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Dear Co-workers:

Penny provides the following remarkable story about the Lord working among Waskuk villagers which led to establishing of a vibrant church.

*PIM teacher Carol was brought up in the village of Amaki-2 (AH mah kee) situated along the upper reaches of the Sanchi River northwest of Ambunti. The village has a long history of witchcraft and rejecting true Christian witness. In the 1960's Neal and Martha travelled on the dangerous fast flowing Sanchi River and hiked miles over swampy trails to share newly translated Bible verses and teach literacy classes in the villages to the south, but Amaki-2 village leaders refused them entrance. In the 1980s when a revival broke out in nearby Waiawos (WHY ah was) and Ablatak (AHB lah tahk) Amaki-2 strongly opposed the movement, even with violence.*



An hour after giving birth to her first born son a young woman paddles from Ambunti to a nearby village. Her mother shades the newborn

*Someone from the village threw a small club at the revelers, but like a boomerang it curved back and hit one of the Amaki-2 people in the head. PIM teacher Douglas Jangi remembers the incident which happened when he was a young boy.*

*In the late 1990s Carol became a Christian through the witness of friends from other villages and grew in her faith. Then she worked with PIM as a teacher in her village. One day she was walking from Amaki-2 to a nearby clinic and heard a distinct voice, "You are going to help begin a church in Amaki." Seeing a change in her life, husband Desmond also started to follow the Lord. He studied for three years in the PIM Bible School in the village of Waiawos to the south, and then he pastored a small fellowship in their village that met together on Sundays. He claims that "Carol was like the Samaritan woman at the well who eagerly told others to come and see the Messiah for themselves."*

*For many years Desmond and Carol suffered persecution. Villagers felt betrayed when Desmond left the community's religion which for years had combined worship of evil spirits and Christian symbolism. They expressed their anger by digging up and destroying their gardens, cutting up their fishing nets, and stealing their chickens. The couple foraged for food in the jungle for their adopted children (of dead relatives) as well as their own. They struggled to forgive and pray for their persecutors. In spite of everything they kept growing in the faith along with the little band of Christians.*

*Around this time Desmond said, "Friends and villagers kept telling me to leave off associating with this new denomination and with PIM. 'You are wasting your time,' they said. But worshiping the old way I did not know or understand the Bible. When I came to the Bible school I learned things clearly, so I cannot leave the mission. I pray for the village people that they see the one and only true God."*



A small Pacu fish

*In the meantime another villager of Amaki-2, Douglas Jangi, became a PIM teacher, and he said, "I noticed that many of the people who opposed the new church had serious problems in their lives, and that many of them who were antagonistic toward the followers were coming to me for counsel. Some of the young people repented and started to attend the new church."*

*At Christmas in 2014 the new church had a commissioning service for a recent believer and his family, Andi Gapi, who was going off to Bible school for three years with his wife and six children. The fellowship of believers decided to invite the whole village to attend the special service. Almost the entire village came! When Andi gave his testimony, he said, "In the old church we have been accustomed to worshiping idols, but that has to change." Then the pastor preached and gave a clear gospel presentation about who Jesus is and what He has done for believers. Many of those from the old church said afterwards, "We have not heard this message before."*

*Later circumstances permitted the Amaki-2 Christians to plan a Christmas and New Years gathering in Amaki-1. They scheduled a speaker and invited other villages, but then they had problems with the weather. Prior to the anticipated date it rained and rained and rained. Amaki's growing band rescheduled the meeting, and the women labored for a full day to manually push away the mud and lay down walkways. "And then we had four days of bright sun!" (Telling the story afterwards, Carol's daughter added, "Then just when the meetings finished on Sunday night, it started to rain again!")*

*People came to the gathering from surrounding villages. Carol and friends prepared food and provided sleeping quarters so that many of the young people could witness the happenings. "For us, the little bit of food we ate was enough because we were all feeding on the Word of God." When the pastors provided the challenge to accept Jesus many were weeping and there was obvious deep affection. Many turned to the Lord. Nearly 200 from six different villages who had been prepared ahead of time by their pastors were baptized; they were mostly young people.*

*Douglas Jangi summed it up. "The messages, the songs, the Bible skits, and the folk getting baptized told something to the people of Amaki-1 as well as us. God is at work. He heard our prayers. He gave us strength and told us how to beat the elements when the flood came. We saw the Lord was doing a great thing and He toughened us up for the work."*

We wish and pray a wonderful new year for you and your loved ones.

In His grace,

Orneal Kooyers  
Photos & format by Doug Heidema



A pet eagle chick