

RACHEL SAINT

Rachel Saint was born Jan. 2, 1914, and died Nov. 11, 1994. She wanted to be buried in the wet soil of the Amazon rain forest where she had spent half of her life. Her home was a mere hut in the village of Tonampade, Ecuador. Her grave is only a few steps away from that hut.

Rachel was an only daughter but had 7 brothers. Her father jokingly remarked "I have 7 sons and everyone of them has a sister". As a young girl she was befriended by a wealthy woman named Parmalee. Since Mrs. Parmalee had no children, she wanted to think of Rachel as her daughter and took her on a tour of Great Britain to celebrate her 18th birthday.

On the way back Mrs. Parmalee made a startling proposal. If Rachel would promise to take care of her during her declining years, she would be made the heir of her vast fortune. After a sleepless night God gave Rachel a vision as she stood on the deck and faced the sunrise. It was a vision of brown skinned people in the jungle whom she felt called to help.

It was at that time Rachel Saint made the decision to give up the things she could not keep, to gain the things she could not lose.

Her first missionary assignment was in Peru. She and another woman missionary were working with the fierce head-hunting tribe known as Shapras. These godly women were reducing their language to writing so this Stone Age tribe could some day have the Word of God in their native tongue. One day she asked the Chief Tariri why he had allowed them to live in his village. He replied: "If two men had come I would have killed them and taken their heads. If a man and a woman had come I would have speared him and taken her to be my wife. But two women came, calling me brother, what could I do but protect them and allow them to live among us." These words would later play a significant role in Rachel's life.

In Feb. 1955 Rachel felt called of God to Ecuador and moved near to the "Aucas" which were perhaps the most violent tribe on earth. On Jan. 8, 1956, men from this tribe killed Rachel's brother, Nate Saint, and four other missionaries. Instead of retaliating against such cruelty, however, God gave Rachel a special love for the Aucas. In 1958, at great personal risk, Rachel and Elizabeth Elliott went to live in the jungle with the Aucas. Rachel's brother Nate had been killed by the Aucas, and Elizabeth's husband Jim also died with hi and the others. After about two years Elizabeth felt called back to America, but Rachel Saint stayed with the Aucas until her death.

The name "Auca" is a derogatory name that means "naked" or "savage". They prefer to be called "Huaorani", which means "The people". Over the years Rachel learned their language and translated the Scriptures into words they could understand.

Interestingly enough, the Huaoranis call the Bible "God's carvings". Even though these Stone Age people were illiterate, they devised a way of marking a trail with their own unique signature. This enabled them to know whom they were following. If you recognized the carvings of your father, for example, you merely followed those carvings until you found him. How simple! How profound". The Huaoranis came to understand that if they wanted to find their Heavenly Father, they also had to follow His Carvings.

Kimmo was one of the men who killed Rachel's brother. He became a believer and a leader in the church. At her funeral he said: "Waengongi Toado ante odomoncaete ante Nemo pongantapa~~~" This means: "~Teaching us to walk God's trail, Star came.~~" The Huaorani gave Rachel the name Nemo, which is their word for "Star".

Rachel always felt blessed to have the privilege of serving these people. Before her death she said: "Isn't it something, that the Lord Jesus would have used someone like me to do his work in this special place"