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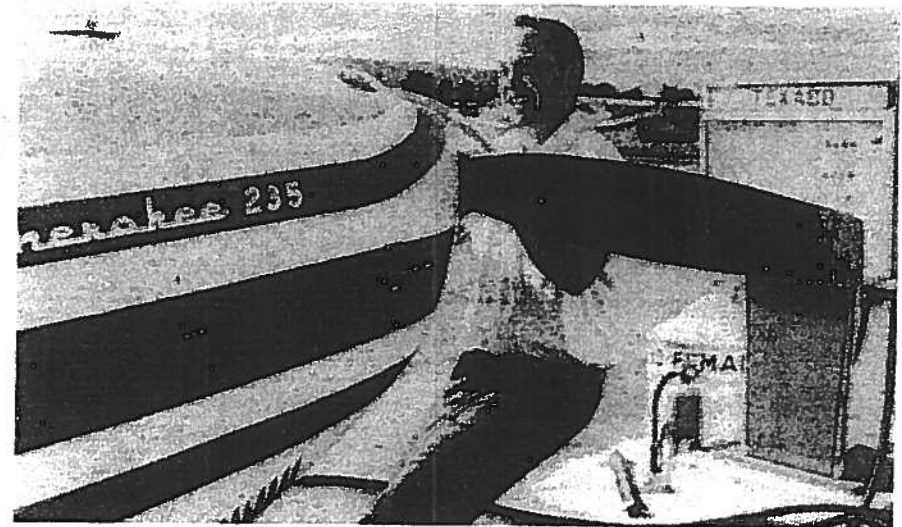
The Christian Community Bill Woods functions on an ecumenical basis at the grass roots level and follows the model of the Latin and Central American "base ecclesial communities". North Americans attempt to accompany the Central American refugees and Spanish immigrants in the Bellaire area of Houston, Texas. The work stresses cooperative and self help programs dealing with basic life necessities. This community approach promotes biblical reflection as a way of life, as well as a process of responding collectively to life's problems.

**For more information about the
CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY BILL WOODS
write to Nanette Navarre
at 6100 De Moss, Houston, Texas 77081
or call (713) 776-9351**

THE

BILL WOODS

STORY



**MARYKNOLL MISSIONARY
IN
GUATEMALA**

This is one chapter from the book
"MURDERED IN CENTRAL AMERICA
The Stories of Eleven U.S. Missionaries"

by
*Dorna Whitson Brett and
Edward T. Brett*

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William Woods

Maryknoll Missionary

In early November 1976, after vacationing with his family in Houston, Texas, Maryknoll missionary William Woods flew to Austin to spend two days with his long-time friend, Father John McCarthy. Father Woods was returning to Guatemala, where he had served as a missionary for the last eighteen years. "[Bill] was in a mellow and tense mood, if that's not a contradiction," recalls McCarthy, who today is bishop of the Diocese of Austin. "We talked long and late into the night. He said that [in April] he had been called in by the U.S. embassy in Guatemala City and given this advice: 'Father, you should get out of the country, and if not, at least move here where we can keep an eye on you.' " The warning was given by Ambassador Francis E. Meloy (who was himself murdered by terrorists in the summer of 1976, soon after his arrival in Lebanon as U.S. ambassador).

Obviously troubled, McCarthy asked: "Bill, what good are you to your people if you're dead?" Woods replied that he had thought about this himself and concluded that his work was too important to abandon; in about three and a half months his Ixcán jungle project would be completed and he would then move to the capital city.

The next day McCarthy drove Bill to the airport. "As I was driving away," recalls the bishop, "I saw him taxiing to the main runway. I turned back, got out of the car, walked to the fence and watched until the plane was out of sight. I had never done that before."

Three weeks later, McCarthy and a friend were jogging; at the end of their workout, they were met by his friend's wife, who called out: "Did you hear about Bill Woods?" Instinctively the priest asked, "Is he dead?" When he received an affirmative answer, he added, "Was he murdered?" The woman responded that she did not know.'

William Hervey Woods was born in Houston on September 14, 1931, the second child and oldest son of William Hervey Woods, Sr., and Anna Charnley

Woods. The family was an interesting blend of Irish-American and Texan stock. His father, a vice president of Gulf Oil, was an ordained deacon and is described by Father Alfred Smith as "rugged, hard-working, yet so tender he would kiss each of his stalwart sons on the lips well into their late teens."² He is depicted by others as a "nice guy" with a strong religious faith, but also as a hard-headed Irishman who could be "a real grouch" at times. His mother is characterized as courageous and serene. Bishop McCarthy remembers that when he first met her she had taken into her household an elderly, unmarried aunt and that later she cared for another needy relative in the same manner.³ Father William McIntire, who had dinner with her in Guatemala just after Bill's death, recalls that she "as always was remarkably calm, most concerned about the other families" whose loved ones had died along with her son.⁴

Bill was, beyond a doubt, a composite of both his parents. Author Ron Chernow reports, "Woods could be bull-headed" and "had an Irish temper."⁵ McCarthy also mentions the Maryknoller's quick temper but adds that "he was very generous; he would give away anything he had and perhaps much of what you had. . . . He had the biggest heart in Western civilization."⁶ Bill was raised with his sister and four brothers in the then rural area of Bellaire, just outside of Houston, where his family belonged to Holy Ghost parish. While attending Saint Thomas High School he resolved to become a priest. Father Smith, who opened and directed the Maryknoll Promotion House in Houston, recalls Bill's first visit with amusement:

He wanted to know if I wanted the grass cut. I was agreeable and we arrived at a satisfactory price. The next morning he arrived with his brother to begin work. After two hours or so he came to the door for his pay. I went out to look and said, "but you didn't do the back." "Aw," he cried, "that wasn't in the price." "To me it was, what good is a half done job?" Grumbling loudly he and his brother got back to work. He took his money and left, but was back that evening very irate. "Father, I think you cheated us today." "Bill," I replied, ". . . how can you speak of being cheated?"

The argument continued until Father Smith, on an impulse, silenced the young man by asking if he had ever thought about becoming a priest.

Thoroughly shocked he backed out of the house. Two weeks later he came back. "All right, where do I sign up?" . . . [Later after his ordination] he would say, now with a grin, "you cheated me on my first job here, now I work for nothing."⁷

In an undated, hand-written essay, probably composed during his first year in the seminary, Woods describes his decision to enter the missionary order, conveniently neglecting his run-in with Smith:

I made up my mind to be a priest when I was in the first year of High School. At that time I wasn't sure just what kind of order of priest I wanted to be. I didn't talk to anyone about my vocation except my parents. Then one day, when I was in the second year of High School, I met Fr. Al Smith by accident, and he asked me to come see the Maryknoll's [sic] new house. I went over there one day and he explained to me what I didn't allready [sic] know about Maryknoll. I liked the idea because I would be able to teach the people just like Christ did. Then to [sic] I liked it because I would represent the American people on the mission field. From then on I went to see Fr. Smith every week, and I met other boys who were planning to be Maryknollers too. We formed a club, or nucleus as Fr[.] called it, and we all went to see Fr[.] together and he would advise us on the different things that came up. We brought our friends over to the Maryknoll house and then we would talk about the priesthood and Maryknoll. This turned out pretty successful [sic], and I think its [sic] the best way to find vocations.⁸

In hindsight, Bill's essay reveals much about his character. First, his carelessness in spelling, grammar, and style betrays a flaw which often annoyed those who would later work with him. Although his thoughts were filled with grandiose plans, he displayed little concern for the mundane, but often essential, details. He constantly exasperated his religious superiors by forgetting to send reports out on time or by neglecting to fill out bureaucratic forms in triplicate. And, although he was successful in obtaining generous contributions for his projects, he could never be described as a polished fund-raiser. As a fellow priest commented, he never bothered to compose those sophisticated "personal touch" letters that adept fund-raisers do so well. Instead, he opted for a short cut—the form letter—and frequently forgot to respond to a donation with a note of thanks.

Woods's statement that he wanted "to represent the American people in the mission field" testifies to a conservative patriotism that he never lost. Unlike so many of the North American priests and religious currently in Third World countries who have voluntarily chosen to share the poverty of their charges, Bill lived almost by U.S. standards. His home in Barillas, Guatemala, was almost like a Texas ranch house, equipped with a small refrigerator and record player. While traveling, he thought nothing of sleeping on the ground and making whatever sacrifices were required; he did this, however, because he had to, not out of a conscious option to live like the poor. To Woods, the North American lifestyle was something to be proud of; he made no apologies for it and hoped that someday his Indians would come to share in something similar. Bishop McCarthy remarks that Bill would in fact have been unsympathetic with much in recent liberation theology: "[He] had a small view of the world; [he] wasn't concerned about multi-national corporations [or] about what is going on in Africa." In other words, his thoughts did not extend beyond a concern for the Indians. "He even said good things about the United Fruit

Company: 'Boy, those people who work at United Fruit have a super clinic and electric lights; my people don't.' What price Guatemala paid to have United Fruit put electric lights in houses he never thought about or talked about."⁹

After graduating from Saint Thomas High School in 1949, Woods entered the Maryknoll seminary at Glen Ellyn, Illinois, along with several other young men from Houston. Included in the group was his close friend, Rafael Dávila, today a member of the governing General Council for the missionary order. The Glen Ellyn seminary had just been opened and Dávila remembers that several buildings were being hurried towards completion when they arrived. Bill was a bright but undisciplined student. A smooth talker, however, he managed to convince his Maryknoll teachers to send him to Mexico in the summer of 1956 to study Spanish, although his grades were too low to merit such a privilege. This glib ability to persuade the most unlikely people to support his views would prove to be a useful asset in his missionary days in Guatemala.

Bill received his bachelor's degree in 1953 and next spent a year of novitiate in Bedford, Massachusetts. He was then sent to Maryknoll, New York, where he completed his theological training in 1958. There, Father Dávila remembers, he, Bill, and a few other seminarians formed a study group. While the rest of them would be discussing the complex theories derived from their lectures and textbooks, Bill would invariably apply the material to hypothetical, but practical, situations that apparently had nothing to do with the course matter. Somewhat irritated, his classmates would tell him condescendingly that his "off-the-wall" theology would prove useless in helping them pass their courses. Years later, however, Dávila repeatedly found that he was forced to face practical problems in his priestly duties which Woods had introduced in these study sessions and which had then seemed so ridiculous.¹⁰

It was the practice of the Maryknoll Fathers to have seminarians who had completed the novitiate spend at least one summer before ordination working in the active ministry. Consequently, Bill was sent in the summer of 1956 to San José, California, where he assisted Father Donald McDonald in his apostolate to migrant farmworkers. McDonald, a friend and adviser of union leader César Chávez, was a rugged, aggressive priest, who refused to accept the poverty and misery of the Hispanic farmworkers as an unchangeable fact of life. Bill was greatly inspired by him and incorporated much of his style in his later missionary work in Central America.¹¹

In the summer of 1957, Bill, by then a deacon, was sent along with Rafael Dávila to Houston where they assisted hospital chaplain Father Joseph Fiorenza in his ministry. Dávila recalls one incident during this time which reflects Bill's character and later approach to conditions in Guatemala. Two babies had been shot and brought to the hospital; both had lost much blood, but their parents belonged to a religious sect which forbade transfusions. The parents refused to listen to the pleadings of the hospital staff; as a result, the children died, one in the arms of Dávila. Bill was furious; pounding his fist on every object in sight, he simply could not accept the fact that two human beings

had been allowed to die because of what he considered to be the stupidity of their parents' views. Stubborn anger in the face of injustice, which he later displayed continually in his missionary work, would inspire him to achieve wonders, but it would also incur the wrath of the authorities.¹²

Woods was ordained to the priesthood on June 14, 1958, and was immediately assigned to Barillas, a town in the western part of Guatemala, near the sparsely populated Ixcán and Quiché jungle regions.

About the same size as Tennessee, Guatemala—from a geographical and cultural standpoint—could be a tourist's haven. Among its lures are beaches and lush rain forests, lakes visited by mysterious noonday winds, and magnificent mountains interspersed with volcanoes. Pilfered ancient ruins dot the countryside and provide a visible link in time with the colorful fiestas and market days of today's Mayan Indians. The political and socioeconomic problems of Guatemala, however, have transformed paradise into a land of bloodshed.

To understand Guatemala's problems, one must realize that about 55 percent of its 7.1 million people are Mayan Indians. Living mostly in the southern and western highlands, the Mayas constitute a rural society of isolated villages in which life has changed little with the passing of time. The various communities display a wide range of cultural and linguistic differences, including distinctive costumes. The Mayan economic mainstay is subsistence farming, with some regional specialization in handicrafts; their annual per capita income is about \$81. They are, writes the historian Walter LaFeber, among the poorest and most isolated people in the Western Hemisphere.¹³

Of the remaining 45 percent of the population, the vast majority are *mestizos*, a mixture of Indian and Caucasian. Four percent are of European descent and dwell in urban areas; politically conservative, this class controls the country. Over the years, however, some *mestizos* have entered their ranks. Ron Chernow sums up the status of the elite succinctly:

The trinity of generals, landowners and entrepreneurs that reigns over Guatemala turns out, on closer inspection, to be three faces of the same all-powerful class. Many of the military are also major landowners and businessmen, and employ mobile military units as their private armies. "In Guatemala, the army doesn't just defend the interest of the private sector," said one Guatemalan journalist. "They are the private sector."¹⁴

The landowning, business, and military elite consider the Mayas to be inferior: The more "Indian" persons are, the less civilized they are thought to be, and Indians are equated with laziness, dishonesty, and biological inferiority. Thus, to persecute and oppress the Indian population is socially acceptable to many of the privileged class. For outsiders to come to Guatemala to labor for the spiritual welfare and material improvement of the Indian is incomprehensible and therefore greeted by the elite with suspicion.¹⁵

In the sixteenth century, when the Spanish led by Pedro de Alvarado

conquered the Mayas, thousands of Indians died. The conquerors soon established the feudal-like *encomienda* system, virtually enslaving the Indians and working them to death. Due to unceasing complaints from Spanish friars led by Bartolomé de Las Casas, the brutal *encomienda* was replaced by the New Laws of the Indies in 1542. These laws permitted the Mayas to live in their own villages while obligating them to perform labor services—by law usually one week a month, but in practice often more—for the Spanish landowners. From the sixteenth century to the present, Mayan descendants have been forced to work the large plantations of the non-Indian elite.¹⁶ “Crews of Indians,” writes Phillip Berryman, “are brought down from the highlands. It happens that the fallow time for corn and beans coincides with the harvest period for coffee, sugar, and cotton (October–February) and large numbers of Indians are chronically in need of cash—in fact, in debt, and usually to the labor contractor—so that there is guaranteed a seasonal labor supply.”¹⁷ Thus, the Mayas are essential to the Guatemalan agro-export economy. Several times in history they have rebelled, only to be brutally suppressed.

With the coming of independence from Spain in the early decades of the nineteenth century, the Guatemalan elite, like that in the rest of Central America, split into two factions that competed for control of the country. The Liberals envisioned themselves as progressives who favored emphasis on coffee production; they were anti-clerical and when in power passed laws aimed at confiscating property of religious orders and communal lands of Indians, so they could be incorporated into the agro-export economy. The Conservatives, on the other hand, favored the aristocratic ways of the past, when the Catholic church worked in harmony with the privileged. Although neither faction concerned itself with ameliorating the condition of the Indians and poor *mestizos*, the Conservatives at least provided the Indians with a modicum of paternalistic protection. In the last years of the nineteenth century, a new agricultural product, bananas, began to play a major role in the socioeconomic structure of Guatemala. Whereas the coffee plantations were owned by local elites, the banana business was controlled by large U.S. companies bent on making as large a profit as possible for their North American stockholders. Thus, a new foreign dimension was added to the country's power structure.

Until 1944 Guatemala was ruled by dictators who paid little attention to meaningful reform. When General Jorge Ubico was forced to resign in July 1944 and his military colleagues were unable to form a lasting government, elections took place. Juan José Arévalo Bermejo, a Liberal, won with 85 percent of the vote. Modeling himself after U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt, he was seriously interested in turning his nation into a twentieth-century democracy. His inauguration as president on March 15, 1945, ushered in a decade of social progress—a decade which serves as a reference point for all subsequent Guatemalan troubles. The right to vote was granted to women and the illiterate; political parties (with the exception of the Communist Party) were allowed to organize; unions were permitted to form and encouraged to grow; freedom of speech and assembly was genuinely allowed; social security

programs were created; and governmental health and education programs were expanded. In 1951, Colonel Jacobo Arbenz Guzmán was elected president with 63 percent of the vote, promising to continue the politics of Arévalo and create a modern capitalist country. In 1952 he had a major land reform law passed. Over a thousand plantations were expropriated and turned over to more than a hundred thousand *campesino* families. Peasants were to pay for the land and former owners were to be compensated according to its declared tax value. Approximately 400,000 of the 550,000 acres owned by the United Fruit Company were expropriated, 85 percent of which were uncultivated. Since this U.S. company had had its property drastically undervalued for tax purposes, it stood to lose from the government's redistribution program. Working with the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and with the blessing of President Eisenhower, United Fruit succeeded in having the Arbenz democratic government declared communist and toppled it, replacing it with an oligarchic dictatorial regime more to its liking and headed by Colonel Carlos Castillo Armas.

By 1954, Guatemala's brief era of political progress was over.¹⁸ It should be noted that Arbenz had removed the prohibition against the Communist Party and that a minority of his officials were communists. It must also be stated, however, that several members of the Eisenhower government were linked to United Fruit. Anne Whitman, the president's personal secretary, was married to Edmund Whitman, United Fruit's public relations director; Secretary of State John Foster Dulles and his brother, CIA Director Allen Dulles, were members of a law firm which did extensive work for the banana company. Thomas Cabot, the brother of Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs John Moors Cabot, had been president of the company in 1948, and the family owned stock in the company, as did United Nations Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge. The most blatant conflict of interest, however, can be attributed to Under Secretary of State Walter Bedell Smith, who applied for a major executive position at United Fruit while he was helping to plan the overthrow of Arbenz. Later, he was named to the corporation's board of directors.¹⁹

With Castillo Armas in office, land reform ended and repression began. Over 99 percent of the expropriated land was returned to its prior owners; *campesinos* and labor union leaders who objected were murdered. Within a year of his taking office, union membership dropped from 100,000 to 27,000. Literacy programs were terminated.²⁰

The corrupt Castillo Armas was assassinated in 1957, only to be followed by a series of military dictators or civilians collaborating with the army. During this time, agricultural exports expanded dramatically along with the landholdings of the elite minority. From 1960 to 1974 the total annual value of the five major agro-export products increased from \$105.3 million to \$367.5 million. This dramatic growth took place at the expense of subsistence farming; so, as the population of Guatemala rose, there was less land available to provide *campesinos* with the corn and beans necessary for the survival of their families.

Within the army there was also dissatisfaction, which led to an incipient guerrilla movement. In 1966, President Mario Méndez Montenegro commissioned Colonel Carlos Arana to search for and destroy the rebels; assisted by U.S. training, advisers, and equipment, his troops killed between six and eight thousand people within the next two years, nearly all of whom were innocent peasants, since, according to various sources, the guerrillas never numbered over three hundred. U.S. pilots in American planes even dropped napalm on *campesinos*, and one thousand Green Berets participated in the counterinsurgency operations. It was also at this time that right-wing death squads were formed to assist the army; a U.S. colonel, John Webber, played a role in their formation. Finally, in 1970, Colonel Arana was elected president, and kidnappings, torture, and murder intensified; from 1970 to 1975, fifteen thousand people disappeared.²¹

In the 1960s, in an attempt to alleviate the problems stemming from land shortage, the Guatemalan government began a program of colonization in the largely uninhabited, steamy jungles of the Petén, Quiché, and Ixcán. The purpose of the project was to provide landless peasants with small family-sized plots. In 1978, Michael McClintock of Amnesty International reported that "ten years ago, there was nothing, just Indians quietly moving in and setting up little farms. They cleared the land and sent out their goods by mule."²² The situation changed dramatically, however, in the 1970s when foreign oil companies decided to begin drilling operations in these areas. Army officers were now interested in gaining ownership of these inhospitable jungles and this meant more trouble for the Indians.

This, then, was Guatemala. Bill Woods, newly ordained and enthusiastic, arrived in 1958 and would labor there until his death in 1976. He came with a mixture of optimism, religious faith, skill, generosity, and naiveté. These qualities would soon enable him to undertake tasks that appeared impossible; yet he would often—inexplicably—succeed. As Bishop McCarthy states, he was a "Texas cowboy for Jesus," ready to enjoy the open spaces of Guatemala, to ride horses, jeeps, airplanes, and motorcycles, and to teach the Indians about the Catholic faith.²³

Bill's assignment at Barillas was perfect for a "cowboy" with big Texan ideas. After arriving and surveying his new environment, he decided he needed a good horse for visiting the scattered Indian families in his large parish. He wrote to his friend McCarthy asking him if he could raise the necessary funds in his U.S. parish. The future bishop, eager to help, acquired over five hundred dollars and Bill got his horse. Before long, however, Bill informed McCarthy that the animal was useless and he had been forced to find additional funds elsewhere for a second horse, one which proved excellent. Today, the bishop laughs at the incident, noting that his friend could have been a bit more sensitive to his feelings.²⁴

McCarthy quickly became a major supporter of Woods's missionary work. Between 1962 and 1970 he personally made no less than five visits to Barillas, three to deliver jeeps bought or remodeled in the United States for the Guate-

malan mission. He remembers his first visit with special clarity: Bill had driven an old jeep to Houston in 1961 for the three-month vacation that Maryknoll gives to its Central American missionaries every three years. He had the vehicle overhauled and asked McCarthy to accompany him on the ride back to Guatemala. The two drove through Mexico, past Huehuetenango in Guatemala and up into the mountains to Santa Eulalia, from which it was a twelve to fourteen hour ride by horseback over rugged mountainous terrain to Barillas. When they arrived at Santa Eulalia, they were met by some of Bill's Indian parishioners who brought them two horses. The Indians then returned to their village by foot, using a shortcut unsuitable for horses and a visiting urban padre from North America. After a few miles, Woods realized he had carelessly forgotten to get food, water, and flashlights from the Indians. McCarthy tells the rest of the story:

The sun went down on us but we had to go on. My horse collapsed, got up, and soon collapsed again on top of me. I told Bill to go on and come back for me the next morning. It was raining hard and I just laid back as if I was drowning. Bill had a terrible mouth when he was mad. He cursed my horse and beat it until it got up. He put me on his horse, the lead horse, took its tail and wrapped it around one of his hands. With the other hand he held the reins of the other horse; it was the useless one we had bought for him. It was pitch dark and we were on a mountain trail. I was in the lead but I couldn't hold back my horse going down the hills. Bill, walking between the two horses, would be pulled and stretched, cursing all the way. When we finally got to his parish the Indians came out to greet him. They carried torches and led us in the rain into town. They were singing and it was a beautiful sight.²⁵

It was a Saturday night when they reached Barillas. Had it been another night they would not have been greeted in such a festive fashion. Bill had built a hostel for the Indians so they could come into Barillas from the surrounding villages on Saturday, stay overnight, then attend a Sunday morning mass, complete with marimbas, hold a market after the service, and return home Sunday evening.

McCarthy recalls a later trip with two other priests in 1965. Woods invited all of them to join him in celebrating mass with the Indians:

Everybody was hot and stinking in this crowded hut, [with] rain coming through [the roof]. Bill divided the vestments up among us [and] said, "I'm the principal celebrant, so I get the chasuble." We priests died laughing. It was very unliturgical but a great mass, the Indians singing their hearts out. We were all jammed in there, covered in mud, but the church was alive.²⁶

Life in Barillas was hard, however, and Father Woods saw his parishioners suffering in ways he refused to accept. Perhaps he could begin a small wood-

carving cooperative for them and set up outlet markets in the United States; such an undertaking would be a source of welcome revenue. The fact that neither he nor they knew anything about this skill was inconsequential. He determined to learn this craft and within a short time he had become an excellent wood-carver.²⁷ He next proceeded to pass on this newly acquired knowledge to his Indian parishioners. Within a few years, the project proved to be a successful money-making venture, in spite of letters like the following that well might have discouraged a few would-be customers:

Dear Father,

I have been advised by some cultivated men that it might be of help both to you and to us, to tell you about a mail order business we have here. In this parish we have had a carving co-op in operation for the past six years, in which we carve various religious articles and some typical things. We have 25 families living off this co-op and their work is exceptionally good. We have begun shipping crucifixes and small statues direct to the U.S. by regular mail.

We have a standard type (10 inch corpus) out of rare and precious wood, which we ship by regular mail anywhere in the U.S. for \$10.00. There is no duty charged on arrival and it is delivered to the address as any letter would be. Also we ship a resurrected Christ statue (10 inches high) something like the Christ of the Andes for \$8.00. The only disadvantages to the deal are that: (1) It takes over a month to arrive; (2) The crucifixes are shipped apart, the arms have to be glued and the corpus screwed on the cross, the statue of the Risen Christ is shipped in one piece. . . .

Please forgive this impersonal and form letter. Things are fine down here. Guatemala is still the best damn mission Maryknoll ever had despite of [sic] revolutions or any other indications to the contrary.

Thanks for the stateside help.

In Christ,
Bill²⁸

The wood-carving cooperative was just a small part of Father Woods's indefatigable labors for his people. He opened a clinic for them and served as their doctor for minor ailments and even when necessary, for more serious problems. He would suture a badly bleeding machete cut, leaving an ugly scar but saving the victim's life. He extracted teeth, actually a rather easy job since the Indians' teeth were often horribly decayed. No health problem was too complex for him at least to attempt to solve. Father Dávila remembers a situation in which a sick Indian needed more help than an amateur like Bill

could provide. Woods promptly got on the short-wave transmitter he had installed with a gas generator for electricity, contacted a doctor in New York, related the symptoms to him, and received the advice necessary to help the patient.²⁹

Father Woods knew, however, that his hard work touched only a small minority of the poverty-stricken Mayas. For truly meaningful reform, the Indians needed their own land and plenty of it. Had not the government begun a program allowing poor peasants to settle in the inhospitable Ixcán? Perhaps he could harness his energies in this direction. Always thinking on a grandiose scale, he felt that with a few good ideas he might even be able to save the entire Mayan population from a life of misery.

While still brainstorming on how best to develop an Ixcán project, he and another Maryknoll priest went for a vacation to Guatemala's Pacific coast. There, as he watched crop-dusters at work, he formulated his plan. He would fly Indians into the inaccessible jungles where they could carve out farms for themselves; he would then fly out their produce so it could be sold at markets. The fact that he knew little about flying was irrelevant; he would learn.

Woods immediately introduced himself to the pilots and explained his plan to them. They were so intrigued that they began at once to give him flying lessons. By the end of his three week vacation he was ready to apply for a pilot's license.³⁰

Bill next obtained permission and a substantial donation from his order to undertake this project. However, because he wanted to purchase one hundred square miles of land between the Ixcán and Xalbal Rivers, much more money was needed. Before long he had received a \$10,000 donation from the Strake Foundation; later, in 1974, it would provide him with an additional \$20,000. His friends in Houston could also be counted on; one parish pledged to provide him with \$250 per month.

The project was officially begun in 1965. The Ixcán was separated from civilization by the 4,500-foot Cuchumatanes Mountains. At first, Bill and his associates journeyed for a few days by horseback into the jungle to clear land and build an airstrip. Woods would next return to Barillas and then fly Indian families back into the jungle, where they would begin carving out a settlement. The Indians would initially sleep in makeshift shelters close to the airstrip; before long these same peasants, who more often than not arrived in their steamy new home with little more than the clothes they wore, would be the proprietors of small productive farms.

Realizing that Guatemalan *campesinos* were ignorant of the legalities of land ownership and often had their small holdings confiscated by the powerful elite, Woods determined to follow the law to the letter in obtaining land titles. At his request, Callan Graham, a prominent Texas lawyer, flew to Guatemala at his own expense to provide the Maryknollers with professional legal counsel. Graham also chose a competent Guatemalan lawyer to act as co-counsel.³¹ The Indians were given individual, equal-sized plots of land; however, all titles were to be registered in the name of the cooperative. This would make it impossible



A photograph of a painting by Mrs. Barbara Clay of Houston, Texas. The original hangs in the Woods' home in Bellaire, Texas and a copy in the Bill Woods Christian Community.

Fr. William Woods, M.M., shown here giving land titles to Guatemalan peasants, died mysteriously in Guatemala, November 21, 1976.



After Fr. Woods' funeral at the airport in Huehuetenango, Guatemala (L to R) an unidentified man, Fr. Ed Moore, M.M., Mrs. Ann Woods (Fr. Bill's mother) and Sr. Jeannie Lorio, M.M.

The Bill Woods Christian Community at 6100 De Moss, Houston, Texas. North Americans, Central American refugees and Spanish speaking immigrants work together on solidarity projects.



later on for the rich to buy them out individually once the land was fully developed. It would likewise make it more difficult to steal their land through intimidation or violence. The government was fully aware of this and consequently made every effort to stall Woods in his attempt to secure a title to the cooperative's land.

Life was difficult for the members of the project. Used to cool mountain breezes, they now occupied a humid jungle area where temperatures were often above 110 degrees. When the rains came, the Indians would sometimes be forced to carry their crops for two or three hours knee-deep in mud to reach the airstrip. As Dave Hollstegge, Woods's chief assistant for the Ixcán project, remarks:

To me, the project is very revolutionary in so many ways. . . . It's not customary within Indian culture to just pick up and go away and set up new residence in another town. Here these people picked up and hauled off to this unknown, godforsaken land, completely different in climate from what they were accustomed to. The whole idea of their having the opportunity to acquire land—of living with other Indian groups with different languages, culture and customs—is revolutionary in the best, nonviolent sense of the word.³²

Nevertheless, the project proved a greater success than anyone could have imagined, anyone, that is, but Bill Woods.

By 1976, the tireless missionary had three Cessna 185s servicing five cooperatives and was about to add a fourth plane, a twenty-five passenger model worth \$500,000. He and his associates had flown over twelve thousand trips to and from the area. Approximately two thousand families had been settled in the jungle, forming five towns; thus, about eight thousand *campesinos* were living lives of independence and dignity, many for the first time in their lives. Five schools were built and staffed with thirteen teachers; each of the five cooperatives had its own clinic run by a grand total of fifteen certified paramedics and two nurses. Guatemalan doctors were flown in periodically and student doctors made regular visits as part of their training program. An air-ambulance service was set up for serious medical emergencies, making over six hundred flights. Two full-time agronomists assisted the Indian peasants; nurseries were set up and new plants introduced. The project had over a thousand head of cattle and was producing annually 80,000 cwt. (hundred-weight) of corn, 10,000 cwt. of beans, 500 cwt. of coffee, and 200 cwt. of cardamum. The project leased a hangar from the government in Guatemala City and bought a storage room in Huehuetenango. Excess crops were air-transported to these two cities where they were sold at market; the Indians paid the co-op three cents a pound for shipment.³³

Woods was also interested in making the Indians better Christians. The project, therefore, had a small hilltop church and meeting hall. Bill provided the people with radios, which were used for religious instruction. He also had

religious comic books printed and distributed to the Indians. The project was so successful from a religious and material point of view that other missionaries talked of using it as a model for similar structures elsewhere.

While the Indians and Father Woods were laboring to create their success story, others were finding the Ixcán of interest, but for entirely different reasons. Foreign oil companies had known since the 1950s that this jungle area contained oil deposits. Nonetheless, the global price of this fuel was too low to merit the expenses of exploration and drilling. The tremendous rise in oil prices by the 1970s, however, changed their outlook, and they were now ready to invest heavily in the Guatemalan jungle. As the Guatemalan government made ready to auction off drilling rights to the highest bidders, the military and landowning elite began a mad scramble to gobble up this territory that they had once considered worthless. Soon-to-be-president General Fernando Romeo Lucas García eventually acquired 78,000 acres west of the Indian cooperatives. But he and others wanted even more. Land speculation was such that by 1978 (one and a half years after the death of Bill Woods) the jungle lands had increased fifteen times their 1965 value.³⁴ It was now inevitable that the brutality suffered by the poor throughout the more populated areas of Guatemala would soon come to the isolated Ixcán.

In May 1975, Luis Arenas was murdered by two men, probably members of a small guerrilla band living in the jungles since 1972. Arenas, who owned a large plantation not too far from Woods's project, was known as the "Tiger of Ixcán" for his unusually harsh treatment of his workers.

Within a week of his murder, four planes dropped more than a hundred paratroopers over the Ixcán. The soldiers began arresting Indians and hauling them off in helicopters. Some were later released but many were not. Many of the Indian *parcelistas* (members of the cooperatives) left their wives and children and fled into the jungles, promising to return when the army departed. But the army remained.

Bill approached the colonel in charge of the operation but the officer refused to discuss the reason for the military's presence.³⁵ Father Woods reports the rest of the episode:

During the month of June the army kept milling around in the Xalbal area. On June 10th the helicopter landed in Xalbal and Miguel Sales Ordoñez, a health promoter who worked for the project, was carried away for questioning. To this date he has never been heard of [January 14, 1976]. At this point I began to see lawyers asking them what rights we have and what we could do to find out what happened to these people. I went to Santa Cruz, Quiché, which is the center of the operations of the army and asked to see the boss. I was referred to the second in command who when I explained the situation, told me to mind my own business and preach the love of God to the people. His attitude was threatening, insolent and disrespectful to the religion. Later I went to see a lawyer in Quetzaltenango who advised me to send a telegram asking for habeas

corpus from the judge of the first courts in Santa Cruz, Quiché. I also went to see the Bishops of Huehuetenango and Quiché explaining the situation. They mentioned that I ought to have nothing to do with the situation, let the people handle it. I returned to the Ixcán and had the wives of the missing men write the telegrams and I took them by plane to Huehuetenango to be sent. As I was leaving Huehuetenango I realized that I had forgotten to send the telegrams, so I decided to land in Quiché and give them to someone to mail. The head of the army camp was at the field and saw me land. The next day I was informed by the head of civil aeronautics that the planes of the project could not fly anymore since we were a danger to lives and property. This telegram came from the head of the army in Santa Cruz, Quiché. I immediately got word to the President of the Republic and the order was rescinded within two days. . . .

Among the many people captured one man was released and came in to tell me of his experiences. He had lost about 30 pounds, had two busted ribs, and claimed his front teeth were loose. He was carried away in the helicopter around June 10th and taken to a nearby strip for questioning. He claims the main idea of the questioning was to find out how I was involved in the guerrilla activity. He was beaten and finally flown up to Quiché. In Quiché he was closed up in a dark room for what he thought was three days, no food and water were given to him. Later he was beaten again, questioned and after a few weeks in Quiché was flown back to the area and given a green uniform. He went along with a small group of soldiers . . . in [to] the jungle. For around two weeks this man was kept prisoner and made to haul things around for the soldiers. Finally he was released and returned on foot to Xalbal. He could give us no information of the eight to ten men [still] missing from the project. . . .³⁶

Around this time, Woods contracted hepatitis and was forced to fly to the United States, where he spent two months recuperating. When he returned to Guatemala he continued his fight to find out what had happened to the *desaparecidos* (disappeared).

Soon Woods had to face two additional crises. On February 4, 1976, Guatemala was rocked by a devastating earthquake; 22,000 people were killed and 77,000 injured while more than a million were left homeless. Around the same time, Bill received word that his father had suddenly died of a heart attack. He immediately returned home to Bellaire for the funeral mass, where he delivered the homily before a church filled with oil executives and co-workers of his father. He related the grief evoked by this one man's death to the suffering of thousands of the Guatemalan poor because of the earthquake. He then announced that there would be a collection in his father's name for the displaced victims in his missionary land. Over the next couple of days, word spread and an incredible sum—between \$18,000 and \$20,000—was collected.

The phenomenal priest was able to acquire even more, however, for after his return to Central America he was appointed to a four-member Maryknoll committee that distributed approximately one million dollars worth of corrugated roofing to homeless victims of the earthquake.³⁷ He also began making plans for a housing project on the outskirts of Guatemala City to alleviate the housing shortage.

Bill Woods was becoming a legend in Guatemala, a champion of both the rural and urban poor. On the other hand, the powerful were beginning to perceive the dynamic priest as a troublemaker.

It was only two months after his father's death that the incident occurred which is mentioned at the beginning of this chapter: Bill was invited to dinner by U.S. Ambassador Meloy and warned that he was in danger from right-wing government officials, including Minister of Agriculture, General Fausto Rubio Coronado; Minister of Defense, General Romeo Lucas García; and Military Commandant of Quiché, Colonel José Sandoval Torre. The ambassador told Woods that these officers accused him of being supported by Cuba, of robbing the Indians of their money, and of disregarding the laws of Guatemala.³⁸ It was around this time too that his planes were grounded and his commercial pilot's license was suspended; the government, however, was permitting him to fly one of the Cessnas, but only for his priestly duties. Frustrated, Woods went to see the Minister of Agriculture and, along with Bishop Martínez of Huehuetenango, he also met with General Vassaux, the Minister of Interior.³⁹ Moreover, he decided to complain directly to General Laugerud, the president of Guatemala. In a letter dated May 17, 1976, he wrote the following:

Dear Mr. President:

I am writing this letter to ask for your help, as I don't know what to do and I need the support of the Guatemalan government and especially your support.

During Holy Week, the American Ambassador asked me to visit with him and we talked for four hours about my work in Guatemala for the last 18 years. He asked me what I did in the Ixcán area; what my relations were with the guerrillas; and what my political ideas were. I answered all his questions, indicating that I have never had any relationship with the guerrillas and I have no political ideals.

After hearing what I had to say . . . he told me two things. First, that he was well impressed with the Ixcán Project and would do all he could personally to help me, and second, that he had reasons to fear for my personal safety. He indicated that there were some high officials in the government, probably members of the armed forces, who were against my work and myself. This troubles me a great deal, not only personally, but also because of the effect it could have on my work.

After describing his Ixcán project he tells of his latest setback:

On the 7th of May, Aerixcan and I were grounded. The reason for this was due to a report from various military men, and although I consider the report exaggerated, I acknowledge that one of my pilots was carrying, at their request, seven INTA [National Institute of Agrarian Transformation] employees, when the plane's capacity is five passengers. . . .

I love Guatemala and especially those peasants who are putting so much effort into developing a new life in the Zona Reina. It would break my heart to have to leave the country. I repeat, my only interest is to help make the peasants better Christians, better Guatemalans, and thus help them produce more for themselves and for their country.

Mr. President, the Ixcán Project and I need the help of the Guatemalan government and especially yours. . . . I am sure that if you could personally see the achievements the project has made, you would agree that it cannot be abandoned, and therefore, I extend a most sincere and cordial invitation to honor us with your visit to the Ixcán Project.

Hoping to hear from you soon, I remain at your wishes to offer further information if you so require it.

Very truly yours,
Fr. William Woods⁴⁰

Needless to say, Laugerud did not accept Bill's offer. Woods soon received a letter, however, from Hans Laugerud, the president's brother and second highest official of INTA, the government land-distribution agency. The letter advised Woods

. . . to remove his people from certain areas in the colonization project which were being designated forest areas. Father Woods felt that he was being used to remove people from lands they had been legally living on for several years. [He], therefore, wrote a letter to INTA explaining that this organization should deal directly with the Cooperative, that he was in the Ixcán to take care of the spiritual needs of the people, and that the Cooperative was the responsible body. Since his planes . . . were grounded and he wished to avoid being used politically, Father Woods left for the U.S. [in September].⁴¹

This would prove to be his final vacation. He received word in early October that his airline's suspension was lifted and his commercial pilot's license restored.⁴² After the short visit with his friend John McCarthy referred to earlier, he returned to his mission on November 5, 1976.

A short time later, reports McCarthy, he confided to his mother in a cassette tape that he was in trouble again with the authorities. A plane had crashed over the border in Mexico just north of the Ixcán project. The survivors radioed for

help; when, after a long time, no one answered their distress call, Bill decided to fly to their rescue, even though he was not given a clearance to do so. He told his mother that from the time he landed with the survivors, there had been constant surveillance on him. He guessed that the government would certainly take his license away again and feared that this time it would be permanent. But during the short time it took for his message to pass through various postal clerks and make its way from Guatemala to Houston, Bill had died, the victim of a plane crash. Mrs. Woods, therefore, heard her son's last words to her after her return from his funeral in Guatemala. For reasons that will be unfolded below, Bishop McCarthy notes tersely that "they took away far more than his license."⁴³

On Saturday morning, November 20, Father Woods had breakfast at the Maryknoll House in Guatemala City. Brother Bob Butsch then accompanied him to the International Airport. He and his American mechanic serviced and gassed one of the Cessna 185s, which had recently been overhauled in Houston. The mechanic later indicated that the plane had been in fine condition. Bill was to fly to the Ixcán with four passengers: John Gauker, a construction specialist who had come to Central America in August with his family to work with Woods on the Guatemala City housing project; Selwyn Puig, a mother of four who was flying to the cooperative to take photos to accompany an article on the Ixcán project that had recently been accepted by *Maryknoll* magazine; Ann Kerndt, a worker in the Ixcán for Direct Relief Foundation, a small California-based organization; and Dr. Michael David Okado, a Japanese-American intern who decided to fly out with Ann to see the Ixcán. Kerndt and Okado had apparently paid Bill a small fee for transportation.⁴⁴

The Cessna, after weighing in to assure that it was not overloaded, took off at 10:01 A.M.⁴⁵ Just as it cleared the last ridge through the canyon leading into the jungle, when the aircraft was only about 150 feet above the ridge, witnesses saw the plane begin to plummet towards the earth, then twist around and smash into the mountain it had just cleared. According to his sister, Dorothea Woods Wedelich, Bill, while on vacation in Houston, had spoken to parochial school students in September and predicted that if the Guatemalan elite ever planned to kill him they would plant soldiers on the last mountain ridge since his low-flying plane would be an easy target.⁴⁶ As more questions than answers began to unfold concerning the crash, Bill's prediction would assume an ironic significance.

The crash took place at about 10:15 A.M. Several witnesses reported that the weather that day was perfectly clear in that part of the country. In fact, another pilot, Guy Gervais, related that on that day he made several trips over the same area as Woods without seeing a cloud in the sky.⁴⁷ Nevertheless, Colonel Roberto Salazar, commandant of the Guatemalan Air Force, later told Father Ron Hennessey "that he had been at the scene of the accident, that the Father was accustomed to flying in bad weather, and that he had gone through a cloud and run directly into a mountain."⁴⁸ One might legitimately ask why the colonel would give the impression that the weather was bad when it

was not. More questions arose. It was later discovered by Father Hennessey that a few days before the crash Salazar had instructed the governor of Huehuetenango, who was planning to travel to the Ixcán, not to go with Woods. The governor obeyed, but after waiting in vain for three days for the Air Force to arrive for his return flight, he called Woods by short-wave radio and the priest piloted him safely back to Huehuetenango. Salazar likewise insisted that those working for the Direct Relief Foundation cease flying with Woods. When foundation officials replied that arrangements had already been made for some of its members to be flown by the American priest from Guatemala City to Huehuetenango, the Colonel reluctantly allowed the flight to take place, warning the officials, however, to make sure that no one in the future should fly with the priest into the Ixcán. Ann Kerndt, a member of the Direct Relief Foundation, evidently ignored the Colonel, for she died with Woods on her second trip after the warning.⁴⁹

When Bill's plane did not arrive in the Ixcán, the Maryknollers in Guatemala City were notified by his associates at the project. They called the civil aeronautics authorities but could obtain no information; the following morning they finally were given news of the "accident" by a colonel. Yet Maryknoll found out later that the Guatemalan military had actually arrived at the impact site just a few hours after the crash and had had the pieces of bodies removed to a nearby town plaza by 8:00 P.M. that night. This was a clear violation of Guatemalan law, which stipulates that a judge must view an accident scene before the bodies can be removed.⁵⁰

From the above, several puzzling questions and contradictions arise: Woods had made this trip hundreds of times before, often in inclement weather; it seems odd that on a perfectly clear day, a plane in excellent condition would suddenly crash. Why did the military remove the bodies when to do so was a clear violation of law? Why were the Maryknollers not informed of the "accident" until well after the army had taken away the bodies? The military obviously knew of the crash, so why the secrecy? Was it a coincidence that Woods died in the exact spot where he had predicted that the military would murder him if they so desired?

Certain additional problems soon became apparent. A military official had reported to the priests at Maryknoll House that Woods's plane had plowed directly into the mountain and was immediately consumed by fire.⁵¹ Yet when Father Hennessey went to identify the remains of the passengers, which were sent to Guatemala City the day after the crash, he found they were not burned. In early December the Maryknollers decided to investigate the site themselves. They found that the plane was a pile of rubble; its engine, at first wedged six feet into the side of the mountain from the impact, had been pried loose and rolled down a hill. There were certainly no signs that the aircraft had been consumed by fire, so why had this been reported? Moreover, it was obvious that the aircraft had not plowed straight into the mountain, for the way the engine was impacted and the way the surrounding weeds had been cut by the plane indicated that the aircraft did not crash in a near horizontal position, as

had been affirmed by the official report. There was also no evidence that the plane had struck any tree in the vicinity.⁵² The windshield and side windows, all made of plastic materials, were missing from the wreckage.⁵³ Had snipers fired through a window as the low-flying aircraft cleared the ridge, the remains of the windows might have borne evidence of bullet holes.⁵⁴ Is this why they were missing? Finally, Hennessey spent three days completely disassembling the engine. From his investigation "it was evident that the pistons and valves had all been functioning," and had Woods not been disabled he could easily have landed in a nearby pasture.⁵⁵

A few days after the "accident," the Guatemalan civil aeronautics authorities sent a team of investigators to the crash site. They noted in their report that the plane's parts had burned up. Later, when Maryknollers questioned the accuracy of this statement, the report was quickly rewritten with the information on the fire deleted. Ron Chernow, who conducted a personal investigation a year and a half after the crash occurred, found that the civil aeronautics investigators had never set foot on the crash site; they had merely flown by helicopter to the area, hovered over it for a few minutes and returned to the capital to draw up their conclusions. He also learned that when Armand Edwards of the U.S. National Transportation Safety Board flew to Guatemala to lend his expertise to the investigation, the Guatemalan government made every effort to prevent him from reaching the site. First they attempted to frighten Edwards off by informing him that he should arm himself when he went to the crash area because it was a haven for dangerous guerrillas. When he asked to be flown to the site anyway, which was a fourteen-hour automobile trip from the capital, Edwards was told that all helicopters in Guatemala were grounded for maintenance and therefore he could not be flown to the area.⁵⁶ Since it is doubtful that this could be true, one can safely conclude that the Guatemalan government did not want a U.S. expert on air accidents exploring the scene of the crash. From this and the several other points stated above, it appears that the Guatemalan authorities had something to conceal.

Maryknoll missionaries by tradition are buried in the country where they die. Thus Bill Woods and John Gauker were the first laid to rest in the order's niche in the Huehuetenango cemetery. Gauker, at the order's request and with his wife's approval, was buried as a Maryknoll lay missionary.

On November 23, a funeral mass was concelebrated in Guatemala City before a large congregation of mourners. Mrs. Woods, her daughter Dorothea, and sons John and James attended; all expressed strong doubts that Bill's death was accidental.⁵⁷ Phyllis Gauker was present along with her newborn daughter and three-year-old son. The following morning the bodies were driven by hearse on a four and a half hour journey to Huehuetenango, where a second funeral mass was said. A number of people, especially among the Indians, murmured that Father Woods and his passengers had probably been murdered. Many priests and several bishops expressed similar feelings, one even correctly predicting that Bill would be the first of many missionaries killed in Guatemala.⁵⁸

As might be expected, the Ixcán was soon occupied by the Guatemalan army, supposedly to root out guerrillas. Union leaders, peasant organizers, tourists, foreigners, and journalists were no longer permitted to go there. Less than two years after Bill Woods's death, to the east of the Indian project a labyrinth of dirt roads had been built by Basic Resources, a European oil conglomerate. A highway crossing the Ixcán cooperatives was being constructed under the personal supervision of President Lucas García; when completed it would connect his newly acquired lands with the operations of Basic Resources.⁵⁹ Father Karl Stetter, sent by the local bishop to replace Woods, was expelled from Guatemala in 1979.⁶⁰ In March 1982 over three hundred people were murdered by the army at La Unión, one of Father Woods's *pueblos*. Similar massacres were carried out by the military throughout the Ixcán project from March to June. There were also a few individual assassinations committed by the guerrillas.⁶¹

This caused the evacuation of all of the Ixcán Grande—all of Fr. Bill Woods' centers (and their *aldeas* [neighboring villages])—in the spring of 1982. The people made it back to their pueblos of origin or, the majority, 20,000 people maybe, fled to Mexico which was an hour's walk for some or even up to two months or more for others, having to live and hide in the jungle on the way.

Today 4th Pueblo, La Unión, Maylon, La Resurrección . . . and Los Angeles are still abandoned. First Center and Xalbal are again functioning . . . not with the original inhabitants but with other Guatemalans, Indians and Ladinos, brought in from other pueblos by the army.⁶²

Today the jungles of the Ixcán and Quiché are so heavily owned by the Guatemalan military that the *campesinos* have sarcastically dubbed the area the "Zone of the Generals."⁶³

Was Bill Woods murdered by the generals? The authors asked this question of several missionaries. All feel certain that he was. But most telling is the claim of one priest. According to him, some Guatemalan friends, after having attended a social function with military personnel, told him that they actually heard a few inebriated officers boasting about having killed Woods.⁶⁴

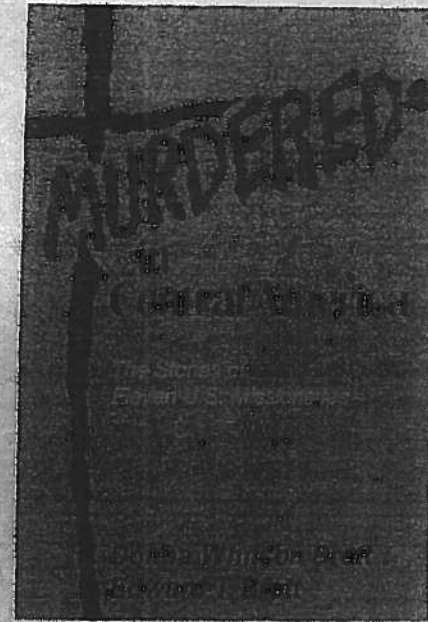
Most thought-provoking, however, are the words of Bishop McCarthy, who notes that Bill and his four companions were not the only victims: "He was murdered, though I can't prove it. He made the difference in thousands of people's lives. He was snuffed out when he could make the difference in thousands more."⁶⁵

WILLIAM WOODS

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2. Letter from Reverend A. E. Smith to the authors, January 4, 1985.
3. Sandoval-McCarthy interview.
4. Reverend William McIntire, "Memo to the Maryknoll General Council on the Death of Fr. William Woods and Others," (December 14, 1976), p. 4, in William Woods file, Maryknoll Archives, Maryknoll, N.Y.
5. Ron Chernow, "The Strange Death of Bill Woods: Did He Fly Too Far in the Zone of the Generals?" *Mother Jones*, May 1979, p. 35.
6. Sandoval-McCarthy interview.
7. Letter from Smith to the authors, January 4, 1985.
8. Undated essay by William Woods, Woods file, Maryknoll Archives.
9. Sandoval-McCarthy interview.
10. Father Rafael Dávila, telephone interview with the authors, January 12, 1985.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid.
13. Walter LaFeber, *Inevitable Revolutions: The United States in Central America* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1984), p. 8.
14. Chernow, p. 35.
15. The above description is taken in part from the authors' "A Teacher and a Martyr in Guatemala," *America*, October 30, 1982, p. 253.
16. Phillip Berryman, *The Religious Roots of Rebellion: Christians in Central American Revolutions* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1984), pp. 35-36.
17. Ibid., pp. 163-64.
18. Stephen Schlesinger and Stephen Kinzer, *Bitter Fruit: The Untold Story of the American Coup in Guatemala* (New York: Anchor Books, 1983); Berryman, pp. 35-39, 163-67.
19. Schlesinger and Kinzer, pp. 106-107.
20. Berryman, p. 169.
21. Ibid., pp. 170-73; Benjamin Keen and Mark Wasserman, *A Short History of Latin America*, 2nd ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1984), pp. 441-42.
22. Quoted in Chernow, p. 34.
23. Sandoval-McCarthy interview.
24. Ibid.
25. Ibid; also, telephone conversation between McCarthy and authors, December 5, 1985.
26. Ibid.
27. Ibid.
28. Letter from William Woods, May 27, 1968.
29. Telephone interview between Father Rafael Dávila and the authors, January 12, 1985; letter from Dávila to the authors, February 27, 1985.
30. Sandoval-McCarthy interview.
31. Letter from Callan Graham to Father John McCormack, October 19, 1967, Woods file, Maryknoll Archives.
32. Quoted in Chernow, p. 37.

NOTES

33. Woods, "Accomplishments of the Proyecto Ixcán," appended to a letter from Father Woods to President Laugerud García of Guatemala, May 17, 1976.
34. Chernow, p. 37.
35. Woods, "Report of Army Interference in Ixcán," January 14, 1976, p. 1, Woods file, Maryknoll Archives.
36. Ibid., pp. 1-2.
37. Sandoval-McCarthy interview; note from Ronald Hennessey to the authors, December 26, 1985.
38. Ronald W. Hennessey, "Report on the Plane Crash of Father William H. Woods on November 20, 1976, by Father Ronald W. Hennessey, Regional Superior of the Maryknoll Fathers, to Father Raymond A. Hill, Superior General," Woods file, Maryknoll Archives.
39. Ibid.
40. Letter from Father Woods to President Laugerud, May 17, 1976, Woods file, Maryknoll Archives.
41. Hennessey, "Report," pp. 7-8.
42. McIntire, p. 1.
43. Sandoval-McCarthy interview.
44. McIntire, pp. 1-3.
45. Hennessey, "Report," p. 1.
46. Ibid., p. 4; see also Chernow, p. 32.
47. Hennessey, "Report," p. 6.
48. Ibid., p. 2.
49. Ibid., p. 8.
50. McIntire, p. 3; see also Hennessey, p. 2.
51. McIntire, p. 3.
52. Hennessey, "Report," pp. 5-6.
53. Ibid., p. 7.
54. Chernow, p. 41.
55. Hennessey, "Report," p. 6; note from Hennessey to the authors, December 26, 1985.
56. Chernow, p. 41.
57. McIntire, p. 4.
58. Ibid., pp. 4-6.
59. Chernow, p. 36.
60. Ibid.
61. Letter written at the request of the authors from a source who wishes to remain anonymous and signs his name "a person who was there." The letter is undated but was received in May 1985.
62. Ibid.
63. Chernow, p. 32.
64. This priest wishes to remain anonymous. Three other Maryknoll priests have confirmed his story in interviews or written correspondence with the authors. They are Fathers Jim Curtin, Emmet Farrell, and Ron Michels.
65. Sandoval-McCarthy interview.



(picture of the jacket of the book from which this is taken., "Murdered in Central America")

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