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## **Transforming Society through missionary Zeal and Cooperation: A Study of the Presbyterian Church in Bono-Ahafo, Ghana**

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### **Abstract:**

*Orthodox churches in Ghana have come under sharp and intense criticism by Charismatic and Pentecostal church pastors and their members in recent times. Some of the points raised include the continued singing of classical hymns at church. Others hold the view that orthodox churches have caused disunity among Ghanaians through their establishment of Salem's and Christian villages. Yet, others assert that pastors of the church are too formalized and do not rekindle excitement in church members during worship. Their form of worship is alien to Ghana and has contributed to the low interest of people in the Christian religion. Despite these assertions, a critical observation of orthodox churches' activities reveal that they have made immense contributions to the Ghanaian society. The Presbyterian Church for instance has established churches in very remote parts of Ghana since the nineteenth century. The church has greatly complemented the Ghana government's efforts to develop and raise the social and economic well-being of the Bono people in particular and Ghanaians as a whole. The church's work in Bono Ahafo exemplifies how churches can spread the gospel without constantly demanding financial support from members. The church's social and economic activities provide a guide on how churches can provide the social and economic needs of members and society generally. This paper seeks to examine the Presbyterian Church's contribution to the socio-economic development of Ghanaians. The paper argues that the Presbyterian Church's policy of selfless leadership and dedicated interest in the well-being of members and society as a whole have contributed significantly to transform the Bono Ahafo traditional society since the twentieth century.*

### **1. Introduction**

In undertaking this research, the author is encouraged by the gaps in the study of the history of Christian missions in Ghana in the existing literature. Debrunner and Noel Smith, focused on the beginnings and spread of Christianity in Ghana only. Although Kwamena-Poh has contributed significantly to our knowledge about the history of the Presbyterian Church in Ghana, he mainly emphasized the contribution of the Church in Education. When he wrote about the Church in Asante, Kwamena-Poh limited his study to Kumasi only and stressed the role Ramseyer played in the establishment of the church in the city of Kumasi. Several other missionaries who worked especially in the remote parts of the Bono Ahafo region have not been studied; some of these missionaries and their contributions to the establishment of the church deserve mention and have been discussed in this paper. An important element of the Christian Mission in Africa, the church's role in the social and economic lives of people living in the rural areas of Ghana has also been given little attention by historians. The current study therefore seeks to produce a history of the church's role in improving the social and economic needs of people living in rural Ghana.

To extensively discuss issues involved in this study, the paper seeks to answer some pertinent questions relating to development and growth of the Presbyterian Church in the Bono Ahafo region; including what factors accounted for the rapid spread of the Presbyterian Church in the Bono Ahafo Region of Ghana? In what ways did missionaries and church leadership contribute to socio-economic change in Bono Ahafo? How did the Presbyterian Church help to improve the social needs of Ghanaians? How did the church's interest in economic activities help the church and society generally?

The information for this study were obtained from primary as well as documentary materials such as *Synod Reports* of the Church, *Abstracts from the Basel Mission Correspondence*, personal interviews, and articles in the *Kristofa Senkekafo* and *Christian Messenger* magazines.

### **2. Bono Ahafo before the Presbyterian Church**

The Bono Ahafo society was not different from other Akan people of Ghana. Their traditional religious practices were supervised by the chief and traditional priests who performed the necessary sacrifices for the welfare of the people. Chiefs acted as intermediaries between the people and the ancestors for the people believed that the well-being of a society depended upon the maintenance of good relations with the ancestors whom the living depended on for help and protection. Every lineage had its blackened stool which was the abode of its ancestors (Busia 1951).

The people believed that they were not alone in the world and that there were unseen beings or powers who were part and parcel of their lives or their community and who they believed to have powers to influence their lives either for good or for evil. One of the numerous unseen beings or spirits has been described as the Supreme Being. The Supreme Being is said to be very real in peoples' day to day activities and this can be seen in the names and attributes that are given to the Supreme Being. The people also believed that He is universal and invisible. There is also the belief that there are numerous divinities such as Asaase Yaa (the Earth goddess). These deities are supposed to derive their powers from the Supreme Being. Ancestor belief also occupied an important place in the religious thoughts of the people. Ancestors are called "Nananom Nsamanfo".

The people believed that death does not end human life. It is just a transition from the present life to another life. The ancestors are believed to continue to live even after death and are said to continue to maintain their position in the family or the group even after death. The ancestors jealously guide the social values, the norms and the property of people in any particular society. There was also the belief in "Abosom". The "Abosom" are supposed to be the children of "Onyame" (God) and so have their powers dedicated to them by "Onyame" (God). Although the Abosom are said to have their powers from God, they use their powers independent of Him. There is also the belief in "Asuman" (Amulets). The people believe that certain plants and animals possess some form of spirit. Some of these plants and animals with special powers are used to make what is known as "Asuman". They are used for protection and destruction. Sometimes they are so powerful that people revere and fear them more than the "Abosom". (Busia 1951).

In the society also, people meet once a year to celebrate their annual festivals. There are two major festivals celebrated mainly by the Bono and Ahafo peoples namely the "Kwafie" and "Apoo" festivals. These are occasions for merry making and a time to remember the ancestors. It is also an occasion in which members of the town who had travelled outside the community return home. During this period, families in dispute would meet to settle their differences and marriages contracted. Marriage is an important phenomenon among Africans. It is deemed an honour for a family to see one of its members married as this ensured continuity of the family. Traditionally, marriage is polygamous and to possess more than one wife was considered a matter of prestige and a mark of progress. Polygamous marriage form was important as traditional farming systems in which more hands were needed on the farm ensured its necessity.

However, Ancestor worship, reverence of divinities, traditional festivals, use of charms and amulets and polygamous marriage forms are practices that contrast sharply with Christian religious beliefs, teachings and practices. After years of work, the missionary was quick however to lament on the absence of an elderly man "to serve as an example to the youth"<sup>20</sup> because of what he called "the awful power of darkness which held sway over the candidates, and the dense ignorance in which they have lived throughout their lives"<sup>21</sup>. Thus re-emphasizing the effect of traditional religious practices on the people that frustrated effective missionary work. By December 1937, eleven of the foreign missionaries working in the area had left for home, while new converts had left the faith.<sup>26</sup> (Abstracts :156).

The Presbyterian Church aimed to modify some of the traditional and cultural practices of Ghanaians. In Bono Ahafo, the Presbyterian Church's impact on the celebration of the Kwafie festival of the people of the Dormaa-Ahenkro traditional area deserves mention. The chiefs and elders of the community have added Sundays to the days used to celebrate the festival. Instead of the two days used to celebrate the festival, it has become a three-day event. The rationale behind the addition of Sunday was to change the perception that the celebration of the festival was in thanksgiving and honour of the traditional states' divinities. (Yeboah, 2013:28)

It aimed also at changing the perception by the growing Christian population that the festival and all its ceremonies were largely evil. In most cases, those who played major roles in the Kwafie celebration, including paramount chiefs converted to Christianity and so found it difficult to perform the same rites the church had condemned as evil. Those who had received formal education insisted that modifications were necessary for the festival to suit modern standards. Yet others believed that modifications would not affect the significance of the festival but would attract interest and participation of the increasing Christian population of the society. As such, the chiefs and elders incorporated Sunday to Kwafie's celebration so as to erase misconceptions the growing Christian population in Dormaa had about the celebration. Some of the traditional leaders pursued an agenda aimed primarily to change aspects of the celebrations that deter participation of literates and Christians especially the pouring of libation, singing of dirges in praise of ancestors, visit to shrines and stool rooms and spilling blood of animals on the feet of chiefs.

Instead of the previous practice of consultation with local divinities before commencement of celebrations, churches now are asked to pray to their God because chiefs and queens and their elders are mostly Christians. This is done also to demonstrate the pre-eminence of Christianity in the celebration of the festival. On Sundays, the last day designated for the celebration of the Kwafie festival, the chiefs organize a grand durbar of all the churches in Dormaa. This grand event to mark the climax of the ceremonies is mostly attended by Christians and traditional leaders including the chief, queen and sub-chiefs. These would dress in white indicating the success of the celebrations and in thanksgiving to God for his love and grace. Through the active participation of Christians therefore, almost every aspect of the festival has gradually become associated with Christian ceremonies, including Christian prayers, worship and praise songs, and an exhortation by a pastor. This notwithstanding the modifications have attracted greater participation of people in the festival. (Yeboah 2013:29)

### 3. Zeal of the Missionaries

The zeal of European as well as African Missionaries to transform the Ghanaian society cannot be over-emphasized. They persisted against all odds, and through the efforts and assistance of African Pastors like David Asante, Theophilus Opoku, Peter Hall and T. Clerk, the Basel Mission had by 1900 gained firm roots in the then Asante Empire and its provinces. The Missionaries first stationed in Kumasi and from there supervised all activities of the Mission in the Districts in the Ashanti Provinces. After the war of 1900, the British colonial administration created the Asante colony, and henceforth Asante experienced a long period of peace and stability. The

ferventness of the mission's work in Kumase then took off again, and soon spread to the North-Eastern province of Asante – The Brong-Ahafo Region. Basically, the Mission's work in the Region was accomplished by Europeans as well as Ghanaian Missionaries. The spread of Christianity in Bono Ahafo was associated mainly with the zeal of the missionaries. This started as far back as 1896 when Sir Garnet Wolseley invited Ramseyer back to Kumasi to resume evangelical work began in 1894. Together with an African Evangelist, Adaye, they declared Asante as a mission field and started an aggressive street preaching. By the end of 1896, Ramseyer and Adaye had successfully created two outstations and two schools, whilst a Catechist's house had been built (Kwamena-Poh 1974:13). In Nkoranza, the work had been started by Hansen Ayeh. Through their efforts, the Basel Mission's outstations in Asante increased gradually to sixteen by 1900, including some outstations in Nkoranza.

Although the Yaa Asantewaa war of 1900, brought the missionary work in Bono Ahafo generally to a halt and also wiped these early achievements off. (Ward 1928), missionaries were not deterred by this and other developments of which occurred in Takyimantia when Samuel Otu, and early local evangelist of the church suffered martyrdom. Until recently, he was the first and the only agent who suffered martyrdom. (The second martyr was the District Pastor of the Presbyterian church in Salaga, who was killed during the 1994 ethnic conflict in the Northern Region). Otu, who was transferred from Agona Asante in 1900 was accepted by the Tekyimentia chief with a measure of apprehension. He was originally to be stationed at Duayaw-Nkwanta but not Tekyimentia<sup>8</sup>.

Just after four weeks stay in Tekyimentia, the Yaa Asantewaa war began in Kumase and he was expected to join the Kumasi forces to fight the British. When Otu refused to join the emissary dispatched to invite the people of Tekyimentia to join the Asante forces on April 5, 1900, he and his family of three were captured. As prisoners of war, Otu and his family underwent a series of mockery and torture. He was imprisoned for a couple of days and a few days after his capture, was beheaded by a messenger from Kumase. His wife was kept in Tekyimentia for barely nine months until the British soldiers came in to ensure her release. (Christian Messenger, 1911:16). This callous act put some fear into the Missionaries, but it did not frustrate them in their efforts to doing meaningful work.

One of the leading Basel Missionaries in this enterprise was Ramseyer's nephew Edmond Parragaux. Accompanied by a Ghanaian Evangelist, Joseph Atiemo, the two travelled from Kumase through Brong-Ahafo in 1895. In twenty days, their journey had taken them to the remote areas of the Bono district including Atebubu, Nkoranza, Wenkyi, Seikwa and Berekum, and several other villages as they preached the word of God to all the villages. (Smith 1966:130). Although Parragaux was immediately taken ill, and died the same year, his death did not deter further missionary work. Rev. Philip Bauer deemed it his responsibility to persist. Within one year, he covered nearly eight hundred towns and villages in the Asante and Brong-Ahafo areas. His desire for the work was such that out of exhaustion and weariness, he died at Nsuta in 1909<sup>7</sup>. The Rev. F. Jost replaced him, and registered his name among the early missionaries who worked in the Brong-Ahafo Region. By his efforts, the mission got its roots well established in the hitherto troublesome Nkoranza and Atebubu areas where opposition to the new faith and Islamic influence had hindered the establishment of the Christian faith. Other foreign Missionaries in Bono Ahafo included Revs. Baucher, Jenne, Ringwald and Schaefer. (Christian Messenger 1909:43-45).

Work in Berekum was started by Timothy Clark who had to overcome certain problems including regular shortage of water in the Berekum township. Berekum was famous for its regular water shortages. Only a stagnant pond served as the source of water supply. Throughout the days he stayed in Berekum, unfavorable conditions such as improper food and unhygienic drinking water therefore resulted in some kinds of diseases such as guinea worm. Timothy Clerk had guinea worm which affected his health immensely. He became unfit to undertake the rather strenuous missionary work. As a result, on March 16, 1907, after an unsuccessful three years stay in Berekum, he was transferred to Larteh and was not replaced in Berekum. (Debrunner 1965 :52).

After years of work, the missionary was quick however to lament on the absence of an elderly man "to serve as an example to the youth"<sup>20</sup> because of what he called "the awful power of darkness which held sway over the candidates, and the dense ignorance in which they have lived throughout their lives"<sup>21</sup>. Thus re-emphasizing the effect of traditional religious practices on the people that frustrated missionaries' determination to do effective missionary work. By December 1937, eleven of the foreign missionaries working in the area had left for home, while new converts had left the faith.<sup>26</sup> (Abstracts 156)

### 3.1. *Surmounting the Problem of Rival Religions*

By 1905, Islam had already been accepted by many people in northeastern Bono area. Owing to that, converting people to Christianity posed several difficulties. All efforts to establish the Christian religion in Kintampo and Nkoranza for example was difficult because of the prevalence of the Islamic religion in these two districts. (Christian Messenger 1909). These districts had been very problematic areas, during the late nineteenth century also because the people notoriously opposed the Asante military and political power and this affected effective missionary work that radiated from Kumasi<sup>16</sup>. This hindered any meaningful Missionary work in northeastern Bono Ahafo. More so, the Mfantra people in the Seikwa and Mo areas of Bono Ahafo, who initially accepted the agents of the church gradually showed reservation to the word of God as they either left the church or became hostile to Pastors of the church. Buchner testifies that it was by the use of simple but dynamic methods that helped missionaries to succeed in winning souls for Christ in Bono Ahafo.

In view of these problems, pastors regarded new converts of the church as "flock of sheep in the midst of wolves"<sup>25</sup> which apparently meant that the new Christian converts were a few among several non-Christians. Accordingly, agents of the Presbyterian Church intensified their efforts to establish the church and Christianity in the Bono and Ahafo areas after the First World War. By the 1930's reports from the Northern Provincial church districts indicated a steady progress of the gospel. Evangelism had been intensified and the future of the Mission was quite promising as the work by the European and Ghanaian missionaries in the Bono Ahafo area progressed steadily but very fast.

For instance, by 1933, the Banda Mission had been opened by the missionaries, while the area had become much more accessible by 1937. By the end of 1937, about twenty candidates had been won and were ready to be baptized. Special reports by Rev. Buchner on the Gyaman Mission field showed that in 1937, there were five other congregations apart from the main station at Nwereme (Suma Ahenkro). They included Banda, Japekrom, Sampa and Seikwa<sup>23</sup>. The testimony of the commendable achievements of the church in Gyaman echoed in the report presented by Rev. H. Henking. He, and many other missionaries were excited about their involvement in the pioneering work of the church which had yielded commendable results among people receiving Christian teachings for the first time. He said, "It has been a privilege for me to see a part of that area...but also the joy in the work among the heathen and the fellowship with the young converts"<sup>22</sup>

In 1938, the mission's pastor at Berekum was equally elated by the remarkable achievements of missionaries and the church generally. He was impressed by the significant changes caused by the church. In his report, he said that the changes in the district had been "considerable and encouraging", as the number of communicants had nearly doubled itself in the brief space of a year". In 1938, fifty-four adult baptism for instance was recorded on one occasion<sup>24</sup>. Buchner, a missionary at Duayaw Nkwanta also reported that about a hundred adults were received to partake in the Holy Communion in 1939. (Kristofo Senkekafo 1913:64-65).

In other areas, groups were formed in the church and through the presbyterial committee's recommendations, synod opened Atebubu, Wenkyi and Kintampo as pastoral stations by 1953. The promise of firm establishment of the church was high. Rev S. E. Kwaa, the Asante presbytery chairman observed in his 1955 report that "everywhere, congregations were making strenuous efforts to build churches and chapels for worship"<sup>28</sup>, and that "church group anniversaries became intensified and more evangelical in purpose than merriment and enjoyment." Women's Fellowship anniversaries became common as the church seemed to have concluded that conversion of more women would automatically lead to conversion of households. Accordingly women fellowship anniversaries were held in the early 1950's in Duayaw-Nkwanta, Dormaa-Ahenkro and Sampa.

By 1955, the church had gained firmer grounds and expanded considerably to cover greater parts of modern Brong-Ahafo Region. The Duayaw-Nkwanta district of the church for instance covered an extensive area, stretching to the borders of Nkoranza and Wenkyi (covering many villages). Many people had accepted Christ through the church missionaries and had burnt their shrines<sup>29</sup>. (Abstracts :156). By 1951, despite the progress made by the Church, Rev S. E. Kwaa, the Asante Presbytery clerk remarked that the church faced numerous problems; greater part of the Ahafo districts was still closed to the church and church group anniversaries were seen mainly as times for merriment and enjoyment. (Synod Report, 1955). Although the above problems, coupled with the indigenous 'idol worship' posed as a hindrance to the early work of missionaries in the Bono Ahafo area, the church achieved quite remarkably in the first half of the twentieth century through Ghanaian and foreign evangelists. These employed strategies to spread Christian faith including concentrating on particular districts at a time.

This began in 1904 when Nicholas Timothy Clerk – Owura Nico who had accompanied the missionary, Mr. Huppenbuer and his family to Europe to be trained as an evangelist returned as an ordained priest. He was transferred from Aburi and in twenty days, walked for a distance of 384 miles to Kumasi with his five daughters and a son. On July 16, 1904, the Clerks were at their new station and ready to evangelize to the people in and around the town<sup>9</sup>. In spite of the numerous problems the Clarks encountered in Berekum including regular water shortages, Rev. N. T. Clerk, with enormous efforts built a temporary timber house. After the building project, he expressed his readiness to go on an "extensive journey exploring and preaching"<sup>10</sup>. Although he was transferred from Berekum on March 16, 1907, after an unsuccessful three years stay in Berekum, this did not affect the spread of the gospel. In line with the church's maxim that the church would be established in Ghana on the strength and determination of several missionaries, the missionary work in Berekum was taken over by Catchiest S. Dentu following his departure<sup>11</sup>. (Debrunner 1966:49)

The work in Bekyemand Sunyane was undertaken by Rev. The first was in 1904 and the second was in 1908. He organized his programs with permission by the chiefs of the towns as new comers were obliged to obtain permission of Chiefs and their elders. As custodians of the community's land, chiefs could refuse land to missionaries would failed to consult the chiefs. As was common with early missionary work in Asante, Rev. Asante, stationed in Kumase and undertook two main missionary journeys to the Ahafo area. His method of propagating the Christian religion was through open air preaching service which often attracted the entire township. This was calculated to enable more people to listen to him. His preaching appears to have been quite successful. Chiefs and people did not just accept Christianity; converts in Bekyem, Sunyani, Takyimantia, and Duayaw-Nkwanta thereafter expressed their delight to have schools built and resident agents posted to establish churches in their towns.

In Tanoso and Odumase, Rev. Asante appealed to chiefs to release plots of land for missionary work. By his effort, the chief of Odumase agreed to offer the mission the piece of land where the District Commissioner once resided before he moved to Sunyane as this would prevent possible contests with other people. His journey also took him to Kwatre, Nsuatre and Berekum in north-western Asante and to Kenyase Mooho, Hwidiem, Akyirensua and Maban to the west of Asante. By his humility, respect for the chieftaincy institution and constant appeals to traditional authority for acceptance, Rev. Asante contributed significantly to plant the Christian faith in several towns and villages in the Brong-Ahafo Region of modern Ghana (Kristofo Senkekafo 1913:65).

### 3.2. Outdoor Preaching and Support

In examining the missionary contribution to church growth in Bono, one should evaluate the achievements of the missionaries in the Kintampo district. The region was closer to northern Ghana, it was important in the Asante trade to northern Ghana and was therefore settled by several Muslim traders. Establishing the church in Kintampo was therefore a difficult task for any Christian mission. Apart from risk to their lives, missionaries, traditional religion and Islam posed problems. These problems notwithstanding, some missionaries were prepared and eager to evangelize in the Kintampo district. They were prepared to commit themselves fully to establish Christianity in Muslim-dominated areas of the Bono Ahafo area.

On November 17 1910, Rev. N. V. Asare, accompanied by Mr. Hansen, and two children (carriers of his luggage), arrived from Kumase to Kintampo. Against the risk of attacks and possible arrest, they walked from one village to another to preach to the inhabitants. The queenmother of Kintampo, Nana Boahemaa, desired for the mission to re-start the Christian Mission work in the town. But establishing the church in Kintampo was quite difficult as expected due to earlier Islamic influence. To circumvent the problem, the missionary sought the support of more experienced missionaries of the church which he found in Kie and Kiebo, two of Ramseyer's students who were residing in Wenkyi. These were assigned to Kintampo to offer assistance to Rev. Asare to tackle the challenge posed by Islam and traditional Religion. The Reverend and his assistants preached the gospel in Ekoase, Nkonsia, Tuobodom, Akomadan and Tanoso. Like other missionaries, his activities yielded fruit and in 1925, following the urgent appeal from the chief of Abease, a village in the Atebubu district, for an evangelist, the missionary was transferred to reside in the town.

Rev. N.V. Asare believed that a school was necessary for the Missionary work. An agreement was therefore signed between the chief of Abease and himself. The chief was to provide twenty-five school children in 1925, and twelve in subsequent years. By his efforts, the church got well established not only in the Kintampo area but also in the village of Abease. His work appears to have attracted prominent pastors who became interested in the district. In 1925 for instance, Rev. G. Nyfeler and H.J. Keteku visited the area. (Christian Messenger, 1929).

Of the entire Bono area, it appears that Gyaman posed the greatest challenge to missionary work. The Gyaman area extended from Sampa in the west to Japekrom in the east comprising several villages and towns. Residents in the villages engaged mainly in cocoa farming, and in farming of cash and food crops generally. Villages and towns were often deserted as the residents returned from their farms quite late. This notwithstanding, agents of the church determined to convert as many people as possible to the Christian faith. In his five-year report presented in 1937, Rev. H. Buchner reiterated the problem of desertion of towns and villages. Yet Buchner, and other Europeans assisted by Ghanaian teachers and evangelists, established new congregations in the area from 1932 to 1937. He stated among other things that although the area was deserted during most part of the year, they made it their aim in the itinerating work to bring the Good News into every hamlet, home and heart of that large district. (Church Reports and Statistics, 1937:5) To achieve this objective, the missionary used what he called dynamic strategies such as Bible stories in pictures, street preaching, and quieter group discussions. Buchner testifies that these simple but dynamic methods succeeded in winning souls for Christ.

One problem that consistently disturbed the missionaries was the apparent disinterest of the elderly in the Mission's work. The mission believed that elderly people would set examples for the youth. Elderly people, upon conversion would pull entire families along to the church. Debrunner believes that the elderly makes the church as they are invariably accompanied by family members upon conversion. (Debrunner, 1972). Towards encouraging the elderly to join the church, the church's leadership urged evangelists to repeat most of their old Bible stories. Whole Bibles, as well as New Testament Bibles were sold at very cheap prices to enable more people to own copies.

These achievements were the outcome of cooperation between local enthusiastic church agents and foreign missionaries. For example, in the Banda area, a catechist, described as "zealous" assisted the missionary, while foreign missionaries including Revs. Ringwald and Jenne worked in the Suma Ahenkro area. (Synod Report, 1948). At Dormaa (Wam Pamu), the Rev. W. Schaefer who was formerly in Kumase became in-charge of the mission station. By 1930, he had successfully opened the station and become the resident pastor of the town. His activity was complemented by the relentless support provided by catechist J.K. Boadi of the same town. Together, missionaries and evangelists successfully opened many outstations to which the Church quickly assigned missionaries. For example, in 1938, the mission stationed a pastor at Berekum, Sunyane, Odumase, Tuobodom and Wenkyi. In this way, the work by the Presbyterian Church progressed steadily but quite remarkably in the Bono Ahafo area in the first half of the twentieth century. The church's headquarters contributed immensely to these achievements through sustained and concentrated evangelism and the Mission Field concepts (Synod Reports 1938).

#### 4. Sustained Evangelism

Rev. Kwaa believed that the Basel Mission could transform the Bono Ahafo society through what he called sustained evangelism. He believed that this would help the church to reach villages which were wider apart from one another especially in the greater part of the Ahafo districts where the church had not as yet reached. Rev. Kwaa's suggested for an intensified evangelistic campaign to open up the Ahafo area in particular for the church. This was to put up in the Ahafo congregations a new life and to encourage the districts in the Presbytery to establish new offices and subsequently win more souls.

As early as the 1930s leadership regularly visited the Bono Ahafo area and recommended same to other agents in Kumasi and Accra. Regular visits declined during the war years of 1939-1945 but were again revived in the post-war period. By 1951, the Presbyterial Committee in Kumase had visited Bono Ahafo on several occasions. Retreats and seminars had been organized for leaders of the church to promote growth of the church. The presbyterial committee's recommendation to synod led to the opening of Atebubu, Wenkyi and Kintampo as pastoral stations by 1953.

The church headquarters also put up efforts to open up the region to activities of the Presbyterian church. They and expatriate evangelists, as well as established groups were regular visitors to the region. For instance, in 1953, the Synod clerk of the church visited the region and joined them to celebrate the year's annual anniversary. Similarly, in 1955, Revs. F.W.K. Akuffo, Haller, Roth and Mrs. Debrunner visited the Duayaw Nkwanta district to teach and strengthen the youth. Also, when the Basel Mission appointed Miss J. M. Kling to do field work among women in Asante, she chose Sunyane as her base and travelled extensively in the Bono and Ahafo areas. Some sisters of the Basel Mission also started work at Bekyem, and in the Dormaa clinic which yielded good fruits. They believed that active evangelism was an integral part of their work as health workers. (Asante Presbytery Clerk's Report 1955).

The Presbyterian committee in Accra, on the other hand regularly visited the poor and the needy, and collaborated with others to open new stations in the presbytery. Evangelism in the districts intensified as a result of interest shown by the Presbytery, church groups and the National headquarters of the Church. The church achieved much such that in almost all the district reports of the presbytery submitted in 1966, the church offered to provide monetary or manpower support to the church. For example, to promote missionary work in the Gyaman district, nationwide contributions were made in the 1950's to provide funding and other logistics. By 1951, these contributions had yielded about seven hundred pounds sterling (£700) considered sufficient to finance future evangelism in the Gyaman district (Synod Report, 1951).

The effort of the early Missionaries to establish the church in Bono Ahafo was complemented by efforts of women's groups formed in the church. The church's 1942-48 reports commended the Women's fellowships for instance for regularly presenting gifts to the poor and the needy. In some cases, they adopted school girls from poor homes by paying their school fees. Groups like the Young People's Guild (Y.P.G), the singing band, and the church choir also helped to gain new converts. The groups improved singing in the church, and helped in the total evangelization of the church. Church group anniversaries became intensified in the 1950s and more evangelical in purpose than merriment and enjoyment. Women's Fellowship anniversaries were held in the early 1950's in Duayaw-Nkwanta, Dormaa-Ahenkro and Sampa to encourage more people to join the church. (Synod Report 1951:25).

### 5. The Emergence of the Bono Ahafo Presbytery

Despite facing initial problems, the efforts of the Basel Mission society to get its roots firmly planted in the North-Eastern province of Asante, (Brong-Ahafo), progressed steadily in the early post 1945 war period. For instance in 1955, the Sunyane, Goaso and Kenyase stations were opened as pastoral stations and a total number of 139 persons were converted at Bekyem. The Pastor, S. E. Kwaa reported that people were more eager to evangelize in the Dormaa district and evangelists from outside the country, as well as established groups were regular visitors to the region. (Synod Report 1955:86). By the early 1960s, a remarkable development by the mission was evident all over the towns and villages in the Region and pastors asked for the area to be declared a presbytery. This desire became even more imperative because, by 1959, the government of Ghana had created the Brong-Ahafo Region as a politically autonomous region from the Asante Region. The new region thus acquired full administrative responsibilities.

Kwame Arhin says that the attainment of independence in 1957 encouraged several traditional and non-Ghanaian institutions to struggle for autonomy (Arhin 1965). These phenomenal developments in Bono and Ahafo helped to promote Presbyterianism and Christianity generally. But it is important to note also that Christian missionary activities intensified in the early twentieth century for two reasons. First, many had seen the importance of formal education and would like to have schools establish in their areas and secondly, Ghanaians had gotten themselves actively involved in the spread and establishment of churches. Boahen (1975) states ....

In view of the expansion of the church and existence of several congregations in Bono Ahafo, the leadership of the church, during the Asante Presbytery meeting in Bekyem in 1964, resolved that the Asante Presbytery be partitioned into the Ashanti and Brong-Ahafo Presbyteries. This meant that the vast Asante Presbytery would henceforth be considered as two separate Presbyteries. In 1965, Synod at Akuropon approved of this proposal, and in May 1966, a special service was held at Sunyane to commemorate the opening of the newly created Brong-Ahafo Presbytery of the Presbyterian church of Ghana. These achievements can be attributed to missionary zeal but also to interest of the church's headquarters in the area. For example, on the recommendation by Rev. E.K.O. Asante, the Asante Presbytery Clerk in his 1966 Synod Report, Synod Committee considered the petition to transfer the Presbytery chairman's seat from Bekyem to Sunyane, to help speed up effective work of the Presbytery Chairman. This recommendation was considered and Rev. W.E.L. Boateng was transferred from Sampa to become the first Presbytery Chairman. The conversion of prominent personalities in the Bono Ahafo area undoubtedly helped the church's course. For example in 1969, a traditional priestess was converted at Sampa and was baptized with the name Rebecca Donkor. Nana Agyeman Badu, Omanhene of the Dormaa-Ahenkro traditional area, also received his first communion in the same year (Presbytery Report 1969:83).

These conversions and sustained interest of the church in Bono Ahafo ensured increase in membership of the church. For example, two Synods - 1976 and 1985 - were held at Sunyane and several group conventions, involving the Singing Bands Union, the Bible Study and Prayer Group of the church took place in the region after 1966. Statistics for the total Christian community as at 1968, two years after the creation of the presbytery showed a significant increase. Total memberships stood at 24,922. Asante presbytery had 11,580, while Ga Adanbge and Akuapem had 52,510 and 62,531 respectively.<sup>32</sup> By December 1992, the Presbytery was composed of seventeen Pastoral Stations; while the total membership of the church stood at 20, 218. As at 1993 about twenty-four pastors of the church were citizens of the region. This included the first woman minister of the church. Rev. Dora Ofori-Owusu, a citizen of Berekum. (Annual Presbytery report 1992).

### 6. A Big School for Increased Membership

The early Basel Missionaries did not only have their mind on the conversion of people to Christianity. In addition, the missionaries mobilized the great founding members of the church to build schools alongside church buildings. This is because, the policy of the missionaries was that a big school makes a big church. The early schools managed by the church taught their pupils how to read and write to facilitate the spread of the gospel. Fortunately for the local churches, expatriate Basel Mission personnel who were sent from Switzerland, and later Scotland and Germany actively participated in evangelism, support the church financially and resided in the Bono area. Some became largely responsible for the administration of the church's schools. The mission had a syllabus on Religious education for its schools. It also established an educational endowment fund to support the establishment of schools<sup>35</sup>. Progress reports by the missionaries from the 1940s indicated growth in schools opened by the Presbyterian Church. (The Christian Way 1943:1)

By the early 1950s, this initial efforts and the remarkable vision of the mission to open up the country through education had yielded some fruit. Many congregations began putting up school buildings through self-help, and sometimes with the support of the local community. As Presbyterian Church's schools flourished all over the country, the church eventually became the sole financier of schools until the 1980s when the government took over the administration of all schools. (Synod Reports, 1950)

To facilitate school administration, the church established the Presbyterian Educational Unit (P.E.U) with its headquarters in Accra. At the hierarchy of this unit was the General Manager of Presbyterian Schools. At the Regional and District levels were the Regional and Local Managers respectively. The Regional Managers saw to the general administration of all Presbyterian Church schools, including postings and transfers of teachers of the unit in the Region and presented the annual report during annual Pastors' presbytery conferences. Such annual reports covered varied aspects as General education policies, qualifications of teachers and other staff, legislation and administration of schools, and general courses offered in the Church's high institutions among others.

Participants then discussed the report and suggested solutions to problems. The aim was to improve upon school work. Moreover, District Pastors of the church in the past were recognized as local managers of schools<sup>39</sup>. They supervised all activities in their schools, discussed how best to ensure peace and harmony through improvement of performance in their schools. Pastors of the church often intervened to solve conflicts between parents and teachers and conflicts among teachers. As the immediate assistants to the Regional Managers, pastors paid regular visits, and conducted worship services in the schools. They also held regular meetings with teachers. Until the 1960s when the mechanized system for paying salaries was introduced, the pastors served as paymasters. They collected teachers' salaries in bulk from the Banks and paid them. (Minutes and Reports, Bono Ahafo:27).

The mission's interest in education in the Brong-Ahafo Region, like other places in the country has therefore been quite remarkable, well acclaimed, and very enduring. The Basel Mission was the first to introduce formal education in the Region when the first school in the region was opened in Berekum in 1904 by Rev. N. T. Clerk, the first missionary of the church in the town. Gradually as many stations were opened, many more schools were also opened alongside. For instance in 1925, Rev. A.L. Asare started a school at Abease near Atebubu with twenty-five children. Rev. H. Bruchner, after initial difficulties, including lack of land and lack of peoples' interest in formal education, opened two schools at Japekrom, and Suma-Ahenkro in the 1930s. He again opened another school at Sampa in 1940. From that period onwards, the various districts of the church embarked on vigorous efforts to open many more schools. By 1937, the church had built schools in Bekyem, Susuanso and Atebubu. (Basel Mission Report 1937:6)

The zeal of congregations increased tremendously that in 1938, an autonomous educational unit was created and opened in Sunyane. Regional schools' statistics in the 1950s showed that in the nine districts of the church, the church had 101 primary and twenty-three middle schools. Despite the government's policy to take over mission schools, the church's concern to build and adopt schools was intensified after 1962. The church's concern for the rehabilitation and maintenance of schools was likewise pursued seriously.

District	Primary	Middle	Total
NKORANZA	12	1	13
ATEBUBU	9	-	9
D/NKWANTA	6	4	10
BECHEM	8	2	10
BEREKUM	14	5	19
D/AHENKRO	16	4	20
SUNYANI	12	3	15
SAMPA	16	1	17
JAPEKROM	8	3	11
TOTAL	101	23	124

Table 1: Presbyterian Educational Unit Brong-Ahafo Region Statistics 1962 Number Of Schools – 124

In 1981, the synod of the church decided to involve all categories of people, and congregations in school matters. Consequently it proposed the formation of Educational Committees. The Presbytery then formed the Congregational, District, and Presbytery Education Committees. The Presbytery level Committees which met for the first time on May 28, 1986, decided among other things to hold what was described as "Educational week" each year for the proceeds to be used as a revolving fund for the maintenance and establishment of schools. These committees, in conjunction with the Presbyterian Church of Ghana District sessions contributed greatly to educational development in many areas in the Bono Ahafo region. As at 1994, the annual "Educational Report" of the Presbyterian Educational Unit in the Region put the number of Primary and Junior Secondary Schools at 287 with a total number of 38,578 pupils in its thirteen districts. (Presbytery Reports 1994).

District	Nursery	Primary	J.S.S.	Total
GOASO / KUKUOM	6	8	4	18
NKORANZA	10	15	1	26
DORMAA	3	11	4	18
SAMPA	5	8	3	16
ATEBUBU	7	13	1	21
WENCHI	11	14	3	28
TEKYIMANTIA	3	4	2	9
SUMA / NKWANTA	5	8	1	14
BEREKUM	10	16	8	34
BECHEM	4	7	1	12
D / NKWANTA	5	6	3	14
WAMFIE	2	5	2	9
SUNYANE	10	18	7	35
JAPEKROM	9	11	4	24
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>144</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>278</b>

Table 2: Presbyterian Education Unit Brong-Ahafo Region Statistics, 1992 Number Of Schools -278

### 6.1. High Institutions

Apart from its involvement in Basic Elementary education, the church also paid attention to the management of secondary, technical and vocational institutions. Presbyterian schools included the Bechem Presbyterian Secondary School at Bekyem, Nafana Secondary School at Sampa, and Presbyterian Secondary Commercial School at Takyimantia. The church established the Secondary Technical School at Berekum, and Margaret Buchner and Presbyterian Secondary Vocational Institutes in Duayaw-Nkwanta and Dormaa Ahenkro respectively. The Bechem Presbyterian Secondary School was the Presbytery's first second-cycle institution. It was opened on October 15, 1966 with an initial enrolment of 110 boys and 30 girls. The church provided sixty-five acres of land on which a hostel of the school was erected. (Synod Report 1966:12-13).

The establishment of the Nafana Secondary School was a joint undertaking between the Nafana state and the Presbyterian Church of Ghana. It was formally opened on April 5, 1980 with a total student population of ninety-six comprising eighty-eight boys and eight girls. The Nafana Council thereafter entrusted the Presbyterian Church to manage the school. In 1979 the church adopted the then Evangelical Technical Secondary School, a private school at Takyimantia and renamed it the Takyimantia Presbyterian Day Secondary Commercial School. Other schools included the Berekum Presbyterian Secondary Technical School which was opened in 1994. The church spent 17 billion cedis (Equivalent of 170,000 Ghana Cedis in current cedi terms) to rehabilitate the Amankona Diawuo Middle School at Berekum for this project (Presbytery Report 1993).

In response to the advice of Synod for congregations to help promote girls' education, the Margaret Buechner Vocational Centre was opened by the Duayaw-Nkwanta Presbyterian Church in 1980. Dormaa-Ahenkro also opened a vocational centre in 1990 to train girls to acquire vocational skills after completing the basic education. These centres taught girls subjects like dressmaking, catering, needle work, home management, bread making, knitting, pottery, nutrition, English language and mathematics and attracted people to the school and to the church. To attract more girls, the church collaborated with school authorities' to sell items to students at reduced prices and sometimes gave materials to students free of charge. With the exception of the vocational schools, the other high institutions were government-assisted schools. However Rev. and Mrs. Bruchner and Mr. Zoltan Tayti whose finances helped to establish the vocational institutions at Bekyem and Dormaa, together with other overseas organizations provided periodic financial or material assistance to support the schools. (Presbytery Reports 1991:5).



District	Kg/Nur	Primary	J.S.S.	Total
SUNYANE	10	18	7	35
BEREKUM	10	16	7	33
DORMAA	5	16	7	28
JAPEKROM	9	12	5	26
WENCHI	3	4	-	7
KINTAMPO	4	5	2	11
NKORANZA	6	11	1	18
TECHIMAN	2	5	2	9
ATEBUBU	6	12	4	22
BECHEM	4	7	1	12
GOASO	4	6	3	13
KUKUOM	2	2	1	5
BANDA MISSION F	4	5	-	9
NKRANKWANTA	-	3	2	5
WAMFIE	2	5	2	9
DUAYAW-NKWANTA	5	6	3	14
TEKYIMANTIA	3	4	2	9
SAMPA	6	8	3	17
SUMA / AHENKRO	5	8	1	14
TOTAL	90	144	44	278

Table 3: Presbyterian Education Unit Brong-Ahafo Region School, Statistics, 1994

## 7. Health Centers and Hospitals

The early missionaries did not relent in their efforts to provide health facilities. The church established a medical desk at its head office in Accra to plan and monitor its activities in the medical field. By 1965, the church's medical work project indicated a steady progress in its four main hospitals at Agogo, Sandema, Donkorkrom and Dormaa-Ahenkro in Asante, Upper West, Eastern and Brong-Ahafo regions respectively. In pursuance of its policy to improve the welfare of rural dwellers, these hospitals, unlike those opened by the government and other missions were located in the remote parts of the country. Rev. S. Peyer, the General Health Secretary in the 1950s was impressed by the medical work of the church and the dedication of medical staff towards improving welfare of people. He expressed that the church's medical work was a "visible expression of faith, hope and love". According to him medical work in hospitals and clinics belonging to the church was done faithfully by Doctors, Sisters, Midwives and other staff (Synod Medical Reports 1965).

In 1967, the entire church membership nationwide was called upon to support the medical work of the church. The church set aside one Sunday in the year as "medical Sunday" to generate income for medical work and income was used to support medical activities of the church. In the Bono Ahafo area, financial support to the health sector was provided mainly for health care in the Dormaa Ahenkro hospital the only Presbyterian church hospital in the area.

### 7.1. The Dormaa Hospital

Although this was for many years the only hospital under the administration of the Presbyterian Church in the Brong-Ahafo region, its services have been remarkable. Built in 1954 by the chiefs and people of Dormaa-Ahenkro, the traditional authority of the town placed the hospital under the care and management of the local Presbyterian Church in the town because the Presbyterian Church had demonstrated in some parts of Ghana its ability to effectively manage institutions. In Dormaa-Ahenkro itself, the Presbyterian Church was well-acclaimed and very popular. The chiefs and people saw in the church its ability to similarly administer affairs of the hospital. But it must be said also that by 1950, Nana Agyeman Badu, chief of the Dormaa state was a staunch member of the Presbyterian Church and must have influenced the transfer of the hospital to the Presbyterian Church.

Running the hospital was a very difficult undertaking as it was bedevilled with several problems. Foremost of these problems was the lack of qualified and experienced personnel as Dormaa were located further away from Kumasi in Asante and away also from Sunyani the Bono Ahafo capital. (Presbytery Hospital Report 1980). Yet still, other staff faced accommodation, electricity, water supply, transport and finance and other problems. It was through the initiative of the first medical Doctor W. Bekker, and a medical sister that the situation was gradually improved. In addition, Dr. Bekker introduced a mobile clinic work in the district to dispense curative as well as preventive medical services under the joint sponsorship of the Basel Mission and the Government of Ghana. As expected, this helped the church to reach as many people as possible in the remotest parts of the Dormaa area to dispense treatment to patients. In 1969 alone, about 120,000 inhabitants benefited from the hospital's services. In the same year, the church also supplied foodstuffs to the malnourished and tuberculosis patients.

But it was the establishment in 1982 of a separate Health Institution known as the District Presbyterian Primary Health Care (DPPHC) at its headquarters that greatly affected the health of Bono Ahafo people. The primary aim of this institution was to reduce maternal and infant morbidity, disability and mortality. The institution aimed to prevent communicable diseases, to educate people on ill-health due to unsanitary environment; and the dangers associated with the use of unsafe water. The unit aimed also to devote attention to

educate the public on proper refuse disposal, the importance of well ventilated latrines, and the promotion of hygienic water supplies. Following the introduction of the Primary Health Care (PHC) programme in the Dormaa District, more bore holes and wells were sunk by the foreign agencies including United States Association of International Donors (USAID), "Duetsches Institut Fur Asralicher Mission", a Dutch organization and the Association of churches in West Germany in cooperation with the Presbyterian church of Ghana. These were to serve as sources of hygienic water supply to residents of these communities. Also, the congregations of Dwenem, Suma Ahenkro and Japekrom sunk wells in their mission houses that supplied water to the respective communities during dry seasons and in times of drought.

The introduction of a five-year 1992-1996 development plan by the hospital aimed significantly at transforming the medical work of the church. This was to complement and sustain the PNDC government's programme to introduce Primary Health care to the people, especially the most-needy in the society. The programme was also designed to create awareness for individuals and communities to be responsible for their own health. It was to take the necessary steps to prevent illnesses among the 158,376 estimated population of the Bono Ahafo Region of the mid-1990s. To attain this objective, the programme was vigorously pursued by the Presbyterian Church with its mobile clinic systems in the church's rural clinics in collaboration with the medical field unit of the Ministry of Health (Dormaa District Health Report, 1992).

### *7.2. Local/Foreign Churches Collaboration*

The Dormaa Presbyterian hospital has worked in concert and in co-operation with foreign agencies like USAID, and the Christian Services Committee. Foreign cooperation was important to the church in Bono Ahafo for three main reasons. First it enabled the home church to accept and train personnel of the church. Secondly, cooperation enabled the Ghanaian church to secure medical supplies uncommon in Ghanaian stores and lastly it facilitated cooperation between the two areas in the growth and expansion of health services. Indeed, in 1975, the Dormaa hospital received a large consignment of medical instruments, linen, bed sheets, blankets and theatre linen as a donation from the Presbyterian church in Holland. Besides, the "Duetsches Institut Fur Asralicher Mission", and the Association of churches in West Germany regularly gave monetary and material assistance to the hospital.

Besides financial and material support, these organizations regularly sent expatriate medical doctors to the hospital. These personnel helped to augment the medical, paramedical and technical staff of the hospital. Through the availability of personnel, the Dormaa hospital in 1976 opened clinics in villages like Nkrankwanta, Diaba, Kofi Badukrom, Darenname and Kojokumikrom; and put in some efforts to upgrade some of these clinics to the status of polyclinics. Furthermore, a cooperation agreement between the Inter-church co-ordinations in Development Projects – ICCO of Holland, also enabled the hospital to expand its premises. A staff quarters, store room, emergency ward and an OPD were constructed between 1980 and 1984 (Presbytery Report 1980).

In a nutshell, it is important to note that on numerical terms, the Presbyterian Church built a relatively smaller number of health institutions in Bono Ahafo, compared to the Catholic Church which by the 1990s had about ten hospitals in the Brong-Ahafo region. However, the Dormaa Hospital provides invaluable health care services to a large group of people. Apart from the over 137, 872 Ghanaian population who benefited from its services in the 1990s, the hospital extended its medical and social services to Ivorian citizens as well.

### *7.3. The Church's Provision of Other Social Services*

The Bono Ahafo church has been interested in healing camps and healing programmes. This is contrary to popular perception that the Presbyterian Church takes little interest in healing. For example in the early 1980s, the church established a Healing Camp at Gyegyemiregya where the spiritually afflicted and the dying sought healing. Early in 1994, the Japekrom District presented a set of musical instruments to the camp to be used to lull inmates of that camp. The church has often participated actively in national programmes. This sometimes follows in line with the church's own programmes. For example, in pursuance of its policy to educate members and the general Ghanaian population, the church engaged in the Adult Literacy programme introduced by the Ghana government to educate illiterates between nineteen and ninety years.

This was to ensure a better life for individuals and to produce a literate society. Similarly, the various groups in the church have contributed to improve the Bono traditional society in several ways. Groups like the Men's and Women's Fellowships, the Bible Study and Prayer Group, and the Young People's Guild, periodically undertake clean-up and tree planting exercises in the various districts of the church. The groups also offer financial and material assistance to the needy and in the Dormaa district, to patients in the hospital. Towards the equitable distribution of plots of land to members, the Bereku Presbyterian church formed a committee responsible for plot allocation in the 1980s and the 1990s. For several years, the committee sold unused plots belonging to the church to Presbyterians and non-Presbyterians alike. (Presbytery Reports 1991 & 1994).

## **8. Supporting Church's Funds through Commercial Activities**

The Presbyterian Church in Bono Ahafo has made comparable contributions in the economic field as in the social field. The most significant economic development has been the establishment of cash crop plantations and rearing of livestock. Others include the establishment of shops and by the 1990s, the purchase of vehicles to fetch revenue to supplement church funds. Economic activity of the church began along with the missionaries' work in the Gold Coast. The Basel Mission made the development of agriculture an important aspect of their work. Among other objectives, they intended to teach the African "the dignity of labour". Most of the early missionaries from Switzerland, Scotland and Germany were artisans and agriculturists. They assisted their converts to engage themselves in viable farming in the Akuapem hills. (Reindorf, 1923:261)

Ramseyer and Kuhne – founders of the Asante Basel (Presbyterian) mission began cotton plantations in the Volta region of Ghana. It is now agreed that the first cocoa seeds were introduced into the Gold Coast by the Basel Missionaries. Furthermore, the Basel Mission established a trading company the United African Company (UAC) in Accra in the late nineteenth century. This early example of combining commercial activities with evangelism has continued in the life of the church until today. This is because congregations had been, and still are responsible for the payment of the salaries of church agents, and for financing anniversaries, conferences and retreats. The basic sources of finance of these projects are church harvest, tithes, dues, and Sunday offertory which are considered inadequate in the running of the church's activities. (Kwamena-Poh 1974:9)

Besides, members who comprise mostly un-employed and the poor, find it difficult to meet their monetary pledges to the church. The need for viable ventures by the members of the congregation has therefore become indispensable. The church's authorities at Synod, Presbytery and District levels therefore encourage congregations to enter into economically viable projects. The Presbyterian Church of Ghana itself has established agricultural stations at Abokobi, near Accra in the Greater Accra Region, Garu in the Upper East Region and Donkorkrom on the Afram plains in the Eastern Region of Ghana. Some presbyteries have also established development centres or project committees to supervise commercial programmes of the church.

The Brong-Ahafo Presbyterian church has performed remarkably well in this direction. Annual Reports since 1966 present highlights on economic activities of the various congregations in the Presbytery. Congregations have attempted occasionally to actively engage themselves in livestock and cash crop farming, operation of bookshops, and the use of vehicles on commercial basis.

### 8.1. Bookshops

Available records suggest that despite the importance of commercial activities by the church, only the Berekum and Dormaa-Ahenkro congregations have operated bookshops believed to be a major source of income available to congregations. These were opened in the 1980s and the 1990s when the Presbytery Committee obliged every congregation to start one form of business activity or another. Revenue from operation of bookshops remained low for two main reasons. First, items sold comprised mainly Christian literature, school textbooks and stationery which did not attract the rather large illiterate Bono society; and secondly, the major suppliers of their stocks were limited to the Christian Council of Ghana and the Presbyterian Book Depot in Accra which supplied Christian literature only. (Rev. Asiedu, interview: 1994).

In Dormaa Ahenkro, the church in the 1990s bought a mobile van to go round the outstations and sell books and materials to the rural communities instead of keeping it in a bookshop. Although this involved a lot of travelling, it nevertheless helped to improve the revenue of the Dormaa congregation of the Presbyterian Church. In Berekum, the bookshop known as the Berekum Book Depot was established by the Berekum Men's Fellowship. It was later adopted by the local congregation which contributed about one million Cedis (100 Ghana cedis in today's value) to increase the stock of materials in the depot until it was entrusted to the operation of the Berekum District of the Presbyterian Church. This step was to help expand the financial base of the bookshop and thus help increase the stock of the shop. (Presbytery Projects Committee Report, 1983).

### 8.2. Vehicles, Farms, Plantations, Livestock and Others

As at 1994, only the Duayaw-Nkwanta congregation in the Presbytery operated a vehicle as a "passenger's bus". The other vehicle in the Presbytery belonged to the Sunyane branch of the Bible Study and Prayer Group (BSPG) in Sunyane. The use of vehicles by congregations has always been of concern to most churches in the Presbytery. Vehicles serve dual purposes as the church could use them to attend conferences, meetings and excursions, hire them out, and also use them to convey passengers to generate income for the church. Although vehicles are of much significance, the source of money to purchase vehicles have come mainly from annual harvest proceeds which are often inadequate to purchase durable vehicles for such purposes.

Pastoral district and groups in the Brong-Ahafo Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church have at one time or the other engaged themselves in commercial farming with the aim to boost finances of the church. Realizing the importance of these farming activities, it has been the Presbytery's plan to support the districts in diverse ways. In 1983 for instance the Presbytery formed the Presbytery projects committee to support congregations to establish farms and plantations. The committee comprised five farming experts and constituted itself into an advisory, technical and management body. In the same year (1983), the committee embarked upon an educational tour of the districts, they offered technical advice on livestock and cash crop farming. The committee also negotiated with chiefs for vast stretches of land for the Presbytery's cash crop and livestock farms (Projects Committee Report 1983).

Annual Reports from the Districts during the 1980's showed that almost every congregation began the planting of cash crops including cashew nut, cotton, maize, cocoa and oil palm. The Takyimantia congregation for instance began a three-acre oil palm plantation. It also employed the services of a caretaker to harvest the fruits and sell to customers who comprised palm oil manufacturers in Takyimantia and its surrounding villages. In addition, the Takyimantia Church District, in conjunction with the European Economic Community (EEC), and the Bureau of Integrated Rural Development (BIRD) at the then University of Science and Technology (UST) now, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), began an animal husbandry and operation of a corn mill at Subrisu No. 2, a small rural community in the same (Takyimantia) District in 1983. The Takyiman District also installed a corn mill at Ofuman to serve the needs of the community. Other towns like Goaso, Dormaa-Ahenkro, Suma-Ahenkro and Duayaw-Nkwanta similarly embarked upon oil palm plantation, while the Kukuom Presbyterian church began a cocoa plantation at Domeabra, one of its outstation (Rev. Adum, interview 1993).

Apart from the congregations, various groups in the church, through their communal efforts always embark on a series of commercial ventures. In the 1980s, the Dormaa Ahenkro Bible Study and Prayer Group cultivated large acres of vegetable farms. The Women's Fellowship in many congregations including Gyinyini and Sampa have prioritized cassava, maize and plantain farming, formation of

cooperative credit unions, and in purchasing shares in Rural Banks. A general analysis of the commercial programmes of the church indicate therefore that although the basic objective of their programmes has been to provide revenue for the congregations to enable them meet their financial obligations, the farms, bookshops, and vehicles have served other commendable purposes in their respective districts. (Presbytery Reports, 1990). In the final analysis, district, congregation or group projects have helped to increase congregations' finances. Churches have therefore been able to donate to the poor and the needy, and also carry out effectively, other responsibilities to the Presbyterian Church of Ghana.

From the discussions so far made, it is clear that in spite of the many financial and logistics problems, the Presbyterian Church has contributed immensely to the social and economic development not only of members of their congregations but also to the Brong-Ahafo Region as a whole. The church has considered conversion of all manner of people, evangelism in rural areas of Ghana, provision of education and health needs of Ghanaians and commercial activities as important elements of the mission of the church Bono Ahafo. The church has since the early twentieth century undertaken activities in all these areas in towns and villages in the Bono Ahafo Region of modern Ghana. Overall the church has benefitted from its evangelical works, but the greatest beneficiaries have undoubtedly been church members and the Ghanaian society as a whole.

## 9. Conclusion

At the initial stages of their missionary work in Bono Ahafo, the missionaries encountered hostile reception from the local people. The people had their own traditional beliefs and practices. They believed in spiritual beings who could influence their lives either for good or evil. As a result, amulets and charms were used extensively for protection or to bewitch rivals or enemies. In the traditional society, culprits of certain crimes appeared before traditional priests in shrines with fowls, goats, sheep and others to admit their guilt and pacification rites were performed for them. Offenders endured torture or death and in a few cases heavy fines.

The gradual spread and acceptance of Christianity, with the Christian message of God's love, mercies and forgiveness, however led to the decline of obnoxious traditional religious practices. The missionaries had closer interactions with converts. They gave them gifts, offered them free medical care and taught them methods of planting of new crops such as cocoa.

Some missionaries like Samuel Otu however sacrificed their lives. The zeal of the missionaries nevertheless prevailed. By the early 1960s, the church had been firmly established in the Brong-Ahafo Region and after that it achieved quite significantly in her social and economic endeavours. Apart from using its revenue to finance anniversaries and retreats in the districts, the church has built manes, chapels and classrooms. Yet from the little resources, many people were educated and trained in the church's schools. Thus a class of intellectuals holding key positions in the country were produced in most of the Presbyterian schools. To cater for the physical and mental well-being of people, the church with the assistance of her foreign partners established the Dormaa-Ahenkro Presbyterian Hospital. The various livestock and cash crop farm plantations and provision of the vehicles and bookshops helped to increase the food and meat requirements of communities in the Brong Ahafo Region in the twentieth century.

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