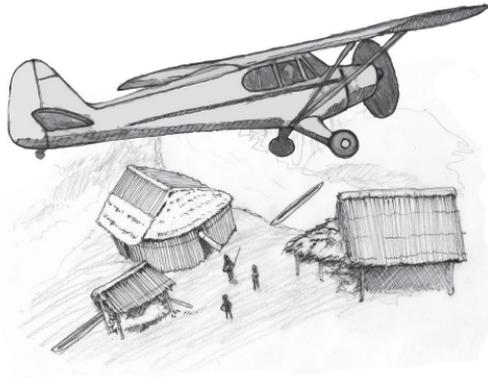


A Daring Venture



In the thick rainforest, hidden from the world, lived a tribe of Indians known as the Huaorani. The Huaorani were very violent. In fact, even their headhunting neighbours, the Jivaro tribe, were afraid of them.

In 1955, four missionaries from the United States felt called by God to preach the gospel to the Huaorani. One of these missionaries was Nate Saint. He was thirty-two years old and a

Missionary Stories from Around the World

pilot. Having learned to fly in high school, Nate flew during World War II. Now, he had joined the Missionary Aviation Fellowship and it was his job to fly medicine, mail, and other supplies to missionaries.

By scouting the area in his plane, Nate discovered a Huaorani settlement only fifteen minutes from the mission station. Nate and three other missionaries began to plan a way to reach the Huaorani. It would be very secretive because if the outside world found out and tried to gain access to the tribe, it would ruin everything. The outsiders would be killed and the missionaries would never be able to contact the natives. As it was, the only person who could help them was a Huaorani girl who had left the tribe and was living with Nate's sister, Rachel.

Nate found that if he flew over the Huaorani village in a tight circle, he could then lower

A Daring Adventure

gifts and keep them almost perfectly still until the natives had taken the gifts. Then on the fourth night, the missionaries spoke to the Huaorani through a loudspeaker system. It was not long until the natives began bringing gifts to the missionaries – parrots, cooked fish, and wooden combs.

It surely did seem like a real friendship was forming between the Huaorani and the missionaries.

Finally, Nate found a place where he could safely land the small plane. It was a long, sandy beach by the Huaorani village. He would land and leave gifts as a sign of friendship.

One day, Nate landed the plane and along with four other missionaries, made camp. At first, the Huaorani seemed very frightened. Nate flew the plane over their village several times and dropped gifts, then landed again.

Missionary Stories from Around the World

Then one man, a woman, and a girl came to their camp. It was Friday afternoon and the visit seemed friendly, but after a few hours they suddenly got up and hurried away. The next day, no one came at all. Nate flew over the village, dropping gifts, which seemed to take away their fears.

However, on the afternoon of January 8, 1956, spears suddenly began to fly and all the missionaries were killed.

There had been a lookout in a tree house and he had sensed no danger, so the attack had come as a complete surprise. More than twenty pilots from the United States immediately offered to come and take Nate's place.

Much later, one of the Huaorani explained why he had helped murder the missionaries. He said they could not understand why white men wanted to be friends, so they became suspicious.

A Daring Adventure

They did not know how, but in some way they believed it was all a trap. After the killings, they realized their mistake, but of course it was too late. A search party found the missionaries the next day, but there were no signs of a struggle. That is how they knew the attack had been a surprise to the missionaries.

Nate Saint was born in 1923 and always loved to fly. He was martyred in 1956 on January 8, a Sunday afternoon, and was only thirty-three years old.

All the men were buried at the campsite where they had given their lives trying to bring the message of salvation to the tribe of savages.

Why did Nate Saint have to die such an awful death when he was doing something so good and noble? Did it make any kind of sense? We will find out in the next story.

“Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints” (Psalm 116:15).

Living with the Huaorani



Jim Elliot was one of the five missionaries who was speared to death by the Huaorani tribe. As a tribe they were violent and even inspired fear in the other local tribes people. Some of the other tribes thought they were cannibals.

Jim's wife, Elisabeth, even in her sorrow over her husband's death, loved the Huaorani just because Jim loved them. However, should she

Missionary Stories from Around the World

risk her life and that of her tiny child, Valerie, to try to carry on the work of trying to reach this tribe with the gospel? She had to be sure that she was following God's will.

She and Jim had been working among the Quichua Indians in a place called Shandia, in Ecuador, for a while. However, it was when she was invited to the home of some friends, that God gave her the answer. Three Huaorani women appeared and she knew she must work among them, even though the danger would be great.

Elisabeth became friends with two of the women. Their names were Mintaka and Mankamu. After a while, they wanted to take her to their Huaorani village. Friends thought she was crazy even to consider such a thing.

Thinking of her husband, Jim, who had been speared by the savages, she asked the women,

Living with the Huaorani

“Will they kill us? Will they spear us?” She had to be sure for to her, the word “Huaorani” meant death.

The Huaorani women promised they would not kill them. They would explain to their people that the white people were good and could be trusted.

God gave her several Scriptures to comfort her. One was, *“I do not fear what man can do unto me. The Lord is on my side to help me.”*

It was discouraging, though, when they heard that a Quichua man named Honorio had just been speared by the Huaorani. He had eighteen spears in his body and his dog had three.

However, God promised to protect them. They started out, three-year-old Valerie, Rachel Saint (Nate’s sister), Elisabeth, and their carriers. Valerie was carried in a little wooden chair. The last of the journey was made by canoe and when

Missionary Stories from Around the World

they reached what was called the strong city, they saw people who wore no clothes. Their hair was cut straight across the forehead but long in the back. Their eyebrows had been plucked or shaved off. They were now in a dangerous place, but they were in the hands of God. He would not fail them.

The houses were only poles with leaf roofs and no walls. The Quichua, who had come with them, made Rachel and Elisabeth tables to work on since it was their goal to put the Huaorani language on paper. They even gave Elisabeth a nickname – Gikair – meaning “woodpecker.” There was no furniture other than the table and Valerie’s bed made from bamboo. Elisabeth slept in a hammock. This she could use as a bed, chair, or stool.

Each house had a fire going twenty-four hours a day. The Huaorani slept with their

Living with the Huaorani

feet near the fire, for the nights were chilly. You could even cook on the fires from your hammock, without ever getting up.

In the mornings, the men would go out hunting with their blowguns and spears. They hunted monkeys, squirrels, toucans, and parrots. Fish was also a great part of their diet. They had no stools but squatted and worked from the ground. They ate huge meals of cooked fish, plantain (a plant with leaves and tiny green flowers) and manioc (root vegetable). To smoke fish, they would collect green sticks and place them over the fire. Then they would put the fish on them, covering them with green leaves. When they cooked a monkey, they ate the tail, head, eyes, ears, and brain. A certain type of squirrel too was completely eaten, especially the stomach and whatever was in it.

Missionary Stories from Around the World

Every spare moment was given to studying the language, trying to find ways to form it and then transform it into words. Sometimes, the backs of the white women hurt from sitting without support. Only little Valerie was totally happy and content. She had her bed, her doll, and its blanket. The Huaorani loved her and gave her lots of attention.

In return, she shared with the Huaorani her picture books, crayons and colouring books, and even the grown-up natives loved to colour. Valerie loved the jungle, her Indian playmates, and she never missed her toys.

They lived with the Huaorani for two years. Elisabeth got some of the language down on paper. Today, many of the Huaorani have accepted Christ and are now telling others about their wonderful Savior and Lord.

Living with the Huaorani

“So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please ...” (Isaiah 55:11).