A river ran through it, the story of an old missionary reflecting on the past.

The river called the Korosomeri, Mad Woman in English, was always a pain to the missionaries working along her banks in the early 80’s but was a source to get us to a tribe where language could be learned, and a church planted among the Bisorio people. Janie and I moved into a tribe just down river from two other missionary families and were living in a bush house until we could build better.

We were not language learners at the time but what the mission called supply workers meeting needs of those full time in language study and preparation to preach the gospel. I like to call it member care freeing up missionaries and giving them full time to spend learning a language that was not in the books.

There were supply runs to be made to the nearest airstrip eating up most of two days if all went well and the river was good to us. There were times when the river was very high and times when we needed to pull the canoe in the shallow waters. In the early days we were making back to back trips getting the missionaries settled in.

Over the years the language was learned, and the church was planted, and an air strip was put in place up river and we decided to move our work to the airstrip along with the young church. As the years pasted the young church became strong and it was time for the missionaries to give them some freedom on their own. One never knows how a church plant will survive until the next generation comes along and the Bisorio church proved it was the real thing.

This was not a work done single handed by a few missionaries even though a few gave up many things to be there hour after hour and day after day discipling several young men to take the church into the next generation. God used many prayers, gifts and many hands to bring the gospel to them.

March 2019, I turned 72 years old and returned to the little village with Bob and Nobly along the banks of the river just to see how they were doing. The church was fine, and many young new believers were there to meet us singing and praising God. Then I toke a little trip down memory lane.

All the houses were gone, the tractor was gone, and the airstrip was cut in half. A tree that was beside our house had grown tall and the wind blowing through the leaves carried a long-ago memory of my boys playing in the water with their Papua New Guinea friends. The river ran through it, the Korosomeri had won again.

The Korosomeri toke it all, the works of my hands but the sounds of the church praising God with their songs echoing into the night reminds me that the gospel is the power of God unto salvation and Jesus said the gates of hell shall not prevail against His church.

All the hard work is just a side job, the real work is the Holy Spirit letting us missionaries work by His side until the job is done. Jesus said, Matthew 28:18, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.” On the banks of that river in the jungles of Papua New Guinea that power has been realized, we have seen first hand men and women coming from darkness into the light and to Jesus we give thanks.