

# ITEC

develop | train | equip

MAY 2020 NEWSLETTER

## It Wasn't My Idea

by Steve Saint

You know how fast you have to run to get away from an angry bear? Just a little bit faster than the next guy! Do you know how much missions experience you need to have to be considered to be an expert on the subject? You got it!

When people comment on what a great idea it was to start ITEC instead of just "doing missions for the Waodani," I feel I need to confess: It wasn't my idea.

My aunt Rachel had just died and I had flown down to represent my family in burying her out in the jungles where she had lived with the Waodani for the last 36 years of her life. After we had finished lowering her plywood coffin into a hand-dug hole, a group of older Waodani informed me that they wanted to talk to me.

When asked what they wanted us to do, they replied, "We don't say, come to do. We say, come to teach us how to do what the foreigners do, like we taught you how to do what we do."

The Waodani Christ-follower's made it clear to me that they were not primarily concerned with taking care of people's physical needs. They told me, "When the foreigners come in and do the baga beae (the tooth thing) and the medicine thing and the airplane thing, the people see them well; but not speaking Wao Tededo (Waodani language), they cannot tell them how to walk the trail the Creator's Son marked with His blood."

Later, when Christ-followers from another Ecuadorian tribe saw the Waodani assembling their first plane, they asked me to help them, too. But I was already way over my head trying to design tools with which to train and equip the Waodani to do what they had urged me to help them do.

When I told the Quechua group they would need to find someone else to help them, one of them whispered to another one in the group, "Where will we find anyone to teach us?"

As the Quechua delegation walked away discouraged, I was surprised to see that the Waodani group helping assemble their little airplane was upset with me. Mincaye asked me diplomatically, "Why do you say 'yes' to helping us, but you said 'no' to helping them?"

I reminded him how busy I was with what he and other Waodani believers were asking me to help them with. Now, he became more blunt. "Like a foreigner you are thinking. We say, you teaching us, together we can teach all the other Christ-followers to teach their own people." Grandfather Mincaye and his contemporaries count up to twenty on their fingers and toes. After that it is just lots and lots. I couldn't imagine trying to tell him that in just the country of Papua New Guinea, with a population of 8,606,000 people, there are 832 distinct languages spoken. I tried to imagine Mincaye going from a tribe of hunter-gatherers just emerging from the Stone Age to teach similar people halfway around the earth to meet felt needs and to teach their own people to follow Christ's trail.

Several years later Mincaye and I were part of an ITEC training team in Hyderabad, India. As Mincaye helped our US dentist train Indian Pastors to pull teeth, I suddenly realized how short-sighted I had been thinking that the Waodani could never go to a place like Papua New Guinea to teach skills. In India, highly educated and dedicated pastors could not share Christ's Gospel because the people they wanted to evangelize would not let Christians into their communities. Grandfather Mincaye was not on an adventure trip. The Indian pastors had specifically asked for Mincaye to go with the ITEC team. I think they knew how we North Americans prefer to do the work ourselves rather than to equip national Christ-followers with skills that open doors to once closed communities.

The Waodani idea was not new. Jesus went from community to community meeting hurting people's felt needs. That is why the multitudes followed Him. But even when thousands of people wanted to hear His message, Jesus concentrated on teaching God's message to twelve uneducated and unprepared men (Matthew 13:36-43 & Acts 4:13).

For an Amazon warrior to travel all around the U.S., Canada, Amsterdam, Hyderabad and Panama telling hundreds of thousands of people, "We acted badly until they brought us God's Markings," is amazing. Now, because of the vision of a few Waodani Christ-followers, Dentists, Doctors, Nurses, Engineers, Optometrist's, Mechanics, Agronomists, Aviators, Videographer's, and soon Trauma Counselors are Developing tools to Train and Equip indigenous Christ-followers in the Americas, Africa, Europe, and Asia.



Mincaye, Ginny, and Steve two years ago in Ecuador.

As most of you know, Grandfather Mincaye has now embarked on his journey to forever-land. We will miss you Maemae. Greet our loved ones, please. Thank you for so very many that will spend eternity in the Creator's place because of the story the Creator wrote with your life.

The idea that Mincaye and the Waodani proposed is still an invitation for you, today. Partnership with our global brothers and sisters in Christ, striving towards interdependence on one another, is the vision they cast that continues to drive ITEC. Maybe one of the greatest memorials to my dad, his four friends, and the Waodani grandfathers who have passed on, is for us to continue this idea of indigenous participation in the Great Commission. The question for you, today, is how has God gifted you to participate in this great story He is writing?

# Obituary for Mincaye

By Steve Saint



He was born into a violent “Stone Age” culture in the Amazon Rain Forrest of eastern Ecuador, South America.

Mincaye, whose name means “Wasp,” died April 28, 2020 at home in the tiny village of Tzapino of natural causes related to old age. He was between 88 and 91 years of age. Mincaye is survived by his wife Ompodae (Otter), thirteen children, fifty some grandchildren, many many great grandchildren and tens of thousands of people who saw him as proof of God’s redeeming and transforming power.

When “Grandfather Mincaye,” as we affectionately knew him, helped five other Waodani warriors spear my father Nate Saint, Jim Elliot, Pete Fleming, Roger Youderian and Ed McCully to death on a river sandbar in 1956, there was no reason to believe anyone outside of his small clan and the five bereaved families would ever take note of that incident.

Nevertheless, millions of people in North America and Europe followed radio news releases that five North American missionaries were missing in the Ecuadorian jungle. For most of a week there was no word of their fate. When a search party finally found their five, spear-riddled bodies the question was, “Why?”

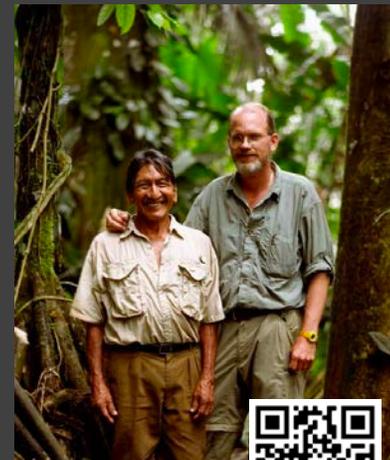
The term “Tragedy” accompanied virtually every radio, newspaper, and magazine article as the news of these vicious and seemingly senseless killings spread. But sixty-four long years later, it seems clear that Genesis 50:20 was about to come true again. “What man meant for evil, God meant for good.”

There has been no greater ambassador of that message than the life of Grandfather Wasp. Mincaye is also the main character in the feature film, “End of the Spear.” When “End of the Spear” in book and movie form became available, Mincaye traveled around the United States and Canada telling his life story. This amazing jungle warrior who counted only up to twenty on his fingers and toes, personally impacted hundreds of thousands of people in audiences as large as forty-five thousand. The movie in which his life plays the leading role has now been translated into the mother tongues of approximately one quarter of the world’s population.

Mincaye’s most frequent speaking theme was, “We lived angry, hating and killing, ‘ononque’ (for no reason), until they brought us God’s markings. Now, those of us who walk God’s trail live happily and in peace.” Then he would often ask, “How long did you have God’s Markings before you brought them to us?” “Waa, iñinamai” (well, I don’t know). “Maybe if we had known sooner that ‘Waengongi’ (the Creator) did not see it well that people should live angry, hating and killing for no reason, we could have walked God’s trail sooner.”

There are people who question the motives of the five missionaries who made contact with the Waodani in 1956. There are some who question Mincaye’s motives in participating in 10 speaking tours to the U.S. and Canada, trips to Europe, Panama and even India. I can only answer that I was Mincaye’s traveling companion on all of those trips. We traveled together, ate together, shared the same room, and spoke together. I have known Mincaye since I was a little boy when he took me under his wing and had his sons teach me to blowgun hunt. He was one of my dearest friends in the world. Yes, he killed my father, but he loved me and my family. One of my grandsons is named Mincaye.

We will miss you, Maemae Mincaye, but we hold onto the certain hope that we will soon see you again (John 3:16).



Visit the  
memorial page:

[www.bit.ly/mincaye](http://www.bit.ly/mincaye)

## Upcoming Trips & COVID-19 Update



Proverbs 16:9 says, “The heart of man plans his way, but the Lord establishes his steps.” This seems to be the theme of the season as we continue to allow the Lord to establish our steps during this uncertain time. Travel is at a standstill, but we are still trusting in God to open borders in His time. See the beautiful rainbow over ITEC HQ taken by one of our staff members- God’s plan is good and his promises are true.

Our team continues to work from home, and will do so until at least June 1. Quarantine has been a challenging time, but also a rewarding time. We have been able to focus on some exciting new projects! There is a lot of work and brainpower being applied to how ITEC can partner with the Church in the US to equip them to train and partner with the Church overseas. There is also work on a potential new online video course!

Thanks you for your continued prayers and support during this time! Please pray with us for God to guide our return to the office, and to make His plans clear for travel when that time comes.

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