

Sopu, PNG
May 11, 1988

Dear friends,

Thankyou so much for praying. We sense that some of the oppression on us is lifting. Today we received word via the radio that one of our supporting churches is sending some extra money to help cover our deficit. We praise the Lord for this!

Let me try and describe for you the events of this morning. A few days ago a seven year-old girl died for no apparent reason. The family sent for two magic men to come and determine the cause of death. The girl was already in a coffin and many people were gathered around her. The magic men put their magic leaves, etc. into the coffin. The girl was already dead, but then she moved and whispered the name of a man seven times. Based on the dead girl's testimony, this man is being accused of sorcery - causing the little girl's death and the death of seven other people.

This morning as some of the men and police were about to leave for the district office to put the sorcerer in jail, some men started arguing. Soon about 100 men were running around swinging axes and knives at each other. Some men got out their bows and arrows. Women with small children were running to our house and to the schoolyard for safety. At the school the teachers were unable to control the children who were also afraid and running around. The teachers began packing their things in order to leave Sopu. We were standing outside in the midst of all this. Finally, Robert went after the man who started the fight and put his arm around him. He talked to him in a quiet way and got him calmed down. Eventually the fighting stopped. Fortunately no one was seriously injured.

There was a lot more shouting and scuffling around, but no more fighting. Eventually the people got calmed down and Robert and the teachers were each presented with a two kina note (money) as a peace token. Presumably they were trying to alleviate any fear we might have for our safety in staying here.

The sorcerer is still here. They may try again later to put him in jail. His clan has threatened to close the school and the airstrip and wreck the community water tank if he is put in jail.

Friends, we are definitely in a spiritual (physical?) battle. Please continue to pray that we may learn the Tauade language quickly in order to communicate God's word and love to them.

In His Service,

Robert & Verna

Robert & Verna Stutzman

Wycliffe Bible Translators
Box 3068 Station B
Calgary, Alberta T2M 4L6

Wycliffe Bible Translators
Huntington Beach, CA 92647