Safety Net

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African Odyssey II

by Steve Quigg

Kampala, Lubumbashi, Lusaka, Luanshya. These are not words that roll easily off the tongues of the majority of people in this world. Fewer still would recognize them as hot-spots of missionary aviation. But after our trip to Africa in March and April we know not only the names and the places, but also the people who work there and the vibrant ministries that they represent.

Don Woodward Photo

Joining Jon Egeler and Joe Hopkins to complete the MSI Team, it was a trip down déjà vu lane for Gail and me as we visited anew places that have captured and held so many memories of our past. Kampala, Uganda was the first stop on this, our latest trip for MSI, but it also happened to be on the itinerary of our very first trip in 2001 when we were trying to figure out just what the Lord was doing in leading us to work with this unique safety organization. Six years and a score of trips later, we were back again, remembering our past through the eyes of the present.

There wasn't much time to plumb any spiritual depths this time around, however, as we were just doing a "touch and go," spending enough time in town to present MSI's "To Live Another Day" Safety Seminar, but little else. Familiar faces in the audience were few and far between as Joe, Jon, Gail and I did our presentations, but it's sort of the nature of the beast that there will be generous turn-over in large aviation programs. MAF-Europe has one of their bigger bases there, and MAF-US uses Kampala as a "home away from home" for their significant Eastern Congo program whenever the political situation in Congo becomes too tenuous (as it has been recently).

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AIRMAP Program Launched!

Many years of vision, hard work, perseverance and cooperation were rewarded on May 31, 2007 with the launch of the **Aviation Insurance and Risk Management Alliance Program (AIRMAP)** for missionary aviation. This momentous event will have a long-term impact on missions around the world, and is the result of a tremendous cooperative effort by many different parties.

We are truly grateful for the support and encouragement of so many as we worked to bring together very diverse ministries for specific purposes. God's hand was evident as we saw an unprecedented spirit of unity and cooperation as ministries caught the vision of working together in this area for the benefit of all, and ultimately for the furtherance of the Kingdom of God. We are excited at the possibilities that lie before us, and we look forward to even more ministries joining the program in the next few months.

Credit for the successful launch of this program goes ultimately to God, who enabled each of the many, many contributors to be involved in some way; whether it was in sharing the vision, giving financially and sacrificially, in prayer support, offering professional advice, using online tools, analyzing data, negotiating with underwriters, writing up the memorandum of understanding, designing the plan, critiquing concepts, or many of the other myriad of things that went into it. As mentioned previously in the ***Safety Net***, cooperation is key to the future, and this program is evidence of that.

As we continue to work with AIRMAP, particularly through our Regional Safety Verification Program (RSVP), we look forward to tremendous improvements in safety, where precious human lives and physical resources will be saved for advancing God's Kingdom and significant dollars are conserved for His use. Thank you so much for being a part of it!

Jon Egeler
President

Steve Quigg Photo

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Just down the road in Entebbe, **AIM AIR** maintains one of their satellite programs with a couple of planes and several families.

You might suspect that with all those pilots and planes in the area that there would be a lot of Christian ministry taking place, and your powers of reasoning would be spot on. However, many people fail to make the chicken and the egg connection. While aviation programs are often created to support already existing church ministries, in cases such as this, many more ministries exist because the planes are there in the first place!

Kampala-based pilots see everything from the impenetrable jungles of equatorial Congo to the barren wastes of the Sahara desert. Of more importance is what they fly over—hundreds of miles of land devoid of any usable roadway on one hand and hundreds of additional miles filled with roving bands of militias and bandits on the other. In between are millions of souls needing the touch of the Master's hand, something that can only be realized through personal contact with the pastors, evangelists, doctors and missionaries that arrive with those pilots.

Taking all those pilots and mechanics out of their daily routines to attend a safety seminar might seem counter-productive to the "real task" of spreading the Gospel, but it actually produces a long-term gain in effectiveness as they take what they learn and make adjustments to their daily routines and attitudes. After all, a banged up plane or aviator can do little ministry.

Bryan Wilson Photo

Somewhere in the transition from Kampala to Lusaka, Zambia, we lost Joe from the MSI team (he decided to divert to Ecuador instead!), but picked up Don Woodward, a United Methodist pilot survivor of the Congo war years of the late 90's. The last time I had flown with Don was when he was getting his plane out of Congo to keep it from being seized for the war effort—again! The last time we had seen **Flying Mission** was when they were in the midst of losing their Botswana government contract for doing medical flights. The financial bottom fell out of their flight ministry in Botswana when that happened, but at the same time, they were being approached about opening a new flight ministry in Zambia. Three years later, here they were in

Jon Egeler Photo

Lusaka with four aircraft, three pilot families and more of both on the way. With such a large transition and a new program start, it was critical to Flying Mission to establish a safety baseline for their program. They wanted to make sure that they were on the right track with their plans and had established a reasonable safety posture amongst their staff. They had, but they wouldn't have really known that unless MSI took the time to thoroughly look at their program and provide them with an experienced and unbiased perspective.

Luanshya is just a dusty crossroads between Ndola and Kitwe in Zambia's Copperbelt region, but it is also the home of the **Kafakumba Training Center,** an ambitious church project that uses a banana plantation, woodworking shop, aloe vera farm,

Jon Egeler Photo

and farming cooperative to support an active pastor's training school and a diverse array of church ministries. It also made the ideal place to gather area pilots for another Safety Seminar—Flying Mission pilots from Lusaka, **Christian Mission in Many Lands** (CMML) pilots from Zambia's northwest, and **United Methodist** pilots from Congo. Somehow, presenting a seminar seems easier the second time around and the more relaxed atmosphere provided lots of encouragement for group discussion and interaction. It was hard to get too formal when the seminar had to compete with the thunder of torrential rain on a tin roof, friendly dogs vying for attention in the audience, and neighborhood kids taking the short-cut through our open-sided auditorium. Still, it was a remarkably good session, notable for the camaraderie developed between people from four different organizations and four different nationalities.

The last time Gail and I traveled the road between Zambia and Congo, there was a war on and the whole experience reeked of tension, mistrust, and hassle. The World War of Africa that played out on Congo soil from 1997-2004 left an estimated 4 million people dead, the worst such conflict since World War II. The recovery will be long, hard and painful, but we were grateful that the worst of the conflict was finally a thing of the past. Although the ride across the border was somewhat more relaxed and trouble free this time around, the difference would have been lost on most casual observers. We were just praying that the results of our foray into Congo to visit the United Methodist aviation programs would be worth the effort.

Two of their programs are based in Lubumbashi, with a third located in Kananga in the center of that vast country. The Methodist programs are remarkable in that they are completely "second-generation" in the ecclesiastical sense. Even when I was flying there more than 15 years ago, I was working under the leadership of my Congolese colleague who served as both Aviation Manager and Chief Pilot. Now, the entire aviation department is Congolese and the supervision of the aviation programs is completely done by indigenous church leadership. While that arrangement has presented its own challenges, the programs managed to keep operating during the war years, something that simply wouldn't have been possible with expatriate staff.

Jon Egeler Photo

> …one cannot touch Africa without being profoundly affected by the resilience of its peoples, the immensity of its lands, and the weight of its burdens.

Bryan Wilson Photo

Our five-day Congo visit was highlighted by two particularly significant events. The first was that the United Methodist programs made the commitment to hammer out a new Operations Manual based on the guidelines developed during MSI's Safety Summit in 2005. Their previous Ops Manual was just a rework of one borrowed from another flight organization; this one was completely their own. It now reflects the way they actually operate and commits them to holding to the standards they have chosen to maintain. What a huge and profound event! The second item of note was the discovery of a badly cracked landing gear casting on one of their Cessna 206s during a courtesy maintenance check. Another few landings on some of their bush strips and this airplane may have very well ended up in an MSI accident report. Even as I write this, the casting is being replaced and the plane prepared for the heavy flying that is coming up soon during the church's annual conference sessions this summer.

Lechwe Photo

Meet the Lotts

by Jon Egeler

Evalynn, David, Sally and Kathryn Lott. Son Gordon not pictured.

Dave and Sally Lott have been serving with **Flying Mission** since 1998. As Chief Pilot and pastoral care provider for the Zambia flight program, Dave's duties are varied. Flying a busy flight schedule in addition to keeping track of the other pilots' proficiency as well as their spiritual well-being might mean sweating in the cockpit or sitting under a shade tree discussing Scripture. Dave also serves as a liaison with government officials in Zambia, where his people skills are also put to good use. Along with homeschooling their 3 children, Gordon (19), Evalynn (16), and Kathryn (13), Sally has kept busy in the Lord's service, too. Since Gordon is now in the US at college, she "only" has two teenagers to homeschool, and yet finds time to be very involved with hospitality, encouraging and mentoring ladies, keeping Dave cared for, and reaching out to the community.

What background could serve as preparation for this type of service to God's Kingdom?

Dave grew up in California and Washington, attending college at UWA in Seattle, where he received a B.S. in Aeronautical Engineering. Joining the Air Force, he flew EC-135 aircraft for 15 years, then spent 5 years coordinating the cross ocean flights of fighter jets.

Dave and Sally met in Omaha, Nebraska during Dave's first assignment, and were married in 1985. During their Air Force career, they found out about missionary aviation and began supporting a number of missionary pilot families because they wanted to invest in God's Kingdom. Originally, Dave had wanted to join the airlines after a 6-year stint in the Air Force, but they were not hiring then. Subsequently, they decided to stay in and go for a pension, thus allowing them more freedom to seek service in God's work.

You might think that 20 years of experience in the Air Force would have adequately prepared the Lotts for service as a missionary pilot/mechanic family, but they did not meet all the requirements yet. Four more years would pass in preparation, as Dave attended school to get his Airframe and Powerplant mechanic's licenses, received specialized flight training at Moody Aviation and JAARS, and worked on raising the support they needed.

At long last they joined the Africa Evangelical Fellowship (now SIM) and were assigned to serve with Flying Mission in Gabarone, Botswana. Before two years had passed, they had moved to Maun, Botswana, where they lived for over 6 years before coming to Zambia last year.

Flying Mission Zambia has been experiencing rapid growth, as there are many groups needing their service. Long distances, flood seasons, and bad road conditions all add up to a need to use aircraft. Dave quickly rattled off a list of eight different mission groups that regularly use their aircraft, plus local Zambians and visitors.

MSI has provided services to Flying Mission over the past several years. Dave says he has appreciated our safety consultations, which have brought about many positive changes in their operations, leading to greater safety in their efforts for the Kingdom.

How can you pray for the Lotts? They would like to ask that the Lord would provide quality time to stay in His Word, and they would take advantage of it; for Gordon attending Virginia Tech, that God would bring influential people into his life, and he would stay close to the Lord, have a good experience, and find a good place to stay in the summer; for Sally and the girls, that they would find home schooling enjoyable and be persistent in it.

MSI

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It's one of those great paradoxes in life that it's always great to leave home—but even better to return! Yet, one cannot touch Africa without being profoundly affected by the resilience of its peoples, the immensity of its lands, and the weight of its burdens. The missionary pilots who operate on that continent make an everlasting dent in the world of despair by shrinking the miles, lightening the load, and giving wings to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It was a privilege indeed to have served those who serve the Lord so well.

MSI

Harold Berk Photo

The International Association of Mission Aviation (IAMA) recently held its 36th Annual Conference in Grand Rapids, Michigan. The **School of Missionary Aviation Technology** (SMAT), led by Howard VanHorn, hosted this year's Conference.

Never the same two years in a row, this Conference again displayed its unique contribution to mission aviation. It provided the opportunity for many different and separate organizations to come together in a forum where networking occurs, mutual respect is evident, insights are gained and new initiatives taken.

Harold Berk Photo

In 1972, IAMA started as simply a fellowship. Some things grow fast—some things take time to ripen. Initial growth was slow. The focus was on function, not form. Each mission was doing its best to build its own aviation ministry. Thus preoccupied with their own interests, participation by various agencies in IAMA in the early days was a bit lukewarm. Still, annual IAMA Conferences were held.

During the 1990 IAMA Conference at Missionary Maintenance Services (MMS), the decision was made to formally incorporate IAMA. Ernie Krenzin became the first president, followed by Hank Cook, Al Meehan, John Armstrong and Chuck Daly—newly elected at the recent 2007 Conference. IAMA continues to mature organizationally and indeed has become a forum for enhancing the cause of mission aviation.

Harold Berk Photo

This year's Conference was not the largest in terms of participation, but was significant in terms of the scope of issues and the opportunities considered. Spiritual challenges were well addressed by both devotional speaker Rev. Joe Gerkin, Executive Director of New Creations Ministries and keynote speaker Mr. Ron Hutchcraft, of multifaceted Hutchcraft Ministries. The joy of salvation, the role of prayer, the calling of God and challenges facing Christians in ministry today were not lost on attendees.

Harold Berk Photo

Harold Berk Photo

Steve Quigg Photo

Insights and updates on new and continuing projects and products were evident. Jim McGee of **Global Mapping International** interacted with participants, gathering data to finalize Phase Three of his study of Mission Aviation—for the benefit of the many different "stakeholders" in world-wide mission aviation. Significant also was the information that a specialized Quest Kodiak training school (**Spokane Training Center**) is planned for construction adjacent to the new Moody Aviation. **LeTourneau University** also is developing a specialized Kodiak training program. **Liberty University**, having a long-standing aviation program, showed plans for a whole new training facility, with emphasis on mission pilot training. Jonas Olsen presented the case for **Blue Sky Network**, a satellite based commercial automatic position reporting system. Jon Egeler of **MSI** filled in details of the AIRMAP insurance program, then within final days of its start-up. Lee Smoll, Director of the **Mission Aviation Support Association** (MASA) , updated attendees on the essentials of involvement in this year's upcoming EAA Airventure. Rounding out the program were updates from participating mission representatives.

Harold Berk Photo

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Harold Berk Photo

The IAMA Leadership Team (l. to r.): John Armstrong (Treasurer), Herman Teachout (retiring), Steve Quigg, (Advisory), Scott Paulson (Secretary), Jerry Meil (Vice President), John Lemmon (Advisory), Howard VanHorn (retiring), (name deleted), Lauren Bitikofer (Advisory), and Chuck Daly (President). Not pictured are Victor Lipsey (Advisory) and Jon Egeler (Advisory).

Prior to the Friday evening Banquet, Conference participants visited SMAT operations in nearby Lowell. The tour enabled guests to understand more clearly the history of SMAT and to get a taste of its role in preparing individuals for a future in mission aviation.

Harold Berk Photo

Ruth Scheltema

Banquet speaker Ruth Scheltema, widow of **ABWE Aviation** pioneer Hank Scheltema, shared stories of the Lord's faithfulness to them as they opened up an aviation program in the Amazon river area of Brazil in 1958. She told of the Lord's leading to establish the ABWE aviation headquarters in Georgia, and then of their return to Brazil. In 2003, even as he was preparing to resume flying there, Hank went to be with the Lord. Through it all, she recounted the Lord's faithfulness in many different and difficult situations.

The Conference concluded on Saturday with the election of the new IAMA leadership for the next year. Retiring President John Armstrong handed the gavel (in this case a CD!) to incoming President Chuck Daly of JAARS.

Today's IAMA is bearing the fruit of the early visionaries. Christian fellowship, glimpses of the current status of mission aviation around the world and agency networking of both small and large organizations are among the continuing blessings and benefits of IAMA. As the world charges on, changing with a rapidity not seen in earlier years, the value of IAMA continues to grow. May it retain its vitality and may its fruit remain—for the good of each and all.

MSI

John Armstrong Chuck Daly

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