Peace Child Study Guide

Peace Child by Don Richardson

BOOKRAGS

Contents

Plot Summary

This book opens up with the story of Yae, a native Sawi in Netherlands Guinea. He strikes up what he believes to be a peace treaty with a neighboring village. However, he finds that his new friends are only practicing the Sawi tradition of tuwi asonai man. In this practice, warriors persuade a man to become their friend, with the intention of killing and eating him later. The more complicated the plan, the more honorable the warrior becomes among his own village. Then, the men of the victim's village begin to plan their revenge. Such murders exist in a cycle of violence within the Sawi culture.

The arrival of strange outsiders rocks the world of the Sawi, however. Europeans and North Americans begin to survey the island for various reasons, from governmental rule to religious concern. A nearby tribe, the Kayagar, arrives on the banks of the Kronkel River to demonstrate the new tools acquired from the pale-skinned people they call the Tuans. The Sawi marvel over steel axes and razorblades.

Kani, a relative of a man killed in retribution for Yae's murder, realizes that he must plan his revenge before the Tuans arrive among the Sawi. He devises a plan of betraying the offending village through one of the enemy's mother-in-laws. Once the betrayal is complete, the story of Kani's treachery spreads through the Sawi culture, fast making him a Legendmaker around the Sawi campfires.

Meanwhile, in Canada, an old man who is a representative from a missionary agency, pleads for the young people in Bible College to consider ministering to the people of Netherlands Guinea. One couple, Don and Carol Richardson, answer the call. Within a few short years, the couple lands in the mountains of Netherlands New Guinea. They make new friends among other missionaries as they travel to the low, swampy area of the Sawi. At once, Richardson chooses a site to build his home and begins learning the previously undocumented language of the Sawi.

The Richardsons seek for some way to relate the news of the gospel to the Sawi. Richardson tells them stories of the bible, until he realizes with alarm that the Sawi see Judas as a hero for his friendship and then betrayal of Jesus. In addition, the tree villagers that come to live in the area surrounding the Tuans fail to live at peace. Richardson announces to the village leaders that, until peace comes to the area, he will leave for another Sawi village. Desperate to keep the Tuans and their supply of steel tools nearby, the Sawi perform an emotional peace child ceremony. Each village presents the enemy with an infant as a peace child. As long as the child lives, they explain to Richardson, the village lives at peace. In the case of an offense, someone may plead the peace child and strife will cease.

Richardson seizes upon the concept as a redemptive analogy for his religious doctrines. He calls Jesus Christ as the perfect peace child. He explains that any man who accepts God's peace child never needs to offer a human peace child again. The idea strikes a chord with the Sawi, but none of them accepts the news for themselves.

Then, Richardson returns to the village after traveling with his wife to the missionary outpost for the birth of their second son. On the way, their canoes capsize in the midst of crocodile-infested swamp water. They recover both children and, with the aid of a passing native, make way back to their jungle home. The Sawi threatens to beat the Richardson's native houseboy for the accident, but Richardson steps in to the boy's defense, crediting him with the rescue of the missionary's two sons. That day, several young Sawi men, including the Richardson's servant, personally accept the gospel of Jesus. Soon after, Hato, an elder in the village, also accepts Richardson's teachings.

The acceptance of Christianity changes the face of the Sawi village. The natives live in relative peace with their families and neighbors. Any time old offenses arise, someone will plead God's peace child and forgiveness follows. As the new spreads to all of the villages, Richardson begins construction of Sawidome, a large, thatched roof structure to house the meetings of the growing congregation. He also teaches the Sawi converts to read in their own language.

Richardson credits the conversions in Guinea with his discovery of the culture's preexisting redemptive analogies. He gives examples of redemptive analogies in other native cultures, as well. He rejoices in the peace Christianity brought to otherwise violent societies.

Author's Introduction

Author's Introduction Summary and Analysis

In the introduction to the book, the author explains his background as a Christian missionary to Netherlands New Guinea, where he took the message of the gospel to the Sawi natives. The Sawi were known for being cannibals and savages. The people of the Sawi celebrate and reward instances of great treachery and betrayal. Richardson gives away the end of the story, though, as he describes the eventual conversion of the Sawi people from their disastrous ways to a more loving, Christian world view. The main obstacles to this conversion serve to make it an interesting and suspenseful read, nonetheless.

Chapter 1, Ambassador to Haenam

Chapter 1, Ambassador to Haenam Summary and Analysis

Chapter One opens Part One of the book, World of the Sawi.

The reader first meets Yae, a man from the Sawi village of Mauro. He attempts to strike an alliance with Haenam. In this chapter, as he prepares for the visit to Mauro's all night dance, he remembers how the idea for alliance began. Members of Mauro approached Yae about an alliance between their communities to give them both protection from other enemies that share their borders. Yae sees the proposal as a way to gain prestige among his people. He accepts tokens of Kauwan's friendship and begins negotiations with the tribe. During this time of remembrance he paddles his dugout canoe toward Kauwan's village of Haenam. The oar he uses bears ornate ancestral designs and is sharpened at one end to double as a spear.

Also in the opening of this chapter, the author describes the layout of a typical Sawi village. While some live in crude wooden dwellings at ground level, most citizens make their homes in long houses higher in the trees. They climb up and down grass ladders gracefully. Inside their one room homes, they live, cook and sleep. Often children play with human skulls of either dead relatives or past victims. The Sawi also use the skulls for pillows.

In negotiations with Haenam, Yae expresses concern about outstanding debts his village has with Haenam. Kauwan assures him that he may offer material tokens for the grievances. Kauwan promises that the elders of Haenam require no human life. Yae agrees to the negotiations and, despite his apprehension, he must honor his promise to appear at Haenam in three days or be labeled a coward. His wish for prestige among his people as a man responsible for bringing such a profitable alliance strengthens his courage for the trip. He decides to make the visit alone, so that he shares none of the risk and none of the honor.

Chapter 2, Fattened with Friendship

Chapter 2, Fattened with Friendship Summary and Analysis

Yae successfully makes the trip by river to the village of Haenam. He remembers his first visit to Haenam. Kauwan, who invited Yae for the dance, performs an elaborate welcome ritual, supposedly ensuring Yae's safety as Kauwan's guest. He then led Yae to Haenam's manhouse, a long house nestled high in the trees which the men of the village used as a meeting house. Women were only permitted inside by invitation. After, Yae offered food and tools as payment to the people of Haenam for various grievances they harbored against Mauro. After they accept their gifts, more men join the proceedings in the manhouse.

Now, on his eleventh visit in seven months, Yae feels quite comfortable around the people of Haenam. He sees their village at peace and proudly takes the credit for this development. Kauwan once again leads Yae to the manhouse. Once the men assemble there, Yae extends invitations to the upcoming dance at Mauro. Twelve of the men accept the invitation. They ask Yae to tie ropes in a knot, that they might use it to count down the days until the dance. As Yae concentrates on his task, the men close in around him.

Yae quakes with fear as he realizes that they intend to kill him in the manhouse. He seeks salvation from Kauman, who claims to be powerless, as he hopes to gain a new wife from one of the men who are responsible for the attack. Viciously, the men spear and club Yae, who tries to escape. He stumbles out of the manhouse, only to hang from the spear impaled in his thigh. Gleefully, children shoot him with miniature arrows, and women club him with sticks until he dies. The practice of luring a man with friendship, with the intent to kill him in the end is known to the Sawi as tuwi asonai man.

Maum, the man whose daughter will marry Kauman, claims the rights to Yae's head. He gives Yae's name to a young boy in the village. Also, he gives the gift of Yae's jawbone to a woman in the village, Anai, who accepts happily. After dividing Yae's ornaments and weapons among other warriors, the men behind butcher the body in the manhouse for the feast to follow. Each family takes a share of Yae's brains to cook over their fires. They also observe the joyous ceremony as the skull of Yae is presented to Anai, who wears it proudly around her neck.

When news of Yae's murder reaches his wife in Mauro, she enters intense mourning, signaled by her shaved head. The village weeps for their slain warrior. They stomp heavily through their long houses for days. They also begin, as is their custom, to plan revenge. However, Maum, back in Haenam, feels invincible as he uses Yae's skull as a pillow at night.

Chapter 3, Shadow of the Tuans

Chapter 3, Shadow of the Tuans Summary and Analysis

The men of Mauro made good on their threats of revenge for the murder of Yae through an alliance with the village of Esep. They convinced Esep to invite warriors from Haenam to a dance and, as dawn broke the next morning, men from Mauro attacked and killed four men from Haenam and injured five more. Haenam then attempted another retaliation, but failed after several attempts. Rumors from up the river delay further violence, however. Due to more alliances between various villages, the Sawi hear of news from even farther away than normal.

Word reaches them of strange new men that visited the village of Asmat. They call the strange, pale men Tuans. Rumors included the Tuans strange weapons, guns, and their strange coverings. The Asmat also describe them as tall and pale. Most notably, the Tuans oppose all headhunting and cannibalism. What draws the most attention, however, are the materials the Tuans disburse. The Asmat describe cutting implements of various sizes called kapaks, parangs and pisaus. They also tell of small sticks for starting fires and rusi, or mirrors, which show one's reflection with unbelievable clarity. With all the strange wonders of the Tuans, the Sawi fail to decide whether they desire to meet one or not.

One day, however, the Atohwaem warrior Hadi visits Haenam, bringing some of the tools the Tuans trade with the Sawi. Proudly, he demonstrates a steel ax, much superior to their own stone and bone tools. Hurip, the man accompanying Hadi who owns the ax explains, through Hadi the interpreter, that he traded one of his children with another member of the Kayagar tribe for this kapak, or ax. He explains that a Tuan lives in the Kayagar village of Araray. Hurip admonishes them that, if a Tuan comes to live in Haenam, he only gives out axes and knives in exchange for work. The Sawi accept this as a reasonable requirement. Hurip also tells them they would have to give up cannibalism and headhunting. This proclamation causes more somber attitudes for many of the Sawi. One young man, Kani, takes this as a warning that he must exact revenge for the murder of his brother soon. He begins to plan another attack on the Mauro village. He decides to once again try the tuwi asonai man approach, which literally means to fatten a pig with friendship before the slaughter.

Chapter 4, The Tuans are Coming.

Chapter 4, The Tuans are Coming. Summary and Analysis

The author explains that, when the long houses of the Sawi begin to decay, the village decides where it will move next. When the present houses showed signs of rot, the men of Haenam establish an alliance with the men of Kamur to build a village together on the northern end of the Kronkel, the main river in Sawi territory. They call this particular stretch of the Kronkel the kidari, or freeway, because a long stretch is visible from the village.

At this new location, Kani waits for his friends to return, that he might share his new plan of treachery with them. Just as they return from a pig hunting trip, though, a strange sound fills the air. The entire village flees into the woods. Kani and other brave warriors hide just on the edge of the woods to watch the strange intrusion. They catch a glimpse of two boats under the flag of the Dutch government. The men on board seek a place for a government outpost in this presently ungoverned area. As the boats make their way down the Kronkel, they fail to meet any natives, as all the Sawi flee from the terrifying sound of the engines.

That night, the men of Haenam and Kamur decide that, should the Tuans pass again the next day, some of the elders will try to establish friendly contact. Though trembling, the next day, Kigo, Hato and Numu stand along the shore of the Kronkel as the boats pass on their return trip. The men of Haenam and Kamur offered gifts of food, which the Tuans accepted, and offered gifts of their own in return. After the brief meeting, the boats continued down the Kronkel.

Once the boats are out of sight, the men show their treasures to the villagers. With curiosity, they examine fish line, hooks and razor blades. Not until a Kayagar visits them days later, though, do they understand the use of the items. The men of Haenam and Kamur see them as tokens of their bravery in meeting the strange, pale creatures.

Chapter 5, The Legendmaker

Chapter 5, The Legendmaker Summary and Analysis

The visit of the Tuans and the rumors of their newest outpost in Piramapan generates gossip for weeks among the Sawi. Eventually, however, Kani returns to his plans for revenge against Mauro. He calls his friends Mauro, Mavu and Sauni to his house to describe his plan to them. He hopes to be a legend maker, like his father, one whose story of treachery will be told around the campfires for generations. Kani plans to exact the revenge on the men of Wasohwi, through a mutual alliance with the village of Kangae. When his friends point out that another man of their village, Mahaen, frequently visits family in Wasohwi, Kani explains that he will seal Mahaen's cooperation with a waness bind. Furthermore, the person to issue the waness bind on Mahaen will be his own mother-in-law.

In the waness bind, the person performing the bind must eat food that touches the genitals of the person on whom they wish to place the bind. As such an action causes such shame, the person placed in the bind must do what the eater requests as repayment. What's more, a man's relationship with his mother-in-law supersedes even that of his blood family, because only through the giving of wives does a man perpetuate his family for another generation. Rarely, however, are women involved in a betrayal such as tuwi asonai man. Kani counts on this for Wario, Mahaen's mother-in-law's, compliance. He knows she will desire a place in such a legend.

Kani's friends begin to see the multiple levels of treachery in their friend's plans for his tuwi asonai man. Such a plan overshadows any current legend that they tell around their fires. They all wish to be part of a story that could be repeated for generations. Kani admonishes them that they must act quickly, before Tuans come to live among them and force them to stop their headhunting.

As planned, Wario performs the waness bind. Mahaen, in return, lures eight men from Wasohwi to a dance at Haenam. By daylight, four headless corpses lay out in Haenam, waiting to be butchered. The story and the fame of Kani spread as people repeat the accounts with admiration.

The author draws an allusion, however, between Kani, the Sawi legend maker and Jesus, the legend maker of the Bible. Richardson warns the reader that, once Kani and the other Sawi come into contact with information about the gospel of the Bible, their lifestyle changes forever. In a bit of foreshadowing, Richardson warns that Tuans will soon come to live among the Sawi and share with them a new set of ideals that serve to release them from their savage ways.

Chapter 6, Genesis of a Mission

Chapter 6, Genesis of a Mission Summary and Analysis

Chapter Six opens Part Two of the book: When Worlds Meet.

The setting of the book changes in the beginning of Part Two. The reader meets the author at a much younger age. While in a Christian college in Canada, Don Richardson heard Ebenezer Vine, secretary of the Regions Beyond Missionary Union, give a stirring supplication for young people to consider evangelizing in the South Pacific after graduation. Vine extolled on the need for a message of peace in an area of the globe known for its treachery and destruction. Many of the people who heard the message did surrender their lives for this cause, including Don Richardson and his future wife, Carol. Richardson lists those who surrendered and their various ministries, where many of the young men from the Canadian Bible College saw success. Richardson also describes the outcome of the mission work that brought peace and Christianity to scores of people through the Pacific islands.

Six years after hearing Vine's message and one year after their wedding, the Richardsons entered language school in Seattle, Washington, gaining valuable skills in deciphering previously unrecorded tongues. One year later, they sailed to Karubaga in the Netherlands New Guinea. Immediately, David Martin introduces Richardson to the natives of the Dani tribe. Afterwards, Martin describes the tribes that inhabit the jungle across the narrow sea, which are know to practice cannibalism and headhunting. He makes the offers for Richardson to make contact with these tribes, though he assures Richardson he will understand if he says no, out of consideration for his wife and new son. After two days of deliberating with his family, Richardson accepts the mission and soon after, missionary pilot Hank Worthington flies them from the mountains to Karubaga to the lowlands near Piramapun.

In Piramapun, the Richardsons meet the Dresser, veteran missionaries to those living near Pirmapun. The McCains also greet them. The McCains live among the Kayagar further up the river. Dresser and McCain educate Don Richardson about the people of this low lying area. They describe a primitive people with little or no contact with the modern world. It is McCain who makes the fateful recommendation for Richardson to make his home with the Sawi people, a large tribe adjacent to the Kayagar with no knowledge of Christianity or much of modern civilization. After one night at the Dresser's home, the Richardsons and the McCains make there way down the river to Kawem, where the McCains live among the Kayagar.

Chapter 7, Through the Ironwood Curtain

Chapter 7, Through the Ironwood Curtain Summary and Analysis

Early in the morning, the Dressers aid McCain and Richardson in preparing for their journey. The men launch out in the boat while the women stay safely behind at the house in Pirmapun. It takes three days for the small boat to reach the mouth of the Kronkel. Two years after the first boats startled the Sawi, the missionaries chart the same course. As they pass the first three Sawi villages, Richardson deciphers a few words in the Sawi language from the men that remained to greet the strangers. When they find an empty village, Richardson leaves gifts, assuring the tribesmen of his good will.

The next day, they leave the larger boat behind and strike out in the smaller and faster skiff. As they pass tributaries that lead to other villages, Richardson connects the facts that the young missionaries in the story do not know yet. Just a few months before their passing, three men of Haenam devoured the four friends of Wasohwi. When they reach the stretch of river known as kidari, the men remark that a missionary plane could perhaps land on the water at this place. However, Richardson senses that nature itself resists the change that the missionaries represent. Drawing on his own courage and faith, he claims the bluff overlooking the kidari as a place for his home. At the time, he does not realize that it is the same location as the old village of Haenam and Kamur.

In their further explorations of the Kronkel, the men learn from some Kayagar men about the location Richardson chose and the name of the old village of Kamur. After promise of payment, Richardson and McCain convince the Kayagar men to lead them to the new location of Kamur. They load the natives into the skiff, and the men of Kayagar fill with fright at the speed of the small boat. Turning tides resulting in low water, though, impedes the exploration, and the men return to their larger boat.

The men felt disappointed in the lack of contact with the Sawi people, for they did not know about the fleet of Haenam men, loaded down with gifts, setting out for an unprecedented trip to meet Tuans face-to-face in Pirampun. However, the two groups meet unexpectedly at the spot known as the kidari. John McCain calls out peaceful greetings in the only native language he knows, Kayagar. Hadi, a man among them fluent in both Sawi and Kayagar, translates. They draw near the natives and touch fingertips in a customary greeting of peace. With assurances of peace, the younger warriors, who hid at first among the reeds at the shoreline, emerged to inspect the strange looking, pale-skinned Tuans. Upon learning of their intended trip to Pirampun, Ken Dresser gives credit to Divine intervention for bringing the two groups together.

After the meeting, Richardson and McCain invite Hadi to ride back to Pirmapun with them in their motor boat. Richardson hopes to gain rapport with Hadi and, thus, language skills. Hadi, though, reacts with fear. Though he lived close to the Arafura Sea all his life, he has never seen it. He fears the stories he hears about the native Asmat tribe near Piramapun. Finally, his desire for prestige among his own people outweighs his fears, and he consents to ride with the Tuans. The men allow Hadi to bring along one other friend. The group sets off, bidding the rest of the natives goodbye until the next day, when they arrive in Piramapun.

The sights and sounds of the trip fill Hadi and his friend Er with trepidation. The wide sea and the native villages produce fear. Richardson attempts to comfort the men, but they shake off the assurances by denying their fear. Once back at the McCain's home, Richardson excitedly introduces the natives to his wife. He makes their sleeping arrangements and peeks in on a sleeping Stephen, his infant son.

The next day, as Richardson attempts to gain more language skills from Er and Hadi, the rest of the Sawi approach in their canoes. The canoes continued on past Kawem, after offering a passage fare of toasted beetle grubs, heading for Pirampun and returning two days later. They had traded their supplies in Piramapun for exciting new tools, though the more than forty miles of paddling left them tired. When the Sawi return to their own territory, Hadi and Er leave with them. Richardson admonishes them to fish on the Kronkel for a few days, signaling that the Tuans will return there soon. Richardson feels excitement and apprehension at what the future may hold.

Chapter 8, The End of an Aeon

Chapter 8, The End of an Aeon Summary and Analysis

In June of 1962, Richardson sets out in two Kayagar canoes, loaded down heavily with supplies for starting the construction of his home among the Sawi. He kisses his wife and son goodbye. After John McCain left by motorboat for Piramapun, Richardson left, accompanied only by his Kayagar guides. After some time of travel, Ricahrdson realizes that the Kayagar mean for him to build his home in their own village. Only after Richardson firmly commands them to carry him into the Sawi territory do they grudgingly concede. Though the men listen, Richardson feels sad inside for leaving these pleading people without a Christian influence in their village of Amyam.

The Kayagar men point out the various tributaries and describe the village to which they lead. When they mention Hadi's village of Yohwi, Richardson instructs them to take him to Hadi. There, Hadi greets him like an old friend. He tells Hadi that he intends to build his home at the old location of Kamur. The news drew excitement from the villagers. Richardson also asks Hadi to help him in the construction of his new house. Hadi promises to follow the next day. After giving Hadi's son a dose of malaria medicine, Richardson continues to the site of his home.

At the old location of Kamur, Richardson loads his materials into the least deteriorated long house. That night, a rainstorm hits that stops their work until midmorning. The next day after the rain lets up, Richardson sends two men to the new location of Kamur with gifts for the chief. He instructs three more to hew ironwood pillars, and the remaining worker helps Richardson himself clear a spot to build the home. After much brush clearing, Hedip indicates a high spot that would survive the worst of the yearly flooding.

A few hours later, two of the men return with a group from Kamur. Richardson calls out the Sawi greeting, "Konahario!" He anxiously awaits their response, realizing that he has no escape if they fail to act friendly. The first Sawi to emerge is Hato. Next, Kigo and Numu introduce themselves. These three men, along with Hadi, become close friends and aides to Don Richardson. The initial greetings turned into jubilant cries of greeting. Before the celebration ended, canoes from the villages of Amyam and Yohwi also approach. Richardson pronounces the resulting round of excited crying as the end of a dark "aeon of isolation" for the Sawi in Netherlands New Guinea.

Richardson proclaims to the reader that his interactions with the Sawi serve to save them from exploitation later in time, when farmers, hunters and developers will invade the forests. Richardson rejoices that he has the opportunity to give to these people before others arrive to take. First, however, he intends to build his home.

Chapter 9, Gods From the Sky

Chapter 9, Gods From the Sky Summary and Analysis

Richardson employs all the natives to help in clearing the area for his home, and they accomplish the task quickly. As Richardson instructs them in setting up the roughly hewn pillars, more canoes arrive, full of warriors from Zhaenam. Richardson works as the lone Tuan among two hundred natives of the Kayagar, Atohwaem and Sawi tribes. The mixture of tribes proves dangerous, however. They easily become provoked at one another. Without full command of the language, Richardson simply talks in calming tones of English to assuage the first fight. The arrival of the Missionary Aviation Fellowship plane averts the next argument that threatens to become violent.

The natives react in fear to the arrival of the plane. They retreat into the brush, because they believe that the planes (aramaso) are allergic to thorns. Kigo and Hato remain next to Richardson, though they too tremble. After a few passes to judge the landing area of the kidari, Hank Worthington lands the plane on the river. When two Tuans emerge from the belly of the plane, the natives approach cautiously. Worthington brings Richardson kerosene to fill his empty barrel and a handwritten letter from his wife. Richardson assures Worthington that the building proceeds well, leaving out the tensions that exist between the tribes.

Paul Pontier, the co-pilot, lightly offers Richardson a safe trip home but realizes that the young missionary desires to stay, regardless of the way things appear. With promises for prayer for the work at Kamur, the planes takes off.

Many of the natives paddle away at dusk, with Richardson's instructions to bring back supplies the next day. Some stay in the crude long houses at the home site. Richardson mulls over his options for an evening bath. He resorts to washing himself with buckets full of water from the Kronkel. The Sawi watch fearfully. They believe that the spirits of the river may not accept the strange "skin grease" of this foreigner. That night, Richardson dreams of his life among the Sawi. He awakens with a desire to bring comfort to this hurting and violent people.

Just over one month after setting out from Kawem, Richardson and the natives finish the house. He sets off to rejoin his family. Richardson promises, before leaving, to return with his wife and son in three days.

Chapter 10, Destiny in a Dugout

Chapter 10, Destiny in a Dugout Summary and Analysis

Three days after, six Kayagar men paddle the canoe that bears the Richardson family to their new home on the Kronkel. The people of Amyam watch curiously as the fair haired family passes.

At the site of Richardson's new home, Narai waits with his dugout anchored in the elephant grass. He reflects on the events of late, which have never occurred in the Sawi legends. He ponders the arrival of the Tuans, the airplane, and the building of the house. He watches anxiously for the missionary to appear and begins to suspect that he is not coming back. Just before dark, he spots the canoe bearing the Richardsons and sounds a signal from a bamboo horn to the distant villages.

When the Richardsons arrive at their new home site they see hundreds of warriors awaiting them. Further back from shore, near the newly constructed house, cower the scores of men and women of the Haenam, Kamur and Yohwi villages.

Chapter 11, A Baptism of Strangeness

Chapter 11, A Baptism of Strangeness Summary and Analysis

Carol gazes at the Sawi warriors in full costume and warpaint. Richardson observes that, unlike their appearance at the home building, now they look like the savages and headhunters they are known to be. He fears the intentions of the fierce looking natives.

Once on shore, the crowd envelops the family and inhibits them from reaching their home. All the while, Carol exhibits trust in her husband. Then the crowd begins to move as one and brings them to their new home. Richardson sees the strange welcoming ceremony as a metaphor of a baptism into the strange, new culture of the Sawi.

Once the Richardsons enter their home, the Sawi crowd around to gaze in the windows and door. Nonchalantly, Richardson pumps up and starts a kerosene lamp. The unexpected brightness of the lamp drives the Sawi from the home. Richardson rushes outside to assure them that it is safe to return. Hadi and Hato emerge first, followed by cautious others. As they lay down to sleep that night, Richardson proclaims language mastery as their first task.

Chapter 12, Patriarch of the Tumdu

Chapter 12, Patriarch of the Tumdu Summary and Analysis

The author describes a successful wild boar hunt by Hato in the opening of this chapter. After butchering the pig on the spot, Hato wraps the meat and bones into three packs. He loads one pack on his back and leaves the rest for his sons to fetch later. The author then describes the necessary tasks of jungle survival, as performed by members of Hato's family.

Two of Hato's wives, Sirowi and Imati, sift sago flour from freshly harvested plants. A new baby lays nearby, protected from insects by another sibling. A young boy watches from a high tree for any enemies that may approach. Meanwhile, an older boy fishes in shallow pools with a bow and arrow. He clouds the water with poisonous bark and waits for the suffocating fish to surface before he pierces them with his arrows.

Two of Hato's daughters collect shrimp from cottony sacks left in other pools. They nibble leaves and pick leeches from their feet as they make their way back to their tree house where Hatos' other two wives have begun cooking the fresh pork. Sirowi and Imati finish collecting the flour and cook the exterior of the sago plant until it forms a gummy treat that the children quickly gather to enjoy.

Around the resulting meal, Hato tells in detail the story of the boar hunt. He adds a piece of the boar's ear to the end of his bow, alongside similar trophies. Hato looks around at his large family and all they accumulated that day. He wonders what more a man could desire. He wants more of the Tuan's axes and knives, one for each person in his family. In an attempt to learn more about the Tuans and their reasons for making a home among the Sawi, Hato instructs his family to prepare for a visit to the Tuan's new village. As they approach the settlement, Hato spots an onslaught of arrows. He instructs his family to hurry, so they might investigate the battle in the Tuan's front yard.

Chapter 13, War at my Door

Chapter 13, War at my Door Summary and Analysis

In the face of a sudden outbreak of violence between the tribes of Haenam and Kamur, Richardson tries to make peace with the limited language skills he possesses. He describes the attack of bows and arrows, in which more experienced fighters shoot directly into the crowd. No attempt to hide in the landscape is made. Younger fighters, mostly young boys, fire arrows in a high arc that rains down on the enemy from above. Should a man suffer a hit, all the shooters concentrate on bringing him down.

The reality of the situation hits Richardson. He stops himself from quick action, as some internal voice reminds him that his death also kills the Christian influence for the Sawi everywhere, at least at the present time. Yet he pushes this voice aside, overcome by a biblical reference "Blessed are the peacemakers" as Haenam suspects they landed a hit.

Richardson nears the battle, and the fighting nearest him ceases. As he makes his way into the fray, the violence stops. Once he has the attention of the crowd, however, he fails to summon up the words to express his intentions. Just then, Hato comes ashore and assures Richardson that he will take care of the situation. Hato addresses the Kamur crowd, which begins to look ashamed. Richardson supplicates Hadi to address the still passionate men of Haenam.

At first, Richardson and his wife rejoice in the fact that three Sawi villages bring their entire population to live around the mission. After three days of jubilant celebration, however, fighting such as what happened in Richardson's front yard, becomes commonplace. Richardson foreshadows that such a treaty proves nearly futile in a society easily offended and prone to violence.

Chapter 14, The Tuan Eat Brains

Chapter 14, The Tuan Eat Brains Summary and Analysis

Richardson begins the chapter with a much more lighthearted antidote. He describes the young boys of the village watching the missionary family eat dinner though the window, as the natives often did, with curiosity. On one such occasion, a young boy runs off to excitedly tell his friends that the Tuans eat brains for supper. Not possessing the language skills to understand yet, the Richardsons continue eating their dinner of macaroni, which the natives, having never seen, mistake for brains.

He next tells a short antidote of an instance when he heard a woman, Mao, crying in distress. The Sawi refuse the Richardsons' offers of help. Richardson learns the next morning that the woman died in childbirth, along with the twin babies. Richardson mourns the loss of three Sawi citizens to whom he will never minister.

The Richardsons, however, attempt to train one Sawi boy to western culture when they attempt to make Haimai their houseboy. In the first days of his instruction, however, he confuses the washing machine and the garbage container, placing a tea bag in with a fresh load of washing.

Another bout of violence breaks out when Mavu announces his intention to take another woman as his wife. Nair, of his same tribe, opposes the union and draws support from his family. Mavu attacks Nair and wounds both Nair and his brother, Paha. Richardson comes upon the fight after the damage is done. He calls his wife to bind the wounded men and give them injections of penicillin. Richardson realizes that the men feel no remorse for injuring and killing others, so he rebukes them for making Carol's hands bloody, which seems to bring some shame to the men. Richardson mentally draws a parallel between the bloodshed and the blood of Christ, but lacks the language and relationship with the men to explain what he feels.

After describing their struggles to keep various forms of jungle life from entering their new home, Richardson gives detailed descriptions of his early language studies. He finds the language to be much more complicated, actually sophisticated, than he anticipated. In everyday conversations, he gains understanding of several Sawi words and forms the framework of sentence structure. After learning several concrete terms, more abstract ideas such as love and fear emerge. Language study continues throughout Richardson's time with the Sawi, and it is a long time before he feels comfortable and fluent in it.

Chapter 15, Meeting in the Manhouse

Chapter 15, Meeting in the Manhouse Summary and Analysis

As Richardson make his way to the manhouse for an attempt to share his first sermon with the Sawi, he describes some problems with translating. Each Sawi verb has nineteen tenses to indicate mood, and even more to indicate point of view. At this time, Richardson only knows one third of the tenses. In addition, every object in nature communicates. The Sawi have words for the way a flower smells and the ways certain things sound.

Mulling over all these problems, Richardson climbs up into the manhouse. He wonders how such a seemingly simple society developed such a complex language. He respects the Sawi men for their knowledge of many things, such as language and nature. The Sawi, however, only had a superstitious belief in the spiritual world. They feared many petty gods who may send misfortune to a man for some minor infraction.

With all of this in mind, Richardson sits with the men in the manhouse and spreads language notes in front of him. He begins to share with them the idea of "the greatest spirit" or Myao Kodon in Sawi. He explains God's omnipresence. That, unlike spirits of the trees or the river, Myao Kodon is everywhere. He also explains God's omnipotence that no human power exists to control God. Such large, unfamiliar ideas take the Sawi off guard. One man shows his interest by repeating the Sawi words that Richardson shares, adding his own emphasis to them. Such a tradition serves as an encouragement to a speaker in Sawi. Richardson accepts the jesture, as it also gives him more time to formulate ideas in the new language.

Seizing upon their interest, Richardson attempts to explain the history of Christianity, beginning at the creation story. He ties this story into Jesus as a redeemer of humanity, when the Sawi begin to show boredom in the story. One man, Mau, yawns and begins makes a new bowstring. Only when Richardson begins to speak of the betrayal of Judas do the men show attention. After his telling, however, Richardson realizes with surprise that the Sawi see Judas as the hero of the story for his betrayal of Jesus to the Romans, resulting in Jesus' death. For the first time, Richardson hears Kani, a Sawi man, refer to tuwi asonai man. Feeling chilled by this reaction, Richardson retreats to his home.

Later that day, Richardson questions Narai, one of his language helpers, about the term. Narai explains that, when a man keeps a pig as a pet, the pig has no idea it will end up as the man's supper. Narai explains the tradition of doing the same to a man, fattening him with friendship before the slaughter.

Richardson realizes that mere murder lost its appeal sometime ago in Sawi culture. They now practice this idea of tuwi asonai man as an art. Therefore, after three years of

friendship, Judas's betrayal appeared to be "Super-Sawi." Richardson feels overwhelmed when he realizes, to share true Christianity with them, he must completely reverse such thinking. He refuses to do as other missionaries, to reach only the children. Richardson prays that he can reach the present adult generation before they die.

Richardson bemoans his lack of cultural parallels. He thinks back to biblical stories of conversation, but each witness shared a cultural similarity with those they witnessed to. So far, Richardson cannot see such a likeness in the Sawi culture. Richardson prays the Lord will reveal to him a "redemptive analogy" to use in sharing his gospel with the Sawi.

As Don Richardson describes this new and chilling knowledge with his wife, she wonders if the Sawi apply this idea to the missionary family. Richardson expresses doubt, as the Sawi value the white people as their connection to steel axes and other tools. Carol encourages her husband, assuring him that God will provide a way to overcome the treachery.

Chapter 16, Crisis by the Kronkel

Chapter 16, Crisis by the Kronkel Summary and Analysis

In Sawi culture, young boys begin training to fight in childhood. In fact, parents praise a disobedient child as "strong willed." Likewise, children rarely receive discipline of any kind. From childhood, children learn to take what they desire by force. By the time they reach sixteen years of age, they possess a quick temper and savage spirit. Due to this culture, Richardson explains, the villagers frequently break out in fighting, even amongst their own people. The attempt to blend people from three different villages gives way too much violence.

Sometimes, Richardson is able to deflect violence, such as the time he rebukes Atae for desiring a third wife even though the wife he desired was already another man's only wife. Another time, however, Er receives three arrow wounds for his unwanted advances on a girl. Only a trip in the MAF plane saved Er's life. Other men were so impressed by Er after his return; they discussed injuring themselves so they could also ride in the plane.

The largest battle, however, came when a man of Haenam calls Ama of Kamur "lizard-skin." The ensuing fight involves the leading men of both communities. Richardson realizes that the death of anyone will result in the disbandment of the village. He also laments that no man will accept a peace agreement with confidence in a society that practices tuwi asonai man. Richardson realizes that only their isolation has saved them to this point. After a time of prayer with his wife, Richardson tells the leaders of both communities that the combination of the villages was a mistake. He tells of his plan to take his message to another Sawi village and return to the area later. Hearing the news saddens the leaders of the Sawi. They promise to make peace the next day, but Richardson doubts that real peace is possible.

Chapter 17, Cool Water Tomorrow

Chapter 17, Cool Water Tomorrow Summary and Analysis

The Sawi term for peace is "cool water." That night, Richardson barely sleeps; anxious to see how the Sawi make peace. The next morning, the missionary family watches from their porch as Mahaen and his wife, from Haenam, climb from their treehouse and make their way towards Kamur. Mahaen caries one of his sons and his wife, Syado, sobs violently. Richardson feels the tension in the air. Before Mahaen reaches Kamur, however, Syado grabs her son and runs away from the crowd of Kamur.

In the ensuing turmoil, Sinau, from Kamur, raises his infant son into the air. He asks his brother Atae to hand over the baby. Yet again, Sinau suffers a change of heart and snatches the baby away.

Another man of Kamur slips away and takes up his only son. As the man, Kaiyo, advances towards Haenam, Kaiyo's wife, Wumi, collapses into the mud, wailing. Richardson begins to fear the crowd's intentions towards the baby, Biakadon. He and Carol feel the sorrow of the grieving parents. at Haenam, Kaiyo calls for Mahor. He asks Mahor to "plead the words of Kamur" among the people of Haenam. Mahor agrees, and Kaiyo presents Mahor with the baby, Biakadon.

Amidst the ensuing cheers, Mahaen presents his infant son to Kaiyo, repeating the pleas for peace. Each villager then places hands on the child presented to them and vows peace with their enemy for the life of the child.

Richardson grabs the attention of a young man named Ari to explain what he just witnessed. Ari tells Richardson the name for the baby is a tarop tim, or peace child. He explains that a peace child is required to make peace. Richardson shares that at this instant, tiny bells sound in his head. Yet, he brushes the sensation aside. Ari assures Richardson that the babies are safe. In fact, each village guards their safety closely as the death of the peace child ends the peace treaty between the villages.

In an elaborate ceremony, each baby receives charms and various decorations. The village people dance joyfully. They also exchange names between men of similar stature, as a further sign of goodwill. Finally, they participate in an elaborate dance, showing that the other village now resides as one with their former enemies. After the dance, Richardson calls Narai and other language informants into his office for further discussion. He finally listens to the bells ringing in his mind, which tell him that the idea of a peace child answers his prayers for a redemptive analogy.

Chapter 18, Stillness in the Manhouse

Chapter 18, Stillness in the Manhouse Summary and Analysis

Chapter Eighteen opens Part Three: A World Transformed.

Once again, Richardson approaches the Haenam manhouse with language notes in hand. He prepares to tell them another sort of sermon on the salvation offered in the Bible. Thanks to the peace child, the tribes have enjoyed peace for two months, with only a few threats. The only time tempers flared between the tribes, Kaiyo reminded the offended that the peace child still lives. Considering all he had learned about the peace child in the last two months, Richardson climbs into the manhouse with renewed excitement.

In an animated sermon, Richardson draws several parallels between the Sawi's peace child tradition and the story of Christ, the only son of God. He explains that, to make a way for man to have peace with God, God sent a peace child in the form of Jesus. The Sawi men realize that, as a betrayer of the peace child, Judas is the worst kind of villain.

Later the same day, Richardson repeats the message of God's peace child in the manhouse of Kamur. Amio tells Richardson how, before Richardson arrived, Kamur gave a peace child to Kayagar. The Kayagar killed and ate the peace child. Amio realized the sorrow of God at the death of Jesus on the cross. In the following days, Richardson repeats the message, with his newfound redemptive analogy straight from the Sawi culture. The Sawi immediately see the weakness of a human peace child. After they accept the truth of God's peace child, Richardson begins to explain the behavioral changes that go along with the Christian moral code.

Chapter 19, Capsized Among Crocodiles

Chapter 19, Capsized Among Crocodiles Summary and Analysis

For months in 1963, Richardson shares the gospels with the Sawi villages, but all the Sawi resist complete surrender to the new religion. Richardson wonders what piece he is missing to fully communicate his message of peace. Richardson tells a man in the village that, should the Tuans leave, the Sawi would resume their headhunting. The man agrees.

However, in June of 1963, the Richardsons return to the highlands of Karubaga for the end of Carol Richardson's second pregnancy. They travel back with another Canadian, Winifred Frost. During their trip by dugout canoe, the group capsizes in crocodile-infested waters with only their Sawi houseboy, Mavo, for help. Frantically, Richardson searches the muddy waters of the Kronkel for his two young sons. After recovering them, Richardson prays for help. Sawi dugouts come upon them quickly and help them get ashore.

Back at the village that night, the men react angrily towards Mavo. One offers to lash Mavo with a vine. Richardson comes to Mavo's defense. He credits Mavo with the recovery of his sons and claims Mavo as someone like a son to him. He pleads for Mavo's safety. The following Sunday, Yodai comes to Richardson to personally testify of his acceptance of Christ's gospel. That same night, Mavo made the same profession of faith.

Chapter 20, My Liver Trembles

Chapter 20, My Liver Trembles Summary and Analysis

Richardson points out, though, that the conversions of two young men make little impact on the village as a whole. However, Hato, an elder in the village, makes a very public acceptance of God's peace child. Hato proclaims that the news of the gospel causes his liver to tremble, signifying his desire to make a decision.

Richardson describes the tradition of a peace child in the Sawi culture as "a time bomb through the ages." Within two weeks of Hato's conversion, his entire family accepts Christianity for themselves. The Richardsons begin to hold regular Bible studies with the new converts. Hato admits that Richardson's peace when his children fell into the river moved Hato to make his decision. Richardson's calm demonstrated his faith in God.

Chapter 21, The Living Dead

Chapter 21, The Living Dead Summary and Analysis

Early in the year 1964, the Sawi announce and mourn the death of old Warahai. However, as Richardson witnesses the transport of the lifeless body, he spots faint breathing. He rushes to the body and finds a pulse. However, the Sawi tell Richardson that a sorceress, Aham, saw Warahai's spirit leave him, therefore any signs of life are from evil spirits. Richardson pleads for the chance to save Warahai. He even promises recovery, in Jesus' name, to combat the Sawi's belief in spiritism. He begs them to stop their tradition of burning Warahai with coals. However, Warahai's relatives announce their intention to build his gravehouse despite Richardson's pleas. The Sawi even express their assumption that Tuans are immortal.

Chapter 22, The Power of Aumamay

Chapter 22, The Power of Aumamay Summary and Analysis

Richardson describes the burial traditions of the Sawi, in which they actually wrap the deceased in vines and place them in a burial house above the ground. Richardson thinks of the anguish of those who may have recovered in the burial house, with no way out. Richardson tells Warahai's relative, Boro, that it is taboo for a Tuan to bury a breathing body. For four days, Richardson and his wife attend to Warahai's weak body.

Richardson pleads for divine intervention, in order to discredit the Sawi's belief in spiritism. Aham, the sorceress, continues to have death visions of Warahai, and each vision stirs the village into a frenzy. During one such frenzy, Richardson seeks the aid of Mahaen to bodily remove Warahai from the man house to his own study. Richardson worries that treating the very sick Warahai is actually a waste of their precious medicine.

After five days, Warahai awakens. Richardson greets him as he recovers in his family's house. The Sawi men seem embarrassed to have been wrong. As a result, four more Sawi men accept Richardson's offer of the gospel.

The Richardson's continue to educate their new converts in the behaviors expected of a Christian. They also announce an exciting new lesson for the Sawi. Richardson tells them they will learn to read.

Chapter 23, Eyes Red with Watching

Chapter 23, Eyes Red with Watching Summary and Analysis

Richardson describes in detail the traditions of the Sawi after the death of a loved one. The men gather under the grave house of a putrid body. They dance among the poles as maggots fall into their hair. One family member climbs next to the body and plunges a hand into the stomach. He then eats freshly cooked sago with the tainted hand. The dead body in this instance is that of Warahai.

After ten days of consciousness, Warahai once again lapsed into an apparent coma. Richardson worries that a lack of good food caused the relapse. A Sawi man brings news of Warahai's death to Richardson and describes the following ritual, called gefam ason.

The next day, Richardson visits the grieving family and finds an old woman, Warahai's mother, singing a traditional song begging for words of redemption. Richardson assures them that the Bible contains the words they seek. They accept this with relief, promising to give up their unsanitary practice of gefam ason.

Chapter 24, The Long Journey

Chapter 24, The Long Journey Summary and Analysis

As the village prepares for a feast of peace offerings with their neighbors, Richardson approaches Kani, the peacemaker from the beginning part of the book. He pleads for peace and forgiveness from Kani towards the men of Mauro. Leaving Kani to greet the guests, Richardson worries that all his preaching on peace will be in vain.

The same day, as the peace celebration continues, a dugout arrives with an injured Kayagar lying inside. One Sawi, Amio, begs Richardson to let the Kayagar man die. Amio explains that this man killed the peace child once offered by Hato, Amio's father. Richardson replies by pleading the peace child of God on the behalf of the Kayagar man. Amio's attitude changes upon this reflection. He offers to carry the man to the medical house alone. That night, as a literate Sawi man gave a stirring message, the Richardsons celebrate Christmas with the newly converted Sawi.

Chapter 25, Out of the Ancestral Cocoon

Chapter 25, Out of the Ancestral Cocoon Summary and Analysis

By 1972, the culture of the Sawi changes to reflect their faith in God. Such changes paved the way for civil government and smoothed this transition.

Richardson continues to challenge the traditions of the Sawi, however. First, he instructs them in digging a canal to ease transportation by river. Next, they begin construction of the largest building the Sawi ever constructed, which he calls Sawidome. They construct an elaborate circular, doomed building with a thatched roof. The final building easily accommodates one thousand Sawi, as they gather for their "love feasts." Inexperienced natives with rough-hewn wood and very meager tools do much of the wok. They accomplish the feat and dedicate the building in 1972.

As Richardson reads to his own children about the prodigal son, he reflects on his time so far with the Sawi. He mourns the death of Kaiyo and Hato, two of his first friends in the village. He remembers the plea he heard in college so long ago, begging people to reach the savages of the Pacific. Richardson looks back with joy at his own surrender to this plea.

Author's Postscript

Author's Postscript Summary and Analysis

In the closing of the book, Richardson describes redemptive analogies from yet other primitive cultures. He looks to them as the key to reaching unknown civilizations with God's message of peace. He closes by wondering who will reach those yet unreached with what Richardson believes is the good and necessary news of Christianity.

Characters

Don RIchardson

In this book, Don Richardson tells the story of his own life as a missionary among the natives in Netherlands New Guinea. As a young man, he felt led by God to share the gospel of Christianity with the Sawi tribe in the Asian pacific.

The first tasks Richardson has upon moving to the jungles of Guinea are to build a house for his family and learn the previously unrecorded language of the Sawi. He then sets out to explain to them the unknown doctrines of Christianity. Richardson discovers that many Sawi traditions directly contradict these doctrines, namely the tradition of tuwi asonai man. The treachery and cannibalism of the practice idolizes characters such as Judas Iscariot, the betrayer of Jesus Christ.

However, Richardson eventually discovers the redemptive analogy of the peace child, in which a village offers an infant to an enemy village to represent a peace treaty between the two peoples. Richardson equates this practice with Jesus as an eternal peace child. The coupling of Richardson's teachings and his own personal actions in the face of danger touch the hearts of the Sawi. After months of work and preaching, the men of the Kamur village begin to accept the new gospel. Richardson rejoices at the peaceful change that sweeps through the jungle as more Sawi villages accept the gospel. He credits the redemptive analogy of the peace child for the conversions. He also discusses other redemptive analogies from other cultures, which provide the keys for communicating Christianity to previously unreached cultures. Richardson serves for years among the native in Netherlands New Guinea, raising his two sons among the newly converted.

Carol Richardson

Carol Richardson appears as a nearly silent partner throughout Richardson's book. She follows her husband gladly to this new home in the jungle, despite the less than ideal conditions, not only to support her husband, but because she also desires to help the native people there. She serves as not only wife, mother and homemaker, but also nurse, teacher and general laborer.

Carol not only lives and raises her first son, Stephen, in the jungle, but also lives through her second pregnancy there, giving birth in the nearby mountains of Karubaga at a missionary outpost there. Carol expresses fear upon learning of the Sawi practice of tuwi asonai man, but remains committed to the task before her.

Yae

The book opens with the story of Yae, a native Sawi who lived and died in the jungle before the arrival of any Tuans. He begins what he believes to be a peaceful treaty with a neighboring village. After months of meetings, however, the new friends turn on him. They tell him, just before they kill him, that they fattened him with friendship for his slaughter, a practice called tuwi asonai man.

Yae's village retaliates by killing and cannibalizing four men from the offending village. Kani, a relative of the victim, plots an intricate revenge that culminates just before the arrival of Don Richardson.

Kani

Kani is a Sawi native that plots a legendary revenge against those who killed one of his own relatives. He persuades other men from his village to help, with the allure of becoming legendmakers in their own culture. His betrayal even involves the betrayal of a man by his own mother-in-law, usually a sacred relationship among the Sawi. Kani succeeds in his plot, and the resulting murders provide exciting stories around Sawi campfires in the region. Kani is a Sawi Legendmaker.

Kani is also among the first group of Sawi warriors that Richardson meets. Kani eventually becomes one of Richardson's first concerts. At the first Christmas celebration among the new Christians at Kamur, Richardson's pleads God's peace child to Kani when the man becomes agitated in the face of the men whom at one time killed his brother.

Hato

Hato also appears in the group of warriors that Richardson meets upon his first journey into the jungle. Hato is a patriarch of the Kamur village, one of the villages that comes to live in the area surrounding Richardson's house. For one chapter, Richardson describes the various duties of Hato and his family as they go about the work of living in the jungle. His wives harvest sago flour, Hato hunts for wild pigs, his daughters gather shrimp, and his sons catch fish with bows and arrows. Hato arrives with these gifts during an intense bit of violence between the villages of Kamur and Haenam just outside of Tuan's house.

Hato also becomes the first of the patriarchs to accept the gospel. His conversion paves the way for many more converts among the Sawi. He remains a staunch supporter of Richardson until his death of pneumonia at the end of the book.

Ebenezer Vine

A veteran missionary to the islands of the Asian Pacific, Ebenezer Vine appears at the Bible College which the Richardson's attend, pleading for young people to consider missionary work to the tribes of that area. He describes the area as endless wilderness in the form of jungles and mountains. He tells of unreached tribes of cannibals and headhunters, with languages never studied by modern man. His message fills a yearning in Richardson's mind for higher purpose in life. He and Carol answer the call to work in the area of Netherlands New Guinea. Dozens of the young people, likewise, work in various parts of the area, with much success.

Hank Worthington

Also a student of Richardson's Bible College, Worthington works as a pilot for the mission's agency. He delivers supplies to Richardson's house on the banks of the Kronkel in a floatplane, able to land on water. His first appearance causes some fear among the natives, who have only seen planes from a distance.

Hadi

Richardson meets Hadi in the group of warriors he first meets in the jungle. Hadi becomes Richardson's first language informant. He even agrees to accompany Richardson aboard his motor powered boat, which proves to be a fearful experience for Hadi. Though he belongs to the Atohwaem tribe, he lives among the Sawi and provides key interpretation among many different groups of people that Richardson meets. He serves as a peacekeeper for Haenam in the first outbreak of violence in Richardson's front yard.

Mavo

Mavo works as a houseboy for the Richardson family. He even travels to Kaybuga with the family for the birth of their second son. On the return trip, the entire party capsizes into the crocodile-infested river. Mavo climbs onto the overturned canoe and aids in spotting the body of Stephen, the Richardson's toddler-aged son, in the muddy water. When the family returns to Kamur, the villagers blame Mavo for the accident and offer to whip him for Richardson. Richardson jumps to the boy's defense and credits him with the rescue of his sons. That evening, Mavo becomes Richardson's second convert among the Sawi. Richardson's reaction to the incident in the river brings about the majority of his early conversions in Kamur, including Hato and his family.

Kaiyo

Due to the ongoing violence, Richardson announces to the villages of Kamur and Haenam that he will be moving. The villagers beg him to stay and promise to make peace. In order to do so, each village must offer their enemy a peace child. When other couples from Kamur fail to offer their sons, Kaiyo offers his only child as a symbol of peace to Haenam. Richardson equates Kaiyo's sacrifice with that of God, as the Bible teaches that he offered Christ, his only son. Kaiyo also becomes a convert in Kamur. He dies, however, in the end of the book, in an unexpected flair of violence.

Biakadon

Kaiyo offers his only son, Biakadon, as a peace child to Haenam. Richardson compares Biakadon to Jesus, as an only child who represents peace to those who accept him.

Yodai

After Richardson defends Mavo when the villagers blame Mavo for capsizing the Tuan's boat, Yodai becomes the first Christian convert among the Sawi.

Warahai

Warahai is an elderly Sawi who takes ill just after Yodai and Mavo become Richardson's first converts. A Sawi sorceress shares a vision of Warahai's death, which signals the natives to begin the burial process. Richardson steps in and finds a faint pulse, however. After much negotiation, Richardson takes over of the care of Warahai, who makes a miraculous recovery after five days. This brings about the conversion of many of his family members, though Warahai dies ten days later, from lack of fresh food.

Following Warahai's death, Richardson witnesses the Sawi practice of gefam ason, in which a family member plunges his hand into the rotting flesh of the deceased and eats his next meal with the tainted hand. Richardson explains that such practices of shame are no longer necessary as Jesus paid for their shame on the cross. The tribesmen accept this revelation with great joy and relief.

Objects/Places

Netherlands New Guinea

Nearly all of the book takes place in Netherlands New Guinea, a small, jungle covered island in the Asian pacific.

Pirmapun

The first modern settlement near the Sawi, Richardson first stays in Pirmapun before seeking a place to build his house.

Kronkel

The Sawi situate their villages along the Kronkel River and its tributaries. The Kronkel is a vast and winding swampy river filled with crocodiles. All travel in the region takes place on the river. After Richardson's family capsizes into the river, his calm faith convinces the Sawi to convert to Christianity.

Kidari

One rare, long open stretch of the Kronkel is called the kidari or freeway. Richardson chooses a place along the kidari for his home, so that the missionary plane can land on the open stretch of water.

Steel Tools

Any outsider quickly learns that a sure way into the trust of the Sawi and other native peoples is by offering steel tools. The Sawi willingly work for payment in steel axes, razor blades and fishing hooks. They also marvel over such inventions as mirrors and soap.

Sago

The Sawi diet consists of many dishes from the Sago tree. The women process the trunks for flour and wrap the small loaves in leaves, baking them in shallow fires.

Dugouts

The Sawi travel on the rivers and tributaries in small dugout canoes. The men carry long handled paddles that double as weapons. They paddle standing up. Few of the warriors

travel more than twenty miles from their home in their lifetimes. Though they live nearby, many never see the ocean.

Man house

Much of the action in a Sawi village happens in an around the man house. As the name suggests, only men enter the man house. Women are forbidden unless invited for a ceremony, such as when hey present the jawbone of a victim they have killed and eaten. Richardson meets in the man house to share the gospel with the leaders of the village. Like their longhouse they live in, the man houses are long buildings built twenty feet off the ground.

Haenam

Several Sawi villages combine to form the village of Kamur surrounding the Richardson's house. One of those is Haenam. When Richardson announces that he will move if they cannot achieve peace, the villages of Kamur and Haenam exchange peace children.

Kamur

Richardson chooses an old location of the village of Kamur for his house. The people of Kamur leave their new location and more back to live near the Tuans. Fighting between Kamur and Haenam almost forces the Richardsons to leave. The exchange of peace children brings the necessary ceasefire to the people.

Bible

Richardson believes the doctrines of the Bible will bring peace to the Sawi headhunters. He finds allusions to themes from the bible in the Sawi tradition of peace child and remon, which is the Sawi word for redemption. After Richardson gains a basic understanding of the language, he begins translating the Bible into the Sawi language. After several Sawi convert, Richardson and his wife begin to teach the Sawi to read in their own language.

Skulls

In the opening, Yae's son plays with his only toy, a human skull, polished to a sheen. The skulls are not only those of headhunting victims, but also those of deceased relatives. The children use them as playthings, and the adults use them as pillows.

Macaroni

Many of those everyday things Richardson takes for granted often alarm the Sawi. One such item is his dinner of macaroni. The villagers make a habit of watching the missionary family go about their daily tasks. One day, some young boys spy the missionary family eating their dinner of macaroni. They incorrectly identify the unknown substance as brains.

Another item that frightens the natives is the bright light of Richardson's kerosene lamp. The unnatural light scares the grown Sawi warriors, who run in fear before Richardson can explain the item.

Medicine

Once the missionaries arrive, minor injuries and illness that once meant death for the Sawi can be healed. The missionaries, though not medical personnel by training, become doctors for the villages, treating spear wounds and malaria among other things. When one injury proves too severe, they notify a passing missionary plane, which transports the man to a better-equipped village, where he makes a full recovery. Richardson overhears two men discussing how to injure one another so they can travel to the far away place, as well.

Themes

Tuwi asonai man

Much of the activities in the Sawi culture revolve around their tradition of tuwi asonai man, especially for the young warriors. Directly translated, the phrase means to fatten a pig with friendship for the slaughter. It mandates that a warrior befriend another man, with the purpose of killing and butchering him at a later time. The longer and more convincing the friendship, the more prized the kill. The first man the reader meets, Yae, becomes a victim of this tradition.

Such violence breeds a chain reaction to killing that lasts for generations in the Sawi culture. Richardson observes that their isolation from one another is the only thing that saves the culture from extinction. He also hypothesizes that, over the centuries, regular murder grew mundane. The natives sought ways to raise the excitement. The tradition serves as an example of human depravity, when left unchecked.

Kani schemes the most notable plan of tuwi asonai man in the course of the book. He plans to seek revenge for the murder of his brother by allowing a male from the enemy to believe he has been invited to a dance. To give the invitation more credence, he arranges for it to come with the endorsement of the man's mother-in-law, a sacred relationship in Sawi culture.

Richardson learns that only the offering of a peace child can overcome tuwi asonai man. He tells the natives that the sacrifice of Jesus fulfills the peace child for every man. Therefore, he admonishes them to give up headhunting in this manner.

Redemptive analogies

Richardson largely writes his story to show the proliferation of redemptive analogies in various cultures. His discovery the peace child provides a common ground by which he may explain his gospel.

This becomes the key for communicating with the Sawi. However, they fail to understand the lessons behind the stories in the bible, but they understand when such stories relate to their own customs. They respond even more when such doctrines fulfill prophecy from their own culture, such as the word of remon, of redemption, that their ancestors sang about for generations. Richardson tells them with excitement that the Bible contains the very words they seek.

In the closing of the book, Richardson describes redemptive analogies discovered by his colleagues in other cultures. They include traditions of rebirth and prophecies of white skinned visitors. These analogies pave the way to sharing the gospel of peace with such primitive and violent cultures.

Divine Calling

Richardson strives to express his feeling of divine calling to his work in Netherlands New Guinea. Richardson completes three years of study in Bible College before feeling a calling to the missionary work. Up to that point, he attended with faith that God would guide him to his future calling. Richardson credits his feeling of calling with his ability to put up with the challenges of life in the jungle and stay on the mission field longer than many other men.

Divine calling applies not only to Don Richardson, but to his wife Carol, as well. He describe how, during the speech by Ebenezer Vine, both he and Carol felt a supernatural pulling at their hearts to minister to these primitive people. Carol observes at one point that their house in the jungle feels like the center of the will of God.

Style

Perspective

Don Richardson tells some of the story, especially Part One, from the omniscient third person point o view. He appears to have knowledge of the events since conducting interviews with the Sawi years after the fact. He tells in detail the story of Yae and his betrayal. The stories are somewhat embellished, by the addition of what Richardson assumes to be the thoughts, feelings and intentions of the men involved, based on interviews with men from similar situations.

The parts of the book that tell of Richardson's time in the jungle take place in first person point of view. Richardson tells not only the events of his early life on the mission field, but also his feelings and frustrations about the culture and his language acquisition.

Tone

Richardson keeps a reverential tone for much of novel. He credits a divine power with many events that one may usually attribute to coincidence or fate.

The language of the novel remains conversational and easy to interpret most of the time. The book has a diary-like quality, in the way it describes everyday life occurrences along side of milestone developments. However, Richardson assumes the reader's knowledge of basic tenets of Christianity, such as the life of Jesus Christ and his relationship to God, according to the Holy Bible.

Structure

Richardson tells the story in three parts: World of the Sawi, When Worlds Meet and A World Transformed. He breaks the book into twenty-five chapters, plus an author's introduction and postscript. The book is 288 pages.

The divisions of the book each signal a major development in the lives of the Sawi people. Each section on its own covers a large span of time; the book as a whole describes more than a decade of development in Netherlands New Guinea.

The reader needs to read the book in its entirety to follow the storyline. No section stands alone. The first section provides most of the description of Sawi words and traditions. The final section concludes the story, giving the final days of many of the main characters. The middle tells the bulk of the story.

Quotes

In many of the legends that the Sawi people tell to their children around the campfires, the heroes are men who formed friendships with the express purpose of later betraying the befriended on to be killed and eaten. p. 8

The key God gave us to the heart of the Sawi people was the principle of redemptive analogy—the application to local custom of spiritual truth. p. 10

Her older offspring, two-year-old Miri, was playing contentedly beside her on a woven mat. His only toy was a human skull who sad eyeholes gaped vacuously at the smoke-blackened ceiling as it rolled about. p. 18

Both the Kayagar to the east and the Asmat to the west were beginning to jabber excitedly about something or someone called a Tuan. p. 42

More "pigs" must be "fattened for slaughter" to avenge the death of Huyaham before the Tuans appeared, just in case it should prove impossible to take vengeance after they appeared. p. 48

These must be the Tuans! There white faces seemed so terrible to look upon that the three savages could not bear to give them more than an occasional glance. p. 59

Among the savage tribes of southwest New Guinea, women were no mere bystanders to the arts of cruelty. Whenever Auyu warriors, for examples, returned from a headhunting raid, their womenfolk would welcome them by beating with sticks anyone who failed to bring back a human head! p. 67

But all of this, of course, was still hidden in the mystery of the future back in 1955 when Ebenezer Vine unburdened his soul before the student body of the Prairie Bible Institutes. Nevertheless, as one of the seven hundred students listening that day, it seemed to me that God had suddenly come among us with a plan, looking for the people He would use to make that plan come to fruition. I also had the unmistakable feeling that I was one fo those He was scrutinizing. p. 86

After years of preparing and waiting, just to hear the name of the people we would devote our lives to was exciting! The Sawi! I turned the name over in my mind. p 91

It was hard to believe 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 mannerism and disarming enthusiasm, they were still headhunters and cannibals. Now they really looked the part. p. 135

"The Tuan is eating brains!" Wondering what the excitement was all about, I lifted another forkful of macaroni to my lips. p. 163

First I coined a name for God in Sawi—Myao Kodon, "the greatest Spirit." p. 174

The little bell clanged again, and this time it caught my attention. I perceived its message and gasped! This was the key we had been praying for! p. 206

I had wondered how a Sawi headman would say it, and what it would feel like to hear it. Now I knew, for Hato had said, "I want to received the Peace Child of God." p. 233

Topics for Discussion

Discuss some ways the early Sawi culture is similar to your own.

In this novel, does Christianity have a positive impact on the Sawi? Explain.

How does Richardson's commitment to his cause alter the course of his life?

What other ideologies may overcome cannibalism?

How would life differ for the Sawi if land developers arrived before the missionaries?

How will growing up among the Sawi effect the lives of Richardson's children?

What role does technology play in Richardson's mission?

If this story occurred in present time, how would it differ?

Who is the most important person to Richardson in this story? Explain.

How would a Sawi react during a visit to a major American city?