christiansborg workshop made wheeled carts which were very popular but all the draught animals tried succumbed to the tsetse fly.

The commercial and industrial activity continued unabated until the first World War so that the Mission became without doubt the largest, and in the eastern area of the Gold Coast, the only agency working for the development of the people and the country. Until 1874, the Government made scarcely any effort in these spheres. (62) No wonder Zimmermann made an impassioned appeal for German settlers who would, in God's Name, make the land flourish and blossom and give an example to the Africans of Christian civilisation! (63) Writing in 1912, Sir John Harris could say: "The results of the Mission's work can be seen all over the Colony; the polite native clerks, the managers of stores, the English-speaking planters, the coloured Government officials have nearly all of them received their training at the Basel Mission School, and the Acting Governor.....does not hesitate to recognise that his best officials have been produced by the Mission. Testimony of this nature is unhappily seldom forthcoming from other colonies.....The commercial department is certainly one of the most profitable enterprises in the Colony, and the stores of the Mission are crowded with purchasers throughout the day.....Whatever the actual financial position of the Basel Mission, its general business operations, splendid educational institutions, its devoutly spiritual atmosphere, combine in forming one of the greatest - if not the greatest - force for progress in the Gold Coast Colony. But the price has to be paid, for, according to the report of the Acting Governor, 'the highest death-rate was again among the missionaries' ". (64)

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(62) Fischer, *ibid.* pp. 17-18, 19-22, 25.

(63) M.M. 1877, p. 225ff. *Mein Letztes Wort*. He despairs of the English calling them 'proud and reserved islanders'. His plans were to set up a Swabian farming community near Abokobi. After Steinhauser's death the Home Board withdrew their permission for the scheme.

(64) Harris, J.H. *Dawn in Darkest Africa*, London, 1912, pp.285-6. cf. Henty, G.A. *The March to Coomassie*, London, 1874. "The establishment (sc. the Basel Mission Factory at Accra) is a large one, and a good many people were at work boiling down oil, and repairing and heading-up cast iron. It was the largest merchantile business I had seen...and the shop or store was by far the best supplied.....I believe that there are some schools and chapels in connection with the Mission, and that converts are made. This I know not; but I can answer that the Basel Mission are energetic traders and storekeepers". Quoted in Wolfson, p.165.

Gospel, school, trade and spade had begun a social revolution. We can understand that, to the native mind, to become a Christian meant a completely new way of life: settling on Mission land, being incorporated into a new community detached from the old, adopting new social customs, building a better house, being able to purchase commodities from Western Europe, sending one's children to school where they acquired skills which found them clerical and artisan posts with the Mission or with the Government.

So much had been achieved that the Basel Mission felt especially concerned for the political stability of the country, a problem which was bound up with the constant pressure of Ashanti upon the coastal tribes. After the second Ashanti invasion of the coastal area in 1863, which cost Britain much in money and human lives, opinion in Government circles in England veered towards the idea of giving up the Gold Coast altogether. Although the Ashantis withdrew across the Pra river the campaign constituted a triumph for them. <sup>(65)</sup> The British Government set up a Select Committee of the House of Commons in 1865 to hear evidence from civil servants, army officers, traders and missionaries and to consider the report of Colonel Ord who had been appointed in the previous year to visit the four West African colonies. <sup>(66)</sup> At this time, Elias Schrenk <sup>(67)</sup> was on leave soliciting money from well-wishers in England (mainly in Quaker circles) for the completion of the road which the Mission had begun. The Home Board at once instructed him to represent the interests of the Mission and to plead for the continuance of England's control. Schrenk travelled widely putting his views to a number of leading people including Members of Parliament who were known to be particularly interested in missions and in colonial development. He prepared

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(65) Ward, *ibid.* pp.215-6.

(66) Ward, pp. 232-3.

(67) Steiner, P. Elias Schrenk als Missionar und Evangelist, Basel, 1919, *passim.*

a Memorandum which was circulated to all Members of Parliament and to the Select Committee which the then Colonial Secretary, Edward Cardwell, afterwards referred to as the most pertinent and best-informed that the Committee had received. <sup>(68)</sup> Schrenk appeared before the Committee and made a great impression by his statement of the needs of the country and the ways in which Britain could fulfil them.

His Memorandum illustrates the wide concern of the Basel Mission at that time for the development of commerce as a means towards the improvement of the social life of the people. He speaks often of the task of both the missionary and the Government as one of bringing 'Christian civilisation' to the country and refers to England's particular duty in strong terms: "England owes her favoured position among the nations to the providence of God, and as an evangelical country she has received special divine commission among the uncivilised peoples. For three centuries the English and other European nations have brought much evil upon Africa. It is now the duty of England especially to make amends for the wrong to that country....It would be an injustice to give up the Gold Coast in the present state of disorder in which it finds itself since the Ashanti War. The British Government is therefore responsible for ensuring that peaceful relations are restored between the neighbouring tribes, before it has the right even to discuss giving up the Protectorate".

Elsewhere Schrenk remarks that for the Mission the British proposal to give up the Gold Coast was a life and death question; although British rule left much to be desired the only alternative was a country overrun by the Ashantis and the destruction of everything that had so far been achieved. <sup>(69)</sup>

(68) Raaflaub, F. Ein wichtiges Dokument aus der Geschichte der Goldküste, M.M. Feb. 1958, pp.28-40. The memorandum is printed here in a German translation. A copy in English is in the Basel Mission archives, entitled, 'What shall become of the Gold Coast?' (London, 97 Hatton Gardens, Jan. 1865).

(69) Schrenk, E. Ein Leben im Kampf um Gott, Stuttgart, 1936, p.95.



Thus by 1870, in the Akwapim and Ga areas, the Mission had become firmly established, and with the assurance of the continuance of British control, confirmed by the promulgation of the new Colony of the Gold Coast and Lagos in 1874, it could look forward to a period of expansion of its activities. Before this could take place, however, the Mission had to wait for a solution of the vexing problem of Ashanti aggression. In continuing the story, it is necessary at this point to look at the religious and social life of the Akan forest peoples and to discuss both the attitude of the missionaries towards it and the impact of Christianity upon it. What was the nature of the religious and social world which the missionaries encountered, and why did they make no attempt to 'fuse' Christianity with it but rather to emphasise the distinction of the new Christian groups from the wider community? The missionaries came into contact with a people who lived in closely-knit communities based on kinship and whose life was built upon a closely-woven pattern of rights and obligations, the whole grounded in a belief in a unified spirit-filled world. On the other hand, the primary appeal of the Gospel was to the individual and its aim was to secure personal conversion to a saving faith in Christ. Thus for the African to respond meant breaking in some degree from his group-life, "an act which he had never before contemplated the possibility of doing". (70) It is the argument of the following chapters that, in their preoccupation with the worst outward features of Akan religion and custom, the missionaries failed to apprehend the essential socio-religious unity of the life of the people.

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(70) Smith, E.W. The Golden Stool, London, 1930, p.256.

## Chapter IV.

### The Akan Traditional World-View.

The Akan religious and social world which the missionaries encountered; the 'abusua' or kindred group; kindred-consciousness; the tribe and the ancestors; birth, puberty, marriage and funeral customs; Akan views of human nature; the world of the dead; ancestor veneration and remembrance; the 'stool' and its significance; the traditional festivals and their meaning; the Adaye and the Odwira; a communal life lived in a spirit-filled world; the Supreme God; Mother Earth; the abosom or intermediary spirits; the abosom priests; amulets and charms; magic and medicine; witchcraft; increase in witchcraft belief a concomitant of social change; the Akan expression of witchcraft.

#### CHAPTER IV.

##### The Traditional Akan World-View.

One of the great gains from the studies of anthropologists and sociologists in Ghana during the last thirty years has been the increased insight into the nature of the Akan way of life. We are indebted to Rattray, Field, Busia and others for showing us the unity of Akan social life and religion and for illustrating the way in which the phenomena of social custom and religious life are determined by the way in which the Akan regards the world and the life of man within it. The advent of Christianity and the adoption of the Christian faith by many Africans have not changed the traditional world-view, and it is this fact that has given rise to many of the problems which beset the Christian Church today. The available evidence from Bowdich, Reindorf, Cruickshank and Reade as well as from the missionaries of the period shows that Akan religion and the organisation of social life have changed little during the past century.<sup>(1)</sup> At this point then, with the Mission well-established and with its influence growing, we enquire into the nature of the Akan religious and social world which the missionaries encountered. Their attitude towards it forms the subject of a subsequent chapter.

The basis of Akan society is religious and the foundation of Akan religion is social. The whole political and social organisation is inextricably interlocked with religion, and at its heart lies the 'abusua', the clan or kindred group. The smallest social unit comprises the man, his wife or wives of a different abusua from their husband, and their children. As this unit grows, the lineage ties are closely kept, and the

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(1) The main sources which I have used are listed in Appendix L.

'extended -family', as it is often termed, retains its unity and coherence. Among the Akan peoples the chief characteristic of the abusua is that the children belong to the mother's lineage, so that the mother-child relationship as well as that between siblings by the same mother is profoundly strong.<sup>(2)</sup> The relationship of the members of the abusua depends upon the common descent from the mother, and as the abusua derives its origin from the woman, both right of succession and inheritance run through the female line.<sup>(3)</sup> The woman is the link between one generation and another as the transmitter of the blood, and although the father is the one who begets the child and gives to it its spirit or character, his family position is seemingly anomalous. He has to care for his immediate family and children but because the children belong to his wife's abusua he looks to his sister's sons and daughters as his own successors and the perpetuators of his blood. He has his own abusua, that of his mother.<sup>(4)</sup>

The children thus often spend long periods with their mother's mother or brother, and the wife, who does not inherit from her husband, never loses her connection with her own abusua. The consciousness of belonging to this wider family through one's mother is complete and all-embracing; the abusua exists as a 'greater' family and each individual member finds his support and strength in and through it. Whatever he wishes to do in life, the Akan turns to his abusua for help; kindred-consciousness is the most important fact in his life.<sup>(5)</sup>

The abusua includes not only the living, but also the dead and the unborn. The most important rites and ceremonies are therefore those

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- (2) Cf. the Twi proverb: *Wo na oba ne wo nua*, 'Your mother's child is your real brother or sister'. Akrofi, C. *Twi Proverbs*, London, 1958, no.650.  
(3) Busia, K.A. *African Worlds*, London, 1954, pp.196-7.  
(4) Field, M.J. *Search for Security*, London, 1960, p.27.  
(5) Ringwald, W. *Religion der Akanstämme*, pp. 108-109.

concerned with birth, naming the child, puberty, marriage, death and the veneration of the ancestors; by the correct observation of these events the life and prosperity of the clan are preserved. This is the basic 'religion of life' of the Akan. "Although these events are personal events....the customs relating to them are social customs....These customs which may be enjoined by religious sanctions or explained by reference to the context of belief are mainly concerned with the solidarity of the kinship structures that forms the basis of our community life". (6)

At the tribal level, the same principle hold good; the chief and the elders are responsible to the ancestors for the well-being of the larger group and this they fulfil by the regular observation of the Adaye and Odwira ceremonies. All religion and life revolve around these two points: the indissoluble bond linking the abusua and the tribe in life and in death with the ancestors in the world beyond, and the concern for abundant life in this world expressed in terms of 'increase', of children, of crops and of goods. The 'sins' of this religion are to neglect the ancestors, to upset the right balance of reciprocal duties and obligations, or in any way to endanger the life and well-being of the group.

The 'rites de passage' are celebrated on this background. A pregnant woman is careful to observe all the taboos, both of her own and that of her husband's abusua, during the waiting period, as she is very vulnerable to evil influences at this time. (7) Infidelity on the part of the woman must be

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(6) Nketia, J.H. Christianity and African Culture, p.37.

(7) The word 'taboo' has been much misunderstood. Some are derived from the totem animal of the clan and others from a particular harmful event or object. Among the Akan the majority come under the heading of 'laws', the 'oman akwiwade', i.e. 'things hateful to the tribe'. Such things are: murder, suicide, incest, adultery, abuse, assault, stealing, cursing the chief, treason, cowardice and witchcraft. These acts, as in any society, are inimical to the life of the group. Cf. Rattray, R.S. Ashanti Law and Constitution, London, 1929. Chs. 26-31.

immediately confessed, if miscarriage or her death or both, are to be avoided. It is considered a calamity for a mother to die in childbirth and if this should happen she must on no account be buried with the child in the womb. Just before interment the child is removed from the mother's body and the two are buried separately.<sup>(8)</sup> "Normal delivery then is an event of joy for the mother and in particular her kith and kin... Should a mother lose her baby, she is encouraged to forget about it..... parents are advised not to mourn, but to eat and appear undisturbed lest they encourage a repetition of the event".<sup>(9)</sup>

After the birth, the father is officially informed and there then ensues a waiting period of eight days before the naming ceremony takes place. During this time the mother and child remain indoors; on the eighth day, it is concluded that the child has 'come to stay' and the public welcome and naming are accorded to it, either on that day or subsequently. To this 'outdooing' and naming-ceremony come the relatives and friends of both families, usually early in the morning; libations are poured and prayers are addressed to the ancestors for a blessing on all present and in particular upon the newcomer.<sup>(10)</sup> Presents are given to the child, and usually the father, the father's father, or an older male from the paternal side bestows the name on the newly-born child. All Akans automatically bear the name of the day of the week on which they were born, and in addition, at the outdooing ceremony, they are given other names either commemorating a forbear or indicating a special relationship.<sup>(11)</sup> Thus the

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(8) Rattray, Religion and Art, p.58. Field, *ibid.* p.122. D. Brokensha gives a vivid instance in his unpublished ms. 'Christianity and Change at Larteh', 1960, p.10.

(9) Nketia, *ibid.*, p.26.

(10) Nketia, *ibid.* p.27.

(11) For example, the Twi word for Tuesday is Benada; a boy is therefore called Kwabena, a girl, Abena. A child may bear a numerical name to denote its sequence among the children: 'Baako' (one), 'Mensa', (three), 'Anan', (four) 'Adu' (ten). A baby bearing a strong resemblance to a deceased ancestor may be called 'Ababio', lit. 'he has come again'. Twins are always designated 'Atta'.

naming is a significant family affair by which the child is accorded its specific place in the abusua.

Among the Akan, puberty customs are celebrated as a rule only for girls; there are no analogous rites for adolescent boys. The emphasis in the celebrations is upon the public proclamation of the fact of the first menstruation, together with the performance of symbolic purification and fertility customs. The girl is ceremonially bathed, dressed in fine clothes and, seated on a white stool in her own home, she receives gifts and congratulations from visitors. She will later, probably accompanied by other adolescent girls, parade the town in her finery. (12) In this way the entire community is made aware of the occasion; the girl is ready for marriage and may now play her part in the continuation of descent and in the expansion of the kinship group. (13)

It is a truism to say that marriage among the Akan is a social contract; it vitally concerns two abusua and takes place only after careful preliminary negotiations. (14) Little has said: "The purpose of marriage is conceived of as economic and procreative rather than as a union of man and wife, and the modern idea of marital partnership is in direct conflict with the primary obligations of both spouses which are to their respective kinsfolk". (15) The man usually takes the first step by indicating his choice of bride to his own family and when they are satisfied as to the advisability of associating with the wished-for bride's family, negotiations are entered into. The formalities vary among the Akan tribes but the following are generally observed: the courtship payment made by the man's father to the woman's father restraining the latter from giving his daughter

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(12) Nketia, *ibid.* p.31.

(13) Ringwald, *ibid.* p.110.

(14) Rattray, *Religion and Art*, p.78f.

Fortes, M. *Kinship and Marriage among the Ashanti*, London, 1950, pp.278-9.

(15) Little, K.L. *Some Patterns of Marriage and Domesticity in West Africa*, p.77.

to another man should the formalities be delayed; the so-called bride-price (*tiri nsa*) which is paid in cash to the head of the bride's lineage and which renders the union regular; the formalities of the presentation of palm wine or gin, the pouring of libation and the invocation of ancestral help.

After marriage, the wife may live for a time with her husband in his family home but when a child is expected the young wife tends to return to her mother's home for a protracted period. Bi-local residence is often thus sooner or later established.

In Akan society polygyny is permitted, but generally speaking, apart from chiefs and wealthy men, successive monogamy or bigamy is the rule. Wealth determines the number of wives a man takes, and the first wife is always the most important; to have additional wives is not only a sign of prosperity but also means an increase in the number of helpers in the family and on the farm, as well as a greater number of descendants. (16)

Adultery is common and is punished by the payment of damages (*ayefare*) to the offended party. (17) Divorce is also common although it is not so easily effected as is sometimes thought because it involves the families. In almost all cases of divorce, arbitrators within the families sit to determine whose fault is the greater; if it is the man's, the bride-payment is forfeited, if the woman's, the money is returned. The commonest grounds for divorce are barrenness, sterility, adultery, witchcraft and incompatibility, of which the last-named is the most frequent. (18)

Between the sexes there is a fairly exact division of spheres of activity: the woman, assisted by the children, does the cooking, fetching water, collecting firewood, growing foodstuffs and petty-trading; the man's work lies mainly in clearing the forest for planting, laying out the food farm

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(16) Ringwald, *ibid.* p.110-111.

(17) Rattray, *Ashanti Law*, pp.317-323.

(18) Rattray, *Religion and Art*, pp. 97-98.



and house-building. They rarely eat together, hold no joint property and often, as we have noted, do not live in the same house. Such property or wealth as a married woman may possess is hers and hers alone, and through her, her family's. Neither man nor wife inherit from each other.

The occasion of death brings every member of the abusua together.<sup>(19)</sup> To the Akan, all departed members of the family, clan and tribe are still in a real sense members of it; the one who has just left to join the ancestors in the unseen world is therefore a very important person at this time, however insignificant a member of the abusua he may have been during his lifetime.<sup>(20)</sup> Thus the funeral celebration is one of the most important, if not the most important, event in the life of the abusua. The various activities which take place at the funeral and which concern all the living members of the family, all relatives and friends, and often the entire community, are bound up with the Akan view of the soul and of the life after death.

To the Akan, human nature is made up of three parts: the okra or soul, the honhom or sunsum, the spirit or character, and the nipadua or bodily frame. The soul is the real individuality of the person and is considered as a separate entity: "it protects him, gives him good or bad advice, causes his undertakings to prosper or slights and neglects him";<sup>(21)</sup> it can leave the body temporarily during sleep and be attacked by witches. When the okra permanently leaves the body, the person dies; the sunsum then wastes away but may return to earth as an oseman or 'ghost', a disembodied spirit. The okra returns to the world of departed souls and is capable of influencing the living members of the abusua for good or for evil. The nipadua or body, rots in the grave and

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(19) Field, M.J. Akim Kotoku, London, 1948, p.138.

(20) Nketia, *ibid*, p.35.

(21) Christaller, Dictionary, p.262.

becomes one with the earth. (22)

The world of the dead is a long way off and is a replica of this world: the ancestors are there, the chiefs, elders and heads of families, and the grouping into clans and abusua is similar. (23) Hence, when chiefs and important men were buried, slaves, favourite wives and others were killed to accompany them. "It was incumbent upon those left on earth to see that the king entered the spirit-world with a retinue befitting his high station". (24) Human sacrifice, which struck Europeans as so terrible and as a vivid example of the degradation of the Akan, was not a lust for blood-shedding for its own sake; no person of the highest rank could be buried without attendants. Capital punishment was not frequent; it was the penalty for carefully-regulated offences, and in Ashanti could only be inflicted by the Ashanti King and by other paramount chiefs. (25) At the ordinary family level there was no human sacrifice although great care was taken over the funeral in order to maintain good relations with the ancestors.

Nketia distinguishes five phases in the Akan funeral: the preparation, the pre-burial mourning (including the lying-in-state and keeping wake), the actual burial, the after-burial mourning, and the subsequent periodic remembrance. (26) All the reports of funerals from European observers emphasise the 'frightful' accompaniments of the celebration: the firing of guns, the drumming and dancing, the wailing and 'keening', and the drunkenness. (27) It seemed to them the complete antithesis of the Christian attitude and the

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- (22) Nimako, S.G. *The Christian and Funerals*, Cape Coast, 1954, p.46ff. The verb 'kra' means 'to take leave of', 'to send on an errand', 'to send to', 'to predestinate'. 'Sunsum' is connected with 'shadow' and 'shade', and 'nonhom' with 'breath'. (Christaller, ad loc.)
- (23) Nimako, *ibid.* pp.50-51. Cf. Christaller, *Dictionary*, p.423, 'Asaman', the world of the dead. The word 'asaman' is used to translate the phrase in the Apostles' Creed, 'he descended into hell'.
- (24) Rattray, *Religion and Art*, pp.105-112. Bowdich, *ibid.* pp.232-238. Freeman, *ibid.* p.24 and p.53.
- (25) Rattray, *Ashanti Law*, pp. 299-316.
- (26) Nketia, J.H. *Funeral Dirges of the Akan people*, Achimota, 1955, p.6.
- (27) Bowdich, *ibid.* pp.232-237, Schletter, *ibid.* Vol.3. p.129. Cruickshank, B. *Eighteen Years on the Gold Coast*, London, 1853, ('Funeral Rites'), quoted in Wolfson, *Pageant of Ghana*, pp.140-142.

ultimate expression of pagan despair yet all these elements of the celebrations had meaning in Akan terms. Even the drunkenness, while it is deplored, must be seen in its proper context. Rattray remarks: "Much of the intoxication noticed by Europeans...at funerals, is due to the fact that those participating have been fasting for long periods, so that even a little liquor soon goes to the head...No people in the world is more cognizant of the evils of alcoholic excess than the Ashanti". (28)

The corpse is washed, dressed in its best garments, laid in state, and is then visited by all relatives and friends. The second stage of the funeral begins with the re-assembly of all the mourners accompanied by the wailing of the women. "From without, one hears nothing but a confused din as each mourner tries to outst the other in loudness and as the sorrow of members of the household grows in intensity. Friends and sympathisers flock in to greet the bereaved mourners. They may join in the funeral wail, each at her own pleasure. From among the confused noises will be heard the voice of many a woman mourner singing a dirge in pulsating tones in honour of the dead or his ancestors or some other person whose loss she is reminded of by the present death". (29) During this period, the house and yard is thronged with people who exchange greetings and join in general conversation; there may be drumming, dancing, the firing of guns and the pouring of libation, depending upon the life status of the deceased. Articles needed by the dead person on the journey to the next world, such as items of clothing, sponge and towel, small sums of money and other treasured personal possessions, are placed in the coffin and the lid is fastened. Dirges and songs are sung on the way to the

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(28) Rattray, Ashanti - Quoted in Wolfson, *ibid.* p.212-3.

(29) Nketia, *ibid.* p.8.

grave where libation is poured and the burial takes place. The post-interment mourning may continue for a day or more. The last stage of the funeral is the periodic remembrance or 'tue ayi' which is, in effect, a repetition of the funeral celebration at stated intervals.<sup>(30)</sup> In an ordinary family, this will be done once and will start with wake-keeping and include, where appropriate, the observance of mourning customs by the widow or widows.<sup>(31)</sup> The motive behind the repetition of the funeral seems to be to make sure that no ritual element has been left undone so that the danger of misfortune brought about by the displeasure of the deceased may be averted.<sup>(32)</sup>

These transition rites take place on a background of ancestor veneration and remembrance; the awareness of departed members of the abusua, the clan and the tribe, conditions all that is done and said on these occasions. "It is believed that success and prosperity in this life depend on the favour of the ancestors....They are believed to be constantly watching over their living relatives".<sup>(33)</sup> The reverence for the ancestors usually takes the form of pouring libation, of offering food and drink to the stools, and in calling upon the ancestors for help. "Each lineage has its blackened stool which is the shrine of its ancestors. On this shrine the head of the lineage at the appropriate seasons offers food and drink to the ancestors, praying that they may protect the members of the lineage, bless them with health and long life, that the women may bear children, and that the farms may yield food in plenty".<sup>(34)</sup> In general, the ancestors are thought of as benevolent; they are only feared if it is felt that serious sickness, miscarriages or sterility within the family, have been brought about by an

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(30) Christaller, Dictionary, p.541.

(31) Nimako, *ibid.* pp. 63-4, 78.

(32) Ringwald, *ibid.* pp.66-8.

(33) Busia, *African Worlds*, p.201.

(34) Busia, *ibid.* pp.201-2.

ancestor who felt himself neglected.

The focus of ancestor veneration is the 'stool'. This is in fact a low wooden seat carved out of one piece of wood according to a specific design but the stool also symbolises the identity, unity and continuity of the group and it is these feelings which are fostered by the annual festivals. (35) While 'to sit on the stool' indicates political power, the chief also represents the ancestors and as such he links the living and the dead. The stool and all that it stands for is the 'soul' of the people. Every paramount chief, clan chief, town or village head, and abusua head possesses a stool. At his death this white-wood stool is placed on his grave for a week and is afterwards blackened with a mixture of spirits, soot, leaves, egg yolks and gunpowder, and the blood of a slaughtered sheep is smeared over it. (36) The stool then bears the name of the ancestor and is carefully cherished in a special 'stool-house' with other ancestral stools, to be shown only on festival days when offerings are made to the spirits of the ancestors they enshrine. (37) The sentiments surrounding the stool, and the veneration of the ancestors are regularly fostered in the Aday and Odwira ceremonies; the former takes place at intervals of twenty-one days, the latter is the great annual harvest and purification festival which lasts for ten days in August or September and marks the beginning of a new year. (38)

An adae day is a dies nefasti, a 'da bone', an inauspicious day for work on the farm or for undertaking any enterprise. (39) On this day, the chief and some of his elders enter the stool house and invoke the ancestral

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(35) Rattray, Religion and Art, pp.272-3.

(36) Christaller, *ibid.* p.211.

(37) Busia, *ibid.* p.202.

(38) The Akan tribes vary in the degree of their attachment to the Odwira. The Ashanti tend to stress the Aday although, according to Bowdich, the Odwira once had pride of place. The Odwira is the most important festival in Akim And Akwapim.

(39) Busia, *ibid.* p.202.

blessing to make the earth fruitful and to enrich the tribe with children.

As they offer the mashed yam to the stools they say:

"Today is Adae; come and receive this and eat;

Let the tribe prosper; let those of child-bearing age bear children;

May all the people prosper; long life to the tribe;

Long life to us all". (40)

A sheep is killed, some of the blood is smeared on the stools, raw meat is offered and the invocation is made; libation is poured and the ceremony concludes with drumming. The great fontomfrom ('talking') drums boom out the 'strong names' and appellations of the chief: he is the valiant one, the benefactor of the tribe. "The ruling chief may not deserve these appellations, but his ancestors did, and it is as their representative that he is thus addressed and extolled.....it is the ancestors who are recalled at the Adae ceremony; it is they whom the tribe seeks to propitiate in order that it may receive a blessing from them". (41)

The Odwira ceremony also honours the ancestors but is essentially a combination of thanksgiving for the harvest of the new yam and a 'cleansing' of the ancestral stools and the people. (42) On each day of the festival certain significant events take place: the royal burial place is visited, the fresh yam is ceremoniously brought into the town, there is a day of mourning and fasting when the dead are remembered followed by a day when mashed yam is offered to the ancestral spirits and libation is poured. (43) At Akropong a typical libation prayer or invocation to the ancestors is uttered by the chief stool custodian as he pours out water upon the ground: "Elders, here is water;

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(40) Busia, Christianity and African Culture, p.21.

(41) Busia, African Worlds. p.203.

(42) The word 'dwira' has two root meanings: 'to strike against, to sprinkle', and 'to cleanse, to sanctify'. (Christaller, ad.loc.)

(43) Safori Fianko: Twifo Amanmuise, London, 1955. pp.32-36.  
Akuffo, B.S. Ahemfi Adesua, privately printed 1950, passim.

elders, here is water. Are you listening? We are not offering this water on account of anything evil but rather because the new year has come round and the chief and his elders are calling upon you and everyone to eat".<sup>(44)</sup> Friday is the great durbar day when the state chief is carried in a palanquin through the chief town and later, as he sits in state, he receives the homage of the district chiefs and of his people. There is great rejoicing, drumming and dancing among all citizens who make every endeavour to be present at this time. On the next Sunday, an Aday day, the chief and the stools are washed ceremonially and 'purified' at a nearby stream, the invocation again indicating the underlying significance of the act: "As the year has come round I invoke you (sc. the ancestors) and sprinkle water on you. Cleanse our possessions and protect them all".<sup>(45)</sup> The Odwira is completed for another year; the tribe is cleansed in its relationship with the ancestors whose favour assists in sustaining its life.

The mainspring of Akan life is thus communal: it is based upon the welfare of the community and its chief concern is with all that prospers communal life, a concern in which the ancestors play a vital part. At the same time, the Akan lives in a spirit-filled world: there is the Great Spirit, the supreme God; the lesser spirits which animate natural objects; and the spirits of the ancestors. These two strands in Akan life constantly interact; the basic concern for the life of the abusua and the tribe, and the spirit-filled world in which this life is lived. Busia expresses it succinctly in the following words: "Social values and filial and parental bonds are thus given meaning within the Ashanti system of belief. Man as a biological being inherits his blood from his mother; this gives him status and membership within the lineage, the clan and the tribe, and his rights and

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(45) Akuffo, *ibid.* p.150. cf. Rattray, *Religion and Art.* p.138.

obligations as a citizen; moreover...the concept of a life hereafter and of a spirit world, and the consequent worship of the ancestors, provides a religious link and an unbroken continuity with all one's matrikin". (46)

All this seems to have little to do with what the European would term religion; there is scant reference to God or even to the lesser spirits or obosom. The popular view of a development from animism by way of polytheism to monotheism seems to be disproved among the Akan who show rather a falling away from an earlier close attachment to the Supreme Being. (47) Christaller long ago observed: "According to native tradition Onyame was, in ancient times, worshipped by all the Tshi tribes; but in the course of the centuries this cult was superseded by that of the asamanfo and the abosom, and in our days, the influence of Nyame upon the religious, moral or social life of the people is quite insignificant". (48)

The Supreme God, however, is known but he is far removed from men and although the name Nyame is often on the lips of people in current speech and in folk tales there is little or no indigenous worship of him. (49) The appellations of Nyame indicate his nature: he is the 'boundless one', (Odomankoma) the one who 'hews out and fashions', (Borebore); the one who 'satisfies', (Omaomee); 'he who gives sun and rain in abundance', (Amowia, Totorobonsu); 'he who supports', (Tweadumpon). (50) The missionaries selected the praise-name Nyankopon, 'the only great Nyame', as the one that best seemed to express the Christian idea of God. (51) Christaller's large collection of proverbs shows

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(46) Busia, *ibid.* pp.199-200.

(47) This is clearly brought out by Ringwald, *op.cit.* pp.115-117.

(48) Christaller, *ibid.* p.598.

(49) The word 'Nyame' means 'shining' and 'bright' and is also the word for 'sky' or 'heaven' understood as the exterior, so to speak of Nyame. Christaller *ad.loc.*

(50) Christaller, *Dictionary*, at these references.

(51) *African Ideas of God*, ed. E.W.Smith, p.247. H.St.J. Evans makes here the suggestion that as the personal name of Nyankopon is Kwame (from Memenede, Saturday) the fervent use of 'Amen' in Church services is really in the native mind an ascription of praise to Nyankopon.



a deep understanding of God as one who ordains the fate and destiny of men and who is the source of all life. (52) There are references to the so-called Nyame-dua, (God's tree), in the compounds of family houses, a forked pole which supported a pot containing offerings to Nyame, (53) and to rare shrines with their attendant priests in honour of Nyame, (54) but it is clear that this Almighty Creator, the source of all goodness and life, was not worshipped. (55)

Nor is there any evidence of a cult of the Earth Spirit or Mother Earth, (Asase Yaa), who, although widely referred to, has no priests, priestesses or shrines. (56) Even so, the co-operation of Mother Earth, with her power to sustain and to destroy life, must be enlisted before planting, building, digging a grave, making a new farm in the forest or purchasing or leasing land. To this end, on these occasions libation is poured and animal blood is shed together with the appropriate invocation. Busia illustrates the sense of dependence upon the Earth by the famous talking-drum stanza:

"Earth, condolences; Earth, condolences;  
 Earth and dust, the Dependable One, I lean upon you.  
 Earth, when I am about to die, I lean upon you.  
 Earth, while I am alive, I depend upon you...." (57)

Most popular religion, however, has reference to the intermediary spirits called abosom. The singular form of the word is obosom which Christaller defines as a 'tutelar or guardian spirit of a town or family! (58)

(52) Christaller, J.G. A Collection of 3600 Tshi Proverbs, Basel, 1879, passim.

(53) Christaller, Dictionary, p.357.

(54) Ringwald, *ibid.* p.26-7.

(55) Busia, *African Worlds*, p.192f.

(56) Busia, *ibid.* p.195. In the same way as Onyankopon is given the appellation 'Kwame' (Saturday), the Earth (Asase) always bears the female name 'Yaa'

(57) Busia, *ibid.* p.195. (Thursday)

(58) Christaller, *ibid.* p.43.

These abosom have been incorrectly termed 'fetishes', a word which would be better restricted, if used at all, to asuman, charms or talismans. The abosom may dwell in a river, a tree, a rock or in an altar-shrine and are served by akomfo (priests) who have the power to invoke the spirits and through whom the oracles of the spirits are delivered. In time of sickness and other calamities the priest is consulted and during an ecstatic possession -fit he is able to reveal the reason for and the cure for the trouble. (59)

Christaller and others distinguish between three types of abosom: those associated with a particular tribe or locality such as the Tano river in Ashanti, the Pra river in Fanti, Krobo Hill, the Sakumo lagoon and Lake Bosomtwe; family abosom which belong to a specific abusua; and the akomfo abosom which are usually shrines in forest groves or in small forest hamlets and which are resorted to by people in distress. (60)

The abosom have power for good and evil; they know men's hearts and they are able to expose and kill witches as well as those who plot evil. They are not present everywhere but because they are incorporeal spirits they may be quickly invoked although great care must be exercised not to offend them. They are cunning and unpredictable and while they may be the occasion of good fortune and success they may equally bring mischief and misfortune.

Thus the abosom priests occupy a special position in Akan religious life; they are able to utter during their hysterical possession-fits the word of advice and help. (61) In consequence, the people constantly attend the shrines bringing their offerings of eggs, fowls, sheep or money with their requests for protection, for help in sickness, and for advice in adversity.

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(59) Ringwald, *ibid.* p.41-2.

(60) Christaller, *ibid.* pp.598-9.

(61) Ringwald, *ibid.* p.57.

The concern in consulting the abosom is for life in the physical sense, long and prosperous days on earth free from illness and untimely death. Again and again, in petitions, the word mmusu is heard, a term which covers mischief, misfortune, misery, disaster and calamity, in pleas for the help of the abosom. (62) Mmusu thus covers all the ills that flesh is heir to: illness, death, lack of prosperity, poor harvest and the like, which the abosom spirits can ward off or explain. Constant watchfulness has to be exercised to avert mmusu; life is insecure and is full of unknown dangers and it can only be made tolerable by a security system through which the goodwill of the abosom spirits may be obtained. The abosom are at hand like the ancestors, whereas Onyame is remote and unapproachable. It is the powers of the abosom that directly affect human life, these powers are not personal or friendly but they may choose to be if they are properly approached. They may, on the other hand, themselves cause mmusu.

To a lesser extent, the asuman, amulets and charms, may avert evil and mischief. These may take any form: the hair or teeth of animals, beads, scraps of inscribed leather or paper, human teeth, leaves and shrubs, porcupine quills, feathers and the like. (63) They may be obtained from the priest or from Moslems and are personal to the owner; they operate within the category of sympathetic or symbolic magic and may be either efficacious in working evil or in giving protection against unknown spirit powers. (64) Generally speaking, the words magic and medicine are used to describe both the asuman and the ritual connected with their use. "There is no activity in life", remarks Miss Field, "which cannot be assisted by medicine. A hunter can medicine his gun and his bullets to make them unerring, his dog to make it

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(62) Ringwald, *ibid.* pp.54-56.

(63) Christaller, *ibid.* p.483.

(64) Rattray, *Religion and Art.* pp.23-24.

fleet, himself to make him invisible. A blacksmith can medicine his tools, a fisherman his canoe and nets...." (65) 'Bad' medicine intended to harm others may also be practised and in this connection there is the Twi phrase, 'bo...dua' (to curse) literally 'to strike wood', which describes the rite of drawing a piece of wood into the ground with appropriate imprecations in order to produce a magic effect. (66) The synonyms 'dome' and 'hye nsew' indicate the casting of a spell by cursing or by a malediction. (67) Once this is done accompanied by the appropriate gestures, the curse is effective; 'all acts by spirit upon spirit' to use a favourite phrase of Mary Kingsley.

As all animals, plants and trees have souls great care must be taken to propitiate the spirits of the things a man has been compelled to use, just as Asase Yaa is placated when the earth is disturbed. Thus in felling trees from whose wood drums and stools are carved or in using certain plants for medicinal purposes their indwelling spirits must be propitiated and if possible a new abode provided for the spirit. (68) To the Akan this world is a spiritual arena. Father Tempels refers to the similar widespread Bantu belief in psychic power as 'force, forceful living or vital force', and asserts that in all their religious practices, which often Europeans find difficult to understand, the motive is to acquire vital force, to reinforce life and to ensure its continuity in their descendants. (69) Mary Kingsley expressed the same insight as follows: "The essential thing when you try to understand any Western African native institution is the religion of the native, for this religion has so firm a grasp upon his mind that it influences everything he does.....To be practical, to get on in the world, to live the day and night through, he must be on working terms with the great world of

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(65) Field, M.J. Search for Security, p.40.

(66) Christaller, *ibid.* p.95.

(67) Christaller, *ibid.* p.90.

(68) Busia, African Worlds, p.194.

(69) Tempels, R.P.P. La Philosophie Bantoue, Paris, 1949, p.30.

spirits round him". (70)

To conclude this sketch of Akan religion we turn to the phenomenon of witchcraft. It has been shown by a number of writers that the incidence of witchcraft has increased in Ghana during the last century and that this increase has coincided with the drastic social changes of the period. (71) The reasons for this are primarily sociological and not religious. In small-scale African indigenous societies where groupings of kin are of paramount importance and in which there are few specialised relationships, witchcraft operates as an explanation of the singularity of misfortune, "why particular people at particular times and places suffer particular misfortunes". (72) Such misfortunes may be the result of envy and hatred within the social group; a person lies unaccountably ill or is suddenly killed by accident and such events are attributed to witchcraft which has been initiated by bad feeling. Every misfortune of this nature implies that someone has caused the harm. In a stationary subsistence economy made up of intensely interrelated groups of kinsfolk any untoward happening of a serious nature may thus be attributed to a breakdown in personal relationships. If someone harbours a grievance then another is in danger of attack by witchcraft; if one person achieves an unusual success he or she becomes suspicious of the witchcraft of his envious fellows. In a relatively static society witchcraft can be 'contained' so to speak, but in a society suddenly and increasingly affected by a Western economy and by new social principles fresh situations arise which stimulate witchcraft belief. "Conflicts between old and new social principles produce new animosities, which are not controlled by custom, and these open the way to

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(70) Mary Kingsley, 1898. Quoted Gwynn, *Life of Mary Kingsley*, Penguin Series, 1932, p.106.

(71) Debrunner, H. *Witchcraft in Ghana*, p.62. He points out that only one writer before 1850 mentions witchcraft.

(72) Gluckman, M. *Custom and Conflict in Africa*, Oxford, 1959, p.84.

new forms of accusation.....The system of witchcraft beliefs, originally tied to certain social relations, can be adapted to new situations of conflict - to competition for jobs in towns, to the rising standard of living, made possible by new goods, which breaches the previous egalitarianism". (73)

Thus in Ghana, after 1850, it becomes clear that the increase in the incidence of witchcraft was a concomitant of the radical social changes in the country: the new factors of a money economy, a cocoa-growing revolution, western-type education, a new religion, a Colonial Government which intervened drastically in tribal life, all these stimulated witchcraft belief. Far from education solving the problem, the tensions are increased among the literates as Field shows: "A youth who is selected by an uncle or other relative to be sent to school becomes the object of jealousy and spite, for education is regarded (by those who have it not) chiefly as a means of wealth and advancement in the world of European activities.... Many a literate youth who has failed to do well at school or who at the end of his schooling had failed to make good, attributes his failure to envious witches in his family". (74)

The development of a money economy and the desire to make money often foster the conviction that lack of prosperity is caused by the machinations of witches. "It is likely that, even now, the meaning and use of money is only vaguely understood by the majority of Africans, its relationship to power is sensed but it is still only symbolic. It belongs, therefore, to the category of magical possessions, part of the stock-in-trade of the Europeans". (75)

Much of this scramble for money is bound up with the profound social changes which resulted from the tremendous development of commercial cocoa-growing which began in the 1890's. (76)

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(73) Gluckman, *ibid*, p.101.

(74) Field, M.J. Akim Kotoku, p.174.

(75) Tooth, G. *Studies in Mental Illness on the Gold Coast*. H.M.S.O. 1950, p.37.

(76) Hill, Polly: 'The History of the Migration of Ghana Cocoa Farmers', in *Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana*, Vol.IV, Part I, pp.14-28.

Cocoa-growing was not fitted into the traditional system of land tenure: land was bought outright by 'strangers', most often in Akim and Ashanti by migrant farmers from Akwapim. Debrunner remarks that, "communal traditional land ownership - the land theoretically belonging to the ancestors and administered by the chiefs - and modern private ownership have in many cases become hopelessly entangled. The result is endless litigations between individuals over lands, and.....increasing debts". (77) The new wealth increased the desire of the prosperous cocoa farmer to pass on some or most of his property to his sons instead of to his nephews, a desire which brought about "quarrels within the lineage...over the inheritance of cocoa farms and houses". Busia quotes the verdict of a farmer: "Cocoa spoils the blood clan and brings conflict into it", (78) and Field asserts that, "not only did the cocoa industry bring an increase in witchcraft but also an increase in plain, ordinary stealing". (79) The influx of strangers into cocoa and mining areas exaggerated the problems of marital instability and infidelity. Life was suddenly assailed by new and distressing questions to which the traditional scheme of things could give no satisfactory answers, and it is not surprising that increasing recourse was had to explanations which blamed the operation of witchcraft.

Chiefs felt bewildered and looked round for new abosom that could deal with the problem. Ladrach quotes the assertion of one chief: "No wonder if the blessing of the tutelary spirits no longer reaches us - the thunder of the big guns has chased them, the noise of the Church bells does not please them; they are caught in the wires of the telephone if they want to come to our help - no wonder, therefore, if there are more and more evil men and if the number of witches increases terribly, and if the power of our magic charms loses its potency". (80)

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(77) Debrunner, *ibid.* p.74.

(78) Busia, K. *The position of the Chief in Ashanti*, London, 1951, p.127.

(79) Field, *Akim Kotoku*, p.174.

(80) Ladrach, *Der Sturz eines afrikanischen Lügengottes*, p.10. I owe this reference to Debrunner.

There are other predisposing conditions of witchcraft belief: both Tooth and Field have emphasised the prevalence of mental depression among the Akan, some of which may be due to the high incidence of sickness. (81) Field goes so far as to assert that the core of witchcraft belief among the Akan is the illness which the psychiatrist terms depression: "Witchcraft meets, above all else, the depressive's need to steep herself in irrational self-reproach and to denounce herself as unspeakably wicked. If depression were stamped out, I doubt if even the drunkards and other paranoid failures, with their urge to project blame on others, could keep witchcraft alive....It is therefore likely that, if depression were to die out, belief in witchcraft would die out also, and the social function of witchcraft (of 'providing something to blame when things go wrong') would be taken over by the less perplexing institution of bad magic". (82)

Thus a money economy, cocoa-growing, education, physical and mental illness all play a part in witchcraft belief; "all are apt to create stresses arising out of frustration, pride and envy". (83) These stresses arise particularly within those closely linked by ties of kin and when witchcraft is in the air it is a small step for the anxious or envious mind to endow either its own or others' resentment with a guilty destructive power. Dr. Evans-Pritchard has shown that among the Azande of the Sudan witchcraft springs from intense suspicion and fear, fostered by strained kinship relationships. (84)

Like the Azande, the Akan are not interested in witchcraft as a theory but only in witch activity, that is, "they are interested solely in the dynamics of witchcraft in particular situations". (85) Consequently the chief concern is to find protection against witchcraft, a protection only achieved

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(81) Tooth, *ibid.*, pp.10-14. He states that 80% of hospital cases of trypanosomiasis have mental symptoms.

(82) Field, *Search for Security*, p.38.

(83) Debrunner, *ibid.* p.81.

(84) Evans-Pritchard, *E.E. Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande*, Oxford, 1937, Ch. VI *passim*.

(85) Evans-Pritchard, *ibid.* p.26.



by the detection and discovery of the witches thus rendering them powerless. Certain abosom spirits are able to 'discover' them and to these shrines there flows a constant stream of people seeking release. The fear of witches and of the harm they can do is widespread; in the last century the existence of this fear is noted in the reports of missionaries, African pastors, travellers and anthropologists from all parts of the country. (86)

The Akan expression of witchcraft has many features in common with that in other parts of Africa. The words used are 'obayi' (witchcraft, sorcery), 'obayifo' (witch or wizard), and 'obonsam' (wizard or sorcerer). Witches are mostly women but they may be males or, more rarely, children. They are not normally recognised as such; their activities take place by night when they have the power of leaving the body and of meeting with other witches usually in trees. At these meetings the vital kra or soul of the victim is 'eaten', bringing about sickness and death; in other cases they pool their powers for evil and inflict material loss, cause sterility and impotence, blight crops and arrange accidents and disasters. (87) Every witch is thought to have a name and a witch cannot be freed from her witch-spirit until she has revealed the name. Most of these names are traditional, and seem to have no special significance although they are always carefully recorded at the shrines. (88)

It was formerly generally believed that a witch could harm only her own kin, hence the meeting of the witches so as to share in 'eating' victims of other kinship groups, but this view is not now widely held; there is seemingly no limit to the destructive power of the witch. (89) This power is wrought by the indwelling obayi, silently, inexorably, and from any distance although

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(86) This is best attested for Ghana by H. Debrunner, *op.cit.*; by W. Ringwald, *op.cit.* pp. 87-89, 99-105; M. J. Field, *Akim Kotoku and Search for Security*; Rattray, *Religion and Art in Ashanti*, pp. 28-31.

(87) Field, *Search for Security*, pp. 35-39.

(88) Ringwald, *ibid.* quotes the minutes of an interrogation of thirteen witches by the Chief of Wamfie in Ashanti in July 1953. The names given by the women were Amanse (2), Fametu, the most common, (lit. 'take me and fly'); Kyinamane, ('roam the town?'); Ponya (?); Atweama (a string of pearls); Nte (ntem, 'quickly'). Cf. Debrunner, *ibid.* p. 52.

(89) Field, *Akim Kotoku*, p. 185 (footnote).

usually the witch seems to have no understandable motive and bears no ill-will towards her victims. The reports by Ringwald of an investigation at Wamfie resulted in the confession by the witches of having caused the deaths of sixteen people including some of their own children. (90)

Thus at the time the missionaries began their preaching witchcraft belief was part of the thought-world of the people but the notices of it are infrequent. After the turn of the century there is increasing awareness of it both with regard to the new shrines and cults offering protection against it and to the fact that belief in and the fear of witchcraft invaded the Christian congregations. (91)

What was the effect of the preaching of the Christian Gospel to a people whose religion and life have thus been described? The following chapter is an attempt to answer this question.

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(90) Ringwald, *ibid.* pp.99-105.

(91) Basel Mission, *Jahresberichte*, 1910, p.76; 1912, p.53; 1926, p.72. Cf. Presbyterian Church Synod Report, 1922. p.15.

## Chapter V.

### The Impact of Christianity upon Traditional Akan Religion and Life.

The missionary attitude that Akan beliefs and Christianity are irreconcilable; the reasons for this attitude; the background, religious and social, of the missionaries; this attitude reinforced by certain features of Akan life and custom; conditions of the time; the preaching of Europeans and Africans; polemic against 'fetish' worship; reaction from priests and chiefs; opposition to the new religion not on doctrinal grounds; the Gospel demanded a break with social ties; Christianity helped to break tribal unity; the problem of polygyny and Christian marriage; the impossibility of isolating Christians from the wider community; the issue of domestic slavery; demands upon the individual convert; the significance of the act of baptism; what was the appeal of Christianity to the Akan?; the 'longing for life' of the Akan; a few converts repeat the European evangelical experience; a turning to the Supreme God; baptism the outward sign of conversion and of inclusion in the new Christian community; the continued attraction of the old religion; the way of life of the new Christian groups.

## CHAPTER V.

### The Impact of Christianity upon Traditional Akan Religion and Life.

It is a commonplace to assert that the attitude of the missionaries towards Akan religion and social customs was usually destructive and that no attempt was made to use any part of the traditional world-view of the Akan as a basis for the preaching of the Gospel or to 'fuse' Christianity with it. All the evidence goes to show that this was so. This is said not with any desire to denigrate the work of the Basel missionaries for their achievement which must rank as high as that of any missionary society in the annals of Protestant Christian Missions, but with the object of showing that what they did not do still remains to be done if the Church is to become a truly indigenous Church. In their prevailing attitude the Basel missionaries were not unique; like all their missionary contemporaries they were representative of the thought and attitudes of their time. Thus there was no attempt to assimilate Christianity with, or 'build it into', African indigenous religious and social life, and the Christian congregations came into existence in conscious opposition to the ancestral ways of life and thought of the rest of the community.

The reasons for this attitude are not far to seek. The great majority of the missionaries stemmed from Pietistic circles in the Württemberg Church in which the primary emphasis was laid on personal devotion to Christ and on experimental religion.<sup>(1)</sup> The basic principle inspiring these men was that of working together with Christ and in His Spirit to spread the Kingdom of God on earth, to bring individuals into touch with the saving grace

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(1) During the first thirty-one years of the Mission exactly half (131) of the missionaries trained in the Seminary at Basel were from Württemberg. (Schlatter, *ibid.* Vol. I. p.159). Out of a total of 1112 trained by 1882, 505 came from Württemberg. Cf. Schlatter, *ibid.* p.299, *Der Pietismus in der Missionsgemeinde.*

of Christ and to build the converts into new Christian societies. These new Christian communities would be at once the sign of the transforming power of Christ and the means of renewal of a degraded and depraved African society.<sup>(2)</sup>

The missionaries came from a Western Europe conscious at that time of its developing technology and of its cultural achievements in contrast with which West Africa could only seem 'backward' and in dire need not only of the grace of the Gospel of Christ but also of the blessings of Christian civilisation. Dr. Baeta emphasises this difference and suggests that it was the main reason for the fact that the missionaries made no attempt to 'wed' the Gospel message to African culture: "The fact that the evangelists and their hearers belonged to such glaringly different racial types; the fact that their cultural backgrounds were so different; the unfortunate associations of the colour black in European superstition; the Slave Trade, with Europeans being always owners and Africans always the owned; the assumption by them of a position of superiority vis-a-vis Africans, which assumption Africans weekly and unprotestingly accepted; the fact that the majority of missionaries to our parts were connected with the movement known as Pietism; these and such-like factors determined the policy, which was adopted by all missions practically without exception, of non-amalgamation with, and aloofness from African culture".<sup>(3)</sup>

It must be said that the generally-accepted picture of 'backwardness' and 'primitiveness' was reinforced by certain features of African religion and custom which obtruded on the attention of the European. Everyone was familiar with the gruesome accounts of human sacrifice which Bowdich and others had recorded.<sup>(4)</sup> Although it became clear after the researches of

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(2) Schlatter, *ibid.* Vol.I. p.249-250.

(3) Baeta, *Christianity and African Culture*, p.55.

(4) Bowdich, *T.E. Mission to Ashantee*, 2nd ed. London, 1873, pp.233-239. Bowdich visited Ashanti in 1817.

Christaller that the Akan possessed a well-developed and well-organised unified social and religious life, the attitude of the missionaries continued to be determined by the attitudes engendered by human sacrifice, cruel customs, the 'tyranny' of chiefs and the deceit of 'fetish' priests. Wherever the missionaries worked they opposed, often successfully, those features of Akan religion and custom which were most objectionable to them, and in so doing, they aroused the conviction in the native mind that Christianity was entirely opposed to the ancestral ways.

Who could blame the missionaries under the circumstances of the time for having little desire or incentive to penetrate to the underlying motives behind the killing of slaves at the funerals of chiefs, or of customs like 'carrying the corpse' and 'panyarring', of noisy funerals which reminded them of saturnalia, or of the rigmarole and paraphernalia of the abosom priests? Writing in 1906, but describing conditions in Akropong in 1851, Steiner summarises the general view in the following words: "The little culture, which today licks the coastal areas, had not penetrated to the uplands. England's power had not yet held the various tribes in check. The tribal chiefs still ruled with the old despotism over their subjects, oppressing them as slaves without rights. This oppression was increased by the fetish-priest (lit. Teufelspriester) and sorcerer, who, by the use of poison and magic incantations exploited the people and made them the slaves of fear. The severe laws and senseless decrees of the so-called sacred fetish retarded the progress and welfare of the natives. Slavery, polygamy, drunkenness, bloody quarrels, brutality and cruelty revealed the pagan life of the people. In the middle of this heathen world, the tiny mission colony at Akropong established itself. Lying on the outskirts of the town, it was exposed day and night to all the heathen commotion, whether from the salvos of the flintlock guns, from the raucous yells during the gruesome ceremonies for the

dead, from political quarrels which led to bloody street-fights, from the frantic deceptions of the fetish priest, or from the wild dancing and drumming during festivals. The hearts of this small evangelical group must often have trembled as they looked into the heathen darkness and cried, Watchman, is it not yet dawn?"<sup>(5)</sup>

This is the generally-accepted picture of African life which is found in mission literature up to the turn of the century and after. T.B.Freeman, the Wesleyan pioneer, on seeing the body of a decapitated female slave, prays that the everlasting Gospel "may chase the demon from these his dark abodes of cruelty".<sup>(6)</sup> Governor Maclean, in a letter to Freeman, refers to 'that stronghold of Satan, Kumasi'.<sup>(7)</sup> Throughout the Basel Mission Yearly Reports from 1850 onwards the overriding motif is an implacable antagonism to 'fetishes' and 'fetish-priests' who were regarded as agents of the devil and the main obstacles to the spread of the Gospel.<sup>(8)</sup> For example in 1850 the religion and morality of the Osu people are described as 'worse' than at Akropong: the abosom worship and the villainous tyranny of the priests have produced a religion of fear and bestial ideas, and a "sensuality which has dulled body, soul and mind and engendered a frightful apathy towards spiritual matters". The report of 1881 mentions an unspecified 'unheard-of sensuality' and other 'wicked deeds', and urges the government to ban funeral customs, interment in houses and 'fetish' worship. There are constant references to the inaction of the English Colonial Government; the Basel missionaries felt very strongly that it should legislate against 'heathenism', enforce changes to Christianity and prohibit traditional practices. "The three fronts of

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(5) Steiner, P. Auf Einsamen Pfaden, Basel, 1906, p.14-15.

(6) Freeman, T.B. Journal, 1843, p.25.

(7) Freeman, *ibid.* p.71.

(8) Heidenbote, 1882, p.67. Jahresberichte 1876, p.105; 1879, p.66; 1904, p.21, 1881, p.12. M.M. 1850.

heathenism are fetish worship, polygamy and the power of chiefs", "funerals are a great hindrance", "the worship of idols is a vain deception".<sup>(9)</sup>

Yet it must be said that apart from the capture and imprisonment of the Rainseyers and Kühne, (who were treated tolerably well during their enforced stay in Kumasi), there is no recorded instance of missionaries who suffered personal hostility from the people. They travelled freely and safely throughout the country and practically everywhere were received with traditional African hospitality and courtesy.

In the preaching of the missionaries it was difficult to resist a polemic against the absurdity of 'fetish' worship and asuman. Ringwald quotes Auer, who, during a preaching tour noticed a priest making an offering: "See this stupid man. He calls and receives no answer; he brings the fetish something and the fowls feed on it".<sup>(10)</sup> Although the missionaries made the love of God in Christ, man's sin and redemption, their central themes,<sup>(11)</sup> the African evangelists tended to take up this polemic and add to it the assertion that to become a Christian was 'profitable'; the difference between the progress in civilisation of the white man and the backwardness of the African was due to the difference in religions. Ladrach gives an example of this tendency, which became more and more marked, in reporting the sermon of an African evangelist: "If the European finds the Word of God necessary, if even the white man finds that his wisdom, his knowledge, his wealth...his steamships, his cannons, his railways and his bicycles cannot help him to stand before God...how much less can we deluded, ignorant, lazy, wicked Africans save ourselves from...superstition and the fear of spirits....

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(9) H.B. 1857; J.B. 1860; J.B. 1910; H.B. 1863, p.131f. The only missionaries to write objectively on African religion and customs are J.G. Christaller and W. Rottmann; cf. the latter's *Der Götze Odente*, Basel 1899. This is confirmed by D. Brokensha in a letter written to the writer on 7/1/1962.

(10) Ringwald, *ibid.* p.135.

(11) Ringwald, *ibid.* p.133-134.



Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, so will these blessings come to you....What use to my father were his many amulets; what help has he had from the fetish?"(12 )

It was reported of Paul Mohenu, the converted priest, that at his initiation as an abosom priest, he was told that the entire craft, apart from the use of healing medicines, was a deceptive sham.(13) It was customary to say that the okomfo 'pretended' to be possessed, and no doubt, his quivering, leaping and shouting ecstatic behaviour seemed to the missionaries the very antithesis of true religion.(14) His appurtenances: roots, cowries, cola, charms and talismans were dubbed magical, and the crude clay altars daubed with the blood of fowls and sheep, and the debris of broken eggs, seemed to the European the very epitome of superstition and idolatry. There was also evidence that some okomfo sought to strengthen their reputations by dabbling in poison and by peddling charms which offered protection against misfortune and witchcraft.(15)

It is not surprising that this particular feature of indigenous religion should become the target of missionary attack. J.A. Mader (1851-1877) conducted what may almost be described as a private feud against the 'fetish' priests; he is said to have 'flogged' one such who opposed the preaching of the Gospel and when no disaster fell upon him, many were converted. As a punishment he regularly sent students from the Seminary to fetch black soil for the garden from the sacred grove at Akropong in fulfilling which they had to run the gauntlet of scandalised and angry townsfolk.(16) Mader was also hostile to chiefs who remonstrated against Christian activity or who attempted to hinder the conversion of one of his people. It is reported that on one

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(12) Heidenbote, 1912, p.12.

(13) Paulo Mohenu, der bekehrte Fetischpriester, Basel, n.d; p.5.

(14) Christaller, *ibid.* p.248.

(15) Ringwald, *ibid.* p.46.

(16) Ghana National Archives EC1/34 (Digest of Mission letters by Debrunner).

occasion, like Riis before him, he told a local chief that he would go straight to hell as a punishment for his immoral life.<sup>(17)</sup> David Asante, an outstanding convert, was rebuked by his mother for accompanying and interpreting for Mader and thus sharing in his attack on indigenous religion.<sup>(18)</sup> There is a marked tendency to blame everything on the machinations of the priests in their capacity as servants of the abosom<sup>(19)</sup> and to portray African religion as entirely cruel and frightful.<sup>(20)</sup> Whilst Mader is exceptional in his zeal, his attitude is not untypical: it was assumed that all African religion was a deception and a sham,<sup>(21)</sup> and that all chiefs must be despots; there was little or no realisation of the factors underlying abosom worship or of the difficulties and complexities of chieftaincy.<sup>(22)</sup>

Naturally, this hostility provoked a reaction from the side of the abosom priests and some chiefs on the grounds that the new religion was 'interfering' with ancestral custom. In the 1850's in Mamfe and Amenokrom near Akropong, the open enmity shown to the Christian converts was such that some of the latter took refuge with the mission at Akropong.<sup>(23)</sup> By chance, during the building of the mission house at Aburi, a sacred tree was inadvertently felled, an event which provoked a serious crisis; and Dieterle also records a hostile demonstration at Aburi which was led by the priests who demanded that the Christians should also sacrifice goats and fowls in order to avert a smallpox epidemic.<sup>(24)</sup> Dieterle's opposition to the 'corpse-carrying' custom also occasioned hostility both at Aburi and elsewhere. The declaration by the priest that a death was 'unnatural' was sufficient to

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(17) Ghana Archives, EC 1/34.

(18) Ibid, EC 1/36.

(19) Mader, J.A. Die religiösen Ideen der Otschi Neger, in E.M.M. Basel, 1862.

(20) H.B. 1866, p.98; 1859, p.38f. (Afrika, das Land des Schreckens).

(21) Böhm, H. Im Lande des Fetisch, Basel, 1905, passim.

(22) J.B. 1879, p.64; 1876, p.105; 1879, p.66.

(23) Schlatter, ibid. Vol.3. pp.66-7.

(24) Dieterle, J.C. 30 Jahre auf der Goldküste, ed. Steiner, Basel, 1900, pp. 49-53.

ensure that the dead body would be carried through the town and the one against whom the bearers 'stumbled' or against whose house they 'knocked' was held guilty of the death.<sup>(25)</sup> There are constant references to the opposition of priests and chiefs, but one gains the impression that such opposition was sporadic and unsustained.<sup>(26)</sup> A number of the worst features of Akan religion were prohibited by the British on humanitarian grounds: the killing of slaves at a chief's funeral; human sacrifice in connection with certain abosom; the custom of house burial; 'carrying the corpse' and the poison ordeal. Such actions reinforced the missionary standpoint in the mind of the people.

The opposition to the new religion was not on doctrinal grounds. Usually, the verdict on the preaching of the Gospel was that it was a 'good and sweet word', which, however, must first be thought about and pondered upon.<sup>(27)</sup> Riis had discovered this prevalent attitude in the earliest days of the mission: "Whenever one speaks about religion to adults.....they say with a shake of the head, this is not for me, I am too old; but I will send my children to you to be taught Christianity".<sup>(28)</sup> The African was prepared to acknowledge the worth of the Gospel, it would not be the white man's religion otherwise, and to consider it for his children, but at the same time to reject a message that cut across his way of life so severely. This indeterminate attitude of praise of the Gospel and, at the same time, of an evasion of its demands, arose from the nature of those demands, namely to break with the traditional clan and family ties.<sup>(29)</sup> Many would have liked to have become Christian but the claims of ancestral duties and obligations were too strong.<sup>(30)</sup> Such was the pressure

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(25) Dieterle, *ibid.* p.31f.

(26) H.B. 1861, p.12; H.B. 1867, No.2; H.B.1869, No.1; H.B.1866, No.7; J.B. 1879, p.64; 1876, p.105; H.B.1882, p.67. J.B.1904, p.21.

(27) M.M. 1851, p.218; J.B. 1861, 181f.

(28) J.B. 1874, p.244; H.B.1869, No.10, p.142; H.B.1866, No.7.

(29) M.M. 1851, p.107.

(30) J.B. 1895, p.41.

of social solidarity that the generality of the people waited for the chief's decision, while he, for his part, was enmeshed in tribal and ancestral responsibilities which formed the very basis of his chieftaincy. To become a Christian meant abandoning the tribal and family structure, an act which the Akan had never previously considered possible or desirable. (31)

At first, the number of adult Christian converts was so small, and the ancillary advantages which accrued from the social activities of the mission were so great, that the breach effected in the traditional social structure did not appear significant to the chiefs. In 1868 there were eight hundred adult converts scattered among twenty-eight congregations and the hopes of the mission were fixed upon the schools which were beginning to multiply rapidly as Africans realised the benefits of literacy. It seemed reasonable also to the chiefs to allow the Christians to have their own separated suburb or Salem; was this not the normal practice in Akan society for 'stranger' groups? It was not until much later that the chiefs realised that as the Christian Salems became well-established there was a tendency for Christians to feel that they had removed themselves from traditional jurisdiction and obligation. Some converts pleaded their Christianity to evade tribal obligations which were often not matters of conscience and the missionaries invariably came to their support. (32) However desirable in theory, the practice of separation effected a break in tribal unity; the Christian was joining another 'tribe', so to speak, and he felt free to a large extent from former obligations.

Today, these Salem suburbs have been enclosed territorially by the

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(31) Smith, E.W. *The Golden Stool*, London, 1931, p.256.

(32) J.B. 1910, p.57; J.B. 1896. On the Christenansiedlungen cf. J.B. 1872-1882. The sketch in H.B. 1882, p.52 of that at Larteh shows a compact group of houses isolated from the town.

growth of the towns and the clear line of demarcation between the Christian quarter and the rest of the town has become less distinct, but there are still Church Synod decisions concerning non-Christians settling on 'Church' lands and concerning lapsed Christians who have forfeited their right to live in the Christian quarter. (33)

The problem of polygyny came early to the forefront. Among the Akan, although polygyny is the exception rather than the rule, it is the sign of the well-to-do man and the chief. Many men therefore preferred to retain the option, so to speak, of taking additional wives, and for this reason did not wish to commit themselves to a Christian monogamous marriage. Others, who were attracted by the Gospel, possessed more than one wife. Apart from one instance, (34) the Mission refused baptism to a polygynist and held to the principles laid down by Inspector Josenhans in 1859 in the "Regulations for the evangelical congregations of the Basel Mission in India and West Africa". (35) Polygyny within the Christian congregation was expressly forbidden; plural marriages which had been entered into were to be resolved before a man could be received into the Church. This 'resolving' of a plural marriage meant that the man had to choose from among his wives the one who would be the best helpmeet to him as a Christian; the remaining wives were to receive compensation. If the wife of a polygynist became a Christian, she could be admitted as a full member of the Church provided that neither she nor her husband had been baptised before the marriage. Only one such wife could be received, others

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(33) Synod Minutes of Presbyterian Church of Ghana, 1918, par.15; 1922, p.7; 1928, p.18; 1956, pp.48-9. "Polygynists and excluded members refusing to pay Church Tax can therefore be removed," (1918) "Rules in regard to the exclusion of polygynists from Mission land must be upheld," (1922) "Synod considered the large number of Church lands lying idle or being used by unauthorised persons". (1956).

(34) Kwaku Sai (Osae?) was baptised at Akropong in 1856 along with his three wives. Eppler, *ibid.* p.192.

(35) Ordnung für die evangelischen Gemeinden der Basler Mission in Ostindien und Westafrika, Basel, 1859.

must separate from the husband before they could be admitted. (36)

It is not now possible to ascertain how many males resolved their marriages in order to become members of the Church but it is unlikely that the number would be large. Wives who were dispensed with on these grounds would be absorbed without embarrassment into their abusua. The Mission, of course, recognised monogamous marriage by African custom but has always urged upon the couple a service of blessing in the Church. If a non-Christian partner to a monogamous marriage became a Christian it was ruled that there should be no separation unless the non-Christian wife or husband set the marriage aside by declaration, separation or desertion, or by re-marriage, the appeal being made to Paul's dictum. (37)

The custom of promising children in marriage was brought to the notice of the Home Board in Basel in 1858 by Dieterle who asked if the Mission could not protect such girls who were in the Mission school by repaying the sums involved to the girl's family. The Committee in Basel demurred at such direct action but agreed that it might be done in exceptional cases. (38) Two years later Widmann reported that the Akropong chief had taken away one girl who was undergoing baptismal instruction and had indicated his desire for others to be given in marriage to various members of his family. This action gave rise to a long letter couched in strong terms from the Board to 'His Serene Highness King Date of Akwapim' to the effect that the missionaries had been instructed not to tolerate any such violation of the freedom of Christian women and that in the event of a repetition they had been ordered to complain to the Colonial Government; on their part, the Home Committee would be prepared to approach the British Queen to ask for the punishment of such an offence against

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(36) Josenhans' Regulations became the basis of the Rules of the Basel Mission Church (1861), and later of the Regulations, Practice and Procedure of the Presbyterian Church. (1929).

(37) 1 Cor. VII, verses 12-15.

(38) Schlatter, *ibid.* Vol.3, p.74.

God's law. "The Committee knows that this practice was formerly a custom in your Highness' country but it is now many years since the Word of God has been preached there.....Christian women cannot enter a polygamous marriage without offence to their conscience; they may not allow themselves to be compelled by a King to enter such a marriage; they are bound not to marry any man for whom they bear no love.....If your Highness inflicts by force an order upon a young woman to marry according to heathen custom, your Highness commits a grave injustice against God and man. The Committee must therefore in God's Name and in the name of His Holy Law emphatically and seriously beg and exhort His Highness not to permit this again". Josenhans, on behalf of the Board, concludes: "May God lead your Highness to the knowledge that the times of ignorance in Africa and also in Akwapim are passed, and that God's Law instead of man's own choice and man's unrighteousness must rule over all the earth. With the assurance of the respectful esteem and friendly disposition both of ourselves, of our missionaries and of all Christians in Akwapim....". (59)

The matter passed off quietly and it would seem that the chief accepted the rebuke with a good grace. It was, all the same, a clear indication that the Christian religion would seriously affect established traditions and it is surprising that such rebukes were accepted without greater protest. The question of the conflict between the Akan and Christian views of marriage cropped up again in another form, namely, when the predominance of women in the Christian congregations made it well-nigh impossible for Christian husbands to be found for them. As celibacy is repugnant to Akan custom and childlessness a stigma, many Christian women had to accept non-Christian husbands, thus raising for the Mission the problem of their pastoral care after marriage.

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(59) Schlatter, *ibid.* Vol.3, pp.75-6, where the letter is quoted in German.

From an early date, therefore, the marriage difficulty brought about a state of social tension between the new Christian groups and the larger community. While, from the missionaries' point of view, indigenous life left much to be desired and a separation seemed essential,<sup>(40)</sup> it proved in fact, on the grounds of marriage alone, impossible to isolate the Christian congregation. Marriage according to customary law was accepted with or without a blessing in Church; no adult polygynist was baptised; members who later became a party to a plural marriage were excluded from the Lord's Supper. The situation remains the same today and still gives rise to much discussion and debate which centre round the two questions: Can the Church in Africa adopt as a temporary measure a milder approach to this problem; and secondly, has the Church the right to deny baptism to a converted polygynist?<sup>(41)</sup> Since the Gold Coast delegate returned from the International Missionary Conference in 1938 with a negative answer to the question that he was commissioned to put to the Assembly, 'Can polygyny not be permitted in the Christian Church in Africa?', very few voices have been raised in the Church in favour of relaxing the ban on polygyny. It seems to be the accepted view that polygyny is passing; the more important problem today is marital instability.<sup>(42)</sup>

The attempt of the Church to encourage marriage by Ordinance, i.e. English Law, broke down before two obstacles: the sheer physical difficulty

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(40) Schlatter, *ibid.* Vol.3, p.73. "The Christian who lives among the heathen... ..is exposed to all sorts of shameless practices....The all-pervading noise makes quiet reading or Christian devotions impossible....The Christian in the heathen town is isolated and with no mutual interests. For these reasons a separation of the Christian from his heathen family is really desirable". (Quotation from a letter of Mohr).

(41) I recall one African who attended service every Sunday telling me that he was hoping that one of his two wives would predecease him so that he could be baptised and be received at the Lord's Table.

(42) There is a good discussion of the two possible mission attitudes in E.M.M. Heft 3, May 1947. "Polygamie und Taufordnung in der Missionskirche von Kamerun", (P.Scheibler), and, "Die Polygamiefrage in Borneo und auf der Goldküste". (H. Henking).



involved and the harshness, by African standards, of divorce regulations. Up to 1909, an African could only marry by Ordinance after giving notice in Christiansborg and by attending the Secretariat in person three weeks later; only then could the minister or missionary marry the couple in church! Christians married by Ordinance also found that divorce by English Law was not only expensive but well-nigh impossible. The Mission was thus placed in the peculiar position of fighting for Christian monogamy and the stability of marriage on the one hand, and on the other hand, of struggling with an obtuse Colonial Government to permit some modification in the divorce laws to suit African conditions.<sup>(43)</sup> Moslems were permitted to divorce by Islamic Law but African Christians married by Ordinance were held strictly to the letter of English Law. A petition by the Mission to the Governor drawing attention to this anomaly, bore no fruit. The general rule is that Christians are married by customary law with or without a blessing in Church.<sup>(44)</sup>

There was strong opposition from the side of the Mission to the Akan custom of the payment of 'ayefare', the fine paid to an offended husband by one who had seduced his wife, a practice which seemed to the missionaries to condone and even to encourage the offence.<sup>(45)</sup> The inference was that some complaisant husbands deliberately countenanced an illicit liason in order to profit by 'adultery damages'. The ideal was that such damages were not to be used for personal enrichment but Rattray shows that many fell short of this ideal.<sup>(46)</sup> Nothing significant was achieved in changing the custom except that for Christians the fine for seduction was made as high as possible. The Twi District Synod in 1909 fixed the amount at £25.<sup>(47)</sup> The 1918 Synod, however, reduced it to £5 and laid down a detailed scheme of fines for such

(43) Schlatter, *ibid.* Vol.3. pp. 171-172.

(44) Few marriages were contracted by 'Ordinance'. After 1921 the average for the country is 200 per annum. (Cardinall, A.W. *The Gold Coast*, 1931, Accra 1931, p.168).

(45) Rattray, *Religion and Art*, p.96.

(46) Rattray, *Ashanti Law*, p.323.

(47) Schlatter, *ibid.* Vol.3. p.172.

offences. (48)

In such ways the efforts of the Mission to establish a Christian view of marriage and family life were frustrated by the tenacious adherence to established custom. Apart from the desire for many children, customs which militated against monogamy were the taboo on sexual intercourse after birth until the child was weaned, a period of up to two years or even longer; bi-local residence; the absence of the menfolk from their homes for long periods on distant cocoa farms, at the mines or in commercial employment in the large towns, and in general, the lack of a sense of commitment to each other on the part of husband and wife. Among the Akan there is also the added factor of the matrilineal system of descent. Even the children of Christians retain a close attachment to their mother's brother who may well be a non-Christian. The intimate relationship between parents and children is of lesser consequence than the claims of the abusua and already by 1909, at a discussion at the Twi District Synod, it was felt that the establishment of a Christian family life could only be achieved by a serious modification or even by the eventual abolition of the matrilineal system of social organisation. (49) Dr. Baeta has shown the tendency within the Akan 'healing' Churches to supplant the matrilineal system of descent-reckoning with the Biblical patrilineal system. (50) In this respect they have adopted the now generally-accepted right of the Christian husband to make provision for his widow and children by which, at his death, his property may be divided into three equal parts between the widow, the children and the husband's abusua. (51) This view commended itself to

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(48) Synod Minutes, 1918, par.14. Seduction of a wife (£5), of a virgin (£12), of a girl not a virgin or who has once delivered a child (£8), of a 'fallen' girl not yet admitted to Church membership (£5), of a virgin by a married man (£12).

(49) Schlatter, *ibid.* Vol.3, p.173.

(50) Baeta, *Prophetism in Ghana*, p.18, p.131.

(51) Presbyterian Church, 'Regulations, Practice and Procedure' (1929), par.235.

some extent to public opinion and in one noteworthy instance, that of the Akim Abuakwa State Council, the customary law of inheritance has been adapted on these lines. (52)

Up to 1875 when the Colonial Government made it illegal, domestic slavery occupied the attention of the Mission. Outwardly, the lot of the domestic slave was not unfavourable; in theory he counted as a member of the family, he could inherit if he belonged to the same tribe and real descendants were lacking; he could marry children of the head of the family and possess private property. (53) In fact, however, in Rattray's words, "he was a solitary creature more or less at the mercy of a single individual, and the liability to be sacrificed at funeral customs may have been an ever-present fear in the mind of a West African slave". (54) A specially numerous class of slaves were those taken in pledge for a debt or a loan; the work of such slaves did not help to liquidate the debt and he remained in bond until the debt plus a high interest had been repaid. "Petty chiefs could sell into slavery people who lost their cases in their courts and who could not pay their fines. Ordinary citizens could sell their debtors, and could kidnap passing strangers and sell them. This practice was a development of the well-known system of panyarring, i.e. the seizure of any fellow-townsmen of a debtor and holding him as a security". (55) The female slave could be used as a concubine.

At first, Christian converts possessing slaves had been accepted in the hope that in course of time the problem would be solved, but as the number of slaves within the Christian community grew it became clear that specific action was required. It was reported in 1860 that there were 247 domestic slaves,

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(52) This action followed the Christian Council's Report on the Customary Law of Inheritance in 1934.

(53) Rattray, *Ashanti Law*, pp.34-46. Cf. Bowdich, *ibid.* pp.209-11 and p.228, and Freeman, *ibid.* pp.62-3.

(54) Rattray, *ibid.* p.42.

(55) Ward, *History of Ghana*, p.160.

of whom thirty-eight were Christians, in the possession of converts. This involvement of the Christian community with domestic slavery astounded the Home Committee in Basel which demanded vigorous action on the part of the missionaries in rooting it out. It was decreed that the possession of slaves or engaging in the practice of panyarring would mean exclusion from the Christian fellowship; baptismal candidates must free their slaves as a condition of acceptance and existing slave owners should dismiss their slaves within two years. (56)

There was considerable opposition to this decision from a number of missionaries on the field who would have preferred a more gradual and modified approach but the Committee empowered Mader, Schrenk and Aldinger to implement the decision on every station. (57) There was some dislocation of the work for a time: a few long-standing Christians were excluded, some 'enquirers' were lost, others continued to hold slaves in secret and there were difficulties in finding paid employment for the freed slaves but the position of the Mission with regard to slavery was clearly established.

The impact of the new religion was evident not only upon social customs but also upon the individual convert; the conditions of membership of the Christian group made far-reaching demands upon him. At his baptism he was called upon to renounce 'the devil and all his works', by which was meant no longer taking part in any ceremonies which had any connection with abosom worship, ancestral rites, non-Christian funerals, dances or drumming. Facial marks, cutting the hair in a special way, amulets, soothsaying, magic, oath swearing, and the observance of favourable or unfavourable days were to be eschewed, nor could the Christian accept 'stool' office so long as this was bound up with traditional beliefs. (58)

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(56) Schlatter, *ibid.* Vol.3, pp.78-82. Mission employees were given six months in which to free their slaves.

(57) H.B. 1862. pp.55ff.

(58) Regulations, Practice and Procedure, Part II.

The decisive step which marked the break from the old life and the inclusion in the new Christian 'asafo' was the act of baptism.<sup>(59)</sup> The missionaries regarded baptism as the outward sign of inward regeneration, of conversion in the evangelical sense, and for them it implied a consciousness of sin and repentance followed by a feeling of joy and peace.<sup>(60)</sup> This rarely took place.<sup>(61)</sup> Writing in 1860, Zimmermann deplores the fact that the new converts showed few signs of emotion, of contrition, and of a sense of sin and forgiveness although he is quite convinced that a real change has taken place in them. "Most of them are so quiet and composed, before, at the time of, and after their baptism; there is little expression of powerful emotion, of a penitential struggle, of confession of sin, of religious awakening, of overwhelming gladness and fervour. Although this would have been easy to provoke in Africans, as easy as the tears among the wailing women (sc. at funerals), and is something that he has delight in and considers important, such emotionalism would then have been induced and would not have grown naturally and therefore would have been doubly suspicious. Yet there is something new there; they are 'born again'.... God's Word and Spirit is at work within them...."<sup>(62)</sup>

This quiet reception of the Gospel and the absence of the classic signs of the conversion experience leads one to ask, when the Gospel was preached what was it in fact that the Africans heard? The burden of the preaching was of the corruption of man's heart, of the offered grace of God in Jesus Christ, of Christ's resurrection and of the Judgment to come.<sup>(63)</sup> Ringwald

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(59) The 'asafo' is originally a warrior group and is not based on lineage. See Christaller, Dictionary, ad.loc. The plural suffix 'fo' in Twi indicates those who belong to a town, a tribe or a group, e.g. Aburofo (Europeans), Akwapimfo (people of Akwapim), Kristofo (Christians), etc.

(60) Ringwald, *ibid.* pp.221-223.

(61) Ringwald, *ibid.* pp.199-201.

(62) H.B. 1861. p.156.

(63) J.B. 1872, p.116; 1877, p.101; 1874, p.58.

is of the opinion that the preaching of Judgment in the world to come was a particularly important factor allied with the promise of eternal life. (64)

At the same time the reasons given for the response to the Gospel and for the decision to seek baptism were so many and varied that one can only conclude that they were all a manifestation of the basic African 'longing for life'. Here in Christianity, the faith of the powerful white man, was a religion which offered material blessings. To learn to read, to learn something of the ability of the European to control his environment and to evolve a superior material culture, factors which to the African were bound up with the white man's worship of Christ, operated as strong motives for announcing oneself as a baptismal candidate. It did not pass unnoticed that in the campaigns of 1869 and 1874 against Ashanti the platoons of African Christian soldiers were given great praise by the English for their skill and behaviour. (65) In the same way, the Christian Gospel seemed to offer more help in sickness, in the struggles of life and at death than the old religion. Some converts proclaimed their weariness with the abosom, with the deceptions of the priests and the failure of the spirits to give help. (66) It is noteworthy that this expression of disappointment with the abosom-spirits is often expressed in terms of Nyamesom or worshipping the Supreme God; to become a Christian is to serve or to follow the one God, Nyame. (67)

This is not to say that there were not those who sought baptism from a purely religious motive. David Asante, who was later educated in the Mission Seminary at Basel and who became one of the first African preachers of the Gospel, refused baptism at first on the grounds that he was not good enough.

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(64) Ringwald, *ibid.* p.151 and pp.184-185.

(65) J.B. 1874, p.94.

(66) Ringwald, *ibid.* pp.178-180.

(67) J.B. 1899, pp.34-35.

It was the verse of an English hymn which finally brought him to the realisation that the offer of the grace of God was not dependent upon his merits. (68) There were others, but they were not many. Ringwald refers to his own experience as a missionary in Ghana and concludes: "I cannot remember a single person who allowed his name to be written down, (sc. for baptismal instruction), who gave me as his reason a specific Word of God which he had heard and which had brought him to the decision. Indeed, many such people who presented themselves after hearing an open-air Gospel sermon, would give as the reason for their coming, 'I am searching for something, I want life'. This could have been meant literally or simply as an expression of the general, unspecified desire for life". (69)

This longing for more abundant life which impelled many to ask for baptism, was at the same time, for the Akan, a turning to the Supreme God, Nyame. It was this primary message that the people heard and explains why the traditional 'conversion' signs of consciousness of sin and of 'rebirth' were lacking. To join the Christian group was to enter the sphere of the God who was more powerful than all the abosom and who was stronger than all the influence of witchcraft. "In the Christian village, there are no witches, and the witches have no power there"; (70) "the pagans say, that as soon as a witch becomes a Christian, her witchcraft is extinguished....". (71) The God who was once far removed has been brought near as the Creator and Father whose power and love are seen in His Son Jesus Christ.

(68) E.M.M. 1900, p.183.

"Come ye sinners, poor and needy, weak and wounded, sick and sore.  
Jesus ready stands to save you, full of pity, love and power.  
He is able, He is willing; doubt no more".

Sankey, I.D. Sacred Songs and Solos, London, n.d. No.130.

(69) Ringwald, *ibid.* pp.183-184.

(70) Debrunner, *ibid.* p.137. Quotation from the missionary W. Schäfer.

(71) Debrunner, *ibid.* p.137. Quotation from A. Mohr in J.B. 1895, p.48.

The first outward step towards inclusion in the Christian community was the request to have one's name 'written down'.<sup>(72)</sup> This phrase together with the statement, 'I want to serve God', are used repeatedly as equivalent to becoming a Christian. A period of careful instruction then ensued and it was during this period that the attempt was made to ensure that the candidate understood the religious significance of his decision. Whatever the motive behind the desire to become a Christian might be no one was baptised who had not perceived something of the love of God in Jesus Christ and who had not understood the need for repentance and faith.<sup>(73)</sup>

For the Akan, the formal act of baptism by sprinkling was decisive in itself. He was familiar with the use of water at the Odwira purification ceremony and at other times when an individual was cleansed from a taboo which he had contravened; it was therefore only natural that he should regard the act in itself as effecting the change.<sup>(74)</sup> Baptism was a visible rite, an outward and visible sign, not necessarily of an inward and spiritual grace, but of a decisive break with the old world; a literal change of allegiance, so to speak. Because his former social life and religion were of a piece, baptism signified a break out of that world, a breach not only with his former beliefs but also with those who shared them. In his admirable study of the problem of conversion among the Akan, Dr. Ringwald shows that this break with his 'social' past at baptism was a real conversion-decision not so much in the purely religious sense but in the sense of a break with clan and kindred.<sup>(75)</sup>

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(72) The phrase is 'kyerew ne din', (to write his name).

(73) J.B. 1872. p.115. (Dieterle).

(74) The Twi phrase 'bo asu' (to sprinkle with water) is used in traditional ceremonies.

(75) Ringwald, *ibid.* pp. 204-205. 'Der Vorgang der Umkehr als Akt der Entscheidung'.



Dieterle refers to a case in 1860 of a woman who before her baptism tore her cover cloth as a sign of her repudiation of family control. Christians undergoing instruction were often spied upon and warned of drastic punishment should they become Christian, and there are references to the use of poison by abosom priests to deter intending candidates or to prevent a catechist from forming a congregation.<sup>(76)</sup> Thus, for the first generation of Christians, baptism was the outward, decisive step which marked inclusion within a new and different community which ordered its life without reference to the larger group from which its converts came.

Yet, from the beginning it was found impossible to maintain this isolation; the main problem was the constant pressure of the former way of life which had been, in theory, renounced at baptism. It was impossible to expect a Christian to fail to take part in a socio-religious event which concerned a member of the abusua or of an important member of the tribe. "The old ceremonies and customs which take place for important heathens and in which Christians take part live on strongly and once again characterise our congregation as heathen-Christian". So wrote one missionary from Akropong in 1895.<sup>(77)</sup> There are reports of exclusions from membership for visiting abosom priests and of the continued power of the old religion,<sup>(78)</sup> of the pressure of non-Christian relatives resulting in a departure from the Christian fold,<sup>(79)</sup> and of the failure of many to persist in their newly-professed faith.

We might almost say that in their zeal to establish separated Christian communities the missionaries asked too much and failed to realise that the claims of kin could not be easily set aside, however great the attractions of the new religion were. There were good reasons for their attitude at the time and we can only sympathise with them yet the failure to come to terms with

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(76) E.M.M. 1900, p.259. J.B. 1879, p.66. H.B. 1882, p.67.

(77) J.B. 1895, p.41.

(78) H.B. 1863, No.10, pp.131ff. J.B. 1904, p.76.

(79) H.B. 1901, p.24; E.M.M. 1888, p.30; J.B. 1881, p.12.

the wider community has left the problem of the fruitful expression of the Gospel in African idiom still unsolved.

All the same, although the small Christian congregations of this period fell far short of the standards set, they were no worse than that, say, at Corinth or elsewhere. Describing the Christian group at Akropong in 1850 Dieterle wrote: "Our little community gave us much worry and care in the past year by its conduct which unfortunately is not always a light to the heathen". He instances sexual immorality, lying and disobedience; (the nature of the disobedience is not specified), and continues: "These are indeed merely the worst things but there are yet many which do not openly obtrude but which give us much concern.....Our Christians are still children in grace".<sup>(80)</sup> Ten years later, Schrenk at Christiansborg deploras the fact that many had fallen away and had been lost to the Church.<sup>(81)</sup> The growing congregations contained many irresolute Christians who seemed to lean heavily upon the missionaries; some of the older Christians did not set a good example and attendance at services was often poor.<sup>(82)</sup> "The moral life of our Church members leaves much to be desired.....It is chiefly the sins of the flesh which causes our Christians to fall, and on this account some have had to be excluded including many of our catechists and teachers", a comment which is repeated with monotonous regularity throughout the following years to the present day.<sup>(83)</sup>

But if the tenacity of traditional life and custom prevented the attainment of the highest ideals of Christian brotherhood, we must not underestimate the achievement and example of the new Christian groups in setting forth a new way of life. Every morning at dawn, in the Salems in many towns and villages, the church bell rang out calling men and women to praise the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>(84)</sup> Through the singing of a hymn, the

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(80) M.M. 1851, p.215f.

(81) Schlatter, *ibid.* Vol.3. p.55.

(82) J.B. 1861, p.137; 1863, p.85; 1874, pp. 47-50; 1881, p.12.

(83) J.B. 1878, p.77.

(84) At Larteh the Church bell was twice removed by the non-Christians on the ground that it 'charmed people into becoming Christians'. E.B.1869.No.I.

reading of a Bible portion, a short exhortation and fervent prayer, the Christians offered themselves and their day to God. Again on Friday evenings at the prayer-meeting and on Sundays at worship, their faith and zeal were renewed. In the new Christian asrafo the ties of filial obligation were widened to include all men and the new ethic of love and forgiveness began to operate. (85) Above all, the Bible and the new Twi hymns became the source and expression of the new-found faith; the Bible was much read and many converts learned passages by heart. The Twi hymns became the battle-cry of the Christian Asrafo: "Let us sing a song to our Saviour, who makes us dwell in quietness and blesses us daily; let us praise and thank Him for He hears our prayer and watches over us. You people of the world, come and listen. He is your Saviour too, look at Him well ! Abosom are worthless, idols are nothing. Serve Jesus Christ, He who saves your life". (86)

To the non-Christians the followers of the new religion gave an example of steady industry. After morning prayers the Christians repaired to their plantations, perhaps to try out new crops and new methods of cultivation. The coffee which was head-loaded to the coast and there sold provided money for new needs, clothing, (87) school fees, and imported household utensils and tools. Trained artisans returned from Christiansborg equipped with new skills in masonry, joinery and blacksmithing and set up their small workshops. This industriousness meant that there was no real poverty: parents were able to help with the cost of the education of their children in the boarding schools and to contribute in a small way to the work of the Mission. (88)

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(85) Ringwald, *ibid.* pp.255-6. cf. J.B. 1888.

(86) Twi Hymn No.14, "Monma yento dwom nma yen agyenkwa".

(87) Speaking of Larteh in 1865, David Asante mentions the poverty of the people and that some Christian children were naked. For a long period the Mission provided the Middle schoolchildren with clothing and also subsidised their feeding. H.B. 1866, No.7.

(88) In 1857 over 420 Swiss francs was collected for the Mission. Schlatter, *ibid* Vol.3. p.74.

The new spirit of Christian brotherhood began to be demonstrated in two ways: within the group in settling quarrels and composing differences in a Christian spirit; and by the way in which Christians from one town or village assisted their fellow-converts in other villages. The elders and the missionaries mediated in disputes in a spirit of compassion and conciliation and their judgment was sometimes asked for and accepted by the non-Christians.<sup>(89)</sup> In the setting-up of new outstations Christians often went in groups to help in clearing the 'bush' and in building, although there were complaints by the missionaries that enthusiasm often soon waned.<sup>(90)</sup>

The overall impression gained from a reading of the accounts of the Christian settlements was that the missionaries had in mind the ideal of an industrious, God-fearing, bourgeois community after the Moravian pattern, in which as far as possible, the whole of life was regulated by the Word of God. "Abokobi is the precedent for a separated community; already we have here an ordered and organised village of Christians. Quite apart from the missionary, they discuss with other places the clearing of the paths, settle disputes, and even have a police force which punishes those with a fine of one shilling who discharge muskets or beat the drum. The attractive village, with its quietness, order and security makes an impression upon the heathen."<sup>(91)</sup> Although no European missionaries were ever stationed at Larteh a separated Christian village of twenty-six houses was in existence by 1866, which was later described as "a special Christian town...The elders promote discipline and order...; they have passed, and enforce, a series of regulations about watching heathen festivals, the bathing of women in the open air, and trading in the streets".<sup>(92)</sup>

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(89) H.B. 1864, 11, p.135; J.B. 1899.

(90) Schlatter, *ibid.* Vol.13. p.73.

(91) J.B. 1869.

(92) J.B. 1865.

## Chapter VI.

### The Period of Advance and Growth. 1870 - 1918.

The state of the Mission in 1869; consolidation in the south and advance in Akim and Kwahu; Mission policy dominated by the situation in Ashanti; the Ashanti confederation and its aggressive wars; the campaign of 1869; the capture of the Ramseys and Kühne at Anum; the invasion of 1872-3; the Sagrenti War and the Treaty of Fomena; preparations for a mission in Ashanti; missions established at Begoro and Abetifi; opposition and persecution at Kibi; developments in Kwahu and Akim Kotoku; indigenous cults suppressed by the Government; Islam in Gomoa; deterioration of the situation in Ashanti; Ashanti invaded and annexed; the Mission is begun in Kumasi; the demand for the Golden Stool and the Yaa Asantewa War; relief of Kumasi and the Mission re-commenced; fate of African evangelists during the war; the martyrdom of Samuel Otu; problems of the Mission in Ashanti; customary service, oath-swearing, new indigenous cults and Islam; the Mission at Ada, Anum, Nkonya and Buem; the work in German territory handed over to the Bremen Mission; opposition from indigenous religion in Kroboland; the effects of the cocoa-revolution in Akwapim and Ga; the new wealth of the people and its effects on the Mission; problems of the lapsed and excluded; pastoral difficulties at Christiansborg; denominational competition; the other Churches at work in the Gold Coast; the Basel Mission in the north of Togoland; the outbreak of the World War and the expulsion of the Basel Mission from the country.

## CHAPTER VI.

### The Period of Advance and Growth, 1870 - 1918.

Although by 1869 there were only eight main Mission centres and sixteen small Christian groups attached to them, with a total Christian community of scarcely more than two thousand, the impact of the Mission's activities upon the life of the people of the eastern part of the country was considerable. The prospects of advance and growth, humanly speaking, seemed good: the organisation of the Mission was running smoothly, the Twi and Ga languages had been mastered, trained African teachers and catechists were available, an organised school system was in being and the Mission was playing a large part in the development of legitimate commerce. The establishment of the southern part of the country as a British Colony in 1874 seemed also to ensure a large measure of political stability. The Mission could begin to look forward to a period of further consolidation of its existing work in the south and of extending its witness to the great kingdom of Ashanti.

After 1875, the Basel Mission concentrated its efforts towards the upbuilding of its work in the Ga, Krobo and Akwapim districts, and, imbued with the hope of preaching the Gospel in Ashanti, a network of well-established Christian congregations was established in Akim and Kwahu. Yet, in spite of the Treaty of Fomena, the relationship between the British and the Ashantis remained unsettled; the British coup of 1896, the Yaa Asantewa War of 1900 and the formal annexation of Ashanti in 1902 form the final episodes of a protracted period of mutual frustration and misunderstanding.<sup>(1)</sup>

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(1) See Introduction, pp.xvi - xix.

For the last thirty years of the nineteenth century, therefore, Basel Mission planning and strategy were dominated by the situation in Ashanti. Although Riis's journey of 1839-40 to Kumasi had shown that the time was not then ripe and the Ashanti invasions of the Protectorate during the intervening years had confirmed that view, subsequent events linked the Mission with Ashanti and strengthened the determination to begin evangelistic work in that area. The fact, however, that the Wesleyans had been compelled to suspend and ultimately to abandon their efforts in Kumasi in the 1860's, led the Basel Mission to adopt a cautious policy and to make no serious attempt until the problem of Ashanti aggression had been finally settled.

During this period the Mission began to encounter new difficulties in the shape of disturbances of traditional life brought about by the 'cocoa' revolution, the expansion of commercial activity, the development of gold mining, the building of roads and railways; and in the religious sphere the Mission had to contend with open hostility from chiefs in Akim and Ashanti, with the appearance of new virile indigenous cults, with the influx of Moslems from the north, and, in the Akwapim and Ga areas with<sup>a</sup> certain waning of the earlier zeal for the Gospel among their converts and the appearance of much nominal Christianity. Yet by 1914, the Basel Mission Church, as it was then called, had extended its field of activity into Kwahu, Akim and Ashanti, across the Volta, and had established a mission at Yendi in the Northern Territories. We take up the story with the Ashanti invasion of the coast in 1869.

The powerful Ashanti Confederation dates from the reign of Osei Tutu (1698 - 1731). Inspired by the priest Okomfo Anokye, the various tribes of the Ashanti people were knit together in loyalty to the Golden Stool, and formed a military force which dominated the entire forest region. Inevitably Ashanti interests were turned towards the wealth to be gained by

trading with the Europeans on the coast, a trade which was at that time in the hands of the coastal tribes. By reason of their conquests the Ashantis had come into possession of some of the 'Notes' by which the various European groups trading on the coast had agreed to pay rent for the lands on which the forts stood.<sup>(2)</sup> The main interest of the Ashantis was not in the fostering of legitimate trade but in the exchange of slaves for guns and ammunition; with these weapons other tribes were more easily dominated and more slaves obtained. The nineteenth century was thus a time of relentless Ashanti pressure upon the tribes to the south, a pressure which brought them into inevitable conflict with the British who, after the Bond of 1844 and the Danish purchase of 1850, were obliged to protect the coastal peoples. In 1863 an Ashanti force invaded the west of the Protectorate and defeated the Fantis and their allies at Asikuma; six years later they were back again at Elmina in support of the local people against the Fantis, a struggle brought about by the transfer of the Elmina fort from Dutch to British ownership; at the same time another Ashanti army began a campaign against the Krepis and Ewes east of the Volta.<sup>(3)</sup>

In June 1869, a fresh Ashanti force led by Adu Bofo captured the towns of Anum and Ho, burned the mission houses, and took prisoner the Basel missionaries Rev. and Mrs. F. Ramseyer and their newly-born baby, the lay-brother J. Kühne, from Anum and a Frenchman, M.G. Bonnat from Ho. They were taken to Kumasi where they were to be held for four and a half years. When Zimmermann at Odumase heard of their capture he tried to get in touch with the Ashanti camp through messengers of the Krobo chief in an endeavour to procure their release, but without success, and for a few months the fate

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(2) The Ashantis possessed the Notes for Elmina and for the three forts at Accra. Ward, *ibid.* pp.245-6, and Ch.XII *passim*.

(3) Ward, *ibid.* pp.214-220.



of the prisoners remained uncertain. (4) In September the news reached Basel and representations which were made to the British Foreign Office through the Swiss Consul in London concerning the captives elicited the reply that as the missionaries had been taken in territory outside British protection the British Government could not assume any responsibility in the matter. (5) On all the mission stations preparations were made for hurried flight to the coast and as the British Government took so long to reach a decision on the Ashanti question it seemed to the Committee in Basel that the entire thirty years' work of the Mission was at stake, not to speak of the lives of fifty-one missionaries then on the field.

J.A.Mader received a report in Akim to the effect that the prisoners were still alive, but that the Ramseyers' baby had died on the way to Kumasi. David Asante went on from Begoro to the Ashanti border in February 1870 and managed to get a letter through to the prisoners. On the instructions of the Asantehene they wrote their reply to the 'King of Europe', (the Dutch Governor of Elmina was meant), and in this way the Mission received the first direct news of the captives, (May 2nd, 1870). In the middle of that year there were unfulfilled hopes of their release and anxiety was tempered by the assurance that the prisoners were being reasonably treated. Oddly enough, in the following October, Adu Bofo sent important hostages to Accra, including his favourite son, Kwame Opoku, who had shown much friendliness towards the missionaries, as a pledge of his intention to abandon hostilities and as a security for their eventual release. (6) During 1871 and 1872 efforts to procure their release failed; the Asantehene refused to take any action until

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(4) Sources: Ramseyer F. and Kühne, J. Four Years in Ashantee, London, 1875, pass.

Schlatter, *ibid.* Vol.3, pp.100-105.

Wanner, G.A. *ibid.* Anhang I, Die Gefangenschaft von Johannes Kühne, pp.505-515.

(5) Wanner, *ibid.* p.506-7. J.B. 1870, pp.18ff.

(6) Wanner, *ibid.* p.511.

the return of Adu Bofo to Kumasi, and after the latter's arrival he put forward a proposal indicating his willingness to enter into peace negotiations and to free the captives against a ransom payment of 1800 ounces of gold, about £6,500. Ramseyer and Kühne counselled against accepting this proposal lest it should arouse a desire among the Ashantis to capture further Europeans. (7)

Ramseyer was allowed to preach the Gospel and even to speak against local customs and he was so uplifted by this opportunity that he begged the Committee to consider Kumasi already as a Basel Mission station and began to make plans for returning and establishing a mission outpost there. (8)

It seemed as though the British would never take action against the ever-threatening Ashantis. In February 1873 the Colonial Government in Accra requested the Basel missionaries up country to retire to the coast to avoid capture. Although the campaigns of Adu Bofo in 1869-70 had seriously depleted Ashanti manpower and ammunition without achieving positive results the vacillating policy of the British authorities allowed the Ashantis to re-arm and to mount yet another series of attacks against the coastal tribes during the dry season of 1872-3. The Fanti army was defeated at Jukwa and thousands of refugees thronged the streets of Cape Coast; British marines held Elmina and Cape Coast and the Ashantis retired slowly towards the Pra. (9) At this point the British Government realised that only an invasion of Ashanti itself could put a stop to these repeated attacks upon the tribes of the Protectorate and in October 1873 Major-General Sir Garnet Wolseley was given full power to deal with the situation. He had two thousand, five hundred British troops but few Africans as the chiefs were reluctant to take up arms

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(7) Ward, *ibid.* p.266. J.B. 1872, p.10f.

(8) Ramseyer and Kühne, *ibid.* pp.160-168. Ramseyer records with astonishment the Asantehene's readiness to accept missionaries 'to pray to God'; the execution of certain abosom priests, and his freedom to preach against their 'fetishes'.

(9) Ward, *ibid.* pp.265-275. Cf. Josenhans' summary of the situation in J.B. 1873, pp.9-10.

against such a redoubtable foe. Captain John Glover raised irregular detachments in the east of the country among whom were one hundred and nine Basel Mission converts accompanied by two catechists.<sup>(10)</sup> The main attack on Ashanti, however, was led by Sir Garnet Wolseley who followed the main Cape Coast - Kumasi route through Prasu. After a relatively short campaign the Ashanti army was driven back and on February 4th, 1874, the British forces entered Kumasi and released the prisoners. The town was burned to the ground.

The ensuing Treaty of Fomena, by which the Asantehene had to pay a large indemnity in gold, to give up his claim to Elmina, Assin, Akin, Adansi and Denkyera, to keep the trade routes open and to stop human sacrifice, brought the so-called Sagrenti War to an end.<sup>(11)</sup> For a period Ashanti was quiet and during the ensuing twenty years there was a new feeling of liberation and security everywhere. In September 1874 the Gold Coast was raised to the status of a Colony; two months later laws were passed forbidding slave-trading, freeing all domestic slaves, and establishing the nucleus of a police force and a proper civil administration.<sup>(12)</sup> Ashanti, however, still remained independent.

In April 1874, a telegram was sent to the Home Committee at Basel from the Church Missionary Society in London: "We are asked to commence mission in Ashantee. Write at once your views. Would your society wish it?"<sup>(13)</sup> There was much correspondence on the question as to which missionary society would take up work in Ashanti; it was conceded that the Wesleyans and the Basel Mission had the prior right, but so much interest had been aroused in England as a consequence of the Ashanti War, that the C.M.S. felt that it would also

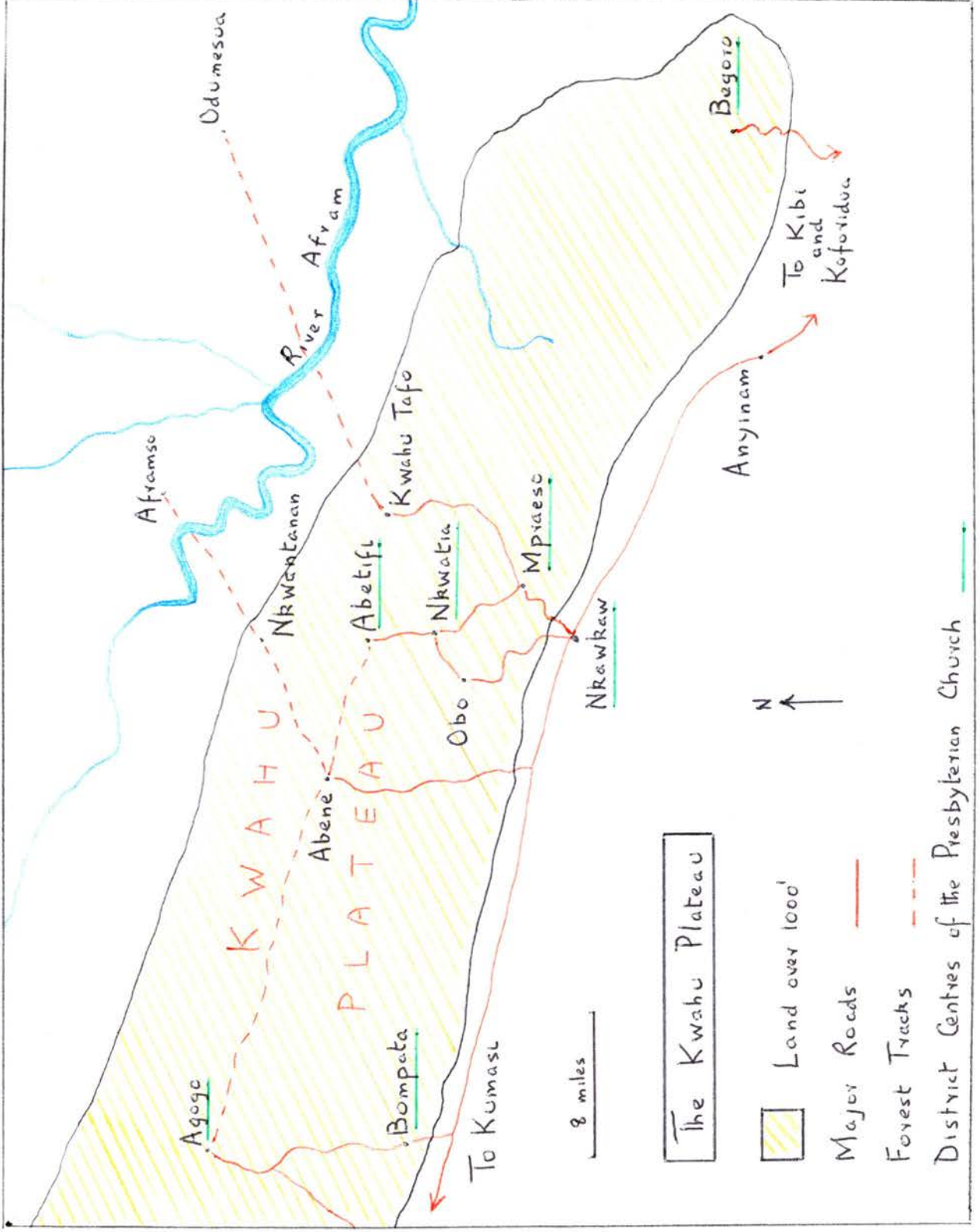
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(10) Wanner, *ibid.* p.572. J.B. 1874, pp.15ff.

(11) From the Twi pronunciation of 'Sir Garnet'.

(12) Ward, *ibid.* pp.394-5.

(13) Schlatter, *ibid.* Vol.3. p.106.



The Kwahu Plateau

- Land over 1000'
- Major Roads
- Forest Tracks
- District Centres of the Presbyterian Church

like to assist in a material way. Schrenk, accompanied by Captain Glover, took up the task of winning support in England and meetings were held in London, Birmingham, Nottingham, Manchester and Liverpool as a result of which a sum of £3,175 was raised for work in Ashanti.<sup>(14)</sup> From the continent of Europe and from America came a further £3,415.<sup>(15)</sup>

The strategy of the Basel Mission was to wait until conditions were more settled in Ashanti itself, and meanwhile to develop the work in Akim and Kwahu. "It may be asked why we did not proceed to Coomassie at once? The social and political conditions of Ashantee were, and are still, so unsettled, that in 1874 we clearly saw that Coomassie would offer very little guaranty for a Missionary Station. The means of our Society did not allow the risk of throwing away money for doubtful enterprises in Ashantee itself. Therefore our eyes were directed to the Eastern Ashantee province Okwao...". Accordingly, towards the end of 1874, Adolf Mohr, (a son of Joseph Mohr), Eugen Werner and Wilhelm Handel were appointed to Akim with a view to starting work in Kwahu and eventually in Ashanti. From Kibi, Mader and Mohr visited Begoro while David Asante, Handel and Werner investigated the Abetifi district. As a result of their reports the Home Board resolved to establish two new mission centres, that at Begoro to be manned by Mohr and the builder G. Glatzle, whereas Abetifi was designated as the Ramseysers' new sphere of work on their return from Europe.<sup>(17)</sup>

Over the turn of the year 1875 Mohr and Glatzle moved to Begoro a town of about five thousand people in a healthy location among the hills, where they selected a plot above the town and began to build. A few days after their

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(14) Schrenk, E. Ein Leben im Kampf um Gott, new ed. 1936, Basel, pp.104, 141-149.

(15) Schott, O. Basel Mission Report 1879, pp.15-16.

(16) Schott, *ibid.* p.16.

(17) J.B. 1876, pp.113-117; 1877, pp.92-98; 1878, pp.85-87; 1879, pp.70-71.

arrival eight baptismal candidates presented themselves and some months later a school was opened in charge of Catechist K. Obeng. Some of the new converts settled on Mission land and soon there were seven families around the station forming a separate Christian village according to the 'Salem' pattern which by now was fairly well established.

The first six baptisms took place in May 1876 followed by six more the following February and a little chapel was dedicated a year later. The work at Begoro grew steadily and happily except for the school in which it was almost impossible to keep more than a handful of boys at any time owing to the opposition of the priests. There were also discipline problems, eighteen members being excluded in 1878 for drunkenness and fornication. In 1883 Begoro became the chief station of Akim on the grounds that Kibi was much too unhealthy to remain a European post. The congregation grew so quickly that after ten years the Christian community numbered over twelve hundred and the people seemed prepared to accept the complete triumph of Christianity in the town. (18)

Meanwhile at Kibi there was difficulty and danger. The district proved specially unhealthy for Europeans: Mrs. Christaller died there in 1866; eight years later David Eisenschmidt had to be transferred on health grounds leaving the stalwart David Asante alone until 1878; (19) while the full force of the old religion and ancient custom was brought to bear on the tiny Christian group so that in the end even Asante was compelled to leave. At this period almost all the two hundred members were former slaves of the chief who had been given their freedom after 1874. (20) These could not however, be abandoned

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(18) Schott, Report 1879, pp.36-38; Report for 1900, 'Begoro' pp.70-71. Missionsmagazin 1878, p.310; 1876, p.453.

(19) Rev. David Asante, the first African ordained minister in the Mission and the first man to be trained in the Seminary at Basel. Schott, *ibid.* pp.34-35. The new stations also took their toll; Glatzle died at Begoro, and Werner at Abetifi, both in May 1879.

(20) M.M. 1881, p.27.

without a leader and at the height of the crisis, the Württemberger, Karl Buck, came to take charge. It was clear that the opposition of the chief and priests in Kibi itself was too great to hope for any immediate change, and Buck concentrated on district evangelism with astonishing results. Accompanied by groups of converts he trekked tirelessly throughout the whole area holding outdoor meetings in villages at which he and others preached. Within a year he reported over one hundred and fifty baptisms and announced that the whole of western Akim had been opened up for the Gospel. For lack of trained evangelists he himself had to spend much time in the villages instructing converts and candidates for baptism with such success that after three years there were seven outstations and more than five hundred converts, one of the most fruitful periods ever experienced in the history of the Mission. Buck divided his district into five parishes with an African minister in charge of each and encouraged the Christians to settle together in Christian villages. Each village had its own farms and set a great example to the local people of an ordered community life. (21)

The opposition from the Omanhene, Amoako Atta I (1866-88), gained momentum; in addition to his own personal hostility to Buck and to the Christians he tried to force the Christian converts to observe 'sacred' days and made complaints to the Government that the missionaries disturbed his people. His despotic tyranny was such that finally the British Government deported him in 1880 to Lagos for five years. For a while, no one was elected as interim chief but in 1883 the town elders approached Buck, much to his surprise, with the request that one of the Christian elders, Joseph Bosompem, take over the post. Buck was at once optimistic and doubtful, feeling on the one hand that the non-Christian elders had begun to realise that the Christian faith had

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(21) Eppler, *ibid.* p.344. Huppenbauer, Karl Buck, ein afrikanisches Missionsleben, *Missionsmagazin* 1891, p.225 ff.

value, but on the other hand fearing that the position would soon deteriorate once chief Atta returned. (22)

Unhappily, towards the end of 1863, Buck, just 32 years of age, fell sick and died, worn out in five years of unremitting service, but leaving behind him the promise of a great future for the Mission. (23) For a while afterwards there was no missionary at Kibi.

In March 1865 the Chief returned and at once the storm broke out again against the Christians: they were forbidden to work on certain heathen festival days; the small congregation at Asuom was evicted from the town; Presbyter Bosompen at Kibi was arrested as a thief and the movements of Christians and missionaries were interfered with. (24) Finally a law suit was brought against the Kibi congregation by the Chief for the recovery of a sum of £3,500 allegedly stolen from him. His death in 1867 during the hearing of the case was the signal for open hostility against Christians everywhere in Akim. The Christians fled from Kibi; their houses and the Mission station were plundered but the latter escaped destruction because the new chief, Akoako Atta II (1868 - 1911), decided to adopt it as his own residence. The chapel was used meantime for public meetings. Elsewhere Christian communities were dispersed, individual Christians were assaulted and robbed, and mission settlements destroyed or damaged. (25) Many Christians fled into the forest or took refuge on other mission stations in Akwapim. An appeal by the Mission to the authorities at last resulted in the sending of a detachment of troops to restore order and in a proclamation by the Kibi District Commissioner to the effect that all members of the Basel Mission could return to Kibi and to all towns and villages of Akim and enjoy all rights and

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(22) J.B. 1864, p.11.

(23) D. Huppenbauer, *ibid.* *passim.* Schlatter, *ibid.* Vol.3, pp.109-110.

(24) Schlatter, *ibid.* Vol.3, pp.111-113. The catechist at Asuom was formerly an adviser to the Omanhene and had refused to return to his service.

(25) Begoro was an exception. Eppler, *ibid.* p.345.



protection enjoyed by subjects of His Majesty in the Colony. The proclamation also enjoined the chiefs not to molest Christians on pain of a fine of £1,000, nor to allow occasions of strife to arise by promulgating local laws directed against them. Christians could fish freely in every Akim river even in those where there was a local prohibition against it, and any foodstuffs could be planted without the permission of the priest. Damage committed in the recent hostility against Christians must be made good. (26)

As would be expected the onslaught greatly upset the progress of the Mission in Akim; the number of Christians dropped in 1887 by over two hundred; in some places like Kwabeng and Asanufu the dearly-won village groups ceased to exist; many converts who had renounced their baptism now wished to affirm it again so that there had to be some kind of sifting of the lapsed from the faithful. It was a difficult process and years passed before the scars were healed. A number of those who had fled lost all their property without hope of restitution, but slowly the congregations were gathered again and were strengthened spiritually by their trials. The main outcome of the struggle was the freedom to preach the Gospel everywhere in Akim and as a result of the intervention of the Government the tendency of Christians to settle in the Christian quarter free from the control of the chiefs became more and more marked. (27)

It became increasingly difficult to guide the mission in Akim from Begoro: Kibi was not only the State capital but was also much more centrally placed for the care of the outstations. Accordingly, in 1900, Samuel Rottmann and later Rudolf Bürki were posted to Kibi, the Mission house being rebuilt and the surrounding bush cleared further back with the hope of improving health conditions. Kibi grew to be a large congregation with a Christian community

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(26) Schlatter, *ibid.* Vol.3. p.112.

(27) H.B. 1891, p.38; J.B. 1895, p.42f.

of over 2,500, but it was a difficult one. Schlatter blames this on the increasing secularisation of life caused by the sudden growth in the wealth of the people through the rapid development of the cocoa trade, and he compares the Kibi congregation with that at Corinth in the first century. After the great period of expansion of the 90's came a time of content struggle to maintain the purity and zeal of the church. (28)

The Kwahu state lies to the north and west of Akim, and is a plateau region forming the watershed of the Afram and Pra rivers. The people are hard-working and have a reputation all over the country as traders. The climate is similar to that of Akwapim, a fact which attracted the Mission to Abetifi while in addition the town lay only about sixty miles due east of Kumasi. Ramseyer, Werner and Jakob Weimer were ready at Kibi at the end of 1875 to found the new station but the Ashanti province of Juaben which lay between Kwahu and Kumasi was involved in hostilities with the Asantehene and it seemed prudent to wait until it became clear that the Kwahu state was not involved. (29) Finally Abetifi was reached and by 1878 the Mission house was finished, a small chapel dedicated, and a boys' school opened. The situation was beset with difficulties: Rev. and Mrs. Ramseyer had to return home for a spell owing to illness; the people were particularly devoted to the ancestral religion; and there was always the fear of war from Ashanti since Kwahu wished to throw off its allegiance to Kumasi. In 1884 the British Government formally took the region under its protection and in the ensuing years the Gospel was received so that by 1890 there were in Abetifi and six outstations over two hundred converts and a hundred children in eight schools.

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(28) Schlatter, *ibid.* Vol.3, p.115. A further problem at Kibi was the influx of a great number of labourers recruited by the Eastern Akim Gold Mining Company which made Kibi its headquarters.

(29) The defeated Juabens fled south and settled near Koforidua. Ward, *ibid.* pp.284-285.

During this time Ramseyer waited, looking forward to the day when it would be safe to start work in Ashanti. The outstation Bompata was his special interest as it lay near the Ashanti border and there Samuel K. Boateng worked unremittingly in building up a Christian congregation. At Patriensa, west of Bompata and right on the Ashanti border, the catechist, James Boama, was active, but still the way was not clear; Ashanti was still strong and the issue of the future relationship of Ashanti and Britain had never been really settled.

In 1898, the election of a new Abetifihene led to an outbreak of hostility against the Christians.<sup>(30)</sup> The District Commissioner annulled the election and there was a move to elect the Presbyterian John Atta who, however, finally declined. In spite of sporadic opposition, the period showed great gains in numbers; in the whole of Kwahu by 1914 there were twenty one congregations with a total of 2,582 members. In 1905 a progressive element in the state led a campaign against cult objects supposed to have the power of causing sickness and death with the result that in Nkwatia over forty women declared themselves to be witches. There seemed to be a general awakening of the people to the least desirable elements in indigenous religion. Bompata, particularly, became an example of a clean, industrious Christian village.<sup>(31)</sup>

In the west and south of Akim lies a large area inhabited by Twi-speaking peoples (Akim Kotoku and Agona) on the edge of Fanti country.<sup>(32)</sup> From time to time evangelistic journeys had been made by various missionaries,<sup>(33)</sup> pastors and catechists, and by 1886 there were already more than two hundred

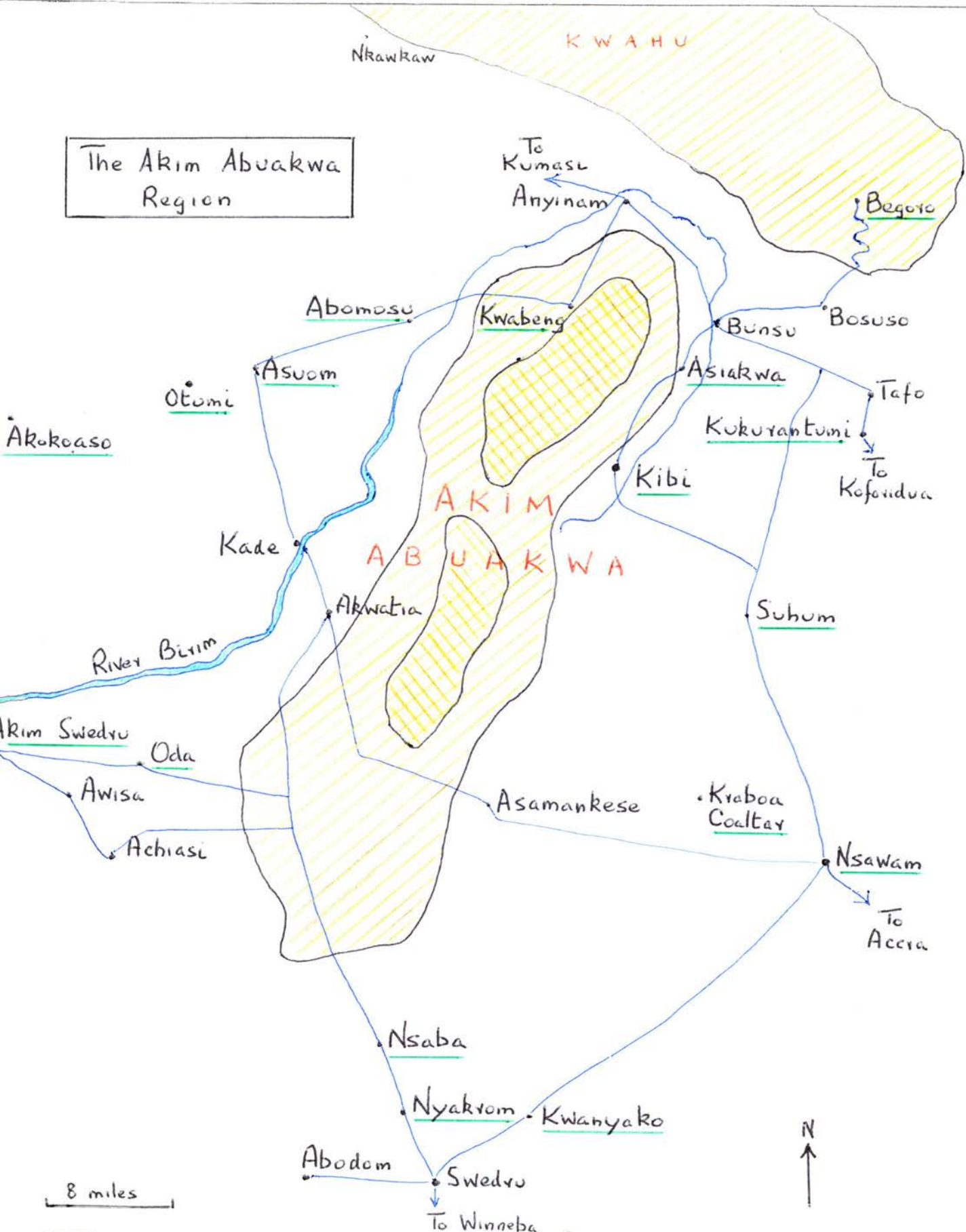
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(30) Yearly Report, 1900. pp.76-79.

(31) Schlatter, *ibid.* Vol.3. pp.119-120.

(32) Cf. Ward, *ibid.* pp.220-222.

(33) In particular by Heinrich Bohner, cf. Steiner, *Die Saat der Mohren*, Basel 1914, p.31.



The Akim Abuakwa Region

Nkrankaw KWAHU

To Kumasi Anyinam

Begoro

Abomasu

Kwabeng

Bunsu

Bosusu

Otomi

Asuom

Asiakwa

Tafo

Akokoaso

Kukurantumi

To Koforidua

AKIM ABUAKWA

Kibi

Kade

Suhum

River Birim

Akwatia

Akim Swedru

Oda

Kraboa Coaltar

Awisa

Asamankese

Nsawam

Achiase

To Accra

Nsaba

Nyakrom

Kwanyako

N ↑

Abodom

Swedru

To Winneba

8 miles

Land over 1000'  
Land over 2000'

District Centres of the Presbyterian Church

Major Roads

converts in different villages being cared for by the Mission. A chief station became a necessity and finally Nsaba was chosen, W. Rottmann being the first missionary to be posted there, followed by J. Sitzler in 1894. There was a considerable response to Christian preaching over the entire area, catechists and teachers being mainly responsible; so that twenty years later there were over three thousand four hundred converts in thirty-two villages and nearly nine hundred children in twenty-seven schools, shepherded and taught by ten missionaries, two African ministers and thirty-four catechists and teachers. Nsaba became the second largest congregation in the Church by 1914, exceeded only by Akropong. (34)

This widespread acceptance of the Christian Gospel in Western Akim cannot be explained by any particular spiritual virtues of the people. The missionaries' reports reveal much the same state of affairs as in other regions, and it would seem that the explanation lies rather in the swift response of the Mission to the challenge of work in a new district and to the fact that trained African personnel was readily available for staffing the outlying areas. (35)

In the north-west of the district, in the Kotoku area, the Mission encountered once again the former inhabitants of Gyadam where Süss had worked. In 1882 Mohr came from Begoro into this 'pocket' between the rivers Birim and Pra to restore old connections. Although abosom worship was very strong in the area the Gospel took root in a plantation village named Batabi which had been established by a group of people seeking refuge from the oppression of one of the priests. Among them was a certain Opanyin Ankoma who, having been converted during a trading journey in West Akim, was baptised in 1889, and was the sole Christian. Full of a desire to witness he visited a number

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(34) In 1893 there were 449 members; in 1899, 1267. (Report, 1900. p.81). Schlatter, *ibid.* pp.128-129.

(35) J.B. 1906, p.25.

of villages preaching, reading from his New Testament and singing hymns. Soon came the fruit of his faith; in February 1890 Rottmann baptised the first eight people in Batabi, and in August a catechist was stationed at Manso while candidates for baptism came forward in many places, including the chief's town, Oda. For a time there was hostility shown to the groups of Christians by the local people, inspired by the chief, until an appeal had to be made to the District Commissioner. Similarly, the ground at Ajumako was prepared for the Gospel by the zeal of a former houseboy of the missionary, Phil. Buss, (57) who began to conduct Sunday services in the villages of the district, won candidates for baptism and finally in 1897 called in the Mission.

We have noted that from time to time appeals had been made to the authorities for protection; in Akim the Government intervened directly to suppress two popular indigenous 'drinking-medicine' cults, the Katawere cult whose shrine was in a grove between Oda and Swedru, and the Aberewa cult. (58) Katawere was regarded as having power over life and death and held the people in a firm grip; every year there were many cases of deaths by Katawere medicine until at last the Government had to intervene. A dispute in 1895 between Oda and Swedru was being heard in Accra and the Katawere chief priest swore on the evening previous to the announcement of the decision that Oda would be given the verdict. When the decision was given in favour of Swedru the people were so angry that the priest had to flee for his life. The elders tried to restore confidence in the cult but the following year the Government, on hearing of further unexplained deaths, sent soldiers to destroy both the shrine and the grove. (59) The Aberewa cult attracted a number of Christians

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(56) Ringwald, *Stafette in Afrika*, p.85.

(57) I have not yet been able to trace his name. The reference is to Schlatter, *ibid.* Vd.3. p.131.

(58) See below, Chapter XI.

(59) Eppler, *ibid.* p.349.

but in the main the congregations stood firm. The cult spread widely during the years 1900 to 1908 when reports of deaths under suspicious circumstances impelled the Government to take action against it. (40)

In the Nsaba reports of this period there is constant mention of Islam particularly with reference to the Christian insistence on monogamy. Both in indigenous religion and in Islam polygyny was allowed and perhaps on this account Islam had begun to spread in some areas in the west faster than Christianity, e.g. in Gomoa, where the two religions came into direct contact. (41) The general development of the country and the relative quiet in Ashanti brought many Moslems to the Coast; both the cola nut and the cattle trade were in their hands, and in addition they found the selling of amulets and charms very profitable. The Moslem faith was, of course, officially recognised and protected by the British Government and this fact encouraged Moslem proselytising, particularly in Fanti country. The aggressive Ahmadiyya movement gained a foothold following the conversion of two Fanti Methodists, Benjamin Sam and Mahdi Appah, through the preaching of a certain Nigerian cleric, Abu Bakr. Sam and Appah made Ekroful their headquarters, about twelve miles from Cape Coast on the Dunkwa road, and began Moslem propoganda and started a school, for which in 1902 the Government provided and paid a qualified teacher. In 1921 the Fanti Moslems invited an Indian Ahmadiyya missionary to work in Saltpond with such success that practically all the Fanti Moslems were converted to Ahmadiyya within a few years. (42)

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(40) A first-hand description of the Aberewa cult is found in Ladrach, *Der Sturz eines afrikanischen Lugengottes*, Basel, 1919, pp.16-36. In 1908 a number of Aberewa priests in Akim, Kwahu and Ashanti were imprisoned and the cult forbidden. See below Chapter XI.

(41) J.B. 1902, p.26. Schlatter, *ibid.* Vol.3. pp.131-132.

(42) There are two kinds of Moslem in Ghana, the one orthodox following the Maliki code which allows customary law to operate but forbids any adaptation of Islamic Law to modern conditions, and those belonging to the Ahmadiyya movement, a sect centred in Pakistan founded by Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (1839-1908), who claimed to be the promised Messiah and Mahdi. The two are exclusive. A notable feature of Ahmadiyya has been its missionary activity in which it has copied Christian missionary methods, especially in starting schools, and its dissatisfaction with traditional Islam.

Two journeys in Ashanti were made by Basel Missionaries during this period of waiting: B.D. Huppenbauer and Karl Buck visited Kumasi in 1881 and sought formal permission from the Asantehene to begin mission work; Edmund Perregaux (the nephew of Ramseyer) and Joseph Atiemo travelled through northern Ashanti in 1895 to Atebubu and Nkoranza.<sup>(43)</sup> It was clear from their reports that Ashanti was still in a very unsettled state: there were party struggles for power, defections of confederacy tribes and consequent outbreaks of fighting and stool disputes, and in the Nkoranza area there was widespread devastation as a result of the punitive Ashanti expedition of 1893.<sup>(44)</sup> After the Sagrenti war the British Government had left the Ashanti people alone and had refused to become involved in their internal affairs. The period from 1875 to 1896 was thus a time during which the Ashantis tried to reassert their dominion over those tribes which desired to break away from the Confederacy and a period when they became more and more exasperated with the unsatisfactory nature of their relationship with the British Government.<sup>(45)</sup>

Agyemang Prempeh (Kwaku Dua III) was elected Asantehene in 1888, in a time of great strain; after years of constant war and fighting the Ashantis were weary, and the chiefs only continued their loyalty to Kumasi because they feared that Ashanti might be attacked by the British. The Asantehene did not trust the British Government, which officially professed a policy of non-interference in Ashanti affairs but had in fact intervened from time to time in disputes when appealed to by sub-chiefs, had received Kwahu into the Colony, and had at different times protected Adansi, Kokofu and Juaben refugees from the Asantehene. In 1890 the Governor, Sir Brandford Griffith, made a

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(43) H.J. Keteku, *Asante Presbiteri Asafo Asempatrew Adwuma Ho Asem*, Macmillan, 1953, passim. Epyler, *ibid.* pp.347-8; H.B. 1896, p.35, 43.

(44) Ward, *ibid.* pp.501-2.

(45) E.G. Juaben, Kwahu, Agona, Bekwai, Brong, Techiman, Krachi, Nkoranza Adansi and Gyaman tried at this period to assert their independence of the Asantehene. Ward, *ibid.* pp.287-303.



proposal to Prempeh that Ashanti should come under British protection, a suggestion which was politely declined. At length, in 1894, the Asantehene, by now fully convinced that the Accra Government was not treating him fairly, decided to send a deputation directly to Queen Victoria in England, although he had been informed that if he did so the entire matter would be referred back to Accra. In September 1896 events moved to a climax: the Governor sent a letter to Prempeh in which he accused him of breaking the Treaty of Fomena, and declared that henceforth a British officer would live in Kumasi as adviser to the Asantehene, that any Ashanti tribe wishing to come under British rule could do so, and that the indemnity of 50,000 ounces of gold still owing for the war of 1874 must all be paid.<sup>(46)</sup>

The Government asked for an answer by the 31st October but the Asantehene replied that he must wait until his envoys returned from England in December. Prempeh decided however to accede to the Governor's demands but it was then too late as the British had already resolved to send an army into Ashanti. On hearing the news he despatched three messengers to Ramseyer in Abetifi asking him to use his good offices with the Governor as he was ready to accept the conditions imposed and would agree "to come under the white men's rule".<sup>(47)</sup> He was too late. On the 17th January, 1896 the vanguard of the British forces reached Kumasi and on the 20th the Asantehene knelt before the Governor without sandals or golden circlet and agreed to submit to the British demands, promising to pay 680 ounces of gold immediately and the rest in instalments. The Governor refused to accept this offer and took the Asantehene, the Queen Mother and a number of important

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(46) The letter complained that the road from Kumasi to the Pra had not been kept open, that human sacrifice had not been stopped, and that the Asantehene had done nothing to foster proper trade. An ounce of gold at that time was worth £3.12s. (Akwa-nnwowa mmienu), Ward, *ibid.* p.303.

(47) Schlatter, *ibid.* Vol.3. p.121.

chiefs in custody to the coast as security for the payment of the indemnity. (48) The Ashantis were utterly taken aback by this unexpected turn of events but they could do nothing except protest; their protests were disregarded.

The British built a fort in Kumasi and a council of chiefs was appointed, headed by a British Officer; the 'fetish' groves were burned, and the chiefs' burial ground at Bantama, the scene of so many human sacrifices, was destroyed. Knowing Ramseyer's special concern for Kumasi, the Governor sent a personal written message to him at Abetifi ending with the words: "Kumasi will henceforth be open to missionaries and should you yourself arrive at Kumasi before I leave, it will give me pleasure to see you". (Camp Kumasi, 22nd January, 1896). A month later, exactly 22 years after the day of his release from imprisonment, Ramseyer, accompanied by his nephew Perregaux, re-entered Kumasi. "It is no longer a dream; I am again in Kumasi and can now say: Kumasi is a Basel Mission station. Here stand Perregaux and I as free missionaries and the entire country is open to us. This is not simply a hopeful expression; no, in fact all the towns are open to our approach, in the north and north-east as far as Nkoranza. And from many different states come requests for us to settle among them. In Ashanti a real change has taken place such as I never would have imagined". (49)

The Mission was allocated a piece of land between Kumasi and Bantama and a catechist started to build a temporary house, as a proper building was not feasible meantime. (50) In June, 1896, the Ramseyers and J. Adaye

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(48) Prempeh was kept first at Elmina Castle, later in Sierra Leone, and finally in 1900 he was taken to the Seychelles Islands. He was allowed to return in 1924 as chief of Kumasi but not as Asantehene. His successor Nana Sir Agyemang Prempeh II was enstooled as Asantehene in 1935.

(49) Ramseyer: Erste Briefe aus Kumase, quoted Schlatter, *ibid.* p.121f.

(50) The magnificent £2 million hospital built in 1955-6 now stands on this site.

entered Kumasi but before their own needs were properly taken care of, a British Officer brought to them a number of slave women and children from the interior, of whom nineteen died of their previous privations, but the rest prospered in the care of the Mission. Street preaching began and by the end of the year there were already two outstations and two schools. School growth in Ashanti was rapid; from three in 1897 to fifteen in 1900. Ramseyer took this as a sign of the confidence of the people in the Mission: "at first", he reports, "they did not know what we wanted the children for; now they say, Make good children out of them".<sup>(51)</sup> At the end of 1897 the first Ashanti convert was baptised. In spite of the continued resentment of the Ashantis towards the British the Mission developed fairly quickly; outstations grew from three to sixteen between 1896 and 1899 and baptisms numbered thirty-three. At the beginning of 1900 there were over one hundred and sixty Christians although the greater number of these were incomers from other tribes; most of the people of Kumasi had left the town and had gone to live on their farm villages.

Ramseyer's own report gives us a picture of the position of the Mission at this time: "In less than four years the station (sc. Kumasi) was founded; two solid houses were built....sixteen other towns and villages were occupied as well by native agents. We could not baptise any persons at Kumasi....The Ashantee people are still very proud....such feelings of being something more than their neighbours, connected with a certain hope to re-establish the Ashantee realm at some future day prevents many from joining the Christians, and even from hearing the Gospel....Our schools are highly estimated - some hate them - but to take the final step is a hard task for an Ashantee. Many like to have their names written down as candidates, but their chiefs threaten them secretly, and they dare not come forward owing to fear". He goes on to praise the African catechists and teachers, mainly

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(51) Schlatter, *ibid.* p.122. It is in Ashanti particularly that the phrase is used of the missionary 'Sukuu Buro'ni', lit. 'school whiteman'.

from Akwapim and Akim, who were working under great difficulties. (52)

By the time this report was written a sociological blunder provoked yet another outbreak of hostilities. In December 1899, the Governor, Sir Frederic Hodgson, was informed of the alleged whereabouts of the Golden Stool and it seemed to be a good piece of strategy to obtain it. The British authorities seem to have had no idea of the sacred and social function of the Stool which embodied, in a sense, the 'soul' of the nation, and though of it simply as the sign of power which it would be good to possess to show that the British were now masters. At a durbar in Kumasi in the following March the assembled Ashanti chiefs were told by the Governor never to expect the return of Prempeh and an annual tribute of about £64,000 (the interest on the indemnity imposed at Fomena) was demanded from them. (53) Finally, Sir Frederic demanded the surrender of the Golden Stool on the grounds that this emblem of power now belonged to the Queen of England. There was great indignation among the Kumasi chiefs and after the meeting they began to make immediate preparations for war. The queen mother of Ejisu was chosen as their head and the ensuing fighting became known by her name, the Yaa Asantewa War. (54)

On the 31st March a party of British soldiers went on to try to locate the Golden Stool, (there had been one such search the previous December) and had to fight their way back to Kumasi. The Governor and Lady Hodgson, the Mission personnel, (55) and other Europeans took refuge in the Fort. Meantime the Ashantis blocked every road leading out of Kumasi and although a few soldiers reached Kumasi from Accra, from Cape Coast and from the north

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(52) Basel Mission Report, 1900, Asante District, pp.81-88. (Ramseyer).

(53) 8,000 pereguans of gold. Ward, *ibid.* p.308.

(54) Smith, E.W. *The Golden Stool*, London, 1930, Ch.I, *passim*.

(55) Rev. and Mrs. A. Ramseyer, Karl Weller, Friedrich Jost and Mrs. Haasis (her husband had just died).

in April and early May, the Fort was closely besieged from May 15th to July 15th. On June 23rd all the Europeans in the Fort with the exception of three officers left with the garrison, made a successful break out at four in the morning along the path to Manso Nkwanta. Although they were attacked three times during the day they finally reached the village of Trebuom where the famished and exhausted party rested under improvised shelters against the pouring rain. The chief of Manso Nkwanta led them the next day to comparative safety, but the survivors still had a journey full of hardships before them until they reached Cape Coast. (56)

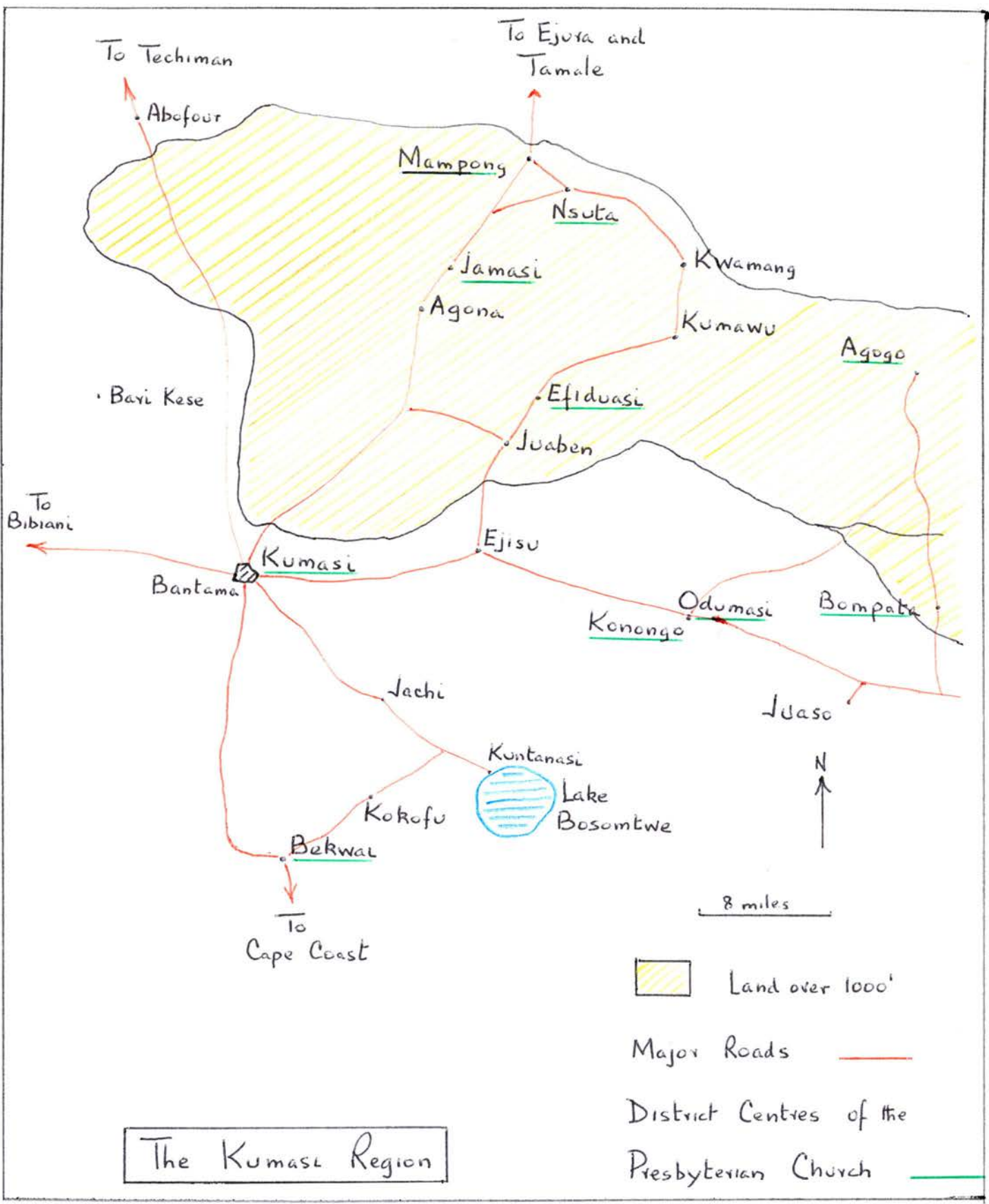
British troops led by Colonel Willcocks reached Fomena on May 20th on their way to relieve the garrison; they then feinted as though they would attack Kokofu and when a section of the Ashanti forces was withdrawn from Kumasi to defend Kokofu, they moved quickly through Peki to Kumasi. (57) After a short fight those still besieged in the Fort were relieved, but this was not until July 15th and a number had meanwhile died of hunger, including two mission teachers. Until the end of the year there were still isolated campaigns in various parts of Ashanti. Some of the captured chiefs were sent to the Seychelles Islands and others were imprisoned in Elmina. The indemnity sum was never paid.

The Mission work had to be begun again at Kumasi: the buildings were destroyed, the Christians dispersed, and the teachers Maxwell Okanta and Helena Sakyama had died in the Fort. On the sixteen outstations the catechists and teachers suffered variously: James Akyea at Dweso narrowly escaped death three times; J. Tete at Ofeso risked his life advising the local people against rebellion, as did Aye Hanson at Nkoranza; the life of J. Danso at Sekyeredomase

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(56) Weller died on the way. Steiner, Schreckenstage in Kumase, Basel, 1900, passim. The account in Steiner is based on Ramseyer's diary.

(57) A group of volunteers of the Basel Mission from Akim was with the army. They were accompanied by Rev. O. Ladrach and Rev. B. Ntow.



was threatened as compensation for a fallen Ashanti soldier but he was saved by the intervention of a local priest. Some were helped by the local people to reach safety, as for example, Rev. S. Kwafu at Mampong and the teacher J. Atiemo at Agona. (58)

One teacher suffered martyrdom. Samuel Otu of Larteh who was stationed at Takyimantia, a town about 50 miles north-west of Kumasi, had not found the beginning of evangelical work easy on account of the hostility of the chief. (59) On the outbreak of hostilities he had given up his efforts to conduct a school and had instead gathered adults for Bible study and preaching, but as an agent of the white missionaries he was a marked man. His house was plundered and he and his wife were imprisoned in a hut, Otu being tethered hand and foot to a stake in the ground. Later Mrs. Otu was freed and permitted to look after the children and her husband and for a short time Samuel was also released from his bonds. Although he made no effort to escape he was again chained to the block, and suddenly some days afterwards, an executioner appeared, hacked off the hand by which he was chained and dragged Otu into the street where he was put to death. Sarah Otu and the children were unharmed but had to stay a further nine months in Takyimantia before it was possible for them to return to Larteh. A few yards from the place where Otu was killed - his grave is unknown - a new Chapel was dedicated in 1951 by Rev. K. Hartenstein of the Basel Home Board. Sarah Otu died at Larteh on 22nd September, 1962, at the age of 88 years, her funeral being attended by Christians from Takyimantia.

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(58) Steiner: In Feindeshand, Erlebnisse eingeborner Missionsgehilfen während des Asante - Aufstandes, Basel 1901, passim. Most of the tribes stayed out of the war; those who fought were mainly from Kumasi, Ejisu, Ofinsu, Nkwanta, Ahafo and Adansi.

(59) Ringwald, Stafette in Afrika, pp.69-74.

On the 13th December, 1901, Ramseyer and Bellon stood in front of the ruined station in Kumasi with heavy hearts, but still full of hope for the future. With the help of Rev. Nathanel V. Asare and Rev. Samuel Kwafu, a fresh start was made. Some Christians came back and the reception by the people was favourable; there were five baptisms at Christmas 1902 and twenty-eight in 1903, in which year H.J. Keteku and Herman Dako restarted the schools, both men tirelessly visiting the outstations. Edmond Perregaux relieved Ramseyer in 1904 and wore himself out on evangelistic journeys in the north and west of Ashanti. He died the following year, on the 14th October 1905.<sup>(60)</sup> In the next few years a long line of men, Africans and Europeans, of courage and conviction, followed, spreading the Gospel into all parts of Ashanti:- B.O. Ampofo, N.T. Clerk, A.O. Mate, J. Dwamena, James Boama, C.E. Opoku, M. Apea, B.M. Seku, A. Jehle, F. Jost, A.P. Bauer, A. Lipps and others.<sup>(61)</sup> By 1914 in Ashanti there were twenty Christian congregations, eight hundred converts and seventeen schools.<sup>(62)</sup>

The development of the Christian mission in Ashanti brought special problems: a new factor in the situation was the opening of schools by the Government; these charged smaller school fees and did not require any religious change on the part of the pupils.<sup>(63)</sup> The Mission feared that such an educational principle would produce a new type of pagan, divorced from his ancestral religion and having nothing better to put in its place. Nor could the Mission extend its educational work quickly owing to the shortage

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(60) Schlatter, *ibid.* Vol.3. p.124.

(61) H.J. Keteku's little book is a mine of biographical information. Like Perregaux, Andreas Bauer literally wore himself out in three years of evangelistic work in Ashanti. In that time he visited over 800 towns and villages preaching the Gospel. He died in 1909 at Nsuta of blackwater fever. Ringwald, *op.cit.* pp.74-77.

(62) J.B. 1915.

(63) It was announced at the opening of the Sunyani Government School: "The instruction given by the Government does not necessitate any religious change as is the case in Mission schools; boys can attend school...and still remain loyal to the beliefs, customs and traditions of their ancestors". Quoted by Schlatter *ibid.* p.125.



of teachers most of whom came from the Colony; at that period almost no Ashantis became teachers. While the numbers attending Basel Mission schools remained steady, the Government schools became much more popular. (64)

After the Yaa Asantewa war the British Government gave much freedom to the chiefs, especially to those who had remained loyal, on the principle of 'indirect rule' popular at that time in British colonial circles. This caused difficulties for the Mission as for example when chiefs insisted that Christians should observe certain local customs; a refusal on grounds of conscience was punished by a fine or by an accusation of insubordination in a report to the authorities. Particularly vexing to the Mission was the Spirits Tax by which the chiefs purchased the right to sell spirits, the money being collected by the chiefs in the form of a levy. Christian converts, who were exhorted by the Mission not to drink spirits, objected to the levy but they were obliged to pay in the interests of peace. (65)

The question of oath-swearing also troubled the Mission in Ashanti for many years. It was a means whereby an Ashanti brought someone to law; the oath was a kind of summons and once sworn and responded to the chief was obliged to settle the case. (66) Both parties in 'the oath' deposited the fixed sum of money attached to the oath, the unsuccessful litigant forfeiting his deposit in addition to a sheep for sacrifice. The amount at that time varied from £1.5s.6d. to £10. Often the oath was bound up with customs repugnant to the Christian conscience and, in some cases it was felt that the

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(64) In 1910, there were 95 attending the Mission School in Kumasi, compared with 300 at the Government School. J.B. 1911, p.96.

(65) Schlatter, *ibid.* pp.125-6.

(66) Rattray, *Religion and Art in Ashanti*, ChXXII. Each tribe has its special oaths, usually the mention of a particularly calamitous event. Once sworn, the chief is obliged to investigate the reason for the swearing of it, in order to avoid a similar calamity. Cf. J.B. 1912, pp.64-66.

prohibition of oath-swearing in Matthew 5. 34 excluded the Christians from any obligation to respond. Often if a Christian made no response to the oath he was automatically adjudged guilty. For a while the Government was inclined not to interfere but pressure from the Wesleyan, Basel and Roman Catholic Missions in 1912 resulted in the matter being so regulated by the Government that Christians must appear if an oath were sworn but should not be held guilty if they did not repeat it, and that in any event the case should be judged on its merits. (67)

There were other problems with which the Mission was familiar enough but which seemed to be especially difficult in Ashanti: the heavy drinking of spirits, the problem of enforcing monogamy, the strength of indigenous religious customs and the appearance of new cults, and for the first time the emergence of Islam as a rival. In 1906 the Aberewa cult appeared from Bonduku in the Ivory Coast; it was essentially a cult offering protection against witchcraft and other calamities as well as promising success in undertakings if certain moral and legal requirements were kept. (68) It was the first time that the Christian faith had been challenged on these new lines. According to Ladrach, at Aberewa festivals liquor flowed freely and songs were sung in her praise: "Aberews hates liars, hates cheating, blesses the good, helps the miserable person - O Aberewa, look on our misery, have pity on us, be gracious to your servants! Aberewa hates the liars, hates cheating - (69) witches die, sorcerers fall down - the evil ones must flee - be on your guard!" The shrine was regarded as the saviour of the town where the cult was established as well as of the individual, and the promise of assistance by the

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(67) Text in Synod Minutes, 1953, pp.15-16.

(68) Ladrach, Der Sturz eines afrikanischen Lugengottes, Basel, 1919, p.11-16.

(69) Ibid. p.23-24.

secret forces of Aberewa was the source of the confidence of the devotees. (70)

The worship at the shrines was full of life and excitement, with drumming, dancing, and the drinking of a prepared potion by the worshipper as a sign of allegiance and fidelity. The medicine was then 'in him'; should an evil person or one practising witchcraft drink the medicine Aberewa would 'catch him'. Often inexplicable deaths took place and there were also other abuses, but the cult spread quickly and widely; most Africans took the view that both Aberewa and Christianity were good and there was much backsliding of Christians. Finally, some of the practices connected with the 'catching' of witches and evil doers, e.g. by poisoning, resulted in the cult being banned by the Government and the shrines being destroyed. (71)

For the first time the Mission was directly faced with the adversary of Islam; one of the results of the annexation of Ashanti by the British was that Hausa traders flocked in from the north. (72) They were allowed to settle in so-called Zongo villages close by Ashanti towns, forming a settlement pattern which was repeated all over the Colony. (73) So great was the influx after 1900 that in some places the Zongo was larger than the native town, and by 1910 there were over four thousand Hausas and others in the Moslem quarter of Kumasi. Even in Kibi a Moslem community came into existence composed of labourers from the north who worked as carriers during the cocoa harvest. Their superficial adherence to Islam was just enough to render them impervious to the appeal of the Gospel, and to the missionaries at that time the prospect

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(70) Ladrach, *ibid.* p.20, "Aberewa assists you at all times invisibly; Aberewa has secret powers, life-medicine for the sick...Aberewa protects you from an early death, destroys evil charms, guides you on the right path, helps the children to grow up, increases your livestock, guards your fowls. Aberewa makes the heart happy, makes you wise and intelligent".

(71) H. Debrunner; *Witchcraft in Ghana*, Kumasi 1959, Ch.15 *passim*.  
M.J. Field; *Akim Kotoku, an Oman of the Gold Coast*, Crown Agents 1948 Chapter XIII.

(72) J.B. 1911, pp.66-7.

(73) A description of the Zongo settlements and their social position is given below in Ch. XI.

of Islam flooding in and destroying their work seemed imminent. (74)

At the mouth of the Volta, on the right bank, lie the towns of Adrafo and Big Ada four miles apart. After Schönfeld's time mission work went ahead painfully slowly, partly on account of the pressure of local custom and beliefs, and partly because of a serious decline in trade. For a time from 1879 there was a secession of the Ada congregation from the Mission although they kept the rules of the Mission and paid their own minister and teachers. The Report for 1900 refers to the fluctuating population and the reluctance of the local people to take the decisive step of baptism. Rev. S. Ofei and Rev. R. Furrer were in charge in the last decade of the century during which time the Ada congregation returned to the fold, and five outstations and schools were established. As however, the commercial importance of the area declined still further, the district was attached to Odumase. At the outbreak of the first World War there were still only 330 members among the seven congregations. (75)

The spread of the Gospel across the Volta into German territory was based on Anum and was the result of the efforts of four outstanding African leaders of the young Church. In 1881 Rev. David Asante re-established the Mission at Anum and a Christian village emerged at the foot of the hill; Rev. Peter Hall, who later became the first Moderator of the Church in 1918, worked for fourteen years in the Nkonya area north of Kpandu and established congregations at Ntsumuru, Wurupong and Alavanjo; Rev. N.T. Clerk began work at Worawora and Vakpo, and in Krachi, the home of the powerful Odente obosom, Rev. D. Awere was successful in establishing a small group of converts. (76)

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(74) Jahresbericht, 1911, p.67. (Rev. G. Martin).

(75) Report, 1879, pp.25-28. Schlatter, *ibid.* p.133. J.B. 1913, p.97.

(76) Report 1900, pp.63-66; Christian Messenger, Oct/Nov. 1961 (N.T.Clerk, M'Anum Tra ne Adwuma: 1881-1891); J.B. 1889, pp.46ff; 1895, pp.20-21; 1897, -.22; 1898, p.26f. M.M. 1893 (Steiner's summary and an article by Hall).

in the hope that this Twi-speaking area might become a base for advance to the north, the Mission decided to concentrate forces in the Buem district, and two missionaries, Adam Mischlich and Andreas Pfisterer, were located there.

There were three main problems which faced the Mission in this district: the opposition of traditional religion and Islam; the spread of Roman Catholic Missions, and the insistence of the Germans upon the use of the Ewe language rather than Twi. The difficulties which arose from working both in German and British territories finally decided the Basel Mission to hand over their congregations beyond the Volta to the German Bremen Mission on the condition that if later events permitted, the Basel Mission would begin work in Northern Togoland. The Bremen Mission, or North German Mission Society, had begun work at Peki in 1847 but had finally made Keta their headquarters. For many years the mission's work suffered considerably as a result of local inter-tribal wars but by the end of the century had firmly established stations at Peki, Ho, Amedzofe and Lome. The transfer of the Basel Mission trans-Volta congregations, with the exception of Anum which lay in British territory was made slowly as Bremen missionaries became available, but was accomplished by 1906. (77) The work in Anum and district always fluctuated; there was little trade locally and many of the people settled for long periods elsewhere in the cocoa-growing areas. For much of the year the town was inhabited mainly by children and elderly folk and created a recurrent problem for the Mission. (78)

Although by 1914 the Christian community in Odumase and its seventeen outstations numbered 1646 the basic situation remained the same, much hearing of the Gospel with little response. We have noted how this pattern was set from the beginning by the Konor, Nene Odonkor Azu, who died in 1867 still

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(77) Akpafu, Worawora, Ntsumuru, Kpandu, Vakpo and twelve village congregations; a total of 932 baptised Christians. J.B. 1909, p.56.

(78) The same problem is now met with in the Akwapim towns. Cf. J.B. 1912, p.55.

unbaptised. Another factor in the situation was the Huza system of land tenure practised by the Krobos which meant that the people were always scattered,<sup>(79)</sup> the long narrow settlements sometimes stretching for three miles and being widely dispersed. Furthermore the worship of the war god 'Nadu' was very strong, while the Dipo custom by which adolescent girls were initiated made it almost impossible for the Mission girls' schools to function. For these reasons the progress of the Gospel in the Krobo area was very slow; in 1889 Odumase was the only congregation in the Gold Coast to show a decline in numbers.<sup>(80)</sup> Although the area had come under British rule in 1874 there was still no guarantee of protection: many travellers disappeared without trace, human sacrifice continued, and communications and trade through Krobo to the Volta were much hindered.

For the first time in 1873 one of the girls in the school refused to undergo the Dipo custom but the opposition was so great that she had to seek refuge in the Girls' School at Abokobi.<sup>(81)</sup> From the Mission's point of view it meant that almost no young unmarried woman entered the Church, so that Christian young men found it almost impossible to contract a Christian marriage.

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(79) Cf. M.J.Field, 'Africa' Vol.XIV No.2. April 1943, 'The Agricultural System of the Manya Krobo of the Gold Coast'.

(80) J.B. 1890, pp.73-4.

(81) Schlatter, *ibid.* pp.150-151. Traditionally the Krobos recognise three gods; Mawu, the sky god who is supreme, Nadu, the war god, and Kloweki the earth goddess, the mother of the tribe. The Dipo custom is a decree of Kloweki. When the girl is twelve, or at the first visible signs of maturity, the girl is taken apart to be instructed by a 'matron' and priestesses. The instruction covers all aspects of motherhood, house-keeping and domestic duties and lasts for 9 - 12 months although it is now shortened to three. At the end of the period of tutelage the girls are dressed in their best clothes, dance in public to the Klama traditional songs and receive a public ovation. The passing out ceremony is called Yifom (washing of the head), after which a girl can go with a man or marry. See the article, The Historical Background of Krobo customs by Nene Azu Mate Kole, the present Konor, in Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana, Vol.1. Part IV 1955, p.136.

Often a mature girl who wished to be baptised was taken by her family against her will to undergo the custom, and according to missionaries' reports there was often licentiousness at the coming-out festival. In 1890 the first breach was made; two daughters of Konor Sackitey were permitted by him to stay on at school without undergoing the custom and after that time Christian girls were left unmolested. (82)

In 1892 a new Konor had to be elected. At this time the British Government had obtained firm proof of the continuance of human sacrifice in Krobo and when Governor Brandford Griffith attended the installation in the July, he spoke openly against human sacrifice and prohibited the skull offerings to Nade as well as the Dipo custom. (83) The people were given three days in which to collect their belongings from the sacred village on Krobo Hill, after which the soldiers razed it to the ground. A former Mission teacher, a nephew of Sackitey, Emmanuel Mate, was elected Konor, the first chief of Krobo to have been brought up as a Christian, but he found it impossible to combine Christianity and chieftaincy, and was later excluded from attendance at Holy Communion.

The Government ban on Nadu was largely successful but the Dipo Custom showed an extraordinary tenacity simply because it was so deeply rooted in the life of the people, and continued under another name, the Bobum or 'clothing' festival. (84) In East Krobo, the forbidden Odente cult was introduced from Krachi and reports from the outstations Sra and Akoli revealed a similar state of affairs. The Gospel had as yet made very little impact upon the prevailing religion and customs of the Krobo people.

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(82) Kopp: Die heidnische Frauenwelt in Kroboland, Missionsmagazin 1893, p.403 ff.

(83) Native Customs Ordinance Vol.II Cap.112, Section 4. In 1907 the shrine of Kreme in Kpemo was also destroyed and the cult forbidden.

(84) Schlatter ibid. Vol.3. p.152.

The hope was often expressed that the Mission would eventually succeed in exerting a greater influence upon the community largely through the steady growth in the number of children in the Mission's schools. The proportion of school children to church members was higher in the Krobo district than anywhere else, roughly two to one. But Schlatter points out, that up to 1915, at any rate, the hoped for results from the schools had not materialised. (85) At the end of the first World War there was little significant increase in the number of communicant Christians at Odumase Krobo, and although some notable conversions are recorded the reports of G. Josenhans who worked there from 1886 to 1913 are seldom encouraging. (86)

In the Akwapim and Ga districts a new set of problems emerged for the Mission arising mainly from the completely new social situation brought about by cocoa-growing. The year 1900 roughly marks the time when the effects of the cocoa revolution begin to make themselves felt; up to this time the congregations continued in much the same way, growing slowly but steadily and enjoying a greater influence within the community, in which the Christians now had an accepted and honourable place although they were still a separated group. First, there was the startling increase in the wealth of the people which led to an increased preoccupation with the material blessings of life. In 1898, exports of cocoa were worth £9,616; by 1911 this figure had risen to £1,613,468 and in 1917 to £3,146,851. Although the Basel missionaries had sponsored cocoa-growing in their search for a cash-crop and welcomed the rise in the standard of living which these cocoa earnings brought, they now began to be much perturbed at the effects of sudden prosperity upon both the Christian and the non-Christian communities. Within the Church there was a general

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(85) Schlatter, *ibid.* Vol.3, p.154.

(86) For example, J.B. 1890, pp.73ff; 1897; J.B. 1913, pp.6-7.



slackening of Christian zeal, the emergence of much nominal Christianity, a great number of exclusions for lapses from the Christian code, and an increased concern for 'pleasure' and the vanities of life. "People think more of sardines and cigarettes than of their souls"; "they spend money on brass bands, six of which played continuously at the Odwira festival at Akropong", are typical comments. (87)

Rev. B. Groh describes the situation as follows:

"Heathenism walks in modern dress, with a different character than even ten years ago. Western culture penetrates with giant strides along with the increasing 'easy money' obtained from the cocoa trade, and both came without warning. The people had no time in which to adapt themselves to the new situation and became rich overnight.....The entire external way of life of the so-called educated group has changed; bread, milk, tea, sardines, biscuits etc. forming for many a part of their daily diet.....We are not concerned about this improved diet but rather about the desire for pleasure among the younger generation which seems to know nothing of the seriousness of life and has no desire for hard work....This luxury makes itself evident in a startling way at Christian family celebrations, much money being spent at marriages, confirmations baptisms and even at the induction of catechists and teachers. One tries to outdo the other, so that from year to year, the expenses for such events grow larger". (88)

Secondly, the development of the cocoa industry had a devastating effect upon the former settled life of the Christian communities. For a time the missionaries tried to dissuade Christians from participating in the cocoa boom but like everyone else Christians joined in the scramble after more fertile land further afield, chiefly in New Juaben, Akim and Ashanti, and spent in

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(87) J.B. 1913, 1914. The missionaries frowned on these bands on the grounds that they led to dancing and fornication.

(88) J.B. 1911, pp.81-82; cf. J.B. 1914, pp.93-95.

consequence much time away from home on their cocoa farms. "Cocoa is spoiling everything...the Akwapim stations present a disagreeable picture, most of the people are away on their cocoa farms....they seldom attend Church and are most liable to influence from pagans....everywhere there is discontent, quarrels, irregular living, open strife..."; a disheartening verdict in 1907.<sup>(89)</sup> This theme is taken up again and again: "so much time is spent on plantations that Christian community life suffers, and many lapse, including second - and third - generation Christians!"<sup>(90)</sup> At Larteh it was reported that for long periods the town seemed almost deserted and that the people returned only to celebrate funeral customs but not for church services or Christian festivals. Children were left with relatives so as to attend school and made long journeys to the plantations at week-ends.<sup>(91)</sup> In this way the ordered life of the Christian groups was shattered and a problem of pastoral care was set which has persisted until the present time.

Thirdly, the cocoa revolution was responsible for a number of other social problems. The former basis of land tenure was interfered with; lands beyond one's own tribal boundaries were bought and sold, a situation which encouraged litigation over possession. Families were sometimes disrupted by quarrels regarding the inheritance of cocoa farms. There are reports of outbreaks of theft, hitherto little known, by those who were attracted by the wealth of some cocoa farmers. Food farms were neglected, a fact which led to a rise in the price of foodstuffs and in much money being spent on imported flour, tinned meat and sardines. Not least, prolonged absences from home encouraged marital instability and the comparative neglect of the children.<sup>(92)</sup>

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(89) J.B. 1907.

(90) J.B. 1910.

(91) J.B. 1913.

(92) J.B. 1913, passim.

The missionaries thus found themselves suddenly in a totally changed situation as a result of the cocoa boom but there were also other difficulties at this time which caused them much concern: requests for freedom from Mission control; the problem of the suddenly increased number of the 'lapsed' and the 'excluded'; seeming failure in the Accra urban area; and increased competition in traditional 'Basel' districts from other Churches. These may be described briefly.

In the Akwapim and Ga districts came the first stirrings of a desire to eliminate the missionary from the direct oversight of the congregation and of the local church session, the so-called Ethiopian tendency.<sup>(93)</sup> A request for independence from Basel Mission control was made by the Ga Synod in 1909, a desire first given expression by the Abokobi congregation four years earlier.<sup>(94)</sup> This tendency seemed to be part of the wider political interest on the part of some educated Africans which began to be noticeable at this time, in reference to the dominant position of the white man. As most of the literates were Christian it was only to be expected that this feeling should find early expression within Church circles.

At Akropong the unprecedented number of exclusions from the Lord's Table on account of breaches of the Christian code - an average of over seventy a year between 1906 and 1913 - resulted in a number of special efforts being made to win back the lapsed, but with indifferent success.<sup>(95)</sup> Special evangelistic campaigns to revive the Christian zeal of nominal Christians were held in a number of Akwapim towns and the first attempts at temperance work were made by

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(93) J.B. 1911, p.69; 1913, p.99f.

(94) J.B. 1912, p.63; 1910, p.63f.

(95) Most of the exclusions were for adultery, concubinage and drunkenness. Schlatter, *ibid.* Vol.5. p.168, compares the number of exclusions in the Basel Mission, Gold Coast, with those in the Basel Mission, India. In 1913 the figure for India was 0.3%; for the Gold Coast it was 3.3% of membership.

Dr. Fisch at Aburi in 1906, who held meetings and distributed pamphlets all over the district on the harmful effects of strong drink. The congregation at Larteh seemed to be the least affected by the falling-away of its people; in 1914 it was the largest single congregation in the Church with over two thousand members yet even here the effects of cocoa growing were beginning to be felt. (96)

The same features of sudden prosperity and the increasing impact of Western life and culture were shown in the congregations of the Ga area. From the villages of the plain the young men were drawn away to Accra in search of employment with the result that the Christian groups failed to grow in numbers. Abokobi reached its peak of church membership in 1900 and thereafter remained static. Nor did the urban congregations seem to benefit from this influx; the struggle to maintain Christian moral standards in the church became particularly acute. The growth of Accra as the capital city of a thriving country brought in its train all the problems of a large mixed metropolitan population. In the nineties there is much depression evidenced in missionaries' and pastors' reports at the lack of progress, so much so that the former raised the issue with the Home Board whether a reduction of the work should not be undertaken in the Accra district by handing over some of it to the Wesleyans who seemed more at home in the large commercial centres. It is an interesting point as it shows that the Basel missionaries felt more at ease in a predominantly rural environment and found greater difficulty than the Wesleyans in coming to terms with the new social changes. The Home Committee however, refused this request and asked for stronger evangelistic efforts. (97)

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(96) Ansah, op.cit. pp.54-5.

(97) Report 1900, pp.34-38; Schlatter ibid. Vol.3. p.146.

The problem of denominational competition was also something new to be reckoned with. The Wesleyans, as we have already noted, (98) began their work at Cape Coast and although they were active in rural area their main strategy was invariably to settle first in the large urban centres. The spread of the Wesleyan Mission from Accra into the traditional Basel Mission 'field' in Akwapim and Akim gave rise to much concern in Basel Mission circles during the last two decades of the nineteenth century. Two interesting examples of the different strategy of the two Missions was seen at Koforidua and Nkawkaw; for decades the Basel Mission had stations in the hills quite near these towns which grew considerably with the development of the cocoa trade and after the building of the Accra-Kumasi railway, yet Presbyterian congregations came into being in the towns themselves much later than the Methodist groups. There are complaints that the exercise of church discipline was made more difficult as Presbyterian members under censure often made their way to the rival mission. Some of the young people preferred the Wesleyan Schools because of their stress on the English language in contrast with the emphasis on the vernacular in the Basel Mission schools. (99)

After 1860 Roman Catholic Missions came increasingly into the picture; within twenty-five years work was established at Elmina and Cape Coast, at Accra, at Keta and at Navrongo in the Northern Territories. Thus from the east and west sides of the country the Roman Catholics entered the traditional Basel and Wesleyan spheres of work. There was little or no official contact between these three Church bodies during this period apart from their mutual concern with

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(98) Ch. I, above.

(99) Eppler, *ibid.* p.332. The Basel Mission was often referred to by the people as 'German' and the Wesleyan Mission as 'English'. The Basel Mission tended also to be stricter in discipline and to ask for higher church dues.

education, and, in Ashanti in 1912, their combined pressure upon the Government to regulate the question of swearing native oaths and of customary obligations.

The year 1906 saw the re-entry of the Church of England Mission at Cape Coast and Accra after an absence of over one hundred and fifty years, and by 1914 the Baptist church, the African Methodist Episcopal Church and the Seventh Day Adventist Church were also present in the country. (100)

In spite of these new problems the period from 1870 to 1918 was, for the Basel Mission, a time of advance and growth. If in the Ga, Krobo and Akwapim districts, after the great endeavours and successes, humanly speaking, a plateau had been reached where for a time the going was slow and wearisome, the pioneers in Ashanti, Akim and trans-Volta could report a new and heartening response to the Gospel, and in addition there was the work in the north of Togoland which had been begun in 1910. (101)

The 1902 agreement between the Basel and Bremen Missions had allowed the former a free hand eventually in the north of Togo. The aim of the Basel Mission was to be in a position to evangelise the north of Ashanti, as well as to have a firm base for work in the Northern Territories, as they were then called. The missionaries, G. Martin and B. Groh had planned an exploratory journey in 1906 when they were invited to Lome by the German Governor to attend a conference between representatives of the Roman Catholic Mission, the Bremen Mission and the civil authorities. The conference agreed on spheres of influence in Northern Togoland: west of aine Mangu-Yendi to be Protestant and the north-east to be Roman Catholic, neither mission to encroach on each other's

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(100) Cardinal, A.W. The Gold Coast 1931, Govt. Printer, Accra, pp.183-186.

(101) Sources for the work of the Basel Mission in N.Togoland; Jahresberichte 1913, pp.141-143; 1914, pp.160-162; 1915, pp.115-116; 1916, pp.100-102; 1917, pp.96-98; 1918, p.47. Schlatter, *ibid.* Vol.3. p.200f.

territory for a period of thirty years. After the conference, Martin and A. Mohr set out, (Groh had fallen sick), via Bimbilla and Yendi to Sansane-Mango and as far as the boundary of French Sudan returning through central Togoland to Anum. The journey convinced them that work should be begun in the north; they had been cordially received and had travelled safely; health conditions were if anything better than in the forest areas, and milk, eggs and meat were plentiful. Martin wrote an impassioned appeal to the Home Board and Mohr was equally in favour of an attempt. (102) They reported that the area was still mostly peopled by tribes unaffected by Islam although Islam seemed particularly attractive to the chiefs. The German authorities had forbidden certain features of some of the local cults which were offensive to the European outlook but Mohr feared that unless a Christian Mission was active in the area, the people might turn inevitably to Islam, as there were Hausa traders everywhere and Moslem prayer places were to be found in every town from Kete-Krachi northwards. He felt, therefore, that Yendi, the Dagomba chief town, was the place to begin: the new missionaries should learn Hausa, and as soon as possible there should be a doctor posted there as well as the founding of an artisan training centre. He closed with the words: "It is vital to start now. It is to be decided now whether North Togo will become Christian or Moslem". (103)

Although the Home Committee in Basel decided to proceed without delay the German Government felt that it was too premature because the safety of the

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(102) Letter of Martin to the Home Committee from Anum 17th May 1906. Quoted in Schlatter *ibid.* Vol.3. p.201f.

"We have been working now for over fifty years among the Ga and Twi peoples, and if you take the map of Africa in your hand and see how small in relation to it this bit of the earth's surface is, both a missionary and a Missionary Society should feel the blood curdling in his veins at the thought of the immeasurable responsibility which we bear in the sight of the Lord of the harvest, who opens door and gate in front of us so that we might reach the thickly-populated area of the Sudan".

(103) Schlatter, *ibid.* Vol.3. p.203.

missionaries in such a remote area could not be guaranteed. The new project thus had to wait until April 1909 when a move was made from another quarter. A telegram was received by the President of the Basel Missionaries' Conference on the Gold Coast from the Chief Commissioner of the Northern Territories, (104) inviting the Mission to establish a station of the Trading Company at Tamale. (105) The White Fathers, (106) who were already established at Navrongo, would like to settle also at Tamale, but the Commissioner seemed to feel that the Basel Mission would be more ready to develop industry and trade. He was ready also to welcome the Mission itself as there was already the nucleus of a congregation among the southerners working in Tamale who met regularly for worship. Natural this approach was welcomed by the Mission, the Home Committee deciding to send G. Josenhans, B. Groh and Dr. Fisch to Tamale to investigate the situation. While preparations for this journey were being made a fresh discussion took place in July with the German Governor in Lome together with representatives of the Bremen and Roman Catholic Missions. The Governor wished the Missions to postpone work in the North until the railway was completed, probably in 1914, although he agreed that the area designated for Protestant Missions in German North Togo could be visited by the missionaries.

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(104) The Northern Territories, comprising the main tribes of Dagomba, Mamprusi, Dagarti, Frafra, Kusasi, Konkomba, Moshie, Gonja and Wala, was made a protectorate in 1901. It was ruled by the military until 1906 when a civil administration was established with headquarters at Tamale.

(105) Schlatter, *ibid.* Vol.3. p.204.

(106) The White Fathers: a French Roman Catholic Mission Order founded in 1868. They received permission to establish themselves in Navrongo in 1906. Their distinctive features were their complete adaptation to local conditions in matters of dress, food and housing, and their indirect approach to evangelism. They assisted the people in welfare and education but gave Christian teaching only on request. See C.P.Groves, *The Planting of Christianity in Africa*, Lutterworth, Vol.III, pp.210-212.



The party set out in January 1910 and travelled from Yendi to Tamale where they were welcomed joyfully by former employees and pupils of the Mission, among whom were former catechists holding regular Sunday services, about seventy Christians assembling in the Government School building. Of the 6,000 inhabitants of Tamale it was estimated that about 1,000 were Moslems. Further north at Diari (between Tamale and Walewale) they met two French colonial officers who, when asked if France would permit a Protestant Mission over the border in French territory, replied in the negative and informed them that the French Government did not wish the Missions to do educational work. (107) Even in Gambaga, the centre of a populous district thirteen miles from the German Togo border, they found a small group of Basel Mission Christians, but also a strong Moslem influence. From Gambaga they trekked through the entire German area and finally returned to Lome where they saw the Governor again, who still wished them to postpone the enterprise although he proposed Bimbilla, between Kpandae and Yendi, as an interim station for language study. In spite of the political problems however, it was felt that a start should be made. (108) By the middle of 1912 over £4,000 had been raised for the new work and on the 31st October the first missionaries were sent out: Rev. and Mrs. O. Schimming, Immanuel Kiess and Hans Huppenbauer, the last named being specially entrusted with language study. (109) They were all from Württemberg. In spite of the fact that Bimbilla was not a Dagomba-speaking town, the missionaries planned to make it their headquarters as the Governor had not yet declared Yendi open to Europeans, but when they landed at Lome they were given permission to settle at Yendi. On their way north, they

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(107) This seemed to be the attitude of the French at that time. In 1906 the White Fathers feared that the recent French anti-religious legislation might result in their expulsion from French territory. Cf. McWilliam, *The Development of Education in Ghana*, p.37.

(108) H. Huppenbauer, *Von Fernen Ufern*, Heft 48, Stuttgart 1958, *passim*.

(109) 95,000 Swiss francs. Schlatter, *ibid.* Vol.3. p.208.

visited some of the former Basel Mission outstations and were warmly welcomed, and on the 13th of January, 1913, they reached their destination.

Their first home was the Government Rest House but in May they moved into a temporary lodging in the town. Exploratory journeys into the surrounding district were made and a dispensary was begun but their main concern was with the language. Dagbani, the speech of the Dagomba people, was first studied but some attempt was made to investigate the relationships of the many local dialects. At the end of 1913 H. Huppenbauer was able to read a portion of the Christmas story for the first time in Dagbani. <sup>(110)</sup> In general, however, the response of the people was discouraging and it took much effort to win their trust; the undercurrent of Moslem influence and a superficial adherence to it by a number of the people was sufficient to create an intangible barrier to Christian preaching. The hopes of the missionaries for the future rested in the small school which was begun in January 1914 with a few boys.

Upon the outbreak of war in 1914, French and British troops advanced across German Togoland from both sides and after a short campaign took over the administration of the territory, the missionaries at Yendi being restricted to the immediate area of their station. They continued their work under increasing difficulties: there was considerable anti-German feeling; carriers to bring up supplies were almost unobtainable; and the little school was discontinued. Only the medical and language work could be pursued uninterruptedly. In March 1916, at the height of the dry season, a fire destroyed more than half the station resulting in the loss of valuable documents, books and personal effects. A swish house was hastily constructed and fresh supplies were obtained from Kumasi and Akuse. Unexpectedly, in

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(110) J.B. 1914, pp.100-1. cf. H. Huppenbauer, *Wie ich den Dagomba die Weihnachtsgeschichte erzählte*, Stuttgart 1956.

August 1916, the missionaries were informed by the British Authorities that they should leave Yendi and settle nearer the coast. They reached Lome in the following September and were then sent to Europe. (111)

The promise of the beginning at Yendi was never realised until thirty years later when the Evangelical Presbyterian Church took up the responsibility for mission work in the area. (112)

The events at Yendi were an epitome of the fate of the entire Basel Mission and in concluding this period we give an account of the expulsion of the Mission from the Gold Coast and the confiscation of the Trading Factory, tragic consequences of the first World War. At the beginning of the war the Basel Mission and the Trading Factory were regarded by the British Government as neutral. Already by November 1914 the Trading Company had excluded (at their own request) German Mission Committee members who had a place on the Board of Directors, and had removed German nationals from active participation in the business, while every effort was made to purchase such share capital as was in German hands. German employees on the Gold Coast had already been deported and interned in England, their posts being taken by employees of Swiss nationality. No profits were remitted to Germany and after November 1916 the business was conducted from London. On the other hand, the Mission itself, as opposed to the Trading Company, had such a great number of missionaries of German nationality on the field and gained support, so far as they were able in war time, from German Churches, that the British Government, which to begin with had not hindered the

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(111) Mrs. Schimming was repatriated after a short delay; the others were interned in the Isle of Man until the spring of 1918. J.B. 1915-1918.

(112) See Chapter IX below.

missionaries from continuing their work apart from restricting their movements, began to view the Basel Mission with some suspicion. (113)

On the field, the missionaries were at first arrested but after a few days were allowed to return to their stations. They had to report regularly to the police and to request permission to travel more than a few miles, but were given leave to visit the schools. At this time there were thirty-seven Basel missionaries, not counting wives and children, of whom all were German, except five Swiss and one American, the General Superintendent being the Swiss, Rev. G. Zürcher. Later they were all given general permission to visit their village congregations; applications to visit other head stations was usually granted but sometimes refused; a few were allowed to sail to England on medical grounds.

In March, 1915, the Basel Mission heard that its work in the Cameroons had been suspended and that the Trading Company there had been proscribed, on the grounds that the entire staff of the Mission was German and that the Duala Mission buildings had been used for storing the baggage of German Army officers. It was furthermore alleged that arms, ammunition and equipment had been buried in the ground in the mission compound. (114) Unsuccessful attempts were made by Zürcher to be permitted to visit the Cameroon missionaries held prisoner in Dahomey, a number of whom were afterwards brought to Christiansborg and allowed to stay in the Mission House for a time.

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(113) Main sources for this period are:

Wanner, Basler Handels Gesellschaft, 1859-1959, Basel, 1959, pp. 305-311, the most authoritative and detailed account of the Trading Company. Unfortunately this valuable book (677pp.) is not on public sale. Correspondence File (Scottish Mission) 1914-1918, containing Zürcher's exchange of letters with the British authorities and with individual missionaries. Scottish Mission Council Minutes, 1918-21; Minutes of the Foreign Mission Committee of the United Free Church of Scotland 1918-21; Basel Mission Jahresberichte 1915-1920.

(114) Letter of Captain R.H. Rowe, D.A.A. Allied Forces, G.H.Q. Duala, 8th Mar. 1915, to the General Agent, B.M.F. Duala (Scottish Mission Records).

In August 1915 a letter from the Colonial Secretary to the General Superintendent indicated a hardening of attitude: "Under instructions from the Secretary of State for the Colonies I am directed by the Acting Governor to inform you that no meetings of missionaries of your mission can be allowed to take place during the continuance of the War. I am further to request you to inform all your missionaries that any proved case of an attempt by a missionary to use his influence disloyally to the British administration will be dealt with very severely and that any individual misdemeanour may be punished by the immediate internment of all German missionaries." (115)

However, in December a further letter from the Acting Colonial Secretary to Zürcher eased the tension for the missionaries meantime by clarifying the position: "I am directed by the Governor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter dated the 20th of December, and, in reply, to inform you that the Government has no immediate intention, as at present advised, of deporting missionaries of enemy nationality". (116)

On the 22nd of June, 1916, the British ambassador in Berne informed the Inspector of African Missions in Basel that the British Government desired in future that all missionaries sent to the Gold Coast should be native-born Swiss citizens, to which the Mission Board responded that it could not promise adherence to such a request as it would mean a break with its history and a denial of its character as an international Missionary Society. (117) In reaction to this viewpoint the British Foreign Office took a firmer line and a note was handed to the Swiss Embassy in London in October 1916 to the effect that, "His Majesty's Government have arrived at the conclusion that the Basel Mission as at present

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(115) Letter of the Ac.Col.Secretary dated 19th August, 1915.(S.M.Records)

(116) Letter of the Ac.Col.Secretary dated 28th December,1915 (ibid).

(117) J.B. 1917, p.4. Cf.also, Friedrich Würz, Die Basler Mission am Scheideweg. Separatdruck aus dem Evangelisches Missions-Magazin April, 1918, p.5f. Wanner, ibid. p.309.

constituted, is so German in sympathy that it cannot be allowed to operate longer in a British dependency. As regards the Basel Mission Trading Society, His Majesty's Government regard it as ancillary to the Mission, and could only allow it to continue its operations under purely Swiss control and with purely Swiss representation and personnel". (118) Although the Trading Company then took active steps to effect a definitive break with the Mission and although it had already given an assurance that its German connections had been severed, this did not prevent its eventual liquidation by the British Government. Thus it seems clear that by the end of 1916, preparations had been made by the British authorities for the eventual cessation of the entire work of the Basel Mission in the Gold Coast. In December the Superintendent of the Mission in Christiansborg received a letter from the Rev. A.W. Wilkie, Secretary of the United Free Church of Scotland Mission Council in Calabar intimating that he, accompanied by his wife and the Rev. J. Rankin, would land in Accra in the following January. Dr. Wilkie wrote: "As you are probably aware, I have been asked by the Foreign Mission Committee of the United Free Church of Scotland to visit the Gold Coast with a view to conferring with you and others as to the best methods of conserving and continuing the good work which has been done by the Basel Mission in that Colony". The explanation of this visit was given in a letter to the Rev. G. Zürcher in the following January. (119)

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(118) Wanner, *ibid.* pp.309-310.

(119) Letter from Calabar dated 12th December 1916 (Scottish Mission - Correspondence File).

Letter from the Acting Colonial Secretary to Zürcher, 22/1/1917, "...while no immediate steps are contemplated locally as regards the Basel Mission the possibility that the Government may require an eventual change in the organisation of this Mission, must be borne in mind. His Majesty's Government have informed Mr. Walter Gettli, the African Secretary of the Basel Mission that they wish to see removed from the Managing Committee and Secretariat of the Mission all persons who are not native-born Swiss citizens.

It has further been suggested to the African Secretary that it would be an advantage to the Basel Mission as well as to His Majesty's Government if the former would be willing to allow a British Mission to co-operate with them in their work in the Gold Coast. It is in pursuance of this suggestion that Mr. Wilkie and Mr. Rankin have now come to Accra". (Scottish Mission, *ibid.*)

Although the Basel Mission Secretary had not been informed by the Home Board of this step the visitors were cordially received. It seemed then, finally, that the German missionaries would be interned and that the Scottish Mission would help out the very few Swiss missionaries who would remain. A cable from Zürcher to the Africa Inspector, Basel, "Scottish Missionary deputies here. Am awaiting your informations and instructions", received the reply "Give necessary information, avoid decisive steps but report". During a stay of four weeks the Scottish missionaries visited all the stations with the exception of Anum and Nsaba and a large number of smaller outstations. Zürcher reported home in full in a letter of March 1st, 1917; he and others had travelled with the Scots and had given them full opportunity to find out all the details of their work.

The year 1917 continued much the same for the Basel missionaries; they could still work under restrictions although there was constant anxiety for the future. (120) Money was short as all the cocoa could not be shipped and drastic economies had to be made: it was not possible to import school books; the pastors and teachers requested an increase in salary; there were difficulties of safeguarding the Mission property at Yendi; but somehow the work went on and the statistics showed an increase in numbers. (121) In September 1917 we find Zürcher writing to J.H. Oldham, the Secretary of the Continuation Committee in Edinburgh requesting assistance for the Bremen missionaries in Lome who were in dire financial straits and who could scarcely maintain themselves or pay salaries to their African personnel: "I thank God our Heavenly Father, that we on the Gold Coast are going on with our work not

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(120) Two vernacular history readers had to be withdrawn from all stations on account of an alleged German bias. The objection seems to have been to the chapter on the Franco-German War of 1870 which emphasised the German victory. Letter of the Colonial Secretary dated 14th September, 1916. (Scottish Mission Correspondence).

(121) J.B. 1917, p.60. J.B. 1918, p.33.

much harmed and almost uninterrupted...It is certainly very unfortunate not being able to renew our staff. There are missionaries in Switzerland waiting to be sent out to the Mission field; they are however not allowed to come, and those who are here 5, 6, 7, and 8 years are not able to go home". (122)

There were signs, however, that events were moving to a climax. The Cape Coast newspaper, the Gold Coast Leader, published an article in May, 1917, alleging that the missionaries were seeking to persuade the people of the inevitability of a German victory; an unfounded report which caused much distress in mission circles. In November exception was taken by the Government to a booklet published by the Mission in connection with the jubilee celebrations of the Akropong Middle School because it contained no specific expressions of loyalty to the British King and all copies were asked to be withdrawn, the freedom of movement of Dr. Huppenbauer at Aburi was threatened, and on the 10th December the long-expected blow fell. "I am directed by the Governor to inform you", wrote the Colonial Secretary to Zürcher, "that His Excellency has received instructions from the Secretary of State for the Colonies that all Basel Missionaries of German nationality are to be deported with the least possible delay and that action is being taken accordingly". (123)

In the second week of December 1917 all the German missionaries were brought to Accra and on the 16th left by ship, the men for an internment camp in the Isle of Man, and the women and children for London, whence, eight weeks later, they were repatriated. The men were repatriated in the following May. (124) The remaining non-German members of the Mission were eight,

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(122) Letter dated 4th September, 1917, (Scottish Mission Correspondence).

(123) Letter of the Colonial Secretary to the General Superintendent, Basel Mission, Accra, 10th December, 1917. (ibid)

(124) Bellop, Die gewaltsame Vertreibung der Basler Missionare von der Goldküste, Stuttgart, 1918, passim. Cf. J.B. pp.39-40.



six Swiss, one American and one Australian; H. Stricker was left in charge of the College at Akropong, G. Zürcher and H. Dewald at Christiansborg, P. Dieterle at Abokobi, E. Scherrer at Aburi, N. Rohde and H. Henking at Abetifi and F. Jost at Kumasi. It seemed that they would be allowed to continue their work but an Order in Council of the 12th January, 1918, forbade any European alien to remain on the Akwapim Ridge. (125) Zürcher applied for permission for either Stricker to remain at Akropong or to move the Seminary to Odumase or Anum. The problem was, however, solved by force majeure when on February 2nd all the remaining missionaries were ordered home by the next steamer in consequence of instructions from the Secretary of State in London to the Governor: "I consider that in view of the German sympathies... all the Europeans must be regarded as suspects. Your Government cannot afford to take risks and the public safety must be the first consideration. You should therefore deport the remaining members of the Mission and the Trading Society as soon as possible". (126)

Hastily, on the 4th February, 1918, the Legislative Council enacted the Basel Mission Ordinance, an ad hoc piece of legislation by which the Trading Company was liquidated, and its entire property and stocks were given over to the control of the Custodian of Enemy Property. (127) Later the Commonwealth Trust, Limited, was set up to continue the commercial enterprise, and a further Bill was passed to legitimise the Ordinance because the confiscation of the Basel Trading Company did not technically fall into the category of dealing with enemy concerns. The Commonwealth Trust was obliged to give any profits over and above a 5% dividend to religious and

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(125) Order in Council No.1. of 1918, Gazette No.3 of 12th January, 1918.

(126) Speech by Colonial Secretary A.R. Slater before the Legislative Council on 4th February, 1918.

(127) Introducing the Bill the Colonial Secretary A.R. Slater remarked: "I have no startling disclosures to make of any overt acts of enmity, hostility or disloyalty. The members of the Basel Mission have, outwardly, observed the neutrality they were required to observe. But although there has been an absence of openly expressed enmity, there has been a notoriously persistent covert unfriendliness..."  
Legislative Council Debate, 4th February, 1918.

educational projects in the Gold Coast. It was not until 1928 that this hasty action in respect of the property and assets of neutrals was put right. (128)  
Gold Coast opinion was generally in favour of the restoration and there was some criticism of the Commonwealth Trust's stewardship. (129)

Thus after close on ninety years of dedicated endeavour, during which the Mission had initiated far-reaching religious and social changes affecting a large area of the Gold Coast and had contributed more than any other single agency to agricultural, medical, commercial and educational development, it was thrust out of the country. (130)

What led the British authorities to take this action at such a late stage in the war? In partial extenuation it must be remembered that the closing months of 1917 were a very dark period in the war for Britain, and that there was therefore a natural tendency to feel suspicious of all Germans. While the Basel Mission was officially a neutral, 'international' missionary society, at least two thirds of its personnel in the Gold Coast at any time

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- (128) After a long legal struggle during which the issue was taken to both Houses of Parliament, the British Government in 1928 restored the possessions of the former Basel Mission Trading Company to the Union Trading Company Ltd. The Commonwealth Trust Company continued in possession of properties erected during the intervening period. Basel Mission Factory property in India was never restored, payment for the sequestration being made only in 1951!
- (129) The Accra weekly paper Vox Populi on 17th November, 1928 wrote: "The action initiated by Government in the sequestration of the properties and assets of the Basle Society, a veritable piece of mess and muddle, characterised by gross indiscretion, greed and rashness...We have been deprived of the invaluable benefits, philanthropic, religious and educational, which we had until then enjoyed under the aegis of the Basle Society over whose return today in our midst we right gladly rejoice".
- (130) Cf. the Basel historian G.A. Wanner, Basler Stadtbuch, Basel 1960, p.102. (Sonderdruck, Basel und die Goldküste).

had been German nationals who were naturally, if not openly, in sympathy with the German cause. Further, in the reports of the missionaries of the period and earlier there is evident a certain tendency to assert, with justice, the special contribution of the Basel Mission to the Gold Coast coupled with the assertion that the Colonial Government had done very little to develop the country. (131) The 'English' approach to education was considered inappropriate, in particular with its emphasis on the English language and its comparative neglect of the vernaculars. (132) Without doubt, this underlying attitude of mind was known to the British authorities and the refusal of the Basel Mission in 1916 to send only native-born Swiss citizens to the Gold Coast confirmed the Government's view that it was German in sympathy. At the same time there is no evidence of any open act of hostility on the part of the Basel missionaries or of a failure on their part to observe a strictly neutral position. It seems clear that the action taken stemmed ultimately from the then Governor, Sir Hugh Clifford, whose attitude was indicated in a speech before the Legislative Council of the Gold Coast in 1918: "Since 1915 I have personally held that the interests of this Colony were not well served by having in our midst persons of enemy association whose influence cannot but be harmful to loyal British subjects". On the same occasion, the Colonial Secretary added: "Your Excellency unhesitatingly recommended (sc. in December 1915)

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(131) For example, F. Fischer, *ibid.* 1911, pp.17-18, 19-22, 25: "Das die Engländer auf der Goldküste sehr rasch an die wirtschaftliche Erschliessung des Landes gegangen waren und darin schnelle Fortschritte gemacht hätten, kann man nicht sagen. Im Gegenteil, man wird der englischen Regierung den Vorwurf nicht ersparen können, dass sie jahrzehntelang sehr wenig dafür getan hat. Vom Jahr 1850 an war sie allein an der Goldküste, also ungehindert; aber es ist sehr wenig geschehen".

"Der direkte Einfluss der englischen Regierung auf die wirtschaftliche und materielle Kultur war eigentlich gering -" "...der bedeutendste Faktor für die Entwicklung der Kultur auf der Goldküste im letzten Jahrhundert war und zwar die Basler Mission".

(132) Jahresberichte, 1912, pp.59-60; 1913, pp.90-92.

that the only satisfactory and prudent course to adopt was to suppress both Mission and Basel Mission Factory". (133) If Guggisberg, with his keen appreciation and fuller understanding of the work of the missionary societies, had been Governor at that time, a less drastic course of action might well have been taken. We give him the last word: "First and foremost among them, (sc. the Missions), as regards quality of education and character-training, was the Basel Mission; and....their removal from this country during the war of 1914-1918 was the greatest blow which education in this country has every received. The removal of some of the staff was necessary, for no country that is fighting for its existence can afford to retain in it enemy subjects. Nevertheless the blow was a great one, but there were recompenses, for it resulted in the arrival in this country of that devoted and efficient band of missionaries - the Scottish Mission. It is no exaggeration to say that the Rev. A.W. Wilkie and his people saved the situation....". (134)

Whatever lay in the future the sacrificial endeavours of the Basel missionaries had borne great fruit: in 1918, when the statistics were read at Synod, the results of their labours, from Christiansborg on the Coast to Yendi in the north, were evident to all. On eleven central stations and in almost two hundred towns and villages were Christian congregations shepherded by thirty African pastors and a host of catechists and teachers, a total Christian community of thirty thousand.

Apart from the religious change, the Basel Mission had been one of the most significant factors in social change in the south-east of the country. The example of the Salems or Christian villages influenced the style of building of dwelling houses (with an increased use of stone and shingles) laid out alongside wide and straight streets. "Everywhere (sc. in Akwapim),

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(133) Gold Coast, Legislative Council Debates, 4th Feb. 1918.

(134) Guggisberg, *ibid.* par.198.

one sees churches, schools and, most of all, private houses, which clearly show the Swiss and German influence." <sup>(135)</sup> In education and in agriculture, in artisan-training and in the development of commerce, in medical services and in concern for the social welfare of the people, the name 'Basel; by the time of the expulsion of the Mission from the country, had become a treasured word in the minds of the people.

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(135) Brokensha, D. *ibid.* p.428.

Chapter VII.

From Mission to Independent Church. 1918 - 1960.

The Scottish Mission takes responsibility for the orphaned Mission; the stages of development from Mission to independent Church; first steps in devolution of responsibility to African leaders; financial provisions; the visit of Hermann Pratorius; the Twi district self-supporting by 1912; the position in 1918; the Mission organised as a self-governing Presbyterian Church; the Synod of 1918; progress from self-government to complete independence; revisions in the constitution of the Church; the work of the Scottish Mission; the integration of Basel and Scottish missionaries within the Church; the Synod of the Church.

## CHAPTER VII.

### From Mission to Independent Church, 1918 - 1950.

In the last chapter we traced the steps by which in 1917 the Basel Mission Church, as it was then called, was suddenly bereft of its missionaries. Although the Mission had concentrated upon the training of indigenous personnel from the beginning, and while after 1880 pressure had been exerted by the Home Board upon the missionaries to accelerate progress towards a self-supporting African Church, there had been little or no devolution of administrative and executive authority. The suddenness of the expulsion left the African pastors bewildered and unprepared for total responsibility. In 1917 the main stations, the Seminaries and the Boarding Schools were still manned by Basel missionaries who also had the general oversight of the districts although the congregations were in the charge of African pastors and catechists. One of Zürcher's last acts before leaving was to place each pastor in charge of a district and to set up a standing Church authority composed of pastors and elders.<sup>(1)</sup> It was into this situation that the Scottish Mission came and made its contribution in organising the Church as a self-governing, independent Presbyterian Church.

We may distinguish four main stages in the whole process of development: the 'mission' period to 1880; the period between 1880 and 1918 marked by the gradual assumption by Africans of local congregational responsibility and the achievement of financial self-support in the Twi and Ga districts; the process by which, beginning with the Synod of 1918 and ending with the adoption of the Revised Constitution in 1950, the Church became fully autonomous; and the final phase of complete integration of the Basel and Scottish missionaries within the Church.

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(1) J.B. 1918, pp.40-41. There were 50 such districts. The Schools were administered meantime by the Government.

The mission period contributed to the process of development mainly through the fact that from the Seminary a long succession of well-trained teachers, catechists and pastors had gone out, while a few of the most-gifted Africans had been sent to Basel for training.<sup>(2)</sup> These men had pioneered on an equal basis with the missionaries and in a number of instances had been placed in charge of the smaller congregations.<sup>(3)</sup> The overall direction of the work was, however, still in the hands of the Missionaries' Conference on the field in which the Africans took no part. The initiative in accelerating progress towards a greater devolution of responsibility came from Inspector Schott in Basel in 1879, whose main concern was to build up an indigenous Church so that missionaries would be freed for pioneer work elsewhere.<sup>(4)</sup> As a result of his overtures to the missionaries the first African Twi District Synod was convened a year later which discussed the installation of presbyters, Church discipline and problems connected with the growth of the Christian community.<sup>(5)</sup> The missionaries met after the Synod to try to formulate a programme by which Schott's plan might be put into effect. Later the same year, the Ga District missionaries' conference combined their meeting with a Ga Synod to discuss the same questions.

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(2) Notably David Asante, Nicholas Clerk and Theophilus Opoku.

(3) The first ordinations of catechists as pastors took place between 1868 and 1878: Revs. A.W. Clerk the Jamaican, Ch. Reindorf, Th. Opoku, E. Koranteng, N. Date, J. Engman and Ch. Quist. They are referred to as Deacons. In 1880 there were seven, by 1882 the number rose to thirteen and in 1914 there were twenty-one.

(4) "Our schools, the most flourishing part of our African Mission, receive every attention, because we must have a staff of well-educated native assistants, before we reach our aim, the future independence of a native Church". Schott, Report, 1879, p.11.

(5) Schlatter, *ibid.* Vol.3. p.156.



There was general agreement that a solution was desirable, opinions differing as to whether all the local congregations should be shepherded by African pastors as Schott desired. A General Conference of missionaries was held in March 1881 at Akropong to decide on a firm policy, David Asante being the sole African present. It was agreed that not only the outstations but also the larger congregations should be in the charge of Africans, and, in order to raise money to pay the salaries of an increased number of ministers it was resolved that the Church Tax should be increased from one shilling to two shillings a year.<sup>(6)</sup> A Central Fund was inaugurated and congregations were henceforth to be responsible for providing houses for the pastor and catechist. After 1880 the number of ordained men grew steadily every year until by 1914 there were twenty-one ministers in charge of congregations whose salaries were paid from the Central Fund.

In 1881, Hermann Prätorius was commissioned by the Home Board with the task of re-organising the work of the Mission so as to further the process of building up a financially-independent African Church which would order its own life through local church sessions and presbyteries but would not sever its ties with the Basel Mission. There travelled with him to the Gold Coast the Basel merchant Wilhelm Preiswerk<sup>(7)</sup> and Dr. E. Mähly who, during a year's stay, was to investigate problems of health in the Gold Coast.<sup>(8)</sup> They landed at Christiansborg in November 1882 and thereafter Prätorius held conferences and discussions with missionaries, pastors, elders, catechists and teachers, visiting the Akwapim and Ga stations and holding a Synod at Kibi.

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(6) The so-called Church Tax was an obligatory payment imposed on all communicant members. Over the years it has provoked some resentment and misunderstanding but, in the absence of a custom of voluntary giving, it worked exceedingly well and formed a dependable income to the Central Fund from which the ministers are paid. Since 1960 a new 'pledge' system of voluntary offerings has been introduced.

(7) A director of the Trading Factory and later the founder of the Union Trading Co.Ltd.

(8) See Chapter VIII below.

He began to suffer from dysentery, fever supervened, and after an illness lasting two months, he died on the 7th of April 1883. (9)

The purpose of the visitation, was, however, fulfilled, in that further impetus was given to the movement towards a greater measure of participation by Africans in the work of the Church at local level. Freiswerk's report pays tribute to the qualities of leadership and character shown by many Africans and insists that the Mission possesses men capable of shouldering the burden. (10) The resolutions of a General Conference at Akropong in March 1883, unhappily in the absence of the sick Inspector, indicated a firm implementation of the new policy: there were to be regular training courses for pastors; special conferences with African workers; Presbytery meetings with equal representation of Africans and Europeans; a General Conference every four years and regular district Synods. (11)

The people responded well to the increased financial demands:- the income to the Central Fund rose steadily from £546 in 1890 to £854 in 1898, in which year the Church levy was increased to four shillings per annum. The levy was raised to eight shillings for men and six shillings for women in 1909 when £3130 was collected. (12) As a result, the Church slowly became more and more responsible for financing the local work until in 1912 the Twi District was self-supporting and even recorded a small surplus. (13) There

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(9) The fine new church at Christiansborg, dedicated in 1899, was given the name 'Prætorius Memorial Church'. Schlatter, *ibid.* Vol.3. pp.160-161. J.B. 1883, p.3f.

(10) Schlatter, *ibid.* pp.162-163.

(11) Other decisions of interest concerned regular congregational Bible study groups; a proposed conference with the Wesleyan Mission to avoid friction in areas where both Missions worked; and a request to Basel for shorter tours of 3 to 4 years instead of the 7 years on the Coast and 10 years on hill stations then obtaining. Schlatter *ibid.* pp.163-4.

(12) In 1919 an increased 'tax' of ten shillings and six shillings respectively realised the sum of £6,318. Thereafter the rate was raised to £1 and 10/- and yielded a steadily rising income. (1959, £43,597).

(13) Jahresbericht, 1913, p.93.

was a growth also in voluntary giving, particularly at the so-called annual district missionary meetings - a kind of open air rally for preaching and singing - while the practice of special thank offerings at Church services grew. (14)

The Church sessions, composed of the African minister and elders, also showed a growing sense of responsibility; the reports after 1900 reveal increased concern for the care of the congregations and disclose the undertaking of local building programmes of manses, catechists' houses, schools and churches without any financial help from the Mission. By the time of the expulsion of the Basel missionaries control at congregational level had passed into African hands and the Church had begun to develop a 'presbyterian' type of organisation. The Missionaries' Conference was, however, still the final authority and although there were regular district meetings and conferences of presbyters, only four official Synods were held before 1917. There was a feeling on the part of the missionaries that the time was not yet ripe for the handing over of executive responsibility within the Church as a whole. The missionaries' reports of this period show that while the desire for increased independence was strong among the Africans, the missionaries felt that the rapid social changes, the evidence of the continuing power of indigenous religion and custom, and the increasing secularisation of life, still demanded their leadership and guidance. (15)

The outbreak of war in 1914 and the limitation on the activities of the missionaries meant that more and more responsibility devolved upon the African pastors and presbyters. We have already noted that as a last measure

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(14) Great enthusiasm was shown at the district missionary or anniversary meetings. In 1911 collections amounted to £2,073. Although enthusiasm for these rallies has waned in recent years £8,813 was collected in 1959. In 1918 thank offerings amounted to £803, in 1959 to £5,456. These amounts go into the Central Fund.

(15) J.B. 1912, p.53; 1914, p.96.

Zurcher gave each ordained pastor charge over a district and established from among the leading pastors and elders a standing Church authority. At that time, in addition to 196 large and small Christian congregations there were over ten thousand children in 176 schools, about one-third of the educational system of the Colony, a formidable task of administration by any standards. (16)

In 1918 the immediate task of administering the School system and the Training College fell upon the Government: District Education Officers managed the affairs of the Schools and the salaries of the teachers were paid by the Treasury; two tutors from the Government Training Institution at Accra took charge of the College. (17)

The stage was thus set for the arrival of the Scottish Mission upon the scene. As we noted in the last chapter, the Rev. A.W. Wilkie and Rev. J. Rankin of the United Free Church of Scotland Mission in Calabar, Nigeria, had visited the larger Basel Mission centres in the Gold Coast towards the end of 1917 and had had the opportunity of discussing the situation with the Basel Mission Secretary and with Government officials. In anticipation of some harmful dislocation of the work when the Basel missionaries were removed the Colonial Government formally invited the United Free Church of Scotland to fill the breach. (18)

It was not possible to send a large group: Rev. and Mrs. Wilkie landed at Accra in January 1918, followed by Rev. J. Rankin, Mrs. Moffat, Miss G.M. Wallace and Miss I.P. Ross. (19)

Wilkie took the logical step of organising the Church as a self-governing Presbyterian Church. The Scottish missionaries were few in number and for

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(16) Scottish Mission Council Minutes, August 1919, par. 29.

(17) In September 1918 the influenza epidemic brought about the closing of the College for some months; the only break in its history.

(18) Owing to the war, the Calabar mission was suffering from a shortage of personnel and financially the Foreign Mission Committee of the U.F. Church was in difficulty, but it was felt that the invitation could not be ignored.

(19) The following year, Revs. W.Samson, W.G.Murray, W.C.Smith, G.Reith and Neil MacKay arrived.

the most part their energies were used in the immediate task of guiding and fostering the educational work of the mission so that it became a matter of urgency to bring in Africans to take a full share in the responsible leadership of the young Church. This could only be achieved within the framework of an established Presbyterian policy but the development was in harmony with Basel Mission practice.

At Akropong, on the 14th of August 1918, the Synod of the whole Church met; the new missionaries, twenty-eight African ministers and twenty-four presbyters. The Synod was constituted as the supreme court of the Church, an executive Synod Committee of eight African members and three missionaries was established, and the Rev. P.Hall and Rev. N.T. Clerk were elected as the first Moderator and Synod Clerk respectively. <sup>(20)</sup> Dr. Wilkie made a statement outlining the events which led to the coming of the Scottish Mission and intimated the intention of the Mission to continue the work without change of method, except as Synod desired. <sup>(21)</sup> For the time being, the districts of the eleven principal stations were to be retained, but it was felt that some changes would have to be made in their organisation. Synod reaffirmed its adherence to the existing form of Church worship as well as to the established rules in respect of Church membership and discipline. Funds were established: the Central Fund (made up of the Church levy, anniversary collections and thank offerings), to be used in the payment of all salaries and for the support of the Senior Schools and the Seminaries; the Congregational Funds (made up of Sunday and Harvest offerings), to be used for local purposes; and the Synod Fund (levied upon each congregation according to size), which would cover Synod expenditure. <sup>(22)</sup>

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(20) cf. Constitution of Synod Committee: History of Origins, (Presbyterian Church of the Gold Coast Synod Committee Minutes, April, 1929, par.8).

(21) Synod Minutes, 1918, par.5.

(22) Synod Minutes, 1918, par.7.

It was a quiet and an encouraging Synod: members left reassured that although a new hand was at the tiller the course would be the same. The sincerity, patience, experience and ability of Dr. Wilkie were evident to all and he quickly became a much-loved and esteemed leader of the young Church. (23) There was also much satisfaction expressed at the fact that in the executive councils of the Church Africans had a full part to play for the first time. The missionaries still retained control of the Central Fund and of educational administration but after 1918 all major decisions were made by Synod and Synod Committee. (24)

The future name of the Church was raised from time to time at various Synods: suggestions were made to translate the word 'Presbyterian' into Twi, but the phrase 'Mpanyimfo Asafo' (lit. 'Elders' or 'Presbyters' Church), did not commend itself, and the title 'Ga-Twi Church' was hardly comprehensive enough. It was not until 1926, the year of the return of the Basel missionaries, that the name, 'The Presbyterian Church of the Gold Coast' was finally adopted, a decision which marked an important step forward in the awareness of the Church's autonomy and of its relationship to the two

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- (23) Dr. Wilkie was appointed in 1931 to the Principalship of Lovedale College, South Africa; he had then served thirty years in West Africa. The address presented to him at that time by Synod reads inter alia: "The severance of your connection with this Church where your indefatigable activities in managing the multifarious and complex affairs which cover a period of thirteen years, is a source of deep grief to the whole Church....It will not be out of place to recount here the following materials with which you constructed a new fabric or Constitution which has contributed immensely to the growth of the Church: the independence of the Church by the creation of a united Synod as the ecclesiastical supreme court of the Church, as well as the Synod Committee and the Presbyteries". Synod Minutes, 1931, Appendix.
- (24) Between 1918 and 1950 Synods met every two years, thereafter annually.

missionary bodies.<sup>(25)</sup> Slowly the Church moved from self-government to complete independence: in 1929 a complete revision of its Regulations, Practice and Procedure was undertaken indicating that while it was in 'historical continuity with the Basel Evangelical Mission Church' it was now responsible for the ordering of its own life;<sup>(26)</sup> in 1930 the Synod Committee became the legal trustees for all properties, and twenty years later the posts of General Manager of Schools and Treasurer were taken over by Africans.

For the thirty years after 1918 the Constitution proved adequate, but as the Church grew in extent and numbers, the administrative burden upon the Synod Committee became excessive, a problem which was solved by granting to the Presbyteries greater executive powers within their bounds and by handing over much routine administrative work to permanent departmental committees whose competence was carefully defined.<sup>(27)</sup> The Synod Committee, however, still retains its position as the supreme executive body of the Church between Synods. The Church's constitution and organisation have thus become more and more like the Church of Scotland, although its worship and ethos reflect those of the German and Swiss Churches from which the earlier missionaries came.<sup>(28)</sup>

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- (25) Synod at Abetifi, 1926, Minute 26. 'This name distinguishes the Church from the Missions. The Basel and Scottish missionaries, working in this Church, have their united Mission Council, with District Committees for their special fields, responsible to their respective Home Committees'. Thirty-one years later, on the attainment of the country's independence, the name was officially changed to the 'Presbyterian Church of Ghana'.
- (26) The Basel Mission Regulations were first revised in 1902. The latest revision was in 1953.
- (27) Synod Minutes, 1950, pp.7-17. Previously, such standing committees as had existed had no executive power and could only remit their suggestions to Synod Committee. The present Committees number seven: Synod, Finance, Education, Youth, Literature, Church Extension and Women's Work. Questions of Land and Property and Worship are dealt with by the Synod Committee which has enhanced status and may act for the whole Church. The Secretaries of both Missions are ex-officio members.
- (28) The place given to elders or presbyters in all the courts of the Church (local Session, Presbytery and Synod) accords well with the African viewpoint.

The Church's view of the work of the Scottish Mission during this period has been expressed as follows: "In treating the subject of 'Training for responsible leadership', however, our account would be both incomplete and unhistorical without mention of what appears to be the distinctive contribution of the Scottish Mission, namely, the setting of the young indigenous Church on its feet.

At the time of the removal of the Basel missionaries in the last war the African agents, although fully equipped for their work in school and congregation, had had no share in the management of the Church's affairs, or the administration of its funds, or the shaping of its policy. When the Scottish Mission took over, it decided not merely to carry out these duties for the African Church, but to do it with them. It therefore evolved our present system of Church government, explaining its basic principles and its routine by much patient teaching....This policy has been consistently and deliberately followed all the time...With the passing years, more and more responsibility has devolved on the African leaders of the Church". (29)

By 1918, then, the Church was self-governing and by 1950 had reached complete independence. Although for some years the Scottish Mission held the right to veto any decision of a Church Court which was considered not to be in the best interests of the Church, this veto was never used. (30) After the return of the Basel Mission in 1926, the two overseas Missions worked harmoniously within the Church and became more and more subject to its jurisdiction apart from personal and financial matters. (31) The final step of the total integration of 'fraternal workers' as the missionaries and other overseas personnel are now termed, was taken at the Synod of 1960. It was the culmination of the hope expressed at the Kumasi Synod of 1930 when the

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(29) The Church in the State, Accra, 1942, p.41.

(30) Synod Minutes, 1918, par.9 *ibid.* 1930, par.16.

(31) The only major difficulty arose when the Basel Mission requested autonomy in Ashanti. See below, Ch. VIII (a).



Church endorsed the continuing activity of the two Missions within the Church in the following words: "The Synod gives thanks for the great work that has been done, and expressed the unanimous wish of the Presbyterian Church of the Gold Coast that the two Societies carry on their work for us in love and unity".<sup>(32)</sup>

The annual Synod of the Church is a highlight of the Church's year and is an inspiring occasion for all the pastors and elders who take part. The ministers normally hold a retreat and conference the day before Synod; in the Sunday forenoon there is a service with sermon by the Moderator and in the evening a solemn Communion service. Each day begins with a devotional service while evenings are given up to the hearing of special reports concerning Church Extension and Missions, Women's Work and Youth Work. The first day of Synod is taken up by the constituting of Synod, approving the order of business, reading the roll of delegates and deceased agents, presenting newly-ordained pastors, probationers, missionaries and special visitors, the reading of greetings and the confirmation of previous Synod minutes. On the ensuing days, constitutional matters are dealt with, committee reports discussed and approved and a host of general matters submitted for endorsement by Synod. The language problem slows up discussion: delegates may speak in English, Twi or Ga, and the interpreters give the gist in the other two languages. No special language provision has yet been made for the native delegates from the congregations in Northern Ghana. Other Church Synods in Ghana conduct their business in English. The Presbyterian Church has been reluctant to take this step mainly on two grounds: there are still a number of presbyters who are not literate in English, and the Church's long use and development of the vernaculars. There is, however, an increasing need arising for a modified

use of English at Synod and in polyglot congregations. The Hymn Book and Liturgy exist in Twi and Ga but there is a wide use of the Scottish Church Hymnary in the Colleges and Secondary Schools.

## Chapter VIII.

### Developments in Educational and Medical Work.

The great share of the Missions and the Church in education; Government assistance and control after 1882; the Education Ordinance of 1887 and its effect on mission schools; the Education Rules of 1909; a description of the schools and their influence; the Middle Boarding Schools of the Basel Mission; conditions after the first World War; English or vernacular languages as the medium of instruction; the Accelerated Development Plan of 1951; the end of the era of Mission 'school planting'; problems arising from the Church's extensive educational commitment; secondary education lags behind <sup>that of</sup> other Churches; the Church begins its own boys' secondary school; the question of its future site causes much controversy within the Church; the secondary school for girls; the training Colleges; Akropong Seminary and its contribution; the problem of catechist-training; the women's colleges, the training of the ministry; the ministers of the Church.

The medical work of the Basel Mission from 1885; Aburi and Abokobi; Dr. R. Fisch 1885 - 1911; the closing of the hospital at Aburi; the Scottish Mission 1920-28; the hospital at Agogo 1929; clinics at Dorma Abenkuro and Bechem; the Mission staffs the Government Hospital at Bawku; the Scottish Mission and the School for the Blind.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### Developments in Educational and Medical Work.

No account of the Presbyterian Church in Ghana would be complete without a survey of the part played by the Missions and the Church in the development of education in the country. A glance at the statistical tables shows a constant and steady growth in the number of children attending the Primary and Middle Schools managed by the Church, from five hundred in 1868 to 108,880 in 1958. About one-sixth of all Primary and Middle school children in the country are in Presbyterian Church Schools, and a great part of the total activity of the Church is taken up with educational administration.<sup>(1)</sup> By 1870 the educational system as it obtains today throughout Ghana was established by the Basel Mission: six years in Primary School followed by four years in the Middle School.

Up to the year 1882 the Colonial Government took little active interest in the schools established by the various Missions apart from making small annual grants of £100 and later of £150 to support them, in return for which the Missions reported the yearly attendance figures. In that year the Legislative Council enacted the 'Ordinance for the Promotion and Assistance of Education in the Gold Coast Colony' which provided for the setting up of a Board of Education presided over by an Inspector whose main task was to ensure that those bodies which conducted schools fulfilled the conditions attached to the grants-in-aid. The first Inspector, a former Principal of the College at Fourah Bay, Rev. M. Sunter, brought great energy to the task but made

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(1) In 1959 the total national enrolment in approved Primary and Middle schools was 605,274. The share of the large educational units was: Roman Catholic, 122,470; Presbyterian, (including 11,327 Evangelical Presbyterian) 112,793; Methodist, 110,862; Anglican 25,913. Educational Statistics 1959, Series I, No.6. p.27, Government Statistician, Accra.

himself unpopular with the Government for his criticism of the terms of the Ordinance as being cumbrous and impracticable, and with the Basel Mission for his criticism of the use of the vernaculars as media of instruction and for the ways in which, as he put it, "mission teachers were forced to subordinate their teaching to their work as catechists".<sup>(2)</sup> Rev. Paul Steiner, who was then in charge of the Basel Mission Schools, urged the continuation of the former system but the authorities insisted upon the terms of the Ordinance, slightly modified, and there ensued a period of confusion, some schools coming under the Ordinance and others not.<sup>(3)</sup>

A more successful attempt to regulate the partnership of the Government and the Missions in education was made through the Education Ordinance of 1887 by which two types of school were recognised, 'government', (of which there were very few), and 'assisted', which included all the Mission schools. The latter received grants only if they were open to all children regardless of religion or race, if they had an average of at least twenty pupils, were staffed by certificated teachers and if they included English Reading and Writing, Arithmetic and Needlework (for girls) in the curriculum.

The Basel Mission was dissatisfied with the 1887 Ordinance on three grounds: the indifferentism with regard to religion, the undue emphasis on the English language, and the introduction of the English primary school system into Africa without regard to African conditions. In practice, however, a modus vivendi was reached; the Mission placed an increasing number of its schools into the 'assisted' category and so gained financial support, a support much needed as the number of Schools rapidly increased.<sup>(4)</sup> The Mission

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(2) McWilliam, H.O.A. The Development of Education in Ghana, London, 1959, p.31. Cf. Mason, R.J. British Education in Africa, O.U.P. 1959, p.25. The 1882 Ordinance based the recurrent grants on the English system of 'payment by results'.

(3) Schlatter, *ibid.* Vol.3. pp.178-181.

(4) The Government grants-in-aid paid to the Mission and to the Church in respect of assisted Primary and Middle schools rose as follows: 1886, £165; 1890, £490; 1899, £1432; 1910, £2400; 1913, £3924; 1919, £10,240; 1923, £12,368; 1927, £24,586; 1936, £31,742; 1946, £54,299; 1951, £75,858. In 1951 the Block Grant System came to an end.

campaigns strongly for the use of the vernacular as the medium of instruction at the primary level, English being used only in the Middle school.

A new set of Education Rules in 1909 put an end to the arid system of 'payment by results' and grants were thereafter based on the general efficiency of the school. Some form of agricultural or manual activity was also made compulsory in order to prevent the training given to the children from being purely 'clerical'. It was a step in the right direction, and during this period, the Basel Mission schools gained great praise for their proficiency in agriculture and crafts, although the emphasis on agriculture failed in its long-term aim of improving the standard of farming.

What were these schools like, and what did they set out to achieve? The building pattern has changed over the years only in the materials used; formerly sundried bricks possibly on a stone foundation and a roof of thatch, nowadays cement blocks with a roof of corrugated iron sheets forming a rectangular block of equal-sized classrooms with the Headteacher's 'office' and store at one end. Only the Middle Boarding Schools established by the Basel Mission show a variation from this pattern in that the classrooms and dormitories formed the sides of a quadrangle, the fourth side being occupied by the typical 'Basel' mission house.<sup>(5)</sup> Such was the high value placed on literacy by the local people that these simply-built schools sprang up everywhere. At first the schools were established on the initiative of the Mission but later, as their value became apparent, local communities appealed to the Mission to sponsor a school in their town or village. In such cases the people erected the building as well as houses for the teachers although the management and conduct of the school remained in the hands of the Mission. These schools were thus one of the most potent factors in accelerating the pace

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(5) Thus Christiansborg, Akropong, Begoro, Anum. These boarding Middle Schools were referred to by the Mission as 'Anstalten' to distinguish them from the 'day' Middle Schools. After 1881 fees were charged for board, clothes and books. A missionary was the Headmaster and the children lived under strict discipline.

of social change and in the minds of the people 'schooling' and the profession of Christianity became almost synonymous terms. In charge of such a school was a teacher-catechist who thus became the key figure not only in educational advance but in the growth of the Church; he conducted the school on week days and slowly gathered a few adults into the nucleus of a congregation on Sundays, and in course of time the erstwhile schoolchildren formed a Christian group, large or small, within the wider community. Almost from the beginning, Christians enjoyed the status of a 'prestige' group and there was competition between towns and villages to build primary and middle schools and to call in the Mission to staff and manage them. (6) From the point of view of the Mission, the schools not only provided secular instruction (the curricula were much the same as in English elementary schools) but existed as training grounds in Christianity.

The Basel Mission concentrated upon the Middle Boarding Schools since it was from these that the future African leaders, both in school and congregation, came. Carl Christian Reindorf, the first Ghanaian historian, and a product of the Basel Mission system, wrote in 1889: "From among the boys of our Day and Boarding Schools, we annually select the more intelligent and allow them to enter our Middle Schools...An active boy thus trained has no difficulty in obtaining an apprenticeship in a merchantile business or in a Government office;....other boys may become farmers or learn a trade in our industrial shops; but these are not our objects with relation to our Middle Schools. Young men who have passed three classes of the Middle School, and wish to become teachers or catechists, receive in a fourth class preparatory teaching, which enables them to enter special Seminaries; and

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(6) This state of affairs applied equally to the Methodist and Roman Catholic Missions and led inevitably to much unseemly struggling among the Missions to be the first to found a school in a particular area.

those who wish to become teachers stay two years in a Teacher's Training School, connected with the Theological Seminary."<sup>(7)</sup>

In the Middle Boarding Schools a missionary was normally the headmaster, discipline was strict and the academic standard was high. The pupils were strongly regimented and had no spare time except on Sundays; in addition to the work in class there was work on the farm or garden, craft instruction, singing practices, fetching water, washing their own clothes, sweeping and keeping the compound tidy. Punctuality, neatness in dress and orderly behaviour were insisted upon.<sup>(8)</sup> In 1900 the Director of Education reported of the Middle School at Akropong: "Industrial instruction of a varied character is given, the boys being employed in no less than nine different occupations of which I think the best are gardening, bookbinding, masonry, woodcarving and modelling". The curriculum included English reading and writing, Twi or Ga, Geometry, Natural History, Physics, Geography, History, Drawing and Bible Study. In the upper classes Greek and Church History were introduced for those proceeding to the Seminary.<sup>(9)</sup> The outstanding results achieved were no doubt due to the careful selection of the boys, the small classes (often not more than ten), the Christian tone of the school, the zeal of the staff and the sense of privilege on the part of the boys in belonging to an educated élite minority.

The general result of the rapid growth in the number of schools and the increasing control of the Education Department in the conduct of the schools was that the Mission schools were forced into a more secular pattern and it

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- (7) Reindorf, *ibid.* pp.222-3. He adds, in reference to those Africans trained in the workshops at Christiansborg: "These workshops have not only enabled the Europeans to build more salubrious and comfortable dwellings than those they first inhabited; but the natives, following their example, have improved upon their former style of house; in fact, all the social changes, which this branch of the work brought to the Gold Coast are generally appreciated and speak for themselves..".
- (8) Nothwang, E. Akropong Middle School, Jubilee Handbook, 1867-1917, *passim*.
- (9) Nothwang, *ibid.*



became more and more difficult to regard them as direct auxiliaries of the total evangelical enterprise. The inculcation of Christian character in the Middle Schools became an increasingly difficult problem but there was now, however, no turning back; the Mission was committed to carry an ever-increasing burden of educational administration.

During the first World War and after, the condition of teachers in Mission schools deteriorated in comparison with the small number of teachers in Government schools whose salaries were higher. There were many resignations, and the Church Schools had to recruit untrained monitors so that for a time the standard of achievement went down. The problem of the many dismissals of teachers for moral lapses gave the Church great concern: in 1920 there were twenty-nine dismissals and in 1922, fifty-two terminations were reported. Dr. Wilkie addressed Synod in 1922 on the subject of whether the Church was losing in evangelical power by over attention to education and concluded that the aim should be the training of the complete life, and that the religious character of the whole training must be central at each stage.<sup>(10)</sup> The salary problem of mission teachers began to be solved by the new scales laid down in the 1925 Education Ordinance which gave 80% grant to missions in respect of salaries.<sup>(11)</sup> The second problem of the character of the teacher was one for the Church itself to solve; to some extent the lengthening of the course of training to four years and in particular the fifth-year catechist course at Akropong helped in providing more time for character training and for equipping the men to respond fully to the challenge of the Christian opportunity provided by the schools.

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(10) Synod Minutes, 1922, p.17.

(11) In 1909 the Missions were only obliged to pay teachers £20-£30 a year, according to the grade of Certificate held, with additions varying from £1.10s to £25. Government teachers were on a scale of £36 to £210. The present scales are: Certificate B £200 x £10 - £400. Certificate A (Post-B) £250 x £15 - £460. Certificate A (Post-Secondary) £280 x £15 - £490.

The 1925 Ordinance also restored teaching through the medium of the vernacular to its former place in the primary classes, and a new more easily-read phonetic script was introduced. For the next thirty-three years, whereas English was learned in the Primary School it was not normally used as the medium of instruction until the first Middle School year. In 1957 the Bernard Report on the use of English as a Medium of Instruction in Gold Coast Schools reflected a wide diversity of opinion on the subject; the Ministry of Education, however, decided firmly on making English the medium of instruction from the first primary class, a decision which provoked a strong resolution against it from the 1958 Synod. (12)

The number of schools qualifying for Government assistance continued to grow at such a rate that in 1936 the Government refused to consider any additions to the number, until a complete survey of the total situation had been made. (13) In order to produce increased revenue for educational purposes District Education Committees were established to control new openings while attempts were made to place more of the burden of the new schools upon the local communities. School openings were slowed down for a time but after the end of the second World War the unprecedented prosperity of the country arising from the phenomenal rise in the price of cocoa resulted in the opening of new schools everywhere even though they received no grant-in-aid. (14)

In 1951 the Accelerated Development Plan by which it was hoped to provide some schooling for every child as a step towards the goal of compulsory primary education, was announced, and implemented during the next six years. (15)

(12) Synod Minutes, 1958, par.54 (d); Appendix E, p.55. This has since been amended: English becomes the medium of instruction in Primary Class IV.

(13) Report of the Education Committee 1937-41; Accra 1942.

(14) Compare the figures for Presbyterian Church Schools:

Year	Number of Schools	Number of Pupils.	Amount of Grant-in-aid.
1939	218	17,787	£33,674
1946	527	45,345	54,299
1951	640	65,376	75,858.

(15) The Accelerated Development Plan for Education 1951. Accra 1951.

Between 1951 and 1957 the number of children in the country's assisted Primary and Middle schools increased from 204,262 to 571,580. (16) The Plan proposed to place the burden of 40% of teachers' salaries upon Local Authorities by 1954 and in addition ruled that the opening of any primary school by a 'denominational religious body' or 'by a private person or group of persons' would not receive assistance unless the prior approval of the Local Authority had been obtained.

This last statement aroused a good deal of protest: the Churches took alarm, regarding it as a first step towards removing the schools which they managed from their control, and the Christian Council issued a public statement stating the conviction of the member Churches that denominational schools had a real contribution to make to Christian education and that they had no desire to hand over any of their present schools to Local Authorities. (17) A compromise was reached whereby existing Church Schools would still be managed by the Churches as formerly but new denominational openings would require the sanction of the Education authority for the district. Thus the era of Church expansion through 'school-planting' virtually came to an end in 1952; the new schools are now for the most part Local Authority schools. (18)

The year 1951 marked an important turning-point in the relationship of Government and Church schools: the denominational schools were more closely integrated into a comprehensive state system and began to play a smaller part proportionately in the total scheme of education: the Block Grant system was abolished and instead salaries of teachers were paid to the educational units for disbursement; maintenance and equipment grants being paid to the Local Authorities.

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(16) Presbyterian Church Schools for the same period: 65,376 to 109,384. Education Statistics 1958.

(17) Statement by the Christian Council of the Gold Coast on Christian Education in Primary and Middle Schools, Scottish Mission Press, Accra, 1951.

(18) Local Authorities, may and do, request one or other of the Church Educational Units to manage and staff the school for them.

The expansion of the educational work of the Presbyterian Church reflected that of the country as a whole; in the three years 1951-54 the Church accepted the responsibility of managing 180 new Local Authority schools although these schools were no longer mission schools in the former sense, a step which greatly increased the administrative responsibilities of the Church's Educational Unit, (19) and has led to the position that there are now in all parts of the country so-called Church Schools far removed from the nearest Christian congregation and from pastoral oversight. (20) At the same time, much more control is also exercised by the Government's Regional and District Education Officers in order to effect parity of staffing in all regions, so that a Unit such as the Presbyterian Church which has always had a high complement of trained teachers is forced to 'loan' staff to other Church Units and to Local Authorities.

The Erzuah Report of 1952 on Salaries and Conditions of Service for non-Government Teachers, and the Waugh Report of 1957, practically removed all differences between the Government and the non-Government teacher, while in 1955 the Government agreed to pay pensions to Church teachers on retirement, a generous provision that later was applied to retired ministers who had spent many years of their lives in the classroom before being ordained. (21) The Ministry of Education has also issued a revised series of regulations applying to all non-Government teachers and although the Churches retain their own codes of discipline they are becoming more and more difficult to apply. (22)

The Presbyterian Church has thus become one of the three large educational units in Ghana, the other two being the Methodist and the Roman Catholic Churches.

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(19) The 1951 Plan coincided with the appointment of Mr. (now Rev.) M.E. Ansah as the first African General Manager of the Church's schools. He took over from the Scottish missionary Mr. F.D. Harker. Both these men over a period of twenty years steered the Church's educational work through very difficult waters.

(20) These schools are designated officially: e.g. Kurokese Local Authority (Presbyterian) Primary (or Middle) School.

(21) The Teachers Pensions Ordinance No. 23 of 1955. A minister may now return to the classroom for some time before retirement so as to ensure a state pension for his teaching service.

(22) An unmarried female teacher, for example, is entitled to maternity leave and pay.

From the 1880's voices have been raised from the side of the Basel and Scottish Missions that the Church is in danger of attempting too much in the educational field and of neglecting its evangelical task in consequence. There has never been any support for this view from African Church leaders who have always regarded both Church and School equally as ways in which Christian faith and life are expressed, and who do not distinguish between the so-called 'sacred' and 'secular' spheres. For both Christian and non-Christian, 'school' and 'church' are almost synonymous terms and freely interchangeable in any context. In any case, from the outset of the Mission enterprise schools were built, teachers and catechists were trained, and Church and School were regarded as different sides of the same coin. That school-planting was such a potent evangelical weapon and was so widely adopted makes the African feel slightly bewildered at the cautious attitude of the missionary today towards the educational sphere of the Church's work.

What is the present situation as regards this great participation by the Church in providing elementary schooling? The first important fact is that the context in which this school activity is carried on is greatly changed and in consequence the relationship of Church and School which formerly obtained is no longer so close. The stages in the changed situation are marked by the various Government Education Ordinances and by the Accelerated Development Plan, by which the former church-school relationship was inexorably altered, and by which the real control of the school and the teacher passed out of the hands of the Church. Up to the end of the first World War, perhaps even until the outbreak of the Second World War, the number of schools was small enough for direct Church oversight and control, and it might be said that the Church school was still a vital part of the total evangelical undertaking. Church and School were but different aspects of Gospel witness and both were a part of the new Christian communities coming into existence in the towns and villages. The teacher or teacher-catechist

was literally a Church agent and the educational task was carried on within the context of the Christian community, although the admission of children of non-Christian parents to the Schools had its disadvantages if the number grew too large, as the Mission's experience in the Krobo area showed. This emphasis has now changed: the school is no longer primarily regarded as a training ground for the Christian life but rather as fitting the child to take its place in the new westernised society which is fast emerging. As we have already noted, there are many so-called Church schools which are not attached to a congregation and where pastoral oversight is difficult. Many teachers do not take their profession of Christianity seriously and it is an uphill task for the Colleges with ever-increasing numbers and in the short time of training available to foster a Christian conviction in the students. Pastors are grossly overburdened by school managerial duties and find that in many cases the former sense of co-operation with the teachers in a common task simply no longer exists. Many Church schools, therefore, are difficult to distinguish from Government or Local Authority Schools, and the name 'Presbyterian' has often become, so to speak, a 'tribal' name and nothing much more.

There is much, however, on the positive side from the point of view of the Church. In the Church Schools Scripture, the Catechism and Hymns are taught, and where there is a congregation nearby the children attend worship regularly. Given understanding and co-operation between the local pastor and the teachers much can be done, and is done, to bring the children up in the 'nurture and admonition of the Lord'. At the same time, there is need for an acute and urgent re-appraisal of the Church's heavy commitment in the sphere of elementary education. There are those who would urge that the Church should shed its elementary school burden entirely but this would seem to the writer to be a counsel of despair. The schools are still of vital importance in the evangelistic task in the sense that Western education is

still eagerly sought after and still provides a most effective point of entry for Christian teaching; the school can be the means of awakening the child to Christian truth and can still be a real *praeparatio evangelica*. (23)

When we turn to the field of secondary education of the English Grammar School or the German Gymnasium type the record of the Presbyterian Church is less impressive. Although the Basel missionaries' conference of 1905 considered the opening of a school of this kind the general opinion was that education at this level was primarily the task of the Government. (24) By 1910 the Wesleyan Mission had established such a school (Mfantshipim) and the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel had opened the St. Nicholas Grammar School, later known as Adisadel, both at Cape Coast. (25) The special education conference in 1923 of the Presbyterian Church convened to plan for an enlarged Seminary at Akropong in completely new buildings showed that many Africans hoped that the new Seminary would provide academic courses to pre-University level and that it might secure affiliation with a Scottish University in the same way as Fourah Bay College, Sierra Leone, had built up a close connection with the University of Durham. It was the year preceding the founding of Achimota College by the Government and the thoughts of many were directed towards higher education. The suggestion, however, was not taken up by the Scottish Mission; it seemed premature at that time to be thinking in such terms when the foundations of the new training college had not yet been laid. (26)

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(23) So far as the Church is concerned, the children (the majority of whom are baptised and eventually confirmed) may be termed 'first-stage' Christians. Non-Christians, in general, take this view, i.e. that attending school is a step on the Christian path, and very few object to their children being taught Scripture, catechised and confirmed.

(24) Schlatter, *ibid.* Vol.3. pp.183-4.

(25) McWilliam, *ibid.* p.39, and pp.58-59.

(26) Conference Minutes, in Synod Minutes, 1923, par.15.

Thus the provision of a Presbyterian Secondary school was from first to last the concern and achievement of the African leaders of the Church. The reason for this concern was that the English School Certificate, (usually that of Cambridge or London University), was more and more becoming the pre-requisite for entrance into Government employment and for University and other professional courses overseas. Young men from the Presbyterian Church who wished to continue their education had to attend either Achimota, Mfantsipim or Adisadel. The African members of the 1930 Synod took up the theme of the provision of a Secondary school with some urgency and although they acknowledged the poor financial position of the Church caused by the trade depression they declared their firm intention to raise the necessary funds. (27)

The decade between 1930 and 1940 was a difficult one financially; it began with a fall in the cocoa price from £50 to £20 per ton and ended with the second World War. Government expenditure on education was cut by almost one-third, (28) and the Church had constant difficulty during this period in balancing its budget. (29) In 1933 an impassioned appeal was made by Rev. N.T. Clerk at the Nsaba Synod to the two Missions: either to begin at Abetifi or to add a secondary section to the training college at Akropong, but neither Mission would commit itself. Both pleaded a shortage of men and money but, apart from this, there seemed at this time a curious reluctance on the part of the two Missions to identify themselves with the Church's aspirations in spite of the fact that the other large Missions had founded secondary schools. There was a tendency for both Basel and Scottish Missions to look back to the past; the fear was often expressed that the Church

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(27) Synod Minutes, 1930, par.24.

(28) From £300,000 in 1930 to £210,000 in 1933. It was still below £300,000 in 1940, although the number of children in schools during the decade had risen from 53,000 to 88,000.

(29) At the close of the financial year in April 1931 expenditure had exceeded income by £11,092 and the entire working capital of the Church, some £14,000, had been consumed. Synod Minutes 1930, pars. 9, 10.



was attempting too much too quickly in the educational sphere with a consequent neglect of its evangelical task and of its existing commitments. (30)

Undeterred, the African leaders set up a Secondary School Committee but it was not until 1938 that much patient endeavour on the part of its members bore fruit and a secondary school was begun in the former Basel Mission premises at Odumase-Krobo. (31) The cost of adapting the buildings was borne equally by the five Presbyteries of the Church. The outbreak of the second World War was not an auspicious time for new projects but in spite of inadequate accommodation, a shortage of graduate staff and a lack of funds, the school went ahead. By 1948 the school had outgrown the space at its disposal and the question of new buildings on a fresh site became acute. (32)

The discussion regarding the site of the new school aroused intense controversy within the Church and set back indefinitely the erection of new buildings. It was a sign that tribal feelings were still strong: claims were vehemently put forward that the school should be located in Christiansborg; others advocated Akwapim and others the Krobo area. The Government, which was providing the money, would have preferred the school to be re-housed in its present position, but it finally acceded to Synod's 'final and irrevocable' decision to a site near Christiansborg. (33) It was a difficult period for the Church: the Pension Fund crisis in 1948 necessitated an emergency Synod in the December, and a second special meeting of Synod in the following June was needed to reach a final decision on the secondary school site. At this latter meeting, after long and vehement debate, it was agreed to site the school at Christiansborg and if this should

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(30) Synod Minutes, 1933, par.17.

(31) Synod Minutes, 1937, par.13 (b), pp.15-19; 1941, par.8; 1942, par.21.

(32) Presbyterian Church Reports, 1948, p.13.

(33) The stages in this unhappy controversy are marked by Synod decisions. Synod Minutes 1946, par.19; 1948, par.10(c); 'Emergency' Synod 1949, *passim*.

not be suitable a position at Legon near the proposed University College buildings should be chosen.

The delay at this critical time was fatal; the Government grant of £230,000, which had already been voted, was withdrawn meantime, and the political events of the next few years made it impossible to regain the position reached in 1948. Although the school is still scheduled for re-housing, work has not yet been begun. (34)

The record of the boys' school at Odumase Krobo has been an enviable one. With an all-African staff from the outset its academic achievements have been good; the Christian tone of the school has been well maintained and the School has played an important part in training boys for responsible posts both in public life and in the Church. (35)

By contrast, the Secondary School for girls aroused no controversy. It was begun by the Scottish Mission alongside the existing training college for women at Aburi and slowly replaced the Girls' Senior School which was transferred class by class to a new site. The generous Government Grant provided splendid new buildings in 1953 and the Presbyterian Girls' Secondary School has become one of the leading girls' schools in the country. (36)

To provide teachers in sufficient numbers to staff the hundreds of Presbyterian Church Schools, there are now six colleges producing more than six hundred teachers annually. Among these, the College at Akropong is the oldest, and because of its special link with the growth of the Church, demands special mention. (37) For just over a hundred years the Seminary, as it was called, produced a constant stream of teacher-catechists who formed the

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(34) Gold Coast Gazette, No.2959 of 15/10/1956, p.1646.

(35) The enrolment of the school is 320 who are all boarders. The curriculum followed is that of a typical English Grammar School. English Language is a compulsory subject and is the medium of instruction: Ghana languages are taken as G.C.E. subjects.

(36) The cost of the school was about £250,000.

(37) See Ch.III above, for an account of its foundation.

spearhead of Mission and school expansion and were thus direct agents of social and religious change throughout the country.

In 1919 one of the first concerns of the African leaders of the Church was that the Scottish Mission would give the same attention to the training of teachers and catechists as the Basel Mission. At that time the teacher training was conducted at Akropong and the theological course at Abetifi, but in 1922 the newly-constituted Seminary Board decided that the two Seminaries should be united and accordingly, in 1924, Rev. William Ferguson, who had taken over at Abetifi, arrived in Akropong with twenty-four students and two African staff. The special Conference of the Church held in the previous year to discuss the whole problem of the future training of teachers and catechists resolved to erect a complete new set of buildings at Akropong. (38) It was a gesture of great faith at a time when congregations everywhere were fully committed to building schemes of their own: schools and houses for teachers, catechists and pastors. The foundation stone of the new building was laid in 1927, by the Governor, Sir Frederick Gordon Guggisberg, in one of his last acts before he left the country. The inscription on the commemorative tablet reads: "To the glory of God and in commemoration of the work of the Basel Mission during a hundred years and of all who gave their lives in the service of the people of the Gold Coast 1828-1928, this College for the training of teachers was dedicated on 20th October, 1928. 'Compassed about by so great a cloud of witnesses'. (39) Fittingly, the new buildings

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(38) Minutes of Conference 1923, pars.4,5 and 12. The need for additional accommodation arose as a result of the Government's requirement that the teacher-training course would be lengthened to four years in 1925. The money was to be raised by a levy of £2 upon each baptised male and £1 in the case of women. £10,000 was raised to supplement the Government grant of £20,000.

(39) Jahresbericht 1929, pp.32-33; Presbyterian Church Report, 1928, pp.8-9. Guggisberg's Governorship (1919-1927) was the period during which far-reaching educational developments took place. His 'Sixteen Principles' enunciated to the Legislative Council in 1925 still form the bases of the Ghana educational system. In his time Achimota, Wesley College, Akropong, Mfantshipim, St. Augustine's and others were founded or provided with new buildings; four Government Trade Schools were begun; the status of teachers was raised, and increased grants-in-aid given to the Missions. McWilliam, *ibid.* Ch.7 *passim*.

in which the Rev. William Ferguson, (Principal 1926-37); Mr. Dougald Benzies (1938-47); and Rev. J.S. Malloch (1948-1957) were to build up the College as it is today, were opened on the very day on which a hundred years earlier Andreas Riis had stepped ashore at Christiansborg.

From 1928 to 1952 the pattern of the training remained the same: a 4-year post-Middle School course followed by a one-year Catechist course with an emphasis throughout on 'practical education'.<sup>(40)</sup> During the 20's and 30's students took the Government's Hand and Eye' examination and the Agricultural Certificate, and Mr. E. Amu experimented with tunes and lyrics in African idiom which, developed by O.A. Boateng and R.H. Danso, became the first indigenous contribution to Church worship.<sup>(41)</sup> It was a time of intensive study of Ghana languages by the staff of the College in continuation of the Basel Mission tradition:<sup>(42)</sup> the revision of the Twi Bible was begun under the leadership of Dr. C.A. Akrofi, a member of staff for thirty years and one of the country's outstanding linguists;<sup>(43)</sup> Scottish missionaries fostered the development of vernacular literature and the writing of school textbooks;<sup>(44)</sup> and Basel missionaries on the staff worked on Twi grammar and on Bible commentaries in Twi.<sup>(45)</sup>

The last decade has been one of expansion and building to accommodate increased numbers of students but the traditional activities of the College remain the same. The students still go out on Sunday mornings into the nearby villages to hold services and organise Sunday Schools for local children

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(40) After 1952 the Catechist course was dropped as grant was no longer paid by the Government for teachers electing to do this course.

(41) See Ch.XI.

(42) Notably E.O. Aye, R.O. Danso, E.O. Koranteng, E. Efa, J.H. Nketia and others.

(43) The revision of the Twi Bible was completed in 1960. Dr. Akrofi published the first Twi Grammar in Twi in 1937, (Twi Kasa Mmara, Longmans). He was awarded a Doctorate in Theology (honoris causa) in 1960 by the University of Mainz for his Biblical and linguistic achievements.

(44) In particular D. Benzies, W.M. Beveridge, J.A.R. Watt, I.S. Beveridge and E.M. Beveridge who produced the famous Kan Me Hwe series of school readers.

(45) E.L. Rapp, Introduction to Twi, Basel, 1936; E.L. Rapp and G.A. Akrofi, Twi Spelling book, Accra 1938; W. Stamm, Korintofe, Kumasi, 1939.

while day by day in chapel and in classroom there is the constant emphasis upon the vocation of the Christian teacher. It is difficult to define the century-old College tradition which has become so much a part of the life of the Church but it is rooted in the conviction that the Christian teacher is a person who sees in his vocation not only formal instruction but also an evangelical opportunity and service to the community. The Presbyterian teacher-catechist has been, and still is, one of the main pillars in the edifice of the Church: in hundreds of villages and towns he was the pioneer of a new way of life, caring for school and congregation, bringing in new ideas, demonstrating agriculture and hygiene, advising and guiding his people in countless ways. He is a man with a strong sense of loyalty to his Church who at the same time possesses a great respect for traditional life and culture. Since 1848 more than five thousand teachers have been trained at the College: practically all the ministers of the Presbyterian Church of Ghana and of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church (formerly the Basel Mission) are former pupils and many have gone into other walks of life than teaching, for example, into educational administration, social work, community development services, broadcasting, commerce, law, medicine and politics.

The Abetifi Seminary was short-lived but from its foundation in 1898 by Rev. Edouard Perregaux it made its contribution to the life of the Church, in particular in training many men who played a notable part in the development of mission work in Ashanti, Akim and Kwahu. <sup>(46)</sup> The same teacher-catechist course was followed as at Akropong with an average of ten students each year. The dismissal of the Basel missionaries at the end of 1917 caused a short interruption of the work until G.D. Reith was stationed there in 1918 followed by W. Ferguson and R.R. Watt in 1921. As we have already mentioned the

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(46) Basel Mission Report, 1900, pp.10-11.

seminary was merged with Akropong in 1924 and thereafter the Mission house was used as the location of a district missionary. In 1946 it was re-opened as a centre for the training of evangelists,<sup>(47)</sup> and since that time the Abetifi Seminary has produced a succession of men who have worked in the pioneer districts of the Church, particularly in Ashanti and the North. The re-opening of Abetifi, however, has not solved the problem of catechist training within the Church. After 1952 teachers could no longer afford to sacrifice a year's salary and lose a year's increment to undertake the catechist course at Akropong while the numbers involved prohibited the Church from making more than a token grant for this purpose.<sup>(48)</sup> Thus the former teacher-catechist is not now being produced, to the serious detriment of the work of the Church in remoter districts. The evangelist at Abetifi is either a post-Middle school pupil-teacher or a Certificate 'B' Primary School teacher and in general lacks seniority and experience, but he does nevertheless play a vital role in the pioneer areas.

The Training Colleges for women at Aburi, Krobo and Agogo developed out of the boarding schools established by the Basel Mission.<sup>(49)</sup> We have already mentioned the founding and development of the three boarding schools for girls at Abokobi, Odumase-Krobo and Aburi<sup>(50)</sup> and these came up for special discussion at the Missionaries' Conferences of 1898 and 1905. The enrolment at each school at that time averaged sixty but there was general disappointment expressed at the results: many girls had lapsed from their faith, others had become too proud to do housework or to help on the farm while there were problems of discipline and a shortage of able African teachers.

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(47) J.B. 1947, pp.25-66.

(48) J.B. 1953, p.24 and Scottish Mission Council Report 1951 (Akropong).

(49) The Basel Mission paid more attention to the provision of education for girls than the other Missions or Government. In 1918 the ratio for all their schools was 2.7 boys to 1 girl, compared with 6 to 1 in Government schools and 7 to 1 in Methodist schools. McWilliam, *ibid.* p.20.

(50) Ch.III above.

The enrolment at Abokobi had declined to nine pupils in 1905 and it was therefore closed but it was decided to persevere with the schools at Aburi and Odumase. (51) Generally speaking, in spite of equality of opportunity, the girls did not respond, and still do not respond, in the same way as boys, to the stimulus of school. The two Schools were continued up to the time of the interment of the Basel missionaries although that at Odumase-Krobo was always difficult. Aburi was re-opened in September 1918 by Miss I.P. Ross and Miss G.M. Wallace, and in 1920 Mrs. M.E. Howie, followed by Miss E.C. Sutherland and Miss A.M. Gray, joined the staff. (52) It was a great blow to the Mission and a reminder that tropical illnesses were still a force to be reckoned with when in the space of a year both Miss Wallace and Mrs. Howie died. Owing to this Odumase Girls' School remained closed and when the Synod of 1919 raised the question of its re-opening the Scottish Mission decided to re-establish the School at Abokobi. By the end of 1921 preparations were complete but the difficulty of recruiting girls finally led the Mission to build a completely new school at Odumase on a hill site outside the town. (53)

Both Aburi and Krobo slowly made the transition from school to training college: by 1930 teacher-training with an emphasis on domestic science had been

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(51) Because conditions were difficult for single European women living alone the Field Conference asked Basel in 1905 not to send out any more unmarried women meantime, the missionaries' wives undertaking the task in the boarding schools. Schlatter *ibid*, Vol.3. pp.181-183.

(52) Both Miss Sutherland and Miss Gray served for more than twenty years at Aburi, assisted later by Miss E.H. M'Killican who came in 1924 and remained at Aburi for the next thirty years.

(53) Presbyterian Church Reports 1927, (Odumase). The buildings cost £12,000, the entire sum coming from Scotland, and were opened by the Governor in 1927. The first headmistress was Miss. S.F. Lamont succeeded by Miss C.P. Moir: the former worked at Krobo for 15 years and the latter for 33 years, while Miss E.M. Moir served there for 25 years.

begun at Aburi and was extended to a 4-year Certificate A course in 1944; at Krobo a two-year Primary course (Certificate B) was inaugurated in 1944.<sup>(54)</sup> At both places new and more adequate buildings were erected appropriate to the changed function of the schools.

The third training college for women is located at Agogo, a plateau town in Ashanti-Akim, twenty miles north of Konongo. In 1928 a special request to the Basel Mission was made at Synod for a girls' boarding school to serve Akim and Kwahu. The work was begun in 1931 by Miss H. Schlatter who was joined a year later by Miss G. Goetz,<sup>(55)</sup> and by 1936 there were a hundred girls in the Middle School and a few students being trained as teachers.

In June 1942, the Army commandeered the school, pupils and staff moving en bloc to Akropong where they were housed in the old College.<sup>(56)</sup> For a year and a half the school continued its programme in spite of crowded conditions until the premises at Agogo were released. The next ten years saw the transition from school to training college, provision being made for the training of both Primary and Middle School teachers.

The most recent development in teacher training was the provision of two Colleges for men at Mampong Ashanti and at Abetifi, the former in 1946 and the latter in 1952. The Accelerated Development Plan for Education provided for such an unprecedented expansion of primary school facilities that within five years the enrolment of children in primary schools was doubled. Special measures were taken to provide 'emergency training' for thousands of pupil teachers and new training centres for the training of primary school teachers were established.

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(54) Presbyterian Church Reports, Aburi Girls' School, 1930, 1936, 1944, 1948, 1952. Ibid. Krobo Girls' School, 1939, 1943, 1953.

(55) J.B. 1931, pp.37-38; 1932, p.41; 1942, pp.20-21.

(56) 1943, pp.14-15, J.B.



The stages in the development of training for the ministry may be traced from the so-called Predigerseminar at Akropong to the foundation of the Theological College at Kumasi. Up to the outbreak of the first World War a number of catechists who were trained in the Preachers' Seminary were ordained as 'deacons'. It was noted in the previous chapter that the impulse towards building up an African ministry came from Inspector Schott, and after the visitation of Pratorius in 1882-3 the number of ordained Africans slowly grew to a total of twenty-one in 1914.<sup>(57)</sup> The Scottish Mission continued the catechists' course in much the same way.<sup>(58)</sup> The best students from the teacher-training college were given an additional fifth-year's study in the Bible, Church History, Theology in Preaching and the care of a congregation. From among these teacher-catechists, after years of proved service and zeal, the Synod Committee chose some for ordination without further training. Before the 'call' was made, the teacher's career, background and Christian character were investigated, and it was rare for anyone to refuse a 'call' to ordination even though it meant, more often than not, a reduction in salary.

From time to time, special training courses for ordinands were held and a few men were given training in Basel and in Scotland, but it became clear that a theological college was a prime necessity. Plans were made to begin theological training at Nsaba in 1940 but in the meanwhile, discussions initiated with the Methodist Church resulted in a decision by the two Churches to share in the establishment of a united college at Kumasi.<sup>(59)</sup> In February, 1943, the College, later to be known as Trinity College, opened with

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(57) Eppler, *ibid.* p.207, 334.

(58) Scottish Mission Council Minutes, Jan.1944, pp.8-10.

(59) Presbyterian Church Synod Minutes, 1939, par.12 (e); 1941, par.8 (e).

four students under the leadership of the late Dr. S.G. Williamson and Rev. D.S. Elder. The number of students has steadily risen: some have come from the Evangelical Presbyterian Church and from as far afield as the Gambia and the Cameroons as well as from the Methodist and Presbyterian Churches in Ghana. Within a few years the College has gained a high reputation; "...this remarkable institution", wrote Dr. Stephen Neill in 1950, "has more of the feel of a College than any other that I visited in Africa"<sup>(60)</sup>. While the Curriculum has followed the usual European pattern, (some students have been successfully prepared for the B.D. degree of London University), "a serious attempt has been made to relate the teaching to the needs and background of African students".<sup>(61)</sup> The importance of the College for theological study in Ghana with particular reference to the problems raised in the last chapter, cannot be overestimated.<sup>(62)</sup>

Thus since 1946 men have been entering the ministry of the Church with a specific training for the task and gradually the proportion of ministers trained at Trinity College among the ministerial body has risen. The need for pastors, however, has been so great, that the former practice of ordaining senior teacher-catechists without further training and study, has been continued. There are therefore at the present time in the Presbyterian Church of Ghana two types of minister: the younger man trained at Trinity College and the older teacher-catechist ordained after long service in education. This second group has been the backbone of the Church's pastoral work for almost a hundred years and is composed of men of faith and wisdom whose lack of further academic study is made up for by long experience. Generally speaking, however, they are somewhat out of touch with youth,

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(60) Survey of the Training of the Ministry in Africa, International Missionary Council, London, 1950, p.51.

(61) Ibid. p.51.

(62) The most recent development is a decision to build a new college on a site near the University at Legon, Accra. J.B. 1959/60, pp.22-23.

particularly with the younger well-educated men and women, and come to the ministry as a kind of 'promotion' so to speak, straight from school work without having had time for reflection upon the special vocation of the pastor. On the other hand, such is the prevalent Akan viewpoint, men below the age of thirty five or even forty, are regarded as still youths, untried and inexperienced.

The older Presbyterian minister is, in general, conservative and traditionalist, and is usually more chary than his European colleague of admitting indigenous forms of expression in worship and Church life. Interest in African religion and culture is mainly confined to the younger graduate minister. No one has so little leisure as the Presbyterian pastor, young or old. He is immersed in such a welter of educational administration, pastoral visitation, session meetings, funerals and 'cases', that he has little or no time for reading and study. He has to accept visitors at almost any hour and to offer hospitality without question to travellers. He has little or no private life, his bedroom being the only part of the manse not open to the public. In the rural areas his prestige and status as God's representative are high; Christians and non-Christians alike accord him respect and he is often called in to settle disputes of all kinds. In the urban centres he is less of a community personality, and rarely find himself at ease with the new educated élite of whom he is, in theory, one. He conducts services and funerals, presides at weekly session meetings, deals with school and church correspondence, pays teachers' salaries, holds confirmation classes, keeps records and accounts, visits his flock locally and on outstations, and receives a constant stream of callers. He is also bound up closely with his own lineage which involves him in many commitments towards his own family group, both Christian and non-Christian.

We conclude the chapter with a brief account of the medical mission. (63)

The first Basel Mission doctor, C.F. Heinze, died in 1832, six weeks after his arrival on the Gold Coast, and there was no further thought on the part of the Home Committee of having a doctor on the field until 1865 when the then Government Medical Officer, who had treated the missionaries for a long period and who was now leaving, sought to induce the Mission to send out its own doctor. His suggestion was supported by the missionaries but it was not until 1882 that Dr. Ernst Mähly arrived with the special task of investigating, over a period of two years, the particular health problems of the Gold Coast. His conclusions were somewhat guarded in view of the death of Inspector Pratorius: the dangers to health were still great but he made valuable recommendations regarding clothing and diet, the nature and treatment of the most common illnesses, and in his report he reviews the health conditions of each main mission station. (64) The Home Board, as a result of this report, decided to send out Medical doctors and nurses in spite of the views of some who regarded the decision as a result of a lack of faith! (65)

Dr. Rudolf Fisch was the first to be appointed in 1885, Aburi being regarded as the most suitable location, and two years later Dr. Alfred Eckhardt came to Christiansborg. In 1891 Dr. Eckhardt moved to Odumase and was in the process of building a house with rooms for patients when he became suddenly ill and died; the nurse, Klara Finckh, who had worked with him during that year, also died six months later. The entire burden of caring for the missionaries on scattered stations and of conducting the out-patients clinics at Aburi and Abokobi thus fell on Dr. Fisch. He became widely-known and loved and made strenuous journeys by bicycle on poor

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(63) Schlatter, *ibid.* pp.187-189, cf. Eppler, *ibid.* Ch.VII, Die "ärztliche Mission pp.368-371.

(64) *Missionsmagazin* 1885, p.396ff. discusses Dr. Mähly's report under the heading "Die Gesundheitsverhältnisse der Goldküste".

(65) Schlatter, *ibid.* Vol.3. p.187. "Man wurde beschlossen, ständige Missionsärzte auszubilden und zu entsenden. Es gab Kritiker, die ein solches Vorgehen verurteilten".

roads and along bush paths, often on the move for days attending to emergency calls. He was relieved in 1895 by Dr. Friedrich Hey who, on Dr. Fisch's return from leave, was stationed at Odumase. He was there only two years before being transferred to the Cameroons and Dr. Fisch was again the only source of medical aid in Akwapim. (66)

In addition to a dispensary, accommodation was provided for in-patients in a building near the mission house at Aburi which Africans both Christian and non-Christian attended in considerable numbers. (67) When he went on leave again in 1903 he was relieved by Dr. H. Vortisch who kept an interesting chronicle of his experiences, and in particular of conditions of travel at the time. (68)

Travel was still difficult: bicycles could be used on the 'Mission' road but the hammock was still in use for longer journeys. It took four hours from Aburi to Akropong by cycle and an additional four to five hours to Odumase but his journey to Abetifi by hammock took six days. He visited Akropong for the Odwira Festival in 1903 and was received in audience by the Omanhene whose eyes he examined and for whom he procured a pair of gold-rimmed spectacles. (69) He was able to visit most of the mission stations and his small book gives an interesting picture of the country and of mission activity at that time.

The work at Aburi developed well: in the period before the first World War the small hospital was increasingly attended by both Africans and Europeans, and the Mission personnel were regularly visited. (70) The Home Board had resolved to build a modern, well-equipped hospital at Aburi

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(66) There was a Government doctor at Accra and for a time Dr. Papafio was at Odumase-Krobo.

(67) Basel Mission Report, 1900, pp.31-2.

(68) Published as "Hin und her auf der Goldküste", Hermann Vortisch, Basel, 1900, passim.

(69) Vortisch, *ibid.* pp.77ff.

(70) In 1912 there were over 20,000 outpatients treated at Aburi and Abokobi and 129 admissions to the 12 bed hospital. J.B. 1913, p.100.

when war intervened and the deportation of the Basel missionaries at the end of 1917 brought the work to a close. (71)

With the arrival of the Scottish Mission the medical work continued for a time; a dispensary for women and children was organised at Christiansborg and in 1922 the hospital at Aburi was re-opened. The Government made a special request to the Scottish Mission to undertake medical and welfare work for women and children in other centres than Aburi and a start was made at Abetifi. Unfortunately the Foreign Mission Committee of the Church of Scotland, with its widespread overseas commitments and a reduced home income finally decided that it was unable to finance any further medical work in the Gold Coast and in 1928 the clinics at Abetifi and Aburi were closed. (72)

It was not long, however, before the Basel Mission began a new hospital at Agogo in Ashanti. In the middle of 1928 Mr. Adolf Kirchner arrived to superintend the building operations and in the following year a 60-bed hospital was opened. (73) Served by a succession of able doctors and devoted nurses the hospital has developed into one of the most-esteemed hospitals in the country. Dispensaries were opened in nearby towns and in 1935 provision was made for lepers who were undergoing treatment. Over the years the hospital has been enlarged and finely-equipped and although the work was brutally interrupted by the second World War when the internment of the German personnel of the Mission brought about its closure for seven years, it has continued to render a great service. (74) Unfortunately it has seemed

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(71) The main references to this period of the medical mission are found in the Jahresberichte: 1911, p.83; 1912, p.62; 1913, p.100; 1914, pp.107-8; 1915, p.83, 1916, p.67 and 1917, p.69.

(72) Scottish Mission Council Minutes: April, 1926, par.250; April 1927, par.270 August 1927, par.282; Feb.1928, pars.291-3; Nov.1928, par.323. Cf. Foreign Mission Committee Minute, 19th March, 1929, No.2399.

(73) Jahresberichte: 1928, p.39; 1929, p.39. Cf. booklet, 'Agogo' by Erika Raith, Stuttgart, 1936.

(74) J.B. 1936, pp.44-5; 1938, pp.49-50; 1940, p.32; 1947, p.26. There are now 150 beds, three doctors, a pharmacist, four sisters, thirteen nurses and between 40-50 pupil nurses at the Training School. In 1958, 2997 in-patients were admitted, and 15,506 out-patients were treated. The Hospital is governed by a Hospital Board on which the Church is well represented. Presbyterian Church Report 1958, pp.13-14.

impossible to recruit African doctors: although there is a staff of African nurses and dispensers, so far not one African doctor has volunteered for work in the mission hospital. In 1956 the Church appointed an African minister as full-time hospital chaplain so that the regular devotional services for staff, daily evangelisation of the out-patients, and ward services could be conducted.

In addition to the Agogo Hospital the Basel Mission has made a major effort in medical work in the past decade, almost half the number of missionaries on the field being engaged in the medical sphere. In 1951 the Mission agreed to staff a clinic erected by the Dormaa Ahenkro Local Authority and a year later a similar clinic was opened at Bechem. A much larger venture was the acceptance by the Mission of responsibility for the running of the new Government Hospital at Bawku in the far north-east of the country. The association of the Mission with local authorities and with the Government has not been entirely a happy one, the motives of each in the provision of medical facilities being different. There is, however, a deep conviction on the part of the Mission that these are worthwhile expressions of the spirit of the Gospel. (75)

A special piece of welfare work requiring mention here is the School for the Blind at Akropong, the first in West Africa, which owes its origin to the interest taken in a few neglected blind children by the Scottish missionaries M. F.D. Harker and Mrs. Margaret Benzies in 1943. Braille primers were obtained and in a short time there were a number of children undergoing instruction at primary level and being cared for in one corner of the College compound. The school was organised into primary and middle classes, the oversight being given by the Scottish Mission and later by a

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(75) Cf. Presbyterian Church of Ghana, 1956, Reports, p.13.

committee composed of representatives of the Presbyterian and Methodist Church and of the Ministry of Education. It is a school offering elementary education but for the older pupils there is craft training, (basket and mat-weaving, and cane chair work), and shorthand and typing classes. The children are drawn from all parts of the country and two pupils have taken the teacher-training course at the College while others are employed as typists and craft instructors. (76)

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(76) Since 1948 the school has been ably conducted by Mr. and Mrs. Sakyama Amoako who were trained in Edinburgh as teachers of the blind, assisted by sighted and blind African staff. It is financed by Government supplemented by donations from the two Churches and from private individuals. A re-housing project for the school is now well-advanced. Presbyterian Church Reports, 1955, pp.19-20; 1956, pp.34-6.



## Chapter IX.

### Developments in the Life and Work of the Church after 1926.

The return of the Basel Mission to the Gold Coast in 1925; the limitation of its sphere of work to Ashanti; difficulties of adjustment to the changed situation; proposal by the Basel Mission of an Ashanti District Church rejected by the Synod; petition from the congregations of Agona and W.Akim; restrictions on the sphere of work of the Basel Mission removed; further interruption by war; the new spheres of evangelistic effort; the Basel Mission in N.W. Ashanti; the Presbyterian Church mission in the Northern Territories; historical review of the reasons for the reluctance of Christian Missions to work in the north, the work at Salaga, Tamale, Garu, Bolgatanga and Sandema; problems of evangelism in the north; the Presbyterian Church spreads to the west; a review of the present pastoral problems affecting the congregations in Ga-Adangme, Akwapim, Akim-Kwahu, Agona-West Akim and Ashanti; present statistics of membership.

## CHAPTER IX.

### Developments in the Life and Work of the Church after 1926.

The year 1926, which saw the return of the Basel missionaries to the Gold Coast, marks a new stage in the life of the Church. By 1924 the efforts made by the Conference of British Missionary Societies to persuade the Secretary of State for the Colonies to permit the Basel and Bremen Societies to resume work in the Gold Coast began to bear fruit. <sup>(1)</sup> In anticipation of permission being granted the representatives of the Basel and Bremen Missions and of the Foreign Mission Committee of the United Free Church of Scotland met in Edinburgh in the September of that year and reached agreement on the future relations of the Missions and the Church. <sup>(2)</sup> After the meeting a formal petition was addressed by Mr. J.H. Oldham, Secretary of the Conference of British Missionary Societies, to the Colonial Secretary, requesting that both the Basel and Bremen Societies be once again recognised in the Gold Coast. The reply came on the 3rd of July, 1925, to the effect that the Basel Mission would be included in the list of recognised missionary bodies for work in Ashanti only and that five missionaries would be given entry permits in the first instance; the Scottish Mission was to continue to undertake responsibility for work in the Colony. <sup>(3)</sup>

The first four missionaries to return were the Revs. I. Bellon, F. Jost, W. Schaefer and G. Nyfeler, all of whom had previously been on the field. <sup>(4)</sup> They landed at the end of December 1925 and were warmly

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- (1) J.B. 1924, p.27. The Scottish Mission had also assumed responsibility for the work of the Bremen Mission in Togoland, now the Evangelical Presbyterian Church.
- (2) Scottish Mission Council (Gold Coast) Minutes, 22nd April 1925, Min.223. United Free Church of Scotland, Foreign Mission Committee Minutes, 31st October, 1924, Minute 7085.
- (3) J.B. 1925, pp.74-75. The Bremen missionaries were also allowed to return provided that the Scottish Mission remained in control of mission schools in British Togoland. Cf. Letter from the Governor to the Secretary, Scottish Mission, 27/3/1925. S.M. Council Minutes, 1929, par.344.
- (4) J.B. 1926, pp.64-74.

received by the Scottish Mission and by the Synod Committee. There were enthusiastic welcome meetings everywhere but in particular in Ashanti where their future work lay.

It took some years before a mutually satisfactory arrangement with regard to the two Missions and the Church was worked out. The difficulties resolved themselves around three main issues: the limitation of the Basel sphere of work to Ashanti; the particular position of the Ashanti mission field; and the changed status of the Church itself. The Basel missionaries had been away only nine years, but during that time the entire situation had altered. They had left a mission Church still under tutelage and had returned to encounter an almost independent, self-governing Church; they had formerly been accustomed to planning and fostering the entire enterprise, now they had a feeling of being restricted both territorially and functionally; while in the Ashanti mission field itself, which was in a mid-stage between 'mission' and Independent Church, they had no special authority and could act only through the newly-established courts of the Church. The relationship between the Basel and Scottish missionaries was, in the main, correct but not cordial; a meeting in 1927 helped to resolve some misunderstandings and paved the way to closer fellowship.<sup>(5)</sup> The Basel missionaries had also to come to terms with the changed context in two other respects; the tremendously increased commitment of the Church in the educational field,<sup>(6)</sup> and the startling material and social changes in the decade 1917-1927.

The reports from Ashanti of the newly-returned Basel missionaries call attention to the waves of western culture breaking with redoubled force; to the new buildings, roads and railways; to the great increase in trade; to the

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(5) J.B. 1928. In 1927 a Basel missionary was attached to the College at Akropong.

(6) In Ashanti alone the number of children in Presbyterian Schools rose from 900 to 2100 between 1918 and 1925, and much more rapidly thereafter.

disappearance of the more 'barbarous' manifestations of indigenous religion; and to the awakened interest in political ideas among the educated young men.<sup>(7)</sup> Concern is also expressed at the fact that the educational expansion meant that the schools became less and less an integral part of the overall evangelistic enterprise.

All these factors led the Basel Mission in 1929 to propose to the Synod Committee the setting up of an Ashanti District Church, which would be the direct responsibility and concern of the missionaries from Basel. Inspector Oettli put forward three main reasons for the general dissatisfaction of the Basel missionaries with the existing arrangements: that they were never quite sure how far their writ ran in advising their African colleagues or in taking urgent necessary action; that the relationship of Church and Mission in Ashanti had never been clearly defined; that their continued limitation to Ashanti meant that they could not play a full part in the development of the Church as a whole. It was also pointed out that although the Scottish Mission had done much in developing education it had undertaken little or no district or pioneer work, and there was also criticism of the introduction by the Scottish Mission of a so-called 'liberal-modern' type of theology into the catechists' course at Akropong.<sup>(8)</sup>

Earlier in the same year, a petition of a different sort, but relevant to the issue of the position of the Basel Mission, had been addressed to the Governor by the presbyters of thirty-six congregations in Agona and Western Akin.<sup>(9)</sup> Its main plea was for a return of the Basel missionaries to their former sphere of labour in this region. It is an interesting

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(7) J.B. 1926, pp.67-69. A typical comment is: "Unaufhaltsem stromen mit den Gütern der modernen Kultur auch moderne Ideen in Asante ein. Es wundert uns nicht, dass in vielen Köpfen, besonders der Jugend, "äthiopische und panafrikanische Ideale spuken".

(8) J.B. 1929, pp.33-37 (Inspector Oettli).

(9) Text in Synod Committee Minutes, 9-12 April 1929. Although it was not signed by the district pastors and teachers, it no doubt influenced the Government's decision to permit the Basel Mission to work again in the Colony.

document: it protests against the expulsion of the Mission in 1917 and deplures the fact that on its return its activities were confined to Ashanti; it makes a special appeal for the return of the missionaries to Akim on the grounds that the recent progress of the Church there 'has been slow and unattractive'. Their petition had point: the congregations in this area had suffered most from the banishment of the Basel Mission as they had by 1917 scarcely emerged from the 'mission' stage of development, nor had the Scottish Mission been able to supply district mission personnel to care for the 'orphaned' Christian groups.

The situation called for much tact and wisdom, and it is to the credit of the African leaders of the Church that they responded so well. They pointed out that the limitation of the sphere of the work of the Basel Mission was the action of the Government, but that as they wished to have the two Missions working in full co-operation with the Church, they would continue to press the Governor for the removal of the territorial restriction. The Synod Committee, however, rejected the Basel Mission proposal for a separate Ashanti 'field' on the grounds that not only would it impair the unity of the Church but that it would also be a reversion to the period before the 1918 constitution. The Basel missionaries could take a full part in the deliberations of the Ashanti Presbytery and of the Synod but, while the Committee gladly welcomed the help of both Missions they did not desire a return to a position where missionaries were given special powers. (10)

The wisdom of this decision has been more and more in evidence as the integration of the European missionaries had proceeded. All the same, the few years after 1926 demanded great patience from all three partners until a harmonious relationship was reached. It was clear that while the African leaders were glad of the help from Europe they were anxious to safeguard the newly-acquired status of the Church; the Scottish missionaries felt that, generally speaking, their role was to foster the 'Africanisation' of the Church

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(10) Synod Committee Minutes, April 1929, pars. 35 and 43.

rather than to undertake district and pioneer work; whereas the Basel missionaries were faced with the problem of adjustment to a greatly-changed ecclesiastical and social situation. In Ashanti, the African pastors in charge of the Districts had discharged their responsibilities creditably and had grown accustomed to the system of local session, presbytery, Synod Committee and Synod by which there was no special reference to the missionary as such except in so far as he was a member of these bodies. There was no question in the African mind of returning to a stage, even in Ashanti, where the missionaries were given particular authority.<sup>(11)</sup> The totally new factor between 1917 and 1927 was the emergence of an independent, self-governing Church which had during this period held responsibility for the Ashanti Mission, a time during which the number of converts had increased fourfold.<sup>(12)</sup> A separate Ashanti Church would have meant the duplication of existing organisations, the ever-present danger of an Ashanti secession church, and an unnatural semi-permanent division of Basel and Scottish missionary interests.

The main stumbling-block in the way of the full co-operation of the two Missions and the Church was removed in 1930 when the territorial restrictions by Government on the Basel and Bremen Missions were rescinded.<sup>(13)</sup> It was now possible for all missionaries to be on the same terms in respect of their work within the Church and efforts were being made to bring the missionaries of the various bodies together at regular conferences. The

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(11) The attitude of the Church becomes clear in the light of the statement of Inspector Oettli: "...our missionaries do not at the present enjoy that position which their responsibilities demand. They do not aspire to the place of leaders of the Church, they will be and remain what they promised to be: the friends and advisers of the Church. In order to enable them to do their duty in a more efficient way, their position, however, needs some strengthening". Memorandum in S.M. Council Minutes, April 1929, Appendix.

(12) J.B. 1926, p.70. In 1917 there were 1004 converts in Ashanti; at the beginning of 1924 the Presbyterian Church had five pastoral districts and 3242 converts; in 1930 the number had grown to almost 8,000.

(13) Scottish Mission Council Minutes, Jan.1930, par.24. J.B. 1930, p.38. Church of Scotland F.M.C. Minutes 2664-5.

Edinburgh Agreement of 1924 still held and a conference in Basel in 1930 between representatives of the Foreign Mission Committee of the Church of Scotland and the Basel Mission agreed that the Synod Committee should be consulted fully with regard to the location of all their missionaries. (14)

The visit to the field of the Rev. K. Hartenstein, Director of the Basel Mission, in 1931, did much to draw together the missionaries of both groups in mutual understanding and co-operation. (15)

Three newly-arrived Basel missionaries were now located in the Colony for district evangelical work, at Begoro, Nsaba and Christiansborg; and in 1932 a Basel missionary was stationed at Akropong to take part in the theological training. Formal meetings of representatives of the Missions took place regularly until the 1950's when their integration into the Church was so far developed that there was no longer need for such gatherings. (16) Today, whatever the national origin of a missionary or expatriate fraternal worker may be, he or she is under the authority of the Church and at its disposal.

It did not seem long before war again interrupted the activities of the Basel Mission. In 1939 the German nationals of both Basel and Bremen Missions were immediately interned. (17) Of the fourteen Basel missionaries of German nationality (including wives) on the field, six were allowed to return to Germany and the remainder spent the war years in camps in Jamaica, Australia and Canada. The Basel-staffed stations at Nsaba, Abetifi, Begoro and Nwereme, as well as the hospital at Agogo, had to be closed; the small

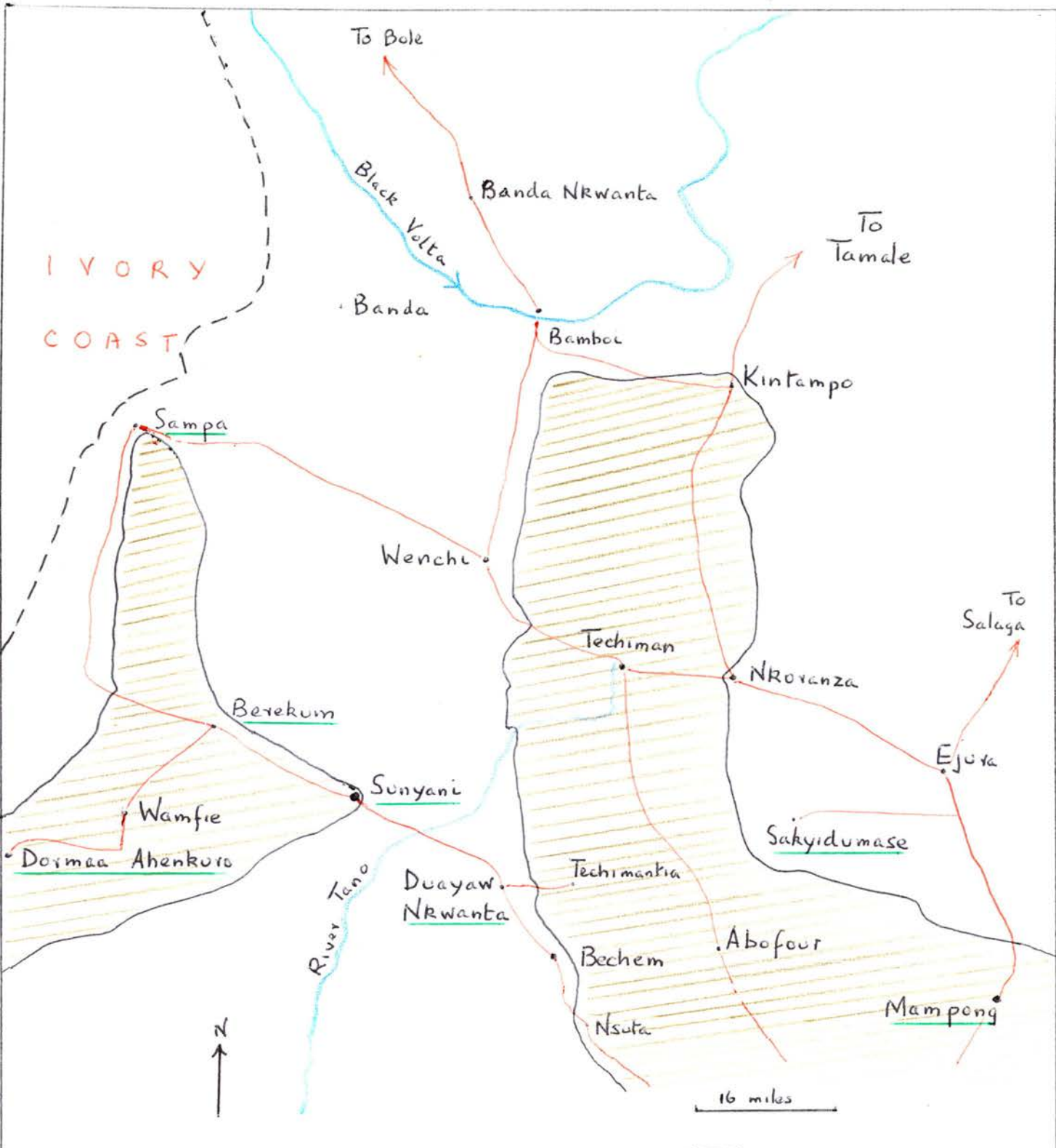
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(14) S.M. Council Minutes, Jan.1931, par.63; J.B. 1931, pp.33-34.

(15) J.B. 1932, pp.35-39, Die Inspektionsreise von Direktor Hartenstein.

(16) In April 1932 in Edinburgh the two Missions reached agreement on the use of Basel Mission property, the Basel Mission graciously allowing the Scottish Mission the use of all the buildings at Aburi, two bungalows at Akropong, one at Begoro and the Book Depot premises in Accra. S.M. Council Minutes, April and July 1932.

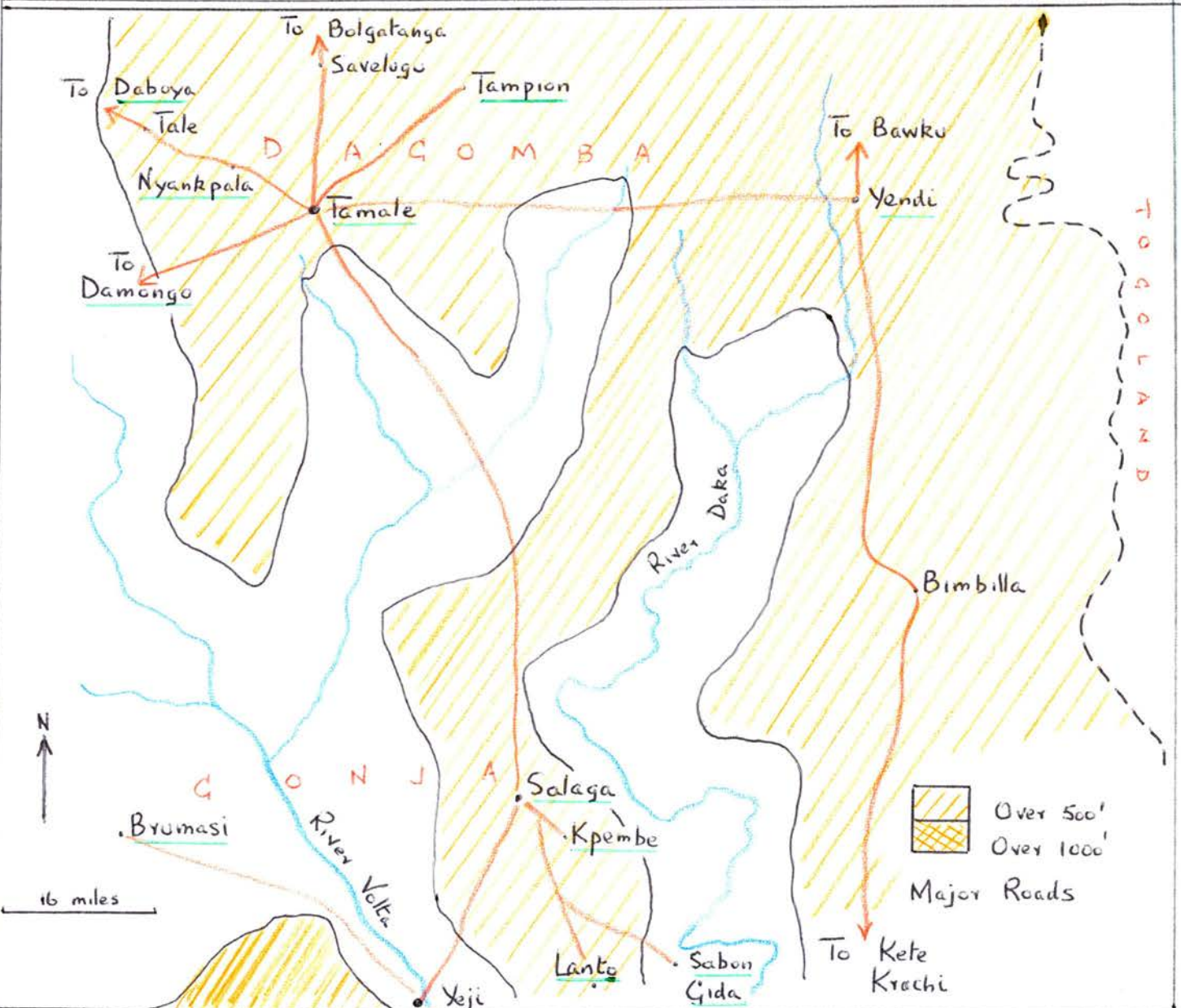
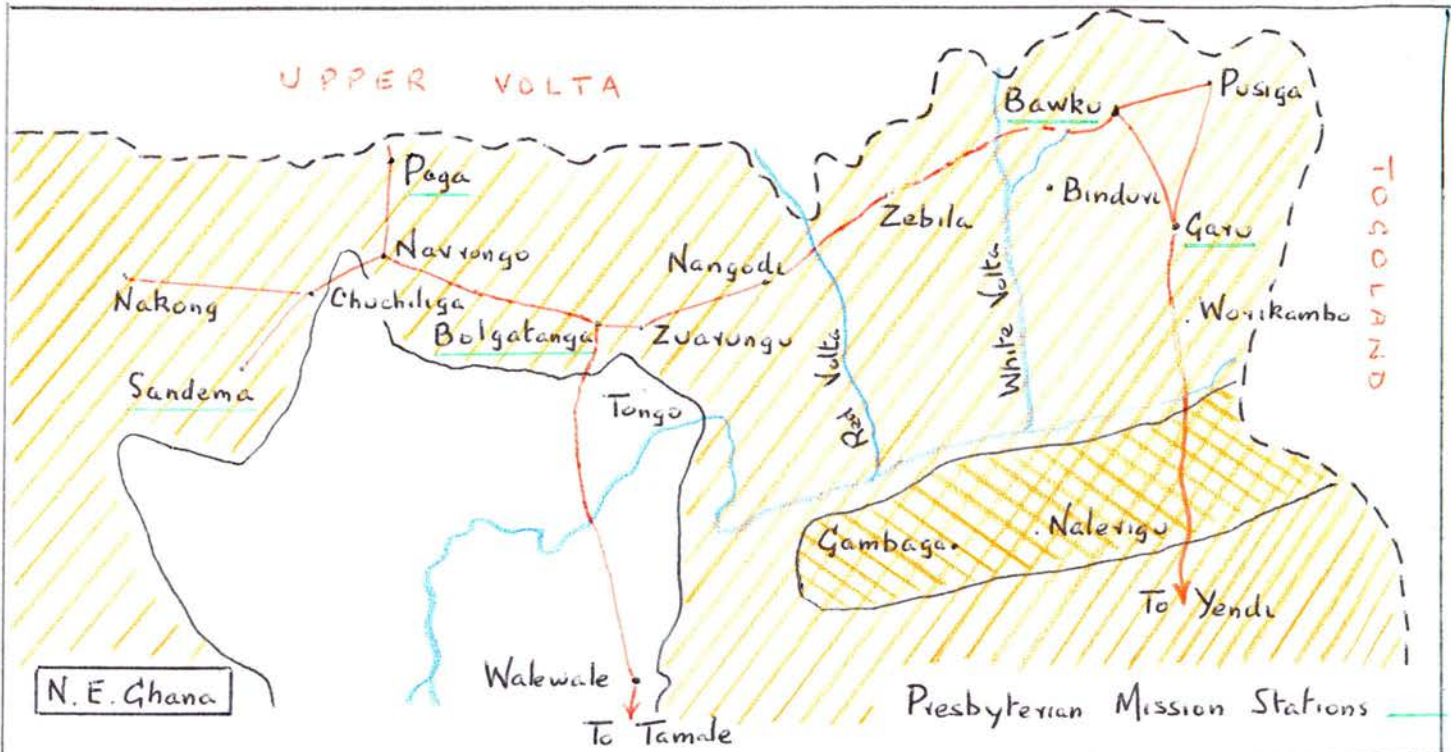
(17) J.B. 1940, pp.30-31, Der Krieg und die Mission.



The Brong Ahafo Region

- Land over 500'
- Major Roads ———
- District Centres of the Presbyterian Church ———





Presbyterian Mission in the Gonja and Dagomba areas

group of Swiss nationals who remained were able to continue their work at the Agogo Girls' School, at Kumasi and at Pamu. The Scottish Mission assumed total responsibility for the Ewe Presbyterian Church, there being only one Bremen missionary left, and accepted increased administrative burdens in the Gold Coast Church. (18)

During the last thirty years the Presbyterian Church has made special evangelistic efforts in the Gyamang area of north-west Ashanti and in Northern Ghana. At Wam Pamu the preaching of the catechist J.K. Boadi brought a small congregation into being and the missionaries, Mr. and Mrs. W. Schäfer found great acceptance of the Gospel in an area where western culture had hardly reached and where indigenous religion and customs were almost unaffected. A medical dispensary became widely known and attended. The first baptisms took place at Christmas 1927 and slowly the number of converts grew. Preaching tours were undertaken by Schäfer and others in the entire north and west of Kumasi, from Abease to Nkoranza and Sekyeredomase, and northwards from Pamu to Wankyi and Banda. In this large area there were dozens of towns and villages willing to accept the Mission but in only a few cases was staff available, either African or European. By 1932, however, the so-called Gyamang mission had been organised based on the location of Basel missionaries and African ministers, catechists and evangelists in the towns of Wam Pamu (Dormaa Ahenkuro), Nwereme, Berekom, Sampa and Banda. This work was linked to that in the existing districts of north Ashanti. (19)

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(18) The Scottish Mission petitioned the Government strongly for the release of the interned missionaries. (S.M. Council correspondence 13th October, 1939). In January 1940 an offer of release was made to three individual missionaries which was not accepted. Thereafter all the German missionaries, except those who had already been repatriated, were interned for the duration of the war.

(19) Wam Pamu: now Dormaa Ahenkro, 130 miles N.W. of Kumasi. cf. Schäfer, Neues aus Wam Pamu, Heidenbote, 1928; J.B. 1926, p.73; 1927, pp.45-46; 1928, p.38; Ringwald, *ibid.* pp.95ff. The Gyamang region proper lies north of Berekom and west of Wenchi as far as the Black Volta, cf. J.B. 1934, p.45.

The Gyamang area contains many scattered villages in the transition zone between the forest of the south and the savanna of the north. It is not a cocoa-growing district so that money is scarce and the people are generally poor; the normal forest crops cannot be grown, the staple food being yam, with some maize, cassava and rice. At Christmas 1934, the first converts at Nwereme, five young men, were baptised, and many others agreed that 'their names should be written' as candidates for instruction.<sup>(20)</sup> Not long afterwards, on the last Sunday of the year, came the news from Sampa that in the great fire which raged through the town, the pastor's house, the chapel and the school had been totally destroyed. In spite of this disaster and the interruptions of the second World War, the work went forward: the entire district became suddenly 'education-conscious' and schools were opened in village after village.<sup>(21)</sup> In 1955 Japekrom, Dormaa and Sampa became ministerial districts and the area was put into the charge of the Ashanti Presbytery.

The Presbyterian Mission in Northern Ghana may be said to begin with the founding of a station at Yendi by the Basel Mission in 1912, a short-lived enterprise owing to the deportation of the missionaries four years later.<sup>(22)</sup> After 1918 there was no resumption of evangelical work at Yendi except that for the next twenty years clerks and traders from the south met regularly for worship among themselves although there was no serious attempt to build up a congregation among the local people. The proposal to open schools in some of the larger towns of the north, including Yendi, to be staffed by Christian teachers was frustrated by a Government policy which seemed to be in favour

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(20) J.B. 1935, p.45; Gyamang Mission Report 1940. In 1952 the Church Extension Committee took responsibility for the work and later the Ashanti Presbytery. 'To write the name' marked the first stage of attachment to the Christian group, see Ch.V above.

(21) From 42 school children in 1940 the number rose to 677 in 1947, the number of schools from two to thirteen. The number of converts increased from 205 to 327 in the same period.

(22) See Chapter VI above.

of a purely secular system of education for the region. (23) After the second World War the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, assisted by missionaries of the Evangelical and Reformed Church of America, took over responsibility for the Kete Krachi-Yendi area. (24)

The fact that there was little or no evangelical missionary activity in the north beyond the river Volta perturbed the Basel Mission. In May 1928, the missionaries Bellon and Schimming toured the entire area and found no missions at work apart from the White Fathers at Navrongo. Formal permission was granted by the authorities to the Basel Mission two years later to resume evangelism at Yendi but lack of funds prevented the plan from being implemented. (25) The next step was taken in 1936 when the Synod Committee appointed a catechist at Atebubu and, in conjunction with the Methodist Church, a minister to look after the diaspora congregation at Tamale, but it was not until 1948 that the Church and the two Missions were able to make a decisive effort. (26) From this time forward an endeavour has been made to found centres of the Christian faith at strategic points, the three groups working together as the Presbyterian Church Mission. (27) The first station to be manned was Tamale (1949), with its outstations Kalandi and Brumasi; then Salaga (1950) with catechists at Damongo, Daboya and Tali; followed by Bolgatanga (1955), Sandema (1957) and Garu (1958). Meanwhile in 1955 the Basel Mission had undertaken the running of the Government Hospital at Bawku. Thus within ten years an entirely new mission field of the Church has been established. (28)

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(23) In 1939 an application by the Presbyterian and Methodist Churches to open a united school at Yeji was refused. S.M. Council Minutes, Jan. 1940, par.425; July 1940, par.433.

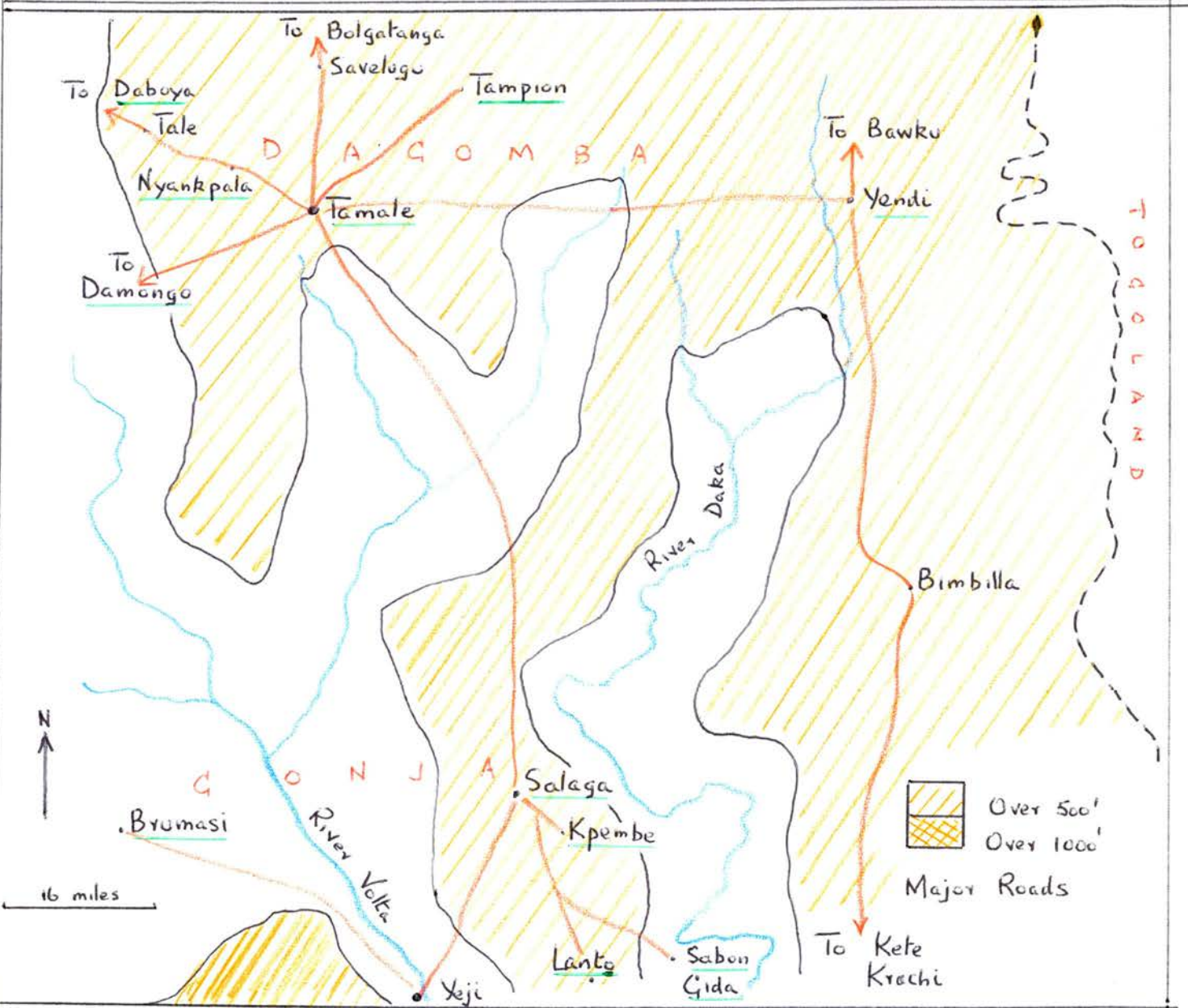
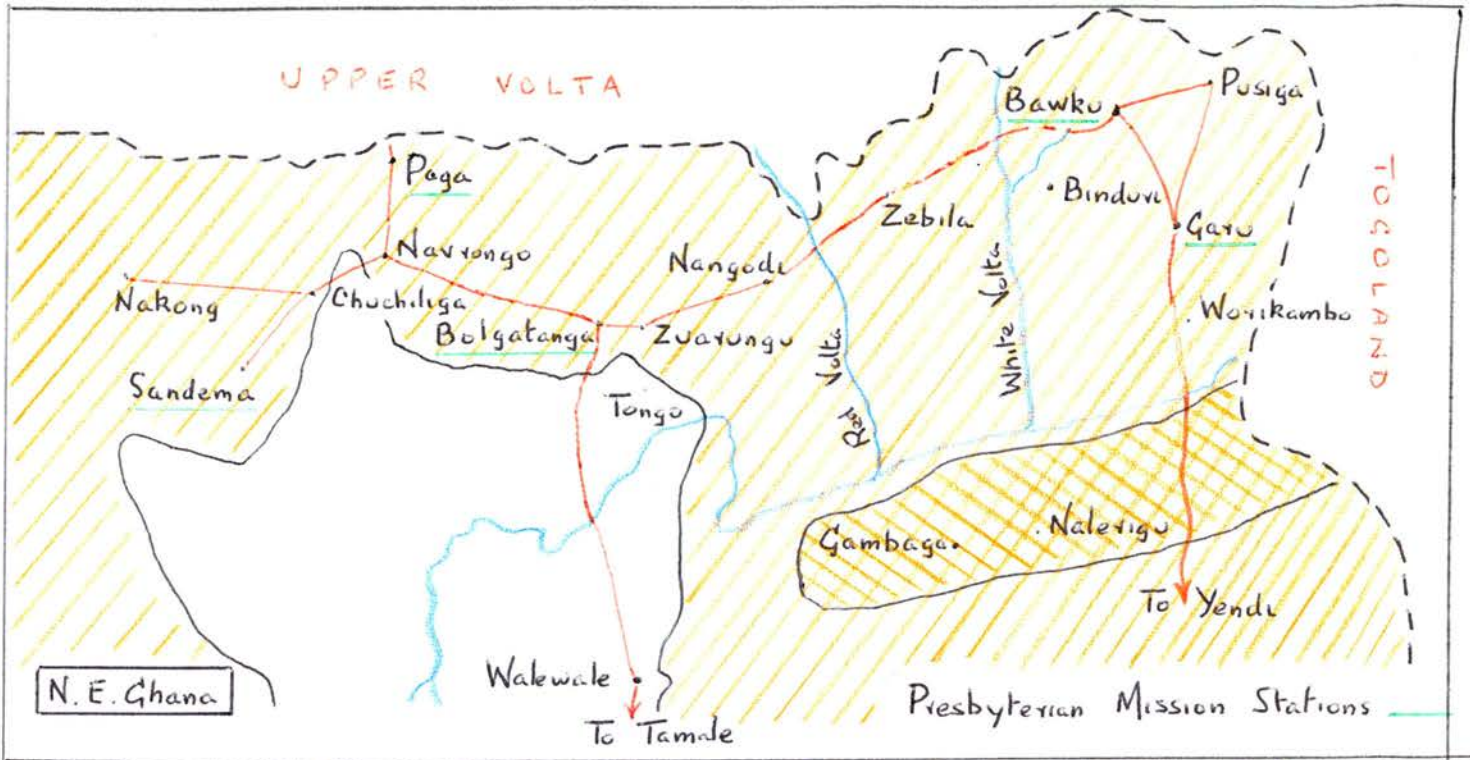
(24) There are now several Christian congregations there and several Local Authority Schools are managed by the Evangelical Presbyterian Church.

(25) J.B. 1929, p.39; 1931, p.39-40; 1932, p.37. (Die Nördlichen Territorien). The Government had already given permission to the Assembly of God Mission to work among the Dagomba and the Mamprussi peoples.

(26) Synod Minutes 1937, par.14; 1944, par.13; 1946, par.12; 1948, par.10.

(27) J.B. 1949, p.21.

(28) The work was co-ordinated by the Northern Ghana Field Conference and after April 1961, by the Presbytery of Northern Ghana.



Presbyterian Mission in the Gonja and Dagomba areas

We have already mentioned the striking difference between northern and southern Ghana in climate, vegetation and peoples. <sup>(29)</sup> The dividing line is roughly 8° North latitude, a line which generally coincides with the course of the Volta river and its tributary from the west, the Black Volta. Here the tropical forest of the south is replaced by the savanna type of vegetation of scattered trees and large areas of grassland. Life is harder in the north; there is only one harvest and there is the ever-present problem of food and water shortage during the long dry season. The most densely-peopled areas are in the extreme N.E. and N.W. 'corners' of Ghana, but elsewhere the people are thinly scattered. Tamale is the administrative centre and the only town of over 40,000 people. <sup>(30)</sup> The northern peoples have been influenced by contact with the Modern world in certain habits of life but Islam, contrary to popular belief, has not affected the mass of the people. <sup>(31)</sup> Thousands of young men from the north migrate to Ashanti and the southern regions to find work on the cocoa farms, in the gold mines, at the ports, in building and in commerce and industry generally, and in fact, practically all the unskilled labourers in Ghana come from the Northern tribes. <sup>(32)</sup> They tend to congregate in special districts or zongos of the larger southern towns. An interesting corollary of this migrant labour is the widespread knowledge of Twi in the north; the labourers learn a variant of Twi during their time in the south with the result that in the remotest villages Twi-speakers are met with. <sup>(33)</sup>

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(29) See Introduction.

(30) Wa, 14,000; Bawku, 13,000; Yendi, 11,000. (1960 Census).

(31) Cf. Rev. T. Colvin, "The majority hold to animist beliefs and practices. Some few have been wholly Islamised and follow strict Muslim practices". The Church Overseas. December 1961, p.93.

(32) Cf. R.B. Davison, Migrant Labour in the Gold Coast, Achimota 1954. The chief tribes are: Dagomba, Frafra (including the Tallensi and Gurense), Dagarti (correctly Dagaba), Kusasi, Mamprussi, Sissala (Isala), Wala, Lobi, Konkomba, Kassena and Gonja. Manoukian, Tribes of the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast, International African Institute, London, 1952.

(33) E.L. Rapp, Zur Ausbreitung einer westafrikanischen Stammesprache (Das Twi), Berlin, 1955, passim. E.Damman, Die Sprachlichen Verhältnisse in Ghana, (Sonderdruck aus Forschen und Wirken, Berlin, 1960, pp.358-359.)

As a result of the intensive missionary effort in the north since 1950, Presbyterian Christian congregations have been established in a number of areas. In spite of the fact that at Salaga the chief is Moslem a small Christian group has come into existence, at first composed mainly of southerners but now a number are local people. The ones most responsive to Gospel preaching are the young men: three were baptised at Salaga in 1951, and on their own initiative these three gathered a number of people together at the village of Kalandi four miles away, <sup>(34)</sup> while at Brumasi, 35 miles north-west of Yeji, the evangelist gained the confidence of a number of youths who were given Christian instruction and taught to read and write. <sup>(35)</sup> Seven baptisms took place at Brumasi in October 1955 and in December the baptism of the first twelve converts and four children occurred at Lanto. The pioneer missionary, Rev. Otto Rytz, reported in the same year that the first Primer in the Gonja language had been published as well as a small booklet for catechumen instruction containing the Ten Commandments, the Lord's Prayer, the Beatitudes and eight Christian hymns; a significant step forward. <sup>(36)</sup> The third outstation in the Gonja area was founded at Sabon Gida about twenty miles south-east of Salaga. For the first time in 1957 a number of school children were baptised, sixty from Kpenbe Primary and Middle Schools. The Presbyterian teachers from the south teaching in these schools prepared the children, and a number of the older ones were later confirmed. Today, after ten years of Christian preaching, there are fourteen congregations in the Salaga district with a total of three hundred and two members. <sup>(37)</sup>

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(34) J.B. 1952, p.9.

(35) Mr. C.I. Natomah, the first Gonja to be trained at the Abetifi Seminary.

(36) Presbyterian Church Reports (Salaga) 1955, p.93.  
J.B. 1956, pp.21-22; 1957, pp.21-22.

(37) J.B. 1959/60, p.22. The first so-called 'Missionary Anniversary' held at Sabon Gida in 1960 brought together 150 Christians from four different tribes, an example of the breaking down of tribal barriers.

With the approval by the Government of Religious Instruction as a subject of the curriculum in schools in the north, the Missions now have an opportunity of presenting the Christian Gospel to hundreds of children day by day. This right of entry into the schools and the fact that many of the teachers in northern schools are Christians from the south are new elements in the pioneer activity of Missions in the region. Hitherto the attitude of the Colonial Government was to restrict the establishment of 'mission' schools. Governor Guggisberg laid down the principle of control in 1926 when he set up the Department of Education for the Northern Territories: "The complete control of education in the Northern Territories has been firmly established, for the field has been virtually clear (sc. of Missions)..... Government is desirous of encouraging the Missions to form schools, but we shall adhere rigorously to the powers which we have taken of limiting the sphere of activities of each Mission so as to prevent missionary bodies competing in the same area....We are prepared to assist mission education generously in the Northern Territories, but only on the strict conditions that our rules are accepted not only in fact but in spirit". (38)

The result of this principle was to discourage Christian Missionary Societies from starting schools in the north. Some assistance was given to the schools founded by the White Fathers, but the attitude of the administration in conjunction with the reduction of expenditure on education between 1930 and 1940, meant that, in comparison with Ashanti and the Colony, Northern Ghana lagged far behind in its educational provision. Although Guggisberg wished to avoid the wasteful overlapping and the often unseemly competition among the Missions in the south, and desired to establish schools of a high standard, the relative lack of freedom accorded to the Missions in the Northern Territories was felt by them to be a hampering condition of work. Thus the Northern

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(38) Guggisberg, op.cit. par.223.



territories failed to benefit from the contribution of the Missions to education and, after the second World War, the relatively few Government and Local Authority schools, (in which little or no place was given to religious teaching, whether Christian or Moslem), emphasised this fact. In 1940, the request of the Scottish Mission for a clarification of the Government's educational policy in the north elicited the reply that "Government has adopted the principle that education should be regarded primarily as an integral part of the administrative machinery"; missions may be permitted to assist in educational provision but "the education provided by the missions .....must be of the type best suited to the needs of the people. In particular His Excellency does not propose to sanction the opening of a school in any locality unless it is considered to be necessary for the locality".<sup>(39)</sup> Only after the constitutional changes of 1949-50 did the Missions feel really free to evangelise and proselytise in the north of Ghana.

Ever since Tamale became the administrative centre of the region there has been a Christian congregation there composed of clerks, teachers and traders from Ashanti and the Colony. We noted the existence of this already in 1909 and it says much for the Christian convictions of the 'southerners' that they should assemble regularly for Christian worship. Although it was partly a tribal and social reaction to an alien environment, the Sunday services continued. Fewness of numbers led to the Presbyterians and Methodists joining together in worship and in establishing primary and middle schools for their own children. This work came under the care of the Joint Committee of the two Churches which shared in providing a catechist and teachers.<sup>(40)</sup> In 1951 the Presbyterian Church made a full-time

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(39) Letter from the Colonial Secretary in Scottish Mission Council Minutes, July, 1940, par.433.

(40) The Schools are assisted by the Government provided that they are open to local Dagbani children.

appointment of an African minister to take charge of the United Church and to begin evangelistic work among the local people. <sup>(41)</sup> The Rev. E.K.O. Asante gathered small groups for baptismal instruction in a number of surrounding villages, <sup>(42)</sup> and in the Tamale urban area children's services and Sunday schools were begun. In 1956 a small congregation at Daboya, north-west of Tamale, was established, while at Nyankpala new converts began the building of a simple chapel with funds provided by the Presbyterian Youth Association of Ghana. An important part of the missionaries' work at Tamale lies in visiting the schools and the training colleges. <sup>(43)</sup>

The Bolgatanga district shows a similar slow but steady development of Christian work among the Kassem in Paga and among the Frafra in the Bolgatanga area itself. The language problem, as in all the pioneer mission areas in the north, creates difficulty but special assistance has been given by Mr. V.N. Aboyer, the first Frafra scholar, who is working on a translation of Mark's Gospel and of the Church's Liturgy. <sup>(44)</sup> Apart from Bolgatanga itself, Presbyterian Christian congregations have been established in the

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(41) Presbyterian Church Reports, 1951, p.15. At the same time a catechist was stationed at Demongo in west Gonja on the inception of the Government's Agricultural Project there.

(42) Kpakpayere, Tali, Tserefoyili and Tampion.

(43) For example, in 1957, 16 men from the Training College, 11 from the Secondary School and 14 from the Middle School were baptised. References to the Presbyterian Mission at Tamale: Presbyterian Church Reports, 1952, p.9; 1955, p.92; 1956, pp.48-49.

(44) Mr. Aboyer came to Kumasi as a boy, stayed with Basel missionaries and entered the primary school. Later he completed Middle School at Begoro from 1909-1912 where he was baptised. He was at Yendi up to the closing of the Basel Mission station in 1916 and then became a civil servant. He was employed by Rattray as helper and interpreter. Cf. Rattray, Tribes of the Ashanti Hinterland, Vol.I, O.U.P. 1932, pp.130-228. This entire section of Rattray's book is a translation of Aboyer's account of his own people written in Frafra. Mr. Aboyer retired in 1948 and lives at Winkogo, five miles south of Bolgatanga. Presbyterian Church Reports (Bolgatanga) 1956, pp.49-50. J.B. 1957/8, p.21.

villages of Gowrie and Paga. At Gowrie a small chapel has been built by the voluntary labour of those undergoing baptismal instruction; at Paga in November 1958, thirteen adults and two children were baptised. (45) A notable event in 1960 was the completion of a large chapel at Bolgatanga which has become a centre of Presbyterian Church activities in the town. The main problem from the mission viewpoint lies in making deeper and more extensive contacts with the local Frafra people; the town itself is a heterogeneous growth made up of incomers from all parts of the country.

At Sandema, in the first year of the founding of the mission station, six converts were baptised as a result of the witness of Paul Atinga, a local man who was converted and baptised in 1955 during his stay at the Scottish Mission, Christiansborg. He became literate in English by attending evening classes and at Sandema his efforts in preaching the Gospel to his own people have been important and effective. (46) The Sandema district contains both Kassena and Bullsa peoples, and apart from Sandema itself the Gospel has taken root at Ketin and Naansa. In both places groups of people have been gathered for baptismal instruction, sometimes in entire family groups, thus bringing up sharply the problems of conversion to Christianity in a polygynous society. (47) At Naansa, after many visits by the missionary and the evangelist Atinga the Christian message was accepted quite abruptly by a large group and the process of religious and social change within the community has begun. Rev. R.H. Duncan tells the story of this decision: "One of the elders stood up in the midst of the people and asked the preacher, 'if we accept

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(45) J.B. 1957/58, p.21.

(46) The Rev. C.F. Paton comments: "This suggests that we may get from Church night schools in the south the northern evangelists whom we need for the Northern Ghana Mission as well as the lay leadership for winning northerners in the south". Annual Ghana Mission Report 1957, Scottish Mission Council, p.2.

The most effective agents of the Christian Gospel have been young men - literates and teachers - who have been converted by attendance at a Christian School or College. Life and Work, Nov.1961, pp.281-2.

(47) Ibid. pp.2-3.

your teaching and become Christians, does this mean that we have to give up our other gods?' The preacher replied that this was true since God was our Father and Creator. The elder then turned to the people, threw up his hands and said, 'You see what he is telling us to do', and walked off in anger. For a few minutes, we felt that this was going to be a real set-back to our work there.....but one young man asked, 'If we do not become Christians, but remain pagans, what will happen to us when we die?' The preacher's reply to this was that he did not know.....'but I do know what will happen if you become a Christian for God has promised eternal life to all who believe'. The preacher then borrowed a stick and drew two intersecting lines on the sandy ground: 'Here are two roads - one leads to God's presence and is clearly marked, the other is not marked and no one knows where it leads to - perhaps to God's place - perhaps not. Now, if you are at the crossroads, which road are you going to take?' The answer pleased the people and there was some laughter." As a result of this encounter, the young man, along with nine others, including the head man of the village, asked for baptismal instruction. (48)

At Garu, twenty miles south of Bawku, a missionary was located in 1958. There seems to have been little response to the Gospel at Garu itself but in the nearby village of Worikambo an elderly married couple have become the centre of a small Christian group and it is reported that there are over a hundred baptismal candidates. (49)

As a result of the evangelism of the last decade in Northern Ghana, Christian congregations of the Presbyterian Church have come into existence composed not only of the newly-literate young men who are looking for a changed

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(48) The Church Overseas (pub. Church of Scotland), Mar.1961, pp.19-20.

(49) J.B. 1958/9. p.20.

way of life but also of some of the older folk who have grown dissatisfied with their old beliefs. The situation shows a number of parallels with that which took place in the south: the Mission is at once the herald of a new faith and of a new way of life; although the Christian community is small, because it contains within it the literate élite, its influence is out of all proportion to its size; it is closely bound up with all the social changes which are rapidly taking place and it often becomes both the vanguard and vehicle of these changes. The Christians "themselves are the agents of change in society - the first volunteers in village self-help schemes, the leaders in mass education, the makers of a new society - and at the same time they are the preachers of the Gospel of Christ". (50) In such ways the Church once again assists and contributes to the break up of the traditional pattern of an African peasant community. Can it profit by its previous experience and without undermining more of the structure of traditional life and religion than is strictly necessary bring into being a Christian community which is seen to be not only that of a literate, élite minority but also to belong to the entire social group?

As a result of its educational and evangelical activities over the past forty years the Presbyterian Church has begun to be known throughout the entire country, and, together with the Roman Catholic and Methodist Churches, has tended to develop a nation-wide representation. The question of Mission 'spheres of influence' was first raised, as we have noted in Chapter VI, after the Ashanti wars when Ashanti became open to Christian missions, but no specific agreement between the Churches was ever reached. Between the Methodist and Presbyterian Churches since the second World War there has existed a Joint Committee which has sponsored united schools and the theological college at

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(50) The Church Overseas, Dec. 1961, p.93. (T. Colvin: The Agents of Change in Northern Ghana).

Kumasi, but the relative ease of communications nullified any attempts at delimiting spheres of work. As Christian members of the various Churches travelled to different parts of the country in the course of their employment they invariably established a congregation of their own denomination and tribe.

An example of this tendency may be seen in the development of the twin township and port of Sekondi-Takoradi, where a congregation of Presbyterian incomers sprang up. Small Presbyterian groups emerged also in the towns along the railway route at Obuasi, Dunkwa, Aboso and Tarkwa. Although the Synod set a minister apart to care for these scattered members in the west of the country it was not envisaged that the Church should open schools or proselytise in traditional Wesleyan and Roman Catholic territory. The Synod of 1939 agreed, however, to station additional catechists in the area, with the proviso that they were to care for Presbyterians and to admit non-Christians but were not to act as 'sheep-stealers'.<sup>(51)</sup> It seemed that children of Presbyterian parents found difficulty in obtaining admission into Methodist and other schools. Discussions with the Methodist Church resulted in no firm decision and as a result the Presbyterian Church began to open schools in the Western Province wherever it had a sizable congregation. Help with buildings was given from the proceeds of a 'Western Province Appeal Fund' and thus, like the Methodists in the east, the Presbyterians in the west, although in a minority, established themselves firmly.<sup>(52)</sup>

The preceding sketch of developments in the life and work of the Church after 1926 needs to be supplemented by reference to conditions in the 'older' districts, those areas where the Church has been established for upwards of

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(51) Synod Minutes, 1939, par.10(c), 'Reconsideration of the limited Presbyterian policy in the Western Province'.

(52) Presbyterian Church of Ghana, Report for 1956, pp.87-89. The largest congregations are at Sekondi and Obuasi. At Essikadu there is a large group of Presbyterians of the Ewe tribe. The most recent Presbyterian groups to emerge are at Enchi and Cape Coast.

fifty years. The reports from pastors and from Presbyteries pieced out by the writer's own observations enable us to gain a general picture of congregational life. The pattern of growth and the place of the Church in the community is the subject of the following chapter; at this point we note some of the pressing pastoral problems which face the congregations in the five Presbyteries which were formed in 1922: Ga-Adangme, Akwamu-Anum, Agona-Kotoku, Akim-Kwahu and Ashanti-Akim.

In the Accra urban area the steady increase in the size of the congregations corresponds largely to the overall growth of the population. (53) A feature of these churches is the polyglot and fluctuating nature of their membership, factors which make pastoral visitation and congregational life difficult. (54) Within the maelstrom of a modern African metropolis the church is the calling-point of members from up-country but often little more; during their stay in the city hundreds of young men and women lapse from active membership. Lay leadership in the Sunday schools and of the youth organisations is scarce and there is a constant struggle to maintain Christian moral standards. Added to these problems there is a proliferation of Christian sects and faith-healing churches, of lodges, fraternities and tribal groups which compete for allegiance. (55) At the same time, the urban congregations show a commendable faith and life and contribute widely to the

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( 53) <u>Accra urban congregations.</u>	<u>No. of communicant members.</u>			
	<u>1918</u>	<u>1929</u>	<u>1939</u>	<u>1958</u>
Christiansborg	330	540	710	2009
Accra	228	359	638	1398
Adabraka		75	304	364
Labadi	161	313	360	527
Teshie	71	131	385	974
	<u>790</u>	<u>1418</u>	<u>2397</u>	<u>5272</u>

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Population of Accra: 1921, 42,803; 1931, 60,726; 1948, 135,926; 1959, about 200,000.

(54) Cf. Report for Adabraka 1955 (Church Reports p.27ff).

(55) J.B. 1947. Cf. The Church in the Town (Christian Council, 1951), pp.23-29 (Busia); pp.47-53 (Acquah).

new social patterns which are emerging. The schools attached to each church and the Presbyterian Youth Guilds (founded in 1937) provide training grounds for young people; the Women's Classes cater for all the women, literate and illiterate, young and old, while the congregation themselves, ruled by the pastor and presbyters, form a centre of religious and social life and play an important role in the larger community.

Even in the city indigenous religion persists. The so-called Homowo is the great yearly festival of the Ga people when there is feasting and merrymaking; libations are poured and food is offered to the ancestors as a means of ensuring protection and blessing for the family in the year to come. A feature of the festival is that family disputes are expected to be settled at this time, and on this account alone Christians find it almost impossible not to take part. (56)

A noteworthy example of the persistence of indigenous religion is the worship of the tutelary deity, La Kpa, at Labadi. Although during the last thirty years Labadi has ceased to be a rural town and has been drawn into the Accra municipality the worship of the god has been maintained. (57)

In 1928, the veteran minister, Rev. C.F. Fleischer, drew attention to the hold which La Kpa had upon the people and in 1953 we find the pastor asking for the prayers of all Ga-Adangme Christians that the power of the deity may be crushed. (58)

The Accra urban area is also the location of many independent African Churches which exhibit revivalistic characteristics, and which stress faith-healing, 'prophecy' and 'speaking with tongues'. Some were founded by 'leaders' who were former members of the historic mission Churches and others

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- (56) Field, M.J. Religion and Medicine of the Ga People, pp.46-65.  
(57) Mante, R.F. A Centenary History of Labadi Presbyterian Church, 1853 - 1953, Presbyterian Church Press, Accra, 1957, passim.  
(58) *ibid.* pp.84-5. It is said that La Kpa or Nyomobi Tete La Kpa ('the first son of God') could assume human form and apportion rewards and punishments during the Homowo season.



were introduced by migrants from Nigeria. All these groups show a special interest in healing by faith and prayer, and a readiness to introduce hand-clapping, dancing and drumming, ecstatic speaking and techniques of exorcism into their worship. Acquah writes: "With only three exceptions, all the churches are, or aspire to be, healing churches.....Other less important factors have been the desire to clap and dance during services, to practise polygamy, or to introduce non-Christian practices into the church which may have their roots in Islam, other world religions or indigenous cults". (60)

For the most part, however, monogamy is insisted upon, the main interest being in faith healing and in a more emotional expression of worship. The Biblical accounts of the healing miracles have a special appeal. "It is believed and taught that, through prayer, fasting and devout living, a Christian may receive sufficient faith and power to cure the sick. All adherents are enjoined not to visit hospitals, nor to consult private doctors or nurses, but to rely upon the spirit-healing practices of their church". (61) Only one or two of these sects have permanent buildings and meet in private houses or in temporary shelters in the open air. The existence of these churches poses a special problem; one which is regularly raised at Presbytery and Synod Meetings, and one to which we turn in the last chapter. (62)

A few miles outside Accra are the villages and small towns of the Accra-Adangme plain covered with thicket-bush and broken only by the isolated Shai hills. The once arduous and tedious journey by foot, hammock and bicycle is now made in an hour along swift roads, and the communities of the plain are being inexorably dominated by the capital. The young people

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(59) Acquah, Ione, Accra Survey, 1958, pp.148-150.

(60) Acquah, *ibid.* p.148.

(61) Acquah, *ibid.* p.150.

(62) Presbyterian Church Reports, 1955, p.30; 1956, p.42; 1959, p.56.

move into the city to find employment and for this reason the Christian congregations on the plain show few signs of growth. Abokobi, the centenary of whose Presbyterian Church was celebrated in 1953, still retains its character as a Christian village, but Dodowa on the main highway has taken its place as the largest congregation in the Ga rural area. (63) The outstations are isolated and over the years reference is made to the same problems: a semi-migrant population, many of whom are away for long periods on cocoa farms in Akim and Ashanti, the young people flocking to Accra, lack of lay leadership and the sheer physical difficulties of caring for the scattered Christian communities on the plain.

The main Adangme and Krobo congregations show numerical growth and evidence of continued evangelism in the districts. (64) Most of the village congregations are small groups in charge of a teacher or an evangelist, able to be visited by the district pastor at infrequent intervals. There was a move forward in the 30's to evangelise the coastal districts from Adafe to Ningo but the lack of personnel hampered the scheme. The period after the second World War in the Ada area was more encouraging, a tribute to the patient work of such pastors as the Rev. C. Hesse, J. Teye and others. But typical

(63) Communicant members:

	1930	1935	1940	1957
Abokobi	198	372	380	433
Dodowa	106	340	308	635

(64)

Year	Minister's Stations	Village Congregations	Communicants
1918	Ada	5	294
	Odumase	10	659
1938	Ada	5	256
	Odumase	5	599
	Sra	3	463
	Bisa	3	324
1958	Ada	16	592
	Odumase	11	1639
	Sra	12	949
	Bisa	15	1098
	Mape	9	348

are the following points from the 1956 Report: an over-dependence upon lay leadership and a crying need for more evangelists and catechists in the villages to care for the converts. (65)

While the Presbyterian Church in the Krobo area has become firmly established the same major problem which restricted the wider influence of the Mission has persisted, namely the welcome given by the people to the Church for its schools combined with a reluctance to accept the claims of the Gospel. (66)

In spite of this the schools have had, and continue to have, a great influence. "Unknowingly, the life of the non-Christian community is reflecting the light of the Gospel", wrote the Odumase pastor in 1926. "One who knew Krobo life fifty years ago would marvel were he to compare present-day conditions with those at that time; many customs entertained then are no longer observed.....Give us accommodation in the schools and we shall harvest astoundingly for the Lord, for the child in the school links the heathen parent and the teacher". (67)

The agricultural habits of the Krobo people involve much 'wandering out' to food plantations for long periods and make pastoral care almost impossible. "A group of people buy a large parcel of land, usually adjoining a stream, and divide it up among the individuals in a series of narrow strips, each with a frontage along the stream.....thus giving rise to a series of long, narrow settlements". (68) Some of these 'huza' villages, as they are termed, extend for as long as three miles. Although the people return to their towns for the Christian festivals of Christmas and Easter and services are crowded, there are constant complaints from pastors

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(65) Presbyterian Church Reports, 1956, p.66. 1958, p.87.

(66) Church Reports, 1924, pp.13-15.

(67) *ibid*, 1926, p.16.

(68) Boateng, E.A. A Geography of Ghana, Cambridge University Press, 1959, p.160. Cf. Field, M.J. 'The Agricultural System of the Manya Krobo of the Gold Coast' in Africa, Vol. 14, 1943.

of fluctuating church attendance and of lapses from active membership.

Odumase Krobo, three miles east of Somanya, has continued as the most important centre of Presbyterian Church activity in the area; it is the seat of the Konor or State Chief who has always displayed a special interest in the Church. (69) Here there is a flourishing congregation, primary and middle schools, a training college for women and a secondary school for boys. After 1930 the town of Bisa developed rapidly as the leading food-growing centre of the province and became the hub of much evangelistic activity. (70) Most of the scattered village groups in the area are in the charge of presbyters and young teachers and there is clearly a need for a new type of itinerant ministry. The former dominant position of the Church in the Manya Krobo area is now affected by the increasing efforts of Roman Catholic missions and by the presence of many African Christian sects.

The congregations at Akwapim, the historic locality of the Basel Mission, are a noteworthy example of the problems of the assimilation of the Gospel to African life. It is here that the Church is most strong: one half of all the children of school age are in Presbyterian Church schools and there are few adults who have no sort of attachment to the Church either by baptism or by schooling. (71) This is particularly evident at Akropong which, with a total population of five thousand six hundred at the 1960 census, counted a total of four thousand and fifty baptised Christians. The influence of the Church is wide and deep and there is scarcely an element in the total life of the community which the Church does not affect. Yet this dominant position is more superficial than real: attendances (apart from

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(69) See Chapter X below.

(70) Presbyterian Church Reports, 1939, pp.25-26; 1940, p.16.

(71) In 1959 in the Koforidua Education District there were 53,767 children in approved Primary and Middle schools of whom 27,197 were in schools managed by the Presbyterian Church. Education Department Statistics, Accra, 1959, pp.11-12.

festivals and funerals) at services in the Akwapim Presbyterian churches have seriously declined; prayer meetings attract only a few older members; and although over one thousand children are confirmed annually within the Presbytery the nett increase in communicant membership has averaged only seventy-five per annum over the last twenty years. (72) Indigenous religious beliefs and their related social customs are still strong; Christians live contentedly side by side linked with one another by ties of birth and marriage; the introduction of the Christian religion has weakened the old beliefs but has by no means displaced them and in turn Christian practices have been affected. (73)

Constant notes in all the pastors' reports of the past forty years are lukewarmness on the part of Christians and the persistence and power of local religion, and reference is made again and again to the sad necessity of excluding Church members who have reverted to indigenous practices in the name of 'custom'. "Although there are many good Christians in the Church, lukewarmness, strong belief in and fear of fetishism, witchcraft and necromancy, prevailed amongst many members", (Larteh); "many of the members do not abstain from heathen customs such as funeral rites, black Christmas (sic) and other country festivals. They do not consider it to be any bad act but simply call it 'custom' ", (Mampong); "...there is still much belief in heathenism and superstition and the shaky members often mingle themselves with such

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(72) This problem affects the whole Church, partly on account of lapses from membership, exclusions, and a failure to retain the youth. A survey of 3078 confirmed Middle school boys during the period Jan.1923 to Dec.1932 showed that one year after confirmation only 40% were regular communicants. At the end of the period the figure had dropped to 14%. A similar survey of 3938 boys for the years 1934-43 gave a better result; at the end of the period 45% were still in communicant membership. Synod Minutes, 1933, par.11, and 1944, par. 13 (c).

(73) See Chapter XI below.

practices and bring excuses that these are native customs", (Tutu). (74)

From Anum are reports of the growth of witchcraft and of a renewed interest in the local abosom, (75) and from Larteh, concern about the revival in the popularity of the great 'fetish' Akonmedi. (76)

In Akwapim too the radical impact of the 'cocoa revolution' upon congregational life is most clearly seen. It has been noted how, in the years preceding the first World War, the missionaries both welcomed the improved standards of living which cocoa brought and deplored the consequent laxity and concern with material prosperity. The most persistent problem, however, has been that of the seasonal dispersion of the people to their cocoa plantations. Half a century ago the missionaries called attention to the break up of the Christian groups: "Cocoa is spoiling everything....the Akwapim stations present a disagreeable picture, most of the people are away on their cocoa farms....they attend church infrequently and are most liable to influence from pagans". (77) "So much time is spent away on plantations that the Christian community life suffers and many lapse, including second and third-generation Christians". (78) Although some of these temporary dwellings at or near the cocoa farms developed into permanent villages where a catechist could be stationed, cocoa farming broke up the former settled way of life of the people. This 'dispersion' is referred to constantly in pastors' reports up to the present time. From Anum in 1932 is a typical comment: ".....the communicants are 273 in number, and nearly half of these have migrated to cocoa-growing areas, chiefly in Akim, and the Church dues of many have not been paid for some years". Many ministers and catechists spend much of

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(74) Presbyterian Church Reports, 1922, p.9; 1931, p.16; 1957, pp.60-61.

(75) *ibid.* 1932, p.19.

(76) *ibid.* 1958, (Larteh). See Chapter XI below.

(77) J.B. 1907.

(78) J.B. 1910.

their time in visiting their scattered flocks and it is usual that only at Christmas, Easter and at the Odwira festival that the greater part of the congregation assembles.

A corollary of the 'dispersion' is the habit of leaving the children to be cared for by grandparents or by elderly relatives. A survey of schoolchildren of Akropong and Abiriw in 1959 showed that 88% of the children lived with guardians and relatives, a situation which makes for emotional conflicts, feelings of insecurity and indiscipline among the young.<sup>(79)</sup> Not a little of the present concern with marital instability and the waywardness of young people may be attributed to the social changes brought by the cocoa industry.

It must not be forgotten, however, that much of this cocoa money was translated into church and school buildings and houses for pastors, catechists and teachers. In almost every town and village in Akwapim the largest building is the Presbyterian Church, often erected at a cost of many thousands of pounds. Cocoa made the financial independence of the Church possible, and, through the Central Fund, the richer areas have made contribution to the growth of the Church in poorer districts.

Apart from the existence of a few Methodist congregations Akwapim is still largely loyal to the Presbyterian Church. The exception is at Larteh which must be unique in Africa in its religious provision. In a town of six thousand people there are congregations of the Presbyterian, Methodist, Anglican, Roman Catholic, Salvation Army, Orthodox Catholic, Seventh Day Adventist, Apostolic, Faith Tabernacle, Musama Disco Christo and African Universal Churches, as well as indigenous religious groups and one of the most flourishing abosom shrines (Nana Akonmedi) in southern Ghana. Thus it is

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(79) Abiabile, S.K. *ibid.* p.40.

not surprising that the Larteh Presbyterian congregation, for so long the largest in the country, should have declined. "While there have been many conversions in the villages within recent years, there have been indeed only a few conversions of heathens in our Church in Larteh itself, owing to the fact that as many as ten denominations are established in the town.....Besides these, there have been a number of itinerant preachers of both sexes who claim to have seen visions". (80)

During the last decade 'Home Missions' have been a feature of the Akwapim congregations with some success at Akropong and Aburi. Refresher courses have been held for presbyters, for untrained teachers and evangelists in charge of village groups, and retreats for pastors and catechists have been organised in attempts to revive enthusiasm and to win back the lapsed. While there is a large number of steady church-going folk and many evidences of a vital Christian faith there is also the beginning of a serious concern on the part of the leaders of the Church that the Church's authority and influence in the wider community is losing ground and a growing awareness of the unsolved problem of clothing the Gospel in African dress. That the Church is in a relatively static position is indicated by the statistics for the Presbytery which show, in spite of the phenomenal rise in the number of children in church schools, very little increase in the communicant membership in the period between 1958 and 1958. (81)

A similar state of affairs is met with in Akim-Kwahu: a steady growth

(80) Ansah, J.K. *ibid.* p.59.

(81) The Akwapim-Volta Presbytery.

Town	Communicant membership		
	1918	1938	1958
Akropong	501	880	1762
Larteh	883	1251	1040
Adukrom	560	958	811
Aburi	297	246	541
Mampong	501	739	642
Mamfe	231	337	716
Koforidua	85	396	561
Anum	462	603	200
Boso	103	136	570
Nsawam	393	867	732
Kraboa Coaltar	-	230	418
Suhum	13	477	708
Adawso	410	575	614
	4992	8560	10068.



in the twenty years after 1918 but a much reduced rate of progress thereafter. There is a similarity in tone and content in practically all the reports: that in spite of the long period of Christian witness it now seems almost impossible for the Church to extend, or even to maintain, its position in society. The chief and people of Akim Abuakwa have always been aware of the value and power of the Christian Gospel but at the same time they have held that the 'old' religion had features of permanent worth which could find a place in the Christian scheme. (82) Throughout its history the Presbyterian Church has enjoyed a close relationship with the Paramount Stool arising from the facts that the Basel Mission was the first to proclaim the Gospel in the territory and that both Nana Ofori Atta I and Nana Ofori Atta II were closely connected with the Church. The former was the son of the Mission evangelist Nana Yao Boakye; the latter had been a presbyter of the Kibi congregation before his accession to the stool.

The congregation at Kibi has thus an honoured place in the community yet it has failed to grow beyond a certain point. Writing in 1935, the pastor remarks: "There were few conversions and adult baptisms....of the forty-six infants that were baptised many are the children of backsliders who cannot stand before the baptismal table, but only asked some friends and relatives to stand in their places...", and he asks: "What is the reason why this old field in Akim Abuakwa could not yield such crops as might be desired....? The principal cause is the lack of high spiritual life in our congregations". (83) While it may be agreed that the spiritual life of some Christians may leave much to be desired there is evidence to show that for many both inside and outside the Christian fold the Gospel is expressed in terms which seem alien to African life.

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(82) Cf. Chapter X.

(83) Church Reports 1935, (Kibi).

The traditional missionary attitude to African religion and custom tends to be reflected among the older pastors and the traditional sanctions of exclusion are applied, only to swell the ever-growing number of the lapsed. "Some heathen boys and girls....are asking for baptism. But I regret that the older men and women whose minds have been poisoned with heathenism, superstition, witchcraft and worldliness cannot break through and embrace the Christian faith.....The ball and other dancing, funeral rites, Odwira and Ohum festivals which were formerly not much cared for are now enjoyed by some of our Christians". (84)

This comment in 1923 sets the tone of reports up to the present day and although the communicant membership at Kibi topped the thousand mark in 1938 its numbers have remained static for the past twenty years, a characteristic of many of the 'older' congregations. (85)

The story is similar at Begoro. Even allowing for the fact that some village congregations have been transferred to other centres, the Begoro congregation has not grown as one would have expected although for over half a century it was the only Christian church in the district. In a year which showed an increase in the number of communicants of eighty-six, the minister

(84) *ibid.* 1923 (Kibi).

(85) The Akim-Kwahu Presbytery

<u>Town</u>	<u>Communicant membership</u>		
	<u>1918</u>	<u>1938</u>	<u>1958</u>
Otumi	242	560	419
Asamankese	303	555	740
Kibi	662	1007	988
Kukurantumi	128	790	1174
Begoro	616	937	608
Abomosu	52	628	409
Kwabeng	356	617	804
Obomeng	18	646	-(ceased to be a district station)
Nkwatia	108	396	774
Abetifi	779	886	822
Asiakwa	138	156	879
Akim Akropong	30	60	557
Nkawkaw	-	46	615
Mpraeso	20	89	705
Asuom	14	107	394
	<u>3486</u>	<u>7480</u>	<u>9888</u>

<u>Year</u>	<u>Congregation.</u>	<u>Communicants.</u>	<u>Baptised Adherents.</u>	<u>Christian Community.</u>
1938	69	7480	10677	17699
1959	139	10130	38693	48823

deplores the 'gloomy and discouraging' prospect: "Paganism of the worst nature often threatened individuals, even reliable personalities.....Belief in sorcery and superstition.....are prevalent". (86)

Four years later, an analysis of membership showed that about 70% were women, a situation attributed to polygyny: "Many men of the heathen population would embrace Christianity, but they find it very difficult to leave their wives. It is to be pitied that this enemy got hold of some of our members whom we had to exclude from church membership". (87)

Additions of new converts were offset by exclusions: for example, in 1928, there were ninety-five adult baptisms but an increase in the communicant roll of only fifty-three, and in the following year, thirty-three adults were baptised yet the membership decreased by twenty-five. (88)

The greater number of exclusions are for adultery, bigamy, failure to pay Church dues, absence from Holy Communion for more than a year, and many who have left the district semi-permanently on food and cocoa farms are struck off the roll.

As in other areas the increase in size of the total Christian Community is explained by the rise in the number of children attending Church schools. Within the Presbytery in 1938 there were 9413 baptised school children; twenty years later the total had reached 34,352. By comparison in the same period, the number of baptised adult adherents (non-communicants) increased from 1264 to 4341; but these are the ones who retain some sort of connection with the Church by attending services; the great majority of baptised school children seem to be lost to the Church.

The historic Presbyterian congregations in Agona and Western Akim are those of Nsaba, Akim Swedru, Kwanyako, Akokoaso and Oda with their attached

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(86) Church Reports, 1922 (Begoro).

(87) *ibid.* 1926 (Begoro).

(88) *ibid.* 1928 (Begoro).

village groups. With the spread of the Church to the west of the country, described earlier in the chapter, this Presbytery is now the largest geographically but the smallest numerically. (89) The momentum of evangelistic activity of the Basel Mission between the years 1890 and 1917 was not maintained: at the time of the expulsion of the missionaries few of the congregations had grown beyond the 'mission' stage and, as the figures show, advance since that time has been slow and painstaking. Apart from the 'orphaning' of the converts at a critical period and the inability of the Scottish Mission to supply district missionary personnel, in this area the Methodist and Roman Catholic Churches have long been active and in the last thirty years the region has been the hunting-ground of religious sects, of African faith-healing Churches, and of Ahmadiyya Islam.

Mention of these difficulties recurs repeatedly in the annual reports of district pastors: denominational competition, the aggressive propaganda of Moslem missionaries in Gomoa, much lapsing from active membership, the continued pressure of indigenous religion, a lack of personnel to supervise

(89) The Agona-Western Akim Presbytery.

<u>Town</u>	<u>Communicant membership.</u>		
	<u>1919</u>	<u>1939</u>	<u>1959</u>
Nsaba	526	512	896
Akim Swedru	356	638	785
Kwanyako	486	612	754
Oda	17	803	935
Sekondi	+	200	418
Besease	42	62	526
Akokoaso	515	60	426
Nyakrom	119	132	398
	<u>2061</u>	<u>3019</u>	<u>5138</u>

} adjustment  
of village  
congregation

<u>Year</u>	<u>Congregations</u>	<u>Communicants</u>	<u>Baptised Adherents.</u>	<u>Christian community.</u>
1939	58	3019	4920	7939
1959	88	5138	16166	21304

the congregations, and the rise of African healing Churches and medicine-cults. "It is regrettable to have to express with deepest anguish and distress the open patronage of idolatry now prevailing here, commonly known as Tigare. This has prevented the faith of five Christian young men.....Some members also.....have recently abandoned their faith and have joined the Musama Disco Christo Church". (90) Writing in 1940, the veteran minister, Rev. S.E. Obeng, reviews his three years in the Nsaba district: "When I make a retrospective survey.....I can see no appreciable change for the better..... the communicant roll decreased year by year through the removal of the names of those who showed no desire to follow the leadership of Christ.....Neither the adult baptisms, which were negligible, nor the number re-admitted, could make up for the decrease.....Immorality was rampant, especially among the young folk on all the stations, and the reason was not far to seek. Home supervision was very lax, while filial religion taught by parents was very rare". (91)

Yet this and similar accounts present only one side of the picture. On the other side there are the patient endeavours of pastors, catechists, teachers and elders evident in the slow upbuilding of the congregations, the erection of schools and churches testifying to the zeal of local Christian communities, and the establishment of women's classes and youth groups.

To conclude this survey, we attempt to recount briefly the development of the work of the Presbyterian Church in Ashanti. The Gyamang mission in the north-west has already been mentioned; in the south and centre of this large area the main problem was to consolidate and extend the existing work in spite of a shortage of personnel. While the Scottish Mission assisted in the educational field, the main burden of evangelism and pastoral care

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(90) Church Reports, 1937, (Kwanyako).

(91) *ibid.* 1940 (Nsaba district).

rested upon African shoulders. Led by the Rev. C.E. Martinson, for many years pastor at Kumasi, African ministers, catechists, teachers and evangelists (for the most part non-Ashantis) built up the small Christian communities. Writing in 1926, on his return to the Gold Coast, Rev. I. Bellon commented: "The field that has been allotted to our care....has in the past years been very fruitful. Mr. Jost again and again expressed his admiration in regard to the .....admirable work done during the time of our absence by Mr. Martinson and his whole staff....". (92)

Kumasi remained the centre of operations but by 1923 it was possible to organise the mission from the four towns, Bompata, Kokofu, Mampong and Berekum. The experience of Ramseyer and his fellow-pioneers of the particular strength of local religion and social custom in Ashanti and of the general reluctance of the people to commit themselves to Christianity, continued to be evident. "The worst state of the heathen is that they are neither against the Gospel nor are they for it". (93) From a secure place within his own social system the Ashanti looked askance at a religion which in claiming his allegiance asked him to break free from or at least to sit loose to the ties which bound him to his kith and kin, to his chief and to his forefathers. One thing he accepted without reserve, the schooling which the Mission offered, so much so that 'sukuu Broni' (lit. 'school-European') became the Ashanti synonym for 'missionary'. Such was the hunger for education that the Mission was welcomed everywhere although it was clear that in most cases the chiefs did not relish the prospect of religious change. A typical comment is: "The chief who called us there thought that the agent (sc. the catechist) came only for school purposes, but when he found out that

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(92) *ibid.* 1926 (Ashanti), p.8.

(93) *ibid.* 1924 p.39 (Berekum).

he aims at the conversion of the people he became alarmed and is strongly against him". (94) On this account, the Government schools which required no religious change were preferred by the Ashantis, and although the number of mission schools grew apace there was no corresponding increase in the total of adult converts.

Adult conversions were never many at one time and within the Christian fold itself there was much resentment at the exercise of Church discipline; from the beginning indigenous religion and social solidarity were forces to be reckoned with and attempts to isolate the Christian group from the larger community were less successful than in the south. Other factors which limited the appeal of the Mission were the competition from other Churches, in particular from the Wesleyans and the Roman Catholics, and the reduced total impact compared with the south where Basel commercial activity and artisan training had reinforced the presentation of the Gospel.

All the same, the Christian groups in Ashanti slowly took root and became more and more Ashanti in composition. The Kumasi pastor could write in 1925: "The main difficulties today arise not from our failures but our success. What preys on our mind is the increase of appeals from far and near, the number of converts, and their growth in spiritual life..." (95) The grave shortage of personnel continued to hamper the Mission's efforts, and although the return of the Basel missionaries in 1927 gave much needed help and guidance the constant cry was for more assistance; there were far more opportunities than there were preachers and teachers. The extent of the achievement of the Mission, however, may be realised from the fact that in 1918 the total number of converts at Kumasi and in sixteen outlying congregations was just over eight hundred whereas in 1930 there were eight

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(94) *ibid.* 1926, p.42 (Sefwi Anhweso).

(95) *ibid.* 1925, p.35.

ministerial districts, fifty eight congregations, three thousand five hundred communicants and four thousand four hundred baptised children and adult adherents. (96)

In July 1930, the Synod of the Church met at Kumasi, the first time in Ashanti, an event which was a source of great encouragement to the delegates. Yet significantly, in spite of the fact that much patient evangelism was bearing fruit, great concern was expressed about the growing number of lapsed members arising from the reluctance of Christians to break with ancestral custom. (97) As the chiefs realised the implications of Christian allegiance many put pressure on Christians to show their loyalty to the stool mainly in the matters of swearing the tribal oath and of observing sacred days on which no work should be done. Even in 1951 the attempt by certain chiefs to force the observance of certain usages upon Christians impelled the Ashanti Presbytery to appeal to the Chief Commissioner who ruled that Christians should not be compelled to keep special days or to perform the 'Bra Goru' female puberty rites. (98) Although the

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(96) The Ashanti Presbytery, 1918 to 1959.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Minister's stations.</u>	<u>Village congregations.</u>	<u>Communicants.</u>	<u>Baptised adherents.</u>
1918	1	16	822	not known
1920	4	37	1243	1110
1930	8	58	3498	4414
1940	10	63	3521	5054
1957	18	215	8912	3668
1959	18	222	9055	3656

(97) Synod Minutes, 1930, pars. 11-15.

(98) Church Reports, 1951, p.34. The sacred days are mainly those of the Adaye ceremonies and other fixed festivals.



pronouncement came as a relief to the Church it was an indication of the acuteness of the problem of the relationship of Christians to the social order and to their natural rulers.

The decade 1930 - 1940 seems to have been especially unrewarding; there are innumerable references in pastors' reports to the effects of the disastrous fall in the price of cocoa. As a result, church dues were unpaid, the number of agents was reduced and building schemes were held up. Congregational life suffered; attendance at the Lord's Supper declined largely because church dues were paid during the previous week and many who could not pay absented themselves; some others attached themselves to sects which made little or no financial demand. It is a period when the resurgence of new abosom shrines becomes prominent but in spite of setbacks the painstaking missionary and pastoral endeavour bore fruit in the ensuing years.

Between 1940 and 1955 African ministers were stationed at Sempa, Bechem, Bekwai, Japekrom, Odumase-Konongo, Obuasi, Sunyani and Jamasi, so that there was scarcely a town of any size in Ashanti where there was not a congregation of the Presbyterian Church. June 1946 saw the celebration of the jubilee of the beginning of the work of the Basel Mission in Ashanti, fifty years after the Ramseys entered Kumasi. It was an imposing gathering of veteran ministers, missionaries, evangelists, catechists and teachers who had pioneered in difficult days. (99)

The appraisal in this chapter of the life and work of the Church after the return of the Basel missionaries in 1926 may fittingly conclude with the country's attainment of political independence in 1957. The establishment

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(99) Among the Africans may be mentioned Revs. H.J. Keteku, C.E. Opoku, N.T. Clerk, P.E. Addo, B.M. Seku, C.W. Agadzi, M.A. Adade; Messrs. A.O. Mate, A. Karikari and A. Labi. A full list of the pioneers in Ashanti is given in Keteku, H.J. *Asante Presbiteri Asafo Asempatrew Adwuma Ho Asem*, London, 1953, pp.70-84.

and growth of the Church over a period of a century and a quarter are a vindication of the faith of Andreas Riis and of those who followed him. Today, throughout the country, there are 686 congregations of the Church shepherded by seventy-nine ministers, two hundred and forty-eight catechists and sixty-five evangelists. Regular communicant members number forty-five thousand; children in the Church's schools total over one hundred and twenty-two thousand; and there are above fifteen thousand baptised adult adherents; a total Christian community of one hundred and eighty-two thousand. <sup>(100)</sup> In the educational sphere the Church has over three thousand seven hundred teachers staffing five hundred and seventy Primary and one hundred and forty-one Middle schools, six training colleges and two secondary schools.

It is a Church which looks back with pride upon the devotion and sacrifice of Basel and Scottish missionaries, upon the courage of West Indians, and upon the faith and patience of African pastors, catechists, evangelists and teachers; a Church worshipping in the tongues of the people; a Church which has contributed much to the life of the country and which for over a hundred years has been an integral part of the development of modern Ghana.

From time to time in this study it has been suggested that the fundamental problem now facing the Church is that of extending its position in the community, an issue which is bound up with its presentation of the Gospel to an African society in transition. The ensuing chapters attempt to examine this problem in some detail: first, to review the contemporary position of the Church within the larger non-Christian community, and secondly, to consider the religious issues of adaptation and assimilation.

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(100) Church Report, 1959, pp.10-11. In this year there were 78 European missionaries and fraternal workers assisting the Church: 31 in higher educational institutions, 29 in medical services, 7 district missionaries, 5 at the Book Depots and the Printing Press, 3 in administration, 2 in women's work and one architect and builder. See Appendix.

## Chapter X.

### The Church and the Community, 1926 - 1960.

The Christian Church a permanent part of the community; a minority Church; the pattern of growth of the Presbyterian Church; types of congregation; the influence of the Church out of all proportion to its numbers; Christians the most literate group; the Book Depot; Women's Classes; development of Ghana languages; the Christian Council; yet the strength of indigenous religion and custom exist almost unimpaired; the problem of integration of the Church within Akan society remains unsolved; the relationship of the Church and the natural rulers; the Akim Abuakwa Memoranda; the Church's reply; discussions on the nature of ancestor-veneration and libation; has the Church taken this problem seriously enough?; the factor of political change; the place of the Church in a changing society.

## CHAPTER X.

### The Church and the Community.

We have described in the previous chapter the ways in which during the years after 1926 the Presbyterian Church spread throughout the country. This growth may be attributed not only to the astonishing development of popular education, in which the Presbyterian Church along with the other Churches played a leading part, but also to the unceasing evangelistic efforts of pastors, catechists, evangelists and missionaries. The three other large Churches in Ghana, Methodist, Roman Catholic and Anglican, each underwent a not dissimilar territorial and numerical expansion with the result that the Christian religion has become a permanent feature of Ghana society. There is hardly a settlement of any size south of the Volta river which does not possess a Christian church and a school. In the north of the country this is not the case but it is beginning to become so. Christians are, however, still very much a minority group amounting to about one in eight of the total population, although in certain areas in the south where the Churches have been long established the proportion of Christians to non-Christians is considerably greater. (1)

The pattern of growth in the Presbyterian Church was simple: in 1918 the Church was divided into districts around eleven central stations, Christiansborg, Abokobi, Odumase, Aburi, Akropong, Anum, Kibi, Begoro, Nsaba,

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(1) The total Christian community (communicants, baptised children and adult adherents) of the Presbyterian Church of Ghana in 1959 was 182,000, and of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church in the Volta Region about 60,000. The Methodist Church numbers about 200,000, the Anglican Church 50,000 and the Roman Catholic Church 250,000. With the addition of Christians of other groups there are probably 800,000 baptised Christians in a population of 6½ millions. Children enrolled in 1959 in Primary and Middle schools of these four Churches were: Roman Catholic 122,470, Presbyterian 112,793, Methodist 110,862 and Anglican 25,913. Out of a total national enrolment in schools of 605,274, 400,000 were in schools managed by Christian Churches. Education Statistics 1959, Series I, No.6. p.27. Govt. Statistician, Accra.

Abetifi and Kumasi each with its subsidiary congregations. From these existing congregations the surrounding villages were evangelised, a school was established and placed in the charge of a catechist-teacher, a procedure which resulted in the eventual emergence of another Christian group. Often the building of a new road led to the opening up of a populous rural area and inevitably the Church followed. The 'migration' of Akwapim cocoa farmers in search of more fertile lands in Akim and Ashanti took Christians into the remotest forest areas; the growth of new commercial towns was inevitably accompanied by the formation of congregations of 'incomers' particularly in the towns along the railway routes through the cocoa and gold-mining centres.<sup>(2)</sup> When the new church group had reached a certain size a minister was placed in charge of a new 'district', a process constantly repeated until in 1959 there were seventy four such districts and a total of 686 congregations.<sup>(3)</sup>

Today these local Christian communities fall broadly into three main categories: those of the large urban centres, those in the rural areas which have been in contact with Christianity for a century or more, and those in the more recently evangelised districts.

In the greater commercial towns the Christian groups are large and the churches are well-attended; they exist within wider communities which exhibit the special features of modern African urban life: extremes of poverty and wealth, housing congestion, slum districts, the emphasis on money, tribal mixing, new types of social organisation, the increase in organised crime, the partial breakdown of formal tribal sanctions, marital instability, lax sex morality and prostitution, together with the pursuit of the new pleasures

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(2) In these 'railway line' commercial towns such as Nsawam, Koforidua, Nkawkaw, Konongo, Tarkwa and Obuasi the four main Churches are usually represented. Commercial activity has blurred the lines of geographical division between the Missions.

(3) The Church adopted the classic system of organisation by Presbyteries and Synods in 1922.

of cinema, dance-hall, night-club, race-track and the like. (4) Such towns in Ghana are Accra, Sekondi-Takoradi, Kumasi, Cape Coast, Tamale, Obuasi and Koforidua.

In rural districts where the Church has been established for fifty to a hundred years, the local congregations play a much greater part in the total life of the community but they have tended to become 'institutionalised' and static in membership; they have been thoroughly accepted by the non-Christian body and a tolerant modus vivendi between the two groups has been established. This situation is most marked in Akwapim and Akim.

The third main type of congregation lies in rural areas more recently evangelised, for example in north-west Ashanti, in Northern Ghana and on the Afrem plain. Usually in these cases the Christians are few in number but play once again their historic role as initiators and chief agents in the process of social change.

In seeking to estimate the part played by the Church in contemporary Ghana life three generalisations may be made: first, the Church exerts an influence out of all proportion to its size; secondly, the strength of indigenous religion and social custom exists almost unimpaired; and thirdly, the problem of the integration of the Church into African society remains unsolved.

The influence of the Church is bound up with its provision of education; for over a century ninety per cent of the educational facilities in the country were provided by the Missions, a fact which has meant that almost every African occupying a leading position in society has had some

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(4) The Church in the Town, Christian Council Conference Report, 1951, pp.18-30 and 47-53.

Acquah, Ioné, Accra Survey, London, 1958, passim.

Southall, A. ed. Social Change in Modern Africa, Oxford, 1961, pp.287-304.

Urbanism in West Africa, Sociological Review, July 1959, Univ.College of N. Staffs. pp.65-97.

part of his education in a Mission school. Since the nineteen fifties the increased participation of the Government in the provision of primary and secondary schooling has altered this situation but not yet significantly since the great majority of teachers are still trained in Church colleges and Church schools even now cater for approximately two-thirds of the children attending school. Knowledge and awareness of the Christian Gospel and its ethical standards are thus widespread.

Christians are the most literate group in the community. From the earliest days, Christianity and schooling were sides of the same coin, a fact which has become indelibly impressed upon the native mind. Hence to a real extent, to belong to a Christian Church signified membership of an élite, literate group associated with 'civilisation' and 'progress'. Ringwald mentions the replies of an African evangelist in the Gyamang area to questions regarding the motives of baptismal candidates: "...most of them consider Christianity to be a good thing judging by what they had seen in Ashanti and elsewhere" (sc.of western civilisation), and "they come to learn to read so as to be different from their heathen friends who envy their ability to read. They like to carry their books about so that their friends may see the difference".<sup>(5)</sup>

The societies of the Church, notably the Youth Guild, the Women's Classes, the Singing Bands, the Choirs, the Sunday Schools, the literacy classes and Bible-reading fellowships emphasised this difference as well as offering new forms of association in a changing society. Furthermore, until the last decade practically all the available reading matter in vernacular languages was written by Christians, and although not necessarily on Christian topics, much of it was Christian in tone and outlook. The

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(5) Ringwald, *ibid.* p.173.

monthly newsheet, the Christian Messenger, limited in circulation as it is, is widely read.

Of special significance in this connection is the place of the Book Depot in the printing, publishing and distribution of worthwhile reading material both in the vernaculars and in English. In the eighteen seventies a Book and Tract Depository was set up by the Basel Mission at the Christiansborg Middle School in order to supply the needs of the schools and of the Seminary, and in 1896 a separate Book and Bible Depot was opened in Accra to fulfil the increased demand. "It is our aim", wrote the first manager, Mr. C. Buyer, "to bring good Christian literature to the natives on the coast, and to exclude the trade in books not suitable for the minds and hearts of our people".<sup>(6)</sup> The emphasis was upon the provision of edifying works of general reading, of biblical and devotional books, and of School requirements. It is recorded that in 1899, two thousand copies of the Gospels in English, nine hundred English Bibles and five hundred copies of the New Testament in Twi were sold.<sup>(7)</sup>

The Basel Mission Book Depot, as it came to be known, developed successfully on a site in the centre of Accra, not far from the Trading Factory and the workshops. In addition, for some years, a small printing press was in use at Akropong where the periodical, The Christian Messenger, was published. The Basel Mission Ordinance, passed by the Legislative Council in 1918, vested the Book Depot first in the hands of trustees and later in the Scottish Mission which continued the business under the name of the Scottish Mission Book Depot until 1958. In 1924 the printing department was

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(6) Basel Mission Report, 1900, p.30.

(7) *ibid.* p.30. A list of all Basel Mission publications in Twi and Ga up to 1900 is given on pp.28-9 of this report.



restarted in Accra and books in the new vernacular scripts began to come off the press. (8) After the restoration of the properties of the Basel Mission, the Scottish Mission was permitted to continue to conduct the enterprise on payment of a nominal rent; a gracious gesture in the interests of mission co-operation in view of the fact that the Basel Mission had at that time opened a new bookshop in Kumasi. (9)

Efforts to overcome the problem of distribution were made by the employment of colporteurs who travelled widely to inaccessible villages, by the formation of book clubs and by the opening of branch bookshops in a number of the larger towns. In this way, for more than half a century, the Book Depot has played a large part in Ghana in fostering literacy and in supplying good reading matter in both English and in Ghana languages. In a country with few bookshops the Book Depot and its branches have assisted greatly in this field of social progress. A corollary of its work has been the stimulation and development of local languages, so much so that publications in Akan have become second in number to those in Swahili of all printed books in African tongues. (10) Both the Basel and Scottish missionaries wrote in Ghana vernaculars and encouraged their African colleagues to do so. In 1942 the quarterly newsheet, 'Christian Youth' and the Church magazine, 'The Christian Way', made their appearance and afforded an outlet to African writers. More recently these publications have been merged in a new monthly paper bearing the historic title of 'The Christian Messenger'.

Educational expansion has created a vast new reading public in Ghana

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- (8) Ga Children's Bible, (Mrs. A.W. Wilkie); Ga Fables, (C.P. Moir); Twi Pilgrim's Progress, (R.R. Watt).  
 (9) Scottish Mission Council Minutes, Memorandum of Edinburgh Conference, April, 1932.  
 (10) According to the bibliography in 'Africa' 1955.

<u>No. of publications</u>	<u>1930-39</u>	<u>1940-1950</u>
Swahili	120	141
Akan (Twi)	44	67

and although there are more bookshops there is still a great demand for religious works. <sup>(11)</sup> Air transport now brings the best and the worst of European books and magazines and of the English Sunday newspapers to the bookstalls within hours of publication and Government-sponsored productions abound; for these reasons alone the Book Depot still has a vital part to play in the field of religious and other literature.

From Kumasi the Basel Mission Book Depot expanded rapidly and branches were opened in various parts of Ashanti. <sup>(12)</sup> The two Mission Book Depots collaborated closely and in 1949 negotiations were begun which resulted in both Missions handing over their businesses to the Church as outright gifts. <sup>(13)</sup> Since 1959 the Presbyterian Book Depot and Printing Press have been conducted as limited liability companies, the share capital of which is held by the Church.

Of all the societies inaugurated by the Missions and fostered by the Church the Women's Classes are the most systematically organised. In many parts of the country they have been the means of spreading a knowledge of hygiene, baby care, child welfare and housekeeping as well as in fostering Christian ideals of marriage and the home. Much of the preliminary work was done by wives of missionaries and women teachers: in the nineteen thirties Mrs. F. Mommingier held courses at Begoro for the wives of African ministers and teachers; Mrs. D. Benzies and Mrs. G.A. Martin did similar work at Awisa and Nsaba respectively; and at Krobo, Agogo, Aburi, Christiansborg and Akropong women's groups and child welfare clinics were organised. <sup>(14)</sup> By

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(11) Twenty items of religious books in Ghana languages alone showed sales in 1953 of over 1000 copies each. S.M. Council Report, 1953.

(12) J.B. 1954, p.27.

(13) The B.M. Book Depot was handed over in 1957; buildings and stock being valued at £58,000. In the following year the S.M. Press and Book Depot (together worth over £100,000) were given to the Presbyterian Church of Ghana and to the Evangelical Presbyterian Church respectively. Independence Year 1957 saw also the transfer to the Church of all Basel and Scottish Mission lands and properties.

(14) J.B. 1937, p.48; Church Reports, 1938, p.37; 1937, p.40.

1947 there were one hundred and fifty active women's classes with an approximate membership of five thousand, and for the first time the Synod in that year began the practice of devoting an evening session to work among women.

The continued growth in the number of classes led to the appointment of full-time European women missionaries, the training of African women leaders, and the opening of a Training Centre at Begoro. There is now a team of African and European leaders who visit the classes regularly and organise courses within the Presbyteries. At Begoro, in addition to the training of Women's class leaders, vocational training for young girls was begun in 1959. (15)

In such ways the Christian was marked out from his fellows by his literacy, by his reception of new ideas, and by his membership of a 'progressive' group in addition to his Christian beliefs. It is not surprising therefore that the leaders in Ghana society should be those who either belonged to the Christian Churches or who had had some Christian upbringing. After 1929 the Christian viewpoint has been put forward by the Christian Council of which the Presbyterian Church is an active member and which in the thirty or so years of its life has become the accepted voice of the Protestant Churches of the country on matters of general concern. (16) These matters have been mainly in connection with African customs and the Christian faith, moral and social issues, the dissemination of Christian literature, the relation of Church and State, and ecumenical problems. In 1931 the Council published a booklet on witchcraft; a report on the customary

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(15) J.B. 1947, p.27; 1948, p.26; 1951, p.24; 1952, pp.9-10; 1953, p.26; 1958, p.78. Church Reports 1956, pp.39-41.

(16) Its member Churches are: Anglican, Methodist, African Methodist Episcopal Zion, Evangelical Presbyterian, Presbyterian, Salvation Army and the American Baptist Church. Christian Council of the Gold Coast, Silver Jubilee Handbook, 1954, Scottish Mission Press, passim.

law of inheritance was addressed to the Paramount Chiefs in 1934; and when the Tigare cult was at its height in 1946, fourteen thousand copies of a pamphlet in four vernaculars and in English against the misleading claims of the movement were sold throughout the country. (17) In 1951 the Council sponsored a conference to consider the social problems revealed by Dr. Busia's 'Social Survey of Sekondi-Takoradi' the outcome of whose deliberations was published in 'The Church in the Town'. (18) The following year saw the 'Statement on Christian Education', to which reference has been made in Chapter VIII, and in 1955 came the publication of the proceedings of a large representative gathering of Ghanaian clergy and European missionaries who discussed at length the relationship of Christianity and African culture. (19) Wide publicity has also been given at different times to the Council's memoranda to the Government on higher education, religious broadcasting, the importation of spirits, the pouring of libation, Sunday football and municipal lotteries. Since independence the Council has summarised the position of its member Churches with regard to the State in the booklet, 'The Role of the Christian Church in a Democratic State'. (20)

The Christian Council has not been merely a protesting and negative voice but has sponsored literacy campaigns, welfare work among women in Accra, and has produced a Scripture syllabus which is in use in most schools in the country. It has done much in bringing the Churches together and has now inaugurated discussions on Church union. By means of its public utterances the Christian point of view has been constantly presented to the attention of the wider public.

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- (17) *ibid.* p.12. The Akim Abuakwa State Council adopted modified rules of inheritance which made better provision for widows and orphans. There was little response from other state councils.
- (18) *The Church in the Town* (63pp.) 1951. (Papers by Drs. K.A. Busia, S.G. Williamson, Mrs. Ioné Acquah, Justice N.A. Ollenu and others).
- (19) *Christianity and African Culture*, Scottish Mission Press, Accra, 1955 (80 pp. Papers by Drs. Busia, Williamson, Debrunner, Baeta; Rev. E.A. Asamoah and Mr. J.H. Nketia).
- (20) Published with this title by the Presbyterian Church Press, Accra, 1960.

The problems associated with marriage in Akan society and the reluctance on the part of the majority to accept the Christian doctrine of lifelong monogamous marriage have been mentioned in Chapter V. The issues are complicated by the Akan traditional family system by which descent and inheritance are traced through the mother; husband and wife do not inherit each other's property and a widow may be left destitute. (21) As we have noted the Church succeeded in obtaining general assent to its insistence upon provision for the widow and children where a Christian dies intestate, and was able in 1961 to effect a reconsideration of the proposals of the Government to modify the present dual system of marriage by Ordinance and by customary law. The people were asked to consider a modified system of plural marriage by which one wife would be registered and given enhanced status; polygyny would not be abolished but inheritance would be confined to the registered wife, her children by her husband and his children by other unregistered wives. (22) The Church argued that these proposals would encourage loose, temporary unions, would discriminate against those women who desired a genuine monogamous marriage, while to exclude the abusua from any share in the inheritance would be repugnant to the Akan outlook. (23)

Our second general statement was to the effect that everywhere in Ghana the strength of indigenous religion and social custom, although modified to suit changing conditions, persists almost unimpaired. We shall discuss this assertion in some detail in the following chapter particularly as it affects the life of the Church; at this point we are concerned to show that the extent of the influence of the Church, clearly much greater than its numbers

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(21) Little, K.L. Some Patterns of Marriage and Domesticity in West Africa, Sociological Review, Keele, July 1959, p.77.

(22) White Paper on Marriage and Inheritance, Government Printer, Accra, 1961.

(23) Comments on the White Paper, Presbyterian Church Press, 1961. Privately circulated.

would lead one to suppose, is still limited. Dr. Busia has pointed out that in the large towns though the churches have become an important part of the community and pervade its life in a significant way, "as one watches the daily lives and activities of the people, and takes account of the rites connected with marriage, birth, death, widowhood, harvests, or installations to traditional offices, one learns that a great deal of the normal communal activities of the converts lies outside their Christian activities, and that for all their influence, the Christian churches are still alien institutions, intruded upon, but not integrated with indigenous social institutions..." (24)

In the review in the preceding chapter of the churches in their local setting attention was drawn to the repeated references of pastors, whether in city, country town or village, to the constant struggle with organised indigenous religion and with 'faith-healing' churches. One notes the revival in popularity of the tribal festivals, another the renewed interest in local abosom, a third the increased prevalence of belief in witchcraft. "The superstition of witchcraft is a common and strong feeling throughout the different towns and villages. Small cemented fetish houses have been erected at the outskirts of nearly every town with the inscriptions 'oboafu' ('helper') or 'ogyefo' ('saviour'). The Chief, elders and people gladly assembled and listened to open-air services, and confessed to having been touched by the Word, but worldly pleasures and fetishism are the great hindrances to their repentance". (25) At Larteh, the shrine of Nana Akonnedi, mentioned by Christaller in 1875, has in recent years returned to popular favour. (26) From the west of the country come reports of the lapsing of

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(24) Busia, K.A. Social Survey of Sekondi-Takoradi, p.79.

(25) Presbyterian Church Reports, 1932 (Anum).

(26) *ibid.* 1958 (Larteh). Cf. Chapter XI below.

Christians to the Musama Disco Christo Church and from Ashanti announcements of new abosom shrines and of attempts by certain chiefs to force indigenous customs and usages upon Christians. (27)

The third generalisation regarding the place of the Church in the community was that the problem of the integration of the Church in Akan society remains unsolved, a difficulty which is bound up with the relationship of Christians to their natural rulers, the Chiefs. It has been noted that the profession of Christianity involved a break with tribal life and to a marked extent from traditional obligations, a state of affairs which the chiefs began more and more to resent. In Ashanti and in Akim Abuakwa the question of swearing the tribal oath in order to initiate litigation was 'settled' in 1912 at a meeting of representatives of the Missions with the Governor and other political officers, (the chiefs do not seem to have been present), where it was agreed that "no Christian is obliged to swear back an oath but that on an oath being sworn against him a Christian should be bound to accept it as a summons to attend court....Chiefs should be warned that the failure of a Christian to swear back an oath should in no way prejudice his case. No Christian shall be called upon to perform any fetish rite or service, but shall be bound to render customary service to his chief on ceremonial occasions when no element of fetish practice is involved". (28)

What the ceremonial occasions were is not specified but as there are hardly any which are not bound up with traditional religion, the decision in fact emphasised the right of the Christian to hold himself aloof from customary requirements. It is not surprising that to the chiefs such an attitude should be construed as disloyalty to the tribe. Pressure was still put upon Christians: after the restoration of the Ashanti Confederacy in 1935

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(27) *ibid*, 1937, 1940, 1951.

(28) Presbyterian Church, Synod Minutes, 1953, II pp.15-16. J.B. 1912, pp.64-66.

an attempt was made to impose certain 'national' observances upon Christians, for example Asase Yaa day, and the approval of the Colonial Government was sought in support. The Governor replied that the beliefs of the minority must be respected. (29)

The social-religious bond in Akan life is so strong therefore that there have been no cases of a chief becoming a Christian in full membership (i.e. communicant membership) and remaining the occupant of the stool; a Christian elected to the office of chieftaincy would sooner or later have to perform 'customs' and rites in connection with the ancestors, or to become a polygynist, both of which would debar him from attendance at Holy Communion. (30) At the same time there are chiefs who are particularly concerned with this problem and who would genuinely wish to see an integration take place. I instance the Memoranda officially addressed to various Synods of the Presbyterian Church by the Paramount Chiefs of the Akim Abuakwa and the Krobo states. (31)

In both these states Christianity was first introduced by the Basel Mission and the Church has made great headway in both areas. The natural rulers of both states have always taken a great interest in the growth of the Church and have assisted that growth in many ways, particularly in their support of education. The concern manifested in the memoranda is that a solution of the problem of the relationship of Christianity and the local social order might be found so as to repair the breach in tribal unity and to make a Christian State possible.

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(29) Digest of Minutes of Ashanti Confederacy Council, paras. 113-119.

(30) Some chiefs are, of course, called 'Christian' and attend Church on special occasions.

(31) Memorandum to the Synod of the Presbyterian Church of the Gold Coast by the State Council of Akim Abuakwa, 1941; Address of Welcome to the Synod by Nana Ofori Atta II, 1954; Address by Nene Mate Kole to the Presbyterian Church Synod, 1960.



The argument of the 1941 Memorandum, written by the late Nana Sir Ofori Atta, criticises the pioneers of the Mission who "failed to understand the underlying motives of many of the customs and habits of the people, and this, coupled with the segregation of their members, tended to destroy the unity and cohesion of the tribe.....We have therefore today in the State, people who, because of their being Christians, consider themselves above the true national life....". (32) He instances the fact that the national festivals, Odwira, Ohum and Kwasidae, are not attended by Christians and that the Church disbars its members from acting as stool functionaries, and suggests that these festivals may be compared to the reverence accorded to the dead by the British at the Cenotaph in Whitehall and the offices to those of Black Rod and Equerry. (33) He deplores the promulgation by the Church of rules and penalties in respect of adultery and seduction which are in contradiction to prevailing customary law, and feels that the Church has taken up an unnecessarily obdurate position with regard to the swearing of the state oath. (34) The practice of the Church of developing a Christian suburb is deprecated at some length: "It did create in the minds of members.....an ideal of isolation and of disconnection with their own people who are not members of the Church"; the land so given was not intended to be held by the Church in fee simple but was to be held in the sense that Christians who were natives of the State could build their houses on it. (35) Finally he asserts his conviction that "all forms of superstition and fetishism will eventually disappear, and a true religion such as the Christian faith will exercise the widest sway; and, I should like to feel that when that time came, the people would not have lost their legitimate and perfectly proper traditions and other good features of their national life". (36)

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(32) Memorandum, paras. 8,9,11.

(33) *ibid.* paras. 12-15.

(34) *ibid.* paras. 58-66.

(35) *ibid.* par.67.

(36) *ibid.* paras. 68-69.

It was a sincere appeal which hardly received the response from the Church which it deserved. From the Abetifi Synod in 1942 the Church presented its reply. (37) In it the Salem system of segregation was defended, the position of the Church in regard to indigenous festivals was defined and the assertion was made that the native State must adapt its traditional practices to make it possible for Christians to participate fully in local political life. "We must guard against a tendency to idealise the past and to forget that African life was very different then from what it is today....The root of the trouble is inherent in the fact that, from time immemorial, the expression of African national life has been indissolubly bound up, at every step, with that very religious faith from which the Christian has turned away in order to give his allegiance to Jesus....

...The second main difficulty lies in the fact that, at many points, the ethical standards of Christ come into direct conflict with those of African traditional custom. If therefore such custom cannot be done away with, or modified to make it inoffensive to the Christian conscience, then the Christian must decline to obey it". (38) The reply goes on to insist that Christians have never been forbidden to attend festivals, but more specifically they have been asked not to associate themselves with those elements which are repugnant to the Christian faith. On the other hand, the view is expressed that it would seem feasible to weld together the Odwira and the Church's Repentance and Thanksgiving Day into one great festival of the entire people. "The various Aday ceremonies seem to us to be on a different footing....we think you will agree when we say that this is worship of ancestors". (39)

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(37) The Church in the State, Scottish Mission Book Depot, Accra, 1942.

(38) *ibid.*, paras. 10-15.

(39) *ibid.* paras. 22-23.

In its reply the Church agreed to bring the penalties for ayefare and seduction in line with those of the state but reasserted its conviction that it could not permit Christian women to enter into a polygynous marriage. It was explained that its insistence on the proper documentation of lands was due to the desire to avoid litigation and to secure protection from arbitrary action by local chiefs. The tenor of the closing paragraphs is to place the onus of adaptation upon the State; while the Church realised the indissoluble nature of Akan religion and social custom its reply shows a failure to recognise the significance of this fact and to appreciate the extent of the concern of the Chief and the State Council, practically all of whom had been baptised and educated in Presbyterian Church schools.

In 1954 the Synod met again at Kibi when Nana Ofori Atta II took up the issues raised in the 1941 Memorandum. During the intervening years no action had been taken by either side but the door had been left open for further discussions. "The outstanding subjects in which we appear today to differ relate to Festivals, Stool Functionaries and the Oath".<sup>(40)</sup> Nana therefore proposed a joint committee "to examine the existing obstacles to the attainment of our common goal of a Christian State.....If the kingdom of Uganda can become a Christian State as you testify.....I can see no insurmountable obstacles to our Gold Coast States also becoming Christian".<sup>(41)</sup>

This committee, composed of representatives of the Church and of the Akim Abuakwa State Council, did not meet until 1957. Meantime, the Church had deliberated the problems raised by the report of the Christian Council Conference three years earlier on Christian faith and African culture. Thus for the first time, thanks to the persistence of the Akim Paramount Chief and Dr. J.B. Danquah, and to the growing awareness among African Christian leaders

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(40) Address to Synod, 1954, par.13.

(41) *ibid.* paras. 20-22.

of the vital importance of these problems, the main issues in the conflict began to be isolated. The central point was that of the position of the ancestors, whether they were worshipped or merely venerated; could the ancestral stools be regarded as simply depicting the continuity and solidarity of the race without 'blackening' them and without animal sacrifice, food offering, libation or the invoking of the spirits of the forefathers; could the traditional state oath be separated from 'suman' and 'abosom' ? Dr. Danquah pointed out that the stools 'detest' obosom, ('nkonnua nkyiri abosom'), and that personal cleansing from possible defilement caused by contact with abosom had always been undergone before the stools were approached. (42) He also urged that the term 'worship' as used in connection with the stools had been understood too narrowly; "God's command is that we shall have no other gods before Him, but He does not command us not to honour our fathers and our mothers or our ancestors". (43)

The Committee turned to the vexed issue of libation. The Akan words libation ('nsagu') and invocation ('mpaeyi') were held to be synonymous and to imply supplication ('adesre') and dedication ('ahofama'). Prayers on these occasions, it was agreed, are addressed to Onyame, Asase Yaa and to the ancestors, the weight of the invocation being upon the last-named. The rites of libation have a social function in expressing those sentiments on which the solidarity of the group depends and in strengthening the bond of unity between the living and the dead. The State Council members argued that in spite of the fact that the requests in the prayers appear to be offered to the ancestors themselves they are really directed through them to the Supreme God. The ancestors are thus intermediaries who, by virtue of their nearness to the Almighty in the spirit-world, can intercede for the living. From the side

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(42) Minutes of Joint Committee Meeting, pp.2-5, printed in Presbyterian Church Synod Minutes, 1957, par.56.

(43) Minutes of Second Meeting, 12th July, 1958, p.1.

of the Church it was felt that the real issue lay in the sense of dependence: does it accord to the ancestors power which they do not possess and honour which they do not merit and thus deny the first commandment? A majority of the members of the committee agreed that libation could be christianised if due honour were given to God but a minority were against Christian association with libation in any form. There was unanimous agreement, however, with the view that the ancestors were alive and interested in the affairs of men and that it was necessary to acknowledge a sense of unity and solidarity with them. The final recommendation to the Church reads: "That though at present it may be difficult to introduce libation into Christian worship, we may accept the function in principle, provided that the invocation of fetish (sic.) is not involved and that the glory is ultimately directed to God and not to the ancestors, who must be considered as an integral part of society, a society comprising both the living and the dead. On festival days this idea of solidarity will be given special expression and emphasis through libation". (44)

The 1958 Synod at Kibi discussed the Committee's findings. It asserted its faith in the unique place of Jesus Christ as Mediator between man and God but agreed that ministers could be asked to pray at festivals and that a prayer of remembrance of ancestors may be inserted in the funeral service. Objection was made to the slaughtering of sheep on the stool and it was urged that other means of 'blackening' them should be found; if stools were merely symbols of unity and solidarity the Church could recognise them. The decision, however, to hold no further discussions of the questions of libation and ancestor veneration caused disappointment to the Kibi State representatives and no further meetings have been held although the Church

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(44) Minutes, *ibid.* p.3. Printed in Synod Minutes, 1958, Appendix B.

expressed its willingness to continue the study of the Christian implications  
of the great festivals, the blackening of stools and of drumming at funerals. (45)

The impression given by the Church is of a certain reluctance to treat these issues as critical: the initiative has so far been taken by non-Christians; most of its ministers have absorbed the traditional 'missionary' attitudes to local religion and custom and have not realised that the present relatively static position of the Church arises from its failure to work 'within' Akan social and religious categories. One wonders how far the conversion of the Anglo-Saxons would have gone if Gregory I had not shown an understanding of a not dissimilar situation: "...pagan temples are not to be destroyed among that people but the idols within them must be destroyed; let holy water be sprinkled in the temples, altars built and relics set there....People will resort to the temples more readily if they are used to requesting them....let them not sacrifice animals to the devil but slaughter them for their own eating to the praise of God....". (46)

A move from another side came in 1960 when Nene Mate Kole, in a welcome address to the Synod at Odumase-Krobo, pressed the delegates to give priority "to the questions involving what appears to be our cultural conflict with the Christian concept, namely the issue of the incompatibility, or otherwise of libation, ancestral worship and stools..... Further, I would like to say that these problems appear to me not only important but fundamental to the growth of the pure Christian spirit in a society which has advanced in so short a time on Western lines, and whose social, cultural and religious conceptions are not the same as those of the Western nations". (47) Nene Mate Kole instances the unreflecting assimilation of Christianity and indigenous

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(45) Synod Minutes, 1958, p.14.

(46) Bede, Eccles. Hist. BkII, Ch.V. Everyman Ed. Letter to Mellitus 601

A.D.

(47) Address to Synod, paras. 8-10. Text in Synod Minutes, 1960, Appendix G, pp.56-59.

religion and the rise of faith-healing sects, "a sociological problem needing solution", (48) and concludes: "The times are changing fast and it is the belief of most Chiefs of Ghana that by research and deep thought the Church will in no distant date embark on policies that will make all chiefs practising as well as professing Christians, and finally that our deep-rooted institutions may be purged with the light of the Christian spirit to the glory of God and to the well-being of this emerging nation". (49)

Thus there is much goodwill towards the Church and a desire on the part of two paramount chiefs at least that the christianisation of society should be more effective. It is clear from the foregoing discussion that a deepened influence of the Church upon the community at large depends to a great extent upon its willingness to work within Akan institutions in which the chief is the key figure. The main elements in Akan religion, the veneration of ancestors, is reflected in the abusua and the clan system whose symbol of unity is the stool, whose religious 'sacraments' are the transition rites and whose prayers are the invocations to the ancestors when offerings are made and libations are poured.

Christianity came to the Akan as part of the culture of Western Europe, and the African has shown his capacity for accepting the material blessings brought to him but such modifications of his social life as he has been forced to make have taken place within the traditional framework so that, for example, even in urban and industrial areas, the strength of lineage consciousness has stood the strain. The supra-tribal societies which have come into existence, are not substitutes for, but additions to the claims and ties of the abusua and the stool. The evidence for this phenomenon abounds. (50)

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(48) *ibid.* paras. 11-16.

(49) *ibid.* paras. 17-18.

(50) Cf. Southall, A. (ed.) *Social Change in Modern Africa*, 1961, *passim*.

This is not to say that recent social changes have not tended to loosen the ties of family organisation and to bring about a consequent weakening of ancestor reverence. Busia has remarked that: "The consequent disintegration of the social structure and the decay of the ancestral cult appears to be proceeding together. I think it can be said of the Akan, however, that ancestor worship is still a force, in spite of rapid social change. This is because it has consisted not only of lineage rites but also public rites, i.e. festivals in which a whole tribe or chiefdom have participated.... ..the question of the place of chieftaincy in the Christian Church....is important and urgent, if Christianity is to touch the whole of our group life". (51)

A similar tendency may be observed in the religious sphere. There is, generally speaking, no opposition to Christianity as a religion and while it has been widely accepted and while its influence permeates many parts of life, the unresolved problem of the relation of the Christian to Akan social order hampers and frustrates its further spread. The African has added the Christian Gospel to the totality of the spiritual resources which he already possesses, a situation illustrated by the seeming inability of the Church to grow beyond a certain point, by the existence of a vast and ever-increasing throng of adherents and lapsed members who call themselves Christian, by the failure to hold more than a small percentage of the hundreds of catechumens who join the Church each year, by the almost unimpaired continuance of 'custom', and by the emergence of African-Christian expressions of religion.

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(51) Christian and African Culture, p.22.



How far has the accelerated political development of the last decade affected traditional life and the place of the Church in the community? Apter has shown that the integrated socio-religious traditional pattern is far from being seriously altered. "In the Gold Coast the impact of primary group associations is more significant than in westernised systems. The primary associated groups are strongholds of non-political traditionalism. Those who may be bitterly opposed to the chiefs, and to the entire structure of traditional authority, may conform to the very traditional behaviour patterns in his immediate family environment". (52)

The new social unit of the dominant Convention People's Party which may be characterised as a product of urbanism and a sign of the revolt of 'youth' against the patriarchal rule of the chiefs is not yet a substitute for but an addition to the already existing claims of lineage. Although the chiefs have now been relegated to a subordinate political position in society by which, as paid servants of the Central Government, they become the guardians of native institutions and of the cultural heritage, there has been no attempt to dispense with chieftaincy or to overthrow the basis of ancestral life. (53)

Whether or not the chiefs, without political power, can fulfil their obligations as custodians of the 'old' life, remains to be seen but it is probable that the infinite capacity of the African to accept, reject and modify will succeed in making a synthesis.

This capacity is to be noted in the general political attitude which Ghana has taken: a rejection of capitalism as being tainted with colonialism and an acceptance of a socialism modified by African conditions. "The structure of the Convention People's Party has been built up from our own experiences, conditions, environments and concepts, entirely Ghanaian in outlook, and based on the Marxist-socialist philosophy and world-view". (54) Hodgkin emphasises

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(52) Apter, D. *The Gold Coast in Transition*, Princeton, 1955,

(53) This view has been expressed at length by Dr. Nkrumah in a speech on Nov. 8th, 1960. Text in the C.P.P. monthly, 'The Party', Nov. 1960.

(54) Dr. Nkrumah, speech at Winneba, 18th Feb. 1961, Govt. pamphlet, p.7. The occasion was the opening of the Ideological Institute.

this 'unembarrassed eclecticism' in African socialism; its readiness to draw on Western democratic (including Marxist) tradition, as well as on its own indigenous resources. (55)

The main aspects of this new political development in Ghana are to be seen in the growth of a radical mass party, the C.P.P., which has taken control of the state with the aim of reconstructing it; the insistence upon human equality; the emergence of a supra-tribal consciousness with the President as a 'charismatic' father-figure and the symbol of national unity; (56) the endeavour to break down ethnic, territorial and cultural barriers; the rise of the politician as the new wielder of effective power, the local chief having become the guardian of traditional rites and customs; the development of public secular education on a large scale; the declared aim of building Ghana into a modern industrialised state on a socialist basis; the emphasis on the dignity and moral worth of the African expressed in the concept of the 'African personality'. (57)

It is not yet possible to evaluate the changes in social structure which will take place as this political and economic programme is increasingly implemented. How far-reaching, for example, will be the effects of national integration upon traditional lineage and tribal affiliation? What will be the result of a materialistic ideology upon the Ghanaian 'spiritual' view of life? What part may the Christian Churches hope to play in the future in moulding and leading public opinion? Their former 'built-in' prestige position within the framework of the colonial régime has gone. The political

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(55) Hodgkin, T. article in *Encounter*, June 1961, pp.5-6. cf. his remarks in *African Political Parties*, Penguin series, London, 1961, p.169, "African political parties have to be understood as essentially African institutions....while they have borrowed techniques of organisation and propaganda, as well as ideas, from Europe, America and Asia, they have modified these to suit African purposes".

(56) Apter, *op.cit.* p.174 and pp.303-7.

(57) Hodgkin, T. *African Political Parties*, pp.133-139, 158 - 160.

changes are bound more and more to push the Church on the defensive in a society which is rapidly moving towards a modern type of collectivism. The Christian Council has made its views known and has insisted upon its freedom to speak on matters of public concern,<sup>(58)</sup> yet it seems clear that the Church is in danger of being relegated to a relatively subordinate and innocuous position in the state, a danger emphasised by its failure to become an integral part of the time-honoured social pattern.

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(58) The Role of the Christian Church in a Democratic State, Christian Council of Ghana, 1960.

## Chapter XI.

### Problems of Adaptation, Assimilation and Social Change.

The Church in Ghana a strong minority group but failing to extend its position in society; the reasons for this situation; in spite of profound social change the motivating factors of Akan religious and social life still operate strongly; a summary of a century of change; the continued strength of kinship ties; the continued existence of the Akan social and religious worldview; phenomena which indicate that the historic Mission Churches have failed to satisfy felt needs; the assimilation of customary usages connected with the transition rites and Christian practice; outdoorings and baptism; puberty rites and confirmation; marriage by customary law; funeral customs; the Christian and indigenous festivals; the emergence of African healing Churches; the Musama Disco Christo Church; the significance of these Churches; adaptation of abosom shrines to new uses; the phenomena of drinking-medicine cults; Islam as an 'African' religion; the mission method of Islam in West Africa; the zongo; the Church sociologically considered; the Church sui generis yet planted in African soil; the challenge to the Church; theological questions; the task of re-interpretation one for Akan theologians; suggested lines of thought; the worship of the Church; the Church as Christ's abusua; the introduction of African customs into Christian observance; the root problem of ancestor veneration; problems set by the 'healing' Churches; healing, witchcraft and exorcism; what is the nature of the Church's mission in Africa?; the problem of missionary aims and methods; an example from Ruanda-Urundi and from Anglo-Saxon Britain; conclusion.

## CHAPTER XI.

### Problems of Adaptation, Assimilation and Social Change.

In the previous chapters the growth and development of the Presbyterian Church of Ghana has been described from its missionary beginnings to the present day. Together with the other large Churches in Ghana it has attained the position of a strong minority group but it now seems to have reached a point at which, humanly speaking, it is not only failing to extend its position in society but is also losing its former influential position. It is customary for the missionaries and African ministers to account for this by adducing a deficient spiritual life brought about by a growth in numbers but not in depth. "The Church is seriously undernourished, the biblical content dwindling, the preaching of our catechists and teachers is often a mere religious talk or a moral discourse.....rather than a spirit-filled testimony".<sup>(1)</sup> Dr. Ringwald instances other elements which have contributed to the weakness of the Church: the proliferation of African-led healing Churches and quasi-religious societies, Freemasonry and Lodges from Europe and America.<sup>(2)</sup> Others have mentioned the increasing secularisation of education, the recent political changes, accelerated economic development, and the continued power of indigenous religion.<sup>(3)</sup> A certain nostalgia is evident from the side of the African pastors for the 'old days' in their 'calls' for the rekindling of spiritual zeal and for the rediscovery of the 'true' life of the Church. At the same time, this 'younger' Church shows many evidences of Christian faith and life: its evangelism in the north of the country, the large numbers of steady church-going folk, the crowded services at the times of the great Christian festivals,

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(1) J.B. 1946.

(2) Ringwald, W. Religion der Akanstämme, p.290.

(3) J.B. 1947.

the sacrificial giving of money in support of Church projects, the zeal of many pastors, catechists, presbyters and members; all these manifest a real love for Christ. To instance a failure in spiritual life is not enough; the argument of this study is that the Church has failed rather to integrate itself into African society and has not succeeded in coming to terms with the social and religious conditions of its environment but has emerged in a marked degree as bourgeois association largely out of touch with the mass of the people. Some of the reasons for this state of affairs have been noted: the stress on education with the result that the profession of Christianity signified membership of an elite group; the constant opposition to the African expression of religion so that no attempt was made to adapt the presentation of the Gospel to indigenous Akan life and thought; the break with the existing social order which becoming a Christian entailed; and the inextricable confusion of the Gospel with Western European culture.

During the century of the Church's existence in Ghana, African traditional society itself has undergone profound changes but the motivating factors of religious and social life have remained largely the same. (4) From the period of Maclean's jurisdiction (1830 to 1843) the main streams of culture contact, political, economic, religious and educational, poured into the country represented by the Colonial Government and its agents, the trader with his 'western' goods and the missionary with his Gospel and school. In the native mind, all these streams are comprehended by the term 'civilisation' or 'anibue' (lit. 'opening of the eyes'). (5) The Bond of 1844 legalising and defining the jurisdiction which had grown up in the 'Protectorate' under Maclean's influence, the purchase of the Danish forts in 1850 and of the Dutch

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(4) Southall, op.cit. p.30. "Although the full nexus of kinship and tribal obligations is often purposely evaded by town dwellers, kinship and tribal bonds are constantly drawn upon and turned to new uses".

(5) Cf. Mair, L. An African People in the 20th Century, London, 1954, p.12.

forts in 1872, brought into existence a political unit in which the British became responsible for justice, education and social and economic developments. The Bond prohibited human sacrifice, panyarring and 'other barbarous customs', while 'murders, robberies, and other crimes and offences' were to be tried by judicial officers and chiefs, 'moulding the customs of the country to the general principles of British law'.<sup>(6)</sup>

At this period we may describe Akan tribal unity as being largely unbroken and the unified religio-social Akan world-view yet unshaken; traditional religion and its sanctions served the social needs of the people, and by effectively buttressing the social structure the religious system aided the survival of the social unit. From 1850 onwards the influence of the Colonial administration was increasingly felt: the killing of slaves to serve the chief in the next world was suppressed, some famous tribal obosom shrines were destroyed, certain local taboos were forbidden, while the authority of the chiefs was seriously weakened, the last word in all important matters being that of the District Commissioner. The administrative machinery required clerks, police, interpreters and a host of minor officials and thus placed a high value on the formal schooling offered by the Missions. To pay them and to develop social services, taxes had to be levied and on this account it became<sup>a</sup> necessary part of Government policy to encourage cash crops. The trader was active wherever palm oil and kernels, rubber, coffee and cocoa were to be obtained, offering in exchange a bewildering variety of European-made articles and in the process introducing the African to a money economy. Alongside the administrator and trader was the missionary who, in general, thought of his task as 'civilising' as well as evangelising.

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(6) The text of the Bond is quoted in full in Ward, History of Ghana, 2nd ed. 1958, p.194.

Thus the introduction of a new political system, a money economy, education and Christianity seriously affected Akan traditional life but it did not destroy its basis. Busia has well shown how in Ashanti the cocoa industry accelerated social change and introduced tensions into the social and political structure. (7) Cocoa encouraged the movement from a subsistence economy, it improved the standard of living and led to a great expansion of trade; 'new types of social personality have emerged' as well as new social groups; it led to conflict within the kinship group over the inheritance of productive cocoa farms; it led to the loosening of political loyalties to the local chief. Yet in spite of these changes and the strain on lineage allegiances it cannot be said that 'the unity of the kin group' has been undermined. (8) All the evidence goes to show that even in urban areas kindred consciousness and lineage ties still operate strongly, being turned to new uses in new situations. Regarded superficially it seemed that Akan culture would be dominated by that of Europe, but the process of social change, rapid though it has become, must not be understood as implying the breakdown of traditional life. In spite of all the innovations ancestor veneration and the life of the group, even though the abusua may be scattered, mean almost as much today as formerly. One has only to observe the way in which all the members of the abusua assemble for the funeral of one of its number to appreciate the truth of this statement. It is a mistake to imagine that because Africans have so readily accepted the material benefits of European culture they have abandoned their own. The organisations which have grown up independent of kinship bonds, churches, men's clubs and fraternities, women's classes, youth guilds, improvement associations, trade unions and political parties, which are products of the

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(7) Busia, K.A. The Position of the Chief in the Modern Political System of Ashanti, O.U.P. 1951, Chs. 1-4, passim.

(8) Thus Fiwoo, D.K. unpublished Ph.D. thesis, 1959, Edinburgh University, pp.365-6.



social changes of the last century, do not replace clan and family loyalties but are additional to them.

This is particularly true in the religious sphere; Christianity was added to the totality of already-existing supernatural resources but it did not replace them. After a century of the preaching of the Christian Gospel and the establishment of Christian congregations throughout the country, traditional religion shows an astonishing power of survival and rejuvenation. Outside the Church, the abosom shrines have been adapted to new ends, the drinking-medicine cults have a wide vogue, the faith-healing sects effect a working compromise between Christian ideas and African custom, and within the Church the background thought-world still operates.

It has been noted that while in theory the decisive act of baptism marked a break with the old life and was the sign of inclusion in the new Christian 'asafu', in practice kinship ties, with all their Akan implications, were maintained. The break was mainly effective in the refusal of Christians to participate in stool rites and ceremonies but this did not mean that the Christian cut himself off from his abusua obligations. As in fact, these abusua obligations involve respect for and concern with the ancestors the wheel has come full circle and many who call themselves Christians readily participate in the ancestral festivals. The rank and file of members of the Church find it impossible to divorce themselves from the complex of social relationships which makes up their total life, and in the last resort they prize the group life higher than their individual response to Christ. Whatever religious change has taken place in his own life the individual Christian must share in the life of his abusua. As Dr. Busia has said: "He must share the reciprocal obligations of that group. As a member of that group he takes part in its economic activities; he shares its knowledge and experience; he shares in its sentiments, its drives, its fears; he shares

in its song and language and art and dance".<sup>(9)</sup>

Thus, as matters now stand, the historic Mission Churches have not provided an alternative to the unified social and religious world-view of the Akan. The expression of the Christian faith which they have given does not yet 'belong' to the thought-world of the people, it does not satisfy their felt needs and, in the main, it offers a Gospel which detaches a man from his fellows. There are a number of phenomena that, in the mind of the writer, reinforce this conclusion: (first, the way in which certain traditional customs connected with the transition rites accompany Christian observance; secondly, increased Christian participation in tribal festivals; thirdly, the appearance and growth of independent 'spiritual' Church groups; fourthly, the periodic revivals of 'drinking-medicine' cults and abosom shrines; and finally, the increasing attraction of Islam as a 'truly' African world-religion.

It has been remarked earlier that the transition rites are the 'sacraments' of Akan religion; they express at one and the same time the twin aspects of indigenous belief, the longing for life and kinship consciousness. The outdooring or naming ceremony is so popular among the Akans that it is now almost universally performed by Christians. Although the Regulations of the Presbyterian Church enjoin the presentation of the child for baptism within a month after birth, the custom has grown up of delaying the baptism until Christmas Day, Christmas Sunday or some other festival day.<sup>(10)</sup> The children of Christian parents are thus 'outdoored' on the eighth day and brought for baptism much later. The outdooring ceremony among Christians follows the pattern described in Chapter IV except that the prayers said and the blessings asked for are usually made by the minister, prebyter, catechist

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(9) Christianity and African culture, p.23.

(10) Regulations, Practice and Procedure; Presbyterian Church of Ghana, 1953, par. 118.

or leader of the Church, and are addressed to God and not to the ancestors. <sup>(11)</sup>

Libation is sometimes poured and prayers are sometimes addressed to the forefathers although most Christian families feel that prayer to God is a substitute for these elements. As however, outdooing is a rite which concerns the two kinship groups among whom there are likely to be both Christians and non-Christians the tendency is for Christians on these occasions to acquiesce in the full traditional ceremony. Christians do not consider outdooing as a substitute for baptism but perform both; the former concerns the abuasafu, the latter the Christian asafu.

The puberty ceremony for girls and the Christian rites of confirmation have interacted somewhat differently and form an interesting example of 'simultaneous degeneration and regeneration', to use a phrase of Dr. Little. Among non-Christians the observance of the puberty custom in its traditional form has declined. Brokensha observes that, among the Guang people of Larteh, when a girl first menstruates she may be given a meal of eggs to signify the event but nothing more is done. <sup>(12)</sup> Generally speaking, girls attending school regard themselves as free from the obligation and in any case, many do not relish the publicity, while the belief that misfortune will ensue if the rite is not performed is no longer widely held. Christian girls are therefore not subjected to the traditional ceremony but on the other hand, Confirmation has now taken on the aspect of a puberty festival. "There is no drumming and dancing but there is feasting and the wearing of fine clothes; and many young people take a holiday for about a week..... They receive presents and go about thanking the members of the community as puberty girls would do. Many of our (sc.Christian) young girls and their parents now think that Confirmation is the gateway to marriage....All these

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(11) A summary of 61 observances of 'outdooing' is given in the Appendices.

(12) Brokensha, D. Christianity and Change at Larteh, unpublished M.S. 1960, p.9.

attitudes and activities are essentially African, and ministers who have tried to discourage them have not met with much success, for Confirmation, if anything, is to the African a kind of transition rite in which relatives are interested". (13) Ahiabile goes so far as to remark, in the same vein, "This Christian initiation....is an admission into the local Christian community .....Confirmation ceremonies are always such grand occasions that some parents spend more than ten pounds to give parties and buy shoes, dresses and boxes for their children. It has now become a substitute for the puberty or 'fertility' rites for girls. This is a single instance in which a pagan rite has been purified or 'christened' ". (14)

The earlier references to marriage and polygyny in Chapter V showed that the Christian view of life-long monogamous marriage has not been acceptable to Africans. Though all members of the Church in full communion are monogamists the large number of adult male adherents excluded from the Lord's Table on grounds of plural marriage and the great disproportion of female and male membership illustrates the reluctance of the men to relinquish the option of taking another wife and of much easier divorce. (15) Practically all marriages between Christians are by customary law, very few of which are 'blessed' in church at a later date. Such marriages by Ordinance as there are usually concern paid agents of the Church, professional men and others of the élite for whom marital status is a function of social and economic position. An educated man marrying under the Ordinance fulfils all the monetary obligations for a marriage under customary law. "He pays a 'knocking fee', 'thanks money', and 'head money' in addition to sending an engagement ring and

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(13) Nketia, J.H. in *Christianity and African Culture*, p.32.

(14) Ahiabile, S.K. "An investigation of the home and social background of schoolchildren in Akropong and Abiriw", unpublished thesis, 1960, pp.83-4. (Institute of Education, University of Accra).

(15) Presbyterian Church of Ghana 1959: full communicant members; men 13,195, women 31,800.

a Bible through the girl's parents to the girl.....During the engagement period he is also expected to pay maintenance money to his fiancée.....He also pays for the bride's trousseau, and has to provide refreshments for the witnesses and for a large number of uninvited as well as invited guests.....The payment of head money, which may be greater in the case of an educated girl, constitutes a lump sum, ranging from £20 to £100 or more".<sup>(16)</sup> Educated girls often insist upon Ordinance marriage because it allows them to inherit from the husband, gives them status, and protects them against easy divorce which in such cases can only be obtained through proceedings in the Supreme Court.<sup>(17)</sup>

Because the Church insists that marriage contracted under customary law which has received its blessing is as sacred and binding upon the Christian partners as marriage contracted under the Ordinance, the tendency is for the great majority of Christians to avoid having the marriage blessed in church. Thus, in practice, the marriage arrangements and the celebration of the event are the same for Christians as for non-Christians, and very little change is evident in the fundamental marriage pattern.<sup>(18)</sup> The most significant 'adjustment' of the incompatibility of the Christian, monogamous form of marriage and traditional African practice, however, has been the increased incidence of concubinage. Dr. Little has outlined the sociological reasons for this<sup>(19)</sup> and my investigations of Christian marriages elicited the information that almost one-third of the males possessed one or more concubines in addition to the wife.<sup>(20)</sup> The inference would seem to be that to many

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(16) Little, K.L. Some Patterns of Marriage and Domesticity in West Africa, Sociological Review, Keele, Vol.7. No.1. 1959, p.71.

(17) The Criminal Code Bill (Ghana 1960) Cap. VI, par.262, makes bigamy an offence unless both marriages are contracted under customary law.

(18) Lystad, R.A. Continuity and Change in African Cultures, pp.190-193, notes the following tendencies among the Ahafo-Ashanti as minor exceptions to this generalisation: the relaxation of the rules of sib-exogamy; the much lowered incidence of cross-cousin marriages; the increased initiation of marriage by young people without consulting their families.

(19) Little, *ibid.* pp.73-75.

(20) See Appendices.

Africans the possession of concubines does not violate the letter of the law of monogamy. Relatively easy divorce by native customary law has also meant that successive monogamy is practised.

The rules of the Church in respect of death and burial are quite clearly stated and though these in theory are observed the Christian funeral is in practice a mixture of traditional and Christian rites. "Christians must not grieve after the manner of those who have no hope. They should be sober, refraining from taking or offering intoxicating drink on such occasions and observe simplicity in their expense on the coffin, etc. Superstitious customs: wearing apparel and jewelry or church membership cards deposited in the coffin and long periods of mourning including confinement and hardship imposed on widows should be avoided. The funeral service should be conducted in accordance with the approved liturgy....in an atmosphere of order and solemnity. The Session is authorised to refuse the funeral service, if the rules above are disregarded". (21)

The preparation of the corpse is made in the usual way and as soon as the body is laid in state the minister attends the home to offer prayers. The church bell is tolled to announce the death whereupon all friends and relatives and as many of the Christian community as possible visit the house to pay their respects. Drinks are generally served; these will include alcoholic beverages for the non-Christian male mourners. Wailing, keening, drumming and the pouring of libation are not done, their place being taken by the singing of Christian hymns and lyrics. S.G. Nimako refers to the Hope Societies in the Methodist Church which tried to introduce a 'refined' form of drumming and dancing at Christian funerals, "to meet the desire of the people to show due respect to the dead, for social expression of sympathy to the bereaved and for some insurance against the financial liabilities". (22)

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(21) Regulations, Practice and Procedure, paras. 153-156.

(22) Nimako, S.G. *ibid.* pp.57 and 77. It should be said that these societies are not approved of by the Methodist Church.

Christians invariably follow the standard practice of lodging a piece of cloth or money in the coffin and often the Bible, Hymn Book, Baptismal or Confirmation card of the deceased are included. Attempts by the Church to prevent 'coffin enclosure' (aside) largely failed. (23)

If the deceased was a full member of the Church, the coffin is taken into the church (24) and a funeral service is conducted by the minister usually in the presence of a crowded congregation. All the Christians and many non-Christians attend as the death is the concern both of the Christian congregation and the wider community. The funeral of a minister is attended by as many of his fellow pastors who can possibly undertake the journey in time. Thereafter the long cortège winds its way slowly to the graveside, funeral hymns being sung on the way, and on arrival the Christian burial service is read. Should the deceased have been a member of a Lodge or a Fraternity the appropriate additional rites are performed after the officiating minister and the main body of mourners have left the graveside. The family mourners return quietly to the house.

The last stage of the funeral is the thanksgiving service in church or 'memorial' service. The effort to order this on European lines has been fraught with difficulty; Africans are not satisfied with a reference to the deceased within the ordinary service of worship. In 1951 each congregation was required to select one Sunday per month on which Memorial Services could be held. (25) Two years later Synod 'abolished' Memorial Services and condemned the wearing of special uniform cloths and dresses by members of the bereaved family. (26) "Drinking, wake-keeping and thanking connected with such

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(23) Fiawoo, op.cit. p.312. Cf. Synod Minutes (Presbyterian Church) 1935, par.14.

(24) A lapsed member is not accorded this privilege. Synod Minutes, 1926, par.12.

(25) Synod Minutes, 1951, par.16.

(26) *ibid.* 1953, II, par.5.

occasions are not allowed".<sup>(27)</sup> The pressure of traditional custom is so strong, however, that these memorial-thanksgiving services are still held.<sup>(28)</sup> Christian widows all too often feel that there must be some sort of equivalent to the widowhood customs and sometimes private services are held for the widow, her kinsfolk and close friends to signify the termination of mourning or 'weed-off'. These services are often announced in the press and follow a night of wake-keeping by the family; they are the Christian equivalent of the non-Christian repetition of the funeral celebration. A basically non-Christian rite has thus been integrated 'unofficially' into the Christian pattern.

Huge sums are spent on funerals: an investigation of seventy funerals of men and women from all walks of life, Christian and non-Christian, showed an average expenditure of £110; in all cases a debt was incurred.<sup>(29)</sup> Families do not hesitate to borrow money freely for this purpose so that the deceased may be properly received in the next world and may not visit his displeasure upon those remaining behind. The practice of advertising both funerals and memorial services in the local press has much increased during the last few years. The line of demarcation between Christian and non-Christian observances has so broken down that the dates and times of the burial, wake-keeping, libation and memorial service are given in the same announcement. The gathering of the abusua for the memorial is usually the time of the reckoning of the donations from friends and sympathisers and of the total funeral expenses.

In general, Christians do not participate directly in the ceremonies connected with the tribal festivals and do not hold stool positions. A

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(27) *ibid.* 1948, par.12.

(28) The 1961 Synod resolved that the observance of these services shall be optional and be officially known as Thanksgiving Services. A set order has been prescribed for use within an ordinary service of worship.

(29) See Appendix.



Christian who is elected to occupy a stool forfeits full membership of the Church but may, and invariably does remain an adherent. Up to twenty years ago in Akropong Christians were largely indifferent to the annual Odwira festival but nowadays it has once again become the great national and social occasion of the entire community. Odwira week is the time when Christian and non-Christian alike return to their town of birth and abusua members from far and near are united. The social function of the celebration has overridden Christian sentiment; the Christian cannot sever relations with his kin or refuse to show deference to the ruling chief simply on account of offerings made to the stools of the ancestors. Consequently the Christian will abstain from eating the new yam until it is officially permitted to do so; he will be fully aware of all the ceremonial acts performed on the various days and their significance; he will enter wholeheartedly into the spirit of reunion and fellowship which permeates the week; and he will attend the great Friday durbar just as the non-Christian will attend the packed Sunday service in the church.

In the foregoing examples of adaptation and assimilation of Akan and Christian elements it may be noted that they have taken place spontaneously; they have occurred as unreflecting modifications and are usually at variance with the stated policy of the Church. With none of them has the Church taken the initiative but has invariably adopted a defensive role.

A feature of the last thirty years in Ghana has been the emergence of heterogeneous semi-orthodox African 'Church' groups which have developed a type of worship and an ethos compounded of Christian and indigenous elements. This is a phenomenon which is not confined to Ghana and increasing notice has

been taken of it in recent years from all parts of Africa. (30) The elements common to these separatist groups are: the emphasis placed upon the 'prophet' or 'leader' of the sect who was called by divine inspiration to found the Church; the revivalistic character of their worship with an emphasis upon speaking with tongues, spirit possession and the interpretation of dreams and visions; the emotionalism of the services with complete congregational participation in the forms of hand-clapping, dancing and sometimes drumming, spontaneous singing and pious ejaculation. There is a special interest in faith-healing, in the exorcism of malevolent spirits by prayers, fastings, sprinkling with 'holy' water, and in anointing with oil. Some of the sects are anabaptist and have elaborated the baptismal rite, and though some churches insist strictly upon monogamy there is a general toleration of polygyny among them. All the churches hold to the Bible in a strictly literal way and all are African-founded, led and financed and have no connection with the historical mission Churches. Baëta describes five such indigenous Churches in Ghana and gives a short description of four others introduced from abroad all of which have a considerable following. (31) A feature of Presbyterian

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(30) For Ghana there are accounts in 'Africa', Vol. XXVI (Barbara E. Ward); Vol. XXVII (J. Goody); *Prophetism in Ghana*, C.G. Baëta, London, 1962; *Witchcraft in Ghana*, H. Debrunner, pp.149-162; *Accra Survey*, Ione Acquah, pp.148ff. For other parts of Africa there are: *Religion in an African City*, G. Parrinder, London, 1953, pp.107-132; *East African Rebels*, F.B. Welbourn, London, 1960; *Bantu Prophets in South Africa*, B.G.M. Sandkler, London 1948; *Propheten in Afrika*, K. Schlosser, Braunschweig, 1949;. By contrast with the rest of Africa, Ghanaian 'spiritual' churches seem to be non-nationalistic and free from messianism.

(31) These are: The Church of the Twelve Apostles; the Musama Disco Christo Church; the Momeneda Gyidifo ('The Saturday Faithful or the Saviour Church'); The Apostolic Revelation Society; the Prayer and Healing Group of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church at Etodome; the African Faith Tabernacle; the Eternal Order of the Cherubim and Seraphim; St. Michael's Spiritualist Temple of Light; The Church of the Lord. Acquah records 17 such groups in Accra in 1955 (*Accra Survey* p.148).

ministers' reports of their districts during the past forty years is the mention of members lapsing to join one or other of these Churches. (32)

The largest of them is the Musama Disco Christo Church which has its headquarters at Gomoa-Ashien near Abodom about eighty miles from Accra on the main west road. Here a village was founded named Mazano whence the Church has spread to all the regions of Ghana and in 1959 claimed a total membership of 19,800. (33) The founder of the Church was Prophet James Jehu Appiah, a Fanti catechist of the Methodist Church who, in 1919, was suddenly inspired by the Holy Spirit and who began to work miracles of healing. About the same time a woman member of his prayer group had visions of angels and of heaven and the two became the leaders of the new so-called Faith Society. In obedience to a further vision Jehu Appiah and Hannah Barnes married and by their prophetic utterances and healings gained great prestige for the new faith. The dismissal of Appiah from the service of the Methodist Church led to the formation of the new Church and the establishment of Mazano. On the death of the prophet in 1948 the leadership was undertaken by the son of Jehu Appiah, known as Prophet Mathapoly Moses Jehu Appiah.

The ruling body of the Church is the Jehuano Family, members and male descendants of those who, with the first Prophet, founded Mazano. These do not engage in any paid employment and spend their time in daily prayers and in the care of the organisation. They are supported by members of the Church with gifts in money and in kind. (34) There are ordained priests, catechists, healers and prophets, the last-named being 'specialists' in speaking in tongues, invoking spirits, detecting witches, exorcising devils, interpreting dreams and discerning the 'spiritual' causes of illnesses. (35) These agents are partly

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(32) The first mention I could trace was of the Faith Tabernacle in 1922 at Asamankese.

(33) Baëta, *ibid.* p.65.

(34) Baëta, *ibid.* p.45.

(35) *ibid.* p.46.

supported by members and partly by their own occupation.

At Mazano, the Holy Place, a flat-roofed cement house, occupies a prominent position and holds the Ark, a box containing the Ten Commandments and some of the Founder's prophecies written on parchment. Here ministers are ordained and prophets consecrated. Most services take place out of doors but plans are afoot to build a large 'cathedral'. Elsewhere the Musama Disco chapels resemble those of the historic Churches except that they contain both a table and an altar complete with a frame for candles. "It is here that a candle-lighting ceremony and 'high mass' are held on Sundays whenever a priest is available."<sup>(36)</sup> The agents of the Church wear long white gowns, cassock-type, with blue, black or purple girdles; the Prophet is dressed in the vestments of an archbishop; the male members wear plain white gowns and the females white dresses and red or white veils.

The life and worship of the Church is an amalgam of features from the Reformed and Catholic traditions and from indigenous religion. Every new member is baptised by sprinkling and the laying-on of hands following his public confession of sins; he or she is then given a new 'heavenly' name by the Prophet. There is instruction in the use of a fifteen-bead rosary, in the Ten Commandments, the Lord's Prayer, the Apostles' Creed and in the special 'heavenly language' of the community. The children of members are baptised as infants in conjunction with the outdooring ceremony.<sup>(38)</sup> Methodist influence is discernible in the Synod and circuit system of organisation, in the various 'societies', and in the quarterly and camp meetings. All members wear a small wooden crucifix around the neck and are obliged to fast every

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(36) *ibid.* p.49.

(37) The M.D.C.C. version of the Creed inserts the name of the Church thus: 'I believe in the Holy Ghost, the holy Musama Disco Christo Church and all true Christian Churches everywhere in the world; the communion of saints....' Baeta, *ibid.* p.43.

(38) *ibid.* p.51.

Friday, taking only water and chewing cola from dawn until dusk; longer fasts up to seven days are prescribed for the clergy. There is a taboo on sexual intercourse and on indecent conversation during fast periods. Alcohol, tobacco, pork and 'blood' are forbidden and menstrous women do not join in services of worship although their participation is not forbidden. (39) Holy Communion is administered quarterly and during the annual festival being celebrated just before dawn.

"Healing is undoubtedly far and away the most important activity of the Church....Members are not allowed the use of any drugs whatsoever, and may be treated in hospital only for accidents involving some abrupt break of a bodily organ. It is not permitted for them to consult either Western-trained doctors or African herbalists, whereas resort to a medicine man, or to magical healing of any kind....is punishable by prompt exclusion from the Church". (40) Preparation for the healing service is by fasting, ceremonial washing and by the use of a set prayer; there is drumming, dancing, fervent and frenzied petitions to God followed by anointing with oil and 'witnessing' by those who have been healed. Those affected by witchcraft are exorcised.

Polygyny is allowed but attempts are made to control it; the Jehuanos must approve the intended marriage and existing polygynists are dissuaded from taking additional wives. The divorce of members is categorically refused and 'marriage meetings' are held when advice is given on marriage and family life. (41) The Church encourages patrilineal inheritance and it has modified the customary widowhood ceremonies; funeral customs are restrained and heavy expenditure and alcohol are forbidden. The Church depends entirely upon voluntary offerings out of which the full-time workers are paid and the building of healing centres, of which there are now five, is financed.

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(39) *ibid.* p.54.

(40) *ibid.* p.54.

(41) *ibid.* p.59.

"Considerable mutual aid is practised, in goods and money as well as in services, and there is much sharing in one another's personal and family occasions and affairs, such as the outdooing of babies, engagements, marriages and the various customary arrangements therefor....." (42) The sense of belonging to a separate community united in the closest bonds of fellowship, is very strong. Baëta suggests that this is a very significant factor in the growth of the group at a time when traditional kinship bonds are beginning to lose their former cohesion. (43) The great yearly festival of the group is the annual preparation for and celebration of the 'Peaceful Year' at Mazano when members gather to dedicate themselves afresh and to hear the predictions of the Leader for the ensuing year.

None of the other healing Churches is so well-organised and developed as the Musama Disco Christo Church, but all exhibit similar features. While membership of them has not the same prestige value as membership of the historical Mission Churches, these sects have gained a considerable following and influence in the larger towns and in populous rural areas. Baëta's conclusion is that they are evidences of the firm turning away of Ghanaians "from traditional sources of succour to the Christian God" and he points out that "where reversion to African traditional practices have taken place..... the reason has been the authority of the Old Testament rather than the fact that the customs were African". (44) Their pattern of organisation and worship is African but their literal Biblicism prevents them from straying too far away from orthodox Christianity and their greater freedom in worship and the emphasis on healing have a great appeal. Their adherents feel that these Churches and groups really do justice to the supernatural elements in the Bible and demonstrate the direct, obvious action of the Holy Spirit, particularly in speaking in tongues, in ecstatic utterances, trance states,

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(42) *ibid.* p.62.

(43) *ibid.* p.63.

(44) *ibid.* p.128.

and in dealing with felt needs in exposing and exorcising witchcraft and other evil spirits. If the 'healing' Churches may be simply described as revivalism in a Ghanaian setting they are nevertheless an example of the adaptation of the Biblical message to the African's conscious desires and anxieties. Sundkler remarks: "The most pressing need (sc. for the African) is the promise of health and abundant life through methods he can understand."<sup>(45)</sup>

Two further points may be adduced in regard to these Churches. The first is their uncompromising stand against native religion. "The old pagan African resources of supernatural power, believed to be continuing in full force, are now identified as actively antagonistic to God.....There is no trace in any of these movements that the tolerant attitude of paganism to heterolatry has been permitted."<sup>(46)</sup> Secondly, they are an indication of those elements in the Christian scheme which Africans particularly prize. In the words of Dr. J.W.C. Dougall: "These African separatist churches....reveal the possibilities and the risks of revival movements under genuine African leadership and they are of great significance for the guidance of the younger churches when they seek to become truly indigenous in character and method. Moreover, the study of the way in which these movements begin and develop is of some help in the study of the relation of Christianity to culture, both Western and African, and throws up a number of clues to the whole problem of adaptation and syncretism in the world mission of the Church."<sup>(47)</sup>

If the African 'healing' Churches have emerged as religious adaptations at the Christian level so from time to time in the purely indigenous sphere there have been adaptations of obosom shrines to new uses and the elaborations of drinking-medicine cults, both offering release from some of the psycho-social problems of people in a rapidly changing society.

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(45) Sundkler, *Bantu Prophets*, p.236.

(46) Baeta, *ibid.* p.138.

(47) Dougall, J.W.C. in *International Review of Missions*. July 1956.

The place of the obosom in the Akan religious world-view has been  
earlier described. (48) Periodically in Ghana a local 'abisa' or 'asking'  
shrine gains a special reputation for being able to deal with the ills that  
afflict men and women. Miss Field has described one such shrine in detail,  
that of Mframoso in Ashanti. (49) The organisation and procedure at the  
shrine are in the classic tradition: here, to the accompaniment of drumming,  
the sounding of horns and 'gong-gong', the okomfo or priest goes into a trance  
state and, 'possessed' by the obosom spirit, he utters the oracles which  
contain the answers to the petitions of the suppliants. Her analysis of  
these requests shows that the most common concerned the reason for a failure  
to prosper in life, a wish for protection, recovery from sickness, desire for  
children and a safe delivery in childbirth, requests for help in new enterprises  
and for the solution of marital problems. (50)

There are other shrines where the priests or asofo do not become  
possessed, but in such cases, however, there are invariably women or 'spokesmen'  
who go into a possession fit and whose words are accepted as the 'oracle' of the  
abosom. The difference is usually explained on the grounds that the osofo-  
priest is responsible for the ritual while the okomfo-priest is the one who  
falls into an ecstatic trance state. (51) The oracles are often delivered in  
a pidgin version of the local language or dialect and are interpreted by an  
okyeame or spokesman. There is a Twi proverb to the effect that unless an  
okomfo obtains an assistant to interpret for him he utters no oracles. (52)

A great many of the petitions attribute the particular misfortune, illness  
or need for protection to witchcraft, and behind all the requests and

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(48) Chapter IV, above.

(49) Field, M.J. Search for Security, London, 1960.

(50) *ibid.* p.105-6.

(51) Ringwald, *ibid.*, p.43 cites Römer (Nachrichten von der Küste Guinea 1769)  
as evidence that such inspired women are an old phenomenon.

(52) 'Okomfo annya asapaate a, onkom'.



supplications lies the longing for life in the physical and material sense, long and prosperous days on this earth, freedom from sickness and from an untimely death. The consultations are expensive enough; no one may approach the abosom without an offering of eggs, fowls, sheep, cows or money. Usually the promise of several sheep or cows is commuted for a money-payment, the various shrines having different nominal values for the animals. (53) Along with these goes a reconciliation offering if an instruction given by the abosom on a previous occasion has not been obeyed, and thank offerings in return for protection or for benefits received are numerous.

An example of a more sophisticated abosom shrine with an emphasis on healing is that of Nana Akonnedi at Larteh, Akwapim, which has shown a revival of popularity in recent years. (54) Akonnedi has a long history and is mentioned in Christaller's Dictionary. (55) She is a female obosom attended by a chief priestess, attendant priestesses, herbalists, drummers and spokesmen. The shrine itself is in a well-built cement-block house; the supplicant pays his fee, makes known his request and awaits the oracle. The special days are Tuesdays and Fridays when normally the chief priestess is possessed by the spirit of Nana Akonnedi. She is dressed in white and there is singing and drumming while the priestess talks, dances and gesticulates in a trance state until the obosom leaves her. Ideally the instructions given during the ecstatic possession fit are then implemented. "Treatment is mainly with herbs, roots and barks....and spiritual or ceremonial cleansing always precede the herbal treatment". Some cases are referred to a hospital but "no illness inflicted by witchcraft or juju lies beyond the reach of Nana

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(53) Debrunner, op.cit. p.129f. Field, ibid. p.111.

(54) My information comes from a paper read at the Ghana Science Association Conference in April 1961, by Mr. W.S. Mensah-Dapaa, and from verbal communications of Mr. D. Brokensha.

(55) Christaller, J.G. Dictionary, p.599.

Akonnedi unless it has been ignored too long to cause excessive damage....or unless the malady is a punishment inflicted for an offence in which case treatment is dependent on confession as well as on pacification of the offended". (56) Mr. Mensah-Dapaa records a series of cures at the shrine of barrenness, impotence, epilepsy, paralytic and mental illnesses, dipsomania, respiratory affections and skin rashes.

The periodic revivals of 'drinking-medicine' cults in Ghana are another feature of the religious life of the last half-century. Since 1900 there has been a succession of these cults which in turn have exercised a great influence for a time and then waned. The first notices come from Basel missionaries and thereafter from anthropologists and sociologists. The general view of them is that they have arisen in response to 'the multiplicity of social problems that underlie the struggles for adaptation in the midst of the stresses and strains of a changing culture', (Fiawoo); their popularity suggests 'a growing concern about evil magic and an attempt to assuage the anxieties arising from rapid social change', (Christensen); 'they have sprung up in response to a growing sense of insecurity which can be correlated with the expansion of the cocoa industry,.....while few, if any, chiefs at the present day now consider their stools, their ancestors and their traditional ceremonial sufficient security against the dangers of modern times', (Field). (57)

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(56) Mensah-Dapaa, op.cit. pp.3-4.

(57) References are numerous: J.B. 1913, pp.85-87;  
Ládrach, O. Der Sturz eines afrikanischen Lugengottes, Basel, 1919.  
Rettray, R.S. Tribes of the Ashanti Hinterland, London, 1932, Vol.II, pp.361-5.  
Field, M.J. Akim Kotoku, Crown Agents, London 1948, Ch.XIII passim.  
Field, M.J. Search for Security, Ch.IV pass.  
Christensen, J.B. The Adaptive Functions of Fante Priesthood, in Continuity and change in African Cultures, ed. Bascom and Herskovits, Univ. Chicago Press, 1959, pp. 274-278.  
Ward, B. in 'Africa', Vol. XXVI, Jan. 1956.  
Acquah, I. Accra Survey, 1958, Appendix 1, 'Case History of Kwaku Firi'.  
Fiawoo, D.K. op.cit. pp.269-303.  
Tigare; Christian Council of the Gold Coast, 1947.

The most widely-known of these cults in Ghana in rough historical sequence are: Aberewa, Hwe-me-so, Kwasi Badu (or Anhwere), Kune (or Brakune), Senyakupo (or Kupo), Tongo, Kankamea, Tigare, Blekete, Kwasi Kukoro and Kwaku Firi. Tigare, at the height of its influence in the forties, is the most ubiquitous and it has become a generic name for this type of shrine. Most of them hail from Northern Ghana and some originated in the Sudan area of the Ivory Coast; in their original home the 'gods' are ordinary genii loci similar to the abosom of the Akan and are mainly concerned with agriculture and fertility. When these 'deities' are established in the forest region, however, they acquire a fresh power to deal with witchcraft and new forms of evil; they are then referred to, not as abosom but as 'aduru' (lit. 'medicine'), and to join a cult is 'to drink the medicine'. This may be the eating of a sanctified kola nut, (Tigare, Kune, Blekete), or ceremonial washing or marking the face with white clay, and only rarely the drinking of a potion. Once the adherent has taken the 'medicine' an inexorable and automatic connection is set up between himself and the 'deity'; disobedience of any of the cult rules will be immediately punished by death or madness, but first the 'god' will make him physically ill or mentally troubled. There is thus an opportunity for the offender to confess to the priest and to be absolved. (58)

Most 'drinking-medicine' shrines are privately owned but some are purchased by a community and set up by permission of the chief as a new power to protect the town against the growing incidence of witchcraft, stealing, marital infidelity and the unrest brought about by the changing times. (59) The priests are trained by existing practitioners and may then open a 'branch' of the cult; the cost of training varies from £25 (Blekete) to £300 or more (Tigare)

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(58) Field, Search for Security, p.89.

(59) Field, Akim Kotoku, p.183. On the other hand some chiefs banned the cults in their states, e.g. Nene Mate Kole prohibited Tigare in the Krobo districts.

and the length of the novitiate varies from three to six months, after which the new priest acquires the 'bag', the receptacle containing the cowries, the kola and other cult objects. There are references to the wealth of the priests: Debrunner quotes the Basel missionaries Lochmann and Fuller as evidence that the priest of Kwasi Badu took about £100 a day, and that in the twenties the Kwasi Kukoro priest earned £300 per annum, and Acquah asserts that Kwaku Firi gave over £6,000 to the local village people. (60) Although the regular charges to petitioners do not seem excessive, from fifteen shillings to five pounds, there is also an income from fines for transgression of the rules and charges up to ten pounds or more for cures for witchcraft.

A particularly interesting aspect of these cults is the collection of rules which govern the conduct of the member. These clearly reflect Christian influence, being cast in the form of commandments, and include injunctions against covetousness, envy, plotting evil, murder, stealing, being angry without cause, committing adultery, bearing false witness, failing to confess one's sins fully and refusing requests for help. Other prohibitions are directed against witchcraft, the use of magic or sorcery, cursing one's neighbour and challenging the power of the 'deity'.

Ladrach cites twenty commandments of Aberewa which include the above-mentioned prohibitions and adds disobedience against chiefs, the selling of stolen property, the bringing of others into debt by litigation, the failure to repay debts and neglecting to further the interests of Aberewa. (61) In every case the punishment is death at the hands of the 'god'. The ten commandments of Tigare are variously quoted but cover similar ground, as do those of Kwaku Firi and Blekete. (62) Fiawoo lists thirty-one requirements of Blekete which

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(60) Debrunner, *Witchcraft in Ghana*, p.129; Acquah, *op.cit.* p.165-6.

(61) Ladrach, *ibid.*, pp.11-16.

(62) Christian Council pamphlet, *Tigare*; cf. Busia, *Social Survey*, pp.79-81. Acquah gives the prohibitions of Kwaku Firi in *Accra Survey*, p.165.

reveal a greater admixture of Moslem, Christian and indigenous elements, e.g. the prohibition of pork, of work on Sundays, retaining hats and shoes at prayer, illicit sexual intercourse, and divorce unless sanctioned by the cult priest. (63)

One gains the impression that the various rules are well-meaning efforts on indigenous lines to prevent the further disorganisation of traditional society.

Once having taken the medicine the supplicant is then "secure against witchcraft, bad medicine, theft and adulterous intrigue for the rest of his life, provided he keeps the rules. Anyone who tries to bewitch him, harm him magically, rob him or entice away his wife, will be caught by the medicine....

..Anyone so 'caught' is smitten with sickness: if he confesses quickly and is taken to the shrine and cleansed, he recovers, if not, he dies". (64) The requests are similar to those presented at the 'asking' akomfo shrines, an indication of the troubles and problems of people belonging to a society in transition.

It is difficult to estimate the importance of these cults in the total religious life of the people: they are active in many parts of Ghana and from time to time a particular one has gained sudden fame in a specific area or, as in the case of Tigare, over the entire country. Their rise has coincided with the decline in influence of the national and traditional abosom shrines and with the rapid development of the country on Western European lines. Pastors' reports from 1922 to the present day mention the falling-away of Presbyterian Church members to take the medicine of one or other of them. (65) In the nineteen forties the number of Christians lapsing to Tigare caused all the Mission Churches deep concern. Nkwantanan in Kwahu, the headquarters

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(63) Flawoo, op.cit. pp.277ff.

(64) Field, Akim Kotoku, p.184.

(65) Cf. reports from Abetifi 1922, Oda 1935, Juaso 1935, Kwanyako 1937, Larteh 1939.

of the chief Tigare priest, became a place of pilgrimage attracting devotees, so-called pagans, literates and illiterates, Christians and Moslems, in thousands; special lorries were hired for the last part of the journey up the scarp from Nkawkaw railway station. I recall a week-end at Abetifi in January 1944 when I noted a stream of over two thousand 'pilgrims' in one afternoon. (66)

Special sermons were preached in all the Christian Churches, campaigns were conducted and pamphlets were published against Tigare which had the eventual effect of halting the exodus from the Churches, although the cult continues and may revive on a large scale at any time. Acquah remarks: "Especially for Christians this cult has ceased to be important; it may be that for some of the former Christian devotees the new Christian healing churches provide a more satisfactory alternative". (67)

The factors mentioned in the foregoing account; the extent of clan and family solidarity, the contemporary assimilation by Christians themselves of indigenous traditional rites into Christian usage, the increased Christian participation in customary festivals, the rise of 'spiritual' healing Churches, and the continued popularity of the abosom shrines and 'drinking-medicine' cults, seem to indicate two things: first, that the 'old' religion, on the one-hand, has not adequately met the present needs of a peasant people in a rapidly-changing society, and secondly, neither, on the other hand, has the form and expression of the Christianity of the historical Mission Churches. We see both an adaptation of indigenous religion to serve new needs and a feeling after an African form of Christianity. The situation is further complicated

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(66) The occasion was the so-called Tigare Anwona festival.

(67) Acquah, op.cit. p.143.

by the fact that Islam, in its role of a 'higher' world religion which is yet African in spirit, is increasingly contending for allegiance.

Islam has succeeded in doing in West Africa what Christianity has so far failed to achieve, namely, to integrate itself into certain ethnic religions and slowly to transform them. (68) The disparate elements in West African religions and Islam would seem at first glance to make the problem of conversion from the one to the other as difficult as with Christianity and as equally disruptive of the African socio-religious pattern of life. That this is not so is shown by the fact that Islam in West African meets traditional religion and life at its own level and on its own terms. "Thus the form in which Islam first makes its impact upon the animist seems little removed from animism. This gives Islam the advantage of rarely finding itself in direct contact with animists in a form whose cultural level is too high to render mutual understanding possible.....Islam does no violent uprooting but offers immediate value without displacing the old". (69) Trimingham discerns three main stages in the assimilation of Islam by West African peoples: first, the adoption of aspects of the religious and material culture of Islam such as dress, food and household habits; secondly, a stage characterised by the parallel existence of the two religions within the community, with a slow weakening of the local religious structure until the third stage, which may be of long duration, is reached, that of a definite transition to an islamised society. (70)

In Ghana first-stage Islam is encountered among the northern tribes, the Dagomba, the Mamprusi, the Gonja, the Wala and the Moshi whose rulers are

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(68) This process in West African has been excellently described in detail by J. Spencer Trimingham, *Islam in West Africa*, London, 1959, Chs. II, III, VI and VII. Cf. also G. Parrinder, *Religion in an African City*, London, 1953, pp.187-189.

(69) Trimingham, *ibid.* pp.33-4.

(70) *ibid.* pp.34-40.

Moslem but the great majority of whose people are 'pagan'. Islam among the Fanti in the south-west is the result of the western-type propaganda of the Ahmadiyya movement. In southern Ghana the inhabitants of the so-called zongo, or Moslem suburb of every town of any size, are conservative and aloof not only from Christianity but also from Akan beliefs and culture. In the large urban centres Moslems are sufficiently numerous to make people conscious of Islam as a religion especially during Ramadan and the other festivals. (71)

The zongo is an annex of forest-zone towns and villages where the people from Northern Ghana live. These settlements grew up after 1900 when developing commerce, industry and agriculture drew thousands of men to the south. They are the gathering-place of all northerners, Moslem or otherwise, from Northern Ghana, Nigeria and the Sudan. Many of the inhabitants are semi-permanent but they never lose their veneer of Islam and preserve their own way of life. They work among the Akan as cocoa-labourers manual labourers, watchmen, petty traders, butchers, mattress and cushion dealers, tailors of Moslem clothing and water-carriers. (72) Occasionally a malam, or Moslem cleric, is resident among them; he leads in prayer, teaches the rudiments of the Koran, performs the first sacrifice at the great feasts, names the new-born, conducts the marriage ceremonies, washes the dead and says the funeral prayers. The zongos are the calling-places and rest-houses of the travelling Hausa traders and Fulani cattle-men.

There is recognition of the nkramfo (lit. 'prayer folk'), the term used by the Akan to describe the zongo dwellers, a reference to their habit

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(71) Acquah, Accra Survey, p.144 quotes J.H. Price as estimating the Moslem population of Accra in 1954 as 23.4% of the total. Most of these are temporary immigrant labourers. The Yoruba in W. Nigeria are the only forest people yet significantly affected by Islam.

(72) In the large towns many of them make a living out of re-selling cement bags, flour bags, empty bottles and kerosene tins.



of praying in public. They may trade, farm and practice their religion without interference but conversely they take no part in Akan traditional life except to appear as a community on certain state or civic occasions such as to pay homage to the Chief at the Odwira durbar. They never adopt Akan religion or dress and Christian converts from among them are very rare. Although they are poorer than the generality of the Akan community in which they live they feel in no way inferior; their isolation tends to confirm them as Moslems but since independence (1957) they have become more assured of their place in society. In reading through the Presbyterian Church and Mission Reports of the last fifty years I have encountered no references to any local Christian group making efforts to evangelise the zongo dwellers. (73) On the other hand, the mission of the Church is very active in the north of the country. (74) Thus the ubiquity of Islam and the fact that educated southerners who call themselves Moslems are more often encountered, together with the changing religious patterns which have already been mentioned, should compel the Church to re-examine its evangelical approach.

Can the Church learn from Moslem 'methods' and adapt the presentation of its Gospel to the outlook and mode of life of Africans? "In social practice Islamic ceremonial connected with the transitional rites is easily adopted.....the new culture gives new values without radical displacement of the old". (75) By contrast, the Christian congregation has come into being in conscious opposition to the community as a whole, largely divorced from the felt needs, thought-life and behaviour of the African. The appeal of the historical Mission Churches seems, at this point in time, to be limited and the Christian community remains a somewhat alien group on the circumference of society.

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(73) Apart from Nima, Accra.

(74) See Chapter IX above.

(75) Trimmingham, *ibid.* p.40.

The Presbyterian Church of Ghana, like the other European-founded Churches, is thus now faced with a new and complex religious situation. Sociologically considered, the Church may be described as a new form of religious association, one of the fruits of change in the religious and social sphere. (76) Judged purely as a sociological phenomenon it may be said to owe much of its appeal and its progress to its offer of a means of adjustment in a rapidly-changing society. It offers to the convert education and a feeling of having gained social status by the fact of belonging to an enlightened group. By itself, it is a symbol of the western 'civilised' world which the non-Christian community values and appreciates. Chiefs, for example, and often the priests of the new cults, donate handsomely to the Church; the chiefs help to provide schools and give land and increasingly, on festival occasions like Christmas and Easter, they, together with many of the non-Christian community, will attend services. The Churches, through their educational and medical activities, have also initiated and fostered social change.

At the same time, the Church, from the Christian point of view, is sui generis and cannot be reduced to sociological factors. Its aim is conversion to a living faith in Jesus Christ as the Way, the Truth and the Life and is not simply one of cultural and religious intercourse; it sets out to change men and society and to re-orientate the whole of life around a new centre. The mission of the Church is not fulfilled by a process of conscious synthesis between Christianity and another religion. Nevertheless, the Church is planted in a particular soil and in a region which has its own religions and social climate; it is therefore only to be expected that the plant will grow differently in Africa than in Europe. The task and duty of the Church in Ghana is quite clear, in Kraemer's words: "The necessity and imperativeness of

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(76) Thus Fiwoo, op.cit. pp.361-5.

adaptation falls into its natural place when we take seriously the upbuilding of the Church....It means that the Church has to live, to witness, to grow there, in that specific world where God has placed it. Adaptation therefore does not signify compromise, or 'interesting experiment' but....expression of the Christian faith in a style which is...not that of a pot-plant, but of a seed sown in a specific soil. To be sure there are knotty questions here, but the direction is as clear as sunlight. Why do we Westerners find it natural and justified that English, German and Dutch Christianity, for instance, should have their peculiar characteristics, style and flavour, and are even reluctant in our own environment to enter fearlessly into the knotty questions implied in this fact, whereas, when it comes to the 'younger churches', we often impede them in their search for self-expression by immediately raising the knotty questions". (77)

Kraemer goes on to offer guidance in facing this problem of adaptation: the Church should be truly a community reborn in Christ whose members are thoroughly instructed in the thought-world of the Bible, and in each congregation there should be a strong minority that knows in a simple but effective way the religious and ethical purport of the Christian faith. Positively, he urges that like the Apologists in the second century the Church should initiate the 'dialogue' with their surrounding world and find out in the process "how to represent the Christian faith in a world with which the Church, on its human side, is bound up". (78) Clearly this is a risky undertaking: "In the second century the Church manifested its deviation from the apostolic kerygma in many ways. We may mention the apocryphal gospels, the moralistic attitude of the early Fathers,....the accommodation of various apologetes to the dominant trends of thinking in their environment with which they opened the dialogue. (79) None of these things need deter us".

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(77) Kraemer, H. Religion and the Christian Faith, London, 1958, pp.410-11.  
(78) Kraemer, *ibid.* pp.404-417, 'Syncretism as a Missionary Problem'.  
(79) *ibid.* p.413.

The problem of adaptation for the Church in Ghana is further complicated by factors of which Justin and Quadratus and the others knew nothing, namely the ever-increasing impact of modern Western European technology, industry, and political ideas, with their inevitable social and cultural consequences. In spite of this impact, however, the basic Akan way of life shows a remarkable resilience and tenacity, rooted as it is in the conception of a unified society, and in a view of man in which there is no separation of the sacred from the secular, or of 'the cerebral from the instinctive' to use a phrase of J.V. Taylor.<sup>(80)</sup> Not a little of the concern about the break-up of the old cultural pattern is in itself a challenge to the Church as the one institution that can come to the aid of African culture and transform it from within. Up to now in Ghana this challenge has not been seriously taken up but rather the reverse in that the opposition to local religion and custom by the Church has contributed to the process of disintegration. It is not to be wondered at, therefore, that a position of stalemate seems to have been reached with the Church occupying a peripheral rather than a central place in the total community. At the same time, the assimilation of indigenous customs into Christian usage and the rise of the healing Churches are indications of the relative failure of the European Mission Churches to express the Christian faith in African form and style. That this situation is not peculiar to Ghana is clear from Sundkler's researches throughout the continent. He writes: "Theology is, in the last resort translation. It is an ever-renewed re-interpretation to new generations and peoples of the given Gospel, a re-presentation of the will and the way of the one Christ in a dialogue with new thought-forms and culture patterns. Translation to Africa, on this

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(80) Taylor, J.V. The Growth of the Church in Buganda, p.259.

level of theological encounter, has hardly begun....Theology in Africa has to interpret this Christ in terms that are relevant and essential to African existence". (81)

This task of re-interpretation is one for Akan theologians. Really independent Akan theological thinking has not yet developed but it is beginning and the importance of Trinity College for the Presbyterian and Methodist Churches in Ghana cannot<sup>be</sup>/overestimated. (82) We still await African theologians who will pioneer in this task of re-interpretation; as a conclusion to this study we may indicate some of the general lines on which it might proceed.

First, in the realm of the Church's worship. In this sphere the Presbyterian Church still reflects the characteristics of the European Churches from which the missionaries came. It is austere and unemotional with very little congregational participation apart from the hymn-singing, the words of which are forced into Western metres and sung to tunes which ignore the tones of the language. The minister is dressed in a black gown, with clerical collar and bands, and the literate choir is robed in cassocks, surplices and mortar boards. The wearing of African dress in the pulpit is frowned upon. The Sunday morning service begins with a hymn, followed by the Beatitudes said by minister and congregation in versicle form, thereafter is a long written prayer of praise, confession, thanksgiving and intercession ending with the repetition of the Lord's Prayer. The long prayer is punctuated by five set responses and by the singing of three hymn verses. From this point, the service proceeds through the reading of the Scripture, the singing of hymns and the Sermon. (83) There is an alternative order with fewer responses and which contains the Apostles' Creed, a Litany of supplication and confession which is read mainly

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(81) Sundkler, B. The Christian Ministry in Africa, London, 1960, p.281.

(82) See Chapter VIII above.

(83) Twi Hymns and Liturgy, Basel 1957, 26th ed.

at Easter. The minister is free to use extempore prayer and often does so. There is no address to the children and the sermon, which is based on the lectionary passage, lasts for thirty minutes and is invariably in the nature of a homily or a moral discourse.

A feature of the Sunday forenoon service is the announcement by the minister of the thank offerings. The motive of 'longing for life' in the Akan religious approach is clearly expressed in this custom of announcing the thanks of those who have benefited from God's goodness, for example, for recovery from an illness or an accident, protection from danger, for the safe birth of a child, a safe homecoming from a long journey, or a happy outcome of an enterprise. A special prayer is often made at the conclusion of the announcements and the money donated by each individual is mentioned. The amount given, often anonymously, varies from a few shillings to one or two pounds. An idea of the strength of this custom may be gained from the fact that the total of such thank offerings paid into the Central Fund of the Church in 1959 amounted to £5,456.

The sole concession to a purely African expression of worship is in the singing of lyrics in vernacular words and idiom; a movement begun by E. Anu in 1932 and one which has been continued by a number of other composers. (84) In the Methodist congregations, similarly, the Fante lyrics have found a firm place and have stood the test of time. (85) Both are indigenous modes of expression adapted to the use of Christian worship; both, however, are the province of the illiterate and semi-literate singing band or the women's class. The 'westernised' choir of literates, who like to sing an anthem or a hymn in English, takes pride of place. (86)

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(84) Twenty-five African Songs in the Twi Language, E. Anu, London, 1932.

(85) The Lyric in the Fante Methodist Church, S.G. Williamson, in 'Africa' Vol. 28, No.2, pp.126-134.

(86) There is still much use of English in the Ghana Methodist Church. The Presbyterian services are almost entirely in the local languages.

The Church has frowned upon African drumming and dancing on the grounds that they were often associated with elements in traditional life which were repugnant to Christian feeling, and drums are forbidden on church premises. Yet there are Christian Ghanaian musicians who feel that the drum may have a place in worship: "I would certainly like to encourage the poetic use of the drum in creating an atmosphere of worship where necessary....Drummed at appropriate moments it can help the African as he tries to concentrate every faculty on Christ during the short period of worship....Invariably singing accompanied or combined with drums has implications of movement which may be articulated in bodily movements - a simple wagging of the head, the toe, the shoulder or in more vigorous dancing".<sup>(87)</sup> While there is a necessity to maintain the traditional features of Christian worship which have always characterised it may it not be re-created for many through the use of African resources? "Ultimately the problem of indigenising Christian worship rests with African Christians who have an insight into the Christian faith and a sympathetic understanding of the problems of worship in their own changing society".<sup>(88)</sup>

But there is a more important aspect of the Church's worship in Africa, namely that in Sundkler's words: "the great Biblical terms for the Church - the People of God, the Body of Christ, the Household or Family of God - find a vibrant sounding-board in the structure of African social patterns, particularly of the clan".<sup>(89)</sup> In the Akan abusua system there is much that can be built into the community of believers; may it be that 'abusua' is a more fitting term for the Church than 'asafo', the 'family' rather than the 'warrior band'? There is a risk in this approach in the possible confusion between the kinship

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(87) Nketia, J.H. The Contribution of African Culture to Christian Worship, in International Review of Missions, July, 1958, p.275.

(88) *ibid.* p.278.

(89) Sundkler, *ibid.* p.297-8.

bond of blood and the spiritual bond of faith in the blood of Christ which transcends all kin and clan relationships, and in forgetting that reverence for ancestors is not the same as the 'communion of saints'.

There are, however, two vital factors to be recalled, first that in spite of the 'westernisation' of African life the patterns and attitudes of the extended family and clan still play a great role, and secondly, that no African can ever forget his links with the dead. Baeta has suggested that the Church may make a deliberate effort to make use of the Akan kindred consciousness by the introduction of new customs into Christian observance. "The setting, the external framework of these observances should be taken directly from African culture and be plainly reminiscent of it. But the meaning, the content, especially as expressed in words, should serve Christian purposes and provide Christian nurture.....The important thing is that for every occasion of heightened feeling there should be a custom combining African form and Christian content. For this reason I would suggest that these new customs be hitched principally, though not entirely, to the inevitable highlights of the common life, i.e. to birth, puberty, marriage and death". (90) He goes on to show that 'outdooring' and infant baptism may be combined and that in traditional marriage ceremonies the Christian requirements can be comprised. He remarks significantly on funeral observances: ".....whatever others may do in their own countries, our people here live with their dead. This is plain for anybody to see who participates sympathetically in a ceremony of the pouring of family libations: the intimate and affectionate tone of the prayers, the sense of the immediate presence of the dead, all that can leave no one in any doubt. And yet when church bodies make rulings in the matter of funeral observances the

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(90) Baeta, C.G. in Christianity and African Culture, p.58.



reasons given for the repressive measures recommended.....are not even religious reasons, but merely such irrelevances as expense, inconvenience and waste of time.....The better way of dealing with such-like intractable remnants of a previous or passing culture, now no longer desired, would seem to be not to proscribe them out of hand but to prune, purify and guide them...!"<sup>(91)</sup>

The root theological problem with regard to Akan religion lies in the understanding of ancestor veneration. Stripped of all accretions Akan religion is centred on the more abundant life of each lineage and of the tribe in which the departed ancestors play a decisive role. In spite of rapid social change the concern with ancestors is still a powerful force because it concerns both the lineage and the tribe; "it has become associated with the sentiments and values on which the unity and continuity of the tribe depend".<sup>(92)</sup> The stools, the chieftaincy and the great festivals are the outward expression of this unity and continuity of the living and the dead.

From the Christian side it is not difficult to assert that the ancestors are worshipped and that their alleged power over human affairs denies not only the first commandment but also the Lordship of Christ. The suggestion that they are intermediaries between man and God can be shown to be an affront to the position of Christ as sole Mediator, while the supposition that the deceased have the same status in the spiritual world as on earth is clearly something quite different from the Christian doctrine of the Resurrection. I have yet to meet, however, an African Christian who, while assenting to these arguments, did not feel that at this point the Gospel scheme did not fulfil his needs. Nor, with this dogmatic approach, does it seem probable that the whole of African group life will be touched. May this question not be

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(91) *ibid*, p.59.

(92) Busia, *Christianity and Culture*, p.22.

approached differently? For one thing, ancestor veneration among the Akan has no set formulation of beliefs, its primary aim is social and not religious; and for another, because its emphasis upon the links between the living and the dead is so much an integral part of Akan life and thought it cannot be ignored in any presentation of the Gospel to such a people. H. St. John Evans has remarked that "the important thing to be noticed about this cult (i.e. ancestor veneration) is that it in no sense seeks to raise the asamanfo to the status of gods. Their sphere of influence is not thought to extend beyond the particular family or clan group; nor can the reverence in which they are held be regarded as worship, in the strictly religious sense. It is, rather, a recognition of the essential unity of all members of the clan, living and departed - the latter being held to possess certain super-human powers which entitle them to special respect".<sup>(93)</sup> Clearly we have here, in Baëta's words, "all the material for a theological battle royal", and "an issue indistinguishable from that of the controversies of the Middle Ages regarding saints, namely the shades of meaning in the words 'reverence', 'worship' and 'service', and who gets what".<sup>(94)</sup> May it not be that as a result of this theological debate the Church in Africa will lead us in Europe into a fuller understanding of the 'descent into Hell' and of 'the communion of saints'?

The phenomena of the 'spiritual-healing' Churches, of the increased incidence of witchcraft and of the widespread recourse of people to the shrines, need to be taken more seriously by African Church leaders. From Baëta's sympathetic study of the African Churches four conclusions emerge: they mark an effort in a changing society to create new communities which should function like kinship groups; while they have abandoned the traditional sources of

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(93) St. John Evans, H. The Akan Doctrine of God, in African Ideas of God, ed. E.W. Smith, London, 1950, pp.243-4.

(94) Baëta, C.G. *ibid.* p.60.

spiritual succour they have retained the basic African ideas regarding the nature of the world and its forces; the healing of the 'whole' man has been placed squarely within the religious context; the 'revivalist' type of service, while not distinctively African, seems to accord more with the traditional African expression of worship. (95)

The preoccupation of these Churches with the techniques of gaining contact with supernatural power, their fastings, taboos, special times and types of prayer, their dress and rituals, their rigid Biblical literalism and their leaning upon 'miracle', makes their religion different from that of the historical Mission Churches. "In fact the old

Reformation distinction between 'grace alone' and 'works' (in this context the performance of special rites, ceremonies and ecstatic dancing) is clearly

illustrated here". (96) Moreover, argues Baëta, the very concern of these Churches to fulfil the immediate felt needs of the people tends to restrict their function and to overlook the wider message of the Gospel.

At the same time it may be said that these Churches offer a number of clues to the problem of adaptation. We begin to see 'what the African Christian, when left to himself, regards as important and relevant in Christian faith and in the Christian Church', (Sundkler); in their worship 'they approach nearer the African ethos', (Parrinder); 'much of the success of the sects derives from the fact that there is much more personal contact and personal attention, especially towards diseased persons', (Debrunner). Here is a rich field for the Christian African theologian in a reconsideration of the pastoral responsibilities of the Church which will take much more seriously the recurrent phenomena of witchcraft. Taylor has suggested, in speaking of similar problems in Buganda, that "the development of some properly-safeguarded ministry of exorcism may be the right approach". (97) The task

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(95) Baëta, C.G. *Prophetism in Ghana*, Ch. VIII, *passim*.

(96) *ibid.* p.145.

(97) Taylor, *op.cit.* p.211.

of the Church is not to deny the spirits but to show that they are overcome in the power of Christ, to demonstrate the strength of its face-to-face fellowship, and to offer a Gospel geared to African needs.

Most of the previous discussion revolves around the problem of missionary aims and methods. The Presbyterian Church of Ghana, together with the other historical Mission Churches, stands at a point in its history when a re-examination of its pastoral and evangelical task is most urgent. What is the nature of its mission? Is it to establish itself in separated congregations of convinced, dedicated believers who have in theory 'broken' with the customs and thought-world of the past, or, is the Church to be a Church of the people seeking to enfold all society in its embrace? "Has missionary policy had too disintegrating an influence?" asks Parrinder, "Does it need re-orientation, if indeed it seeks to gain Africa rather than a few islands of the élite". (98)

The following considerations need to be borne in mind in attempting to frame answers to these difficult questions. First and foremost is the presentation of the Gospel which demands individual response to peoples whose religion and social life is all of a piece; and secondly, the past experience of the Church in its missionary enterprise. In his study of the growth of the Church in Buganda Taylor gives his considered opinion in these words: "What is at stake is not merely a question of pastoral method but the whole relation of the Gospel to the peasant world. We have seen that in Buganda the village people have a deep sense of the need for 'religion' which is compounded of custom, law, outward observance, beliefs held in common, all based on a recognition of the transcendent God and on some body of revealed

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(98) Parrinder, *Religion in an African City*, p.196.

truth. We have also seen that the idea of 'gospel' as something that challenges 'religion' and finds it wanting, goes against the grain of peasant culture, because of its inherent individualism and discrimination. We are compelled to ask whether there is any evidence, in the world today, or in the history of the Church, that Evangelical Christianity - the Christianity of 'gospel' - can ever take firm hold of a peasant society.....This may partly explain why only the so-called 'catholic' presentation of Christianity has taken a firm hold of peasant peoples in the past without changing them into something else....." (99)

One cannot, in a study of this nature, lay under contribution the total experience of the Church's missionary method but a few points may be made. In the early Church up to the time of Constantine Christian congregations came into existence in the cosmopolitan, urban populations of the Graeco-Roman world. From the period of Constantine and Theodosius onwards conversion was by the community as a whole rather than by individuals; usually this step was taken by the chiefs and kings who led or coerced their subjects into following them to the baptismal font. It is perhaps an over-simplification to speak of the one process as 'conversion' and the other as 'christianisation', or to suggest that the former describes the 'Reformed' approach and the latter the 'Catholic', for historically the two aims have operated contemporaneously. There are dangers in both approaches but it would seem that in Africa there is more to be said for the 'catholic' view. The only areas in Africa, namely the Belgian Congo, Ruanda-Urundi and Buganda, where the Church has begun to capture the 'soul' of the people, are examples of the policy followed in the conversion of Europe.

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(99) Taylor, op.cit. p.258.

Sundkler has graphically described how Roman Catholic mission policy in Ruanda-Urundi was drastically reversed in 1928, when "the gravitation centre of the whole work was switched from shepherding the Christians to the conversion of the pagans". (100) Emphasis was laid upon winning chiefs and at the same time two classes of the catechumenate were formed, one of believers not yet baptised and the other group of those who had been baptised but who were partners in a plural marriage. (101) The results have been amazing: in 1927 there were 28,000 baptised Christians, 44,000 catechumens and two African priests; thirty years later the number of baptised Christians had risen to 1,200,000, that of the catechumens to 353,000, and that of African priests to 117. Most of the local and district chiefs have become Roman Catholics during the same period. (102)

A study by an African theologian of the conversion of the Anglo-Saxons would make interesting and enlightening reading. It seems clear that in many ways the traditional religion of the Anglo-Saxons had many features in common with that of the Akan, and that the foundation of the success of the mission was laid in the earliest days by those who followed Gregory's instructions. "He bade the monks tell their tidings of hope and salvation simply, to insist only on the essentials of faith and baptism, and to avoid anything that might needlessly offend the traditions of the people they had come to save.....They were to merge the old heathen feasts in the festivals of the Christian year; to destroy the idols but keep the temples...Christianity was presented as the correction rather than the denial of their beliefs". (103) The 'conversion' was, of course, incomplete and often superficial; many years passed before barbarous customs were purified; heathen practices and magic long continued but the Church was enabled to work from within the community and

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(100) Sundkler, op.cit. pp.77-87.

(101) International Review of Missions, Oct. 1950, pp.459-61.

(102) Sundkler, op.cit. 80-81.

(103) Bryant, A. Makers of the Realm, London, 1955, p.78. From Bede, Eccles, Hist. Book I, Ch. XXX.

slowly to change its ethos.

We end this account by urging a fresh consideration of the social and religious factors embodied in the indigenous Akan world-view and which condition the inner life of the people, so that the message of the Gospel may speak directly to their minds and hearts. Through the work and researches of missionaries, anthropologists and sociologists, we possess today a much clearer insight into the essential nature of Akan religion and society, in Rattray's phrase, we know so much more of 'the idiom of the soul' of the people. It is only too clear that we cannot relegate the spiritual outlook of the Akan to the museum shelves but rather the Church must build upon it. This task<sup>is</sup> primarily that of the leaders and theologians of the Church. It is they who share the same total life-situation as their non-Christian brethren, it is they alone who can tell when 'conversion' has taken place, it is they alone who can translate to their day and generation, in African terms, the life-giving, integrating and saving Gospel of Jesus Christ.

APPENDIX I.

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The Minutes of the Basel Mission Home Board were available to me for a few days. Owing to the fact that they are written in the old German script which I was not able to read easily I could only spare the time to verify such references of Schlatter upon which I have relied.

My thanks are due to the Directors of the Basel Mission who readily placed the Mission House Library at my disposal and who gave me every assistance.

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APPENDIX II.

The Roll of 138 European Missionaries and Wives of the Basel Mission

who died in the Gold Coast 1829-1913.

(Compiled from Jahresberichte and Basel Mission Archives).

Name	Date of Birth	Arrived in Africa	Date of Death	Burial Place
Holzwarth Gottlieb	19. 7.1802	18.12.1828	12. 8.1829	Christiansborg
Salbach, Carl				
Ferdinand	28.12.1799	"	29. 8.1829	"
Schmid, J. Gottlieb	8. 8.1804	"	"	"
Henke, J. Philip	30.12.1798	"	27.11.1831	"
Heinze, Christian F.	15.12.1804	13. 3.1832	26. 4.1832	"
Jäger, Peter				
Peterson	7. 4.1808	"	18. 7.1832	"
Stanger, Andreas	21. 3.1811	3.11.1836	25.12.1837	Akropong-Akwapim
Mürdter, Johannes	18. 7.1809	"	4.11.1838	"
Sebald, Ernst F.		10. 1.1845	7.12.1845	"
Riis, Margaretha (Mrs.A.Riis)	12. 3.1815	11.1836	5. 9.1845	At sea off Cape Coast.
Köster, Carl F.	10. 2.1820	18. 3.1849	15. 6.1849	Christiansborg
Riis, Elizabeth (Mrs.H.N.Riis)	17. 7.1827	1848	14.10.1849	Akropong-Akwapim
Herzog, Friedrich	13. 8.1824	23.12.1855	22. 5.1856	Abokobi
Steinhauser, W. August	7.11.1829	25. 1.1853	13. 9.1857	Christiansborg
Hönger, Abraham	9.11.1832	26. 3.1857	18. 5.1858	Gyadam
Baum, David	19. 3.1827	23.12.1855	14. 8.1858	Christiansborg
Furer, Anna	7. 7.1838	1857	1. 8.1859	"
Ried, Michael	1. 3.1833	23.12.1856	5. 4.1860	Abokobi
Pfrunder, Jacob	27. 1.1834	26.10.1861	22. 3.1862	"
Schall, Louise (Mrs.E.Schall)	9. 6.1831	1860	1. 7.1862	"
Heck, Marie (Mrs.J.Heck)	27. 7.1836	31. 7.1860	4. 7.1862	Odumase Krobo
* Schellenberg, Johann H.	23. 1.1836	19. 1.1862	26.11.1862	Christiansborg
Weiblen, Johannes	3.12.1835	22. 1.1861	15. 5.1863	Abokobi
Maier, Johannes	21. 7.1840	20. 5.1863	14. 6.1864	Akropong-Akwapim
Schimaneck, G.H.	11. 1.1836	20. 8.1863	26. 1.1866	Aburi
Christaller, Emilie (Mrs.J.G.Christaller)	11. 2.1829	23.12.1856	13. 8.1866	Kibi
* Lindermann, Sebastian	4. 7.1837	22. 6.1864	23. 2.1866	Christiansborg
Heck, Jakob	4. 5.1832	23.12.1856	11. 5.1866	"
Eisenschmid, Rosine (1st wife of Rev.D Eisenschmid)	21.12.1841	20. 1.1865	9. 5.1867	Kibi
Schönhut, Heinricke (Mrs.A.Schönhut)	1. 5.1843	14.11.1866	12.10.1867	Christiansborg

\* indicates Mission Factory employee.

Name	Date of Birth	Arrived in Africa	Date of Death	Burial Place
Reh fuss, Christiane (Mrs.F.Reh fuss)	10. 3.1838	1867	9. 3.1868	Christiansborg
Klaiber, Rebecca (1st wife of Rev. M.Klaiber)		1. 2.1864	5.11.1868	Aburi
*Klaus, Robert	10. 1.1841	21. 2.1864	22. 4.1868	Odumase Krobo
Reh fuss, Friedrich	1. 7.1841	21. 2.1864	4. 7.1868	Christiansborg
Lüthy, T.Ulrich	6.12.1839	17.11.1866	7. 5.1869	Abokobi
Klaiber, Rosine (2nd wife of Rev. M.Klaiber)		27.10.1870	7. 5.1871	Odumase Krobo
Walker, Pauline (Mrs.J.J.Walker) (1)	7.10.1836	17. 6.1867	25. 9.1872	Akropong-Akwapim
Mader, Ernestine (Mrs.J.A.Mader)	10.10.1828	1855/56	19. 2.1873	Adafo (2)
Haas, Johannes	5. 8 .1843	29.11.1872	1. 6.1873	Adafo (2)
Haas, Maria (Mrs.L.Haas)	14.11.1846	29.11.1872	6.11.1873	Kibi
Bohmer, Mrs. Friederike	19.12.1851	29.11.1872	19. 5.1875	Abokobi
Handel, H. Wilhelm	16. 6.1851	8. 2.1875	21. 5.1875	Kibi
Klass, Jakob (brother of Mrs.Seeger)	6. 6.1849	22.10.1871	29. 8.1875	Akropong-Akwapim
Weber, Joh.Jacob	16. 7.1842	27.10.1870	11. 9.1875	Adafo
Müh, Michael	8. 3.1846	2.12.1873	13. 9.1876	Christiansborg
Widmann J.Geo.	30. 1.1814	19. 4.1843	27.11.1876	Akropong-Akwapim
Petavel, August	21.11.1846	3. 1.1875	6. 1.1877	" "
Krauss, C.Heinrich	2. 3.1852	31. 5.1876	14. 6.1877	" "
*Wörnle, W.Louis	11. 1.1856	7.12.1876	26. 9.1877	Aburi
Muller, Ernestine (nee König 1st wife of Rev. Joh. Muller)	13. 3.1848	26. 1.1871	11.12.1877	Akropong-Akwapim
Eisenschmid, Hanna (2nd wife of Rev. D.Eisenschmid) (3)	17.9.1843	1866	14.12.1877	"
Buch, J.Friedrich	12.7.1851	3. 1.1877	1.3 .1878	Christiansborg
Emmer, F.August	24. 7.1848	1.12.1875	28. 3.1878	"
Jordi, Johannes	30. 3.1849	20. 6.1877	12. 7.1878	Akropong-Akwapim
Sauter, Martin	26.12.1852	7.12.1876	9.11.1878	"

\* indicates Mission Factory employee.

- (1) came first as the fiancée of Rev.J.Ulrich Lüthy who died in May,1869.
- (2) The first European burial there: (Heidenbote 73, p.75).
- (3) Sailed to Africa in 1866 as the fiancée of Rev.Ruckaber (Bremen Mission, Togoland), became a widow the following year and later married the Rev. D. Eisenschmid.

Name	Date of Birth	Arrived in Africa	Date of Death	Burial Place
Glatzle, Gottlieb	12.12.1850	1.12.1875	15. 5.1879	Begoro
Werner, Eugen C.	8. 4.1851	3. 1.1875	22. 5.1879	Abetifi
* Buttner, Richard	9. 3.1856	8.1877	18. 7.1880	Adafo
Weigle, Pauline	28. 3.1853	28.11.1877	5. 6.1880	Akropong-Akwapim
* Preiswerk, Ernst	29. 9.1854	20. 6.1877	10. 6.1881	Christiansborg
Schmidt, Louise (Mrs. Alphonse Schmidt)				
Sister of Ernst Preiswerk).	12. 9.1856	23. 2.1881	31. 5.1881	"
Schmidt, Alphonse	17. 2.1850	11. 7.1878	13. 6.1881	"
Ochsner, Wilhelm	19. 3.1851	11. 7.1878	17. 5.1881	Aburi
Buss, Phil.	1. 8.1851	7.12.1876	25. 8.1881	Begoro
Sixt, August	18. 3.1852	28.11.1877	16. 3.1882	Aburi
Burckhardt, Beorg.	8. 1.1852	10.1880	28. 4.1882	Begoro
Schöller, J. Jakob	16. 7.1853	15. 3.1879	8. 9.1882	Akropong-Akwapim
Gauger, Maria	5.12.1858	12. 1.1882	30. 3.1882	Christiansborg
Mohr, Adelheid	7. 9.1851	28.11.1877	2. 8.1882	Begoro
Schönfeld, Mrs. Tabitha	21. 4.1849	27. 3.1872	6. 5.1882	at sea off Senegal
* Dieterle, Nathanael	28. 3.1851	10. 2.1874	19. 1.1883	Odumase Krobo
Dieterle, Babette	30.11.1856	23. 2.1881	16. 3.1883	Akropong-Akwapim
Buck, Carl	18. 9.1851	31. 5.1876	30. 9.1883	Abokobi
Lydia Buck	21.10.1859	2.11.1882	1. 2.1883	Kibi
* Reisser, Hermann	29. 3.1861	9.1881	20. 7.1883	Christiansborg
Krauss, Jakob F.	15.11.1856	4.11.1881	15. 2.1883	Begoro
Bender, Carl	1. 7.1849	5.11.1874	15. 3.1885	Akropong-Akwapim
Weimer, Jakob	19. 2.1850	1.12.1875	25. 4.1885	Begoro
Schmid, Johann	3. 2.1860	11.11.1885	15.12.1885	Abokobi
Huppenbauer, Wilhelm	26. 6.1858	2.11.1882	22. 3.1886	Christiansborg
Huppenbauer, Lydia	25. 6.1860	20. 5.1885	21. 2.1886	Begoro
Seeger, Wilhelmina	28. 8.1856	15. 3.1897	17. 4.1886	Abokobi
Müller, Mathilde nee Denner (Mrs. J. Michael Müller)	26. 2.1853	28.11.1877	6. 1.1886	Akropong-Akwapim
Müller, Magdalene nee König (2nd wife of Rev. Joh. Müller)	20. 3.1850	5.11.1878	28. 8.1886	"
Siegle, Emilie	6. 7.1862	7. 1.1885	26. 8.1886	Christiansborg
Siegle, Gottfried Im	7. 5.1858	2.11.1882	26. 8.1886	"
* Blust, Reinhard	4. 9.1860	11.11.1885	12. 6.1887	"
* Hanner, Joseph	20. 3.1859	4. 4.1884	17. 5.1887	"
Seeger, Lydia (4) (2nd Wife of Rev. M. Seeger)	29.11.1856	31. 5.1876	6. 1.1888	Abokobi
Furrer, Elizabeth	10. 6.1855	4. 7.1880	2. 4.1888	Ada
Bachtle, Mrs. Maria Agnes (1st wife of Rev. J. Bachtle)	18. 4.1862	26. 6.1888	29. 9.1889	Christiansborg.

\* indicates Mission Factory employee.

(4) sailed to Africa in 1876 as the bride of Michael Müh who died in Sptember of that year. She later married August Sixt whodied in 1882, and later rev. Seeger.

Name	Date of Birth	Arrived in Africa	Date of Death	Burial Place
Schmid, Gottlieb Ludwig	8. 3.1849	3. 1.1877	8. 2.1890	Aburi
Natter, Carl	20. 1.1865	5. 9.1888	15. 7.1890	Christiansborg
* Zimmermann, Gotfried	17. 5.1861	6.1882	13. 6.1891	"
Eckhardt, Carl A Dr.Med.	20. 1.1859	24. 8.1887	24. 4.1893	Aburi
Finch, Clara(miss)	19. 1.1858	3.1892	24. 9.1893	Odumase Krobo
* Schlaich, Louis	12. 6.1866	19. 9.1890	15. 7.1893	Aburi
Kölle, Lina (Mrs)	13. 5.1864	3.1892	12. 5.1894	Abokobi
Bächtle, Mrs. Anna Lina (2nd wife of Rev. J.Bächtle)	9. 2.1865	2. 3.1892	27. 1.1894	Christiansborg
Luther, Wilhelmina (Miss) (5)	26. 4.1895	28. 6.1895	17. 7.1895	Aburi
* Ross, Georg	20. 2.1866	3/4.1889	22.10.1895	Accra
* Levin, Heller	21. 1.1862	15.10.1893	18. 2.1896	"
* Grutzmacher, Richard	24. 9.1870	29. 9.1894	21. 4.1896	"
Lehmann, Johann	13. 2.1864	2.12.1887	11. 3.1896	Akropong-Akwapim
Lienhardt, Philipp	7.10.1869	3. 4.1896	3. 5.1896	Christiansborg
* Thal, Oskar	26. 9.1858	21. 3.1889	20. 2.1896	Accra
* Bellon, Otto	8.10.1873	28. 6.1895	21. 2.1896	Ada
* Martin, Hermann	15. 6.1873	30. 3.1896	22. 5.1896	Accra
* Leser, Karl	13.12.1863	30. 3.1896	11. 4.1896	"
* Kaiser, Wilhelm,	5. 3.1869	28. 6.1895	9.11.1897	Aburi
* Schöffler, Karl	18.12.1864	30. 3.1897	15. 9.1897	Ada
Blumle, Friedrich	26. 1.1877	3.12.1896	10. 6.1898	Winneba
Bauer, Hanna (mrs)	28.10.1866	3.1892	25. 9.1898	Odumase
Weber, Georg	4. 1.1854	14.12.1882	9. 2.1899	Akropong-Akwapim
Haasis, Jakob	20. 2.1865	28.11.1890	31. 3.1899	Kumasi
* Glattli, Henrich	21.12.1859	13.12.1885	25. 7.1899	Odumase Krobo
* Bichle, Emil Georg	14. 2.1876	3. 5.1897	16. 9.1899	Accra
Weller, Karl Ch.(6)	7. 2.1874	14.12.1898	3. 7.1900	Akwaboso
Fischer-Pfister (Mrs. Anna (7))	2. 7.1842	30. 3.1897	2.12.1901	Akropong-Akwapim
Roser, Karl	8.11.1873	19.12.1899	24. 9.1901	"
Obrecht, Leonhard	10. 7.1864	3.10.1892	13. 2.1902	Begoro
* Fritz Daniel	23.11.1879	29. 6.1901	25. 5.1902	Winneba
Bächtle, Mrs. Wilhelmine (3rd wife of Rev.J.Bächtle.	7.11.1873	5.10.1896	14. 6.1902	Aburi

\* indicates mission factory employee.

(5) sailed to Africa as the fiancée of Rev.E. Perregaux.

(6) buried at Akwaboso during the flight from Kumasi.

(7) married Rev.Fr.Fischer on 11th July, 1901.



Name	Date of Birth	Arrived in Africa	Date of Death	Burial Place
Seybold, Maria	28. 4.1877	5/6 1902	15. 4.1902	Winneba
Zürcher-Spahn, (Mrs.Louise)(8)	13. 2.1864	10.1888	16. 7.1904	Christiansborg
Giezendanner, Hanna	11. 5.1881	26. 4.1903	3. 1.1905	Winneba
Perreiaux, Edmand	6. 2.1868	20. 9.1891	14.10.1905	Kumasi
*Bernier, Adolf	26. 6.1878	30. 5.1904	19. 8.1906	Akuse, Accra.
Jost, Elisabeth	1. 5.1873	10/11.1899	21. 9.1907	Nsaba
Schmid, Clara	11.11.1868	30. 8.1898	23.11.1907	Begoro
Bellon, Agnes	4. 6.1876	29. 7.1902	20. 3.1908	Akrepong-Akwapim
Bauer, Andreas	4. 6.1864	12.12.1889	13. 3.1909	Nsuta
Stern, Sophie	11. 9.1881	26. 7.1906	27. 1.1910	Nsaba
*Wolf, Wilhelm	21. 4.1885	11.1910	24. 5.1911	Accra
*Demmer, Wilhelm	28. 5.1885	26. 2.1911	28. 5.1999	Accra
*Hesse, Paul	31.12.1885	3.1912	27. 6.1912	Christiansborg
Weiss, Paul	7. 4.1885	28. 1.1913	15. 5.1913	"
Ebert, Ludwig	10. 2.1885	27.12.1912	11. 9.1913	Nsaba

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\*indicates Mission factory employee.

(8) married Rev. W. Zürcher on 6th April, 1893.

APPENDIX III.

Scottish Missionaries who died in Africa.

Mrs. J. Moffat (née Jane D.H. Reid) appointed Calabar 1903, in the Gold Coast 1918/19, died at Port Harcourt, Nigeria 1924.

Miss Gladys Muriel Wallace, born 12th July 1889, appointed to the Gold Coast (Aburi) in August 1918. Died 4th November 1921 and was buried at Christiansborg.

Mrs. M. Howie (née Martha E. Dunsmore), missionary in South Africa 1901-1910, appointed to Aburi on 9th June 1920; died 13th November 1920 and was buried at Christiansborg.

Mrs. J.S. Malloch (née Agnes B. Mitchell, born 1st July 1913. In the Gold Coast from 18th December, 1948. Died on 21st December 1951 and was buried at Akropong-Akwapim.

APPENDIX IV.

THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF GHANA.

(a) Statistics for each ten-year period from 1848.

Year	Congregations	Ministers	Communicants	Schools	Teachers	School children	Christian Community
1848	2	-	60	2	4	100*	364
1858	5	-	385	4	26	300*	811
1868	28	-	805	8	52	533	1581
1878	31	7	1870	10	80	1803	3961
1888	122	12	3000*	85*	120*	2600*	8500*
1898	157*	21	6000*	128	243	4985	16806
1908	174*	21	8500*	155*	259	6000*	20000*
1918	196	30	14292	179	316	10295	30000*
1928	273	34	23957	221	566	15093	51920
1938	312	54	26574	214	579	17835	69064
1948	499	72	31937	561	1824	55525	100511
1959	686	89	44995	858	4302	122369	182215

(b) Presbyterial Statistics 1959.

Presbytery	No. of Ministerial Districts	No. of Congregations.	Communicants.	Baptised Adherents.	Children in Church Schools.
Ga-Adangme	13	101	10503	2730	20981
Akwapim-Volta	16	108	10074	2339	7197
Agona-W. Akim	8	88	5138	1991	14588
Akim-Kwahu	14	139	10130	4341	34352
Ashanti	18	222	9055	3656	24839
Northern Ghana	5	28	95	65	412
	74	686	44995	15122	122369

Notes: (1) \* indicates approximate figures.

(2) The Total Christian community includes communicants, children of Christian parentage in School and baptised Adult adherents.

The problems of the pastoral care of the congregations is seen by a glance at the following table which shows how much the Church is dependent upon lay leadership.

Presbytery	Congregations	Ministers	Evangelists	Catechists	Pupil Teachers in charge	Presbyters in charge
Ga-Adangme	101	13	7	41	44	10
Akwapim-Volta	108	16	9	45	41	3
Agona-W.Akim	88	8	6	28	27	8
Akim-Kwahu	139	14	8	56	56	6
Ashanti	222	18	19	77	91	8
Northern Ghana	28	5	16	1	-	1

The number of baptisms (infant and adult), and confirmations for 1959 may be compared with the increase in the number of communicants.

Presbytery	Baptisms (children and adults)	Confirmations	Increase in No. of communicant members.
Ga-Adangme	3736	1142	18
Akwapim-Volta	2570	1239	483
Agona-W.Akim	1527	309	169
Akim-Kwahu	3559	1124	255
Ashanti	3911	1145	107
Northern Ghana	122	24	not known
	15225	4983	1032

APPENDIX V.

SYNODS OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF GHANA.

First Synod	1880	2-4 February, Akropong.
Twi District Synod	1894	
Twi District Synod	1909	26-28 January, Aburi.
Ga-Adangme District Synod	1909	26-28 January, Odumase.

- |                                      |                                      |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Akropong, 1918, 14-17 August      | 17. Christiansborg 1946, 9-12 July   |
| 2. Christiansborg 1919, 12-14 August | 18. Akropong, 1948, 20-23 April      |
| 3. Aburi 1920, 14-16 September       | 19. Akropong 1948 13th December      |
| 4. Kibi 1922, 19-21 July             | 20. Christiansborg 1949, 15 June     |
| 5. Odumase 1924, 16-19 July          | 21. Christiansborg 1950, 9-13 Jan    |
| 6. Abetifi 1926, 16-18 November      | 22. Christiansborg, 1951, 13-17 Aug. |
| 7. Akropong 1928, 17-19 October      | 23. Akropong 1952, 25-29 August      |
| 8. Kumasi 1930, 14-17 July           | 24. Kumasi 1953, 7-13 August         |
| 9. Christiansborg 1931, 8-10 July    | 25. Kibi 1954, 23-30 September       |
| 10. Nsaba 1933, 11-13 October        | 26. Christiansborg 1955, 11-18 Aug.  |
| 11. Begoro 1935, 16-19 July          | 27. Akropong 1956, 30 Aug-6 Sept.    |
| 12. Odumase 1937, 28 Sept.-1 Oct.    | 28. Kumasi 1957, Aug 29-5 Sept.      |
| 13. Aburi 1939, 18-21 July           | 29. Kibi 1958, 27 Aug - 3 Sept.      |
| 14. Kibi 1941, 15-18 July            | 30. Akropong 1959 27 Aug-4 Sept.     |
| 15. Abetifi 1942, 25-28 Aug.         | 31. Odumase 1960, 25 Aug-2 Sept.     |
| 16. Kumasi 1944, 18-21 July          | 32. Kumasi 1961, 24 Aug-1 Sept.      |

MODERATORS AND SYNOD CLERKS.

Moderators.

Rev. Peter Hall	1918
Rev. Nathanael Asare	1923
Rev. William A. Quartey	1924
Rev. Ludwig L. Richter	1929
Rev. Charles E. Martinson	1933
Rev. S.S. Odonkor	1938
Rev. E.V. Asihene	1951
Rt. Rev. E. Maxwell Dodu	1955
Rt. Rev. E.M.L. Odjidja	1959

Synod Clerks.

Rev. N.T. Clerk	1918-1932
Rev. D.E. Akwa	1933-1940
Rev. M.A. Obeng	1941-1950
Rev. C.H. Clerk	1951-1954
Rev. A.L. Kwansa	1955-

APPENDIX VI.

A summary of the results of a detailed observation of 70 funerals.

1. Of the 70 observed, 28 were Christian and 42 non-Christian; 20 were below the age of 35, 32 between the ages of 35 and 70, and 18 over 70.
2. In 7 cases (6 Christian and 1 non-Christian) was there no coffin enclosure. The commonest enclosures among both groups were personal jewellery, money, clothing and other personal possessions, sponge and towel with the occasional addition among Christians of the Baptism and Confirmation Certificate. In only two cases was the Bible enclosed. The commonest answer as to why this is done is that the deceased needs money and clothing on the journey to the ancestors; other answers were to prevent the deceased from haunting the living; to please the ancestors; to assuage the anger of the deceased if intimate personal possessions were to come into the hands of others.
3. In 53 cases libation was poured. (11 Christian).
4. In 52 instances (10 Christian) steps were taken to prevent the spirit of the deceased from haunting his or her spouse or close relatives. These were: ritual bathing (18), burning of incense in and around the house (16), pouring libation and removing all the belongings of the deceased from the house. (18)
5. Cost of the funeral: 4 cost more than £400, 4 more than £200, 11 more than £150, 13 more than £100, 11 more than £50 and 23 less than £50.
6. In every case but three on the death of an adult male the widow performed one or more of the following rites: shaving of the head, fasting, not wearing beads, remaining indoors, wearing special mourning clothes.

APPENDIX VII.

A summary of 74 replies to a questionnaire on Marriage.

1. Of the 74, 65 were Christian and 9 non-Christian, 67 males and 7 females, all educated. 61 were teacher training students.
2. Average age of marriage: men, 25 years, women 19 years. There were 11 cross cousin marriages and three males who married nieces. In 69 cases the sanction of the families was obtained; the 5 who married without family sanction were Christian males.
3. The cost of the engagement ranged from 8/- to £45 (average £9).
4. The cost of the marriage among Christians ranged from £4.13s to £250, the average being £39.8s. The average of the small sample of non-Christians was £10.14s.
5. Two only of the sample were married by Ordinance followed by a blessing in Church; thirty were married by native custom followed by the Church blessing; thirty-three were married by native custom only.
6. Thirty-five of the males possessed one wife and no concubines; twenty-one had one wife and one or more concubines. Of this latter group four had two concubines, five had three and one four. Three 'Christians' reported that they had two legal wives. In answer to the question addressed to those with concubines what effect this had on their religious life the commonest answer was 'no effect' provided the home was peaceful. If it was not, concubinage brought difficulty, and destroyed peace of mind. A number categorically stated that although taking a concubine violated the rules of the Church they did not regard themselves as having ceased to be Christian.
7. Thirty-four had had pre-marital sexual intercourse. The main reason given was proof of fertility and virility.
8. Fifty husbands paid a regular monthly allowance to the wife, varying from £1 to £10, but in fifty-one cases did not disclose the amount of their earnings to the wife. In almost every case the wife was petty-trading, baking bread, sewing, growing foodstuffs for sale and with the money providing food and clothing for herself and her children. Sometimes she paid the rent and made an occasional loan to the husband. School fees and the cost of the education of the children was the husband's province.
9. In 56 cases husband and wife were living in the same house.

APPENDIX VIII.

The Outdooring Ceremony.

1. Sixty-one occasions were observed of which 30 were cases of Christian parents.
2. The entire family (Christian and non-Christian) assemble early in the morning. The ceremony may last from one hour to a whole day.
3. Libation was poured in 40 cases but was omitted where the Christian representation in the family is strong. The substitute is a prayer by the Minister or Catechist.
4. Donations varied from £1 to £30: average sum given was £3.
5. Answers to other questions by the parents showed that in all cases the ceremony was valued for its effect in promoting family harmony. Where the child came from a predominantly non-Christian family, or where one or both of the parents were not Christian, the ceremony was considered vital: the child was committed in prayer to the ancestral spirits and invariably named after an ancestor. Where the parents were Christian the non-Christian elements (libation, sprinkling the child with water or rum, putting beads on the baby's right hand, committing it to the care of the ancestral spirits), tended to be modified or omitted. Yet, while Christian parents asserted that outdooring was not a substitute for Christian baptism, the predominant feeling was that it should be performed.



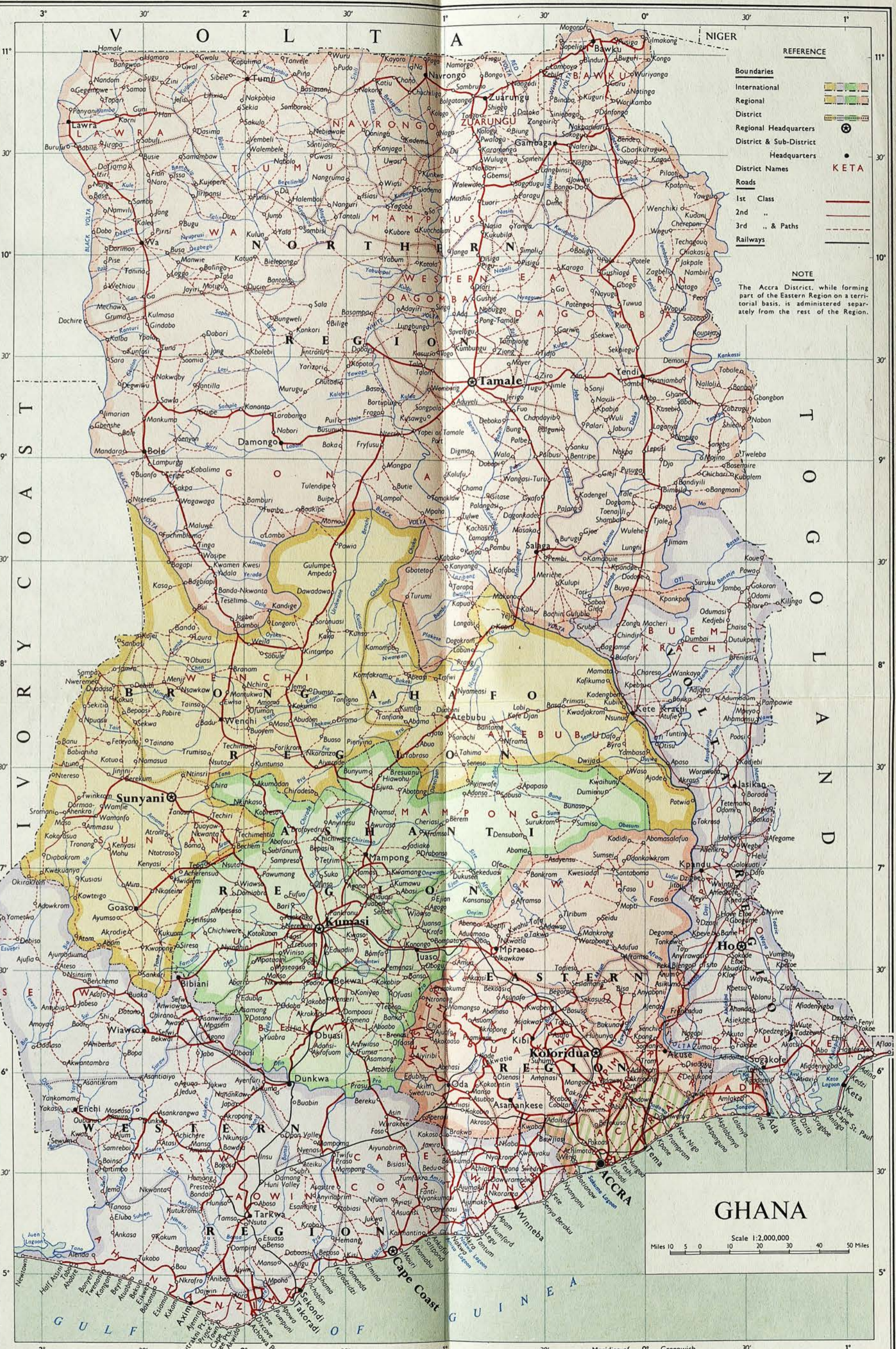
APPENDIX IX.

Libation.

1. Sixty-seven adult males (33 Christian and 34 non-Christian) answered the questionnaire.
2. To the question, Do Christians pour libation? 49 answered in the negative, 10 in the affirmative, and 8 answered 'some do'.
3. All 67 were agreed that the Church did not approve of libation.
4. Thirty-six (23 non-Christian and 13 Christian) were in favour of pouring libation as an expression of worship, and 41 (26 non-Christian and 15 Christian) thought that the rite could be christianised.

The questionnaire showed that whereas formerly a Christian was disciplined for pouring libation, this is no longer so, the prevalent view was that although the Church officially opposes it she cannot abolish it. There was a considerable body of opinion that it is a valuable custom and that by mentioning only the name of God and omitting the names of the spirits and the ancestors, it could be christianised.

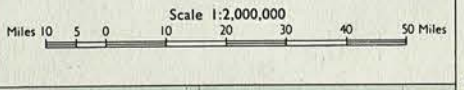
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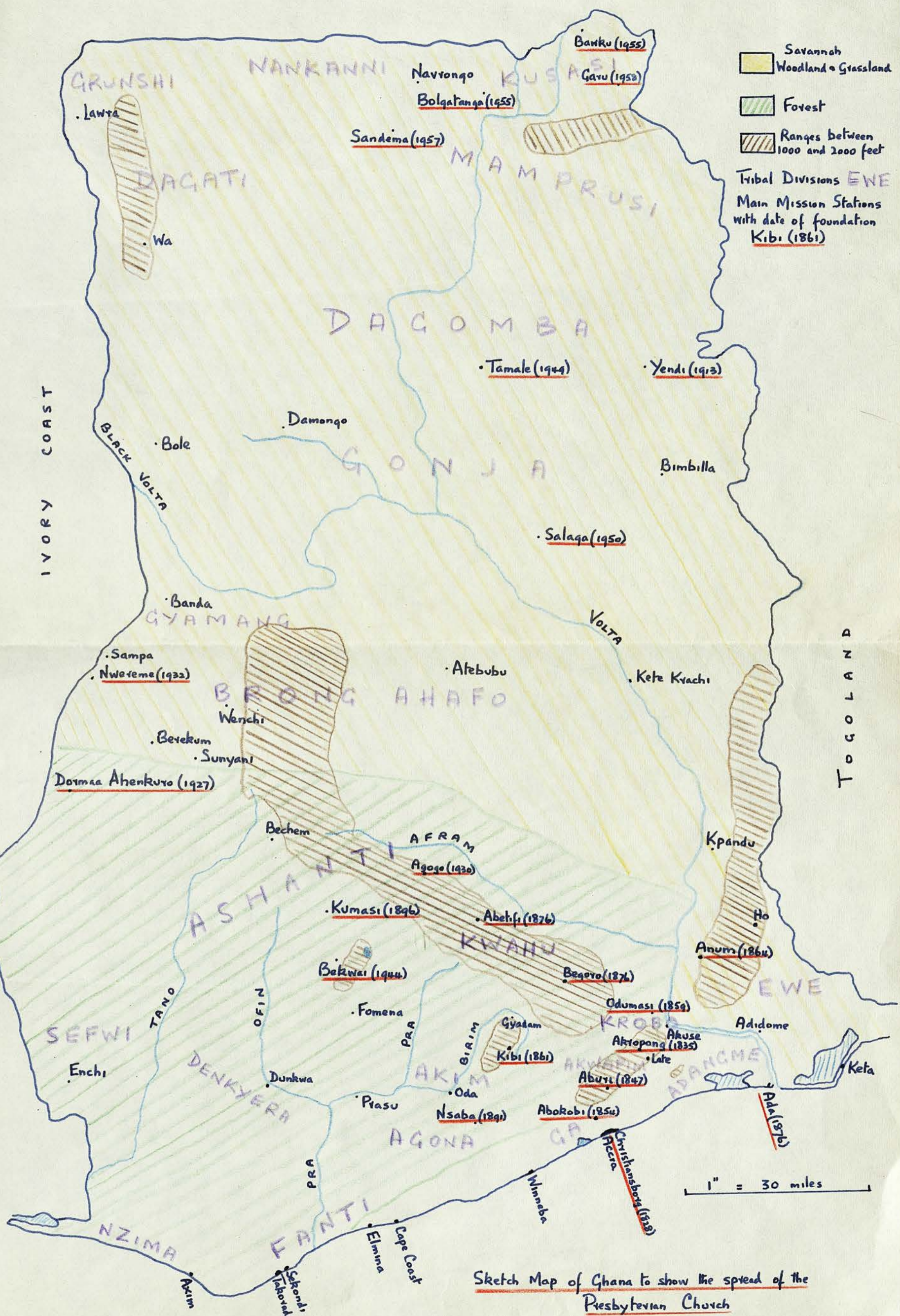


**REFERENCE**

Boundaries	
International	—
Regional	—
District	—
Regional Headquarters	⊙
District & Sub-District Headquarters	●
District Headquarters	●
Roads	
1st Class	—
2nd ..	—
3rd .. & Paths	—
Railways	—

**NOTE**  
The Accra District, while forming part of the Eastern Region on a territorial basis, is administered separately from the rest of the Region.





Sketch Map of Ghana to show the spread of the Presbyterian Church

1" = 30 miles