

Mission Aviation: Faith, Publicity, and Cultures of Technology (1908—1950)

by

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of  
the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

(History)

at the

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

2018

Date of final oral examination: 05/03/2018

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To my wife Christina, who offered unending encouragement, and endured this project with understanding and steadfast patience.

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List of Abbreviations

AIM	–	Australian Inland Mission
AFM	–	Apostolic Faith Mission
AMS	–	Aerial Medical Service
CAMF	–	Christian Airmen’s Missionary Fellowship
C&MA	–	Christian and Missionary Alliance
CMS	–	Church Missionary Society
CBFMS	–	Conservative Baptist Foreign Missionary Society
JAARS	–	Jungle Aviation and Radio Service
LWF	–	Lutheran World Federation
<i>Miva</i>		<i>Missionarium Vehicularum Associatio</i> , in English Missionary Vehicular Association
MAF-UK	–	Missionary Aviation Fellowship (UK branch)
MAF-US	–	Missionary Aviation Fellowship (US branch)
MWE	–	Movement for World Evangelization
NTM	–	New Tribes Mission
SIL	–	Summer Institute of Linguistics
StL	–	Speed the Light (affiliated with Assemblies of God)
VSP	–	Victory Sky Pilots
WASP	–	Women Airforce Service Pilots
WMAC	–	World Missionary Aviation Convention, later changed to World Missionary Aviation Council

Preface

When one walks in to the main lobby of the Smithsonian's National Air and Space museum in downtown Washington, D.C., they are greeted by a collection of history's most important aircraft. There is *Glamorous Glennis*, the first aircraft to fly faster than the speed of sound, and Charles Lindbergh's *Spirit of St. Louis* – the first ship to fly across the northern Atlantic. The Apollo 11 command module sits in an adjacent room; in others sit the 1903 Wright Flier and Amelia Earhart's red *Vega*. Yet, in that main lobby, hanging just to the right of the *Spirit of St. Louis*, is the Wright EX Vin Fiz, the first aircraft to fly across the United States. Less famous today than many of its more recognizable compatriots, the Vin Fiz inspires little more than a cursory look, as one glances at the peculiar advertisement painted along the bottom of the aircraft's fabric wings: "Vin Fiz, the Ideal Grape Drink." Curious, but hardly as impressive as many of the other artifacts in the building. Yet, one would be mistaken to so casually dismiss the flying billboard. For in truth, that aircraft is perhaps the museum's clearest example of a principal role of aviation and space exploration in the early-to-mid 20<sup>th</sup> century: publicity.

For much of its history, flight has been propaganda through spectacle. During the inter-War period, aircraft manufacturers publicized the capabilities of their aircraft through air circuses, races, and air shows. Advertisers, like Vin Fiz, recognized that contemporary aircraft, flying slowly above people, trees, and buildings, were excellent mobile advertising platforms. The marketing potential of flight was not lost on politicians or military leaders either. The achievements of the Wrights, Lindbergh, Köhl, Yeager, and Gagarin were all used to advertise the supposedly unique ingenuity, fortitude, and capabilities of their respective national populations. During the Cold War, space exploration and moon shots advertised national military

might (the earliest space rockets were converted ICBMs), scientific prowess, industrial capability, and global relevance – a motif that continues today in the space programs of China and India. World air forces continue to advertise the technical flying capability of their pilots through the air shows of air demonstration units such as the US Navy’s *Blue Angels*, or the Royal Air Force’ *Red Arrows*. Even a decade removed from flight’s hundredth anniversary, aircraft remain a potent tool of commercial advertising. The Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company’s “Goodyear Blimp” is an icon of American college and professional athletics; Red Bull energy drinks fund both sky diving events from near-space and human powered aircraft competitions as part of its “Red Bull will give you wings” advertising campaign.

There exist excellent monographs that examine how flight has fostered national identity, promoted militarism, or simply operated as a publicity tool for commercial interests like Vin Fiz soda. This monograph will expand upon the conversation. It will explore how Christian missionaries in the early-to-mid twentieth century employed societal interpretations of aviation to construct their own identities and establish an organizational narrative of Christian missions as bold, adventurous, modern, and most significantly, relevant. It will argue that mission aircraft were marketing devices as much as they were logistical tools, one means by which mission organizations united their brand narrative to modern spectacle and claimed a degree of relevancy.

Introduction

September 1947:

Cameras flashed in disjointed unison across the grassy English airfield, as trained photographers fixated their shutters upon one object, a sleek twin-engine Miles Gemini on final approach. As the aircraft glided gracefully onto the field, the pilot taxied towards the awaiting crowd and cut the engines. As the props slowed to a jerking stop, Murray Kendon, a strapping young New Zealand RAF veteran of the Second World War, popped open the Gemini's canopy and cheerfully waved towards the spectators. Hopping confidently to the ground, Kendon jogged towards the speaker's box as the assembled crowd cheered the arrival of what many believed to be Britain's first missionary aircraft.

This scene, replayed in thirty-three cities scattered throughout the British Isles, was for the thousands who drove, biked, or bused to the airfield, their first glimpse of Missionary Aviation Fellowship (MAF), in a spectacle carefully designed by MAF and its sponsors to convey an aura of excitement, modernity, and professionalism for the fledgling organization.<sup>1</sup> MAF's 1947 UK tour emphasized aviation as a spectacle because MAF's leadership – Murray Kendon and Thomas Cochrane – knew that aerial exhibitionism would heighten excitement for their work and draw increased support for MAF amongst the British public. MAF was not the only mission organization to use such imagery. Dozens of other mission groups and hundreds of other missionaries performed similar, and even much more grandiose aerial exhibitions as a means of propaganda.

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<sup>1</sup> Murray Kendon to James C. Truxton, 28 Jul. 1947 (BGC 136-52-5); Murray Kendon, "Friend of the MAF (Aug.)," pamphlet (MAF-UK, 1947) BGC 136-52-5; Murray Kendon, "Friend of the MAF (Nov.)," pamphlet (MAF-UK, 1947) BGC 136-52-5; Stuart Sendall-King, *Hope Has Wings: The Mission Aviation Fellowship Story* (Zondervan, 1993), Chapter 3.

The history of Christian missions is often examined in context of the work of missionaries abroad: missionary efforts to convert local peoples to a new faith, lifestyles, and social outlooks; the impact of this work upon local peoples; and the connection between missions, empires, and capital. The research here is deep, varied, and exhaustive. Considerably less effort has been made to study how mission movements operated in their own native environments, and how they sought to remain relevant in their parent (or “home”) country. The issue is important. Mission organizations of all eras required considerable volunteer and financial support to operate and send missionaries abroad to live and minister. Therefore, a mission organization’s success drawing support at home was as crucial, if not more, to their long-term viability than their success drawing converts to Christianity.

In this regard, mission marketing was remarkable in its ingenuity. Numerous mission organizations developed quite sophisticated “propaganda” campaigns that constructed a brand narrative to tie their mission to contemporary issues, and made use of contemporary assumptions, values, and identities to frame the mission’s identity. Thus, one finds a German war ace who, as a Catholic missionary to Canada, combined the gendered masculinity of explorer pilots with the image of a selfless missionary to construct a cult of personality surrounding him and his work. His self-depiction drew hundreds of thousands of global supporters. In another instance, a Pentecostal American evangelist reimagined his work by incorporating contemporary technology into his ministry, and then used that effort as a visible metaphor of his denomination’s progressive vision and modern ethos. Or, another missionary of the Church Missionary Society, weaved his mission work to narratives of human knowledge and imperial and Australian expansion by charting thousands of square miles of northern Australia and constructing an image of himself as a rugged explorer scientist. Uniting German Catholic,

Australian Anglican, and American Pentecostal in these instances is the use of technology – specifically aircraft – to manipulate the image of mission work in such a manner so as to align it to the contemporary fascination with flight.

From the middle of World War One through 1950, as many as six hundred nine missionaries and evangelists made full use of aircraft as a tool of propaganda and (sometime) tool of transportation.<sup>2</sup> Missionaries with little but a rough concept of an untested aviation program, could raise tens of thousands of dollars, and attract thousands of supporters. Newspapers and magazines featured mission aviators on their front pages or in full-spread stories, sometimes prior to the mission's successful launch. The emphasis placed on aviation as a marketing stratagem, should not be taken to imply that even a significant minority of mission aviation operations were duplicitous marketing ploys. Mission aviation organizers give no indication that they sought to deceive their supporters with impractical programs. Missionaries themselves seemed true believers in the revolutionary potential of flight to remake human transportation, replace the automobile, and perhaps even end the concept of war.

Of course, aircraft did not replace cars or buses as the default mode of transportation in the twentieth century, and the promised utopian world of aircraft failed to materialize. Likewise, most all of the early mission aviation programs were unrealistic endeavors with low rates of operational success started by missionaries who knew more about fundraising amongst the faithful than they did of aviation maintenance and logistics.<sup>3</sup> The shocking failure rate of mission

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<sup>2</sup> See Appendix A & B.

<sup>3</sup> Anon., "Sky Pilot," *The Mail* (Adelaide, South Australia), 19 Jul. 1924, 25; Anon., "Real Sky Pilot: Missionary with Aeroplane," *The Uralla Times* (Uralla, New South Wales), 16 Dec. 1926, 4; Anon., "Sky Pilot: Plane for Parish in vast Wilcannia," *Evening News* (Sydney, New South Wales), 24 Feb. 1927, 4; Anon., "The Real Sky Pilot," *Queensland Times* (Ipswich Queensland), 15 Jan. 1927, 8; Anon., "The Churches Rev. Leonard Daniels Rector of Wilcannia," *The Sydney Morning Herald* (Sydney New South Wales), 14 Jan. 1928, 10; Anon., "Sky Pilot Crashes: Appeal for funds," *Mirror* (Perth, Western Australia), 2 Jun. 1928, 4; Anon., "Wilcannia's Sky Pilot: Activities of Mr. Daniels," *Barrier Miner* (Broken Hill, New South Wales), 12 Sep. 1928, 3; Anon., "Sky Pilot:

aviation programs mattered little in an age of aviation utopianism and in which the popular press maintained narrative of aviation as a change agent that would revolutionize humanity. Aircraft brought mission programs interest, support, and the cache of modern relevancy. However, as the popular aviation culture of the 1910s through 1940s gave way to a more staid and professionalized evaluation of flight in the 1950s, many mission aviation programs collapsed. Whether by good fortune, or a genuine recognition as to the probable costs and limitations of contemporary aircraft, a few mission aviation organizations continued past the early 1950s. The most influential being the Missionary Aviation Fellowship, an organization that formed the impetus for this work.

The British branch of MAF traces its origins to the in-flight musings of Murray Kendon. Long before setting out on his 1947 tour of the UK, Kendon developed his mission aviation schema as he patrolled the Atlantic during World War Two. A trained pilot, Kendon believed that the business of flight should not be relegated to the side job of regular missionaries. Instead, “mission aviation” was a task for specialists—those professionally trained as pilots and prepared for all the dangers and treacheries of the sky.<sup>4</sup> While Kendon had a rough concept, he did not have the means by which to implement his vision. Seeking support for his mission-aviation plan, Kendon contacted Dr. Thomas Cochrane, head of the Mildmay Movement for World Evangelism (MWE), a respected London-based global think-tank dedicated to the promotion and development of Christian mission.<sup>5</sup> Kendon’s close association with the Mildmay Center proved

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Budding Flying Parson," *The Cumberland Argus and Fruitgrowers Advocate (Parramatta, New South Wales)*, (Parramatta, New South Wales), 11 Jul. 1932.

<sup>4</sup> Thomas Cochrane, "The Modern Approach," *Mildmay Outlook*, March 1945 1945, 3-4; Murray Kendon, "A Christian Airways Service," *Mildmay Outlook*, Mar. 1945 1945, (BGC, 136-52-5); *Hope Has Wings*, 6-7.

<sup>5</sup> Cochrane, "The Modern Approach", 1945; Thomas Cochrane, "Speeding World Evangelisation," *Mildmay Outlook*, March 1945 1945, 4-5; Thomas Cochrane, "Friend of the MAF," pamphlet (MAF-UK, Jun. 1950) BGC 136-52-6; *Hope Has Wings*, 6-8; George A. Hood, "Thomas Cochrane," in *Biographical Dictionary of Christian Missions*, ed. Gerald H. Anderson (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1999).

to be a boon for his young Missionary Aviation Fellowship (MAF). Dr. Cochrane provided MAF with London office space, logistical assistance, and funding. The Center's newsletters, *The Mildmay Outlook* and *The Mildmay Magazine*, had a wide distribution and carried information concerning MAF to readers around Europe and many of Britain's colonies. The newsletters attracted donors and netted MAF a number of important volunteers from the British armed services, including Jack Hemmings, a pilot with the RAF stationed in India, and Stuart King, an RAF engineer stationed in France.<sup>6</sup> Cochrane likewise introduced Kendon and MAF to Christian pilots in the United States, including Jim Truxton and his Christian Airmen's Missionary Fellowship (CAMF). Over the years, MAF and CAMF exchanged information and ideas, provided each other with assistance when needed, and agreed upon a shared name (CAMF changed their name to MAF in 1946). The two branches formed the original nucleus of MAF as it has developed today.<sup>7</sup>

The Christian Airmen's Missionary Fellowship (CAMF) first began operational service in 1946, under a former Women Airforce Service Pilot (WASP) Betty Greene, flying for Cameron Townsend's Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL). CAMF's initial success in 1946 was short-lived. Over the next two years CAMF suffered a myriad of problems arising from multiple crashes and the personality shortcomings of some amongst its leadership. In 1947, MAF lost the trust and support of Cameron Townsend who formed his own rival mission aviation program, Jungle Aviation and Radio Service (JAARS). Around the same time, MAF confronted the rise Paul Hartford and his World Missionary Aviation Council (WMAC), built in large part

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<sup>6</sup> *Hope Has Wings*, 10, 12, 17, 18; Stuart Sendall-King, interview by Lane Sunwall, 16 Jul., 2009; Stuart Sendall-King, interview by Lane Sunwall, 12 Apr, 2010.

<sup>7</sup> James C. Truxton to Murray Kendon, 15 Aug. 1945 (BGC 136-52-5); Murray Kendon to James C. Truxton, 24 Aug. 1945 (BGC 136-52-5); *Hope Has Wings*, 20.



to undercut both branches of the MAF.<sup>8</sup> MAF in the UK fared little better in the late 1940s than its American cousin. Disappointingly for MAF staff, the London-based fellowship failed to convince enough British or international missionary partners to join their aviation service, and so took matters into their own hands. In fall 1947, MAF-UK purchased a Miles Gemini, christened the “Mildmay Pathfinder,” raised money on their fall tour of the UK, and in early January 1948 set out on an aerial survey to establish the need for aviation service in eastern and central Africa, and to establish personal contacts with local mission groups.<sup>9</sup> MAF stalwarts Stuart King and Jack Hemmings conducted extensive surveys of mission work in central Africa and worked with local Protestant mission councils to ascertain the needs of local missionaries. Unhappily for MAF, the survey revealed that there was no pressing need for mission-aviation services in central Africa; a number of mission organizations already then operated their own aircraft and saw no need to partner with MAF.

Following this nadir of their fortunes, the MAF organizations of Los Angeles and London each made miraculous recoveries in the 1950s. Both established multiple flight programs throughout the globe, in Africa, South America, the southern Pacific, and Asia. They, in addition, inspired the creation of new MAF branches around the world. Their aviation method became the model for both Protestant and Catholic mission aviation operations, and they remain amongst the most well-respected mission aviation programs in existence.

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<sup>8</sup> Anon., "Missionary Aviation Conference Proceedings and Report," Missionary Aviation Conference, (Winona Lake, IN), 1-4 Aug. 1946 (BGC 136-53-12); James C. Truxton to Murray Kendon, 10 Apr. 1946 (BGC 136-52-5); James C. Truxton, "All Is Not Gold," *Missionary Aviation*, Jan-Feb 1947, 2, 5; Anon., "Letters," *Missionary Aviation*, Mar-Apr 1947, 3; Dietrich Buss and Arthur Glasser, *Giving Wings to the Gospel: The Remarkable Story of Mission Aviation Fellowship* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1995), 15, 19-27, 30-1, 41, 43-5, 50-4, 59-60.

<sup>9</sup> James C. Truxton to Murray Kendon, 27 May 1946 (BGC 136-52-5); Ken Ellis to Jr. Charles Mellis, 16 Aug. 1946 (BGC 136-52-5); Murray Kendon, "Friend of the MAF," pamphlet (MAF-UK, Nov. 1946) BGC 136-52-5; Murray Kendon to James C. Truxton, 6 Feb. 1947 (BGC 136-52-5); Kendon, *Friend of the MAF* (Aug.) (1947); Stuart King, Jack Hemmings, and Murray Kendon, "Letters from the Congo Survey," pamphlet (MAF-UK, 28 Jan. 1948) BGC 136-52-6; Murray Kendon, "Dear Prayer Partners," pamphlet (MAF-UK, Mar. 1948) BGC 136-52-6; *Hope Has Wings*, 25, 38-45.

Apart from this work, MAF's early struggles and later growth has remained something of a mystery. Both organizations struggled in the 1940s during what was a rebirth of the 1920s and 1930s enthusiasm for flight as a potentially utopian tool: a vehicle that would revolutionize human life. That vision of flight entered into a terminal decline circa 1950, just as MAF enjoyed its steady growth into the world's premiere mission aviation service. MAF's initial efforts to develop in the mid-1940s therefore failed, not because MAF's methodology was inferior, but because neither the UK nor US branches could convince American mission organizations – then caught up in the popular millennialist enthusiasm for amateur flight – as to the need of professional aviation services. Influenced by their ambient cultural background, numerous US and Australian mission organizations saw flight as a relatively simple logistical venture and looked to start aviation operations of their own. Operating one's own plane meant that an organization's staff could support its mission staff more quickly and with greater flexibility than via cooperation with an outside contractor such as MAF. In addition, given popular attitudes towards flight, owning an aircraft offered a mission marketing benefits as well. Within this context, MAF's calls in the mid-1940s, for inter-mission cooperative programs (under their leadership) were not infrequently met by derision and dismissed as arrogant presumption by mission administrators who saw no need to hand over control of their own popular programs.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> CAMF sent out letters of introduction to many mission agencies in 1945. The response CAMF received back from mission agencies varied. Some were interested in collaborating with CAMF as the mission agency in question sought to develop their own program, a few sought CAMF's immediate assistance in starting an aviation program (assistance CAMF was unable to offer at that time), and still others were insulted by a perceived arrogance implicit of the letter. See for example, the introductory letter sent out from MAF to mission agencies; James Buyers to Mr. Shank, 1 Nov. 1945 (BGC 136-53-26). See as well, the correspondence between Charles Mellis and Daniel Nelson (BGC 136-28-30), James Truxton and Paul Hartford (BGC 136-25-13), and Elrow La Rowe and James Truxton (BGC 136-25-61). See also: Charles Mellis, Jr., "The CAMF Story...In Brief," *Missionary Aviation*, Jul. - Sep. 1945, 9-10; Elrow La Rowe to James C. Truxton, 16 Jul. 1945 (BGC 136-25-61); Elrow La Rowe to James C. Truxton, 19 Sep. 1945 (BGC 136-25-61); Charles Mellis, Jr., "From the Field," *Missionary Aviation*, Oct.-Dec. 1945, 10-11, 15; Grady Parrott to MAF Co-Workers, 18 Nov. 1945 (BGC 136-2-2); Grady Parrott to Elizabeth Greene, 5 Oct. 1948 (BGC 136-2-4).

As American aviation culture adapted towards an attitude in line with MAF in the late 1940s and early 1950s, MAF's arguments found their own social currency; the broad abandonment of aviation utopianism made MAF's strident technical realism appear prescient; while the growth of commercial airlines underscored the need for high standards of safety in flight and reinforced MAF's own emphasis on mission aviation professionalism. MAF's arguments were thus increasingly normalized amongst influential US-based evangelical missions and eventually accepted by global mission groups. By the early 1950s, mission organizations saw the wisdom of what MAF had been arguing since 1945 and were then willing to employ MAF to carry their missionaries. As the MAF branches flew more missionaries with few mishaps and at a reasonable cost, its reputation and influence grew as well. Therefore, the history of the British and American Missionary Aviation Fellowship is one entwined with popular transnational representations of flight. These interpretations set the stage for how British and American Christians viewed the organization, and how global Protestant mission organizations interpreted their vision of mission aviation.

### **Outline of Chapters**

This dissertation will first explore mission aviation in what I have called its "first wave:" 1908 through May 1927. Chapter one argues that mission organizations initially struggled to find a use for aircraft, and as a result only seven mission aviation programs launched. Those organizations that did fly, did so to draw attention to and shape the public perception of their work. Chapter two explores the second wave of mission aviation: June 1927 through 1941. Lindbergh's 1927 trans-Atlantic flight was instrumental in altering the popular perception of flight. Following Lindbergh, aircraft were hailed globally as revolutionary, though potentially

dangerous, machines. The attitudes of mission aviation organizations aligned to this perception, and a growing chorus mission organizations developed their own mission aviation programs, both as a practical tool of transport and a sensationalized method of propagandistic outreach. Chapter three remains chronologically in the second wave. It explores the perceptions of mission aviators more closely. Mission aviators themselves were taken in by the marketing of the aviation industry, and as a result many early programs were logistical failures. Nevertheless, despite the serious flaws of many operations, second wave mission aviation provided missionaries an opening to create a relatively popular narrative of their work that united their beliefs with contemporary cultural interests, and thereby allowed missionaries to break down preconceptions of themselves as culturally isolated zealots.

Chapter four moves forward chronologically into the third wave of mission aviation: 1942-1950. The third wave was, like its predecessors, a fad. The majority of period mission programs were built as a result of the technological optimism of 1940s American utopianists, who believed in the transformative sociological potential of the technology. US based mission organizations subscribed to the rhetoric and launched programs organized around the belief that aircraft were the next Model T-Ford. Given these perceptions, mission aviation programs remained both dangerous tools and lucrative marketing programs for their respective missions. Only in the late 1940s did mission organizations reevaluate their free-wheeling support of mission aviation. This is explored in chapter five. The reevaluation of flight by mission programs arose because of the changing cultural perceptions regarding flight within the United States. As commercial flight became increasingly professional, convenient, and normal, US-based mission organizers and society at large increasingly demanded that mission aviation programs be

likewise professional, safe, and sustainable. By the late 1950s, the heroic explorers and daredevils of mission aviation past had become an anachronism.

Chapter six concludes this work. The conclusion of the third wave was marked by a horrific loss in life amongst mission aviators and their passengers. It is important to note that the deaths of dozens of missionaries and their families were not of themselves the cause of the third wave's end. Third-wave aviation, ended because of a fundamental shift in how those deaths were perceived by the global Protestant mission community. Mission organizations had long accepted a certain rate of loss in the field, and death was frequently interpreted as a known price of mission work. However, by 1950, these accidents were understood in a different light. Aviation standards drastically improved in the late 1940s, alongside popular perceptions of sound practice. After 1950, death in mission-owned planes raised questions of organizational carelessness and faulty decision making, and in turn ushered in a complete reevaluation mission aviation that ultimately led to MAF's growth.

Chapter OneAviation technology as a metaphor  
for Christianity's cultural relevance  
(1908 – 1927)

“I intend my aeroplane to be used, not as an instrument of war, but as a means of doing good. Look at this map and see the extent of heat[h]en country around us. With an aeroplane good work might be done, instead of letting it be used for dropping of bombs and shells, my idea is to utilize it for the purposes of peace and goodwill.”<sup>1</sup>

In 1908, a retired and unnamed cleric of the Australian Church of England introduced New Zealand and Australia to the newest in aviation science. His revolutionary aircraft was capable of speeds nearing sixty miles per hour. Its innovative tail section resembled that of a fantail pigeon and could twist and turn to provide the pilot with an effortless method of aeronautical control. Forswearing any desire for fame and fortune by the sale of his craft, the retired clergyman stated that his invention was to fly for the benefit of humanity and Christian mission. It would improve civilization by promoting peace and advance Christian faith as the pilot tossed religious tracts down to onlookers below.

In all probability, the cleric's envisioned “pigeon” plane would have been entirely impractical. Its design resembled many other contemporary and failed aircraft of this early birdman era of flight. There remains no evidence to suggest the clergyman ever constructed it, and had he done so, it would have been unlikely to fly.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, the reverend's missionary

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<sup>1</sup> Anon., "The Flying Missionary," *The Hawera and Normanby Star* (Southern Taranaki, NZ), 19 Jun. 1908, 3.

<sup>2</sup> Robert Wohl, *A Passion for Wings: Aviation and the Western Imagination, 1908-1918* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994).

aviation scheme was then technically unworkable and a decade ahead of its time. Yet, the cleric's efforts were not a failure. As a method of mission marketing, the cleric's project was strikingly successful. The cleric received international press coverage for promoting an incomplete aircraft design. Publicity he coupled to his Anglican ministry and then employed to craft a narrative of Anglican missions as forward-looking, innovative, and progressive.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, in his interview, the cleric positioned himself as a far-sighted expert of aviation science and technology, an individual who saw a value in aircraft beyond that of war or capitalism. Instead, the parson and others who partnered with him (such as the Australian Bible Society and its supporters) would apply this scientific machinery to a higher good, such as global peace and Christian evangelism. The reverend thus skillfully entwined a sermon regarding the moral and physical dangers of technology with a promotional pitch that portrayed the mission of the Anglican church as socially and technologically progressive.<sup>4</sup> It mattered little that the cleric did not build the aircraft. It mattered only that he planted in his audience's mind this positivistic image of the Anglican faith.

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This chapter will introduce the uncharted history of mission aviation's 'first wave:' 1908 through May 1927. As the unnamed cleric illustrated, mission aviation of this period is best interpreted as part of a larger narrative of the relationship between Christian missions, science, culture, and publicity. Missionaries made use of contemporary inventions such as aircraft, much like the Anglican cleric of 1908, to draw interest and support to their work, convey specific meaning, and shape how potential supporters perceived their broader evangelistic efforts. Thus,

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<sup>3</sup> See Appendix A for more information.

<sup>4</sup> Anon., "The Flying Missionary"; Peter Fritzsche, *A Nation of Fliers: German Aviation and the Popular Imagination* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992), chapter 1; Roger E. Bilstein, *Flight in America: From the Wrights to the Astronauts*, Revised ed. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994).

in order to understand fully why a particular mission organization would decide to take to the skies, it is essential for the reader to look beyond logistical benefits of speed and comfort, or increased missionary survivability an aviation program could potentially provide. Instead, one must look at the use of aircraft as a method of publicity.<sup>5</sup>

The manner in which Christian outreach groups incorporated aircraft into their marketing program was largely informed by the cultural interpretation of flight. Circa 1908, print and radio sources, especially in North America, Europe, and European colonies, began to promote aircraft as symbols of speed, progress, and modernity. The same imagery employed by the Australian cleric. However, this perception was conflicted. Aviation boosterism and evident popular passion for flight, did not necessarily mean the masses considered flight a serious or even safe venture. Up through 1927, many of the same people who rushed eagerly to catch a glimpse of an airplane in flight were likewise distrustful of the flying machines and the high mortality rate of those who flew them.

The attitude of mission societies towards aviation mirrored that of their home societies, and effectively undercut support for aircraft as a practical mission tool. Despite the logistical potential afforded by a mission aviation programs, mission administrators were disinterested in starting an operation they did not think could succeed. From 1908 to May 1927, only between seven and nine Christian organizations followed in the steps of the trailblazing Australian cleric, and their histories seemingly confirmed the administrators' suspicions. Those mission aviation programs that did launch were dangerously experimental, unsustainable, and oddities in an era when many saw aviation as a foolhardy pursuit.

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<sup>5</sup> Michael Adas, *Machines as the Measure of Men: Science, technology, and ideologies of western dominance*, Cornell studies in comparative history (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989), 205-6; Susan Thorne, *Congregational Missions and the Making of an Imperial Culture in Nineteenth-Century England* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), 7.



Then again, none of these failings particularly mattered. As the Australian cleric showed, the publicity potential of an aircraft could easily surpass its logistical utility. Although aircraft were widely perceived as unsuited to serious business ventures or passenger service, they remained fascinating inventions that were potent metaphors of progress and modernity. The select few missionaries who started programs in this era grasped the marketing and brand imaging potential of flight and employed their programs to attract attention and shape the popular narrative of their wider labors. Therefore, between 1908 and 1927, the application of aviation for mission purpose was exceedingly rare and broadly dangerous. Incredulity as to aviation's safety and utility undercut support. All the while, enthusiasm for aerial spectacle inspired mission aviators to embrace hazardous – though compelling – aviation practice.

### **Flight as Misunderstood Spectacle: 1908-27**

The turn of the twentieth century represented the birth of a new and modern scientific age to the minds of many living in North America, Europe, and Europe's settler communities. It seemed scientists and inventors had achieved an almost unlimited capability to change and improve both nature and human existence.<sup>6</sup> Electric lights opened a bright breach into night's darkness and provided light by which all might amuse themselves in splendid luminosity. Advancements in medicine curtailed infant mortality, cured long-incurable diseases, and prolonged life. The once-inconceivable speed at which trains and steamships transported people and trans-oceanic telegraph cables conveyed news and ideas, altered peoples' definition of time

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<sup>6</sup> David Edgerton, *England and the Aeroplane: An essay on a militant and technological nation* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1991); *A Nation of Fliers*, introduction; Eric Schatzberg, *Wings of Wood, Wings of Metal: Culture and technical choice in American airplane materials, 1914-1945* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1999); David Edgerton, *The Shock of the Old: Technology and global history since 1900* (London: Profile, 2008); David Edgerton, "England and the Aeroplane Revisited," in *Myths, Gender and the Military Conquest of Air and Sea*, ed. Katharina Hoffmann (University of Oldenburg: BIS-Verlag, 2009).

and their understanding of space. Many even hoped that these innovations would work in partnership to unite humanity together in a global community of peace, happiness, and solidarity.<sup>7</sup> Aviation eventually came to sit amongst the highest echelons of human achievement in this age of innovation. Most initially received news of the Wrights' breakthrough invention with overt skepticism, but as aviation slowly became an accepted reality in the late 1900s, popular perceptions of flight transformed from disbelief to enthusiastic embrace. The heady interest continued following World War One. Audiences in London, Rome, Paris, Berlin, and New York eagerly consumed news of aircraft developments and regularly gathered in the tens of thousands to catch but a glimpse of those marvelous flying machines.<sup>8</sup>

This passion for flight lay in what aircraft represented, not in what they could then accomplish – which at first was very little. Aircraft occupied a realm that only the gods and their prophets had previously traversed. The symbolic impact of humanity now breaking into that same dimension should not be underestimated, for now humanity could ascend beyond the

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<sup>7</sup> *The Shock of the Old*; Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *The Railway Journey: The Industrialization of Time and Space in the Nineteenth Century* (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2014), 2.

<sup>8</sup> This does not mean that the view of airplanes was entirely benign. In England, the invention of controlled flight initially caused a degree of fear. Military strategists such as Lord Northcliffe were wary of the fact that controlled flight effectively meant that "Britain [was] no longer an island." In this new air age, the Royal Navy could not be relied upon solely to stop any and all attacks upon England's shores – airplanes could simply fly over the fleet. Britain would therefore need to create an air force to fight alongside, or above, the navy. Apprehension existed within Britain's literary establishment as well. H. G. Wells in his work *The War in the Air* (1908) prophesied the importance of aviation to future warfare, and the massive destruction airplanes would eventually reign down upon cities and their civilian populations. However, one would do well to question the assertion (see: Joseph Corn, *The Winged Gospel*) that the principle response in Britain to the plane was fear. Corn's work largely references material from 1908, 1909, or 1910, during which alarmism over a future German invasion was at its height. Taking a broader chronological perspective, one sees that the British response to aviation was positive and quite similar to that seen in many other countries in Europe and North America. Indeed, aviation eventually evolved into a means by which to save Britain and preserve the Empire. See also: Joseph J. Corn, *The Winged Gospel: America's romance with aviation, 1900-1950* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 44-6, chapter 1; Stephen Kern, *The Culture of Time and Space: 1880-1918* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1983); Marshall Berman, *All that is Solid Melts into Air: The experience of modernity* (New York, N.Y., U.S.A.: Viking Penguin, 1988); *England and the Aeroplane*; *A Nation of Fliers*, 1-2; *Flight in America*, 15; Eric Schatzberg, "Ideology and Technical Choice: The Decline of the Wooden Airplane in the United States, 1920-1945," *Technology and Culture* 35, no. 1 (1994): 34-69; *A Passion for Wings*, 257; *Wings of Wood, Wings of Metal*; Peter Watson, *The Modern Mind: An Intellectual History of the 20th Century* (New York: Perennial, 2002), 52; *The Shock of the Old*; Scott Anthony and Oliver Green, *British Aviation Posters: Art, Design, and Flight* (Surrey, UK: Lund Humphries, 2012).

limitations of their ancestors who had lived lives firmly strapped to the confines of earth and float amongst the clouds and stars. Aviation's societal impact was further elevated as a result of the language and discourse surrounding it. Aircraft did not just traverse the sky, they elevated, soared, and leapt. Pilots did not just travel, they flew, arose, ascended.<sup>9</sup> This language was readily employed by aviation professionals and industry leaders given its positive subtext, and their general inability to describe flight lucidly to the general public. Even in an age of mechanical progress and invention, the science of flight remained incomprehensible to the uninitiated. Therefore, aviation industrialists, reporters, and pilots leaned upon religious and mystical imagery to provide the public a metaphoric vocabulary by which the layman might describe and comprehend flight.<sup>10</sup> Jules Roy, the famous French aviator, perhaps encapsulated best this religiously tinged conception of flight: "once a pilot was free from the steely bonds of this earth, sailing among the clouds, he sees clearly the essential, he discovers his lost treasure. His eyes are turned toward the sky, towards its snares and its promises, in the contemplation of a purified world. He looks endlessly upwards, his slave's look having become the look of a king."<sup>11</sup> News companies recognized the broad interest in aviation, saw the eager crowds at air shows, and themselves reinforced the fascination for flight. They promoted individual pilots and covered international aviation events extensively. Readers devoured the special coverage and eagerly followed air races across the United States, air acrobats, or daring feats of endurance,

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<sup>9</sup> Donald Reid, *Paris Sewers and Sewermen: Realities and representations* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991).

<sup>10</sup> This likewise excludes those who floated in hot air balloons beginning in the eighteenth century. See also: *The Winged Gospel*, chapter 1; *A Nation of Fliers*, 134-35, 70.

<sup>11</sup> *A Passion for Wings*, 258, 80; Bernhard Rieger, *Technology and the Culture of Modernity in Britain and Germany, 1890-1945*, New studies in European history (Cambridge, U.K. ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Robert Wohl, *The Spectacle of Flight: Aviation and the Western Imagination, 1920-1950* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2005), 291.

such as the first attempted flight from the UK to Australia. The stories helped grow popular interest in flight, and perceptibly increased newspaper sales.<sup>12</sup>

The news coverage combined with the public discourse of flight reinforced interest in aircraft as a symbol of human progress. The symbolism could not, however, overcome the technology's limitations in terms of safety or usefulness.<sup>13</sup> In the 1910s and early 1920s, the aircraft's principal public exposure came at airshows, public exhibitions, and warfare. There, aircraft served as either a sensationalized spectacle for daredevil aerial acrobats, or the platform from which military pilots "toyed with death." Indeed, the colloquialism neatly encapsulated early aviation practice. Many of the early aviators flying in post-World War One air circuses pushed their craft's capabilities too far, and as Icarus, plummeted to their doom. The very real possibility of death cut as a dual-edged sword. The high fatality rate of pilots of all types increased the romantic image of pilots, added to the drama of flight, piqued interest, and drew crowds to airshows, but it likewise reinforced the popular prejudice that airplanes were fundamentally dangerous: the doom of the foolish and heroic romantics, not a practical means of conveyance.<sup>14</sup> Also undermining broad acceptance of flight, was the fact that very few understood how contemporary aircraft could be effectively and efficiently utilized. Aviation industry leaders themselves disagreed as to aviation's true potential and long-term application. Their marketing thus frequently oversold aircrafts' abilities and emphasized a fantasized potential of aviation to attract interest and sales. As bold predictions of flight's future failed to

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<sup>12</sup> *A Nation of Fliers*, 144; Martin Francis, *The Flyer: British culture and the Royal Air Force, 1939-1945* (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), chapters 1, 7.

<sup>13</sup> Valentine Cunningham, *British Writers of the Thirties* (Oxford Oxfordshire ; New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 168.

<sup>14</sup> *Paris Sewers and Sewermen: Realities and representations; Flight in America*, 15-25, 60-75.

materialize, the broken promises effectively reinforced the unserious and dangerous image of aircraft.<sup>15</sup>

### **Mission Aviation as Circus Stunt**

The vast majority of missionary organizations of the period were in broad agreement with their fellow countrymen, and most dismissed aviation as a wasteful extravagance. As a result, up through the mid 1920s, only sixteen mission groups expressed even nominal public interest in flight.<sup>16</sup> Of those that launched active flight programs prior to 1927, none possessed a sound understanding of aviation logistics. Of course, that did not particularly matter. For those first-wave programs that did start aviation operations, found their aircraft to be powerful marketing platforms that attracted publicity and crowds of fascinated spectators wherever they flew. This should not be taken to imply that mission programs took to the sky solely for the propaganda value of their aviation venture; most seemed honestly intrigued by the logistical potential afforded by aircraft. Nevertheless, up until 1927, mission aviation's value as a publicity stunt far outweighed the more practical benefits of flight, and those few mission groups who launched programs made full use of aviation as an advertising tool. Indeed, for some missionaries, marketing constituted the core function of their flights.<sup>17</sup>

Lt. Belvin M. Maynard was amongst the first active missionary pilots and the first known to promote himself as a "flying parson." He was likewise an accomplished military test pilot,

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<sup>15</sup> Richard P. Hallion, *Legacy of Flight: The Guggenheim Contribution to American Aviation* (Seattle: University of Washington Press); *Flight in America*, 41-55; Donald M. Pattillo, *A History in the Making: 80 Turbulent Years in the American General Aviation Industry* (New York: McGraw-Hill).

<sup>16</sup> For a more detailed analysis, see Appendix A.

<sup>17</sup> Anon., "Marriage a la Airplane and Radio," *The Literary Digest*, 27 May 1922, 27; Anon., "Mrs. Mattie Crawford," *Aero Digest*, Nov. 1924, 309 (BGC 528-2-2); George D. Crissey, "Pastor Flies Over Oregon," *Florence Times-News* (Florence, AL), 12 Jul. 1928, 3; Keith Langford-Smith, *Sky Pilot in Arnhem Land* (Sydney, Australia: Angus and Robertson Limited, 1935); *British Aviation Posters*, 16, 20, 27.

stunt flyer, and celebrated air racer. Upon the United States entry into World War One, Reverend Maynard left his former life as a small-town minister to join the Army's air corps. Maynard proved himself a talented pilot, and the Army removed him from front-line duty to test military aircraft. Following the war, Maynard remained in the Army and gained international fame winning two prestigious air races: the first, a Toronto-New York round trip sprint of over one thousand miles, popularly billed "the greatest air race in history," the second, a long-distance marathon between New York City and San Francisco. After winning his second race, the American press anointed Maynard the "the greatest pilot on earth." Then, at his moment of greatest fame, Maynard's military career collapsed. Sitting for an interview with a temperance group soon following the transcontinental contest, Maynard stated that some amongst his fellow pilots in the Army-sponsored race had been drunk. The Army hounded Lt. Maynard out of the fly corps shortly thereafter. Following his dismissal, Maynard found it difficult to secure subsequent employment as a pilot, and as many other ex-servicemen in the initial post-war years (Charles Lindbergh included), he turned to the flying circuses to sustain his public profile and secure an income.<sup>18</sup>

As an independent pilot, Maynard combined his national popularity and stunt work with his background as a minister. He spoke at churches, regaling congregations with his time as a war pilot. In 1922, Maynard installed broadcasting equipment in his airplane and delivered sermons over the radio as he flew high above his congregation. Thousands tuned in to his well-advertised radio sermons, the most famous of which was an aerial wedding service conducted as Reverend Maynard circled over Times Square in New York city. Maynard continued to tour with flying circuses and preach at local churches up to his death in late summer 1922. While

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<sup>18</sup> *Technology and the Culture of Modernity*, chapter 5.

performing at an air circus in Rutland, Vermont, Belvin Maynard lost control of his aircraft and died instantly in the subsequent crash.

For Reverend Belvin Maynard, the publicity value his aircraft brought was the only benefit derived from flying. Then again, that was the point. Logistical practicalities mattered little to a stunt pilot such as Belvin Maynard. Maynard flew because flight was a spectacle that drew attention and provided him funding. His outreach efforts were entirely in line with common practice and differed little to how airplane manufacturers and engineers then sold aviation to the public – via the spectacle of air races, flying circuses, or record flights. Furthermore, by promoting himself as the “flying parson,” Maynard made use of his clerical background to differentiate himself from the many other under-employed pilots of the era and draw additional attention and support.<sup>19</sup> Ultimately, and in part because of his tragic fate, his efforts were a success. His exploits, as well as his tragic death, were front-page news in the *New York Times*, and are still highlighted in public history journals almost a century later.<sup>20</sup>

### **Mission Aviation as a Tale of Faith and Science**

Beside Reverend Maynard, few, if any, Christian missionaries or evangelists flew aircraft solely as a marketing platform.<sup>21</sup> These other programs embraced the sensationalism around flight – very much like Maynard. Nonetheless, they placed meaningful emphasis within their marketing narratives upon the practical logistical nature of their work and the relationship of

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<sup>19</sup> *The Winged Gospel*.

<sup>20</sup> Anon., "Planes Tuned for Long Race," *Harrisburg Telegraph* (Harrisburg, PA), 6 Oct. 1919, 7; Anon., "Maynard Wins Air Derby, Racing 125 Miles an Hour," *New York Times* (New York), 19 Oct. 1919, 1, 3; Anon., "Concert from Plan Aids Veteran's Camp," *New York Times* (New York), 15 Apr. 1922, 3; Anon., "To Wed in Plane 3,000 Feet Above Times Sq.; Couple Will Exchange Vows in Radio Set," *New York Times* (New York), 24 Apr. 1922, 1; Anon., "Marriage a la Airplane and Radio", 1922; Thomas C. Parramore, "Belvin Maynard: "The Greatest Pilot on Earth", North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, <http://ncpedia.org/biography/maynard-belvin>.

<sup>21</sup> The one exception possibly being the exploits of Mattie Crawford. See Appendix A.

flight to their larger ministry goals. This strategy was itself tied to the evolving public image of aircraft in the early-post World War One period. Throughout the early 1920s, the aviation industry sought to recover from the immediate post-war decline in aviation investment by transforming flight into a form of mass transportation. Therefore, aircraft manufactures invested in better designs. Factories produced more powerful, reliable, and safe aircraft. Flight practice likewise improved; schools trained pilots with greater vigor and an eye towards survivability, educating young trainees the importance of avoiding unnecessarily risky flight practices that imperiled pilot, plane, and aviation's public image.

Despite the rapid improvements to the design and practice of flight, negative stereotypes regarding aircraft survivability remained common. Fueled by contemporary ignorance as to aviation science and the still popular sensationalism of stunt pilots, many amongst the general public continued in their skepticism of aircraft safety and practicality. The rapid improvements to flight safety and reliability by the aircraft industries was not however, entirely in vain. Commercial interests and national governments, gradually took note of the aviation's development. Banks began to transport money via airplanes to reduce time in transit and so decrease costs arising from interest. Executives flew to conduct regional business more quickly. Farmers hired crop dusters to kill pests and weeds. Both the U.S. and French governments contracted with pilots to carry the mail.<sup>22</sup>

Therefore, throughout the early-to-mid 1920s, the public image of flight remained conflicted. Regardless of the best efforts of the aviation industries, the machines themselves had not yet escaped their negative stereotypes. However, the perception of aircraft as inherently dangerous was something of a mirage, influenced more by risky behavior than by inherent flaws

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<sup>22</sup> *Legacy of Flight; Flight in America*, 41-55; *A History in the Making*.



in the technology. This divergence in perception and reality regarding the safety of 1920s aviation technology could be employed to great use by an enterprising pilot. The increasing reliability of the aircraft (flown prudently) made the matter of actual flight relatively safe. Furthermore, the conflicted symbolism evoked by aircraft – modernity, progress, danger, heroism, and excitement – made airplanes a potent means by which one could effectively capture interest and interject themselves into the public consciousness.

It was in this way that most first-wave missionary pilots employed their own aircraft: cutting-edge technology that served a dual role as transportation device and a propaganda platform by which to construct a narrative around their work as progressive and practical. This spin was particularly pertinent to the period. Long before the 1925 “Scopes” trial in Tennessee became a flashpoint in the so-called war between faith and science, Christian laborers had spent the better part of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries waging related defensive battles to prove the reasonableness of faith. The stakes were high as Christians sought to demonstrate that the non-religious, however defined, were wrong to declare spiritual belief an old-fashioned relic, undermined by modern thought and the scientific age. Nothing could be more wrong Christian leaders countered. The Christian gospel offered practical solutions to the problems of any epoch and was essential to the long-term (indeed eternal) happiness of all humanity.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Crissey, "Pastor Flies Over Oregon"; David Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: a history from the 1730s to the 1980s* (London ; Boston: Unwin Hyman, 2002), Chapters 2, 6; Ronald L. Numbers, *Science and Christianity in pulpit and pew* (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), Introduction; Timothy Larsen, "War Is Over, If You Want It': Beyond the Conflict between Faith and Science", *Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith* 60, no. 3 (2008): 147-55; Priscilla Pope-Levison, *Building the Old Time Religion: Women evangelists in the progressive era* (New York: New York University Press, 2014), 27-8, 47-9; Amanda Porterfield, "Pragmatism at the Turn of the Twentieth Century," *Fides et Historia* 47, no. 2 (2015): 87-92; Geoffrey Treloar, *The Disruption of Evangelicalism: The age of Torrey, Mott, McPherson and Hammond*, vol. 4, A History of Evangelicalism (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2017), esp. 201.

Christian outreach societies thus sought for ways to demonstrate the relevancy of the Christian faith in their “modern” world, and some incorporated the sciences into their work to demonstrate the point. It is important to qualify this remark. ‘Science as propaganda’ is certainly not the only interpretive framework by which to understand missionary endeavors in such fields as geography, agriculture, medicine, or education. Missionary labors in these disciplines were most certainly employed with a mind to advance the spiritual goals of their mission and physically assist those whom missionaries hoped to convert. The success of missionaries in charting maps, building schools, or alleviating hunger, should not however occlude the relationship of these ventures to the narrative constructs by which missionaries employed them. For “practical” mission works were not merely practical. They were metaphors, visible illustration by which missionaries conveyed to potential supporters the relevancy of their evangelistic labor and the practical rationality of belief. In this way, missionaries sought to make themselves relevant and undermine contemporary rhetoric that belittled them as illusory idealists who had no constructive impact on the present age.

It was to this mixed purposed that the Reverend Robert Crawford of the American-based Apostolic Faith Mission (AFM) began his ministry as a flying preacher beginning circa 1920. Crawford’s use of aircraft to frame his wider ministry serves as an excellent example of how early-twentieth century mission organization strategically employed aircraft technology as a metaphor of their faith’s cultural relevancy. Unlike Belvin Maynard, who flew as an evangelist largely because the novelty of his being a flying minister attracted interest to his air shows, Crawford flew as part of a carefully scripted plan to manipulate the popular perception of his

ministry, and link together Christianity and twentieth-century American modernity in the minds of all who saw the mission plane fly overhead.<sup>24</sup>

From its 1907 founding in Portland, Oregon by Florence Crawford (Robert's mother), the Apostolic Faith Mission sought to resist as best it could America's supposed descent into apostasy. A new, mechanized, and "rapid age" was dawning the church leadership argued, one that increasingly challenged the centrality of Christianity in American culture. The AFM thus set out to convince the U.S. population of the continued relevancy of Christianity in the contemporary world and provide Americans with a concrete demonstration of that union. In the late 1900's, when the presence of an automobile could draw a crowd, AFM attached placards to a fleet of vehicles and parked them near public parks to attract spectators to impromptu evangelistic crusades. AFM likewise purchased a motorboat to draw attention to their work and smuggle tracts to sailors at anchor in Portland Oregon (this despite the best efforts of ship's captains to keep the Pentecostals off their ships).<sup>25</sup>

By 1919, aircraft seemed to AFM the next platform by which to visualize Christianity's contemporary relevancy and the perfect means by which to increase interest in their evangelistic efforts. Therefore, beginning in 1920, Rev. Crawford piloted the AFM's newest tool of vehicular spectacle, the *Sky Pilot*, in a constant circuit between the small towns scattered across the U.S. northwest. Upon arriving over a town or village Robert Crawford announced his appearance by barnstorming above the heads of his potential congregation; he buzzed just over the tops of trees and houses, tossed leaflets, and dived his plane towards onlookers below, only pulling up at the last possible moment to avert disaster. After Crawford's dangerous aerial acrobatics had secured

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<sup>24</sup> Religious News Service, "The Week in Religion," *Walla Walla Union Bulletin* (Walla Walla, WA), 5 May 1946, 13; *Building the Old Time Religion*, 47-9.

<sup>25</sup> Crissey, "Pastor Flies Over Oregon"; *Flight in America; Building the Old Time Religion*, 47-9.

the attention of the local populace, he piloted his craft to a nearby field, landed, and from his cockpit delivered a sermon to those who had gathered to see his plane more closely. With services concluded, Crawford then hopped back into his craft, roared off, and concluded the evangelistic crusade by dropping religious tracts and pamphlets over nearby prisons, reform schools, or poor farms. His local work completed, Crawford navigated to the next town and restarted the process anew. AFM and Crawford continued this aerial ministry until 1922 when government banned organizations from dropping literature from airplanes, and a general lack of safe landing strips undermined their work. The Apostolic Mission sold the *Sky Pilot* and Robert Crawford's aerial adventures were temporarily suspended. That is until the late 1920s when another explosion of aviation enthusiasm, fueled by Lindberg's celebrated trans-Atlantic flight, drove public investment in public airports and made the method once again a viable method of marketing.<sup>26</sup>

AFM concentrated so heavily on the use of innovative equipment such as automobiles, motorboats, and aircraft in part because they were useful means by which to transport their Pentecostal message. However, the denomination was likewise fully aware that the public act of operating these new inventions conveyed a message of their own. In 1928, after Crawford had returned to his aerial ministry, he attracted the interest of a reporter of the United Press. In the following interview, he explained AFM's efforts to a national audience. Unlike traditional Protestants who only a few years' prior "plodded their weary way" between stops on their mission circuit, the AFM, Crawford claimed, was highly attuned to the interests and values of the contemporary world. So, they flew a sleek and powerful airplane to carry out its mission work quickly, and to more efficiently attract spectators to their crusades. In the "rapid age" of the

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<sup>26</sup> Crissey, "Pastor Flies Over Oregon"; *Building the Old Time Religion*, 49.

1920s, Crawford concluded, the Apostolic Faith Mission was leading the way in twentieth-century evangelism, applying the most modern means to advance peace, goodwill, and the Christian gospel.<sup>27</sup> AFM used their automobiles, motor boats, and aircraft to illustrate a practical union between their denomination and the modern world. Their technology served as relatively inexpensive publicity devices, mobile platforms that drew a constant parallel between the Pentecostal's 'old-time' Gospel message and the machines that delivered it.<sup>28</sup>

### **Mission Aviation as a Practical Tool**

The example provided by Robert Crawford and the Apostolic Faith Mission was in many ways common amongst mission aviators throughout the first wave of mission aviation and up through mid-1950s. Theirs represented the high-middle of the bell curve. Whereas Belvin Maynard was at the far left, employing aircraft primarily as a circus act, most mission aviators employed flight in a mixed fashion: one-part propaganda device, one-part logistical tool. To the right of the majority however, and in a distinct minority until the 1950s, were mission aviation programs such as John Flynn's Aerial Medical Service (AMS). The AMS did not begin full-time aviation operation during the first wave of mission aviation, but its groundwork was laid starting in 1912, and even in its initial experimental stage, the service demonstrated the potential of mission aviation as a practical, life-saving instrument.

Australian Presbyterian minister John Flynn laid the initial foundations for the Aerial Medical Service (AMS) soon after his appointment as the first superintendent of the newly formed Australian Inland Mission (AIM) in 1912.<sup>29</sup> AIM's mission field centered in the broad,

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<sup>27</sup> Crissey, "Pastor Flies Over Oregon", 3

<sup>28</sup> Appendix A

<sup>29</sup> For a detailed outline of all known mission aviation programs in operation prior to 1950, please see Appendix A.

sparsely populated Northern Territory of Australia, and included additional rural regions in adjoining Australian states. Already an experienced missionary, Flynn well understood the daunting task required of him as AIM administrator. Vast distances separated AIM mission stations from its missionaries, and mission transportation was rudimentary; Flynn's first mission administration post stocked camels for day-to-day transportation. Furthermore, Flynn wanted to expand AIM's outreach and services. During his ministerial training, Flynn had worked closely with the inhabitants of the Australian interior and he was heartbroken by the hardship they faced because of the extreme isolation. Isolation that separated patients from doctors, emergency medical care, and life-saving vaccinations. Flynn believed it possible to broaden AIM's scope and so better assist a larger number of these settlers.<sup>30</sup>

Inspired by the earlier exploits of Louis Blériot, who in 1909 had become the first human to fly over the English Channel, Flynn believed that aviation would come to provide the key to solving the problems facing both his mission and those living in the Outback.<sup>31</sup> The concept was bold, but in the mid-1910s there existed no practical method by which to put his concept into practice. For years, and while performing his wider duties as AIM's administrator, Flynn promoted his idea to mission supporters and sought out for a method by which to make his aerial medical service operational. His search came to an end in 1917, when Flynn began a long correspondence with Lieutenant Clifford Peel of the Australian Flying Corps.<sup>32</sup> Peel heard of Flynn's proposed service while training as a military pilot, and after some thought on the particulars, wrote up an operational blueprint and mailed it to Flynn shortly before he shipped to

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<sup>30</sup> Anon., *The Flying Doctor Story*, ed. The Royal Flying Doctor Service of Australia (Sydney: Deaton & Spencer Pty. Ltd., 1970 ca); Graeme Bucknall, "Flynn, John (1880-1951)," in *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, 1981).

<sup>31</sup> *The Culture of Time and Space*, 244.

<sup>32</sup> *The Flying Doctor Story*.

the front lines of Europe. The program Peel created was a stunning work of foresight, creativity, and design. It was likewise far ahead of aircraft and radio technology of 1917. But Lt. Peel, who was killed in 1918, accurately anticipated later scientific developments.<sup>33</sup> As science slowly caught up to Peel's vision during the mid-1920s, Reverend Flynn promoted the concept and raised the needed support and funds: technical assistance from Hudson Fysh (founder of QANTAS), thousands of pounds of direct financial aid from prominent Australian executives, bankers, and manufacturers, and even significant material assistance from the Australian Department of Defense.<sup>34</sup> With a firm financial footing and broad support across Australia, Flynn built up a stock of radios, generators, and planes, hired doctors, hangers, and pilots, and even contracted with inventors to design specialized equipment (such as pedal-powered electric generators to power radios in rural farmsteads).

Only after years of effort and patient planning on the part of Flynn, AMS began operation in May 1928, and made an immediate impact to the lives of those living in the remote Australian territories it served. Through its successor organization, the Royal Flying Doctor Service, AMS continues to operate today. In its long history, AMS has established radio links between ranchers living miles apart, set up rural education services for children, distributed first aid kits, taught settlers advanced emergency medical procedures, and has saved thousands of lives.<sup>35</sup> Of all the mission aviation programs ever founded, AIM-AMS has consistently been amongst the most impactful.

## Conclusion

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<sup>33</sup> 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. John Clifford Peel was lost (and presumed dead) after a reconnaissance mission over France, 19 September 1918. See: John Clifford Peel to Reverend John Flynn, 2 Nov. 1917; Anon., "PEEL John Clifford, Service Record," ed. Australian Imperial Force (1917); Anon., "Flying Doctors. Inland Mission. Cloncurry as a base," *Brisbane Courier* (Brisbane, Queensland), 2 Nov. 1927, 11; *The Flying Doctor Story*; Bucknall, "Flynn, John (1880-1951)."

<sup>34</sup> Peel, 2 Nov. 1917; Anon., "PEEL John Clifford, Service Record."

<sup>35</sup> *The Flying Doctor Story*; Bucknall, "Flynn, John (1880-1951)."

Regardless of the striking example set by Flynn's Aerial Medical Service, the use of flight by Christian evangelists or missionaries was incredibly rare in the 1910s and 1920s. Between the promotion of the Australian cleric's "pigeon" plane in 1908 and Lindbergh's trans-Atlantic flight in May 1927, there existed but seven, though possibly nine, missionaries and evangelists who utilized aviation in their religious work: the Catholic priests John Moran and John Sullivan (France, 1918-1919), Belvin Maynard (USA, 1919-1922), Robert Crawford (USA, as early as 1919), Mrs. Mattie Crawford (USA, as early as 1924), Bishop Harry Carson (Haiti, as early as 1924), and J. R. Blanchard (Australia, as early as 1926).<sup>36</sup> There are possibly two additional programs to add to this list: Lutheran missionary Dr. E. A. Late (Liberia, circa 1924) and an unnamed Catholic priest (South Pacific, early 1920s). However, little evidence concerning these last two missionary pilots has been unearthed and their dates of successful operation remain obscure.<sup>37</sup>

In addition, there existed four proposed mission aviation programs planned in the late 1910s and early 1920s that eventually launched after mid-1927: a Church of England aviation program launched by Leonard Daniels (Australia, proposed 1924, first flight 1928), John Flynn's Aerial Mission Service (Australia, first conceived 1912, planned in 1917, experimental use in 1927, operational start in 1928), Paul Schulte's *Catholic Missionalium Vehiculorum Associatio* (global footprint, first conceived in 1925, founded 1927, first flight circa 1933), and Cameron Townsend's Jungle Aviation and Radio Service (Central and South America, first conceived ca.

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<sup>36</sup> Anon., "Catholic Items: Exploits of Catholic Canadian Chaplains," *Southern Cross* (Adelaide, South Australia), 31 Jan. 1919, 19; Anon., "This Bishop to fly on visits to Flock," *New York Times*, 04 Aug. 1924, 13; Anon., "Mrs. Mattie Crawford", 1924; Anon., "A Busy Sky Pilot," *The Brisbane Courier* (Brisbane, Queensland), 16 Sep. 1926, 6; Crissey, "Pastor Flies Over Oregon"; Parramore, "Belvin Maynard".

<sup>37</sup> Anon., "Aeroplane to be used by missionary working in Africa," *The Evening Republican* (Mitchell, SD), 9 Jul. 1924, 1; Anon., "This Bishop to fly on visits to Flock"; Most Reverend A.R.E. Thomas to John Wells, 24 Jul. 1972 (BGC 528-3-11).



1927, first flight in 1946).<sup>38</sup> Finally, three additional missionaries received attention from global news outlets for proposed mission aviation programs, though no known evidence exists to suggest they succeeded in ushering their dreams into reality. This list includes the Australian cleric's advertised plans of 1908, Reverend Dr. S. Hall Young's failed 1919 mission aviation program to Alaska, and Leon Bourjade's proposed program to Polynesia in 1924.<sup>39</sup> The first wave of mission aviation operation therefore confined itself to no more than nine scattered programs, all of which stumbled and collapsed by 1930.

Despite the small numbers, and its limited direct impact on global Christian missions, mission aviation's first wave offers powerful insight into later iterations. Very similar to mission aviation in later decades, mission aviation between 1908 and May 1927 was in fact an outgrowth of aviation culture, and popular perceptions of aircraft informed – at times dictated – mission aviation practice. During mission aviation's first wave, the stereotypes surrounding aviation were integral to its slow adoption by missions. Aircraft offered most every missionary who labored far from home, the opportunity to bridge distance, expand their ministry, and like the Apostolic Faith Mission, even develop a new and modern public narrative for their work. In addition, the actual state of post-1918 aviation design was well suited to the needs of many mission organizations. Nevertheless, missionaries were slow to adopt new aviation technology. In part, this was a function of expense, but for the majority this was a result of the broad negative

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<sup>38</sup> Peel, 2 Nov. 1917; Anon., "Sky Pilot," *The Mail* (Adelaide, South Australia), 19 Jul. 1924, 25; Anon., "To Use Moth Plane: Outback "Sky Pilot"," *Maryborough Chronicle, Wide Bay and Burnett Advertiser* (Maryborough, Queensland), 29 Dec. 1927; Anon., "Real "Sky Pilot": German War Flyer's Plan," *The Telegraph* (Brisbane, Queensland), 17 Feb. 1930, 5; *The Flying Doctor Story*; Cameron Townsend, interview by John Wells, 12 Jul., 1976.

<sup>39</sup> Anon., "The Flying Missionary"; Anon., "Aero to Take Gospel to Gold Country," *The Capital Times* (Madison, WI), 10 Feb. 1919, 2; Anon., "Air Hero Becomes Monk: Living in Lonely Hut, "New Battles to Fight.," *The Brisbane Courier* (Brisbane Queensland), 25 Feb. 1924, 13.

perception surrounding the effectiveness and safety of aircraft, as well as a general ignorance as to contemporary aircraft's actual capabilities.<sup>40</sup>

Therefore, it was not a lack of need or the insufficiency of contemporary technical that undermined first-wave mission aviation, but missionaries' general unfamiliarity with aviation technology combined with the common perception of aviation as a fascinating but impractical toy. Certainly, populations in Europe and North America were enthralled by aircraft and flocked to air shows, air circuses, and to watch barnstormers thrill overhead. Yet, flight was little understood, and its association with artificial spectacle and deadly crashes undercut its support as a practical tool. Mission associations appeared to share the appraisal of society more broadly; aviation was for the intrepid and courageous few, not a pursuit of the common individual, or for that matter, the common missionary.<sup>41</sup> Those few missions that did initiate aviation programs during the first wave of mission aviation (1908-1927), exhibited a more thorough understanding as to aircraft's true potential than aviation's many skeptics. However, these missionaries' comprehension of aircraft's use for missions remain firmly tied to the prejudices imbedded within their ambient culture and resembled many other secular aviation programs of the period: short-term, limited-scope projects, or novelties, that were broadly unsafe and unsustainable.

Despite the myriad failures of first-wave mission aviation, the early movement was in some respects a success. For these initial aviators saw in flight a clever method by which they could yoke a popular technology to evangelism and assimilate its image and corresponding

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<sup>40</sup> Mission aviators in France, the United States, the Caribbean, and Australia all operated successful (but limited) aviation programs between 1919 and the early 1920s. Furthermore, some mission aviators flying post 1927, such as Keith Langford-Smith (Australia, CMS) and Leonard Daniels (Australia, Church Bush Aid Society), flew aircraft designed and built during the mid-1920s. See also: Anon., "Real Sky Pilot: Missionary with Aeroplane," *The Uralla Times* (Uralla, New South Wales), 16 Dec. 1926, 4; Anon., "The Real Sky Pilot," *Queensland Times* (Ipswich Queensland), 15 Jan. 1927, 8; Anon., "Wilcannia's Sky Pilot: Activities of Mr. Daniels," *Barrier Miner* (Broken Hill, New South Wales), 12 Sep. 1928, 3; *Sky Pilot in Arnhem Land*.

<sup>41</sup> *The Winged Gospel*, Chapter 4; *England and the Aeroplane*, Chapter 3; *The Shock of the Old*, Chapter 4..

narrative towards their own ends. Like the racers, barnstormers, and aerial acrobats of the era, mission aviation programs (such as that of Robert Crawford) flew because that act was itself a spectacle. One that promoted Christian evangelism and connected faith to scientific innovation. Missionary pilots embraced the parallel imagery of aircraft as exhilarating but enigmatic emblems of modern human progress, and by doing so implicitly staked a claim that their work, and Christian faith more broadly, were likewise modern and progressive. Indeed, given the aviation industry ready use of religious metaphor and imagery to explain flight, aircraft were an ideal bridge between reason and faith. Americans and Europeans were already primed to connect flight and faith. Missionaries simply deployed common industry metaphors in reverse and flew aircraft to explain religion. Indeed, given the widely-held perception of aircraft as deathtraps, the act of evangelists taking to flight was an object lesson of faith in and of itself.

Chapter TwoAircraft as symbols of progress  
and heroic exploration (1927-1941)

“Even in her exhausted state her heart turned over at the excitement of the find. He saw her excitement. He said, "Time enough to think of that when you're safe. No, you must come."

She was too weak to argue, even if the blessed sense of safety, the cessation of thirst and terror, had left her willing to. He lifted her, and carried her to the little plane, with its windmill-looking propellers overhead. It must have made, she saw, an incredibly dangerous landing, small as it was. . .

The motor roared; the little autogiro lifted, straight above the jungle. . . The green treetops waved below her. She could see the mounds, the outline of the green buildings she had come to seek, in a beautiful, regular pattern, now, from the air. There was a magnificent design, visible through the overgrowth, through all these years, to be seen – unless she returned, or some-one else finished her discovery – only by some chance flyer. It occurred to her that Jon probably knew more than most explorers about lost cities. Apparently they interested him not at all.”<sup>1</sup>

Captured here in part is but one of the exploits of fictional missionary pilot Jonathan Weare in the novel *She Knew Three Brothers*.<sup>2</sup> In the novel, written by Pulitzer Prize winner Margaret Widdemer, heroine and amateur archeologist, Valentine Weare, succumbs to injuries inflicted over her long and arduous journey to a lost Mayan temple. Just as Valentine gives up all hope of survival and faints from her wounds, missionary pilot Jonathan Weare suddenly appears over the jungle canopy in his small gyrocopter, and makes a harrowing landing in the small clearing near the temple.<sup>3</sup> Arriving just in time to save Valentine’s life, he revives Ms. Weare,

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<sup>1</sup> Margaret Widdemer, *She Knew Three Brothers* (New York: Farrar & Rinehart, Inc., 1939), 192-3.

<sup>2</sup> Anon., "Bound to be Read," *Lodi News-Sentinel* (Lodi, CA), 9 Sep. 1939, 4; Gerald Fraser, "Miss Widdemer, 93, Poet, Author Dies," *New York Times* (New York), 15 Jul. 1978, 20, 20.

<sup>3</sup> In the novel Jonathan Weare was Valentine Weare’s brother-in-law prior to Valentine’s divorce of Jonathan’s brother.

provides her with lifesaving medicine, and deftly carries her back to the aircraft.<sup>4</sup> As the missionary and his ward climb from the dark forest floor into the bright sunlight above, Valentine – now quickly recovering – looks down at the temple. Taken aback by the beauty of the scene from the air, Valentine realizes that the missionary pilot, flying regularly over the forest in service of others, must know much about the Mayan ruins of the Mexican jungle. Nevertheless, Jon was so focused on his mission that he disregarded the worldly temptations of fame and riches in order to care for those to whom he ministered.<sup>5</sup>

Sensationalized and embellished, Margaret Widdemer's description of missionary Jonathan Weare's work as a pilot reflects quite accurately how many missionary pilots of the 1930s described themselves and marketed their work. Like this scene from Widdemer's novel, mission aviators promoted their efforts as a progressive innovation to contemporary Christian missions. Missionary pilots credited themselves with facilitating life-saving emergency medical service to missionaries, local peoples, and even waylaid explorers. They boasted how their work mapping and scouting mission fields enabled fellow mission laborers to locate and minister to new people groups quickly. Perhaps most importantly, mission aviators were cognizant that their flying brought attention to them and their parent mission organization and used that publicity to draw in new supporters.

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After a small burst of interest in mission aviation immediately following World War One, the first wave of mission aviation stagnated by the mid-1920s. Mission organizations were unwilling to risk the lives of their workers to flying machines still considered unsafe and

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<sup>4</sup> Before the two fly to the safety of the mission station, Jon and Valentine discover a cache of sealed ancient Mayan religious objects, which – in the name of science – the two smash open and pilfer from the temple.

<sup>5</sup> *She Knew Three Brothers*, 186-238.

unreliable. However, Lindbergh's celebrated flight across the Atlantic ushered in a broad reevaluation of aircraft amongst global populations, and helped convince the world that aircraft were, or would soon be, a practical means of conveyance. This broad reassessment of flight likewise had a significant impact on mission aviation. A "boom" of interest in mission flight occurred in the late 1920s through 1930s, as missionaries began to experiment with means by which to utilize aircraft in mission work more practically.<sup>6</sup>

At a surface level, mission use of aircraft during the second wave of mission aviation (1927 – 1941) was not much different than the first wave. Most programs were small *ad hoc* affairs, and mission organizations struggled to establish operations that were sustainable, safe, and effective. The similarities between first- and second-wave mission aviation programs however, should not distract from the important differences. As the perception of flight gradually improved, mission staff progressively came to accept that there were practical long-term logistical benefits to aviation programs. Mission aviation therefore became increasingly committed to a long-term use of aircraft for sustainable logistical service. This in turn led to a much more serious investigation into safe and efficient flight operations amongst an important minority of aviation programs. Their work gave rise to more complicated, better operated, safer, and sustainable cooperative-use mission aviation concerns that would eventually become the standard method of mission aviation.

The embrace of practicality did not eliminate of course the value of propaganda for mission aviation, as some mission organizations continued to fly aircraft primarily to raise interest in and support for their broader work. As in the first wave, the propaganda evolved

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<sup>6</sup> Roger E. Bilstein, *Flight in America: From the Wrights to the Astronauts*, Revised ed. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), 49, 75-7; Donald M. Pattillo, *A History in the Making: 80 Turbulent Years in the American General Aviation Industry* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1998), 15-6.

alongside the development of aircraft culture. In the late 1920s and early 1930s, aircraft were increasingly accepted as a valuable, treacherous – but not foolhardy – device by which the limitations of nature could be overcome and human knowledge expanded. Christian mission aviators staked a claim to this humanistic progressive view of aircraft to underline their own argument that human advancement and scientific progress were not antithetical to conservative, orthodox Christianity. This theme correlated well to then-evolving Protestant mission practice that sought to counter challenges to its relevancy by underscoring the “practicality” of missions through mission schools, farm initiatives, and medical centers.<sup>7</sup> Therefore, wherein the first wave aircraft were spectacles, or showcases of Christian modernity, in the second wave they served to demonstrate mission practicality, usefulness, and contributions to human development. Of course, these mission aviation narratives focused – like their secular counterparts – upon the most exhilarating aspects of their work, and frequently transformed missionary pilots into larger than life heroes that closely resembled the heroic missionary pilot of Margaret Widdemer’s novel.

### **Lindbergh and Aviation Culture after May 1927**

In the decade immediately following World War One, aviation advocates and industrialists came to understand that to increase popular support for aviation, they first needed to improve the public perception of aircraft. Therefore, the aviation industry consciously crafted a public narrative for flight that promoted aircraft as marvels of technology while simultaneously pushing against the popular perception of airplanes as unsafe and unreliable.<sup>8</sup> In the late 1910s,

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<sup>7</sup> Steven S. Maughan, *Mighty England Do Good: Culture, Faith, Empire, and World in the Foreign Missions of the Church of England* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2014).

<sup>8</sup> *A History in the Making*; Scott Anthony and Oliver Green, *British Aviation Posters: Art, Design, and Flight* (Surrey, UK: Lund Humphries, 2012), 27-30.

American aircraft corporations gradually ended their traditional sponsorship of air circuses and dangerous exhibitions. They instead hosted air races and offered prize money to those who successfully pushed the still narrow boundaries of aviation.<sup>9</sup> The reformed aerial exhibitions were popular, raised awareness for their sponsors, and served as a spectacular showcase of aircraft capabilities to potential buyers and investors. Aircraft manufacturers likewise advertised their aircrafts' technical data in company advertisements, pamphlets, and newspapers. The detailed technical specifications, charts, and diagrams, were not themselves meant to be fully comprehensible by the average reader. They were meant to underscore the modernity of airplanes and the intricate technical specifications of each aircraft. Regardless of whether the consumer understood what the technical specifics meant, the numerical and visual descriptions conveyed an image of scientific exactness, reliability, and informed design.<sup>10</sup> Commercial airline companies too found their own ways to reassure potential customers. They instituted tight discipline and order at airports to promote an image of professionalism and safety. In their marketing material, they played off aircraft manufacturers' own publicity efforts to highlight the modernity and reliability of the aircraft they flew and emphasized the professionalism and training of their pilots, hoping the combination would assuage the fears of potential clients about the safety of commercial aviation transport.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Bernhard Rieger, *Technology and the Culture of Modernity in Britain and Germany, 1890-1945*, New studies in European history (Cambridge, U.K. ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

<sup>10</sup> Anon., "Planes Tuned for Long Race," *Harrisburg Telegraph* (Harrisburg, PA), 6 Oct. 1919, 7; Anon., "Marriage a la Airplane and Radio," *The Literary Digest*, 27 May 1922, 27; Anon., "Religion: MIVA," *Time*, Oct. 1936, 12, 18; *Flight in America*, 25-75; Eric Schatzberg, "Ideology and Technical Choice: The Decline of the Wooden Airplane in the United States, 1920-1945," *Technology and Culture* 35, no. 1 (1994): 34-69; *British Aviation Posters*, 6-9.

<sup>11</sup> This Imperial Airways marketing effort was quite important to the company, as their inferior British-made airplanes were at first thoroughly unreliable. See also: Joseph J. Corn, *The Winged Gospel: America's romance with aviation, 1900-1950* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 55; *Flight in America*, 16-75; *British Aviation Posters*, 35.



Despite the best efforts of aircraft and airline companies, popular distrust of flight continued to depress aviation development, the aircraft market, and airline ticket sales up through the mid-1920s. That is, until Charles Lindbergh altered the equation. Lindbergh and his May 1927 solo flight across the Atlantic recreated the early-1900s popular enthusiasm for flight and convinced a global audience that aviation had finally developed into a viable means of transport. Lindbergh's fame was in part perpetuated by his patron, Harry Guggenheim, a publisher, philanthropist, and scion of the fabulously wealthy Guggenheim mining family. Harry Guggenheim was himself an aviation enthusiast: he remade the quiet reserved Lindbergh into an ambassador of civil aviation and sent him on a tour of all forty-eight states. The massive trip served to cement Lindbergh's heroic image, fanned the flames of aviation enthusiasm, and helped touch off what historians have labeled the "Lindbergh Boom"—a massive increase in airport construction, demand for new aircraft, and airline business. In the United States alone, airline passenger rates between 1928 and 1929 surged 335%, while civil engineers built airstrips in almost every town in the country.<sup>12</sup> The "Lindbergh Boom" likewise made its way across the Atlantic to Europe. European airlines and the aircraft industry experienced a significant growth in business in the late 1920s and early 1930s as countries competed amongst each other to build ever-more advanced aircraft, improve domestic civil aviation, and develop their national airlines.<sup>13</sup> Airports across Europe became tourist destinations, and each year hundreds of thousands gathered to watch commercial and private aircraft take off and land while lounging at airport restaurants or sitting in purpose-built spectator stands. Even more popular than watching

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<sup>12</sup> Richard P. Hallion, *Legacy of Flight: The Guggenheim Contribution to American Aviation* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1977), 72; *The Winged Gospel*, 17-25, 73-5; *Flight in America*, 49, 77; *A History in the Making*, 15-6; Eric Schatzberg, *Wings of Wood, Wings of Metal: Culture and technical choice in American airplane materials, 1914-1945* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1999); *Technology and the Culture of Modernity*, 116-7, chapter 5.

<sup>13</sup> Robert Wohl, *The Spectacle of Flight: Aviation and the Western Imagination, 1920-1950* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2005); *British Aviation Posters*.

aircraft in person, was watching them on screen. In the United States and Europe alike, millions marveled at the hundreds of Hollywood and European films that took advantage of the aircraft craze and helped to shape the public perception of aviation in both Europe and America. Taken together, these films reinforced the cult of the pilot as a rugged loner and the image of the airplane as a source of freedom, and domination over the mundane.<sup>14</sup>

Lindbergh's flight was that rare global sensation that combined importance with popularity, but not for the reasons often assumed. The journey was not necessarily important because it was the first nonstop journey over the north Atlantic, nor because it represented a technological breakthrough. Lindbergh's flight was crucial to the development of twentieth-century aviation because of what his crossing symbolized. Lindbergh demonstrated the power and capability of modern aviation in a way that uniquely captured the attention of a worldwide audience even as it offered conclusive proof that flight could serve as an important means of transportation.<sup>15</sup> Thus, Lindbergh's true contribution to aviation was in igniting a popular reevaluation of flight, that was in turn further shaped and molded by politicians, industrialists, academics, artists, publishers, and entertainers.<sup>16</sup> Given that the Lindbergh "boom" was primarily a cultural reassessment of technology, how aviation was promoted and interpreted varied

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<sup>14</sup> *The Winged Gospel*; Peter Fritzsche, *A Nation of Fliers: German Aviation and the Popular Imagination* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992); Robert Wohl, *A Passion for Wings: Aviation and the Western Imagination, 1908-1918* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994), chapter 2.

<sup>15</sup> Louis Blériot's successful crossing of the English Channel in 1909 had a similar, though smaller impact. Indeed, Reverend John Flynn credited Blériot's feat as crucial to convincing him that aviation would become a viable means of transportation. See also: Anon., "Priest will use Modern Airplane," *Winnipeg Free Press* (Winnipeg, Manitoba), 04 Jul. 1936, 17; Anon., *The Flying Doctor Story*, ed. The Royal Flying Doctor Service of Australia (Sydney: Deaton & Spencer Pty. Ltd., 1970 ca); Graeme Bucknall, "Flynn, John (1880-1951)," in *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, 1981); *The Winged Gospel*; Stephen Kern, *The Culture of Time and Space: 1880-1918* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1983), chapter 9.

<sup>16</sup> K. E. Bailes, "Technology and Legitimacy: Soviet Aviation and Stalinism in the 1930s," *Technology and Culture* 17, no. 1 (1976): 55-81; *The Winged Gospel*, preface, 17-25; Schatzberg, "Ideology and Technical Choice."; *Wings of Wood, Wings of Metal; The Spectacle of Flight*, Chapter 6; David Edgerton, *The Shock of the Old: Technology and global history since 1900* (London: Profile, 2008), Ch 1, 4; *British Aviation Posters*, chapter 7.

significantly according to location. Certainly, there were commonalities in how people interpreted flight: many associated aircraft with speed or dynamism. Film, print, and other cultural artifacts that crossed national boundaries promoted a vision of flight that emphasized freedom and heroism. However, the way in which German, British, American, and Australian press portrayed aviation varied in accordance to ingrained national narratives, interests, and values.<sup>17</sup>

In Weimar, and then in Nazi Germany, the national narrative presented German aviation as conclusive evidence of the nation's technological prowess and the German people's unique ability to prosper regardless of danger, hardship, or strain. Flight served an especially important role in marking the nation's rebirth following the disaster of World War One. The Zeppelin, the most visible illustration of German aerial innovation, was also the signal example of the country's aerial enthusiasm. Across the Reich, Germans rushed outdoors as a Zeppelin made a scheduled flyover, and eagerly bought up newspapers to track the dirigibles as they crossed the Atlantic.<sup>18</sup> Like the USA, the UK, and France, Germany had its own pantheon of pilot-heroes. Germans gathered in the hundreds of thousands to attend weekly air rallies, which featured famous stunt pilots such as Ernst Udet, whose signature move was a quick dive to the ground where he scraped the earth with his wingtip to snatch a handkerchief from the grass. Then with a jerk, Udet pulled up once more into the sky to the roar of the astonished crowd, with his handkerchief fluttering wildly on the tip of his wing.<sup>19</sup> Germany, of course, likewise had its more disciplined pilot-heroes. Hermann Köhl won international acclaim in 1928 upon becoming the

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<sup>17</sup> Michael Adas, *Machines as the Measure of Men: Science, technology, and ideologies of western dominance*, Cornell studies in comparative history (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989); *A Nation of Fliers*, chapter 4; Gordon Pirie, *Air Empire: British Imperial Civil Aviation, 1919-39* (New York: Manchester University Press, 2009), 235-40; *British Aviation Posters*, 20.

<sup>18</sup> *A Nation of Fliers*, 5-6, 135.

<sup>19</sup> Armand van Ishoven, "Profile Aircraft: Udet (BFW U-12 Flamingo variants," pamphlet (Ltd. Profile Publications, ca 1972)

first person in history to fly east-west across the north Atlantic, a feat that – given the prevailing west-to-east winds – was more difficult than Lindbergh’s 1927 crossing. Köhl’s fame, like Lindbergh’s, stemmed from what his flight represented as much as the actual flight itself.<sup>20</sup> According to the German press, Köhl, quite dissimilar to “lucky Lindy,” did not need to rely on good fortune for his success. Köhl – a man who exemplified German discipline and virtue – succeeded because of his precise planning, preparation, and practical application of scientific knowledge.

Very much like aviation enthusiasts in Germany, British governments and industrialists promoted aviation as a means of national rebirth. Their propaganda fashioned British aircraft into a visual demonstration of the UK’s technological ingenuity that would enable the nation to retain its position as a top-rank world power. The British public enthusiastically supported the endeavor. Each year, hundreds of thousands of Britons, including members of the monarchy, flocked to British airshows, the most famous of which was the RAF’s annual exhibition at Hendon just outside of London.<sup>21</sup> The Hendon “derby” featured flyovers of the latest British warplanes, mock dogfights, and reenactments of RAF bombing missions over rebellious “native villages.” The entwinement of flight and British culture extended far beyond the landing fields at Hendon. British directors and authors explored aviation in films, academic literature, and poetry,

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<sup>20</sup> Both Hermann Köhl and Charles Lindbergh became international stars because of the symbolic nature and constructed meaning of their flights, not only their talent as pilots. Numerous others performed feats of comparable skill before and after without similar levels of accompanying fanfare. Indeed, of the two flights, Köhl’s was in many ways the more difficult. The prevailing west-east winds over the Atlantic pushed against the German aviator, even as they had propelled Lindbergh towards Paris a year earlier. Lindbergh’s flight however, held much more symbolic meaning for a much larger global population, and he was the far more celebrated pilot as a result. Regardless of relative popularity, international populations saw in both flights symbols of the growing fellowship of humanity, the victory of science over nature, and the industrial capabilities and resolve of their respective nations. It was these perceptions that made both Charles Lindbergh and Hermann Köhl famous. See also: *Technology and the Culture of Modernity*, 116-7.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, chapter 8; Martin Francis, *The Flyer: British culture and the Royal Air Force, 1939-1945* (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 16-7; *Air Empire*; Gordon Pirie, *Cultures and Caricatures of British Imperial Aviation: Passengers, pilots, publicity* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2012).

as well as in the era's popular mystery novels such as Agatha Christie's *Death in the Air* (1935) or Christopher St. John Sprigg's *Death of an Airman* (1934).<sup>22</sup>

For their part, Westminster politicians and their allies in the press constantly promoted aviation as a powerful tool of colonial legitimization and consolidation. Of course, they claimed British aircraft were flown primarily for the benefit of others and bring to those in need the benefits of British science and technology. Colonial officials publicized plans to employ RAF planes to spray insecticide over crops and mosquito-infested waters to end malnutrition and eliminate disease. They likewise touted RAF work to facilitate archeological discovery, deliver medical aid, and carry engineers and scientists to help build and develop the colonies. However, despite all claims to the contrary, the use of aircraft in the British Empire was about perpetuating power much more than about facilitating development, a fact the RAF bombing of mock villages at the annual Hendon airshow underscored. Indeed, the British Treasury considered the young air military wing a cheap means of colonial administration. Bombing rebellious villages from the air or strafing enemy troops with aircraft was a decidedly economical means of imperial maintenance—much cheaper than sending the Army in to quell local insurrections.<sup>23</sup>

Imperial motifs were not absent from the United States' own national narrative of aviation. However, American media more frequently promoted aircraft through the prisms of early twentieth-century progressivism and democratic idealism. Aviation industrialists led the

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<sup>22</sup> Valentine Cunningham, *British Writers of the Thirties* (Oxford Oxfordshire ; New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 168; David Enrico Omissi, "The Hendon Air Pageant, 1920 - 37," in *Popular imperialism and the military*, ed. John M. MacKenzie (New York: Manchester University Press, 1992), 216.

<sup>23</sup> Other countries likewise employed aircraft in a show of power. For example, American military planes flew throughout South America in the 1920s on what were termed tours of 'goodwill,' while German pilots explored and charted air routes over Germany's former colonies. See also: Fritz Loose, "Flugerlebnisse in Neuguinea," *Junkers-Nachrichten*, Sep-Oct 1967, 3-5 (BGC 528-3-5.1); Fritz Loose to John Wells, n.d. 1970 (BGC 528-3-5); Cameron Townsend, interview by John Wells, 12 Jul., 1976; David Edgerton, *England and the Aeroplane: An essay on a militant and technological nation* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1991), 20-1; *The Spectacle of Flight*, chapter 2; *Air Empire*, 100-1, conclusion.

campaign, hoping to do for light aircraft what Henry Ford did for automobiles. In the popular press, industry magazines, and aviation showcases, industrialists promoted the idea of aviation as the ultimate democratizer of transportation, a means by which ordinary people could escape the dirty confines of the city to fly wherever they wanted for a quick weekend diversion. The regular flight of millions of average citizens amongst the serene clouds and the pure air would improve mental health and make each American a more thoughtful citizen. This millennialist interpretation of aviation did not confine itself to industry propaganda. Aviation enthusiasts, politicians, and the popular press reinforced the aviation industry's imaging and the American public eagerly embraced it.

The positivistic, progressive interpretation of aviation became an important construct of interwar aviation culture; it was one component of the average American's broader faith that science would soon eradicate disease, improve humanity, achieve global peace, and otherwise facilitate a technological utopia.<sup>24</sup> To an extent, this American positivism was shared by their British cousins, and spurred the collaboration amongst British and American liberals to combine flight with their vision of Wilsonian internationalism. Politicians such as Winston Churchill and aviation philanthropists like Harry Guggenheim joined forces to advance a shared belief that aircraft would soon usher in a better, more peaceful future. They and others argued that through increased international flights, aviation would facilitate better communication among peoples around the world and break down old prejudices and misgiving.<sup>25</sup> Furthermore, they hoped aviation would link national economies together by quickly transporting goods across state

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<sup>24</sup> *The Winged Gospel*, introduction, 27; *Machines as the Measure of Men*, Chapter 3; *A Nation of Fliers*, 3-5; *British Aviation Posters*.

<sup>25</sup> *The Winged Gospel*, 32-7, 75-90; *England and the Aeroplane*, xxv; *A Nation of Fliers*, 175; *Flight in America*, 77; David Edgerton, "England and the Aeroplane Revisited," in *Myths, Gender and the Military Conquest of Air and Sea*, ed. Katharina Hoffmann (University of Oldenburg: BIS-Verlag, 2009), 2.

borders, effectively binding nation to nation economically and eliminating war by making it too costly in terms of national interests.<sup>26</sup>

### **Mission Aviation after Lindbergh**

Lindbergh's May 1927 flight therefore did much to convince a broad swath of the global population that aviation was indeed a practical form of transportation, newly evolved from its Precambrian form. Mission organizations adapted to the new social sentiment. As populations the world over began to accept the practicality of flight, missionaries increasingly experimented with ways by which they might utilize aircraft in the mission field. Between mid-1927 and 1941, mission organizations began roughly thirty new mission aviation programs in Scotland, Australia, Canada, South Africa, Sudan, Papua New Guinea, Polynesia, Tanganyika, the United States, South America, the Baltic coast, and Germany.<sup>27</sup> As in the first wave, these mission aviation programs were usually small affairs, operated by missionaries who, in addition to their regular evangelistic work and pastoral responsibilities, flew and maintained their own aircraft. Second-wave programs also remained highly experimental. Most mission administrators who approved their organization's mission aviation programs had little understanding of the requirements of safe, efficient flight. They left their novice missionary pilots to develop flight techniques, scout air routes, and repair their craft on their own, frequently without much training or a valid pilot's license.

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<sup>26</sup> *Flight in America*, 77.

<sup>27</sup> This is in addition to the numerous mission aviation programs that were proposed during this period, but it is unclear if they were launched, and in addition to the between eight and ten programs started during the first wave of mission aviation. Of the programs began during the first wave, two operations continued to fly into the second wave (R. Crawford, Bishop Kirky), though it is possible three additional programs did as well (Bishop Carson, M. Crawford, Blanchard). See also Appendix A; Anon., "Religion: MIVA", 1936

A few second-wave mission programs followed a different trajectory than the majority. The broader acceptance of flight as a realistic pursuit fostered amongst three mission groups a more thoughtful exploration into mission-aviation best practices, such as adequately training their pilots, and cooperatively flying on behalf multiple mission stations. The cooperative use of aircraft provided regional member missions customized and centralized service at a significantly lower cost per flying-mile than traditional missionary-pilot models. Moreover, led by professional pilots and trained engineers who kept regular maintenance schedules and rigorously planned their flight operations, cooperative-use programs were safer both mechanically and operationally. They quickly demonstrated themselves to be more sustainable, effective, and safe than those programs flown by amateur missionary pilots and represented a paradigm shift for those mission organizations that embraced them. Three of these programs developed in the interwar period: the Aerial Medical Service of the Australian Inland Mission founded by John Flynn (first conceived in 1912, first flight in 1928), the Catholic Missionary Vehicular Association begun by Paul Schulte (more commonly known by its Latin acronym *Miva*, first conceived in 1925, founded in 1927), and the aerial service in Papua New Guinea, begun as a joint effort by German and American Lutheran churches (first flight in 1935).

Like Schulte's *Miva* and Flynn's AMS, the aerial service of American and German Lutheran missions in Papua New Guinea was instrumental in expanding the evangelistic work of its parent organization. Impetus for the German-American program originated in 1922, as the American Lutheran Church struggled to cope with expansion.<sup>28</sup> By the early 1920s, German and American Lutheran mission groups had saturated the New Guinea coastline, and looked to push inland where recently conducted surveys pinpointed numerous population centers in New

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<sup>28</sup> The northern half of the territory had only come under Australian control following World War One, prior to which it had been part of Germany's ephemeral global empire.



Guinea's central highlands. Despite the missionary potential of these villages, their locations along valley floors or amongst high mountain ridges made sustained communication and transportation between missionaries working within New Guinea's interior and mission doctors and staff stationed on the coast difficult. Transportation back and forth between these stations would require long, dangerous, and expensive hikes through dense forest and over treacherous mountains, and would effectively isolate the missionaries for much of the year. Both missionaries and the missions' administrative boards felt it unadvisable to start work in such inaccessible locations, and the Lutheran missions therefore continued to concentrate their work on the New Guinea coast.<sup>29</sup>

The introduction of airplanes in New Guinea's interior gold fields offered a potential solution to the Lutherans' problem. Beginning in the 1920s, New Guinea gold companies experimented with the use of aircraft to support mining work in the central highlands. The experiments were a success and the companies built large runways throughout New Guinea to fly men and material in and out of the interior's mining centers.<sup>30</sup> The Lutherans explored the feasibility of chartering one of the many airplanes flying for the mining companies but found the commercial operators unreliable and too expensive to provide sustainable mission transportation service. The commercial air network did however provide the Lutherans with a working model of how to operate a New Guinea flight service successfully as well as a network of airstrips they had permission to use.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Albert Frerichs and Sylvia Frerichs, *Anutu Conquers in New Guinea: A Story of Mission Work in New Guinea* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1969).

<sup>30</sup> "Gold Seeker", "Surmounting New Guinea's Natural Barriers by Airplane," *Aero Digest*, 1930, 44, 156 (BGC 528-3-5.4); *Anutu Conquers in New Guinea*.

<sup>31</sup> Rev. John H. F. Kuder to John Wells, 4 Jul. 1970 (BGC 528-3-5).

With the Australian government's enthusiastic support and financial assistance from German churches in Bavaria, the Lutheran missions purchased a 5-seater Junkers aircraft and hired a professional pilot both to fly and develop their planned aviation program.<sup>32</sup> The mission's new plane, christened *Papua*, began flights in February of 1935 under the supervision of German pilot Friedrich "Fritz" Loose. A flyer of exceptional skill and fame, Fritz Loose had flown previously for the German Navy in the First World War, set numerous world time and distance records in the 1920s, and, with famed pilot Hermann Köhl, made multiple attempts to fly the first aircraft over the North Atlantic from east to west (he wasn't aboard when Köhl finally completed the trip). Loose flew the *Papua* from 1935 to 1938 without incident. He never joined the mission nor engaged in evangelical activity, but Loose's work proved to be essential to mission growth and operations. Flying in only a five-seat plane, Loose opened up numerous mission stations for the Lutherans, regularly supplied those stations, and maintained lines of communications between missionaries living in the interior of New Guinea and their superiors in central stations on the coast. In just his first four months of operation, Loose made 145 flights, carried 258 passengers, and hauled 18 tons of freight. Mr. Loose left New Guinea in 1938 to rejoin his former employers at the Junkers aircraft company in Germany. The Lutherans replaced Loose with another German pilot who competently flew the mission plane until 1939.<sup>33</sup>

The other two second-wave cooperative-use mission aviation programs – *Miva* and AIM-AMS – likewise made immediate and lasting contributions to their parent mission organization. All three demonstrated the effectiveness of mission aviation and inspired several other mission organizations following World War Two. Yet, their examples remained in the distinct minority up through the mid-1950s. Instead, most second-wave mission aviation programs stumbled from

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> *Anutu Conquers in New Guinea*; Kuder, 4 Jul. 1970 (BGC 528-3-5); Loose, n.d. 1970 (BGC 528-3-5).

one setback to the next without a clear path to sustainability, and most failed just years following their initial flight.<sup>34</sup> Lindbergh may have demonstrated the operational capabilities of contemporary aircraft, but with little experience in aviation logistics or a means to collaborate effectively with each other, most mission organizations of the second wave proved to be poorly planned, unsafe, and unsuccessful.<sup>35</sup>

Mission aviation's myriad failures in the 1930s should not be taken to suggest that those same programs were unpopular. Notwithstanding the fact that most mission aviation programs were experimental and had little to show for the time and resources missions invested in them, mission aviation remained a popular marketing platform by which to promote mission work and shape an organization's brand image. Mission flight operations attracted additional donations, interest from the press, and the imagination of Christian youth. Global mission groups with flight programs thus utilized those operations as public symbols of their work and promoted their aviation programs in print, film, photography, and editorials. For a significant number of these second wave programs, the marketing – or propagandistic – value of aircraft proved to be their principal worth, far outweighing the meager practical benefits most missions of this era achieved through flight.

The international press were willing allies in missionary organizations' use of flight as propaganda. Up through the late 1940s, publishers found that aviation stories could drive newspaper and magazine sales and so covered flight liberally, featuring in print such highlights

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<sup>34</sup> See Appendix A; Townsend, "Transcript of Taped Conversation between Cameron Townsend (JAARS) and John Wells," 1-3.

<sup>35</sup> George D. Crissey, "Pastor Flies Over Oregon," *Florence Times-News* (Florence, AL), 12 Jul. 1928, 3, 3; Anon., "Australian Missionary Assembles Plane Unaided," *The New York Times* (New York), 28 Apr. 1935, 30; Keith Langford-Smith, *Sky Pilot in Arnhem Land* (Sydney, Australia: Angus and Robertson Limited, 1935); Anon., "M.A.F. To Operate Land Program," *New Life*, 8 Nov. 1973; Harold Shepherdson to John Wells, 8 Oct. 1974 (BGC 528-3-10); *The Spectacle of Flight*, 36-41.

as the first in-flight cow milking or the first wedding service conducted over Times Square.<sup>36</sup> As part of this broader campaign, the popular press frequently included accounts of mission aviators alongside the many other stories of aerial curiosity, and covered almost every cleric and missionary who but publicly aspired to fly. Comparable to the Australian Anglican in 1908, would-be mission aviators did not need to start a mission aviation program. They needed only express their intent and in return received international press. Indeed, the total number of mission aviators featured in local newspapers far exceeded the actual number who flew in the world's mission fields.<sup>37</sup>

The press not only helped increase awareness of mission aviation programs, but also reinforced mission aviators' own marketing narratives as innovators and explorers. Newspapers and magazines offered national attention and public praise for missionary pilots as they explored mountain passes (Alber de Agostino) or conducted a wedding service in the air (Belvin Maynard). Editors likewise published nationally syndicated accounts of mission aviators' wider adventures. Paul Schulte's exploits were particularly well-covered by the international press, especially his emergency flights to rescue stranded priests in northern Canada, his film documentary of Africa, or his geographic charts of transportation routes in the Arctic.<sup>38</sup>

Aircraft manufacturers likewise promoted mission aviation programs. In 1930, the Packard engine and vehicle company ran a full-page advertisement on behalf of the Catholic missionary George Feltes in the enthusiast journal *Popular Aviation*. The advertisement

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<sup>36</sup> Anon., "Concert from Plan Aids Veteran's Camp," *New York Times* (New York), 15 Apr. 1922, 3; Anon., "Marriage a la Airplane and Radio", 1922; *The Winged Gospel*, 51.

<sup>37</sup> Anon., "The Flying Missionary," *The Hawera and Normanby Star* (Southern Taranaki, NZ), 19 Jun. 1908, 3; Anon., "After Airplane for Missionary in Alaskan Field," *La Crosse Tribune and Leader Press* (La Crosse, WI), 05 Feb. 1919, 6; Anon., "Flying Missionary," *Waterloo Daily Courier* (Waterloo, IA), 4 Dec. 1933, 5; Anon., "Priest Plans Flight Over Andean Peaks," *Gleaner* (Kingston, Jamaica), 11 Jul. 1933, 22.

<sup>38</sup> Anon., "Marriage a la Airplane and Radio", 1922; Paul Schulte, "Heroic Flying Priest Rescues Brother Clergyman in Arctic," *The Lowell Sun* (Lowell, MA), 11 Aug. 1938, 1; Anon., "Flying Missionary Priest's Adventures," *Lewiston Evening Journal* (Lewiston, MA), 17 Aug. 1938, 13.

highlighted Feltes' "historic" transcontinental flight, the first undertaken with a diesel engine, and focused on the extreme flying conditions Feltes would face in Alaska. Both aspects of Feltes' work served to showcase the power and reliability of Packard's diesel engines and encourage others to purchase Packard powerplants that were (according to the testimony of a *priest*) rugged enough to facilitate even audacious undertakings in the Arctic north.<sup>39</sup> Packard was obviously more interested in promoting their product than they were in Catholic missions, but their promotional literature worked towards the churches' own interests nonetheless. In attempting to build a brand narrative for Packard engines as robust and dependable, they serendipitously constructed for George Feltes and the Catholic Church more broadly, an image of Catholic workers as brave explorers, who pushed the boundaries of aircraft technology for the benefit of others.<sup>40</sup>

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It should be emphasized that most mission organizations began flight programs during mission aviation's second wave (1927-1941) because they were caught up in the broad enthusiasm for aviation and as a result believed aircraft would dramatically improve their mission's effectiveness. Marketing campaigns were secondary to their focus on mission development. Nevertheless, even while mission aviation programs struggled to make their aviation programs sustainably operational, they discovered that the programs attracted interest in their wider efforts. Consequently, mission aviators and their supporting organizations placed significant focus on their aviation work and appealed to a common faith in heroic science and played on pre-established themes constructed by politicians and industrialists to reinforce the

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<sup>39</sup> An odd claim, given the problems of diesel engine operation in cold weather.

<sup>40</sup> Anon., "The Marquette Missionary," *Popular Aviation*, Nov. 1930, 5.



Left to right:  
Brother George Feltes, pilot,  
Father Phillip Delon,  
and George Pickenpack, co-pilot.

## The “MARQUETTE MISSIONARY”

The transcontinental flight recently completed by Brother George J. Feltes in a Packard-Diesel powered Bellanca marks a new milepost in aviation history—for it was the first time that a plane crossed the United States under Diesel power.

The Packard-Diesel equipped Bellanca, christened the “Marquette Missionary”, was flown with a load of four persons and their baggage from Roosevelt Field to San Francisco over a pre-arranged route—and on a definite schedule which was kept to the minute! The actual flying time was but 34 hours—an average speed of better than 97 m. p. h.

On the 3300 mile coast-to-coast trip only 340 gallons of fuel and 19 gallons of lubri-

cating oil were consumed. This means that the cost of transporting the entire party was *less than one cent a mile!*

Brother Feltes—the first “flying missionary”—intends to take his Packard-Diesel equipped plane up into Alaska to aid him and his Jesuit Brothers in their work among the Indians and Eskimos. To meet flying conditions in this Arctic country, far from factory service facilities, he particularly required an engine with the utmost reliability—and it is significant that he chose a Packard-Diesel.

Literally it can be said that this new and revolutionary aircraft powerplant is giving “new impetus to flight.”

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contemporary importance of mission. Therefore, missionaries began aviation programs in the belief they would someday be practical logistically, even though the true benefit of second-wave mission aviation was the propagandistic value it brought to mission organizations. This was true of programs that were logistical failures, such as that of George Feltes. It was likewise true of those that were a long-term success.

### **Paul Schulte: Priest, Pilot, Propagandist**

Father Paul Schulte, Catholic missionary and German fighter ace of the First World War, founded *Miva* (Missionary Vehicular Association) in 1927 as an umbrella organization by which to improve the transportation services available to Catholic missionaries. *Miva*, still in operation today, continues to provide Catholic foreign workers with a broad spectrum of contemporary transportation technology: automobiles, motorcycles, motorboats, and, of course, airplanes. *Miva* grew quickly following its 1927 founding. Its popularity stemmed in larger part from Schulte's concerted marketing campaigns that brought the Catholic Church significant international acclaim and remade Schulte himself into a globally celebrated explorer, scientist, artist, and hero.<sup>41</sup>

Paul Schulte first conceived of his mission transportation and aviation program in 1925 after learning that his close wartime friend, the Reverend Otto Fuhrmann, had died of malaria while ministering in Central Africa. Reverend Fuhrmann had fallen ill far from the nearest doctor. Aware that he would most likely perish without the proper treatment, Fuhrmann attempted a difficult weeks-long journey from his mission post to the closest medical center and died only a few short miles from his destination. Hearing of his friend's needless death, Schulte

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<sup>41</sup> Anon., "Religion: MIVA", 1936; Anon., "Priest will use Modern Airplane"; *British Aviation Posters*.

resolved to ensure the same fate did not befall other Catholic missionaries. For two years Schulte campaigned to build *Miva*. In his campaigns, he frequently returned to the memory of his friend, Reverend Fuhrmann, arguing that to save the lives of its missionaries, the Catholic church needed to modernize mission transportation services and replace traditional mission horses, oxen, camels, and dog sleds with automobiles, motor boats, and airplanes.<sup>42</sup> The Catholic hierarchy was initially very reluctant to approve of Schulte's transportation program, but the stiff wind pushing against Schulte suddenly transformed into a cooperative breeze in 1927. Schulte earned the full, enthusiastic support of the Catholic hierarchy – including Pope Pius – and launched *Miva* that same year.

As a program leader, Schulte proved a highly capable propagandist. He successfully employed spectacle, celebrity, and the aura of modernity to capture global attention and raise money. By 1930, *Miva* donors had reportedly given over \$100,000 and, by 1936, the organization counted fifty thousand active supporters who together donated enough money to send twelve airplanes, one hundred and fifty automobiles, and an unknown number of motorboats to Catholic missions in Albania, Canada, Latvia, Madagascar, Korea, New Guinea, Brazil, the Solomon Islands, and east, west, and south Africa.<sup>43</sup> In newspaper articles published around the globe, Schulte wove captivating stories of how *Miva's* use of modern technology allowed Catholic mission groups to carry the light of Western progress to even the most isolated locations.<sup>44</sup> Schulte even employed celebrity pilots to grow interest and awareness of *Miva's* efforts. In 1930, while fundraising for *Miva* in the United States, Schulte boasted of a spectacular

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<sup>42</sup> Anon., "Women Catholics to Hear Flying Priest: Father Schulte Tells Delegates in Capital of Plane's Use in Missionary Work," *New York Times* (New York, NY), 26 Sep. 1937, 21; Anon., "Flying Missionary Priest's Adventures"

<sup>43</sup> Anon., "Real "Sky Pilot": German War Flyer's Plan," *The Telegraph* (Brisbane, Queensland), 17 Feb. 1930, 5, 5; Anon., "Priest will use Modern Airplane"; Anon., "Religion: MIVA", 1936

<sup>44</sup> Anon., "Holy Father Receives "Flying Priest.": Destined for South Sea Isles.," *Southern Cross* (Adelaide, South Australia), 17 Jan. 1930, 2.



African mission he was planning for the next few years that would penetrate “one of the least known inhabited sections of the globe” and chart new air routes in South Africa. After personally planning the air route, Schulte intended to hire international celebrities Herman Köhl and Colonel James Fitzmaurice—the then-famous German and Irish duo who had been the first to fly east-west across the north Atlantic—to pilot a large transport plane filled with Catholic missionaries to convert local African “pagans” via massed evangelism. It seems Schulte never fully carried out his plan, but that mattered little to the newspapers eagerly covering Schulte’s exploits.<sup>45</sup> Schulte continued his global propaganda campaigns throughout the early 1930s. In 1935, Schulte finally succeeded in acquiring Herman Köhl’s services as pilot, whom he hired to fly a *Miva*-owned Klemm monoplane on exhibition over Italy. Köhl landed the *Miva* plane at many of Rome’s airports and even wheeled it through Rome’s winding streets to Vatican City, where the aircraft stood on display before the governor’s palace. Köhl then flew the plane back to Germany for later transport to South Africa. The stunt, conducted in the heart of Fascist Italy, in a Catholic-owned plane flown by Germany’s most famous pilot, gained publicity around the globe.<sup>46</sup>

In 1936, with interest in *Miva* still strong, Schulte traveled once more to the United States to raise funds for a new mission aviation program in the northern territories of Canada. On his way across the Atlantic, Schulte was one of an elite group of passengers aboard the maiden oceanic flight of the Hindenburg, pride of German industry. Schulte and the Catholic Church more broadly made expert use of the international attention focused on the crossing to draw attention to their work. Indeed, it was very likely that the Schulte and his Catholic superiors

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<sup>45</sup> Anon., "Real "Sky Pilot": German War Flyer's Plan"

<sup>46</sup> Anon., ""Sky Pilot" Now a Fact: First 'plane in Vaitcan City," *Advocate* (Melbourne, Victoria), 30 May 1935, 8; Anon., "Religion: MIVA", 1936; Ishoven, "Profile Aircraft: Udet (BFW U-12 Flamingo variants." (ca 1972)

selected the Hindenburg for Schulte's Atlantic crossing for that precise purpose. The marketing effort was a complete success. The international press followed Schulte closely and described in detail the Catholic Mass he performed aboard ship—the first time in history a priest had conducted the service in air. Pope Pius XI likewise received international acclamation for his interest in the Hindenburg's trans-Atlantic crossing. Pius XI personally sent to the ship's commander, Dr. Hugo Eckener, a St. Christopher medal to pin to the Hindenburg and bestowed upon him and his family his papal blessing. Both Schulte's and the Pope's gestures were purely symbolic (in fact, Dr. Eckener was a Protestant). Nevertheless, they were well crafted, succeeded in connecting the Catholic church to the primary symbol of German technological prowess, and syphoned for both the Church and *Miva* a portion of the massive public interest surrounding the Hindenburg.<sup>47</sup> Following his arrival aboard the Hindenburg, Schulte's fundraising tour of the United States and Canada received enthusiastic public support from film companies in the UK and continuous press coverage in newspapers in the United States, Canada, and even Australia.

After spending a few months fundraising, Schulte flew to Canada in one of three new *Miva* aircraft. While there, he personally worked on behalf of Catholic missions throughout the Canadian north.<sup>48</sup> Schulte and other *Miva* pilots transformed Catholic Arctic mission; they rapidly conveyed Catholic priests over the immense distances between their posts, built radio stations to connect missions together wirelessly, charted courses for mission supply ships struggling to navigate ice-jammed Arctic sea-lanes, and flew food, supplies, and medicine to mission stations when roads were snowed in during Canada's long winter months. *Miva*'s exploits were feted in newspapers, magazines, and Catholic journals around the globe, and Schulte's personal efforts

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<sup>47</sup> Anon., "Zeppelin Off for U.S. Shore: Many Notables Included on Passenger List: Mass to be said daily in air," *Gettysburg Times* (Gettysburg, PA), 7 May 1936, 8.

<sup>48</sup> Anon., "Priest will use Modern Airplane"; Anon., "Religion: MIVA", 1936

were popularly credited with saving lives, opening new areas to Catholic missionaries, and decreasing the burden face by the Catholic missionaries ministering far from home.<sup>49</sup>

Even while flying in the remote corners of Canada, Schulte continued to coordinate *Miva* marketing around the globe and constructed a cult of personality for himself. For example, in 1938, while Schulte was in Churchill, Manitoba, working through the logistics of a future Arctic mission-aviation service, he received news of a priest in desperate trouble, some twelve hundred miles to his north in Baffin Land. The radiogram Schulte received read: FATHER COCHARD SINCE NINE DAYS VERY SICK; TEMPERATURE 105; PAINS ON LEFT SIDE. FATHER REFUSING FOOD. PLEASE HELP. Schulte heroically—at least according to the newspaper reports—hopped in his plane and, with his mechanic Brother Beaudoin, flew the vast distance to the stricken priest, braving fog and mechanical setbacks as he traveled. Once at Baffin Land, Schulte found the priest ill but still alive. He wrapped the father snugly in the plane, offered him oranges, and flew him to the nearest hospital, where doctors saved his life. This story made the press even while Schulte was still conducting the rescue mission. Of course, the press only knew of the “heroic” tale because as Schulte flew north to pick up the doctor, he radioed the *New York Times* to report his activities. Later, after he found Father Cochard alive, had packed him in the plane, and was flying south towards the nearest hospital, he took the opportunity to radio news outlets in-flight with the rest of the story. Schulte’s personal account of the events, entitled “Heroic Flying Priest Rescues Brother Clergyman in Arctic,” made international headlines.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Anon., "Zeppelin Off for U.S. Shore: Many Notables Included on Passenger List: Mass to be said daily in air"; Anon., "Priest will use Modern Airplane"; Anon., "Flying Missionary Buys New Airplane," *Ottawa Evening Citizen* (Ottawa), 21 Oct. 1936, 4; Charles Grenham, "Flying Priest Alaska Bound," *Monessen Daily Independent* (Monessen, PA), 30 Oct. 1936, 8; Anon., "Religion: MIVA", 1936; Anon., "Picked Up in Passing for the Busy Man," *The Lethbridge Herald* (Lethbridge Alberta), 30 Nov. 1936, 4; Anon., "Women Catholics to Hear Flying Priest: Father Schulte Tells Delegates in Capital of Plane's Use in Missionary Work"; Anon., "World Religious News," *The Daily News* (Huntington, PA), 29 Oct. 1937, 10; Anon., "Flying Missionary Priest's Adventures"; Schulte, "Heroic Flying Priest Rescues Brother Clergyman in Arctic"

<sup>50</sup> Anon., "Obviam Christo," *Time*, 1938, 40; Schulte, "Heroic Flying Priest Rescues Brother Clergyman in Arctic"

Schulte's publicity campaign could easily be misconstrued as narcissistic, and perhaps it was. Yet, it was also quite ingenious. For by maintaining focus on a single individual, Schulte provided *Miva* with a public face and a narrative arc that effectively raised awareness for the mission. Furthermore, the strategy allowed Schulte to make full use of his many talents when he made periodic visits back to the United States. A gifted public speaker, Schulte's accounts of his work drew standing-room-only crowds in the United States and Germany. In addition, Schulte wrote books, produced movies, and published articles in which he detailed to enraptured audiences his (and by extension *Miva's*) work to chart flight paths through the Arctic and South Africa, lead mission supply ships through ice-jammed Arctic seaways, and establish the first Arctic radio network. If they happened to miss his public addresses or were unable to catch his documentaries, potential donors could marvel at Schulte's award-winning photography collection "Arctic View" featured at the 1937 international Leica exhibit in Rockefeller Center. Schulte's exploits were larger than life and well published. It is thus perhaps unsurprising that Margaret Widdemer fictional missionary pilot, Jonathan Weare, closely resembled the popular press's accounts of Paul Schulte: "priest, missionary aviator, explorer, medical angel, photographer, World war veteran."<sup>51</sup>

With the active support of Catholics worldwide, *Miva* grew throughout the 1930s and despite the ongoing Depression. In 1938, Paul Schulte expanded *Miva's* aerial ministry and purchased a twelve seat Fokker Amphibian that had once belonged to noted inventor Garfield Woods. Schulte rebuilt the ship so that a large portion of its fuselage could be swung open to reveal a Catholic altar inside that could be easily unpacked to celebrate mass right alongside the

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<sup>51</sup> Anon., "Women Catholics to Hear Flying Priest: Father Schulte Tells Delegates in Capital of Plane's Use in Missionary Work"; Inc. E. Leitz, "Catalog: the Fourth International Leica Exhibit," New York, NY, pamphlet (Inc. E. Leitz, 1937) ; *She Knew Three Brothers*.

plane. Schulte intended to pilot his “flying church” to Canadian villages without their own priest where he could celebrate mass and, if needed, provide emergency ambulance service.

Furthermore, given Schulte’s past publicity exploits, the large “flying church” was an obvious (and successful) attempt to attract attention to his efforts from both potential converts and the popular press.<sup>52</sup>

Schulte and *Miva* drew national attention to their work through clever marketing and a well-controlled narrative. Schulte portrayed himself and his mission more broadly, as modern and progressive. Almost alone, Schulte claimed, *Miva* supplied Catholic missionaries with the latest technology and rid the Catholic church of archaic forms of transportation that left missionaries stranded and in danger.<sup>53</sup> Furthermore, Schulte himself became the personified embodiment of *Miva*’s modernity—a missionary who advanced science, charted paths, saved lives, but still found time to appreciate the arts. According to the obsequious report on *Miva*’s work by the British Pathé newsreel service, Schulte waged a one-man “war against doubt and disease:” he was a hero who overcame countless lonely voyages in order to bring warmth to the cold north, link the so-called native to the outside world, carry medical supplies and religious solace to those in need.<sup>54</sup> Throughout the 1930s, Schulte and *Miva* were internationally renowned. Not only because what they were doing, but also because of how well Schulte manipulated his mission’s brand narrative to maximize the symbolic and modernist nature of their efforts.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> M. H. Carrington, "Flying Priest," *Popular Aviation*, Mar. 1939, 47-8, 86; William Karl Martin, "The Use of Aircraft on the Mission Field," *Central Baptist Theological Seminary*, 1947, 10-5 (BGC 136-61-23); Priscilla Pope-Levison, *Building the Old Time Religion: Women evangelists in the progressive era* (New York: New York University Press, 2014).

<sup>53</sup> Anon., "Flying Missionary Buys New Airplane"

<sup>54</sup> Anon., "The Flying Priest!," (British Pathé, 1938).

<sup>55</sup> See the many instances of *Miva*’s description which emphasized modernity up through today: Anon., "Real "Sky Pilot": German War Flyer's Plan"; Anon., "Holy Father Receives "Flying Priest."": Destined for

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Paul Schulte's fame and success as a missionary pilot was at heart very much like that of Charles Lindbergh. Their popularity stemmed not just from what they accomplished, but from what their accomplishments represented: the transformation of aviation from a seemingly impractical, potentially dangerous curiosity into a supposedly noble, practical, scientific pursuit of knowledge and human progress. By so successfully pushing the boundaries of human imagination, Paul Schulte, Charles Lindbergh, and many others were subsequently portrayed by legions of fans and the popular press as heroic explorers—titles many of them openly embraced. Numerous other second-wave missionary pilots sought to claim their own place in this new aerial pantheon, and like Schulte, fashioned for themselves cults of personality. Their efforts were not necessarily disingenuous. Missionaries and their superiors were simply caught up in the aviation culture of the period.

In this, the second wave of mission aviation resembled its predecessor. The true innovation of the second generation of missionary pilots however, was in the creation of the cooperative-use method of mission flight. All totaled, the combined work of the three cooperatively-operated concerns – *Miva*, ALC, and AIM-AMS – dwarfed the collective efforts of the (at most thirty) individually-operated mission operations. John Flynn's Aerial Medical Service, starting with but a single plane in 1928, supported tens of thousands of settlers and aboriginal populations scattered across a territory roughly the size of Texas.<sup>56</sup> Fritz Loose in New Guinea flew the *Paupa* for three years on behalf of the America Lutheran Church, during which time he transported twenty-eight hundred tons of freight (mostly food) and twenty-four

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South Sea Isles."; Anon., "Priest will use Modern Airplane"; Anon., "Religion: MIVA", 1936; Pat Studdy-Clift, "St. Paulus: a plane of many missions," *Australian Heritage*, 2010, 19-21.

<sup>56</sup> Anon., "Flying Doctors. Inland Mission. Cloncurry as a base," *Brisbane Courier* (Brisbane, Queensland), 2 Nov. 1927, 11.

hundred people to dozens of mission bases scattered throughout Papua New Guinea.<sup>57</sup> Paul Schulte's *Miva*, for a while the largest of the three, built up a fleet of a dozen aircraft which flew in support of Catholic missionaries across the globe.<sup>58</sup>

The three cooperatively operated programs demonstrated conclusively that even in the 1920s, an aviation program was indeed practical, sustainable, and useful to the work of a mission. The problem was, not enough other contemporary mission organizations knew about them or their methods. There remained no consensus about mission aviation best practices, and there was no recognized organization that could provide sound advice regarding flight to global mission boards. This perpetuated improper program preparation and resulted in waste, death, and infighting amongst mission staff when operations launched with unrealistic expectations failed. These structural problems brought into question the very viability of mission aviation as a concept and confirmed to an ever-growing list of skeptical mission administrators that mission aviation was at best a questionable publicity stunt and at worst an expensive and impractical dream of aviation enthusiasts.

Therefore, even as mission aviation grew into a global phenomenon during its second wave, one should not confuse mission aviation's breadth with depth. Available letters, periodicals, and board minutes found within mission archives suggest that even up through the 1930s, many missionaries, evangelists, and mission organizations were dismissive of aviation as a mission tool. Granted, few would have gone as far as one Church Missionary Society board member who suggested in 1930 that, "If God meant us to fly, He would have given us wings."

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<sup>57</sup> Loose, n.d. 1970 (BGC 528-3-5).

<sup>58</sup> Anon., "Religion: MIVA", 1936; Anon., "Priest will use Modern Airplane"

Yet, most evidence suggests that most mission personnel throughout the 1930s considered flight as little more than a fad.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> John Clifford Peel to Reverend John Flynn, 20 Nov. 1917; Anon., "A Real Sky Pilot," *The South Eastern Times* (Millicent, South Australia), 2 Aug. 1927, 4; *Sky Pilot in Arnhem Land*, 182-86; Anon., "Religion: MIVA", 1936; C&MA, "C&MA Board Minutes," Christian and Missionary Alliance, 11-12 Mar. 1936 (528-1-21); C&MA, "C&MA Board Minutes," Christian and Missionary Alliance, 5-6 May 1937 (528-1-21); Edward Lawson, "The Gospel Goes by Air," *Flying and Popular Aviation*, Nov. 1940, 22-23, 75; Elizabeth Greene, "Wings Over Borneo," *Missionary Aviation*, Oct. - Dec. 1945, 4-7; Harry Albus, "He Flew the Gospel to the Headhunters," *Christian Digest*, Dec. 1945, 24-27, 58-59 (BGC 528-2-8); Most Reverend A.R.E. Thomas to John Wells, 24 Jul. 1972 (BGC 528-3-11); *The Winged Gospel; England and the Aeroplane; A Nation of Fliers; Wings of Wood, Wings of Metal; The Spectacle of Flight; The Shock of the Old; Air Empire; British Aviation Posters*. See also: Appendix A.



### Chapter Three

#### Flight, publicity, and narrative construction (1928 – 1941)

Throughout the 1920s and 1930s, aviation business propaganda oversold aircraft's short-term potential. Their marketing, amplified by the press and entertainment industries, fostered impractical fantasies as to the capabilities of aircraft and the realities of flight, even as it transformed aviation into a global phenomenon and spurred the development of mission aviation. As a result, mission aviation supporters tended to reflect these naïve assumptions and advocated for the creation of programs that were broadly unsafe and inefficient. Most mission aviation programs created in this environment lay in tatters by the end of 1941. Some destroyed by the escalation of World War Two, many others as result of their own intrinsic failures. This should not be taken to imply that aircraft were impractical as transportation devices – the examples set by *Miva* and the Aerial Medical Service demonstrate otherwise. The failure of most mission flight programs was an outcome of inexperience, unrealistic expectations, and poor judgement.

Of course, the inefficiencies and failures of mission aviation operations did not particularly matter to its supporters. Aircraft provided mission organizations exciting images and engaging narratives with which they could differentiate themselves from other missionaries and raise support – even crashes and harrowing tales of near-death experiences made for good publicity material.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, mission flight offered aviators a means by which to contextualize their religious faith within contemporary society. From 1927–1941, mission

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<sup>1</sup> David Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*, American Society of Missiology Series (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991), 363-7.

aviation served as an expression of devotion to both Christianity and science as two methods of human improvement, a public proclamation that the two were not antithetical but could be applied in harmony. This chapter will conclude the historical narrative of the second wave of mission aviation began in chapter two. It will first interpret the key problems faced by second-wave mission aviators and argue that they were largely the result of missionaries' acceptance of popular representations of aircraft and broad ignorance as to the realities of aircraft operation. The chapter will then examine the history of missionary pilot Keith Langford-Smith. His worked offers a vivid illustration of the full gambit of problems faced by contemporary mission aviators, and further illustrates how the imagery and marketing use of aircraft was of potentially significant more value than the logistical value derived from its operation.

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George Feltes' short aviation career (briefly examined in the previous chapter) began in the late 1920s, when Alaskan Bishop, the Rt. Reverend Joseph R. Crimont, initiated a plan to expand Catholic outreach to American Indians in Arctic through the use of aircraft. Fundraising in the Eastern United States, Bishop Crimont quickly raised the \$22,000 needed to purchase a plane, and selected brother Feltes as pilot, a natural choice, given the young priest's prior training in mechanics and aviation theory.<sup>2</sup> Feltes subsequent 1930 grand tour of the United States in the newly christened *Marquette Missionary* drew international publicity, support from the Packard motor company, and fanfare for the Catholic Church. Feltes arrived in his mission territory already a minor celebrity.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Anon., "Plane for Alaskan "Sky Pilot", " *Manitowoc Herald News* (Manitowoc, WI), 2 Jul. 1930, 8; Anon., "Real Sky Pilots," *The Canberra Times* (Canberra, Australia), 9 Jul. 1930, 3; Anon., "Both Plane and Pilot will wear Snowshoes," *Oakland Tribune* (Oakland, CA), 4 Aug. 1930, 7; Bank of Japan, "Foreign Exchange Rates: Telegraphic Transfer Selling Rates Quoted by the Yokohama Specie Bank (1912-1941)," Bank of Japan, 2016.

<sup>3</sup> Anon., "A Priest to Fly to Northern Post," *Hutchinson News* (Hutchinson, KS), 2 Jul. 1930, 1; Anon., "Plane for Alaskan "Sky Pilot""; Associated Press, "Flying Missionary Stops at Chicago," *The Helena Independent* (Helena, MT), 25 Jul. 1930, 1; Anon., "Mission Plane is Being Assembled," *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner* (Fairbanks, AK), 9

Regardless of his initial fame and support, Feltes' "modern" and "scientific" sky pilot service collapsed in just thirteen months of sporadic operation. Soon after arriving in Alaska, a local pilot whom Feltes hired to point out regional landing fields crashed the *Marquette Missionary*, killing himself and all aboard.<sup>4</sup> Feltes, not aboard the doomed flight, returned to the lower United States and in 1931 persuaded Catholic supporters to purchase another aircraft, the *Alaskan Missionary*. Feltes, himself at the controls, crashed his new plane twice: once in New York and again in Alaska. The first accident, a simple mishap on the runway, merely delayed Feltes' return north. His later crash in Alaska was slightly more serious. No one was critically injured, but Feltes and his passenger spent the next two weeks struggling through the arctic wilderness before stumbling into Seward, Alaska in early December 1931.<sup>5</sup> The Catholic Church eventually recovered Feltes' second plane and sold it shortly thereafter. Feltes never flew again as a missionary pilot.<sup>6</sup>

The decision of Catholic administrators to ground Feltes is perhaps understandable; the program had cost the lives of multiple Catholic workers, the selection of a diesel-powered aircraft was questionable (given diesel's propensity to freeze at low temperatures), and indeed Feltes would have likely benefited from additional training of local flying conditions. Yet, scrubbing the Alaskan flight program was not necessarily in the Catholic diocese' best interest. Feltes' program was certainly not perfect, but his efforts were in many ways commendable; he

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Sep. 1930, 8; EveryWeek Magazine, "First Flying Missionary," *Miami Daily News-Record* (Miami, OK), 19 Oct. 1930, special insert; Anon., "The Marquette Missionary," *Popular Aviation*, Nov. 1930, 5.

<sup>4</sup> Anon., "Feltes Tells of Aerial Tragedy," *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner* (Fairbanks, AK), 27 Dec. 1930, 3.

<sup>5</sup> Associated Press, "Bro. Feltes to Leave for Alaska Today," *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner* (Fairbanks, AK), 22 Jul. 1931, 1; Anon., "Flying Missionary Escapes Injuries When Plane Crashes," *Olean Evening Herald* (Olean, NY), 24 Jul. 1931, 2; Anon., "Flying Missionary's Plane Cracks Up," *Athens Messenger* (Athens, OH), 27 Jul. 1931; United Press International, "Flying Missionary Lands at Alameda," *Bakersfield Californian* (Bakersfield, CA), 13 Aug. 1931, 10; Associated Press, "Jesuit Missionaries Rescued in Alaska," *The Stanford Daily* (Stanford University, CA), 7 Dec. 1931, 1.

<sup>6</sup> Feltes stayed in Alaska where he enjoyed a second career with the Catholic church as an instructor of mechanics.

had firm financial support, undertook an acceptable amount (for the time) of training, conducted research into his aircraft, and did not appear prone to exhibitionism. Furthermore, other Catholic missionary aviation programs in the Arctic (such as *Miva*) were then flying successfully, providing crucial support to Catholic workers throughout northern Canada. Nevertheless, the series of accidents involving Feltes planes convinced the Alaskan diocese that the entire concept of a church-operated aviation service was inadvisable, regardless of the international acclaim the program brought.

Feltes' story offers a lesson in the dangers of early mission flight and is likewise helpful in underscoring the fickle and restrictive attitudes of mission administrators towards aviation. Mission administrators and board members who initially approved aviation programs, often did so on condition that the operation faced no serious setbacks, a difficult task given the complexities of establishing a working pioneer aviation operation. Even minor accidents, or simple budgetary overruns could easily convince skeptical mission administrators that the aviation program was a mistake. Thus, most mission aviation programs were doomed from the start.<sup>7</sup> Yet, it was not just the crashes and corresponding cost overruns themselves that undercut administrators' faith in aviation programs. They were of a concern, but opposition to mission aviation more frequently centered around fears that an aviation program would distract missionary pilot from their core function as an evangelist.

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<sup>7</sup> See for example: John Clifford Peel to Reverend John Flynn, 2 Nov. 1917; Anon., "A Real Sky Pilot," *Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate* (Newcastle, New South Wales), 8 Jan. 1927, 12; Anon., "Sky Pilot in Arnhem Land. From Crusoe to Airman," *Sunday Mail* (Brisbane, Qld.), 21 Jul. 1935, 6; Keith Langford-Smith, *Sky Pilot in Arnhem Land* (Sydney, Australia: Angus and Robertson Limited, 1935), 182-6; Anon., "Religion: MIVA," *Time*, Oct. 1936, 12, 18; Edward Lawson, "The Gospel Goes by Air," *Flying and Popular Aviation*, Nov. 1940, 22-23, 75; Elizabeth Greene, "Wings Over Borneo," *Missionary Aviation*, Oct. - Dec. 1945, 4-7; Charles Mellis, Jr., "From the Field," *Missionary Aviation*, Oct.-Dec. 1945, 10-11, 15; Harry Albus, "He Flew the Gospel to the Headhunters," *Christian Digest*, Dec. 1945, 24-27, 58-59 (BGC 528-2-8); Christian and Missionary Alliance, "Actions regarding the Christian and Missionary Alliance Plane in Indonesia," Christian and Missionary Alliance, 1963 (BGC 528-1-21); Most Reverend A.R.E. Thomas to John Wells, 24 Jul. 1972 (BGC 528-3-11); Stuart Sendall-King, interview by Lane Sunwall, 16 Jul., 2009.

Mission board members, including leaders of such prominent mission organizations as the Church Missionary Society, Christian & Missionary Alliance, the Australian Inland Mission, and the Catholic Church, perceived of flight as a sideline pursuit, not a fulltime mission occupation. Most mission aviators, for that matter, did as well. They frequently described their program as a means by which to augment their ministry, not the ministry itself.<sup>8</sup> As a result, when mission leaders and would-be missionary pilots negotiated the terms of a potential mission aviation program, administrators regularly extracted promises from missionaries to ensure that the bulk of their time and resources were spent as missionaries, not aviators. The compromises struck in these negotiations undermined safety, resulted in wasted time, and ultimately undermined nascent programs.<sup>9</sup>

The fundamental problem arising within the negotiations was that neither group had a complete understanding as to what effective aviation work entailed. Amongst the most common fetters placed upon mission aviators by administrators, were their demands that any proposed aviation venture operate in addition to a missionary's existent work and with its own separate operational budget. In this way, the mission organization sought to reduce their financial exposure to an operation of whose worth they were uncertain and ensure that their wider operations were not significantly impacted should the aviation program fail. A select few missionaries worked through their initial ignorance and founded successful programs. George Fisk of the Christian and Missionary Alliance (C&MA) and Paul Schulte of the Catholic Church,

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<sup>8</sup> C&MA, "C&MA Board Minutes," Christian and Missionary Alliance, 5-6 May 1937 (528-1-21); James C. Truxton to Murray Kendon, 2 Nov. 1946 (BGC 136-52-5); Luther L. Grubb, "Wings for Brethren Home Missions," *The Brethren Missionary Herald*, 18 Oct. 1947, 945-7, 51; Anon., "What is the . . . missionary aviation fellowship?," USA, pamphlet (MAF-US, 1948) BGC 136-52-5; Luther L. Grubb, "As the Editor Sees It," *The Brethren Missionary Herald*, 21 Aug. 1948, 729-30; Ralph Colburn, "Wings for the Gospel," *The Brethren Missionary Herald*, 9 Oct. 1948, 889, 90; Dietrich Buss and Arthur Glasser, *Giving Wings to the Gospel: The Remarkable Story of Mission Aviation Fellowship* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1995), 60-1.

<sup>9</sup> See especially Keith Langford-Smith.

each fought pitched battles with their respective superiors as to the wisdom of an aviation program. Both only gained authorization to start their projects after they acquired their own funding. The two programs they initiated eventually proved successful, and their respective supporting institutions thereafter relented of their earlier hostility and plowed additional money into the program.<sup>10</sup> However, in the hands of missionary pilots less competent, the compromises which worked so well for Fisk and Schulte could easily result in disaster. For a mission board's insistence that the missionary treat their aviation program as auxiliary to their role as evangelists undermined the time missionary pilots could devote to proper aviation practice, undercut the resources needed to maintain their aircraft, and encouraged missionaries to operate their program with little consideration made for safety.<sup>11</sup>

In addition to their questionable conceptual framework, most mission aviation programs likewise suffered from the inadequate training and irresponsible grandstanding of their pilots. Both issues reflected aviation standards of the era. It was not uncommon for pilots of the interwar period to undertake the very minimum of preparation, attain a basic private license and then, much like Charles Lindbergh, continue practicing on their own as they also delivered mail, shuttled passengers, or performed air circus acrobatics. This was of course unsafe, and Lindbergh himself would later severely criticize the practice.<sup>12</sup> Furthermore, as this remained an era wherein novice pilots found international acclaim for performing dangerous stunts, mission aviation operators found considerable marketing success through their own aerial showmanship. They played to the thrill and romance of flight and tied their work to the legendary exploits of

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<sup>10</sup> See: George Fisk and Paul Schulte information in Appendix A.

<sup>11</sup> Anon., "Mr. K. Langford Smith: Father's Statement," *Sydney Morning Herald* (Sydney, NSW), 6 Jun. 1935, 12; Anon., "Mr. K. Langford Smith: Church Missionary Society's Statement," *Sydney Morning Herald* (Sydney, NSW), 30 May 1935, 8.

<sup>12</sup> Charles Lindbergh, *We* (G.P. Putnam, 1927).

famous pilot-adventurers of the era: men and women such as Charles Lindbergh, Amelia Earhart, or Saint-Exupéry. Unfortunately, most mission aviators lacked the proper skill, supplies, or temperament required to safely undertake the difficult aerial feats or even simple, long-term aircraft operation. Many suffered repeated mishaps as a result. Yet, provided the missionary survived their accidents and their supporting institution continued in their support, the dangers and hardships missionary pilots endured were effortlessly reimagined as epic narratives of survival and perseverance for an eager audience back home. This of course only encouraged the missionaries to risk their own lives further and increased the relative danger of their work.<sup>13</sup>

### **Keith Langford Smith**

In many ways, the popular interest and support for second-wave mission work revolved around not just a missionary's success as a pilot, but their capability to craft a compelling public image that was relevant to contemporary values; as the public perception of flight and aircraft evolved, so must the missionary's narrative of their work. It was in this regard that missionary Keith Langford-Smith proved a maestro. He was not a particularly gifted pilot. His aviation

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<sup>13</sup> Anon., "'Sky Pilot' Plane Arrives. Bound for Arnheim Land," *The Charleville Times* (Brisbane, Qld.), 29 May 1931, 7; Anon., "'Sky Pilot' Attacked," *The Evening News* (Rockhampton, Qld.), 28 Dec. 1931, 1; *Sky Pilot in Arnheim Land*; Anon., "Zeppelin Off for U.S. Shore: Many Notables Included on Passenger List: Mass to be said daily in air," *Gettysburg Times* (Gettysburg, PA), 7 May 1936, 8; Anon., "Religion: MIVA", 1936; Anon., "Flying Missionary Priest's Adventures," *Lewiston Evening Journal* (Lewiston, MA), 17 Aug. 1938, 13; Anon., "Missionary Aviation Conference Proceedings and Report," Missionary Aviation Conference, (Winona Lake, IN), 1-4 Aug. 1946 (BGC 136-53-12); Leslie B. Flynn, "No Place to Land," *Christian Life*, May 1953, 24-26 (BGC 528-2-1); David Edgerton, *England and the Aeroplane: An essay on a militant and technological nation* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1991); Peter Fritzsche, *A Nation of Fliers: German Aviation and the Popular Imagination* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992); Roger E. Bilstein, *Flight in America: From the Wrights to the Astronauts*, Revised ed. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994); Robert Wohl, *A Passion for Wings: Aviation and the Western Imagination, 1908-1918* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994); Donald M. Pattillo, *A History in the Making: 80 Turbulent Years in the American General Aviation Industry* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1998); Bernhard Rieger, *Technology and the Culture of Modernity in Britain and Germany, 1890-1945*, New studies in European history (Cambridge, U.K. ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 126-54; Sarah Jaensch, "The death-defying Flying Padre," Australian Broadcasting Corporation, <http://www.abc.net.au/stateline/nt/content/2006/s1797098.htm>; David Edgerton, *The Shock of the Old: Technology and global history since 1900* (London: Profile, 2008); Gordon Pirie, *Air Empire: British Imperial Civil Aviation, 1919-39* (New York: Manchester University Press, 2009).

program collapsed into utter ruin in less than two years. Furthermore, his failures as an aviator cost Langford-Smith his job with the Church Missionary Society (CMS), and a not insignificant amount of controversy for the CMS itself. Nevertheless, despite only flying as a missionary pilot between 1931 and 1933, Langford-Smith remained relevant as a “Sky Pilot” into the 1970s. Smith’s success stemmed from his ability to refocus his work as a mission aviator through a rainbow of prisms that changed with the times and appealed to contemporary interests: Australian nationalism, European colonialism, “western progress.”<sup>14</sup> Ultimately then, Keith Langford-Smith’s longevity as an evangelist lay not in his ability as a pilot, but his ability as a publicist.

In 1928, CMS first sent Langford-Smith to its Roper River Station in Arnhem Land in the Northern Territory of Australia as a temporary replacement while the mission organization reorganized the station’s staff. Only twenty-two years of age, Langford-Smith traveled to the distant post seeking excitement and adventure, with little comprehension of what mission work entailed. What he found was a run down, poorly funded, and isolated post. Nevertheless, believing he could make a difference in the lives of those to whom the mission ministered, Smith operated the station on scant resources as best he could for two years until he was relieved in 1930. Free of his responsibilities in the Northern Territory, Langford-Smith returned to southern Australia, driving his rickety old car some two thousand miles through the Outback. While still on furlough in New South Wales and awaiting CMS’ decision regarding his subsequent duties, Smith met the Reverend Leonard Daniels, an English ex-war pilot and Anglican missionary. Daniels’ own pioneer mission aviation program in Wilcannia, New South Wales, had made him

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<sup>14</sup> Wayne Hudson and Geoffrey Bolton, eds., *Creating Australia: Changin Australian history* (St. Leonards, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 1997).



something of an international celebrity, and their meeting inspired Langford-Smith to create a CMS mission aviation program of his own.<sup>15</sup>

By 1931, CMS had still not found another missionary to run the Roper River Station, and so once more contacted Keith Langford-Smith, though not without some controversy. While only a youth of twenty-five, Smith proved a provocative figure amongst the staid CMS leadership in Victoria. The board members considered Smith flippant, disrespectful and reckless, and they were highly skeptical of the aviation plans he had brought before them. Langford-Smith for his part viewed the board members as quaint, backward, and shortsighted – opinions he would later publish. Regardless of their mutual distrust, and largely because no one else was willing to tackle the problem of running the Roper River Station, the board made Langford-Smith the mission station's administrator. They also approved his aviation program, but with grave reluctance and firm restrictions as to the type of funds he could spend on his flying venture.<sup>16</sup> Specifically, Langford-Smith had to agree to purchase his plane and train to fly it on his own time and at his own expense. Furthermore, CMS stipulated that the aviation program must not interfere with his other responsibilities as a missionary.<sup>17</sup> Having made what turned out to be a Faustian bargain, Langford-Smith spent the remaining nine months before his return north to Arnhem Land prepping his planned operation. Smith drove thousands of miles crisscrossing southern Australia in his battered car (illegally driven, lacking a valid registration) to visit churches where he promoted his mission aviation program with lanternslides and speeches. He studied Reverend

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<sup>15</sup> Anon., "Real Sky Pilot Wants an Aeroplane," *The Newcastle Sun* (Newcastle, New South Wales), 7 May 1924, 1; Anon., "Preacher to use Airplane: Will Cover Huge Parish in Australia in a British Moth," *New York Times* (New York, NY), 7 Oct. 1927 1927, 26; Keith Cole, *From Mission to Church: The CMS Mission to the Aboriginies of Arnhem Land 1908-1985* (Bendigo, Victoria, Australia: Keith Cole Publications, 1985), 72-5; John Harris, *One Blood: 200 years of aboriginal encounter with Christianity - a story of hope* (Claremont, CA: Albatross Books, 1990), 734.

<sup>16</sup> *Sky Pilot in Arnhem Land*; Anon., "Sky Pilot in Arnhem Land. From Crusoe to Airman"; *From Mission to Church*; *One Blood*, 734.

<sup>17</sup> *Sky Pilot in Arnhem Land*, Chapter 22.

Daniels mission methods and conducted practice flights in Daniels' Cirrus Moth. By April 1931, Smith scraped together £400 and with it bought a second-hand De Havilland Gipsy Moth.<sup>18</sup> Having already passed his flight physical—though he was of generally poor health and had to shop for a doctor who would approve him—Langford-Smith spent eight hours training and then performed his solo flight. In the early summer of 1931, while still an inexperienced flyer, Smith flew more than two-thousand miles (with a paying passenger) through dangerous mountain passes and over sparsely populated terrain from Melbourne back to his mission station in the Northern Territory of Australia.<sup>19</sup>

Across the continent, the Australian press eagerly followed Langford-Smith's initial transcontinental journey north to the Northern Territory, reported on the flights details, published Smith's passenger list, and praised his corporate sponsor (Shell Oil) for its assistance with his work. Even after the excitement over the initial cross-continent flight abated, Langford-Smith's flights attracted the attention of newspaper editors in Australia and around the globe. Reporters regaled their readership with stories of Langford-Smith's adventures: his struggles with inclement weather, his narrowly missed murder at the hand of "dangerous" aboriginals, and his daring takeoffs on unprepared makeshift runways.<sup>20</sup> The Royal Geographical Society made Langford-Smith a fellow of the society in 1935 out of recognition of his pioneer aviation work and his important surveys charting thousands of square miles of northern Australia. In the UK,

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid.; Keith Langford-Smith to John Wells, 28 Nov. 1972 (BGC 528-3-11).

<sup>19</sup> *Sky Pilot in Arnhem Land*, Chapter 22.

<sup>20</sup> Anon., "A Sky Pilot: Arnhem Land Missionary," *The Telegraph* (Brisbane, Qld.), 7 May 1931, 1; Anon., "The "Sky Pilot" Mission Machine's Flight," *Examiner* (Launceston, Tas.), 22 Oct. 1931, 12; Anon., "A Sky Pilot," *The Brisbane Courier* (Brisbane, Qld.), 18 May 1931, 10; Anon., "A Sky Pilot - 1931," *The Newcastle Sun* (Newcastle, NSW), 19 May 1931, 1; Anon., "Northern Territory. Outlying Missions Stations. "Sky Pilot's Tour," *The Longreach Leader* (Longreach, Qld.), 6 Nov. 1931, 22; Anon., "Real "Sky Pilot." N.T. Parson Flies," *The Evening News* (Rockhampton, Qld.), 31 Oct. 1931, 4; Anon., "The "Sky Pilot" Mission Machine's Flight"; Anon., "Northern Territory. Outlying Mission Stations. "Sky Pilot's" Tour," *Geraldton Guardian and Express* (Geraldton, WA), 31 Oct. 1931, 1; Anon., "Real Sky Pilot," *Laredo Times* (Laredo, TX), 19 Nov. 1931, 1; Anon., "Sky Pilot Plane at N.W. Mission," *News* (Adelaide, SA), 26 Sep. 1932, 1; *Sky Pilot in Arnhem Land*.

the CMS proudly featured a picture of Langford-Smith's plane in the pages of their journal *The Church Missionary Outlook*, and CMS general secretary, William Wilson Cash, wrote of Smith as a shining example of modern progress made by missionaries amongst the so-called primitive Aboriginal Australians.<sup>21</sup>

Despite his many critics in the CMS, Langford-Smith launched a seemingly successful aviation operation. Maintaining his beloved program, however would prove much more difficult. Underfunded because of the limitations CMS officials placed on his aviation venture, Smith remained constantly strapped for cash as a missionary pilot. He therefore raised capital in any way he could, taking full advantage of popular enthusiasm for aircraft to self-finance his efforts. To start, Smith reworked the moniker "Sky Pilot," a late nineteenth-century slur for clerics and missionaries, into a nickname and his own personal brand. He raised interest and capital by publishing stories, reprinted in newspapers across Australia, that linked his work to the glories and adventures of aviation culture.<sup>22</sup> When traveling as a CMS missionary, Langford-Smith made frequent stops in the small towns along his path, not necessarily for impromptu sermons (as Reverend Crawford in the US), but to raise funds by taking advantage of people's innate curiosity in his airplane. Smith panhandled from those who ran to out to meet him on the road or dusty field on which he had just landed. Alternatively, for those brave souls willing to climb aboard his rickety plane – also called "Sky Pilot" – Langford-Smith offered rides in exchange for fuel. Smith was equally resourceful in the maintenance of his aircraft. When his Gipsy Moth needed repairs and new parts, Smith scrounged them from junked cars and ranching supplies. Discarded parts from Model-T Fords, chunks of water pipe, raw animal hides, fencing wire, and

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<sup>21</sup> Anon., "The Sky Pilot, the Aeroplane of the C.M.S. of Australia," *The Church Missionary Outlook*, Aug. 1931 1931, 165; W. Wilson Cash, "The C.M.S. of Australia," *The Church Missionary Outlook*, Feb. 1932 1932, 26-8; Anon., "End of an Adventure," *The Sydney Morning Herald* (Sydney, NSW), 10 Oct. 1936, 12.

<sup>22</sup> Langford-Smith, 28 Nov. 1972 (BGC 528-3-11).

old shirts were all used at one time or another to repair his plane and keep his mission aviation program operational.<sup>23</sup>

Based at the Roper River Station, Langford-Smith spent two years flying throughout northern Australia as a pioneer flying missionary. Despite his minimum training, lack of funding, questionable decision making, and the continued hostility of the CMS board, Langford-Smith provided emergency air ambulance services, ferried supplies between mission stations, transported mission personnel to and from hard-to-reach destinations, and achieved life-long fame for his efforts.<sup>24</sup> Langford-Smith's belief that mission aviation would form a crucial component of missions in northern Australia proved prescient and his work was truly pioneering. Following Smith's flights as a mission pilot, other missionaries – including the CMS – carried on in his work providing life-saving aerial transportation services throughout the region.

Notwithstanding Smith's celebrated flights and the international publicity he brought the CMS, Keith Langford-Smith's time as the "Sky Pilot" proved to be an unmitigated disaster for the missionary society. Langford-Smith, a self-professed aerial exhibitionist, proved to be a careless mechanic, and an undisciplined pilot who took unnecessary chances with his and his passengers' safety. The toxic combination resulted in numerous crashes. The accidents each cost money, and despite Smith's unique approach to fundraising and creativity in repairing his aircraft with repurposed parts, he remained chronically short of resources. A more sensible missionary might have made cuts to his taste for aerial adventure. Smith was too committed a pilot and developed a destructive habit of overspending on aviation repairs that starved his mission of

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<sup>23</sup> *Sky Pilot in Arnhem Land*; Keith Langford-Smith, *Sky Pilot's Last Flight* (Sydney, Australia: Angus and Robertson Limited, 1936); Langford-Smith, 28 Nov. 1972 (BGC 528-3-11).

<sup>24</sup> Langford-Smith, 28 Nov. 1972 (BGC 528-3-11); *One Blood*, 732-37.

funds. Furthermore, the side jobs Smith took to raise extra capital for his aircraft undercut his work as a missionary and undermined CMS operations at the Roper River Station.<sup>25</sup>

Entirely incapable of balancing his love of flight and his mission work, Smith's demise as a CMS missionary pilot came less than two years after having first flown to Arnhem Land. On Easter Day, 16 April 1933, Keith Langford-Smith crashed the *Sky Pilot* for the final time at CMS' Oenpelli mission station, breaking the aircraft's wings and destroying its propeller. Smith shipped the damaged plane to a friend in Darwin for repairs, but a fire gutted the aircraft in transit and put its rehabilitation out of financial reach. Without funds to patch-up his beloved "Sky Pilot," Langford-Smith reluctantly abandoned his flying career. CMS sold what remained of airplane to a private buyer in early 1934.<sup>26</sup>

Already beset by scandal, Langford-Smith's career as a CMS missionary began to crumble soon after the loss of his plane. Hoping to protect his image as a visionary pilot, Langford-Smith blamed the Easter accident on the incompetence of the CMS missionaries at the Oenpelli mission station, whom, he argued, had built a fence across the mission air strip that in turn caused his crash. Langford-Smith's ungracious statements to the Australian press infuriated his fellow CMS missionaries who rebuffed Smith's accounts with their own published version of events that insisted any alterations made to the Oenpelli landing field had been completed in response to Langford-Smith's direct instructions.<sup>27</sup> Thoroughly alienated from his coworkers, Langford-Smith's rocky relationship with the CMS mission board disintegrated as well. Smith's neglect of the Roper River station had not gone unnoticed. Both the CMS and the Australian

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<sup>25</sup> *Sky Pilot in Arnhem Land*, 201-4; *Sky Pilot's Last Flight*, 124-5; *From Mission to Church*, 74.

<sup>26</sup> Anon., "'Sky Pilot' has forced landing. Plane Damaged," *Northern Standard* (Darwin, NT), 25 Apr. 1933, 7; Anon., "Flying in the North. Pilot Cropley Buys Sky Pilot," *Kalgoorlie Miner* (Kalgoorlie, WA), 12 Mar. 1934, 5; *From Mission to Church*, 125.

<sup>27</sup> Florence A. Nevill, "The 'Sky Pilot' at Oenpelli," *Northern Standard* (Darwin, Northern Territory), 6 Jun. 1933, 8; Anon., "Flying Sky Pilot. Arrival at Darwin," *The Daily News* (Perth, WA), 17 May 1933, 7.

government, which was in part funding the mission station, issued scathing criticisms of Smith's conduct. A government Board of Inquiry met to discuss the situation shortly thereafter, and ultimately ended their (meager) subsidy of the Roper River station in 1935. CMS dismissed Smith from the organization that same year.<sup>28</sup>

With the benefit of hindsight, Langford-Smith's mission aviation program for CMS collapsed largely because of his own inexperience and poor judgment. Smith failed to investigate the long-term costs in time and resources required to operate an aviation program, and he mismanaged the Roper River Station because of his all-consuming focus on aviation. Furthermore, Smith's immaturity, reckless behavior, and gleeful disregard for CMS authority infuriated CMS leadership, undermined his support amongst the board, damaged his relationship to his superiors, and left him exposed to attack.<sup>29</sup> CMS however, itself must itself take a share of the blame for the debacle at Roper River. To begin, the isolated Roper River mission station had long been poorly funded, poorly staffed, and its goals poorly conceived. The Australian government's support came with the caveat that missionaries provide works-based education and training for local aboriginal and 'half-caste' populations, while CMS demanded that the missionaries likewise maintain a continual focus on evangelism. Long before Langford-Smith had first been stationed at Roper River, the station's unaligned objectives undermined station morale and left neither government nor CMS feeling as if the Roper River missionaries were achieving the objectives set before them.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> *From Mission to Church*, 74; *One Blood*, 735-7; Richard Broome, *Aboriginal Australians: Black responses to white dominance 1788-1994*, 2nd ed. (St. Leonards, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 1994), 104.

<sup>29</sup> *Sky Pilot in Arnhem Land*; *Sky Pilot's Last Flight*; *One Blood*, 734.

<sup>30</sup> Anon., "Mr. K. Langford Smith: Church Missionary Society's Statement"; Anon., "Mr. K. Langford Smith: Father's Statement"

Furthermore, in approving Langford-Smith's aviation program, no matter how reluctantly, CMS administrators set the fledgling "Sky Pilot" service up for failure from the very beginning. The tight limitations CMS placed on "Sky Pilot" fundraising undermined Smith's capacity to raise an appropriate level of cash and suffocated his finances, despite the existence of a donor-base interested in supporting his aerial work. In addition, the short timeframe that CMS provided Langford-Smith to train as a pilot shouldered the inexperienced missionary with a costly and experimental aviation program that he had to develop on his own with little technical expertise or professional training. Had the CMS board worked with Langford-Smith, provided constructive and continuous feedback concerning his plans, supplied adequate manpower for the station, and opened more resources for training and maintenance, his program would have had a higher probability of success – or at least been able to wind down without official government inquiries. In the end, the mission board's anxiety in 1930 that Smith's mission aviation program might develop into a costly diversion from his broader work at Roper River proved to be a self-fulfilling prophesy. It was not simply the youthful inexperience of Keith Langford-Smith that was to blame for the debacle at Roper River, but likewise CMS' poor leadership.<sup>31</sup>

Then again, Langford-Smith embraced flight and aviation culture not simply because he believed airplanes to be a useful means of transportation; Langford-Smith flew in the face of opposition, scandal, and minimal funding because he understood aviation to be a powerful means of propaganda. With the support of the Australian and international press, the young missionary used his plane to draw attention to his larger missionary efforts, recast his public image, and reframe his ministry into an exciting symbol of the struggle of modern Christian progress against

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<sup>31</sup> *Sky Pilot in Arnhem Land; Sky Pilot's Last Flight; From Mission to Church*, 72-4; *One Blood*, 732-7; Keith Cole, "Langford-Smith, Keith (1907-1981)," in *Australian Dictionary of Evangelical Biography* (Southern Cross College, Australia 2004).

poverty, ignorance, and idolatry.<sup>32</sup> Publications in the US and Australia praised Smith for carrying the benefits of western progress and modern science to the “primitive” aboriginals in the Northern Territory.<sup>33</sup> The many stories concerning Smith, refashioned the diminutive missionary who was, in his own words, an unsophisticated “cripple,” into a daring adventurer and a romantic, internationally celebrated aviator.<sup>34</sup> They depicted Keith Langford-Smith as a “courageous” explorer who, at great personal risk, evacuated patients hundreds of miles from the nearest doctor, explored Arnhem Land by air, and mapped the territory’s landmarks so that others might follow in his work, settle the region, and bestow upon local aborigines the benefits of education and medicine.<sup>35</sup> Many of these positivistic published narratives came from the pen of Langford-Smith himself, and were so successful that long after Smith’s ministry with CMS had ended in fiasco, his identity as “Sky Pilot,” remained the lynchpin of his subsequent career.<sup>36</sup>

The longevity of Langford-Smith’s persona as “Sky Pilot” and his success as a missionary lay in Smith’s ability to adapt his public image to contemporary events and the evolving interests of the Australian public. As Smith retold his adventure narratives to new audiences, he continuously refashioned his stories to tease out new interpretations of his work and thereby maximize their effect as a promotional device. Amongst his best example, grew out

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<sup>32</sup> Anon., "The Real Sky Pilot," *Queensland Times* (Ipswich Queensland), 15 Jan. 1927, 8; Anon., "Preacher to use Airplane: Will Cover Huge Parish in Australia in a British Moth"

<sup>33</sup> Keith Langford-Smith, "Sky Pilot At the Limmen River," *The Sydney Morning Herald* (Sydney, NSW), 8 Apr. 1933, 17.

<sup>34</sup> Smith had been crippled in a sporting accident at school when he was 14, and in the 1930s still limped from his injury. Smith repeatedly described himself as a cripple, to contrast that against the image of a dashing aviation hero he cultivated during his time as “Sky Pilot.” See also: Anon., "Sky Pilot in Arnhem Land. From Crusoe to Airman"

<sup>35</sup> Anon., "Northern Territory. Outlying Missions Stations. "Sky Pilot's Tour"; Anon., "Northern Territory. Outlying Mission Stations. "Sky Pilot's" Tour"; Anon., "Real Sky Pilot"

<sup>36</sup> Anon., "Northern Territory. Outlying Missions Stations. "Sky Pilot's Tour"; Keith Langford-Smith, ""The Sky Pilot." Aloft in Arnhem Land," *The Sydney Morning Herald* (Sydney, NSW), 12 Mar. 1932, 9; Langford-Smith, "Sky Pilot At the Limmen River"; Keith Langford-Smith, "The "Sky Pilot" at Oenpelli," *Northern Standard* (Darwin, NT), 6 Jun. 1933, 3; *Sky Pilot in Arnhem Land*; Anon., "End of an Adventure"; *Sky Pilot's Last Flight*; Keith Langford-Smith et al., *Sky Pilot Fellowship fete - Parramatta Town Hall* (Sydney (NSW): Moore College Library, 1953); S. Campbell Begbie, *Sky Pilot Fellowship fete - Sydney Town Hall* (Sydney, NSW: Moore College, 1957); Langford-Smith, 28 Nov. 1972 (BGC 528-3-11).



of an incident early in his flying career. In October 1931, as Langford-Smith conducted his aerial survey of Arnhem Land, he became lost and so landed his craft near a small encampment of Aboriginal Australians near Caledon Bay to ask for directions.<sup>37</sup> The men, for reasons unknown, soon set upon their uninvited guest with spears and Langford-Smith made a hasty retreat. Smith published accounts of this event repeatedly over the next few decades and he altered his accounts over time to manipulate the public's interpretation of his larger efforts.

The initial retelling of Smith's Caledon Bay narrative, first published in mid-October 1931, introduced Smith as the explorer of a new world. Langford-Smith's account focused upon his efforts to chart new air routes in the Northern Territory and upon a close description of the scenery, the flora, and the fauna. The encounter with "a camp of blacks" was almost an afterthought within the larger narrative of discovery and exploration.<sup>38</sup> In late December 1931, Smith's chronicles of his exploration over Arnhem Land shifted focus to the attack itself. In an article entitled "'Sky Pilot' Attacked," Smith emphasized his role as a robust adventurer who employed western technology to stave off a threat from the so-called brutish and uncomprehending tribe. In this version, Smith wrote that as soon as he had landed, the "blacks" of Caledon Bay immediately set upon the "Sky Pilot" with a "fusillade of spears," which damaged Smith's aircraft. The men, because of their implied cowardice, then ran off in terror at the sound of his engine, which opened an opportunity for Smith to escape into the sky. Despite still being lost, and now flying a structurally damaged plane, Smith gave chase to his former attackers who were then in full retreat, and "flew low over the heads until they were scattered far

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<sup>37</sup> Anon., "Northern Territory. Outlying Missions Stations. "Sky Pilot's Tour"

<sup>38</sup> Anon., "The "Sky Pilot" Mission Machine's Flight"; Anon., "Northern Territory. Outlying Mission Stations. "Sky Pilot's" Tour"; Anon., "Real "Sky Pilot." N.T. Parson Flies"; Anon., "The Sky Pilot," *Northern Territory Times* (Darwin, NT), 14 Aug. 1931, 6.

and wide.” The missionary adventurer, it would seem, had a full measure of revenge upon his assailants.<sup>39</sup>

Smith continued to reference the “attack” at Caledon Bay throughout his subsequent time as CMS missionary. Smith maintained the narrative of confrontation and exploration in his subsequent retellings but wrapped those themes within a larger plotline of progress and national destiny. According to Smith, his exploratory flights made possible the extension of Australian civilization and trade to those peoples beyond the ‘Never Never.’ This progress would appear a threat however, to those who could not comprehend the benefits of western progress, such as the “brutish” locals who had attacked him at Caledon Bay. It would likewise be opposed by unscrupulous Euro-Australians who profited from the ignorance of others. Thus, Smith portrayed himself as selfless hero pushing back the boundaries of ignorance and greed by carrying forth the light of civilization.

The Caledon incident likewise allowed Smith to interject his mission within a regional conflict that had attracted international attention. Langford-Smith’s experience at Caledon Bay was but a minor episode in a string of such incidents (some deadly) in the early 1930s by aboriginal people against Japanese and Euro traders. The attacks heightened fears of a general uprising of aboriginal peoples against outsiders and led to calls for reprisal attacks that would ‘teach the blacks a lesson’.<sup>40</sup> Amid the escalating violence, Smith’s narratives of his harrowing experience at Caledon Bay and his call for increased development and education provided the

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<sup>39</sup> Anon., ““Sky Pilot” Attacked”

<sup>40</sup> Ted Egan, *Justice All Their Own: The Caledon Bay and Woodah Island Killings 1932-1933* (Carlton South, Victoria: Melbourne University Press, 1996), 36-7.

young missionary an opportunity to claim a degree of national relevancy, and of course greater attention to his work.<sup>41</sup>

As Keith Langford-Smith's career with the Church Missionary Society unraveled following the loss of his airplane, Smith continued to make his time as a missionary pilot the core component of his missionary identity. Soon after his dismissal from CMS in 1934, Keith Langford-Smith compiled his adventures as "Sky Pilot" into two popular and critically acclaimed autobiographies: *Sky Pilot in Arnhem Land* (1935) and *Sky Pilot's Last Flight* (1936). Smith used both books to burnish his image as a rough and ready explorer missionary who overcame a shortsighted CMS mission board, "jungles and swamps," and "treacherous natives," to bring help and modernity to those in need. Various Australian newspapers purchased the rights to Langford-Smith's work and serialized excerpts from both books.

National exposure as the courageous "Sky Pilot" transformed the failed missionary into a minor celebrity and would eventually prove crucial as Keith Langford-Smith set out into the metaphorical wilderness in search of a new calling.<sup>42</sup> Despite the national success of his two books, both of which went into multiple editions, Keith Langford-Smith spent the 1930s futilely casting about for a new career. In late 1936, Keith Langford-Smith and his new wife (Gwen) toured northern, central, and western Australia for six months to "look around" and hunt for

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<sup>41</sup> Anon., "'Sky Pilot' Attacked"; Langford-Smith, "'The Sky Pilot.' Aloft in Arnhem Land"; Keith Langford-Smith, "'The Sky Pilot.' Aloft in Arnhem Land, Almost Unknown Country," *Daily Mercury* (Mackay, Qld.), 22 Mar. 1932, 3; Langford-Smith, "Sky Pilot At the Limmen River"; Langford-Smith, "The 'Sky Pilot' at Oenpelli"

<sup>42</sup> *Sky Pilot in Arnhem Land*; Anon., "Sky Pilot in Arnhem Land. From Crusoe to Airman"; Anon., "Australian Books. The Year's Publications. Growth of Popularity.," *The Sydney Morning Herald* (Sydney, NSW), 30 Dec. 1935, 8; *Sky Pilot's Last Flight*; Keith Langford-Smith, "Sky Pilot's Last Flight. No. 1," *Sydney Mail* (Sydney, NSW), 10 Jun. 1936, 16, 17; Keith Langford-Smith, "Sky Pilot's Last Flight. No. 3," *Sydney Mail* (Sydney, NSW), 24 Jun. 1936, 47, 48; Anon., "End of an Adventure"; Anon., "New Books. Arnhem Land Mission. 'Sky Pilot's' Last Flight," *Newcastle Morning Herald and Miner's Advocate* (Newcastle, NSW), 31 Oct. 1936, 5; Anon., "The 'Sky Pilot' Mr. Langford Smith Re-visits Arnhem Land," *Townsville Daily Bulletin* (Townsville, Qld.), 18 Feb. 1937, 6.

material for Keith's next planned book.<sup>43</sup> The husband and wife, accompanied by another couple who had been Keith's neighbors at Roper River, made a holiday of their journey. They drove five thousand miles from Sydney through northern and central Australia, and their grand tour included airplane rides, expeditions exploring unique rock formations, and even a return to the Roper River station itself.<sup>44</sup>

Although the Australian press covered the Langford-Smiths' trip north, it was not the success Keith hoped. No new ministry work developed from the tour and Langford-Smith never published his planned third book. However, Keith and Gwen did write a few articles about their adventures for the Australian press. Keith Langford-Smith's accounts of his expedition across Australia betrayed a rather desperate effort to recapture the magic of his first two autobiographies and salvage the narrative of his time as a CMS missionary. Very like his earlier descriptions of the Australian 'Never Never,' Langford-Smith's articles positioned him as an explorer, narrating the wonders and mysteries of the north for an audience living thousands of miles away. Rather hyperbolically, Smith retold aboriginal legends and recreated in print the detailed description of an abandoned aboriginal 'ghost city.'<sup>45</sup> Langford-Smith's account of his visit to the Roper River station described the post in glowing terms. Indeed, the Roper River Station had prospered since Smith's departure, due in large part to the leadership, Mr. and Mrs. C. S. Port, who had constructed new buildings and revived the morale of local mission staff.<sup>46</sup> Langford-Smith's reports (ungraciously) overlooked the work of the station's current

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<sup>43</sup> Gwen Langford-Smith, "Children of Northern Territory: Where Toys Arrive by Aeroplane," *Sydney Morning Herald* (Sydney, NSW), 6 Apr. 1937, 11.

<sup>44</sup> Anon., "Roper River Paradise for Two," *Australian Women's Weekly*, 12 Dec. 1936, 3, 8; Anon., "Young Half-Castes: Removal From Mothers, Government Strongly Criticised," *Sydney Morning Herald* (Sydney, NSW), 24 Feb. 1937, 15; Keith Langford-Smith, "'Ruined City' of the Bush: Ghostly Corroborees in Arnhem Land," *Sydney Morning Herald* (Sydney, NSW), 22 Oct. 1938, 21.

<sup>45</sup> Langford-Smith, "'Ruined City' of the Bush"

<sup>46</sup> *From Mission to Church*, 74-5.

missionaries to focus on his own contributions to the mission's success. Smith painted a warm picture of life at Roper River and emphasized the close relationships he still enjoyed with local peoples and mission staff. In general, Langford-Smith did not construct his narrative to praise the current work at the CMS mission station, but to repudiate prior claims of misconduct laid against him in the government inquiry of 1933. Langford-Smith boasted that contrary to suggestions made by members of the Australian parliament that should he ever dare return to Roper River "the natives would lynch him," they instead embraced him warmly upon his return.<sup>47</sup>

Furthermore, Smith pointed out, a number of the landing strips he constructed remained in regular use, now by doctors of the Australian Inland Mission's Aerial Medical Service. Both facts, Smith strongly implied, vindicated his conduct as a missionary as well as his all-consuming focus on aviation. Despite any moral victories Langford-Smith's published accounts may have won him, the ex-missionary remained unemployed. With nowhere else to turn, Keith Langford-Smith, "the Sky Pilot of Arnhem Land," purchased a small farm outside of Sydney in 1939 and began raising pigs. Despite some vague claims to the contrary some forty years later, there remains no evidence that he ever returned to his work as the "Sky Pilot."<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> The MP in question was most likely Harold Nelson, MP for the Northern Territory. According to Mr. Nelson, and speaking under parliamentary privilege, Keith Langford-Smith was guilty of "rape, immorality, abortion, and the spreading of venereal disease," and was overall a "maggot feasting on the festering corpse of Christianity." Nelson admitted to not having seen the actual evidence brought against Langford-Smith, but assumed its validity given that CMS had relieved Langford-Smith of his post. See also: Anon., "House of Representatives Official Hansard, No. 44, 1 Nov.," (1933); Anon., "Young Half-Castes: Removal From Mothers, Government Strongly Criticised"; *One Blood*, 736-7, 64; *Aboriginal Australians: Black responses to white dominance 1788-1994*, chapter 7.

<sup>48</sup> Unfortunately, little is known of Keith Langford-Smith's 'wilderness years,' the fourteen years between his dismissal as a CMS missionary and the start of his radio program in 1948. He seemed to have lived quietly as a pig and poultry farmer between 1939 and 1948. According to a June 1975 edition of *Sky Pilot News*, Smith spent those years flying and conducting what he rather ambiguously called "independent interdenominational mission work." However, given his propensity to self-promotion, and the willingness of the Australian press to publish even minor accounts of his work, it is surprising that there exists no evidence of any flying on his part nor of any reported contact with aboriginal missions, with the singular exception of his trip to the north in 1936-37. Therefore, claims as to mission flights post April 1933 seem doubtful. See also: Anon., "Mr. K. Langford Smith: Father's Statement"; Anon., "The 'Sky Pilot' Mr. Langford Smith Re-visits Arnhem Land"; Langford-Smith, "'Ruined City' of the Bush"; Anon., "Stud Pig Notes: Pig Society's New Members," *Land* (Sydney, NSW), 22 Nov. 1940, 8; Anon., "Advertisement," *Sydney Morning Herald* (Sydney, NSW), 18 Sep. 1948, 21; Anon., "Sky Pilot's Log," *Methodist* (Sydney, NSW), 23 Oct. 1948, 5; Anon., "The Sky Pilot's Log," *Cumberland Argus and Fruitgrowers Advocate*

In 1948, after eight years as a farmer and fifteen years following the crash at Oenpelli station, Langford-Smith returned to the ministry. He spoke at local churches and youth retreats, regaling audiences with his time in Arnhem Land and all the while revived his public



Langford-Smith at the first broadcast of the *Sky Pilot's Log* (1948).  
Keith Langford-Smith, *Sky Pilot's News*, Sky Pilot Fellowship Ltd. (BGC 528-3-11)

identity as the “Sky Pilot.” Later that year he joined the Open Air Campaigners organization and launched the “Sky Pilot’s Log” radio program that aired daily from 12:15 – 12:30 p.m. on Sydney AM broadcasting station 2CH.<sup>49</sup> As was his aerial missionary work, Smith’s “modern” radio program was, for its time, rather innovative. Langford’s radio ministry was half-sermon and half-theater; it first sought to amuse its faithful audience with tales of missionary adventure from around the world, and then proceeded to invite unbelieving radio listeners to think of their eternal destiny. At center stage, of course, were Langford-Smith’s own twenty-three months as missionary pilot. Publicity shots for *Sky Pilot’s Log* featured the now grounded Keith Langford-Smith in front the broadcaster’s microphone in full captain uniform, with flight wings and the words “Sky Pilot” embroidered over his left chest.<sup>50</sup> *Sky Pilot’s Log* ran uninterrupted over four

(Parramatta, NSW), 17 Nov. 1948, 10; Zona Wilkinson, Anne Loxley, and John Kirkman, *Marella: The Hidden Mission* (Emu Plains, NSW: Penrith Regional Gallery & The Lewers Bequest, 2009), 6, 10.

<sup>49</sup> Anon., "Advertisement"; Anon., "Sky Pilot's Log"

<sup>50</sup> *Sky Pilot in Arnhem Land*; *Sky Pilot's Last Flight*; Langford-Smith et al., *Sky Pilot Fellowship fête - Parramatta Town Hall*; Langford-Smith, 28 Nov. 1972 (BGC 528-3-11); *One Blood*, 732-7.

years beginning in 1948. 2CH canceled the *Log* in 1952, but a petition from Smith's loyal listeners convinced the station to bring the "Sky Pilot" back. The radio program continued until the mid-1950s, with two thousand total episodes. Keith Langford-Smith's radio career as "Sky Pilot" lasted over three times as long as his job as an actual pilot, but more significantly, the radio program provided Smith a platform from which to maintain a support base and perpetuate his image as a modern, innovative missionary.<sup>51</sup>

While still a well-known radio personality, Keith Langford-Smith began his third and final career as the "Sky Pilot" in 1951 when he rebuilt his "Marella Stud Farm" into an orphanage. Smith utilized his radio program as a platform from which to raise interest and money, and in 1954, Langford-Smith and his wife opened the newly christened Marella Mission Farm to Aboriginal Australian orphans and other Indigenous children whom the Australian social services had forcibly taken from their homes.<sup>52</sup> Now the headmaster of an orphanage (as well as a radio host, and farmer) Langford-Smith continued to use his "Sky Pilot" persona as part of orphanage marketing. In speeches, at fundraising drives, in institutional newsletters (entitled "Sky Pilot News") Langford-Smith recounted at length his aerial adventures some twenty years prior, and only then moved on to elaborate on the needs of the mission children. At the "Sky Pilot Fellowship fetes," large fundraisers held at Sydney's town hall on behalf of the Marella Mission Farm, Langford-Smith's identity as a mission pilot was a main point of focus, and was regularly praised by Australian luminaries, such as the Anglican Bishop William George

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<sup>51</sup> Langford-Smith et al., *Sky Pilot Fellowship fete - Parramatta Town Hall*.

<sup>52</sup> To his credit, Smith, in 1937, had publicly and strongly condemned these actions on the part of the Australian government.

Anon., "Young Half-Castes: Removal From Mothers, Government Strongly Criticised"; Anon., "Happy Christmas After All for Mission Children," *The Sydney Morning Herald* (Sydney, NSW), 27 Dec. 1957, 4.

Hilliard, as a demonstration of Langford-Smith's progressive, courageous, and enterprising spirit.<sup>53</sup>

Langford-Smith's identity as Sky Pilot remained crucial in his efforts to remain relevant. Just as he recast his violent encounter in Caledon Bay to take advantage of contemporary events and varying local interests, Smith reimagined his work as Sky Pilot in the 1950s to captivate to a new generation. Since Langford-Smith had last flown in 1933, and his fame as a missionary pilot reached its crescendo in early 1936, the public's interpretation of aircraft had changed. The popularity of aviation culture had declined precipitously as the millennial hopes that science would usher in world of universal peace withered with the failed promises of a technological utopia and the specter of nuclear devastation. Furthermore, by the early 1950s aircraft companies had succeeded integrating aviation into contemporary society. As the aviation industry matured and became a regular component of twentieth-century living, the romance and spectacle of interwar aviation evaporated in the engine wash of Boeing passenger jets.<sup>54</sup>

Langford-Smith's old tale of exploration and development needed to be adapted for his contemporary audience. Therefore, in the speeches and radio programs he delivered in the 1950s, Smith united past and present. He drew clear parallels between his efforts to chart, develop, and civilize northern Australia in the 1930s to his work in the 1950s to reeducate and civilize both radio listeners and aboriginal children. In an era in which aviation itself could no longer conjured images of progressive development, Langford-Smith instead promoted his work within a larger

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<sup>53</sup> *Sky Pilot in Arnhem Land; Sky Pilot's Last Flight*; Langford-Smith et al., *Sky Pilot Fellowship fete - Parramatta Town Hall*; Begbie, *Sky Pilot Fellowship fete - Sydney Town Hall*; Langford-Smith, 28 Nov. 1972 (BGC 528-3-11); *From Mission to Church*, 72-4; *One Blood*; Cole, "Langford-Smith, Keith (1907-1981)."; Rita Wright, interview by The Stolen Generations' Testimonies Foundation, 2007; Naomi Parry, "Records of Marella Mission Farm," (Newtown, Australia: Find and Connect: History and information about Australian orphanages, children's Homes and other institutions, 2013).

<sup>54</sup> Joseph J. Corn, *The Winged Gospel: America's romance with aviation, 1900-1950* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 138-40; Robert Wohl, *The Spectacle of Flight: Aviation and the Western Imagination, 1920-1950* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2005), 319-22; *Air Empire*, 237.



narrative of Australian triumphal nationalism.<sup>55</sup> Aviation, exploration, radio, agriculture and orphanages were not just about the achievements of one missionary, but one part in a larger story of Australia's development into an independent nation. All those who partnered with Smith financially, could likewise claim a share in that epic narrative.<sup>56</sup>

In retrospect, Keith Langford-Smith's genius rested not in his innovations as a missionary. Langford-Smith's real talents lay in his ability to promote and advertise his work. As a pilot, radio host, and principal, Langford-Smith expertly entwined his narratives to the process of Australian nation building and carried both his readers and listeners to regions of their country they had never before visited, even as he offered them an opportunity to partake in the development, of the Outback.<sup>57</sup> When setbacks occurred, Smith proved exceedingly capable of constructing a positivistic interpretive spin regarding his efforts. When Smith bragged of repairing his plane with used car parts, fencing wire, and raw animal hides, he was in actuality twisting disaster into victory, retranslating his failures as a pilot and missionary into a story of personal perseverance and dedication.<sup>58</sup> Perhaps more impressively, Langford-Smith proved to be an expert in maintaining his reputation over the long haul. For over fifty years, Anglican bishops, devoted supporters, the popular and religious press, all celebrated Smith as a missionary progressive, based almost entirely on the twenty-three months he spent (unsuccessfully) flying a used Gypsy Moth in Arnhem Land.<sup>59</sup>

### **Conclusion: The end of the Second Wave of Mission Aviation (1941)**

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<sup>55</sup> Robert Dixon, *Prosthetic Gods: Travel, representation and colonial governance* (St. Lucia, QLD: University of Queensland Press), 48-50, chapter 5.

<sup>56</sup> Langford-Smith et al., *Sky Pilot Fellowship fete - Parramatta Town Hall*; Begbie, *Sky Pilot Fellowship fete - Sydney Town Hall*.

<sup>57</sup> *Prosthetic Gods: Travel, representation and colonial governance*, 48-50, 124.

<sup>58</sup> Langford-Smith, 28 Nov. 1972 (BGC 528-3-11).

<sup>59</sup> Cole, "Langford-Smith, Keith (1907-1981)."

It would be incorrect to think that all first- and second-wave mission aviation programs were dangerous, inefficient, or simply tools of mission propaganda. As we saw in earlier chapters, there were as many as eighteen mission aviation programs that operated *successfully* prior to World War Two, including John Flynn's Aerial Medical Service, the New Guinea aviation program, and the various aviation programs launched and funded by *Miva*. These programs were dedicated to rigorous planning, employed highly trained pilots, and enjoyed significant organizational input from aviation veterans of the First World War. Interestingly, all but one of the successful programs were flown or directed by former German war pilots. Indeed, until mission aviation professionalized in the 1950s, most every successful missionary pilot had military training, which, for all intents and purposes, seemed to inoculate the pilot against the excesses of contemporary aviation boosterism.

Ultimately, no matter aviation's popularity, or the success of a limited number of programs, most aviation programs were in a terminal decline by the late 1930s and ended by 1942.<sup>60</sup> World War Two ended a few mission aviation programs directly. The joint flight operation between the American and Bavarian Lutherans in New Guinea ended in 1939 after the

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<sup>60</sup> The collapse of a few programs attracted public commentary on their downfall: George Feltes (1931), Rev. Kemmis (1932), Keith Langford-Smith in (1933). However, most mission aviation operations simply faded from the archives: Harry Roberts Carson, Robert Crawford, and even Paul Schulte. It is possible, though it is unlikely, that these programs continued during World War Two. Interwar news sources heavily reported on aviation activity, and the absence of Carson's and Crawford's programs from the news records speaks to their demise. The same logic can be applied to those many programs which were proposed during the 1920s and 1930s but were never again mentioned in the popular press. They may have successfully launched, but it is unlikely given that there is no identified record in newspapers from the United States, the UK, Australia, New Zealand, or Canada. Nor are there records of their existence amongst mission aviation organizations of the post-War era. Finally, and perhaps surprisingly, the Australian Inland Mission's Aerial Medical Service likewise ended operation – but only as a mission program. After launching in 1928, AMS quickly grew beyond the organizational capacity of its host mission. Therefore, to fulfill his ultimate vision of providing medical service to all peoples living in the Australian Outback, Flynn ended AMS' operation as a "preaching agency" and developed it into "a dynamic partner in a national enterprise to help the frontier people." In 1933, and with some controversy, the Aerial Medical Service became a separate, purely humanitarian medical organization. See also: Appendix A; Graeme Bucknall, "Flynn, John (1880-1951)," in *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, 1981).

pilot and engineer who replaced Friederich Loose turned out to be Nazi sympathizers. At the outbreak of war, the two stole the mission airplane and in a rather spectacular fashion used it to make their way back to Germany. The Lutheran missionaries were themselves incriminated by the theft and were barred by the Australian government from resuming operations.<sup>61</sup>

The Lutheran's flight operations in New Guinea would likely have been cut short regardless of the political views of its German personnel. At the start of the war in Europe, German mission aviation programs operating throughout Allied territories were grounded by officials who feared German pilots might use their aircraft for espionage, or even sabotage, on behalf of the German military. This wartime policy impacted much of *Miva*, operated as it was by German nationals. The Australian government forced Divine Word Airways in New Guinea (whom *Miva* provided an aircraft and pilot) to sell their aircraft, and similar fates likely befell *Miva* operations in the Solomon Islands and Southern Africa.<sup>62</sup> Paul Schulte's operations in the Canadian north were also grounded. By one account, the Canadians ended Schulte's mission because of their worries that Schulte – a former German war hero – might take advantage of his work in the Canadian north to pass along sensitive weather information to German authorities. Schulte had no known Nazi sympathies, but he was forbidden from flying for the duration of the war nonetheless.<sup>63</sup> Finally, the Christian & Missionary Alliance aviation program in Borneo was lost to the Japanese invasion in 1941. At the start of the fighting, the mission's pilot, Reverend Fred Jackson, scouted out Japanese military positions for the Allied Dutch and Australian forces, and shuttled women and children out of the conflict zone. However, Jackson himself was unable

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<sup>61</sup> Albert Frerichs and Sylvia Frerichs, *Anutu Conquers in New Guinea: A Story of Mission Work in New Guinea* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1969).

<sup>62</sup> Pat Studdy-Clift, "St. Paulus: a plane of many missions," *Australian Heritage*, 2010, 19-21.

<sup>63</sup> It is possible that the *Miva* operation in South America continued. However, given *Miva*'s preference for German-built aircraft, the mission would have faced difficulty keeping their planes operational without ready access to spare parts. See also: William Karl Martin, "The Use of Aircraft on the Mission Field," Central Baptist Theological Seminary, 1947 (BGC 136-61-23).

to escape, and along with numerous other missionaries and Allied personnel trapped behind enemy lines, was captured by the Japanese military and summarily murdered in a mass execution.<sup>64</sup>

Given the extent and nature of World War Two, its detrimental impact on mission aviation is unsurprising. However, most mission aviation programs collapsed in the late 1930s in large part because of their underlying instability, financial overruns, the unrealistic hopes of mission aviators as to what aircraft could accomplish. Many mission aviation programs started between the two World Wars were initiated by missionaries with little aeronautical experience and who launched programs in response to popular enthusiasm for aviation – itself the creation of contemporary aviation propaganda flowing from aviation companies, Hollywood films, politicians, poets, and writers. The aviation programs built in this environ mimicked the culture of their birth and readily embraced its predisposition towards spectacle, colorful publicity, and exciting acrobatic tricks. Certainly, flight offered obvious benefits to mission work: quick travel to mission posts that were hard to reach, an ability to carry heavy loads anywhere a plane could land, and emergency medical service to compliment and expand the reach of medical mission services. These benefits however, required a considerable effort to materialize, and few missions adequately committed themselves to comprehensive initial stage planning, exhaustive staff training, and the discipline needed to maintain operational discipline. In most instances, even their usefulness as an outreach tool could not save most mission aviation programs from their deeper systemic failures, and most collapsed. Yet, the demise of individual mission aviation programs did not undermine the usefulness of aircraft for marketing and mission outreach. Popular interest in flight did not disappear in 1941, it simply evolved. Therefore, while most

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<sup>64</sup> Greene, "Wings Over Borneo", 1945

mission aviation programs of the first and second wave collapsed prior to - or during the war, following 1945 a new generation of mission aviators took flight.

Chapter FourThe meteoric relaunch of Protestant  
mission aviation (1940-1949)

Mission Aviation's third wave (1942-1950) was a golden era for US-based mission aviation, with interest and support far eclipsing the popularity it enjoyed in the 1920s and 1930s. Missionaries and mission executives both warmly embraced aviation for mission service. Their programs were highly innovative, a source of rapture and enthusiasm for their supporters, and decidedly shaped by the American conviction that aviation was safe and meant for the masses. The period saw the birth of dozens of new aviation programs, most in the United States and Australia, the formation of multiple international aviation conferences, and the launch of many collaborative organizations. It witnessed the start of mission aviation training centers, the creation of transnational mission aviation programs, and the publication of numerous magazines, newsletters, and pamphlets dedicated to mission aviation.

These were mission aviation's halcyon days, but only because it was still a fad. World War Two had diluted the technological utopianism of the early twentieth century, but the war did not destroy it. Aviation technology continued to improve and become safer. American popular interest in aircraft grew markedly and there remained a self-righteous optimism about the sociological impact of technology. With the technological capabilities of Nazi Germany still fresh in their minds, optimists conceded that scientific innovation would not of itself lead to higher ideals or a better, more enlightened civilization. However, belief persisted that the genie

could be controlled when in the proper hands and used to make the world a better place. Aircraft remained at the center of this vision, just as they had prior to the war.<sup>1</sup>

US-based aviation marketing likewise ratcheted up towards the end of World War Two. Aircraft manufacturers and flight enthusiasts claimed that aircraft were now ready to fulfill their destiny and transform world civilization. In the United States, interest in aviation seemed to reach a new fevered pitch, as aircraft industrialists prepared for the return of millions of former military personnel, hundreds of thousands of whom it was believed would want to fly and purchase their own aircraft. A *Saturday Evening Post* survey released in 1945 seemed to support the claim, stating that as many as 32% of adults hoped to purchase a plane after the war, and 7%, or three million Americans, *definitely* planned to purchase one. Initially, the survey seemed to foretell the future. Thousands of servicemen used their GI bills to learn to fly and joined the tens of thousands more who returned from military service with their licenses already won. In 1946, Americans purchased 33,354 personal airplanes and manufacturer backlogs reportedly ran into the millions.<sup>2</sup>

Just as their predecessors of decades past, mission-aviation enthusiasts tapped into the continued post-war popularity of flight and aviation culture to construct their own idealized image of mission aviation. The mission-supporting American public eagerly bought their product, not because mission aviation had necessarily improved or was even superior to other means of transportation such as horses, automobiles, ships but because mission aviators made effective use of post-War American optimism and the techno-utopianism of the 1940s to

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<sup>1</sup> Joseph J. Corn, *The Winged Gospel: America's romance with aviation, 1900-1950* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 66-9; Michael Adas, *Machines as the Measure of Men: Science, technology, and ideologies of western dominance*, Cornell studies in comparative history (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989), part 3.

<sup>2</sup> *The Winged Gospel*, preface, 93-110.

promote their cause.<sup>3</sup> Mission supporters therefore bought into the hype of mission aviation, not the reality.

Regrettably, the reality was that little had changed since second-wave mission aviation. Between 1942 and 1950, mission aviation as generally practiced remained an application of aviation industry propaganda, internationalist positivism, and technological utopianism. Mission aviation was therefore frequently impractical, unsafe, and at times broadly counterproductive. Not that most mission aviators saw it that way. Mission aviators of this era were generally like those of the first and second waves: professional missionaries, not professional pilots. They had trained in outreach, fundraising, ministry, and evangelism – not as professional aviators, mechanics, or navigators. Therefore, influenced by aviation industry marketing (not long-term experience), mission aviators truly believed that, since their programs employed cutting-edge aviation research, they were therefore inherently safe and efficient.

Ignorant about the realities of long-term aircraft operation, these missionary pilots were amateurish and operated in ignorance of established aviation practice – at times with deadly results. Regardless of their lack of proper training, missionaries enthusiastically took to flight between 1942 and 1950 with an unfailing certainty as to the soundness of their methods, the efficiency of their program, and the safety of their aircraft. There is little evidence to suggest that most were cognizant of the dangers and inefficiency of their programs nor that most attempted to hoodwink their supporters. As in the first and second waves, mission aviators hoped to use their aircraft to promote, contextualize, and translate their mission work. Their success using aircraft to increase interest and attract donations blinded some missionaries and mission administrators to

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<sup>3</sup> Eric Schatzberg, "Ideology and Technical Choice: The Decline of the Wooden Airplane in the United States, 1920-1945," *Technology and Culture* 35, no. 1 (1994): 34-69; David Edgerton, *The Shock of the Old: Technology and global history since 1900* (London: Profile, 2008), 10; Scott Anthony and Oliver Green, *British Aviation Posters: Art, Design, and Flight* (Surrey, UK: Lund Humphries, 2012).



the costs and dangers of their flight operations. Numerous missionaries died as a result and their untimely deaths hastened, though did not cause, the third-wave's demise.<sup>4</sup>

This chapter explores the history of the third wave of mission aviation, emphasizing the examples of three period mission aviation operations, namely: those programs operated by independent missionary Paul Hartford, the World Missionary Aviation Council, and the mission aviation program of the Assemblies of God Church. It will argue that as mission aviators themselves were taken in by marketing of aviation industry, many early programs were logistical failures. Nevertheless, despite the serious flaws of many operations, third-wave mission aviation provided missionaries an opening to create a relatively popular narrative of their work that united their beliefs to contemporary cultural interests.

### **Paul Hartford**

In the spring of 1940, a thirty-year-old independent missionary named Paul Hartford struggled his way through Cuba. He rode alone, trudging upon his weary horse to a village deep in the forests where he planned to minister later that evening. As the missionary sat uncomfortably in his saddle, he gazed into the sky and suddenly an idea struck him: rather than pushing his painstaking way through the brush, he could – in an airplane – simply fly over forest and stream to arrive at his destination with much less effort and in much less time.<sup>5</sup> One short year following his revelation (at least by his own accounts), Paul Hartford took a rough outline of a small-scale mission aviation program back with him to the United States, where he hoped to train immediately for his pilot's license. The United States' entry into World War Two delayed

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<sup>4</sup> *The Shock of the Old*, chapter 8; Priscilla Pope-Levison, *Building the Old Time Religion: Women evangelists in the progressive era* (New York: New York University Press, 2014).

<sup>5</sup> James E. Walters, "Cleric Plans Air School for Pastors," *Valparaiso Vidette Messenger* (Valparaiso, IN), 27 Nov. 1945.

his plans, and so Hartford bided his time. He pastored for a small church in Pontiac, Michigan, and learned how to fly in his spare time. In 1944, Hartford revved his plans into motion as loosening wartime restrictions made his envisioned aviation program once again feasible. With contributions from his congregation, Hartford quickly raised enough funds to buy a partial interest in a small aircraft and in the spring of 1944, he flew to Mexico where he tested his plans.<sup>6</sup>

Hartford set no itinerary for his trip south. He hoped to contact as many of the Protestant missionaries working in Mexico as he could, and with their assistance investigate the potential impact and usefulness of aviation in their field. By working with a variety of missionaries, Hartford thought he might come to understand how mission aviation worked in various settings.<sup>7</sup> On this initial survey, Hartford met Melvin Todd, a missionary with Wycliffe Translators whose mission field included villages and towns separated by both thick forest and imposing canyons. Hartford offered to fly Todd over both and the struggling missionary quickly accepted. In only a few brief minutes of flight time, the two traversed a broken and forested landscape that, on foot, had taken Todd weeks to fight his way across. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the Wycliffe missionary bought fully into Hartford's vision and Todd soon set to work building his own mission aviation program. Having won his first convert, and having confirmed, in his mind at least, the utility of mission aviation, Hartford carried his message to dozens of other missionaries in southern Mexico. By the time he left for Michigan in the fall of 1944, he had won over some fifteen more missionaries to his vision.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Anon., "Pontiac's Flying Preacher," *Airman: The Aviation Newsmagazine*, Jan. 1945, 2 (BGC 136-25-13).

<sup>7</sup> Paul Hartford to Elizabeth Greene, 14 Dec. 1944 (BGC 136-25-13).

<sup>8</sup> Paul Hartford to George Fisk, 6 Sep. 1944 (BGC 136-25-13); Walters, "Cleric Plans Air School for Pastors"; Anon., "To the Regions Beyond in . . . *Flying Grasshoppers*," *Power*, 9 Dec. 1945, 1-3, 7.

Intoxicated by his success in Mexico, Hartford was certain that his initial hunch back in Cuba had been right: flight was the future of mission work. Just as he and Melvin Todd had done in Mexico, Hartford believed that missionaries the world over could quickly “jump” from one mission station to the next in their own small single-engine aircraft, or “grasshopper ships” as Hartford called them.<sup>9</sup> Hartford resigned his pastorate in Michigan and committed his full energy towards the conversion of missionaries, evangelists, and pastors around the world as to the heady potential of aviation to improve Christian outreach.<sup>10</sup>

Hartford spent the better part of the next two years promoting his “progressive” vision of mission transportation to churches and rallies throughout the United States. Ever the showman, Paul Hartford, who also went by various stage names such as “Flying Paul,” and “America’s No. 1 Flying Preacher,” built a promotional campaign that was as much entertainment as it was a serious call for the development of mission aviation. His shows featured “vivid color slides” and musical performances; Hartford himself sang and played trumpet and accordion for his audiences (prior to his conversion, Hartford had begun his adult life as a trumpeter with a touring jazz band).<sup>11</sup> After concluding the musical portion of his exhibitions, Hartford transitioned to his core message. He spoke of the power of aircraft to overcome all obstacles, while at the same time being almost effortless in operation. Aircraft in the hands of Christian evangelists, Hartford prophesized, would “shrink the jungles, deserts and mountain ranges down small enough so gospel men [could] get to all the natives quick.” To his many critics, who alleged that training amateur missionary pilots to fly over dense forests and rugged mountains was unnecessarily

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<sup>9</sup> Anon., "Preacher Flies Here Sunday," *Lima News* (Lima, OH), 2 Jun. 1945, 4.

<sup>10</sup> Helen Delich, "Clergy Urged to Take to Air," *Racine Journal Times* (Racine, WI), 22 Jan. 1945, 8.

<sup>11</sup> Paul Hartford, "Victory Sky Pilot," pamphlet (Inc. Victory Sky Pilots, Spring 1945) BGC 136-25-13; Anon., *Brainerd Daily Dispatch* (Brainerd, MN), 26 Apr. 1946, 7; Anon., "Flying Preacher is Grounded, Has Services," *Somerset Daily American* (Somerset, PA), 9 Dec. 1949, 1.

dangerous, Hartford claimed that his research in Mexico, as well as the successful operation of aircraft by many amateur pilots then in the United States, conclusively demonstrated “that the personal airplane in the hands of a competent individual is the most practical, economical and safe method of transportation known in the world today.”<sup>12</sup>

Hartford did not think that aircraft’s impact would be limited to just the foreign mission field. He believed that pastors and evangelists throughout the United States would soon take to the skies. Just as savvy businessmen flew small aircraft to travel quickly between important meetings, Hartford called American clergymen to a similar level of industriousness. He argued that Christian evangelism needed to evolve with technology and embrace modern advancements to become more efficient. Preachers responsible for flocks in sparsely populated parishes could quickly fly between congregations, while a famous evangelist with a busy speaking schedule could, by simply flying their own craft, cut down journeys of hours into trips of minutes, and thereby speak to more audiences with less effort. Age or disability was not an issue either. For if these ministers and speakers could not themselves fly, then certainly they could take advantage of the skill of their friends and neighbors, one of whom would certainly be amongst the millions who were expected to take to the air in their own personal aircraft following the War.<sup>13</sup>

In less than a year of campaigning, Hartford became something of a nationally recognized mission aviation expert, and used his credibility to build his own aviation school. During his promotional crusades, Hartford argued that the “thousands of flying missionaries” he anticipated would soon fly required a customized training regimen to prepare them for the unique

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<sup>12</sup> Delich, "Clergy Urged to Take to Air"; Paul Hartford, "untitled promotional pamphlet," Winona Lake, IN, pamphlet (Victory Sky Pilots Inc., Jan. - Mar. 1948) BGC 136-25-13; Anon., "Missionary Pilot Slated," *Lynnwood Enterprise* (Lynnwood, WA), 18 Apr. 1973, 16.

<sup>13</sup> Paul Hartford, "Invitation to Enroll," pamphlet (Inc. Victory Sky Pilots, Spring 1945) BGC 136-25-13; Anon., "Youth for Christ Presents Paul Hartford," *Pioneer Log*, 15 Oct. 1945; Walters, "Cleric Plans Air School for Pastors"; *The Winged Gospel*.

challenges of missionary flight. Therefore, to “mass produce” the new missionary pilots, Hartford advocated for the creation of a specialized school to train missionary pilots with himself at its controls. Very quickly, Hartford raised thousands of dollars and built a national training center for budding missionary pilots at Smith Field, a small airport near Winona Lake, IN. Hartford purchased three planes for pilot training, hired two part-time instructors, and bought the nearby Garfield Hotel for a student dormitory. Paul Hartford opened *Victory Sky Pilots Incorporated* in February 1945, as the first mission flight school ever built.<sup>14</sup>

Hartford’s curriculum at Victory Sky Pilots (VSP) featured an “intensified course” that completed a missionary’s entire aviation training regimen in 90 days. In that time Hartford expected to teach his students aircraft maintenance and engineering, provide basic aviation courses in navigation and meteorology, as well as provide them 40-50 hours of flight time. By the end of November 1945, VSP boasted of forty students (men and women), each one a budding mission aviator.<sup>15</sup> By December, six of Hartford’s initial recruits had graduated to the mission field, and, Hartford claimed, were on their way to posts in Mexico, Haiti, Ecuador, Russia, India, and the United States. With spirits high, Hartford was convinced that his vision of a global missionary air fleet was at last becoming a reality.<sup>16</sup>

Despite its initial growth, Hartford’s school was not without its growing pains, most of which stemmed from his own idiosyncrasies. Hartford over-extended his program’s finances and lost the lease to Smith Field after he was unable to make payments (though he did manage to

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<sup>14</sup> Paul Hartford to George Fisk, 16 Sep. 1944 (BGC 136-25-13); United Press International, "Pastor Urges Clergy to Make Use of Planes," *The Lima News* (Lima, OH), 22 Jan. 1945, 30, 4; Anon., "To the Regions Beyond in . . . Flying Grasshoppers", 1945; Dietrich Buss and Arthur Glasser, *Giving Wings to the Gospel: The Remarkable Story of Mission Aviation Fellowship* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1995).

<sup>15</sup> Victory Sky Pilots opened to students in February 1945, but was not incorporated until November. See: Walters, "Cleric Plans Air School for Pastors"

<sup>16</sup> Delich, "Clergy Urged to Take to Air"; United Press International, "Pastor Urges Clergy to Make Use of Planes"; Anon., "Preacher Flies Here Sunday"; Walters, "Cleric Plans Air School for Pastors"; Anon., "Missionaries are Taking to Wings," *The Way*, Mar. 1946, 42 (BGC 528-2-11).

build a new airport nearby).<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, many of Hartford's students failed to launch successful careers as mission aviators, and of those who did, a high percentage suffered serious accidents. (see Appendix A) This last issue was closely tied to Hartford's carelessness in matters of safety. Hartford believed that contemporary aviation technology rendered flight virtually foolproof provided one had been trained in the basics of aviation and followed common-sense rules of flight. As such, instruction at Victory Sky Pilots emphasized little beyond basic flight operation, combined with some additional instruction for flying outside of the United States. Hartford believed that advanced training for a missionary pilot was in-field, and besides God was in control. Any underlying danger arising from sending inexperienced pilots into difficult flying conditions, Hartford believed, was mitigated by an all-powerful God who would preserve the lives of those tending his flock.<sup>18</sup>

Because of his deep faith in the inherent safety of aviation technology and the reality of divine intervention, Hartford's students were inadequately equipped as missionary pilots, and Hartford himself took unnecessary risks while flying. Hartford flew to the towns, cities, and mission posts he visited as a visible demonstration to his audiences of aviation's safety and its usefulness for the modern Christian evangelist. There was nothing inherently unsafe about such practice. Yet, Hartford flew regardless of inclement weather or the presence of obstacles near-field. His dogged determination to fly regardless of mitigating circumstances ended in near-fatal accidents on numerous occasions.<sup>19</sup> Even more troubling was Hartford's carelessness with the lives of his passengers and students. To prove his own flying prowess, Hartford would show off

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<sup>17</sup> Anon., "Missionary Aviation Conference Proceedings and Report," Missionary Aviation Conference, (Winona Lake, IN), 1-4 Aug. 1946 (BGC 136-53-12).

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Anon., "To the Regions Beyond in . . . *Flying Grasshoppers*", 1945; Paul Hartford, "Wings for the Gospel," *Youth For Christ*, 1947, (BGC 136-59-28).

and perform dangerous stunts when he took his students up on their initial flights.<sup>20</sup> Likewise, Hartford would push the boundaries of flight safety at his own airfield. On one occasion, after a day-long training exercise, he and a student attempted to land simultaneously after sunset at Victory Field—Hartford in one plane and his student in another. Hartford had not installed runway lights on the airstrip and so the landing was made in the darkness of night, with only the headlights of some nearby parked cars to guide Hartford and his student towards the landing strip. Hartford knew the danger of such an attempt, yet endeavored the landing regardless. As the two pilots circled the field they lost sight of each other in the black. With neither plane equipped with radio or navigation lights, regaining visual contact with the other proved impossible. Running low on fuel, both pilots unknowingly attempted to land simultaneously while approaching from opposite directions. As he committed to his final approach, Hartford caught a glimpse of his student's wing rushing towards him in the glare of a car's headlight. At the last possible moment, and with wheels nearing the ground, Hartford frantically pulled back on his stick and only narrowly avoided a mid-air collision. By Hartford's own admission, he should have died that night. Only divine intervention, Hartford claimed, kept him and his student from certain death.<sup>21</sup>

Hartford continued to instruct missionary pilots and maintained his furious pace of aviation evangelism throughout 1946. "Flying Paul" barnstormed the United States to promote Victory Sky Pilots and mission aviation more broadly to ministers, mission supporters at churches, and to teenagers at popular Youth for Christ rallies. Like Robert Crawford two decades prior, Hartford well understood the power of aviation as a modern spectacle. Hartford prefaced

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<sup>20</sup> Helen Jean Moose Zwyghuizen, *Daily Choices for Christ: A Lifetime of Joyful Missionary Service* (Xulon Press, 2007), 46-56.

<sup>21</sup> Anon., "To the Regions Beyond in . . . *Flying Grasshoppers*", 1945

his crusades by dropping thousands of leaflets over the towns at which he would speak and advertised the time of his arrival to encourage people to visit the airfield and see him land. To encourage robust attendance amongst the youth at his rallies, Hartford even offered free rides to those Youth for Christ members who brought at least ten guests to the night's festivities.<sup>22</sup> At his rallies themselves, Hartford enthralled his audiences with stories of flying adventure, color slides of "Old Mexico," and of course his trumpet solos.

Hartford believed that his identity as a pilot offered the "old-fashioned gospel" a new relevancy in the modern age. His promotional work further emphasized the contrast between the content of his message and the technological means of his travel. Stated Hartford in one (rhyming) newspaper article:

Most youngsters  
feeling that the airplane is here to stay,  
like to listen to this old-fashion gospel preacher  
with the new-fangled ways.<sup>23</sup>

The content of Hartford's messages reinforced his imagery. Hartford spoke regularly about how a modern invention like aviation was necessary if Christians (though here Hartford meant evangelical Protestants) were to spread the gospel message to *all tongues, tribes and nations* before the fast-approaching end times.<sup>24</sup> Missionaries and evangelists, Hartford chimed, therefore had a duty to advance from ox-cart, trains, and cars to aircraft.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Anon., ; Anon., "Rally Speaker to Fly Here," *Milwaukee Sentinel* (Milwaukee, WI), 22 Jun. 1946, 8; Ralph Colburn, "Wings for the Gospel," *The Brethren Missionary Herald*, 9 Oct. 1948, 889, 90.

<sup>23</sup> William Mollenhour, "Sky Writing: Times Union Aviation News and Comment," (Warsaw, IN), 27 Oct. 1947.

<sup>24</sup> Anon., "To the Regions Beyond in . . . *Flying Grasshoppers*", 1945; Luther L. Grubb, "Wings for Brethren Home Missions," *The Brethren Missionary Herald*, 18 Oct. 1947, 945-7, 51; Hartford, "untitled promotional pamphlet." (1948)

<sup>25</sup> Anon., "Evangelistic Service Here," *Delphos Daily Herald* (Delphos, OH), 8 Mar. 1946, 3; Religious News Service, "The Week in Religion," *Walla Walla Union Bulletin* (Walla Walla, WA), 5 May 1946, 13; Anon., "Flying Minister Takes Part in City 'Youth for Christ' Rally," *La Crosse Tribune* (La Crosse, WI), 27 Feb. 1947, 18; Mollenhour, "Sky Writing: Times Union Aviation News and Comment"



The most fruitful of Hartford's marketing campaigns were those developing out of his work in the mission field itself. Between 1941 and 1952 Hartford made multiple trips to Mexico, Latin and South America where he flew tens of thousands of miles and met hundreds of missionaries at dozens of mission stations. Hartford advertised these tours as scientific endeavors designed to test aviation models in various centralized locations, though they were also used as marketing programs directed at both supporters at home and missionaries in the field.<sup>26</sup> At each mission post he visited, Hartford fashioned an elaborate pitch to impress field missionaries with the unique ministry opportunities possible via mission aviation and Victory Sky Pilots. To entice prospective clients, Hartford demonstrated the effectiveness of aircraft directly. He created customized aerial surveys that explained operational costs, proposed potential air routes, and highlighted locations of nearby emergency landing fields. Hartford took potential missionary pilots up for aerial tours of their mission field, so they might pinpoint new villages of unbelievers, and offered them rides to distant mission posts. At the end of some of his visits, Hartford even offered stay at the local mission station and personally train interested missionary pilots.<sup>27</sup> Upon returning to the United States, Hartford compiled pictures and notes from his tours in Mexico and South America to fashion publicity for those nearer home. After each trip Hartford developed new arguments in support of his claims – “rock-solid proof” as Hartford termed it – that missionaries could safely and economically fly in virtually any region on the globe.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Hartford, 16 Sep. 1944 (BGC 136-25-13); Walters, "Cleric Plans Air School for Pastors"; Frank E. Allen, "Glimpses of the Religious World," *The Covenanter Witness*, 15 Jan. 1947, 34; Anon., "Flying Minister Takes Part in City 'Youth for Christ' Rally"; Anon., "Flying Evangelist," *Christian Life*, Apr. 1952, 38.

<sup>27</sup> Hartford, 16 Sep. 1944 (BGC 136-25-13); Anon., "To the Regions Beyond in . . . *Flying Grasshoppers*", 1945; Paul Hartford, "Victory Sky Pilot's News Release," Winona Lake, IN, pamphlet (Inc. Victory Sky Pilots, Winter 1946-47 1946) BGC 136-25-13; Hartford, "Wings for the Gospel", 1947; Luther L. Grubb, "As the Editor Sees It," *The Brethren Missionary Herald*, 10 Sep. 1949, 630-31.

<sup>28</sup> Anon., "To the Regions Beyond in . . . *Flying Grasshoppers*", 1945; Grubb, "Wings for Brethren Home Missions", 1947; Hartford, "untitled promotional pamphlet." (1948)

Paul Hartford saw real interest in mission aviation as he traveled the United States and South America. However, he understood that this interest, while spread broadly amongst mission organizations, was unorganized and lacking in leadership. As a result, mission organizations launched programs without truly understanding best aviation practices or even the type of plane best suited to their field. Here, Hartford's leadership acumen proved quite insightful. For indeed, the lack of organization and cooperation between mission programs had undermined mission aviation in the 1920s and 1930s. Therefore, Hartford endeavored to fill the void in aviation leadership amongst mission organizations. He refocused Victory Sky Pilots' (VSP) operational goals, and he began to offer help and direction to other evangelical mission aviation programs in the training of missionary pilots. However, in a rare moment of self-reflection, Hartford saw that his VSP was not well adapted to coordinating the many numerous mission aviation programs that were then developing. Hartford understood that a larger, interdenominational and transnational organization was needed to build a true Christian "air force": one that matched missionary pilots to mission fields and mission organizations, provided insight into mission aviation best practices, and facilitated greater economy through inter-mission cooperation.<sup>29</sup> Therefore as Hartford traveled North and South America he sought out other likeminded Christian airmen with whom to build the large inter-mission aviation coordinating body he envisioned.

Paul Hartford joined the Los Angeles-based Christian Airmen's Missionary Fellowship (CAMF) as one of the organizations first members (#11) in late 1944 and after lengthy conversations with George Fisk and a direct request from the fledgling fellowship's founder, Jim

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<sup>29</sup> Anon., ; Anon., "Evangelistic Service Here"; Service, "The Week in Religion"; Anon., "Rally Speaker to Fly Here"; Allen, "Glimpses of the Religious World", 1947; Anon., "Flying Minister Takes Part in City 'Youth for Christ' Rally"

Truxton.<sup>30</sup> Hartford, Fisk, and Truxton all saw a distinct advantage to be gained in the close collaboration between Victory Sky Pilots (a missionary pilot training organization) and CAMF (a mission program still actively searching for an identity). Hartford believed that the two organizations could benefit from joining forces directly: VSP could provide trained pilots to CAMF, and CAMF would match those pilots to mission organizations around the globe. Both groups could then work together to coordinate mission aviation amongst US-based evangelical Protestants. Throughout 1945 and well into 1946, Victory Sky Pilots and CAMF continued to collaborate in their promotional campaigns to both mission administrators and the missionary-supporting US public. Their open collaboration reached a crescendo late in the summer of 1946 at the first Missionary Aviation Conference, held at Victory Sky Pilot's home-base at Winona Lake, IN.<sup>31</sup>

In many ways, the conference was a joint effort between VSP and CAMF. Paul Hartford conceived and organized the entire event, while Jim Truxton and CAMF actively publicized the conference and sent many amongst their leadership team to Winona Lake. The conference attracted a significant crowd of post-war mission aviation luminaries, including Paul Robinson, founder of Moody Aviation in Chicago, and Murray Kendon, a New Zealand RAF pilot based in London and founder of Missionary Aviation Fellowship.<sup>32</sup> At the conference itself, Hartford presented alongside his colleagues from CAMF, MAF, and Moody concerning mission aviation

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<sup>30</sup> At later conferences, perhaps to reinforce a public image of unity between Victory Sky Pilots and CAMF, Hartford would later claim that he joined Jim Truxton's organization on the same day he started VSP (Feb. 1945). See also: Hartford, 6 Sep. 1944 (BGC 136-25-13); Hartford, 16 Sep. 1944 (BGC 136-25-13); James C. Truxton to Paul Hartford, 11 Dec. 1944 (BGC 136-25-13); Hartford, 14 Dec. 1944 (BGC 136-25-13); Charles Mellis, Jr., "The CAMF Story...In Brief," *Missionary Aviation*, Jul. - Sep. 1945, 9-10; Anon., "Missionary Aviation Conference Proceedings and Report," 1946.

<sup>31</sup> Service, "The Week in Religion"; Charles Mellis, Jr. to Ken Ellis, 19 Jul. 1946 (BGC 136-52-5).

<sup>32</sup> James C. Truxton to Murray Kendon, 10 Apr. 1946 (BGC 136-52-5); Service, "The Week in Religion"; Charles Mellis, Jr., *Missionary Aviation*, Jul. - Sep. 1946; Ken Ellis to 15 Jul. 1946 (BGC 136-52-5); Mellis, 19 Jul. 1946 (BGC 136-52-5); Anon., "Missionary Aviation Conference Proceedings and Report," 1946.

history, operational best practices, aircraft coordination amongst mission groups, potential problems, and their plans for the future. The fulcrum of Paul Hartford's presentations however, revolved around his belief that the growth of mission aviation would instigate a global revival. Therefore, Hartford argued that conference attendees had a duty to publicize and promote mission aviation with all haste and usher in that revival as soon as possible. Towards that end Hartford publicly called on CAMF to act as a clearing house for the many missionary pilots anticipated to soon graduate from the four US-based mission aviation training programs then in operation or under consideration: Victory Sky Pilots, and the training programs at Moody Bible Institute, Wheaton College, and LeTourneau Technical Institute.<sup>33</sup> Hartford envisioned that the schools would train missionary pilots and place them in contact with CAMF, which would then pair them with the appropriate mission organization. Furthermore, CAMF was to aggressively publicize and promote the foreseen benefits of mission aviation, conduct surveys in mission fields, and offer mission organizations instruction in best aviation practice in the field.<sup>34</sup>

Perhaps surprisingly, Hartford's vision prompted severe pushback from CAMF and MAF. CAMF was not opposed to operating as a clearing-house for other mission aviation programs. Indeed, as CAMF struggled to launch its own independent flight operations it regularly assisted other mission organizations in much the same manner as Hartford had proposed. CAMF provided mission programs with aerial surveys, helped match pilots to mission jobs, and offered their technical opinions when requested.<sup>35</sup> Neither was CAMF at that time opposed to missionaries acting as their own pilots. Indeed, CAMF actively promoted the use of

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<sup>33</sup> Wheaton College (Wheaton, IL) launched a small, short-lived mission aviation program in 1946. The aviation programs of Moody Bible Institute (Chicago) and LeTourneau University (Texas) are still in operation. See: "Aviation," *Christian Life and Times*, Oct. 1946, 22.

<sup>34</sup> Anon., "Missionary Aviation Conference Proceedings and Report," 1946.

<sup>35</sup> Include some letters to organizations providing help: See as example letters to Lutheran World Mission Murray Kendon, "A Christian Airways Service," *Mildmay Outlook*, March 1945 1945, 6-7; Charles Mellis, Jr., "CAMF Diary," *Missionary Aviation*, Jan.-Mar. 1946, 8-13, 14.

aircraft by amateur missionary pilots within the pages of its own magazine, *Missionary Aviation*. Furthermore, over 40% of CAMF members, including co-founder George Fisk, were amateur pilots looking to serve in the mission field.<sup>36</sup> However, VSP and CAMFs' ideas were steadily drifting apart.

Amongst the most significant point of contention between Hartford and the leadership of CAMF and MAF was what the latter group regarded as the shallow sensationalism of Hartford's mission-aviation marketing plans and their negative impact on the development of safe aviation practice. Truxton and Kendon regarded most contemporary mission aviation programs to be poorly thought-out, unsafe, and in desperate need of serious reform. Furthermore, both saw a desperate need for education amongst mission organizations as to the realities of operating a plane in a foreign mission field.<sup>37</sup> They believed that the sensationalistic and "promiscuous" mission aviation propaganda advocated by Hartford was damaging their reform effort and even twisting the realities of mission aviation. Hartford's irresponsible propaganda, Truxton and Kendon asserted, perpetuated the dangerous misconception amongst the mission-supporting public that aircraft were a cure-all solution to mission logistics that would prove as simple to operate as an automobile – a fundamental misconception that CAMF and MAF feared would result in serious accidents and death. Furthermore, Truxton and Kendon were fearful that the unserious sensationalism surrounding mission aviation would undermine the entire concept amongst the many more sober-minded mission leaders who were not swayed by it. Already, CAMF had experienced pushback from numerous mission executives who believed that mission

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<sup>36</sup> See Appendix C – CAMF Early Membership. See also: Charles Mellis, Jr., "From the Field," *Missionary Aviation*, Oct.-Dec. 1945, 10-11, 15; Charles Mellis, Jr., "Wings of Prayer and Praise," *Missionary Aviation*, Oct.-Dec. 1945, 14-15; Charles Mellis, Jr., "Introducing. . ." *Missionary Aviation*, Jan.-Mar. 1946, 6-7; Mellis, "CAMF Diary", 1946; Truxton, 10 Apr. 1946 (BGC 136-52-5); Charles Mellis, Jr., "From the Field," *Missionary Aviation*, Jan.-Mar. 1946, 14; Charles Mellis, Jr., "Introducing. . ." *Missionary Aviation*, Apr.-Jun. 1946, 8-9; Mellis, "From the Field", 1946; Charles Mellis, Jr., "Wings of Praise and Prayer," *Missionary Aviation*, Apr.-Jun. 1946, 15.

<sup>37</sup> Anon., "Missionary Aviation Conference Proceedings and Report," 1946.

aviation programs such as CAMF and Victory Sky Pilots were unserious mission ventures that were but thinly veiled attempts by ex-military pilots to fund their postwar flying ambitions. Therefore, to prove their worth to the global mission organizations with which they hoped to partner, MAF and CAMF advocated a slow process of development to organize and construct well-thought-out, safe, and sustainable aviation programs.<sup>38</sup>

As an alternative to CAMF and MAF, Paul Hartford promoted a model of mission aviation that he believed was not only safe, but much more flexible, responsive, and effective than the collaborative and highly professionalized model advocated by Truxton and Kendon. Hartford believed that a missionary flying as a part-time pilot and full-time evangelist to be the ideal expression of mission flight. Certainly, for missionaries who were uninterested or unable to fly themselves, the existence of a professional mission aviation service, such as MAF, was desirable. However, Hartford believed that Truxton and Kendon unnecessarily undercut mission aviation's full potential when they insisted that *only* by using highly trained professional pilots could one ensure a program's safety. To Hartford's understanding, aircraft served multiple roles in Christian evangelism. Certainly, Hartford agreed with Truxton and Kendon that airplanes provided effective logistical support to mission groups. However, aircraft were much more than mechanical beasts of burden. They were publicity devices. An airplane attracted audiences to mission rallies and inspired attendees to give or even to become a missionary themselves.<sup>39</sup> So too in the mission field. The mission plane attracted crowds whenever it landed and underscored the authority of the missionary as a messenger of God. Furthermore, the very existence of a mission plane reinforced the missionary's message. What better way to reinforce the urgency of evangelism than using the quickest means of transport available? What better way to underscore

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<sup>38</sup> Truxton, 10 Apr. 1946 (BGC 136-52-5); Anon., "Missionary Aviation Conference Proceedings and Report," 1946.

<sup>39</sup> "Pontiac's Flying Preacher", 1945; Hartford, "untitled promotional pamphlet." (1948)

the relationship between the missionary's message and God, than to have that missionary literally descend from the heavens and, following their presentation of the gospel message, ascend once more into the clouds?

In an age in which the aviation industry still optimistically promoted single-engine light aircraft as the next automobile, Hartford's views are understandable. Why hire additional personnel as pilots and mechanics when missionaries could perform the same tasks themselves in machines that had been supposedly designed to be simple, efficient, and safe to operate? Did not missionaries act as their own drivers, navigators, and automobile mechanics in the mission field? Why would operating light aircraft be any different? Finally, Hartford was concerned that CAMF's and MAF's insistence upon painstaking surveys and preparation prior to launching any mission aviation program ignored the urgent needs of missionaries in the present and only served to slow down the global advance of Christianity. Hartford claimed that CAMF's and MAF's thorough and cautious approach was an unnecessary encumbrance on missions, and Hartford chided his detractors at the Winona conference for relying too heavily upon their own efforts and failing to trust in God's providence. "Trust in the Lord," Hartford advised: if aviation was truly God's will, *He* would take care of the details.<sup>40</sup>

By the conclusion of the 1946 Winona Lake mission aviation conference, Hartford saw that there was little chance either that Truxton or CAMF would come around to his line of thinking, or that he would be able to change CAMF from within.<sup>41</sup> Given Truxton's continued

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<sup>40</sup> Anon., "Missionary Aviation Conference Proceedings and Report," 1946; *Giving Wings to the Gospel*, 30-1.

<sup>41</sup> As one of the earliest members of CAMF, Hartford had long advocated for change within the organization, especially in the decision-making process, which he felt placed too much power into the hands of ex-military pilots like Jim Truxton, whom he accused of being overly dismissive of non-professional amateur pilots. For months Hartford attempted to use his position as leader of VSP and member of CAMF to persuade Truxton into opening CAMF's decision-making process to a broader membership pool. Hartford believed that if CAMF members were allowed a say in the programs operations, the many amateur missionary pilots amongst its ranks could compel Truxton to embrace a broader vision of mission aviation, one that would include a more robust role for amateur pilots as well as an aggressive use of aircraft for marketing purposes. However, Truxton and CAMF's leadership

obstinance, Hartford used the gathering of Protestant missionary aviation leaders at Winona Lake to sideline CAMF altogether. On the last day of the mission aviation conference, Hartford motioned for the creation of a *new* independent aviation consulting body, one built to organize all aspects of mission aviation for every Protestant mission organization on the planet and fulfill the role Hartford had originally envisioned for CAMF. Hartford's motion did not carry.<sup>42</sup>

Hartford's influence grew following Winona Lake, despite his failure to launch an interdenominational missionary aviation program independent of CAMF. Hartford successfully marketed his vision of mission aviation via self-published press releases featured in newspapers across the United States, as well as on his frequent promotional tours, church presentations, and speeches. Hartford organized mission aviation conferences. He persuaded multiple mission organizations to follow his example in the creation of their own mission aviation programs, and by the end of 1947 had, via Victory Sky Pilots, trained over 120 potential missionary pilots. At the dawn of 1948, Hartford was an internationally known expert on mission aviation with converts to his ideas among mission staff and leadership found on four continents. So, while the two branches of MAF had only one semi-operational program between them, Hartford could brag that as many as twenty-six of his former students were then flying in mission fields located in Ecuador, India, Angola, Haiti, Mexico, and the United States.<sup>43</sup> Never much for modesty, Hartford reveled in his success and declared his tiny airport in northern Indiana to be the "headquarters and aviation center of world-wide missionary flying activities."<sup>44</sup>

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team refused Hartford's requests and bristled at his accusations that CAMF was insufficiently "democratic." See: Murray Kendon to James C. Truxton, 6 Nov. 1945 (BGC 136-52-5); Anon., "Missionary Aviation Conference Proceedings and Report," 1946.

<sup>42</sup> Anon., "Missionary Aviation Conference Proceedings and Report," 1946.

<sup>43</sup> This number of 26 pilots is possible, but unlikely and has not been independently confirmed. See: Appendix A, Appendix B. See also: Mollenhour, "Sky Writing: Times Union Aviation News and Comment"

<sup>44</sup> For details on the struggles of MAF-US and MAF-UK see "Correspondence Records" (BGC 136-52-5). See also: Hartford, "Invitation to Enroll." (1945); Walters, "Cleric Plans Air School for Pastors"; Anon., "To the Regions Beyond in . . . *Flying Grasshoppers*", 1945; Anon., "Missionaries are Taking to Wings", 1946; Anon., "Evangelistic



Notwithstanding Hartford's own appraisal of the situation, mission aviation indeed took root outside of northern Indiana. By 1948, there were hundreds of missionary pilots and flying evangelists and up to sixty missionary-owned airplanes flying around the globe. And more mission pilots were in the pipeline. In addition to Hartford's Victory Sky Pilots, mission organizations and religious institutions were starting or experimenting with their own aviation training programs: LeTourneau University, Moody Bible Institute, Wheaton College, New Tribes Mission, the Assemblies of God, and the Catholic Church. Regardless of the growth of mission aviation in the late 1940s, very few missionary pilots or missionary organizations had a solid grasp on how to operate or even sustain their aviation programs. Seeing opportunity in the combination of large numbers and an acknowledged lack of order and leadership, Hartford renewed his push to launch his own international mission aviation cooperative.

### **World Missionary Aviation Council**

As Hartford toured the United States, Mexico, and South America advocating for missionaries to take to the skies, he took advantage of his frequent contacts with mission leaders to build support for the creation of an international cooperative for mission aviation. Amongst his patrons were Dr. Daniel Nelson of the Lutheran World Federation, and H. B. Garlock of the (Pentecostal) Assemblies of God. Both men agreed to lend their name, time, and influence to help Hartford gather together Protestant mission aviation leaders at a World Missionary Aviation Conference held in Washington D.C. in May, 1948.<sup>45</sup> The Washington D.C. conference brought

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Service Here"; Anon., "Missionary Aviation Conference Proceedings and Report," 1946; Hartford, "Victory Sky Pilot's News Release." (1946); Allen, "Glimpses of the Religious World", 1947; Mollenhour, "Sky Writing: Times Union Aviation News and Comment"

<sup>45</sup> Charles Mellis, Jr. to James C. Truxton, 16 Jan. 1947 (BGC 136-1-102); Murray Kendon to Jr. Charles Mellis, 3 May 1948 (BGC 136-25-88).

together nearly every Protestant mission aviation program then in existence, including mission groups with aviation operations in China, India, Africa, Mexico, South America, Australia, the United States, and Alaska. The conference was meant as a preliminary step towards the possible creation of a more permanent body and attendees agreed to only a few vague goals: namely, to “hasten world evangelization” by coordinating and uniting the global aviation projects of member societies.<sup>46</sup> As they disbanded the attendees agreed to reflect upon the potential need for a more permanent coordinating body and come together again later that year to deliberate the creation of a more formal organization. Hartford, elected executive secretary of the conference, organized the second gathering at Winona Lake in July and succeeded in amassing the requisite votes for the creation of a permanent organization, christened the World Missionary Aviation Council (WMAC).<sup>47</sup>

Hartford and his supporters built the WMAC to be a clearing-house to coordinate all aspects of Christian aviation. They centered their efforts around four main pillars.<sup>48</sup> First, the WMAC would support missionaries and mission organizations in the use of light, single-engine aircraft. Here, the WMAC looked to build itself into the world’s leading expert on small-type aircraft in mission service, and in a manner that purposefully set it up as a competitor to both the US and UK branches of MAF.<sup>49</sup> WMAC would share with members mission aviation best practices for local topography and climate, conduct surveys of proposed mission aviation programs, coordinate the cooperative use of small mission aircraft for local transportation in-

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<sup>46</sup> Kendon, 3 May 1948 (BGC 136-25-88); Paul Hartford, "Minutes of the Opening Session of the Proposed World Missionary Aviation Conference," World Missionary Aviation Council, 25 May 1948 (BGC 136-60-7).

<sup>47</sup> Hartford, "Minutes of the Opening Session of the Proposed World Missionary Aviation Conference."

<sup>48</sup> Paul Hartford, "Memorandum on the Findings of the World Missionary Aviation Conference Held in Washington, D.C. May 25-26, 1948," World Missionary Aviation Conference, (Washington, D.C.), 1948 (BGC 136-60-7); Anon., "A World Missionary Aviation Conference was organized," *Theological Observer*, 1948; Luther L. Grubb, "As the Editor Sees It," *The Brethren Missionary Herald*, 21 Aug. 1948, 729-30.

<sup>49</sup> In late 1946 CAMF changed its name to MAF – though the two organizations retained separate leadership structures.

field, facilitate the purchase of aircraft from manufacturers at discounted prices, and arrange for the distribution and shipping of spare parts.<sup>50</sup> Secondly, Hartford and WMAC intended to take the lead in training mission aviation personnel and establish training standards for all Protestant training schools. Third, WMAC was to be the central organization tasked with coordinating a new global missionary airline which would ferry large numbers of missionaries and their cargo directly to their posts aboard. The large mission airline planes would set out from central hubs in Europe, the United States, and Asia. Acting as the spokes, feeding missionaries to the central missionary airport hubs, would be thousands of amateur Christian pilots who would volunteer their time to carry missionaries to the main missionary air fleet. Facilitating the fellowship of these private pilots would be WMAC's fourth pillar.<sup>51</sup>

Jim Truxton, and others in MAF leadership, such as Nate Saint, were in steadfast opposition to the WMAC. They asserted that the council was a waste of time, its plans unsafe, and its efforts a direct threat to the purpose and continued operation of MAF. There fears were seemingly confirmed when Grady Parrott, a former Paul Hartford supporter and later MAF executive, found out "through the grapevine" that Hartford meant to use the WMAC to sideline and supersede MAF. Of course, MAF had long suspected that very possibility following Hartford's more direct attempt to undercut the organization at Winona Lake in 1946.<sup>52</sup> Of greater concern to MAF were what they saw as WMAC's unsafe operational plans and, in Jim Truxton's words, the WMAC's ostentatious "promotional scheming."<sup>53</sup> Following a number of high-profile crashes amongst amateur missionary pilots, Truxton had apparently come around to Murray

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<sup>50</sup> Mellis, 16 Jan. 1947 (BGC 136-1-102); Anon., "A World Missionary Aviation Conference was organized", 1948; Grubb, "As the Editor Sees It", 1949

<sup>51</sup> Paul Hartford to James C. Truxton, 27 Oct. 1948 (BGC 136-60-7).

<sup>52</sup> Grady Parrott to Murray Kendon, 17 Nov. 1948 (BGC 136-25-88).

<sup>53</sup> James C. Truxton to Murray Kendon, 3 Nov. 1948 (BGC 136-1-88).

Kendon's line of thinking and both MAF branches firmly committed themselves to a professional model of mission aviation. Truxton argued that it that it made no sense to make "a poor pilot out of a good missionary" and risk lives in the process – no matter the publicity gained by having missionaries fly their own planes.<sup>54</sup> Furthermore, MAF leaders feared that WMAC's four pillars were a waste of scarce mission resources that duplicated the services of MAF, commercial aviation, and the various mission-aviation flight schools then in existence.<sup>55</sup>

MAF leaders were not alone in their fears concerning Hartford's vision for the WMAC. Administrators of some of the world's most influential Protestant mission organizations expressed similar misgivings: Dr. Percy of Sudan Interior Mission, Drs. Griffin and Canfield of China Inland Mission, Mr. Nixon of Africa Inland Mission, Dawson Trotman of Navigators, Dr. Snead of the Christian & Missionary Alliance, Dr. Anderson of the Presbyterian Church USA, and Richard Pittman of Wycliffe Bible Translators.<sup>56</sup> However, many of these men likewise saw potential in the WMAC. They believed it might serve as a means by which mission executives could consult regarding mission aviation. Murray Kendon, and – with greater reluctance– Jim Truxton and Nate Saint agreed. In their estimate, the WMAC might serve as an opportunity by which MAF could educate mission organizations on aviation best practices and cure them of their general "ignorance" regarding flight.<sup>57</sup> But only if they could sideline Hartford and his supporters. Therefore, MAF members regularly participated in the WMAC (though by mutual agreement, neither MAF organization formerly joined) and Jim Truxton agreed to serve as WMAC's first vice president. The two separate branches of MAF then worked to weaken

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<sup>54</sup> From MAF's general introductory letter sent by Jim Buyers to global Protestant mission organizations fall 1945. For example see: James Buyers to Mr. Shank, 1 Nov. 1945 (BGC 136-53-26).

<sup>55</sup> James C. Truxton and Charles Mellis, Jr. to Active Members Advisory Council, 21 Jul. 1948 (BGC 136-60-7); Truxton, 3 Nov. 1948 (BGC 136-1-88).

<sup>56</sup> James C. Truxton to Murray Kendon, 15 Jul. 1948 (BGC 136-25-88).

<sup>57</sup> Murray Kendon to James C. Truxton, 16 Sep. 1948 (BGC 136-25-88).

Hartford's sway in the council and undercut his influence amongst mission aviator leaders more broadly.<sup>58</sup>

Through 1946 to 1948 Hartford and the two MAF organizations had played a shadow war for the hearts and minds of Protestant missions. Hartford's WMAC had been a tactical victory in that struggle, but his continued belligerence towards MAF pushed their conflict into the open. Their 'hot' war began over a simple point of order in July 1948 at the second WMAC meeting held at Winona Lake. Two months earlier, at the May WMAC conference in Washington, D.C., the WMAC committee had expressly forbidden Hartford from calling the follow-up WMAC meeting that summer; reasoning that a short two-month window between meetings would not provide many of the mission leaders interested in WMAC the time required to arrange their schedules and book their travel. Hartford called the meeting anyway and sent out invitations as a *fait accompli*.<sup>59</sup> The absence of key mission aviation leaders at the Winona Lake gathering of the WMAC, such as those with the Christian and Missionary Alliance, MAF-UK, Sudan Interior Mission, Wycliffe Bible Translators, and Scandinavian Missionary Flights, would seem disadvantageous for the WMAC, still a fledgling missionary council. The timing of the July conference was perhaps an unintentional consequence of Paul Hartford's exuberant and impatient personality. However, to those with a more cynical nature, the timing was more than suspicious. For Winona Lake was Paul Hartford's own backyard, and his supporters turned out in force. The many of the mission leaders with whom MAF had cultivated ties were, in the end, unable to come, and the July gathering was an utter disaster for MAF.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Paul Hartford, "'Minutes of the World Missionary Aviation Conference' Jul 26-28 1948," World Missionary Aviation Conference, (Winona Lake, IN), 1948 (BGC 136-60-7); Nate Saint to James C. Truxton, Charles Mellis, and Grady Parrott, 30 Jul. 1948 (BGC 136-2-8); Truxton, 3 Nov. 1948 (BGC 136-1-88).

<sup>59</sup> Truxton, 15 Jul. 1948 (BGC 136-25-88).

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.; Paul Hartford, "Constitutional Convention of the World Missionary Aviation Council held at Winona Lake, IN," World Missionary Aviation Council (Winona Lake, IN), 1948 (BGC 136-60-7); James C. Truxton to Murray Kendon, 3 Aug. 1948 (BGC 136-25-88).

Writing after the gathering, Truxton and Nate Saint summarized their reception in Indiana to fellow MAF members. Truxton wrote of being surrounded by a hostile crowd whose members accused MAF of slothful indecision and worked to undermine their standing amongst mission organizations. Truxton for his part had little positive to say regarding his interlocutors either, one of whom he described as a “huge fat person with dark glasses,” whose concerns Truxton dismissed as the rantings of an amateur.<sup>61</sup> Nate Saint’s assessment of the conference was just as negative, but his critiques were slightly more substantive. Saint suggested that the attacks leveled against MAF had been coordinated from those he termed the “promotion bloc” – which consisted of Paul Hartford, his friends amongst amateur private pilots, and their wives. Saint accused them of fabricating facts regarding mission aviation to persuade others to their cause. Furthermore, he suggested that Hartford and his associates treated WMAC as a propaganda tool for their personal aviation projects and a means by which they could advance their own programs by connecting them to the names of well-known and respected organizations (such as the Assemblies of God, the Lutheran World Federation, and even MAF).<sup>62</sup>

MAF was also incensed over the character of the WMAC’s voting rules, which gave full voting rights to all interested parties in Christian aviation. Members with no experience in the mission field were permitted to vote on the direction of the WMAC alongside full-time missionaries, mission administrators, and mission leaders. Hartford regarded this as “democratic.” In practicality, it resulted in an organization in which the votes of those with mission experience or who were responsible for mission organizations were negated by the will of individual pilots, members of Victory Sky Pilots, and even the amateur pilots of the “Flying

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<sup>61</sup> Truxton, 3 Aug. 1948 (BGC 136-25-88).

<sup>62</sup> Saint, 30 Jul. 1948 (BGC 136-2-8); Truxton, 3 Nov. 1948 (BGC 136-1-88); Grady Parrott to Ralph Hanson, 4 Nov. 1948 (BGC 136-60-7).

Farmers of Pennsylvania.”<sup>63</sup> This issue was mitigated by the presence of mission leaders who could sway the crowds. MAF had cultivated ties with many of them and shaped their stance on matters of aviation at the initial meeting in Washington, D.C. With those leaders absent at Winona Lake, MAF found itself alone and constantly outvoted by Hartford and his supporters. Nate Saint, not one to mince words, openly accused Hartford of using the absence of mission leaders to his advantage and employing parliamentary procedure to negate prior council decisions with which they had disagreed.<sup>64</sup>

MAF’s policy defeats at Winona Lake were compounded by their humiliation at the hands of Paul Hartford himself. According to both Truxton and Saint, Hartford spent a considerable amount of his time as speaker belittling MAF, offering “sneering little jabs, sarcasm and more or less ridiculous criticisms.” He condemned MAF’s survey methods as unsound, questioned their capabilities as pilots, and called them “fools” during the public meetings.<sup>65</sup> Hartford used news of the 20 July crash of MAF-UK’s *Mildmay Pathfinder* in central Africa to browbeat MAF further. Because of the peculiarities of mid-century mail delivery, the letter informing Truxton and Saint of the accident arrived in Los Angeles after they left for Indiana but arrived at Paul Hartford’s desk just prior to the conference. He thus learned of the accident before them. The two MAF representatives could therefore only sit and listen in shocked silence as Hartford both informed them of the accident and used the public announcement of MAF-UK’s crash to raise questions as to the soundness of all MAF operations. If Jim Truxton’s bitterly angry letter to Murray Kendon detailing the conference bears any semblance to the actual tale

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<sup>63</sup> Hartford, "Constitutional Convention of the World Missionary Aviation Council held at Winona Lake, IN," 1948.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.; Saint, 30 Jul. 1948 (BGC 136-2-8); Truxton, 3 Nov. 1948 (BGC 136-1-88).

<sup>65</sup> Truxton, 3 Aug. 1948 (BGC 136-25-88).

Hartford told, Hartford's misrepresentation of the facts of the accident were obviously and purposefully crafted to cause as much damage to MAF as possible.<sup>66</sup>

MAF was prepared for Hartford at the next WMAC meeting at Moody Bible Institute in December 1948. MAF spent the fall recruiting mission leaders to appear at the conference in hopes of countering Hartford's influence.<sup>67</sup> Their efforts succeeded, and the Moody gathering was much better attended, though it remained confrontational. To judge from the surviving MAF memoirs of the event – which were in essence triumphalist anti-Hartford narratives – MAF and its allies appear to have won the day and many of Hartford's ambitions were defeated. Hartford's work to build the WMAC into an independent aviation consultation service were rolled back. His efforts to use the WMAC to sideline MAF were likewise crushed – Hartford himself was even chastised by mission personnel for the attempt. As perhaps a final insult, after having built the organization from nothing, attendees emphatically defeated Hartford's bid to be named the WMAC's paid full-time executive secretary.<sup>68</sup>

Although MAF emerged victorious from the Moody WMAC gathering, the group soon cut its ties to the council and Jim Truxton stepped down as Vice President. MAF's initial cooperation with WMAC had been born of weakness. In 1947, both MAF's insistence on the use of professional pilots and cooperatively operated aircraft was something of a novelty amongst even mission aviation supporters and both organizations were still struggling to initiate independent flight operations. Therefore, no matter how misguided or sensationalized Truxton and Kendon might think Hartford's vision for the WMAC might be, MAF saw the council as a useful means by which to propagate their views. By early 1949 MAF's fortunes had improved.

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid.; Kendon, 16 Sep. 1948 (BGC 136-25-88).

<sup>67</sup> Truxton, 3 Aug. 1948 (BGC 136-25-88).

<sup>68</sup> Grady Parrott to Murray Kendon, 16 Feb. 1949 (BGC 136-25-88).



They had established collegial working relationship with numerous mission boards and had friends amongst Christian news publishers through which they could promote their vision of mission aviation to Christian readers around the globe.<sup>69</sup> Furthermore, MAF was growing in supporters, boasted a new branch organization in Australia, and MAF-US was finally beginning independent flight operations in Ecuador. By 1949, MAF's leadership saw no need to participate in the WMAC, and so ended their active relationship.<sup>70</sup>

Perhaps surprisingly, given their acrimonious history, the loss of MAF as a WMAC participant was a blow to Paul Hartford. Hartford had envisioned the WMAC as a global unifying aviation body, and he seemed truly interested in MAF's contributions in his *World Missionary Aviation Council*. Hartford understood that the organization's participation provided the WMAC with a veneer of respectability and brought it the valued experiences of recognized aviation experts.<sup>71</sup> Regardless of his long-term goals of incorporating MAF into the WMAC, Hartford was unwilling to alter either his views concerning mission aviation practice, or, for that matter, temper his sharp tongue. Furthermore, his animosity towards MAF was reciprocated. MAF frequently accused Hartford of irresponsible mission aviation practice and considered his marketing techniques dishonest and sensationalized.<sup>72</sup> Hartford's publicity was certainly sensational, and his promise that he would, in only ninety days, fully train his pilots to fly in some of the most challenging locals on the planet, was unsustainable. However, many of Hartford's views concerning aircraft were little different from popular attitudes toward aviation

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<sup>69</sup> Get an example of newsman they had friends with – there are two one from IL and one from NY

<sup>70</sup> James C. Truxton to Ralph Hanson, 29 Jan. 1949 (BGC 136-60-7).

<sup>71</sup> That Hartford felt this way towards MAF is gleaned from the record of his interaction with the organization and the history of their love-hate relationship. See BGC Archive Collection 136. See also: Parrott, 17 Nov. 1948 (BGC 136-25-88).

<sup>72</sup> Saint, 30 Jul. 1948 (BGC 136-2-8); Truxton, 3 Aug. 1948 (BGC 136-25-88); Truxton, 3 Nov. 1948 (BGC 136-1-88); James C. Truxton to Dear Co-workers, 6 Jun. 1950 (BGC 136-2-27); *Giving Wings to the Gospel*, 31; Stuart Sendall-King, interview by Lane Sunwall, 16 Jul., 2009.

in the 1930s and 1940s.<sup>73</sup> Paul Hartford's claims that contemporary aircraft were inherently safe and relatively simple for a properly trained amateur pilot to fly perhaps reflected unsound judgement. It likewise reflected contemporary thought.

Without MAF's participation, the WMAC held its second annual convention, entitled "Wings for Christ for your flying future," in late July 1949. The Assemblies of God – one of the WMAC's largest and most influential member organizations – played host for the gathering at their headquarters in Springfield, Missouri.<sup>74</sup> Despite MAF's absence, the second annual council boasted a significant following. As many as eighty global mission boards still supported the WMAC, and their operations represented a significant proportion of total global Protestant mission aviation activity.<sup>75</sup> The WMAC's second annual meeting formalized the organization's constitution, elected leaders, hired Hartford as a paid full-time general secretary, and scheduled a series of rallies and gatherings across the country to attract new pilots and mission organizations to the council. As was the intention, the gathering was likewise a publicity event. Paul Hartford claimed the convention would provide attendees with "challenge-packed hours that will thrill the heart of every flyer and linger in memory a lifetime."<sup>76</sup> The event's program began with a formation flight over Springfield, led by a large C-46. There were prizes for those who flew their own plane to the convention, a short field-takeoff and landing contest to test pilot's skills and

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<sup>73</sup> *The Winged Gospel*, 109 - 10.

<sup>74</sup> Paul Hartford, "Brochure for 2nd Annual World Missionary Aviation Council Convention," pamphlet (WMAC, 26-28 Jul. 1949) BGC 136-60-7.

<sup>75</sup> Though, given Hartford's past failure to ascertain whether an organization actually supported WMAC before writing their names as member organizations, this number could be questioned. See: 1948 controversy over names. See also: Anon., "Flying Preacher is Grounded, Has Services"; Grubb, "As the Editor Sees It", 1949

<sup>76</sup> Hartford, "Constitutional Convention of the World Missionary Aviation Council held at Winona Lake, IN," 1948.

aircraft performance, and there were free rides aboard the Assemblies of God's C-46, *The Ambassador*.<sup>77</sup>

Free of Truxton, Kendon, and the rest of MAF, Hartford could with impunity advance his agenda. Hartford pushed for a similar four-part platform to that he had proposed a year earlier in Winona Lake. Under Hartford's direction, the WMAC committed itself to the support of a broad variety of aviation programs: small-scale mission aviation, pilot training, Christian aviation clubs, and mission aviation airlines. However, most projects Hartford envisioned failed to materialize. No matter its pretensions, the WMAC never became a recognized leader of pilot training and lost out to the expertise of Moody Aviation and LeTourneau Flight School. Neither was the WMAC able to supplant MAF as the preeminent program for small-scale mission aviation. The council did however, manage to make practical headway in the creation of aviation clubs to minister to pilots and bring together Christian aviators.<sup>78</sup> WMAC leader Elmer Sachs founded *Sky Pilots of America* to take advantage of contemporary youth interest in aviation. *Sky Pilot* members studied scripture, trained as missionary pilots, and – as part of a larger national effort to combat juvenile delinquency – committed themselves to a stringent moral code.<sup>79</sup>

Paul Hartford meanwhile maintained ties with private pilots scattered throughout the United States. Indeed, amateur Christian pilots of the WMAC proved to be amongst Hartford's most ardent supporters. This group of aviation enthusiasts had grown out of the aviation boom of the mid-1940s; they were interested in using the WMAC to coordinate fellow Christian general aviators to organize fellowship events, evangelize at US airports, and fly as part-time

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<sup>77</sup> Paul Hartford, "Review of Events -- 2nd Annual Convention -- World Missionary Aviation Council," pamphlet (WMAC, 26-28 Jul. 1949) BGC 136-60-7; Anon., "News Briefs," *The Brethren Missionary Herald*, 20 Aug. 1949, 592; Grubb, "As the Editor Sees It", 1949

<sup>78</sup> Hartford, "Review of Events -- 2nd Annual Convention -- World Missionary Aviation Council." (1949)

<sup>79</sup> See Sky Pilots of America files at the Billy Graham Center BGC136-30-53. See also: *ibid.*; *The Winged Gospel*; Tyler B. Flynn, "Evangelicals Having Fun: Youth Outreach at the Buffalo Christian Center, 1947-1980," *Fides et Historia* 48, no. 1 (2016): 93.

missionaries.<sup>80</sup> Hartford intended to organize these pilots into a part-time private Christian air force and evangelistic organization. Overall, the private pilot program of the WMAC amounted to little more than a few weekend excursions amongst aviation enthusiasts who happened to also be Christian.<sup>81</sup> The last major operation of this WMAC group occurred in late 1949. Hartford organized a fly-in to Mexico to visit Melvin Todd, who was then flying as a private missionary to Mexico. Hartford organized the trip, which he termed the “winter thrill flight vacation of a life time,” to provide pilots with experience of flying over rough terrain and of being a missionary pilot. The flight attracted pilots from around the Midwest, but was canceled at the last moment.<sup>82</sup> Melvin Todd, one of Hartford’s oldest supporters, along with his copilot George King, died in a plane crash. Todd’s death only underlined the danger of mission aviation. Hartford’s “thrill flight” collapsed, and nothing similar was again attempted. His goal of binding together amateur Christian pilots and using them for airport ministries ended with little to show for years of effort.

### **The Missionary Airline**

Almost by default, because of its wider failures, the WMAC quickly evolved into an organizing council for the development and promotion of global missionary airline services. Missionary “airlines” had launched in response to the unsettled state of global transportation industries following World War Two. In the years immediately following the war, Christian mission organizations around the globe struggled to reshuffle tens of thousands of missionaries and staff following nearly a decade of global conflict. However, mission groups found it

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<sup>80</sup> Truxton, 3 Nov. 1948 (BGC 136-1-88); Grady Parrott to Murray Kendon, 29 Nov. 1949 (BGC 136-25-88); Parrott, 16 Feb. 1949 (BGC 136-25-88).

<sup>81</sup> Paul Hartford, "Dear Friend of Missionary Aviation," pamphlet (WMAC, 1949) BGC 136-60-7.

<sup>82</sup> Paul Hartford, "News on the Wing #1," pamphlet (WMAC, Nov. 1949) BGC 136-60-7; Paul Hartford, "News on the Wing #2," pamphlet (WMAC, Dec. 1949) BGC 136-60-7.

frequently took months to plan, book, and conduct a voyage across the sea. Airline tickets were expensive and still required a missionary to wait months for his or her supplies and belongings to arrive via the merchant marine.<sup>83</sup> Therefore, the Lutheran World Mission, the Assemblies of God, New Tribes Mission, and a collaboration of mission societies from Sweden, Norway, and Denmark, each launched their own independent missionary airline program which flew large passenger and cargo planes to shuttle their missionaries to posts around the world.<sup>84</sup>

The first of the airlines to form was that of a collective of mission societies from Norway, Sweden, and Denmark. In mid-1945, the group chartered a large transport plane from Swedish AB Aerotransport to evacuate and replace their many missionaries then stranded in Europe, Asia, and Africa. The flight program continued to grow over the next twelve months and so the Scandinavians purchased their own C-47 from a US military surplus sale, rechristened *The Ansgar*. Now with their own aircraft, the Scandinavian mission collective began an independent airline service under the direction of Torild Backe and with continued technical support from Swedish ABA. The program, known as *Scandinavian Missionary Flights* (SMF), flew without incident, transporting missionaries to and from the mission field for the next three years. By late 1949, the *Ansgar* had made 37 separate flights, flown over 515,000 miles, and transported 1,200 missionaries (most Scandinavian) to and from Europe, Africa, the Middle East, India, Vietnam, and China. Despite their success, the number of passengers aboard *The Ansgar* began to flag as commercial shipping and aviation services improved. While Scandinavian Flights struggled to fill *The Ansgar's* twenty odd seats, the group believed the ship was still worth operating long-

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<sup>83</sup> See for example; Louis S. Bauman, "Editorially Speaking," *The Brethren Missionary Herald*, 2 Feb. 1946, 98. See also: Mellis, "From the Field", 1946

<sup>84</sup> The young New Tribes Mission was never a WMAC member.

term and so reached out to WMAC to offer transportation service to other mission organizations.<sup>85</sup>

The *St. Paul*, operated by the Lutheran World Federations beginning on July 4, 1946, was the sister ship to *The Ansgar*. The Lutheran program focused its efforts in China, where it evacuated the growing number of missionaries encircled by Mao's communist forces. Over the next three years the *St. Paul* flew throughout China and carried medical supplies to mission hospitals and Red Cross centers while ferrying mission staff back to the Chinese coast and away from the fighting. As the Chinese Nationalist forces were swept out of central China, *St. Paul's* flights became more urgent and more dangerous. The plane landed at airstrips under active bombardment by Communist forces, was hit by anti-aircraft fire, and flew from cities just hours before they fell to oncoming Communist soldiers.<sup>86</sup> Regardless, the German and American crew soldiered on with their work. They evacuated staff, patients, and the equipment of entire hospitals. They moved university faculty, books, and equipment out of Communist territory, and even carried the families of Nationalist military leaders out of harm's way.<sup>87</sup>

Daniel Nelson, the Lutheran World Federation field director in charge of China operations, began the Lutheran *St. Paul* program to evacuate missionaries caught in the tide of war. However, he believed that the program could form the backbone of a much larger and more permanent global missionary transportation system, one that could move missionaries and their

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<sup>85</sup> Mellis, "From the Field", 1946; Scandinavian Missionary Flights, "Scandinavian Missionary Flights: Member of the World Missionary Aviation Council," pamphlet (Scandinavian Missionary Flights, 8 Oct. 1948) BGC 136-61-14; Anon., "The "Ansgar" – Scandinavian Mission Plane," *The China News Letter*, Nov.-Dec. 1949, 19-20 (BGC 136-61-14).

<sup>86</sup> Margi S. Grytting, *The China News Letter*, Jan-Feb 1950, 6 (BGC 136-61-14); Rev. Arthur S. Olson, "The "St. Paul" Bows Out: An Editorial," *The China News Letter*, Jan-Feb 1950, 2-5 (BGC 136-61-14); Axel Christiansen, "St. Paul - Operational Relief," *The China News Letter*, Jan-Feb 1950, 15-7 (BGC 136-61-14).

<sup>87</sup> Anon., "Lutheran Plane Arrives in Oslo," *The China News Letter*, Jun. - Jul. 1947, (BGC 136-61-14); Anon., "World Missionary Aviation Council," *Missionary Digest*, 9 Oct. 1948, 23 (BGC 136-60-7); "Meet our Flight Mechanic and Engineer," *The China News Letter*, Mar. - Apr. 1949, 14-17 (BGC 136-61-14); "The Spirit of "St. Paul": An Editorial," *The China News Letter*, Mar. - Apr. 1949, (BGC 136-61-14).

supplies to locations the commercial airlines did not fly.<sup>88</sup> Nelson therefore laid the groundwork for a second *Lutheran C-47* program, and eagerly involved himself in the WMAC where he served as the organization's first president beginning in 1948. He and Paul Hartford worked together to translate the need for quicker, cheaper missionary transportation into an interconnected global mission airline service that coordinated the resources of the three mission airline programs operated by the Scandinavians, Lutherans, and the Assemblies of God.<sup>89</sup>

Nelson's plans employed the WMAC as an intermediary to facilitate close cooperation between the three programs, ensure each plane flew at peak efficiency, and build contacts with other global mission organizations.<sup>90</sup> To remain sustainable, each mission passenger plane needed to operate near full capacity on both outbound and homebound flights. None of the mission groups operating independently could fill their ships beyond the short term. After that, their demand would begin to slacken and costs per-mile would increase as they flew half-empty planes. However, if the mission groups used the WMAC to coordinate their efforts, they could offer mission airline service to a broad segment of the globe and perhaps attract additional customers. The Scandinavian's *Ansgar* could fly Norwegian and Swedish missionaries to Africa, and then, through contacts from WMAC, transport staff from other missionary organizations on the return trip to Europe. From there, MAF-UK could shuttle European mission staff aboard *The Pathfinder*, while American missionaries could connect with the Assemblies of God's

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<sup>88</sup> Daniel Nelson to James C. Truxton, 22 May. 1946 (BGC 136-28-30).

<sup>89</sup> Daniel Nelson to Jr. Charles Mellis, 24 Jun. 1946 (BGC 136-28-30); Grubb, "As the Editor Sees It", 1948; Grubb, "As the Editor Sees It", 1949

<sup>90</sup> Originally, there were supposed to be four airline programs. At the Washington, D.C. conference, Murray Kendon indicated that he was interested in such a venture if it made sense economically. Paul Hartford mistook Kendon's interest as a commitment, and broadly advertised MAF's involvement in WMAC and Lutheran World Federation publications. The public identification of MAF as a participant in this type of airline venture, well into 1949, was something of an embarrassment for Murray Kendon in the UK and Jim Truxton in the USA as MAF had very quickly spoke against WMAC's airline service once its details had been made known. See also: Murray Kendon to Grady Parrott, 12 Nov. 1948 (BGC 136-60-7); Anon., "The Spirit of "St. Paul": An Editorial", 1949

*Ambassador* for the final return to the United States. With the ability to fly missionaries directly to and from numerous mission fields, Nelson and Hartford believed their mission airline would evolve into a compelling transportation choice for other mission organizations. Mission personnel aboard the craft would enjoy all the comforts of commercial transportation as well as the warm fellowship of their fellow missionaries. All the while mission organizations would save money by using a not-for-profit airline and be able to move their mission staff around the world much faster than before possible.<sup>91</sup>

To draw the attention of enough mission groups, Nelson and Hartford's airline model of mission aviation required a significant amount of publicity to remain operational. Therefore, WMAC leaders promoted the airline to their supporters and held rallies at airports where missionary aircraft could be seen up close. The missions likewise took out advertisements and promoted their operations in magazines such as *Christian Life* and *The Missionary Worker*. These marketing efforts emphasized the cutting-edge nature of missions flying their own aircraft. They were likewise seasoned heavily with eschatological references concerning the end of the world to reinforce the urgent need to deliver missionaries to their posts quickly.<sup>92</sup>

Indeed, the marketing and mission propaganda quickly became the principal rationales behind the WMAC's mission airline program. Each of the mission groups that launched their own large passenger planes in the mid-to-late 1940s did so as they wrestled with immediate and temporary logistical problems until such a time as their logistical needs were less acute and

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<sup>91</sup> Nelson, 22 May. 1946 (BGC 136-28-30); Nelson, 24 Jun. 1946 (BGC 136-28-30); "Other Planes," *The Missionary Worker*, 15 Oct. 1948, (BGC 136-61-5); Anon., "The Spirit of "St. Paul": An Editorial", 1949; Grubb, "As the Editor Sees It", 1949

<sup>92</sup> Anon., "World Missionary Aviation Council", 1948; Anon., "Other Planes", 1948; Anon., "Assemblies Pick New Head," *Christian Life*, Dec. 1949, 28-9; "Missionary Plane Carrying 21 Strikes Peak in Rockies," *The Capital Times* (Madison, WI), 22 Nov. 1950, 1, 8.



commercial transport systems were readily available.<sup>93</sup> However, as the backlog of missionaries needing to go to or from the field dwindled and commercial transportation networks improved towards the late 1940s, all three of the airline programs redoubled the investment made in their airline operations and joined the WMAC to find new passengers. They did so because their large airplanes were a marketing bonanza.<sup>94</sup>

By just flying a C-46, C-47, or especially a converted B-17 as did the Assemblies of God, mission organizations earned enthusiastic interest from popular news organizations and from their Christian supporters. Crowds greeted the *St. Paul*, *Ansgar*, or the *Ambassador* wherever they landed. Their mission periodicals featured the craft prominently, alongside editorials praising their operation and even interviews with the crew. Therefore, the Scandinavians, Lutherans, and the Assemblies of God did not help build the WMAC's airline program merely to build a global Christian airline by which to ferry missionaries at low cost. They organized the WMAC to maintain an airline operation they could not otherwise sustain to perpetuate the wide public enthusiasm for their work, which they could not otherwise build. The WMAC's airline operations were not merely propaganda. WMAC mission leaders considered their initial operations a success and truly believed their program to be safe, economical, and sustainable

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<sup>93</sup>Nelson, 22 May. 1946 (BGC 136-28-30); "Circling the Globe: Scandinavia," *Missionary Aviation*, Jul. 1946, 11; Noel Perkins, "The Ambassador Is Ready," *The Missionary Challenge*, Aug. 1948, (BGC 528-1-5); Anon., "Airmen Wanted," *The Missionary Challenge*, 17 Jul. 1948, (BGC 528-1-5); Wesley R. Steelberg, "Singing Together," *The Missionary Challenge*, Apr. 1949, 10-1 (BGC 528-1-5); Sydney S. Bryant, "To India by Air," *The Missionary Challenge*, Jun. 1949, 8-9, 20 (BGC 528-1-5); Olson, "The "St. Paul" Bows Out: An Editorial", 1950; Christiansen, "St. Paul - Operational Relief", 1950

<sup>94</sup> George Carmichael, "The Ambassador's Plans," 1948, (BGC 528-1-5); Hartford, "Memorandum on the Findings of the World Missionary Aviation Conference Held in Washington, D.C. May 25-26, 1948," 1948; Anon., "Airmen Wanted", 1948; Flights, "Scandinavian Missionary Flights: Member of the World Missionary Aviation Council." (1948); Anon., "Dedication of the Ambassador," 16 Oct. 1948, (BGC 528-1-5); Anon., "The Spirit of "St. Paul": An Editorial", 1949; "The "Ansgar" – Scandinavian Mission Plane", 1949; Anon., "The Ambassador a B-17," Dec. 1949, (BGC 528-1-5); Anon., "Assemblies Pick New Head", 1949; James C. Truxton to D-1, 20 Jul. 1950 (BGC 136-2-27); James C. Truxton to MAF D-1, 30 Jul. 1950 (BGC 136-2-27).

over the long term. However, that belief was itself built upon wishful thinking that ignored warnings regarding long-term costs, competition, and the inherent dangers of such operations.<sup>95</sup>

### **Assemblies of God: Passenger Planes as Marketing Device**

The Assemblies of God *Ambassador* program offers a striking example of how a mission program used the WMAC airline system to perpetuate their marketing and propaganda goals. The Assemblies of God built their mission aviation programs to change their public image and demonstrate their relevance in the modern era, not unlike Robert Crawford and the Apostolic Faith Mission in the 1920s. Assemblies of God articles promoting their mission aviation program proclaimed: “We have an old-fashioned gospel, it is true, but we must be up-to-date in our methods of propagating it.”<sup>96</sup> Propaganda interest would remain at the center of their aviation operation throughout the 1940s.<sup>97</sup> Of course, the Assemblies of God’s aircraft transported missionaries as well. However, Assemblies pilots and administrators flew their aircraft with a sharp outlook for any publicity that might be gained from them. Their story therefore sheds light on the marriage between mission work and publicity that constituted their mission aviation program and was at the root of their involvement with the WMAC.

In 1944, the Assemblies of God’s youth organization, Christ’s Ambassadors, launched a new mission program named Speed the Light (StL) at their annual National Youth Conference. Speed the Light grew out the youth organization’s enthusiastic embrace of technology as a solution to the logistical problems then facing their missionaries in field. Very much like Paul Schulte’s Miva, StL’s members and leadership raised money to replace missionaries’ traditional

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<sup>95</sup> Anon., *The Altoona Mirror* (Altoona, PA), 27 Feb. 1948, 83; Grubb, "As the Editor Sees It", 1949

<sup>96</sup> "Our Challenge. . . Speed the Light!," *The Missionary Challenge*, 3 Feb. 1945, (BGC 528-1-5).

<sup>97</sup> See Assemblies of God sources in Mission Aviation History collection at the Billy Graham Center, Wheaton College (BGC 528-1-5).

means of transportation – such as traditional oxcarts or canoes – with the latest modern technology to expand, improve, and “speed” the denomination’s global mission efforts to the world’s “benighted people.”<sup>98</sup> The Assemblies of God leadership warmly embraced the StL program, gave it ample coverage in Assemblies of God publications and supported the program directly. By 1950, the youth of “Christ’s Ambassadors,” had raised a total of \$700,000: enough money to purchase seven buses, 174 cars, 43 Jeeps, 44 trucks, 121 bicycles, and eleven airplanes.<sup>99</sup> Although Speed the Light was a runaway success, both its leaders and supporters fixated upon modern technology as a solution to all logistical challenges and at times their techno-utopianism undermined the organization’s decision-making process.<sup>100</sup>

As the program’s budget grew larger so did its ambitions. In 1946, the Assemblies of God magazine, *The Missionary Challenge*, featured on its front cover an artistically altered photograph of parked DC-3s – engines firing – with the



“The Challenge of Modern Air Travel,” *The Missionary Challenge* VI, no. 2 (1946), pg. 1 (BGC 528-1-5).

<sup>98</sup> Anon., "Our First Missionary Plane," *The Missionary Challenge*, 1945, (BGC 528-1-5); Carmichael, "The Ambassador's Plans", 1948

<sup>99</sup> This in addition to many other devices such as bicycles, motorbikes, motorcycles, scooters, trailers, and even one Dodge “gaily decorated after the manner of the Chinese” and equipped with a large loudspeaker to advertise Youth of Christ meetings in Kunming, China . See also: Malcolm Blakeney, "STL Story," *The Missionary Challenge*, Apr. 1950, 15-18,21 (BGC 528-1-5). See also: Anon., "Our First Missionary Plane", 1945

<sup>100</sup> "In the beginning," *Christ's Ambassadors Herald*, Oct. 1969, 4-11 (BGC 528-1-5).

Speed the Light logo neatly painted upon their fuselages. The retouched picture was meant as a *challenge* to the magazine's readership to donate to the Assemblies of God's mission programs and help grow its programs to such an enormous size that it would require a fleet of passenger aircraft to move all its missionaries.<sup>101</sup> The symbolism implicit to the DC-3s, prepped and ready for takeoff, likewise underlined the importance the Assemblies of God placed on technology in contemporary missions: only the most modern equipment could ensure the Gospel was quickly flown around the globe. Although the denomination's supporters might have to sacrifice for such machines, they would make Assemblies of God missionaries "the best equipped of any Protestant missionaries in the world," able to proclaim the *true* Gospel around the globe.<sup>102</sup>

In 1948, the Assemblies of God and Speed the Light raised funds for the denomination's first passenger aircraft: a Curtis C-46 Commando the Assemblies purchased at a war surplus sale and renamed the *Ambassador*.<sup>103</sup> The Assemblies of God initially described its *Ambassador* program as a temporary fix to the unique challenges of late 1940s global transportation. Once commercial passenger companies resumed normal



The *Ambassador* with crew: Captain William Wood, co-pilot Roy Taylor, and engineer Walter Kornelson. See: *The Missionary Challenge*, Oct. 1948 (BGC 136-61-5)

<sup>101</sup> Anon., "The Challenge of Modern Air Travel," *The Missionary Challenge*, Jan. 1946, 1,2 (BGC 528-1-5).

<sup>102</sup> Anon., "Our Challenge. . . Speed the Light!", 1945; Mrs. Dewey Hale, "Flying the Light in the Gold Coast," *World Challenge*, 14 Aug. 1948, (BGC 528-1-5); "In the beginning", 1969

<sup>103</sup> The Assemblies of God purchased a second C-46 for spare parts. Though considered refurbishing and flying it to expand the program.

operation, the Assemblies of God implied they would wind the *Ambassador* operation down and sell the plane. During the *Ambassador* program's first year, the plane made six voyages and flew missionaries and other personnel to Africa, South America, Europe, India, and numerous locations throughout the United States. The C-46 could carry some twenty-five missionaries, as many as twelve crew members, and a significant amount of luggage (including a disassembled light plane) to mission stations abroad and then back again to the *Ambassador's* home base at Springfield, MO.<sup>104</sup> The denomination sold the *Ambassador* in late 1949 and upgraded to a converted B-17. The Assemblies of God purchased the *Ambassador II* to placate those concerned with flying a 2-engine C-46 across ocean. The general consensus of those in the WMAC was that a 4-engine B-17 added a layer of safety should an engine fail mid-Atlantic.<sup>105</sup> As the former presidential transport craft of the Philippines, the new *Ambassador II* was already well upholstered for civilian transportation. The ship's nose, which would originally have held the bombsights, had even been converted into a VIP lounge complete with a stunning view of the world passing beneath.<sup>106</sup>

The Assemblies of God may perhaps have initiated the *Ambassador* program for practical logistical concerns. Nevertheless, they swiftly integrated the *Ambassador* aircraft into denominational publicity.<sup>107</sup> Similar to the denomination's use of the photograph of the DC-3s on the cover of *The Missionary Challenge*, the marketing for the *Ambassador* program was wrapped around what the large aircraft represented and not its function. In the late 1940s, both the C-46 and B-17's size, appearance, and connection to the Allied victory in World War Two,

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<sup>104</sup> Perkins, "The Ambassador Is Ready", 1948

<sup>105</sup> Hartford, "Review of Events -- 2nd Annual Convention -- World Missionary Aviation Council." (1949); Hartford, "News on the Wing #1." (1949)

<sup>106</sup> Anon., "The Ambassador a B-17", 1949; Anon., "Historical Outline of the Missionary Flights of the Assemblies of God," 1970 (BGC 528-1-5).

<sup>107</sup> Anon., "Our Challenge. . . Speed the Light!", 1945; Anon., "The Challenge of Modern Air Travel", 1946; Blakeney, "STL Story", 1950

bespoke power, influence, and status. The large transport aircraft were therefore easily employed as an embodiment of the Assemblies of God's success. They explicitly demonstrated to the world the triumph of Assemblies' fundraising drives, the depth of their support, and their importance as a global Protestant denomination.<sup>108</sup> The denomination persistently reinforced these images through its propaganda. They cataloged the aircraft's size and technical specifications in the same way that as commercial aviation companies had for decades proudly advertised the technical aspects of their aircraft. In both instances, the details and specifications served not to inform, but to impress the reader with the aircraft's power and grandeur as well as underline the prestige of flying such an airplane. Likewise, the Assemblies altered the *Ambassadors'* appearance to draw greater attention. They stripped the military markings and drab paint from their planes to expose the gleaming aluminum skin beneath. The aluminum shined in the sun even as it drew the eye to the bold stripe running the length of the fuselage towards Assemblies of God livery and the words "Missionary Aviation" carefully printed along the side.<sup>109</sup>

The benefits to those who flew in the *Ambassadors* were not ignored by Assemblies of God marketers either. Yet surprisingly, Assemblies' marketing invited readers to compare the *Ambassador* against *commercial airlines* and not more traditional means of long-distance mission transportation such as ships, trains, or automobiles. *Ambassador* advertisements emphasized luxury and the myriad perks available to missionaries flying in the aircraft. They detailed the high standards of in-flight service and professional nature of the crew. Wrote the

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<sup>108</sup> Anon., "Our Challenge. . . Speed the Light!", 1945; Anon., "The Challenge of Modern Air Travel", 1946; Anon., "Dedication of the Ambassador", 1948; Blakeney, "STL Story", 1950

<sup>109</sup> Carmichael, "The Ambassador's Plans", 1948; Perkins, "The Ambassador Is Ready", 1948; H. B. Garlock, "The Flight to Africa," 18 Sep. 1948, (BGC 528-1-5); Anon., "Dedication of the Ambassador", 1948; Bryant, "To India by Air", 1949; Anon., "The Ambassador a B-17", 1949; Assemblies of God, "Mission to Missionaries," *Christian Life*, Jun. 1950, 10.

Assemblies of God marketers: the “interior is finished in plush with reclining seats, galley and refrigerator. . . every care is being taken to provide for the comfort of the passengers and for the utmost in safety. In the plastic covered compartment in the ship’s nose a lounge room is available for observation of the unusual sights of the trips.”<sup>110</sup> Taking another page out of airline marketers playbook, the Assemblies of God emphasized not only the comfort, speed, and power of the *Ambassador I & II*, but the exotic ports of call missionaries would make on their trips to the mission field.<sup>111</sup> Former *Ambassador* passengers wove tales of their adventures in the Bahamas, the Holy Land, Greece, Brazil, and Africa. These narratives served the Assemblies’ larger marketing effort to attract would-be missionaries to service with the promise of “adventure” and a chance to see the world via the denomination’s private aircraft.<sup>112</sup> *Ambassador* marketing was not focused upon convincing readers as to the necessity or urgency of transporting missionaries to their posts quickly in the absence of a commercial alternatives. The Assemblies of God promoted the *Ambassador* aircraft and the larger WMAC program as an alternative to commercial aviation: an airline that offered missionaries an opportunity to travel to their posts quickly and in comfort so as to arrive at their post well rested and ready to begin their work.<sup>113</sup>

Assemblies of God promoted the *Ambassador* as a commercial airline alternative because it was. By the last two years of the 1940s, commercial aircraft were again patrolling the globe and the emergency postwar need for such a missionary endeavor was past.<sup>114</sup> The *Ambassador*’s real value to the Assemblies of God was therefore the publicity it brought, the meanings it

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<sup>110</sup> Anon., "The Ambassador a B-17", 1949

<sup>111</sup> *British Aviation Posters*.

<sup>112</sup> Perkins, "The Ambassador Is Ready", 1948; Paul Glynn, "A Reporter Travels on the Amabassador: He Sees the Ambassador a tool in God's Hands," *The Missionary Challenge*, May 1950, 11-2 (BGC 528-1-5); Glen Renick, "Trip to Holy Land," 5 Aug. 1950, (BGC 528-1-5).

<sup>113</sup> Glynn, "A Reporter Travels on the Amabassador: He Sees the Ambassador a tool in God's Hands", 1950

<sup>114</sup> Truxton and Mellis, 21 Jul. 1948 (BGC 136-60-7).

conveyed, and the attraction it garnered – not the missionaries it carried. This is not to say that the Christian missionary airlines born of the 1940s were launched solely as propaganda platforms. They just quickly evolved into such programs, which explains why they continued to operate past 1946-47 as commercial airlines became increasingly cost-efficient.

The Assemblies of God and their *Ambassador* program provide a vivid illustration of the importance of marketing in the decision-making process of mission leaders who promoted missionary aviation programs in the 1940s. Indeed, the *Ambassador* program stood out amongst even the other Christian airline programs, for the Assemblies' airline was marked by a sharp divide between the publicity spotlight on the aircraft and the relative paucity of missionaries who actually flew in them. Between August 1948 and September 1949, the first *Ambassador* completed a total of six major voyages and transported as many as fifteen hundred individuals (not including crew members). Of those numbers, only half of the voyages were to the mission field and only one in every ten passengers were actual mission personnel.<sup>115</sup> The other three journeys made before the Assemblies sold the *Ambassador I* had a heavy emphasis on propaganda. Two flights carried denominational ministers and administrators to conferences in Paris and Seattle, where the *Ambassador* flew the flag for the Assemblies of God and acted as a display of the denomination's resources.<sup>116</sup> The other flight was specifically for marketing: a "barnstorming tour" throughout the USA, wherein the *Ambassador* appeared at Assemblies of God rallies in Reno, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Portland (OR), Seattle, Billings (MT), Sioux

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<sup>115</sup> An amount of 150 missionaries may itself be somewhat optimistic and assumes a full load of 25 individuals for each of three trips to and from the mission field. See also: Anon., "Historical Outline of the Missionary Flights of the Assemblies of God."

<sup>116</sup> Ibid.



Falls, Milwaukee, Indianapolis, and Memphis and gave rides to some 1,250 individuals who had gathered to see the C-46.<sup>117</sup>

The *Ambassador II* almost doubled the number of mission flights of its predecessor. It flew a total of five voyages to the mission field and carried as many as 250 missionaries.<sup>118</sup> Yet, even the actual mission flights of the *Ambassador II*, and its predecessor for that matter, were exploited by the denomination for maximum propagandistic effect to proclaim the importance and relevance of the Assemblies of God as an organization to a global audience. The eight mission flights of the two *Ambassadors* served dual purposes. They (sometimes) carried missionaries, but more importantly, they drew attention to the denomination and its message. The Assemblies literature stressed that the *Ambassador* drew the interest of other Protestant missionaries and helped build the denomination's prestige and global recognition as an influential mission program.<sup>119</sup> The denomination took advantage of interest in their *Ambassadors* to invite press agents aboard to ride with them and foster additional positive publicity in newspapers. They converted popular interest in the C-46 amongst Assemblies of God members to sell their denomination's magazine – giving away tickets aboard the *Ambassador* to the individual who sold the most subscriptions to *The Missionary Challenge*. Furthermore, the Assemblies sent high-ranking church officials on each voyage to build contacts for subsequent mission work and serve as cultural liaisons with the many government officials, technicians, and members of the public who greeted the plane at the airport. The Assemblies of God's claims about the influence and status the *Ambassadors* provided them may very well have been over-exaggerated. Yet, even embellished stories made for good print in denominational

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<sup>117</sup> Anon., "Dedication of the Ambassador", 1948

<sup>118</sup> Anon., "Historical Outline of the Missionary Flights of the Assemblies of God."

<sup>119</sup> Carmichael, "The Ambassador's Plans", 1948; Anon., "Airmen Wanted", 1948; Steelberg, "Singing Together", 1949

magazines and pamphlets, reinforced existing claims, and further bolstered enthusiasm within the denomination for mission work.<sup>120</sup>

Perhaps predictably, the Assemblies of God used the *Ambassadors* themselves as *missionaries*. The airplane and its livery undoubtedly attracted the attention of those near landing fields, and to the minds of the denomination's leadership, it bolstered the influence of the denomination's missionaries. Wesley Steelberg, assistant general superintendent of the Assemblies of God, called the C-46 a "means of vindicating the testimony of our precious missionaries." He continued, offering as example a story he had heard from a group of Assemblies of God missionaries then ministering in Ouagadougou (capital of present day Burkina Faso). The denomination's missionaries, it would seem, had boasted to potential converts of the *Ambassador* and led them to the nearby landing strip to view the plane when it was scheduled to land after crossing the Atlantic from Brazil in early December 1948. The spectacle became rather stressful after the aircraft was held up by foul weather. The local West Africans interpreted the delay as evidence that the missionaries had been caught in a lie and accused them of inventing the phantom C-46 in hopes of gaining converts. When the *Ambassador* finally arrived, the relieved missionaries recounted to Steelberg that the West Africans had been impressed by both the aircraft and the missionary who spoke truth concerning "the gospel ship."<sup>121</sup> This story, when taken in light of other similar articles in *The Missionary Challenge* reinforced to the magazine's readership traditional stereotypes that Africans could be impressed and won from their "heathen world of darkness" by the use of contemporary

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<sup>120</sup> Garlock, "The Flight to Africa", 1948; H. B. Garlock, "Flying the Missionaries," *The Missionary Challenge*, Oct. 1948, 16-21 (BGC 528-1-5); Steelberg, "Singing Together", 1949; Bryant, "To India by Air", 1949; Glynn, "A Reporter Travels on the Ambassador: He Sees the Ambassador a tool in God's Hands", 1950; Anon., "Make that Air Castle Materialize," *The Missionary Challenge*, Jun. 1950, (BGC 528-1-5); Truxton, 20 Jul. 1950 (BGC 136-2-27); Stanford Lee, "Flight to West Africa," *The Missionary Challenge*, Apr. 1951, 32, 34 (BGC 528-1-5); Anon., "Untitled," 2 Sep. 1951, (BGC 528-1-5).

<sup>121</sup> Steelberg, "Singing Together", 1949

technology as a ministry prop. Furthermore, many Assemblies of God leaders argued that the C-46 was but one component of the denomination's larger responsibility to reach those untouched by "modern progress." Assemblies' administrator Don Lowe argued that the denomination had a duty to "go forth to conquer in the name of Jesus Christ – to bring both spiritual and physical help to those who are so desperately in need."<sup>122</sup>

Given the *Ambassadors'* usefulness to the Assemblies of God as a marketing platform, the denomination continued to fly the large aircraft well into 1950, despite the availability of commercial flights. That same year, the Assemblies of God promoted the *Ambassador II* in its publications and took out a full-page advertisement for their airline service in the evangelical magazine *Christian Life*, inviting other mission organizations to purchase discounted seats aboard the aircraft.<sup>123</sup> However, the *Ambassador II's* flight to Mexico City in mid-1950 was the program's last voyage. The leadership of the Assemblies of God, who had so recently praised the Ambassador program, ended it abruptly after they concluded that the risks posed by the program's failure were too high to warrant its continued existence. Their change in heart stemmed from two tragedies of a mission airline operation very like the *Ambassador* program. New Tribes Missions, a young and then still controversial missionary organization, had that year lost not one, but two DC-3's loaded with missionaries and their families. The corresponding backlash and negative publicity directed toward New Tribes Missions raised to the mission

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<sup>122</sup> Anon., "'Ambassador' Arrives," 1948 1948, (BGC, 528--1-5); Perkins, "The Ambassador Is Ready", 1948; Garlock, "The Flight to Africa", 1948; Steelberg, "Singing Together", 1949; Glynn, "A Reporter Travels on the Amabassador: He Sees the Ambassador a tool in God's Hands", 1950; Don Lowe, "First Flight Abroad," *The Missionary Challenge*, Nov. 1950, 10 (BGC 528-1-5).

<sup>123</sup> "Missionary Plane Carrying 21 Strikes Peak in Rockies"

public's consciousness the inherent danger of operating an independent, low-volume airline such as operated by the Assemblies of God and the WMAC.<sup>124</sup>

## Conclusion

Following World War Two, Protestant (as well as Catholic) missionary organizations rebuilt or launched dozens of missionary aviation programs, some of them significant in cost and scope. For some of these organizations, aircraft proved an effective means of transport where none was otherwise available, such as the Lutheran World Federation operation in central and northern China during the Chinese Civil War. While mission aviation programs could indeed be practical, even impractical and dangerous operations remained popular given the common misunderstanding regarding aircraft safety, and the continued faith in technological utopianism amongst Americans. Informed by aviation industry marketing, missionaries and mission organizations, especially those based out of the United States, continued to view aircraft as a panacea. Many believed aircraft to be an effective means by which to save lives and increase mission efficiency – regardless of whether data proved it to be more capable than traditional means of transportation, such as horse, ship, or automobile.<sup>125</sup> Aircraft were also effective mission marketing platforms. They attracted crowds, facilitated mission fundraising, and raised interest in mission activities.

Despite the broad interest in mission aviation, there were deep divisions arising concerning aviation best practice amongst North American and European mission boards. Numerous Protestant mission organizations believed that while mission aviation had the

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<sup>124</sup> Anon., "untitled #1," (Assemblies of God, n.d.); James C. Truxton to MAF D-1, 23 Jun. 1950 (BGC 136-2-27); Anon., "Historical Outline of the Missionary Flights of the Assemblies of God."; Kenneth J. Johnston, *The Story of New Tribes Mission* (Sanford, FL: New Tribes Mission, 1985), 136-47; *Giving Wings to the Gospel*, 312-13.

<sup>125</sup> *The Shock of the Old*, preface.

potential to improve mission work, the contemporary infatuation with aircraft within Protestant mission circles was counterproductive and blinded them to the hazards of missionary flight. These mission and evangelistic organizations – including the Missionary Aviation Fellowship (of both the United Kingdom and the United States), Sudan Interior Mission, African Inland Mission, Navigators, Wycliffe Bible Translators, Foreign Missions Conference of North America, Christian & Missionary Alliance, and the Presbyterian Church USA – held that mission aviation as commonly practiced was entirely inefficient, an utter waste of resources, and scandalously unsafe.<sup>126</sup> The warnings of these mission organizations would prove prophetic as the triumphal rebirth of mission aviation collapsed once more in 1950. Hastened by a mounting number of crashes and growing list of fatalities.<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>126</sup> Truxton, 15 Jul. 1948 (BGC 136-25-88).

<sup>127</sup> Murray Kendon, "Missionary "Air Arm"," London, pamphlet (MAF-UK, 1946) BGC 136-52-5; Truxton, 10 Apr. 1946 (BGC 136-52-5); James C. Truxton to Murray Kendon, 8 May 1946 (BGC 136-52-5); *Giving Wings to the Gospel*, 43; Sendall-King, "Interview #1."

Chapter FiveMission aviation and the professionalization  
of flight (1945-1952)

Millions of Americans in the post-War 1940s were caught up in the triumphal rebirth of the “winged gospel,” believing that very soon aircraft would democratize travel and transform society. American Christians likewise took part in this joyous excitement and applied it to the logistical problems of mission. Informed by contemporary aviation culture, American Protestants and Catholics believed that aircraft had finally developed to the point that they could now revolutionize mission work.<sup>1</sup> Combined with an eschatology that held the end times were nigh, hundreds of missionaries across the United States trained as private pilots to launch their careers as full-time missionaries and part-time pilots. As the popularity of the “winged gospel” declined, and deaths amongst missionaries flying in mission-owned aircraft mounted, mission organizations began to reevaluate their freewheeling approach to aviation. In the early 1950s, informed by a new aviation culture that prized professionalism, sustainability, and efficiency, the amateur mission aviators were gradually replaced by a cadre of professionalized missionary pilots.

This chapter will first examine the evolution of early-post War American aviation culture and its impact on mission aviation. It will then argue that the rapid late-1940s decline in enthusiasm for flight as a democratic “leveler” precipitated a corresponding reevaluation of mission aviation by global mission organizations. As American’s expected increasingly higher levels of professionalism and safety from aviation services, the arguments of professionalized

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<sup>1</sup> Joseph J. Corn, *The Winged Gospel: America's romance with aviation, 1900-1950* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983); Dominick A. Pisano, *To Fill the Skies with Pilots: The Civilian Pilot Training Program, 1939-46* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 131.

mission-aviation organizations such as MAF, became much more relevant. Their support and influence amongst mission organizations increased as a result. For those mission-aviation organizations, such as Paul Hartford's *Victory Sky Pilots*, whose methods remained tied to the past, interest in their work declined as popular perceptions of flight in the late 1940s and early 1950s changed.

### **Changes in American Views of Aviation**

Interest in mission aviation had, since it was first conceived in 1908, been closely tied to broader attitudes towards flight. Between 1920 and the late 1940s, many Americans connected aircraft to romanticized images of adventure, exploration, progress, and even democracy. Missionaries and mission administrators were, for their part, likewise caught up in this rapturous excitement for aircraft, and endeavored to wield it for their benefit. They adopted aviation programs to streamline mission operations. In addition, they flew aircraft to link themselves to the contemporary narrative of aviation culture and claim for themselves a public image that was compelling, progressive, and modern.<sup>2</sup>

In the late 1940s, American attitudes toward aviation began to change as aviation became more common and the utopia aircraft industrialists had promised failed to materialize. Certainly, aircraft had successfully shrunk the world, facilitated long distance travel and commerce, and allowed humans to cross mountain, desert, and ocean. However, flight had not overcome humanity's destructive nature, either by fostering greater international accord or by ending war with the implicit threat of global annihilation. Given that the future neglected to arrive as

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<sup>2</sup> *The Winged Gospel*, preface; Roger E. Bilstein, *Flight in America: From the Wrights to the Astronauts*, Revised ed. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), 62,75; David Edgerton, *The Shock of the Old: Technology and global history since 1900* (London: Profile, 2008), preface.

expected, Americans began to adopt a more pragmatic view of aviation. Aircraft were nothing more and nothing less than a practical means to transport people, goods, bombs, and information.<sup>3</sup>

This should not be taken to mean that aviation technology did not advance or fulfill many of its earlier promises. It did. However, these advances likewise contributed to the demise of flight's cultural impact and popularity. As aircraft designs and aviation practice improved, flight became ever more safe, common, and dull. By mid-century, the other-worldly adventure of air travel and the transcendental quality of flight had given way to common efficiency and professional practice.<sup>4</sup> Aircraft were still interesting, at times even exciting. Yet, their role as a cultural icon of a millennial future had ended.<sup>5</sup> Charles Lindbergh, having dedicated his adult life to championing aviation's development, bemoaned this new reality. In a letter penned to his wife Anne Morrow in 1948, Lindbergh recounted his feeling of loss now that flight no longer evoked a sense of wonder for those who flew or for those who watched from the ground: "I can't get used to the ease with which one covers the world today. It's no longer an effort—Pole—equator—oceans—continents—it's just a question of which way you point the nose of your plane. The pure joy of flight as an art has given way to the pure efficiency of flight as a science. . . . Science is insulating man from life—separating his mind from his senses. The worst of it is that it soon anaesthetizes his senses so that he doesn't know what he's missing."<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> *The Winged Gospel*, 66-9, epilogue; Robert Wohl, *The Spectacle of Flight: Aviation and the Western Imagination, 1920-1950* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2005), 227-83, 308-23.

<sup>4</sup> *The Winged Gospel*, epilogue.

<sup>5</sup> Richard P. Hallion, *Legacy of Flight: The Guggenheim Contribution to American Aviation* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1977), 72, 154-56; *The Winged Gospel*, 12-22, chapter 2; *Flight in America*, 77, 83; Donald M. Pattillo, *A History in the Making: 80 Turbulent Years in the American General Aviation Industry* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1998), 15-6; *The Spectacle of Flight*, 36-41.

<sup>6</sup> A. Scott Berg, *Lindbergh* (Simon & Schuster, 2013).



Charles Lindbergh's observations proved prescient; aviation's visceral impact faded as flight became normal, sterile, and efficient. The normalcy of flight, however, had auxiliary impact as well. As flight became ever more common, popular expectations of flight standards became ever more stringent.

Throughout the 1950s, Americans increasingly insisted that commercial flights be comfortable, safe, and reliable. In many ways, this was as a result of aviation marketing of the prior generation, as commercial carriers strove to



The Lockheed Constellation, amongst the most celebrated post-war commercial aircraft, was popular in no small part because of its stunning design.

(picture from Wikimedia Commons)

convince the general public that aviation was in fact safe. Airports therefore had become bastions of precision: airlines operated on predictable schedules, crew operations were highly regulated, staff wore tailored uniforms, and commercial aircraft were well-groomed and visually stunning. Image and style were hallmarks of quality. They implicitly spoke to the airline's organizational discipline, its competence, and dedication to maintenance (especially important in an industry where mistakes could cost lives).<sup>7</sup> The aircraft were themselves a perfect example: the more impeccable their outward design, the more it was assumed that their mechanical design was similarly flawless. Finally, the image of the ideal pilot evolved as well. No longer was the model

<sup>7</sup> Eric Schatzberg, "Ideology and Technical Choice: The Decline of the Wooden Airplane in the United States, 1920-1945," *Technology and Culture* 35, no. 1 (1994): 34-69; *The Shock of the Old*, 87; Scott Anthony and Oliver Green, *British Aviation Posters: Art, Design, and Flight* (Surrey, UK: Lund Humphries, 2012).

flyer a romanticized adventurer of World War One and Hollywood films, or even the intrepid explorer of the late 1920s and 1930s. Instead, pilots were highly trained, calm professionals with a rigid focus on safe flight practice and general air safety.<sup>8</sup> Over the course of the late 1940s and early 1950s, many Americans came to accept that professional flight practices had rendered aviation safe and efficient. This perception may have been a boon to the airlines. However, it undermined the populist appeal of flight and ultimately amateur aviation as a mass movement.

Immediately following World War Two, cheap, reliable aircraft seemed, at long last, within reach. Government officials, industrialists, and university educators widely expected that millions of Americans would soon take to the skies in aircraft so safe that flying would be no more difficult than highway driving, and many times more enjoyable.<sup>9</sup> Already, there existed 350,000 trained pilots in the United States. Millions more had been exposed to aviation during the war as mechanics, maintenance personnel, or passengers, and many of these professed an interest in flight training. Professional forecasters and local and national governments assumed that those exposed to aviation would actively continue in that interest, train in one of the many government-funded flight centers, and then purchase their own aircraft.<sup>10</sup> Their predictions initially seemed viable. In 1946, Americans purchased over 35,000 light aircraft, more than double the total number sold between 1933 and 1941. Backorders for additional aircraft far outstripped US production, and reportedly mounted into the millions.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> *The Spectacle of Flight*, 3, 308-23; *The Shock of the Old*, chapter 4.

<sup>9</sup> Tom D. Crouch, "An Airplane for Everyman: The Department of Commerce and the Light Airplane Industry, 1933-37," in *Innovation and the Development of Flight*, ed. Roger D. Launius (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press), 167; *To Fill the Skies with Pilots*, chapter 5; Janet R. Daly Bednarek and Michael H. Bednarek, *Dreams of Flight: General Aviation in the United States* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 2003), preface, chapter 3.

<sup>10</sup> *Dreams of Flight*, 83.

<sup>11</sup> *The Winged Gospel*, chapters 2 & 5; *To Fill the Skies with Pilots*, 126.

With millions of Americans apparently interested in becoming pilots, society appeared on the cusp of a radical transformation. In 1941, the Chicago Association of Commerce and the Chicago Regional Planning Association, expecting a dramatic growth in air traffic, drafted joint plans for a massive, interconnected web of local aircraft facilities. The focal point of their designs were three major air terminals between three-to-ten miles from downtown Chicago. These hubs would then be supported by four additional major inner-belt airports and five more outer ring fields (approximately forty to sixty miles from the city center), all fed by a complex network of thirty additional private airports that were clustered around the main fields. Four years later, in 1945, Minneapolis and St. Paul city planners crafted a similar proposal. Predicting that 25,000 private aircraft would soon fill the skies over the Twin Cities, they drafted plans for a forty-airport aviation system that would encompass the two city centers and accommodate a mass of aircraft. These Midwestern city managers were not outliers. Across the United States, city-planning experts envisioned a near future in which aircraft would be, in the words of noted urban theorist Lewis Mumford, “as much a part of our daily lives as the motor car.” Not only would the mass use of light aircraft facilitate faster interaction and communication amongst Americans, but also regenerate industrial urban cities into “Garden Cities,” each with large expanses of green, pastoral land breaking up the stark, grey urban areas.<sup>12</sup>

Following World War Two, the stars appeared to have finally aligned, and for one brief, shining moment, it seemed as if the air-age was at last arriving. Yet, over the course of the next four years, the American light-plane industry slowly collapsed. For all the hype regarding the joyous rapture of flight and its safety, economy, and speed, Americans appeared surprisingly far less interested than expected in flying their own aircraft. To begin, science had not rendered

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<sup>12</sup> Greg Hise, "The Airplane and the Garden City: Regional Transformations during World War II," in *World War II and the American Dream*, ed. Donald Albrecht (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1995), 169.

aircraft foolproof in their operation. Flight safety required more than a blind faith in an aircraft's safety features; it necessitated rigorous training and dedicated attention to safe operating procedures and aircraft maintenance.<sup>13</sup> Neither were private aircraft, most of which only reach sustained speeds of little more than 95-100 miles per hour, as exciting as advertised. They were unequipped to fly at night or in poor flying conditions, were subject to ever-tightening aviation regulations following the war, and their Spartan interiors compared unfavorably to the family sedans then rolling off the assembly lines in Detroit.

Indeed, by almost every metric, light craft compared poorly to the automobiles they were intended to replace. They were relatively expensive, especially when one added to the purchase price the cost of regular maintenance, hangar space, and transportation to and from the airport. With exception of long-distance flights, their speed was not appreciably faster than that of automobiles. Indeed, many owners of light aircraft grew bored of the experience.<sup>14</sup> The banality of flying light aircraft was especially felt by former military pilots who were used to much more powerful, faster, and maneuverable military aircraft. Instead of buying a Piper Cub, military veterans who chose to fly following the war could purchase the relatively cheap, readily available surplus military aircraft that flooded the market. For still many other veterans, the experience of flight brought up unwelcome memories of the war and undercut their interest in both civilian and military aircraft.<sup>15</sup>

Piper Cubs and Cessna 170s did not revolutionize mass transport as had the Model-T Ford. Despite the broad interest in light aircraft in 1945 and 1946, their operation evolved into a

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<sup>13</sup> Donald Grey Barnhouse, "Missionary Aviation," *Revelation*, Jun. 1948, 241-2; James C. Truxton, "Aviation in Missions," *Revelation*, Nov. 1948, 477; *Legacy of Flight*, 72,154-56; *The Winged Gospel*, chapters 2 & 5; *Flight in America*, 77; *A History in the Making*, 15-6; *The Shock of the Old*, preface; General Aviation Manufacturers Association, "General Aviation 2000 Statistical Datebook," Washington, D.C., 2001.

<sup>14</sup> *To Fill the Skies with Pilots*, 133.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 134-7; *Dreams of Flight*, 87-90.

specialized hobby for those affluent enough to afford the cost.<sup>16</sup> After reaching highs in 1946, the sales of new light aircraft immediately collapsed. In 1947, American manufacturers shipped 15,594 light planes, and in 1948 that number again halved to 7,037.<sup>17</sup> Broad excitement for amateur flight dissipated as well. By 1950, most private pilots let their licenses lapse, many of the small airfields operated by private aviation enthusiasts closed, and the light aircraft industry collapsed, taking with it all major light aircraft producers apart from Piper, Cessna, and Beech.<sup>18</sup> Certainly, the United States' geographic expanse continued to make civil flight a practical means of transportation. However, by mid-century, it was increasingly apparent that the future of civil aviation would be dominated by professional – not amateur – pilots.<sup>19</sup> By 1950, most Americans, had gained a much clearer comprehension of aviation's actual strengths and weaknesses. As a result, their assessment of flight began to mirror that of the public in inter-War Britain and Germany: aircraft were useful, at times fascinating machines, but they were exacting, fit only for specific uses, and required a well-trained professional to operate.<sup>20</sup>

American mission supporters were caught in the same social eddies as the rest of the country. By 1950, mission aviation as commonly practiced from the 1920s through the late 1940s had become an anachronism. No longer could mission aviators trust that the mere act of flight would attract masses of individuals to hear them speak. No longer was it praiseworthy – or even acceptable – for a missionary pilot with scant training to risk his life by flying a poorly

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<sup>16</sup> *To Fill the Skies with Pilots*, 134-7.

<sup>17</sup> General Aviation Manufacturers Association, "General Aviation 2000 Statistical Datebook," 4.

<sup>18</sup> *Dreams of Flight*, 90.

<sup>19</sup> *The Winged Gospel*, 110-29; *The Spectacle of Flight*, 308-23; *The Shock of the Old*, chapter 4.

<sup>20</sup> *The Winged Gospel*, 44-6; David Edgerton, *England and the Aeroplane: An essay on a militant and technological nation* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1991), 38-52,64; Peter Fritzsche, *A Nation of Fliers: German Aviation and the Popular Imagination* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992), chapter 4-5; *The Spectacle of Flight*, 3-4,51,305.

maintained aircraft over forest or desert. The Christian public did not accept such low standards in commercial aviation and were unwilling to accept it from their missionary pilots either.<sup>21</sup>

The general decline in popularity of aviation culture and missionary aviation did not happen instantaneously, nor was its impact felt everywhere all at once. There was still support amongst the American Christian public for mission-aviation exhibitionism long after the 1950s. Paul Hartford, for example, found significant interest in his aviation exploits from the adolescents involved with Youth for Christ International up through the mid-1970s.<sup>22</sup> However, beginning in the late 1940s, enthusiasm for mission aviation, support for aviation exhibitionism, and sponsorship of amateur mission aviators steadily declined. Thus, Paul Hartford's continued use of spectacle in the 1970s was a decided anomaly, whereas a generation prior it had been an accepted norm.

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<sup>21</sup> Paul Hartford, "News report to mission organizations from Paul Hartford," pamphlet (WMAC, 13 Jan. 1950) BGC 136-60-7; Malcolm Blakeney, "STL Story," *The Missionary Challenge*, Apr. 1950, 15-18, 21 (BGC 528-1-5); Paul Glynn, "A Reporter Travels on the Ambassador: He Sees the Ambassador a tool in God's Hands," *The Missionary Challenge*, May 1950, 11-2 (BGC 528-1-5); James C. Truxton to Dear Co-workers, 6 Jun. 1950 (BGC 136-2-27); James C. Truxton to J. W. Shank, 7 Oct. 1950 (BGC 136-2-27); James C. Truxton to Grady Parrott, 21 Oct. 1950 (BGC 136-2-27); "Aviation in Missions," *Moody Monthly*, Jan. 1951, (BGC 136-61-17); Russell T. Hitt, "21 Die in New Tribes Plane Crash As Mission Death Toll Mounts: Christian Public Stunned," *Christian Life*, Jan. 1951, 26; James C. Truxton to Robert Schaler, 7 Feb. 1951 (BGC 136-57-19); Donald Grey Barnhouse, "Call it Murder," *Eternity*, Mar. 1951; Luther L. Grubb, "As the Editor Sees it: Recent Tribesman DC3 Crash Draws Editorial Comment," *The Brethren Missionary Herald*, 21 Apr. 1951, 274, 6; "Three Strikes in New Guinea," *Christian Life*, Feb. 1957, 45 (BGC 528-1-21); C&MA, "C&MA Board Minutes," Christian and Missionary Alliance, 19-20 Mar. 1957 (BGC 528-1-21); *The Spectacle of Flight*, 308-23.

<sup>22</sup> Paul Hartford, "News on the Wing #5," pamphlet (WMAC, Apr. 1950) BGC 136-60-7; James C. Truxton to D-1, 20 Jul. 1950 (BGC 136-2-27); James C. Truxton to MAF D-1, 30 Jul. 1950 (BGC 136-2-27); James C. Truxton to Grady Parrott, 4 Aug. 1950 (BGC 136-2-27); "Picture of Significance," *Christian Life*, Sep. 1950, 8-9; Ronald C. Carlson, "Operation Fox," *Christian Life*, Oct. 1950, 7; "Mission Plane in Crash May be Replaced," Nov. 1950, (BGC 136-61-17); Leslie Flynn, "Sky Pilot," *Christian Life*, Jan. 1951, 7; Ivan E. Olsen, "21 Die in Missionary Plane Crash," *Good News Broadcaster*, 1951, (BGC 136-61-17); Paul R. Bauman, "Wings for Brethren Home Missions," *The Brethren Missionary Herald*, 17 Mar. 1951, 195; "The New Tribesman," *Time*, 27 Aug. 1951, (BGC 136-61-17); "Airborne Mission," *Time*, 11 Feb. 1952, (BGC 136-25-13); "News from the Churches," *The Brethren Missionary Herald*, 16 Feb. 1952, 116; "Youth For Christ Caribbean Team Tour a Success," *The Brethren Missionary Herald*, 24 May 1952, 337; "Islands Ripe for Revival," *The Brethren Missionary Herald*, 7 Feb. 1953, 95; "Newspage," *The Brethren Missionary Herald*, 30 Jun. 1956, 406; *Kingston Gleaner* (Kingston, Jamaica), 2 Mar. 1958, 18; "To Address YFC," *Frederick News Post* (Frederick, MD), 22 Apr. 1959; "Missionary Pilot Slated," *Lynnwood Enterprise* (Lynnwood, WA), 18 Apr. 1973, 16.

The decline of mission aviation as a spectacle was not consistent. Its gradual collapse was intermittently quickened by accidents and fatalities amongst mission aviators. The significance of these crashes lay not solely in the number of deaths they caused. Missionary pilots had been crashing, and even dying, since Belvin Maynard in 1922.<sup>23</sup> Instead, the crashes' true significance lay in the perceptions they engendered. Absent a proper corrective narrative, the accidents of mission aviators in the late 1940s and early 1950s made obvious the disharmony between mission aviation as practiced and the increasingly normalized American assumptions that flight should be professional, reliable, and safe.

As American expectations of aviation and pilots evolved, so too did the expectations of American Christians regarding mission aviation and how mission aviators should – or should not – conduct their work.<sup>24</sup> Seeing numerous examples of well-operated aviation programs in commerce and the military, mission leaders, Christian magazine editors, and even missionary supporters increasingly insisted that missionary aviation programs be similarly conducted. Therefore, by the late 1940s, it became ever more unacceptable for an “intrepid” missionary to boast of how they had risked life and limb in their rickety, poorly-maintained airplane. Doing so no longer demonstrated the religious zeal of the mission organization that the missionary represented; instead, it called into question the judgement of its missionaries and its leadership.

This perceptual shift was first readily noticeable amongst global Protestant mission organizations and American Christian leaders in January of 1948, in the aftermath of the death of missionary Paul Uhlinger. Uhlinger's accident occurred shortly after another serious crash in Ecuador involving the Gospel Missionary Union.<sup>25</sup> It thus sparked an already smoldering tinder

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<sup>23</sup> "Flying Parson' Dies, 3 Other Air Men Killed During Fair," *New York Times* (New York), 8 Sep. 1922, 1.

<sup>24</sup> Truxton, "Aviation in Missions", 1948; James C. Truxton to MAF D-1, 23 Jun. 1950 (BGC 136-2-27).

<sup>25</sup> Charles Mellis, Jr., "Wings of Praise and Prayer," *Missionary Aviation*, Apr.-Jun. 1946, 15; William Karl Martin, "The Use of Aircraft on the Mission Field," *Central Baptist Theological Seminary*, 1947, 4 (BGC 136-61-23);

and ignited a widespread and public reassessment of mission aviation practice amongst Protestant missionary leaders. Following Uhlinger's death, a subtle shift in American mission aviation practice and marketing became evident. Mission organizations increasingly placed a greater emphasis on high operational standards, conducted surveys and research into local flight best practices, and increasingly turned to inter-mission collaboration for assistance. All the while overtly propagandistic mission-aviation operations by amateur pilots entered its sustained decline.<sup>26</sup>

Uhlinger grew up in Africa living with his missionary parents. While still in his parents' care, Uhlinger came to see the potential advantages flight offered missionaries. Therefore, after World War Two, Uhlinger returned to the United States and joined the US-based Conservative Baptist Foreign Missionary Society (CBFMS) in hopes of becoming a missionary pilot. In a manner that was reminiscent of Keith Langford-Smith and the Church Missionary Society, CBFMS refused to fund Uhlinger's proposed aviation program, but agreed to let him start one provided he found the capital for such a project himself. Therefore, with help from the LeTourneau Foundation, Uhlinger trained as a pilot and purchased an aircraft.<sup>27</sup> In the late summer of 1947, Uhlinger returned to the Belgian Congo, assembled his airplane, and launched a missionary aviation service for his fellow CBFMS missionaries. Regardless of his spotty flight-

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"Echoes from Ecuador," *Missionary Aviation*, May-Jun. 1948, 6; J. Grady Parrott to Murray Kendon, 2 Sep. 1949 (BGC 136-25-88); Dietrich Buss and Arthur Glasser, *Giving Wings to the Gospel: The Remarkable Story of Mission Aviation Fellowship* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1995), 78.

<sup>26</sup> James C. Truxton to Murray Kendon, 9 Mar. 1948 (BGC 136-25-88); Donald Grey Barnhouse, "Editorial," *Revelation*, Mar. 1948, 199; Paul Hartford, "Minutes of the Opening Session of the Proposed World Missionary Aviation Conference," World Missionary Aviation Council, 25 May 1948 (BGC 136-60-7); Barnhouse, "Missionary Aviation", 1948; Paul Hartford, "Memorandum on the Findings of the World Missionary Aviation Conference Held in Washington, D.C. May 25-26, 1948," World Missionary Aviation Conference, (Washington, D.C.), 1948 (BGC 136-60-7); "World Missionary Aviation," *The China News Letter*, Jul. - Aug. 1948, 20-23 (BGC 136-49-40); Luther L. Grubb, "As the Editor Sees It," *The Brethren Missionary Herald*, 21 Aug. 1948, 729-30; Paul Hartford, "World Missionary Aviation Convention Report," World Missionary Aviation Council, Dec. 7-9 1948; Stuart Sendall-King, *Hope Has Wings: The Mission Aviation Fellowship Story* (Zondervan, 1993); Stuart Sendall-King, interview by Lane Sunwall, 16 Jul., 2009. See also: sources from footnote #12.

<sup>27</sup> "Missionaries Die in Plane Crash (2)," 1948, (BGC 136-61-12).



safety record and limited training, local missionaries eagerly boarded Uhlinger's aircraft and kept the young missionary pilot busy throughout the fall of 1947.<sup>28</sup>

Paul Uhlinger's flight of January 12, 1948, started little differently than his others. Reverend George Kevorkian and Edna May Sill had recently requested a ride to a regional education conference and Uhlinger agreed to shuttle them to the meetings. Earlier that day, Uhlinger had experienced some difficulty sealing his aircraft's gas tanks, but after manufacturing a quick replacement gas cap, Uhlinger prepped his aircraft and set off. A mile or so from the field, and only 500 feet in the air, the aircraft's engine failed. Uhlinger made the (incorrect) decision to circle back to the airfield and attempted to land. He was forced down short of the airstrip, and into a nearby swamp that was blanketed with tall grass. As Uhlinger slowed the plane, the aircraft struck a hidden obstruction. The impact folded back a wing, and pinned it against the cabin door. Gasoline gushed from storage tanks in the destroyed wing and ignited, engulfing the aircraft in flames. Because of the jammed door, Uhlinger and his passengers were unable to escape. All aboard perished in the inferno.<sup>29</sup>

Missionaries around the world mourned the loss of the three missionaries. However, subsequent investigation into the accident revealed that Paul Uhlinger's crash had been the result of a poorly executed emergency maneuver and the presence of water in the fuel lines. At some point since Uhlinger had last refueled his aircraft, water vapor had entered his gas tanks, possibly because of the missing gas cap, and then condensed. The liquid water mixed with the gasoline, entered the fuel lines, and choked the engine during flight. Tellingly, the engine failure of 12 January was not the first time Uhlinger's aircraft had been forced down. During his brief career

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<sup>28</sup> Leslie B. Flynn, "No Place to Land," *Christian Life*, May 1953, 24-26 (BGC 528-2-1).

<sup>29</sup> Tom Banham and Murray Kendon, "'No. 5' Trip-out Report," 2 Feb. 1948 (BGC 136-52-6); Truxton, 9 Mar. 1948 (BGC 136-25-88); "African Plane Crash," *Christian Life*, Apr. 1948, 48 (BGC 528-2-1).

as a pilot, Uhlinger had suffered repeated engine failures because of similar neglect. Perhaps most damningly, this issue was (and continues to be) a common problem faced by pilots. It is one that aviators are taught to anticipate, and it is one that is simple to fix.<sup>30</sup>

The death of three missionaries initiated a broad reevaluation of mission aviation practice amongst Protestant missionaries in the Congo. MAF-UK, who had in 1948 been looking to initiate their own aviation program in central Africa, found the local mission organizations greatly alarmed by the accident and now hesitant to support any new mission aviation venture with MAF unless provided a detailed explanation of how MAF would avoid the same troubles that beset Uhlinger. MAFs' response, which emphasized high safety standards and MAFs' commitment to professional flight practice, assuaged local mission leadership. Furthermore, it flipped the crisis into a long-term boon for the organization, convincing members of CBFMS as to the importance of entrusting mission flights only to professionals. CBFMS missionaries were again flying some years later, but now as passengers aboard MAF aircraft.<sup>31</sup>

The deaths impacted mission operations in the United States as well. News of the accident fomented unease amongst mission staff as to mission aviation best-practice. However, the articles published by the American Christian press concerning Uhlinger tended to limit themselves to reciting facts of the crash as then known, without significant commentary.<sup>32</sup> MAF sought to change that and used the Uhlinger crash to lead public opinion and guide the debates amongst mission staff. MAF believed that the broad interest in the Uhlinger accident provided an opening to educate the Christian public as to the importance of sound aviation practice.

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<sup>30</sup> Banham and Kendon, "'No. 5' Trip-out Report."; Sendall-King, "Interview #1."

<sup>31</sup> "Missionaries Die in Plane Crash," *United Evangelical Action*, 1 Feb. 1948, (BGC 136-61-12); Banham and Kendon, "'No. 5' Trip-out Report."; "Three CBFMS Missionaries Die in Crash," *Missionary Digest*, Mar. 1948, (BGC 136-61-12).

<sup>32</sup> "Missionaries Die in Plane Crash", 1948; "Three CBFMS Missionaries Die in Crash", 1948; "Missionaries Die in Plane Crash (2)", 1948; "African Plane Crash", 1948

Furthermore, James Truxton (of MAF-US) asserted that the accident offered the global MAF branches an opportunity to undercut amateur mission aviation, showcase its folly, and persuade other missionary organizations as to the validity of MAF's own strict operational standards.<sup>33</sup>

One of James Truxton's close contacts, was Dr. Donald Barnhouse, the influential editor of the Christian news magazine, *Revelation*. In the March 1948 edition of his publication, Barnhouse wrote an incendiary editorial concerning the disaster. In the article, Barnhouse warned that operating a mission aviation program with poorly trained amateur pilots was patently dangerous. Safe flight practice, according to Barnhouse, required a staff of fully trained pilots, dedicated maintenance personnel, a large investment in spare parts, and an adequately apportioned ground base. The article implicitly attacked the judgement of Uhlinger, the Conservative Baptist Foreign Missionary Society, and amateur mission aviators in general. Barnhouse concluded by advising Christians to be cautious of mission aviation "propaganda" and avoid supporting aviation programs until they were fully cognizant of operational practice. Protestant leaders and mission administrators, who were the magazine's target audience, would know to read the subtext. Barnhouse was advising Christians to avoid contributing to mission aviation programs like CBFMS and instead support the well-funded, professionalized services he described earlier in the article—services such as MAF.<sup>34</sup>

Barnhouse's editorial bore the distinct mark of James Truxton of MAF. It is very likely that Truxton used his influence to encourage Barnhouse to write the article, and, given Barnhouse's description of safe mission flight practice, Truxton probably supplied some of the

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<sup>33</sup> That Truxton took such an aggressive approach to using Uhlinger's death for propaganda is somewhat shocking given that Uhlinger was in fact a member of MAF-US (#230). See also: Charles Mellis, Jr., "CAMF Active Members - No. 201 to No. 250 inclusive," *Missionary Aviation*, Jul. - Sep. 1946, 6; Tom Banham and Murray Kendon, "Letters from the Congo Survey," pamphlet (MAF-UK, 2 Feb. 1948) BGC 136-52-6; Truxton, 9 Mar. 1948 (BGC 136-25-88); Barnhouse, "Editorial", 1948; Barnhouse, "Missionary Aviation", 1948

<sup>34</sup> Barnhouse, "Editorial", 1948; Truxton, 23 Jun. 1950 (BGC 136-2-27); Truxton, 30 Jul. 1950 (BGC 136-2-27).

direct phrasing.<sup>35</sup> More importantly, Barnhouse's article succeeded in its aims. It humiliated the Conservative Baptist Missionary Society and damaged its standing amongst American Protestants; following the article's publication, the mission permanently ended their in-house aviation program.<sup>36</sup> Soon after the editorial's publication, CBFMS' president wrote a letter to Barnhouse expressing the organization's profound grief regarding the accident and to publicly state that CBFMS' views regarding mission aviation practice were now almost fully in accordance with those espoused in the editorial.<sup>37</sup>

Dr. Barnhouse acknowledged CBFMS' contrite spirit in *Revelation's* June 1948 edition and commented on CBFMS' letter at length. This new editorial was, however, not merely an occasion for Barnhouse to rehabilitate CBFMS' good name, but to again restate his central argument, now reinforced by CBFMS' own remarks. Wrote Barnhouse in his second editorial: "Very small planes may be worthwhile in some fields as a mission project, but the idea of an individual missionary owning his plane and using it as one might today use an automobile is, we believe, foolish." Barnhouse then concluded the June editorial with a long quote from James Truxton's article, "All is not Gold." The quote offered a detailed explanation of why professionalized mission-aviation practice was a necessity, and implicitly reaffirmed Barnhouse's earlier endorsement of MAF.

It becomes increasingly apparent that the bulk of missionary work is such that the training and equipping of many individual missionaries to fly their own aircraft is inadvisable. . . In many ways missionary flying is the most difficult type of flying being done anywhere in the world today, and, if not properly conducted, the most

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<sup>35</sup> Truxton, 9 Mar. 1948 (BGC 136-25-88); Truxton, "Aviation in Missions", 1948; Truxton, 4 Aug. 1950 (BGC 136-2-27).

<sup>36</sup> One must not discount the impact of the death of three missionaries, as well as CBFMS original ambivalence to Uhlinger's program, in the mission societies decision to end their mission aviation operations. That said, looking back on the episode some nineteen years later, CBFMS leaders placed considerable weight on Uhlinger's death as a principal rational for ending their own in-house mission-aviation program. See: Walter Fricke to John Wells, 10 May 1967 (BGC 528-2-1).

<sup>37</sup> Barnhouse, "Missionary Aviation", 1948

dangerous type. Ordinarily, operating far from dependable maintenance facilities and navigational aids, the missionary airman should be a qualified mechanic as well as a skillful pilot and navigator. The more actual and practical experience he has had the better. Such complete training and experience requires more time and expense than the regular missionary should or need assume (whether paid for by himself or the Lord's people), since in most cases missionary flying carried on as a fulltime task by the one specially trained will meet the needs of all missionaries throughout an entire area.<sup>38</sup>

Overall, Barnhouse and Truxton made excellent use of the Uhlinger tragedy, and the crisis it engendered amongst Protestant mission bodies, to buttress their own arguments concerning proper mission aviation practice. Both branches of MAF had been forwarding these ideas to mission organizations for years. However, Uhlinger's death brought to the forefront the necessity of higher mission aviation standards and prompted mission administrators to pay attention to MAF's claims. Furthermore, by having a respected Christian leader spearhead the critique of Uhlinger's aviation methods, MAF did not appear to be using the tragedy for their own benefit – and indeed there is no known evidence to suggest that many outside of MAF knew of Truxton's editorial input in Barnhouse aviation articles.<sup>39</sup>

It is doubtful that Barnhouse's editorials or MAF's warnings directly undermined any amateur mission aviation program in the 1940s. Nevertheless, MAF's arguments, found in and outside the pages of *Revelation*, were important; they provided mission organizations a counter example of mission aviation operation, one that was professionalized and demonstrably safer than amateur operation. Thus, as American views of aviation evolved, and accidents involving mission aviators highlighted the poor operating standards of most mission aviation programs, MAF offered a more acceptable method of mission-aviation. MAF's rigid attention to flight

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<sup>38</sup> James C. Truxton, "All Is Not Gold," *Missionary Aviation*, Jan-Feb 1947, 2, 5; Barnhouse, "Missionary Aviation", 1948

<sup>39</sup> Barnhouse, "Missionary Aviation", 1948; Truxton, "Aviation in Missions", 1948; James C. Truxton to Murray Kendon, 15 Jul. 1948 (BGC 136-25-88); Truxton, 4 Aug. 1950 (BGC 136-2-27).

safety, as well as the Fellowship's aggressive publicity tactics, likewise served MAF's interests more directly. Over the next decade, MAF's operational standards became the norm amongst global mission organizations. By the late 1950s, global Protestant *and* Catholic mission leaders looked to MAF as the *de facto* leader in mission aviation.<sup>40</sup>

### **The Fall of Paul Hartford, Victory Sky Pilots, and the World Missionary Aviation Council**

“Today we stand on the threshold of the greatest day in aviation advancement. We must all work together to do the job.”

~ Paul Hartford (Winona Lake, IN 1946)

Paul Hartford launched his career as a mission aviation expert in the fall of 1944, just as Americans began to anticipate – in all earnestness – a post-War dominated by aircraft. Reading Hartford's publicity of 1945-1951 today, one is struck by his romanticism and apparent ignorance of basic safety considerations. These are valid observations, and quite like those made by MAF in the 1940s. Yet, a myopic focus on Hartford's shortcomings risks overlooking his considerable impact. Hartford's promotional material was very much in line with mid-1940s thinking, informed as it was by urban designers, industrialists, and educators who claimed aircraft were safe and would soon revolutionize society. Therefore, if one interprets Hartford's work through a contemporary lens, one gets a sense for how well he made use of widely accepted sensibilities to advance his own agenda. Hartford did not innovate in using aircraft for publicity, but by so accurately reading mid-1940s aviation culture and co-opting it for religious

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<sup>40</sup> See for example JAARS, African Inland Mission, and the Catholic International Missionary Aviation Foundation. See also: Grady Parrott to Jr. Charles Mellis and James Truxton, 3 Feb. 1948 (BGC 136-2-4); H. P. A. M. Holsheimer to Father Alfred Schmit, Jun. 1964 (BGC 528-1-13); Arnold Newman, "AIM-AIR: Providing air transport for Africa Inland Mission and other agencies," Africa Inland Mission, 1975 (BGC 528-1-4).

purposes. Hartford ensured that there existed a close affinity between his arguments and those made by aviation companies, universities, government planners, and editors of aviation journals.<sup>41</sup> In this way, their writings and publicity reinforced his own. When Piper or Cessna emphasized the intrinsic safety of their vehicles, their ease of operation, and promoted light-aircraft within a context of the post-War “American Dream,” they buttressed Hartford’s own claims regarding the general accessibility of flight.<sup>42</sup>

A similarly symbiotic relationship existed between cultural interest in aviation utopianism and Hartford’s arguments describing how aviation would radically accelerate mission work. The utopianism of aviation had long been a favorite theme of those in the press and wider media. Paul Hartford simply added to it a more spiritual dimension.<sup>43</sup> Indeed, Hartford’s ability to construct a spiritual reality in which aircraft could operate was the source of his publicity’s greatest strength. Educators, urban planners, and government officials alike had sold Americans on a romanticized vision of tomorrow made possible through flight. American Christians came to Hartford’s rallies to witness its fulfillment.<sup>44</sup> Indeed, Hartford offered them a way to usher in that future themselves, arguing that *all* Christian aviators had a role to fulfill as mission aviators. This outlook played to the aspirations of post-War American Christians and offered them a means by which to connect to missions more meaningfully. Thus, private pilots around the US rallied to Hartford’s cause. They fought alongside him against MAF in order that they might open the WMAC to amateur Christian pilots. They fellowshiped together at small airports across the

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<sup>41</sup> *To Fill the Skies with Pilots*, 131.

<sup>42</sup> *Dreams of Flight*, chapters 3 & 4; “An Airplane for Everyman.”

<sup>43</sup> Adrian Hastings, “The Clash of Nationalism and Universalism within Twentieth-Century Missionary Christianity,” in *Missions, Nationalism, and the End of Empire*, ed. Brian Stanley (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2004); *The Shock of the Old*, 87; *ibid.*, chapter 5.

<sup>44</sup> Paul Hartford, “Victory Sky Pilot,” pamphlet (Inc. Victory Sky Pilots, Spring 1945) BGC 136-25-13; Anon., “Preacher Flies Here Sunday,” *Lima News* (Lima, OH), 2 Jun. 1945, 4; Truxton, 4 Aug. 1950 (BGC 136-2-27).

country, and an unknown number involved themselves in Hartford's short-term mission projects to Mexico, Central America, and South America.<sup>45</sup>

There was likewise a secondary religious theme embedded in Hartford's publicity, one that gave his work all the more urgency. Hartford's marketing efforts convincingly welded missions, aviation utopianism, and democratic idealism onto a dispensational eschatology. Around the globe, millions of Protestant fundamentalists and evangelicals believed that the political and social turmoil of the mid-twentieth century were signs, all pointing to an imminent and literal return of Christ—the Second Coming. A not insignificant number fully expected to be taken up in the Rapture at any moment.<sup>46</sup> Therefore, Hartford's emphasis on speeding the missionary endeavor aligned very closely with the views of those millions of Christians who believed the cataclysmic End was upon them. Aircraft, safe and easy to operate, offered an ideal solution for those Protestants dedicated to saving a world that was soon to be judged by its creator.

Hartford's marketing and outreach attracted thousands of supporters, hundreds of pilots, and dozens of mission organizations to his aviation conferences, meetings, and aviation training center, Victory Sky Pilots, Inc.<sup>47</sup> Thus in late 1947, even as both the MAF-UK and MAF-US

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<sup>45</sup> Charles Mellis, Jr. to James C. Truxton, 16 Jan. 1947 (BGC 136-1-102); Nate Saint to James C. Truxton, Charles Mellis, and Grady Parrott, 30 Jul. 1948 (BGC 136-2-8); James C. Truxton to Murray Kendon, 3 Nov. 1948 (BGC 136-1-88); Anon., *The Altoona Mirror* (Altoona, PA), 27 Feb. 1948, 83; Saint, 30 Jul. 1948 (BGC 136-2-8); Paul Hartford, "Review of Events -- 2nd Annual Convention -- World Missionary Aviation Council," pamphlet (WMAC, 26-28 Jul. 1949) BGC 136-60-7; Luther L. Grubb, "As the Editor Sees It," *The Brethren Missionary Herald*, 10 Sep. 1949, 630-31; Emily s. Rosenberg, *Spreading the American Dream: American Economic and Cultural Expansion, 1890-1945*, American Century Series (New York: Hill and Wang, 1982); Brian M. Howell, *Short-Term Mission: An Ethnography of Christian Travel Narrative and Experience* (Downers Grove, IL: InverVasrity Press, 2012).

<sup>46</sup> The Rapture, according to dispensational theology, involves the literal and immediate transfer of all Christians (living and dead) from earth to heaven. See also: Elizabeth Greene, "A Gal, A Plane, and a Dream," *His*, Spring 1943, 9-10 (BGC 136-1-92); Anon., "The Gospel to be radioed to all nations! What then?," *The Brethren Missionary Herald*, 13 May 1944, 266-7; Luther L. Grubb, "Wings for Brethren Home Missions," *The Brethren Missionary Herald*, 18 Oct. 1947, 945-7, 51; Blakeney, "STL Story", 1950

<sup>47</sup> See Billy Graham Center Collections 136, folders 59-28, 25-13, 60-7. See also, BGC 528-2-11.



each struggled to maintain one operational aircraft between the two of them, Paul Hartford had trained some 120 students, twenty-six of whom were then flying in mission stations scattered around the world.<sup>48</sup> Yet, as Hartford's approach to aviation were so entwined in the contemporary interpretation of aviation, his programming was tied to the longevity of those beliefs. As Americans insisted upon greater safety in passenger aircraft and focused with greater sobriety on what a plane could do rather than what it represented, the impact of Hartford's message declined precipitously.<sup>49</sup>

Beginning in 1948, support for Hartford's utopian vision for mission aviation began to falter. Hartford still attracted crowds at Youth for Christ rallies. Furthermore, those who continued to emphasize the imminence of the Second Coming in their own theology found value in Hartford's call to evangelize with all haste.<sup>50</sup> However, over the next four years, his role as a recognized leader of mission aviation faded. Victory Sky Pilots Incorporated was the first to collapse within this new milieu. Missionaries and mission organizations slowly abandoned Hartford's mission training school in favor of more stable and credentialed training centers at Moody Aviation (which was itself closely affiliated with MAF) and LeTourneau Flight School; both programs emphasized higher flight and safety standards. Between late 1947 and 1950, less than 20 additional students came through Hartford's Victory Sky Pilots program, and it is likely that no more than four completed the entire course.<sup>51</sup>

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J. R. Garber, "Missing in Action," *Brown Gold*, Jul. 1950, (BGC 136-61-17); Rev. Fred Jordan, "New Tribes Plane Down," *American Soul Clinic*, Dec. 1950, (BGC 136-61-17).

<sup>48</sup> William Mollenhour, "Sky Writing: Times Union Aviation News and Comment," (Warsaw, IN), 27 Oct. 1947.

<sup>49</sup> *The Winged Gospel*, chapter 5.

<sup>50</sup> See especially contemporary writings of those in leadership positions within New Tribes Mission and the Assemblies of God. See: BGC collection 136, folders 2-27 and 61-17 for New Tribes Mission. See: BGC collection 528, folder 1-5 for Assemblies of God. See also: Anon., "Youth For Christ Caribbean Team Tour a Success", 1952; Anon., "Airborne Mission", 1952; Anon., "Newspage", 1956; Anon., ; Anon., "To Address YFC"

<sup>51</sup> Grady Parrott to Bill Knights, 6 Dec. 1949 (BGC 136-52-6); Anon., "Make that Air Castle Materialize," *The Missionary Challenge*, Jun. 1950, (BGC 528-1-5); Truxton, 21 Oct. 1950 (BGC 136-2-27); Anon., "Aviation in

Perhaps Hartford sensed Victory Sky Pilots imminent death, or simply desired another outlet for his mission vision. For as Victory Sky Pilots began to unravel in 1948, Hartford transferred his energies to the World Missionary Aviation Council.<sup>52</sup> Despite his frequent use of aviation populism and aerial spectacles, Hartford had never entirely discounted more practical aviation concerns. He believed that flight safety was important (even if his understanding of flight safety would now be considered foolhardy), that aerial surveys were essential to the establishment of new air routes, and that Christian organizations would benefit financially from cooperatively operating their flight programs. These views had served as the lynchpin of his initial cooperation with CAMF and their joint missionary aviation conference at Winona Lake, Indiana, in August of 1946.<sup>53</sup> However, the possibility of a merger or even a joint operation between CAMF/MAF and Paul Hartford's Victory Sky Pilots collapsed following Winona Lake, which in turn led to Hartford's creation of a rival aviation consulting program, the World Missionary Aviation Council (WMAC).<sup>54</sup>

### **The Decline of the WMAC**

The WMAC grew out of Hartford's longstanding competition with MAF and his astute understanding of the broad interest in aviation amongst Protestant missionaries, leaders, and the Christian public. Unlike MAF, Hartford correctly anticipated that many mission boards

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Missions", 1951; John Wells and Glenn Arnold, "Winging the Word: Missionary aviation's first 60 years," *Christian Herald*, Sep. 1981, 54-7.

<sup>52</sup> See Truxton letter regarding WMAC and how Hartford only started it after VSP started to go.

<sup>53</sup> *The Shock of the Old*, chapter 4.

<sup>54</sup> Anon., "Missionary Aviation Conference Proceedings and Report," Missionary Aviation Conference, (Winona Lake, IN), 1-4 Aug. 1946 (BGC 136-53-12); Mellis, 16 Jan. 1947 (BGC 136-1-102); Anon., "A World Missionary Aviation Conference was organized," *Theological Observer*, 1948; Hartford, "Minutes of the Opening Session of the Proposed World Missionary Aviation Conference."; Truxton, 15 Jul. 1948 (BGC 136-25-88); James C. Truxton and Charles Mellis, Jr. to Active Members Advisory Council, 21 Jul. 1948 (BGC 136-60-7); James C. Truxton to Murray Kendon, 3 Aug. 1948 (BGC 136-25-88); Grady Parrott to Murray Kendon, 17 Nov. 1948 (BGC 136-25-88); Grady Parrott to Murray Kendon, 16 Feb. 1949 (BGC 136-25-88); Truxton, 6 Jun. 1950 (BGC 136-2-27).

interested in mission aviation would want to operate their own flight programs rather than contract with an outside operation such as MAF or regional commercial operators. Mission organizations had no need to cooperatively operate their automobiles. They questioned why then they would want to do so with airplanes. Astutely, Hartford foresaw that these mission bodies would soon find that their aviation programs required outside technical advice and support to operate effectively.<sup>55</sup> Therefore, despite mission organizations' insistence on independent operation, they would be interested in cooperating to formulate better flight standards.

Interest grew in Hartford's envisioned cooperative consulting organization over the course of the late 1940s, particularly following a spate of crashes amongst missionary pilots beginning in 1947, as well as the impact of evolving American perceptions regarding aviation. By 1948, mission organizations increasingly recognized they had not done enough to ensure the safety and sustainability of their mission aviation programs. The two branches of MAF might have offered this type of assistance. However, both branches faced severe staffing and financial shortages and were focused on developing their own independent aviation programs as well as on their long-term survival. Neither were able (or generally willing) to support fully the many sundry aviation operations requesting assistance.<sup>56</sup>

After two years of collaboration and input from global mission leaders, Hartford called together the World Missionary Aviation Council (WMAC) in May 1948 as a cooperative consulting body of global mission aviation operators.<sup>57</sup> The nearly twenty-five mission groups

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<sup>55</sup> Anon., "Missionary Aviation Conference Proceedings and Report," 1946; Mellis, 16 Jan. 1947 (BGC 136-1-102); Hartford, "Minutes of the Opening Session of the Proposed World Missionary Aviation Conference."; Hartford, "Memorandum on the Findings of the World Missionary Aviation Conference Held in Washington, D.C. May 25-26, 1948," 1948.

<sup>56</sup> Truxton, "All Is Not Gold", 1947; Grady Parrott to James Truxton, 24 Sep 1948 (BGC 136-2-4); Parrott, 16 Feb. 1949 (BGC 136-25-88); Truxton, 20 Jul. 1950 (BGC 136-2-27).

<sup>57</sup> Mellis, 16 Jan. 1947 (BGC 136-1-102); Hartford, "Minutes of the Opening Session of the Proposed World Missionary Aviation Conference."; Paul Hartford, "Constitutional Convention of the World Missionary Aviation Council held at Winona Lake, IN," World Missionary Aviation Council (Winona Lake, IN), 1948 (BGC 136-60-7).

who joined WMAC (or at the least participated in it) gathered together to learn from each other regarding best flight practices, conduct joint research, and even participate in limited inter-mission collaboration. All the while, they maintained control of their flight programs and reaped the rewards brought by marketing them.<sup>58</sup> As it was initially conceived, the WMAC gained broad support and enjoyed considerable growth under the direction of the respected mission leader Dr. Daniel Nelson, director of the Lutheran World Federation and WMAC's first president. Sadly, Dr. Nelson, as well as much of his immediate family, was murdered by pirates off the coast of China in late 1948.<sup>59</sup> Had Nelson lived, the WMAC's trajectory may have been different, for Nelson seemed to have been a moderating influence upon the sensationalistic tendencies of Paul Hartford, WMAC's executive secretary. For following Nelson's death, Hartford wielded an obviously increased influence over the council, which he used to his advantage.<sup>60</sup> Hartford gained significant control over WMAC operations by coordinating his voting bloc, which consisted primarily of amateur private pilots and their wives, at WMAC meetings and conferences. This so-called "promotion bloc" placed a heavy emphasis on spectacle and publicity, as well as creating a prominent role for amateur pilots in mission aviation operations. They routinely fought against the self-named "technical bloc" of MAF supporters who sought to push WMAC towards adopting more stringent, professional standards.<sup>61</sup>

Hartford believed that publicity and the democratizing of mission aviation work would broaden mission aviation's appeal amongst the general Protestant American public. This, in turn, would increase the number of pilots of both amateur and professional status, thereby advancing

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<sup>58</sup> Hartford, "Minutes of the Opening Session of the Proposed World Missionary Aviation Conference."

<sup>59</sup> Truxton, 15 Jul. 1948 (BGC 136-25-88); Saint, 30 Jul. 1948 (BGC 136-2-8); Truxton, 3 Aug. 1948 (BGC 136-25-88).

<sup>60</sup> Besides Nelson, there existed other influential mission leaders within the WMAC's administration. However, they appeared significantly less interested than Nelson in actively directing policy.

<sup>61</sup> Truxton, 15 Jul. 1948 (BGC 136-25-88); Truxton, 3 Nov. 1948 (BGC 136-1-88).

Protestant missions by providing missionaries the ready service of an armada of hundreds and thousands of mission aircraft and part-time missionary pilots. These pilots could fly as charter pilots for missionaries in the United States then on furlough, carry missionaries and their families to mission posts in field, and even tour North America, ministering to the crowds of spectators wherever they might land. Furthermore, Hartford believed, given enough support, that these groups of pilots could develop into an interdenominational men's religious organization, ministering to each other, supporting their own walk of faith, and witnessing to non-believers at airports and landing strips around the country.<sup>62</sup>

Despite Hartford's grandiose plans, the WMAC collapsed after Hartford failed to organize the Council into a pragmatic advising organization and soon lost the confidence of Protestant mission leaders. Mission executives involved in the Council by and large believed that the WMAC as originally conceived (a Christian body dedicated to improving mission flight policy and economy) was an inspired idea. Even those in the MAF, such as Murray Kendon, were supportive of the concept.<sup>63</sup> However, Hartford's inability to avoid sensational spectacles in his publicity campaigns estranged him from many of these leaders. By the late 1940s, aviation culture demanded professionalism and pragmatism far more than populist utopianism. In this new context, Hartford's methods appeared decidedly unserious.<sup>64</sup> The WMAC's second annual meeting, held at the denominational headquarters of the Assemblies of God in Springfield, Missouri, in July of 1949, only highlighted the problem. The conference's focus was clearly on publicity, complete with a fly-in, a formation flight over Springfield, singspirations, and

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<sup>62</sup> Paul Hartford, "Program for the Second Convention of the World Missionary Aviation Council: Wings for the Word to the World," pamphlet (WMAC, Dec. 1948) BGC 136-60-7; Paul Hartford, "Constitution of the World Missionary Aviation Council," pamphlet (WMAC, Fall 1948) BGC 136-60-7; Saint, 30 Jul. 1948 (BGC 136-2-8).

<sup>63</sup> Murray Kendon to Jr. Charles Mellis, 3 May 1948 (BGC 136-25-88); Murray Kendon to James C. Truxton, 16 Sep. 1948 (BGC 136-25-88); Paul Hartford to James C. Truxton, 27 Oct. 1948 (BGC 136-60-7).

<sup>64</sup> Truxton, 15 Jul. 1948 (BGC 136-25-88); Kendon, 16 Sep. 1948 (BGC 136-25-88); Truxton, 3 Nov. 1948 (BGC 136-1-88); Truxton, 21 Oct. 1950 (BGC 136-2-27).

inspirational speeches.<sup>65</sup> It featured only a limited discussion on operational standards and so underscored WMAC's inability to assist in the development of mission aviation operations. The WMAC declined rapidly following the Springfield conference, and the July 1949 gathering was the last major WMAC event of its kind.<sup>66</sup>

WMAC was also critically undermined by its public feud with MAF-US. Both programs represented distinctly opposing visions of mission aviation. Hartford's was populist at heart. He looked to facilitate all forms of aviation for mission purposes and to use mission aviation as a marketing tool to advance Protestant evangelism more broadly. The two MAFs advocated a targeted method of mission aviation that limited itself to only high-need mission fields and revolved around the exclusive use of professional pilots and mechanics to maintain high levels of operational safety. While both MAF branches were in opposition to Hartford's methods, MAF-UK was the more conciliatory of the two. Murray Kendon endeavored to work with Hartford to thereby win the trust of amateur operators, or at the least encourage them to improve standards.<sup>67</sup> MAF-US, and especially James Truxton and Nate Saint, were much more antagonistic. They believed amateur aviation to be irresponsibly dangerous. Towards Hartford they were similarly unkind. Truxton and Saint both actively worked to undermine the WMAC and labeled Hartford a charlatan—an unscrupulous preacher who peddled irresponsible ideas to drum up support from amongst casual mission supporters.

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<sup>65</sup> A singspiration is a special, music-focused church service in which congregants join together in the singing of numerous hymns. The musical portion of the service is often followed by a sermon.

<sup>66</sup> Hartford, "Review of Events -- 2nd Annual Convention -- World Missionary Aviation Council." (1949); Charles Mellis, Jr. to James C. Truxton, 29 Dec. 1949 (BGC 136-1-104); Anon., "News Briefs," *The Brethren Missionary Herald*, 20 Aug. 1949, 592; Truxton, 6 Jun. 1950 (BGC 136-2-27); Paul Hartford, "World Missionary Aviation Council - 3rd Annual Convention," WMAC, Jul. 1950 (BGC 136-2-27).

<sup>67</sup> Kendon, 16 Sep. 1948 (BGC 136-25-88).

The feud between MAF-US and Hartford was a regular feature at WMAC meetings, and neither comported themselves in a particularly magnanimous, or “Christ-like,” manner.<sup>68</sup> MAF endeavored to weaken WMAC by building allies amongst professional Christian aviation technicians, Christian leaders, and publicists. Frequently, MAF attacks against the WMAC were done through proxies or via a flurry of letters written by MAF leaders to Christian leaders.<sup>69</sup> Hartford may have attempted a similar policy. He had allies amongst Christian executives and publishers, and he enjoyed strong ties to Christian aviators around the US who backed him at WMAC meetings.<sup>70</sup> The only Christian administrator to lend consistent published support to Hartford was Luther Grubb of the Brethren Church.

Unfortunately for Hartford – whose arguments were not as foolhardy as MAF claimed – his shrill denunciations of MAF at conferences and WMAC meetings alienated neutral parties and even some of his supporters. Hartford, like any professional evangelist, was a good impromptu speaker. The fire of Hartford’s convictions, however, compelled him to make claims that were personally cutting and not always supported by the evidence.<sup>71</sup> Following a particularly heated debate, Hartford could be conciliatory amongst MAF personnel in private.<sup>72</sup> However, the friction he facilitated between MAF and WMAC undercut support from the many professional

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<sup>68</sup> Anon., "Missionary Aviation Conference Proceedings and Report," 1946; Saint, 30 Jul. 1948 (BGC 136-2-8); Truxton, 15 Jul. 1948 (BGC 136-25-88); Truxton, 3 Nov. 1948 (BGC 136-1-88); Truxton, 6 Jun. 1950 (BGC 136-2-27); James C. Truxton to MAF D-1, 14 Jun. 1950 (BGC 136-2-27).

<sup>69</sup> Truxton, 3 Aug. 1948 (BGC 136-25-88); Truxton, 23 Jun. 1950 (BGC 136-2-27); Truxton, 20 Jul. 1950 (BGC 136-2-27); James C. Truxton to Grady Parrott, 17 Aug. 1950 (BGC 136-2-27); Truxton, 4 Aug. 1950 (BGC 136-2-27).

<sup>70</sup> Joseph H. Oldham, "A new beginning of international missionary co-operation," *International Review of Mission* 9, no. 4 (1920): 481-94; Glenwood Blackmore, "Ox-Cart to Wings," *United Evangelical Action*, 1 Oct. 1945, 7, 19-20 (BGC 136-25-13); Anon., "To the Regions Beyond in . . . Flying Grasshoppers," *Power*, 9 Dec. 1945, 1-3, 7; Anon., "Missionaries Earn Wings at Indiana Flying School," *United Evangelical Action*, 15 Dec. 1945; Religious News Service, "The Week in Religion," *Walla Walla Union Bulletin* (Walla Walla, WA), 5 May 1946, 13; Saint, 30 Jul. 1948 (BGC 136-2-8); Grady Parrott to Elizabeth Greene, 5 Oct. 1948 (BGC 136-2-4); Paul Hartford, "Report of the Alaska Trip," World Missionary Aviation Council, May-Jun. 1950 (BGC 136-60-7).

<sup>71</sup> Truxton, 3 Aug. 1948 (BGC 136-25-88).

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

Christian aircraft technicians who themselves were members of MAF, or at the least supportive of MAF policies. Those aviation technicians were crucial to the WMAC's success. Their cooperation was essential if the WMAC hoped to provide the technical advice mission organizations desired, and that constituted the principal rationale for the WMAC's existence.<sup>73</sup> Furthermore, and most damaging to WMAC long-term, the feud between Hartford and MAF-US served to accentuate the division between professional and amateur mission aviation. It drove supporters of each camp into ever more entrenched positions and destroyed all possibility of meaningful cooperation that could have benefited them both. Certainly, MAF lost support because of their war against Hartford, but Hartford himself was undone through the process.<sup>74</sup>

### **The Death of the Mission Airlines**

The last WMAC program to collapse was its mission airline. Missionary agencies first began operating passenger aircraft in 1945 as a stop-gap measure to compensate for their difficulty transporting missionaries to mission fields following World War Two.<sup>75</sup> By 1948, commercial aviation and shipping had each recovered in both reliability and efficiency and were now able to handle the bulk of mission transportation at affordable rates. However, the large missionary aircraft continued to fly. Even into 1950, the sight of a large airline ship flown by a mission organization proved a compelling spectacle; government officials, the international press, and spectators at home and abroad crowded around mission airliners whenever they

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<sup>73</sup> See: Paul Hartford's "News on the Wing" pamphlet series #1-9, 1949-50 (BGC 136-60-7). See also: Paul Hartford, "Dear Friend of Missionary Aviation," pamphlet (WMAC, 1949) BGC 136-60-7.

<sup>74</sup> Parrott, 5 Oct. 1948 (BGC 136-2-4).

<sup>75</sup> As example see: Emily VanBuren, "Aviation," *Christian Life and Times*, Dec. 1946, 2, 37-8. See also: Charles Mellis, Jr., "The Christian Airmen's Missionary Fellowship IS," *Missionary Aviation*, Oct. - Dec. 1945, 2; Charles Mellis, Jr., "Circling the Globe," *Missionary Aviation*, Jul.-Sep. 1946, 10-11, 14; Grubb, "As the Editor Sees It", 1948; Noel Perkins, "The Ambassador Is Ready," *The Missionary Challenge*, Aug. 1948, (BGC 528-1-5); Rev. Arthur S. Olson, "The "St. Paul" Bows Out: An Editorial," *The China News Letter*, Jan-Feb 1950, 2-5 (BGC 136-61-14).



landed. Therefore, although the need for such operations declined beginning in 1948, the number of large mission aircraft in operation grew: from two in 1947 to four in 1949. Indeed, Scandinavian Missionary Flights, the Lutheran World Federation, and the Assemblies of God all joined WMAC because each program was interested in propping up a mission aviation method that fascinated supporters but had but little practical value.

Large mission-owned aircraft were popular with crowds and raised the public profile of the mission programs that operated them. However, missionary airline service was not particularly popular amongst missionaries or mission administrators outside the WMAC. WMAC's *Missionary Airlines* offered but a small savings over traditional commercial carriers, and at the cost of a commercial carrier's greater flexibility and breadth of service. More damaging to the mission airline's continuation, however, were the changing cultural assumptions concerning flight. In the late 1940s, mission organizers placed an increasing premium on professionalism and safety; the mission airline simply could not match the rigorous safety, training, and maintenance standards of commercial airlines, nor persuade outside mission bodies to risk the lives of their missionaries aboard WMAC aircraft. Despite the efforts of Hartford and the Missionary Aviation Council, the passenger numbers aboard the Scandinavian and Assemblies of God passenger aircraft continued their terminal decline, until one by one the three mission organizations decided to end their airline programs and dropped out of active WMAC participation.<sup>76</sup>

The first WMAC airline to end operations was Scandinavian Missionary Flights (SMF). Between 1945 and 1949, SMF's *St. Ansgar* made thirty-seven separate flights, flew over 515,000 miles, and transported 1,200 missionaries (most Scandinavian) to and from the mission field.

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<sup>76</sup> Truxton and Mellis, 21 Jul. 1948 (BGC 136-60-7); Murray Kendon to Grady Parrott, 12 Nov. 1948 (BGC 136-60-7).

Most of the *St. Ansgar's* passengers had flown prior to 1947. The transportation needs of SMF's member mission agencies flagged following 1946; most post-War emergency transportation needs of SMF's member mission agencies had been met and commercial aviation had improved.<sup>77</sup> By 1948, the *St. Ansgar* was frequently flying with empty seats. The leadership of SMF joined the WMAC that same year to find passengers for its aircraft and resurrect the program. Their gamble failed. Unable to increase the number of paying fares or rationalize the expensive operation for publicity's sake alone, the Scandinavians ended the *St. Ansgar* operation, as well as their affiliation with the WMAC sometime in mid-1949.<sup>78</sup>

The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) ended their aviation program the same year following the collapse of the Republic of China. Up until the very end of the airline operation, the *St. Paul* flew with full loads of missionaries, mission staff, and Chinese nationals fleeing advancing Communist forces. By December 1949, with almost all of mainland China under Communist Party control, the Lutheran World Federation ended the *St. Paul* operation. All in all, the plane had completed 98 flights, flown over 450,000 miles, served almost every Protestant and Catholic missionary organization in China, and carried over ten thousand missionaries, staff, and even Chinese Nationalist military personnel. The Lutherans had little need to join the WMAC in 1948. However, its leader Dr. Daniel Nelson believed that the *St. Paul* was a terrific publicity tool for the mission and sought to expand the *St. Paul* program beyond China. By 1949, the viability of a global aviation program seemed doubtful, and following the collapse of the Chinese National forces, Dr. Nelson's successors ended their mission airline.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Hartford, "Minutes of the Opening Session of the Proposed World Missionary Aviation Conference."

<sup>78</sup> Notes from the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual WMAC Convention suggest that the *St. Ansgar* was still flying 1950. This however, is unlikely. See: Hartford, "World Missionary Aviation Council - 3rd Annual Convention." See also: Charles Mellis, Jr., "From the Field," *Missionary Aviation*, Apr.-Jun. 1946, 12-13. Anon., "The "Ansgar" – Scandinavian Mission Plane," *The China News Letter*, Nov.-Dec. 1949, 19-20 (BGC 136-61-14).

<sup>79</sup> Jan 1950 (Arthur S. Olson, Axel Christiansen, Margi Grytting), Oct. 1949

By January 1950, the Assemblies of God remained the last WMAC member still in active operation. WMAC worked to secure passengers for the *Ambassador*. However, following the termination of the Scandinavian and Lutheran programs, its outreach collapsed.<sup>80</sup> Despite the lack of global affiliates and only marginal assistance from the crumbling WMAC, the Assemblies of God continued to fly the *Ambassador* for both transportation and publicity purposes. That is, until 1951 when the destruction of the two New Tribes Mission passenger aircraft made the *Ambassador's* continued operation a significant publicity risk.<sup>81</sup>

Paul Hartford's career as mission aviation expert ended in 1951 as well. Hartford had built his flight empire between 1944 and 1951, during a short period in which aviation culture had convinced Americans that aircraft would replace automobiles and perhaps alter the course of human existence. By 1948, this vision had begun to fade. Thereafter, fewer missionaries thought to train as part-time pilots, and mission organizations endeavored to improve the safety of their operations. Victory Sky Pilots finally stumbled to an inglorious death in 1952. The bulk of its training aircraft were sent to Brazil, likely to support mission operations in the country.<sup>82</sup> By 1953, its only official function was to act as legal owner of the plane Hartford flew on behalf of Youth for Christ. The WMAC did not appear to survive 1951 either. Its last known public release was from its president Luther Grubb, informing now-disinterested mission organizations that the WMAC stood ready to assist them in all efforts to improve their aviation operations.<sup>83</sup>

In 1952, Hartford left Winona Lake. He joined Youth for Christ as a full-time missionary pilot in Cuba and continued to fly his plane as a grand evangelistic spectacle. He broadcast radio

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<sup>80</sup> Hartford, "World Missionary Aviation Council - 3rd Annual Convention."

<sup>81</sup> The New Tribes disasters will be explored more fully in chapter six.

<sup>82</sup> Based on contemporary aviation registration lists, it appears many of Victory Sky Pilot's planes were exported and reregistered in Brazil in 1953.

<sup>83</sup> Grubb, "Recent Tribesman DC3 Crash Draws Editorial", 1951

messages while flying over cities and dropped leaflets from the sky over the towns at which he and his team would soon speak.<sup>84</sup> By the mid-1950s Hartford had been promoted to director of Youth for Christ activities in the Caribbean. Even then, he continued to fly, and in 1957 he reportedly led an “air armada” to the Pan American Congress on Youth Evangelism.<sup>85</sup>

## Conclusion

Amateur missionary pilots besides Hartford continued to fly into the 1950s and beyond. Yet, the late 1940s was the final epoch in which amateur pilots flew as the standard-bearers of missionary aviation. What Reverend Robert Crawford started in 1920, and Keith Langford-Smith, Paul Hartford, and so many others had carried on, ended in 1950. Their fall came as mission organizations gradually came to insist upon higher training standards for missionary pilots, a greater emphasis on safety in flight operations, and a rigorous focus on economy.

It is devilishly tempting to look back and critique the numerous failures and scandalous excesses of these early mission aviators. In general, MAF was correct; their efforts were wasteful and dangerous. However, it is likewise essential to understand these groups in relation to their settings. When examining third-wave mission aviation history in context of contemporary American aviation culture, the efforts of mid-1940s mission aviators become less outlandish and almost conventional. Paul Hartford is the textbook example. Hartford’s appeal to the democratic ideals of flight played off a common American interpretation of flight that was widely accepted amongst mission organizations through 1948.<sup>86</sup> Indeed, up to late 1946, MAF-US (much *unlike* its London-based counterpart) was in principle agreement with Hartford’s policies.

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<sup>84</sup> Anon., "Youth For Christ Caribbean Team Tour a Success", 1952; Anon., "Flying Evangelist," *Christian Life*, Apr. 1952, 38; Anon., "Islands Ripe for Revival", 1953

<sup>85</sup> Anon., "Newspage", 1956; Anon., ; Anon., "To Address YFC"; Anon., "Missionary Pilot Slated"

<sup>86</sup> See as example: Elrow La Rowe, "A Basis for the Consideration of Practical Missionary Aviation," Nov.-Dec. 1946 (BGC 136-25-61).

CAMF/MAF-US endorsed the use of amateur mission pilots as one part of a larger global mission aviation effort – and as of September 1946, forty-two percent of its active membership was composed of amateur pilots interested in working with MAF to become part-time mission aviators.<sup>87</sup>

Paul Hartford's publicity efforts, like his flight methods, were deeply indebted to contemporary culture. "Flying Paul's" outreach differed little from that of commercial, industrial, and even government aviation promoters.<sup>88</sup> Hartford employed "sensationalized" publicity stunts, such as fly-overs during WMAC rallies, or massed flights of amateur pilots, because they were an accepted form of marketing that drew attention to his work. Hartford understood the impact aircraft had upon mission supporters and so tailored his marketing to match their interests. Therefore, because of his adaptive outreach methods and willingness to accommodate a wide breadth of mission aviation models, Hartford had a much broader base of support amongst American Christians in the 1940s than did MAF. Even as both branches of MAF struggled to begin operations in 1947-48, Hartford had founded a flight school, initiated dozens of mission aviation programs, and built a new global mission aviation initiative (WMAC). The mission airline Hartford coordinated represented an investment of hundreds of thousands of dollars, transported thousands of missionaries, and was an unqualified success as a mission marketing platform. That is, until aviation culture changed and Hartford's empire collapsed.

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<sup>87</sup> See Appendix C.

<sup>88</sup> Frank E. Allen, "Glimpses of the Religious World," *The Covenanter Witness*, 15 Jan. 1947, 34.

Chapter SixHastening the Third Wave's  
Fall (1947-1955)

“There seems to be a very real danger that we will move too fast and send out pilots with so little training that we shall have to learn the hard way in the loss of life. Because of the popularity of flying, because of the glamour involved in flying, there may be some who will get into this field who should be weeded out.”<sup>1</sup>

(Annon., *Missionary Aviation Conference, Moody Bible College, 1946*)

As in the first and second waves, popular aviation culture deeply influenced mission aviation practice in the third wave. New aviation programs launched in early post-War Europe, Australia, New Zealand, and China. However, aviation culture's impact on new programs was particularly felt in the United States as hundreds and thousands of mission aviation enthusiasts supported or launched new programs, many of which were begun with little thought about safety or long-term sustainability. This lack of foresight stemmed from the wild promises of American aviation producers and commentators who claimed aircraft were as safe to operate as automobiles. In addition, it was a consequence of the Evangelical eschatology of many mission aviators, who earnestly believed that as the End Times were nigh approaching, little advantage was to be gained from too much foresight. Therefore, throughout its third wave (1942-1950), mission aviation remained a product of contemporary culture informed by evangelical Protestant eschatology and theology.

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<sup>1</sup> Anon., "Memorandum Concerning Missionary Aviation Conference: Moody," Moody Bible Institute: Chicago, 26 Nov. 1946 (BGC 136-28-6).

Beginning in the late 1940s, as aviation standards improved, and flight became routinized, professionalized, and dull, the excitement generated by airplanes declined. These changes influenced mission aviation as well, and mission aviation as commonly practiced between 1920 and 1950 entered into its decline during the winter of 1947-48. Yet, the impact of the professionalization of flight upon mission aviation was ever so gradual. Heard first in the increasingly nervous tenor of administrators following airplane crashes that involved one or more of their organization's personnel. The perspectives of missionary pilots, casual mission aviation supporters, or mission boosters seemed quite different. For these groups looking ahead to 1950, flight seemed poised to continue its role as a potent mission publicity device. Such optimism would, tragically, be short-lived.

The third wave came to a sudden and appalling end in late 1950 on the heels of two seminal (and entirely avoidable) events: the crashes of the New Tribes Mission's *Tribesman* and *Tribesman II*. The two crashes combined claimed the lives of thirty-six men, women, and children; they nearly destroyed New Tribes Mission, fatally injured the WMAC, and contributed to the end of both the New Tribes Mission and the Assemblies of God mission airline programs.<sup>2</sup> More broadly, the twin accidents brought into question the very survival of mission aviation as a concept. They initiated a barrage of fierce criticism towards most all mission aviation programs from US Protestants. They likewise instigated a crisis amongst US Protestant mission organizations whose leaders now worried that their mission aircraft were a potential liability to their missionaries' lives and the reputation of their core programs. Even MAF leaders feared

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<sup>2</sup> Paul Hartford, "News on the Wing #9," pamphlet (WMAC, Oct. 1950) BGC 136-60-7; Russell T. Hitt, "21 Die in New Tribes Plane Crash As Mission Death Toll Mounts: Christian Public Stunned," *Christian Life*, Jan. 1951, 26; Donald Grey Barnhouse, "Call it Murder," *Eternity*, Mar. 1951; Luther L. Grubb, "As the Editor Sees it: Recent Tribesman DC3 Crash Draws Editorial Comment," *The Brethren Missionary Herald*, 21 Apr. 1951, 274,6.

support for their operations would decline as a result of the accidents, this despite their long labor speaking out against unsafe practices.<sup>3</sup>

Given the seriousness of the accidents and the collateral damage they inflicted, it is tempting to consider the twin *Tribesman* disasters the primary cause of mission aviation's third wave. They certainly hastened the demise of third-wave mission aviation, but they did not end it. The New Tribes crashes held such power to undermine faith in mission aviation because they so clearly obviated the stark operational differences between mission and professional aviation practice. The crashes sparked such an outcry because the perceptions of mission supporters regarding what constituted "safe" flight had shifted. The 'daring adventurers' of a generation past, or the 'everyman pilot' of the mid-1940s was by 1950 increasingly disparaged as an unprincipled and dangerous anachronism. By the late 1940s, flight was ever more understood as a professional service, and was not supposed to be an adventure. The accident threw light upon the amateur nature of the majority of mission aviation operations and placed them in an unfavorable comparison with professional aviation. Mission aviation as a result, looked increasingly dangerous and unethical given the growing consensus as to the need for professional discipline and high standards of flight safety.

### **The Two Tragedies of New Tribe Missions**

New Tribes Missions began their own airline venture in 1949 with all the gusto of the Assemblies of God and for very similar purposes. Both were ostensibly logistical ventures to transport missionaries. But in truth, they were more important as tools of propaganda. Paul Fleming, New Tribes Missions founder and the force behind his mission's airline operations,

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<sup>3</sup> James C. Truxton to MAF D-1, 23 Jun. 1950 (BGC 136-2-27); James C. Truxton to D-1, 20 Jul. 1950 (BGC 136-2-27); James C. Truxton to MAF D-1, 30 Jul. 1950 (BGC 136-2-27).



began his mission career serving in Malaya with the Christian and Missionary Alliance. In Malaya, Fleming had proved a decidedly impatient missionary, unsatisfied with the slow rate at which missionaries reached out to nearby unsaved people groups. By his own account, Fleming relentlessly pushed his fellow missionaries towards greater exertion and told those who disagreed with his mission approach that they were poor evangelists, insufficiently dedicated to God. Unsurprisingly, Fleming quickly alienated himself from his fellow missionaries, and so left Malaya and the C&MA to found in 1942 his own missionary organization, New Tribes Mission.<sup>4</sup>

Fleming organized New Tribes Mission as a Fundamentalist evangelical organization whose members committed themselves to swift advances into new mission fields and the rapid conversion of unreached peoples.<sup>5</sup> The urgency of Fleming's program was informed in part by his Hudson Taylor-like concern for those "millions" dying without knowledge of the Gospel, as well as by his premillennialist eschatology. Fleming's views regarding the End Times were common among Fundamentalists of the era; he held to an imminent and literal rapture of all Christians, followed by a period of Tribulation. Christians everywhere, Fleming believed, were duty-bound to save as many as possible before the fast-approaching End Times stripped the unsaved from their last best hope of salvation. In less than two years, Fleming attracted, trained, and sent over one hundred fifty missionaries, but struggled to keep the mission financially stable. Furthermore, his unorthodox mission outlook combined with his decided impatience alienated him from his initial board of directors, most of whom soon quit.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Hitt, "21 Die in New Tribes Plane Crash", 1951; Anon., "The New Tribesman," *Time*, 27 Aug. 1951, (BGC 136-61-17).

<sup>5</sup> Paul W. Fleming, "Seven Completed Flights," *Brown Gold*, Jul. 1950, (BGC 136-61-17).

<sup>6</sup> Rev. Fred Jordan, "New Tribes Plane Down," *American Soul Clinic*, Dec. 1950, (BGC 136-61-17); "The New Tribesman", 1951; Hitt, "21 Die in New Tribes Plane Crash", 1951

In the field, Fleming's missionaries mimicked the tendencies of their director and hastily pushed into new ministry regions. Once arrived at their posts, New Tribes laborers established contacts with local peoples, learned their dialect, and shared the gospel. Then, after their brief encounter with the one group, the missionaries moved deeper "into the hinterland" to start the process anew. Most other mission organizations considered Fleming's tactics overly aggressive, undisciplined, and potentially dangerous. These warnings were seemingly confirmed in 1943 when five New Tribes missionaries were killed by a group of Bolivian Indians whom other mission groups had known to be hostile to outside intruders and so had avoided.<sup>7</sup> Fleming was not deterred by his missionaries' deaths and spun the tragedy into a call to action. He challenged his supporters to offer themselves to foreign missions, even if it meant sacrificing their lives to the cause, as had the dead missionaries in Bolivia. The stratagem proved a boon to New Tribes support and Fleming continued to attract new volunteers.<sup>8</sup>

Fleming's approach to mission aviation was simply a mechanized version of his broader mission strategy. God, Fleming believed, called for total dedication and a focused sense of urgency. Aircraft were thus a natural means by which to expand this process. Only the most modern methods, Fleming stated in New Tribes' magazine, *Brown Gold*, would allow the mission to "move rapidly into the regions beyond" and save those lost in ignorance of Christ.<sup>9</sup> In 1947, New Tribes Mission sent missionary Mel Wyma, a former student of Paul Hartford, to Bolivia to fly the small mission-owned Stinson. Unfortunately, when Wyma began the service he was inattentive to operational safety, unfamiliar with regional flight routes, and disregarded local regulations. His inexperience and poor training resulted in several near-misses amongst the

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<sup>7</sup> Fleming, "Seven Completed Flights", 1950; Hitt, "21 Die in New Tribes Plane Crash", 1951

<sup>8</sup> Fleming, "Seven Completed Flights", 1950

<sup>9</sup> Paul W. Fleming, "Tomorrow We Fly," *Brown Gold*, Jul. 1943, (BGC 136-61-17).

Andes, a week in jail after failing to clear his flights with local officials, and a crash in 1949.<sup>10</sup> Nevertheless, Wyma helped New Tribes solve numerous logistical challenges plaguing their missionaries who were then operating far from central resource centers. He provided rapid transport in cases of emergency, delivered goods, shuttled staff, and scouted new villages for subsequent mission incursions. Furthermore, Fleming discovered that Wyman's Stinson worked as an evangelistic tool in its own right. The single-engine light-aircraft attracted interest wherever it landed. The plane drew people to Wyma's speeches and helped him smooth out the difficulties of first contact with unreached villages. Furthermore, Fleming believed, the aircraft bequeathed a certain prestige upon the mission in the eyes of the people they hoped to convert.<sup>11</sup>

Therefore, despite Wyma's insufficient training and close brushes with death, Fleming saw his work as the foundation for the next epoch of New Tribes expansion, and so enlarged New Tribes Mission's aviation program.<sup>12</sup> In 1948, the New Tribes missionary "boot camp" in southern California began a light-aircraft aviation school to train New Tribes missionaries in light-plane operation. By mid-year, chief instructor Clifford Martz was training some fifteen missionary pilots.<sup>13</sup> Yet, even then New Tribes mission operations were advancing too slowly for Fleming. Certainly, Fleming considered it a positive that missionaries were training to fly locally amongst mission stations, but he thought more could be done to deliver missionaries to the actual mission field at a quicker pace. Only in the field, Fleming observed, could New Tribes missionaries fan out to battle against "the creeds of Satan" in a war for lost souls.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> "To the Regions Beyond in . . . *Flying Grasshoppers*," *Power*, 9 Dec. 1945, 1-3, 7; Anon., *Early History of the New Tribes Mission and Life and Work of Paul Fleming* (Woodworth, WI: Brown Gold Publications, n.d.); Kenneth J. Johnston, *The Story of New Tribes Mission* (Sanford, FL: New Tribes Mission, 1985).

<sup>11</sup> Mel Wyma, "Over Savage Village by Air," *Brown Gold*, Apr. 1948, (BGC 136-61-17).

<sup>12</sup> Paul W. Fleming, "Big Wings for a Big Job," *Brown Gold*, May 1949, (BGC 136-61-17).

<sup>13</sup> Paul W. Fleming, "Holding the Ropes," *Brown Gold*, Jun. 1948, (BGC 136-61-17).

<sup>14</sup> Fleming, "Big Wings for a Big Job", 1949; J. R. Garber, "Missing in Action," *Brown Gold*, Jul. 1950, (BGC 136-61-17).

Fleming's problems returned to the issue of logistics. Despite the rapid improvement of global transportation following World War Two, Fleming concluded that shipping and aviation transportation were too expensive, erratic, and unsuitable for his mission's needs. Missionaries, Fleming wrote his supporters, were unable to book reliable or affordable travel to their posts in South America and Asia, and New Tribes mission was unable to pay for frequent administrative visits to missionaries in the field, where leadership better coordinate activities. Fleming believed he could remedy the situation with his own airline. In 1949 Fleming purchased a used DC-3 from



New Tribes Missionaries, staff, and crew before their first flight to Brazil in the *Tribesman*. Picture taken 17 June 1949, Chico, California. Ben Wetherald is seated in the front row, second from left. Paul Fleming is seated in the front row, second from right.

Picture from: Paul W. Fleming, "17,000 Miles by Air." *Brown Gold*, Jul. 1949, (BGC 136-61-17).

American Airlines for a bargain price of \$8,500, renamed the former airline flagship the *Tribesman*, and used it to send his missionaries to the field *en masse*.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>15</sup> *The Story of New Tribes Mission*, chapters 11, 12.

Just as he had faced censure for his mission methods in Bolivia, Fleming received a barrage of criticism for his mission's airline program. MAF and others had already reproached New Tribes for the lax operational standards of their light-plane program, and considered the *Tribesman* an unsafe and inefficient duplication of commercial airline services. Fleming disregarded their advice. He believed it was a Christian's duty to evangelize by any means necessary, even if that meant taking risks in the process. Wrote Fleming in mid-1949:

“We still find, however, much opposition to using such a modern means of transportation. Missionary work which should be the most aggressive, most forceful and determined effort of the Church of Jesus Christ is often remaining in the horse and buggy stage just because we do not have the courage to use what is available in our day to hasten the advance of the Gospel in the remote, untouched parts of the world.”<sup>16</sup>

Fleming penned these words in his 1949 article entitled “Big Wings for a Big Job,” in which he rationalized the need for the *Tribesman* to his supporters. Of course, Fleming was not simply selling his method of mission mass transit. He hoped to rebut mission aviation critics as he promoted a larger image of New Tribes Mission as “courageous,” “modern,” and perhaps even unique in its “aggressive” commitment to reaching others for Christ. Likewise, Fleming depicted the *Tribesman* itself as not just a means by which to move missionaries from point “A” to point “B,” but a symbol of his mission's courageous commitment to carry forth the Christian message by whatever means necessary.

Paul Fleming purchased the *Tribesman* to speed missions; he flew it to craft New Tribes' image. Fleming sent the *Tribesman* on tours of the United States to spark interest in his mission's work. When the aircraft ferried missionaries from its base in Los Angeles across the United States to Chicago, Miami, and then to mission stations in South America, Fleming held rallies and meetings wherever the DC-3 landed. Spectators gathered to see the plane and tour the inside.

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<sup>16</sup> Fleming, "Big Wings for a Big Job", 1949

They also heard speeches in which Fleming and other leaders explained the urgency of mission work and challenged the audience to climb aboard the *Tribesman* as passengers and fly off to the mission field themselves. New Tribes regularly used their DC-3 in their broader marketing campaigns as well. They featured the aircraft as a symbol of the program's modernity, an icon of the urgency of missions, and an obvious emblem of their fast growth over the previous seven years. *Tribesman* marketing proved such a triumph that even New Tribes missionaries in field were caught up in the airplane's potential to build enthusiasm for missionary work. Mrs. Joe Jenkins, a New Tribes missionary to South America captured the enthusiasm quite well:

“Oh, but the publicity, the notoriety, and the propaganda value of the plane cannot be estimated in dollars and cents. And it has been the means of challenging so many more people to give their lives for the Lord's service.”<sup>17</sup>

The *Tribesman* made a total of seven round-trip voyages to South America between June 1949 and June 1950. The aircraft proved so effective for publicity and transportation purposes that the mission considered enlarging the program to include an expensive, four-engine DC-4. The DC-4's longer range, and cargo capacity would permit the mission to transport personnel on the long jump across the Pacific to Japan, from which Fleming hoped to expand quickly throughout Asia.<sup>18</sup> The plans came to naught, however, for the *Tribesman* program collapsed a year later.

The end of New Tribes Mission's airline venture began on 9 June 1950. Captain Ben Wetherald set out on the *Tribesman's* eighth flight, loaded with seven missionaries, five children,

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<sup>17</sup> To be fair to Mrs. Jenkins, this quote was recorded by a skeptical James Truxton in a confidential office memo to other MAF staff. In the letter Truxton severely condemned Fleming and New Tribes Mission for their emphasis on publicity and not sound aviation practice. One might take Truxton's quote as an exaggeration. However, the type of attitude of which Truxton speaks was readily apparent in New Tribes' marketing of their aircraft. See also: Truxton, 20 Jul. 1950 (BGC 136-2-27); *The Story of New Tribes Mission*, chapters 11 - 12.

<sup>18</sup> Paul W. Fleming, "Planning Flight to Far East," *Brown Gold*, Oct. 1949, (BGC 136-61-17).

and two additional crew members.<sup>19</sup> On their way to the mission fields of South America, Captain Wetherald refueled at Kingston, Jamaica, and left for the final leg of the day's journey to Maracaibo, Venezuela at 3:45pm.<sup>20</sup> The flight plan put the *Tribesman* into Venezuela at twilight and around the time the Maracaibo airport normally closed for the evening. Captain Wetherald had flown into Maracaibo on numerous occasions and was familiar with the policy. He therefore asked Jamaican airport officials to alert the Maracaibo airport of his arrival so the facility would remain open until he landed. At 6:02 pm, air controllers stationed at Balboa Airport, Panama City, advised Wetherald that Maracaibo had then already ended air to ground radio communication and would soon shut down its point to point radio navigation beacon as well. However, the sky was clear, the winds moderate, and the radio beacon was not required for navigation. Wetherald continued with the scheduled flight and fifty minutes later radioed back to Balboa that he was just then flying over the Colombian coast, twenty-five minutes out of Maracaibo and beginning his descent. This was the last radio message sent by the flight.<sup>21</sup>

The *Tribesman* was not confirmed missing for over a week.<sup>22</sup> The aircraft's flight plan was somehow lost in a mix-up and seems to have never reached Maracaibo's control tower.<sup>23</sup> Therefore, airport officials were not anticipating Wetherald that evening, and after the day's last

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<sup>19</sup> Associated Press, "Missionary Plane Carrying 21 Strikes Peak in Rockies," *The Capital Times* (Madison, WI), 22 Nov. 1950, 1, 8.

<sup>20</sup> All times are reported in Eastern Standard Time

<sup>21</sup> Truxton, 23 Jun. 1950 (BGC 136-2-27); D. W. Rentzel et al., "Accident Investigation Report: New Tribes Mission, Fonseca, Colombia, South America, June 9, 1950," ed. Civil Aeronautics Board (1951).

<sup>22</sup> There are conflicting reports concerning the timeline of events post-crash. I was thus forced to blend the various accounts. Fleming's account of his actions following the crash are taken primarily from his July 1950 article, "Seven Completed Flights." Most other material originates from the government investigation into the accident. See: Fleming, "Seven Completed Flights", 1950; Rentzel et al., "Accident Investigation Report: New Tribes Mission, Fonseca, Colombia, South America, June 9, 1950."

<sup>23</sup> Unofficial word-of-mouth from Pan American personnel suggests that airport staff did receive news of Wetherald's intended arrival but that the message was somehow lost prior to its relay to the control tower. See: James C. Truxton to MAF D-1, 28 Aug. 1950 (BGC 136-2-27).

known flights had arrived, the crew closed the airport on schedule.<sup>24</sup> Air-traffic controllers at Panama's Balboa Airport, however, remained in contact with the *Tribesman* throughout its flight. After they advised Wetherald of Maracaibo's imminent closure, they offered to pass along the flight's arrival time to officials at Kingston who were responsible for tracking the flight until it landed. Unfortunately, Balboa mistook Wetherald's report that he was twenty-five minutes out of Maracaibo to mean that the flight was safely under Venezuelan direction and as good as landed. Therefore, no one thought anything amiss the next morning. Balboa and Kingston officials believed that the aircraft had arrived safely in Maracaibo. All the while Maracaibo officials never knew to expect the plane. Back in the United States, Paul Fleming, having heard of nothing amiss, rested content that his DC-3 had arrived in Venezuela and was then continuing further into South America to deliver his missionaries to their individual stations.<sup>25</sup>

It was only five days later that captain Wetherald's wife, Mrs. Donna Wetherald, begin to inquire concerning her husband's flight. Paul Fleming joined in the search the day after, curious as to the DC-3's location, but confident that nothing was amiss. Surely, rationalized Fleming, the New Tribes administrator aboard had simply asked Wetherald to delay the return flight to the USA so as to spend more time in consultation with local New Tribes missionaries. Similar delays had happened before. Only on July 17, after increasingly frantic phone calls and inquiries on the part of Donna Wetherald yielded no results, did it become apparent that the *Tribesman* had never arrived in Maracaibo. The missing missionary aircraft was soon splashed across the front pages of newspapers around the country even as contradictory stories emerged regarding the flight's

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<sup>24</sup> However, the official investigation into the crash, noted that the Balboa airport in Panama had forwarded Wetherald's 5:52pm position and arrival report to Maracaibo. It remains unknown who heard that report or if it was forwarded to the proper official. See: Rentzel et al., "Accident Investigation Report: New Tribes Mission, Fonseca, Colombia, South America, June 9, 1950."

<sup>25</sup> Fleming, "Seven Completed Flights", 1950



status, including one published in *Christian Life* that implied that the occupants of the plane were safe and sound after an emergency landing on an isolated Colombian beach.<sup>26</sup> The report turned out to be but a desperate hope.

On 6 July, almost a month after the plane had disappeared, and over a week after Colombian officials had given up their search, a New Tribes Mission scout plane found the lost DC-3's wreckage scattered amongst the Colombian mountains. An overland rescue mission revealed that all were indeed dead, killed instantly after the aircraft rammed into the northeasterly end of the Serranía de Valledupar Range at an elevation of some 4,400 feet.<sup>27</sup> The tragedy placed an unwelcome spotlight on New Tribes Mission's policies. Even as the mission mourned its lost personnel, New Tribes Mission, and Paul Fleming in particular, sustained withering criticism from fellow mission organization leaders who questioned the mission's decision to fly a loaded DC-3 with what some considered an unqualified crew.<sup>28</sup>

New Tribes Mission deflected the condemnations as best it could. Fleming emphasized to supporters that they had taken every precaution in maintaining the aircraft and stressed that the late captain Wetherald and his crew were highly trained, former-military pilots who were certainly not to blame. The accident, according to Fleming, was the tragic result of unforeseen weather and the negligence of airport officials. Certainly, Fleming conceded, the aircraft was off-course, but only as result of the strong 30 to 35 mile-per-hour winds that blew Wetherald off his flight path. Twilight played its part as well, casting into impregnable shadow the navigational

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<sup>26</sup> Truxton, 23 Jun. 1950 (BGC 136-2-27); "Bellwood Man, 14 Others Die In Plane Crash," *Altoona Mirror* (Altoona, PA), 1 Jul. 1950, 18; Truxton, 20 Jul. 1950 (BGC 136-2-27); Russell T. Hitt, "15 Killed in Crash," *Christian Life*, Aug. 1950, 29-30; Associated Press, "Missionary Plane Carrying 21 Strikes Peak in Rockies"; Hitt, "21 Die in New Tribes Plane Crash", 1951

<sup>27</sup> Paul W. Fleming, "Missing DC-3," *Brown Gold*, Jun. 1950, (BGC 136-61-17); Associated Press, "Missionary Plane Carrying 21 Strikes Peak in Rockies"

<sup>28</sup> Truxton, 23 Jun. 1950 (BGC 136-2-27); Fleming, "Seven Completed Flights", 1950; James C. Truxton to Paul Fleming, 10 Jul. 1950 (BGC 136-57-19); *The Story of New Tribes Mission*, 117-8.

markers the crew would have otherwise used to regain their course, while high cloud banks hid the dangerous mountains into which they were flying (both of these claims were later shown to be inaccurate). Even if off-course when entering Colombian airspace, Fleming argued the *Tribesman* could have been saved. Had Maracaibo not switched off its navigational beacon, the radio signal would have alerted Wetherald of his position and guided him away from the mountain range. In the end, Fleming admitted no wrongdoing on the part of New Tribes members. He cast almost all responsibility for the *Tribesman*'s demise at the feet of Maracaibo airport officials, and openly accused them of criminal negligence for switching off the radio beacon despite having been informed of the *Tribesman*'s flight plan. Furthermore, Fleming argued that Balboa and Kingston airport officials were culpable as well, as they had not done enough to ensure Maracaibo knew of Wetherald's impending arrival.<sup>29</sup>

Despite Fleming's public defense of his pilot and his mission aviation program, many others blamed the accident on the *Tribesman*'s crew and New Tribes Mission's airline program in general. MAF, along with its supporters amongst Protestant mission leaders, considered the crash the inevitable result of New Tribes Mission's questionable decision to continue their airline program.<sup>30</sup> Indeed, the very fact that no one even knew for almost a week that the plane was missing highlighted the danger of flying non-scheduled passenger flights. A simple mishap could – and did – lead to disaster, such as when Maracaibo shut down its radio beacon because of a misplaced message informing them that the aircraft was on its way. If the plane had been a regularly scheduled airline flight, the airport would have anticipated their landing and never shut down communication or navigation beacons in the first place.<sup>31</sup> Of course, MAF leaders likewise

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<sup>29</sup> Fleming, "Seven Completed Flights", 1950

<sup>30</sup> Barnhouse, "Call it Murder", 1951

<sup>31</sup> Truxton, 23 Jun. 1950 (BGC 136-2-27).

pointed out that Wetherald ignored safety considerations in his attempt to land at Maracaibo so late in the evening, knowing he would arrive after the airport was closed. Furthermore, he and his crew's failure to navigate accurately from Kingston to the Colombian coast called into question their general competence. All in all, MAF leaders considered this but a tragic consequence of New Tribes Mission's widely known and longstanding history of negligence in matters of aviation safety and considered the crash the likely result of gross pilot error.<sup>32</sup>

The US Civil Aviation investigation into the crash tended to agree with MAF's own initial assessment. The Civil Aeronautics Board's final report found no evidence of the 30 to 35 mph winds described by Fleming and did not believe that the light-to-moderate 16 to 20 mph northeasterly winds Wetherald would have encountered in flight were enough to impact his ability to navigate significantly. Nor did the investigators censure Maracaibo's airport officials, as they closed their facilities according to known practice. The US aviation board instead assigned much of the responsibility for the accident to captain Wetherald. The investigators questioned Wetherald's decision to continue with his original flight plan knowing he would arrive after Maracaibo was scheduled to shut down its radio beacons and close its runway. Furthermore, the board noted that the Maracaibo's radio policy alone would not account for the disaster.<sup>33</sup> The navigational beacon was a convenient means of direction-finding, but not necessary had Wetherald and his crew successfully navigated the plane. *Tribesman* was some thirty miles west of its flight path when it first flew over the Colombian coast at 6:02 pm, heading into the high mountains north and west of Maracaibo. Yet, even after crossing the South American coastline, Wetherald had some forty minutes of light and good visibility to find his bearings and correct course before darkness shrouded the landscape below. Furthermore,

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid.; Truxton, 20 Jul. 1950 (BGC 136-2-27); James C. Truxton to Grady Parrott, 4 Aug. 1950 (BGC 136-2-27).

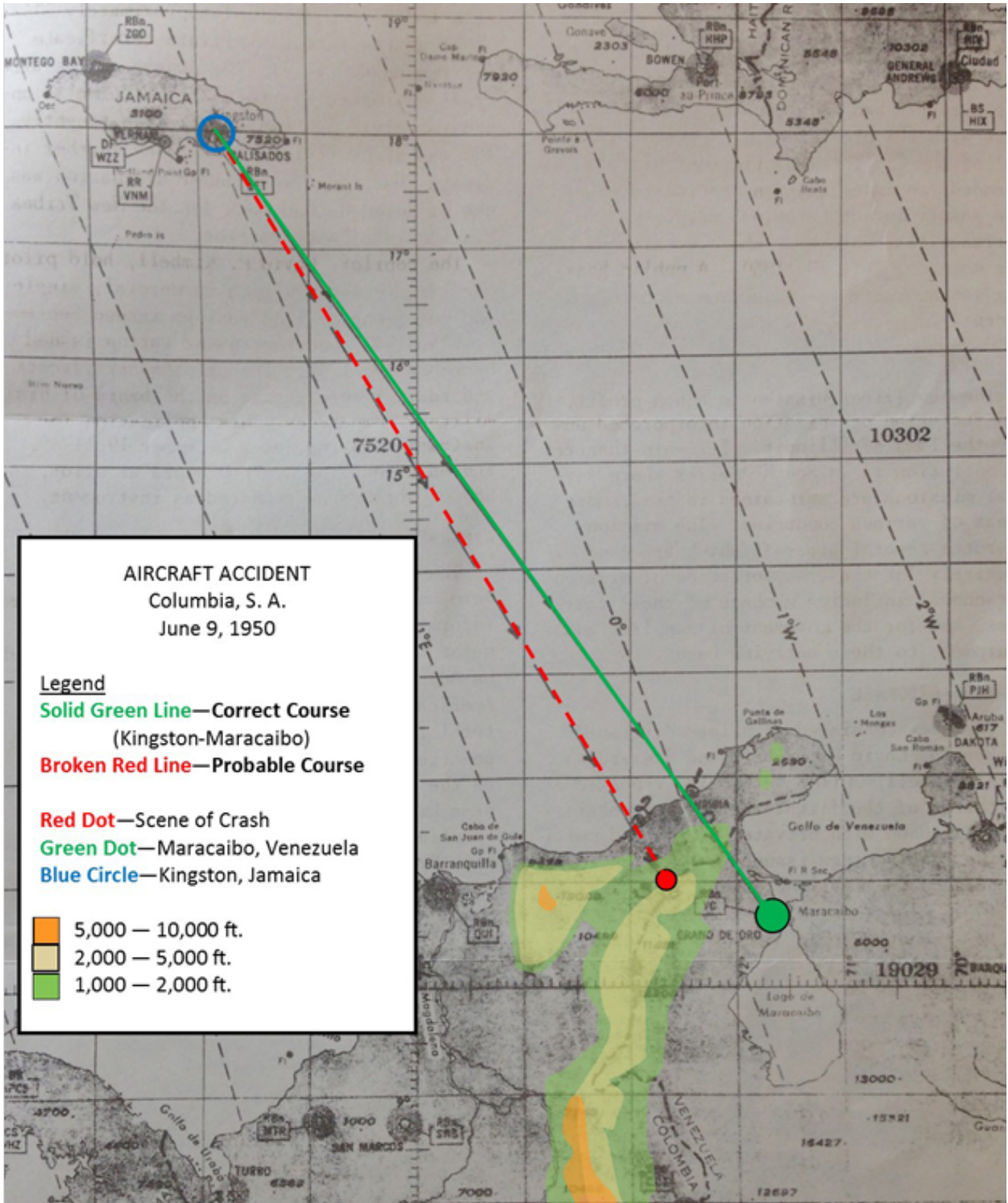
<sup>33</sup> Truxton, 10 Jul. 1950 (BGC 136-57-19).

Maracaibo's radio beacon was only shut off at 6:53 pm, and calculations based the location of the plane's wreckage placed the accident at or around 7:00 pm. Therefore, it is entirely probable that the *Tribesman* had access to the navigational signal until the last seven minutes of flight – a fact that casted additional doubt on the navigational abilities of *Tribesman's* crew. Mechanical failure was likewise a possibility. However, here Paul Fleming's statements claiming the *Tribesman* was in good flying condition rang true. The *Tribesman* had remained in constant contact with Balboa airport throughout its flight. Had the plane lost altitude due to a mechanical failure, the crew would have most likely been able to make an emergency broadcast before their crash.

Therefore, the Civil Aviation report concluded that pilot error and faulty navigation played central roles in the accident. The *Tribesman* crew were blown off course by light-to-moderate winds of which they were aware. They misjudged their location after they first crossed the coastline in good visibility with the sun still in the sky and failed to navigate properly using radio beacons. As a result, soon following twilight, the crew unknowingly rammed the DC-3 into the Colombian mountainside, instantly killing all aboard. However, as US aviation officials did not have access to the crash site, they did not feel they had enough evidence to blame the pilot or co-pilot *officially* for the accident. New Tribes Mission held tight to that fact and for years maintained their own version of events; Wetherald crashed because of a toxic combination of high winds, poor visibility, and the negligence of Maracaibo and Kingston airport officials.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Truxton, 23 Jun. 1950 (BGC 136-2-27); Anon., "Bellwood Man, 14 Others Die In Plane Crash"; Paul Fleming, "Plane Found!: From Bob Shaylor Report," *Brown Gold*, Jul. 1950, (BGC 136-61-17); Fleming, "Seven Completed Flights", 1950; Truxton, 10 Jul. 1950 (BGC 136-57-19); Associated Press, "Missionary Plane Carrying 21 Strikes Peak in Rockies"; United Press International, "Little Hope for 21 On Crashed Plane: Glacier in Path of Search Party," *The Terre Haute Star* (Terre Haute, IN), 23 Nov. 1950, 1, 4; *Early History of the New Tribes Mission*, 73-6; *The Story of New Tribes Mission*.



Map Retrieved from: Rentzel, D. W., Oswald Ryan, Josh Lee, Joseph P. Adams, and Chan Gurney. "Accident Investigation Report: New Tribes Mission, Fonseca, Colombia, South America, June 9, 1950." edited by Civil Aeronautics Board, 1951 (BGC 136-61-15)

Fleming and others in leadership struggled to come to grips with the loss of the DC-3 and their missionaries, even as they dealt with the biting criticism of their program. As they regrouped, New Tribes leaders drew their supporters' memories back to the deaths of the five missionaries in 1943. Like those martyred in Bolivia, Fleming wrote that those who died in the DC-3 crash were not passive victims caught in a freak accident. They were casualties in a spiritual war against the Devil and all the forces of darkness. The Colombian crash, declared Fleming, should not therefore be cause for long periods of mourning or an excuse to stop their aviation program. Their deaths were a reminder that New Tribes Mission was at war; as soldiers of Christ, missionaries should expect casualties. The dead in Colombia were martyrs, stated Fleming, and oh what a glorious eternity awaited those who had been chosen for such an honor!<sup>35</sup> As for New Tribes Mission, yes, it had suffered losses, but would not retreat; it would not yield up those lost and ignorant to the forces of hell. The aircraft, Fleming continued, was a crucial weapon with which to send missionaries to the front lines of the spiritual warfare then raging. Both the plane and the missionaries lost in the crash needed to be replaced. Donna Wetherald, now widowed, joined Fleming in challenging New Tribes supporters to devote themselves more deeply to God in their battle against hell. Who, asked Mrs. Wetherald, would stand in her husband's place to help the mission reinstitute their aviation service?<sup>36</sup>

Fleming's impassioned plea in the face of such tragedy struck a chord amongst his supporters. By early September, and after only two months of campaigning, the mission had raised \$26,000 for a new plane.<sup>37</sup> The mission heralded the speed at which donations for the new plane had poured in as a sure sign of God's desire that they steadfastly carry on in their aviation

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<sup>35</sup> Fleming, "Seven Completed Flights", 1950; Garber, "Missing in Action", 1950

<sup>36</sup> Fleming, "Seven Completed Flights", 1950; Garber, "Missing in Action", 1950; Donna Wetherald, "If Only," *Brown Gold*, Jul. 1950, (BGC 136-61-17).

<sup>37</sup> Paul Fleming, "Mission Completed," *Brown Gold*, Jul. 1950, (BGC 136-61-17).

operation. With their windfall donations, New Tribes Mission purchased another C-47 that they named *Tribesman II*. The mission immediately began to retrofit the military aircraft for passenger service beginning later that fall.<sup>38</sup>

Jim Truxton and others amongst MAF-US leadership were aghast at Fleming's decision to resume his aviation program. New Tribes' airline program, in MAF's eyes, was a wasteful extravagance, dangerous, and a threat to MAF. Truxton, not the best of diplomats, shared his views publicly: to global mission leaders, in Christian magazines such as *Revelation* and *Christian Life*, as well as in an emotional letter to Paul Fleming himself.<sup>39</sup> Truxton and most of MAF's executive team believed that New Tribes' motivations was not much different from those of the Assemblies of God's own *Ambassador* airline, or even most other mission aviation programs then flying. MAF suspected that these operations were at heart publicity ventures designed to draw interest in the missions. Aircraft and their pilots attracted the national press, drew crowds to evangelistic meetings, and helped a mission organization raise money.<sup>40</sup> Wrote Truxton to his fellow MAF administrators soon after the June 1950 accident:

“You take any average congregation out to L. A. Municipal airport to see a mission owned and operated DC-3 come in with a planeload of missionaries – and have a stirring missionary talk given right there by the side of the plane – and my guess is that you'll have several starry eyed boys and girls deciding they'd like to be missionaries too.”<sup>41</sup>

Indeed, Truxton quite accurately anticipated how Fleming would publicize the DC-3 tragedy to raise additional funds for New Tribes Mission. Truxton believed that, just as in the aftermath of the killing of five New Tribes missionaries in Bolivia in 1943, Fleming would again

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<sup>38</sup> Fleming, "Missing DC-3", 1950

<sup>39</sup> James C. Truxton, "Aviation in Missions," *Revelation*, Nov. 1948, 477; Truxton, 10 Jul. 1950 (BGC 136-57-19); Truxton, 30 Jul. 1950 (BGC 136-2-27).

<sup>40</sup> Truxton, 30 Jul. 1950 (BGC 136-2-27); Truxton, 4 Aug. 1950 (BGC 136-2-27).

<sup>41</sup> Truxton, 20 Jul. 1950 (BGC 136-2-27).

spin the Colombian crash into a challenge to his supporters. Fleming, Truxton argued, would play to his supporters' sympathies but neglect to explain the actual cause of the tragedy. Wrote Truxton in the summer of 1950:

“I can almost see the next issue of *Brown Gold* – ‘widowed pilot’s wife sells engagement ring towards next airplane’ – ‘Who will take the place of those who can no longer fly our next DC-3;’ or some such propaganda. As you have so truly said, these are things which play on sympathies, and which can be so effectively used to play on sympathies. Let’s pray that there will be more discernment on the part of the Lord’s people, and especially, that the mission itself will learn to build itself on more solid popularity than merely stems from flashing a romantic DC-3 in front of starry-eyed people.”

It remains exceedingly tempting to view Fleming’s response to the crash with Truxton’s cynicism. After all, by manipulating his donors’ sympathies, Fleming raised tens of thousands of dollars above and beyond his mission’s usual donations. Furthermore, he had already done much the same before when five New Tribes missionaries were killed in Bolivia. In that instance too, Fleming used the tragedy of the missionaries’ deaths to challenge his supporters to follow in the footsteps of the five martyrs. The mission expanded significantly in the aftermath. Yet, there is no indication that Fleming was callous about the loss of his missionaries. Reading through his letters and writings following the crash, he appeared truly heartbroken over their deaths and earnestly believed he had taken every precaution within his power to ensure their safety. Fleming’s rhetoric regarding spiritual warfare with the kingdom of darkness was likewise not mere puffery. It was then a widely accepted interpretation of Biblical text, shared by James Truxton, and certainly not out of place in mid-century American evangelical Fundamentalism. Fleming simply concluded that, given the reality of a spiritual war between the agents of good and evil, these were the types of losses one would expect. Fleming repeatedly asserted that God’s will was – no matter the circumstance – working toward a larger plan. The death of fifteen missionaries may seem counter-productive to a divine master plan, but in Fleming’s



understanding, it was not his place to know the will of God. If God had wanted to spare his missionaries in Colombia, He would have moved the very mountains to keep them safe.<sup>42</sup>

Again, Truxton – and much within the leadership of MAF’s various branches – shared these outlooks. They and Fleming broadly agreed that with prayer and attention to God’s calling, a Christian laborer could work secure in the knowledge of divine protection, provided they did not carelessly or knowingly go into harm’s way. Therefore, differing conclusions reached by Fleming and MAF leadership regarding mission aviation were a result of their distinct attitude towards flight informing their similar Biblical cosmology. As we’ve seen, Fleming’s vision of flight, and here one could safely include Paul Hartford and his supporters as well, aligned closely to the utopian promotional material of mid-1940s aviation propagandists. Given their cultural influences, it is unsurprising that Fleming and Hartford saw little problem entrusting lives to amateur or undertrained pilots and used, lightly maintained aircraft. After all, in their mind planes were as safe as or safer than automobiles. Thus, to operate them as such was sound practice and in no way careless. Conversely, MAF’s approach to aviation logistics was nurtured by the military flight service of most amongst its executives; it was systematic, professional, and risk-adverse. In stark opposition to Fleming and Hartford, MAF’s leadership – MAF-UK beginning in 1945 and MAF-US in 1947 – argued that aircraft were decidedly unlike cars; they were complicated machines that required rigorous training, continuous practice, and prudent operation. Thus, after having been repeatedly warned against the dangers of flying on an amateur basis and without strict attention to safety, New Tribes Mission (and other amateur operators) presumed upon God’s grace and knowingly placed their missionaries lives at risk. It was one thing to ask God for protection from the variables of weather, MAF argued it was quite another

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<sup>42</sup> Fleming, "Missing DC-3", 1950

to go knowingly and needlessly into danger, expecting God to act as a shield against the consequences of one's own obvious mistakes. That New Tribes Mission did so primarily for the publicity value the *Tribesman* afforded their work only made their deadly negligence all the more damning.<sup>43</sup>



Edna Griener and Donna Wetherald with their children before boarding the *Tribesman II*

Photo from: Kenneth J. Johnston, *The Story of New Tribes Mission*. Sanford, FL: New Tribes Mission, 1985.

Despite the deaths of New Tribes missionaries, the controversy it entailed, and the questions it raised regarding his leadership, Paul Fleming's marketing campaign following the first *Tribesman* disaster was a complete success. In celebration of the new *Tribesman II*, Fleming

scheduled a grand tour of the United States on the aircraft's maiden flight to South America. Paul Fleming was himself to fly aboard as passenger, as he intended to spearhead promotional rallies scheduled in Montana, Nebraska, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Illinois, Michigan, and all the way to Miami, where the plane was scheduled to depart for South America on December 12. Also aboard were a number of the families of those lost in the first *Tribesman*. Fleming scheduled the widows and children of the now deceased to speak at New Tribes Mission rallies

<sup>43</sup> Truxton, 30 Jul. 1950 (BGC 136-2-27); Truxton, 4 Aug. 1950 (BGC 136-2-27); Anon., "Missionary Aviation Conference Proceedings and Report," Missionary Aviation Conference, (Winona Lake, IN), 1-4 Aug. 1946 (BGC 136-53-12).

where they would lend their public support to the mission and inspire audiences with their determination to advance the Christian gospel despite their personal losses. Some of the families even intended to make their way to South America and serve in the very mission field where their loved ones had but recently perished. Therefore, as the *Tribesman II* prepared for takeoff on November 21, Paul Fleming, Donna Wetherald and her six-month-old son Mark, Mrs. Edna Greiner and her five children (the family of the late Reverend John Milton Greiner), as well as twelve other missionaries and the crew clambered inside the plane. After their hearty farewell from the gathered crowd, they were on their way to their first rally in Billings, Montana.<sup>44</sup>

Tragedy once again descended upon New Tribes Mission. As captain Sterling Lowery piloted the aircraft north through Idaho, cold November winds blew the *Tribesman II* off established air routes and into dangerous mountain ranges. The airplane's crew became disorientated as darkness descended upon the western Rockies, and they fought to navigate their airplane through the treacherous mountains. With the wind, fog, and a likely electrical failure that shorted-out the craft's navigation, lights, and radio, Captain Lowery decided to return to Idaho and begin the journey anew the following day. However, the crew were in fact disorientated, and likely believed they were flying through a different mountain pass than they were. As the crew made a final turn west towards central Idaho, they failed to see the mountainside rushing towards them. The *Tribesman II* slammed into Mount Moran in Wyoming's Grand Tetons late in the evening of November 21. Although both forest rangers and the US military attempted numerous rescues, all aboard the craft were lost.<sup>45</sup>

New Tribes Mission understood that the loss of their second large passenger aircraft in less than five months would be met with scathing criticism in the popular press and

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<sup>44</sup> Associated Press, "Missionary Plane Carrying 21 Strikes Peak in Rockies"

<sup>45</sup> United Press International, "Little Hope for 21 On Crashed Plane: Glacier in Path of Search Party"

recriminations on the part of other mission boards. Their evaluation as to the response proved prophetic. The crash was reported around the country.<sup>46</sup> It likewise caught the attention of global mission boards, Christian magazine editors, and Protestant leaders, many of whom (though not all) publicly lambasted the mission's entire operation. With their founder and leader dead, some even questioned whether the mission would survive the disaster.<sup>47</sup> Both the press and mission boards attacked New Tribes's aviation program and condemned the entire mission as undisciplined, overtly propagandistic, and unsafe.<sup>48</sup>

As had happened in June, New Tribes leaders closed ranks around their staff and mission policies. They defended the training and decision making of their pilot Sterling Lowrey and rationalized the accident as common to contemporary aviation: it was the tragic result of well-qualified pilots caught in bad weather amongst the dangerous mountainous passes. Furthermore, and in a manner very similar to their fallen leader, New Tribes administrators' rebuttals avoided the issues at hand and instead used the accident to browbeat their detractors. They questioned their critics' dedication to Christian evangelism and called on them to be as committed to mission work as had been those on the plane. More Christians, New Tribes executives wrote, needed to be like Paul Fleming and Donna Wetherald, men and women who willingly risked their lives (and the lives of their children) to carry the Gospel to the world as quickly as possible.<sup>49</sup>

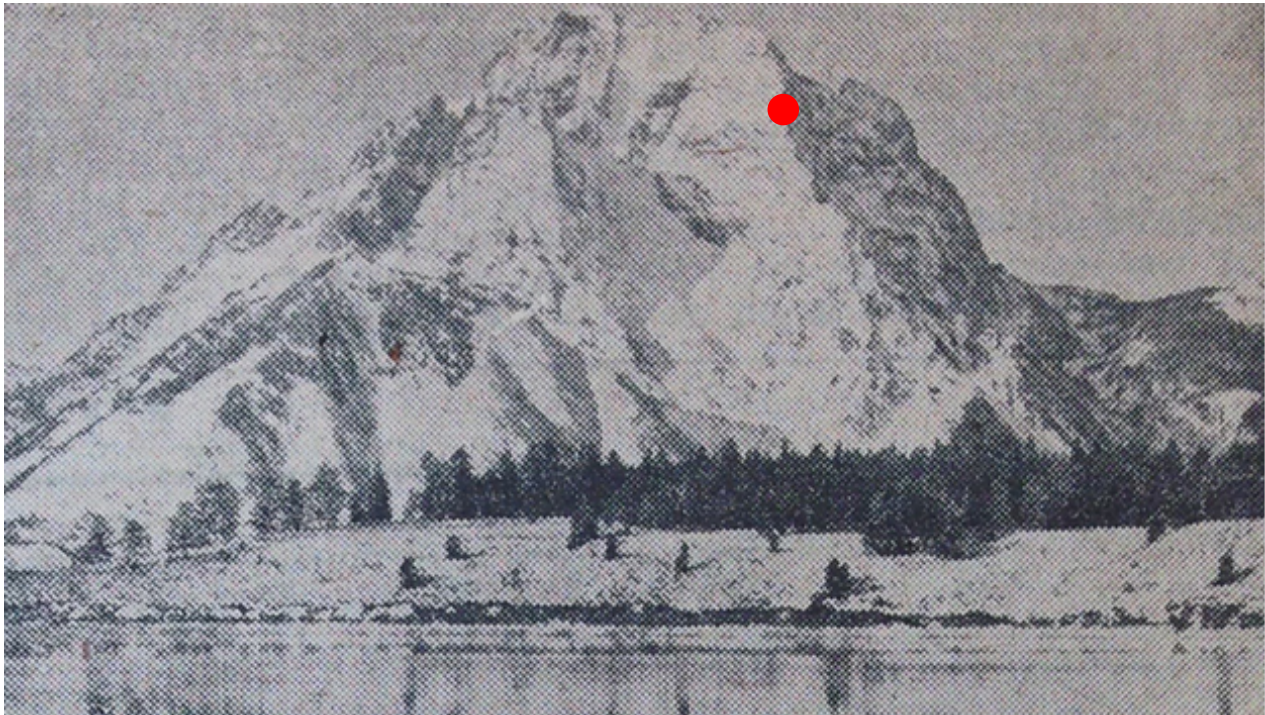
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<sup>46</sup> See for example: Associated Press, "Missionary Plane Carrying 21 Strikes Peak in Rockies"; United Press International, "Little Hope for 21 On Crashed Plane: Glacier in Path of Search Party"; United Press International, "Plane Crashes May End Air Travel by Mission," 29 Nov. 1950, (BGC 136-61-17); Jordan, "New Tribes Plane Down", 1950

<sup>47</sup> *Early History of the New Tribes Mission*, 82; *The Story of New Tribes Mission*, 139-43.

<sup>48</sup> Jordan, "New Tribes Plane Down", 1950; Ivan E. Olsen, "21 Die in Missionary Plane Crash," *Good News Broadcaster*, 1951, (BGC 136-61-17); "Aviation in Missions," *Moody Monthly*, Jan. 1951, (BGC 136-61-17); James C. Truxton to Robert Schaler, 7 Feb. 1951 (BGC 136-57-19); Barnhouse, "Call it Murder", 1951

<sup>49</sup> Jordan, "New Tribes Plane Down", 1950



Red Dot denotes location of crash site on slope of Mt. Moran  
 Picture and accident information from: Ivan E. Olsen, "21 Die in Missionary Plane Crash." *Good News Broadcaster*, 1951, (BGC 136-61-17).

Ultimately, New Tribes leaders claimed that their missionary airline program was but confirmation that they “had dared greatly.” Quoting Theodore Roosevelt in a response to her late husband’s myriad detractors, Cherrill Fleming stated: “It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbled, or where the doer of a deed could have done better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena; whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs and comes short again and again.” Far from being criminally reckless, New Tribes leaders argued they had valiantly risked all on behalf of Christ, and challenged others to do likewise.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> *Early History of the New Tribes Mission*, 77-82; *The Story of New Tribes Mission*, 139-43.

Despite claims to the contrary, New Tribes Mission leadership and staff were most likely at fault for the November crash. A subsequent investigation revealed that neither pilot nor co-pilot were adequately trained for passenger flights, nor were they properly licensed for instrument-only navigation. Indeed, just weeks prior to the November 21 flight the *Tribesman's* co-pilot had failed his instrument rating test.<sup>51</sup> Furthermore, improper maintenance prior to flight caused a likely electrical outage that made any navigation difficult. However, the outage appeared to have occurred over Idaho long before captain Lowrey had committed to the mountain crossing over Wyoming, raising further questions as to his decision to continue the scheduled flight despite storm and electrical failure. Overall, given the circumstances, New Tribes Mission had no business sending out the plane or its crew on the flight. Its leaders broke with standard aviation practice, not to mention the law, in so doing.<sup>52</sup>

### **Reactions to NTM crashes from the larger Christian Community**

The crashes of the two *Tribesman* in 1950 resulted in a robust public dialogue amongst mission organizations concerning the nature of mission aviation best-practice and contributed to a growing sense of urgency that missions needed to rethink their support of mission aviation.<sup>53</sup> Given the loss of life and the negative national media attention, it is unsurprising that mission

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<sup>51</sup> Grubb, "Recent Tribesman DC3 Crash Draws Editorial", 1951

<sup>52</sup> It should be understood that much of the most damning information concerning the flight and its crew comes from Luther Grubb, president of WMAC, in an article he wrote with the express intent to critique New Tribes Mission. However, the details that Grubb offers in his analysis do not seem to have been invented whole cloth and it appears that he had access to the initial Civil Aeronautics Board (CAB) analysis of the accident. Unfortunately, the final CAB report is now lost and was not found after multiple searches in the National Archives and consultations with National Archives staff. See also:

Ibid.; *The Story of New Tribes Mission*, 136-8.

<sup>53</sup> Truxton, 20 Jul. 1950 (BGC 136-2-27); Truxton, 30 Jul. 1950 (BGC 136-2-27); James C. Truxton to Grady Parrott, 17 Aug. 1950 (BGC 136-2-27); International, "Plane Crashes May End Air Travel by Mission"; Hitt, "21 Die in New Tribes Plane Crash", 1951; Barnhouse, "Call it Murder", 1951; Grubb, "Recent Tribesman DC3 Crash Draws Editorial", 1951; *The Story of New Tribes Mission*, 118.

administrators, supporters, and missionaries alike began to question the safety of mission aviation as well as the cost of any advantages gained from it. The debate quickly spilled out amongst the pages of the Christian popular press, especially in publications whose editors spotlighted mission use of aircraft. The popular *Christian Life*, a widely read and broadly Pentecostal Christian magazine, had long supported a wide variety of mission aviation programs (including the Assemblies of God's *Ambassador* project) with great enthusiasm. The magazine reported the initial *Tribesman* crash (with likely input from Paul Fleming) as a tragic and unfortunate accident, one that occurred despite the expertise of Captain Wetherald.<sup>54</sup> Following the second *Tribesman* crash of November 1950, the magazine's editorial position toward New Tribes Mission changed drastically. *Christian Life* lambasted New Tribes' aviation operations and derided Paul Fleming, now deceased, for what the article's author considered a careless disregard for life.<sup>55</sup> The severity of *Christian Life's* condemnation of Fleming and New Tribes Mission garnered the magazine a flurry of letters expressing support for both sides of the argument: some angry at the paper's supposedly unjust criticisms and others complimentary of *Christian Life's* supposedly "honest and objective" reporting.<sup>56</sup>

*Christian Life's* critique of New Tribes Mission did not extend to mission aviation more broadly. Its editors continued to publish articles in support of even amateur mission aviation operations, though at a notably slower pace than before the second New Tribes accident.<sup>57</sup> Nevertheless, global mission aviation operators were quite worried about the severity of the

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<sup>54</sup> Truxton, 17 Aug. 1950 (BGC 136-2-27); Hitt, "15 Killed in Crash", 1950

<sup>55</sup> "Aviation," *Christian Life and Times*, Jul. 1946, 16; "Aviation," *Christian Life and Times*, Feb. 1947, 40; "Modernize the Missionary," *Christian Life*, Oct. 1949, 4; Hitt, "21 Die in New Tribes Plane Crash", 1951

<sup>56</sup> Howard Sherman and Jerry Curnalia, "Readers Write," *Christian Life*, Mar. 1951, 4.

<sup>57</sup> Between Jun. 1946 and its report on the second New Tribes crash (Jan. 1951), *Christian Life and Times* (later *Christian Life*) published 27 articles regarding flight. In the five years (1951-1956) following the second accident, the magazine published but three additional articles regarding mission aviation. See also: Anon., "Flying Evangelist," *Christian Life*, Apr. 1952, 38; Leslie B. Flynn, "No Place to Land," *Christian Life*, May 1953, 24-26 (BGC 528-2-1).



fallout from the New Tribes accidents. James Truxton of MAF-US believed that the negative publicity surrounding the *Tribesman* crashes cast all mission aviation programs in a negative light and undermined support for mission aviation more broadly. Based on his own dialogue with mission workers in the summer of 1950, following the first NTM crash in Columbia, Truxton noted a troubling ambivalence amongst missionaries and mission supporters concerning mission aviation. Some, Truxton remarked, felt mission aviation to be a waste of time and scarce financial resources. A few even argued that aviation was only for those missionaries who sought to avoid the common hardship of mission travel, and was evidence of their lack of true dedication to mission outreach.<sup>58</sup> Therefore, Truxton as well as others in MAF leadership feared that the blowback against New Tribes Mission would adversely impact MAF as well.

MAF's fear that the hostility directed towards New Tribes Mission would impact their own work proved accurate, as mission aviation continued to be severely criticized in the Christian press in late 1950 and into 1951. Amongst the most damning critiques appeared in the March 1951 edition of Donald Barnhouse's influential magazine *Eternity* (formerly *Revelation*). It is clear that Barnhouse penned his article, "Call it Murder," in direct response to both *Tribesman* crashes. Indeed, his attack on the New Tribes Mission was similar in many respects to that found in *Christian Life*. Yet Barnhouse did not once mention either Paul Fleming or New Tribes Mission. The New Tribes accidents were simply the setting, an anticipated backdrop in the minds of his readership that Barnhouse employed to give his claims greater impact. Barnhouse's target was much larger than one wayward mission organization and aimed to undermine a much larger

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<sup>58</sup> Truxton, 10 Jul. 1950 (BGC 136-57-19); Truxton, 20 Jul. 1950 (BGC 136-2-27); Truxton, 30 Jul. 1950 (BGC 136-2-27); Truxton, 4 Aug. 1950 (BGC 136-2-27); Truxton, 17 Aug. 1950 (BGC 136-2-27); Truxton, 28 Aug. 1950 (BGC 136-2-27); James C. Truxton to J. W. Shank, 7 Oct. 1950 (BGC 136-2-27).



group of mission-aviation operations.<sup>59</sup> Barnhouse' "Call it Murder" argued that mission aviation, as then commonly practiced, was an utter disaster for contemporary missions. Mission aviation was waste of money that needlessly duplicated commercial aviation service, employed underqualified pilots, and took unnecessary risks with the lives of missionaries. Most aviation operations, Barnhouse stated, were built by unscrupulous mission organizers almost exclusively for their publicity value and existed as little more than superfluous marketing tools that risked missionaries' lives to raise money. More damningly still, Barnhouse asserted that many mission organizations turned a blind eye to the myriad problems of their aviation operations, even when they resulted in a missionary's death. These "offending parties" profited in the wake of mission fatalities and utilized the memories of their "martyrs and heroes of the faith" to raise capital and additional missionary personnel. Those killed in mission aviation accidents were therefore not true martyrs, Barnhouse wrote, but victims. Murdered by the greed of mission leaders, who were in turn enabled by the thoughtless contributions of mission supporters who were willingly seduced by the spectacle of aviation and who paid scant attention to the manner in which their donations were spent.<sup>60</sup>

MAF stood in broad agreement with Barnhouse's public assessment, most likely a result of their having collaborated with Barnhouse in the writing of "Call it Murder." Truxton and others in MAF leadership were deeply concerned with the potential for all of mission aviation to be discredited by the New Tribes incident. Therefore, they turned to Donald Barnhouse to once again get in front of bad press, shape the narrative of the accident, and deflect criticism onto

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<sup>59</sup> Donald Grey Barnhouse, "Editorial," *Revelation*, Mar. 1948, 199; Donald Grey Barnhouse, "Missionary Aviation," *Revelation*, Jun. 1948, 241-2; Barnhouse, "Call it Murder", 1951; Grubb, "Recent Tribesman DC3 Crash Draws Editorial", 1951

<sup>60</sup> Barnhouse's arguments within this editorial were very likely written with support and direction from James Truxton of MAF-US. For more on Barnhouse's and Truxton's collaborative attack on MAF's rival aviation programs please see Chapter 5. See also: Barnhouse, "Editorial", 1948; Barnhouse, "Call it Murder", 1951

those with whose methods they disagreed.<sup>61</sup> Barnhouse's editorials here proved again a useful tool by which MAF-US leaders could promote MAF policy and mold public opinion without directly involving MAF as an organization, and were but one part of MAF's larger toolkit of education and advocacy against dangerous mission aviation practice.<sup>62</sup>

As did MAF, the leadership of the World Missionary Aviation Council realized that the public hostility directed towards New Tribes Mission endangered mission aviation support more broadly and sought to limit the damage through their own editorials. Therefore, Luther Grubb, WMAC president, issued a formal statement, published in the *Brethren Missionary Herald* (of which he was editor), that stridently attacked NTM policy even as it endeavored to shore up support for mission aviation and reaffirm the WMAC's own commitment to safety.<sup>63</sup> Indeed, Grubb's article was at heart a defense of WMAC. Grubb had little need to land another blow upon the already-stricken New Tribes Mission. He had a very strong need, however, to shield WMAC from the same slings and arrows that were then directed towards New Tribes Mission. For the World Missionary Aviation Council had, very like NTM, been criticized for its own missionary airline program, its continued reliance on amateur missionary pilots, and its heavy reliance on romanticized spectacle to raise interest in its work.<sup>64</sup> Given WMAC's position, Luther Grubb did not begin his editorial with an attack on New Tribes Mission. He instead launched a forceful assault against the editors of Christian magazines who had used the New Tribes crash as an opportunity to condemn mission airline service and mission aviation more broadly: these

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<sup>61</sup> See: Truxton, 23 Jun. 1950 (BGC 136-2-27); Truxton, 4 Aug. 1950 (BGC 136-2-27); Truxton, 17 Aug. 1950 (BGC 136-2-27); Truxton, 28 Aug. 1950 (BGC 136-2-27). See also: BGC 136-2-27 – 1950 James Truxton.

<sup>62</sup> See as example: Truxton, 7 Oct. 1950 (BGC 136-2-27). See also: *Missionary Aviation* archives as well as period letters of MAF leadership found in BGC.

<sup>63</sup> In addition to serving as WMAC president, Grubb was Home Missions secretary of the Brethren Church (based in Winona Lake, IN), and a key ally of Paul Hartford. See also: "News Briefs," *The Brethren Missionary Herald*, 20 Aug. 1949, 592; Paul R. Bauman, "Wings for Brethren Home Missions," *The Brethren Missionary Herald*, 17 Mar. 1951, 195.

<sup>64</sup> Grubb, "Recent Tribesman DC3 Crash Draws Editorial", 1951

ignorant writers, according to Grubb, “based their deductions largely on supposition” and had “a natural antipathy towards missionary aviation.”<sup>65</sup>

Of all the critiques of mission aviation in the Christian press, Grubb took special offence at Donald Barnhouse’s editorial of March 1951. Grubb never mentioned Barnhouse by name, but reworded Barnhouse’s conclusions so that anyone who had read Barnhouse’s piece would quickly identify his target. He then dismissed Barnhouse’s dire warnings as the opinions of one utterly unfamiliar with flight: “We seriously doubt whether our accuser has ever taken time to study the missionary aviation picture sufficiently to know whereof he speaks.” Instead, Grubb asserted that far from being representative of larger problems of contemporary mission aviation, the New Tribes mission example was an outlier in mission aviation practice and had been uniquely, but horribly, negligent in matters of common-sense safety. According to Grubb’s analysis of the second NTM crash, New Tribes mission had been negligent in crew training and safety standards.<sup>66</sup> Had they but followed recommendations set out by the WMAC, the whole tragedy would have been certainly averted. Grubb concluded his own article with an appeal for the continued support of mission aviation and the WMAC in particular. It made no more sense, Grubb claimed, to end support of mission aviation because of a few bad actors than it did to forbid missionaries to drive in cars because some careless individual crashed while neglecting accepted rules of the road.<sup>67</sup>

### **End of the New Tribes Mission airline**

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<sup>65</sup> "Aviation in Missions", 1951; Grubb, "Recent Tribesman DC3 Crash Draws Editorial", 1951

<sup>66</sup> Grubb’s appraisal of NTM flight standards were seconded by James Truxton of MAF-US. See: Truxton, 7 Feb. 1951 (BGC 136-57-19).

<sup>67</sup> Grubb, "Recent Tribesman DC3 Crash Draws Editorial", 1951

New Tribes Mission faced assault on all fronts following the twin crashes of its *Tribesman* ships and the death of dozens of men, women, and children. Then again, controversy had frequently visited the young mission program, and its leadership was not quick to admit defeat. New Tribes Mission briefly considered the purchase of yet another large passenger aircraft, even in the aftermath of second crash. J. Ruskin Garber, New Tribes secretary, stated in an interview with the United Press: "We don't want people to think we're being stubborn about continuing flying, but it's been a terrific blessing in tying our home work with field operations."<sup>68</sup> Allies of New Tribes Mission, including Fred Jordan, president of the American Soul Clinic, held special fundraising drives for New Tribes' proposed third airline operation and rigorously defended the mission's aviation program to the readers of his magazine. Despite the money raised for a new air venture, New Tribes Mission executives ultimately relented. At the mission's December 1950 board meeting they decided to scrap all airline operations. Their public statement claimed that restarting airline operations was simply too expensive a proposition given the wartime realities imposed by the Korean War.<sup>69</sup>

The high purchase cost of a new passenger craft may have indeed been the principal consideration of those New Tribes Mission board members who voted against resuming the *Tribesman* airline program. However, basing a decision on budgetary constraints alone went against long-established New Tribes Mission practice. The cost of the *Tribesman II* had also been significantly inflated by wartime conditions and Paul Fleming nonetheless continued with its purchase. The publicity the aircraft brought the mission, its dramatic symbolism of the urgency of mission work, and New Tribes' avowed belief that no expense should be spared if it

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<sup>68</sup> International, "Plane Crashes May End Air Travel by Mission"

<sup>69</sup> 23 Jun. 1950 (BGC 136-2-27); Jordan, "New Tribes Plane Down", 1950; *The Story of New Tribes Mission*, 152.

meant advancing God's kingdom, supposedly legitimized its purchase.<sup>70</sup> On balance, it is more than probable that the publicized portions of the mission agency's deliberation regarding a third passenger aircraft may have amounted to little more than a bit of mummery – damage control in the face of vehement criticism of their operation. How better to reinforce the stated position that their aviation program was entirely safe, and indeed a blessing to their wider evangelistic efforts, than to publicize selected portions of their deliberations regarding a potential successor and rationalize the program's conclusion as a matter of budgetary limitations. To end the project abruptly following the November 21 crash would tacitly have been to admit defeat and even culpability in both tragedies.

Having decided against launching their airline program, New Tribes leaders set about looking for an alternative method of mass missionary transport, but one that would still draw broad attention to their wider operations. In February of 1951, New Tribes Mission settled on a compromise between safety and publicity. It purchased a World War Two era, 175-foot submarine chaser for \$12,000 and renamed the ship the *M. V. Tribesman*. New Tribes Mission then spent thousands more to refit the ship for large-scale civilian transport, officially register it, and finally find the twenty crewmembers needed to sail the vessel.<sup>71</sup> The new *Tribesman* departed out of Oakland, California in August 1951 to national acclaim and a “gigantic missionary farewell.”<sup>72</sup> Over its short career as a mission transport vessel, the *M. V. Tribesman*

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<sup>70</sup> Fleming, "Tomorrow We Fly", 1943; Wyma, "Over Savage Village by Air", 1948; Fleming, "Big Wings for a Big Job", 1949; Paul W. Fleming, "Flight One," *Brown Gold*, Jun. 1949, (BGC 136-61-17); Paul W. Fleming, "17,000 Miles by Air," *Brown Gold*, Jul. 1949, (BGC 136-61-17); Fleming, "Flight One", 1949; Garber, "Missing in Action", 1950; Truxton, 20 Jul. 1950 (BGC 136-2-27); Truxton, 30 Jul. 1950 (BGC 136-2-27); *The Story of New Tribes Mission*, 147.

<sup>71</sup> "Gigantic Missionary Farewell in Oakland," *United Evangelical Action*, 15 Sep. 1951, (BGC 136-61-17); *The Story of New Tribes Mission*, 147-51.

<sup>72</sup> "The New Tribesman", 1951; "Gigantic Missionary Farewell in Oakland"



*M. V. Tribesman*

Photo from: Kenneth J. Johnston, *The Story of New Tribes Mission*. Sanford, FL: New Tribes Mission, 1985.

carried hundreds of missionaries, their luggage, Jeeps, and even two small aircraft to South America. However, after but two voyages and despite tens of thousands of dollars spent, New Tribes Mission ended their shipping service in 1953 and sold the *M. V. Tribesman* in 1956. In deciding to end the *Tribesman* program, Kenneth Johnston, a longtime New Tribes missionary, friend of Paul Fleming, and chairman during the 1980s, stated that the mission's board came to the (perhaps belated) conclusion that commercial aviation and shipping services simply offered large-scale missionary transport for much less than they could provide by operating and maintaining their own passenger aircraft or sea-faring vessel.<sup>73</sup>

### **Assemblies of God: End of the Ambassador Program and Declining use of mission aviation**

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<sup>73</sup> *The Story of New Tribes Mission*, chapter 15.

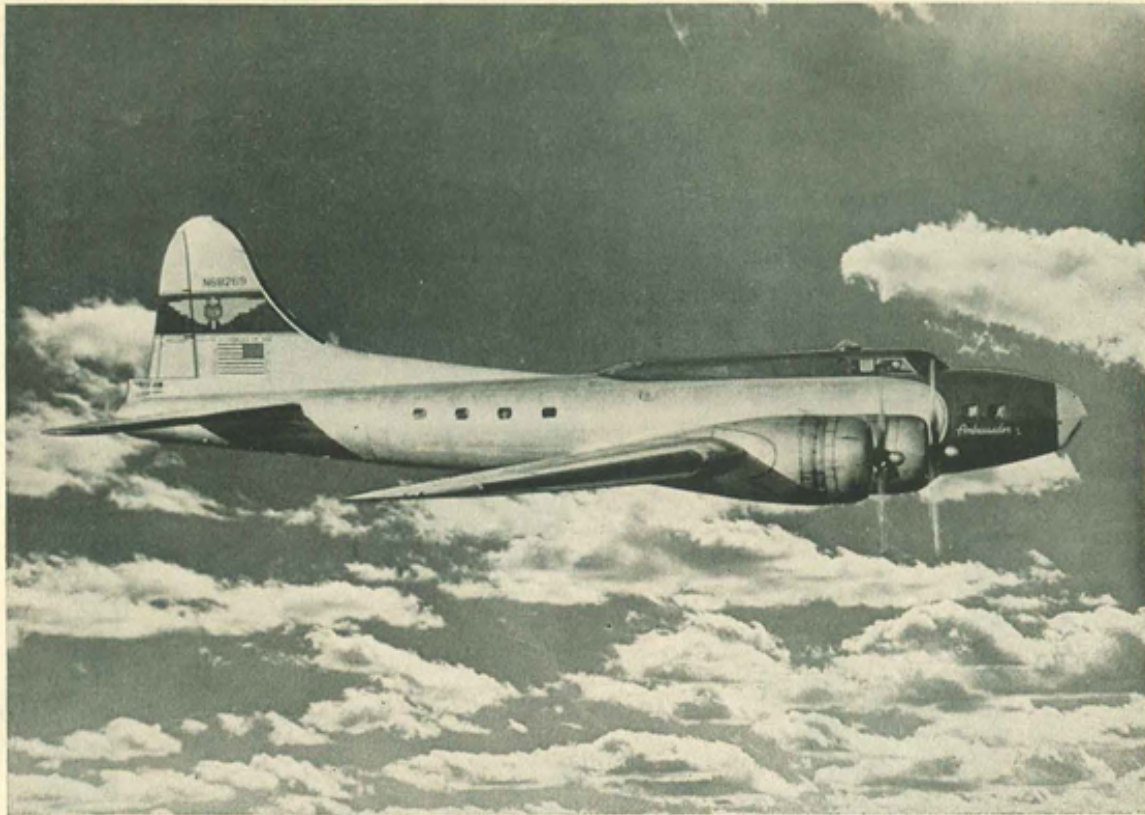
The tragic accidents involving the two *Tribesman* likewise ended the Ambassador program operated by the Assemblies of God. From the acquisition in February 1948 of the very first *Ambassador*, the Assemblies of God's passenger aircraft had been the pride of the denomination. The church's leadership featured both the C-46 and B-17 prominently in its literature and promoted the program in evangelical magazines.<sup>74</sup> Indeed, just before the first New Tribes' aircraft disappeared over the Colombian mountains, the Assemblies of God had taken out a full-page advertisement for the *Ambassador* in the June 1950 issue of *Christian Life* to promote their "Mission to Missionaries." Following the 9 June accident, the *Ambassador* flew but once more: a previously scheduled flight to West Africa in August of 1950. Assemblies of God's promotion of the program declined precipitously as well, and in mid-1951 the denomination sold the *Ambassador II* to a Fort Wayne aeronautical company, ending the large-scale missionary aviation program altogether.<sup>75</sup>

Similar to NTM, the leaders of the Assemblies of God spun their airline program's demise as a purely budgetary matter. As the *Ambassador* program wrapped up operations in 1951, the Assemblies' leadership argued that they had only started the *Ambassador* program in 1948 as a temporary measure given contemporary transportation difficulties: commercial aviation was then too expensive and maritime shipping was infrequent, often backlogged by months. The *Ambassador* program therefore offered the denomination the most inexpensive means available by which to transport their missionaries quickly. By 1951, matters had changed,

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<sup>74</sup> See BGC folder "Assemblies of God" located in Collection 528 (BGC 528-1-5).

<sup>75</sup> Stanford Lee, "Flight to West Africa," *The Missionary Challenge*, Apr. 1951, 32, 34 (BGC 528-1-5); Anon., "Untitled," 2 Sep. 1951, (BGC 528-1-5); Anon., "Historical Outline of the Missionary Flights of the Assemblies of God," 1970 (BGC 528-1-5).



## MISSION TO MISSIONARIES

Across the frozen northland and icy seas to Greenland, Iceland and on to Europe . . . above the Atlantic to Africa and India . . . across the Caribbean to South America—ferrying missionaries to the needy fields of the world, evacuating tired and worn soldiers of the Cross to places of safety and rest.

This is the mission of *The Ambassador*, the four-motor trans-oceanic missionary plane of the

Missions Department of the Assemblies of God.

Now in its third year of service, *The Ambassador* has transported many hundreds of evangelical missionaries from its associated groups—thus aiding the important work of bringing the Light of the Gospel to those in sin and darkness. Many are the expressions of appreciation from Mission Boards that have been served by *The Ambassador*.

Meanwhile, the foreign mission-

ary program of THE ASSEMBLIES OF GOD is carried on in the spirit of the emergency of this atomic age. Today more than 600 missionaries are in service on fields throughout the world. They are supplemented by more than 3500 native workers and 30 training schools.

To these, as well as to all missionaries everywhere who hold to the faith once delivered to the saints, is *The Ambassador* and its mission dedicated.

## ***The Assemblies of God***

FOREIGN MISSIONS DEPARTMENT

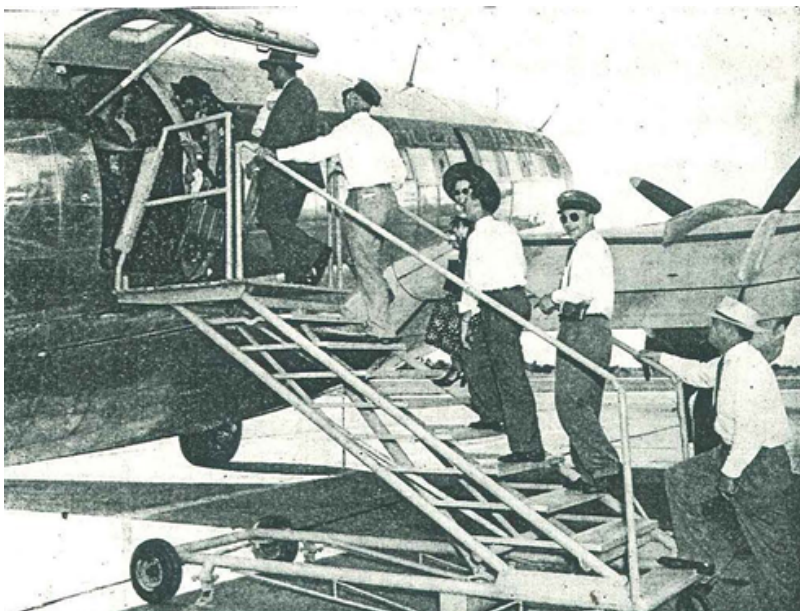
434 WEST PACIFIC STREET

SPRINGFIELD, MISSOURI



the Assemblies leaders argued.<sup>76</sup> The price of commercial aviation had fallen and shipping service had become more reliable. Furthermore, even as commercial costs had fallen, the price of operating the *Ambassador* had increased; insurance rates were rising, and Civil Aviation Administration regulations were growing ever more expensive to fulfill. Besides, the denomination could get a good price for the aircraft, money it could use for more urgent mission activity. Ending the *Ambassador* program therefore made sound financial sense according to Assemblies of God literature.<sup>77</sup>

The Assemblies of God leadership was not lying. Yet, they were not telling the entire truth either. Budgetary concerns certainly played into the *Ambassador's* demise, but they were not the denomination's primary rationale for grounding the aircraft. The Assemblies of God, after all, had not flown the *Ambassadors* to save money.



Happy passengers boarding the *Ambassador's* maiden flight to Africa.

Found in *The Missionary Challenge*, Oct. 1948, (BGC 528-1-5), 16.

The denomination operated the aircraft to increase publicity of and interest in their operations. The aircraft attracted the attention of the national press and earned the denomination free publicity. In late 1949, the popular Christian religious periodical, *Christian Life*, declared the

<sup>76</sup> Noel Perkins, "The Ambassador Is Ready," *The Missionary Challenge*, Aug. 1948, (BGC 528-1-5).

<sup>77</sup> Anon., "Untitled", 1951

*Ambassador* as one of the denomination's most "outstanding projects" of the past few years.<sup>78</sup> Granted, budgetary concerns may have indeed informed the Assemblies of God's initial interest in the *Ambassador* program. When Noel Perkins<sup>79</sup> first introduced the *Ambassador* to his denomination in the summer of 1948, he did in fact rationalize the expense and labor which the aircraft represented by explaining to his readers the denomination's difficulty in arranging economical international transportation for its missionaries. Yet, the program quickly devolved into a publicity program. Indeed, in the same initial article, Noel Perkins likewise emphasized the historic nature of the aircraft and the interest and increased support it brought the denomination.<sup>80</sup> While the *Ambassadors* were in active operation between 1948 and 1950, budgetary issues were mentioned far less frequently than the speed and comfort by which the aircraft delivered missionaries to their posts, the prestige the aircraft provided the denomination, and the interest it raised in its mission activities. It could perhaps be said that the Assemblies of God's leadership only recalled that their Ambassador program was supposed to be a temporary fiscal and time-saving venture *after* they decided to end it.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Anon., "Missionaries Trained to Fly," *The Covenanter Witness*, 7 Jan. 1948, 2; Perkins, "The Ambassador Is Ready", 1948; Anon., "From Africa to Springfield," *Leader and Press* 1948, 1, 8 (BGC 528-1-5); Wesley R. Steelberg, "Singing Together," *The Missionary Challenge*, Apr. 1949, 10-1 (BGC 528-1-5); Anon., "Assemblies Pick New Head," *Christian Life*, Dec. 1949, 28-9.

See also: Truxton, 20 Jul. 1950 (BGC 136-2-27).

<sup>79</sup> Noel Perkins was in the 1940s and early-1950s the Assemblies of God's secretary of foreign missions.

<sup>80</sup> Perkins, "The Ambassador Is Ready", 1948

<sup>81</sup> "From Africa to Springfield"; "'Ambassador' Arrives," 1948 1948, (BGC, 528--1-5); H. B. Garlock, "The Flight to Africa," 18 Sep. 1948, (BGC 528-1-5); H. B. Garlock, "Flying the Missionaries," *The Missionary Challenge*, Oct. 1948, 16-21 (BGC 528-1-5); "Dedication of the Ambassador," 16 Oct. 1948, (BGC 528-1-5); George Carmichael, "The Ambassador's Plans," 1948, (BGC 528-1-5); Paul Hartford, "Review of Events -- 2nd Annual Convention -- World Missionary Aviation Council," pamphlet (WMAC, 26-28 Jul. 1949) BGC 136-60-7; Steelberg, "Singing Together", 1949; Sydney S. Bryant, "To India by Air," *The Missionary Challenge*, Jun. 1949, 8-9, 20 (BGC 528-1-5); "The Ambassador a B-17," Dec. 1949, (BGC 528-1-5); "Assemblies Pick New Head", 1949; Malcolm Blakeney, "STL Story," *The Missionary Challenge*, Apr. 1950, 15-18,21 (BGC 528-1-5); Paul Glynn, "A Reporter Travels on the Ambassador: He Sees the Ambassador a tool in God's Hands," *The Missionary Challenge*, May 1950, 11-2 (BGC 528-1-5); Assemblies of God, "Mission to Missionaries," *Christian Life*, Jun. 1950, 10; "Little Hope for 21 On Crashed Plane: Glacier in Path of Search Party"; Truxton, 20 Jul. 1950 (BGC 136-2-27); Glen Renick, "Trip to Holy Land," 5 Aug. 1950, (BGC 528-1-5); Don Lowe, "First Flight Abroad," *The Missionary Challenge*, Nov. 1950, 10 (BGC 528-1-5); Barnhouse, "Call it Murder", 1951; Anon., "Untitled", 1951

Given the successful development of the *Ambassador* program as a publicity tool, the denomination's rather flaccid claim that sudden budgetary problems undermined it rings hollow. When factoring in the high cost of maintaining multi-engine passenger aircraft, insurance, and operational costs, the program had always been expensive, and rarely (if ever) less than the combined cost of flying missionaries to their stations commercially. Therefore, the fiscal costs of operating the plane did not suddenly and dramatically change in 1950. What had changed was the potential publicity debacle the *Ambassador* represented following the New Tribes Mission disasters.<sup>82</sup> The Assemblies of God leadership would have seen full well the public flogging New Tribes Mission suffered following the disastrous conclusion to the *Tribesman* program. They would have realized that should the *Ambassador* suffer even a minor accident, a similar type of public criticism would befall them as well. In this post-*Tribesman* context, the public relations disaster resulting from any *Ambassador* mishap would have utterly destroyed the carefully constructed image the Assemblies of God had built by flying the aircraft. Serious questions would surface as to why the Assemblies of God appeared willing to risk their missionaries' lives for the simple sake of publicity, and the denomination's carefully constructed public image as modern, innovative, and successful would have been transformed by the specter of dead missionaries into one of greed and incompetence.<sup>83</sup>

### **Assemblies of God Aviation Services post-1950**

Following the abrupt end of the *Ambassador* program in 1950, the Assemblies of God continued to own and operate small bush planes. These post-*Ambassador* aviation programs

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<sup>82</sup> Truxton, 10 Jul. 1950 (BGC 136-57-19); Truxton, 7 Feb. 1951 (BGC 136-57-19).

<sup>83</sup> Anon., "untitled #1," (Assemblies of God, n.d.); David A. Womack to John R. Wells, 25 Jan. 1974 (BGC 528-1-5).

served very similar logistical functions to the denomination's aviation programs of the 1940s. They shuttled missionaries, ferried supplies, and performed emergency ambulance service. However, the marketing and outreach programs for these aviation programs were distinctly different. The biggest change to Assemblies of God aviation publicity was that the denomination subsumed their aviation programs within the context of their broader mission efforts. By the mid-1950s, the denomination's publicists had reversed the narratives of the 1940s. The Assemblies of God fleet of aircraft were no longer a focal point of mission outreach or icons of the denomination's growth and financial success. Assemblies of God marketers instead incorporated their aviation programs into the denomination's wider body of work. The continued use of aircraft was rationalized in Assemblies of God outreach literature as a utilitarian measure that facilitated more important work and bespoke of the mission's dedication to efficiency. According to the Assemblies of God, they operated their own aircraft out of necessity, not convenience or comfort.

Aircraft were by the mid-1960s simply another tool in the denomination's tool chest. They were not ignored by the denomination's publicists but were not treated much differently than a missionary's bicycle, automobile, or printing press.<sup>84</sup> No longer did the Assemblies of God revel in the grandeur of their planes, but instead insipidly depicted the benefits of flight as similar to the merits of a flatbed trailer. Certainly, aircraft were very useful for certain types of mission work but were no longer terribly romantic or exciting.<sup>85</sup> Missionary pilots suffered a similar loss of esteem. They were not disparaged (at least publicly) but were now listed with the other

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<sup>84</sup> Please see BGC file 528-1-5 for more on how the Assemblies of God's decreasingly emphasized the spectacle of aviation in their marketing between the 1940s – 1970s. Especially important are the files of missionaries Walter Kornelsen and Talmage Butler. See also: "In the beginning," *Christ's Ambassadors Herald*, Oct. 1969, 4-11 (BGC 528-1-5).

<sup>85</sup> Anon., "Untitled", 1951

specialized missionary technicians: those mission professionals who dug new wells, built hospitals, fixed tractors, or translated the Bible. The image of the mission aviator as mission symbol, noble explorer, and heroic adventurer was now relegated to the dustbin of the marketing department.<sup>86</sup>

The Assemblies of God's use of aircraft declined in the 1960s and 1970s, and some within its leadership grew decidedly uncomfortable, even bitter, about the way in which their denomination had used aircraft in the past. In 1974, David A. Womack, Assemblies of God Home Secretary of Foreign Missions, stated unequivocally that he believed his denomination's infatuation with aircraft had been an utter mistake and counterproductive to their wider efforts. He argued that missionary pilots had tended to spend too much time maintaining their aircraft and not enough time ministering. Womack stated: "our church has expanded its number of overseas believers past the four million mark by working on the ground and developing churches along the lines of our land travel." The aviation program had been a hindrance to their cause.<sup>87</sup>

## **Conclusion**

The crash of the *Tribesman I & II* ended the New Tribes Mission's aviation service, despite the mission's urgent claims to the contrary. The crashes had ended the lives of numerous missionaries, missionary families, and New Tribes' founder, Paul Fleming. They transformed the mission into something of a pariah mission organization, undercut support, and threatened to destroy the mission itself. The two crashes likewise undermined mission aviation practice. By early 1951, mission agencies, mission leaders, and the Christian public openly wondered not how

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<sup>86</sup> Please see BGC file 528-1-5 for more on how the Assemblies of God's decreasingly emphasized the spectacle of aviation in their marketing between the 1940s – 1970s.

<sup>87</sup> Womack, 25 Jan. 1974 (BGC 528-1-5).

quickly they should start a new mission aviation program, but whether the whole concept was safe or even worth its cost.

Mission aviation as commonly, though not universally, practiced between 1920 and 1950 did not survive following the New Tribes crashes. As flight evolved into a normalized professional service in the late 1940s, it became less relevant to promote one's aviation program as a romantic adventure or tool of common missionaries. That marketing narrative held declining cultural currency and impact. Over the next five years, aviation programs built as spectacles and marketing devices either reformed their practice or gradually rolled up production and sold off their assets. The New Tribes crashes had hastened their doom.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> Murray Kendon, "Missionary "Air Arm"," London, pamphlet (MAF-UK, 1946) BGC 136-52-5; James C. Truxton to Murray Kendon, 10 Apr. 1946 (BGC 136-52-5); James C. Truxton to Murray Kendon, 8 May 1946 (BGC 136-52-5); Dietrich Buss and Arthur Glasser, *Giving Wings to the Gospel: The Remarkable Story of Mission Aviation Fellowship* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1995), 43; Stuart Sendall-King, interview by Lane Sunwall, 16 Jul., 2009.

Conclusion

MAF rose to prominence during the 1950s as that was when its arguments concerning aviation finally became relevant to the interests and needs of its target audience: other mission groups. The old utopianist mission-aviation culture born in the 1920s had begun its decline in the late 1940s, was hastened by the fall of New Tribes Mission, and that decline continued through the early 1950s. The millennialist populism of mission aviation's past had proven false, and prominent crashes amongst mission aviators had resulted in a wave of scandal that forced mission organizations to accept the reality that aircraft would not replace the mission automobile. Only then did mission administrators widely accept that amateur pilots were a hazard to themselves, their passengers, and the mission that supported them. Amateur enthusiasts like Paul Hartford had no place in this new reality; so wedded was he to the ideals of early post-War American aviation culture that he failed to adapt when that culture vanished.

As amateur mission aviation declined, professional mission aviation programs grew. From 1950 onward, the history of mission aviation was dominated by the growth and triumphs of MAF. Over the next six decades, the various international branches continued to innovate and expand until the MAF brand represented the largest mission aviation program in the world and remains today the standard-bearer of operational professionalism. There are, of course, other major mission aviation operators; JAARS and New Tribes Mission (thoroughly reformed) now both have outstanding aviation programs. Yet, mission aviation as a concept is often now equated, rightly or wrongly, with MAF.

MAF did not grow into the most visible mission aviation program in the world simply because it had a more effective model of mission aviation than that of Paul Hartford or other

amateur mission aviators. MAF became dominant because broader cultural views had come to align with their arguments. By 1950, aviation culture had come to strengthen MAF's claims, not Paul Hartford's. The growth of commercial airlines was particularly important in this regard, reinforcing MAF's claims that it was unwise to entrust the lives of either passengers or missionaries to the hands of unproven pilots. Certainly, MAF survived beyond its troubled infancy because of the technical competencies of its leaders (James Truxton, Nate Saint, Charles Mellis, Stewart King, Steve Stevens), its thorough attention to detail, and the diplomatic capabilities of some amongst its executives (Grady Parrott, Murray Kendon). However, it was only when aviation culture changed that MAF's arguments found footing and acceptance amongst a wide swath of mission agencies. It was only then that MAF's arguments aligned with the culture of their target audiences, and they successfully "translated" the message of practical and safe mission aviation practice into something intelligible to mission staff.

Ultimately, MAF's success stemmed from its ability to market its arguments, ally itself to influential mission leaders, and wrap its work within concepts of professionalism, safety, reliability, and economy. MAF spent the 1940s endeavoring to shape Christian public opinion towards insistence upon professional flight standards amongst mission aviators. They built a network of influential Christian leaders, mission administrators, and editors of Christian magazines, using them to promote MAF's vision to the Protestant community both in the United States and abroad.<sup>1</sup> Thus when the utopianist aviation culture came crashing down in the late-1940s, MAF had already established themselves as preeminent authorities in sound mission aviation practice. MAF replaced the populist dream sold by American industrialists in the 1940s

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<sup>1</sup> James C. Truxton to Dear Co-workers, 6 Jun. 1950 (BGC 136-2-27); James C. Truxton to MAF D-1, 23 Jun. 1950 (BGC 136-2-27); James C. Truxton to J. W. Shank, 7 Oct. 1950 (BGC 136-2-27); James C. Truxton to Grady Parrott, 21 Oct. 1950 (BGC 136-2-27); James C. Truxton to Robert Schaler, 7 Feb. 1951 (BGC 136-57-19).



with the more British, German, and Italian vision of pilots as elite professionals, whose knowledge and skill, refined and tested, were the only safe and logical choice for mission aviation.

Looking back, it would be easy to label Paul Hartford, Paul Fleming of New Tribes Mission, and their supporters as simplistic or naive. After all, MAF and its allies were – overall – absolutely correct. The aviation methods of many mission aviators from the 1920s through to the early 1950s were dangerous, poorly planned, and clumsily implemented. Yet mission leaders who operated such programs were decidedly not simple; nor were they unintelligent. They simply followed a series of logical steps flowing out of their core belief (one shared with many of MAF's leadership) that the Lord was soon coming and that it was up to them to save as many souls as possible before the end of time. Aviation offered them an obvious means of saving souls quickly, and they applied it as reason dictated.<sup>2</sup> Christ, per many Protestant evangelicals, was about to *literally* take the faithful away in the Rapture after which he would *literally* descend to earth upon a cloud. In this light, it is entirely unsurprising that Hartford and others would spend such a small amount of time ensuring the long-term economy and sustainability of their operations; if the world was soon to end, why bother to ensure that one's program would be viable ten or twenty years into the future? Furthermore, given their literalist dispensational cosmology, it required but a small leap of faith for these evangelicals to believe that if God intended missionaries to fly, he would literally intervene to ensure their safety.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> J. R. Garber, "Missing in Action," *Brown Gold*, Jul. 1950, (BGC 136-61-17); Paul W. Fleming, "Seven Completed Flights," *Brown Gold*, Jul. 1950, (BGC 136-61-17); James C. Truxton to Paul Fleming, 10 Jul. 1950 (BGC 136-57-19); Paul Fleming to James C. Truxton, 12 Sep. 1950 (BGC 136-57-19).

<sup>3</sup> For more on the danger of prejudging historical actors based on the peculiarities of their religious views, see "Special Section: The scholarship and career of Grant Wacker," in *Fides et Historia* 47:2 (Summer/Fall 2015). See also: Anon., "The Gospel to be radioed to all nations! What then?," *The Brethren Missionary Herald*, 13 May 1944, 266-7; Anon., "Missionary Aviation Conference Proceedings and Report," Missionary Aviation Conference, (Winona Lake, IN), 1-4 Aug. 1946 (BGC 136-53-12); Luther L. Grubb, "Wings for Brethren Home Missions," *The Brethren Missionary Herald*, 18 Oct. 1947, 945-7, 51; Fleming, 12 Sep. 1950 (BGC 136-57-19); Rev. Fred Jordan,

No matter how much Hartford, Fleming, and others might protest their strict adherence to Biblical literalism, *Sola scriptura*,<sup>4</sup> or their utmost faith in God's care for Christian workers, they were undoubtedly and greatly impacted by the culture from whence they came. They understood well how to combine eschatology, aircraft, and culture together to persuade others as to the importance and urgency of their cause. They understood the importance of maximizing their mission's visibility and interest and toured regularly to emphasize and showcase their aircraft to excited audiences whenever they could. Their efforts to promote a method of aviation that other mission organizations (not least MAF) considered dangerous, and what we might consider fanciful, were not intended to mislead the Christian faithful. They were simply the enthusiastic embrace of a dispensational interpretation of the End Times informed by an aviation culture that told them that airplanes were as safe as cars and would soon revolutionize human life.<sup>5</sup>

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"New Tribes Plane Down," *American Soul Clinic*, Dec. 1950, (BGC 136-61-17); Ivan E. Olsen, "21 Die in Missionary Plane Crash," *Good News Broadcaster*, 1951, (BGC 136-61-17).

<sup>4</sup> That is a strict and generally literal understanding of Biblical texts that attempts to limit the role of culture and tradition in their interpretation.

<sup>5</sup> James C. Truxton to D-1, 20 Jul. 1950 (BGC 136-2-27); James C. Truxton to MAF D-1, 30 Jul. 1950 (BGC 136-2-27); James C. Truxton to Grady Parrott, 4 Aug. 1950 (BGC 136-2-27).

### Appendix A

The following entries list all known evangelists, missionaries, and mission organizations that planned, organized, or started a mission aviation program from 1908 through 1950.

1908 – First Wave of Mission Aviation (1908 – May 1927)

**Anon. cleric (retired)**

Church of England – Australia (no known flights)

In 1908 the Sydney Herald interviewed an (unnamed) Australian cleric who claimed to have designed and built an experimental aircraft, one he intended to build solely for the purpose of missionary evangelism. Although the cleric's aircraft design was impractical (he built his airplane to resemble a "fantail pigeon"), his understanding of aviation's future significance for mission was much more realistic.<sup>1</sup>

1917

**John Clifford Peel**

Australian Inland Mission – New Zealand and Australia (plans developed 1917, no known flights)

In 1917, 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant Clifford Peel began a short but productive collaboration with Reverend John Flynn to create the first known detailed and practicable plan for a mission aviation service. Peel died in combat during World War One. However, using Peel's plans, Flynn built the Australian Inland Mission Aerial Medical Service eleven years later.<sup>2</sup>

1918

**Rev. Belvin Maynard**

USA (1918-1922)

Reverend Belvin Maynard was both a minister and famous airman. Following his service as a fighter and test pilot in World War One, Maynard sought to continue his flying career following the war. However, like so many other ex-service pilots of his generation Maynard struggled to make a living as a professional pilot, given the lack of commercial aviation positions then available. Maynard therefore turned to professional aircraft racing and air-circus flying to feed his family. In the 1920s, Maynard performed elaborate publicity stunts to heighten his national fame: such as conducting a wedding service while flying 3,000 feet over Times Square. Maynard

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<sup>1</sup> Anon., "The Flying Missionary," *The Hawera and Normanby Star* (Southern Taranaki, NZ), 19 Jun. 1908, 3.

<sup>2</sup> John Clifford Peel to Reverend John Flynn, 2 Nov. 1917; John Clifford Peel to Reverend John Flynn, 20 Nov. 1917; Anon., *The Flying Doctor Story*, ed. The Royal Flying Doctor Service of Australia (Sydney: Deaton & Spencer Pty. Ltd., 1970 ca).

also used his identity as a famous pilot for evangelistic purposes. He transmitted live radio sermons delivered from his cockpit, and he spoke at local churches in the towns he visited. Belvin Maynard died 7 September 1922 in an accident while performing aerial stunts at a flying circus in Rutland Vermont. His death was front page news in the New York Times.<sup>3</sup>

### **Rev. John Moran**

Catholic Church – European Western Front WWI and Canada (1918)

Reverend John Moran was a Canadian Catholic priest who flew in aircraft to quickly move between military camps and deliver Mass during World War One.<sup>4</sup>

### **Rev. John Sullivan**

Catholic Church – European Western Front WWI (1918)

Reverend John Sullivan was a Canadian Catholic priest who flew in aircraft to quickly move between military camps and deliver Mass during World War One.<sup>5</sup>

### **Rev. Dr. S. Hall Young**

Presbyterian Board of Home Missions for Alaska – USA (organizational planning 1918 – 1919, no known flights)

Beginning in 1918, the Reverend Hall Young toured the United States to promote a planned mission aviation program to Alaska. Stymied by the death of his pilot in World War One, it is unlikely he ever successfully launched the program.<sup>6</sup>

## 1920

### **Anon.**

Catholic Church – South Pacific ( ? )

In an interview with the New York Times, Bishop Harry Roberts Carson claimed that there existed a Catholic priest who flew throughout the Southern Pacific in the early 1920s. Bishop

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<sup>3</sup> Anon., "Maynard Wins Air Derby, Racing 125 Miles an Hour," *New York Times* (New York), 19 Oct. 1919, 1, 3; Anon., "To Wed in Plane 3,000 Feet Above Times Sq.; Couple Will Exchange Vows in Radio Set," *New York Times* (New York), 24 Apr. 1922, 1; Thomas C. Parramore, "Belvin Maynard: "The Greatest Pilot on Earth", " North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, <http://ncpedia.org/biography/maynard-belvin>.

<sup>4</sup> Anon., "Catholic Items: Exploits of Catholic Canadian Chaplains," *Southern Cross* (Adelaide, South Australia), 31 Jan. 1919, 19.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Anon., "After Airplane for Missionary in Alaskan Field," *La Crosse Tribune and Leader Press* (La Crosse, WI), 05 Feb. 1919, 6; Anon., "Aero to Take Gospel to Gold Country," *The Capital Times* (Madison, WI), 10 Feb. 1919, 2.

Carson did not name the priest and his exploits are not confirmed elsewhere. That a Catholic missionary flew throughout the South Pacific in the early 1920s is possible, though unlikely, given a lack of coverage of his exploits in either the secular or Catholic press.<sup>7</sup>

### **Rev. R. Robert Crawford**

Apostolic Faith Mission – USA (1920 –, 1928 –)

Reverend Crawford began flying in the U.S. northwest in 1920 as an itinerant evangelist for the Apostolic Faith Mission. Of all claimants to the title “first flying missionary,” his is the most probable. Unlike the Revs. Moran, Sullivan, or Maynard, Robert Crawford’s flights served as a key component of his work and ministry. Crawford suspended his flying ministry in the mid-1920s, only to return in 1928 following Lindbergh’s flight across the Atlantic and the corresponding rapid growth in aviation’s popularity. Given a lack of newspaper coverage of his work following the late 1920s, his aviation ministry likely ended sometime in the early 1930s.<sup>8</sup>

1924

### **Leon Bourjade**

Catholic Church – Polynesia (1924, no known mission flights)

Noted French WW1 fighter ace and Catholic missionary to Polynesia, Leon Bourjade achieved additional fame in Australia after he mentioned his hope of one day flying an airplane to distant parishes.<sup>9</sup>

### **Rev. Harry Roberts Carson**

Episcopal Church – Haiti, the Caribbean (1924 –)

Beginning in 1924, the Reverend Harry Roberts Carson (Episcopal bishop of the diocese of Haiti) made frequent flights between Episcopalian mission posts in the Caribbean with help from a pilot and plane loaned to him by the US Navy. It is unlikely he continued these flights much beyond the mid-1920s.<sup>10</sup>

### **Mrs. Mattie Crawford**

Pentecostal– USA (1924 – ca. 1926)

<sup>7</sup> Anon., "This Bishop to fly on visits to Flock," *New York Times*, 04 Aug. 1924, 13; Most Reverend A.R.E. Thomas to John Wells, 24 Jul. 1972 (BGC 528-3-11).

<sup>8</sup> George D. Crissey, "Pastor Flies Over Oregon," *Florence Times-News* (Florence, AL), 12 Jul. 1928, 3.

<sup>9</sup> Anon., "Air Hero Becomes Monk: Living in Lonely Hut, "New Battles to Fight.," *The Brisbane Courier* (Brisbane Queensland), 25 Feb. 1924, 13.

<sup>10</sup> Anon., "This Bishop to fly on visits to Flock"

Mrs. Crawford was a famous – though controversial – Pentecostal evangelist who, in the mid-1920s, utilized an airplane for propaganda as well as transportation to and from evangelistic tours in the United States.<sup>11</sup>

### **Rev. Leonard Daniels**

Church Bush Aid Society – New South Wales (fundraising 1924 – 1927, mission flights 1928 – 1932)

Reverend Leonard Daniels was a veteran pilot of Egypt during World War One, and Anglican minister. He began service as a missionary with the Colonial Church Society and the Church Bush Aid Society in New South Wales (NSW) beginning in 1923. In 1924, Reverend Daniels began raising funds in London to purchase a deHavilland Moth to fly between his distant mission posts and thereby more effectively minister a parish that was equivalent in size to England. Daniel's efforts to start what he believed to be the first missionary-aviation service in the world were not without controversy, and were opposed by members of his Australian parish. Regardless of the resistance, Daniels began flying in 1928 and promoted his work widely as a modern and practical innovation for contemporary missions. As Daniels ministered throughout NSW, he built a reputation as a heroic pioneer explorer. Daniels built runways, served as his own mechanic, impressed local officials with his flying capabilities, and entertained audiences with his speaking prowess and musical gifts (he was reportedly an accomplished pianist). Daniels likewise mentored a young Church Missionary Society missionary, Keith Langford Smith, in the basics of missionary flight and helped him launch his own "sky pilot" career in Australia's Northern Territory. Rev. Leonard Daniels ended his flying mission service in 1932 to conduct parish work in Lithgow, NSW. The Rev. C. E. Kemmis, also of the Church of England, took up his mantle and replaced Daniels as New South Wales' "sky pilot."<sup>12</sup>

### **Dr. E. A. Late**

Lutheran Foreign Missions – Liberia (1924 –)

Dr. Late was credited in the popular press for beginning a mission aviation service in Liberia. However, the extent of his mission aviation service is not now known as he is not mentioned outside one newspaper article.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.; Anon., "Mrs. Mattie Crawford," *Aero Digest*, Nov. 1924, 309 (BGC 528-2-2).

<sup>12</sup> Anon., "Sky Pilot," *The Mail* (Adelaide, South Australia), 19 Jul. 1924, 25; Anon., "Real Sky Pilot: Missionary with Aeroplane," *The Uralla Times* (Uralla, New South Wales), 16 Dec. 1926, 4; Anon., "Sky Pilot: Plane for Parish in vast Wilcannia," *Evening News* (Sydney, New South Wales), 24 Feb. 1927, 4; Anon., "The Real Sky Pilot," *Queensland Times* (Ipswich Queensland), 15 Jan. 1927, 8; Anon., "The Churches Rev. Leonard Daniels Rector of Wilcannia," *The Sydney Morning Herald* (Sydney New South Wales), 14 Jan. 1928, 10; Anon., "Sky Pilot Crashes: Appeal for funds," *Mirror* (Perth, Western Australia), 2 Jun. 1928, 4; Anon., "Wilcannia's Sky Pilot: Activities of Mr. Daniels," *Barrier Miner* (Broken Hill, New South Wales), 12 Sep. 1928, 3; Anon., "Sky Pilot: Budding Flying Parson," *The Cumberland Argus and Fruitgrowers Advocate* (Parramatta, New South Wales), (Parramatta, New South Wales), 11 Jul. 1932.

<sup>13</sup> Anon., "Aeroplane to be used by missionary working in Africa," *The Evening Republican* (Mitchell, SD), 9 Jul. 1924, 1.

## 1925

### ***Miva* (Missionalium Vehiculorum Associatio)**

Catholic Church– Global (organizational planning 1925 – 1927, flight operations 1927 – present)

Paul Schulte, a German oblate missionary, founded *Miva* (in German: Missions-Verkehrs-Arbeitsgemeinschaft) in 1927 to facilitate global Catholic missionary transportation through the purchase of transportation means for mission use. This included sending to missionaries bicycles, automobiles, boats, tractors, airplanes, and even mules, oxen, and elephants. The association found initial support from lay German Catholics, but also German Protestants and Jews. However, despite the broad interest base, Catholic leaders remained skeptical of *Miva* until the early 1930s when the organization won the public and enthusiastic support of Pope Pius XI. With official papal backing the organization expanded quickly during the 1930s. By 1939 the organization had sent supplies and equipment around the globe. *Miva* also spawned its own subsidiary organizations. *Miva* Switzerland was formed in 1932 and *Miva* Netherlands in 1935. Following World War Two, *Miva* Germany reorganized as *Diaspora Miva*. Additional *Miva* branches grew in the following decades: *Miva* Austria (1949), USA (1971), UK (1974), South Korea (1981), Slovenia (1987), Slovakia (1998), Poland (2000), Australia (2002), Croatia (2012), and *Miva* Bosnia (2015).<sup>14</sup>

## 1926

### **Rev. J. R. Blanchard**

Presbyterian – Western Australia (1926 – ca. 1927)

Reverend Blanchard made sporadic use of aircraft to fly between towns in Western Australia as part of his ministry. It is unlikely that his flights continued much beyond 1927.<sup>15</sup>

### **William Cameron Townsend**

South America (organizational planning 1926 – 1927)

Cameron Townsend was a prominent American missionary who founded Wycliffe Bible Translators, the Summer Institute of Linguistics, and Jungle Aviation and Radio Service (JAARS). Townsend first thought of using planes in 1926 to station and resupply Bible translators in Brazilian rain forests far removed from overland transportation routes. After

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<sup>14</sup> Anon., "'Sky Pilot' Now a Fact: First 'plane in Vaitcan City," *Advocate* (Melbourne, Victoria), 30 May 1935, 8; Anon., "Religion: MIVA," *Time*, Oct. 1936, 12, 18; M. H. Carrington, "Flying Priest," *Popular Aviation*, Mar. 1939, 47-8, 86; MIVA, "MIVA homepage," [www.miva.at](http://www.miva.at).

<sup>15</sup> Anon., "'A Busy Sky Pilot'," *The Brisbane Courier* (Brisbane, Queensland), 16 Sep. 1926, 6.



extensive planning and collaboration with pilots of the US military and National Geographic, Townsend postponed his envisioned aviation service until the cost of aircraft operations became more affordable. Between 1945-1947, Townsend organized aircraft service to his mission programs via CAMF (later MAF). Townsend broke with MAF in 1947 and launched JAARS in 1948.<sup>16</sup>

### 1927 - Second Wave of Mission Aviation (May 1927 – Dec. 1941)

#### **Bishop Richard Thomas**

Church of England – UK and South Australia (Jul. 1927)

The Right Rev. Richard Thomas (Bishop of Willochra) gained international publicity in July 1927 for utilizing an aircraft, flown by amateur pilot Alan Goodfellow, to travel between speaking engagements in the UK. While in the UK, the Bishop likewise made financial requests to church patrons for the purchase of an aircraft for use by Australian missionaries. It is unlikely his appeals were successful.<sup>17</sup>

### 1928

#### *Albatross*

Oblate brotherhood of the Catholic Church, *Miva* – Germany (ca 1928 – ca 1934)

One of six planes, that according to Paul Schulte were flown by himself and other German pilots in the Oblate brotherhood. All planes were based at a Catholic-owned airdrome in Germany. The pilots also possibly flew into Central and Eastern Europe to conduct Catholic mission work up through the mid-1930s.<sup>18</sup>

#### *Miva #2*

Oblate brotherhood of the Catholic Church and *Miva* – Germany (ca 1928 – ca 1934)

Unknown aircraft, one of six flown by Oblate Brotherhood. See also the entry for *Albatross*.

#### *Miva #3*

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<sup>16</sup> Cameron Townsend, interview by John Wells, 12 Jul., 1976.

<sup>17</sup> Anon., "A "Sky Pilot": Busy Bishop's Quick Transit," *Examiner (Launceston, Tasmania)* (Launceston, Tasmania), 12 Jul. 1927, 4.

<sup>18</sup> Anon., "Real "Sky Pilot": German War Flyer's Plan," *The Telegraph* (Brisbane, Queensland), 17 Feb. 1930, 5.

Oblate brotherhood of the Catholic Church and *Miva* – Germany (ca 1928 – ca 1934)

See entry for *Albatross*.

***Miva #4***

Oblate brotherhood of the Catholic Church and *Miva* – Germany (ca 1928 – ca 1934)

See entry for *Albatross*.

***Miva #5***

Oblate brotherhood of the Catholic Church and *Miva* – Germany (ca 1928 – ca 1934)

See entry for *Albatross*.

***Miva #6***

Oblate brotherhood of the Catholic Church and *Miva* – Germany (ca 1928 – ca 1934)

See entry for *Albatross*.

**Australian Inland Mission Aerial Medical Service**

Australian Inland Mission – rural Australia (May 1928 – present)

Employing an organizational plan developed by Lt. John Peel, Reverend John Flynn launched the Aerial Medical Service (AMS) of the Australian Inland Mission (AIM) in 1928 after eleven years of planning. Originally conceived as an emergency medical service within the confines of AIM, AMS split from its parent organization in 1933 to operate independently. The organization continues to provide emergency medical services in rural Australia and is now known as the Royal Flying Doctor Service.<sup>19</sup>

**Bishop Sydney James Kirkby**

Church Bush Aid Society, Church of England – New South Wales, Australia (1928 – 1932)

In 1928, Reverend Sydney Kirkby, later known as the “Flying Missionary,” initiated an aviation program to facilitate travel to his mission posts scattered throughout New South Wales. In 1932 Kirkby was appointed bishop coadjutor of Sydney, which finished his active involvement with

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<sup>19</sup> Anon., "Flying Doctors. Inland Mission. Cloncurry as a base," *Brisbane Courier* (Brisbane, Queensland), 2 Nov. 1927, 11; *The Flying Doctor Story*; Graeme Bucknall, "Flynn, John (1880-1951)," in *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, 1981).

the Church Bush Aid Society. The aviation program he spearheaded appears to have ended around this time as well.<sup>20</sup>

### **Right Rev. Bishop Peter Trimble Rowe**

Episcopal Church – Alaska (1928)

Bishop Rowe, Episcopal Bishop of Alaska, chartered a commercial airplane to travel between the mission stations within his diocese. It is likely that his use of a charter craft was temporary.<sup>21</sup>

### **Rev. G. M. Scott**

Australian Inland Mission – Queensland, Australia (1928 –)

A decorated RFC veteran of World War One, Reverend G. M. Scott employed two English built monoplanes to “hop” between sermons of his 100,000 square mile parish in Queensland, Australia. He likely ended his service in the early 1930s.<sup>22</sup>

## 1929

### **Most Rev. Bishop Gabriel Breynat**

Catholic, Miva – Canada (1929 – 1941)

Beginning in 1929, Bishop Gabriel was heralded by Canadian newspapers as the "Bishop of the Winds" and the “Flying Bishop” after he began to charter aircraft to fly between Catholic mission posts throughout his 600,000 square mile Canadian bishopric. In 1936, Bishop Gabriel received a used Junkers supplied by Paul Schulte and subsequently flown by Matt Berry and Louis Bisson.<sup>23</sup> Bishop Gabriel soon sold the *Sancta Maria* and purchased a Bellanca Waco named *Sancta Maria II*. In 1941, unspecified wartime realities forced Breynat to sell the plane to Canadian Airways, ending his mission aviation operation.

### **Hermann Köhl**

Catholic Church, Miva – South Africa (planning – 1929)

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<sup>20</sup> Anon., "The Church's Rev. S. J. Kirkby Leaving for England," *Sydney Morning Herald* (Sydney, Australia) 1930, 8; K. J. Cable, "Kirkby, Sydney James (1879-1935)," in *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, 1983).

<sup>21</sup> William Karl Martin, "The Use of Aircraft on the Mission Field," Central Baptist Theological Seminary, 1947, 16 (BGC 136-61-23).

<sup>22</sup> Anon., "True Sky Pilot," *Evening News (Sydney, New South Wales)* (Sydney, New South Wales), 23 May 1928, 13; Anon., "Flying Missionary," *Corsicana Daily Sun* (Corsicana, TX), 13 Jul. 1928, 6.

<sup>23</sup> Anon., "Religion: MIVA", 1936; Anon., "Over the Vineyard," *Time*, 20 Dec. 1937, 43; Gabriel Breynat, *Bishop of the Winds: Fifty Years in the Arctic Regions*, trans. Alan Gordon Smith (New York: P. J. Kenedy & Sons, 1955).

Captain Hermann Köhl was a decorated German pilot of World War One and the first pilot to cross the Atlantic from east to west. Following his famous flight, Paul Schulte asked him to lead a mission survey to South Africa for *Miva* and Köhl received international attention as he planned the exhibition. It is unlikely that he actually accompanied Schulte on the trip.<sup>24</sup>

### **Rev. Joseph M. Rick**

Catholic Church – India (training and operational planning – 1929)

Reverend Rick received national attention simply for his stating his intent to use an airplane for missionary work in India. There is no known record of any actual mission flights by the Catholic priest.<sup>25</sup>

## 1930

### **Bishop Dr. G. W. Chambers**

Anglican Church, East Africa (planning, 1930 – ?)

In 1930, Dr. Chambers, the Anglican Bishop of Tanganyika, raised money in the UK to begin a mission aviation program in East Africa. As of 1930, he was training a pilot and negotiating the purchase of an airplane. It is unknown if the planned program ever became operational.<sup>26</sup>

### **Brother G.J. Feltes**

Catholic Church – Alaska (1930 – 1931)

Although Brother Feltes gained considerable international attention for his mission aviation program to Alaska, his operation was an utter disaster. After numerous crashes, one of which claimed the lives of three people, the Catholic Church ended Feltes flying career after only a few months.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Anon., "Pioneer Flying Missionary," *The Laredo Times* (Laredo, TX), 5 Jun. 1929, 6.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Anon., "Sky Pilot: Solomons Missionary plane in luggage," *Cairns Post* (Cairns, Queensland), 6 Mar. 1930, 5.

<sup>27</sup> Anon., "A Priest to Fly to Northern Post," *Hutchinson News* (Hutchinson, KS), 2 Jul. 1930, 1; Anon., "Plane for Alaskan 'Sky Pilot'," *Manitowoc Herald News* (Manitowoc, WI), 2 Jul. 1930, 8; Associated Press, "Flying Missionary Stops at Chicago," *The Helena Independent* (Helena, MT), 25 Jul. 1930, 1; EveryWeek Magazine, "First Flying Missionary," *Miami Daily News-Record* (Miami, OK), 19 Oct. 1930, special insert; Anon., "The Marquette Missionary," *Popular Aviation*, Nov. 1930, 5; Anon., "Feltes Tellsof Aerial Tragedy," *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner* (Fairbanks, AK), 27 Dec. 1930, 3; Associated Press, "Bro. Feltes to Leave for Alaska Today," *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner* (Fairbanks, AK), 22 Jul. 1931, 1; Anon., "Flying Missionary Escapes Injuries When Plane Crashes," *Olean Evening Herald* (Olean, NY), 24 Jul. 1931, 2; Anon., "Flying Missionary's Plane Cracks Up," *Athens Messenger* (Athens, OH), 27 Jul. 1931; United Press International, "Flying Missionary Lands at Alameda," *Bakersfield Californian* (Bakersfield, CA), 13 Aug. 1931, 10.

### **Clarence W. Jones**

Voice of the Andes – Peru (planning and organization only, 1930)

Clarence Jones and the Voice of the Andes radio station purchased an airplane in 1930 with the intent of flying it between radio stations that were located along the headwaters of the Amazon River in Peru. They did not carry out their planned operation.<sup>28</sup>

### **Paul Schulte**

Catholic Church, Miva – Namibia (1930)

In 1930 Paul Schulte received international attention for announcing his intent to charter a large transport plane to fly Catholic missionaries *en masse* to South Africa. Schulte intended famed pilots Hermann Köhl and Colonel James Fitzmaurice to fly the planes, and Hermann Köhl seemingly agreed to the plan. Furthermore, Schulte intended to use the trip to conduct a detailed survey of northern Namibia for subsequent mission flights. Schulte appears to have conducted the survey, however it is unlikely that either Köhl or Fitzmaurice participated in the effort.<sup>29</sup>

### **Rev. Father Bernard Toenjes (alt. Tonjes)**

Catholic Church, Miva – Solomon Islands (1930 – 1934 –)

In 1930 Reverend Father Bernard Toenjes flew a hydroplane, supplied to him by *Miva*, in the Solomon Islands to conduct Catholic mission work. Father Toenjes claimed he first thought of his mission aviation program when he was flying as a bomber pilot in World War One.<sup>30</sup>

## 1931

### **Keith Langford-Smith**

Church Missionary Society – Northern Territory, Australia (1931 – 1933)

Keith Langford-Smith flew his airplane, the "Sky Pilot," between 1931 and 1933 for the Church Missionary Society in Arnhem Land, Australia. His short-lived aviation program proved disastrous for CMS, but for the remainder of his life, his identity as the "Sky Pilot" served as the

<sup>28</sup> Martin, "Aircraft on the Mission Field," 17.

<sup>29</sup> Anon., "Real "Sky Pilot": German War Flyer's Plan"

<sup>30</sup> Anon., "The Newcastle Sun (Newcastle, New South Wales)," *Newcastle, New South Wales*, 14 Jan. 1930, 1; Anon., "Holy Father Receives "Flying Priest.": Destined for South Sea Isles.," *Southern Cross* (Adelaide, South Australia), 17 Jan. 1930, 2; Anon., "Sky Pilot: Solomons Missionary plane in luggage"; Martin, "Aircraft on the Mission Field," 10.

foundation of his subsequent mission careers. CMS only again resumed flight operations in Arnhem Land following World War Two.<sup>31</sup>

### **Rev. Father Seymour**

Catholic Church – Queensland, Australia (1931 –)

Father Seymour began flying as an irregular part of his ministry in 1931.<sup>32</sup>

### **Rev. George M. Woodley**

Catholic Church – Alaska (1931)

Reverend Woodley established a Catholic mission aviation service in Alaska, but died in a hunting accident soon upon arriving in the field.<sup>33</sup>

## 1932

### **Rev. C. E. Kemmis**

Church of England – New South Wales (1932)

Rev. C. E. Kemmis, a New Zealand native, replaced Rev. Leonard Daniels as flying missionary for the Bush Church Aid Society (Church of England) in spring 1932 and continued Rev. Daniels work. On 8 November 1932, Rev. Kemmis misjudged a landing at his home base located in Wilcannia and destroyed his aircraft, much to the horror of the many onlookers who had gathered at the landing strip to watch him land. Kemmis was uninjured in the crash, though the incident was reported across Australia for the next two weeks. One July 1933 report suggested that Kemmis returned to his aerial ministry in a new airplane, though the prospect seems unlikely as his flying ministry is not subsequently mentioned in the Australian press. Reverend Kemmis resigned his vicarship in late 1933 though continued to minister elsewhere.<sup>34</sup>

### **J. Grady Parrott**

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<sup>31</sup> Keith Langford-Smith, *Sky Pilot in Arnhem Land* (Sydney, Australia: Angus and Robertson Limited, 1935); Keith Langford-Smith, *Sky Pilot's Last Flight* (Sydney, Australia: Angus and Robertson Limited, 1936); Anon, "M.A.F. To Operate Land Program," *New Life*, 8 Nov. 1973.

<sup>32</sup> Anon., "Queensland Has "Sky Pilot" Who Flies," *The Courier-Mail* (Brisbane, Queensland), 20 Sep. 1938, 1.

<sup>33</sup> Associated Press, "Priest is Found with Broken Neck," *North Adams Transcript* (North Adams, MA), 15 Oct. 1931, 1.

<sup>34</sup> Anon., "Our Flying Padre," *Lithgow Mercury* (Lithgow, New South Wales), 1 Aug 1932, 2; Anon., "Plane Crash at Wilcannia," *Barrier Miner* (Broken Hill, NSW), 8 Nov. 1932, 1; Anon., "Aeroplane Crash at Wilcannia," *Western Herald* (Bourke, New South Wales), 18 Nov. 1932, 3; Anon., "Church Notes," *Barrier Miner* (Broken Hill, New South Wales), 23 Dec. 1933, 3.

Mexican Gospel Mission (treasurer), Gideons (president of Arizona branch), Christian Business Men's Committee in Phoenix (treasurer), CAMF – Member #34 – United States, New Guinea (planning – 1932 – 1945, active CAMF involvement 1945 – 1982)

Grady Parrott began flying as a private pilot in 1932. He later claimed that he saw immediately in aviation an effective method of mission outreach and so began exploring methods by which to incorporate aircraft in the mission field. However, he never flew as a missionary pilot prior to World War Two. Between 1942-1945, Parrott served as a US air corps advanced flight instructor in Arizona, assigned to the RAF. As the war drew to its conclusion, Parrott began exploring the possibility of working as an instructor for Paul Hartford at Victory Sky Pilots, but soon became disillusioned with Hartford's methods, and instead joined CAMF in mid-1945.<sup>35</sup> Apart from his major aerial survey of the Baliem Valley in Dutch New Guinea in 1952, Parrott rarely flew as a CAMF/MAF pilot. His major contribution to the organization was in leadership. He served as vice-President (1945—1949) and as president (1949—1970).<sup>36</sup> Throughout his tenure with CAMF/MAF, Parrott proved an effective administrator and diplomat (much more so than James Truxton), able to work effectively with other mission leaders. Parrott steered MAF through its difficult breakup with Wycliffe Bible Translators, and helped mediate disputes between MAF and other mission organizations (such as those ran by Paul Hartford). After stepping down as president in 1970, Parrott served as chairman of MAF's board between 1970 and his retirement in 1982.<sup>37</sup>

## 1933

### **Anon. Scottish ministers**

Unknown Denomination – Scotland (– 1933 –)

Circa 1933, a group of unnamed Scottish ministers flew planes to access distant parishes in the northern parishes of Orkney and Shetland.<sup>38</sup>

### **Abbe Andre Charlon**

Catholic Church – France (planning only, 1933)

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<sup>35</sup> Charles Mellis, Jr., "CAMF Active Members," *Missionary Aviation*, Jul-Sep 1945, 6; Charles Mellis, Jr., "Introducing . . ." *Missionary Aviation*, Oct. - Dec. 1945, 8-9; Elizabeth Greene to James C. Truxton, 27 Feb. 1945 (BGC 136-1-92).

<sup>36</sup> Dietrich Buss and Arthur Glasser, *Giving Wings to the Gospel: The Remarkable Story of Mission Aviation Fellowship* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1995), 150-5.

<sup>37</sup> Please see: Correspondence of Grady Parrott (1945-1948) – BGC 136-2-2, 136-2-3, 136-2-4; Correspondence of James Truxton (1944, 1947, 1948, 1950) – BGC 136-1-87, 136-1-88, 136-2-14, 136-2-27; Paul Hartford Folder – BGC 136-25-13. See also: Grady Parrott to Paul Hartford, 23 Oct. 1953 (BGC 136-25-13); *Giving Wings to the Gospel*, 117; Kenneth Chan, "Former MAF President, Founding Member Passes Away," *Christian Post*, 2004.

<sup>38</sup> Anon., "They Really Are Sky Pilots," *The World's News* (Sydney, New South Wales), 15 Nov. 1933, 4.

Adre Charlon, a Catholic priest from France, received international publicity for his stated desire to become a flying missionary. It is possible, but unlikely that he ever operated a mission plane.<sup>39</sup>

### **Rev. Alber de Agostino**

Catholic – South America (1933 – ca 1934)

"Rome's Flying Missionary," Alber de Agostino received a personal farewell from Mussolini and international acclaim as he set out on an aerial exploration of South America on behalf of the Catholic Church. It is unlikely that his aviation program extended much beyond 1934.<sup>40</sup>

### **Harold Shepherdson**

Methodist Overseas Mission – Northern Territory, Australia (1933, 1935 – 1973)

A missionary for the Methodist Overseas Mission, Harold Shepherdson first conceived of a mission aviation program in 1933. In 1935, he launched his mission aviation program with a home-built aircraft. His aviation service was interrupted by World War Two, but then continued until 1973 when MAF assumed responsibility for the program.<sup>41</sup>

## 1934

### **Rev. Vivian Broderick**

Baptist – United States of America (– 1934 –)

Reverend Broderick, a Baptist minister known in the mid-1930s as "the flying missionary," gained national publicity in the United States for acquiring a pilot's license and flying to religious conventions.<sup>42</sup>

### **Rev. George Fisk**

Christian and Missionary Alliance – Borneo – (1934, 1939, 1940 – 1941)

George Fisk first devised of a missionary aviation program while on furlough in the United States in 1934. He believed that an airplane would allow him to speed up mission work and avoid dangerous river travel to remote mission posts. Fisk's supervising board members in the Church and Missionary Alliance (C&MA) disagreed. They considered his plan unwise and refused his requests to launch a mission aviation program. Five years later, the mission board

<sup>39</sup> Anon., "A Flying Missionary," *North Western Courier* (Harrabri, NSW), 15 Feb. 1933, 2; Anon., "Flying Missionary," *Waterloo Daily Courier* (Waterloo, IA), 4 Dec. 1933, 5.

<sup>40</sup> Anon., "Priest Plans Flight Over Andean Peaks," *Gleaner* (Kingston, Jamaica), 11 Jul. 1933, 22.

<sup>41</sup> Anon., "M.A.F. To Operate Land Program", 1973; Harold Shepherdson to John Wells, 8 Oct. 1974 (BGC 528-3-10).

<sup>42</sup> International News Service, "Flying Missionary," *Laredo Times* (Laredo, TX), 8 Jan 1934, 6.



relented and approved Fisk's operation, providing he raised his own money. Fisk quickly found the needed funds (courtesy of an heir to the *Toronto Globe*) purchased a Beechcraft E17B and hired Ralph Smith to train him to fly. Fisk took over the aviation program on his own in 1940, though by 1941 he returned to the United States and left the aviation program to fellow missionary-pilot Fred Jackson. During World War Two, Fisk toured the United States where he promoted mission aviation to churches and mission supporters. His words proved inspirational to James Truxton and James Buyers, who along with George Fisk, laid the initial foundations of the Christian Airmen's' Missionary Fellowship (CAMF, later MAF) in the summer of 1944.<sup>43</sup> For additional information regarding the C&MA aviation program in Borneo, see entry for Fred Jackson (1941).

### **Friederich "Fritz" Loose**

American and Bavarian Lutheran Church Missions — Papua New Guinea (1934 – 1938)

With the help of Bavarian churches, the American Lutheran Church bought and operated a German-built plane in service of the remote mission posts in Papua New Guinea. The plane was flown by Friederich "Fritz" Loose until 1938. At the outbreak of World War Two, the aircraft was stolen by its German pilot and engineer who used the plane to fly back to Germany and join their nation's armed forces. The Australian government grounded the mission for the remainder of the war. The Lutherans resumed flights after World War Two utilizing the Australian MAF.<sup>44</sup>

### **Hans Martin**

Catholic Church, Miva – South Africa (1934 – 1939)

Hans Martin, of Swiss branch of *Miva*, begins regular flight operations in South Africa circa 1934. It is probable that South African officials ended Martin's flying work at the start of World War Two.<sup>45</sup>

### **William "Willy" Schafhausen**

Catholic Church, Miva, Divine Word Airways – New Guinea (1934 – 1939, 1945 –)

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<sup>43</sup> Edward Lawson, "The Gospel Goes by Air," *Flying and Popular Aviation*, Nov. 1940, 22-23, 75; James C. Truxton to Murray Kendon, 15 Aug. 1945 (BGC 136-52-5); Charles Mellis, Jr., "Editorial," *Missionary Aviation*, Oct. - Dec. 1945, 3; Elizabeth Greene, "Wings Over Borneo," *Missionary Aviation*, Oct. - Dec. 1945, 4-7; "CAMF Diary," *Missionary Aviation*, Jan.-Mar. 1946, 8-13, 14; Murray Kendon, "Mounting up with Wings #3," Mildmay Center, London, pamphlet (MAF-UK, 1947) BGC 136-52-5; Christian and Missionary Alliance, "Actions regarding the Christian and Missionary Alliance Plane in Indonesia," Christian and Missionary Alliance, 1963 (BGC 528-1-21); John Wells and Glenn Arnold, "Winging the Word: Missionary aviation's first 60 years," *Christian Herald*, Sep. 1981, 54-7; *Giving Wings to the Gospel*, 18-9.

<sup>44</sup> Albert Frerichs and Sylvia Frerichs, *Anutu Conquers in New Guinea: A Story of Mission Work in New Guinea* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1969); Fritz Loose to John Wells, n.d. 1970 (BGC 528-3-5).

<sup>45</sup> Martin, "Aircraft on the Mission Field," 10.

Divine Word Airways (DWA) began with assistance from *Miva*. DWA's first airplane, *St. Paulus* (named in honor of *Miva* founder Paul Schulte) was initially flown by Willy Schafhausen, until his death in 1939. At start of World War Two, the Australian government did not allow the German-dominated DWA to own its own airplane. The *St. Paulus* was then sold. DWA resumed operations following the end of the war.<sup>46</sup>

## 1935

### **Bishop Herbert Guy Bullen**

Anglican – Egypt and Sudan (1935 – 1937)

A former CMS missionary, and from 1935 the assistant Bishop of Egypt and Sudan, Herbert Guy Bullen flew throughout Egypt and Sudan to travel between distant mission stations where he assessed educational needs of local communities and sought to bridge the differences between Protestant and Catholic mission groups. Bishop Bullen believed it to be the church's responsibility to collaborate fully with the British colonial government to "provide Sudanese with education and civilization." Bishop Bullen was killed in 1937 when his small plane crashed in South Sudan.<sup>47</sup>

### **Bishop Dr. William A. Geddes**

Anglican Church – Northern Canada (– 1935 –)

Known as the "Flying Bishop" of Canada, William Geddes flew in plane piloted by professional pilot to minister throughout the Church of England diocese of Northern Canada.<sup>48</sup>

### **Rev. J. W. Cliff and Rev. Father Kenny**

Anglican Church, Catholic Church – Rottnest Island, Western Australia (1935)

Rev. Cliff (Church of England) and Father Kenny (Catholic Church) made a joint flight to Rottnest Island to conduct special services during the Christmas season. The single round-trip flight warranted front-page coverage in Perth.<sup>49</sup>

### ***St. Peter***

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid.; C. Peter Wagner, *Frontiers in Missionary Strategy* (Chicago,: Moody Press, 1971).

<sup>47</sup> Anon., "Over the Vineyard", 1937; Samuel E. Kayanga and Andrew Wheeler, eds., *"But God is Not Defeated!" Celebrating the Centenary of The Episcopal Church of the Sudan 1899-1999* (Nairobi, Kenya: Paulines Publications Africa, 1999).

<sup>48</sup> Anon., "Out of the skies: Diocesan Tour, Modern Sky Pilot," *Geraldton Guardian and Express* (Geraldton, Western Australia), 5 Dec. 1935, 3.

<sup>49</sup> Anon., "Modern "Sky Pilots"," *The Daily News (Perth, Western Australia)* (Perth, Western Australia), 4 Jan. 1936 1936, 1.

Catholic, *Miva* – Rome, Orange Free States (1935 – 1939)

The *St. Peter* was a Klemm aircraft purchased with funds raised by *Miva* from German Catholic parishes. In Mar. 1935 the aircraft was at the center of international news when Hermann Köhl flew the ship to Rome as part of a *Miva* publicity stunt. The Catholic Church placed the plane on display in Vatican City, and Köhl flew exhibition flights over the city before the plane was shipped to the Orange Free States later that year. The fate of the aircraft following 1935 is more opaque. It was very likely operated by William Linkhold and, given the fate of other German-owned aircraft operating in Allied territory during World War Two, sold sometime in late 1939.<sup>50</sup>

**Rev. H. F. Schlaphoff**

New Apostolic Church – South Africa (– 1935 –)

Reverend Schlaphoff, president of the German-based New Apostolic Church, flew his own aircraft between ministerial posts in South Africa circa 1935.<sup>51</sup>

1936

**Rev. Paul B. F. Carlson**

Evangelical Covenant Church of America – Alaska – (1936 – 1942, 1943 –)

A missionary with Evangelical Covenant Church of America, Paul Carlson began flying in 1936 for mission work in Alaska. After a brief hiatus during World War Two, Carlson returned to Alaska in 1943, purchased a new aircraft, and continued his aviation work over the next few decades.<sup>52</sup>

**Catholic Flying Church**

Catholic Church, *Miva* – Northern Canada (1936 – 1939)

In 1938 Paul Schulte purchased a twelve seat Fokker Amphibian that had once belonged to noted inventor Garfield Woods. Schulte rebuilt the ship so that a large portion of its fuselage could be swung open revealing a Catholic altar inside. Schulte intended to fly his “flying church” to Canadian villages that did not have their own priest where he could celebrate Mass and, if needed, provide emergency ambulance service. Furthermore, given Schulte’s past publicity

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<sup>50</sup> Anon., ""Sky Pilot" Now a Fact: First 'plane in Vaitcan City"; Martin, "Aircraft on the Mission Field," 10-5.

<sup>51</sup> Anon., "A Real "Sky Pilot" From South Africa," *The Courier-Mail* (Brisbane, Queensland), 8 Mar. 1935 1935, 12.

<sup>52</sup> Mellis, "Introducing . . .", 1945; Mellis, "CAMF Diary", 1946; Charles Mellis, Jr., "Seward Peninsula," *Missionary Aviation*, Jul.-Sep. 1946, 5-7, 9; Martin, "Aircraft on the Mission Field."

exploits, the large “flying church” was likely an effort to attract attention to his efforts from both potential converts and the popular press.<sup>53</sup>

### **Father J. M. Courture**

Catholic – Canada (– 1936 –)

Starting in the early 1930s, Father Courture, flew throughout his Northern Ontario parish in a plane flown by a professional pilot. In 1936, Courture received a private pilot’s license and his own plane with which he flew to distant ministry posts on his own.<sup>54</sup>

### **Linford D. Hackman**

Mennonite Church Missions – Alberta and Saskatchewan, Canada (1936 – 1947 –)

Linford Hackman began flying for Mennonite Church Missions in 1936 around Peace River country. He was still flying for the Mennonite mission in 1947.<sup>55</sup>

### **Paul Schulte**

Catholic Church, *Miva* – Northern Canada (1936 – 1939, 1945 –)

In 1936 Paul Schulte made international headlines as he flew from Germany to America aboard the *Hindenburg*, upon which he became the first priest to give mass while in the air. After a fundraising tour throughout the US eastern seaboard, Schulte traveled to Canada where he initiated three new aviation operations. Schulte himself operated one of the programs, flying a Stinson Reliant, named *The Flying Cross*, as well as another aircraft named *St. Lucas*. Schulte continued to make headlines for his work in Canada, where he flew emergency medical flights, scouted shipping lanes through ice flows, established air routes throughout northern Canada, and built a wireless communication network with which Catholic priests ministering in the Arctic north could maintain contact with outside help. Schulte likewise took detailed notes, and shot numerous videos and still shots of his adventures. He published a book based on these notes and edited his video into well-received films. Schulte submitted still shots of his efforts to the International Leica Exhibit, where they won awards, and were displayed at the Rockefeller Center in New York City. All of these accomplishments were emphasized in *Miva* publicity. Under Schulte’s, *Miva*’s work in Canada continued to grow up through 1939. By 1939, and in large part thanks to donations from US Catholics, Schulte built fifteen radio stations as well as fifteen refueling stations throughout the Canadian Arctic. His most remote post was some 800 miles north of the Arctic Circle. World War Two ended Schulte’s efforts in Canada. While it is uncertain, it is very likely that the Canadian government intervened to ground Schulte and removed him from contact with Arctic radio transmitters. Weather in the North Atlantic

<sup>53</sup> Carrington, "Flying Priest", 1939; Martin, "Aircraft on the Mission Field," 10-5; Priscilla Pope-Levison, *Building the Old Time Religion: Women evangelists in the progressive era* (New York: New York University Press, 2014).

<sup>54</sup> Anon., "'Sky Pilot of the North'," *The Telegraph* (Brisbane, Queensland), 3 Jun. 1936, 23.

<sup>55</sup> Martin, "Aircraft on the Mission Field," 54.

impacted directly that of Europe. Therefore, Canadian weather information was of strategic importance during wartime, and Schulte's German nationality made him a security risk. Schulte continued with other missionary work in Illinois during the war and resumed his aviation ministry in Africa following it.<sup>56</sup>

## 1937

### **Miss. Clarice I. Gooding**

National Baptist Convention – Africa (– 1937 –)

Miss Clarice I. Gooding, advertised in *The Afro-American* as a "flying missionary," supposedly flew throughout her posts in Africa while employed as a missionary for the National Baptist Convention, a predominantly African-American Protestant denomination based in the American South.<sup>57</sup>

### **Rev. Mother Michael Dufay**

Catholic Church, Missionary Sisters of the Holy Ghost – sub-Saharan Africa (1937 – 1938)

Reportedly the world's first "Flying Mother." Mother Dufay (superior general of the Missionary Sisters of the Holy Ghost) left in November 1937 on a 5,000-mile inspection of missions on a plane furnished by the French Air Ministry. Her journeys carried her to Madagascar, Mozambique, the Cameroons, and the Congo.<sup>58</sup>

## 1938

### **Unnamed German Pilot**

American and Bavarian Lutheran Church Missions — Papua New Guinea (1938 – 1939)

Unknown German national who flew for American and Bavarian Lutheran Churches in Papua New Guinea following departure of Fritz Loose. At the outbreak of World War Two, the pilot

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<sup>56</sup> Anon., "Zeppelin Off for U.S. Shore: Many Notables Included on Passenger List: Mass to be said daily in air," *Gettysburg Times* (Gettysburg, PA), 7 May 1936, 8; Charles Grenham, "Flying Priest Alaska Bound," *Monessen Daily Independent* (Monessen, PA), 30 Oct. 1936, 8; Inc. E. Leitz, "Catalog: the Fourth International Leica Exhibit," New York, NY, pamphlet (Inc. E. Leitz, 1937); Anon., "Women Catholics to Hear Flying Priest: Father Schulte Tells Delegates in Capital of Plane's Use in Missionary Work," *New York Times* (New York, NY), 26 Sep. 1937, 21; Anon., "World Religious News," *The Daily News* (Huntington, PA), 29 Oct. 1937, 10; Anon., "The Flying Priest!," (British Pathé, 1938); Anon., "Obviam Christo," *Time*, 1938, 40; Anon., "Flying Missionary Priest's Adventures," *Lewiston Evening Journal* (Lewiston, MA), 17 Aug. 1938, 13; Carrington, "Flying Priest", 1939; Martin, "Aircraft on the Mission Field," 10-5; Paul Schulte, *Der fliegende Pater Paul Schulte. Gründer der MIVA. Eine Biographie*; Paul Schulte, *Der Flug meines Lebens* (Germany: Aschaffenburg, 1964).

<sup>57</sup> Anon., "Flying Missionary Returns from Coast," *The Afro-American* (Baltimore, MD), 9 Oct. 1937, 16.

<sup>58</sup> Anon., "Over the Vineyard", 1937

and an unnamed engineer stole mission aircraft and used it to return Germany where they rejoined their nation's armed forces.<sup>59</sup>

### **Unnamed German Aviation Engineer**

American and Bavarian Lutheran Church Missions — Papua New Guinea (1938 – 1939)

Unknown German national who worked as mechanic for American and Bavarian Lutheran Churches in Papua New Guinea following departure of Fritz Loose. At the outbreak of World War Two, the unnamed pilot and engineer stole the mission aircraft and used it to return Germany where they rejoined their nation's armed forces.<sup>60</sup>

### **John Brown University Aviation Program**

John Brown University – Arkansas (1938 –)

John Brown University, a private Christian college in the United States, launched its own aviation training program in 1938, expanding its airfield and hanger in 1939. It's relationship to other mission aviation efforts is unknown.<sup>61</sup>

### **Elrow LaRowe**

India Mission, WMAC – India, United States (1938 – 1948 –)

Beginning circa 1938, Elrow LaRowe served for an indefinite time as a missionary pilot in India with the India Mission. By 1945, he had returned to the United States, and using his experience as a missionary pilot, published at least two reports concerning mission aviation best practices that received some notoriety amongst the Christian press. LaRowe continued to tour the United States as a mission aviation expert up through at least 1948.<sup>62</sup>

## 1939

### **Dr. Walter Herron**

Bolivian Indian Mission, WMAC #27 – Bolivia (1939 – 1950)

In 1939, Walter Herron an Australian missionary stationed in Bolivia with the Bolivian Indian Mission, lost his wife Violet Dunn Herron after complications from a difficult childbirth. The grief-stricken widower cared for his infant son as best he could. However, his station was a five

<sup>59</sup> *Anutu Conquers in New Guinea*; Loose, n.d. 1970 (BGC 528-3-5).

<sup>60</sup> *Anutu Conquers in New Guinea*; Loose, n.d. 1970 (BGC 528-3-5).

<sup>61</sup> "TIMELINE: JBU Through the Years," John Brown University, <http://www.jbu.edu/archives/timeline/>.

<sup>62</sup> Paul Hartford to James Buyers, 14 Nov. 1945 (BGC 136-25-13); Anon., "Aviation," *Christian Life and Times*, Sep. 1946, 21.

day ox-cart ride from the supplies and medical care needed for his infant son. Herron eventually conceded that he would be unable to properly tend to his newborn child and so loaded up his wagon to take his son to his wife's parents in New Zealand. As Herron struggled with his ox's and fought mosquitos he heard the faint sound of an aircraft overhead, and remarked to himself that had he had the plane, his wife would have likely survived. While on furlough later that year, Herron requested funds from his mission for an aircraft and to build a series of landing strips near his station. While skeptical that Herron's aviation program would prove viable, his board nevertheless approved the project. In 1941, with only 40 total hours experience as a pilot, Herron began his aviation program flying his Piper Cub amongst Bolivia's dangerous mountain passes. That Herron survived his aviation program was a miracle unto itself. His aircraft had difficulty flying in high altitudes, he failed to scout flight paths through local mountain passes, he purchased no spare parts (apart from a spare propeller), and flew his plane on a shoestring budget, frequently suspending his operation when he ran out of funds.<sup>63</sup> Following World War Two, Herron was heralded as a prominent veteran mission aviator. Despite his program's questionable operational standards, CAMF, MAF-UK, Paul Hartford, and members of the Christian Press all pointed to Herron's mission aviation operation as inspiration and proof that the concept was indeed practical.<sup>64</sup> In 1950, Herron's Piper was eventually destroyed in a storm while parked in a landing field. The Bolivian Indian Mission attempted to raise funds for a replacement, though it is unclear Herron again returned to the air.<sup>65</sup>

### **Friedl Lang**

Catholic Church, Miva – Northern Canada (– 1939 –)

Mr. Lang reportedly flew for *Miva* in the Canadian Arctic during 1939.<sup>66</sup>

### **Rev. Clifford W. Lanham**

Methodist Inland Mission – Queensland, Australia – (1939, 1945 –)

In 1939 Reverend Clifford Lanham, a missionary with the Methodist Inland Mission in Queensland Australia, purchased a used Fox Moth, which he flew (in replacement of an old ambulance) throughout his 170,000 square-mile mission district. Lanham's aviation ministry allowed him to minister to a broad population base and provide air ambulance service to those living around his station post in Boulia, Queensland. During World War Two, Lanham left the

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<sup>63</sup> Walter J. Herron, "Wings over Bolivia," *Missionary Aviation*, Apr.-Jun. 1946, 3-5, 13; Wells and Arnold, "Winging the Word: Missionary aviation's first 60 years", 1981

<sup>64</sup> Truxton, 15 Aug. 1945 (BGC 136-52-5); "Introducing . . .", 1945; "Missionaries Earn Wings at Indiana Flying School," *United Evangelical Action*, 15 Dec. 1945; "CAMF Diary", 1946; "Missionary Aviation Conference Proceedings and Report," Missionary Aviation Conference, (Winona Lake, IN), 1-4 Aug. 1946 (BGC 136-53-12).

<sup>65</sup> Truxton, 15 Aug. 1945 (BGC 136-52-5); Walter Herron to Mr. Roberts, 23 Jan. 1946 (BGC 136-54-26); Herron, "Wings over Bolivia", 1946; "Further Evidences of God's Blessing - "BIM", " *Bolivian Indian*, Jan-Mar 1947, (BGC 136-61-8); Walter Herron, "The Wings of the Wind," *Bolivian Indian*, Jul-Aug 1947, 15 (BGC 136-61-8); Walter Herron, "After Nine Years," *The Bolivian Indian Mission*, 1950, 7-8 (BGC 136-61-8).

<sup>66</sup> Martin, "Aircraft on the Mission Field," 10-5.

ministry to serve as a flight instructor. He returned to the ministry after leaving the armed forces, and spear-headed an expansion to the Methodist Inland Mission's aviation program.<sup>67</sup>

### **R. G. LeTourneau**

R.G. LeTourneau, Inc., LeTourneau Foundation, Christian & Missionary Alliance, LeTourneau College, LeTourneau University – USA (1939 – present)

Successful businessman and noted inventor of construction equipment, R. G. LeTourneau took a great interest in facilitating mission aviation following the purchase and operation of a light plane by his construction company in the late 1930s. Towards that end he advised C&MA in the development of George Fisk's aviation program in Borneo, collaborated with CAMF, donated numerous aircraft to missionary organizations (such as the aircraft flown by Paul Uhlinger), and launched a missionary flying school: first operated out of Toccoa, Georgia, and later at LeTourneau College (now LeTourneau University) in Longview, Texas.<sup>68</sup>

### **Leo Verhulst**

Catholic Church, *Miva* – South America (– 1939 –)

Mr. Verhulst reportedly flew for *Miva* in South America during 1939.<sup>69</sup>

## 1940

### **Elizabeth “Betty” Greene**

Presbyterian, CAMF – Member #4 – USA, Mexico, Peru, Sudan (planning – 1940-1945, flights – 1946 –)

Elizabeth Greene ranks as amongst MAF's most influential leaders. She was one of its founding members, its first full-time employee, and first missionary pilot. Elizabeth Greene initially started flying in 1936 at the age of 16, and four years later laid plans to fly as a missionary pilot. During World War Two Greene served as a Women's Air-Force Pilot (WASP), where she test piloted aircraft and towed target gliders. In 1943 she wrote an article for *His* magazine

<sup>67</sup> Anon., "Outback Clergyman to be 'Sky Pilot'," *Sunday Mail* (Brisbane, Queensland), 9 Jul. 1939, 12; Anon., "Finds Only Real 'Sky Pilot' Can Work Huge Circuit," *The Courier-Mail* (Brisbane, Queensland), 3 Jul. 1939, 1; "Aviation", 1946; Martin, "Aircraft on the Mission Field."

<sup>68</sup> James C. Truxton to Murray Kendon, 10 Apr. 1946 (BGC 136-52-5); Service, "The Week in Religion"; "Aviation", 1946; Charles Mellis, Jr. to Ken Ellis, 21 Aug. 1946 (BGC 136-52-5); "Missionary Aviation Conference Proceedings and Report," 1946; "News," *Christian Life and Times*, Feb. 1947, (BGC 136-59-28); Martin, "Aircraft on the Mission Field."; "Missionaries Die in Plane Crash (2)," 1948, (BGC 136-61-12); Christian and Missionary Alliance, "Actions regarding the Christian and Missionary Alliance Plane in Indonesia," Christian and Missionary Alliance, 1963 (BGC 528-1-21); Henry Cook, "A Research Project in Mission Aviation," Moody Bible Institute, 1963 (BGC 528-3-1); "LeTourneau," *Christian Life*, Jun. 1963, 34 (BGC 528-3-4); Roy S. LeTourneau to John Wells, 12 May 1970 (BGC 528-3-4).

<sup>69</sup> Martin, "Aircraft on the Mission Field," 10-5.



(published by InterVarsity Christian Fellowship) in which she laid out her vision of mission aviation. The article caught the attention of James Truxton who soon contacted her to request her membership in CAMF.<sup>70</sup> Following the disbanding of the WASP program in 1944, Greene started secretarial work for CAMF in Los Angeles.<sup>71</sup> Beginning in 1945, Greene spearheaded CAMF's initial aviation service program, operated in conjunction with Cameron Townsend's Wycliffe Bible Translators in southern Mexico. Greene conducted an intensive aerial survey over Wycliffe territory near, established landing strips, and on 23 February 1943, Greene made CAMF/MAF's first mission flight out of Chiapas, Mexico.<sup>72</sup> Greene continued to fly for Wycliffe in Mexico in 1946. In 1947 she provided aviation service for the organization in Peru (and also became the first female pilot to fly over the Andes).<sup>73</sup> Although it appears that Cameron Townsend pursued Greene's flight services after he ended the formal relationship with MAF in 1947/48, Greene ultimately stayed with MAF throughout the remainder of her aviation career.<sup>74</sup> Betty Greene later flew for MAF-US in Nigeria (1950-52), MAF-UK in the Sudan (1956-58) – which required an Act of the Sudanese Parliament to facilitate – and in New Guinea (1960-62). Greene remained in an active leadership role within MAF-US into the 1970s, and remains a popular figure within the annals of mission aviation history. She wrote a posthumously published account of her life in 2002, continues to remain the focus of children's Sunday school lessons; and has her own fan page on Facebook.<sup>75</sup>

### **Rev. Paul C. Hartford**

Youth for Christ International, Victory Sky Pilots, World Missionary Aviation Council, World Opportunities Incorporated – Cuba, Mexico, the United States, South America, the Caribbean (1940 – 1973 –)

Paul Hartford first developed a concept of mission aviation in 1940 as a missionary in Cuba. He returned to the United States intent upon carrying out his plan, but was delayed by the United States entry into World War Two. In 1944, Hartford flew to Mexico to test his aviation theories and left Mexico convinced as to aviation's value to mission organizations. He began raising money to build a flight school for missionaries and pastors, and opened Victory Sky Pilots in Winona Lake, Indiana, in February 1945. Hartford's work quickly attracted the interest of James Truxton and George Fisk of the newly formed Christian Airmen's Missionary Fellowship. Their collaboration with Hartford resulted in the first Missionary Aviation Conference of 1946, which helped lay the foundation of many subsequent missionary aviation programs. In 1946, Hartford

<sup>70</sup> Elizabeth Greene, "A Gal, A Plane, and a Dream," *His*, Spring 1943, 9-10 (BGC 136-1-92); *Giving Wings to the Gospel*, 27-8, 40.

<sup>71</sup> Mellis, "Introducing . . .", 1945

<sup>72</sup> Charles Mellis, Jr., "Wings of Praise and Prayer," *Missionary Aviation*, Jan-Mar. 1946, 15; James C. Truxton to Murray Kendon, 26 Feb. 1946 (BGC 136-52-5); Mellis, "Seward Peninsula", 1946; Anon., "Wings of Praise and Prayer," *Missionary Aviation*, Jul. 1947, 5.

<sup>73</sup> *Giving Wings to the Gospel*, 69; Betty Greene and Dietrich G. Buss, *Flying High: The amazing story of Betty Greene and the early years of Mission Aviation Fellowship* (Camp Hill, Pa.: Christian Publications, 2002).

<sup>74</sup> Murray Kendon, "Friend of the MAF," pamphlet Apr. 1947 (1947) ; Grady Parrott to Elizabeth Greene, 5 Oct. 1948 (BGC 136-2-4); Grady Parrott to Elizabeth Greene, 5 Oct. 1948 (BGC 136-2-4).

<sup>75</sup> *Giving Wings to the Gospel*, 131, 90-1, 202-3, 36, 80; Chris Solomon, "Betty Greene, 76; Pioneer Aviatrix, Missionary and a Lady to her core," *Seattle Times* (Seattle, WA), 16 Apr. 1997.

and CAMF had a falling out over CAMF's insistence that missionary aviation be dominated by professional pilots, not amateur missionary aviators. In response Paul Hartford formed the World Missionary Aviation Conference in 1947/48, later World Missionary Aviation Council (WMAC), to coordinate international Protestant mission aviation programs. Over the next three years WMAC and CAMF (now MAF) fought each other in their attempt to capture the support of Protestant missionary organizations. However, by 1949 WMAC was in decline, and ended major operations in 1951. Later that year, Hartford closed VSP, sold off his stock of aircraft, and in 1952 joined Youth for Christ as their first official "flying evangelist." Hartford continued his flying evangelism work up through the mid-1970s.<sup>76</sup>

### Quaker Relief Wings

Quaker – United States of America (independent relief operation 1940 – 1942, then subsumed into US Civil Air Patrol)

In 1940, famous socialite and aviatrix, Ruth Nichols, founded Relief Wings to provide emergency air ambulance service. Nichols found inspiration for Relief Wings from her family's roots as Quakers, however the organization appears to have been exclusively focused upon humanitarian assistance. Nichols achieved fame and national prominence in the late 1920s and 1930s as an aviation pioneer; she flew in the famous "Powder Puff" Women's Air Derby of 1929, was the first woman to fly to all forty-eight states, she set world altitude and speed records, and was the first female pilot hired to fly for a passenger airline. Following the United States entry into World War Two, Nichols transferred Relief Wings assets to the Civil Air Patrol though remained closely affiliated with the organization. Jim Truxton considered agencies such as Relief Wings a threat to evangelical Protestantism, evidence that "modernist" religious

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<sup>76</sup> Paul Hartford to George Fisk, 6 Sep. 1944 (BGC 136-25-13); Paul Hartford to George Fisk, 16 Sep. 1944 (BGC 136-25-13); Paul Hartford to Elizabeth Greene, 14 Dec. 1944 (BGC 136-25-13); Helen Delich, "Clergy Urged to Take to Air," *Racine Journal Times* (Racine, WI), 22 Jan. 1945, 8; United Press International, "Pastor Urges Clergy to Make Use of Planes," *The Lima News* (Lima, OH), 22 Jan. 1945, 4; Paul Hartford, "Invitation to Enroll," pamphlet (Inc. Victory Sky Pilots, Spring 1945) BGC 136-25-13; "Preacher Flies Here Sunday," *Lima News* (Lima, OH), 2 Jun. 1945, 4; "Introducing. . ." *Missionary Aviation*, Apr.-Jun. 1946, 8-9; "Missionary Aviation Conference Proceedings and Report," 1946; "Advertisement: Flying the Gospel," *Revelation*, Jan. 1947; Charles Mellis, Jr. to James C. Truxton, 16 Jan. 1947 (BGC 136-1-102); Luther L. Grubb, "Wings for Brethren Home Missions," *The Brethren Missionary Herald*, 18 Oct. 1947, 945-7, 51; "A World Missionary Aviation Conference was organized," *Theological Observer*, 1948; Paul Hartford, "Minutes of the Opening Session of the Proposed World Missionary Aviation Conference," World Missionary Aviation Council, 25 May 1948 (BGC 136-60-7); Paul Hartford, "Constitutional Convention of the World Missionary Aviation Council held at Winona Lake, IN," World Missionary Aviation Council, (Winona Lake, IN), 1948 (BGC 136-60-7); James C. Truxton to J. O Percy, 12 Aug. 1948 (BGC 136-58-23); Murray Kendon to James C. Truxton, 16 Sep. 1948 (BGC 136-25-88); Paul Hartford, "World Missionary Aviation Convention Report," World Missionary Aviation Council, Dec. 7-9 1948; Paul Hartford, "Review of Events -- 2nd Annual Convention -- World Missionary Aviation Council," pamphlet (WMAC, 26-28 Jul. 1949) BGC 136-60-7; Grady Parrott to Murray Kendon, 16 Feb. 1949 (BGC 136-25-88); James C. Truxton to Dear Co-workers, 6 Jun. 1950 (BGC 136-2-27); "Youth For Christ Caribbean Team Tour a Success," *The Brethren Missionary Herald*, 24 May 1952, 337; *Kingston Gleaner* (Kingston, Jamaica), 2 Mar. 1958, 18; "Missionary Pilot Slated," *Lynnwood Enterprise* (Lynnwood, WA), 18 Apr. 1973, 16.

elements were pursuing mission aviation, and that conservative evangelicals needed to be as similarly focused on the concept or risk falling behind.<sup>77</sup>

## 1941

### **Rev. Fred Jackson**

#### Christian and Missionary Alliance – Borneo (1941 – 1942)

The Reverend Fred Jackson arrived at Borneo in October 1941 as a replacement pilot for George Fisk. Following a brief training regime provided by Fisk, Jackson began flight operations for C&MA in November, though initially without a valid pilot's license. Later that year Jackson was enlisted into the USAAF reserves as a Lieutenant. In anticipation of the forthcoming Japanese invasion of the island, Jackson regularly assisted the US and Dutch government by dropping pro-Allied war-time propaganda over villages and scouting for enemy military movements. By Christmas 1945, Jackson was amongst the last pilots flying in the region. On 10 January 1942, Jackson spotted the Japanese invasion fleet and radioed the information to the Dutch government. Jackson then flew to the islands interior and shuttled fellow missionaries away from the conflict. In July 1942, with Japanese victory all but certain, the Dutch government destroyed the C&MA aircraft, and a month later, Jackson, along with all other missionaries still in Borneo – men, women, and children – were reportedly murdered by Japanese military forces.<sup>78</sup>

## 1942 – Third Wave of Mission Aviation (May 1927 – November 1950)

### **Rev. E. Leroy Mason**

#### Assemblies of God – Africa, Liberia (1942 –)

Reverend Mason spent much of World War Two stationed in Africa as a missionary pilot. Following the war, Mason flew the first Assemblies of God aircraft (a Sikorsky amphibian) in Liberia, and he along with Rev H. B. Garlock and Walter Kornelsen were instrumental in the Assemblies of God's decision to launch the Ambassador program in 1948. The programs use of and methods of repairing an older 1930s' vintage aircraft, one that was prone to maintenance problem, was much criticized by local missionaries stationed nearby (see entry for: Baptist Mid-

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<sup>77</sup> Truxton, 15 Aug. 1945 (BGC 136-52-5); Gene Nora Jessen, *Powder Puff Derby of 1929: The True Story of the First Women's Cross-Country Air Race* (Naperville, IL: Sourcebook, Inc., 2002); Margaret A. Weitekamp, *Right Stuff, Wrong Sex: America's First Women in Space Program* (Baltimore, MD: The John Hopkins University Press, 2004).

<sup>78</sup> Greene, "Wings Over Borneo", 1945; Anon., "Dedicating Seaplane for Use by Missionaries in Borneo," *New York Herald Tribune* (New York), 18 Apr. 1948, 2 (BGC 528-1-21); Richard Lenehan to Bernard S. King, 17 Jul. 1955 (BGC 528-1-21); C&MA, "C&MA Board Minutes," Christian and Missionary Alliance, 19-21 Nov. 1956 (528-1-21); Anon., "Three Strikes in New Guinea," *Christian Life*, Feb. 1957, 45 (BGC 528-1-21); C&MA, "C&MA Board Minutes," Christian and Missionary Alliance, 19-20 Mar. 1957 (BGC 528-1-21).

Missions, 1945).<sup>79</sup>

### **Rev. Paul F. Robinson**

Baptist, Moody Aviation, CAMF member #12 – Alaska, Chicago (1942 – 1946, 1946 – 1975)

Paul Robinson began flying his own aircraft in 1942 while still pastor of the Forestville Baptist Church in Forestville, New York. During World War Two he served as a Civilian Air Patrol pilot and conducted some flight work as a mission aviator in Alaska. Following World War Two, Rev. Robinson collaborated extensively with CAMF (member No. 12) and in 1946 founded Moody Bible Institute's Aviation program. Robinson and Moody Aviation have maintained a close working relationship with MAF, nearly 70% of all MAF-US pilots have been trained at Moody. Robinson retired from Moody in 1975.<sup>80</sup>

## 1943

### **Lt. James Watson Buyers**

Presbyterian, CAMF – Member #2 – USA, Brazil (1943 – 1952 –)

Lt. Jim Buyers first collaborated with James Truxton, George Fisk, and Jack Wyrzten concerning the creation of a mission aviation program as early as 1943, while Buyers served as a test pilot for the US Naval Air Corps. In 1945, Buyers, as well as James Truxton, Grady Parrott and Elizabeth Greene founded the Christian Airmen's Christian Fellowship, for which Buyers served as Executive Secretary from 1945-1946. He proved instrumental in facilitating the close working relationship with Dawson Trotman and the Navigators Christian evangelical organization from whom CAMF received considerable assistance its first year of operation. Following the end of the war, Buyers entered Columbia Bible College (SC), and in 1946 he resigned from CAMF to pursue his studies full-time. According to Dietrich Buss (1995), Buyers later joined a Presbyterian mission to Brazil where he served as a missionary pilot.<sup>81</sup>

### **Cecil Dye**

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<sup>79</sup> "Our First Missionary Plane," *The Missionary Challenge*, 1945, (BGC 528-1-5); Reverend Gordon D. Mellish to James C. Truxton, 11 Jan. 1946 (BGC 136-54-22); "Using Modern Methods," *Christian Life*, Dec. 1949; "Focus on Learning," pamphlet (Assemblies of God, 1973) BGC 528-1-5.

<sup>80</sup> Charles Mellis, Jr., "CAMF Membership Stories," *Missionary Aviation*, Jul. - Sep. 1945, 5-6; Anon., "Aviation," *Christian Life and Times*, Jun. 1946, 10-2; William Karl Martin, "The Use of Aircraft on the Mission Field," *Central Baptist Theological Seminary*, 1947, 83 (BGC 136-61-23); Dietrich Buss and Arthur Glasser, *Giving Wings to the Gospel: The Remarkable Story of Mission Aviation Fellowship* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1995), 128; John Wells and Glenn Arnold, "Winging the Word: Missionary aviation's first 60 years," *Christian Herald*, Sep. 1981, 54-7.

<sup>81</sup> Mellis, "CAMF Membership Stories", 1945; James C. Truxton to Murray Kendon, 8 May 1946 (BGC 136-52-5); *Giving Wings to the Gospel*, 40, 68, 128.

### New Tribes Mission — United States (1943)

In 1943, Mr. Dye flew as pilot of New Tribes Mission's first aircraft. The vehicle was given to the mission in 1943 by G. W. Van Syoc. Dye's turn as pilot was tragically short, as he, along with four other New Tribes missionaries, were murdered in Bolivia in June 1943.<sup>82</sup>

### **Clarence A. "Soddy" Soderberg**

Sudan Interior Mission, CAMF/MAF Member #6 – USA, Nigeria (planning 1943 – 1946, operational 1947 –)

Clarence Soderberg, Lieutenant USNR, began developing an idea for mission aviation sometime in 1943. Shortly thereafter, he publicized his interest amongst US Protestants, and in turn helped convince James Truxton and James Buyers as to the broad interest in mission aviation from American servicemen. Soderberg was a founding member of CAMF, and enjoyed a long relationship with program. Through CAMF contacts, Soderberg was, in 1946, asked by Sudan Interior Mission (SIM) to begin their mission aviation program in Nigeria. The program launched February 1947. Much to the irritation of James Truxton, Soderberg had multiple crashes in 1947-48. However, he continued to operate the program, and was still flying in 1952.<sup>83</sup>

### **Lt. James C. Truxton**

Presbyterian, CAMF founder and first president, Member #1 – United States and South America (1943 –)

James Truxton, James Buyers, and George Fisk laid the initial foundations for CAMF (later renamed MAF) in 1944 after they found widespread interest in mission aviation from amongst the other Christian military pilots with which they were acquainted.<sup>84</sup> The three initially conceived of the organization as a clearing house for all types of missionary flight activity, including the practice of training missionaries (such as George Fisk) to fly as part-time pilots.<sup>85</sup> A year later, Truxton, as well as Buyers, Grady Parrott, and Elizabeth Greene officially founded the Christian Airmen's Christian Fellowship, for which Truxton served as President from 1945-1949. Truxton built CAMF to facilitate mission aviation. However, when he launched the fellowship, he remained uncertain as to mission-aviation best practice. After extensive research

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<sup>82</sup> Paul W. Fleming, "Tomorrow We Fly," *Brown Gold*, Jul. 1943, (BGC 136-61-17); Paul Fleming, "Hopes High," *Brown Gold*, Sep-Oct 1943, (BGC 136-61-17); Kenneth J. Johnston, *The Story of New Tribes Mission* (Sanford, FL: New Tribes Mission, 1985).

<sup>83</sup> Charles Mellis, Jr., "CAMF Active Members," *Missionary Aviation*, Jul-Sep 1945, 6; James C. Truxton to Murray Kendon, 15 Aug. 1945 (BGC 136-52-5); Charles Mellis, Jr., "Wings of Praise and Prayer," *Missionary Aviation*, Mar.-Apr. 1947, 4, 5; Murray Kendon, "Friend of the MAF," pamphlet (MAF-UK, Apr. 1947) BGC 136-52-5; Martin, "Aircraft on the Mission Field," 79; Mellis, "Wings of Praise and Prayer", 1947; James C. Truxton to Murray Kendon, 24 Jan. 1948 (BGC 136-25-88); Paul Hartford, "Review of Events -- 2nd Annual Convention -- World Missionary Aviation Council," pamphlet (WMAC, 26-28 Jul. 1949) BGC 136-60-7; *Giving Wings to the Gospel*, 20-1, 128.

<sup>84</sup> Mellis, "CAMF Membership Stories", 1945

<sup>85</sup> *Giving Wings to the Gospel*, 18-9, 60.

and in constant dialogue with missionary and religious leaders, missionary pilots, and professional pilots, Truxton decided that it would prove most safe and efficient to employ a professional-pilot model. Truxton promoted this vision with his customary gusto and enthusiasm. While an able organizer, pilot, and aviation theorist, Truxton remained decidedly impatient and headstrong. His dismissive attitude towards those who disagreed with his views and his strong opinions on most matters concerning flight, at times alienated MAF from other missionary leaders (especially Paul Hartford, and Cameron Townsend – though he and Truxton appear to have later reconciled). Truxton was himself aware of his flaws and stepped down as MAF president in 1949. He instead focused on conducting surveys and flights for MAF and continued to work with MAF into the 1970s.<sup>86</sup>

### **Robert “Bob” Williams**

New Tribes Mission – USA (planned, 1943)

In 1943 Paul Fleming intended for Bob Williams, a cofounder of New Tribes Mission (NTM), to fly a NTM plane in Borneo following World War Two. This plan seems to not have been carried out.<sup>87</sup>

### **Mr. H. L. Wood**

Seventh Day Adventist – Alaska (1943 – 1946 –)

In the summer of 1943, H. L. Wood learned how to fly and purchased the aircraft sold by Paul Carlson of the Evangelical Mission Covenant Church when he temporarily left Alaska in 1942. Wood was still flying in late 1946 and it could be presumed that he continued to use the aircraft up through the early 1950s.<sup>88</sup>

## 1944

### **Anon. “Mass Literature Bombing”**

Unknown – unspecified (1944)

In 1944, the *Brethren Missionary Herald* (published by the Fellowship of Grace Brethren

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<sup>86</sup> Please see Correspondence of James Truxton and Grady Parrott found in BGC collection 136. See also: James C. Truxton to Murray Kendon, 15 Jul. 1948 (BGC 136-25-88); Murray Kendon to James C. Truxton, 16 Sep. 1948 (BGC 136-25-88); Grady Parrott to Charles Mellis and James C. Truxton, 29 Jan. 1948 (BGC 136-2-4); Grady Parrott to Elizabeth Greene, 5 Oct. 1948 (BGC 136-2-4); Grady Parrott to James Truxton, 24 Sep 1948 (BGC 136-2-4); James C. Truxton to Grady Parrott, 4 Aug. 1950 (BGC 136-2-27); James C. Truxton to Dear Co-workers, 6 Jun. 1950 (BGC 136-2-27); James C. Truxton to MAF D-1, 23 Jun. 1950 (BGC 136-2-27); James C. Truxton to MAF D-1, 30 Jul. 1950 (BGC 136-2-27).

<sup>87</sup> Fleming, "Tomorrow We Fly", 1943; *The Story of New Tribes Mission*; SCOTT TOMPKINS, "New Tribes Mission Co-Founder Dies at 98," *Charisma News*, 31 Jul 2009.

<sup>88</sup> Martin, "Aircraft on the Mission Field," 31.

Churches) reported that an American protestant denomination planned to send aircraft out over the entire globe to conduct a “mass bombing” of religious literature over the world’s major cities. The denomination considered the effort, along with the contemporary expansion of religious radio, as a fulfilment of Jesus prophesy in Matthew 24, that he would not return again until his gospel had been preached throughout the world. That the mass ‘bombing’ was planned is probable. However, there exists no evidence that it was ever carried out as advertised.<sup>89</sup>

### **China Inland Mission**

Missionary Aviation Fellowship (MAF-US) – United States and South America (1944 – 1946)

During and immediately following World War Two, China Inland Mission (CIM) started an emergency aviation program to fly missionaries into and out of war-torn China. Although CIM leader Herbert M. Griffin (who also served on MAF-US’s Advisory Council), sought to expand the aviation program, the operation appears to have been a limited wartime measure, not long continued<sup>90</sup>

### **Christian Airmen’s Missionary Fellowship (C.A.M.F.), later Missionary Aviation Fellowship (M.A.F.), later Mission Aviation Fellowship (M.A.F.)**

Evangelical Protestant non-denominational – based in Los Angeles (later Napa, ID), initial operations in Mexico, South America, Nigeria, New Guinea, later operations have global reach (1944 – present)

The Christian Airmen’s Missionary Fellowship (CAMF) arose through the collaboration of Navy pilots James Truxton and James Buyers, working with support from former C&MA missionary pilot George Fisk (as well as Jack Wyrzten). Truxton and Buyers initially conceived of CAMF as a clearing house for all types of missionary flight activity, such as the practice of training missionaries (such as George Fisk) to fly as part-time pilots.<sup>91</sup> However, following a number of surveys, and in consultation with the London-based Missionary Aviation Fellowship (MAF), CAMF leaders eventually concluded that mission aviation was best left to professional, highly trained pilots, and that it was dangerous to expect fulltime missionaries to care for their machines properly or maintain flight proficiency.<sup>92</sup> Their decision was at the time controversial, and initiated a public struggle between CAMF and those (including many amongst its own membership, such as Paul Hartford – See Appendix C) who adhered to a traditional model of mission aviation dominated by amateur and semi-professional pilot missionaries. Betty Greene piloted the fellowship’s first mission flight in south-west Mexico in late February 1946 in partnership with Wycliffe Bible Translators, and later that year CAMF changed its name to Missionary Aviation Fellowship (MAF).<sup>93</sup> Despite CAMF/MAF’s promising start, the fellowship struggled throughout the 1940s. The programs suffered multiple crashes and had difficulty

<sup>89</sup> "The Gospel to be radioed to all nations! What then?," *The Brethren Missionary Herald*, 13 May 1944, 266-7.

<sup>90</sup> Charles Mellis, Jr., "Introducing . . ." *Missionary Aviation*, Oct. - Dec. 1945, 8-9; *Giving Wings to the Gospel*, 46.

<sup>91</sup> *Giving Wings to the Gospel*, 60; James C. Truxton to Murray Kendon, 27 Oct. 1945 (BGC 136-52-5).

<sup>92</sup> See: *Missionary Aviation* back issues (BGC 136-52-8). See also: *Giving Wings to the Gospel*, 102-4.

<sup>93</sup> Martin, "Aircraft on the Mission Field," 63; *Giving Wings to the Gospel*, 60.

attracting pilots. Furthermore, the at times short temper and over-bearing nature of some of its key leaders (such as James Truxton and Charles Mellis), alienated Cameron Townsend and Wycliffe Bible Translators. Townsend decided in 1947 to terminate Wycliffe's longstanding relationship with MAF and instead form JAARS (Jungle Aviation And Radio Service) to handle Wycliffe's transportation needs. MAF slowly rebounded from the loss of its relationship with Wycliffe and opened operations Ecuador in 1948, Honduras in 1949, and New Guinea in 1954. Today, MAF is perhaps the most influential mission aviation programs in the world.<sup>94</sup>

Board of Directors (1945)<sup>95</sup>

**James C. Truxton** – President

**J. Grady Parrott** – Vice-President

**James W. Buyers** – Executive Secretary

**Elizabeth E. Greene** – Secretary-Treasurer

Advisory Council (1945)<sup>96</sup>

**Dr. V. Raymond Edman** – President of Wheaton College (Wheaton, IL)

**Mr. Dawson E. Trotman** – Founder and President of *The Navigators* Christian outreach organization

**Mr. Cameron Townsend** – Founder of Wycliffe Bible Translators and Summer Institute of Linguistics

**Mr. C. Stacey Woods** – First General Secretary of the US branch of InterVarsity Christian Fellowship, and influential mid-century American evangelist

**Mr. Jack Wyrzten** – influential American evangelist and founder of *Word of Life* ministry

**Dr. Robert C. McQuilkin** – President of Columbia International University (Columbia, SC)

## Columbia Bible College

Columbia, SC – (1944 –)

Columbia Bible College, now Columbia International University, began offering aviation courses as early as 1944. Early leadership included Morton S. Taylor and Thomas M. Petty. The school, and aviation training program, had a close affiliation with CAMF/MAF.<sup>97</sup>

## Allen W. and Doris Franz

<sup>94</sup> "Missionary Aviation Conference Proceedings and Report," Missionary Aviation Conference, (Winona Lake, IN), 1-4 Aug. 1946 (BGC 136-53-12); James C. Truxton, "All Is Not Gold," *Missionary Aviation*, Jan-Feb 1947, 2, 5; "Letters," *Missionary Aviation*, Mar-Apr 1947, 3; MAF-US, "What is Safety?," *Missionary Aviation*, May-Jun 1947 1947, 2 (BGC 136-52-8); Parrott, 29 Jan. 1948 (BGC 136-2-4); Parrott, 24 Sep 1948 (BGC 136-2-4); Parrott, 5 Oct. 1948 (BGC 136-2-4); Grady Parrott to Ralph Hanson, 4 Nov. 1948 (BGC 136-60-7); Grady Parrott to Murray Kendon, 17 Nov. 1948 (BGC 136-25-88); *Giving Wings to the Gospel*.

<sup>95</sup> Charles Mellis, Jr., *Missionary Aviation*, Jul. - Sep. 1945, 2.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

<sup>97</sup> Charles Mellis, Jr., "Introducing . . . Thomas M. Petty," *Missionary Aviation*, Jan.-Mar. 1946, 6; Elaine Levine, "Aviation on the Campus," *Flying*, Oct. 1946, 27-9; "Flying Missionaries," *Southern Wings*, Jun. 1947.



Russian Gospel Association, World Missionary Aviation Council – Ruby Alaska region (1944 – 1946 –)

Beginning circa 1943, Allen (CAMF member #260) and Doris Franz worked as missionaries in the Alaskan interior. The two struggled to traverse between remote mission stations via dogsled and so in June 1944, after a year spent in the field, they returned to the United States where they both trained to fly. The couple returned to Alaska in 1945 with a Cub Coupe (named *Evangel*) and with which they ministered to trappers and villagers along the Yukon River. The two likewise used their aircraft as an air ambulance, a rescue craft, and to shuttle affiliated missionaries to their respective posts.<sup>98</sup>

**Lt. Charles Frederick, and Peggy McIntosh**

Evangelical Protestant of unknown denominational affiliation – (planning – 1944)

Lt. Charles McIntosh served as a B-17 pilot in World War Two. He was shot down and killed over Nuremburg in 1944 while flying his 35<sup>th</sup> bombing mission. According to his widow, Peggy McIntosh, Charles intended to serve as a mission aviator following the war. Peggy later partnered with CAMF and spearheaded the creation of the McIntosh Memorial Fund which raised money towards the purchase of an airplane for William Jones, a missionary with Central American Mission (see: William Jones). Peggy also served as MAF secretary in Los Angeles.<sup>99</sup>

**Missionary Aviation Fellowship, later Mission Aviation Fellowship, later joined to Mission Aviation Fellowship International (MAF-UK)**

Non-denominational evangelical Protestant, Movement for World Evangelism – London, later Folkstone, Kent (planning 1944 – 1947, operational 1947 – present)

Missionary Aviation Fellowship grew out of the in-flight musings of Murray Kendon, a New Zealander, flying for the RAF during World War Two. While patrolling the Atlantic, Kendon came to believe that aircraft could prove just as useful transporting missionaries and their supplies as they were transporting troops and equipment in the war. As a pilot himself, Kendon knew all too well the perilous nature of the skies, and strongly believed that aviation should not be relegated to a side job for regular missionaries. Mission aviation needed to be a task for specialists: those trained as pilots and prepared for the dangers of flight.<sup>100</sup> Although Kendon had a rough concept floating around his head, he did not have the means by which to implement his ideas. He therefore reached out to Dr. Thomas Cochrane, head of the influential Mildmay Movement, a London based organization dedicated to the promotion of mission outreach programs. Dr. Cochrane immediately seized upon the great possibilities offered by mission aviation and asked Murray to head up a mission aviation program under the Mildmay Center's

<sup>98</sup> Peter Deyneka to Jr. Charles Mellis, 28 May 1946 (BGC 136-58-13); Charles Mellis, Jr. to Peter Deyneka, 31 May 1946 (BGC 136-58-13); Allen W. Franz, "From Dog Sleds to Wings: Yukon Valley," *Missionary Aviation*, Jul.-Sep. 1946, 4, 14; Martin, "Aircraft on the Mission Field," 54.

<sup>99</sup> Mellis, "CAMF Membership Stories", 1945

<sup>100</sup> Stuart Sendall-King, *Hope Has Wings: The Mission Aviation Fellowship Story* (Zondervan, 1993), 6-7.

direction. Kendon agreed, and christened their new organization, Missionary Aviation Fellowship.<sup>101</sup> The Mildmay Center provided MAF-UK with much needed publicity, attracted donors, and netted the organization a number of important volunteers; this included Tom Banham, Jack Hemmings, a pilot with the RAF stationed in India, and Stuart King, an engineer officer also with the RAF. MAF-UK purchased a Miles Gemini in September 1947, and began flight operations on January 13, 1948, with an aerial survey of Eastern and Central Africa. Unfortunately, King and Hemmings crashed the aircraft part way through the trip. Worse still, the survey revealed that there was no urgent need for mission aviation services throughout much of the Congo. However, on their survey Hemmings and King had flown through the Sudan and established a close relationship with Howard Borlase, the field director of the Sudan Interior Mission (SIM). There was indeed considerable desire on the part of missionaries in Sudan for aviation service. Therefore, after jumping through a number of bureaucratic hoops, the MAF(UK) started aviation service in Sudan in late 1950 flying a 1930s vintage de Havilland Rapide.<sup>102</sup> Throughout their development, MAF-UK maintained a close working relationship with James Truxton and CAMF/MAF-US. The two organizations frequently exchanged information and ideas, provided each other with assistance when needed and throughout the rest of the 1940s seriously considered officially merging their organizations.<sup>103</sup> In addition, the American MAF provided MAF-UK access to US donors and contacts with evangelical mission organizations, both of which proved instrumental to MAF-UK's long-term success. After struggling in their initial start, MAF-UK continued to grow, and became the foundation for what is today MAF International, a global body comprised of member organizations in thirteen countries, and with operations in thirteen additional countries.<sup>104</sup>

### **Pastor Val L. Sherman**

First Methodist Church – Del Rio, Texas (1944, 1946 –)

In 1944 Val Sherman, pastor of First Methodist Church of Del Rio, Texas, began flying to distant cattle ranches on pastoral visitations. The aircraft, which had been loaned to the denomination was sold that same year. In 1946, Pastor Sherman rented another plane to conduct similar work.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> Ibid., 6-8; George A. Hood, "Thomas Cochrane," in *Biographical Dictionary of Christian Missions*, ed. Gerald H. Anderson (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1999).

<sup>102</sup> James C. Truxton to Murray Kendon, 26 Feb. 1946 (BGC 136-52-5); Ken Ellis to Jr. Charles Mellis, 31 Jul. 1946 (BGC 136-52-5); Kendon, "Friend of the MAF." (1947); Stuart King, Jack Hemmings, and Murray Kendon, "Letters from the Congo Survey," pamphlet (MAF-UK, 28 Jan. 1948) BGC 136-52-6; Tom Banham and Murray Kendon, "Letters from the Congo Survey," pamphlet (MAF-UK, Apr. 1948) BGC 136-52-6; Murray Kendon, "Dear Prayer Partners," pamphlet (MAF-UK, Jul. 1948) BGC 136-52-6; *Hope Has Wings*, 10, 12, 17-8, 25, 31-2 38-45, 52, 56, 58-9, 98.

<sup>103</sup> Truxton, 15 Aug. 1945 (BGC 136-52-5); Murray Kendon to James C. Truxton, 6 Nov. 1945 (BGC 136-52-5); *Hope Has Wings*.

<sup>104</sup> *Hope Has Wings*, 86, 96, 125, 39, 42, 45, 47-9, 55; *Giving Wings to the Gospel*, 198; Mission Aviation Fellowship International, <http://www.mafint.org/>.

<sup>105</sup> Martin, "Aircraft on the Mission Field," 62.

## Swedish Evangelical Mission Covenant of America

Pietistic evangelical, broadly Lutheran – United States and Alaska (1944 – 1947)

There exists no known record of the mission aviation activities in Alaska of the Swedish Evangelical Mission (now Evangelical Covenant Church), absent two short references made by Cameron Townsend in 1976 during an interview with John Wells (of Wheaton College, IL). Townsend noted that he had consulted with the “Swedish Covenant” mission, then operating in Alaska, when he was exploring best aircraft types for missions in the 1940s. That the Swedish Evangelical Mission operated such a mission aviation program is probable.<sup>106</sup>

## Melvin A. Todd

Wycliffe Bible Translators, later independent missionary, WMAC member #2 – southern Mexico (1944 – 1949)

Amongst Paul Hartford’s first supporters, Melvin Todd participated in Hartford’s initial survey of mission stations in Mexico. Todd returned to the United States with Hartford to initiate a mission aviation program in Mexico. In 1945 Todd joined Hartford’s Victory Sky Pilots as a student and following graduation from VSP purchased a plane and flew back to Mexico as a missionary pilot. Todd continued a close affiliation with Paul Hartford for the remainder of his life. He supported Hartford at WMAC conferences, and in 1946 Todd joined Hartford and Dr. Clyde W. Taylor in an extensive survey of South American mission stations (although Hartford likewise used the trip to promote his model of mission aviation). In 1949, Todd’s aviation ministry in Mexico appeared to have been growing. Tragically however, Melvin Todd, along with his copilot George King, were killed in their Cub Clipper in an aviation accident on 19 November 1949. Melvin Todd’s death cut short a WMAC-sponsored aviation rally to Mexico and the notoriety surrounding the debacle served to further undermine the WMAC’s reputation amongst Protestant mission groups.<sup>107</sup>

1945

## Unknown pilot

<sup>106</sup> Additional records concerning the mission can likely be found in the Evangelical Covenant Church’s central repository. See also: Cameron Townsend, interview by John Wells, 12 Jul., 1976.

<sup>107</sup> Todd was originally a missionary with Wycliffe Bible Translators, but at an undetermined date leaves the mission group, but stays in Mexico as an independent missionary. See also: Paul Hartford to George Fisk, 6 Sep. 1944 (BGC 136-25-13); Paul Hartford to Elizabeth Greene, 14 Dec. 1944 (BGC 136-25-13); James E. Walters, "Cleric Plans Air School for Pastors," *Valparaiso Vidette Messenger* (Valparaiso, IN), 27 Nov. 1945; "To the Regions Beyond in . . . Flying Grasshoppers," *Power*, 9 Dec. 1945, 1-3, 7; Paul Hartford, "Victory Sky Pilot's News Release," Winona Lake, IN, pamphlet (Inc. Victory Sky Pilots, Winter 1946-47 1946) BGC 136-25-13; Paul Hartford to James C. Truxton, 27 Oct. 1948 (BGC 136-60-7); Paul Hartford, "News on the Wing #2," pamphlet (WMAC, Dec. 1949) BGC 136-60-7; Paul Hartford, "News on the Wing #1," pamphlet (WMAC, Nov. 1949) BGC 136-60-7; *Giving Wings to the Gospel*, 116.

Baptist – Owen county, KY (1945 – 1948)

Beginning circa 1945, a friend of Reverend Arnold began broadcasting Arnold's sermons from his aircraft. While flying in circles over communities near his Owen county (KY) flight school, the pilot would deliver a short message via a loudspeaker attached to his plane. Once completed he would move on to the next community and begin the process again. Reverend Arnold later began delivering his own sermons in the same manner.<sup>108</sup>

**Rev. Dr. Louis W. Arnold**Baptist – Southern United States, Caribbean, Europe (1945 – 1959 –)

Beginning circa 1945, Reverend Arnold began flying between churches he had helped establish in the eastern United States. Later, inspired by a friend, Arnold began preaching sermons from his aircraft. While flying in circles over a neighborhood, Reverend Louis would deliver a short message via a loudspeaker attached to his plane. Once completed he would move on to the next community and begin the process again. Arnold continued his aerial ministry into the 1950s, serving as a flying evangelist in the Caribbean.<sup>109</sup>

**Eleanor Bankson**Evangelical Protestant of unknown denominational affiliation, CAMF – Member #69 – (planning – 1945 –)

In 1945, Eleanor Bankson, a private pilot and prospective missionary pilot, attracted the interest of CAMF which published a short biography of her in *Missionary Aviation*. Although she appears to have planned to fly as a missionary pilot, it is uncertain if she ever launched an active program.<sup>110</sup>

**Baptist Mid-Missions, Mid Liberia Baptist Mission**Baptist – Liberia (planning 1945; operation 1946 – 1974 –)

After a year of preparation, and some doubt on the part of the Mid-Mission board of directors as to its advisability, Mid Liberia Baptist Mission (BMM) began an aviation service in Liberia on 4 July 1946. Mr. Harlan Rahilly flew as senior pilot and was supported by the Reverends Abe Guenter (who did most of the actual flying), Gordon D. Mellish, and (possibly Millard Demy). During the first year, the mission struggled to maintain their aircraft, a problem compounded (in the minds of Mid-Mission missionaries) by the tackless actions of the Assemblies of God who likewise operated an aircraft in the region. According to Gordon Mellish, a missionary with BMM, the Assemblies of God made a poor decision in operating a 1930s-vintage Sikorsky that

<sup>108</sup> Jim Warren, "Evangelist who started Clays Mill Road Baptist Church and other churches dies at 101," *Lexington Herald Leader* (Lexington, KY), 20 Feb. 2015.

<sup>109</sup> Anon., "Kentucky's Flying Evangelist," *Christian Life*, Jan. 1949, 27-8; Warren, "Evangelist who started Clays Mill Road Baptist Church and other churches dies at 101"

<sup>110</sup> Mellish, "Introducing . . .", 1945

required frequent maintenance. As the Assemblies of God had no mechanic, the mission imposed itself upon the generosity of the US Army and Pan American Airlines to assist. As a result, both the US military and Pan-Am later imposed tight restrictions on their employees on-duty work and effectively cut off all missionaries from their support. Baptist Mid-Mission pilots therefore performed their own maintenance work. The Baptist Mid-Mission flight program soon became an integral part of the mission's Liberian operations and quickly expanded. The aircraft played a crucial role in supplying mission stations (by 1948, three stations relied exclusively on aircraft for food and supplies), transporting those in need of medical attention, and in direct evangelism (shuttling missionaries between mission stations). The program expanded over the next thirty years. By 1974, the program operated some 50 landing strips throughout Liberia, and had gained the trust of the Liberian government, who contracted with the operation for local flights of government officials – including the Liberian president.<sup>111</sup>

### **Rev. John Barrett**

Wings of Mercy, Roman Catholic Church, Society of Jesus – Illinois (1945 –)

Trained as missionary pilot with Wings of Mercy in 1945.<sup>112</sup>

### **Donald Berry**

Missionary Aviation Fellowship (MAF-US) – United States and South America (1945 –)

While still a military cadet during World War Two, Don Berry worked out a rough concept of mission aviation. Berry pursued his vision following the war. In 1946, he earned his commercial pilot's license and joined MAF-US. As a student at Wheaton College (IL), Berry along with Nate Saint and "Hatch" Hatcher built the college's aviation club to promote mission aviation amongst their fellow students. After graduation from Wheaton College, Berry enrolled in Paul Robinson's Mechanical Training Course at Moody Bible Institute and later began a long career with MAF-US, stationed primarily in South America. Berry was in attendance at both the 1946 Missionary Aviation Conference (Winona Lake, IN) and the World Missionary Aviation Council Convention at Moody Bible Institute (1948).<sup>113</sup>

### **Lt. Lee O. Bogue, Jr.**

Evangelical Protestant of unknown denominational affiliation, CAMF – Member #8 – unknown

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<sup>111</sup> "The Good News Pilot," *Mid-Missions*, Jul. 1945, 2 (BGC 136-54-22); Gordon D. Mellish to Elizabeth W. Greene, 16 Nov. 1945 (BGC 136-54-22); Mellish, 11 Jan. 1946 (BGC 136-54-22); Gordon D. Mellish to James C. Truxton, 19 Nov. 1946 (BGC 136-54-22); Gordon D. Mellish to Charles J. Mellis, 29 Jun. 1948 (BGC 136-54-22); Reverend Abe Guenter to John Wells, 22 Feb. 1974 (BGC 528-3-11).

<sup>112</sup> Anon., "Why did he come?," *Wings of Mercy*, Aug. 1945, 2 (BGC 136-61-10); Martin, "Aircraft on the Mission Field," 39-43.

<sup>113</sup> "And Now Mexico," *Missionary Aviation*, Apr.-Jun. 1946, 6-7, 14; "Missionary Aviation Conference Proceedings and Report," 1946; Paul Hartford, "World Missionary Aviation Convention Report," World Missionary Aviation Council, Dec. 7-9 1948; *Giving Wings to the Gospel*, 101, 24-5.

(planning, – 1945 –)

Lt. Charles McIntosh served as a B-24 pilot in World War Two, and was shot down on his 12<sup>th</sup> bombing mission sometime in 1945. As of July 1945, he remained missing in action. According to CAMF, Lt. Bogue expressed interest in flying as a missionary pilot after the war.<sup>114</sup>

### **Chalmers C. Boring**

Evangelical Protestant of unknown denominational affiliation, CAMF – Member #39 – unknown (– 1945 –)

In 1945, Chalmers Boring was a radioman and student pilot then in missionary training. Although he appears to have planned to fly as a missionary pilot, it is uncertain if he ever launched an active program.<sup>115</sup>

### **Miss. Elaine Bowman**

Evangelical Protestant of unknown denominational affiliation, CAMF – Member #49 – unknown (– 1945 –)

In 1945, Elaine Bowman was a student pilot then in missionary training. Although she appears to have planned to fly as a missionary pilot, it is uncertain if she ever launched an active program.<sup>116</sup>

### **Father John Broker**

Wings of Mercy, Roman Catholic Church, Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer – Illinois, (possibly) South America (1945 –)

Trained as missionary pilot with Wings of Mercy in 1945.<sup>117</sup>

### **Mr. Lincoln Burrow**

Bolivian Indian Mission – Bolivia (– 1945 –)

Lincoln Burrow of Adelaide (South Australia) assisted Walter Herron with his aviation operations on behalf of the Bolivian Indian Mission.<sup>118</sup>

### **Stanley V. Cain**

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<sup>114</sup> Mellis, "CAMF Membership Stories", 1945

<sup>115</sup> Mellis, "CAMF Active Members", 1945

<sup>116</sup> Ibid.

<sup>117</sup> "Why did he come?", 1945

<sup>118</sup> "Pioneering and Preaching per Plane in Bolivia," pamphlet (Bolivian Indian Mission, Feb. 1945) BGC 136-54-26.

CAMF – Member #14 – United States (planning – 1945 –)

Stanley Cain was a Westmont College (Los Angeles, CA) ministerial student and student pilot. He intended to use aircraft to facilitate his ministry within the United States and therefore joined CAMF. He was featured in the first issue of CAMF's *Missionary Aviation*. It remains unknown how much time—if any—Cain spent as a missionary pilot.<sup>119</sup>

**Ralph G. Caldwell**

Evangelical Protestant of unknown denominational affiliation, CAMF – Member #40 – unknown (– 1945 –)

In 1945, Ralph Caldwell was a student pilot then in missionary training. Although he appears to have planned to fly as a missionary pilot, it is uncertain if he ever launched an active program.<sup>120</sup>

**Rev. Father Aloysius Cartier,**

Wings of Mercy, Roman Catholic Church, Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate – Illinois, Canada (1945 –)

Missionary priest, president and first pilot trained by Wings of Mercy.<sup>121</sup>

**Gilbert Cicio**

Evangelical Protestant of unknown denominational affiliation, CAMF – Member #44 – unknown (– 1945 –)

In 1945, Gilbert Cicio was a student pilot then in missionary training. Although he appears to have planned to fly as a missionary pilot, it is uncertain if he ever launched an active program.<sup>122</sup>

**David H. Clark**

Navajo Bible School and Mission, CAMF – Member #95 – Arizona, California (– 1945 –)

David Clark was, in 1945, a private pilot and pastor of Calvary Church at Placentia, CA. He was featured in CAMF's *Missionary Aviation* because of his intent to fly an aircraft to reach those

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<sup>119</sup> Mellis, "CAMF Membership Stories", 1945; Mellis, "CAMF Active Members", 1945; *Giving Wings to the Gospel*, 45.

<sup>120</sup> Mellis, "CAMF Active Members", 1945

<sup>121</sup> INS, "Missionaries to Use Planes in Future, Bishop Predicts," *San Diego Union* (San Diego, CA), 7 Jan. 1945, (BGC 136-61-10); Anon., "Why did he come?", 1945; Religious News Service, "The Week in Religion," *Walla Walla Union Bulletin* (Walla Walla, WA), 5 May 1946, 13; Martin, "Aircraft on the Mission Field," 39-43.

<sup>122</sup> Mellis, "CAMF Active Members", 1945

Navajo populations far removed from his own mission station.<sup>123</sup>

### **Harold T. Commons**

Association of Baptists for World Evangelism – USA, Dutch New Guinea (planning – 1945)

In 1945, Harold Commons, president of the Association of Baptists for World Evangelism, advertised an interest in establishing an aviation operation to support mission work in Dutch controlled New Guinea. It is unknown if the Association ever launched such a program on the island, although it did start a mission aviation program in Brazil in 1946.<sup>124</sup>

### **Rev. Dr. Sidney N. Correll**

Victory Sky Pilots, Youth for Christ, Christian Tabernacle, Missionary Digest, Evangelical Protestant – Dayton (OH), upper-Midwest USA (1945 – 1948 –)

Reverend Dr. Sidney Correll, editor of the *Missionary Digest* and pastor of the Christian Tabernacle in Dayton Ohio, began flying an aircraft in his ministry beginning circa 1945. He was a known ally of Paul Hartford and served on the board of Victory Sky Pilots (1945 – 1947). In 1946, he and Paul Hartford flew two separate aircraft throughout Minnesota to promote a series of Youth for Christ singspirations held in the region.<sup>125</sup>

### **Newberry B. Cox**

Central American Mission – Huehuetenango, Guatemala (planning – 1945)

Newberry B. Cox, a Wheaton College graduate and missionary to Guatemala expressed interest in establishing a mission aviation program to facilitate his work. It is uncertain if he ever launched an active program.<sup>126</sup>

### **Rev. Millard Demy**

Baptist Mid-Missions, Victory Sky Pilots – Indiana, possibly Liberia (1945 –)

Reverend Demy, a 30-year-old missionary with Baptist Mid Missions (BMM), trained for his pilot's license with Victory Sky Pilots in 1945. He graduated from VSP and received his license the same year. BMM intended for Demy to fly as a missionary pilot in Liberia beginning in

<sup>123</sup> Mellis, "Introducing . . .", 1945; "C.A.M.F. Active Members - No. 51 to No. 100 inclusive," *Missionary Aviation*, Oct-Dec 1945, 16.

<sup>124</sup> See entry for Robert R. Standley. See also: Mellis, "Introducing . . .", 1945

<sup>125</sup> Glenwood Blackmore, "Ox-Cart to Wings," *United Evangelical Action*, 1 Oct. 1945, 7, 19-20 (BGC 136-25-13); Walters, "Cleric Plans Air School for Pastors"; Anon., *Brainerd Daily Dispatch* (Brainerd, MN), 26 Apr. 1946, 7; Luther L. Grubb, "Wings for Brethren Home Missions," *The Brethren Missionary Herald*, 18 Oct. 1947, 945-7, 51; William Mollenhour, "Sky Writing: Times Union Aviation News and Comment," (Warsaw, IN), 27 Oct. 1947; Paul Hartford, "Constitutional Convention of the World Missionary Aviation Council held at Winona Lake, IN," World Missionary Aviation Council, (Winona Lake, IN), 1948 (BGC 136-60-7).

<sup>126</sup> Mellis, "Introducing . . .", 1945



1946, however it appears as if he stayed in the United States for another year to train as a mechanic. It is unclear if Demy ever flew as a missionary pilot or served as a missionary mechanic.<sup>127</sup>

### **Bill Ettinger**

#### Evangelical Protestant – Indiana (1945)

A student pilot at Victory Sky Pilots, Ettinger and Hartford narrowly avoid a fatal head-on collision when both attempt to land at Victory Field at night despite there being no lights installed on the runway. It is not known if he graduated from VSP.<sup>128</sup>

### **Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches: Home Missions Council Administrative Aircraft**

#### Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches – USA (1945 – 1956 –)

A theologically conservative evangelical denomination with a strong mission focus, that evolved out of Pietist and Anabaptist traditions. Under leadership of Luther L. Grubb, and with technical advice from Paul Hartford of Victory Sky Pilots, the Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches purchased a small 2-seat Cessna in 1946 to enable Reverend Grubb (executive secretary of the denomination's Home Missions Council) to conduct church business throughout the United States. Grubb used the aircraft to visit denominational branches, plant new churches, and for marketing purposes; its leaders frequently used the aircraft to attract media attention and otherwise promote church-sponsored events. Grubb's editorials, published in the *Brethren Missionary Herald*, often framed mission aviation as a modern method, that was as easy to operate as an automobile, and one that savvy Christians should utilize to speed evangelism before the fast-approaching Second Coming. The denomination expanded the program in early-1951, selling its old Cessna 140 and replacing it with a 4-seat Ryan Navion. The operation of the aircraft was broadly popular, but not without some controversy, as signified by a separate account Grubb used to maintain the plane. Grubb continued to fly the aircraft up through (at minimum) 1956.<sup>129</sup>

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<sup>127</sup> Mellish, 11 Jan. 1946 (BGC 136-54-22); Helen Jean Moose Zwyghuizen, *Daily Choices for Christ: A Lifetime of Joyful Missionary Service* (Xulon Press, 2007), 49.

<sup>128</sup> "To the Regions Beyond in . . . *Flying Grasshoppers*", 1945

<sup>129</sup> Luther L. Grubb, "Wings for Brethren Home Missions," *The Brethren Missionary Herald*, 18 Oct. 1947, 945-7, 51; Luther L. Grubb, "Home Missions Travelog," *Brethren Missionary Herald*, 15 Nov. 1947, 1016; Paul E. Dick, "The Revival in Winchester," *Brethren Missionary Herald*, 27 Dec. 1947, 1136; Luther L. Grubb, "As the Editor Sees It," *The Brethren Missionary Herald*, 21 Aug. 1948, 729-30; Anon., "News Briefs," *The Brethren Missionary Herald*, 20 Aug. 1949, 592; Paul Hartford, "News on the Wing #8," pamphlet (WMAC, Sep. 1950) BGC 136-60-7; Paul R. Bauman, "Wings for Brethren Home Missions," *The Brethren Missionary Herald*, 17 Mar. 1951, 195; Luther L. Grubb, "As the Editor Sees it: Recent Tribesman DC3 Crash Draws Editorial Comment," *The Brethren Missionary Herald*, 21 Apr. 1951, 274,6; Luther L. Grubb, "Home Missions Travelog," *Brethren Missionary Herald*, 19 Jul. 1952, 459; Luther L. Grubb, "Faster Farther on Wings for Brethren Home Missions," *Brethren Missionary Herald*, 21 Jul. 1956, 453-6.

### **Rev. Daniel Feryance**

Baptist, Baptist Mid Missions, Victory Sky Pilots – Indiana (1945)

Daniel Feryance was a student at Victory Sky Pilots in 1945 and received his pilot's license that same year. He served as a missionary with Baptist Mid-Missions in Central and Western Europe over the next four decades. It does not seem as if he ever flew as a missionary pilot.<sup>130</sup>

### **Rev. Father Gordon H. Fournier**

Wings of Mercy, Roman Catholic Church, Society of the Missionaries of Africa (the White Fathers) – Illinois, (possibly) Africa – (1945 –)

Trained as missionary pilot with Wings of Mercy in 1945.<sup>131</sup>

### **Lt. Walter E. Fulton**

Evangelical Protestant of unknown denominational affiliation, CAMF – Member #64 (planning – 1945)

Walter Fulton was killed in 1945 while training in a P-61 in California. He had intended to fly as a missionary pilot in China prior to his death.<sup>132</sup>

### **Maynard L. Haaland**

CAMF MAF-US (Member #80) – (planning, 1945 –)

In 1945, US Navy military pilot and World War Two veteran, Maynard Haaland, expressed interest in becoming a missionary pilot. It is unlikely he ever did so.<sup>133</sup>

### **Lt. E. W. “Hatch” Hatcher**

Presbyterian Evangelical, CAMF – Member #94 – southern Mexico (planning – 1945 –, operational 1949 – 1971)

“Hatch” Hatcher a trained aircraft mechanic and pilot, a flew B-25 bombers during World War Two. Following the war, Hatch entered Wheaton College (IL), and along with Donald Berry and Nate Saint built the college's aviation club to promote mission aviation amongst their fellow students. After graduation, Hatch began a twenty-three year long career with MAF-US beginning in 1948, and flew almost exclusively in southern Mexico. Hatcher likewise served as one of MAF's principle flight instructors. It was in this capacity that he was killed in a crash on 17 February 1971 in California while training John Wilson, a prospective MAF pilot who likewise

<sup>130</sup> *Daily Choices for Christ*, 49; "Daniel Feryance," *The Franklin News-Post* (Rocky Mount, VA), 2 Oct. 2015.

<sup>131</sup> Anon., "Why did he come?", 1945; Martin, "Aircraft on the Mission Field," 39-43.

<sup>132</sup> Charles Mellis, Jr., "Killed in Routine Night Flight," *Missionary Aviation*, Oct-Dec 1945, 9; "C.A.M.F. Active Members - No. 51 to No. 100 inclusive", 1945

<sup>133</sup> Mellis, "And Now Mexico", 1946

died in the accident.<sup>134</sup>

### **G. R. Heath**

Moravian Mission – USA, Honduras (planning – 1945)

In 1945, G. R. Heath, superintendent of the Moravian Mission in La Mosquitia, Honduras, advertised his interest in establishing an aviation operation to support his mission's work. It is unknown if the mission ever launched such a program.<sup>135</sup>

### **Walton G. Herbert**

Evangelical Protestant of unknown denominational affiliation, CAMF – Member #47 – unknown (– 1945 –)

In 1945, Walton Herbert was a student pilot then in missionary training. Although he appears to have planned to fly as a missionary pilot, it is uncertain if he ever launched an active program.<sup>136</sup>

### **John F. Hinderlie**

Evangelical Protestant of unknown denominational affiliation, CAMF – Member #88 – Oregon, Alaska (– 1945 –)

In 1945, John Hinderlie was a student pilot then training to become a missionary to Alaska. Although he appears to have planned to fly as a missionary pilot, it is uncertain if Hinderlie ever launched an active program.<sup>137</sup>

### **Father Henry Hoff**

Wings of Mercy, Roman Catholic Church, Society of the Divine Word Fathers – Illinois, New Guinea (1945 – 1963 –)

Father Hoff was trained in 1945, and began mission aviation operations in New Guinea flying a de Havilland Dragon in 1948. He was still flying in 1963.<sup>138</sup>

### **Melvin J. Huckins**

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<sup>134</sup> Mellis, "Introducing . . .", 1945; Charles Mellis, Jr., "Others," *Missionary Aviation*, Jul-Aug 1948, 4; *Giving Wings to the Gospel*, 77, 101, 19-21, 301-3.

<sup>135</sup> Mellis, "Introducing . . .", 1945

<sup>136</sup> Mellis, "CAMF Active Members", 1945

<sup>137</sup> Charles Mellis, Jr., "Wings of Prayer and Praise," *Missionary Aviation*, Oct.-Dec. 1945, 14-15; "C.A.M.F. Active Members - No. 51 to No. 100 inclusive", 1945

<sup>138</sup> Anon., "Why did he come?", 1945; Martin, "Aircraft on the Mission Field," 39-43; International Fides Service, "Father Hoff," (Rome (Italy)), 9 Oct. 1963, (BGC 528-1-13); International Fides Service, "New Guinea Priest-Pilot Logs 10,000 Hours," (Rome (Italy)), 9 Oct. 1963, (BGC 528-1-13).

Evangelical Protestant of unknown denominational affiliation, CAMF – Member #23 – unknown  
(– 1945 –)

In 1945, Melvin Huckins was a student pilot then in missionary training. Although he appears to have planned to fly as a missionary pilot, it is uncertain if he ever launched an active program.<sup>139</sup>

### **Rev. John Huffman**

Victory Sky Pilots, Presbyterian – Indiana, Cambridge, Massachusetts (1945 – 1950 –)

Reverend John Huffman served as pastor in Cambridge, Massachusetts, dean of Winona Lake School of Theology (IN), board member of Victory Sky Pilots (1945-1947-), and director and producer of “Wings of Morning,” a religious radio program broadcast out of Boston, MA. Based in Cambridge, Reverend Huffman flew his Aeronca chief between meetings. He also used his aircraft for publicity stunts. Circa 1947, Reverend Huffman disassembled his aircraft and then re-assembled it as a prop on the platform of a large church at which he was speaking. He was a known ally of Paul Hartford.<sup>140</sup>

### **Rev. George V. Johnson**

Wings of Mercy, Roman Catholic Church – Illinois, Goltry, Oklahoma (1945 –)

Known as the “Flying Priest of Oklahoma” even prior to his affiliation with Wings of Mercy, Rev. Johnson received further training and a new plane from the program in 1945. He was first diocesan priest to be trained and supplied by the program. It is unclear for how long he flew his aircraft.<sup>141</sup>

### **William “Bill” Jones**

Central American Mission – Nicaragua (planning – 1945)

An acquaintance of Fred and Peggy McIntosh, William “Bill” Jones was featured in *Missionary Aviation* because of his interest of using an aircraft in his mission work. Peggy McIntosh and CAMF raised some seven hundred dollars to purchase an aircraft for his proposed aviation program. It is unclear if Jones ever flew as a missionary pilot.<sup>142</sup>

### **Charles Kegerize**

Christian and Missionary Alliance, CAMF – Member #20 – unknown (– 1945 –)

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<sup>139</sup> Mellis, "CAMF Active Members", 1945

<sup>140</sup> Blackmore, "Ox-Cart to Wings", 1945; Grubb, "Wings for Brethren Home Missions", 1947; Mollenhour, "Sky Writing: Times Union Aviation News and Comment"; Paul Hartford, "Flying Friends," pamphlet (Victory Sky Pilots Inc., Spring 1948) BGC 136-25-13.

<sup>141</sup> "The Flying Priest of Oklahoma," *Wings of Mercy*, (136-61-10).

<sup>142</sup> Mellis, "Introducing . . .", 1945; *Giving Wings to the Gospel*, 34.

Charles Kegerize was a pilot and missionary with the Christian and Missionary Alliance in 1945, and seems to have led an affiliated CAMF student-pilot training chapter in Nyack, New York.<sup>143</sup> Although he likely planned to fly as a missionary pilot with C&MA, it is uncertain if he ever launched an active independent program.<sup>144</sup>

### **Howard Kjsinger**

Evangelical Protestant of unknown denominational affiliation, CAMF – Member #38 – unknown (– 1945 –)

In 1945, Howard Kjsinger was a student pilot then in missionary training. Although he appears to have planned to fly as a missionary pilot, it is uncertain if he ever launched an active program.<sup>145</sup>

### **Miss Edna Kource**

Evangelical Protestant of unknown denominational affiliation, CAMF – Member #65 – Michigan (– 1945 –)

In 1945, Edna Kource was a student pilot then in missionary training. Although she appears to have planned to fly as a missionary pilot, it is uncertain if she ever launched an active program.<sup>146</sup>

### **Rev. John W. Lamey**

Evangelical Protestant of unknown denominational affiliation, CAMF – Member #53 – Ohio (– 1945 –)

In 1945, John Lamey, a commercial pilot and pastor based out of Ohio, appears to have made plans to fly as part of his wider ministry. It is uncertain if he ever launched an active program.<sup>147</sup>

### **Father Paul Lloyd**

Wings of Mercy, Roman Catholic Church, Congregation of the Mission – Illinois, (possibly) China (1945 –)

Missionary pilot trained by Wings of Mercy in 1945.<sup>148</sup>

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<sup>143</sup> George Fisk to James C. Truxton, 27 Mar. 1945 (BGC 136-23-68).

<sup>144</sup> Mellis, "CAMF Active Members", 1945

<sup>145</sup> Ibid.

<sup>146</sup> "C.A.M.F. Active Members - No. 51 to No. 100 inclusive", 1945

<sup>147</sup> Ibid.

<sup>148</sup> Anon., "Why did he come?", 1945; Martin, "Aircraft on the Mission Field," 39-43.

**Father Thomas Mahoney**

Wings of Mercy, Roman Catholic Church, Congregation of the Mission – Illinois, (possibly) China (1945 –)

Trained as missionary pilot with Wings of Mercy in 1945.<sup>149</sup>

**David C. Mangham**

Evangelical Protestant of unknown denominational affiliation, CAMF – Member #37 – unknown (– 1945 –)

In 1945, David Mangham was a student pilot then in missionary training. Although he appears to have planned to fly as a missionary pilot, it is uncertain if he ever launched an active program.<sup>150</sup>

**Everett J. Marks**

CAMF – Member #60 (planning, 1945 – 46)

In 1945, while still a student pilot, Everett Marks expressed interest in working as a missionary pilot with CAMF. Marks never served with CAMF/MAF, and it is unknown if he flew as a mission aviator.<sup>151</sup>

**Clifford E. Martz**

New Tribes Mission, CAMF – Member #87 – Michigan (– 1945 – 1951 –)

In the mid-1940s, Clifford Martz, a private pilot and pastor based out of Michigan, began plans to fly as part of his wider ministry. He joined CAMF in 1945. By 1948, Martz had earned his flight instructor rating and was then in charge of New Tribes Mission's (NTM) flight training program. Starting in 1951, Martz operated a small aircraft (built by Howard Aviation Corporation) in Bolivia on behalf of NTM.<sup>152</sup>

**Miss. Marianna Mejsiek**

Evangelical Protestant of unknown denominational affiliation, CAMF – Member #50 – unknown (– 1945 –)

In 1945, Marianna Mejsiek was a student pilot then in missionary training. Although she appears to have planned to fly as a missionary pilot, it is uncertain if she ever launched an active

<sup>149</sup> Anon., "Why did he come?", 1945; Martin, "Aircraft on the Mission Field," 39-43.

<sup>150</sup> Mellis, "CAMF Active Members", 1945

<sup>151</sup> Charles Mellis, Jr., "Introducing. . ." *Missionary Aviation*, Jul.-Sep 1946, 12-13.

<sup>152</sup> "C.A.M.F. Active Members - No. 51 to No. 100 inclusive", 1945; Paul W. Fleming, "Holding the Ropes," *Brown Gold*, Jun. 1948, (BGC 136-61-17); *The Story of New Tribes Mission*, 152.

program.<sup>153</sup>

### **Charles J. Mellis Jr.**

CAMF, MAF-US (Member # 169) – USA, New Guinea (1945 – 1973)

Charles Mellis had become increasingly interested in mission aviation while serving as an AAF pilot in World War Two, and joined CAMF shortly upon leaving the military. In 1946, he became CAMF's Midwest field representative, and was instrumental to CAMF's early growth. He wrote articles promoting the mission in various Christian publications (including *His, Sunday*, and *Power*). He organized mission aviation conferences in Los Angeles, Dallas, and Wheaton (IL) to attract pilots to missionary service. He helped coordinate MAF operations from MAF headquarters in Los Angeles, and edited MAF publications: *Missionary Aviation*, "Wings of Praise and Prayer." In the mid-1950s Mellis and his family, working in conjunction with MAF-Australia, helped establish MAF operations in New Guinea. Charles Mellis continued to work with MAF through the 1960s, and from 1970-1973 served as MAF president.<sup>154</sup>

### **Victor Pederson**

Salvation Army, "Flying Padre" Service, MAF-Australia – Northern Territory, Australia (1945 – 1957, 1959 – 1972)

Victor Pederson founded the Salvation Army's ongoing "Flying Padre" service in 1945. Based out of Darwin (Northern Territory, Australia), Pederson flew as an aviation 'circuit rider.' He visited farmers and ranchers scattered throughout northern Australia Monday through Friday and returned to Darwin on Saturday to deliver religious services on Sunday. Pederson's visitations were reported to be eagerly anticipated by local peoples. In addition to the Christian gospel, the "flying preacher" brought with him films, literature, and news from Darwin and the wider world. Between 1947 and 1970, Pederson crashed six times, damaged four aircraft, of which three were destroyed. His crashes, and his survival despite them, remained legendary decades following his work. Regardless, of his unsafe technique of flying just above the ground (to take advantage of favorable wind currents), his questionable maintenance standards, and his practice of landing with little regard for ground conditions, Pederson's "Flying Padre" service was widely admired. In the late 1940s, Harry Hartwig asked Pederson to assist in the early development of MAF – Australia. He was awarded an MBE, and admitted into the Salvation Army's Order of the Founder in 1999.<sup>155</sup>

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<sup>153</sup> Mellis, "CAMF Active Members", 1945

<sup>154</sup> *Giving Wings to the Gospel*, 46, 48, 71, 118.

<sup>155</sup> "Flying Preacher Found," *Canberra Times* (Canberra, Australia), 18 Jan. 1947 1947, 2; *Giving Wings to the Gospel*, 136; Sarah Jaensch, "The death-defying Flying Padre," Australian Broadcasting Corporation, <http://www.abc.net.au/stateline/nt/content/2006/s1797098.htm>; The Salvation Army, "Flying Padre & Outback Services," The Salvation Army,, <http://www.salvationarmy.org.au/en/Find-Us/Northern-Territory/Our-Services/Flying-Padre/>.

### **Thomas M. Petty**

Columbia Bible College (Columbia, SC), CAMF, MAF-US (Member #13) – Columbia, SC (1945 – 1946 –)

A professor at Columbia Bible College (now Columbia International University), Thomas Petty was also a mission aviation enthusiast. In 1944/45, Petty coordinated the creation of a college-sponsored airfield and flight-training center for potential missionary pilots. Columbia students could take lessons (in missionary and ministerial aviation) at the field for college credits. Petty was likewise an early supporter of CAMF. In February 1945, he offered to launch an official CAMF branch in Columbia and use his field to train future CAMF pilots.<sup>156</sup>

### **Lt. Timothy Pietsch**

Evangelical Protestant of unknown denominational affiliation, CAMF – Member #91 – California, Japan (planning, – 1945 –)

Lt. Pietsch, a former missionary to Japan, appears to have been interested in the possibility of flying as a missionary pilot. It is uncertain if he ever launched an active program.<sup>157</sup>

### **George Poole**

Youth for Christ International, HCJB radio ministries, Victory Sky Pilots #3, LeTourneau Flight School, WMAC #33, MAF-US – Ecuador, Guatemala, USA (1945 –)

A graduate of Wheaton College, George Poole was a director of Youth for Christ ministries in Ft. Wayne (IN) in the mid-1940s when he heard Paul Hartford speak as to the benefits of aviation for the mission field. Poole soon after decided to train as a missionary; first with R. G. LeTourneau, and then eventually with Hartford at Victory Sky Pilots, graduating in 1945. In 1946, Poole accompanied Paul Hartford to South America in preparation for his mission aviation work with the mission radio station HCJB in Quito, Ecuador. He flew in support of regional mission stations in Ecuador, though seems to have at times partnered with Reverend Bob Hart. In 1947, Poole was seriously injured after Hart crash-landed an aircraft, stranding Poole in the Ecuadorian forest for six days. After his recovery, Poole worked with MAF in 1948 to set up a radio network to link together local mission stations. Poole later returned to the United States and was a firm supporter of WMAC, serving as its Operations director from 1949-1950. Poole returned to the mission field (likely in 1950), but was again seriously injured, this time in a plane crash in Guatemala in 1950.<sup>158</sup>

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<sup>156</sup> Anon. to George Fisk, 12 Feb. 1945 (BGC 136-23-68); Mellis, "Introducing . . . Thomas M. Petty", 1946; Levine, "Aviation on the Campus", 1946

<sup>157</sup> "C.A.M.F. Active Members - No. 51 to No. 100 inclusive", 1945

<sup>158</sup> "News", 1947; "Aviation," *Christian Life and Times*, Feb. 1947, 40; "Missionaries Trained to Fly," *The Covenanter Witness*, 7 Jan. 1948, 2; Charles Mellis, Jr., "Ecuador Radio Arm," *Missionary Aviation*, Sep. - Oct. 1948, 3, 5; Hartford, "Review of Events -- 2nd Annual Convention -- World Missionary Aviation Council." (1949); Paul Hartford, "News on the Wing #8," pamphlet (WMAC, Sep. 1950) BGC 136-60-7; *Giving Wings to the Gospel*, 78.



### **Carroll Rinehart**

CAMF – Member #5 – unknown (planning – 1943 – 1945)

A U.S.N.R. naval air transport pilot during World War Two, Lt. Rinehart intended to serve as a missionary pilot following the conflict. Rinehart's plans drew the attention of James Truxton. Truxton credited Rinehart with convincing him that there was a wide interest in mission aviation amongst military pilots, and that following the war there would be a need for a mission body (such as CAMF) to coordinate this interest and facilitate the integration of these military pilots into the mission field.<sup>159</sup> Rinehart joined MAF as one of its earliest members and was featured prominently in their first issue. However, he neither flew for CAMF, nor (apparently) any other mission organization.<sup>160</sup>

### **David C. Rupp, Jr.**

Evangelical Protestant of unknown denominational affiliation, CAMF – Member #100 – Indiana (planning, – 1945 –)

Lt. Pietsch, a missionary to Africa, appears to have been interested in the possibility of flying as a missionary pilot. It is uncertain if he ever launched an active program.<sup>161</sup>

### **Robert L. Russell**

Evangelical Protestant of unknown denominational affiliation, CAMF – Member #42 – unknown (planning, – 1945 –)

In 1945, Robert Russell was a student pilot then in missionary training. Although he appears to have planned to fly as a missionary pilot, it is uncertain if he ever launched an active program.<sup>162</sup>

### **Scandinavian Missionary Flights, Nordiskt Missionsflyg**

Scandinavian Free Church Missions Association, World Missionary Aviation Council (1945 – 1949)

Cooperative international body with member missionary organizations from Sweden, Denmark, and Norway

Flew to the following locations: Finland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Netherlands, Switzerland, France, Italy, Athens (Greece), Algeria, Lagos (Nigeria), Congo, Egypt, Sudan, Juba (Sudan), Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, South Africa, Iraq, India, Indo China, China

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<sup>159</sup> Truxton, 15 Aug. 1945 (BGC 136-52-5).

<sup>160</sup> Carroll W. Rinehart and Charles Mellis, Jr., "Carroll W. Rinehart, Lt.," *Missionary Aviation*, Jul-Sep 1945, 2, 10; Mellis, "CAMF Active Members", 1945

<sup>161</sup> "C.A.M.F. Active Members - No. 51 to No. 100 inclusive", 1945

<sup>162</sup> Mellis, "CAMF Active Members", 1945

In the months following World War Two, Scandinavian mission organizations found it impossible to hire either ground or air transportation to and from their mission fields. Many of these organizations therefore came together under the leadership of Torild Backe to form Scandinavian Missionary Flights (Nordiskt Missionsflyg). As the mission collective, headquartered in Sweden, negotiated the purchase of their first aircraft (a military C-47 transport plane), the group chartered a Swedish Airlines (ABA) DC-3 for two trips to Africa in early fall of 1945. The first chartered flight, piloted by Captain Carl Gustaf, was to Ethiopia and proved to be a media event in its own right. Prior to takeoff, the mission airline attracted a crowd of mission supporters, government officials, and press agents who gathered to see the plane. After the second chartered flight, Scandinavian Missionary Flights began operation of their own C-47 (named *St. Ansgar*) in the spring of 1946, again piloted by Captain Carl Gustaf and supported by other crew and pilots, all from ABA. The Missionary Flights program was initially meant by its organizers to be a temporary emergency measure to relieve missionary workers stranded at their posts during World War Two. The program was to consist of fifteen flights flown between 1945-1947. After which time, the Scandinavians anticipated that commercial transport would again resume normal operation and they would then sell the C-47. However, the project proved successful, both as a transportation system and as a publicity device for the Scandinavian mission agencies operating the airline. The program was extended indefinitely, and in 1948, Scandinavian Missionary Flights joined the World Missionary Aviation Council, and they, along with the Lutheran World Federation and the Assemblies of God, built Missionary Flights, the world's first global missionary airline network. However, the global missionary airline was short lived. Scandinavian Missionary Flights ended operation in late 1949 as commercial transport became more reliable and less expensive. Between 1945 and 1949, Scandinavian Missionary Flights made a total of thirty-seven voyages, flew 516,000 miles, and transported 1,200 missionaries (with luggage) to and from mission fields around the globe.<sup>163</sup>

### **John W. Schearer**

CAMF, MAF-US (Member #15), SIM – USA (1945 – ca 1948)

An AAF pilot in World War Two, and graduate of Moody Bible Institute, John Schearer was an active member of CAMF during the Fellowship's early development. He served as CAMF's temporary Field Secretary for the Eastern US in the 1940s, and was a leader at the 1946 Missionary Aviation Conference at Winona Lake, IN. He very likely left MAF around 1948 to join SIM as a missionary in Ethiopia.<sup>164</sup>

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<sup>163</sup> Service, "The Week in Religion"; Kendon, "Friend of the MAF." (1947); Martin, "Aircraft on the Mission Field," 47-52; Banham and Kendon, "Letters from the Congo Survey." (1948); Paul Hartford, "Minutes of the Opening Session of the Proposed World Missionary Aviation Conference," World Missionary Aviation Council, 25 May 1948 (BGC 136-60-7); "Airmen Wanted," *The Missionary Challenge*, 17 Jul. 1948, (BGC 528-1-5); Scandinavian Missionary Flights, "Scandinavian Missionary Flights: Member of the World Missionary Aviation Council," pamphlet (Scandinavian Missionary Flights, 8 Oct. 1948) BGC 136-61-14; Murray Kendon to Grady Parrott, 12 Nov. 1948 (BGC 136-60-7); "The "Ansgar" – Scandinavian Mission Plane," *The China News Letter*, Nov.-Dec. 1949, 19-20 (BGC 136-61-14); Cook, "A Research Project in Mission Aviation."

<sup>164</sup> Charles Mellis, Jr., "John W. Schearer," *Missionary Aviation*, Jan. - Mar. 1946, 12; Grady Parrott to James C. Truxton, 20 Oct. 1948 (BGC 136-2-4).

### **Richard M. Siple**

Evangelical Protestant of unknown denominational affiliation, CAMF – Member #43 – unknown (– 1945 –)

In 1945, Richard Siple was a student pilot then in missionary training. Although he appears to have planned to fly as a missionary pilot, it is uncertain if he ever launched an active program.<sup>165</sup>

### **Rev. Gordon H. Smith**

Christian and Missionary Alliance, CAMF – Member #9 – United States, French Indochina (planning – 1945 – 1946, operational 1946 – 1949 –)

Reverend Gordon Smith, Field Director of C&MA operations in French Indochina and missionary to Indochina, conducted substantial research into mission aviation in the mid-1940s while on furlough in the United States, and was a recognized leader in mission aviation practice.<sup>166</sup> Smith attended the August 1946 Mission Aviation Conference held at Winona Lake, IN where he made numerous and substantial contributions to conference debates. Smith strongly supported a cautious, pragmatic, and professional model of mission aviation, very much in accordance with CAMF/MAF. Smith believed that mission aviation had been overly romanticized, and that missionaries perused flight more out their own superficial interest in aviation than any practical comprehension as to an aviation program's cost and benefits. He sparred frequently with Paul Hartford during debates and cautioned against promoting mission aviation via overt propaganda. Smith returned to French Indochina (likely) in 1946 and flew a 1946 Stinson Voyager to travel throughout his mission field. Smith crashed his Voyager in late 1949 with wife and children aboard – none were seriously injured. Smith apparently was forced into an emergency landing after attempting (unwisely, according to Grady Parrott) to fly through a serious storm. His aircraft was damaged beyond repair. If the C&MA approved another plane for Smith, it is unlikely he continued his aviation program much past the early-to-mid 1950s.<sup>167</sup>

### **Rev. Robert R. Standley**

Association of Baptists for World Evangelism, Inc., CAMF MAF-US (Member #205) – Brazil (1945 – 1948)

Reverend Standley was a missionary to Brazil and a private pilot. In 1946 he launched a mission aviation program in rural Brazil for the Association of Baptists for World Evangelism. However, the aviation program ended in 1948 after it fell into debt and the Baptist mission board concluded the plane was not being flown enough to warrant continued operation. Standley later wrote a

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<sup>165</sup> Mellis, "CAMF Active Members", 1945

<sup>166</sup> Ibid.; Mellis, "Introducing . . .", 1945

<sup>167</sup> "Missionary Aviation Conference Proceedings and Report," 1946; Grady Parrott to Murray Kendon, 29 Nov. 1949 (BGC 136-25-88); Hartford, "News on the Wing #2." (1949); C&MA, "C&MA Board Minutes," Christian and Missionary Alliance, 19-20 Mar. 1957 (BGC 528-1-21).

book of his experiences as a missionary pilot (*Flying Missionaries*, Nashville: Boardman Press, 1954).<sup>168</sup>

### **W. M. Strong**

Soldiers and Gospel Mission of South America (director) – Chile (planning – 1945 –)

W. M. Strong, director of the Soldiers and Gospel Mission of South America planned to build an aviation program for his mission to South America. He requested the assistance of CAMF in building the operation in 1945. CAMF, short on both manpower and finances, was unable at that time to assist. It is uncertain if he ever launched an active program.<sup>169</sup>

### **Arnold D. Swanson, RM 2/c**

Evangelical Protestant of unknown denominational affiliation, CAMF – Member #128 – unknown (planning – 1945 –)

In 1945, Arnold Swanson, a radio instructor at the Pacific Fleet School, made plans to fly as a missionary pilot in China. It is uncertain if he ever launched an active program.<sup>170</sup>

### **Father Linus Swartz**

Wings of Mercy, Roman Catholic Church, Order of St. Benedict – Illinois, (probably) North Dakota – (1945 –)

Trained as missionary pilot with Wings of Mercy in 1945. Intended to serve as missionary pilot in North Dakota, most likely in Richardton area (west of Bismarck, ND).<sup>171</sup>

### **Morton S. Taylor**

Columbia Bible College, CAMF/MAF Member #82 – South Carolina (1945 –)

Morton Taylor helped found Columbia Bible College's aviation program in 1945 and served as one of its first instructors.<sup>172</sup>

### **Dr. Wilfred G. Tidmarsh**

Plymouth Brethren Mission – UK, Ecuador (planning – 1945)

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<sup>168</sup> Charles Mellis, Jr., "CAMF Diary," *Missionary Aviation*, Jan.-Mar. 1946, 8-13, 14; "Standley Returns to Brazil," *The Message*, Aug. 1946, 2 (BGC 136-61-6); "Brazil Plane to Be Sold," *The Message*, Spring 1948, (BGC 136-61-6); Cook, "A Research Project in Mission Aviation."

<sup>169</sup> Mellis, "Introducing . . .", 1945; *Giving Wings to the Gospel*, 35.

<sup>170</sup> Mellis, "Introducing . . .", 1945

<sup>171</sup> Anon., "Why did he come?", 1945; Martin, "Aircraft on the Mission Field," 39-43.

<sup>172</sup> "C.A.M.F. Active Members - No. 51 to No. 100 inclusive", 1945; "Flying Missionaries", 1947

In 1945, Dr. Tidmarsh, a British scientist and senior missionary with the Plymouth Brethren, expressed interest in establishing a mission aviation program to facilitate Plymouth mission work in Ecuador. Tidmarsh eventually decided against building his own aviation operation, and instead partnered with MAF. In 1947 he assisted James Truxton in an extensive survey of Ecuadorian missionary stations, and began using MAF services in 1948. Tidmarsh continued a close collaboration with the fellowship throughout the 1950s. After an attempt to establish contact with the Waorani led to the death of five missionaries (including MAF member Nate Saint) in 1956, Dr. Tidmarsh proved instrumental in facilitating positive interactions between the Waorani and Protestant missionaries in 1957.<sup>173</sup>

### **Fred Tinley**

#### Unknown Presbyterian Mission, MAF-US – Tabasco Mexico (1945 – 1955 –)

In 1945, Fred Tinley, a missionary teacher at a Presbyterian mission school in Tabasco Mexico, approached his mission board with a request to begin a mission aviation program. Tinley sought to fly a small plane to shuttle Bible students and ministers between the scattered villages of Tabasco Mexico to evangelize more efficiently. The Presbyterian mission board was receptive to Tinley's request until he informed them of his desire to be the program's pilot. Not willing to invest in his flight training, Tinley's proposal sat in committee until spring 1947 when MAF resumed operation in southern Mexico. The Presbyterian board, believing Tinley's plan for an itinerant missionary aviation program was well conceived, contracted with MAF to implement it. Although he had been shut out of his own proposed aviation program, Fred Tinley pursued his mission aviation ambitions and was still flying in the late 1950s.<sup>174</sup>

### **Victory Sky Pilots, Incorporated**

#### Evangelical Protestant, non-denominational – Winona Lake, Indiana (1945 – 1951)

Victory Sky Pilots, Inc. (VSP) was founded in February 1945 by Paul Hartford as the first ever flight school devoted to the training of pastors, missionaries, and evangelists.<sup>175</sup> Victory Sky Pilots featured an "intensified course" that Hartford believed would complete a missionary's entire aviation training regimen in 90 days. In that time Hartford expected to teach his students aircraft maintenance and engineering, provide basic aviation courses in navigation and meteorology, as well as provide them 40-50 hours of flight time. Despite a relatively quick period of initial growth, most of Hartford's students failed to launch successful careers as mission aviators, and of those who did, a high percentage suffered serious accidents. This was closely tied to Hartford's carelessness in regard to safety. Hartford believed that contemporary aviation technology rendered flight virtually foolproof provided one had been trained in the basics of aviation and followed common-sense rules of flight. As such, instruction at Victory Sky Pilots emphasized little beyond basic flight operation, combined with some additional instruction

<sup>173</sup> Mellis, "Introducing . . .", 1945; *Giving Wings to the Gospel*, 79-80, 107, 11-2, 84-5.

<sup>174</sup> *Giving Wings to the Gospel*, 33, 52, 56, 74-6, 119, 249.

<sup>175</sup> Victory Sky Pilots opened to students in Feb. 1945 but the organization was not incorporated until November 1945.

for flying outside of the United States. As a result, Hartford's students were inadequately equipped as missionary pilots. Between 1945 and late 1947, VSP trained a total of 120 student pilots. However, between late 1947 and January 1950, the corporation trained but fifteen more, the last known being Arthur Grover who graduated in 1949. VSP stopped admitting students sometime later and sold most of its airplane stock to an unspecified organization in Brazil (or donated, likely to a mission group) by the conclusion of 1951. Beginning in 1952, Paul Hartford began flying as a missionary pilot for Youth For Christ International in the Caribbean.<sup>176</sup>

### **Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #1**

Evangelical Protestant – Indiana, Arkansas (1945)

Unknown minister and student of VSP who used an aircraft to reach widely scattered churches in the Arkansas hill country.<sup>177</sup>

### **Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #2**

Evangelical Protestant – Indiana, Haiti (1945)

Unknown missionary and VSP graduate who in 1945 was *en route* to Haiti to fly an aircraft to reach widely scattered mission posts.<sup>178</sup>

### **Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #3**

Evangelical Protestant – Indiana, Russia (1945)

Unknown missionary and VSP graduate who in 1945 intended to fly an aircraft to reach widely scattered mission posts in Russia.<sup>179</sup>

### **Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #4**

Evangelical Protestant – Indiana (1945)

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<sup>176</sup> See: Paul Hartford (1940); Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #4. See also: Paul Hartford to George Fisk, 16 Sep. 1944 (BGC 136-25-13); Helen Delich, "Clergy Urged to Take to Air," *Racine Journal Times* (Racine, WI), 22 Jan. 1945, 8; United Press International, "Pastor Urges Clergy to Make Use of Planes," *The Lima News* (Lima, OH), 22 Jan. 1945, 30, 4; Anon., "Preacher Flies Here Sunday," *Lima News* (Lima, OH), 2 Jun. 1945, 4; Walters, "Cleric Plans Air School for Pastors"; "To the Regions Beyond in . . . *Flying Grasshoppers*", 1945; Anon., "Missionaries are Taking to Wings," *The Way*, Mar. 1946, 42 (BGC 528-2-11); Anon., "Missionary Aviation Conference Proceedings and Report," 1946; Mollenhour, "Sky Writing: Times Union Aviation News and Comment"; Hartford, "News on the Wing #2." (1949); "Gospel Sky Team Here Wednesday," *St. Petersburg Times* (St. Petersburg, FL), 21 Jan. 1950, 21; "Airborne Mission," *Time*, 11 Feb. 1952, (BGC 136-25-13); "Flying Evangelist," *Christian Life*, Apr. 1952, 38; "Islands Ripe for Revival," *The Brethren Missionary Herald*, 7 Feb. 1953, 95; *Giving Wings to the Gospel*.

<sup>177</sup> See entry for Victory Sky Pilots, Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #4, and Paul Hartford. See also: Walters, "Cleric Plans Air School for Pastors"

<sup>178</sup> See entry for Victory Sky Pilots, Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #4, and Paul Hartford. See also: *ibid*.

<sup>179</sup> See entry for Victory Sky Pilots, Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #4, and Paul Hartford. See also: *ibid*.

Towards the end of 1945, Paul Hartford claimed to have trained a total of forty missionaries, pastors, or evangelists at Victory Sky Pilots. Of these forty missionary pilots, information is currently available on only ten. It is possible (though not for certain) that Paul Hartford exaggerated in this number. Based on some of Hartford's letters and advertising material, it is clear that he was open to accepting students at VSP who did not intend to fly as part of a ministry. Therefore, this number may very well include a not insignificant number of private pilots who did not fly as part of a ministry. See also entry for Victory Sky Pilots and Paul Hartford.<sup>180</sup>

**Victory Sky Pilots – *Unknown Pilot #5***

Indiana (1945)<sup>181</sup>

**Victory Sky Pilots – *Unknown Pilot #6***

Indiana (1945)<sup>182</sup>

**Victory Sky Pilots – *Unknown Pilot #7***

Indiana (1945)<sup>183</sup>

**Victory Sky Pilots – *Unknown Pilot #8***

Indiana (1945)<sup>184</sup>

**Victory Sky Pilots – *Unknown Pilot #9***

Indiana (1945)<sup>185</sup>

**Victory Sky Pilots – *Unknown Pilot #10***

Indiana (1945)<sup>186</sup>

**Victory Sky Pilots – *Unknown Pilot #11***

Indiana (1945)<sup>187</sup>

**Victory Sky Pilots – *Unknown Pilot #12***

Indiana (1945)<sup>188</sup>

**Victory Sky Pilots – *Unknown Pilot #13***

Indiana (1945)<sup>189</sup>

**Victory Sky Pilots – *Unknown Pilot #14***

Indiana (1945)<sup>190</sup>

**Victory Sky Pilots – *Unknown Pilot #15***

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<sup>180</sup> See Paul Hartford Papers in BGC 136-25-13. See also: *ibid.*

<sup>181</sup> See Victory Sky Pilots – *Unknown Pilot #4*.

<sup>182</sup> See Victory Sky Pilots – *Unknown Pilot #4*.

<sup>183</sup> See Victory Sky Pilots – *Unknown Pilot #4*.

<sup>184</sup> See Victory Sky Pilots – *Unknown Pilot #4*.

<sup>185</sup> See Victory Sky Pilots – *Unknown Pilot #4*.

<sup>186</sup> See Victory Sky Pilots – *Unknown Pilot #4*.

<sup>187</sup> See Victory Sky Pilots – *Unknown Pilot #4*.

<sup>188</sup> See Victory Sky Pilots – *Unknown Pilot #4*.

<sup>189</sup> See Victory Sky Pilots – *Unknown Pilot #4*.

<sup>190</sup> See Victory Sky Pilots – *Unknown Pilot #4*.

Indiana (1945)<sup>191</sup>

**Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #16**

Indiana (1945)<sup>192</sup>

**Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #17**

Indiana (1945)<sup>193</sup>

**Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #18**

Indiana (1945)<sup>194</sup>

**Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #19**

Indiana (1945)<sup>195</sup>

**Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #20**

Indiana (1945)<sup>196</sup>

**Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #21**

Indiana (1945)<sup>197</sup>

**Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #22**

Indiana (1945)<sup>198</sup>

**Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #23**

Indiana (1945)<sup>199</sup>

**Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #24**

Indiana (1945)<sup>200</sup>

**Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #25**

Indiana (1945)<sup>201</sup>

**Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #26**

Indiana (1945)<sup>202</sup>

**Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #27**

Indiana (1945)<sup>203</sup>

**Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #28**

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<sup>191</sup> See Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #4.

<sup>192</sup> See Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #4.

<sup>193</sup> See Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #4.

<sup>194</sup> See Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #4.

<sup>195</sup> See Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #4.

<sup>196</sup> See Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #4.

<sup>197</sup> See Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #4.

<sup>198</sup> See Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #4.

<sup>199</sup> See Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #4.

<sup>200</sup> See Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #4.

<sup>201</sup> See Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #4.

<sup>202</sup> See Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #4.

<sup>203</sup> See Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #4.



Indiana (1945)<sup>204</sup>

**Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #29**

Indiana (1945)<sup>205</sup>

**Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #30**

Indiana (1945)<sup>206</sup>

**Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #31**

Indiana (1945)<sup>207</sup>

**Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #32**

Indiana (1945)<sup>208</sup>

**Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #33**

Indiana (1945)<sup>209</sup>

**Neal Webber**

Evangelical Protestant of unknown denominational affiliation, CAMF – Member #28 – unknown  
(– 1945 –)

In 1945, Neal Webber was a student pilot then in missionary training. Although he appears to have planned to fly as a missionary pilot, it is uncertain if he ever launched an active program.<sup>210</sup>

**Father Robert Weitzel**

Wings of Mercy, Roman Catholic Church, Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer – Illinois,  
(possibly) South America (1945 –)

Trained as missionary pilot with Wings of Mercy in 1945.<sup>211</sup>

**Kurt Wetzel**

Evangelical Protestant – Indiana (1945 – 1951 –)

Beginning in the summer of 1949, touring evangelist Kurt Wetzel began broadcasting sermons, hymns, and announcements from a PA system installed in his aircraft. If Wetzel was only in town for a single evangelicalistic service, he would fly in circles over a particular neighborhood long enough to deliver a short message and play a hymn, and then move on, repeating the process for hours. If he planned to speak at a church for a week or so, his flying messages were

<sup>204</sup> See Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #4.

<sup>205</sup> See Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #4.

<sup>206</sup> See Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #4.

<sup>207</sup> See Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #4.

<sup>208</sup> See Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #4.

<sup>209</sup> See Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #4.

<sup>210</sup> Mellis, "CAMF Active Members", 1945

<sup>211</sup> "Why did he come?", 1945

shorter, and focused on invitations to his later speeches. Wetzel recorded some success in attracting people his sermons with these methods, and claimed that some converted to Christianity on the spot, others at his revival meetings. Still others, upon hearing the aerial messages, believed that the end of the world had arrived, and that Wetzel's "shouts" were a sign of Christ's Second Coming. Prior to flying as an evangelist, Wetzel test-piloted aircraft for Piper, served as a flight instructor for the Army, and test pilot for the Navy. In 1948, he directed the aviation division of Bob Jones University, and trained missionary pilots, while still a student at the school.<sup>212</sup>

### **Wheaton College Aviation Program and Club**

#### Wheaton College – Wheaton, IL (1945–1947, 1948–)

Wheaton College had a close relationship with many post-War mission aviators, the college served as host to a MAF sponsored 1947 mission aviation conference, and its president, Ray Edmond, was on the board of MAF-US and a recruiter for the organization. Multiple reports from 1945-47 suggest that the school considered starting a flight training program (open to men and women) under direction of Lyle G. Frost (a Wheaton College alum, military pilot, and B-17 flight instructor). It seems any program Wheaton launched was limited to courses offered circa 1946-47 in flight theory, aerial navigation, and meteorology. It is unclear what semesters the courses were available, though by 1948 the program seems to have been dropped in favor of a mission aviation student flight club, organized by E. W. Hatcher, Donald Berry, and Nate Saint.<sup>213</sup>

#### MAF members and missionary pilots affiliated with Wheaton College

Donald Berry

Newberry B. Cox

Dr. V. Raymond Edman – President of Wheaton College, CAMF Advisory Council

Walter E. Fulton

Lt. E. W. "Hatch" Hatcher

Bob Hutchins

Charles J. Mellis, Jr.

Nate Saint

George Poole

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<sup>212</sup> Anon., "Liberia," *Mid-Missions*, Oct. 1945, 1; Anon., "Sky Pilot," *Sunday Times (Perth)* (Perth, Western Australia), 31 Jul. 1949, 9; Paul Hartford, "News on the Wing #5," pamphlet (WMAC, Apr. 1950) BGC 136-60-7; Leslie Flynn, "Sky Pilot," *Christian Life*, Jan. 1951, 7.

<sup>213</sup> Charles Mellis, Jr., *Missionary Aviation*, Jul. - Sep. 1945, 2; Charles Mellis, Jr., "Introducing . . ." *Missionary Aviation*, Oct. - Dec. 1945, 8-9; Charles Mellis, Jr., "Killed in Routine Night Flight," *Missionary Aviation*, Oct-Dec 1945, 9; Anon., "Missionary Aviation Conference Proceedings and Report," 1946; Anon., "Aviation," 1946; Anon., "Missionary Aviation Conference Proceedings and Report," Missionary Aviation Conference - 1947, (Wheaton College, Wheaton, IL), 1-2 Aug. 1947 (BGC 136-53-13); Charles Mellis, Jr., "Others," *Missionary Aviation*, Jul-Aug 1948, 4; *Giving Wings to the Gospel*, 21, 77, 101, 19-21, 40, 301-3.

## **Wings of Mercy**

Roman Catholic Church, Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate – headquarters in Belleville (IL), affiliated mission aviation programs in United States of America, China, Africa, New Guinea and other islands of the South Pacific, the Bahamas, South America, Northern Canada, Southwest Africa (1945 –)

Wings of Mercy (WM) was officially launched April 1945 in Belleville (IL) by the most Reverend Marc Lacroix (O.M.I., Bishop of Hudson Bay) and Reverend Aloysius Cartier (O.M.I., missionary priest). Cartier and Lacroix had both been involved with *Miva* prior to World War Two, and started Wings of Mercy as an unofficial successor to Schulte's former program. William Martin believes that Lacroix and Cartier started the program separate from *Miva* given that neither knew whether or not *Miva* was then still operational, and given the direct connections both *Miva* and Schulte had to Germany. Asking American Catholics to donate money to a German mission program, posed a decided marketing problem given that Germany and the United States were then still at war.<sup>214</sup> Despite the shared pedigree, Wings of Mercy differed from *Miva* substantially. The program focused exclusively on aviation transportation, and undertook to train Catholic religious workers extensively as pilots, in addition to supplying them with aircraft. The organization grew out of the same Catholic missionary religious congregation as *Miva*, the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate (O.M.I.). It swiftly expanded its outreach efforts to include others: the Congregation of the Mission (Vincentian fathers), Missionaries of Africa (White fathers), Society of the Divine Word, the Order of St. Benedict, and the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer (Redemptorists). In 1945, the group operated six training craft at its base in Illinois where by 1946 it had trained some twenty pilots who worked as missionary pilots in North Dakota, Oklahoma, Africa, South Pacific, Bahamas, northern Canada, and China. Jim Truxton mentioned the Wings of Mercy flight school, which he called "Fars Air College," in a 15 August 1945 letter to Murray Kendon<sup>215</sup>

### Leadership and Staff<sup>216</sup>

Reverend Father Aloysius Cartier – President  
 Dr. R. C. Heiligenstein, M.D. – Vice-President  
 Mr. Louis E. Shively – Secretary-Treasurer

### Chief Pilot and Flight Instructors<sup>217</sup>

Thomas Hartman, later replaced by Philip P. Zampini

## ***Wings of Mercy #1***

Wings of Mercy, Roman Catholic Church, Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate – Illinois (1945 –)

<sup>214</sup> Martin, "Aircraft on the Mission Field," 39-43.

<sup>215</sup> Anon., "Why did he come?", 1945; Truxton, 15 Aug. 1945 (BGC 136-52-5); Service, "The Week in Religion"; Martin, "Aircraft on the Mission Field," 39-43.

<sup>216</sup> "Why did he come?", 1945; Martin, "Aircraft on the Mission Field," 39-43.

<sup>217</sup> Martin, "Aircraft on the Mission Field," 39-43.

One of four possible aviation programs operated with support from Wings of Mercy. The details regarding this program have not yet been recovered. See also the entry for *Wings of Mercy*.<sup>218</sup>

### ***Wings of Mercy #2***

Wings of Mercy, Roman Catholic Church, Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate – Illinois (1945 –)

One of four possible aviation programs operated with support from Wings of Mercy. The details regarding this program have not yet been recovered. See also the entry for *Wings of Mercy*.<sup>219</sup>

### ***Wings of Mercy #3***

Wings of Mercy, Roman Catholic Church, Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate – Illinois (1945 –)

One of four possible aviation programs operated with support from Wings of Mercy. The details regarding this program have not yet been recovered. See also the entry for *Wings of Mercy*.<sup>220</sup>

### ***Wings of Mercy #4***

Wings of Mercy, Roman Catholic Church, Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate – Illinois (1945 –)

One of four possible aviation programs operated with support from Wings of Mercy. The details regarding this program have not yet been recovered. See also the entry for *Wings of Mercy*.<sup>221</sup>

### **Horst Wolf**

Evangelical Protestant of unknown denominational affiliation, CAMF – Member #48 – unknown (– 1945 –)

In 1945, Horst Wolf was a student pilot then in missionary training. Although he appears to have planned to fly as a missionary pilot, it is uncertain if he ever launched an active program.<sup>222</sup>

### **Mel Wyma**

New Tribes Mission, Victory Sky Pilots – New Mexico, Colorado (planning 1947, operational 1948)

Mel Wyma began mission aviation service in 1945 as a student of Paul Hartford at Victory Sky

<sup>218</sup> Service, "The Week in Religion"; Martin, "Aircraft on the Mission Field," 39-43.

<sup>219</sup> Service, "The Week in Religion"; Martin, "Aircraft on the Mission Field," 39-43.

<sup>220</sup> Service, "The Week in Religion"; Martin, "Aircraft on the Mission Field," 39-43.

<sup>221</sup> Service, "The Week in Religion"; Martin, "Aircraft on the Mission Field," 39-43.

<sup>222</sup> Mellis, "CAMF Active Members", 1945

Pilots. He began active mission flights in 1947, flying for New Tribes Mission in Bolivia. Working in cooperation with local rubber businesses, Wyma and New Tribes Mission flew the mission's Stinson 150 to scout future mission locations, make contact with new people groups, carry missionaries, and to impress potential converts. Although Wyma made a number of dangerous attempts over the Andes with little knowledge of local flying conditions, he only suffered his first accident in 1949. Wyma had become lost over the Bolivian forests, ran out of fuel, and made a forced landing in an open field. It took Wyma and his passengers eight days to make it to safety. Wyma continued to fly into the 1950s.<sup>223</sup>

### **Helen Jean Moose Zwyghuizen**

#### Independent missionary (later with Baptist Mid-Missions), Victory Sky Pilots – Indiana (1945)

Helen Jean Moose Zwyghuizen was Victory Sky Pilot's first, and only known female graduate. Recounting the tale years later, Helen recalled that on her first introductory trip up with Paul Hartford, Hartford worked hard to show off his flying skills. His acrobatic flying so unsettled the young missionary that Helen Jean nearly dropped out of the program. Despite her nerve-racking introduction to VSP, Helen continued with her training, and seemed to have formed a tight bond with one of the trainers ("Joe") who helped her overcome her anxieties with flight and graduate from VSP. Helen Jean eventually received her pilots license. However, she never flew as a missionary pilot in-field. There is some indication made by Jim Truxton that Helen was disillusioned by her time at Victory Sky Pilots and felt as if Paul Hartford gave her a "raw deal" in her training. In 1948, Helen flew aboard the St. Paul as she made her way into Central China to work as a missionary with Baptist Mid-Missions.<sup>224</sup>

## 1946

### **Assemblies of God: Administrative Flight Program**

#### Assemblies of God – Springfield, MO (1946 –)

The Assemblies of God began flying a small 3-passenger Stinson in 1946. The denomination flew the aircraft from its administrative headquarters in Springfield (MO) primarily to facilitate

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<sup>223</sup> Anon., *Early History of the New Tribes Mission and Life and Work of Paul Fleming* (Woodworth, WI: Brown Gold Publications, n.d.), 70; Anon., "To the Regions Beyond in . . . *Flying Grasshoppers*", 1945; Paul Fleming, "A New Plane for South America," *Brown Gold*, Aug. - Sep. 1947, (BGC 136-61-17); Mel Wyma, "Over Savage Village by Air," *Brown Gold*, Apr. 1948, (BGC 136-61-17); Paul W. Fleming, "Big Wings for a Big Job," *Brown Gold*, May 1949, (BGC 136-61-17); Paul Hartford, "News on the Wing #6," pamphlet (WMAC, 29 May 1950) BGC 136-60-7.

<sup>224</sup> "To the Regions Beyond in . . . *Flying Grasshoppers*", 1945; James C. Truxton to MAF D-1 and Elizabeth Greene, 25 Sep. 1950 (BGC 136-2-27); *Daily Choices for Christ*.

administrative travel. However, the denomination likewise used the airplane as a trainer for students at the denomination's Central Bible Institute, also in Springfield, MO.<sup>225</sup>

### **Assemblies of God: Flight Training Program**

Central Bible Institute (Springfield, MO) (1946 – 1948 –)

In 1946 the Assemblies of God operated a missionary flight training program (consisting of 5 training aircraft) at its Central Bible Institute in Springfield, MO.<sup>226</sup>

### **Raymond E. Baltz**

Bob Jones University, CAMF, MAF-US (Member #355) – (planning only, 1946)

A former Naval pilot, Raymond Baltz intended to train as a flying medical missionary in South America. It is unknown if he ever did.<sup>227</sup>

### **Bob Jones University: Flight Department**

Bob Jones University – South Carolina, USA (1946 – present)

Information regarding the early years of Bob Jones University missionary aviation training program is currently limited. The program began in 1946 and, according to Paul Hartford, was in 1950 then training some 75 prospective missionary pilots. Bob Jones University phased out its aviation program beginning in 2011. However, the university continues to offer a minor in aviation available through a partnership with USAeroFlight, a training school started by former instructors of the Bob Jones aviation training program.<sup>228</sup>

### **Rev. Roger Boomershine**

Victory Sky Pilots – Indiana (1946 – 1947)

Roger Boomershine trained at Victory Sky Pilots in 1946-47. There is no evidence to suggest he served as a missionary pilot.<sup>229</sup>

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<sup>225</sup> William Karl Martin, "The Use of Aircraft on the Mission Field," Central Baptist Theological Seminary, 1947, 37-8 (BGC 136-61-23).

<sup>226</sup> Ibid., 38; Paul Hartford, "Minutes of the Opening Session of the Proposed World Missionary Aviation Conference," World Missionary Aviation Council, 25 May 1948 (BGC 136-60-7).

<sup>227</sup> Charles Mellis, Jr., "Introducing. . ." *Missionary Aviation*, Jul.-Sep 1946, 12-13.

<sup>228</sup> James C. Truxton to Murray Kendon, 10 Apr. 1946 (BGC 136-52-5); "Missionary Aviation Conference Proceedings and Report," Missionary Aviation Conference, (Winona Lake, IN), 1-4 Aug. 1946 (BGC 136-53-12); Paul Hartford, "News on the Wing #4," Winona Lake, IN, pamphlet (WMAC, Apr. 1950) BGC 136-60-7; Leslie Flynn, "Sky Pilot," *Christian Life*, Jan. 1951, 7; Amy Clarke Burns, "Instructors save Bob Jones flight school," *Greenville Online* (Greenville, SC), 15 Aug. 2014; Bob Jones University, "Minors," <http://www.bju.edu/>; "USAeroTech Website," <http://usaerotech.net/>.

<sup>229</sup> William Mollenhour, "Sky Writing: Times Union Aviation News and Comment," (Warsaw, IN), 27 Oct. 1947.

### **Rev. Spencer Bower**

Unknown denomination – Minnesota, USA (–1946 –)

In 1946 the Reverend Bower, of Bemidji Minnesota, gained regional acclaim as a ‘flying missionary.’ He advertised his aviation credentials in advertisements for mission conferences at which he spoke.<sup>230</sup>

### **Brother Timothy Calhane**

Wings of Mercy, Roman Catholic Church, Order of Servants of Mary – Illinois, (probably) Swaziland Africa (1946 –)

Trained as missionary pilot with Wings of Mercy in 1946. Intended to fly as missionary pilot in Swaziland Africa.<sup>231</sup>

### **Harold Christensen**

Victory Sky Pilots – Winona Lake, IN (1946 –)

Harold Christensen was a student pilot at Victory Sky Pilots in 1946.<sup>232</sup>

### **Church of God: Alaskan Mission Aviation Program**

Aviation program – Alaska (planning, 1946 –)

In 1946, the Church of God (based in Anderson, IN) announced plans to link its Alaskan mission stations by air. There is no further record of the program. It is probable it was started, though likely on a temporary basis.<sup>233</sup>

### **Wilson Dale Crane**

LeTourneau Technical Institute, CAMF, MAF-US (Member #78) – USA (1946 – 2010)

Following his discharge from the US Navy, Dale Crane entered Parks Air College in 1946 where he studied flight and aviation mechanics. He, along with Glen Ellis, later founded LeTourneau Technical Institute’s aviation program, and he remained active as an aviation instructor

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<sup>230</sup> Anon., "The Rev. Spencer Bower - Flying Missionary," *Mason City Globe-Gazette* (Mason City (IA)), 5 Aug. 1946.

<sup>231</sup> Martin, "Aircraft on the Mission Field."

<sup>232</sup> *The Clarion*, 6 Dec. 1946.

<sup>233</sup> "Aviation," *Christian Life and Times*, Dec. 1946, 2, 37-8.

throughout his life. Crane wrote numerous works on aviation maintenance, many of which remain in print.<sup>234</sup>

### **Rev. Weldon Culver**

Victory Sky Pilots, Asbury College, Youth for Christ International – Indiana, Illinois, India, Japan, Taiwan (1946 – 1947)

Weldon Culver trained as a missionary pilot at Victory Sky Pilots in 1946, and by October 1947 had entered the mission field in India. After five years, Culver returned to the United States to serve briefly as a pastor of rural churches in Indiana and Illinois. In 1952 he returned to the mission field, this time to Japan, to serve with Youth for Christ. He moved to Taiwan in 1959, and served as a missionary there. In none of these locations is there evidence to suggest he flew as a missionary pilot.<sup>235</sup>

### **Ray Frazier**

Moody Aviation – Bolivia (1946 – 1949 –)

Ray Frazier was the first student to conduct a solo flight while studying at Moody Aviation. Following his graduation from the training school, Frazier entered the mission field, and as of 1949 was conducting an aerial survey of Bolivia in anticipation of beginning a mission aviation operation in the country.<sup>236</sup>

### **Father Alban Fruth**

Wings of Mercy, Roman Catholic Church, Order of St. Benedict – Illinois, (probably) the Bahamas (1946 –)

Trained as missionary pilot with Wings of Mercy in 1946. Intended to fly as missionary pilot in the Bahamas.<sup>237</sup>

### **Gospel Missionary Union: Ecuador Mission Aviation Program**

Victory Sky Pilots – Ecuador (1946 – 1947)

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<sup>234</sup> Charles Mellis, Jr., "Introducing . . . Wilson Dale Crane," *Missionary Aviation*, Jan. - Mar. 1946, 6; "Missionary Aviation Conference Proceedings and Report," 1946; "Dale Crane," Aviation Supplies & Academics, Inc., <http://www.asa2fly.com/Dale-Crane-C131.aspx>; Dale Crane, *Aviation Maintenance Technician: Powerplant eBundle*, ed. Jerry Lee Foulk, 3rd ed., Aviation Maintenance Technician Series (Aviation Supplies and Academics, Inc. 2013); Candi Bolden, "At 60, LeTourneau aviation school known as one of best," *Longview News-Journal* (Longview (TX)), 14 Aug. 2016.

<sup>235</sup> Mollenhour, "Sky Writing: Times Union Aviation News and Comment"; Anon., "Speaker to Leave soon for Japan," *Findlay Republican Courier* (Findlay, Ohio), 25 Oct. 1952, 5; Anon., "Class Notes," *Asbury Alumnus combined with Asbury College Bulletin*, Oct. 1959, 8.

<sup>236</sup> Faith Coxe, "Wings for the Word," *Moody Monthly*, Feb. 1949, 456-7, 60 (BGC 136-61-16).

<sup>237</sup> Martin, "Aircraft on the Mission Field."



In 1946, Christian Weiss, director of the Gospel Missionary Union (GMU), attended the Moody Aviation Conference where he was convinced as to the potential of mission aviation to facilitate global mission work. Therefore, later that year he purchased a 4-place Stinson, and launched a GMU-lead cooperative mission aviation program in Ecuador. The Reverend Bob Hart, a missionary with GMU, volunteered to fly the mission plane. He was trained by Paul Hartford at Victory Sky Pilots, earned his private pilot's license, and then made his way to Ecuador. Unfortunately, the GMU program was short-lived. Bob Hart proved inattentive to airplane maintenance, and as a result his plane suffered a sudden engine failure during a routine flight. The resultant crash, severely injured Hart's passenger, George Poole of HCJB. Although MAF-US had promoted GMU's initial operation in 1946, they used the memory of Hart's accident to critique amateur missionary aviation programs and to emphasize the necessity of high safety standards and the use of professional pilots in all mission aviation operations. MAF-US took over GMU's mission aviation service in Ecuador following the accident.<sup>238</sup>

### **Bob Hart**

#### Gospel Missionary Union, Victory Sky Pilots – Ecuador (1946 – 1947)

The Reverend Bob Hart, a missionary with GMU, was trained by Paul Hartford at Victory Sky Pilots in 1946, earned his private pilot's license, and then made his way to Ecuador to fly as a missionary pilot for the Gospel Missionary Union. In Ecuador, Hart shuttled supplies and personnel, and made surveys of the region for GMU and Paul Hartford.<sup>239</sup> Unfortunately, the GMU program was short-lived. Bob Hart proved inattentive to airplane maintenance, and as a result his plane suffered a sudden engine failure during a routine flight. The resultant crash, severely injured Hart's passenger, George Poole of HCJB. Although MAF-US had promoted GMU's initial operation in 1946, they used the memory of Hart's accident to critique amateur missionary aviation programs and to emphasize the necessity of high safety standards and the use of professional pilots in all mission aviation operations. MAF-US took over GMU's mission aviation service in Ecuador following the accident. It is unlikely that Bob Hart continued to fly following the accident.<sup>240</sup>

### **Rev. Norval Hegland**

#### Lutheran – South Dakota, Alaska, Oregon, Kansas, Montana (1946 – 2002)

In 1946, five years following his ordination as a Lutheran pastor (Luther Seminary, St. Paul, MN) Reverend Norval Hegland completed flight training in Plentywood, Montana, hoping to become a flying pastor. In 1948, Hegland moved to Lemmon South Dakota, and served a nine-

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<sup>238</sup> Charles Mellis, Jr., "From the Field," *Missionary Aviation*, Apr.-Jun. 1946, 12-13; Martin, "Aircraft on the Mission Field," 4; "Echoes from Ecuador," *Missionary Aviation*, May-Jun. 1948, 6; J. Grady Parrott to Murray Kendon, 2 Sep. 1949 (BGC 136-25-88); Dietrich Buss and Arthur Glasser, *Giving Wings to the Gospel: The Remarkable Story of Mission Aviation Fellowship* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1995), 78.

<sup>239</sup> James C. Truxton to J. O Percy, 12 Aug. 1948 (BGC 136-58-23).

<sup>240</sup> Mellis, "From the Field", 1946; Martin, "Aircraft on the Mission Field," 4; "Echoes from Ecuador", 1948; Parrott, 2 Sep. 1949 (BGC 136-25-88); *Giving Wings to the Gospel*, 78.

church parish, known as the Lemmon Circuit Air Parish, flying from one congregation to the next to hold services. In his first year alone, Hegland flew some 40,000 miles on behalf of his ministries. Hegland further used his aircraft to promote church participation, providing local children with free airplane rides for regular attendance at Sunday School. In 1951, Hegland transferred to Seward Alaska, flying between churches and serving as superintendent of the Lutheran Eskimo Mission. Hegland left Alaska in 1960, and continued to fly as a pastor in South Dakota, Oregon, Kansas, and Montana until his death in 2002.<sup>241</sup>

### **Eleanor Holdeman**

Stetson University (FL), Columbia Bible College (SC), CAMF, MAF-US (Member #344) – (planning only, 1946)

Eleanor Holdeman, a public school teacher, was in 1946 training for her private pilot's license in hopes of using it in the mission field.<sup>242</sup>

### **Rev. Gilbert Howe**

Aviation School – Wisconsin & possibly California (1946 –)

Following World War Two, the Reverend Gilbert Howe planned to build a flight school for Protestant ministers. Reverend Howe had by this time arranged for a former military flight instructor to provide training, and selected Kenosha, Wisconsin as his base location. There is little additional information regarding Howe's efforts apart from some fragmentary material suggesting his school was moved to Rice Lake, California and was still in operation in 1949.<sup>243</sup>

### **Raymond S. Jackson**

Unknown denominational affiliation, CAMF MAF-US (Member #22) – unknown (planning, 1946 –)

In 1946, AAF military pilot and World War Two veteran, Raymond Jackson, expressed interest in becoming a missionary pilot. It is unlikely he ever did so.<sup>244</sup>

### **Rev. T. Wayne Judd**

CAMF, MAF-US, (#136) – Ecuador (– 1946 –)

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<sup>241</sup> Corinne Rye, "Sky Pilot," *Christian Life*, Jul. 1949, 7; Anon., "Obituaries for Tuesday, Jan. 29: Rev. Norval Gerhard Hegland," *Rapid City Journal* (Rapid City, SD), 29 Jan. 2002.

<sup>242</sup> Mellis, "Introducing. . .", 1946

<sup>243</sup> "Aviation", 1946

<sup>244</sup> Charles Mellis, Jr., "Introducing . . . Raymond S. Jackson," *Missionary Aviation*, Apr. - Jul. 1946, 9.

Reverend Wayne Judd was a missionary to Ecuador with his private pilot's license. Reverend Judd had no plane as of 1946. He was however, actively looking to start his own mission aviation program.<sup>245</sup>

### **Stanislaus A. Kalpa**

Wings of Mercy, Roman Catholic Church – Illinois (1946 –)

Trained as missionary pilot with Wings of Mercy in 1946.<sup>246</sup>

### **Warren Krantz**

Victory Sky Pilots -- USA, Angola (1946 –)

Warren Krantz trained as a pilot with Paul Hartford at Victory Sky Pilots. He is mentioned in one article, where it was noted that he worked at the Weatherhead factory in Warsaw, Indiana, and that by 1947 he had moved to Angola. It is probable that the newspaper meant Angola, Indiana, and not the then colony of Angola in Africa. There exists no known evidence to suggest that Krantz flew as a missionary pilot or ever served as a foreign missionary.<sup>247</sup>

### **Mr. and Mrs. H. V. Lemley**

Independent Protestant Missionaries – Mexico (planning, 1946 –)

In 1946, Mr. and Mrs. H. V. Lemley planned to launch a mission aviation program to service their independent mission work in southern Mexico. It is unlikely the program was ever initiated.<sup>248</sup>

### **Letourneau College: Letourneau Flight School**

LeTourneau College, LeTourneau University – Toccoa, GA, Longview TX (1946 – present)

The LeTourneau Flight School began operation circa 1946 in Toccoa, GA. The program then moved to LeTourneau College (now LeTourneau University) in Longview, TX circa 1956, and continues to operate as a respected flight program. Principal founders included: Ernie Hansen, Dale Crane, Glen Ellis, and a Mr. Phillipi. It is possible however, that R. G. LeTourneau started two separate flight schools and that the Georgia and Texas programs were two distinct operations. Each branch seemed to have distinctly different objectives; the first, in Georgia, trained missionaries to fly as a “vocational” component of their broader ministry efforts, while the program in Texas focused on training professional pilots. Furthermore, the Texas program today dates its genesis to 1956, even though the Georgia program existed as early as 1946.

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<sup>245</sup> Mellis, "Introducing. . .", 1946; Mellis, "From the Field", 1946; Charles Mellis, Jr., "CAMF Active Members - No. 101 to No. 150 inclusive," *Missionary Aviation*, Jan.-Mar. 1946, 16.

<sup>246</sup> Martin, "Aircraft on the Mission Field."

<sup>247</sup> Mollenhour, "Sky Writing: Times Union Aviation News and Comment"

<sup>248</sup> Charles Mellis, Jr., "CAMF Diary," *Missionary Aviation*, Jan.-Mar. 1946, 8-13, 14.

Therefore, it is possible that the Georgia program was always separate, ended sometime in the late-1940's, and that the Texas training operation was started in 1956 as a separate venture.<sup>249</sup>

### **Lutheran World Federation: *St. Paul* Program**

#### Lutheran World Federation, World Missionary Aviation Council – China (1946 – 1949)

In spring 1946, Dr. Daniel Nelson, director of the Lutheran World Federation, organized an emergency missionary airline program to rescue missionaries stranded as a result of World War Two. He purchased a used C-47 from a US military surplus sale, and on 4 July 1946 launched the Lutheran World Federation's aircraft, *St. Paul*, on its first mission flight. Nelson originally organized the *St. Paul* program on a temporary basis, but he soon endeavored to expand the service into a permanent missionary aviation operation with a global footprint. Toward that end, Nelson worked with MAF and the WMAC (of which he served as the first president). Beginning in 1948, Nelson integrated the *St. Paul* into the WMAC's worldwide missionary airline program, and flew his mission's aircraft in conjunction with the Assemblies of God and Scandinavian Missionary Flights.<sup>250</sup> The first *St. Paul* was destroyed in a weather-related accident in China in spring 1949. Although no one was injured in the accident, the aircraft was scrapped and a new one quickly purchased.<sup>251</sup> As the Chinese Nationalist military forces gradually lost ground, the Lutheran World Federation gradually curtailed the *St. Paul's* flights, ending operations on 14 December 1949 after a final flight carrying Chinese refugees to Hainan Island in south China. Over their operational lifetimes, the two *St. Paul* aircraft flew as the pride of the Lutheran World Federation, and were credited by mission staff with increasing the prestige of the mission amongst government officials and other mission bodies.<sup>252</sup> In addition to its propagandistic value, the *St. Paul* program with considerable success. Between July 1946 and December 1949, the two *St. Paul's* flew 457,500 miles, made 98 flights, and had 431 takeoffs and landings. The aircraft carried some 10,000 missionaries, personnel from virtually every mission body then working in China, including those from the Catholic Church, and operated at a profit.<sup>253</sup> They likewise carried hundreds of tons of medical and relief supplies to war-torn China, and evacuated entire mission stations, schools, and mission hospitals – including patients, staff, missionaries, and equipment. Despite flying into active combat zones, being targeted and fired upon by anti-aircraft guns, and suffering a serious accident, the *St. Paul* program operated with no deaths or injuries to passengers or crew. Following the conclusion of the *St. Paul* program, the Lutheran Federation sold the C-47 to the aircraft's chief pilot, Arthur Dudding and his copilot Max Albert Springweiler who later flew the aircraft commercially. Dr. Nelson did not live to see the

<sup>249</sup> Truxton, 10 Apr. 1946 (BGC 136-52-5); Religious News Service, "The Week in Religion," *Walla Walla Union Bulletin* (Walla Walla, WA), 5 May 1946, 13; "Aviation," *Christian Life and Times*, Jun. 1946, 10-2; Bolden, "At 60, LeTourneau aviation school known as one of best"

<sup>250</sup> Charles Mellis, Jr., "Circling the Globe: China," *Missionary Aviation*, 1946, 10; Charles Mellis, Jr., "Introducing. . ." *Missionary Aviation*, Apr.-Jun. 1946, 8-9; Daniel Nelson to James C. Truxton, 22 May. 1946 (BGC 136-28-30); Charles Mellis, Jr. to Daniel Nelson, 25 May 1946 (BGC 136-28-30); Daniel Nelson to Jr. Charles Mellis, 24 Jun. 1946 (BGC 136-28-30); Daniel Nelson, "Report on the Saint Paul to the International Missionary Aviation Conference," 25 May 1948 (BGC 136-61-14).

<sup>251</sup> "Mission Plane Wrecked," *Christian Life*, May 1949, (BGC 136-61-14).

<sup>252</sup> Axel Christiansen, "St. Paul - Operational Relief," *The China News Letter*, Jan-Feb 1950, 15-7 (BGC 136-61-14).

<sup>253</sup> "Plane "St. Paul" Near End of Service in China," *United Evangelical Action*, 1 Jan. 1950, (BGC 136-61-14).

conclusion of the St. Paul program. He, along with much of his family, were murdered by pirates in 1948 near Hong Kong in the South China Sea.<sup>254</sup>

St. Paul Crew: 1946–1949<sup>255</sup>

**Lawrence Sowles**, Minneapolis, MN – pilot (– 1946 – 1947 –)

**Robert A. Conrath**, USA – pilot (– 1947 –)

**Richard Rossi**, USA – pilot (– 1947 –)

**William “Bill” Arthur Dudding**, Minnesota, USA – chief pilot (1948 – 1949)

**Max Albert Springweiler**, Waldkirch Germany – co-pilot, radio operator (1946 – 1949)

**Otto Hoefft**, Hanover, Germany – flight mechanic, engineer (1946 – 1949)

### **MAF-US: Missionary Flying Club**

Unknown denominational affiliation, CAMF (MAF-US) – Monrovia, California (– 1946 –)

There is currently little information regarding the Missionary Flying Club in Monrovia, California. In 1946, James Truxton mentioned to Murray Kendon (MAF-UK) that CAMF (MAF-US) had been teaching club members how to fly. It is not now known how long the club continued or if any of its members ever became active mission aviators.<sup>256</sup>

### **MAF-US: Chiapas, Mexico service for Wycliffe**

CAMF/MAF-US, Wycliffe Bible Translators – Chiapas, southern Mexico (1946, 1947 –)

Flying a 1933 Waco biplane, Betty Greene launched CAMF’s (MAF-US) first operational mission aviation program on 23 February 1946, ferrying two missionaries of Wycliffe Bible Translators to their stations in Chiapas, southern Mexico. Betty and CAMF continued to fly for Wycliffe until the summer of that same year when George Wiggins (CAMF member #321) crashed the Waco into a building while landing the Waco. Wiggins had been sent to relieve Greene in Mexico in order to free Greene to conduct aerial survey work for MAF elsewhere. Although neither Wiggins nor Greene (who was aboard the aircraft) were seriously injured, the Waco required major repairs. MAF-US sent Nate Saint (then a student at Wheaton College) to restore the plane to flying condition. Following repairs, James Truxton and Betty Greene flew the Waco back to California where it was sold. MAF-US purchased a Piper Cub Super Cruiser and resumed operations with Wycliffe later in 1947. Although the initial crash caused MAF-US

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<sup>254</sup> Rev. Arthur S. Olson, "The "St. Paul" Bows Out: An Editorial," *The China News Letter*, Jan-Feb 1950, 2-5 (BGC 136-61-14); Charlotte Gronseth, "Daniel, Jr. and Esther Nelson," in *Biographical Dictionary of Chinese Christianity* (2014).

<sup>255</sup> "Meet the Chief Pilot," *The China News Letter*, Mar. - Apr. 1949, 8-10 (BGC 136-61-14); "Introducing the Co-Pilot and Radio-Operator," *The China News Letter*, Mar. - Apr. 1949, 10-4 (BGC 136-61-14); "Meet our Flight Mechanic and Engineer," *The China News Letter*, Mar. - Apr. 1949, 14-17 (BGC 136-61-14); "The Spirit of "St. Paul": An Editorial," *The China News Letter*, Mar. - Apr. 1949, (BGC 136-61-14).

<sup>256</sup> Truxton, 10 Apr. 1946 (BGC 136-52-5).

and Wycliffe considerable embarrassment, the success of the overarching operation convinced Cameron Townsend to expand the flight program into Peru.<sup>257</sup>

### **MAF-US: Peruvian Service for SIL**

#### Summer Institute of Linguistics, JAARS – Peru (1946 – 1948)

Excited at the success of MAF's aviation service for SIL in Mexico, Townsend looked to expand aviation service to his new SIL operation in Peru. However, in selecting the aircraft Townsend neglected to fully consult with MAF, and purchased a US military surplus Grumman J2F "Duck," amphibious plane in 1946, with the direct financial assistance of the Peruvian government (who expected to be able to use the plane themselves when needed). Unfortunately, tensions grew between Townsend and MAF, regarding the unclear lines of control over the plane, its operation, and the pilots in charge. The tensions helped lead to the end of MAF's involvement with SIL and the founding of JAARS by Townsend in 1948.<sup>258</sup>

### **Sister Maxine**

#### Roman Catholic Church, Order of St. Benedict – Minneapolis and St. Cloud, MN (1946 –)

In mid-1946 a sister in the Benedict order named Maxine, undertook flight training in anticipation of herself teaching students to fly at a Catholic high school in St. Cloud, Minnesota.<sup>259</sup>

### **Horace W. McCracken**

#### CAMF, MAF-US (Member #117) – (planning only, 1946)

In 1946, Horace McCracken was a military pilot stationed in Alaska who intended serve as a missionary to Latin America following his military commitments. He stated an interest in mission flight work to CAMF leaders. However, it is unlikely he flew as a mission aviator.<sup>260</sup>

### **Father Joseph E. McIntyre**

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<sup>257</sup> Charles Mellis, Jr., "And Now Mexico," *Missionary Aviation*, Apr.-Jun. 1946, 6-7, 14; Charles Mellis, Jr., "Wings of Praise and Prayer," *Missionary Aviation*, Apr.-Jun. 1946, 15; Charles Mellis, Jr., "Circling the Globe," *Missionary Aviation*, Jul.-Sep. 1946, 10-11, 14; MAF-US, "Operation Repair," *Missionary Aviation*, Jan.-Feb. 1947, 3 (BGC 136-52-8); Murray Kendon, "Friend of the MAF," pamphlet (MAF-UK, Apr. 1947) BGC 136-52-5; Martin, "Aircraft on the Mission Field," 63; Grady Parrott to Charles Mellis and James C. Truxton, 29 Jan. 1948 (BGC 136-2-4); *Giving Wings to the Gospel*, 58.

<sup>258</sup> Truxton, 10 Apr. 1946 (BGC 136-52-5); MAF-US, "Operation Repair", 1947; Parrott, 29 Jan. 1948 (BGC 136-2-4); *Giving Wings to the Gospel*, 62-3, 69-73; Fredrick A. Aldridge Jr., "All Things to All Men for the Gospel's Sake: The Wycliffe Bible Translators and the Summer Institute of Linguistics, 1934-1982," (2014), 169-71.

<sup>259</sup> Martin, "Aircraft on the Mission Field," 43-4.

<sup>260</sup> Charles Mellis, Jr., "Introducing . . . Horace W. McCracken," *Missionary Aviation*, Jan. - Mar. 1946, 7.

Wings of Mercy, Roman Catholic Church, Congregation of the Mission – Illinois, (possibly) China (1946 –)

Trained as missionary pilot with Wings of Mercy in 1946.<sup>261</sup>

### **Methodist Church: Division of Home Missions Aviation Service**

North and South Dakota (1946)

In the summer of 1946, the Division of Home Missions of the Methodist Church sent three Boston University theological students to North and South Dakota as “flying parsons.” The students were tasked with ministering eleven churches scattered over 8,500 square miles. It is unlikely that the program continued much beyond that year.<sup>262</sup>

### **Moody Bible Institute: Moody Aviation**

Moody Bible Institute, WMAC, CAMF, MAF – Chicago, graduates sent around globe (1946 – present)

Moody Aviation grew out of the efforts of Paul Robinson, and launched with an initial class of sixteen students, September 1946. Throughout the 1940s, Robinson operated Moody Aviation out of a hanger in Elmhurst, IL (a far-western suburb of Chicago), where he built an office and classroom facilities.<sup>263</sup> Moody Aviation was initially a cooperating (non)member of the WMAC, and hosted the council’s December 1948 gathering. However, Robinson and Moody were very much in ideological alignment with the two branches of MAF. In his courses, Robinson emphasized high levels of training, safety, and efficiency. Robinson and CAMF & MAF enjoyed a close collaborative relationship beginning in 1945. MAF leaders trusted Robinson explicitly, and decided to scrap their own proposed mission aviation training program and instead entrusted the training of future MAF pilots to Moody. The close relationship between MAF and Moody Aviation continued, and as of the mid-1990s some 70% of all MAF pilots were Moody graduates. Moody aviation had by 1949 trained nearly 100 students, although an unknown number did not graduate. In 1980, the number of Moody Aviation graduates stood at approximately 250.<sup>264</sup>

#### **Moody Instructors (ca. 1949)**

Paul Robinson  
Richard Holstein

<sup>261</sup> Martin, "Aircraft on the Mission Field," 39-43.

<sup>262</sup> "Aviation", 1946

<sup>263</sup> "Missionary Aviation Conference Proceedings and Report," 1946; "Aviation", 1946

<sup>264</sup> Paul Hartford, "World Missionary Aviation Convention Report," World Missionary Aviation Council, Dec. 7-9 1948; Grady Parrott to Bill Knights, 6 Dec. 1949 (BGC 136-52-6); Paul Hartford, "News on the Wing #6," pamphlet (WMAC, 29 May 1950) BGC 136-60-7; James C. Truxton to Grady Parrott, 21 Oct. 1950 (BGC 136-2-27); "Aviation in Missions," *Moody Monthly*, Jan. 1951, (BGC 136-61-17); *Giving Wings to the Gospel*, 61; John Wells and Glenn Arnold, "Winging the Word: Missionary aviation's first 60 years," *Christian Herald*, Sep. 1981, 54-7.

Bob Stockley

### **Bernard E. Northrup**

CAMF, MAF-US (Member #138) – (planning only, 1946)

Military mechanic, and in 1946, a student pilot, Bernard Northrup intended to serve in the mission field as an aviator. It is unlikely this plan came to fruition.<sup>265</sup>

### **Oakland Bible Institute**

Pentecostal Bible College – California, USA (1946 – 1947)

During the 1946-47 academic school year, the Oakland Bible Institute (headed by revivalist Bebe H. Patten) flew its women's choir (the "Famous flying choir") along US West Coast and into Canada in a chartered DC-4. The trip was promoted in OBI promotional literature and used to raise interest in the school<sup>266</sup>

### **Father Charles Patrick**

Wings of Mercy, Roman Catholic Church, Missionaries of the Sacred Heart of Jesus – Illinois, (probably) South Pacific islands (1946 –)

Trained as missionary pilot with Wings of Mercy in 1946. Intended to fly as missionary pilot in the South Pacific islands.<sup>267</sup>

### **Elmer Pearson**

Independent missionary – unknown (planning, 1946 – 1948 –)

In 1946, independent missionary to Congo, Elmer Pearson, expressed interest in training as a pilot and launching an aviation program in the Congo. He seems to have cooperated with MAF-UK in their 1948 survey of the region, but never likely started one of his own.<sup>268</sup>

### **Presbyterian Church USA: Central Brazil Mission**

Presbyterian Church USA – Brazil (1946 – 1954 –)

In 1946, Rodger Perkins, a missionary pilot, began a mission aviation program in rural Brazil for the Central Brazil Mission (CBM) of the Presbyterian Church USA. Perkins flew the mission's Cub Super-Cruiser successfully, using it for evangelistic outreach efforts and to conduct

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<sup>265</sup> Mellis, "Introducing. . .", 1946

<sup>266</sup> "Advertisement: Flying the Gospel," *Revelation*, Jan. 1947.

<sup>267</sup> Martin, "Aircraft on the Mission Field."

<sup>268</sup> Mellis, "Introducing. . .", 1946; Jack Hemmings, Stuart King, and Murray Kendon, "Letters from the Congo Survey," pamphlet (MAF-UK, Jul. 1948) BGC 136-52-6.



emergency medical flights. The CBM aviation program grew over the next decade. In 1948, CAMF founder Jim Buyers, who had recently left MAF-US, joined CBM as an additional missionary pilot, and in 1950 the program had expanded to two operational aircraft. In 1951, Perkins work as a missionary pilot in Brazil was adapted into a film, *Wings to the Word*. By 1954, Perkins appeared to have ended his active flying career to take one administrative duties as director of the Instituto Dois de Julho in Bahia Brazil.<sup>269</sup>

### **Rev. W. H. Rainey**

British and Foreign Bible Society, CAMF – (promotional, – 1946 –)

An established, and well-known evangelist in Australia and the United Kingdom, Reverend William H. Rainey published numerous article promoting mission aviation as a “modern method” of mission outreach. Rainey believed that evangelists in Africa, South America, and Australia could make ready use of mission aviation services and that technology had advanced to the point where this was both practical and affordable. Wrote Dr. Rainey “a few missionaries, equipped with planes, cars, and wireless, could do more to evangelize the world in our generation than a host of footsloggers.” Through contacts developed by George Fisk, Rainey knew about and supported CAMF/MAF.<sup>270</sup>

### **Nathanael “Nate” Saint**

Missionary Aviation Fellowship, Wheaton College – Ecuador, USA (1946 – 1956)

A native of Huntingdon Valley, PA, Nathanael “Nate” Saint joined the US military in 1942, hoping to serve as a pilot, though ill health soon undermined his army career. Following the war, Saint entered Wheaton College, and in 1946 served briefly as a mechanic with CAMF, repairing the Waco aircraft damaged by George Wiggins in southern Mexico. Saint returned to Wheaton and along with Hatch Hatcher, Don Berry, and Hobert Lowrance, led Wheaton College’s missionary aviation club. Saint withdrew from Wheaton in 1948 to join MAF as a fulltime pilot and mechanic for the fellowship’s Ecuador operation. In Ecuador, Saint provided regional air support for seven total mission stations operated by GMU, Plymouth Brethren, and Christian and Missionary Alliance. Unfortunately, Saint experienced a serious crash on 30 December 1948, as a result of his failure to negotiate a downdraft on takeoff. MAF resumed service in April 1949 with Grady Parrott serving as pilot until Saint had recovered from injuries sustained in the December accident. Saint soon returned to Ecuador, and continued to fly as a mission pilot in Ecuador until his death at the hands of “Auca” Indians in 1956.<sup>271</sup>

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<sup>269</sup> Mellis, "From the Field", 1946; Martin, "Aircraft on the Mission Field," 56; James C. Truxton to MAF D-1, 30 Jul. 1950 (BGC 136-2-27); James C. Truxton to J. W. Shank, 7 Oct. 1950 (BGC 136-2-27); *Daily Independent Journal* (San Rafael (CA)), 14 Apr. 1958, 13; *Giving Wings to the Gospel*, 68, 128.

<sup>270</sup> George Fisk to Dear Co-workers, 26 Apr. 1946 (BGC 136-23-68); W. H. Rainey, "Evangelizing the Outback in the Land Down Under," *Missionary Aviation*, Jul.-Sep. 1946, 8-9.

<sup>271</sup> *Giving Wings to the Gospel*, 54-5, 86, 101, 04-11.

### **Rev. Fred Stadtmueller**

Catholic – New Mexico (1946)

In the mid-1940s, Reverend Fred Stadtmueller, the “flying priest of Mosquero,” flew his plane (*The Spirit of St. Joseph*) to visit outlying mission stations scattered to the east of Santa Fe, NM.<sup>272</sup>

### **Father Anthony Gendusa, A. M. Stemper**

Wings of Mercy, Roman Catholic Church – Illinois, South Pacific islands of New Britain, New Ireland, and the Admiralties (1946 –)

Both trained as missionary pilots with Wings of Mercy in 1946.<sup>273</sup>

### **Frederick A. Treffer**

CAMF, MAF-US (Member #116) – (planning only, 1946)

Former AAF pilot, Frederick Treffer intended to train in medicine in order to become a flying medical missionary. It is unlikely he served in such a capacity in the mission field.<sup>274</sup>

### **Norman C. Truxton**

CAMF, MAF-US (Member #51) – (planning only, 1946)

Brother of CAMF founder Jim Truxton, Norman Truxton expressed interest pursuing mission aviation following his military service in the Navy. He did not.<sup>275</sup>

### **Paul Uhlinger**

Conservative Baptist Foreign Missionary Society, MAF-US (#230) – Belgian Congo (training 1946 – 1947, operation August 1947 – 12 January 1948)

While still a child living at his parents’ mission post in Africa, Paul Uhlinger came to see the potential benefits of mission aviation. After World War Two, he returned to the United States and joined the US-based Conservative Baptist Foreign Missionary Society (CBFMS) in hopes of becoming a missionary pilot. The CBFMS refused to fund Uhlinger’s aviation program. Its leadership however, agreed to let him start one, provided he found the finances himself. Therefore, with help from the Le Tourneau Foundation, Uhlinger trained as a pilot and purchased an aircraft. In the late summer of 1947, Uhlinger returned to the Belgian Congo, assembled his airplane, and launched a missionary aviation service for his fellow missionaries of the CBFMS.

<sup>272</sup> Service, "The Week in Religion"

<sup>273</sup> Martin, "Aircraft on the Mission Field."

<sup>274</sup> Mellis, "Introducing. . .", 1946

<sup>275</sup> Charles Mellis, Jr., "Introducing . . . Norman C. Truxton," *Missionary Aviation*, Jan. - Mar. 1946, 6; "Obituarie: Norman Campbell Truxton," *The Tennessean*, Nov. 23 2011.

Despite his very limited funding, training, and experience, Uhlinger made numerous flights in the fall of 1947. Paul Uhlinger, along with his passengers, the Reverend George Kevorkian and Edna May Sill, were killed in an accident on 12 January 1948. Their deaths resulted in the end of CBFMS mission aviation program and ignited a global discussion amongst Protestant missionaries as to mission aviation best practice.<sup>276</sup>

### **George Wiggins**

CAMF, MAF-US Member #321 – Chiapas, Mexico (1946 – 1947)

Already an experienced naval pilot, George Wiggins was asked by CAMF (MAF-US) to take over the Chiapas Mexico flight program from Betty Greene in spring 1946. Before he began full flight operation however, Wiggins crashed the aircraft on a training flight as he landed at MAF's El Real airstrip. Wiggins had failed to notice a small building next to the field, and as a result the Waco's left wing struck the side of the building, severely damaging the aircraft. Although Wiggins did fly the Waco from the El Real airstrip after lengthy repairs had been made by Nate Saint, he left MAF-US shortly thereafter.<sup>277</sup>

### **Eugene E. Williams**

CAMF, MAF-US (Member #216) – (planning only, 1946)

Military pilot and early member of CAMF. It is unlikely he later pursued missionary aviation actively.<sup>278</sup>

### **F. M. Williams**

CAMF, MAF-US (Member #107) – (planning only, 1946)

A former flying instructor in the Royal Canadian Air Force, F. M. Williams intended to fly as a missionary pilot. It is unlikely he ever did.<sup>279</sup>

## 1947

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<sup>276</sup> Charles Mellis, Jr., "CAMF Active Members - No. 151 to No. 200 inclusive," *Missionary Aviation*, Apr. - Jun. 1946, 6; James C. Truxton, "All Is Not Gold," *Missionary Aviation*, Jan-Feb 1947, 2, 5; Anon., "Missionaries Die in Plane Crash (2)," 1948, (BGC 136-61-12); Tom Banham and Murray Kendon, "'No. 5' Trip-out Report," 2 Feb. 1948 (BGC 136-52-6); Donald Grey Barnhouse, "Editorial," *Revelation*, Mar. 1948, 199; James C. Truxton to Murray Kendon, 9 Mar. 1948 (BGC 136-25-88); "African Plane Crash," *Christian Life*, Apr. 1948, 48 (BGC 528-2-1); Donald Grey Barnhouse, "Missionary Aviation," *Revelation*, Jun. 1948, 241-2; James C. Truxton to Grady Parrott, 4 Aug. 1950 (BGC 136-2-27); Leslie B. Flynn, "No Place to Land," *Christian Life*, May 1953, 24-26 (BGC 528-2-1); Stuart Sendall-King, interview by Lane Sunwall, 16 Jul., 2009.

<sup>277</sup> Mellis, "And Now Mexico", 1946; *Giving Wings to the Gospel*, 53-4, 56, 57.

<sup>278</sup> Charles Mellis, Jr., "Introducing . . . Eugene E. Williams," *Missionary Aviation*, Jan. - Mar. 1946, 7.

<sup>279</sup> Mellis, "Introducing. . .", 1946

## Ken Cooper

MAF-US, MAF-AU, Borneo Evangelical Mission – Australia, New Guinea, Borneo (1947–1963–)

Ken Cooper, an RAAF pilot, was a founding member of MAF-AU and early member of CAMF. He, along with Bruce Morton, also started the mission aviation service for Borneo Evangelical Mission in 1949 and for whom he was still flying in 1963.<sup>280</sup>

## Jakob Driediger

Sudan Interior Mission, CAMF/MAF Member #137 – USA, Nigeria (1947 –)

Jakob Driediger, a trained mechanic, performed maintenance service for Clarence A. Soderberg's aircraft in Nigeria, while also working as a full-time missionary for SIM.<sup>281</sup>

## Rev. Luther L. Grubb

Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches (executive secretary of denomination's Home Missions Council), Victory Sky Pilots (1947 graduate), WMAC (president 1949 – 51) – USA (1947 –1956 –)

Reverend Luther L. Grubb was executive secretary of Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches' Home Missions Council, and strong supporter of Paul Hartford, Victory Sky Pilots, and the World Missionary Aviation Council. As editor of his denomination's *Brethren Missionary Herald*, Grubb used his position to promote mission aviation, and Paul Hartford in particular. Grubb framed mission aviation as a modern method, that was as easy to operate as an automobile, and one that savvy Christians should utilize to speed evangelism before the fast-approaching Second Coming. Grubb was a 1947 graduate of Victory Sky Pilots, and that same year spearheaded a successful effort to start an aviation program for the Brethren Churches' home mission department. From 1947 through at least 1956, Grubb flew the church plane to conduct church business and to promote the Brethren faith throughout the United States. Grubb, a fierce advocate of the WMAC, was elected as Council president in 1949, and was still serving in that position in 1951. Grubb continued to fly and promote his and Hartford's views concerning mission aviation up through at least 1956.<sup>282</sup>

<sup>280</sup> *The Age* (Melbourne, Australia), 5 Oct. 1957, 9; Beatrice Neilson, "Borneo Mission Pilot on Furlough," *The Age* (Melbourne, Australia), 6 Sep 1963, 12; *Giving Wings to the Gospel*, 132-33.

<sup>281</sup> Mellis, "CAMF Active Members - No. 101 to No. 150 inclusive", 1946; Charles Mellis, Jr., "Wings of Praise and Prayer," *Missionary Aviation*, Mar.-Apr. 1947, 4, 5.

<sup>282</sup> Luther L. Grubb, "Wings for Brethren Home Missions," *The Brethren Missionary Herald*, 18 Oct. 1947, 945-7, 51; Luther L. Grubb, "Home Missions Travelog," *Brethren Missionary Herald*, 15 Nov. 1947, 1016; Paul E. Dick, "The Revival in Winchester," *Brethren Missionary Herald*, 27 Dec. 1947, 1136; Luther L. Grubb, "As the Editor Sees It," *The Brethren Missionary Herald*, 21 Aug. 1948, 729-30; Anon., "News Briefs," *The Brethren Missionary Herald*, 20 Aug. 1949, 592; Paul Hartford, "News on the Wing #8," pamphlet (WMAC, Sep. 1950) BGC 136-60-7; Paul R. Bauman, "Wings for Brethren Home Missions," *The Brethren Missionary Herald*, 17 Mar. 1951, 195; Luther L. Grubb, "As the Editor Sees it: Recent Tribesman DC3 Crash Draws Editorial Comment," *The Brethren Missionary Herald*, 21 Apr. 1951, 274,6; Luther L. Grubb, "Faster Farther on Wings for Brethren Home Missions," *Brethren Missionary Herald*, 21 Jul. 1956, 453-6.

## Edwin “Harry” Hartwig

MAF-AU – Australia, New Guinea, Borneo (1947 – 1951)

While still a student at the Melbourne Bible Institute, Harry Hartwig spearheaded the start of MAF-AU. He continued working with MAF-AU and started its first aviation program in New Guinea. He was killed in a crash 6 August 1951 after a failed attempt to climb through the Asaroka Pass in the Central Highlands of New Guinea.<sup>283</sup>

## Jungle Aviation And Radio Service (now JAARS, Inc.)

Non-denominational Protestant, affiliated with Wycliffe Bible Translators, and Summer Institute of Linguistics – based in USA, initial flight operations in Peru, currently has global reach (first conceived – 1926, first flight with MAF – 1946, launch as independent organization – 1948, operation – 1948 – present)

Cameron Townsend started the Jungle Aviation and Radio Service (JAARS) in 1948 as an auxiliary operation, providing flight service in support of Wycliffe and the Summer Institute of Linguistics. The organization remains very active, with operations scattered across the globe.

Townsend's first thought of beginning a mission aviation program was in 1926 after he heard of new people groups living in the Amazon basin, and of the success the 1926 Pan-American Goodwill flight had flying throughout South America. He approached his superiors in the Central American Mission with a proposed “Air Crusade to the Wild Tribes,” who flatly turned him down given the extravagant cost in time, labor, and resources, such an undertaking would require. Townsend placed his plans on hold until after World War Two.<sup>284</sup>

Dietrich Buss, in his excellent biopic of MAF – *Hope Has Wings*, argued that Townsend launched JAARS as a result of disagreements with MAF regarding flight operations, and his desire to maintain SIL's public identity as a strictly humanitarian linguistic organization, not a Christian mission. MAF's public commitment to support Christian missionaries undermined this façade, and so the two parted ways.<sup>285</sup> This narrative however, does not entirely fit the historical documentation. Nor does Townsend's version of events. Cameron Townsend, in an interview with John Wells in 1976 regarding the origins of JAARS, fails to even mention MAF. He incorporated the work performed by MAF for Wycliffe between 1946-48 with the larger narrative of JAARS early history. Indeed, Townsend white-washed MAF from JAARS founding.<sup>286</sup>

MAF and Cameron Townsend (who served on MAF's board of advisors) enjoyed a warm working relationship up through 1947. The split between MAF and Townsend appeared to have

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<sup>283</sup> *Giving Wings to the Gospel*, 132-45.

<sup>284</sup> Jr., "All Things to All Men for the Gospel's Sake: The Wycliffe Bible Translators and the Summer Institute of Linguistics, 1934-1982."

<sup>285</sup> *Giving Wings to the Gospel*, 48-54, 63-74.

<sup>286</sup> Henry Cook, "A Research Project in Mission Aviation," Moody Bible Institute, 1963 (BGC 528-3-1); Cameron Townsend, interview by John Wells, 12 Jul., 1976.

occurred, not simply because Townsend wanted to distance SIL from mission activity, but out of a conflict of personalities. Reading MAF correspondence of 1946-50, it is apparent that James Truxton and Charles Mellis disliked Townsend's interference in the selection of aircraft types for use in SIL and Wycliffe operations in South America. They further chaffed at Townsend's insistence that MAF focus its flight operations on supporting SIL. MAF did not consider itself a subsidiary of Wycliffe or SIL, but an intermission aviation cooperative, and so MAF leaders endeavored to expand beyond Wycliffe and SIL support operations.

According to Grady Parrott, Cameron Townsend felt that MAF had failed to raise money or locate enough pilots for the flight work in Mexico and Peru, and that MAF's efforts to expand elsewhere had come at the expense of adequate flight support for SIL.<sup>287</sup> However, Parrott argued in a series of letters between himself and Jim Truxton, that another root cause of the division between MAF and Townsend was in fact Jim Truxton and Charles Mellis' arrogance and caustic criticism towards Townsend and his decisions regarding SIL's flight program. Their inability to manage disagreements diplomatically, had in turn alienated MAF from its many supporters amongst SIL and Wycliffe's board of directors, who upon seeing Truxton and Mellis' correspondence to Townsend had rallied around Townsend and agreed (reluctantly) to launch JAARS.<sup>288</sup> Grady Parrott (who was in substantial agreement with Cameron Townsend regarding the unprofessionalism of MAF's actions) seemed to have done much to calm the situation. Parrott help facilitated JAARS launch, and negotiated the continued partnership of MAF with local SIL leaders in Mexico.<sup>289</sup> The divorce between MAF and Townsend was permanent, and Townsend seemed to harbor a longstanding distrust of the fellowship.<sup>290</sup>

The loss of Wycliffe as a contractor was a stunning blow to MAF. It ended what was at the time their only operational program, caused something of a crisis amongst the organization's leadership, and resulted in the temporary resignation of Betty Greene from active MAF operations.<sup>291</sup> Furthermore, with the advent of WMAC, the crash of MAF-UK's only aircraft (July 1948), as well as the launch of numerous other independent missionary aviation programs at this time, MAF's future as a global brand suddenly seemed uncertain.<sup>292</sup> Finally, it is worth noting that the divorce between MAF and Townsend was with precedent. MAF-US was widely known for its professionalism and competence. MAF-US, it seems, was also known as prickly, elitist, and quick to judgement. This had alienated the program from multiple other mission

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<sup>287</sup> Parrott, 29 Jan. 1948 (BGC 136-2-4).

<sup>288</sup> Grady Parrott to Jr. Charles Mellis and James C. Truxton, 31 Jan. 1948 (BGC 136-2-4).

<sup>289</sup> Ibid.; Grady Parrott to Jr. Charles Mellis and James Truxton, 3 Feb. 1948 (BGC 136-2-4).

<sup>290</sup> James C. Truxton to MAF D-1, 28 Aug. 1950 (BGC 136-2-27); Townsend, "Transcript of Taped Conversation between Cameron Townsend (JAARS) and John Wells."

<sup>291</sup> *Giving Wings to the Gospel*, 63-74.

<sup>292</sup> Mellis, "And Now Mexico", 1946; Mellis, "Wings of Praise and Prayer", 1946; Mellis, "Circling the Globe", 1946; "Missionary Aviation Conference Proceedings and Report," 1946; Truxton, "All Is Not Gold", 1947; MAF-US, "Operation Repair", 1947; "Letters," *Missionary Aviation*, Mar-Apr 1947, 3; Martin, "Aircraft on the Mission Field," 63; Kendon, "Friend of the MAF." (1947); MAF-US, "What is Safety?," *Missionary Aviation*, May-Jun 1947, 2 (BGC 136-52-8); Parrott, 29 Jan. 1948 (BGC 136-2-4); Grady Parrott to James Truxton, 24 Sep 1948 (BGC 136-2-4); Grady Parrott to Elizabeth Greene, 5 Oct. 1948 (BGC 136-2-4); Grady Parrott to Ralph Hanson, 4 Nov. 1948 (BGC 136-60-7); Grady Parrott to Murray Kendon, 17 Nov. 1948 (BGC 136-25-88); Dietrich G. Buss and Arthur F. Glasser, *Giving Wings to the Gospel: The remarkable story of Mission Aviation Fellowship* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1995), 15, 19-27, 30-31, 41, 43-45, 50-54, 58-60.

organizations in the past, and was a problem that Grady Parrott and Elizabeth Greene attempted to resolve.<sup>293</sup>

### **Rev. Albert Kliever**

Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches, Brethren Boys Club, Sky Pilots of America, Victory Sky Pilots – New Mexico, Colorado (planning 1947, operational 1948)

In 1947 the Brethren Boy's Club raised money to buy their organization a plane to be flown as a ministry tool. An Aeronca Chief was selected for the mission by Paul Hartford, who in fall 1948 then trained Albert Kliever (27 year old regional Boy's Club superintendent, regional director of Sky Pilots of America, and missionary based in Taos, New Mexico) as a pilot at Victory Sky Pilots in Indiana. Following the end of his training Kliever returned to his youth ministry in the US southwest. On 24 November 1948, Kliever was forced down by strong downdrafts and crashed after a failed emergency landing. He died from his injuries, his passenger survived.<sup>294</sup>

### **Jim Lomheim**

MAF-US – Mexico, South America (1947 –)

A native of South Dakota, Jim Lomheim graduated from Parks Air College (now part of St. Louis University, MO), with an aeronautical engineering degree, Jim Lomheim began service with MAF in 1947. His first jobs involved relaunching the Wycliffe-MAF aviation program in Chiapas Mexico after Bob Wiggins left, and helping start the Presbyterian-MAF program in Tabasco Mexico. Lomheim continued to fly for SIL in Mexico even after Townsend's split with MAF, as Townsend allowed each mission post to decide what aviation service it used, and some chose MAF over JAARS. Lomheim continued to fly and work for MAF into the 1970s.<sup>295</sup>

### **MAF-AU: Missionary Aviation Fellowship, Australia (also known as Australian Missionary Aviation Fellowship)**

Non-denominational – Australia, New Guinea, South Pacific (planning 1947 – 1949, operational 1950 – present)

MAF's Australian branch was launched by Ken Cooper and Edwin "Harry" Hartwig in Melbourne Australia, with additional input from Vic Ambrose. The fellowship's organizational meeting was held 30 June 1947 with Leonard Buck chairing. MAF-AU (or AMAF) was founded as an autonomous body, affiliated with the Mildmay Movement Australia (Movement for World Evangelism), MAF-UK, and MAF-US. Initial officers were John Nimmo (president), Bruce

<sup>293</sup> Grady Parrott to Elizabeth Greene, 5 Oct. 1948 (BGC 136-2-4).

<sup>294</sup> Ralph Colburn, "Brethren Boys Clubs Buy Plane," *The Brethren Missionary Herald*, 18 Sep. 1948, 824; Ralph Colburn, "Wings for the Gospel," *The Brethren Missionary Herald*, 9 Oct. 1948, 889, 90; Robert D. Crees, "Al Kliever is Promoted to Heaven," *The Brethren Missionary Herald*, 18 Dec. 1948, 1056.

<sup>295</sup> Mellis, "Wings of Praise and Prayer", 1947; Mellis, "Wings of Praise and Prayer", 1947; Charles Mellis, Jr., "Wings of Praise and Prayer," *Missionary Aviation*, Sep. - Oct. 1948, 4, 5; *Giving Wings to the Gospel*, 74, 77-7, 317.

Morton (treasurer), and Harry Hartwig (secretary). MAF-AU's public inaugural meeting was held 18 September 1948, with Keith Langford-Smith as guest speaker. In 1950, MAF-AU began operational flight service in New Guinea for the Lutheran missionaries who had been formerly assisted by Fritz Loose.<sup>296</sup>

### **MAF-UK: Survey of African Protestant Mission Stations**

Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, Eastern and Central Africa (December 1947 – November 1948)

Beginning in late 1947, Stewart Sendall-King, and Jack Hemmings began MAF's initial survey of Africa.<sup>297</sup> In planning the survey, there was a grave sense of urgency amongst MAF leaders who were eager to begin initial operations in Africa. They remained concerned that should they take too long in initiating service, the mission organizations for which they hoped to serve would launch their own programs.<sup>298</sup> The survey was originally meant as a joint venture between MAF-UK and MAF-US. However, MAF-US was then stretched thin with its own work in Ecuador and so left the operation entirely in the hands of the likewise cash-poor MAF-UK.<sup>299</sup> After sending Tom Banham to coordinate operations in Nairobi, Jack Hemmings and Stewart King flew MAF's Miles Gemini (the *Mildmay Pathfinder*) from London in January 1948 and then throughout Africa. The pair contacted numerous Protestant mission organizations, primarily in the Congo, regarding their need for aviation service. However, given the relatively good transportation network already existent in the Belgian Congo, MAF felt that a mission aviation program in Congo would prove superfluous.<sup>300</sup> On 10 July 1948, King and Hemmings crashed the Gemini on the North-East corner of Lake Tanganyika in present day Burundi, both escaped serious injury.<sup>301</sup> Now without an aircraft, King and Hemmings continued the survey from the ground and gathered data on transportation service in Africa until they were recalled back to London to settle the insurance claim on the Gemini. They flew out of Africa aboard Scandinavian Mission Flight's *St. Ansgar* in November of 1948.<sup>302</sup> MAF was initially disappointed regarding the results of the survey, as well as the loss of their aircraft, and briefly considered disbanding as a mission. However, the survey had pointed to a need for aviation service in the southern regions of the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan. Therefore, in 1949, MAF began to investigate more closely the possibility of providing aviation service for the American Presbyterian Mission and Sudan Interior Mission.<sup>303</sup>

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<sup>296</sup> Anon., "Advertisement," *Sydney Morning Herald* (Sydney, NSW), 18 Sep. 1948, 21; *Giving Wings to the Gospel*, 132-45.

<sup>297</sup> Tom Banham and Murray Kendon, "Letters from the Congo Survey," pamphlet (MAF-UK, 2 Feb. 1948) BGC 136-52-6.

<sup>298</sup> James C. Truxton to Murray Kendon, 15 Feb. 1947 (BGC 136-52-5).

<sup>299</sup> Murray Kendon to James C. Truxton, 6 Feb. 1947 (BGC 136-52-5).

<sup>300</sup> Murray Kendon, "Dear Prayer Partners," pamphlet (MAF-UK, Sep. 1949) BGC 136-52-6; Grady Parrott to Murray Kendon, 29 Nov. 1949 (BGC 136-25-88); Thomas Cochrane, "Friend of the MAF," pamphlet (MAF-UK, Jun. 1950) BGC 136-52-6.

<sup>301</sup> MAF-UK, pamphlet (MAF-UK, 20 Jul. 1948) BGC – 136-52-6.

<sup>302</sup> Stuart Sendall-King, *Hope Has Wings: The Mission Aviation Fellowship Story* (Zondervan, 1993), 54.

<sup>303</sup> *Ibid.*, 56-8; Sendall-King, "Interview #1."



### **MAF-US: Ecuador Flight Program**

Gospel Missionary Union, Plymouth Brethren Missions, Christian and Missionary Alliance (1947 –)

Following Bob Hart's serious accident of a Gospel Missionary Union (GMU) plane in Ecuador, 1947, GMU contacted MAF to provide them air support in Ecuador. Jim Truxton began surveys later that year, and full service began under direction of MAF pilot Nate Saint in September 1948. MAF's Ecuador service provided regional air support for seven total mission stations operated by GMU, Plymouth Brethren, and Christian and Missionary Alliance. Unfortunately, Saint himself experienced a serious crash on 30 December 1948, as a result of his failure to negotiate a downdraft on takeoff. MAF used the accident as a learning opportunity, and instigated higher levels of training for pilots customized to local flight conditions. MAF resumed service in April 1949 with Grady Parrott serving as pilot until Saint had recovered from injuries sustained in the December accident. Saint continued to fly as a mission pilot in Ecuador until his death in 1956.<sup>304</sup>

### **MAF-US: Presbyterian Church USA Mexico Flight Program**

Presbyterian Church USA, MAF-US – Tabasco Mexico (1947 –)

Based on an earlier proposal made by missionary Fred Tinley, the Presbyterian Church USA mission board, with support from H. O Moser (Executive Secretary, Mexico Mission), contracted with MAF to implement a mission aviation program that MAF would operate in conjunction with their other work SIL. The program was operated by Jim Lomheim and later Hatch Hatcher.<sup>305</sup>

### **William "Bill" E. Martin**

US Air Force, MAF-US, WMAC, VSP – Indiana (1947 –)

William Martin served as a chaplain in the US Air Force in the 1940s, and trained to fly as a mission aviator – although there is no record of him so doing. Martin also wrote extensively on early mission aviation while a graduate student at Central Baptist Theological Seminary in 1947.<sup>306</sup>

### **Dr. Don McClure**

American Presbyterian Mission – southern Sudan (planning–1947 – 1950)

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<sup>304</sup> Mellis, "Wings of Praise and Prayer", 1947; Jr. Charles Mellis, "Missionaries," *Missionary Aviation*, Jul-Aug 1948, 2; *Giving Wings to the Gospel*, 86, 104-11.

<sup>305</sup> Anon., "Letters", 1947; James C. Truxton to Murray Kendon, 3 Dec. 1947 (BGC 136-52-5); *Giving Wings to the Gospel*, 33, 52, 56, 74-7, 119, 249.

<sup>306</sup> Martin, "Aircraft on the Mission Field."; Paul Hartford, "News on the Wing #5," pamphlet (WMAC, Apr. 1950) BGC 136-60-7; Bill Martin to MAF-US, 16 Oct. 1950 (BGC 136-60-7).

In 1949, Don McClure, a pilot working with the American Presbyterian Mission in Akobo in southern Sudan, sought to use aircraft to facilitate travel between his station and supply and medical centers. He decided against launching his own aviation program given stringent government aviation regulations and contracted with MAF-UK beginning in late 1949. In 1959, Dr. McClure began discussions with Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia regarding a mission aviation program in the country. His intervention proved instrumental in facilitating MAF-UK's eventual expansion into Ethiopia.<sup>307</sup>

### **Minneapolis Hospitality House**

First Baptist Church, Minneapolis, MN (1947)

In 1947, the Minneapolis Hospitality House purchased a light aircraft (reportedly a small Taylorcraft) to fly as part of its youth outreach activities in the US northwest. As part of the aircraft's dedication, the House disassembled and then reassembled the aircraft in the sanctuary of (it is assumed) the First Baptist Church of Minneapolis, MN. This was quite similar to John Huffman's own publicity efforts (See: John Huffman, 1945)<sup>308</sup>

### **Lawrence "Larry" and Beulah Montgomery**

Wycliffe Bible Translators, JAARS, MAF-US – Mexico, South America, Peru (1947 –)

A veteran USAAF pilot and trained mechanic, Larry (and wife Beulah) Montgomery entered the Peru mission field with Wycliffe Bible Translators in 1947. Although Larry was an early member of MAF and close to many amongst its leadership, he did not fly for the fellowship. He instead rose to be JAARS lead pilot by 1950 and continued with the mission for an indefinite time.<sup>309</sup>

### **Bruce Morton**

MAF-AU, Borneo Evangelical Mission – Australia, New Guinea, Borneo (1947 – 1963 –)

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<sup>307</sup> Jack Hemmings to Grady Parrott, 9 May 1947 (BGC 136-52-5); Charles Mellis, Jr. to Murray Kendon, 26 Nov. 1947 (BGC 136-52-5); Stuart King, "Letters from Sudan," pamphlet (MAF-UK, 16 Aug. 1950) BGC 136-62-6; *Hope Has Wings*, 70; *Giving Wings to the Gospel*, 92, 267; Sendall-King, "Interview #1."

<sup>308</sup> Glenwood Blackmore, "Ox-Cart to Wings," *United Evangelical Action*, 1 Oct. 1945, 7, 19-20 (BGC 136-25-13); Martin, "Aircraft on the Mission Field," 59; Grubb, 1947 #724; Mollenhour, "Sky Writing: Times Union Aviation News and Comment"; Paul Hartford, "Flying Friends," pamphlet (Victory Sky Pilots Inc., Spring 1948) BGC 136-25-13.

<sup>309</sup> Jr. Charles Mellis, "Wings of Praise and Prayer," *Missionary Aviation*, 1947, 4; Mellis, "Wings of Praise and Prayer", 1947; Jr. Charles Mellis, "Still Others," *Missionary Aviation*, 1948, 5; *Giving Wings to the Gospel*, 35, 69; Jr., "All Things to All Men for the Gospel's Sake: The Wycliffe Bible Translators and the Summer Institute of Linguistics, 1934-1982," 179.

Bruce Morton, an RAAF pilot, was a founding member of MAF-AU. He, along with Ken Cooper, also started the mission aviation service for Borneo Evangelical Mission in 1949, and for whom he was still flying in 1963.<sup>310</sup>

### **National Holiness Missionary Society**

WMAC Affiliated – USA, Honduras (1947 – 1949 –)

The National Holiness Missionary Society began its Honduran mission aviation service under missionary pilot Reverend David Schneider in 1947 and in cooperation with the Moravian Evangelical Mission. In the fall of 1949, Reverend Schneider crashed the mission's Super Cruiser after landing in an insufficiently surveyed field. The mission was a participant in the World Missionary Aviation Council (WMAC) through George Warner, who served on the WMAC's finance committee.<sup>311</sup>

### **Elmer B. Sachs**

Sky Pilots of America, World Missionary Aviation Council, Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches, Youth for Christ, Creation Science Research Center, Evangelical Protestant – USA, especially California and Colorado (missionary pilot activities: 1947 – mid-1960s)

Elmer B. Sachs founded Sky Pilots of America as a boys evangelicalistic organization in 1947. He himself trained as a pilot and flew throughout the United States as part of his organization's outreach initiative. On these flights, he dropped leaflets over towns, held Youth for Christ rallies and spoke at churches where he promoted Sky Pilots. Elmer Sachs appeared a close ally of Paul Hartford, and served in the leadership of the World Missionary Aviation Council. He seemed to have been interested in a close working relationship with MAF. However, his methods of mission aviation training were considered dangerously amateur by MAF personnel, and MAF kept its distance of Sachs organization. Newspaper records indicate that Sky Pilots ended regular operation sometime in the mid-1960s. After which Sachs transformed himself into an evangelistic preacher who toured the United States in the 1960s-70s, campaigning for various social issues, including the retention of the Colorado death penalty, and the teaching of Creationism in public schools.<sup>312</sup>

<sup>310</sup> Neilson, "Borneo Mission Pilot on Furlough"; *Giving Wings to the Gospel*, 132-33.

<sup>311</sup> Anon., "A New Day in Missions," *Call to Prayer*, Feb. 1947, (BGC 136-57-15); Herman Marx to James C. Truxton, 24 Apr. 1948 (BGC 136-57-15); Paul Hartford, "Review of Events -- 2nd Annual Convention -- World Missionary Aviation Council," pamphlet (WMAC, 26-28 Jul. 1949) BGC 136-60-7; Paul Hartford, "News on the Wing #2," pamphlet (WMAC, Dec. 1949) BGC 136-60-7.

<sup>312</sup> Elmer B. Sachs, "Sky Pilots of America," pamphlet (Sky Pilots of America, BGC 136-30-53); Anon., "Hear Elmer B. Sachs," pamphlet (Sky Pilots of America, BGC 136-30-53); Elmer B. Sachs, pamphlet (Sky Pilots of America, BGC 136-30-53); Grady Parrott to Jr. Charles Mellis, 18 Apr. 1947 (BGC 136-2-3); Anon., *Brethren Missionary Herald*, 12 Jul. 1947, 626; Elmer B. Sachs, *Wings for Christ* (1948): (BGC 136-30-53); Elmer B. Sachs, *Sky Pilot News* (1949): (BGC 136-30-53); Elmer B. Sachs, *Sky Pilot News*, Mar. 1949, (BGC 136-30-53); Elmer B. Sachs, "Dear Sky Pilot Friend," pamphlet (Sky Pilots of America, May 1949) BGC 136-30-53; Hartford, "Review of Events -- 2nd Annual Convention -- World Missionary Aviation Council." (1949); Hartford, "News on the Wing #2." (1949); Jr. Howard M. Green, *Wings for Christ*, May 1950, (BGC 136-30-53); Jr. Howard M. Green,

## **Sky Pilots of America**

Evangelical Protestant Youth Organization, World Missionary Aviation Council, Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches, Youth for Christ, Bible Institute of Los Angeles (Biola) – USA, especially California, Oregon, Colorado, Washington state, and Indiana (1947 – mid-1960s)

Sky Pilots of America (SPoA) began in 1947 as a model plane club, connected to John W. Liger's youth Sunday School class at Bassettdale Community Church in Puente, California. Bassettdale's pastor, Reverend Elmer B. Sachs, thought the club's popularity might extend beyond his congregation and so redeveloped it into an independent youth evangelistic organization with two divisions: the Junior division, aimed at boys 9-15, remained a hobby model airplane club; the Senior division, aimed at boys starting at age 14, emphasized flight training. Throughout its operational run, Reverend Sachs (a former Chicago area detective, and failed vacuum cleaner salesman) promoted Sky Pilots as a tool by which to transform boys into missionaries, fight international Communism, and prevent youth "delinquency." In addition to its focus on flight, both Sky Pilots divisions heavily emphasized proselytization, with Senior division members training to become missionary pilots. In 1948, the organization claimed it was then training some eleven missionary pilots (all students of Biola). Sachs intended to eventually expand the organization into the mission fields of the South Pacific, Asia, and South America, in order to provide recruits with actual flight experience as missionary pilots. SPoA enjoyed strong backing and support from the World Missionary Aviation Council, and the Bible Institute of Los Angeles (Biola). A number of Biola students joined the organization outright, and the college supplied Sky Pilots with radio time and office space. By 1950, Sky Pilots operated in eighty churches in eight states (with a heavy footprint on the West Coast and Indiana), and claimed two thousand regular members. In 1951 the organization secured a five-year lease of its own airport (Hollister Airport, Hollister, CA) where it held conventions, Sky Pilot rally's, evangelistic fly-ins, bi-monthly church services, and trained missionary pilots. The organization appeared to enjoy continued widespread support through the mid-1950s, especially surrounding speaking tours of Captain Mitsuo Fuchida, a former Japanese Imperial Pilot who lead the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, and later converted to Christianity. The organization seems to have ended active operation sometime in the mid-1960s.<sup>313</sup>

## **Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #34**

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*Wings for Christ*, Aug. 1950, (BGC 136-30-53); Hartford, "News on the Wing #8." (1950); James R. Adair, "Big Elmer Sachs and his Sky Pilots," *Power*, Feb. 1951, (BGC 136-30-53); Anon., *Sky Pilot News*, Feb. 1951, (BGC 136-30-53); Anon., *Sky Pilot News*, Sep. 1951, (BGC 136-30-53); Anon., "General Elmer B. Sachs," *Hutchinson News* (Hutchinson, MA), 30 Apr. 1960, 2; Anon., "Elmer Sachs Now Backs Equal Creation Teaching," *Greeley Daily Tribune* (Greeley, CO), 8 Oct. 1971, 21; Anon., "Creation theory exponent guest at Fruitvale," *The Bakersfield Californian* (Bakersfield, CA), 18 Nov. 1972, 5.

<sup>313</sup> Sachs, "Sky Pilots of America." ; Anon., "Hear Elmer B. Sachs." ; Sachs, ; Parrott, 18 Apr. 1947 (BGC 136-2-3); Anon., 1947; Sachs; Sachs; Sachs, 1949; Sachs, "Dear Sky Pilot Friend." (1949); Hartford, "Review of Events -- 2nd Annual Convention -- World Missionary Aviation Council." (1949); Hartford, "News on the Wing #2." (1949); Howard M. Green, 1950; Howard M. Green, 1950; Hartford, "News on the Wing #8." (1950); Adair, "Big Elmer Sachs and his Sky Pilots", 1951; Anon., 1951; Anon., 1951

Evangelical Protestant – Indiana (1946 – 1947)

Victory Sky Pilots appeared to have reached its peak towards the end of 1947. Paul Hartford was then operating seven training aircraft, and claimed to have instructed (between 1945–1947) a total of one hundred twenty (120) missionaries, pastors, or evangelists. Of this number, twenty-six were then flying as missionaries or evangelists, although information is currently available on only sixteen of these pilots. Of the 120 student pilots trained at VSP, many may very well have been private pilots who did not fly as part of a ministry. See also entry for Victory Sky Pilots, Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #4, and Paul Hartford.<sup>314</sup>

**Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #35**

Indiana (1946 – 1947)<sup>315</sup>

**Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #36**

Indiana (1946 – 1947)<sup>316</sup>

**Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #37**

Indiana (1946 – 1947)<sup>317</sup>

**Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #38**

Indiana (1946 – 1947)<sup>318</sup>

**Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #39**

Indiana (1946 – 1947)<sup>319</sup>

**Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #40**

Indiana (1946 – 1947)<sup>320</sup>

**Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #41**

Indiana (1946 – 1947)<sup>321</sup>

**Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #42**

Indiana (1946 – 1947)<sup>322</sup>

**Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #43**

Indiana (1946 – 1947)<sup>323</sup>

**Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #44**

Indiana (1946 – 1947)<sup>324</sup>

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<sup>314</sup> See Paul Hartford Papers in BGC 136-25-13. See also: James E. Walters, "Cleric Plans Air School for Pastors," *Valparaiso Vidette Messenger* (Valparaiso, IN), 27 Nov. 1945; Mollenhour, "Sky Writing: Times Union Aviation News and Comment"

<sup>315</sup> See Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #34.

<sup>316</sup> See Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #34.

<sup>317</sup> See Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #34.

<sup>318</sup> See Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #34.

<sup>319</sup> See Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #34.

<sup>320</sup> See Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #34.

<sup>321</sup> See Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #34.

<sup>322</sup> See Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #34.

<sup>323</sup> See Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #34.

<sup>324</sup> See Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #34.

**Victory Sky Pilots – *Unknown Pilot #45***  
Indiana (1946 – 1947)<sup>325</sup>

**Victory Sky Pilots – *Unknown Pilot #46***  
Indiana (1946 – 1947)<sup>326</sup>

**Victory Sky Pilots – *Unknown Pilot #47***  
Indiana (1946 – 1947)<sup>327</sup>

**Victory Sky Pilots – *Unknown Pilot #48***  
Indiana (1946 – 1947)<sup>328</sup>

**Victory Sky Pilots – *Unknown Pilot #49***  
Indiana (1946 – 1947)<sup>329</sup>

**Victory Sky Pilots – *Unknown Pilot #50***  
Indiana (1946 – 1947)<sup>330</sup>

**Victory Sky Pilots – *Unknown Pilot #51***  
Indiana (1946 – 1947)<sup>331</sup>

**Victory Sky Pilots – *Unknown Pilot #52***  
Indiana (1946 – 1947)<sup>332</sup>

**Victory Sky Pilots – *Unknown Pilot #53***  
Indiana (1946 – 1947)<sup>333</sup>

**Victory Sky Pilots – *Unknown Pilot #54***  
Indiana (1946 – 1947)<sup>334</sup>

**Victory Sky Pilots – *Unknown Pilot #55***  
Indiana (1946 – 1947)<sup>335</sup>

**Victory Sky Pilots – *Unknown Pilot #56***  
Indiana (1946 – 1947)<sup>336</sup>

**Victory Sky Pilots – *Unknown Pilot #57***  
Indiana (1946 – 1947)<sup>337</sup>

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<sup>325</sup> See Victory Sky Pilots – *Unknown Pilot #34*.

<sup>326</sup> See Victory Sky Pilots – *Unknown Pilot #34*.

<sup>327</sup> See Victory Sky Pilots – *Unknown Pilot #34*.

<sup>328</sup> See Victory Sky Pilots – *Unknown Pilot #34*.

<sup>329</sup> See Victory Sky Pilots – *Unknown Pilot #34*.

<sup>330</sup> See Victory Sky Pilots – *Unknown Pilot #34*.

<sup>331</sup> See Victory Sky Pilots – *Unknown Pilot #34*.

<sup>332</sup> See Victory Sky Pilots – *Unknown Pilot #34*.

<sup>333</sup> See Victory Sky Pilots – *Unknown Pilot #34*.

<sup>334</sup> See Victory Sky Pilots – *Unknown Pilot #34*.

<sup>335</sup> See Victory Sky Pilots – *Unknown Pilot #34*.

<sup>336</sup> See Victory Sky Pilots – *Unknown Pilot #34*.

<sup>337</sup> See Victory Sky Pilots – *Unknown Pilot #34*.

**Victory Sky Pilots – *Unknown Pilot #58***  
Indiana (1946 – 1947)<sup>338</sup>

**Victory Sky Pilots – *Unknown Pilot #59***  
Indiana (1946 – 1947)<sup>339</sup>

**Victory Sky Pilots – *Unknown Pilot #60***  
Indiana (1946 – 1947)<sup>340</sup>

**Victory Sky Pilots – *Unknown Pilot #61***  
Indiana (1946 – 1947)<sup>341</sup>

**Victory Sky Pilots – *Unknown Pilot #62***  
Indiana (1946 – 1947)<sup>342</sup>

**Victory Sky Pilots – *Unknown Pilot #63***  
Indiana (1946 – 1947)<sup>343</sup>

**Victory Sky Pilots – *Unknown Pilot #64***  
Indiana (1946 – 1947)<sup>344</sup>

**Victory Sky Pilots – *Unknown Pilot #65***  
Indiana (1946 – 1947)<sup>345</sup>

**Victory Sky Pilots – *Unknown Pilot #66***  
Indiana (1946 – 1947)<sup>346</sup>

**Victory Sky Pilots – *Unknown Pilot #67***  
Indiana (1946 – 1947)<sup>347</sup>

**Victory Sky Pilots – *Unknown Pilot #68***  
Indiana (1946 – 1947)<sup>348</sup>

**Victory Sky Pilots – *Unknown Pilot #69***  
Indiana (1946 – 1947)<sup>349</sup>

**Victory Sky Pilots – *Unknown Pilot #70***  
Indiana (1946 – 1947)<sup>350</sup>

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<sup>338</sup> See Victory Sky Pilots – *Unknown Pilot #34*.

<sup>339</sup> See Victory Sky Pilots – *Unknown Pilot #34*.

<sup>340</sup> See Victory Sky Pilots – *Unknown Pilot #34*.

<sup>341</sup> See Victory Sky Pilots – *Unknown Pilot #34*.

<sup>342</sup> See Victory Sky Pilots – *Unknown Pilot #34*.

<sup>343</sup> See Victory Sky Pilots – *Unknown Pilot #34*.

<sup>344</sup> See Victory Sky Pilots – *Unknown Pilot #34*.

<sup>345</sup> See Victory Sky Pilots – *Unknown Pilot #34*.

<sup>346</sup> See Victory Sky Pilots – *Unknown Pilot #34*.

<sup>347</sup> See Victory Sky Pilots – *Unknown Pilot #34*.

<sup>348</sup> See Victory Sky Pilots – *Unknown Pilot #34*.

<sup>349</sup> See Victory Sky Pilots – *Unknown Pilot #34*.

<sup>350</sup> See Victory Sky Pilots – *Unknown Pilot #34*.

**Victory Sky Pilots – *Unknown Pilot #71***  
Indiana (1946 – 1947)<sup>351</sup>

**Victory Sky Pilots – *Unknown Pilot #72***  
Indiana (1946 – 1947)<sup>352</sup>

**Victory Sky Pilots – *Unknown Pilot #73***  
Indiana (1946 – 1947)<sup>353</sup>

**Victory Sky Pilots – *Unknown Pilot #74***  
Indiana (1946 – 1947)<sup>354</sup>

**Victory Sky Pilots – *Unknown Pilot #75***  
Indiana (1946 – 1947)<sup>355</sup>

**Victory Sky Pilots – *Unknown Pilot #76***  
Indiana (1946 – 1947)<sup>356</sup>

**Victory Sky Pilots – *Unknown Pilot #77***  
Indiana (1946 – 1947)<sup>357</sup>

**Victory Sky Pilots – *Unknown Pilot #78***  
Indiana (1946 – 1947)<sup>358</sup>

**Victory Sky Pilots – *Unknown Pilot #79***  
Indiana (1946 – 1947)<sup>359</sup>

**Victory Sky Pilots – *Unknown Pilot #80***  
Indiana (1946 – 1947)<sup>360</sup>

**Victory Sky Pilots – *Unknown Pilot #81***  
Indiana (1946 – 1947)<sup>361</sup>

**Victory Sky Pilots – *Unknown Pilot #82***  
Indiana (1946 – 1947)<sup>362</sup>

**Victory Sky Pilots – *Unknown Pilot #83***  
Indiana (1946 – 1947)<sup>363</sup>

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<sup>351</sup> See Victory Sky Pilots – *Unknown Pilot #34*.

<sup>352</sup> See Victory Sky Pilots – *Unknown Pilot #34*.

<sup>353</sup> See Victory Sky Pilots – *Unknown Pilot #34*.

<sup>354</sup> See Victory Sky Pilots – *Unknown Pilot #34*.

<sup>355</sup> See Victory Sky Pilots – *Unknown Pilot #34*.

<sup>356</sup> See Victory Sky Pilots – *Unknown Pilot #34*.

<sup>357</sup> See Victory Sky Pilots – *Unknown Pilot #34*.

<sup>358</sup> See Victory Sky Pilots – *Unknown Pilot #34*.

<sup>359</sup> See Victory Sky Pilots – *Unknown Pilot #34*.

<sup>360</sup> See Victory Sky Pilots – *Unknown Pilot #34*.

<sup>361</sup> See Victory Sky Pilots – *Unknown Pilot #34*.

<sup>362</sup> See Victory Sky Pilots – *Unknown Pilot #34*.

<sup>363</sup> See Victory Sky Pilots – *Unknown Pilot #34*.



**Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #84**  
Indiana (1946 – 1947)<sup>364</sup>

**Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #85**  
Indiana (1946 – 1947)<sup>365</sup>

**Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #86**  
Indiana (1946 – 1947)<sup>366</sup>

**Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #87**  
Indiana (1946 – 1947)<sup>367</sup>

**Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #88**  
Indiana (1946 – 1947)<sup>368</sup>

**Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #89**  
Indiana (1946 – 1947)<sup>369</sup>

**Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #90**  
Indiana (1946 – 1947)<sup>370</sup>

**Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #91**  
Indiana (1946 – 1947)<sup>371</sup>

**Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #92**  
Indiana (1946 – 1947)<sup>372</sup>

**Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #93**  
Indiana (1946 – 1947)<sup>373</sup>

**Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #94**  
Indiana (1946 – 1947)<sup>374</sup>

**Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #95**  
Indiana (1946 – 1947)<sup>375</sup>

**Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #96**  
Indiana (1946 – 1947)<sup>376</sup>

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<sup>364</sup> See Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #34.

<sup>365</sup> See Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #34.

<sup>366</sup> See Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #34.

<sup>367</sup> See Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #34.

<sup>368</sup> See Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #34.

<sup>369</sup> See Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #34.

<sup>370</sup> See Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #34.

<sup>371</sup> See Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #34.

<sup>372</sup> See Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #34.

<sup>373</sup> See Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #34.

<sup>374</sup> See Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #34.

<sup>375</sup> See Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #34.

<sup>376</sup> See Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #34.

**Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #97**Indiana (1946 – 1947)<sup>377</sup>**Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #98**Indiana (1946 – 1947)<sup>378</sup>**Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #99**Indiana (1946 – 1947)<sup>379</sup>**Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #100**Indiana (1946 – 1947)<sup>380</sup>**Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #101**Indiana (1946 – 1947)<sup>381</sup>**Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #102**Indiana (1946 – 1947)<sup>382</sup>**Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #103**Indiana (1946 – 1947)<sup>383</sup>**Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #104**Indiana (1946 – 1947)<sup>384</sup>**Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #105**Indiana (1946 – 1947)<sup>385</sup>**Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #106**Indiana (1946 – 1947)<sup>386</sup>**Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #107**Indiana (1946 – 1947)<sup>387</sup>**Harold Witt**World Missionary Aviation Council (#11) – Mexico (– 1947 – 1950 –)

According to Paul Hartford, Harold Witt studied for three years at Winona Lake to become a mission aviator in Mexico. However, Witt was drafted into the US Army, postponing his

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<sup>377</sup> See Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #34.

<sup>378</sup> See Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #34.

<sup>379</sup> See Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #34.

<sup>380</sup> See Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #34.

<sup>381</sup> See Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #34.

<sup>382</sup> See Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #34.

<sup>383</sup> See Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #34.

<sup>384</sup> See Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #34.

<sup>385</sup> See Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #34.

<sup>386</sup> See Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #34.

<sup>387</sup> See Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #34.

intended missionary service. It is currently unknown if Witt continued with his intended mission work at a later date.<sup>388</sup>

## 1948

### **Assemblies of God: Piper Tri-Pacer**

Liberia (1948 –)

Following their relative success flying the Sikorsky amphibian for mission transport, the Assemblies of God expanded their African aviation program in the late 1940s. Circa 1948, they began flying a Piper Tri-Pacer in the Gold Coast of Africa.<sup>389</sup>

### **Rev. Edward Badten**

Assemblies of God, World Missionary Aviation Council (#61) – Alaska  
(– 1948 – 1950 –)

As part of his service for the Assemblies of God church, Reverend Edward Badten (also Bodton, Bapten) flew a Stinson (named “Alaskan Missionary”) in the region surrounding his base at Fairbanks, Alaska.<sup>390</sup>

### **Christian and Missionary Alliance**

Missionary Aviation Fellowship, Dutch Borneo (1948 – 1957)

In August 1948, the Christian and Missionary Alliance (C&MA) resumed its missionary aviation service in Dutch Borneo under pilot Al Lewis. Lewis flew the mission’s Beechcraft (soon after a Short Sealand) successfully in support of C&MA missionaries (especially those in the Baliem Valley), as well as for mission publicity, and to curry favor with the Dutch colonial government. Al Lewis crashed the Sealand on 10 May 1955, and perished in the accident. The mission sent another plane soon after; it was lost in 1956 after the pilot crashed on a new landing strip. The mission’s next plane was likewise soon destroyed. On 4 November 1956, local Kapauku people attacked the C&MA mission station in Obano, killing an Indonesian teacher, his wife and two children, a local carpenter, and two guards. The Kapauku likewise demolished the mission building and the new aircraft. The C&MA missionary pilots were not injured, having been off-site at the time of the attacks. In 1957, following the loss of three planes in less than two years, the C&MA (with considerable internal controversy) ended their flying program in favor of

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<sup>388</sup> Hartford, "News on the Wing #8." (1950)

<sup>389</sup> Mrs. Dewey Hale, "Flying the Light in the Gold Coast," *World Challenge*, 14 Aug. 1948, (BGC 528-1-5); Paul Hartford, "Review of Events -- 2nd Annual Convention -- World Missionary Aviation Council," pamphlet (WMAC, 26-28 Jul. 1949) BGC 136-60-7.

<sup>390</sup> Anon., "Gold Cry Sits Alaska Again," *The Bakersfield Californian* (Bakersfield, CA), 22 Oct. 1949, 7; Paul Hartford, "Report of the Alaska Trip," World Missionary Aviation Council, May-Jun. 1950 (BGC 136-60-7); Paul Hartford, "News on the Wing #9," pamphlet (WMAC, Oct. 1950) BGC 136-60-7.

contracting with MAF for their aviation needs.<sup>391</sup>

### **Basil Costerisan**

Sky Pilots of America, Bible Institute of Los Angeles, California (1948 –)

Basil Costerisan was included in a 1948 Sky Pilots of America (SPoA) produced-list of Bible Institute of Los Angeles students who were supposedly actively training as full-time missionary pilots and SPoA advocates. It is unclear if Mr. Costerisan ever flew as an active missionary pilot.<sup>392</sup>

### **Jim Custer**

Sky Pilots of America, Bible Institute of Los Angeles, California (1948 –)

Jim Custer was included in a 1948 Sky Pilots of America (SPoA) produced-list of Bible Institute of Los Angeles students who were supposedly actively training as full-time missionary pilots and SPoA advocates. It is unclear if Mr. Custer ever flew as an active missionary pilot.<sup>393</sup>

### **Melvin “Mel” Dorstad**

New Tribes Mission, WMAC – USA (1948 – 1950 –)

Mel Dorstad served alongside Clifford E. Martz as an instructor for New Tribes Mission’s flight training program in the late 1940s. Was also affiliated with the WMAC.<sup>394</sup>

### **Evangelical Mission Covenant #2**

Evangelical Covenant Church of America – Alaska (1948 –)

According to Paul Hartford’s notes of the 25 May 1948 WMAC conference at Winona Lake, IN, the Evangelical Mission Covenant operated two aircraft in Alaska: Paul Carlson’s, and one other (either a Stinson Voyager 150, or a Piper Cruiser). This information was likely supplied to

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<sup>391</sup> Elizabeth Greene, "Wings Over Borneo," *Missionary Aviation*, Oct. - Dec. 1945, 4-7; Anon., "Dedicating Seaplane for Use by Missionaries in Borneo," *New York Herald Tribune* (New York), 18 Apr. 1948, 2 (BGC 528-1-21); Anon., "Christ for Wildmen," *Christian Life*, Aug. 1948, 12; Anon., "The great bird must fly against time," *Christian Life*, Dec. 1949, 2; C&MA, "C&MA Board Minutes," Christian and Missionary Alliance, 10 May 1955 (BGC 528-1-21); Anon., "Plane Lost in New Guinea," *Christian Life*, Jul. 1955, 29 (528-1-21); Richard Lenehan to Bernard S. King, 17 Jul. 1955 (BGC 528-1-21); C&MA, "C&MA Board Minutes," Christian and Missionary Alliance, 19-21 Nov. 1956 (528-1-21); Anon., "Three Strikes in New Guinea," *Christian Life*, Feb. 1957, 45 (BGC 528-1-21); C&MA, "C&MA Board Minutes," Christian and Missionary Alliance, 19-20 Mar. 1957 (BGC 528-1-21).

<sup>392</sup> Elmer B. Sachs, *Wings for Christ* (1948): (BGC 136-30-53).

<sup>393</sup> Ibid.

<sup>394</sup> Paul W. Fleming, "Holding the Ropes," *Brown Gold*, Jun. 1948, (BGC 136-61-17); Paul Hartford, "World Missionary Aviation Council - 3rd Annual Convention," WMAC, Jul. 1950 (BGC 136-2-27).

Hartford by Ralph Hanson, a leader within the denomination.<sup>395</sup>

### **Kenneth Goodman**

Moody Aviation – Cameroon (1948 –)

In 1949, Kenneth Goodman, a missionary pilot and graduate of Moody's flight program, was then surveying his mission field in Cameroon, preparing for a full-time mission aviation service.<sup>396</sup>

### **Arthur "Art" Grover**

Victory Sky Pilots, World Missionary Aviation Council (#79), Moody Bible Institute – Illinois, Indiana, Alaska (1948 – 1950 –)

Former Army Air Corps pilots and then current evangelists and Moody Bible Institute students, Arthur Grover and Harold Wright flew their personal light planes as part of their own independent ministry in the Chicagoland region. The two each flew their aircraft to and from the churches at which they ministered and to promote regional Sunday School attendance. Children who regularly attended Sunday School were given free rides and brief flying lessons. Both men reported that their efforts boosted Sunday School attendance. Arthur Grover, also a graduate of Victory Sky Pilots and member of the WMAC, later operated "This-Side-of-Heaven Children's Home" in Kasilof Alaska and flew as a missionary pilot in the region.<sup>397</sup>

### **Elliott Kaye-Smith**

World Missionary Aviation Council (#5) – Indiana (1948 –)

Elliott Kaye-Smith was a longtime supporter of Paul Hartford and the World Missionary Aviation Council. He was an active private pilot and advocate of airport ministries to aviation personnel. He served as chairman of WMAC's Private Pilots Committee, and eventually as WMAC Treasurer.<sup>398</sup>

### **Albert "Al" Lewis**

Christian and Missionary Alliance – Dutch Borneo (1948 – 1955)

Al Lewis (of Ontario, Canada) flew throughout central Borneo for the Christian and Missionary

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<sup>395</sup> Paul Hartford, "Minutes of the Opening Session of the Proposed World Missionary Aviation Conference," World Missionary Aviation Council, 25 May 1948 (BGC 136-60-7); Paul Hartford, "World Missionary Aviation Convention Report," World Missionary Aviation Council, Dec. 7-9 1948.

<sup>396</sup> Faith Coxe, "Wings for the Word," *Moody Monthly*, Feb. 1949, 456-7, 60 (BGC 136-61-16).

<sup>397</sup> Paul Allen, "Top Attendance Award," *Christian Life*, Jul. 1948, 28; Coxe, "Wings for the Word", 1949; Paul Hartford, "News on the Wing #2," pamphlet (WMAC, Dec. 1949) BGC 136-60-7; Hartford, "News on the Wing #9." (1950)

<sup>398</sup> Paul Hartford, "News on the Wing #3," pamphlet (WMAC, Feb. 1950) BGC 136-60-7.

Alliance from fall 1948 up through his death following a 10 May 1955 aviation crash. C&MA resumed mission flights following the accident.<sup>399</sup>

### **Hobert “Hobey” Lowrance**

MAF-US, Wheaton College – Chicago, Los Angeles, Mexico, Ecuador (1948 – 1970s –)

A native of Tulsa, Oklahoma, Hobert “Hobey” Lowrance began flying for American Airlines in 1942 at the age of twenty-one. During World War Two, Lowrance flew military transports as a civilian and he remained in American Airlines following the war’s end. By spring 1948, Lowrance had enrolled at Wheaton College (IL) where he (along with Nate Saint, Hatch Hatcher, and Don Berry) was a lead member of Wheaton College’s missionary aviation club. Lowrance resigned from American Airlines in August 1948 and joined MAF the next month. Lowrance began MAF service flying in southern Mexico alongside Hobey Lawrence for Wycliffe and SIL. He continued to fly for MAF into the 1970s.<sup>400</sup>

### **Leslie Madison**

Moody Aviation – western United States (1948 –)

Leslie Madison began flight training at Moody Aviation in 1948. Madison intended, following the completion of both his flight and pastoral training, to fly his plane while pastoring in the rural portions of the western United States. It is unlikely he made regular use of his flight training while serving as a pastor<sup>401</sup>

### **Mahlon McCurry**

Sky Pilots of America, Bible Institute of Los Angeles, California (1948 –)

Mahlon McCurry was included in a 1948 Sky Pilots of America (SPoA) produced-list of Bible Institute of Los Angeles students who were supposedly actively training as full-time missionary pilots and SPoA advocates. It is unclear if Mr. McCurry ever flew as an active missionary pilot.<sup>402</sup>

### **Dr. Clyde W. Meadows**

Church of the United Brethren in Christ, Billy Graham Crusades, WMAC(member #22) – Pennsylvania (– 1948 – 1949 –)

Dr. Clyde Meadows served as a flying preach in the 1940s. Little is readily available concerning

<sup>399</sup> See: Christian and Missionary Alliance (1948). See also: Anon., "Christ for Wildmen", 1948; C&MA, "C&MA Board Minutes."

<sup>400</sup> "Wings of Praise and Prayer," *Missionary Aviation* 4:5, pg. 4; Charles Mellis, Jr., "Wings of Praise and Prayer," *Missionary Aviation*, Sep. - Oct. 1948, 4, 5; *Giving Wings to the Gospel*, 101, 08, 305.

<sup>401</sup> Coxe, "Wings for the Word", 1949

<sup>402</sup> Sachs.

Dr. Meadows flight career. According to Paul Hartford, Meadows had a long interest in flight, was “one of the US oldest flying preachers” and “personal friend” of the Wright brothers. Following his work in the 1940s, Dr. Meadows served as a leader in the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, and in Billy Graham’s early evangelistic crusades.<sup>403</sup>

### **Rev. Ralph W. Neighbor**

Victory Sky Pilots, Fort Wayne Gospel Temple, Evangelical Protestant – Cuba, Fort Wayne, Indiana (1948 – 1950)

In late 1940s, the Reverend Ralph W. Neighbor of the Fort Wayne Gospel Temple, in Fort Wayne (IN), flew an Aeronca aircraft as part of his local preaching, missionary, and administrative work. He also flew it to Cuba to support of Gospel Temple missionaries stationed in the country. From at least 1945-1948, he served on board of directors of Victory Sky Pilots.<sup>404</sup>

### **New Tribes Mission: Missionary Flight School**

New Tribes Mission – southern California, USA (1948 – present)

In 1948, Paul Fleming began a missionary flight school for New Tribes Mission under the direction of instructor Clifford E. Martz, assisted by Mel Dorstad. By June 1948, Fleming claimed to have fifteen student pilots training to fly in the mission field. New Tribes Mission (now known as Ethnos360) continues to train missionary pilots.<sup>405</sup>

### **New Tribes Mission: Missionary Flight School: Unknown Student Pilot #1**

California, USA – (1948 –)

Available archival information regarding NTM’s missionary flight school operations in the 1940s and early 1950s is limited. The names of its “fifteen student pilots” is currently not known.<sup>406</sup>

### **New Tribes Mission: Missionary Flight School: Unknown Student Pilot #2**

California, USA – (1948 –)<sup>407</sup>

### **New Tribes Mission: Missionary Flight School: Unknown Student Pilot #3**

California, USA – (1948 –)<sup>408</sup>

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<sup>403</sup> Hartford, "News on the Wing #2." (1949); Dr. Clyde W. Meadows and Steve Dennie, *In the Service of the King* (Church of the United Brethren in Christ, 1993).

<sup>404</sup> Blackmore, "Ox-Cart to Wings", 1945; Grubb, "Wings for Brethren Home Missions", 1947; Mollenhour, "Sky Writing: Times Union Aviation News and Comment"

<sup>405</sup> Fleming, "Holding the Ropes", 1948

<sup>406</sup> Ibid.

<sup>407</sup> See entry for “New Tribes Mission: Missionary Flight School: Unknown Student Pilot #1

<sup>408</sup> See entry for “New Tribes Mission: Missionary Flight School: Unknown Student Pilot #1

**New Tribes Mission: Missionary Flight School: Unknown Student Pilot #4**  
California, USA – (1948 –)<sup>409</sup>

**New Tribes Mission: Missionary Flight School: Unknown Student Pilot #5**  
California, USA – (1948 –)<sup>410</sup>

**New Tribes Mission: Missionary Flight School: Unknown Student Pilot #6**  
California, USA – (1948 –)<sup>411</sup>

**New Tribes Mission: Missionary Flight School: Unknown Student Pilot #7**  
California, USA – (1948 –)<sup>412</sup>

**New Tribes Mission: Missionary Flight School: Unknown Student Pilot #8**  
California, USA – (1948 –)<sup>413</sup>

**New Tribes Mission: Missionary Flight School: Unknown Student Pilot #9**  
California, USA – (1948 –)<sup>414</sup>

**New Tribes Mission: Missionary Flight School: Unknown Student Pilot #10**  
California, USA – (1948 –)<sup>415</sup>

**New Tribes Mission: Missionary Flight School: Unknown Student Pilot #11**  
California, USA – (1948 –)<sup>416</sup>

**New Tribes Mission: Missionary Flight School: Unknown Student Pilot #12**  
California, USA – (1948 –)<sup>417</sup>

**New Tribes Mission: Missionary Flight School: Unknown Student Pilot #13**  
California, USA – (1948 –)<sup>418</sup>

**New Tribes Mission: Missionary Flight School: Unknown Student Pilot #14**  
California, USA – (1948 –)<sup>419</sup>

**New Tribes Mission: Missionary Flight School: Unknown Student Pilot #15**  
California, USA – (1948 –)<sup>420</sup>

### ***Kenneth Nottingham***

Sky Pilots of America, Bible Institute of Los Angeles, California (1948 –)

Kenneth Nottingham was one of eleven students from the Bible Institute of Los Angeles (Biola) that trained with the Sky Pilots of America towards becoming a missionary pilot. Upon

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<sup>409</sup> See entry for “New Tribes Mission: Missionary Flight School: Unknown Student Pilot #1

<sup>410</sup> See entry for “New Tribes Mission: Missionary Flight School: Unknown Student Pilot #1

<sup>411</sup> See entry for “New Tribes Mission: Missionary Flight School: Unknown Student Pilot #1

<sup>412</sup> See entry for “New Tribes Mission: Missionary Flight School: Unknown Student Pilot #1

<sup>413</sup> See entry for “New Tribes Mission: Missionary Flight School: Unknown Student Pilot #1

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<sup>415</sup> See entry for “New Tribes Mission: Missionary Flight School: Unknown Student Pilot #1

<sup>416</sup> See entry for “New Tribes Mission: Missionary Flight School: Unknown Student Pilot #1

<sup>417</sup> See entry for “New Tribes Mission: Missionary Flight School: Unknown Student Pilot #1

<sup>418</sup> See entry for “New Tribes Mission: Missionary Flight School: Unknown Student Pilot #1

<sup>419</sup> See entry for “New Tribes Mission: Missionary Flight School: Unknown Student Pilot #1

<sup>420</sup> See entry for “New Tribes Mission: Missionary Flight School: Unknown Student Pilot #1



graduation from Biola and SPoA, Nottingham intended to serve as a missionary pilot in Taos, NM alongside Reverend Albert Kliewer. Given Reverend Kliewer's death in November 1948, the eventual operational status of Nottingham's flying mission is currently unknown.<sup>421</sup>

## **Qualm**

Peru (1948 –)

“Qualm,” from (or stationed in) Peru, was listed by Paul Hartford as a scheduled speaker on mission aviation at the December 1948 WMAC meeting at Moody Bible Institute. There is no other available information regarding such an individual.<sup>422</sup>

## **Walter Reschlein**

World Missionary Aviation Council (#3), Youth For Christ – Illinois (1948 – 1950 –)

Little is known about Walter Reschlein's mission aviation work beyond that Paul Hartford listed him in an a 1950 WMAC newsletter as a “Flying YFC Director.” In addition to his reported flying ministry with Youth For Christ, Reschlein spoke at WMAC conferences on the use of aircraft as ministry tool.<sup>423</sup>

## **Sky Pilots of America – *Unknown Pilot #6***

Sky Pilots of America, Bible Institute of Los Angeles, California (1948 –)

In 1948, Elmer Sachs claimed that “Eleven missionary students from the Bible Institute of Los Angeles are now taking their training up to Licensed Pilots” at Sky Pilots of America's flight school program.” This likely included Jim Custer, Mahlon McCurry, Kenneth Nottingham, Basil Costerisan, Myron Wilson, and six other as of yet unknown potential missionary pilots. It is unclear if any of these students flew as missionary pilots.<sup>424</sup>

### **Sky Pilots of America – *Unknown Pilot #7***

Sky Pilots of America, Bible Institute of Los Angeles, California (1948 –)<sup>425</sup>

### **Sky Pilots of America – *Unknown Pilot #8***

Sky Pilots of America, Bible Institute of Los Angeles, California (1948 –)<sup>426</sup>

### **Sky Pilots of America – *Unknown Pilot #9***

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<sup>421</sup> Sachs.

<sup>422</sup> Paul Hartford to James C. Truxton, 27 Oct. 1948 (BGC 136-60-7).

<sup>423</sup> Paul Hartford, "Program for the Second Convention of the World Missionary Aviation Council: Wings for the Word to the World," pamphlet (WMAC, Dec. 1948) BGC 136-60-7; Hartford, "News on the Wing #9." (1950)

<sup>424</sup> Sachs.

<sup>425</sup> See: “Sky Pilots of America – Unknown Pilot #6” for full information.

<sup>426</sup> See: “Sky Pilots of America – Unknown Pilot #6” for full information.

Sky Pilots of America, Bible Institute of Los Angeles, California (1948 –)<sup>427</sup>

**Sky Pilots of America – *Unknown Pilot #10***

Sky Pilots of America, Bible Institute of Los Angeles, California (1948 –)<sup>428</sup>

**Sky Pilots of America – *Unknown Pilot #11***

Sky Pilots of America, Bible Institute of Los Angeles, California (1948 –)<sup>429</sup>

**Rev. Orrin Van Loon**

WMAC Berkley, MI (1948 – 1949 –)

In the late 1940s, Reverend Van Loon (who had been famously abducted and branded by the KKK in 1924) flew as part of his ministry. He was also a supporter of the WMAC and led a local Michigan chapter.<sup>430</sup>

**Myron Wilson**

Sky Pilots of America, Bible Institute of Los Angeles, California (1948 –)

Myron Wilson was included in a 1948 Sky Pilots of America (SPoA) produced-list of Bible Institute of Los Angeles students who were supposedly actively training as full-time missionary pilots and SPoA advocates. It is unclear if Mr. Wilson ever flew as an active missionary pilot.<sup>431</sup>

**World Missionary Aviation Council**

Evangelical Protestant – Indiana (1948 – 1951)

The World Missionary Aviation Council (WMAC) was the fulfillment of Paul Hartford's quest to begin a global mission aviation support network that would link together all Protestant mission aviation programs in order that each member might share best practices, tips, personnel, and aircraft. A noble, and potentially good idea. Unfortunately, given Hartford's flamboyant disregard for safety, his emphasis on the use of aircraft for mission marketing, a lack of counterbalancing leadership on the part of participating missions, and MAF-US' steadfast animosity towards the project, the WMAC dissolved within five years of its founding. The Council began life with widespread curiosity from mission organizations around the globe, and at its height (early 1949), the WMAC boasted substantial support from the Lutheran World Federation, the Assemblies of God, Scandinavian Missionary Flights, Grace Brethren Churches, and the Conservative Baptist Foreign Mission Society. In addition, the WMAC had (at least) nominal support from seventy-five global mission bodies, and operated a world-wide missionary

<sup>427</sup> See: "Sky Pilots of America – Unknown Pilot #6" for full information.

<sup>428</sup> See: "Sky Pilots of America – Unknown Pilot #6" for full information.

<sup>429</sup> See: "Sky Pilots of America – Unknown Pilot #6" for full information.

<sup>430</sup> Hartford, "World Missionary Aviation Convention Report."; Hartford, "News on the Wing #2." (1949); David G. Hunter, *BRANDED!: The Strange Disappearance of Reverend Van Loon* (Berkley, MI: Third Iowa Publishing, 2016).

<sup>431</sup> Sachs.

airline.<sup>432</sup>

### **Brief Timeline**

May 1948 – Formed as World Missionary Aviation Conference at “1<sup>st</sup>” WMAC conference, held in Washington, D.C.

Jul. 1948 – Renamed “World Missionary Aviation Council” at “2<sup>nd</sup>” WMAC conference held at Winona Lake, IN.

Dec. 1948 – Third WMAC conference held at Moody Bible Institute, Chicago, IL.

Jul. 1949 – Second Annual WMAC Convention held at headquarters of Assemblies of God church, Springfield, MO. Luther Grubb elected president. WMAC begins noticeable decline following event.

Jul. 1950 – Third Annual WMAC conference held at Northwestern Bible School, Minneapolis, MN. Only nineteen members in attendance.

Apr. 1951 – Last known WMAC publication

Jul. 1951 – Intended to hold conference at Winona Lake, IN

### **Leadership**

#### President

Dr. Daniel Nelson (1948)

Luther Grubb (1949 – 1951)

#### Vice President

Noel Perkin (May – Jul. 1948)

James Truxton (Jul. 1948 – Jan. 1949)

Raymond Buker (1949)

George Warner (1950)

#### Secretary Treasurer

Paul Hartford (1948 – 1949)

Ralph Hanson (1949 – 1950)

Gerald Tyler (1950)

#### Executive Secretary

Paul Hartford (1948 – 1951)

#### Additional Executive Members

John Rosengrant (1948)

John Garlock (1949)

Noel Perkin (1949 – 1950)

George Poole (1949 – 1950)

James Adkins (1949)

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<sup>432</sup> Please see: BGC Collection 136, Box 1 (Files 88, 102, 104), Box 2 (File 8, 27), Box 25 (File 88), Box 49 (File 40), Box 58 (File 23), Box 60 (File 7), Box 61 (File 5)

Elmer Sachs (1949 – 1950)  
Elliott Kaye-Smith (1949 – 1950)

### **Harold “Pinky” Wright**

Moody Bible Institute – Illinois, Indiana (1948 –)

Former Army Air Corps pilots and then current evangelists and Moody Bible Institute students, Harold Wright and Arthur Grover flew their personal light planes as part of their own independent ministry in the Chicagoland region. The two each flew their aircraft to and from the churches at which they ministered and to promote regional Sunday School attendance. Children who regularly attended Sunday School were given free rides and brief flying lessons. Both men reported that their efforts boosted Sunday School attendance.<sup>433</sup>

## 1949

### **Assemblies of God: Piper Super Cruiser**

Liberia (1949 –)

Following their relative success flying the Sikorsky amphibian for mission transport, the Assemblies of God expanded their African aviation program in the late 1940s. Circa 1949, they began flying a Piper Super Cruiser in Liberia.<sup>434</sup>

### **Assemblies of God: Republic Seabee**

Liberia (1949 –)

Following their relative success flying the Sikorsky amphibian for mission transport, the Assemblies of God expanded their African aviation program in the late 1940s. In 1949, they packed a Republic Seabee aboard their C-46 *Ambassador* for use in Liberia. It is unclear how long they continued to fly the aircraft following 1949.<sup>435</sup>

### **Assemblies of God: Stinson Reliant**

Liberia (1949)

Following their relative success flying the Sikorsky amphibian for mission transport, the Assemblies of God expanded their African aviation program in the late 1940s. Circa 1949, they began flying a Stinson Reliant in Liberia. The plane crashed later that year. Although neither

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<sup>433</sup> Allen, "Top Attendance Award", 1948

<sup>434</sup> Hartford, "Review of Events -- 2nd Annual Convention -- World Missionary Aviation Council." (1949)

<sup>435</sup> Noel Perkins, "The Ambassador Is Ready," *The Missionary Challenge*, Aug. 1948, (BGC 528-1-5); Hartford, "Review of Events -- 2nd Annual Convention -- World Missionary Aviation Council." (1949)

pilot nor passengers were seriously injured in the accident, the aircraft was a total loss.<sup>436</sup>

### **Borneo Evangelical Mission**

MAF-AU – New Guinea, Borneo (1949 – mid-1970s)

The Borneo Evangelical Mission began aviation services in Borneo in 1949 under direction of head pilot Bruce Morton and deputy pilot Ken Cooper. The program appears to have been limited to the careers of the two pilots. MAF-AU took over the aviation program in the mid-1970s. The Borneo Evangelical Mission later became part of Overseas Missionary Fellowship.<sup>437</sup>

### **John Clay**

Sudan Interior Mission – Nigeria (1949 –)

In early 1949, John Clay, a missionary pilot with SIM, began flying in conjunction with Clarence Soderberg in Nigeria.<sup>438</sup>

### **Alex Freind**

MAF-AU – Northern Australia, New Guinea (1949)

In 1949, Alex Freind (a pilot and engineer) accompanied Harry Hartwig in the initial MAF-AU survey of Northern Australia and New Guinea. He has no further known contact with MAF or mission aviation.<sup>439</sup>

### **Maurice and Trixie Hammond**

Sky Pilots of America, Minnesota, California, Bolivia (1949 – 1953 –)

Maurice (a trained A&E mechanic) and Trixie Hammond (members of Bethesda Free Church, Minneapolis, MN) trained as missionaries and pilots sometime prior to 1951. In January 1951, they left for Bolivia as missionaries and established Sky Pilots of America branches in the country. They likewise intended to fly as missionary pilots as soon as they were able to raise funds for an aircraft.<sup>440</sup>

### **David Kimball**

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<sup>436</sup> Hartford, "Review of Events -- 2nd Annual Convention -- World Missionary Aviation Council." (1949); Hartford, "News on the Wing #2." (1949)

<sup>437</sup> *The Age* (Melbourne, Australia), 5 Oct. 1957, 9; Beatrice Neilson, "Borneo Mission Pilot on Furlough," *The Age* (Melbourne, Australia), 6 Sep 1963, 12; *Giving Wings to the Gospel*, 133.

<sup>438</sup> Grady Parrott to Murray Kendon, 29 Nov. 1949 (BGC 136-25-88).

<sup>439</sup> *Giving Wings to the Gospel*, 134, 36.

<sup>440</sup> Anon., "Out to Bolivia," *Sky Pilot News* 3, no. 3 (1951): 3 (BGC 136-30-53); Anon., "Sky Pilots in Bolivia," *Sky Pilot News* 5, no. 9 (1953): 2 (BGC 136-30-53).

### New Tribes Mission – USA, South America (1949 – 1950)

Flew as co-pilot of New Tribes Mission's *Tribesman* under Ben Wetherald from 1949 – 1950. Kimball died along with his wife Hazel Kimball (who served as stewardess), after *Tribesman* crashed into mountain range in Columbia.<sup>441</sup>

### **George King**

#### Independent missionary – southern Mexico (– 1949 )

George King operated a Piper Clipper in cooperation with Melvin Todd. He, along with Todd perished in an aviation accident on 19 November 1949.<sup>442</sup>

### **Ken Kinney**

#### New Tribes Mission – USA, South America (1949)

Ken Kinney, a former Army navigator, served as navigator of New Tribes Mission's *Tribesman* on its first flight in June 1949.<sup>443</sup>

### **Wallace Lindskoog**

#### Gideons International, World Missionary Aviation Council (#28) – California, Mexico (– 1949 – 1950 –)

Wallace Lindskoog, a WMAC supporter, flew an aircraft while distributing Bibles in Mexico as part of his work with Gideons International.<sup>444</sup>

### **MAF-UK Sudan Operation**

#### American Presbyterian Mission, Sudan Interior Mission – Southern Sudan, Bases in Akobo, Doro, and Malakal (1949 – 1964)

Problems settling their insurance claims on the Miles Gemini had forced MAF-UK out of Africa in the fall of 1948, before King and Hemmings had a chance to fully explore need of aviation service in Sudan. After studying the results of the 1948 Survey, MAF-UK begin coordinating with American Presbyterian Mission and Sudan Interior Mission in 1949 quickly decided to launch MAF-UK's initial aviation program in Sudan. In 1950 MAF-UK purchased a used de Haviland Rapide (*Mildmay Pathfinder II*) with which MAF-UK surveyed mission stations in the

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<sup>441</sup> Associated Press, "American Plane Carrying 15 Persons Missing off Venezuela," *The La Crosse Tribune* (La Crosse, WI), 20 Jun. 1950, 1.

<sup>442</sup> For additional material see Melvin Todd (1944). See also: Hartford, "News on the Wing #2." (1949); Dietrich Buss and Arthur Glasser, *Giving Wings to the Gospel: The Remarkable Story of Mission Aviation Fellowship* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1995), 116.

<sup>443</sup> Kenneth J. Johnston, *The Story of New Tribes Mission* (Sanford, FL: New Tribes Mission, 1985), chapter 11.

<sup>444</sup> Paul Hartford, "News on the Wing #8," pamphlet (WMAC, Sep. 1950) BGC 136-60-7.

country and began preliminary operations in southern Sudan, initially based out of the American Presbyterian Mission station in Akobo. MAF-UK continued flying in Sudan under the leadership of Stewart King and Steve Stevens (a pilot formerly of the South African Air Force) until they were forced out of the country by the Sudanese government in 1964<sup>445</sup>

**Moody Aviation – Unknown Pilot #1**

Moody Bible Institute – Chicago, IL (1949)<sup>446</sup>

**Moody Aviation – Unknown Pilot #2**

Moody Bible Institute – Chicago, IL (1949)<sup>447</sup>

**Moody Aviation – Unknown Pilot #3**

Moody Bible Institute – Chicago, IL (1949)<sup>448</sup>

**Moody Aviation – Unknown Pilot #4**

Moody Bible Institute – Chicago, IL (1949)<sup>449</sup>

**Moody Aviation – Unknown Pilot #5**

Moody Bible Institute – Chicago, IL (1949)<sup>450</sup>

**Moody Aviation – Unknown Pilot #6**

Moody Bible Institute – Chicago, IL (1949)<sup>451</sup>

**Moody Aviation – Unknown Pilot #7**

Moody Bible Institute – Chicago, IL (1949)<sup>452</sup>

**Moody Aviation – Unknown Pilot #8**

Moody Bible Institute – Chicago, IL (1949)<sup>453</sup>

**Moody Aviation – Unknown Pilot #9**

Moody Bible Institute – Chicago, IL (1949)<sup>454</sup>

**Moody Aviation – Unknown Pilot #10**

Moody Bible Institute – Chicago, IL (1949)<sup>455</sup>

**Moody Aviation – Unknown Pilot #11**

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<sup>445</sup> Dorothy Lear, "Dear Prayer Partners," London, pamphlet (MAF-UK, Jan. 1950) BGC 136-52; Dorothy Lear to Grady Parrott, Charles Mellis, and James C. Truxton, 29 Mar. 1950 (BGC 136-52-6); Jack Hemmings, "Friend of the MAF," London, pamphlet (MAF-UK, Oct. 1950) BGC 136-52-6; Jack Hemmings to Grady Parrott, 6 Oct. 1950 (BGC 136-52-6); *Giving Wings to the Gospel*, 83-99, 190-205; Stuart Sendall-King, interview by Lane Sunwall, 16 Jul., 2009.

<sup>446</sup> Coxe, "Wings for the Word", 1949

<sup>447</sup> Ibid.

<sup>448</sup> Ibid.

<sup>449</sup> Ibid.

<sup>450</sup> Ibid.

<sup>451</sup> Ibid.

<sup>452</sup> Ibid.

<sup>453</sup> Ibid.

<sup>454</sup> Ibid.

<sup>455</sup> Ibid.

Moody Bible Institute – Chicago, IL (1949)<sup>456</sup>

**Moody Aviation – *Unknown Pilot #12***

Moody Bible Institute – Chicago, IL (1949)<sup>457</sup>

**Moody Aviation – *Unknown Pilot #13***

Moody Bible Institute – Chicago, IL (1949)<sup>458</sup>

**Moody Aviation – *Unknown Pilot #14***

Moody Bible Institute – Chicago, IL (1949)<sup>459</sup>

**Moody Aviation – *Unknown Pilot #15***

Moody Bible Institute – Chicago, IL (1949)<sup>460</sup>

**Moody Aviation – *Unknown Pilot #16***

Moody Bible Institute – Chicago, IL (1949)<sup>461</sup>

**Moody Aviation – *Unknown Pilot #17***

Moody Bible Institute – Chicago, IL (1949)<sup>462</sup>

**Moody Aviation – *Unknown Pilot #18***

Moody Bible Institute – Chicago, IL (1949)<sup>463</sup>

**Moody Aviation – *Unknown Pilot #19***

Moody Bible Institute – Chicago, IL (1949)<sup>464</sup>

**Moody Aviation – *Unknown Pilot #20***

Moody Bible Institute – Chicago, IL (1949)<sup>465</sup>

**Moody Aviation – *Unknown Pilot #21***

Moody Bible Institute – Chicago, IL (1949)<sup>466</sup>

**Moody Aviation – *Unknown Pilot #22***

Moody Bible Institute – Chicago, IL (1949)<sup>467</sup>

**Moody Aviation – *Unknown Pilot #23***

Moody Bible Institute – Chicago, IL (1949)<sup>468</sup>

**Moody Aviation – *Unknown Pilot #24***

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<sup>456</sup> Ibid.

<sup>457</sup> Ibid.

<sup>458</sup> Ibid.

<sup>459</sup> Ibid.

<sup>460</sup> Ibid.

<sup>461</sup> Ibid.

<sup>462</sup> Ibid.

<sup>463</sup> Ibid.

<sup>464</sup> Ibid.

<sup>465</sup> Ibid.

<sup>466</sup> Ibid.

<sup>467</sup> Ibid.

<sup>468</sup> Ibid.



Moody Bible Institute – Chicago, IL (1949)<sup>469</sup>

**Moody Aviation – *Unknown Pilot #25***

Moody Bible Institute – Chicago, IL (1949)<sup>470</sup>

**Moody Aviation – *Unknown Pilot #26***

Moody Bible Institute – Chicago, IL (1949)<sup>471</sup>

**Moody Aviation – *Unknown Pilot #27***

Moody Bible Institute – Chicago, IL (1949)<sup>472</sup>

**Moody Aviation – *Unknown Pilot #28***

Moody Bible Institute – Chicago, IL (1949)<sup>473</sup>

**Moody Aviation – *Unknown Pilot #29***

Moody Bible Institute – Chicago, IL (1949)<sup>474</sup>

**Moody Aviation – *Unknown Pilot #30***

Moody Bible Institute – Chicago, IL (1949)<sup>475</sup>

**Moody Aviation – *Unknown Pilot #31***

Moody Bible Institute – Chicago, IL (1949)<sup>476</sup>

**Moody Aviation – *Unknown Pilot #32***

Moody Bible Institute – Chicago, IL (1949)<sup>477</sup>

**Moody Aviation – *Unknown Pilot #33***

Moody Bible Institute – Chicago, IL (1949)<sup>478</sup>

**Moody Aviation – *Unknown Pilot #34***

Moody Bible Institute – Chicago, IL (1949)<sup>479</sup>

**Moody Aviation – *Unknown Pilot #35***

Moody Bible Institute – Chicago, IL (1949)<sup>480</sup>

**Moody Aviation – *Unknown Pilot #36***

Moody Bible Institute – Chicago, IL (1949)<sup>481</sup>

**Moody Aviation – *Unknown Pilot #37***

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<sup>469</sup> Ibid.

<sup>470</sup> Ibid.

<sup>471</sup> Ibid.

<sup>472</sup> Ibid.

<sup>473</sup> Ibid.

<sup>474</sup> Ibid.

<sup>475</sup> Ibid.

<sup>476</sup> Ibid.

<sup>477</sup> Ibid.

<sup>478</sup> Ibid.

<sup>479</sup> Ibid.

<sup>480</sup> Ibid.

<sup>481</sup> Ibid.

Moody Bible Institute – Chicago, IL (1949)<sup>482</sup>

**Moody Aviation – *Unknown Pilot #38***

Moody Bible Institute – Chicago, IL (1949)<sup>483</sup>

**Moody Aviation – *Unknown Pilot #39***

Moody Bible Institute – Chicago, IL (1949)<sup>484</sup>

**Moody Aviation – *Unknown Pilot #40***

Moody Bible Institute – Chicago, IL (1949)<sup>485</sup>

**Moody Aviation – *Unknown Pilot #41***

Moody Bible Institute – Chicago, IL (1949)<sup>486</sup>

**Moody Aviation – *Unknown Pilot #42***

Moody Bible Institute – Chicago, IL (1949)<sup>487</sup>

**Moody Aviation – *Unknown Pilot #43***

Moody Bible Institute – Chicago, IL (1949)<sup>488</sup>

**Moody Aviation – *Unknown Pilot #44***

Moody Bible Institute – Chicago, IL (1949)<sup>489</sup>

**Moody Aviation – *Unknown Pilot #45***

Moody Bible Institute – Chicago, IL (1949)<sup>490</sup>

**Moody Aviation – *Unknown Pilot #46***

Moody Bible Institute – Chicago, IL (1949)<sup>491</sup>

**Moody Aviation – *Unknown Pilot #47***

Moody Bible Institute – Chicago, IL (1949)<sup>492</sup>

**Moody Aviation – *Unknown Pilot #48***

Moody Bible Institute – Chicago, IL (1949)<sup>493</sup>

**Moody Aviation – *Unknown Pilot #49***

Moody Bible Institute – Chicago, IL (1949)<sup>494</sup>

**Moody Aviation – *Unknown Pilot #50***

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<sup>482</sup> Ibid.

<sup>483</sup> Ibid.

<sup>484</sup> Ibid.

<sup>485</sup> Ibid.

<sup>486</sup> Ibid.

<sup>487</sup> Ibid.

<sup>488</sup> Ibid.

<sup>489</sup> Ibid.

<sup>490</sup> Ibid.

<sup>491</sup> Ibid.

<sup>492</sup> Ibid.

<sup>493</sup> Ibid.

<sup>494</sup> Ibid.

Moody Bible Institute – Chicago, IL (1949)<sup>495</sup>

**Moody Aviation – *Unknown Pilot #51***

Moody Bible Institute – Chicago, IL (1949)<sup>496</sup>

**Moody Aviation – *Unknown Pilot #52***

Moody Bible Institute – Chicago, IL (1949)<sup>497</sup>

**Moody Aviation – *Unknown Pilot #53***

Moody Bible Institute – Chicago, IL (1949)<sup>498</sup>

**Moody Aviation – *Unknown Pilot #54***

Moody Bible Institute – Chicago, IL (1949)<sup>499</sup>

**Moody Aviation – *Unknown Pilot #55***

Moody Bible Institute – Chicago, IL (1949)<sup>500</sup>

**Moody Aviation – *Unknown Pilot #56***

Moody Bible Institute – Chicago, IL (1949)<sup>501</sup>

**Moody Aviation – *Unknown Pilot #57***

Moody Bible Institute – Chicago, IL (1949)<sup>502</sup>

**Moody Aviation – *Unknown Pilot #58***

Moody Bible Institute – Chicago, IL (1949)<sup>503</sup>

**Moody Aviation – *Unknown Pilot #59***

Moody Bible Institute – Chicago, IL (1949)<sup>504</sup>

**Moody Aviation – *Unknown Pilot #60***

Moody Bible Institute – Chicago, IL (1949)<sup>505</sup>

**Moody Aviation – *Unknown Pilot #61***

Moody Bible Institute – Chicago, IL (1949)<sup>506</sup>

**Moody Aviation – *Unknown Pilot #62***

Moody Bible Institute – Chicago, IL (1949)<sup>507</sup>

**Moody Aviation – *Unknown Pilot #63***

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<sup>495</sup> Ibid.

<sup>496</sup> Ibid.

<sup>497</sup> Ibid.

<sup>498</sup> Ibid.

<sup>499</sup> Ibid.

<sup>500</sup> Ibid.

<sup>501</sup> Ibid.

<sup>502</sup> Ibid.

<sup>503</sup> Ibid.

<sup>504</sup> Ibid.

<sup>505</sup> Ibid.

<sup>506</sup> Ibid.

<sup>507</sup> Ibid.

Moody Bible Institute – Chicago, IL (1949)<sup>508</sup>

**Moody Aviation – *Unknown Pilot #64***

Moody Bible Institute – Chicago, IL (1949)<sup>509</sup>

**Moody Aviation – *Unknown Pilot #65***

Moody Bible Institute – Chicago, IL (1949)<sup>510</sup>

**Moody Aviation – *Unknown Pilot #66***

Moody Bible Institute – Chicago, IL (1949)<sup>511</sup>

**Moody Aviation – *Unknown Pilot #67***

Moody Bible Institute – Chicago, IL (1949)<sup>512</sup>

**Moody Aviation – *Unknown Pilot #68***

Moody Bible Institute – Chicago, IL (1949)<sup>513</sup>

**Moody Aviation – *Unknown Pilot #69***

Moody Bible Institute – Chicago, IL (1949)<sup>514</sup>

**Moody Aviation – *Unknown Pilot #70***

Moody Bible Institute – Chicago, IL (1949)<sup>515</sup>

**Moody Aviation – *Unknown Pilot #71***

Moody Bible Institute – Chicago, IL (1949)<sup>516</sup>

**Moody Aviation – *Unknown Pilot #72***

Moody Bible Institute – Chicago, IL (1949)<sup>517</sup>

**Moody Aviation – *Unknown Pilot #73***

Moody Bible Institute – Chicago, IL (1949)<sup>518</sup>

**Moody Aviation – *Unknown Pilot #74***

Moody Bible Institute – Chicago, IL (1949)<sup>519</sup>

**Moody Aviation – *Unknown Pilot #75***

Moody Bible Institute – Chicago, IL (1949)<sup>520</sup>

**Moody Aviation – *Unknown Pilot #76***

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<sup>508</sup> Ibid.

<sup>509</sup> Ibid.

<sup>510</sup> Ibid.

<sup>511</sup> Ibid.

<sup>512</sup> Ibid.

<sup>513</sup> Ibid.

<sup>514</sup> Ibid.

<sup>515</sup> Ibid.

<sup>516</sup> Ibid.

<sup>517</sup> Ibid.

<sup>518</sup> Ibid.

<sup>519</sup> Ibid.

<sup>520</sup> Ibid.

Moody Bible Institute – Chicago, IL (1949)<sup>521</sup>

**Moody Aviation – *Unknown Pilot #77***

Moody Bible Institute – Chicago, IL (1949)<sup>522</sup>

**Moody Aviation – *Unknown Pilot #78***

Moody Bible Institute – Chicago, IL (1949)<sup>523</sup>

**Moody Aviation – *Unknown Pilot #79***

Moody Bible Institute – Chicago, IL (1949)<sup>524</sup>

**Moody Aviation – *Unknown Pilot #80***

Moody Bible Institute – Chicago, IL (1949)<sup>525</sup>

**Moody Aviation – *Unknown Pilot #81***

Moody Bible Institute – Chicago, IL (1949)<sup>526</sup>

**Moody Aviation – *Unknown Pilot #82***

Moody Bible Institute – Chicago, IL (1949)<sup>527</sup>

**Moody Aviation – *Unknown Pilot #83***

Moody Bible Institute – Chicago, IL (1949)<sup>528</sup>

**Moody Aviation – *Unknown Pilot #84***

Moody Bible Institute – Chicago, IL (1949)<sup>529</sup>

**Moody Aviation – *Unknown Pilot #85***

Moody Bible Institute – Chicago, IL (1949)<sup>530</sup>

**Moody Aviation – *Unknown Pilot #86***

Moody Bible Institute – Chicago, IL (1949)<sup>531</sup>

**Moody Aviation – *Unknown Pilot #87***

Moody Bible Institute – Chicago, IL (1949)<sup>532</sup>

**Moody Aviation – *Unknown Pilot #88***

Moody Bible Institute – Chicago, IL (1949)<sup>533</sup>

**Moody Aviation – *Unknown Pilot #89***

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<sup>521</sup> Ibid.

<sup>522</sup> Ibid.

<sup>523</sup> Ibid.

<sup>524</sup> Ibid.

<sup>525</sup> Ibid.

<sup>526</sup> Ibid.

<sup>527</sup> Ibid.

<sup>528</sup> Ibid.

<sup>529</sup> Ibid.

<sup>530</sup> Ibid.

<sup>531</sup> Ibid.

<sup>532</sup> Ibid.

<sup>533</sup> Ibid.

Moody Bible Institute – Chicago, IL (1949)<sup>534</sup>

### **New Tribes Mission: *Tribesman* Aviation Program**

New Tribes Mission – USA, Bolivia, Brazil, Venezuela, Jamaica (1949 – 1950)

In spite of the rapid improvement of global transportation following World War Two, Paul Fleming (leader and founder of New Tribes Mission) concluded that shipping and aviation transportation were too expensive, erratic, and unsuitable for his mission's needs. Missionaries, Fleming wrote his supporters, were unable to book reliable or affordable travel to their posts in South America and Asia, and New Tribes mission was unable to pay for frequent visits to missionaries in the field, where its leadership better coordinate activities. Fleming believed he could remedy the situation, and so built his own airline. In 1949 Fleming purchased a used DC-3 from American Airlines, renamed the former airline flagship the *Tribesman*, and used it to send his missionaries to the mission field *en masse*. Fleming's airline was immediately beset by controversy, and despite his hopes, no other mission organization joined him in his venture. Indeed, MAF and others reproached New Tribes for the lax operational standards of their light-plane program and considered the *Tribesman* an unsafe and inefficient duplication of commercial airline services. Fleming disregarded their advice. He believed it was a Christian's duty to evangelize by any means necessary, even if that meant taking risks in the process. In addition to flying as a mission transport plane, the *Tribesman* aircraft served as a marketing device for Fleming's NTM, and was frequently flown as the centerpiece of mission rallies. The *Tribesman* made a total of seven round-trip voyages to South America between June 1949 and June 1950. The aircraft proved so effective for publicity and transportation purposes that the mission considered enlarging the program to include an expensive, four-engine DC-4. The DC-4's longer range and cargo capacity would permit the mission to transport personnel on the long jump across the Pacific to Japan, from which Fleming hoped to expand quickly throughout Asia. Tragically, the *Tribesman* venture fell apart in 1950. The *Tribesman* crashed in June 1950, on its eighth flight to South America, killing all fifteen aboard. New Tribes Mission purchased a second DC-3, named *Tribesman II*, later that year. It crashed on its maiden flight in November 1950, killing all twenty-one aboard, including Paul Fleming. New Tribes mission briefly considered purchasing a third plane, but opted instead for a large ex-navy vessel.<sup>535</sup>

#### **Known Mission Flights of *Tribesman* and *Tribesman II***<sup>536</sup>

1<sup>st</sup> Flight – 17 June 1949 – Chico (CA), Chicago, Mobile (AL), Miami (FL), Maracaibo (Venezuela), San Fernando de Atabapo (Venezuela). Stops in Chicago, Mobile, and Miami were to conduct rallies on behalf of mission.

<sup>534</sup> Ibid.

<sup>535</sup> Paul W. Fleming, "Big Wings for a Big Job," *Brown Gold*, May 1949, (BGC 136-61-17); Paul W. Fleming, "Planning Flight to Far East," *Brown Gold*, Oct. 1949, (BGC 136-61-17); James C. Truxton to D-1, 20 Jul. 1950 (BGC 136-2-27); Associated Press, "Missionary Plane Carrying 21 Strikes Peak in Rockies," *The Capital Times* (Madison, WI), 22 Nov. 1950, 1, 8; United Press International, "Little Hope for 21 On Crashed Plane: Glacier in Path of Search Party," *The Terre Haute Star* (Terre Haute, IN), 23 Nov. 1950, 1, 4; *The Story of New Tribes Mission*, chapters 11, 12.

<sup>536</sup> *The Story of New Tribes Mission*, chapter 11.

2<sup>nd</sup> Flight – 1949 – Chico (CA), Belem (Brazil), Rio de Janeiro (Brazil), Bolivia. Led by Rus Garber.

3<sup>rd</sup> Flight

4<sup>th</sup> Flight

5<sup>th</sup> Flight

6<sup>th</sup> Flight

7<sup>th</sup> Flight – May 1950 –

8<sup>th</sup> Flight – 9 June 1950 – Miami (FL), Kingston (Jamaica). Plane destroyed in Columbian mountain range crash.

9<sup>th</sup> Flight – 21 November 1950 – Chico (CA), no stops made prior to destruction on Mount Moran (WY). First intended stop was Billings (MT), then North Platte (NE), Minneapolis (MN), Kenosha (WI), Chicago (IL), Miami (FL), Bolivia, and Brazil.

### **Passenger List of 9 June 1950 Crash<sup>537</sup>**

Ben Wetherald – Pilot

David Kimball – Navigator and Co-pilot

Hazel Kimball – crew member

Mrs. Mildred Garber (missionary)

Rev. John Milton Greiner

Mrs. Betty Hilker (missionary), and three children

Nelda Hilker

Daniel Hilker

David Hilker

William and Mrs. Hoffman (missionaries), as well as their two children

Harold Mills (missionary)

Clyde Snow (missionary)

### **Passenger List of 21 November 1950 Crash<sup>538</sup>**

Sterling “Cy” Lowrey - pilot

Bob Crammer – co-pilot

Jack Dennis – radio

Jack Beach

Robert Cook

Arthur Eltrich, Jr.

Paul Fleming

Haorld Freeman

Mrs. Edna Greiner (widow of John Greiner who had died in the *Tribesman*), and children

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<sup>537</sup> Anon., "Bellwood Man, 14 Others Die In Plane Crash," *Altoona Mirror* (Altoona, PA), 1 Jul. 1950, 18; Associated Press, "Missionary Plane Carrying 21 Strikes Peak in Rockies"; *The Story of New Tribes Mission*, chapter 11.

<sup>538</sup> Associated Press, "Missionary Plane Carrying 21 Strikes Peak in Rockies"; *The Story of New Tribes Mission*, chapter 14.

Victoria – 8 years  
 Dorothy – 7 years  
 Nancy – 5 years  
 Joanna – 4 years  
 John, Jr. – 1 years  
 Hazel Hansen  
 Robert and Barbara Judge, with two children  
     Dianna Judge  
     Ruth Judge  
 Donna Wetherald – wife of late Ben Wetherald  
     Mark Wetherald – 7 months old

### **William “Bill” Post**

New Tribes Mission – USA, South America (1949 – 1951 –)

Bill Post (former military pilot, certified mechanic, and flight instructor) began flying as captain of New Tribes Mission’s *Tribesman* in 1949. Post was not aboard when the aircraft crashed in 1950, and he continued to fly light aircraft (Norseman) for New Tribes Mission into the 1950s.<sup>539</sup>

### **John Richardson**

Moody Aviation – Phillipines (1949 –)

A tail gunner stationed in the Philippines during World War Two, John Richardson trained at Moody Aviation with the intention of returning to the islands as a flying missionary.<sup>540</sup>

### **Sky Writing organized by Bert Turner and Jacob B. Sparks**

Detroit, MI (1949)

In 1949, evangelist Bert Turner and businessman Jacob B. Sparks hired a local sky pilot to write out “Jesus Saves” above Briggs stadium during a Detroit Tigers – New York Yankees baseball game.<sup>541</sup>

### **Ira E. Washburn**

World Missionary Aviation Council (#4) – Colombia (– 1949 – 1950 –)

Ira Washburn served as an independent missionary and mission aviator around Boyaca,

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<sup>539</sup> *The Story of New Tribes Mission*, chapter 11, 152.

<sup>540</sup> Coxe, "Wings for the Word", 1949

<sup>541</sup> L. P. Buroker, "The Word in the Sky," *Christian Life*, Feb. 1949, 5.



Colombia.<sup>542</sup>

### **Benjamin “Ben” Wetherald**

New Tribes Mission – USA, South America (1949 – 1950)

During World War Two, Ben Wetherald flew as pilot of C-47's (military derivative of the DC-3). In 1949, he began flying for NTM, first as co-pilot, and then as captain of New Tribes Mission's *Tribesman*. Wetherald died after crashing NTM's DC-3 into mountain range in Columbia. His wife Donna and son Mark were killed in second *Tribesman* accident in November 1950.<sup>543</sup>

## 1950

### **Aero-Radio Missions**

Southern Mexico (– 1950 –)

Aero-Radio Missions was, according to Paul Hartford, founded circa 1950 by Reverend F. S. Doney and Reverend Glenn E. Doney. They intended to serve in Central and Latin America via aircraft and a radio network.<sup>544</sup>

### **Anderson Ambassadors Association, Inc.**

WMAC – USA (– 1950 –)

According to Paul Hartford, flying youth leader, Reverend James Anderson, started the Ambassadors circa 1950 as part of his wider youth ministries. The program (similar to Sky Pilots of America) seemed designed to provide instruction in aviation and Christianity to youth.<sup>545</sup>

### **Rev. James Anderson**

WMAC – USA (– 1950 –)

According to Paul Hartford, Reverend James Anderson, flew as a part of his youth ministry circa 1950.<sup>546</sup>

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<sup>542</sup> Hartford, "News on the Wing #3." (1950); Paul Hartford, "News on the Wing #5," pamphlet (WMAC, Apr. 1950) BGC 136-60-7; Hartford, "News on the Wing #9." (1950)

<sup>543</sup> Associated Press, "American Plane Carrying 15 Persons Missing off Venezuela"; Associated Press, "Missionary Plane Carrying 21 Strikes Peak in Rockies"; *The Story of New Tribes Mission*, chapter 11.

<sup>544</sup> Hartford, "News on the Wing #5." (1950); James C. Truxton to Dear Co-workers, 6 Jun. 1950 (BGC 136-2-27).

<sup>545</sup> Paul Hartford, "News on the Wing #6," pamphlet (WMAC, 29 May 1950) BGC 136-60-7.

<sup>546</sup> Ibid.

**Bob Jones University – *Unknown Pilot #1***South Carolina (1950)<sup>547</sup>**Bob Jones University – *Unknown Pilot #2***South Carolina (1950)<sup>548</sup>**Bob Jones University – *Unknown Pilot #3***South Carolina (1950)<sup>549</sup>**Bob Jones University – *Unknown Pilot #4***South Carolina (1950)<sup>550</sup>**Bob Jones University – *Unknown Pilot #5***South Carolina (1950)<sup>551</sup>**Bob Jones University – *Unknown Pilot #6***South Carolina (1950)<sup>552</sup>**Bob Jones University – *Unknown Pilot #7***South Carolina (1950)<sup>553</sup>**Bob Jones University – *Unknown Pilot #8***South Carolina (1950)<sup>554</sup>**Bob Jones University – *Unknown Pilot #9***South Carolina (1950)<sup>555</sup>**Bob Jones University – *Unknown Pilot #10***South Carolina (1950)<sup>556</sup>**Bob Jones University – *Unknown Pilot #11***South Carolina (1950)<sup>557</sup>**Bob Jones University – *Unknown Pilot #12***South Carolina (1950)<sup>558</sup>**Bob Jones University – *Unknown Pilot #13***South Carolina (1950)<sup>559</sup>**Bob Jones University – *Unknown Pilot #14***


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<sup>547</sup> Paul Hartford, "News on the Wing #4," Winona Lake, IN, pamphlet (WMAC, Apr. 1950) BGC 136-60-7.

<sup>548</sup> Ibid.

<sup>549</sup> Ibid.

<sup>550</sup> Ibid.

<sup>551</sup> Ibid.

<sup>552</sup> Ibid.

<sup>553</sup> Ibid.

<sup>554</sup> Ibid.

<sup>555</sup> Ibid.

<sup>556</sup> Ibid.

<sup>557</sup> Ibid.

<sup>558</sup> Ibid.

<sup>559</sup> Ibid.

South Carolina (1950)<sup>560</sup>

**Bob Jones University – *Unknown Pilot #15***

South Carolina (1950)<sup>561</sup>

**Bob Jones University – *Unknown Pilot #16***

South Carolina (1950)<sup>562</sup>

**Bob Jones University – *Unknown Pilot #17***

South Carolina (1950)<sup>563</sup>

**Bob Jones University – *Unknown Pilot #18***

South Carolina (1950)<sup>564</sup>

**Bob Jones University – *Unknown Pilot #19***

South Carolina (1950)<sup>565</sup>

**Bob Jones University – *Unknown Pilot #20***

South Carolina (1950)<sup>566</sup>

**Bob Jones University – *Unknown Pilot #21***

South Carolina (1950)<sup>567</sup>

**Bob Jones University – *Unknown Pilot #22***

South Carolina (1950)<sup>568</sup>

**Bob Jones University – *Unknown Pilot #23***

South Carolina (1950)<sup>569</sup>

**Bob Jones University – *Unknown Pilot #24***

South Carolina (1950)<sup>570</sup>

**Bob Jones University – *Unknown Pilot #25***

South Carolina (1950)<sup>571</sup>

**Bob Jones University – *Unknown Pilot #26***

South Carolina (1950)<sup>572</sup>

**Bob Jones University – *Unknown Pilot #27***

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<sup>560</sup> Ibid.

<sup>561</sup> Ibid.

<sup>562</sup> Ibid.

<sup>563</sup> Ibid.

<sup>564</sup> Ibid.

<sup>565</sup> Ibid.

<sup>566</sup> Ibid.

<sup>567</sup> Ibid.

<sup>568</sup> Ibid.

<sup>569</sup> Ibid.

<sup>570</sup> Ibid.

<sup>571</sup> Ibid.

<sup>572</sup> Ibid.

South Carolina (1950)<sup>573</sup>

**Bob Jones University – *Unknown Pilot #28***

South Carolina (1950)<sup>574</sup>

**Bob Jones University – *Unknown Pilot #29***

South Carolina (1950)<sup>575</sup>

**Bob Jones University – *Unknown Pilot #30***

South Carolina (1950)<sup>576</sup>

**Bob Jones University – *Unknown Pilot #31***

South Carolina (1950)<sup>577</sup>

**Bob Jones University – *Unknown Pilot #32***

South Carolina (1950)<sup>578</sup>

**Bob Jones University – *Unknown Pilot #33***

South Carolina (1950)<sup>579</sup>

**Bob Jones University – *Unknown Pilot #34***

South Carolina (1950)<sup>580</sup>

**Bob Jones University – *Unknown Pilot #35***

South Carolina (1950)<sup>581</sup>

**Bob Jones University – *Unknown Pilot #36***

South Carolina (1950)<sup>582</sup>

**Bob Jones University – *Unknown Pilot #37***

South Carolina (1950)<sup>583</sup>

**Bob Jones University – *Unknown Pilot #38***

South Carolina (1950)<sup>584</sup>

**Bob Jones University – *Unknown Pilot #39***

South Carolina (1950)<sup>585</sup>

**Bob Jones University – *Unknown Pilot #40***

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<sup>573</sup> Ibid.

<sup>574</sup> Ibid.

<sup>575</sup> Ibid.

<sup>576</sup> Ibid.

<sup>577</sup> Ibid.

<sup>578</sup> Ibid.

<sup>579</sup> Ibid.

<sup>580</sup> Ibid.

<sup>581</sup> Ibid.

<sup>582</sup> Ibid.

<sup>583</sup> Ibid.

<sup>584</sup> Ibid.

<sup>585</sup> Ibid.

South Carolina (1950)<sup>586</sup>

**Bob Jones University – *Unknown Pilot #41***

South Carolina (1950)<sup>587</sup>

**Bob Jones University – *Unknown Pilot #42***

South Carolina (1950)<sup>588</sup>

**Bob Jones University – *Unknown Pilot #43***

South Carolina (1950)<sup>589</sup>

**Bob Jones University – *Unknown Pilot #44***

South Carolina (1950)<sup>590</sup>

**Bob Jones University – *Unknown Pilot #45***

South Carolina (1950)<sup>591</sup>

**Bob Jones University – *Unknown Pilot #46***

South Carolina (1950)<sup>592</sup>

**Bob Jones University – *Unknown Pilot #47***

South Carolina (1950)<sup>593</sup>

**Bob Jones University – *Unknown Pilot #48***

South Carolina (1950)<sup>594</sup>

**Bob Jones University – *Unknown Pilot #49***

South Carolina (1950)<sup>595</sup>

**Bob Jones University – *Unknown Pilot #50***

South Carolina (1950)<sup>596</sup>

**Bob Jones University – *Unknown Pilot #51***

South Carolina (1950)<sup>597</sup>

**Bob Jones University – *Unknown Pilot #52***

South Carolina (1950)<sup>598</sup>

**Bob Jones University – *Unknown Pilot #53***

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<sup>586</sup> Ibid.

<sup>587</sup> Ibid.

<sup>588</sup> Ibid.

<sup>589</sup> Ibid.

<sup>590</sup> Ibid.

<sup>591</sup> Ibid.

<sup>592</sup> Ibid.

<sup>593</sup> Ibid.

<sup>594</sup> Ibid.

<sup>595</sup> Ibid.

<sup>596</sup> Ibid.

<sup>597</sup> Ibid.

<sup>598</sup> Ibid.

South Carolina (1950)<sup>599</sup>

**Bob Jones University – *Unknown Pilot #54***

South Carolina (1950)<sup>600</sup>

**Bob Jones University – *Unknown Pilot #55***

South Carolina (1950)<sup>601</sup>

**Bob Jones University – *Unknown Pilot #56***

South Carolina (1950)<sup>602</sup>

**Bob Jones University – *Unknown Pilot #57***

South Carolina (1950)<sup>603</sup>

**Bob Jones University – *Unknown Pilot #58***

South Carolina (1950)<sup>604</sup>

**Bob Jones University – *Unknown Pilot #59***

South Carolina (1950)<sup>605</sup>

**Bob Jones University – *Unknown Pilot #60***

South Carolina (1950)<sup>606</sup>

**Bob Jones University – *Unknown Pilot #61***

South Carolina (1950)<sup>607</sup>

**Bob Jones University – *Unknown Pilot #62***

South Carolina (1950)<sup>608</sup>

**Bob Jones University – *Unknown Pilot #63***

South Carolina (1950)<sup>609</sup>

**Bob Jones University – *Unknown Pilot #64***

South Carolina (1950)<sup>610</sup>

**Bob Jones University – *Unknown Pilot #65***

South Carolina (1950)<sup>611</sup>

**Bob Jones University – *Unknown Pilot #66***

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<sup>599</sup> Ibid.

<sup>600</sup> Ibid.

<sup>601</sup> Ibid.

<sup>602</sup> Ibid.

<sup>603</sup> Ibid.

<sup>604</sup> Ibid.

<sup>605</sup> Ibid.

<sup>606</sup> Ibid.

<sup>607</sup> Ibid.

<sup>608</sup> Ibid.

<sup>609</sup> Ibid.

<sup>610</sup> Ibid.

<sup>611</sup> Ibid.

South Carolina (1950)<sup>612</sup>

**Bob Jones University – *Unknown Pilot #67***

South Carolina (1950)<sup>613</sup>

**Bob Jones University – *Unknown Pilot #68***

South Carolina (1950)<sup>614</sup>

**Bob Jones University – *Unknown Pilot #69***

South Carolina (1950)<sup>615</sup>

**Bob Jones University – *Unknown Pilot #70***

South Carolina (1950)<sup>616</sup>

**Bob Jones University – *Unknown Pilot #71***

South Carolina (1950)<sup>617</sup>

**Bob Jones University – *Unknown Pilot #72***

South Carolina (1950)<sup>618</sup>

**Bob Jones University – *Unknown Pilot #73***

South Carolina (1950)<sup>619</sup>

**Bob Jones University – *Unknown Pilot #74***

South Carolina (1950)<sup>620</sup>

**Bob Jones University – *Unknown Pilot #75***

South Carolina (1950)<sup>621</sup>

### **Verne A. Bruce**

Tetelcingo, Mexico (– 1950 –)

According to Paul Hartford, Verne Bruce crashed a Taylorcraft missionary aircraft at a landing strip in Mexico.<sup>622</sup>

### **Rev. Bernard Brunsting**

First Reformed Church – Grand Haven, MI (– 1950 –)

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<sup>612</sup> Ibid.

<sup>613</sup> Ibid.

<sup>614</sup> Ibid.

<sup>615</sup> Ibid.

<sup>616</sup> Ibid.

<sup>617</sup> Ibid.

<sup>618</sup> Ibid.

<sup>619</sup> Ibid.

<sup>620</sup> Ibid.

<sup>621</sup> Ibid.

<sup>622</sup> Hartford, "News on the Wing #8." (1950)

To invite children to vacation bible school at his church in Grand Haven, Michigan, pastor Bernard Brunsting (a former USAAF bomber pilot), threw “flying saucers” (paper plates) with information concerning the event out of his aircraft as he flew over the local community. Reverend Brunsting was assisted by Kenneth Leestma and John DiMartino,<sup>623</sup>

### **Oliver “Ollie” Bryant**

Sky Pilots of America, Wycliffe Bible Translators, California, Peru (– 1950 – 1953 –)

Oliver Bryan, World War Two fighter pilot, and A&E mechanic, temporarily flew (an Aeronca Sedan) for Wycliffe Bible Translators in South America. In 1951, he joined Sky Pilots of America as the organization’s resident mechanic at Hollister Field. Mr. and Mrs. Bryant were members of Home Union Church of Rosemead California.<sup>624</sup>

### **Rev. Buchanan**

WMAC – Kotzebue, Alaska (– 1950 –)

According to Paul Hartford, Reverend Buchanan flew in region of Kotzebue Alaska circa 1950.<sup>625</sup>

### **Bob Crammer**

New Tribes Mission – USA (1950)

Bob Crammer, served as commander in the Military Air Transports Service until the fall of 1950 when he flew as co-pilot of New Tribes Mission’s *Tribesman II* on its only mission flight, November 1950. Luther Grubb of the WMAC seemed to have seen a (now lost) federal report concerning the 21 November 1951 crash. From this report, he claimed (plausibly) that neither Lowrey nor Crammer had enough recent experience as pilots to fly a loaded passenger aircraft. Furthermore, neither pilot had the required instrument rating to fly in conditions of low visibility, and Crammer did not have a commercial pilots license.<sup>626</sup>

### **Jack Dennis**

New Tribes Mission – USA (1950)

Jack Dennis, a World War Two bomber pilot (B-17), served as radio operator of New Tribes

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<sup>623</sup> Anon., "Picture of Significance," *Christian Life*, Sep. 1950, 8-9.

<sup>624</sup> Anon., "New Mechanic at Hollister," *Sky Pilot News* 5, no. 5 (1951): 3 (BGC 136-30-53).

<sup>625</sup> Hartford, "Report of the Alaska Trip."

<sup>626</sup> Associated Press, "Missionary Plane Carrying 21 Strikes Peak in Rockies"; Luther L. Grubb, "As the Editor Sees it: Recent Tribesman DC3 Crash Draws Editorial Comment," *The Brethren Missionary Herald*, 21 Apr. 1951, 274,6; *The Story of New Tribes Mission*, chapter 14.



Mission's *Tribesman II* on its only mission flight, November 1950.<sup>627</sup>

### **Clarence Dilley**

WMAC – Hartford, Alaska (– 1950 –)

According to Paul Hartford, Clarence Dilley served as an independent flying missionary near Hartford, Alaska circa 1950.<sup>628</sup>

### **Laurence Durfee**

World Missionary Aviation Council (#100) – unknown (– 1950 –)

According to Paul Hartford, Laurence Durfee served as a “flying Bible student” in 1950.<sup>629</sup>

### **Robert L. Fielden**

Southern Baptist Convention Foreign Mission Board (SBC-FMB) – Brazil, Tennessee (– 1950 –)

Robert Fielden was appointed by SBC-FMB to their northern Brazil mission field to service their airplane based in Corrente.<sup>630</sup>

### **Ivan Fowler**

Moody Aviation – (1950)

Trained as missionary pilot at Moody Aviation. Killed in airplane accident at Elmhurst airport along with Harry Habegger and Richard Holstine, 23 May 1950.<sup>631</sup>

### **John Garlock**

Assemblies of God, World Missionary Aviation Council (#38) – unknown (– 1950 –)

In 1950, Assemblies of God pilot John Garlock received a new Cub Pacer from the Assemblies of God “Speed the Light” youth program to fly for mission posts in South Africa. Son of H. B. Garlock, influential leader within the Assemblies of God and supporter of WMAC.<sup>632</sup>

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<sup>627</sup> Associated Press, "Missionary Plane Carrying 21 Strikes Peak in Rockies"; *The Story of New Tribes Mission*, chapter 14.

<sup>628</sup> Hartford, "News on the Wing #9." (1950)

<sup>629</sup> Ibid.

<sup>630</sup> Bill Martin to MAF-US, 16 Oct. 1950 (BGC 136-60-7).

<sup>631</sup> "Two students, instructor die in burning airplane," *The Moody Student* (Moody Bible Institute, Chicago, IL), 2 Jun. 1950, 1, 4 (BGC 136-61-16).

<sup>632</sup> "Our First Missionary Plane," *The Missionary Challenge*, 1945, (BGC 528-1-5); Reverend Gordon D. Mellish to James C. Truxton, 11 Jan. 1946 (BGC 136-54-22); Hartford, "Review of Events -- 2nd Annual Convention --

### **Harry Habegger**

Moody Aviation – (1950)

Trained as missionary pilot at Moody Aviation. Killed in airplane accident at Elmhurst airport along with Ivan Fowler and Richard Holstine, 23 May 1950.<sup>633</sup>

### **Bob Hutchins**

MAF-US, MAF-AU – United States, Australia, New Guinea, Borneo, Africa (1950 – 1970s)

Bob Hutchins was a MAF-US member and Wheaton College graduate, originally from Pasadena California, and married to Betty Hansen Hutchins. In 1950, MAF-US loaned him to MAF-AU to fly in New Guinea. The Hutchins began flying for MAF-US later in the 1950s, and in 1960 began flying for MAF-UK in Sudan and Ethiopia. Hutchins likely remained flying with the various MAF branches throughout his mission career.<sup>634</sup>

### **Harold Jackson**

New Tribes Mission – USA, South America (– 1950 –)

Harold Jackson briefly flew for NTM circa 1950.<sup>635</sup>

### **Rev. Vincent J. Joy**

World Missionary Aviation Council (#96) – Alaska (– 1950 –)

Reverend Vincent Joy flew a Cub Clipper in the region surrounding Glennallen, Alaska.<sup>636</sup>

### **Walter Kornelsen**

Assemblies of God – Liberia, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Mexico, Panama, USA (– 1950 – 1954 –)

Walter Kornelsen flew as a missionary pilot for five years in Liberia, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Mexico, and Panama. He is credited with flying the Assemblies of God's *Ambassador* to Africa, however, the bulk of his aerial work consisted of flying light aircraft to provide other missionaries with groceries, mail, and air ambulance service. Following his mission aviation work, Walter and his wife continued for the next few decades to work as

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World Missionary Aviation Council." (1949); "Using Modern Methods," *Christian Life*, Dec. 1949; Hartford, "News on the Wing #8." (1950); "Focus on Learning," pamphlet (Assemblies of God, 1973) BGC 528-1-5.

<sup>633</sup> "Two students, instructor die in burning airplane"

<sup>634</sup> *Giving Wings to the Gospel*, 140-43, 46-47, 55, 57, 66, 71, 220, 23-24, 32, 42, 47, 66-69, 72-74, 94-95, 316, 18.

<sup>635</sup> *The Story of New Tribes Mission*, 152.

<sup>636</sup> Hartford, "Report of the Alaska Trip."; Hartford, "News on the Wing #9." (1950)

Assemblies of God missionaries.<sup>637</sup>

### **Sterling “Cy” Lowrey**

New Tribes Mission – USA (1950)

Sterling Lowrey, a World War Two bomber pilot (B-17), served as pilot of New Tribes Mission's *Tribesman II* on its only mission flight, November 1950. Luther Grubb of the WMAC seemed to have seen a (now lost) federal report concerning the 21 November 1951 crash. From this report, he claimed (plausibly) that neither Lowrey nor Crammer had enough recent experience as pilots to fly a loaded passenger aircraft. Furthermore, neither pilot had the required instrument rating to fly in conditions of low visibility, and Crammer did not have a commercial pilots license.<sup>638</sup>

### **Neil Macaulay**

World Missionary Aviation Council (#45) – unknown (– 1950 –)

According to Paul Hartford, Neil Macaulay served as a flying evangelist in 1950.<sup>639</sup>

### **Presbyterian Church USA: Central Brazil Mission, Second Aircraft**

Presbyterian Church USA – Brazil (1950 –)

In 1946, Rodger Perkins, a missionary pilot, began a mission aviation program in rural Brazil for the Central Brazil Mission (CBM) of the Presbyterian Church USA. In 1950 the program expanded to two operational aircraft.<sup>640</sup>

### **Robert “Bob” Shaylor**

New Tribes Mission – USA, South America (– 1950 –)

Bob Shaylor flew a Stinson in Venezuela in the early 1950s for New Tribes Mission. As with many aspects of NTM's early aviation works, his was shrouded in controversy. According to a letter from James Truxton to Shaylor, Shaylor, along with other NTM pilots, had been flying poorly maintained aircraft contrary to the orders of Venezuelan officials, who had ordered NTM aircraft grounded until they had been repaired, orders NTM had ignored. NTM's disregard of

<sup>637</sup> Anon., "Focus on Learning: Walter Kornelsen," pamphlet (Assemblies of God, Jun. 1973) BGC 528-1-5; Anon., "Veteran Missionaries of the Assemblies of God: Rev. and Mrs. Walter Kornelsen," pamphlet (Assemblies of God, Jun. 1977) BGC 528-1-5.

<sup>638</sup> Associated Press, "Missionary Plane Carrying 21 Strikes Peak in Rockies"; Grubb, "Recent Tribesman DC3 Crash Draws Editorial", 1951; *The Story of New Tribes Mission*, chapter 14.

<sup>639</sup> Hartford, "News on the Wing #9." (1950)

<sup>640</sup> See: Presbyterian Church USA: Central Brazil Mission (1946). See also: Mellis, "From the Field", 1946; Martin, "Aircraft on the Mission Field," 56; James C. Truxton to MAF D-1, 30 Jul. 1950 (BGC 136-2-27); James C. Truxton to J. W. Shank, 7 Oct. 1950 (BGC 136-2-27); *Daily Independent Journal* (San Rafael (CA)), 14 Apr. 1958, 13; *Giving Wings to the Gospel*, 68, 128.

regulation undermined relations between government officials and other mission aviation organizations then operating in the country.<sup>641</sup>

### **Clem Smith**

New Tribes Mission – USA, South America (– 1950 – 1951 –)

Clem Smith flew light aircraft (Norseman) for New Tribes Mission in Brazil during the 1950s.<sup>642</sup>

### **Howard Street**

Baptist Mid Missions – Congo (– 1950 –)

Howard Street flew a Super Cruiser in the Congo for Baptist Mid Missions. While flying to save the life of a missionary child, Street crashed his aircraft.<sup>643</sup>

### **Victory Sky Pilots – *Unknown Pilot #108***

Evangelical Protestant – Indiana (1948 – 1950)

Between 1948 and 1950, Victory Sky Pilots trained but fifteen additional missionary pilots. Thus, throughout the program's operational lifetime, VSP trained a total of 135 total ministers, evangelists, and missionaries. Of those taught between 1948 – 1950, information is currently available on two: Albert Kliever (1948) and Arthur Grover (1949). Of the 135 student pilots trained at VSP, many may very well have been private pilots who did not fly as part of a ministry. See also entry for Victory Sky Pilots, Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #4, Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #34, and Paul Hartford.<sup>644</sup>

#### **Victory Sky Pilots – *Unknown Pilot #109***

Indiana (1948 – 50)<sup>645</sup>

#### **Victory Sky Pilots – *Unknown Pilot #110***

Indiana (1948 – 50)<sup>646</sup>

#### **Victory Sky Pilots – *Unknown Pilot #111***

Indiana (1948 – 50)<sup>647</sup>

#### **Victory Sky Pilots – *Unknown Pilot #112***

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<sup>641</sup> James C. Truxton to Robert Schaler, 7 Feb. 1951 (BGC 136-57-19); *The Story of New Tribes Mission*, chapter 152.

<sup>642</sup> *The Story of New Tribes Mission*, 152.

<sup>643</sup> Paul Hartford, "News on the Wing #7," pamphlet (WMAC, Aug. 1950) BGC 136-60-7.

<sup>644</sup> See Paul Hartford Papers in BGC 136-25-13. See also: Ralph Colburn, "Brethren Boys Clubs Buy Plane," *The Brethren Missionary Herald*, 18 Sep. 1948, 824; Hartford, "News on the Wing #2." (1949); "A Reporter Travels on the Ambassador: He Sees the Ambassador a tool in God's Hands," *The Missionary Challenge*, May 1950, 11-2 (BGC 528-1-5).

<sup>645</sup> See Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #108.

<sup>646</sup> See Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #108.

<sup>647</sup> See Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #108.

Indiana (1948 – 50)<sup>648</sup>

**Victory Sky Pilots – *Unknown Pilot #113***

Indiana (1948 – 50)<sup>649</sup>

**Victory Sky Pilots – *Unknown Pilot #114***

Indiana (1948 – 50)<sup>650</sup>

**Victory Sky Pilots – *Unknown Pilot #115***

Indiana (1948 – 50)<sup>651</sup>

**Victory Sky Pilots – *Unknown Pilot #116***

Indiana (1948 – 50)<sup>652</sup>

**Victory Sky Pilots – *Unknown Pilot #117***

Indiana (1948 – 50)<sup>653</sup>

**Victory Sky Pilots – *Unknown Pilot #118***

Indiana (1948 – 50)<sup>654</sup>

**Victory Sky Pilots – *Unknown Pilot #119***

Indiana (1948 – 50)<sup>655</sup>

**Victory Sky Pilots – *Unknown Pilot #120***

Indiana (1948 – 50)<sup>656</sup>

### **Tom Van Meter**

Fergus Falls, MN (– 1950 –)

Tom Van Meter gained some notoriety in the late 1940s for using an aircraft to hunt animals (foxes, coyotes, wolves) in rural Minnesota. His efforts were part of a statewide predatory control program, and Van Meter would tour the region to speak on his work. He also used his speaking engagements as opportunities to evangelize his audience.<sup>657</sup>

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<sup>648</sup> See Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #108.

<sup>649</sup> See Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #108.

<sup>650</sup> See Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #108.

<sup>651</sup> See Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #108.

<sup>652</sup> See Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #108.

<sup>653</sup> See Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #108.

<sup>654</sup> See Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #108.

<sup>655</sup> See Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #108.

<sup>656</sup> See Victory Sky Pilots – Unknown Pilot #108.

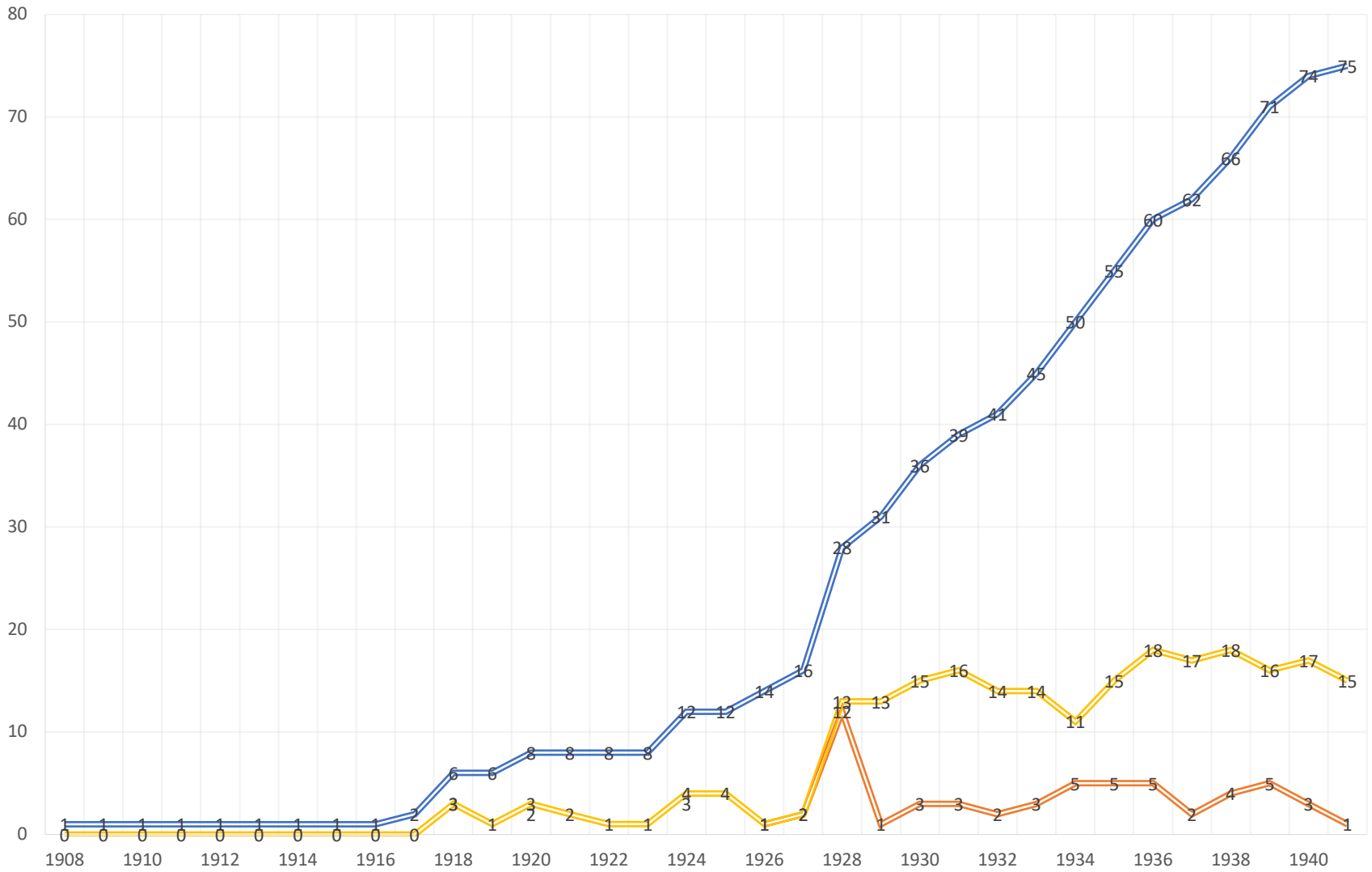
<sup>657</sup> Ronald C. Carlson, "Operation Fox," *Christian Life*, Oct. 1950, 7.

### Appendix B

The following charts plot in graphic form the data from Appendix A. They trace the number of missionaries and mission organizations that planned, organized, or started a mission aviation program from 1908 through 1950. However, as the records of many of these pilots and organizations are fragmentary, the charts should not be thought of as exact, but as a representative approximation of mission aviation activity for this time.

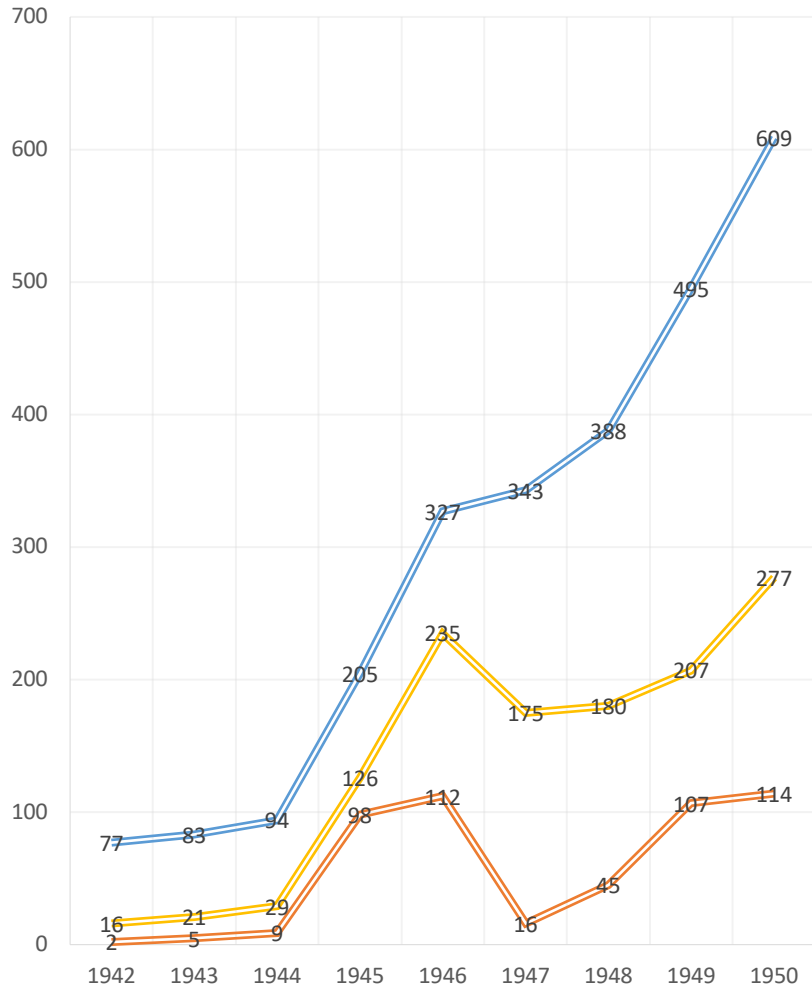
# WAVES 1 & 2

— Launched    
 — Operational    
 — Running Total of Mission Aviation Programs Planned and Launched

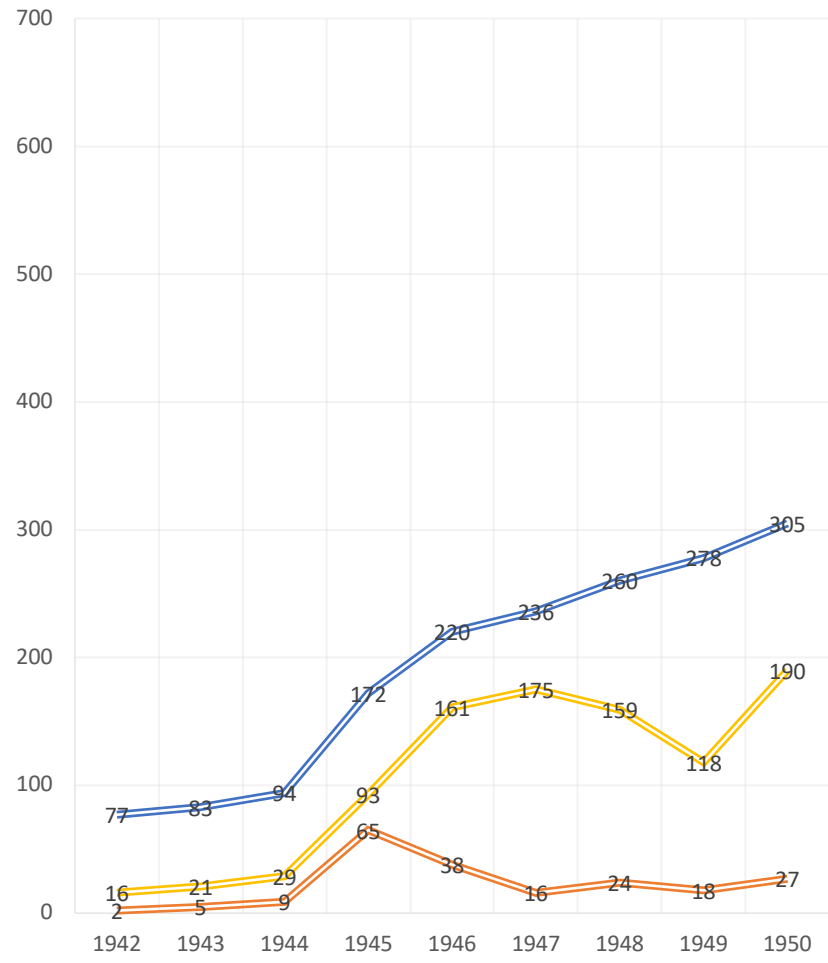


### WAVE THREE

- Launched
- Operational
- Running Total of Mission Aviation Programs Planned and Launched



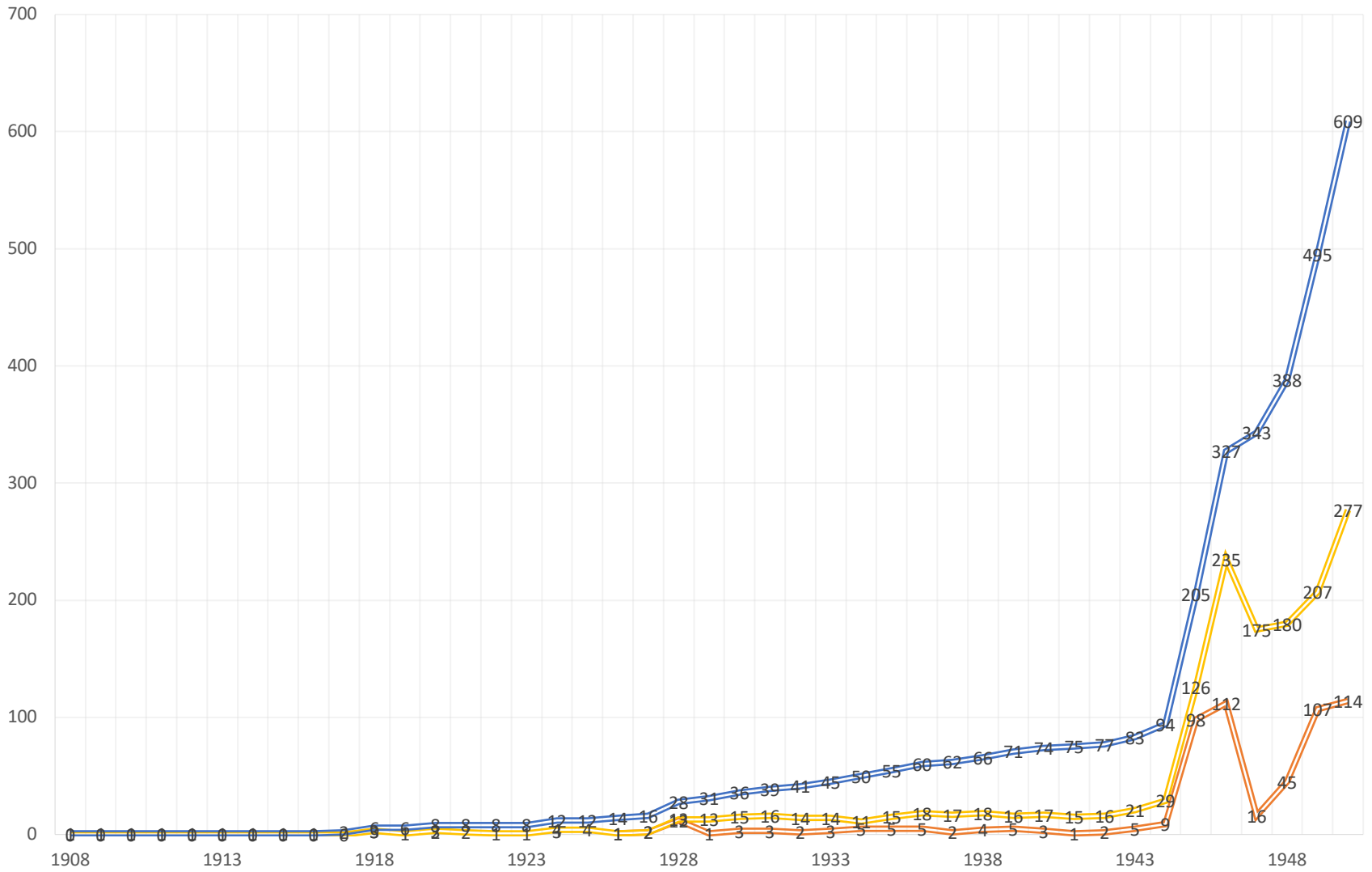
### WAVE THREE (WITH NO ANONYMOUS AVIATION STUDENTS)





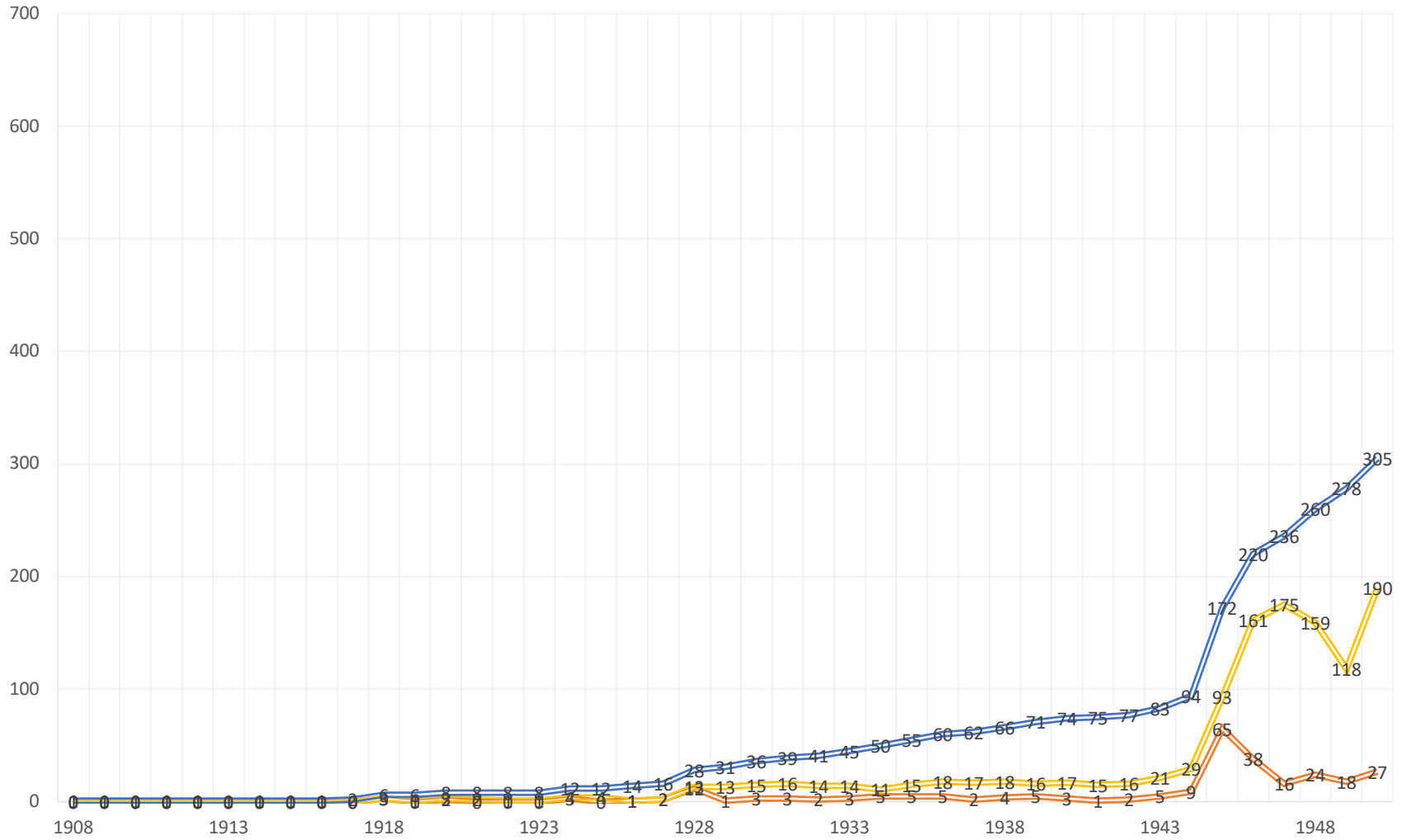
# WAVES ONE THROUGH THREE

— Launched    
 — Operational    
 — Running Total of Mission Aviation Programs Planned and Launched



# WAVES ONE THROUGH THREE (WITH NO ANONYMOUS MISSION AVIATION STUDENTS)

— Launched    
 — Operational    
 — Running Total of Mission Aviation Programs Planned and Launched



### Appendix C

The following is a list of the first two hundred fifty MAF-US members who joined the organization between July 1945 and September 1946. Of these members, 57% were professionals of the aviation industry. The remaining 42% (105 members) were amateur pilots interested in mission aviation, little different than many of Paul Hartford's own supporters.

Member #	Name	Additional Info
1	James C. Truxton	Lt. U.S.N.R. RBM Pilot. CAMF President
2	James W. Buyers	Lt. U.S.N.R. Ferry Pilot - Test Pilot. CAMF Exec Secretary
3	George E. Fisk	Rev., C&MA, Missionary Pilot in Borneo. CAMF Foreign Secretary 1945-46
4	Elizabeth E. Greene	WASP. CAMF secretary-treasurer, 1945-46
5	Carroll W. Rinehart	Lt. U.S.N.R., Naval Air Transport Pilot
6	Clarence A. Soderberg	Lt. U.S.N.R., Naval Air Transport Pilot
7	Paul B. Payne	Commercial Airline Pilot. CAMF Technical Board
8	Lee O. Bogue, Jr.	2nd Lt. A.C. B-24 Bomber Pilot - MIA
9	Gordon H. Smith	Rev. Missionary from French Indo China, Private Pilot
10	Lloyd T. White	A & E Mechanic, Grad. Parks Air College
11	Paul C. Hartford	Rev., civ. pilot, president Victory Sky Pilots
12	Paul F. Robinson	Rev., civilian pilot, pastor. Founder of Moody Aviation
13	Thomas M. Petty	Rev., student pilot, professor Columbia Bible College
14	Stanley V. Cain	Student pilot, ministry student at Westmont College
15	John W. Schearer	Lt. A.C., B-17 pilot
16	George E. Boggs	Lt. U.S.M.C.R. Marine fighter pilot
17	Heb L. Smith	AAF pilot instructor
18	W. IL. Pierce	Flight officer RCAF - Canada
19	WM. E. Martin	Rev., AAF pilot
20	Charles Kegerize	C&MA missionary and pilot
21	WM. E. Baldwin	Lt. A.C., Army bomber pilot, MIA
22	Ray Jackson	Lt. A.C. AAF fighter and transport pilot
23	Melvin J. Huckins	Student pilot, missionary in training
24	Nathaniel Saint	Sgt. A.C., License mechanic and pilot
25	Windsor S. Vick	Aero. Eng., A & E. mech, student pilot
26	H. D. Hungerford	Lt. A.C., AAF four engine pilot
27	Verne A. Bruce	T/5 Student Pilot
28	Neal Webber	Student pilot in missionary training
29	WM. J. Engen	Air Cadet, AAF pilot
30	Frank D. McLaughlin	Pvt. Civilian pilot, now radio operator on B-29
31	Everett W. Elder	Lt. A.C., Pilot instructor - B-24
32	E. R. Jones	L.A.C., RCAF single engine pilot - Canada
33	Verne J. McClain	Aviation technician
34	J. Grady Parrott	RAF flight instructor. CAMF Vice-President 1945, 46,
35	B. H. Todd, Jr.	Lt. A.C., AAF pilot
36	Paul Finlay	Primary flight instructor for Army Air Forces
37	David C. Mangham	Student pilot, missionary in training
38	Howard Kinsinger	Student pilot in missionary training
39	Chalmers C. Boring	Student pilot and radioman in missionary training
40	Ralph G. Caldwell	Student pilot in missionary training

41	D. W. Williams	Air Cadet U.S.N.R. In Naval pilot training
42	Robert L. Russell	Student pilot in missionary training
43	Richard M. Siple	Student pilot in missionary training
44	Gilbert Cicio	Student pilot in missionary training
45	Morton H. Smith	Lt. A.C. AAF flight instructor
46	Richard G. Douse	Air Cadet U.S.N.R.
47	Walton G. Herbert	Student pilot in missionary training
48	Horst Wolf	Student pilot in missionary training
49	Elaine Bowman	Student pilot in missionary training
50	Marianna Meisiek	Student pilot in missionary training
51	Norman C. Truxton	AMMF 3/c, Flight Engr.
52	James R. Ryerson	Navy Pilot
53	John W. Lamey	Rev. Commercial Pilot
54	James W. Eveland	Tech., Pilot; A & E Mech; Aircraft Inspector
55	Edward C. Bedros	Aircraft worker
56	Laurel A. Walter	Civ. pilot
57	Robert A. Remington	Sgt., Radio Operator
58	Frank O. Widbin	Lt. C-47 Pilot
59	David Scales	1st Lt. 4-Eng. Pilot
60	Evertt J. Marks	Student Pilot and Aero Engr.
61	Robert F. Hopkins	Lt. AAF Navigator; Pilot
62	William B. Cather Jr.	Radioman
63	James M. Kopp	Pvt. Civ. Pilot; Avn. Mech.
64	Walter F. Fulton Jr.	Lt. P-61 Night Ftr. Pilot - Killed in Trng.
65	Edna Kource	Student pilot in missionary training
66	Robert Bernlehr	Ens. Navy ATS Pilot
67	Ken Cooper	Sgt., Student Pilot; RAAF Radio Operator (Australia)
68	G. E. Knierim	Civ. Airplane Mech.
69	Eleanor A. Bankson	Private pilot
70	David J. Gunn	B-25 Pilot; Westmont Student
71	Stanley Bloom	Mechanic
72	Gerald E. Mokma	A/C, Pilot
73	Phillip W. Roberts	Radioman
74	Robin W. Hays	Cap, U.S.N, Chief Avn. Pilot
75	Hosier	Private pilot, Reverend
76	Cragoe	
77	Bolinder	
78	Crane	
79	Dedrick	
80	Haaland	
81	Hugo	
82	Taylor	
83	Balnicky	

84	Ault	
85	Widbin	
86	Wassman	
87	Martz	Private Pilot, Reverend
88	Hinderlie	Student Pilot, Prospective Missionary to Alaska
89	Wivell	
90	Seeley	private pilot
91	Pietsch	military pilot also missionary
92	Browner	
93	Robinson	
94	Hatcher	
95	Clark	private pilot, Reverend
96	Yoder	
97	McGuill	student pilot
98	Teague	
99	Christian	
100	David C. Rupp	student pilot missionary to Africa
101	Marple	
102	Bergman	
103	Briggs	private pilot
104	Hartman	
105	Heller	
106	Bishop	
107	Williams	
108	Pomarico	
109	Bertsch	private pilot
110	Walworth	
111	Mannester	student pilot
112	Moffett	
113	Ross	
114	Mendenhall	
115	Green	
116	Treffer	interested in flying as a missionary doctor
117	McCracken	private pilot
118	Goodman	
119	Hammond	
120	Robie	private pilot
121	Agar	
122	Walter	
123	Hendrickson	
124	Petrovic	private pilot
125	McDonald	
126	Devine	

127	Frye	
128	Swanson	
129	Schultz	
130	Wilson	
131	Stewart	
132	Grimes	
133	Greenberg	
134	Ubbink	
135	Hess	student pilot
136	Judd	Reverend, Private Pilot, Missionay to South America
137	Driediger	
138	Bernard E. Northrup	student pilot, intends to be missionary aviator
139	Mrs. Dorothy Dehr	solo pilot
140	Overholt	
141	Reuter	
142	Minor	
143	Robb	
144	Packard	private pilot
145	Notson	student pilot
146	Castro	
147	Vess	private pilot
148	Buker	private pilot
149	Lehman	private pilot
150	Davis	private pilot
151	Bryant	private pilot
152	Simms	private pilot
153	Leonard	private pilot
154	Jones	
155	McClure	private pilot
156	Alderman	
157	Chaney	
158	Aunkst	
159	Arnold	private pilot
160	Sadler	
161	Yuva	student pilot
162	Hess	student pilot
163	Marston	private pilot
164	Longfield-Smith	private pilot
165	Hanson	private pilot
166	Pabst	student pilot
167	Abel	private pilot
168	Baskett	student pilot
169	Charles J. Mellis Jr.	commercial pilot

170	Speake	private pilot
171	Springston	private pilot
172	Wilson	
173	Starch	
174	Lochler	
175	McConnell	
176	McLennon	
177	Oldham	
178	Lindahl	
179	Kendall	private pilot
180	Surdam	
181	Ehrenkrook	private pilot
182	Nuzum	private pilot
183	Kalivoda	
184	Legant	
185	Parker	private pilot
186	Fletcher	
187	Olson	
188	Few	private pilot
189	King	
190	Pearsall	
191	Ferrall	
192	Sims	
193	Hurst	private pilot
194	Kile	student pilot
195	Berry	
196	Gamble	
197	Bergwall	
198	Jenkins	
199	Borman	
200	Wittenmeier	
201	Spaulding	private pilot
202	Steele	
203	Coffman	private pilot
204	Neel	
205	Standley	private pilot, missionary in Brazil
206	Tidings	private pilot
207	Campbell	private pilot
208	Shields	private pilot
209	Frost	private pilot
210	Diem	
211	Currie	student pilot
212	Knecht	student pilot



213	Davis	private pilot
214	McDonald	private pilot
215	Harms	
216	Williams	private pilot
217	Peterson	private pilot
218	Lyons	
219	Giese	
220	Sokol	
221	Weis	
222	A. Denwood Lane	private pilot
223	Dekker	private pilot
224	Wilson	private pilot
225	Bowden	private pilot
226	Goolsbee	
227	Wright	
228	Mrs. A. D. Lane	student pilot
229	Singer	
230	Paul A Uhlinger	private pilot, missionary to Africa
231	Reihmer	
232	Brien	private pilot
233	Marvin	
234	Kenneth W. Clark	Commercial Pilot
235	Johnson	private pilot
236	Truxton	
237	Thomas	Private pilot
238	Matthews	student pilot
239	Conner	student pilot
240	Mashburn	
241	Roffe	private pilot
242	Heck	private pilot
243	Robertson	private pilot
244	Simondson	private pilot, AU
245	Bowman	private pilot
246	Anderson	private pilot
247	Suber	
248	Donovan J. Bakke	private pilot
249	Hard	
250	Bingham	student pilot

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