

The United Methodist Flyer



United Methodist Aviation Ministries

The Aviation Branch of the
Global Ministries of the United Methodist Church

→ UMAviationMinistries.org ←

January 2014

Optional Prayer?

Be assured that our request for prayer support is not just for show. Your prayers are an integral part of our (and any) ministry.

I left on my trip to the Congo last month with a long list of projects to work on. I never expected to get everything on the list accomplished – and I didn't. But realistically speaking, getting 4 pilots, one mechanic, two mission volunteers, a videographer and an Aviation Coordinator all together in the same place and at the same time to accomplish much of anything would be a long shot in anyone's book. By the grace of God, we managed to knock quite a few things off the list, and the

volunteer team and I were able to get up-country to visit and film mission stations I hadn't seen in years.

But if accomplishing those few things was a challenge (and it was), imagine taking most of that same group, adding an ad-

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Congo Checklist



- National Aviation Board formation
- Flight reviews – Rukang, Jacques
- Revise flight review form
- Calibration system
- Av-gas container
- Dec 3 Giving Tuesday event
- Budgets – sustainable programs
- Video pilots and programs
- Inspect hangars in Lub. & Kga.
- Jet fuel handling
- Schedule audit
- 402 container
- Caravan pics for Preferred
- Spidertracks, Delorne In-Reach
- Caravan Inspection
- Sophie—maintenance applicant

The number of pilots in this world is counted by the millions. The number of missionary pilots is counted by the hundreds. The skill set needed for missionary pilot work can be every bit as demanding as that for an airline captain. It's a different skill set, mind you, but demanding none the less. Missionary pilots also have an obviously different purpose and calling in life. And for the United Methodist Aviation Ministries (UMAM) pilots, there is one more distinctive difference. Captains typically wear epaulettes with 4 bars (first officers 3; flight engineers 2) and you can see "4-striper" walking around most any major airport. But UMAM pilots have chosen to use captain chaplain's epaulettes which have the four gold bars, but also have a gold cross. Yes, we fly for a different purpose and we want the world to know.

At the close of the National Aviation Board meeting, we ceremoniously stripped Markus Wolfmaier of his epaulettes. Markus is our newest pilot and a wonderful addition to our ranks, but he showed up for work improperly dressed to be a UMAM pilot. He was issued his new epaulettes which proudly and distinctively proclaim him to be one of ours, but far more importantly, one of God's!



The Changing of the Epaulettes



United Methodist Aviation Ministries

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*La Bonne Nouvelle Dans L'Air
(The Good News in the Air)*

UMAM is a Proud Member of



International Association of Missionary Aviation

There are plenty of ways to get involved with the United Methodist Aviation Ministries. To see how, visit UMAviationMinistries.org or contact Steve Quigg at SQuigg@umcmmission.org.

To sign up to receive the UM Flyer on a regular basis, contact Peggy Elliott at umamnews@gmail.com

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ditional four bishops (each with his own priorities), two mission board executives (suffering from jet-lag), four wives (from very different backgrounds), and four annual conference representatives (who had never worked together before) and asking them to form a National Aviation Board (which had no precedent). All we would expect of them would be to work in unity across conference and episcopal lines for the greater good of the aviation ministry. Hmm! A similar effort to form a Congo national health board had ended in spectacular failure just weeks before. I confess, my expectations were minimal. But shame on me – you were praying!

The National Aviation Board meeting exceeded my wildest expectations. I still believe in miracles, and I'll tell you, we lived through one there. The cooperation between the delegates was impressive, the spiritual reflection and admonitions profound, and the accomplishments significant. We now have collaborative strategies for providing aerial coverage for the new episcopal area formed at last year's General Conference. We now have new cooperative projects for which to seek funding. And we now have a greater appreciation for each other's work than ever before.

Knowing the impact the United Methodist Aviation Ministries has on the people of the Congo, and learning of the formation of the new Board, the state governor invited the delegates over to his home for a private face to face meeting to learn more about what had been accomplished. One of the most poignant moments of the entire trip was seeing the bishops and mission leaders gathered in a circle with the governor to pray for him.

Lots of good stuff happens when God's people join together to pray. Prayer Optional? Not on our watch!



A Poignant Moment of Prayer with the Governor (third from the left)

Flying Wild Congo

One of the greatest challenges for any missionary is making the adventures we live overseas come alive for the support team "back home". Stories have to be transported across the great divides of language, culture, world-view, perspective and technology. It's not an easy thing to do. Those who tell the stories well are rewarded with generous responses as supporters engage with the ministry; those who don't, wonder why people just don't get it. But many a compelling story simply doesn't survive the journey from one world to the next.

The Aviation Ministries is no exception. Our stories are exciting, the personalities engaging, the results eternal. But it's a challenge to put a face on an airplane, so to speak, and to make the case for why an aviation ministry is such a necessity in the midst of the African jungle. Which is exactly why we made the investment this fall to haul a videographer to some of the remotest places on earth. If a picture is worth a thousand words, imagine what a movie can do! But it's not just any person with a camera who can tackle such a job. Enter TJ, an up and coming videographer who has a great love for the Lord—and a great discomfort with airplanes! Be that as it may, TJ flew half way around the world, and then took a dozen flights across the Congo to capture the sights, sounds and spirit of the UM Aviation Ministries. We expect great things to come from his efforts, and you can too. Take a peek at some of TJ's previous work to understand why he got this gig: www.vimeo.com/48267311/



TJ Lining Up a Shot