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HOW SHALL THEY BELIEVE IN HIM
OF WHOM THEY HAVE NOT HEARD?

One evening eight years ago way out in the unreached forests of Ecuador, Dayuma a young indian girl talked to her mother from her hammock as the glowing embers of the warming fire slowly burned out. Her young heart had been shocked and saddened by the sudden spear-killing of her father and brother. Mwipa, the despised and hated leader of the naked savages -an indian who once lived in the same low-roofed thatched house with Dayuma and her family- had made a ruthless attack. Even her baby sister had been killed with a machete before her very eyes, and Dayuma had had enough. On the morrow she would run away... For Akowa, her mother, weary too with the many tribal killings, the discussion just added to her sorrows. "The whites would surely kill you, my child. Now go to sleep." But Dayuma didn't go to sleep. With the dawn she fled through the forest. Today, as far as we know, she is the only speaker of the Warani Auca language outside the borders of the tribe to which there is still no access.

Dayuma is clothed now, the mother of a sweet little boy, her former wild life of the forest being testified to only by her independent spirit and the huge holes in the lobes of her ears, -holes which still show the light of day through them though they have not been used for ear sticks these many years!

Dayuma was curious about the white señoritas who had come to her -flown in so dramatically in a bit, swift airplane with two canoes on the bottom (our JAARS float plane) which roared into their quiet jungle and landed on the river almost in front of the big hacienda which is now her home. Most of all she wondered why one of them wanted to learn the language which she had scarcely spoken for eight years. Perhaps because of her curiosity, she faithfully taught me when the patron released her from her work, and was an excellent informant. Gradually the nouns began to build up in that precious language file, and verb forms for which I had an area of meaning only. We began to understand each other a bit, and Dayuma asked me questions which I want to share with you.

"WHY DO YOU WANT TO LEARN MY LANGUAGE?" - So that I can go to your people and teach them not to kill and to live well." (Language limitations at that time did not permit me to say more.) A wondering look was her only reply. Dayuma has no desire to return.

“WHO SENT YOU?” -(Language work had progressed some. From the Warani legends I had learned sword for the god of creation.) “Our God, the other God, sent me here to learn from you.” A big sentence in Auca for me, and I wondered if Dayuma understood. Her reply reassured me. It must have been your God, she reasoned, for before we came she had been far away with no thought of returning. Way down on the River Curaray, measles, that dread of all indian tribes, had struck. Her husband and tiny baby died, and she too lay dying all alone in the forest. Finally someone brought her word that her little son too had the same often-fatal disease at the Hacienda. Making a supreme effort in her weakness, her mother-heart brought her back up the river and over the long trail to her son. And our God’s great heart had brought her back to us. She arrived a day or two before us.

“WHY DID YOU COME?” -For several months I had been watching for some way to tell Dayuma about God’s Word. Now, in my time of need, the Lord gave it to me. Not long before my brother had parachuted our mail from the MAF plane that frequently passes that way. I showed Dayuma a letter and told her it was from my mother far away. “mbara ndiwamonga” “Mother’s writing”, she said. At last I had found a way to tell her! “So that I can put God’s Writing into your language and teach your people what God has to say to you.”

“WHO TAUGHT YOU?” - (Emphasis on the ‘you’) --- “IS THERE A FLOOR ABOVE THE SKY AND A FLOOR ABOVE THE EARTH?” And a lot of other questions.

“WILL YOU COME BACK?” - The time had come to go, and the hindrances about getting back were many, but with faith in the God who sent me to Dayuma, I replied, “Okayimanta” - “I will come back.” Three months have passed since then. Two of them I was quite ill. There are still hindrances about getting back. Will you pray that the Lord will open the way and give his servant increased strength, the partner of His choice, and ability for the task. Pray too for the unreached Aucas who twice in the last two months have come out of the forest and spear-killed on their borders, that they may hear of Him,

“Whose we are and whom we serve” ,

Rachel Saint

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