

October 2, 1958

Dear Ones,

Where to begin - with such fantastic developments that began just a week ago today. We have been so thrilled around here. I'm glad some of you heard the Back Home Hour, but I'll fill in the details in this letter.

The Lord's wars are simply marvelous. In Sept. Dayuma and her two aunts (those two with whom Betty Elliott has been living - we'll call them M. and M.) went back to their Auca tribe, not knowing what fate they would meet. Dayuma left her little boy with Rachel, hoping of course to return sometime. After two flights over the tribe and not seeing any of the women Betty concluded that they had met death. Spirits were low and the next step uncertain.

Then the Tidmarshes who occupy the McCully's station (Arajuno) had to come up to Quito for dental work and to make a long story short Marge Saint and Betty Elliott ended up staying at Arajuno alone. Naturally we were all concerned. Last Thurs. morning a Quechua Indian came and casually remarked to Betty that the Aucas were coming! So what did Marge and Betty do but go down the trail to meet them - not knowing how many or if men or women or what. They met them just a ways beyond the airstrip. There were Dayuma, her two aunts, the Quechua woman whose husband had been killed and she captured 9 mos. ago, two other women, three little girls and two boys. One correction, the Quechua woman had stayed with her parents downstream.

They seemed perfectly at ease and Marge says she felt so at peace with them, felt no fear whatsoever. Dayuma assured them that they had not been followed by any men. She said that all but about two of them were sick and besides that, they were building a house for Betty! This was tremendous news.

Betty had to have her usual class that afternoon with the Quechuas and Marge had to spend time at the radio, so they had to do something with the Aucas, realizing that the nearby priest would pay any price to get even one of them. So they put them in an old building and put Dayuma in charge. When the Quechuas would come around (of course they knew of the Aucas coming via the jungle grapevine) Dayuma would place herself in the doorway and say "If you want to see an Auca, look at me, I'm one!" Finally though Betty let them five by five to stand and stare and thus satisfied their curiosity.

That night they let them sleep on the living room rug. Dayuma told Rachel Saint (who had immediately been flown in from her Sycliffe base) that she wanted to sleep on a sheet like Rachel! She did spend the night on a sleeping bag. But what can one expect from a girl who has seen the world now like Dayuma has. The Aucas had quite a time settling down, giggling etc. Finally Dayuma told them forcefully to "Shut up and go to sleep!.. So they did. Guess Dayuma really feels her oats, being of course the translator and go-between.

Then Betty and Marge and Rachel racked their brain for all the questions that had been in their minds since the men were killed. Here are some of the answers. "George," the Auca who took the ride in the airplane with Nate, seems to have been the one responsible for the deaths. He went back to the tribe and told some of the men that the five men were going to eat them and must be killed. Just how many took part in the killing is not yet known-they have a poor sense of numbers. And Marge said that Dayuma's countenance took on another look whenever she was asked anything about themen. When the old chief heard of the killing, he wept, saying why did you kill those men, they were our friends. They also say they found Ed's body and buried it. They kept none of the men's possessions but threw them all in the river.

The Quechua captive sent word with Dayuma to tell Betty that if Betty wanted to go into the tribe, she would be glad to go back with her. The Aucas treated her very well, molested her in no way during all these nine months. Betty doubts though that her folks would let her return.

The Aucas claim they had never been anywhere near Arajuno (contrary to everyone's belief) because when they looked to see where the plane went, it always went too far away "into the blue." Once one even went to a high hill and climbed a tree to see and said for sure that they could never go where the plane went. They also say there is another tribe a good distance down the river who are their bitter enemies. They claim it is this tribe that did the killings of the Shell oil men and other Quechua Indians etc. Quien sabe?

Betty will be going into the tribe perhaps this week-end. As you read this she will probably be in the tribe. Rachel will go with her if she gets an OK from Dr. Townsend of Wycliffe. Betty will go alone if Rachel does not get permission. She will take Valerie with her. Marge tried to persuade her to let her take her back to Quito, but Betty said, "Where I go, Valerie goes." And it may be that Valerie will help the situation although I know there goes through Betty's mind- what will happen to Valerie if something happens to me.

The Aucas women want to go back and Dayuma is going to take her little boy in so he can see his grandmother. Then she wants to put him in school and herself return to the tribe. She said that only one couple showed any interest when she told them about the Lord. She also invited the whole tribe (which they estimate to be only about 50) to come out to Arajuno to live. She took her mother some medicine, but had to take some it herself before her mother would eat it.

Some felt that Betty should wait until the women had returned and had come back out once more to see if the tribe really wanted. But Betty's reasoning is this: If Dayuma, or rather since Dayuma has said that I would come in, and I don't come, then it may mean they would kill Dayuma. It seems the Aucas have an unbreakable code of something that holds anyone to their word regardless. Betty fully realizes the danger. Marge asked her what she felt was the most dangerous aspect of the whole thing and Betty answered: "The lances." Marge says she has a real desire to go with Betty were it not for her children, one now sick and two in school. She does not feel she should leave them. Marge says further that when she thinks of Betty and Rachel down there now at Arajuno, it makes her scared to think of it, but where she was there herself, all fear was gone. The Lord gives strength when we need it.

The Geodetic Survey here in Quito gave three walkie talkie sets to the operation-one for the plane, one for Arajuno and one for Betty. But our radio men are working and worked all night last night to complete a 3 pound transistor set for Betty to carry and thus save 7 pounds of weight. Betty does not know if the Auca women will condescend to carry any of her gear and of course no Quechua Indian will go any farther than the Curaray River, so what goes in will have to be carried by Betty and Aucas. Betty said she thinks she is going to line up her stuff according to priority and load it on them until they squawk and what gets left, gets left. Of course the airplane will be able to let things down in the bucket drop, which will help. If will be something to get little Valerie there-it will be about a three day trek over very rough terrain.

So pray for Betty and Rachel and the whole affair. This seems to be the break the world has been praying for. Several times now when all hope had been dashed to the rocks, the Lord has raised our hopes. Of course Betty's going is just a beginning. I'm sure she will think through every action while she is in there.

Some of you may have read of a Canadian psychologist who went into the tribe. He had been down here shortly after the death of themen. Abe talked with him several times to dissuade him. He tried to convince the missionaries in the jungle that he was an evangelical. It turned out he was a Catholic, but the Catholic's here would have none of his plan. So he went on his own. The Auca women say he was killed in the tribe-that he seemed crazy shot all night long, wouldn't allow even children to approach him, so they waited until he was out of ammunition and killed him with rocks and lances.

One amusing sidelight: As Betty and Marge approached the Aucas in the train, they heard in the distance someone singing "Jesus Loves Me" in an Auca accent-none other than Dayuma. She was singing it in English. Won't it be a great day when the others can really sing it too. Those that know Dayuma best say there is no doubt that she is born-again. Well, this is the jist of what took place.

From Marjorie Jones Whitaker '44 to her mother Mrs. Blanche S. Jones