

December 23, 2012 by Steve Brandon



The Peace Child

Isaiah 9:6

1. The Coming of a Child

2. The Proclamation of Peace

I want to begin my message by reading from this marvelous verse -- Isaiah 9:6. Then, I want to tell you a true story. And then, briefly at the end of the story, I want to return to this verse. It's a great verse for us to reflect upon at this Christmas season.

Isaiah 9:6
For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given,
and the government will be on his shoulders.
And he will be called
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Exactly fifty years ago, Don Richardson, his wife, Carol, and their infant son, Stephen, went into the jungles of Netherlands New Guinea (which is known today Papua New Guinea) to bring the gospel to the Sawi people. The Sawi people were a violent people. They were cannibals. The Sawi people were a treacherous people. They didn't hold in honor the one who killed the most enemies. No, they held in highest honor the one who befriended the enemy and killed him as an act of betrayal. In fact, the greater the betrayal, the greater the honor.

The Sawi people liked to fatten the calf before the slaughter. They would lure an enemy into their territory under the premise of peace. They would meet with the enemy multiple times on multiple occasions. They would invite their enemy to come and feast with them. They would have several feasts with them. And then, when the enemy's senses were lowered to the danger, the Sawi would attack and kill and eat their enemy. These were the heroes that the Sawi people held in highest regard -- those who were able to betray the enemy in the greatest manner. The greater the betrayal, the greater the honor!

To these people, the Richardson family came to live. Now, to the Sawi a white man was a mystery. He was called a "Tuan." Only a few of the Sawis had ever seen a Tuan before. Occasionally, they had seen planes fly far overhead. And every few years, a plane would fly a bit lower, as the government conducted surveillance flights. The Sawi knew that the Tuans were flying these machines. In their minds, Tuans were alien beings.

But, from the reports, the small jungle people were apprehensive. I love the way that Don Richardson tells the story,

The consensus of reports seemed to indicate that Tuans were extremely large beings.
How frightening!
They were also known to be generally friendly.
This was reassuring!
Nevertheless, they were said to possess weapons capable of spurting fire with a sound like a thunderclap.
Seasoned warriors trembled!
They also were reported to be very much opposed to headhunting and cannibalism.
How fortunate. ...
Their skin was said to be as white as new sago flour. ...
How unsightly they must look!
... and very cool to touch.
Could it be that they are not really human at all?
Their hair, furthermore, was straight or wavy, but never kinky, and they covered themselves with strange skins so completely that their actual persons were hardly visible!
How difficult it must be to know them as they really are!
Most informants affirmed that no female Tuan had ever been seen, though more distant sources claimed a few such existed.
How they must have to fight to obtain wives if there are so few women! ^[1] (p. 43).

When Don Richardson showed up in the jungle, he didn't know whether or not he would be killed. Remember, Jim Elliot was speared to death by the Waodani people in Ecuador six years before (1956) doing the exact same thing that Don Richardson was doing--going into cannibal territory to bring the gospel to them.

But, the Sawi knew enough of the Tuans that it would be beneficial to them if one came to live among them. They brought steel axes and machetes and knives other goods to the tribes (p. 111). The Tuans had medicines that were magical in their power to heal. Furthermore, the Sawi people thought that the Tuans were immortal, because nobody had ever seen one die!

So, Don Richardson was relatively safe among these violent people. But, he always kept alert, as they were all "capable of flying into a rage at the mere drop of a word" (p. 121).

This wasn't accidental. They were trained to rage from childhood. They were never punished for their disobedience. Rather, they were taught to throw tantrums. If a child threw a violent enough tantrum, he would get his way (p. 185). They were trained to be angry people of violence and temper. They were encouraged to seek revenge.

During his first visit among them, Don Richardson went alone. His aim was to find a suitable place to build a house for his family, from which they might minister to these people. Once he stepped on land, word spread quickly that a Tuan had come into their territory. Soon, he was surrounded by 200 people from three different tribes: Kayagar, Atohwam, and Sawi. He had many eager workers to help him build his small house. Within a week or two, his house was completed. He paid his workers and then pronounced that he would return in three days with his family.

When he returned with his wife and child in their canoe, it was dusk. They were greeted by several hundred armed warriors, who thronged the shore (p. 134). They carried spears and had painted their bodies and faces with war paint (p. 135). Don Richardson writes, ...

It was hard to believe that they were the same people who only days before had so meekly gathered materials for our home. Then it had been easy to forget that behind their friendly mannerisms and disarming enthusiasm, they were still headhunters and cannibals. Now they really looked the part.

Had I misread their intentions? Was this their way of expressing welcome, or was it something else? Had I missed God's leading in bringing Carol and Stephen here so soon? I could hear my heart pounding as if in an echo chamber. ...

Lord God, have I been a fool? These men have never even learned to respect a policeman, let alone honor You--and here we are: man, wife and child, sixty-five river-miles from the nearest government post--defenseless except for Your Spirit surrounding us.

Triggered by the loud signal, a heavy fusillade of drumbeating exploded around us, making us shudder involuntarily. ... Gradually the drummers synchronized their rhythms into a steady, booming thunder, whereupon the entire host erupted in a paroxysm of wild shouting, leaping in the air, jabbing their spears up and down. Standing at the heart of the tumult, we studied the wildly animated faces of the celebrants, awed by the fierce intensity of their emotion, their absolute involvement in the meaning of the moment.

Presently the shouting became chanting, the leaping gave way to dancing. Wave after wave of warriors swirled closer, as if to engulf us. It's like a baptism, I thought. A baptism of primitive spirit. Of strangeness. ...

Suddenly the multitude was moving through the deep shadows, bearing us toward our home. They parted to allow us access to the rough steps I had fashioned earlier. We climbed together up onto the crude front porch and turned toward them. A tremendous shout made the air quiver. Men and boys were leaping up and down, drumming and chanting with great force. Beyond them, the women were dancing separately, their long grass skirts tossing like waves of the sea.

It was clear now, as we looked down into the upturned faces of the warriors, that they had not intended to frighten us. They carried their spears in the same way a military honor guard carries bayonets. Every motion, every dab of paint and every cadence of sound was for our pleasure. ...

Together we surveyed the interior of our new residence by flashlight. Around our feet scores of black crickets scurried to hide from the beam, while overhead a large, green tree-frog with bulging eyes leaped frantically from rafter to rafter. But the frogs were not the only black eyes watching us. Turning I saw that a number of dancers had left the singing and crowded onto our porch to stare at us through the window screen.

Under their close scrutiny, I pumped up a kerosene pressure lamp and turned it on, forgetting that this was the first time I had used such a device among the Sawi. There was a mad scramble as the unexpected burst of light struck their eyes. No one took the time to find the stairs--they simply abandoned ship by leaping over the railings. Fortunately the level of our porch was only five feet above ground.

Outside, the drumming came to a sudden halt, and the chanting boiled over into a wail. There was an unmistakable sound of hundreds of feet stampeding into the night. Setting the lamp on a counter, I hurried outside to reassure the people.

Then I saw why they had fled. Our entire home was agleam with light like some gigantic, awesome jack-o-lantern. Through hundreds of cracks in sago-frond walls, through every door and window, the blinding light of the little five-hundred-candlepower silk mantle was stabbing into the darkness.

We were not the only ones being baptized with strangeness.

"Tadan nomo! Tadan nomo! Kee nawain!" I called. "Don't be afraid! Come back!"

Slowly, Hadi, Hato and others returned, reassured to see that the intense light was only from an instrument and did not mean that Carol, Stephen and I had suddenly transformed ourselves into gods radiating awesome supernatural power.

Minutes later the drums began to throb again, as the dancers regained their composure and returned to encircle our house-though at a slightly wider radius (pp. 135-141).

Such was the environment into which the Richardsons came. The Sawi were ignorant of the ways of the 20th century. They were ignorant of the ways of God. They were ignorant of the gospel.

Over the next few months and years, the Richardson family began to live with the Sawi. They learned their language. They learned their ways. And as he had ability, Don began to teach them about God and the gospel.

When the Sawi first heard of the Myao Kodon, "the greatest spirit," (the name that Richardson chose to use for God), they were amazed. They marveled how God was unlike all of their spirits that they feared. Rather than dwelling in one submerged log or in a tree, He "filled the whole sky and the whole earth" (p. 174). "He knows all about everything. He knows what everyone is saying, doing, and thinking. We cannot see Him, but He sees us! He also controls everything, just as easily as you control the movements of your own muscles. Without Him the wind cannot blow, nor the rain fall. The sun cannot shine, nor the moon rise without His power. Neither could plants grow, nor babies be conceived without His provision" (p. 175). When they heard this, they were hearing things for the first time and were very excited about this Myao Kodon.

As Don Richardson continued his teaching over the course of time, he taught them about God and His love for justice. He taught about God and His merciful ways. He taught about the creation of the world and the advent of evil into the human community. He taught about God's pursuit of lost man. He taught about the Jewish people and how Jesus came from the Jews.

Through these teachings, some continued their interest. Many others were completely tuned out to what He was saying, especially when talking about the Jews. These jungle dwellers had little interest in those far-away people from a far-away place, as they had little relevance for their own lives (pp. 176-177).

Even when Richardson began to tell them about the life and ministry of Jesus -- His miracles and His teachings -- there was very little interest. But, it all turned when he began to tell them about Judas. The Sawi men perked up to listen. "For three years Judas had kept close company with Jesus, sharing the same food, traveling the same road" (p. 177). But Judas betrayed Jesus, handing Him over to the authorities, who killed Him by hanging Him on the cross. He did this all by himself, "without any of the other disciples suspecting his plot" (p. 177). When Don Richardson finished this story, one of the men "whistled a birdcall of admiration" (p. 177). Others were in awe (p. 177).

At first, Richardson was confused. But, then it dawned upon him. "They were acclaiming Judas as the hero of the story!" (p. 177). Judas was the one who committed the greatest act of treachery! He was the true hero! Three years in his plot to destroy Jesus! Nobody else was in on it! Wow! "Judas was a super-Sawi!" they said (p. 180).

How unprepared the Sawi people were for the news of the Messiah. With the Jews, God had prepared them for the coming of Jesus. The Jews were taught that the Messiah would come. Isaiah 7:14 says, "Behold, a virgin shall be with child and bear a Son and she will call his name Immanuel" (Matt. 1:23). Or, our verse this morning, ...

Isaiah 9:6
For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given,
and the government will be on his shoulders.
And he will be called
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

The Jews had categories in which to understand Jesus. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; so that whoever believes will in Him have eternal life" (John 3:14-15). John the Baptist pointed out to Jesus, "Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world." The life of Jesus gave testimony that He was the Messiah. "He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil" (Acts 10:38). "He was despised and rejected. A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief" (Isaiah 53:3).

But, none of these things were true of the Sawi people. They had no category for a redeemer. Try as he might, Richardson could never figure out how to communicate the gospel to them so that they would look to Jesus as the hero, and not celebrate Judas, the betrayer. Don and Carol began to wonder if they would be betrayed. They worried whether they were being fattened with friendship for the slaughter (p. 183).

Furthermore, there were always problems in the jungle. But, one of the problems that Don and Carol had created was that their presence in the jungle had brought many of the Sawi people to live close to their home much more than they usually experienced. There were two Sawi tribes that lived in close proximity to them. As a result, they experienced constant clashes between the tribes. They were hostile and violent toward each other. There were constant skirmishes. There were constant battles. There was constant violence. The Richardsons treated many with their medicines as they would injure one another in various skirmishes.

Don Richardson came to realize that the only way that the only way for the Sawi to survive was in small communities, where a higher premium was placed upon every life to survive (p. 191). Furthermore, smaller tribes were more mobile and easily hidden from their enemies. Richardson wrote, ...

Suddenly one day a new thought stopped me in my tracks. You keep urging them to make peace, I said to myself, on the assumption that peace is possible for these people. Peace, however, requires assurance of sincere good will on both sides.

But among the Sawi, where [betrayal] is a constant possibility, can there ever be assurance of sincere good will? Each side knows perfectly the other side's capacity for using friendship as a means of treachery. Each side knows also that at any time a ... bind can be used to close the mouths of even those who normally would stand by a peace agreement (p. 190).

And there came a time in the ministry of Don Richardson that he told the people that he was going to leave them. He said that his presence in the jungle was a constant danger to them. He said, ...

Since you cannot make peace with each other, it is clear to us that we ought to leave you. If we stay here, it is only a matter of time until men are killed, and then you will be locked in a blood-feud which may take still more lives.

There are other Sawi villages over on the Au River--Tamor, Sato, Ero and Hahami--we will go and see if they are living at peace with each other and try to teach them (p. 192).

Such comments cause the Sawi to be thrown into a long discussion with each other. Finally, near the end of the day, one of the Sawi men came and said, "Tuan, we're not going to kill each other. ... Tuan, tomorrow we are going to make peace!" (p. 192).

The next morning, what Don and Carol Richardson witnessed was the very breakthrough that they needed. As the day dawned, he witnessed the people gathering together. One man was carrying one of his sons on his back. His wife was "sobbing violently" (p. 194). At one point, she came and took the child off of her husband's shoulders. The husband chased her and attempted to claim the son back. But, his oldest son intervened and prevented the father from taking the child (p. 195).

Soon, they noticed that all of the women were "clutching their babies close to their breasts, crying out in apprehension" (p. 195). "Men were running back and forth, gesturing [and] shouting. The village was in turmoil" (pp. 195-196).

At one point another man raised a little baby boy over his head for all to see. He then, gave it to his brother, saying, "I can't bear to hand him over myself! ... You do it for me!" As his brother began walking off with the child, the father ran toward him and took the baby back into his own arms, saying, "I've changed my mind! I can't let him go!" (p. 196).

Suddenly, Kaiyo, a man with only one child (unlike the other two men who had grabbed their babies), slipped away and found his only son lying on the grass mat. The baby was only six months old. He said to himself, "It's necessary. There's no other way to stop the fighting. And if the fighting does not stop the Tuan will leave" (p. 197). He reached down and picked up Biakadon and began to walk toward the crowd, with "conflicting emotions raging within him" (p. 197). When Wumi, Kaiyo's wife saw him with their firstborn, she "stood frozen with shock and disbelief" (p. 197). When everything computed in her brain, she "screamed and ran after Kaiyo, pleading with all the force of her soul" (p. 198).

"But Kaiyo never looked back. His broad back kept growing smaller with distance as he raced ahead of her. ... There was no hope now. He was too far ahead. He had almost reached the waiting crowd among the Haenam, [another Sawi tribe living close by]" (p. 198).

When Kaiya reached the edge of Haenam, ...

the leading men of the village were massed in front of him, ... expectantly eyeing the child Kaiyo held in his hands. Kaiyo scanned the row of enemy faces before him. ... They were all there.

Then he saw the man he had chosen and called his name. "Mahor!" he cried.

Mahor leaped forward, his eyes bright with emotion. Kaiyo and Mahor drew near to each other. All the men, women and children of [the village] were crowding closer, their faces bright with anticipation. Behind him, Kaiyo could hear the roar of excitement from the people of his own village who were watching from a distance.

Kaiyo and Mahor stood face to face.

"Mahor!" Kaiyo challenged. "Will you plead the words of Kamur among your people?"

"Yes!" Mahor responded, "I will plead the words of Kamur among my people!"

"Then I give you my son and with him my name!" Kaiyo held forth little Biakadon, and Mahor received him gently into his arms.

Mahor shouted, "*Eahaa!* It is enough! I will surely plead peace between us!"

Both villages thundered forth a series of *hahap kamans* until the very earth itself seemed to quiver with emotion. People now began calling Mahor by Kaiyo's name.

Suddenly Mahaen reappeared in the forefront of the crowd. Facing Kaiyo, Mahaen held aloft one of this other baby sons and cried, "Kaiyo! Will you plead the words of Haenam among your people?"

"Yes!" cried Kaiyo, holding out his hands toward Mahaen.

"Then I give you my son and with him my name!" As Kaiyo took the little boy, Mani, from Mahaen, a sudden cry of despair broke out from the back of the throng. Close relatives of the child had just realized what was happening.

Kaiyo was about to respond to Mahaen's gift when Mahaen urged, "Go! Go quickly!" Kaiyo wheeled around and fled toward Kamur with his newly adopted son, Mani. Close relatives of the child tried in vain to overtake him.

As Kaiyo departed, Mahor shouted an invitation to the entire population of Haenam. "Those who accept this child as a basis for peace, come and lay hands on him!"

Young and old alike, male and female, filed eagerly past Mahor and laid their hands in turn upon tiny Biakadon, sealing their acceptance of peace with Kamur. The same ceremony took place in Kamur as soon as Kaiyo returned with Mahaen's baby in his hands. Kaiyo now began to go by the name Mahaen" (pp. 199-201).

Upon seeing all of this take place, Don Richardson drew one of the young men aside and began asking questions. The young man explained, "Kaiyo has given his son to Haenam as a *tarop tim*, a peace child, and Mahaen in return has given a *tarop tim* to us!" "Why is this necessary?" I asked. "Tuan, you've been urging us to make peace--don't you know it's impossible to have peace without a peace child?" (p. 201).

Don Richardson writes ...

I had thought of the Sawi culture as based on a single pillar--a total idealization of violence, with its awesome manifestations of treachery, headhunting and cannibalism, aided when necessary by the [bind of betrayal]. In this view, peace could never be established, for goodwill could have no credibility. ...

The theory had seemed logical, watertight--yet somewhere in prehistory the ancestors of the Sawi had accomplished what the theory said could not be done. They had found a way to prove sincerity and establish peace. ... Among the Sawi, every demonstration of friendship was suspect except one. *If a man would actually give his own son to his enemies, that man could be trusted!*

...

And everyone who laid his hand on the given son was bound not to work violence against those who gave him, nor to employ the [bind of betrayal] for their destruction" (pp. 205-206).

Do you think that Don and Carol Richardson left these people to go to another tribe? Not hardly.

Now he had the key to unlock the gospel to the Sawi. Jesus Christ is the peace child. Jesus Christ was given to still the hostility between us and God. Jesus Christ was given to make peace in the world. This is the message of Christmas!

I trust that you remember the angelic announcement that came to the shepherds. Listen to Luke 2:8-14.

Luke 2:8-14

In the same region there were some shepherds staying out in the fields and keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord suddenly stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them; and they were terribly frightened. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the people; for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." And suddenly there appeared with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased."

Two things stand out about the angelic announcement. The Coming of a Child and The Proclamation of Peace.

Indeed, from the very first day of His coming, Jesus was known as the peace child. We see the same thing in our text this morning. Turn back to Isaiah 9:6, ...

Isaiah 9:6

For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given,
and the government will be on his shoulders.
And he will be called
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

We see ...

1. The Coming of a Child

"For to us a child is born. To us a son is given." This is what God did with His Son, Jesus Christ. He is the "only begotten Son" (John 3:16). God didn't have another Son to give. But, God gave what He had. He gave us Jesus Christ.

We can often think that it was easy for the Lord to give His only Son to us. But, I think not. I believe that God was like Abraham. Do you remember when God called Abraham to sacrifice his son? He said, "Abraham! ... Take now your son, your only son, [the son] whom you love, Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering" (Genesis 22:2). And Abraham was willing to take his son to Mount Moriah and to offer him as a sacrifice.

The emotions of Kaiyo, who gave his only son to the enemy tribe were similar to the emotions of Abraham--giving your only begotten son isn't easy. I believe that these emotions were similar to the emotions that God experienced as well. God gave His son, His only Son, the son He loved. God was willing to give His Son to die at Calvary.

When God gave Jesus to us, He knew what awaited Him. He knew that he would be oppressed and afflicted (Is. 53:7). He knew that He would be led like a lamb to the slaughter (Is. 53:7). He knew that He would be cut off out of the land of the living (Is. 53:8).

And yet, like Kaiyo, God knew that His Son would bring peace.

This is what we see in our verse. The Coming of a Child. And, ...
2. The Proclamation of Peace

Isaiah 9:6
For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given,
and the government will be on his shoulders.
And he will be called
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Jesus came into the world with a purpose -- to reconcile man and God. He didn't come when we were friends. On the contrary, Jesus came when we were God's enemies.

Romans 5:6-10
For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him. For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.

Do you remember how Kaiyo gave his child to his enemy? This is what God did when He sent Jesus to us. He gave His child to His enemy.

And what did we do with Him? We killed Him upon the cross. Jesus "came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him" (John 1:11). Instead, rejected Him and placed Him upon the cross.

Though, in a twist of irony, that sin became the very means through which Jesus would atone for sins. And when our sins are forgiven, then we have peace with God and are able to have peace with others.

As a pastor, I am often told of the problems that people are facing. Sometimes people tell me of their own problems. Sometimes people tell me of the problems of others they care for. The problems span the spectrum: relational problems, drug problems, alcohol problems, marital problems, sexual problems, financial problems, anxiety problems, family problems, addiction problems. And I'm often reminded that the solution to all of the sin problems in this world is Jesus.

Jesus solves our relational problems by giving grace and patience. Jesus solves our addiction problems by giving us a greater desire -- a desire for God. Jesus solves our financial problems by giving us contentment in life. "For God so loved the world, that He gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:16).

Do you believe in Him?

The good news is that the Savi people believed in Jesus. They came to see that Jesus was the ultimate *tarop tim*, the ultimate Peace Child. In the Savi culture, when a peace child was given, peace would last only as long as the child remained alive. When the child was dead, there was no more obligation for peace, unless another peace child was given.

But, Jesus, living forever, is the peace child that never dies.

In fact, we can see that in Isaiah 9:6, ...

Isaiah 9:6
... And he will be called
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,

Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Now, certainly, there are Trinitarian hints all over this passage. Jesus, the Son, is identified as being the "Mighty God." Jesus, the Son, is identified as being the "Father."

In many ways, when God gave us His Son, He was really giving us Himself. This is the reality of Christmas: Immanuel - "God with us."

But, I want for you to notice the modifier to "Father." Jesus is the "everlasting Father." Jesus was before time. Jesus will endure throughout all time. The infant of Christmas is the infinite of Creation. Since Jesus never dies, there is no other need for another peace child to be given.

Furthermore, the Savi people came to see that Jesus was better than Judas. When they came to understand that Judas betrayed the peace child, they saw how sinful his actions were.

In the Savi culture, the treachery extends to everyone, except for the peace child. To kill the peace child was understood to be the greatest wrong that could be done.

God did a miraculous work among the Savi. Don Richardson lived among the people for 15 years. In that time, God transformed their culture. No longer were they cannibals. No longer were they a treacherous people.

Isaiah 9:2-5
The people who walk in darkness
Will see a great light;
Those who live in a dark land,
The light will shine on them.
You shall multiply the nation,
You shall increase their gladness;
They will be glad in Your presence
As with the gladness of harvest,
As men rejoice when they divide the spoil.
For You shall break the yoke of their burden and the staff on their shoulders,
The rod of their oppressor, as at the battle of Midian.
For every boot of the booted warrior in the battle tumult,
And cloak rolled in blood, will be for burning, fuel for the fire.

The picture here is of an entire transformation of a culture. Where once there was darkness, now there is light. Where once there was sadness, now there is gladness. Where once there was war, now there is peace.

In verse 6 we read that "the government will rest on His shoulders." Ultimately, that's talking about Jesus taking the throne of David (verse 7) to be king of the world. And yet, this took place with the Savi people. No longer were they a law unto themselves, but Jesus is their governor. Jesus is their king.

This past summer, Don Richardson and three of his sons returned to the Savi to visit them. [2] It was exactly 50 years from the time he first arrived. They were received with a hero's welcome, as he saw friends from long ago. One of the things that Don Richardson said was, "It was amazing to see so many old people." When you live in a cannibalistic society, very few survive. But, now that Christ has come to them, they live in peace.

The gospel that took root 50 years ago is still holding the people today. "He who began a good work among the Savi has been faithful to complete it" (Phil. 1:6).

Know that this message of Christ crucified is a powerful message that can change your life as well. Know that this message of Christ crucified is a powerful message that can sustain your life as well. Believe on Him!

This sermon was delivered to Rock Valley Bible Church on December 23, 2012 by Steve Brandon.
For more information see www.rvbc.cc.

[1] Unless otherwise noted, all of the references in this sermon come from Don Richardson's book, "Peace Child." Each reference will be denoted by the page number, rather than a footnote for each.

[2] See <http://beckydoughty.com/2012/07/06/bob-peace-child-by-don-richardson/> and <http://www.pioneers.org/Connect/Media/MediaArchive/tabid/149/PostID/531/Never-the-Same.aspx>