

Sacrifice: “We’ve Made Contact”  
Adapted from *Hero Tales, Volume II*, by Dave and Neta Jackson

*Jim Elliot might have seemed like an ordinary, bright, clean-cut, all-American boy, but his life and service for the Lord proved he was anything but ordinary.*

My wife Elisabeth was worried. “Are you sure this is the right time to contact the Aucas?” she asked me. “What will happen to the work we’ve started with the Quichuas?” Unspoken was the fear all of our missionary wives shared: What if their husbands didn’t come back?

I, Jim Elliot, knew the real question behind my wife’s doubts. I understood that I and the others were taking a big risk. But the Indian Christians we’d already taught could continue the work in Shandia. “I’ve been called,” I told my wife simply.

The plans for meeting the Aucas face-to-face were made carefully, step by step. First we five missionaries would land on a strip of beach on the river nearest “Terminal City,” the largest Auca village. Then we would build a tree house for safety from jungle animals. We would wait for several days, letting the Aucas get used to our presence, before attempting to make contact.

On Tuesday, January 3, 1956, it took pilot Nate Saint five trips to fly in all five of us and our supplies. The landings and take-offs on the beach were tricky, but our worst problem was the flying insects. We got in touch with our wives each day, either by shortwave radio or with notes we sent with Nate in his plane. After a few days of camping on the beach, we began calling Auca phrases of welcome across the river. Surely the Aucas were watching and listening. But would they come?

On Friday, we were finally rewarded. An Auca man and two women appeared on the bank across from us. I waded into the river, using all the Auca phrases I knew, to help lead them safely across. It was an exciting day. We missionaries took pictures of the visit and even took the man, whom we nicknamed “George,” up in the plane for a ride over his village.

Saturday, Nate and Pete flew back to base camp to pick up supplies and report the exciting news. They returned to the beach on Sunday morning. When they landed, Nate radioed back to his wife: “Pray for us! We’re sure we’ll have contact again today! Will radio you again at four-thirty.”

All of the other wives gathered eagerly around their radio. But four-thirty came and went. Nothing. When they still had not heard from the men by Monday morning, they knew something was wrong. A search party made its way to the river camp. Five bodies were found in the river. We had been killed by Auca lances.

The tragic story soon appeared in newspapers around the world. Some people thought the five men were foolish to try to make friends with a savage Indian tribe. “A waste of lives!” they said. But hundreds of young people around the world, inspired by the dedication of Jim Elliot and the others, volunteered to become missionaries in their place. Eventually, Rachel Saint—Nate’s sister—and Elisabeth Elliot lived among the Aucas who had murdered the men. These women learned the Auca language and translated the Bible for them.

A waste? Jim Elliot wouldn’t think so. He knew that Christians are sometimes called by God to “fall to the ground and die,” like seeds, so that good fruit will grow.

*Sacrifice means a willingness to live—or die—for the cause of Christ.*

