



Bulletin of Wheaton College

The Salt of the Earth

by PRESIDENT V. RAYMOND EDMAN

President Edman examines Auca spears with Rene Padilla and Louis Rodriguez, students from Ecuador.

Table salt, just plain sodium chloride, NaCl to the chemist, is to us a very common commodity; and yet we remember upon a moment's reflection that it is indispensable to human life. We, who take civilization for granted, have no comprehension of the dire urgency on the part of primitive peoples to find sources of salt in areas where it is very scarce.

Just as salt is an absolute necessity for human life, so is "the salt of the earth" for spiritual life. The Lord Jesus spoke of those who believed on Him as, "My witnesses," and said, "Ye are the salt of the earth." Salt has cleansing, healing, sustaining qualities, and also the faculty of making us thirsty. Thus is the Christian to be in this world—an influence for cleansing, preserving, and making others thirsty for the Saviour.

Because of its scarcity in the forest lands of eastern Ecuador, salt is one of the gods of the Aucas. To Ecuadorians, "Auca" is an expression most terrible and dreadful, because it represents the most desperate and dreaded aborigines of the jungle.

These fierce and fearsome dwellers of the dark forest do not call themselves "Auca," but are known as such by the Indians who live on the upper reaches of the great rivers that flow through the foothills of the eastern Andes to the Amazon. No one knows what the Aucas call themselves because almost nothing is known about them. They are the most desperate and dreaded killers of the jungle. From what little has been seen of them they are physically well proportioned, naked except for paint they concoct from plants and clay. Their only adornment consists of two feathers stuck in the nose, which practice is begun upon little children.

The Aucas are distinctly a stone-age people. They fear and hate every stranger, and live entirely by fishing, hunting, and killing. When they have the advantage of superior forces they raid the settlements of other Indians; and after killing all the men, take the women and children as their slaves. When confronted by an enemy of superior power they flee into the jungle and disappear like a phantasma.

In their primitive state they are without modern weapons of any kind, but use lances, also bows and arrows. The warriors become very skillful in throwing these spears, and have less adept companions as carriers of additional lances. Their aim is always the abdomen of their enemy, or their friend as the case may be, whom they desire to kill.

So great is their fear and hatred of strangers that they have been known even to kill a stray dog that ventured into their area. The Yumbo and Jivaro Indians, who live closer to civilization, have the greatest dread of the Aucas, and will not venture into any region where they are believed to be lurking.

Dr. and Mrs. Reuben E. Larson, with Clarence Jones, co-founders of radio station HCJB in Quito, were pioneer missionaries a generation ago on the upper stretches of the Napo River in the general vicinity where the McCullys, Elliots, and Flemings settled in recent years. On one occasion some of the Indians friendly to the Larsons crossed the Napo River without knowing the Aucas were in the neighborhood, and all were murdered with Auca lances. Three of those spears, pictured above, serve as mute evidence of the ferocity and savagery of the Aucas. On a

later occasion some footprints were observed on the sandbar near the mission station, and a tracing of them was made. "That is the closest we ever got to the Aucas," wrote Mrs. Larson.

All down the years of missionary endeavor in the forest lands of eastern Ecuador there has been the outreach of missionary hearts to bring the Gospel to the Aucas, but until the last few months no contact with them has been possible. The first word we had about any such possibility came in a letter at Christmas-time from Rachel Saint, Nate's older sister, and one of the translators with the Summer Institute of Linguistics (Wycliffe). Friend wife and I were deeply stirred by the word that a captive girl had escaped from the Aucas and was teaching the missionaries what few words she knew in the language of that savage people. Was the day dawning at last that the Aucas, worshippers of salt, whose hearts are filled with implacable hatred for all "who eat their god," also were to hear the Gospel of the grace of God in the Lord Jesus Christ?

Three Wheaton lads, Ed McCully, Jim Elliot, and Nate Saint, along with two other stalwart servants of the Lord Jesus, Roger Youderian and Pete Fleming, were indeed the salt of the earth. From happy homes and bright prospect of great usefulness in God's service in the homeland, they obeyed the deep inner urge by the Lord of the Harvest to go to the jungle Indians of Ecuador who still sit in darkness and the shadow of death. For six years Nate has been flying over jungle and mountains for Missionary Aviation Fellowship, with headquarters at Shell Mera; and later Jim and Betty Elliot became established at Shandia, and Ed and Marilou McCully at Arajuno, the farthest outposts of the Light in that heathen darkness.

Ed McCully came to Wheaton from a godly home in Milwaukee and from service in the Navy to be a Business Administration major. Humble and yet very capable, quiet-spoken and always very cheerful, he became outstanding as a varsity end on a championship football team under Coach Chrouser, and a leading track star under the coaching of Gil Dodds. For years his record of 22:3 stood in the College 220-yard dash; and in competition at other colleges his time was even faster. By sheer ability and sportsmanship he was a member of championship relay teams that competed in the outstanding track meets in the Middle West as well as on the East Coast.

Ed loved music, and often blessed our hearts by a trombone solo. He had little training in the field of Speech, and yet he took first honors in national competition in oratory sponsored by the Hearst newspapers. By his classmates he was selected their president, and was a magnificent leader of the Class of 1949.

He believed that the Lord would have him take up the practice of law, and after grad-



Ed McCully played end on Wheaton's championship football team.

COVER PICTURE: Ed McCully winning 220 yard dash in 1949.

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Jim Elliott played soccer and was an outstanding wrestler.

One day he knocked at the door of my study and said, "Dad, could I have a few moments of your time?" I said, "You sure can." He came in and this is what I heard him say, "I have been battling with the Lord for the last three weeks, but last night I surrendered my life to Him and I'm not going back to law school. I am turning my life over to the Lord Jesus to allow Him to use me anywhere He sees fit." I said, "Ed, God can use a Christian lawyer, but I am thankful that you have made this decision, and I would not put a straw in your way. I will pray that you will be led of the Lord in all that lies before you."

To prepare for missionary work Ed, along with his college pal, Jim Elliot, started a work among boys in Chester, Illinois. The blessing of the Highest rested upon their testimony in services and over the radio, in boys' groups and in a tent campaign. Then he went to the Bible Institute of Los Angeles to take an intensive medical missionary course to prepare him for pioneer work among the jungle Indians of Ecuador. The Lord provided life's companion in Marilou Hobolth of Pontiac, Michigan, a graduate of Moody Bible Institute and an accomplished pianist. Her younger sister, Billy, graduated from Wheaton in 1955 and her brother, Kirk, is a sophomore quarterback on the football squad.

Last spring I was in Quito for a Wheaton gathering while en route to Argentina and Brazil; and was delighted with the word that the missionaries brought about Ed's becoming a master of the Quichua language spoken by the Indians around Arajuno, and of the blessing of the Lord upon his effective testimony for the Saviour. Marilou and he could not get up to the mountains for the Wheaton gathering, but others told me about them. In his last prayer letter dated December 27, 1955, he spoke for himself:

Five Indians obeyed the Lord's commandment in baptism last Sunday. A number of others have made a profession but were not baptized. . . . A good deal of our time here is spent in literacy work among the adults as well as children. Married men and women are learning to read along with their own children and younger brothers and sisters. One unusual pupil is the community's leading witch doctor—a man unusually possessed of demon power and a true child of the devil. Notwithstanding, he is hearing the Word of God daily, and although he seems to grow more bitter and is more openly opposed to the message of God, who knows but that the Spirit of God will choose to soften and bring to repentance his wicked and wretched heart. . . . During the past year, we have been able to preach the name of Jesus in areas where His precious name had not been heard.

Ed McCully was truly the salt of the earth!

So also was Jim Elliot. He came to Wheaton from an earnest Christian home in Portland, Oregon, and was a fellow member of the Class of 1949. How often they stood side by side in Wheaton Chapel to sing God's praises, and sat to hear the devotional message from the Word. Jim was the jolliest of fellows, always cheery with a big smile, and yet always desperately in earnest in the things of God. In Benson Polytechnic High School of Portland, where he majored in architectural drawing and specialized in public speaking, he became known as "Preacher Jim." A classmate of his has written:

I became acquainted with Jim during my Junior year when I joined the Public Speaking Club. . . . It was during this time that I heard a friend of mine referring to Jim as "Preacher"

uation from Wheaton he entered the Law School of Marquette University in Milwaukee. Without doubt he would have been a great leader in that field. As he was about to enter his second term in September 1951, however, he went to his father, T. E. McCully, formerly president of Christian Businessmen's Committee International and now Executive Secretary of that wonderful organization. Theo McCully has shared with me the sacredness of that heart to heart talk of father and son, saying:

Elliot, I was very interested, so I asked him why the "Preacher" label? He answered, not in scorn but in real respect, "Why, man, you ought to hear that guy pray!" He was looked upon with respect and honor because of his consistent testimony.

In Wheaton Jim majored in Greek so as to prepare himself for Bible translation work in some pioneer mission field, and was graduated with highest honors. His last college vacation time was spent in Mexico, and he attended the Summer Institute of Linguistics at the University of Oklahoma to prepare himself for his life's work. He was very active in Gospel team work here on campus, a leader in Foreign Missions Fellowship, and captain of the wrestling team, in which sport he excelled.

When his parents inquired as to his missionary call, to make sure that he knew the mind of the Lord, because there was need of Christian service in this country, he replied:

I do not wonder that you were saddened at the word of my going to the Latins. This is nothing else than what the Lord Jesus warned us of when he told the disciples that they must become so infatuated with the kingdom and in following Him that all other allegiances must become as though they were naught. And He never excluded the family tie. In fact, those loves which we regard as closest, He told us must become as hate in comparison with our desire to uphold His cause. Grieve not, then, if your sons seem to desert you, but rejoice rather. Remember how the psalmist described children? He said that they were an heritage from the Lord and that every man should be happy who had his quiver full of them. What is a quiver full of but arrows? And what are arrows for but to shoot? So with the strong arms of prayer draw the bow-string back, and let them fly—all of them straight at the enemy's hosts!

In his earnest labors among the Quichua-speaking Indians of Shandia, Jim was most careful to teach the Word of God to his Indians. He was like Timothy, to whom the Apostle Paul had written: "The things that thou has heard of me among many witnesses the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also. Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ" (II Timothy 2:2-3).

But in the dark jungle recesses, eastward and downward from Shandia there were Aucas who had never heard the Name by which alone we can be saved. In the last letter written on December 28, 1955, Jim wrote to his parents:

By the time this reaches you Ed and Pete and I and another fellow with the Gospel Missionary Union named Roger will have attempted with Nate a contact with the Aucas. We have prayed and prepared for this for several months. . . . The contact is planned for Friday or Saturday of next week (January 6-7) and we may have to wait longer. I don't have to remind you that these are completely naked savages (I saw the first sign of clothes last week on the gift-drop flight—a g-string) who have never had any contact with white men and only killing contacts with our Indians. They do not have fire except what they make from rubbing sticks on moss. They use bark cloth for carrying babies, sleep in hammocks, steal machetes and axes when they kill our Indians. They have no word for God in their language, only for devils and spirits. I know you will pray. Our orders are "the gospel to every creature."

Jim Elliot was the salt of the earth!

And so is his wife, Betty Howard '48 of Wheaton, daughter of Dr. and Mrs. Philip E. Howard, Jr., Editor of the *Sunday School Times*.

We came to know Betty when first she came to campus. Of course she was "Phil Howard's daughter," and younger sister to the oldest son of the Howards who had come to Wheaton from long army service in Europe during the war. She helped Mrs. Edman in the home, always cheerful and courteous, thoughtful and consistent, with quiet humor that ran deep and rippled in laughter.

Like Jim who became a very close friend of her younger brother, Dave, who also was a wrestling captain in his senior year, Betty majored in Greek. She was active in Boethallian literary society, varsity debate, the student council of which she was vice-president, and served on the staff of the *Record* and also the *Tower*.

Gifted in writing like her father and grandfather before her, Betty had a real future in that area, but her heart was in the mission field. She and Jim knew each other in Wheaton; but to make sure that their interest in each other was not just from themselves they went separately to Ecuador. After language school in Quito they were married in that capital city of the republic on October 8, 1953; and shortly afterward went east-

ward over the mountains into the jungle country.

Betty's heart of utter and implicit devotion to the Savior is best expressed in her own words, written in the poem entitled "Sacrifice," and printed in *Sunday School Times* after her graduation from Wheaton.

Sacrifice? The word is not for me—

Gladly I take my cross to follow Thee.
Could I be loath to yield my meager pittance,
When Thou dost offer Heaven's gold to me?
Let me obey Thee even unto death,
That to the far-flung fields Thy name be told.
Forsaking all? What, Lord, could I forsake
That would not be repaid a thousand-fold?
My life is Thine, Lord; never let me seek
To plan that life for which my Saviour died.
Thine, Lord, is the power to will and do—
That in my body Christ be magnified.
To know the excellency of Christ, my Lord,
What things were gain to me I count but loss;
Teach me the values of eternity—

To choose with Thee the pathway of the Cross.

Betty Howard Elliot, daughter true of Wheaton, is the salt of the earth!

The same I can say of Nate Saint. After three years in the Air Force during the war he came to Wheaton, and of course we knew him right away as "Phil's and Rachel's brother." In his own right he already was an artist, architect, engineer, carpenter, pilot, aircraft engine (and all-around) mechanic, radio technician, photographer, and author. He had served a year in Mexico under Missionary Aviation Fellowship, and came to Wheaton for further preparation in that service.

About him his older brother, Phil '41, wrote from Costa Rica in a statement carried in the *Moody Monthly* for this month of March, 1956:

From taking clocks apart and tinkering with old jalopies it was for him an easy step to small training planes and flying lessons. Planes became as much a part of this "son of the skies" as his two capable hands, or the mop of hair on his head which at times earned him the nickname "Whitey."

From his earliest flying years, his ingenuity and precision became legendary. He was never one to take chances, or to endanger lives. Methodical and meticulous in everything, he gained wide experience in handling small aircraft. . . .

While others were frivolous and carefree, he was quietly moving out for God.

For a while he went to college at Wheaton, but so great was the burden he carried, and so clear was the call of the Holy Spirit that he "graduated" to the mission field, not waiting for a diploma. . . .

How he met and married Marj his faithful and talented wife is another story. Needless to say, this unassuming lad with experience far beyond his years could never have conquered jungle barriers, and the heart-breaking setbacks of pioneer missionary work without the full and enthusiastic support of his wife, who not only acted as nurse, radio monitor, teacher, and mother to three small children, but shared the vision and mission of her radio-minded husband.

Nate's heart can be best understood from his own words, as has been true of Ed, Jim, and Betty. On December 18, 1955, he bared his heart in these words:

We have had a high old time this Christmas! May we who know Christ, hear the cry of the damned, as they hurtle headlong into the Christless night, without ever a chance! May we be moved with compassion, as our Lord was! May we shed tears of repentance for those whom we have failed to bring out of darkness! Beyond the smiling scenes of Bethlehem, may we see the crushing agony of Golgotha. May God give us a new vision of His will concerning the lost, and our responsibility. Would that we could comprehend the lot of these stone-age people, who live in mortal fear of ambush on the jungle trail—those to whom the bark of a gun means sudden, mysterious death—those who think that all the men in the world are killers, like themselves. If God would grant us the vision, the word "sacrifice" would disappear from our lips and thoughts. We would hate the things that now seem dear to us. Our lives would suddenly be too short. We would despise time-robbing distractions and charge the enemy with all our energy in the name of Christ. May God help us to judge by the eternity that separates the Aucas from the comprehension of Christmas and Him Who, "though He was rich, yet for our sakes became poor, so that we, through His poverty might be made rich."

Careful, capable, cheerful, a bond slave of the Lord Jesus Christ, Nate Saint was the salt of the earth!

And, though I did not know them personally as well, I can say the same for the others—Roger and Barbara Youderian with their little Beth Elaine and Jerry Lee; Marjorie Saint with her Cathy, Stephen, and Philip; Marilou McCully with her Stephen and Michael; and Pete and Olive Ainslie Fleming—they too, are the salt of the earth!

What about ourselves? As I face that question I read again Phil Saint's challenge:

As I write, people here on the streets of San Jose are talking of the selflessness and courage of these men. And it is safe to say that throughout all of Latin America millions of those who read newspapers and listen to the radio are stirred to admiration and moved with compassion. Back in the homeland many Christians are taking stock of their lives and re-evaluating their own measure of devotion to Christ.

Somehow the shiny new car sitting in the driveway doesn't seem quite so necessary. Somehow the fancy clothes, so thoughtfully purchased, have lost their appeal. Hours spent sitting comfortably before a television set brings a haunting sense of spiritual delinquency from the more vital tasks of life.

But the work Nate started there at Shell Mera will go on. The Missionary Aviation Fellowship will continue to expand its world-wide ministry. Translators like my sister, Rachel, will push back into the interior regions. Hundreds of young men and women will leap to carry forward the blood-stained banner of the Cross, until the last savage in the last forgotten jungle of earth hears of a Saviour's love and of a salvation paid for by the precious blood poured out on Calvary's brow centuries ago.

Next fall when with Wheatonites from far and near I sit in the new stands being erected at the football field I shall again see in my mind's eye Ed in orange and blue making a fierce and unflinching tackle against the opposition; and then I shall wonder, "Who will venture into Auca darkness for fearless combat with



Nate Saint and family in 1954.

the powers of darkness?" In the spring as I watch eagerly the Wheaton relay teams pass the baton one to another and lead their opponents to the tape I shall wonder, "Who will pick up the torch dropped by Ed, Jim, Nate, Pete, and Roger; and carry it farther into the blackness of Auca night?"

And when in Chapel we sing, "Wonderful Grace of Jesus," I shall be seeing Betty and Jim singing along with Wheatonites of today; and then remember the Aucas who have no song. Heart will be remembering Betty and her little Valerie in their thatched-roofed home in the clearing at Shandia; especially in the hours of the night when the wind and rain swish through swaying palm trees and the night birds send their weird and plaintive call from the jungle fraught with fear and danger.

The Aucas in their brutality, bloodthirstiness, and blindness, still worship their god of salt; but because of the salt of the earth the murderers themselves will be among the first Aucas to murmur the Name in penitence and prayer. Unwittingly, in their savage slaughter of these lads who went to them as constrained by the love of Christ, they have tasted the salt of the earth, and will become thirsty for the Saviour!

God grant that to be soon!