

# Through Gates of Splendor

By Elisabeth Elliot

## Part 1

### CHAPTER I "I Dare Not Stay Home"

The Santa Juana is under way. White stars breaking through a high mist. Half moon. The deep burn of phosphorus running in the wake. Long, easy rolling and the push of steady wind."

It was hot in the little cabin of the freighter. Jim Elliot, who was later to become my husband, was writing in the old cloth-covered ledger he used for a diary. It was a night in February, 1952. Pete Fleming, Jim's fellow missionary, sat at a second desk. Jim continued:

"All the thrill of boyhood dreams came on me just now outside, watching the sky die in the sea on every side. I wanted to sail when I was in grammar school, and well remember memorizing the names of the sails from the Merriam-Webster's ponderous dictionary in the library. Now I am actually at sea-as a passenger, of course, but at sea nevertheless-and bound for Ecuador. Strange-or is it?-that childish hopes should be answered in the will of God for this now?"

"We left our moorings at the Outer Harbor Dock, San Pedro, California, at 2:06 today. Mom and Dad stood together watching at the pier side. As we slipped away Psalm 60:12 came to mind, and I called back, 'Through our God we shall do valiantly.' They wept some. I do not understand how God has made me. Joy,

sheer joy, and thanksgiving fill and encompass me. I can scarcely keep from turning to Pete and saying, 'Brother, this is great!' or 'We never had it so good.' God has done and is doing all I ever desired, much more than I ever asked. Praise, praise to the God of Heaven, and to His Son Jesus. Because He hath said, 'I will never leave thee nor forsake thee,' I may boldly say, I will not fear...'"

Jim Elliot laid down his pen. He was a young man of twenty-five, tall and broad-chested, with thick brown hair and blue-gray eyes. He was bound for Ecuador-the answer to years of prayer for God's guidance concerning his lifework. Some had thought it strange that a young man with his opportunities for success should choose to spend his life in the jungles among primitive people. Jim's answer, found in his diary, had been written a year before:

"My going to Ecuador is God's counsel, as is my leaving Betty, and my refusal to be counseled by all who insist I should stay and stir up the believers in the U.S. And how do I know it is His counsel? 'Yea, my heart instructs me in the night seasons.' Oh, how good! For I have known my heart is speaking to me for God! ... No visions, no voices, but the counsel of a heart which desires God."

Jim's mood of the moment was felt by Pete. Pete was shorter than Jim with a high forehead and dark wavy hair. The two had learned to understand and appreciate each other long before, and their going to Ecuador together was, to them, one of the "extras" that God threw in. Pete, too, had met with raised eyebrows and polite questions when he made it known that he was going to Ecuador. An M.A. in literature, Pete was expected

to become a college professor or Bible teacher. But to throw away his life among ignorant savages-it was thought absurd.

Only a year or two before, the problems of Ecuador, on the northwest bulge of South America, had seemed remote. The two young men had talked with several missionaries who had been there, who described the enormous problems of transportation, education, and development of resources. Missionary work had done much to help the country bridge the cultural span of a millennium between primitive jungles and modern cities. But progress was pitifully slow. Evangelicals had been working among the head-shrinking Jivaros for twenty-five years, among the Quichuas of the high Andes, and among the red-painted Colorados of the western forest. The Cayapas of the northwestern river region had also been reached with the Gospel, and advances were soon to be made into the Cofan tribe of the Colombian border.

But there remained a group of tribes that had consistently repelled every advance made by the white man: the Aucas. They are an isolated, unconquered, seminomadic remnant of age-old jungle Indians. Over the years, information about the Aucas has seeped out of the jungle: through adventurers, through owners of haciendas, through captured Aucas, through missionaries who have spoken with captured Aucas or Aucas who have had to flee from killings within the tribe. Whatever Jim and Pete had been able to learn about them was eagerly recorded, so that by now the very name thrilled their young blood. Would they someday be permitted to have part in winning the Aucas for Christ?

They were aware that the first missionary to have entered Auca territory-Pedro Suarez, a Jesuit priest-had been murdered by spears in an isolated station near the confluence of the Napo and Curaray. That was in 1667. His murderers were Indians who might have been the ancestors of some present-day Aucas. For about two hundred years after this the Indians had been left in peace by the white man. Then the coming of rubber hunters wrote a dark page in the history of this jungle area. For some fifty years-from about 1875 to 1925-these men roamed the jungles, plundering and burning the Indian homes, raping, torturing, and enslaving the people. It was a time when the concept of "lesser breeds without the law" was almost universally accepted. For the Aucas to have no love for the white man was understandable. Could Christian love wipe out the memories of past treachery and brutality? This was a challenge to Jim and Pete as they hoped to bring the message of God's love and salvation to these primitive people. It was a challenge and leading for which they had both been prepared since childhood.

God had led Jim-since boyhood, when, in his home in Portland, Oregon, he learned that the Book of all books is the Bible, and that to follow its teaching is not necessarily to live a cloistered, dull life. Now as he sat in his cabin on shipboard his mind went back to his family house on a hillside facing snow-covered Mt. Hood. Jim's father, a red-haired, iron-jawed Scotsman, would gather his four children each morning after breakfast and read to them out of the Bible, trying always to show them that this Book was to be lived, and that the life it depicted was a happy and rewarding one. The children would squirm in their seats in the little breakfast nook, but some of the

truths sank in, and Jim, third of the Elliot sons, soon received Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord.

When he entered high school, Jim, following the example of the Apostle Paul, was "not ashamed of the gospel of Christ." A Bible always rested on top of his stack of textbooks when he entered the classroom. Academically his early interest was in architectural drawing. His talent in this was exceptional, and his drawings were kept by the teacher to be used as examples to future classes. Before finishing Benson Polytechnic School, however, he began orienting his life toward the mission field.

While at Wheaton College in Illinois, Jim limited his extracurricular activities, fearing that he might become occupied in nonessentials and miss the essentials of life. He refused requests that he run for several offices on the campus. He did, however, go out for wrestling, explaining his choice in a letter to his mother:

"I wrestle solely for the strength and co-ordination of muscle tone that the body receives while working out, with the ultimate end that of presenting a more useful body as a living sacrifice. This God knows, and even though He chose to allow it to be strained, the motive was for His glory and the faith He honors. Simplicity of heart and freedom from anxiety He expects of us, and gives grace to have both."

During his sophomore year in college Jim came to the conclusion that God wanted him in a Latin-American country, preaching the Gospel to those who had never heard it. This decision was immediately followed by action; he began the informal study of Spanish. He chose Greek as his major,

preparatory to translating the Bible into some unwritten language. His professors remember the vigor, if not always the accuracy, with which he translated some of the ancient classics- Xenophon, Thucydides, patristic literature. It was a thrill to him to read for the first time in Greek the old stories of the New Testament, so familiar in English.

"Today I read the story of the Cross in John 19 for the first time in the original," he wrote to his parents. "The simplicity and pathos made me almost weep; something which has never occurred in my English reading. Surely it is a wonderful story of love."

In November, 1947, Jim wrote a letter to his parents which showed where his ambition lay: "The Lord has given me a hunger for righteousness and piety that can alone be of Himself. Such hungering He alone can satisfy, yet Satan would delude and cast up all sorts of other baubles, social life, a name renowned, a position of importance, scholastic attainment. What are these but the objects of the 'desire of the Gentiles' whose cravings are warped and perverted. Surely they can mean nothing to the soul who has seen the beauty of Jesus Christ.... No doubt you will hear of my receiving preliminary honors at school. They carry the same brand and will lie not long hence in the basement in a battered trunk beside the special gold 'B' pin, with the 'ruby' in it for which I studied four years at Benson. All is vanity below the sun and a 'striving after wind.' Life is not here, but hid above with Christ in God, and therein I rejoice and sing as I think on such exaltation."

Jim and my brother, Dave Howard, were both members of the class of 1949 at Wheaton, but although I was also at

Wheaton, I had not met Jim until Christmas, 1947, when Dave brought him home with us for the holidays. I smiled later when I learned Jim had written his parents about "a tall, lean girl, far from beautiful, but with a queer personality-drive that interests me."

His junior year at college completed, Jim wrote to his parents: "Seems impossible that I am so near my senior year at this place, and truthfully, it hasn't the glow about it that I rather expected. There is no such thing as attainment in this life; as soon as one arrives at a long coveted position he only jacks up his desire another notch or so and looks for higher achievement—a process which is ultimately suspended by the intervention of death. Life is truly likened to a rising vapor, coiling, evanescent, shifting. May the Lord teach us what it means to live in terms of the end, like Paul who said, 'Neither count I my life dear unto myself, that I might finish my course with joy..... .."

During that summer, after preaching to a group of Indians on a reservation, Jim wrote: "Glad to get the opportunity to preach the Gospel of the matchless grace of our God to stoical, pagan Indians. I only hope that He will let me preach to those who have never heard that name Jesus. What else is worthwhile in this life? I have heard of nothing better. 'Lord, send me!'"

In his diary of the summer he wrote: "'He makes His ministers a flame of fire.' Am I ignitable? God deliver me from the dread asbestos of 'other things.' Saturate me with the oil of the Spirit that I may be a flame. But flame is transient, often short-lived. Canst thou bear this, my soul short life? In me there dwells the Spirit of the Great Short Lived, whose zeal for God's house consumed Him. 'Make me Thy Fuel, Flame of God.'"

The man who wrote these words was no recluse. He was an American college senior, school-champion wrestler, consistent honor student, president of the Student Foreign Missions Fellowship, amateur poet, and class representative on the Student Council. Jim was warmly admired by fellow students. He was known as "one of the most surprising characters" on campus. Able to recite such poems as "The Face on the Barroom Floor" and Robert Service's "The Cremation of Sam McGee," he was at the same time recognized as a man of spiritual stature above his classmates. George Macdonald said, "It is the heart that is not yet sure of its God that is afraid to laugh in His presence." Jim spoke of "joking with God." "Every now and again," he said, "I ask for something—a little thing, perhaps, and something answers. Maybe it's only me, but something answers, and makes the request sound so funny that I laugh at myself and feel that He is smiling with me. I've noticed it several times lately, we two making fun of my 'other self' who does so hate to be laughed at!"

Sure that he belonged to God by faith in His Son Jesus Christ, Jim was equally sure that the God who had redeemed him would also guide him. "I am as sure of His direction as I am of His salvation," he used to say. During his senior year a large convention was held at the University of Illinois for students who were interested in foreign missionary work. Jim attended and asked God to show him what He wanted him to do.

At the end of the convention he wrote: "The Lord has done what I wanted Him to do this week. I wanted, primarily, peace about going into pioneer Indian work. And as I analyze my feelings now, I feel quite at ease about saying that tribal work in South American jungles is the general direction of my missionary

purpose. One more thing: I am quite confident that God wants me to begin jungle work single. Those are good-sized issues to get settled finally in a week, but just now I am happy about them."

Toward the end of the summer of 1950, Jim's "general direction" became specific. He met a former missionary from Ecuador who told him of the needs in that field, and mentioned the great challenge of the dread Aucas. This was the climax to several years of seeking direction from God. Jim devoted ten days largely to prayer to make sure that this was indeed what God intended for him. He was given new assurance, and wrote to his parents of his intention to go to Ecuador. Understandably, they, with others who knew Jim well, wondered if perhaps his ministry might not be more effective in the United States, where so many know so little of the Bible's real message. He replied:

"I dare not stay home while Quichuas perish. What if the well filled church in the homeland needs stirring? They have the Scriptures, Moses, and the prophets, and a whole lot more. Their condemnation is written on their bank books and in the dust on their Bible covers."

This feeling is reflected in his diary account of Gospel meetings that he and his college pal Ed McCully conducted in southern Illinois: "Sterile days. Have had thirty-two nights of 'Youth Rallies' in Sparta, with fifty or sixty out in the public school gymnasium. There is little interest, and very few young people are reached in this way, I'm beginning to see. This problem of meeting a culture with truth from God is the most difficult kind of thing. One comes as a renovator, a conditioner of society, and society is in no mood to be conditioned. The

fixedness of the human mind is the 'wall of Jericho' to Gospel preaching. God must shake, or there will be no shaking.

"There has been a sense of discouragement and doubt come over me through this.... There is a strong pull to the philosophy that 'chaos created this lump of clay in his own image'-and to let fall the whole gamut of theological arguments. Again, I'm held by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Were it not that I believed that Jesus was seen of men and proved Himself to be supernatural in outwitting death, I would throw the whole system back to the troubled skies and take a raft down the Mississippi today. But the fact is founding, settling, establishing. It holds as nothing else, and gives the sense that there are answers, not yet discovered, for which I must wait."

It was typical of Jim that, once sure of God's leading, he did not turn aside easily. The "leading" was to Ecuador, so every thought and action was bent in that direction. Jim practiced what he preached when he wrote in his diary: "Wherever you are, be all there. Live to the hilt every situation you believe to be the will of God."

Jim had been praying for some time that God would give him a comrade with whom to go to the mission field, a single man ready to enter tribal work with him. For a while he thought that it might be Ed McCully, but when Ed married in June, 1951, Jim began to pray for another. In August he saw an old friend, Pete Fleming, who had just obtained his master's degree and was at that time seeking God's direction for his lifework. Jim later wrote to him:

"I would certainly be glad if God persuaded you to go with me, but if the Harvest-Chief does not move you, I hope you remain at home. To me, Ecuador is an avenue of obedience to the simple word of Christ. There is room for me there, and I am free to go. Of this I am sure. He will lead you too, and not let you miss your signs. The sound of 'gentle stillness' after the thunder and wind have passed will be the ultimate word from God. Tarry long for it. Remember the words of Amy Carmichael: 'The vows of God are on me. I may not stay to play with shadows or pluck earthly flowers, till I my work have done and rendered up account.' "

Jim's hopes were to be fulfilled when he and Pete set sail from San Pedro in 1952. Their paths had crossed when groups of young people interested in studying the Bible had gotten together from Seattle and Portland for conferences and mountain-climbing expeditions. Pete had once gone east to join Jim Elliot in a series of speaking engagements at religious conferences and other meetings. Six weeks of traveling together brought them into a deeper comradeship than they had known before. Driving back across the country to the northwest, Jim wrote:

"Pete is a most engaging traveling partner, interested in all the things that I notice-geology, botany, history, and the sky and all the good things God has scattered through the west in such extravagant variation."

Pete, who was born in Seattle, Washington, in 1928, early learned to appreciate the Bible and to hold it as his supreme rule of life and conduct. Those who knew him in his late teens and

early twenties were impressed by his intelligent grasp of Scripture, and by the breadth of his spiritual knowledge. Converted at the age of thirteen after hearing the testimony of a blind evangelist, Pete, like Enoch, "walked with God" in a way that set him apart in the eyes of fellow high school students. He earned his letters in basketball and golf, and the members of the letter club asked him to be their chaplain. In his valedictory speech at graduation he said: "Where shall we look? Where shall we go? I believe that we have a right to go back to the Bible for our anchorage. Here we have a recognized foundation ... let us build upon it."

This conviction stood Pete in good stead when, in the fall of 1946, he entered the University of Washington as a philosophy major. He was a man with a critical mind, and the study of philosophy challenged him to re-examine his whole view of life and of the world around him. For a while he almost foundered on the shoals of conflicting thought, but at last the God to whom he had long since "committed the keeping of his soul" brought him back to the harbor of truth, His eternal Word.

Pete worked part time, studied hard, and was president of the University Christian Fellowship. He was a man who drove himself, yet in his busy schedule he took time for prayer and study of the Bible. In 1951 he received a master's degree, his thesis being on Melville's *The Confidence Man*.

In the meantime, having seen and corresponded with Jim, he reached a decision about his lifework. He surprised his friends by announcing that he believed God was calling him to Ecuador.

"I think a 'call' to the mission field is no different from any other means of guidance," he once wrote to his fiancée, Olive Ainslie. "A call is nothing more nor less than obedience to the will of God, as God presses it home to the soul by whatever means He chooses."

He had known Olive since childhood; the two of them had attended the same worship group on Sundays. When he responded to God's call to Ecuador, however, he went with the intention of serving Him without the responsibilities of home life—at least for the first year or so.

On September 6, 1951, he wrote to Dr. Wilfred Tidmarsh, an English missionary with twelve years' service in the Ecuadorian jungle, who had addressed many Christian groups in the States:

"Since your visit I have been very much in prayer about going to Ecuador. In fact, I have never prayed so much before the Lord about anything. Jim and I have exchanged several letters in which I told him of the increased desire to go forth, and of the Scriptures which God seemingly had brought to mind to confirm it. My thinking, both in and outside of the Scriptures, was directed toward the stringency of Christ's words to His disciples, when he sent them forth: 'I send you forth as sheep among wolves..... .He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me..... .He that taketh not up his cross, and follows after me is not worthy of me..... .He that finds his life shall lose it: and he that loses his life for My sake shall find it.' It has seemed that the severe requirements of a difficult field like Ecuador are matched on a spiritual level by the severe requirements placed

on real disciples. Ecuador, as it seems, is a God-given opportunity to place God's principles and promises to the extreme test.

"This door seems to be opening at a time when I was looking to the Lord regarding the future, and thus is the Lord's answer to my prayers."

On the verge of his sailing from the States, Pete said to one of his college friends: "Remember the last few verses of I Corinthians 3: 'For all things are yours . . . and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's.' Throughout all our personality we are God's, and since God has made our whole selves, there is great joy in realizing who is our Creator. This realization is to permeate every area and level of life. In appreciation of beauty, mountains, music, poetry, knowledge, people, science—even in the tang of an apple—God is there, to reflect the joy of His presence in the believer who will realize God's purposes in all things. "

## **CHAPTER 2 Destination: Shandia**

After eighteen days at sea Jim Elliot and Pete Fleming arrived in Guayaquil, Ecuador. "About half-way up the Guayas River," wrote Pete, "I finally comprehended that this, this was Ecuador. I felt a tingling sensation for the first time. Jim and I sang quietly, 'Faith of our Fathers,' as the boat pulled into the harbor:

"'Faith of our Fathers, holy faith  
We will be true to thee till death.

Leaving the ship, the two young men made their way through the stacks of baggage out into the hot sunlight on the Malacon, the parkway beside the Guayas River. The tide was coming in, and out in the center of the current, great masses of

water hyacinths rode swiftly upriver. A gleaming white fruit ship stood at anchor, and beside it crowded the barges and long slim dugout canoes of banana vendors. A ferry was disgorging its sweating, shouting multitudes, with their straw suitcases, cloth bundles, chickens, and baskets. Jim and Pete stopped to watch the faces until the crowd dissipated in all directions; then they turned and crossed the street. Portals over the sidewalk shaded them from the tropical sun, and they gazed at the store windows with their astonishingly heterogeneous displays: sweaters and typewriters, frying pans and automobile tires, fake shrunken heads from the Jivaro Indians, and Camay soap. In one side street, cocoa beans were spread out like a nubby red-brown carpet to dry in the sun. Businessmen, dressed in crisp white suits and Panama hats, were coming out of the buildings for their two-hour lunch break. Cadillacs and donkeys, nudging each other for the right of way, epitomized this land of contrasts.

With a growing population of over three hundred thousand, Guayaquil is the country's largest and most modern city, with wide streets and imposing office buildings. The streets are crowded, as owners, managers, and clerks from the various importing and exporting firms bustle about their business. Guayaquil is the banana capital of the world, and also from here, since World War 11, more than three million bags of coffee, some seventy million pounds of cocoa, and more than three hundred million pounds of rice have annually been loaded for the export market. An air of prosperity prevails, production is constantly rising, and this port city serves as the country's trade barometer.

Pete and Jim spent their first night in a third-class hotel. Heat, mosquitoes, the occasional bray of a burro, and the Latin

rhythm of a dance band nearby made the night a memorable one. The next day they took a plane to Quito, traveling up over the western cordillera of the Andes, crossing a 13,000-foot pass, and landing in the capital of Ecuador. Quito is 9,300 feet above sea level, and to the west rises the volcanic mountain Pichincha.

Here was a new opportunity to "live to the hilt." This old-world city, with its adobe houses, high mud walls, cobblestone streets, ornate churches, with its red geraniums and eucalyptus trees, was to be their home for the next six months. For before they could get to the Oriente-the eastern jungle area of Ecuador, goal of their tireless preparation and planning-there remained this last requirement, the learning of Spanish, the national language of Ecuador.

They signed up for Spanish lessons with a senorita who expected nothing short of perfection, and they also engaged a room in the home of an Ecuadorian doctor who had five children. Here was an unparalleled opportunity for practice. They were forced to speak Spanish, and the children were quite uninhibited in pointing out the mistakes and peculiarities of their guests.

"Senor Jaime," said little Moquetin, a bright-eyed imp of six, "why is it that your face is always red?" Jim countered, "Why is it that your face is always brown?" "Because it is much prettier that way," was the unexpected reply.

"Language is a tyranny of frustration," Pete once said. But learn it they must. During those months of study Pete wrote in his diary: "I am longing now to reach the AUCAS if God gives me the honor of proclaiming the Name among them.... I would

gladly give my life for that tribe if only to see an assembly of those proud, clever, smart people gathering around a table to honor the Son-gladly, gladly, gladly! What more could be given to a life?

"These almost six months have been crammed full of goodness and God has given us special privileges by way of having not set responsibilities, of giving us the money and the freedom to live with a national family and undoubtedly we have learned things that will stand us in good stead all our missionary lives. And it has been a terrific boon; praying together and seeing God give us faith, getting more and more from the Spanish Bible, gradually finding Spanish easier and getting useful phrases fixed in my mind so I didn't have to think out everyone. It has all been good and we have learned things; how to cope with situations and how to keep our mouths shut on some subjects, how to get along with the nationals, what their perspective on missionaries is.... God is going to give us Spanish by one means or another, and Quichua as well."

Finally the day came when Jim and Pete were to leave Quito. They saw their gear thrown up on top of a fat, ungainly vehicle that served as a bus. An American truck bed had been surmounted by an amazing superstructure that protruded on both sides accommodating perhaps thirty or more passengers inside, and as many as dared cling on the outside. Squeezing themselves and their cameras, hallmark of the missionary as well as of the tourist, in among the other riders, they each found a seat-a board perhaps ten inches wide, with as much room again for the legs, between it and the next seat. They were fortunate indeed to be in a bus with an aisle, for in some vehicles passengers cheerfully clamber over the backs of the

seats to their places. And they were able to sit up straight and still see out of the low windows. To have one's knees close to one's chin is not the most comfortable position, but then, they could take turns sitting by the aisle to stretch their legs.

"Vamos!" called the driver. Jim and Pete rejoiced that the bus was going to start on schedule. But no such luck this time-for this is the land of monana. Everywhere there are unexplained delays, and perhaps the most trying thing of all to an outsider is the fact that no one seems to be the least interested in giving an explanation. No questions are asked. Silence. In this case, the delay lasted only ten minutes or so; and, without warning, the driver gunned his motor and the bus lurched to a start.

Leaving the city, the bus climbed up over the paramo, where a cold drizzle added to the bleakness of great stretches of brown grass. An occasional Indian galloped by on horseback, red wool poncho flying in the strong wind. A woman dressed in a heavy wool skirt and embroidered blouse passed at a dog trot, the usual gait of the Indian of the high Andes. Her baby, dressed exactly as she was, complete with fedora, joggled in a cloth on her back. The mother's hands moved nimbly, spinning wool on a spindle.

At 12,000 feet the men could see the small grass huts of the highland Quichuas. They eke out a living herding cattle and sheep, growing potatoes and certain grains. This scene was soon replaced by the and territory surrounding Ambato, the city of the earthquake of 1949, and the "gateway to the Oriente." Here the bus stopped, and was immediately besieged by women with their trays of fried pork, meat pies, glasses of fruit drink, or slices

of pineapple piled into an enamel basin. Each called her wares in a peculiar singsong.

The trip was resumed once more, with the bus climbing up between lofty, snow-clad peaks, then tipping forward to swoop down in dizzy, hairpin turns into the vast gorge cut by the Pastaza River through the eastern cordillera of the Andes, past the cone-shaped Tungurahua, an extinct volcano. With startling suddenness the desert of the western slope and the high mountain pass were replaced by lush greenness on the breathtaking eastern descent. Purple orchids nodded out over the road as the bus swayed and jerked along the narrow shelf of road, a precipice on the right, a steep wall of rock shouldering up on the left. Toward late afternoon the bus rounded another curve, and the Pastaza spread itself out before them, flowing in broad ribbons over black beaches. This was the western extreme of the mighty Amazon basin, which terminates three thousand miles to the east, as the river empties into the Atlantic Ocean. Another little town or two, and Shell Mera was reached. A former base of the Shell Oil Company for prospecting operations in the area, it is now an unpretentious huddle of dilapidated wooden buildings; houses, a hotel, and stores on one side of the road, and an army base and mission sponsored Bible school on the other.

The Ecuador base of the Missionary Aviation Fellowship was at the southern end of town. Here Jim and Pete met Dr. Tidmarsh, the missionary with whom they had corresponded before coming to Ecuador. And with him they were soon flying north from Shell Mera, over the green sea of jungle, following the Ansuc River toward the Atun Yaku, headwaters of the Napo.

They were headed for Shandia, the Quichua mission station which Dr. Tidmarsh had had to abandon because of his wife's health. They planned to reopen the station, Dr. Tidmarsh staying till they could get established. Shandia did not at this time have an airstrip, so the three flew to another station nearby. Here they landed and set out on foot through the jungle. It was late in the afternoon when they started, and knowing that it was normally a three-hour hike, they raced against the sudden tropical twilight. Slipping on grassy roots, stumbling and struggling through deep mud at times, they pressed eagerly on to the place that would be their home for months to come. They were full of anticipation for what lay ahead, but at the same time they drank in the beauties of the great Amazon rain forest through which they passed.

It was virgin jungle. Trees with buttress-shaped roots grew to tremendous heights, often with no branches except at the top. Under these umbrellas an incredible variety of flora thrives. It was often impossible for Jim and Pete to distinguish the leaves which belong properly to the trees, for the huge tangle of lianas, air plants, and fungus that sponge a living from them. Orchids everywhere lent their soft colors to the living green. Fungus grew in vivid colors and bizarre shapes-vermilion, shaped like the ruffle on a lady's dress; turquoise, shaped like a shell, half hidden under a rotten log.

Just as the moon rose over the forest, the three men burst into the clearing that was Shandia.

"Indians immediately gathered around," wrote Pete, "and I remembered a couple of faces from Tidmarsh's pictures, and felt a kind of pride in remembering. My first thought was, 'Yes, I can

love these people.' The ink-colored designs on the women's faces interested me and the pitiful drape of the faded blue skirts. Lots of children were about, smiling shyly. Babies sucked on big, tremulous breasts, and the young, eager faces of boys looked up at us. Heard Tidmarsh's first conversation in Quichua; wondered how I would ever learn it."

At the same time Jim wrote: "We have arrived at the destination decided on in 1950. My joy is full. Oh, how blind it would have been to reject the leading of these days. How it has changed the course of life for me and added such a host of joys!"

At the far end of the clearing stood the small thatched house in which Dr. Tidmarsh had lived. It was walled with split bamboo, floored with boards, and set on posts to ensure circulation of air and to give protection from both the damp ground and the invasion of insects.

"At my first glance the house looked spacious and comfortable," Pete wrote in his diary, "and I thought how easily Olive and I could live in such a set-up, feeling joy in the knowledge and anticipation. Afterwards we got cleaned up a bit, washed our muddy feet in the ice-cold Napo, took a look around, and settled down to a meal of rice soup, plantain, manioc, and rice, with coffee. Now by the light of the kerosene lamp I am writing on the dining room table ... tired but full of thankfulness to the Father, who leads on. In reality, this is not an end but a beginning."

### **CHAPTER 13 "All Things to All Men"**

In Shandia, Jim and Pete became full-fledged missionaries for the first time. They had come to reach the Quichuas with the Word of God, a task for which they were prepared but could accomplish only if they gained the Quichuas' confidence and love. So by living among them, sharing in their lives and thus laying the foundations of mutual trust they hoped to open the minds and hearts of the Indians to the Christian message. And Jim and Pete knew that whatever knowledge they gained from their experiences among the Quichuas would prepare them for work among other tribes further removed from today's civilization.

The two young missionaries learned quickly that the Quichuas hunt a little, farm a little, and work occasionally for a neighboring hacienda owner. They are subject to a variety of diseases and debilitating intestinal parasites. They are caught between two cultures—the disappearing one of the forebears and the rising white man's world of today. They are a gentle people, unlike their neighbors to the south, the headhunting Jivaros, and to the northeast the feared Aucas. Every facet of the lives, health, language, education, birth, and death of the Indians was of immediate interest to Jim and Pete.

Night after night they sat in their little hut, listening to the jungle tuning up its nocturnal orchestra, and recording their experiences in diaries and letters. Moths and flies swarmed against the lantern, dropping to the paper and clogging penpoints. Great beetles zoomed at their faces, which glistened with sweat from the heat of the lamp. Every evening they were

surrounded by a circle of dark, laughing faces-schoolboys who came in to watch whatever the missionaries might be doing.

"Don't white people ever get tired of paper?" said one to Dr. Tidmarsh in Quichua. "These two, all they do is look at paper and write on paper. My father says white men smell like paper. He gets mad at me for smelling like paper when I come home from school."

Pete Fleming smiled as Dr. Tidmarsh translated. How was a man to concentrate for five minutes? But then-he loved these Quichua boys. This is what he had bargained for-this is why he had renounced the solitude and silence for study, which had been his pleasure before.

I was by this time in the western jungle of Ecuador, and Jim kept in touch with me as frequently as jungle mail service would permit. Soon after he reached Shandia he wrote: "Days begin at 6 A.M. with the swooshing of the gas stove on which Dr. Tidmarsh heats his shaving water. The box we use for a wash stand sits on the corner of the front porch, and the drain is over the wall, where you aim the basin at a ditch which runs right around the house. Breakfast, usually consisting of a bowl or two of banana soup or ground corn, a fresh banana and a cup of coffee, has so far been interrupted at 7:15 each morning to make radio contact with the other mission stations of the region. At meal-time we speak only in Spanish. Breakfast is followed by a reading of Daniel in Spanish, and morning prayer.

"So far my mornings have been consumed in watching the doctor do medical work, studying, or making some gadget to

bring things to a little better state for comfort, and interspersed with visits to the airstrip to see if the men are working. Today, as a herd of wild pigs upriver sent most of them scurrying to the hunt, there were only a dozen or so working. They had arrived at that part of the strip which was planted in patches of plantain [a tropical fruit, 'cooking cousin' of the banana] and they were loath to cut them down. I helped them push over the trees to get them started. It's like destroying food to them, and it hurt me a little, too, but there are other plantains and no other airstrips.

Old Venancio, a typical Quichua, was Dr. Tidmarsh's righthand man. He dresses as the white man does, in ordinary pants and shirt, his parents having years ago left the old costume of the Quichuas, the kushma. Travel on jungle trails, sometimes in knee-deep mud, makes shoes an absurdity for him, though a few others wear them on special occasions as a sign of prestige. A safety pin adorns a conspicuous spot on the front of his unironed shirt, handy for removing chonta palm thorns from his feet. As he travels the trails, he carries a well-worn machete, which he swings aimlessly at trees. If he comes to a steep or slippery bank, he can cut steps for his toes as he ascends. If a vine hangs in his way, one swipe removes it. His wife Susanna trudges behind him, carrying her baby in a cloth on her side, and a great basket containing cooking pot, chickens, blanket, and plantains. This basket is strapped with a jungle "rope," a strip of bark or a long, fibrous leaf, which is passed around the basket and up over Susanna's forehead. She, too, carries her machete, with which to dig and peel the manioc which is their main diet, trim her fingernails, or discourage the weeds around their front door. The machete is their most valued implement-indeed, often

the only implement. It makes an excellent hoe, shovel, ax, knife, scissors, or what have you. Jim and Pete soon learned that it is indispensable in the jungle, and wondered how they had ever done without one in the States.

Venancio spends much of his time making small baskets for storing eggs, trumpet-shaped traps and nets for scooping fish, woven sieves, and monkey-skin drums. His wife does all of the heavy work, such as clearing the land of trees and other jungle growth, planting, carrying water and firewood, washing of clothes on the rocks by the river, hauling of heads of plantains, which may weigh up to one hundred pounds each.

Venancio's bed is made of a few slabs of split bamboo laid across a few poles. For chairs he has chunks of wood, five or six inches in height, on which he squats by the fire. A soup plate and spoon make up his eating utensils, and he uses half-gourds for drinking, along with the clay bowls. The staple food of Venancio and his fellow tribesmen is a drink known as chicha. This is made from manioc, a starchy tuber dug daily by the womenfolk, peeled with deft whacks of the machete, and steamed in a clay pot. When it is cooked, the women pound the manioc with a wooden pestle to the consistency of mashed potato, but coarser and heavier. Taking mouthfuls of this, they chew it and spit it into a tray, thus beginning the fermentation which continues as the mass is put back into the great clay urns. It is left for a day or two, or even a week if strong chicha is desired. The Quichuas literally live on this stuff for most of their lives, supplementing it when they can with wild meat or fish, perhaps a little jungle fruit, and eggs.

Day by day in their observation of the Indians as individuals and in a group, Jim and Pete learned to fit themselves into this new fabric of living. One night as the two men, with their senior worker Dr. Tidmarsh, sat with the schoolboys in their little bamboo house, running steps were heard outside.

"Doctor! Doctor! Tiangichu? Are you there?"

"Ikui. Ikui. Come in."

"My sister-in-law is dying!"

This, in Quichua, may mean anything from a headache to a snakebite. If one is in excellent health, he is "living." Otherwise, he is "dying." "What is the matter with your sister-in-law?"

"She is causing a child to be born. Will you come?"

Unless there is some complication, the missionary is not usually called to attend a delivery, but Dr. Tidmarsh knew that in this case the woman had lost five babies. He was a doctor of philosophy, not a medical doctor, although he had studied homeopathy. So he collected the simple equipment he had for such emergencies, and with Pete, started down the river. Venancio, serving as guide, plunged ahead in the darkness, while they swung their flashlights to try to augment the little circle of light they threw on the muddy trail. The Talac River, a shallow stream perhaps fifty feet wide, had to be crossed two or three times, and finally the house was reached, a rectangular building constructed of split bamboo and palm-leaf roof, woven beautifully and evenly. As they entered the narrow doorway, stepping over a low sill designed to discourage pigs and chickens,

they could see several fires glowing dimly through the smoke that always fills the house and incidentally acts as a preservative for the roof leaf, coating it with tars that resist insects. In one corner sat a man, weaving a string fishing net. Another sawed away on a homemade violin.

"The woman was lying on a bamboo board," Pete wrote later in his diary, "partly shielded from public view by two loosely hung blankets, and was attended by the 'midwife.' Gradually all became dark, the smoldering fires died to embers, and the families went to their boards for the night, the little children with their parents, older boys together in one corner, girls in another. They gave Tidmarsh and me a bed and we lay down as there was no sign of the baby's arrival, labor pains still seven minutes apart. As the bamboo had none of the usually-associated attributes of flexibility which it has in the minds of many, and as our shoes and pants were still wet from walking in the river, we soon chilled, and later rose and sat on small log seats around a smoky fire which refused to stay alight. In company of two mangy skeleton-ribbed dogs we sat listening to the whine of the crickets, the strange goose-like honking of the tree toads, the occasional wailing cry of a child, the creaking of the bamboo as someone rolled over, and the periodic moans of the woman which rose shrilly to a short scream.

"Gradually as the pains increased and intensified the girl rose to her knees and reached for the vine-rope which hung from the ceiling above, intertwining her hands in the rope and lifting her body when the pains came. For me, those small brown hands held high over the head, and the arms, lined with taut tendons, communicated something of the simplicity and yet binding custom of their means of giving birth. After she had

passed the water, the pains waned and finally the baby began to descend. The midwife gave a word, everybody woke up and moved sleepily to the corner and stood peering over the curtains. Privacy is a word and concept unknown. They prepared a drink for the mother by scraping the claw of a sloth and mixing the powder with water. I think this is supposed to hasten the arrival of the baby.

"Venancio, our cook, then stepped inside, grasped the girl by the shoulders and began shaking her violently which he continued to do until the baby arrived, dropping half onto the banana leaves, half on the earthen floor, a tiny white frail thing attached to an intestine-like cord, motionless in the flickering kerosene light. It burped a couple of times, sputtered and cried, then adopted normal breathing. Tidmarsh stepped in to tie off the cord, and the midwife cut it with the sharp edge of a bamboo stick. The midwife then took the baby, took a mouthful of water from an iron pot, and spat it out over the baby, thus washing it. Then wrapping it in an old dirty cloth and tying it with a woman's embroidered belt, she handed it to a small naked child who tottered across the floor with it. A woman took it, laid it on a bamboo plant, where it was apparently forgotten. Meanwhile the mother continued in her martyr-like position, wincing and writhing under the continuing contractions. Tidmarsh committed the baby to the Lord in prayer."

Slowly the men became more familiar with the language. They were never without their little black notebooks and pencils. Since the language was not a written one, they had only to write down what they heard, try to find out by one means or another what it meant, and then memorize.

"I find the language fascinating," Jim wrote home. "The freshness of discovering a language from the speaker's mouth, without the aid of a textbook, is most stimulating. And an especially interesting feature to me now is the onomatopoeic value of certain words. For example, I heard it said of a free-swinging broken wrist, It goes whi- lang, whi-lang.' The word has no dictionary meaning, so far as we can discover. Or a lamp flickering goes li -ping, li-ping, tiung, tiung, and dies.' The word `tukluk, tukluk' describes rapid swallowing and gulping. And there are myriads more."

As Pete and Jim's knowledge of the language grew, so grew the Indians' confidence in them, and they began to invite the missionaries to greater participation in their life and customs. "You speak Quichua better than we do," said Wakcha, a proud young Indian who always wore a pith helmet, a sign of great prestige among his people. "You hear us too well. We are talking away, saying to ourselves, 'They do not hear,' and then you answer us!"

Dr. Tidmarsh eventually left the forest to return to his family in the mountains, but before he went he gave Jim and Pete a few simple instructions about caring for the sick. On their own, they would have to give what medical aid they could with the help of medical books and prayer. Sick calls had to be answered. One night in January a distraught father came to them on behalf of his baby who was ill.

"Will you not stick it with medicine?" he pleaded. It had not taken the Indians long to learn the healing power of antibiotics for their frequent tropical infections, and they soon began to feel

that unless they were injected, the missionary had really done nothing at all. It was useless for the missionary to try to explain that if a man had a bad case of worms, penicillin would not cure him. "Drinking medicine" was not nearly so effective, in the Indian mind, as "sticking-medicine." This time, however, the baby's case seemed to be pneumonia, so Jim gave penicillin. The parents were satisfied that he had done what he could-but the baby did not show immediate signs of recovery. They fell back, then, on the greatest power they knew, the witch doctor. Jim asked if he might stay to watch the ceremony. "A bed was pointed out to me," he recalled later. "I was told they were going to drink ayak waska and that I was to stay on the cane bed and not turn on my flashlight.

"All lamps were extinguished by 8:30, and the three Indians who were to drink the herb, ayak waska, could be heard speaking across the room occasionally. I feigned sleep and drowsed but woke when one of the watchers sleeping on the floor beside me was roused to be alert to listen as the drinking passed and the 'swoon speech' expected. I heard the quick, steady, swish beat of what sounded like a bunch of dry leaves being shaken, and from somewhere, I cannot say if it was from the same source, the rather melodious whistle of the three-tone pattern so usual among them. This was interspersed with a spitting, retching sound, and the curious pop of the smoke blowing on the patient's head, as I had seen done earlier. (I had offered another injection of penicillin and been refused at supper time. The witch doctor insisted that we wait till morning.) The swishing and blowing and whistling were joined by an occasional heavy snore and I dropped off to sleep.

"At eleven I was awakened by an Indian playing a violin. We chatted. I checked the baby at midnight and was told that the witching had not amounted to much as the drinkers had not taken enough to do much talking. Fever seemed a little higher, breathing and general condition had not changed. Around one I fell asleep again. The mother and an old woman were awake, making applications of leaves and tobacco. Lamps and kerosene lanterns made things somewhat less eerie than earlier. I slept until the death wail awakened me at three. No struggle; just quit breathing. Made our third small coffin this morning."

These happenings gave insight into the life of these people. Superstition and fear bound them tightly. Would the New Testament answer the longing of the Quichua for freedom from fear, peace of heart, deliverance from evil spirits? The missionaries prayed and discussed these problems, but still they felt themselves foreigners-felt that they would always be foreigners. The Indian himself must be the answer-he must learn the Scriptures, be taught, and in turn teach his own people. To this end Pete and Jim reopened the missionary school at Shandia that Dr. Tidmarsh had been forced to close. Here in a one-room schoolhouse the youngsters of the community were taught to read and write so that ultimately, they could read the Scriptures for themselves.

But there were others, Indians who had as yet never had one chance to hear the story which these boys listened to daily. Would God send Jim and Pete to take the message to the Aucas?

"The thought scares me at times," wrote Pete, "but I am ready. We have believed God for miracles, and this may include

the Aucas. It has got to be by miracles in response to faith. No lesser expedient is a shortcut. O God, guide!"

#### **CHAPTER 4 Infinite Adaptability**

Ever since their college days, Jim Elliot and Ed McCully had wondered if someday they might work together on the mission field. When Ed, his wife Marilou, and their towheaded toddler Stevie arrived in Quito in December, 1952, it seemed that their hopes would be realized. The McCullys planned to stay in Quito for their required Spanish study and then join Jim and Pete in Shandia. In June, 1953, Ed left his family in Quito and made a quick trip to his future home in the jungle. He wrote to his folks in the States of the scenes he had witnessed:

"I have just returned to Quito, after spending twelve days in the jungles with Jim Elliot and Pete Fleming among the lowland Quichua Indians. If the Lord permits, we hope to be located there in a few months. During these twelve days, after viewing the Indian boys in school and the endless line of people seeking medical aid, after visiting Indian homes, after hearing the weird chant of witch calling, and the hopeless cry of the death mourners, I praise God for bringing us to this land to work with these people. I pray that we might be faithful to our calling and that God will use us to bring many of these Indians to Himself.

"I stood by the bed of an eighteen-year-old Indian boy in the eastern jungle. I watched him vomit blood and in a few minutes I watched him die. In that hour, as I stood looking at his lifeless form lying on bamboo sticks on the dirt floor of the hut, I was to realize more fully what Paul meant in I Thessalonians 4,

'Ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.' I will not soon forget the screaming chanting wail of these heathen folk as they beat their breasts and mourned for two days and nights. It was a pathetic picture of 'no hope.' Tonight I pray a peculiar prayer ... that God will spare the lives of these Indians until He enables us to bring to them the message of hope, of eternal life, of salvation in their own language."

Oldest son of a Milwaukee bakery executive, Ed McCully grew up in the Midwest, in a home which knew something of sacrifice for the work of the Lord. Ed's father was active in preaching, traveling throughout the United States, speaking of Christ to his business associates at every opportunity, and to Christian groups in many places. When Ed entered Wheaton College in the fall of 1945, it was not with the idea of becoming a foreign missionary. He chose business and economics as his major.

Six feet two inches tall, weighing one hundred and ninety pounds, he soon distinguished himself as star end on Wheaton's championship football team. His surprising speed for so big a man made him a track star as well. His track coach, the national champion miler, Gil Dodds, tells of an incident in Ed's senior year. Ten 440yard men were in training for a special meet in Boston; from the ten, five would be picked to go. Ed wanted to go to Boston. So, in spite of the fact that he was a 100-220-yard man and had never run a 440 in his life, he asked if he could try out with the others. It was typical of Ed that he made the relay team by one-tenth of a second. "He was always coming through with the impossible when the chips were down," was Dodds' concluding comment.

Ed was at his best on the platform. His simple, direct approach to his audience enabled him, with no formal training whatever in public speaking, to win the 1949 championship in the National Hearst Oratorical Contest in San Francisco, a competition in which over ten thousand students had competed. His essay on Alexander Hamilton was nearly memorized by his classmates, who insisted on his reciting it at every class gathering. When he came to the climax,

"And like a silver clarion rung,

The accents of that unknown tongue,"

the class would rise simultaneously and shout with Ed,

"Excelsior!"

Such was the spirit which Ed, senior class president, had generated. Of his election my brother Dave wrote: "Ed was elected (or shouted in) without a contrary vote. I frankly doubt if anyone even entertained the idea of proposing anyone else for the position. It was a foregone and unanimously accepted conclusion."

The following year Ed McCully, having turned his thinking toward the bar, entered the law school at Marquette University. At the beginning of his second year there he took a job as hotel clerk at night, intending to spend the time studying. But God, who ordains men of His own choosing and moves in them to the accomplishment of His eternal purposes, had other plans. Ed told his Wheaton classmate Jim about it in a letter dated September 22, 1950:

"Since taking this job things have happened. I've been spending my free time studying the Word. Each night the Lord seemed to get hold of me a little more. Night before last I was reading in Nehemiah. I finished the book and read it through again. Here was a man who left everything as far as position was concerned to go do a job nobody else could handle. And because he went the whole remnant back in Jerusalem got right with the Lord. Obstacles and hindrances fell away and a great work was done. Jim, I couldn't get away from it. The Lord was dealing with me. On the way home yesterday morning I took a long walk and came to a decision which I know is of the Lord. In all honesty before the Lord I say that no one or nothing beyond Himself and the Word has any bearing upon what I've decided to do. I have one desire now-to live a life of reckless abandon for the Lord, putting all my energy and strength into it. Maybe He'll send me someplace where the name of Jesus Christ is unknown. Jim, I'm taking the Lord at His word, and I'm trusting Him to prove His Word. It's kind of like putting all your eggs in one basket, but we've already put our trust in Him for salvation, so why not do it as far as our life is concerned? If there's nothing to this business of eternal life we might as well lose everything in one crack and throw our present life away with our life hereafter. But if there is something to it, then everything else the Lord says must hold true likewise. Pray for me, Jim.

"Man, to think the Lord got hold of me just one day before I was to register for school! I've got my money put away and was all set to go. Today was registration day so I went over to school to let them know why I wouldn't be back. I really prayed like the apostle asked the Ephesians to pray, that I might 'open my mouth boldly.' I talked to all the fellows that I knew well. Then I went in to see a professor I thought a lot about. I told him what I

planned to do, and before I left he had tears in his eyes. I went in to see another professor and talked to him. All I got was a cold farewell and a good luck wish.

"Well, that's it. Two days ago I was a law student. Today, I'm an untitled nobody. Thanks, Jim, for the intercession on my behalf. Don't let up. And brother, I'm really praying for you too as you're making preparation to leave. I only wish I were going with you."

Ed's period of boot-training came when he went with Jim Elliot to Chester, Illinois, in the winter of 1951. Besides the tent meetings and children's classes which they held in an attempt to preach the Gospel in that town, Ed frequently preached on a weekly radio broadcast which he and Jim shared. As the Apostle Paul wrote, "I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise. So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also. For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth...." So Ed believed and so he preached.

On May 16, 1951, he used civic law as an illustration in one of these radio messages. Ed's sermon explains better than most theological statements the belief shared by all five of the men who were ultimately to combine forces in Operation Auca.

"The fate of the criminal," Ed said, "is to fulfill the condemnation by being punished-for some this means serving a term of years, for others it means imprisonment for life, for others it means death. God's condemnation upon all sinners is

death. 'The wages of sin is death....' One sentence, and one punishment for those who do not believe.

"But, you say, God is a God of love. He will not punish anyone eternally. It is true that He is a God of love. And His condemnation does not in any way alter the fact. God is not willing that you or I experience the punishment we justly deserve. Therefore He offers us an escape, if we choose to accept it. At the price of His only begotten Son, God provided pardon.

"This is the simple, plain, and clear Word of God from His book, the Bible. 'He that believeth on My Son,' says God, 'is not condemned, but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he has not believed on my only begotten Son.'"

As in the days when the Lord Himself walked on the earth, the results were not startling. A few wrote to the radio station for further information. A handful of people professed conversion as a result of the meetings held in school auditoriums and tents. But Ed knew that he had been obedient to God in the work of those months. Just prior to going to Chester, Ed had accepted an invitation to speak at a young people's banquet in Pontiac, Michigan. God had more in mind than Ed had imagined. It was there that he met Marilou Hobolth, a pretty dark-haired pianist in the church where he was to speak. During the months in Chester, Ed sent more letters, no doubt, to Marilou than he had posted to others in several years. Early in the correspondence he wrote:

"I'm praying definitely for two things: first, that the Lord will give us wisdom in our relationship-even in the business of letter

writing. Second, that as long as we've got anything to do with each other, that each of us will be an influence upon the other for closer fellowship with the Lord. I don't mean that we'll be preaching to each other-but just that our attraction for each other will be a means of attracting us more to the Lord. I know that's the way you feel too."

Their friendship ripened fast and in April Ed and Marilou became engaged. A few days later Ed wrote her:

"When you pray, ask the Lord definitely to show us where He wants us to spend our lives, and that we'll be willing to spend them there, even anxious to."

Ed's love for the girl he was going to marry was wholehearted: "When anybody speaks to me, it takes everything I've got to stay with them in conversation. It's the craziest sensation! I'm beginning to believe everything the poets and songwriters have to say about love!"

On May 29, 1951, he was writing: "One month from today you will have lost all your freedom and will be subject to my iron rule, my unflinching law, and my cruel command. You have exactly thirty-one days to reconsider. Do you think you'll really be able to put up with me for the rest of your life? It won't be easy. There'll be plenty of times you'll wonder why on earth you married me. Have you reconsidered? Now, let me tell you that I love you with all of my heart."

Marilou did not reconsider. They were married in June in her home church, the First Baptist of Pontiac, Michigan.

Ed's decision to become a foreign missionary led him to enroll at the School of Missionary Medicine in Los Angeles, where he spent a year of intensive study in tropical diseases and their treatment, obstetrics, dentistry, learning the fundamentals in order not only to be of help to the Indians, but also to keep himself and family in shape.

On December 10, 1952, with eight-month-old son Stevie, Ed and Marilou sailed for Ecuador, the country where God had indicated He wanted them to spend their lives.

In the jungle, Jim and Pete had been looking forward to the day when the McCullys would join them. They were building a house for them, along with other mission buildings. In the meantime, the McCullys were living in a stucco house in Quito with an Ecuadorian family, learning Spanish. It was not an easy life and they found themselves subject to discouragement and a sense of uselessness. "We ask in prayer that we might have aptness and accuracy in the studies, and grace to carry us over the 'hump' so we will be able not only to converse but also speak the Word of Life." Ed wrote to friends who had promised to pray for them. He and Marilou were eagerly looking forward to having their own home down in the jungle, and to getting into the work which they longed to do. One day Ed was called to the short-wave radio.

"I didn't read that transmission too well-did you say all of the buildings?" he asked. "Over."

"All of the buildings at Shandia have been destroyed by flood. All of the buildings at Shandia have been destroyed by

flood. Jim and Pete would like you to come down as quickly as possible. Over."

"Okay. Okay. Tell them I'll be right down."

Ed McCully handed the microphone back to the short-wave operator. The message had been relayed to him from Shell Mera. Jim and Pete had sent a runner to Dos Rios, a mission station six hours' walk from Shandia. The missionaries there had informed Shell Mera by radio of the flood.

Ed was dazed. He walked over to the window and stood looking out across the valley of Quito, toward Antisana, the mighty snowcap between him and the little mission station he had visited only a few weeks before.

The mission station at Shandia had been wiped out. In one day of thunderous rising water, followed by a nightmare that lasted through the long hours of darkness, the rampaging river destroyed everything. Five hundred hand-planed boards-each representing one full day's work for one man-stacked up for a new house, a new clinic, and a new school kitchen had disappeared in the night. Most of their personal belongings were saved but Jim and Pete's invaluable Quichua vocabulary manuscript was strewn all over the ground and tracked in mud. Three hundred and thirty feet were sliced off the end of the airstrip. It was a poignant reminder to the men of the temporal quality of their present "city."

Just as they had instinctively sought Ed's help, so now he turned to Marilou. "Babe, the whole station at Shandia has been destroyed by flood!"

Marilou was incredulous. Ed told her of the disaster and of Jim and Pete's having asked him to go down to the forest. She agreed immediately that this was the right course of action.

"But-what about you and Stevie?" he asked.

"Oh, we'll be fine," Marilou replied. "We'll just stay right here, and you let us know by radio whatever you plan to do. I'm sure it'll work out okay."

As usual, Ed was cheered by her spirit, and began making preparations for the trip. "Elliot," he had said one day to Jim, "I've married an efficient wife. She plans-and she makes me plan. And we get it done!"

She got him ready in record time, and soon thereafter he was seated on a canvas chair in the tent which Jim and Pete had pitched in Shandia. Discouragement gave way to planning and the young men quickly turned to rebuilding the mission station and getting things ready for the McCullys. As soon as possible, Ed went to Quito to move his family down. An excerpt from Ed's diary tells of their first days in the rain forest:

"September, 1953. We are well settled by now. Life gets to be a routine of buying, selling, treating sick, fixing kerosene and gasoline appliances, trying to learn a language. It's a fight to try to get time for the latter. Also time for Bible study and prayer. It's hard to stay on top of it all, hard to keep rejoicing, hard to love these ungrateful Indians. It's hard to keep our primary purpose in view when we get so swamped with secondary things."

The life of a missionary calls for infinite adaptability-from winning a national oratorical contest to struggling with an unwritten language ... from starring on the college football field to teaching a bunch of small Indians to play volleyball ... from prospects of a law career in a North American city to a life in the jungle of South America. Marilou, who had been director of music in a large church, slowly and carefully taught Indian children to sing two-line songs which she and Ed had written in the Quichua language. With all this, they were ready. They were fully prepared to be "fools for Christ's sake."

## **CHAPTER 5 "Expendable for God"**

A vioneta uyarimun! The little plane is coming into hearing!"

These words, shouted by the Indians, announced to Jim, Ed, Pete, and other missionaries in the Oriente that the bright yellow Piper of the Missionary Aviation Fellowship was about to land on the station airstrip. The most welcome sound in the jungle was the approaching hum of its engine. The missionary would interrupt his business for the morning, treating a baby for impetigo, selling a bottle of worm medicine, teaching a Bible class, or sawing boards for a building. There would be a grand scramble to clear the strip, the missionary would pace it for a final check of the surface, and then, when dogs and children were at a safe distance, the plane would glide onto the grass. As the prop stopped spinning, the door would swing open, and a sunburned, sandy-haired man with a wide grin and frank, blue

eyes would hop out-Nate Saint, the man whose vision had changed missionary life in the jungle.

Nate would dig out the cargo listed for that station, checking aloud the list which his wife, Marj, had made out for him beforehand:

"Let's see-a sack of flour, fifteen gallons of diesel oil, meat, vegetables, two brooms, and the mail. Your penicillin is in the mail sack. Guess that's it. How's it going, Ed?"

As the two men talked beside the plane, Indians would eagerly gather round. One would stand rubbing one leg down the back of the other continually, to keep off the flies. A baby would cry, or a dog would escape from the captivity of a child-nothing would distract the Indians from looking at the plane, no matter how many times they had seen it.

And then, without warning, a tiny alarm would sound-Nate's watch! A methodical man, he had figured out exactly how much time he could spend in that station and still make his deadline home before sundown, or, if he had another flight scheduled, he would know precisely when he must take off for that. After piling and lashing down the empty diesel oil cans in the back of his plane for refilling at his headquarters in Shell Mera, and rechecking his list, he would jump in, fasten safety belt and shoulder harness, wave goodbye, and take off. It was a bright spot in the week for the isolated missionary.

"Man, there's nobody like old Nate," Ed would say to Marilou, as they walked back to the house.

Truly the coming of Nate Saint with the Piper had marked the beginning of a new way of life on the isolated mission stations of this jungle area. Heretofore the missionary and his family would be completely cut off from the outside world long months at a time-four, six, eight days of heartbreaking struggle on dangerous jungle trail separated him from medical and other help. Then, one by one, airstrips were hacked from the jungle. Radio transmitters and receivers were installed, and the airplane, when it came, covered in five minutes the distance of a long hard day on the trail. Housing was vastly improved-from vermin-ridden bamboo and short-lived thatch to boards cut and planed by machinery brought in by air. Nate worked out a special frame underneath his plane for hauling sheets of aluminum. These provided a durable and easily constructed roof. Electric light plants and fuel to run them, kerosene refrigerators, filing cabinets, stoves, power saws, and cement-all helped to make life in the jungle safer, healthier, and more efficient.

Nate and his wife, Marj, arrived in the Oriente in September, 1948. His first job there was to set up some kind of living quarters for himself and Marj in Shell Mera. A tent sufficed during the weeks he was building a small frame house, which soon became "warehouse dormitory-toolshed." But the job of serving the missionaries was not allowed to wait until the Saints were comfortably settled. Nate had come down as a pilot of the Missionary Aviation Fellowship, an interdenominational organization founded by two ex-Navy pilots whose aim it was to transport evangelical missionaries, their supplies, their sick, to and from remote outposts. Thus, by lightening the physical burden which the missionary carries because of the primitive nature of his surroundings, the MAF could give him more time and energy for his spiritual ministry.

Almost at once Nate started ferrying missionaries in his plane, transporting their cargo, making courtesy flights, and handling all the maintenance on the plane himself. Marj began entertaining all the missionaries and their visitors who came through Shell Mera. These were numerous and she was the only available hostess for miles around. She never knew whether supper should be cooked for two or twelve. "And they eat like harvest hands!" she said. "I cook what I think ordinary people would eat, and then double it."

For the stringent requirements of their unique job, Nate and Marj were eminently suited. Nate's appreciation of Marj's role was once expressed in a letter: "How glad I am to have you working at my side always. I have felt that I had sufficient 'snort' and drive for the sprints, but God knew I would need a flywheel to steady me for the long haul."

Nate's first concern in flying was that it should be safe, efficient, and economical: "Missionaries who used to travel the old trails made sure they weren't carrying anything that wasn't necessary. Today, in the airplane, we, too, make sure we don't carry anything that isn't necessary. When our mission bought the plane, it had nice, soft seats in it. But we found that these seats weighed almost eight pounds each. So we decided to use harder seats that weighed only one pound, and take seven pounds of extra food and cargo."

Every ounce counted in a plane of this type. When Nate found that the streamlined wheel covers were collecting mud, he took them off. Characteristically, Nate turned this to spiritual illustration: "When life's flight is over, and we unload our cargo

at the other end, the fellow who got rid of unnecessary weight will have the most valuable cargo to present to the Lord."

Nate had always regarded himself as "expendable" for the cause of Christ. In a short sermon delivered over the missionary radio station HCJB-The Voice of the Andes in Quito-he shared his belief with others:

"During the last war we were taught to recognize that, in order to obtain our objective, we had to be willing to be expendable.... This very afternoon thousands of soldiers are known by their serial numbers as men who are expendable.... We know there is only one answer to our country's demand that we share in the price of freedom. Yet, when the Lord Jesus asks us to pay the price for world evangelization, we often answer without a word. We cannot go. We say it costs too much.

"God Himself laid down the law when He built the universe. He knew when He made it what the price was going to be. God didn't hold back His only Son, but gave Him up to pay the price for our failure and sin.

"Missionaries constantly face expendability. Jesus said, 'There is no man that has left house, or brothers, or sisters, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands for my sake and the Gospel's but shall receive a hundred fold now in this time and in the world to come eternal life.'"

However, Nate's convictions about expendability did not lessen that sense of caution which is ingrained in the fiber of any first-rate flier. On the contrary, his brain teemed with ideas for improving the safety of his plane. "I am trying to steer clear of

gimmicking for the sake of gimmicking," he wrote. "Nevertheless, I can't help the gad gets that run through my head, but I do try to sort out stuff that might have some value."

One of the devices of real value which he put into operation was an alternate fuel system. He often tried out his ideas on his older brother Sam, an airline pilot with long experience in the field of aeronautics.

"As I sit about the jungle listening for the symptoms of trouble that I never want to hear," Nate wrote to Sam, "I have in the back of my mind little things like the fuel line that fell off in my hand in Mexico a few years back. The flare had broken off one end of the tubing, but natural spring tension had kept it in place. I also think of the quick work of mud wasps when they decide to plug up a fuel vent. To be sure, I am also impressed by the dire consequence to my passengers, not to mention my own bones, if I should come out on the short end somewhere over these tall trees."

While turning over in his mind methods of eliminating a breakdown in the fuel system, Nate was working one day at the hangar at Shell Mera when he noticed a truck en-route to Ambato, high in the Andes. Trucks in that region were not common and this one had an additional attention catcher. A small boy was clinging to the roof of the cab holding a five gallon can of gas and a syphon, while an older boy sat on the front fender holding the lower end of the syphon, pointed in the direction of the carburetor under the partially opened hood. Whatever had caused the failure of the regular fuel system, here was a truck preparing for an ascent of six thousand feet, most of

the way in second or third gear with a great deal of shifting, while a boy metered gas to the engine through a rubber hose!

Nate's lively imagination immediately transferred this method of feeding gas to his own need. He lifted the cowl of his plane, removed the temperature-gauge fitting from the intake manifold, and squirted in gasoline. Each squeeze on the gas-loaded tube produced a burst of power. Encouraged by his experimentation, he went into the kitchen and borrowed one of Marj's cooking-oil tins to use as an auxiliary three-gallon tank. To provide a streamlined fairing for the tank he sent an Indian boy for a piece of balsa wood, which the lad obtained by chopping down an eight-foot balsa tree. The tank and fairing were then strapped to the struts under the left wing. Salvaged fittings, strainers, and a screw-type valve finished the rig. Nate mounted the valve on the fire wall and extended a control rod to the instrumental panel. So far so good, but darkness forced him to wait until morning to test his homemade safety device.

He put in a sleepless night, thinking of various reasons why his idea was totally impracticable-but still there was that truck racing along in second gear without its normal fuel source. Then, too, from his long experience as a mechanic he knew that the complexity of a modern carburetor arises from the need to accelerate smoothly from slow speeds to higher speeds. And a dead engine in the air, he told himself, will windmill fast enough to stay out of those critical lower speeds.

The next morning, first tests proved that the alternate fuel system could work without a hitch on the ground. The moment had come to test it in the air. He described the experience:

Two thousand feet above the landing strip I pulled the mixture control to idle-cut-off. It was quite a novel experience for a fellow who had listened so long, hoping never to hear it happen. But a turn of the new little T-handle on the instrument panel brought with it a wonderful feeling as the engine wound back up to smooth full power. For the next twenty minutes the normal fuel source was shut off tight. Even though the carburetor was by-passed completely the engine never missed. It picked up from the windmilling condition without a cough.

"I put the plane into every imaginable attitude at various power settings. It never faltered. 'Feeling' for the best mixture setting with the emergency T-handle was no more difficult than 'leaning' the engine with the regular mixture control. Same thing.

"The whole rig, tank and all, weighs only four pounds. The only thing it has in common with the ship's fuel system is the engine. It takes care of all the common troubles such as clogged vents and broken lines. With the simplicity and low cost of a deal like this, why do we fly along with our only source of fuel supply in jeopardy at several points between tank and engine, and no alternative? We are all sold on dual ignition: why not an alternate fuel system for emergencies?"

With government permission, every MAF plane now goes out to the jungle a safer machine because it is equipped with Nate's alternate fuel system.

Another ingenious invention of Nate's has astonished many in the aviation world. He developed a method of lowering a canvas bucket from an airplane in full flight into the hands of a

person on the ground. This "spiraling-line technique," as he called it, later made possible the first direct contact with the Aucas. A canvas bucket is let out behind the airplane on a line about fifteen hundred feet long. As the airplane goes into a tight turn, the bucket moves toward the center of the circle-the drag of the cord across the circle overcoming the centrifugal force tending to throw the bucket outward. As the bucket moves toward the center it falls until it eventually hangs almost motionless at the bottom or vortex of an inverted cone. Not only could the person on the ground receive mail, medicine, and small parcels, but, more important, could send messages or other things back to the airplane as the bucket is pulled up again. Sometimes Nate substituted a telephone wire for the cord, with a field telephone in the bucket. In this way he could talk by telephone to a missionary on a sandbar or in a jungle clearing in areas where there was no landing strip.

One of the essential safety measures was the maintenance at all times of short-wave contact with the plane. This was Marj's job. Whenever the plane was in the air, she stood by for regular checks of location, altitude, and fuel load. She checked on weather conditions in Shell Mera, and kept in touch with the missionary to whose station Nate was flying for a check from that end. Each missionary station was equipped with transmitter and receiver, and at seven o'clock every morning the missionaries called in to Shell Mera. If a medical emergency had arisen since the previous call, help could be obtained, and flights arranged for evacuating the patient. Routine supplies were ordered, and flights scheduled by means of this contact. It meant hours and hours of sitting by the radio, but Marj was as convinced that this was her share of missionary work as Nate was that flying was his.

Thus on any morning a visitor to Shell Mera might have heard something like this:

"Shell Mera is standing by for Macuma, Macuma. Over."

"Macuma standing by. We'd just like to know how many carriers to have at the airstrip when our cargo arrives. Over."

"Good morning, Macuma. I think two will be enough. Over."

"Okay, thanks. And how is the boy we sent out to the clinic? Over."

"I'll phone the clinic and find out if he can come home on Thursday's flight. Incidentally, you'll be having a visitor on Thursday. A missionary just came in on the bus and would like to see a typical jungle station. Over."

"Okay, Marj. We'll be glad to have him. Better send us a little more food than our usual order this week, though. Over."

"Okay. Okay Macuma. Shell Mera calling Shandia, Shandia. Do you have any traffic? Over."

"Shandia standing by. No traffic, Mad. Over."

And so the morning would pass, Marj taking orders for food, supplies for the Indian schools, medicine for the dispensaries, standing by while one station talked with another, relaying messages from missionaries to the doctor, getting his answer by telephone and relaying it back to the missionary, and

calling "56 Henry," Nate's plane, as he flew out over the jungle, carefully noting down his position every five minutes.

There were those back home who smiled at Nate's constant concern for safety. "After all," they said, "a missionary is supposed to trust the Lord!"

"Perhaps my reasoning is pagan, as I've been told," Nate wrote home. "I do believe in miracles. They are nothing to God, surely. But the question is one of finding the pattern that the Lord has chosen us to conform to. I wouldn't be here if I weren't trusting the Lord. Chances are that those who shrug it off by saying, 'The Lord will take care of you,' are the same ones who would hardly expose themselves to the bacteriological risks of working in a downtown rescue mission. Forgive me if I feel a little strongly at this point. I'm concerned about safety, but I don't let it keep me from getting on with God's business. Every time I take off, I am ready to deliver up the life I owe to God. I feel we should be quick to take advantage of every possible improvement in carrying out the job before us."

Besides facilitating the work of the jungle missionaries, Nate had a direct influence on the Ecuadorians at his own doorstep. He never appeared to be hurried, and many a national came to him just to talk, recognizing in him a love for God and a sympathetic heart which drew them. He improved steadily in the Spanish language, and was respected for this effort. Street meetings, Sunday school and literacy classes, personal chats—these things made Nate a missionary as well as a pilot.

Small contrivances to add to the convenience and pleasure of his family also took his attention. He built a concrete cistern to

catch rain water from the roof, and also built up a lower outer wall so that the children-Kathie born in 1949 and Stevie born in 1951-could have a place to wade in the overflow from the larger tank. He put a bell-ringing timer on the washing machine to save Mad steps while she was at the radio. Dampness is a major problem in Shell Mera, so Nate created a drying room behind the kitchen by building the kerosene refrigerator flush with the kitchen wall and backing the heating unit into the little room, into which he also put the hot water heater. Thus clothes and other equipment could be kept dry.

What had brought a man with this inventive, ingenious turn of mind, with these modern technical skills, into the primitive jungle of Ecuador? Like Ed, Pete, and Jim, Nate came from a family whose guiding principles of life were rooted deep in the teachings of the Scriptures. As a small boy, he understood the personal implications of the New Testament, and placed his faith in Christ as the only ground for his hope of salvation.

In the Saint home in Philadelphia, where Nate was born in 1923, movies and dancing were not allowed, nor any form of gambling, from pitching pennies to playing poker. But it was no monastery. The children went fishing, trapping, sledding in wintertime, and were allowed such adventures as sleeping out-of-doors. Nate blueprinted and built model gliders, boats, and locomotives. His older sister Rachel was "like a little mother" to him, reading him missionary books about Africa, Japan, India, and South America. His imagination fastened eagerly onto these stories, and he once said, "I don't expect ever to be a preacher, but someday I would like to talk to someone who has never heard about Jesus."

His older brother Sam took him flying when Nate was seven-so small that he had to stand on the seat to see out of the cockpit of the old biplane. From that time on he was captured by wings and the wide sky.

At thirteen he suffered a severe case of osteomyelitis in his leg, and enforced inactivity gave him time to think. Could it be that God wanted him to be a missionary?

Later he recorded: "Through high school everything was evaluated in terms of flying machines and all emotions were tuned to imagined air adventures. All else became almost unbearably confining, in fact, any occupation that keeps me where I can't see the sky for a day is still one of my rougher tribulations."

The four walls of the classroom finally did become unbearable, and in his senior year Nate took a daytime job in a welding shop and went to night school, completing his high school course in a few months. A job at a small airport, where he learned to fly small planes, took up the next six months. After this he worked in an airline overhaul shop and gained a mechanic's license. The next step was to sign up for the Air Force pilot cadet program. "It looked as though the Eagle was about to lay the golden egg!" he said. "Twenty-five thousand dollars' worth of pilot training!" By this time he had piloted a 40horsepower light plane about eighty hours, but he had dreamed long of flying the big powerful planes of the military.

The night before he was to report for his first military flying instruction, he became aware of pain around his old osteomyelitis scar. Yanking up his trouser leg, he knew the truth.

It was inflamed. All his boyhood ambitions of the past years, wrapped up and focused on this shining opportunity to get into big-time flying, suddenly collapsed. "I didn't say a word to my roommate, but jumped into bed and turned out the light without a word. There I barred myself into the small, dark confines of my heart, which had now become a dungeon for solitary confinement. Except for the tossing, and choked, then sighing, respiration, no one would have known the thing that was almost overwhelming me. No fooling; I was heartbroken."

The shock of losing the opportunity of getting out of the flying "put puts" into real airplanes left Nate in a state of numbness, not caring much about anything. When he came out of the hospital, the Air Force made him a maintenance crew chief. On this job he had time to burn and he used it for Bible reading, which he had neglected. One year after he was grounded, he was sent to Detroit on detached service to study new and larger engines that were soon to be on the line, and there, at a New Year's Eve worship service, he felt that the Lord was turning his heart to the mission field. "What was going on in the service wasn't important," he recalled later. "I wasn't hearing anything with my ears, anyhow. I pleaded helplessly with my Heavenly Father for the answer that stood between me and the peace that Jesus had said should be ours. Now, you've heard about people being spoken to by God. I don't know about the other fellow, but that night I saw things differently ... BING ... like that. Just as though a different Kodachrome slide had been tossed onto the screen between my ears. As soon as I could, I stepped out of the building and started out ... just to get away from people. It was snowing and there was already a deep virgin snow on the ground, and the moan of city traffic had been muffled as it is when deep snow is around. A joy, such as I had

never known since the night I accepted Jesus' forgiveness for my sins, seemed to leave me almost weak with gratitude. It was the first time that I had ever really heard that verse: 'Follow me, and I will make you to become fishers of men.' The old life of chasing things that are of a temporal sort seemed absolutely insane."

It was at this juncture, when Nate thought that he would have to say good-bye to planes and flying and buckle down to a couple of years of college in preparation for the mission field, that he heard of the Missionary Aviation Fellowship. He wrote to his mother: "Methinks the aircraft industry has suffered the loss of a 'big operator,' and the Lord has won for Himself a 'li'l operator.' "

Shortly after V.E. Day he was shipped out to Salinas, California, to work as crew chief with the Fourth Air Force. There he met the two ex-Navy pilots who had founded MAF. It sounded like the perfect, made-to-order spot for Nate Saint. He got hold of an old, beaten up, 40horsepower airplane, fixed it up, and began flying in every spare minute practicing, always practicing.

While he was still in the Army he met Marj Farris, whom he later described in a letter: "Among other blessings, the greatest. She had just finished her State exams and is now a practicing registered nurse in California. She is a graduate of U. of California at Los Angeles, an ardent student of the Word, and has a challenging love for the lost. She is the most selfless person I have met in my life except my Mother. She is a meek girl of deep conviction ready for service for the Lord of the Harvest...."

When Nate was discharged from the Air Force he asked God specifically to show him his next move. Suddenly, he found himself with his first assignment with MAF. Early in July, 1946, he was asked to go down to Mexico to repair a plane that had crashed there during a landing. "When God took over my life a couple of years before," Nate said, "He had not defined my duties but somehow it seemed immediately clear that this was to be my first [missionary aviation] assignment." Less than two weeks after he accepted the job, he found himself near the Guatemalan border, in the town of Tuxtla Gutierrez, with a knowledge of Spanish "limited to my childhood acquaintance with the Lone Ranger."

He knew he was something of a sight, with a duffel bag containing forty pounds of tools, plus all his worldly goods. He wondered, too, if he might have difficulty at the customs office- "It's not exactly usual for tourists to carry seven-foot airplane propellers under their arms."

"I tried to imagine the damaged plane. It wouldn't be too bad-a damaged landing gear, and probably a splintered prop. Little did I dream that I would later find two completely demolished wings in a bushel basket." The plane had crashed in the bush at the edge of a jungle airstrip. Pieces of wing struts, landing gear, and the panels had been brought out to the Tuxtla airport for Nate to rebuild. With the help of a Mexican cabinetmaker to whom everything had to be explained by drawings, he set to work to put the pieces together again. He was impeded by the fact that the blueprint he had been given did not match the plane and that a factory-made wing spar sent down as a replacement matched neither the blueprint nor the plane. When he had finally reassembled the parts, the problem

arose of taking the wing panels out to the airstrip in the bush where the wrecked plane lay. It was not feasible to crate them and send them on the trail, where narrow canyon walls had to be scaled; the crates would never make the turns. So the wings were built up like a model plane kit, piece by piece without any glue, then each piece labeled, the whole works disassembled, tied up in bundles, and flown out to the jungle airstrip. When Nate got to the wrecked plane, he found that some parts had been stolen and that mud wasps had lodged in the fuel tank and lines. For lack of rigging data, he had to prop the tail up on a stump and rig the new wings to match the old by eye, just as he used to rig model planes as a child. Thus he finished his first MAF assignment, the plane being flown out barely within the work-permit time limit.

Later Nate went to Los Angeles and spent ten happy days with his little nurse. As he bade her good-by he said, "Well, Marj, as far as I'm concerned, it's all settled but the hardware!"

The winter of 1947-48 found him enrolled at Wheaton College, and in January Marj took a nursing job in a nearby town, studying Bible at the college in preparation for the missionary life they anticipated together. They started a Bible club for teenagers. Nate called the program "a sort of candy-box, loaded with Gospel dynamite."

But their training practice period was shorter than they had expected. The need of a pilot in Ecuador was presented to them. They cut short their courses, pooled their funds, bought an engagement ring and Model-A Ford, and set out one midnight for Long Island, New York, nearly a thousand miles away. They stayed with his brother Sam, and were married. After a four-day

honeymoon, they headed their old Ford west, all their worldly goods stacked up in the back seat. Meals were cans of food heated on the engine. Finally they reached California and Nate began final work on a plane that had been purchased by the MAF for its operation in Ecuador. Marj took another nursing job.

On September 8, the plane was ready and Nate, with another MAF pilot, flew it to Ecuador, leaving Marj to follow later that month by commercial transportation.

The years at Shell Mera passed quickly. The house grew into a large chalet of dark wood, with spacious porches, wide eaves for protection against tropical rains, a running water system for kitchen and shower, connected with the rain pipes from the aluminum roof and with tanks under the eaves. After they raised the roof and built in a second story, there were ten bedrooms to accommodate the many guests who came through, and a radio room where Marj could work efficiently and where radio repairs for the missionaries could be made.

Another pilot, Johnny Keenan, arrived with a second airplane to help in the work, and Nate soon had a comfortable house well on the way for the Keenans, plus accommodations in the hangar for the two planes. He installed a hydroelectric plant down by the river behind his house to furnish electricity for the establishment.

They were now set up to operate with the greatest efficiency; jungle stations were all being supplied, and Nate and Marj began to ask God in what new way they might forward His work in the Ecuadorian jungle.

Nate, despite the unceasing load of responsibility that weighed on him, had never forgotten that the Auca Indians lived only some sixty air miles from Shell Mera. Shortly after arriving in South America Nate had written home: "Not long ago we talked with another missionary who is longing to reach a tribe of killers, the Aucas. Few white persons have contacted them in a friendly way and lived to tell about it. We expect the airplane to play an essential part in reaching these people with the Gospel." Nate used his plane to make an occasional survey flight over Auca territory, but not much was located on any of the flights—only a house or two which had been abandoned. He was beginning to wonder where they were. Then one day in July, 1954, the jungle grapevine carried the news that there had been another Auca killing and this time Nate became personally involved. He wrote home his own account of what happened:

"Yesterday I landed at Villano, about 45 miles west of here. Just after I got on the ground a runner came up and told me of an Auca raid. Later two Quichua survivors arrived at the airstrip. The woman was being carried on a bamboo stretcher and had a serious-looking lance puncture under the armpit. They told us that the lance broke off in the wound. Her attacker was going to jab her again but she grabbed the end of the lance and hung on to save her life. She is about six or seven months pregnant. The man arrived under his own power although considerably crippled up with chest punctures, a hole all the way through one thigh and a hole through his hand where he had apparently tried to stop one of the deadly shafts. We loaded the two patients onto the plane. Once in the air I told Marj what had taken place so that when we arrived here in Shell Mera she had cots set up and, with another woman helping, the Indians got the best care that local facilities would permit.

"We can't talk directly to our patients but our hired couple speak Quichua and converse easily with them. Last night our hired man read the Bible to them in Spanish, interpreting into Quichua as he went along. They had never heard of the Bible. Apparently the truth had not yet found its mark because this morning the man asked if I couldn't fly back out there in the plane and kill at least one of the Aucas for him. Again the hired man explained that we were not interested in taking life but rather in saving it through the Lord Jesus Christ."

Greatly as this incident intensified Nate's sense of urgency about reaching the Aucas, there were also other tribes whose ignorance of the Gospel offered a spiritual challenge to missionaries. In 1954 came an unusual opportunity for Nate to help push deeper into the dark reaches of the jungle. One of the key figures in this new page of missionary history was Roger Youderian.

#### **CHAPTER 6 Missionary to the Head-Shrinking Jivaros**

At Macuma, a mission station in the southern jungle served by the little yellow plane, lived Roger Youderian, his wife, Barbara, and their two children, Bethy and Jerry. Macuma, run since 1945 by Frank Drown, is reminiscent of a busy farm in the United States. As the plane comes in, chickens scatter off the airstrip, while cows continue chewing their cud undisturbed. Buildings are made, not of split bamboo, but of sturdy wooden planks, and an atmosphere of stability and permanence pervades the compound. Macuma is located in Jivaro territory. The Jivaros, whose lives are punctuated by fierce interfamily feuds, are famous the world over for their custom of shrinking human heads. They live throughout seven thousand square miles in the

southern part of the jungle, independent of the white man who has nominally ruled their country for four hundred years.

Roger, tall and thin, with a shock of black hair, had been born on January 21, 1924, on a ranch near Sumatra, Montana, the seventh child of a ranching family. From his mother he received a devoted and thorough Christian training. Roger had been an active youngster, and on the way to becoming a good pianist, when polio struck him at the age of nine. This crippled him so that he not only lost his musical touch but for the rest of his life walked and ran like an old man.

In high school in Lewistown, Montana, he overcame the effects of polio sufficiently to play basketball. From high school, Roger went to Montana State College with three scholarships. He planned to become a teacher in agriculture. He was chosen the outstanding freshman of his year in 1942 and worked during the following summer drawing maps of farms around Lewistown that are still used by the Federal Land Bank. In October, 1943, Roger enlisted in the Army, eventually becoming a paratrooper. He was stationed in England where he became assistant to Army Chaplain Paschal Fowlkes, who wrote to Roger's parents: "Christian work in the Army is not greatly different from Christian work outside, in that the leader must learn to depend on a comparatively small number to carry the load and give inspiration to others. I thought you would be proud and happy to know that I count Roger one of those 'strong pillars.' " During this time in England, Roger's faith was deepened and strengthened and in December, 1944, we find him writing to his mother:

"The happiest day of my life was the day I accepted Jesus Christ as my Savior for the remission of my sins, duly repented for, and with God's help I hope and pray for the faith and strength to glorify our Father through my daily living as a witness and follower of Christ. Searching the Scriptures is my greatest source of hope and inspiration, having yet to learn the full power of prayer. I used to say, 'This is a great world.' With this new faith, this feeling has increased a thousandfold and I fairly ache within from happiness and rejoicing in sharing God's manifold blessing which He gives to this world with Infinite mercy and grace."

Roger survived the Rhine jump of 1944 and was decorated for action in the Battle of the Bulge. The idea of dedicating his life totally and completely to the Lord was taking root in Roger's mind and in August, 1945, he wrote from Berlin: "I've a secret to tell you, Mother, in this more than anything in the world I want the action to precede the announcement. Ever since I accepted Christ as my personal Saviour last fall and wanted to follow Him and do the will of the Lord, I've felt the call to either missionary, social, or ministerial work after my release from the service. Can't say now what the calling will be but I want to be a witness for Him and live following Him every second of my life."

Roger returned to Montana in January, 1946, and during that winter his conviction that he had been called to the mission field was confirmed. He enrolled in the College of Liberal Arts at Northwestern Schools in Minneapolis, where he met Barbara Orton, a quiet, fair haired girl who was also studying Christian Education with the mission field in mind. She came from a Baptist family in Lansing, Michigan, and all her childhood she had heard of mission work, listened to missionaries speak at her

church, and met them in her home. "I believe that the Lord just spoke to me, while I was a child," she says now, "and made me feel that that was what I should do." In September, 1950, Barbara and Roger enrolled in the missionary medicine course at Northwestern Schools. All winter they sat next to each other in a little classroom with nine other students, learning how to set bones, deliver a baby, give injections. They were engaged on Easter Day, 1951, and married in September. They were accepted as candidates by the Gospel Missionary Union, a nondenominational board, and left immediately for six months' probation work in Kansas City. Here they had Spanish classes, learned how to approach some of the practical problems of a mission station, took turns leading Sunday services, and worked with groups of children from the city slums.

In January, 1953, they set out with six-month-old Beth Elaine for Ecuador. After a period of Spanish study in Shell Mera, the Youderians went to Macuma. Frank and Marie Drown, senior missionaries at the Macuma station, had come to Ecuador eight years before from the farm country of Iowa. It was through letters written back to the States by Marie that Roger became interested in working with the Jivaros.

Once settled on the station to which God had sent them, Roger and Barbara plunged into a study of the Jivaro language and were soon able to help in the development of a method of teaching the Jivaros to read and write their own language. Roger made little pen-and-ink drawings of familiar sights—a sloth hanging upside down on a branch, a blow gun, a lizard lazing on a tree trunk—and next to the drawing he printed the sound of the Jivaro words.

Although Roger had come to preach the Gospel there is much a missionary must accomplish and learn before he can expect to make successful contact with a primitive tribe. And even after he has mastered the language, built himself a home, gained the confidence of the Indian, he still has to spend a large amount of time in what is best described as maintenance. The jungle grows with incredible speed and therefore has to be kept at bay by the constant use of the machete. The generators that are used for current at the bigger stations break down with irritating frequency, roofs leak in the hard tropical rain, and the only person who can cope with all this is the missionary himself. Roger's skill as a carpenter and his pleasure in this kind of work stood him in good stead when he first came to Macuma. Barbara wrote: "Roj is in his glory in Macuma; they have two men sawing boards, two fellows are planing, two are grooving, two more sawing and planing 2 by 4's. Roj has his power saw going and they have poured pillars to set the house on. Roj has planted 74 tomato plants from the seeds he got from the station in Costa Rica."

It was not to do construction work, however, that Roj had left his home. Soon he was driving himself to reach the Jivaro Indians with the Gospel. A fiercely independent people, the Jivaros combine warlike hostility and a boisterous sense of humor. "All they do is laugh and spit," said one missionary in describing them. They seem to laugh with little provocation, and have a way of punctuating their conversation by spitting through the second and third finger with an explosive sound. Like the Quichua, the Jivaro never tires of pressing his face to the screen of the missionary's window, watching all that goes on inside. Roj became accustomed to this after a short time, though he found

their sotto voce comments and sudden outbursts of smothered giggles upsetting at first.

Wearing shorts, a sweat shirt, cotton cap, and canvas leggings and sneakers, Roger spent much of his time visiting Jivaro houses. He followed the twisting and exhausting jungle trails, more often than not knee-deep in mud. He might pause sometimes, arrested by an indescribably sweet fragrance, sweeter than orange blossom, but because of the forest, he would be unable to locate the source. The most striking flowers are found high up in the treetops, nearly smothered by the ubiquitous green foliage. He would also have to be on his guard against the most dangerous of jungle fauna, the snakes. Protective coloring renders many varieties almost impossible to detect. The tiny viper may lie in the center of the path, but the dappled pattern of its skin so blends with the pattern of sunlight on fallen leaves that the traveler seldom sees it. The bushmaster carries enough poison in his sacs to kill one hundred men. The coral snake, whose poison attacks the central nervous system and causes death without previous symptoms in twenty-four to forty-eight hours, is one of the smaller species, and therefore more difficult to see. Suddenly, the forest path would end and Roger would step into a clearing, his eyes blinded by direct sunlight after the twilight zone of the jungle. Each Jivaro house stands in its own clearing. It is oblong-shaped, a narrow slit about five feet high at either end serving as window and door, and covered with a palm-thatched roof of pointed leaves whose fringe almost touches the ground.

Strict rules of etiquette govern the behavior of the Jivaro host and the visitor who enters his clearing. A formal greeting,

which may take ten or fifteen minutes, is proper. It is a series of utterances which may go something like this:

"I have come."

"You've come?"

"Yes, I've come to your house."

"You have come well."

Rol learned that no matter how many people are present, the newcomer goes through this dialogue with each one.

Bending his head to get his five feet eleven inches through the slit, he would enter the murky interior through which he could just barely see the dim figures of women moving about at the far end of the house, trailed by several little naked children. Hard-packed earth serves as a floor in these houses and small fires glow at intervals down the long thirty-foot interior, the smoke creating an acrid odor and adding to the lack of visibility. The Jivaro house is strictly divided between the men's section, the front part, known as the tangamash-somewhat the equivalent of the small-town front porch, a place where men can sit and gossip for hours on end-and the back part of the house, which is exclusively for the use of women. The women wear a long piece of cloth that hangs down straight to the knees, the two ends tied at one shoulder. The men are bare-chested but wear a cloth tied around their waists. Like the Quichuas, the Jivaros have long, straight black hair. It hangs loosely around the women's faces, little attempt being made at any kind of coiffure. The men, as befitting their position as superior beings, go in for

an elaborate hair-do. The waist-long hair is combed and then dressed in bright red, yellow, or blue tropical bird feathers.

Roger would be invited to sit down on a bench alongside the wall, and facing him, on a low stool, sat the head of the house. If the man were trying to impress his visitor with his position, he would go through an elaborate charade for the first five minutes before he permitted conversation to begin. One of his two or three wives would bring him a bowl of water, from which he took a mouthful but not to swallow. He spat it out over his hands and then washed his face with his wet hands. After that he combed his hair slowly and deliberately. The entire performance was carried through wordlessly and with dignity and deliberation. He would then be served his chicha, the bowl offered to his guest and conversation begun. Thus Roger spent many hours talking to the Jivaros in their houses, slowly acquiring their language, absorbing their way of life, and above all, telling them the story of Jesus.

Among the Jivaros, witchcraft and sorcery, hate and murder, take deep roots early in life. Children as they fall asleep at night are taught to repeat a list of names of those they must learn to hate. Writing of the tribe, Nate said: "They aren't cruel except that they are made that way by the religion of fear and evil spirits with which they hope somehow to cope with their sin problem. For instance, a witch visited the Macuma Indians a couple of months ago. He was from another section of the forests. For some reason or other he got mad and cursed a certain woman. Usually Jivaro difficulties are over women, who are soulless possessions of the man and are frequently stolen or traded in business deals. At any rate, the woman that had been cursed died within twenty-four hours. Her husband, brothers,

and father then felt duty bound to avenge her blood because the witch was as guilty as if he had shot her outright. They went over to the other tribe and brutally killed the witch and another fellow. The thing is a couple of months old now so life goes on as usual but one of these days there will be another killing. It's routine in the Jivaria. There's no end to the killings. The miserable part is that to pay off these debts, as they call them, they don't necessarily have to kill the very murderer himself-any relative will do. Their consequent fear determines even the construction of their houses which are very much like military fortresses. They often put traps in the trails for their suspected enemies. Not long ago one missionary in the Jivaria was out doing visitation work in the jungles. His barefoot carrier was in front and as they approached a Jivaro clearing, he pulled up to a sudden, painful halt. A needle-sharp palm wood spike was sticking out of the top of his bloody foot."

These were the people with whom Roger had lived for over a year. He had learned their language on the Macuma station, and helped make up primers for the literacy program. At times the atmosphere of vengeance and murder affected Roger deeply, but with typical energy he kept driving ahead. Nate Saint once said of him: "Roj is one of the few missionaries I know who display a real sense of urgency in the task of winning souls."

Now this sense of urgency was prompting Roger to consider making a move. Knowing that Frank Drown could carry on the work of this established station alone, Roj began to pray for a wider sphere of service, as the Apostle Paul wrote: "[It is] my ambition to preach the Gospel, not where Christ has already been named, lest I build on another man's foundation."

## **CHAPTER 7 Breaking Jungle Barriers**

Among the tribes where Christ had not yet been named were the Atshuaras, first cousins of the Jivaros but their deadly enemies. Roger prayed often for an opening in this group and talked it over with Nate, who had shared his concern for some time. Frank and another missionary had tried to contact them five years before. On that occasion, Frank and his colleague had almost reached the house of the chief when they were met by a boy carrying a verbal message: "If you do not turn around at once, you will be killed." The reputation of the chief was such that there was no doubt about the accuracy of the message. The missionaries turned around.

Roger finally decided to move closer to the Atshuaras. On June 5, 1954, he left Macuma and traveled southeast two days on foot to a place called Wambimi, where the Shell Oil Company had abandoned an airstrip and a few dilapidated houses.

"This location is particularly important as a possible doorway [to the Atshuaras]," he wrote. "It was marvelous how the Lord worked for us in preparing this outstation. He enabled us to erect a new building 20 by 60 feet, with a permanent roof to augment the small houses already available on the spot. He protected us in those eleven days from snakes (1 stepped on one), scorpions, tarantulas, injury, complications from nails, from roofs caving in while dismantling old buildings, et cetera."