

Dear Friends,

When we went to live at Salemp in 1972 there was widespread fear of all kinds of spirits. For example, people feared the spirits of dead relatives. They had to follow the customs of the ancestors by avenging a relative's death. And since no death, except that of a very young child, was believed to "just happen" without someone maliciously causing it, every death of a relative had to be avenged. This involved finding out from the witchdoctor who was responsible and killing someone from that other clan. Apart from this being "the right thing to do" since someone from that other clan had killed their relative, they really had no other choice. If they didn't avenge his death, the dead relative might cause their pigs, which are their only domesticated animal and of enormous importance to them, to get sick or die, or their children to get sick or die, or their wife or themselves to get sick or die.

This belief resulted in within the society since not between different lan- different clans in the of the results were: the influential and powerful, people lived in constant many men would show of a relative killed in an clan; there was no word givenness.



very destructive dynamics most of these feuds were guage groups, but between same language group. Some witchdoctor was very in- and could cause chaos; the fear; when I asked them, their arrow wounds or tell attack on or by an enemy for, or concept of, for-

The teaching of Jesus to forgive as we have been forgiven created a "problem". The idea of forgiving was an even more revolutionary thought to the Kobon than it was for the first hearers. They firmly believed in an "eye for an eye" but at least they had a word for forgiveness, but the Kobon had no word and no concept of forgiveness. This in turn created a problem for us. After all forgiveness is a central doctrine of Christianity. One of our goals was to translate the New Testament. And the Gospel, in contrast to the Law, is all about forgiveness.

The Word of God is powerful in its effect. It has been amazing to see the change in people as Jesus has come into their lives through his Word in their hearts and minds. The power of the Word of God to change hearts and minds is the reason that the three New Testaments in the Haruai, Kobon and Minimib languages each have on the cover "The Living Word", which has the dual meaning of "the Word which is Alive" and "the Word which makes Alive"; and why our schools are called "Living Word Schools"; and why the textbooks we use in our schools are Bible storybooks with the text extracted directly from the New Testament; and why every school day starts with a devotion from the New Testament, prayer, hymns and scripture memorization.

The Word of God continues to change the hearts and minds of the Haruai, Kobon and Minimib people as about 1000 students attend the Living Word Schools and are nourished each day by God's Word. Thank you for your part in making this possible by your prayers and gifts. Please pray that as the new school year starts on February 6, the students and teachers will find comfort and joy in the love and grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. And may what you pray for them be true for you too.

In His Love and Grace,

*Pastor John and Maila*