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Concepcion, Nuflo de Chavez
Bolivia, South America
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Dear friends in Christ,

I suppose that the best way in which to bring you up-to-date on what God has been doing in San Ramon among the Guildaay Goosode', is to simply go back and take up from where I left off in my August letter to you.

It was a long way back to San Ramon from our missionary conference in Concepcion in August. Not so far in miles as we think of them these days--130 to Santa Cruz by air; 250 to Robore by rail; 130 more to San Ramon by truck. But it took us 10 days of constant travel. When we arrived in the last days of August, we saw that the Indians had been there in our absence. The gifts were gone, and in their stead hung feathers, on painted sticks stuck in the ground, showing the direction they had gone. A little investigation showed us that at least some of them were of the same group we had met in July. Although we could not be sure, we suspected that there may have been a second group. Now there was nothing to do but sit down and wait for their return.

We did not have to wait long. On September 4, as we rested in our hammocks after dinner, there came an unearthly shouting from the woods in the direction of the salt beds; and almost immediately 9 Indians appeared along the far edge of the landing strip. They were unarmed, and continued to call to us, waving their empty hands in the air above their heads. We slowly walked, unarmed, to meet them. At first they were so frightened that they could not talk to us coherently. But gradually their fear passed, and they came with us to camp. We got them seated under a tree while we prepared them a big pot of boiled beans. Uejai, the head captain of the tribe, had sent them to see if we had returned as yet. He had been in the group that visited San Ramon in our absence, and now wanted to return, at my invitation, to talk with us. At dusk, three of them left again to take the word to their village, 7 days to the south but six stayed with us. Three men and three women...the first Guildaay Goosode women who had the courage to present themselves.

While we waited for them to return with their captain, we began nightly meetings with these six. The Holy Spirit really worked in their hearts, and their interest in the things of God grew daily. Their number soon increased to 18 when another small group, coming for salt, saw the trails and came to investigate. This group was commanded by one of the sub-captains who proved to be a real friend. Now it was that we began to see new evidence of the way God was working for us. One of this latter group was most suspicious and angry. He maintained violently that we were spies, and for more than a day behaved in a most threatening manner. But the others took our part; and assured us that they would protect us with their very lives. Thus we found ourselves actually being sheltered by the very ones who in years gone by had killed on sight ~~the~~ numberless white men.

Meanwhile, Harriet and Stevie flew down in the Cexna with Jonathan Tamplin. After carefully weighing all of the problems, I felt sure that it was God's will that she come. Circumstances more than proved this to be right. Although the physical conditions of camp life were not easy for her, our lives together as a Christian family was a tremendous revelation to these Indians in their gross paganism. I feel we accomplished more just by the example of mutual love than ten thousand words could ever have done.

Finally, on another Sunday, Uejai appeared. It was just at sundown, and we were not yet fully awake, when they came pouring out of the woods with a mighty shout. Seeing the other Indians with us, they had no fear; but came crowding around us, and in a moment completely filled the camp. There were 120 of them

camp in San Ramon.

I suppose enough happened during those six days to fill a book. Outside of Uejai and 5 subcaptains, almost all of them were young people, most of them warriors. What a lovable bunch they were, with their brightly painted bodies and feathers, their insatiable curiosity about all the strange gadgets they were seeing for the first time (I had to unscrew the back of the radio to show them that there was actually no one inside doing the talking), and their constant laughing and shouting and playing. They must have slept in relays; for the noise seemed to continue 24 hours a day.

Uejai, however, was the biggest miracle. I had had plenty of advice on how we would have to handle him. The tame Indians maintained that we would have to kill him with guns before we could ever hope to do anything with his people. The white people often suggested handling the whole Indian problem by catching one of them, giving him smallpox, and sending him back to expose the entire tribe. God, however, had His own way of dealing with him; and Uejai was a changed man when we met him.

Seldom have I met a more noble, serious man. He had under him some 33 subcaptains, and around 1000 people over whom he exercises complete power. But he fully accepted us, including me in his council meetings, asking for and acting upon my suggestions on the handling of daily problems. He stayed with us six days; after which we all felt it wise to break contact temporarily.

The entire tribe began to call us Dad and Mom in Ayore immediately; and announced that they were never going to leave us. They are all extremely anxious to come out into the villages and now they insisted that they were going with us wherever we went. We realize that ultimately contact with the cities will be inevitable; but want to postpone the day as long as possible. To bring them out as they are now would simply be disastrous for them. Within a few months, half or more of them would be dead from grippe or pneumonia, to which they have no resistance at all. After talking the matter over with Uejai, we decided that the only solution was to break the contact. And so, on the 5th of October, we returned to Zapoco.

Meanwhile, Uejai is making a new village in the woods closer to the railroad line, where they eventually want to live. Some of his men are making a new trail from San Ramon to this new site. Others, he has sent to notify the 26 captains whom we still haven't met, to tell them of his plans and to warn them not to harass. We left the landing strip in San Ramon in good shape, and in December intend to fly back to San Ramon and go in on foot to the new village. Uejai has invited us, and says he will have food then to take care of us. I want to stay with him as long as possible, and make a beginning of explaining the Gospel to him and his people.

Then, as the rains let up we will gradually move north and west to a new site south of the Railroad line that is more accessible, and has abundant water and food for them. From here, the young people will gradually be assimilated into the life of along the railroad line.

I don't have to remind you that there are still years of hard work and seemingly insurmountable problems ahead before these people are fully evangelized and form a part of Bolivian society. But I know you will praise God with us for what He has done, and continue to stand with us in faith until the job is done. Just let me say that we appreciate everything you have done. Your prayers, interest and gifts are a tremendous encouragement to us.

yours in Christ,

Bill and Harriet Pencille