



Perspective

By JAMIE BUCKINGHAM

The list is long. It includes, among others, such as these: Dr. Tom Dooley, died in Indo-China; Dr. Paul Carlson, shot by Mau Maus in the Congo; Dr. Bill Wallace, died in a Communist prison in China; Nate Saint, Jim Elliot and three others, killed by Auca Indians in Ecuador; John and Betty Stam, beheaded by Communists in China; C. T. Studd, died in Africa; David Livingstone, died in Africa; Hugh Latimer, burned at the stake in England; John Hus, burned at the stake in Czechoslovakia; Simon Peter, crucified by Romans; Paul, beheaded by Romans; Stephen, stoned by infuriated Pharisees; John the Baptist, beheaded by Herod—and a host of others.

Now add to this list the names of Paul and Nancy Potter, murdered last week in the Dominican Republic.

Paul, 38, and his beautiful wife Nancy, 36, were Southern Baptist missionaries to the Dominican Republic. One morning last week their two children, ages 12 and 10, got up and found their mother and father in a blood-soaked bed where they had been beaten and stabbed to death during the night. Anti-American slogans had been written on Paul's car parked in the driveway.

The Potters, natives of Marshfield, Missouri, had been missionaries since 1965 and had been back in Santiago less than a month after spending a year in the United States on their first furlough. Now their bodies, accompanied by their two small children, have been returned to the States.

I remember Paul as a fellow student, full of life and laughter, yet totally dedicated to taking the message of

Jesus to foreign lands. Like most 20th century missionaries I am sure the possibility of martyrdom had crossed his mind, but Paul was so busy proclaiming that I doubt if he ever had time to grow anxious over his future.

Yet someone has said that the blood of martyrs is the seed of the Gospel. The world can stamp out missionaries, but it has never been able to stamp out the mission.

David Livingstone crisscrossed Africa proclaiming that all men should be free. He died there, never knowing that it was because of his message that the back of the slave trade in Africa had been broken. They returned his body to be buried in Westminster Abbey, but not before the grateful African minister had cut out his heart and buried it in the black soil he loved so well. Now Africa leaders say that the seeds planted by Livingstone are the primary reason for the new liberty and nationalism in this emerging continent.

The assurance of life and safety for the missionary is still an unknown luxury. Some go on their own, leaving all and trusting that God will provide for them. Others, like the Potters, have a gigantic mission board behind them. Yet none are immune from danger and even death.

The death of the Potters simply brings into sharp focus the forces that are doing battle in this world. It reminds us what the Apostle Paul said, who was himself martyred, "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."