As a young lad growing up in the great state of New Jersey, I recall wondering just where the other side of the world might be. "Where would I emerge", I pondered, "if I just went out into the backyard and started digging a nice big hole through to the other side?" Before there was Google or Siri, before there was Alexa or www.antipodesmap.com, there was Dad. So I asked that wise old saint, and from his great storehouse of knowledge he announced, “China”. That sufficed for the next 60 years of my life, until our MSI team landed in the Philippines for our latest safety audit and I wondered anew just how close to the other side of the world from home we might actually be. After all, Manila was 12 time zones ahead of the east coast of the U.S., so I figured we couldn’t be too far off. Besides, China was only a couple hours flight away to the north.

OK, so I was wrong. Come to find out, the other side of the world from our home in Pennsylvania is in the middle of the Indian Ocean, some 4,738 miles away from Manila. And the person living on the other side of the world from Manila, would be found in a small village on the Brazil-Bolivia border. That said, it still took us 3 long flights and 24 hours of chasing the setting sun to get from home to the Filipino capital. Close enough to the other side of the world to count, I figured. But more importantly, there was work to be done.

Ethnos360 Aviation (E360A), perhaps still better known by its former name (New Tribes Mission Aviation - NTMA) and originally known as TAC (Tribal Air & Communications), has been operating in the Philippines for many decades. As a matter of fact, MSI’s very first safety audit and seminar were performed on behalf of TAC back in the mid-1980s. As it was then, the missionaries E360A supports today work as far into the remote regions of the country as one can go to do church planting and Bible translation among indigenous tribes. The small mountain airstrips laboriously carved out of the jungle to support their work were a huge undertaking to build, a constant battle to maintain, and a challenge to fly into. But without the supplies and support they received by air, New Tribes missionaries would have found it almost impossible to stay on location and do their work. The occasional bending of an aircraft in the early days seemed to just be the price one paid for operating into some of the most challenging airfields on earth. But it wasn’t fun and it certainly wasn’t cheap in terms of human and financial losses. Thus, it was a rather bold and courageous decision a few years ago for the Ethnos360 leadership team to start over from scratch in the Philippines. They removed every single one of their airplanes from the country and simply let the airfields give up their fight against the encroaching jungle.

But in place of the venerable Cessna 185s and 206s came Robinson helicopters which could land in most any jungle opening and could carry supplies airplanes simply couldn’t handle. The results were profound. Never have I audited a flight program where the “customer” feedback has been so universally positive and meaningful. Flights can now land almost at a missionary’s doorstep, pilots have more time and energy to spend on location helping with maintenance or emotional issues, the flights have become more comfortable and enjoyable, and the aircraft themselves are much newer and easier to maintain. Talk about a win-win situation—this is a poster child.

To the Other Side of the World and Ethnos 360

by Steve Quigg
Perhaps more significant is that this decision simply reflects a more profound change in the way E360A’s leadership team goes about its work. No longer does it start by asking, “What can we afford?” Rather, its fundamental decision-making question has become, “What can we do to serve our missionaries the best?” Inevitably, when decisions were based on responses to the latter question, the finances to make them happen were always there. In our view, that is the right, professional, and successful way of going about doing God’s business, and it shows in what’s happening in the Philippines.

Ethnos360 Aviation’s Philippines operations might be (almost) on the other side of the world from where you live, but it shows that there is no place too far to go to share the love of Christ. The E360A helicopters clothed in their bright red and white livery are known by Believer and non-Believer alike as being there for the good of the people and the country as a whole. In a land experiencing more than its share of political and religious strife, the testimony is clear that E360A is delivering the goods to the right people in the right way. We were privileged to be a part of their lives for a week of intense auditing and observation. It should come as no surprise to hear that we found their staff doing a superb job, yet also ready to learn how they could do it even better. It sure made our work easier and more rewarding.

It’s just how they do it on the other side of the world.

Thoughts of Ethnos 360 Audit
by Alex Minium, Field Director
Ethnos 360 Philippines

Audits and Prunes

What aircraft owner has ever looked forward to dropping their aircraft off for an annual inspection? The maintenance shop might be looking forward to your business, but, as the owner, you’re acutely aware of the potential for undesirable discoveries while mechanics go digging deep into the innards of your machine. Removing the inspection panels of an aircraft that may look like a gem on the outside will expose areas that aren’t often seen and, if components are found in sub-par condition, could lead to some costly repairs! Despite the potential for wallet-cramping repairs and extended time in the shop, no one wants to be (as my former LeTourneau maintenance instructor often quipped) “flying around fat, dumb and happy” in an aircraft with parts ready to fail or fall off!

That same maintenance instructor also had a saying that related to inspections saying, “they are like prunes and missionaries, going far into the interior to do a lot of work!” While prune juice is not [yet] a necessary part of my diet, I can relate in knowing that a good inspection does require digging deep in order to reveal the whole story. I also believe that for an aviation safety audit to prove valuable, auditors must be able to similarly dig deep into the inner workings of a flight program.

The MSI audit team assigned to audit our Ethnos 360 flight program could not have been better suited to handle this task. It was clear from the beginning that the collective desire of the MSI team was for our long-term success. The MSI team was faithful to “go far into the interior” by thoroughly engaging in tasks like inspecting hangars and aircraft records, checking parts inventories, interviewing national workers, interviewing the spouses of pilots and mechanics and spending time observing daily operations. They also asked questions beyond the surface level in a way that demonstrated their desire to reveal shortcomings, but not in a condescending or condemning way.

At the conclusion of our audit, we were presented with an official audit report that detailed a list of findings ordered by risk level. Just like an aircraft owner being presented with a discrepancy list after an annual inspection detailing the items that need extra attention, it doesn't necessarily feel good to learn of the areas that aren't perfect within a flight program. However, if our desire is indeed to operate a safe, efficient, reliable and professional flight program that serves our missionaries well, then receiving a well-organized and detailed list of areas where we can improve is a tremendous blessing.

All humor about prunes aside, I’m incredibly grateful for the ways each member of the MSI audit team engaged our aviation staff with the truth in love. For those who have experienced an audit from MSI, I know you can relate. For those who have yet to take part in a safety audit, let me encourage you to be vulnerable and allow auditors to gain an accurate picture of your operation. The more that’s revealed, the more that can be either affirmed or corrected. The Lord certainly used MSI to encourage our team because it was always clear that their desire was for our success, and we are better off because of their work.

“Any who love knowledge want to be told when they are wrong. It is stupid to hate being corrected.”
Proverbs 12:1 (Good News Translation)
This year’s annual conference of the International Association of Missionary Aviation (IAMA) took place in LeTourneau University’s beautiful Abbott Aviation Center in Longview, Texas. There is nothing like sitting in a large meeting room with a beautifully restored and polished Cessna 140 suspended over your head! This marked the 52nd year of the conference, and it was a good one! The new IAMA president and his wife, Kerrick and Connie Tweedy did a fantastic job organizing and arranging, and LeTourneau University really pulled out the stops in being great hosts. Our special banquet speaker was Rod Moyer from Dynamic Aviation, sharing stories from his extensive and varied experience.

One of the distinctives this year was the emphasis on non-technical training, with presentations about overcoming dysfunctions of a team, risk management, understanding younger generations, and many more. We learned about FlightSpan, Advanced Air Mobility, Aviation Effectiveness Research/Transportation Needs Assessment, MA-FOQA, and Missionary Aviation Transition Training. If some of these things don’t make sense to you, you need to find out what they are about, because they will affect you and your operation.

Basically, if someone from your organization did not attend, you really missed out! It was valuable stuff, so make plans to attend next year’s conference in Bolivar, MO.

See you there!
So, another year, another March, another Moody Aviation safety seminar. It has become an MSI rite of spring—the first week of March comes around and it’s time to head to Spokane, Washington with a team of aviation safety experts to spend some quality time with the students and staff of Moody Aviation. If our calculations are right, the 2023 edition was the 28th time Moody Aviation and MSI have partnered together to make a safety seminar happen. Another year, another Moody Aviation safety seminar. Ho-hum. . .

Except this year was anything but routine. While certainly not intentional, I couldn’t help but wonder if some of that ho-hum attitude may have rubbed off on the student body through the years. Perhaps they were thinking, “OK, another safety seminar. Two days in a hard chair talking about the bad stuff that happens when someone does something stupid. Why am I not excited?” Regardless, this seemed like the year to stir the proverbial pot to bring home the point that safety is an integral part of aviation training. That it deserves every bit as much focus, time and energy as a flight lesson in a quarter million dollar aircraft.

First, the venue needed to change. Every year, the Moody maintenance staff has been tasked with putting their work on hold in order to clear out the hangar so it could be transformed into a conference hall. They always did a remarkable job dressing it up, but despite the lipstick, it was still a hangar. Yet, just a few hundred yards down the flight line from the Moody Aviation facilities is the Historic Flight Foundation. Local pilot and Foundation chairman John Sessions has gathered an eclectic collection of some of the most iconic aircraft from the 1927 to 1957 era – a Douglass DC3, a Supermarine Spitfire, a North American T6, a De Havilland Beaver on floats, a P-51 Mustang, a Grumman F8F Bearcat, and a Beechcraft Staggerwing to name but a few. Each one has been impeccably restored; each one is perfectly flyable; each one has a story to tell (https://historicflight.org/collection/). Could there possibly be a better place to hold a safety seminar than in the space that holds all these magnificent airplanes? I don’t think so!

Second, there needed to be more time and opportunity for interaction. With all COVID restrictions finally lifted, Moody was able to open the seminar doors again to all comers. Local friends and aviators were part of the event, and the schedule was intentionally made relaxed enough to provide plenty of time for interaction with other attendees and the aircraft on display.

Third, through the generosity of a donor and the efforts of the Moody Aviation staff, a Thursday evening banquet was added to the agenda, featuring Longhorn’s famous Bar-B-Que on the banquet table and Mike Lavelle, a noted aviation author and historian on the dais. Why a banquet? Well, with the spectacular venue and post-COVID freedom, it just seemed like the right thing to do. On one hand, it added more “cred” to the seminar so participants could better appreciate just how important Moody considers safety to be. On the other hand, it gave participants an enjoyable night out with a date or a friend so they’d be in a better frame of mind for absorbing the instruction the next day. And perhaps most of all, it was simply a way of saying thanks to Moody Aviation, an organization that has done so much for so many in the missionary aviation world for the last 75 years.

What didn’t change this year was the quality of the presenters and their presentations. While all four guest presenters were new to the Moody Aviation stage, they all brought an enormous amount of credibility and expertise to the event. Bruce Webb of Airbus Helicopters and Rich Farley of Boundary Level Inc. handled Thursday’s sessions focusing on a variety of human factors issues. And Friday featured the more technical presentations with Henry Soderlund (chief air safety investigator for Textron Aviation), Dan Moore (owner of Dan Moore Aero and a Guinness World Record holder) and myself handling the presentation duties. Great material presented in a professional manner to an appreciative and attentive audience. All good stuff.

New venue, new schedule, new banquet, new presenters. The 2023 edition of the Moody Aviation Safety Seminar was anything but routine. Let’s just call it historic.
The call came into the MSI office in November, 2020. Jon Egeler answered, speaking to Craig Gahagan, long-time friend and director of SAMAIR Peru. A colossal wind storm had blown through their mission base in Cashibo Cocha, lifting the roof off the float plane hangar and dropping it onto the float plane, literally destroying the plane and its hangar. Thankfully no humans sustained any injuries.

Although insured, Gahagan was concerned about replacement costs and additional expenses related to rebuilding in a jungle setting. Egeler encouraged Gahagan to share the news and the need with their friends, families, and the Christian community at large.

“And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.” Philippians 4:19

In March 2023, MSI team members Jon & Pam Egeler from Tennessee, Terry Brabon from Texas, and Stan Schmoe from Minnesota traveled to Peru to conduct a five-day safety audit for SAMAIR, a division of South America Mission.

SAMAIR Peru has eight missionary families living either on the base at Cashibo Chocha or in Pucallpa, a 30-minute drive to where SAM Academy is located. At least three Peruvian staff also serve in the program. Well water on base, 24/7 electricity supplied by the local grid, and wi-fi internet meet some of the needs of living and working at Cashibo Cocha. Tropical vegetation, birds, and beautiful views of the lake make this a special place.

SAMAIR-Peru operates three Cessna 206 aircraft, including one on floats. Flying is focused on the surrounding jungle areas of Peru. A spacious open-air hangar houses a full maintenance shop, air-conditioned offices, a conference room, and a reception area for passengers.

SAMAIR Peru has seen an increase in medical emergency flights, or “medivacs.” During the MSI team’s visit, pilots and planes were dispatched for three such flights. SAMAIR personnel handled logistics on the ground, and assisted the passengers and families upon arrival. We observed everyone involved taking opportunity to pray with the passengers, to share the Gospel of Christ, and to show God’s love in tangible ways.

This was MSI’s eighth visit to Cashibo Cocha and our first visit since that devastating windstorm 2-1/2 years earlier. We rejoiced to see a new, much improved floatplane hangar with steel beams and a safe wrap-around loading dock. A beautiful float plane which previously served another mission organization now stands ready to go. Generous donations also provided for upgrades to all the aircraft, and a fund has been established to subsidize flight expenses for others in need.

We were blessed to visit our sisters and brothers at Cashibo Cocha and Pucallpa, Peru. We thank God for his continued blessings as they serve Him with the tools and means He has provided.

“Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good! Blessed is the one who takes refuge in him!” Psalm 34:8

MSI
40th Anniversary Spotlights

After founding MSI in 1983, some of Joe Hopkins’ earliest audit trips were to SAMAIR in Peru and Bolivia. The late Dwight McSmith, Terry Moose, and Joe Boxmeyer joined him on many of these trips. SAMAIR was then operating a Maule and Cessna 206’s on wheels and on floats.

When Hopkins founded MSI in 1983, Jon Egeler and Craig Gahagan were attending Moody Aviation in Tennessee. Now Jon serves as the president of MSI and Craig serves as the director of SAMAIR Peru.

Naturally, when Jon and Craig get together, they have many stories to tell, experiences to share, and insights and goals to discuss for the future. Upon observing Jon’s and Craig’s friendship, a mutual acquaintance said, “Ah, yes, reliving the glory days;” to which an MSI team member replied, “We are here to help insure that you all [your co-workers and passengers] live long enough to experience ‘Glory Days’ of your own.”

I believe that I shall look upon the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living! Wait for the LORD; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the LORD! Psalm 27:13-14 (English Standard Version)

Craig Gahagan                 Jon Egeler

Making Safety a Way of Life

FOQA Update

We are pleased to report that the Missionary Aviation Flight Operations Quality Assurance (MA-FOQA) project is making good progress. The various working groups have been hard at work, with a software/analysis provider already selected (Truth Data), policy documents nearing completion, and various hardware options explored. We received a grant to help with start-up costs and are expecting some more to help subsidize installation of equipment in older aircraft. Andrew Walton from Liberty University is working part-time for MSI as the MA-FOQA Project Coordinator, keeping things organized and moving along well. We are hoping to have at least one organization participating in the new program by year’s end. Stay tuned for more updates.
A Fond Farewell

So let’s cut to the chase. It’s time to retire.

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here comes a time in life when energy starts to lag, ideas come less spontaneously, and working knowledge drifts further away from the cutting edge. It’s not that life or work have lost their zest or that we’re planning to just shrivel up and slink into a corner to die. But the expertise and drive that once came so easily just doesn’t anymore. And that’s okay—it’s called getting old(er).

Dad pastored six churches during his 42 years of active ministry and carried on preaching in retirement for another 30. He shared many a nugget of wisdom with his family, but one that really stuck with me was, “Move on to something new when things are going well, not when you’ve created a mess for someone else to clean up.” Good words to live (and retire) by. Things are going well at Mission Safety International. The organization has more credibility in the missionary aviation community, more qualified lead auditors, more ministry funds, more member organizations, and more initiatives in the works than ever before. Thanks be to God. As Dad would say, it’s a good time to move on.

Here’s another nugget of wisdom to live by, although not from Dad this time, “If you aren’t missed when you leave someplace, you’re doing something wrong.” Will we be missed? I believe so. There will be some holes to fill when it comes to organizing safety seminars, ministering to the women, and writing Safety Net articles, but no one is irreplaceable, and certainly not us. The Quigg-sized holes will be filled with someone(s) new, with fresh ideas and fresh energy. That’s such a good thing.

So, after nearly 44 years of ministry, it’s time to land this thing. We’re keenly aware that we’ve been carried along the way on the wings of gifts, prayers and encouragement offered up by a great cloud of witnesses, a cloud which includes many of you. Our journey in ministry has been your journey too and together we’ve made a capable crew. So, to everyone who has been a part of it all, we offer our profound and sincere thanks. But most of all, our gratitude must go to MSI founder Joe Hopkins who had the vision to invite us on board when we were wandering in ministry limbo many years ago, to current MSI President/CEO Jon Egeler who provided inspired and inspiring leadership as well as ministry freedom during our years with MSI, and to God who gets all of the glory and none of the blame for what we may have accomplished.

As airline captains are wont to say, “We hope you have enjoyed your flight.” We sure have.

Steve & Gail Quigg

Celebrating God’s Faithfulness

2023 marks the 40th anniversary of MSI, and it is perhaps inevitable that we look back a little and marvel at what God has done. Just as we talked about celebrating the victories in aviation safety in last December’s Safety Net, we also celebrate God’s faithfulness for the past 40 years.

Steve and Gail Quigg are retiring, which will leave a big hole for sure. They have devoted their abundant gifts and talents to MSI and to everyone in missionary aviation and have had a huge impact through the years. Whether it’s through Steve’s energetic presentations at safety seminars, his way with words in Safety Net articles, Gail’s gentle and caring ministry to wives, or so many other areas, we have all benefited greatly from their ministry. We pray God’s continued blessings on them in this new phase of life and will be keeping in touch with them. We also ask you to pray with us for their replacement, as we really need the help!

We are also planning to have a special celebration banquet on September 23 to celebrate 40 years of God’s

faithfulness to MSI. We look forward to a very special evening with special speakers, music, and maybe some stories! There are certainly many, many to tell! I am sure that Joe Hopkins could barely have imagined how much impact and how many people his obedience to God’s vision would affect 40 years ago. Missionary aviation is so much safer today than it was in 1983 that it boggles the mind.

On a personal note, I am very thankful for God’s protection and for seat belts. When our truck and camper took a tumble on the interstate last month and rolled at least twice, Pam and I came out with bumps and bruises, not serious injury or death. Seat belts do save lives, as we can personally attest, so use yours!

Yes, God is faithful even when we are not, so give Him praise and glory. Try not to take it for granted, and keep up the good work striving to

Make Safety a Way of Life!

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