

Letter to Joseph J. Freeman, 23 September 1841

Livingstone, David, 1813-1873

Published by Livingstone Online (livingstoneonline.org)

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Kuruman 23rd September 1841

Dear Sir

That I might be able in my first communication inform the Directors respecting my prospects of usefulness the cause of Christ amongst the Heathen I have delayed my arrival at Kuruman for a period of nearly months. We came hither on the 31st July and a most cordial welcome from the bretheren

Hamilton and Edwards, the warmth of it awakened my bosom feelings of fraternal affection to both these subsequent intercourse has tended to increase

As it is in accordance with my own long cherished and the intentions of the Directors that my energies should be directed to the evangelization the tribes in the Interior the mode in which can best be effected has become a topic intense interest in many conversations, we have together. The decision of the Directors, from matured by long experience is that an native agency is the most efficient mode spreading the gospel. In this decision most the missionaries I have seen fully concur, question therefore where are these to be got for extensive field beyond us has become to me of peculiar interest, Whilst in England had formed the opinion that great things be done by means of this mission, - it might be formed into a sort of from which might diverge in every the beams of Divine truth but after

[0002] personally inspected most of the surrounding localities connexion with this station I am compelled partially relinquish the hope in so far as very extended operation[s] concerned, the great desideratum is a want of , There is no want of success considering the of the number who usually attend the preaching of word, nor can we consider even the attendance small we remember the paucity of people actually within reasonable distance of the church. What in England should call a fair proportion pay respect to the gospel their presence and a larger proportion still give evidence of attachment to its principles by their and conversation. But the population being even although there is a large proportion of there must be a small number qualified with nothing more with only the willing mind to endure for the benefit of their fellow men. I should have called your attention to this which appears only unfavourable feature in the mission had there any probability of an increase of population cause of the steady decrease instead of augmentation inhabitants has been in operation for a great number years, the Interior is quiet, as the gospel extends its peace will become more permanent and unless Bechuanas entirely relinquish their present mode of , - hold something else in estimation as their chief than cattle We cannot expect that Kuruman ever become populous. Regard for the welfare their cattle will always lead them to choose more locations for them than what this district presents

That the Directors may judge whether my fears are well I may mention that within a circle of 8 or 10 miles the station there are not a thousand inhabitants. total number of native houses, (occupied & unoccupied) this station is 185, at least should be deducted the unoccupied or used only as sort of storerooms sleeping apartments for the unmarried females

[0003] if we take this number and take as an average the highest frequent personal inspection I should say we can possibly , (avg.) 5 We have only 925 as the total number of men and children. The above average exceeds by 2 that taken by the French missionaries in estimating

the popu

-lation around them. There is however a much population about 16 miles off. Probably there are that location 1500 souls, Amongst whom also the gospel met with considerable success, In another direction 30 or 35 miles distant there are two villages each from 150 to 200 inhabitants

Although the population is small in this district there is want of inhabitants farther to the North and North- . At Taons (pronounced Towns) which lies about by North of this M^r Owen of the Church Missionary estimated the population at 15 or 20,000, the bretheren thither although it is nearly 100 miles distant though but little positive success has attended their the prospect is cheering, the truth is working way and will soon prevail, even the violent [...] [oppo-] -ition manifested in encouraging for anything is better [...] [than] indifference

In view of the limited choice we are reduced to at this I may be allowed to suggest that we make the most whatever agents we can find, Although desirable that have somewhat more than decided piety it is I not absolutely necessary, Evils may arise from ignorance and mistakes but good will certainly be and I should hope it will abide while the effects their deficiencies will vanish before more efficient whom they themselves may now be instrumental partially preparing, Making the most of every man them seems to have been the reason, by the blessing God, of the great success of the bretheren at Griqua Town

I purpose accompanying (Br.) Edwards in his journey the Interior as I am informed by the bretheren who are able to judge it will be advantageous for me in many . I shall become better acquainted with the habits the people, their language and by exclusion from

[0004] all European society for some time I hope to slip more into their mode of thinking which is essentially different ours. M^r Edwards seems intimately acquainted with character and there is little fear but we shall be kindly more especially by those who have again & again sent for missionaries, There is reason to believe that the

[][names] of Hamilton, Edwards & Moffat are well known hundreds of beyond us as the nomadic habits of the people very much the transmission of news - We take with [^][us] two of best qualified of our members here for the purpose of planting as native teachers in some promising locality, the expenses one of whom (if I do not receive in time the concurrence of D^e Phillip), I shall endeavour to defray myself. the work is . souls are perishing: and what more efficient can there be, for the new missionaries which hope will soon follow us, than the residence for some previously of one or two native teachers

I am exceedingly gratified to observe the confidence which been inspired into the minds of the Bechuanas of the of our medicines . by a very successful care of treatment happened a day or two after our arrival. The bretheren it is altogether unprecedented and an unsuccesfull case has not in least abated their confidence. I feel thankfull hope it will by the blessing of God, enable [^][me] to win attention to a much more important topic than preservation of their bodies, even the salvation of immortal souls.

Faithfully & Affectionately

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