

Onga Zaka Mission

The Waria River constituted the boundry between Papua and New Guinea. Gold was suspected in the Waria area (p.164.GNM) so the German government established a station a couple of hours walk from the mouth of the Waria on a harbour called Adolf harbour. Since here was a large population in the middle Waria, a road to the area was prepared over the foothills.

Already in 1908 Governor Hall told Flierl to buy land for a station. In 1910 Stuerzenhofecker was freed from other duties in order to start Ongga station on the harbour. Mailaender, at Malalo, was sent to begin Zaka station near the mouth of the Waria. But first he assisted with the beginning of Onga station. In mid 1911 he moved t Zaka and Australian lay-missionary Schulz helped build the house. After seven years Ongga was given up since only eight hundred people lived in the area.

At Zaka helpers from Malalo assisted for two years. But they found the learning of the Zia language difficult so they were exchanged by Kate evangelists. (p.165.GNM) these evangelists were placed up the Waria valley but Mailaender did not know Kate. In order to help the situation out, a new course for Kate helpers was moved to Zaka for one year.

Thus in the end of January, 1913, Philhofer plus twenty-five students and eight helpers led by Senior Flierl, arrive at Zaka. The party traveled in three open boats a distance of 324 kilometers by sea.

Many young men of the Zia people were heavily influenced by whites already. They acted like the Sio's. A Buka policeman had influenced them against the mission according to the young men. After the Bible stories were translated, they listened. Late they said the stories (p.166.GNM) of the whites and of the ancestors did not affect them. So only a few came to church on Sundays held in the school house.

The middle Warias became real enemies of the Gospel. In 1921, Mailaender reported he had a fine meeting at Kobo. Three hours after the meeting in a near-by village of Aise, the enemies of the Gospel gathered and scolded the whole night through and threatened murder. They complained to the government already in 1920. They said that the missionaries and helpers spoke of the story of a flood. It this continued, the flood would come upon them. Two months later a big flood did indeed come to the Waria Valley and many people were frightened. The problem was the secret men's cult and the men feared the ancestors. (p.167.GNM). Mailaender reports in 1920 of a prayer made in connection with a Balum festival. "O you our fathers, we have become orphans. Come to our help and sow that you are still the lords and possessors of our land and life."

Suddenly, the five old opponents of the Gospel died one after the other. Then in an Easter gathering Enaleka and Jomenang explained the Sinai Story. Afterwards the leading men said they wanted to make a break with heathen customs. (1920). So Sapa village, near the mouth of

the river, revealed the Balum. This event caused a big gathering took place. The Morobe and Binandere people, who were enemies in the past, sat side by side. Also the Mawai and other inland people came. The sermon theme was "Peace on Erath". Afterwards the people hung their sorcery and magic articles on the rafters of the church. Then came requests for baptism. The first baptism Advent, 1922 of forty adults came after twelve years' work. For the baptism the people asked for a sermon on the Prodigal son. (p.169.GNM) after the baptism Mailaender had to leave for one year's furlough in Australia. When he returned a second baptism took place in 1925 pf eighty-three people. For the next one hundred and sixty registered. And then the inland work became the center of attention. (p.170.GNM).