Safety Net

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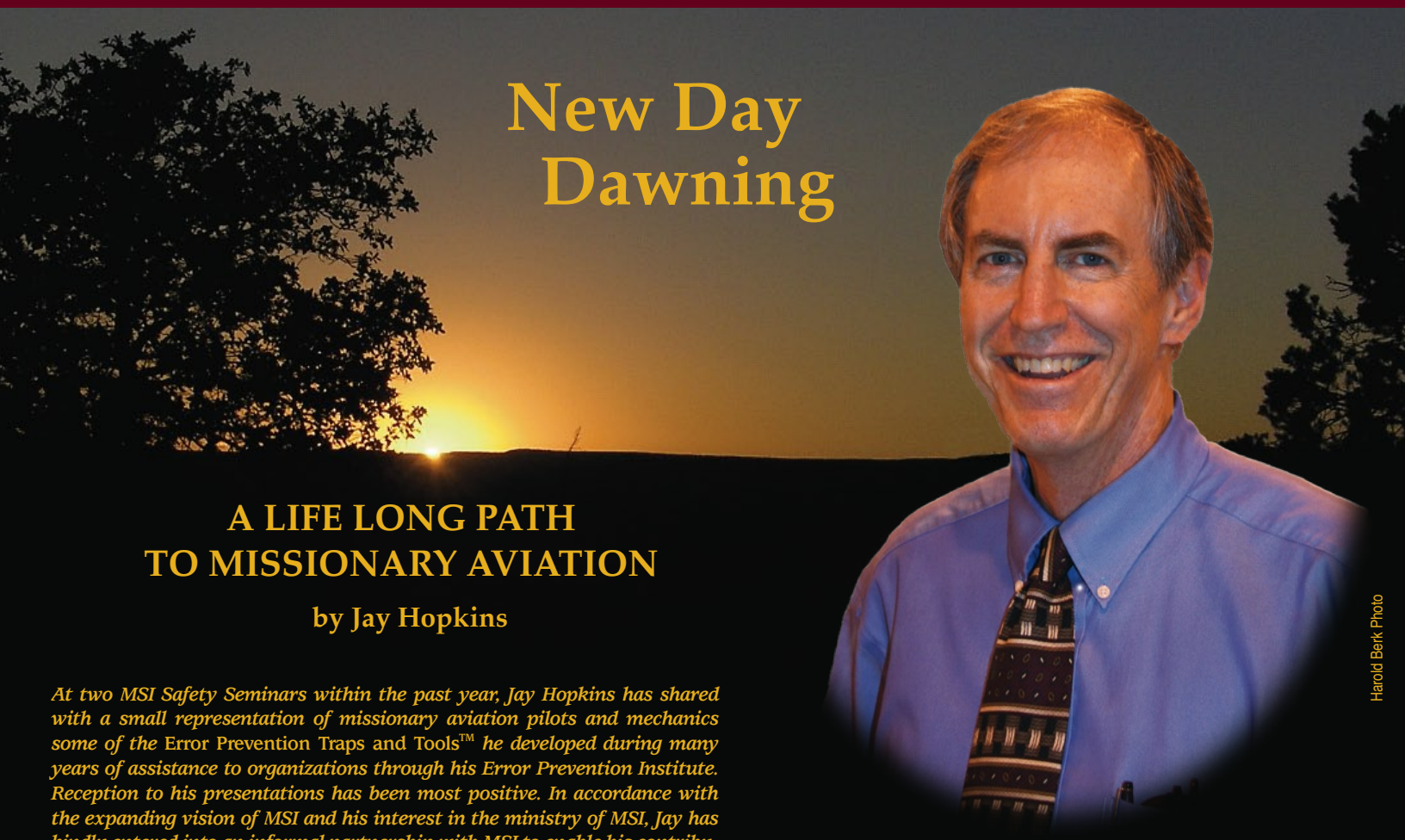
New Day Dawning



Harold Berk Photo

A LIFE LONG PATH TO MISSIONARY AVIATION

by Jay Hopkins

At two MSI Safety Seminars within the past year, Jay Hopkins has shared with a small representation of missionary aviation pilots and mechanics some of the Error Prevention Traps and Tools™ *he developed during many years of assistance to organizations through his Error Prevention Institute. Reception to his presentations has been most positive. In accordance with the expanding vision of MSI and his interest in the ministry of MSI, Jay has kindly entered into an informal partnership with MSI to enable his contributions to be shared with the greater missions community. It is our great privilege to introduce Jay to you.* *Editor*

It can be interesting and exciting to look back over your life and see the plan of God unfolding year by year in a series of "steering moments" when God changed the course of your life, sometimes in a miraculous fashion. For the first half of my life, although I believed in God and could even see him working in my life, I never took the step of dedicating my life to Christ. My primary interest was in aviation. In 1965, before I even had a driver's license I got a job at Syracuse Flying School, in Syracuse, NY, polishing planes, fueling planes and sweeping the hangar floor. I was paid in flying lessons—one lesson for every two and half days I worked. I soloed that way and later worked line service for International Fueling at Hanscom Field in Bedford, MA, to complete my private and commercial ratings. Eventually I got a job as a flight instructor at a little airport in Norfolk, MA, and then had my own flight school and charter business in upstate New York, first in Potsdam and later in Ogdensburg.

I worked a number of other aviation jobs after that, including charter, corporate, and commuter airline, eventually getting my multi-engine ATP, along with instrument and glider instructor. The amazing thing is that even though I was what I now consider a "little" Christian who didn't even attend church and had never read the Bible, during this time I had a continuing interest in missionary aviation, and even a desire to be a missionary pilot. At one point I discovered an organization I believe was called Christian Airman's Fellowship, or CAF, that supported missionary aviation and sent for information. I was filling out the membership form when I came to a question about when I was born again. I wrote at least a page and a half very defensive reply (that I never actually sent) about how I had my own relationship with God and who were they to require that I have this certain experience of being born again!

Finally when I was 30 years old I got the call. I had been invited to church by a neighbor and the sermon just happened to be on "gate leaners," people who walk up to the narrow gate, maybe kind of peek through, even watch other people going through, but never actually walk through the gate themselves.

Background Photo by Steve Quigg

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Mission Effectiveness

The Mission Was Successful!" reads the headlines after a rescue of hostages is completed. We all love to read stories that end with 'mission accomplished!' or 'success!'. What does it take to be effective and succeed, and to accomplish our mission?

The first thing is to define the mission. If we don't know what our objectives are, we are not likely to accomplish them! After that, we make plans, and break down the whole objective into smaller steps or goals. We also try to include flexibility, to allow for success even if one of the intermediate steps can not be accomplished successfully.

What does this have to do with safety? Our mission here at MSI is to help spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the ends of the earth. In order for us to accomplish that, we need to have intermediate goals and plans. Our role in the Body of Christ has been to allow maximum use of the resources—both people and equipment—that God has given by helping to prevent accidents. While we continue in that role, it has become evident that there is a need for us to do more.

Since late 2003, Global Mapping International (www.gmi.org) has been conducting a research project on missionary aviation. Their results, recently released as Flight Plan—Exploring the Present and Future of Mission Aviation, Phase 1, are not a surprise to those of us involved in missionary aviation. Rather, they confirm what we have all sensed—that there are major shifts and changes going on in missions in general, and by extension, missionary aviation. Responding to these changes and shifts, and anticipating others, we must all be ready to make changes to the way we have been doing things for many years.

Two of the areas identified in the Flight Plan report resonate with us, as they confirm requests we have received from mission organizations we serve. These are 1) exploring ways to be more effective and efficient and 2) researching and applying new technology.

As you know, we are already deeply involved in the research of new technology. We want to continue with that, as we see it as using resources God has provided to reach the lost.

While we have always sought to enable those organizations we serve to be more effective, this goal has been somewhat implied and not overtly stated. That is about to change. The MSI Board of Directors affirmed in their meeting that just occurred on October 28 and 29 that this is a direction MSI wants to and needs to take. They are even considering whether a change to our purpose statement as stated in our bylaws needs to be made to reflect this. In short, from now on, MSI will be emphasizing our ministry to help Christian organizations involved in aviation be more effective in accomplishing the task of reaching the world for Christ. In the coming months, we will see what forms this will take, as we explore where God is leading us. We appreciate your partnership with us in this endeavor.

Jon Egeler
President

First Joseph G. Hopkins, Jr. Safety Award Presented to Captain Terry Moose

During the October 2005 Board meeting, Jon Egeler made the first presentation of the Joseph G. Hopkins, Jr. Safety Award to retired American Airlines Captain Terry Moose. In company with other professional pilots, Terry participated in the very first intermission safety seminar in Anapolis, Goias, Brazil, in 1966. Terry shared thoughts of that first seminar and how the things discovered there led to further efforts on his part to assist in improving safety in mission organizations. Terry's firm commitment led to his participation in more than 60 Safety Surveys and Seminars over his decades of service to MSI. We offer our heartiest congratulations and share his recent letter below:

November 5, 2005

Dear Jon and MSI Board,

I deeply appreciate the honor that you and the MSI Board bestowed upon me last Friday, October 28, 2005. There are so many memories associated with it—countless jungle and mountain strips—the faces of the various people served as well as those many faces of those serving in many varied capacities. What has impressed me the most is the advance of knowledge and sophistication from the first seminar to the present—from programs put together by mimeographed materials to the present power-point computerized presentations, even though the seminars might be deep in the jungle.

My goal from the beginning was to bring the mission groups from franchised territories into working as a unit to open the fields to the common goal of bringing His love to those who didn't know Him. I believe that MSI is on the verge of bringing this about.

My prayers will always be that you will be attuned to His calling and His supplying of all your needs.

In His Love,
Terry Moose

Meet MSI Board Member Ed Robinson

MSI interviewed Ed Robinson, who recently joined the MSI Board. We believe you will be interested in what he has to say. Editor

The Robinson name has been around for over half a century in missionary aviation training circles—your father initiated Moody Aviation at MBI right after WWII. Did this influence your decision to become interested in mission aviation?

There were at least two ways that God used my home environment to shape my future. The first was to develop an antipathy for missionary aviation. It had nothing to do with aviation or missions, nor was it a reaction to the fact that it made my dad so busy he rarely had time to play ball with me. Instead, it was an adolescent reaction, often manifesting itself in others as "rebellion." People would meet me and say, "Oh, you are Paul's son. You probably want to be a missionary pilot like your dad." That was the "turn-off." I wanted to be known, not as just Paul's boy, but as Ed Robinson in his own right, whatever that might be.

What was the second way your home influence brought you to where you are today?

The other way was that at the same time, other than a fleeting childhood desire to be a cook in the Navy so I could see the world and be on the ocean, I never had any "secular" vocational ambition. It was obvious to me that my folks were devoting their lives to promoting kingdom of God values when they could have been doing other things much more financially rewarding. Until I could see some reason why that was not important, I aspired similarly, with the single exception that I didn't want to do it in missionary aviation. I did want to serve God in some way.

Harold Berk Photo

How then was your interest in missionary aviation triggered?

After high school, I went to Moody Bible Institute to begin my formal biblical foundation which would be needed in serving Christ. After the first missions conference, my major of general biblical studies gave way to a missions emphasis. After a three-year diploma with Greek, Hebrew, and German, I went to Michigan State to obtain a bachelors degree. I then spent two years as an Assistant to a Pastor, working with youth and going to seminary. My strong interest in foreign missions and a growing disenchantment with the trivia that seemed to consume the American church (as I perceived it from my little perspective) plus a last-minute vacancy in Moody's missionary aviation training Flight Camp evaluation week resulted in a strange turn of events for me.

What happened?

Being the wise though not formally trained psychologist my dad was, he suggested that part of finding God's will for my life involved eliminating certain things, like aviation. "You take a fresh, less biased look at missionary aviation, and we will evaluate your suitability and aptitude so you can put this behind you and get on with the rest of your life!" I wish I could say that I had a Damascus Road or otherwise deeply spiritual experience during that Flight Camp. At week's end, I had been accepted for training, if I chose to accept the opportunity by the following Monday morning at 8:00 a.m. when the new school year started.

So you made a decision?

Out of a desire for relief and direction, I started aviation training that I knew I would enjoy. I found that I could do the maintenance and flight thing fairly well and fairly easily. Not very spiritual, but in the rear view mirror, I can see how God used that event almost 40 years ago to set in motion something that hasn't stopped yet. So it is not without reason that I conclude that God can use anybody who is willing to follow him whether or not he/she has a traditionally defined "call." My wife's "call" was similarly unimpressive.

How did you meet your wife?

Between my first and second year of training at Moody Aviation, the decision was made to re-locate the training program from Wooddale, Illinois, near the MBI campus in Chicago, to Elizabethton, Tennessee. Still being single, leaving my home area cast my hopes of finding a wife before going overseas against the rocks. I had figured that some of the finest women in the world were single-lady missionaries and that's probably what God had for me. However, when I discovered a nice girl in the alto section of the choir at a church I attended in Tennessee, I took a second look. The man singing bass next to me turned out to be her father, and her mother was the church pianist and choir accompanist. It scared me to death when six months later I found myself engaged to be married to her. It's now quite obvious that she is the one God had been setting aside to share life with even though I didn't know it then. She hadn't been anticipating missionary service, but knew that was part of the package if she married me.

Do you have children?

Nancy and I have two special blessings, David and Amy. David lives half a block away from us in Elizabethton with his wife and 14-year old daughter, works for an environmental emergency response company and is a deacon in our church. Amy and her husband, Ben Snyder, a maintenance specialist, are in the Democratic Republic of Congo with MAF, and are awaiting the arrival of their first child. We enjoy them very much.

You were with MAF for many years. When and where was that?

After graduating from Moody Aviation, getting married, and flight instructing at Moody for a year and a half, we joined MAF and left for the Philippines in 1970. We were alone without any other MAF personnel in the program, but it was a good transition to our next place of service. We were there less than a year and a half until we closed out the program. We were able to pass the little bit of essential flying we did to JAARS because of their base just 50 miles away. After packing up, shipping our stuff, spending six months in language school and ferrying one of the Philippine airplanes to Sentani, we transferred to Irian Jaya where there was twice as much to do as the present staff could accomplish. We went from fairly modern to quite primitive, from not very busy to way too busy. It was fun to be part of a big team but quite a change in terms of location and living conditions. Little did we realize that our next assignment, after furlough, would be another 150 miles further

out back. We flew the float plane in an isolated location living again on a base by ourselves. An enormously destructive earthquake and a need for a school teacher at MAF's main base put us back in Sentani with a dozen other missionary families where there were cars, stores, and other aggravations/conveniences like electricity and drinkable water.

What occasioned your leaving MAF service?

Flying, maintenance, bookkeeping, and managing were all part of our task with MAF. Maintaining a growing family, providing hospitality, reaching out and encouraging others were also part of daily living. The tropics, the mountains, the isolation, the teamwork, the cross-cultural living, the separation, the disappointments and the challenges were the context of our dozen years in Irian Jaya. We returned to Elizabethton, Nancy's home, only knowing that we needed to spend a minimum of two years addressing some specific educational needs for our kids. Just five days before leaving Indonesia, we received a letter asking if I could help out at Moody Aviation as a flight instructor during summer school. What looked like instructing recent graduates working on their CFI for six weeks turned out to be 14 years of instructing and 7 years directing the Moody Aviation program.

Harold Berk Photo

You were Moody Aviation Director when the Elizabethton facility was closed. How has that affected your life?

At the time it was a great disappointment to me, but it has turned out to give me an unexpected and exciting opportunity. Because of a long-standing working arrangement with Franklin Graham and Samaritan's Purse (SP), when the tsunami occurred in December 2004, I was free to lend a hand in the relief and rebuilding effort at the other end of Indonesia. Since leaving Moody in the summer of that year, I had been helping SP help Moody students, other mission aviation candidates and furloughees by conducting training in the SP Alaska-based Cessna Caravan. Franklin's foresight into the need for missions to move toward turbine engine aircraft positioned me to be able to take the plane to Indonesia and fly it there in the recovery effort. So it has been a great privilege to assist in the SP projects and work with MAF, doing the flying, and some training, in the province of Aceh, in North Sumatra. I currently spend 6 weeks in Sumatra and then 6 weeks in Elizabethton, alternately.

What brought you to MSI as a Board Member?

MSI had been providing safety services to MA since MSI began and I met monthly with Joe Hopkins in that role for many years. Both MSI board member Keith Ericson and his son-in-law, Jon Egeler, were colleagues at Moody Aviation. I didn't have to be educated about MSI when I was approached about serving on the board. I have appreciated what MSI has done for safety both at Moody and throughout the mission aviation community. Being a part of the MSI team is a great privilege, especially since leaving Moody, thinking my aviation days were over. Surprise!

From your many years in training as well as in direct aviation service, how do you see current mission aviation operations? Has safety improved over the years?

Safety is one of those things one has to go out of his way to measure, and promote. Un-safety, on the other hand, toots its own horn and is obvious to everyone around. So when safety improves, no one but the safety people will naturally notice. To most, it just happens because nothing bad (unsafe) happened. When the number of casualties and fatalities decreases in mission aviation, as it has in the MSI affiliated organizations over the years, only MSI seems to notice. It seems disingenuous for MSI to say so, but if we don't, who will? If we don't keep records and graphically portray them to stakeholders, it often goes unnoticed. Another unique feature about safety is that it is only significant over time. If we institute a safety measure, we can say that it is immediately effective because there were no accidents the first day, or probably the second either. But it really doesn't become significant until a certain amount of time passes and there are still no after-the-accident costs to bear. If we don't keep records, who knows what certain amount of time is required to become significant?

You speak of after-the-accidents costs. What about the cost of safety or the lack of it?

To institute safety measures and to instill safe attitudes and practices does have a cost, but it is a fraction of the costs incurred by having accidents. Strangely, people don't seem to want to pay now when nothing bad is happening to reduce the risk of bad things happening in the future. And if bad things don't happen, it's too easy to conclude that they wouldn't have happened anyway, without the preventative costs. They conclude it's all speculation and a way to get money for things that might not have happened anyway. It's a tough sell, especially on the front end. MSI, by God's grace and Joe's hard work, has made it through those early years and now has a measurable track record which should make it easier to convince people. Yet we find ourselves at a time when it is difficult to find the funds to support MSI's work in safety/accident prevention. Everyone agrees that we do not want kingdom resources (human or otherwise) reduced through preventable mishaps, but the same people are slow to do something about it.

Do you see MSI playing a useful role in the future?

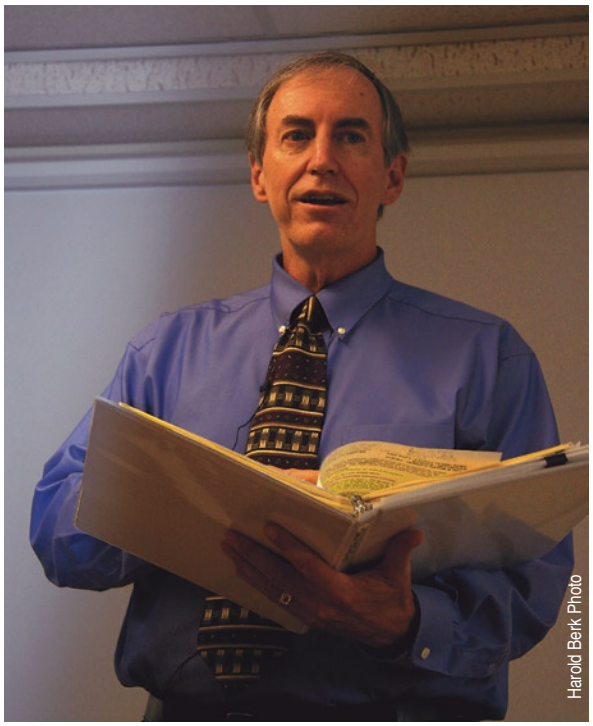
There are significant tensions within any organization that provides an aviation service and promotes safety. Investing in safety takes time and costs money for training, procedures, equipment and supervision. It seems to reduce efficiency, reduce customer service, and inflate cost. The fact of the matter is that it does, but only in the short run. Over the long haul it increases efficiency, increases customer satisfaction and reduces costs. But unless there is someone to keep emphasizing it, the battle is lost to the urgent daily short-run needs and pressures. Most mission aviation organizations are not large enough and don't have time for long-range thinking to institute safety assurances powerful enough to win out over the daily operational pressures to get today's job done. Because of that, an independent third-party organization such as MSI can provide very helpful oversight and institute measures which will help insure that the voices for on-going safe operations win out over those promoting only the urgent daily schedule demands. MSI should be able to fill a very valuable role in this area, especially for smaller organizations.

MSI

Jay Hopkins, Cont'd.

I knew that sermon was meant for me and at that moment I dedicated my life to Christ. Over the next 27 years I always felt God had a special ministry for me, I just didn't know what it was. I had plenty of opportunities to help others, I was involved in men's ministries, I rode a bicycle across the country for Christians in Commerce, but I knew there was something else.

What I didn't know was that God was preparing me for my ministry, like Daniel, the Karate Kid, who went to Mr. Miyagi to learn karate and was instead put to work painting and cleaning and doing other tasks seemingly unrelated to karate. Yet when the time came, he found that his teacher had been preparing him all the time. My preparation involved the miracle of being hired by FlightSafety as a Learjet simulator instructor even though I had never flown a jet, any jet, in my life. Later I was one of the first instructors hired by SimuFlite Training International even though I didn't meet their basic experience requirements. They even sent me to Houston to fly charter in Learjets for a month to gain experience. While I was at SimuFlite I received in depth training on a new discipline called Cockpit Resource Management, or CRM. Then I accepted a position as the Manager of Military Instructor Training with SimuFlite Military Division, only to find that the division had been sold and I now worked for CAE Link. I traveled all over the world training US military aircrew members how to teach what they call Aircrew Coordination Training, which is similar to CRM.



Jay Hopkins speaking at the Missionary Maintenance Services (MMS) Seminar in Coshocton, Ohio. He related many examples of how traps of human nature can lead to poor situational awareness and decision making in missionary work.

As that program was starting to wind down, CAE Link was having a layoff. I was not included in the layoff, but I felt a strong message from God that I needed to get myself laid off, so I wrote a business plan to convince the company they needed to lay me off. (I think my wife has finally forgiven me for that one!) I developed courseware for civilian pilots and did a lot of training for Emergency Medical Services (EMS) flight departments. As I was doing that training I would have doctors and nurses come up to me during the break and say that even though the training was focused on reducing aircraft accidents, they were going to use it in their work also. The broader application of the material was obvious, so I developed a non-aviation version of the course called Preventing Human Error and started the Error Prevention Institute, which has provided Error Prevention Training to everything from the New York City Fire Department to NASA to the City of Phoenix Parks and Recreation Department. More recently I have trained over 15,000 employees for Lockheed Martin Space Systems Company. In the first three years of using Error Prevention, Space Systems experienced a drop in damage to the flight hardware from 40 incidents a year to 10, so I am now working with many of their suppliers such as Honeywell and Aerojet.

God had one other miracle up his divine sleeve. In the course of working for FlightSafety and SimuFlite I had an opportunity to get to know the editors of ***Flying*** magazine. As I was doing the Error Prevention Training around the country I felt a strong desire to provide similar training to general aviation pilots, so I called up Mac McClellan, the editor of ***Flying***, and asked if I could write an article about CRM for general aviation pilots. It "just so happened" that the person who wrote what they call the "training article" had just quit, so Mac asked me if I would like to write a monthly training article.

Thirteen years later I have written over 160 articles for ***Flying*** about human factors in aviation. Several people at MSI read my articles and thought that they contained information valuable to missionary aviation, so Steve Quigg of MSI contacted me through ***Flying*** magazine. He had no idea who I was or if I would be interested in working with MSI so he was probably surprised and gratified to discover I was a Christian who had always had an interest in missionary aviation and was excited about the opportunity to serve missionary personnel by sharing the knowledge and experience God had given me to prepare me for this moment. While I still occasionally experience a twinge of human regret that I never made it to the mission field myself, I am excited and thankful to have an opportunity to meet such a great group of dedicated Christians and look forward to using the preparation God has put me through to help missionary organizations be safer and more effective in carrying out the work of God throughout the world. MSI

The Kodiak

Seen by MSI personnel at both the AirVenture in Oshkosh and at Quest Aircraft's open house at the factory in Idaho, the new Kodiak is expected to receive FAA certification early next year. Mission representatives are eagerly awaiting it's release, hearing that it is meeting it's performance goals. Imagine this machine being able to operate effectively on CE 206 strips. Orders are being taken—missions can hardly wait! MSI

Brazil's Asas de Socorro 50th Celebration

It's not often that mission aviation personnel are able to visit an overseas ministry that they had a hand in starting, but that is now under control of competent national leadership. Such was the pleasant experience of many former MAFer's last August, when Brazil's Asas de Socorro (ADS) celebrated it's 50th Anniversary. Jim Truxton, then MAF Vice-President, spent 1954 in Brazil making contacts with both mission personnel and government officials regarding proposed activities. ADS grew over the decades, gradually coming under total Brazilian leadership.

Sr. Rocindes Jose Correa, President and CEO of Asas de Socorro

In 1955 the first resident personnel from MAF arrived and took initial steps to serve missions in both engine overhaul and flight services. ADS currently operates a flight school as well as maintenance and flight operations from its headquarters in Anapolis, Goias.

As the infrastructure of roads has developed extensively in the past 50 years in Brazil, the focus of ADS aviation services has shifted to the huge Amazon area. ADS now has a regional headquarters in Manaus, where its Cessna Caravan on amphibious floats and CE-206 serve missions and provide non-governmental organization (NGO) type humanitarian flights.

MSI

Part of the North American missionary contingent—older and newer—to Brazil

Recently completed new ADS regional base/hangar in Manaus

Moody Aviation Hangar Dedication

Under the untiring leadership of Cecil Bedford, Director of the new Moody Aviation initiative, over 300 Moody Bible Institute personnel, supporters and mission representatives met on October 14 to dedicate the newly completed hangar in Spokane, Washington. Dr. Michael Easley, recently elected President of Moody Bible Institute, gave the dedicatory address. The large hangar accommodates two main areas on the ground floor—one heated for aircraft maintenance and the other for aircraft storage. Administrative offices and other supporting centers occupy one end of the hangar on both first and second floors.

The reconstruction of the aviation program as well as the hangar has consumed much of Cecil's time. The task of creating effective partnerships with the local community college has not been without its challenges. Cecil appreciates the prayer support he's received during the hangar construction phase and asks that it continue. At the present time, seventy-five students are enrolled in the flight, maintenance and Bible programs.

MSI

Why a Color Safety Net?

Some of you may be wondering why we would spend the money to publish a color ***Safety Net*** when it may seem extravagant in light of our significant need for additional funding to support what we believe God is calling us to. Here are a few reasons we feel it is an appropriate investment:

1. We need to communicate in relevant ways to our readers. Black and white only is not up to today's standards. If we are seen to be behind the times, our credibility in other areas could be brought into question.
2. Some of the things we need to display in pictures—like new technological advances that are best seen in color in order to display their features more effectively.
3. As we approach foundations and major donors interested in the ministry of MSI, we want our publications to reflect the high quality we all strive for.
4. Through the generosity and creativity of some interested partners, it will not cost MSI much more than the previous black and white editions.

Please know that we are not being extravagant, but trying to make the best uses of all the resources God provides for us. We welcome your input and suggestions, along with your prayer for wisdom for us. Thank you for your understanding and your part in making ***Safety a Way of Life***.

Jon Egeler

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