



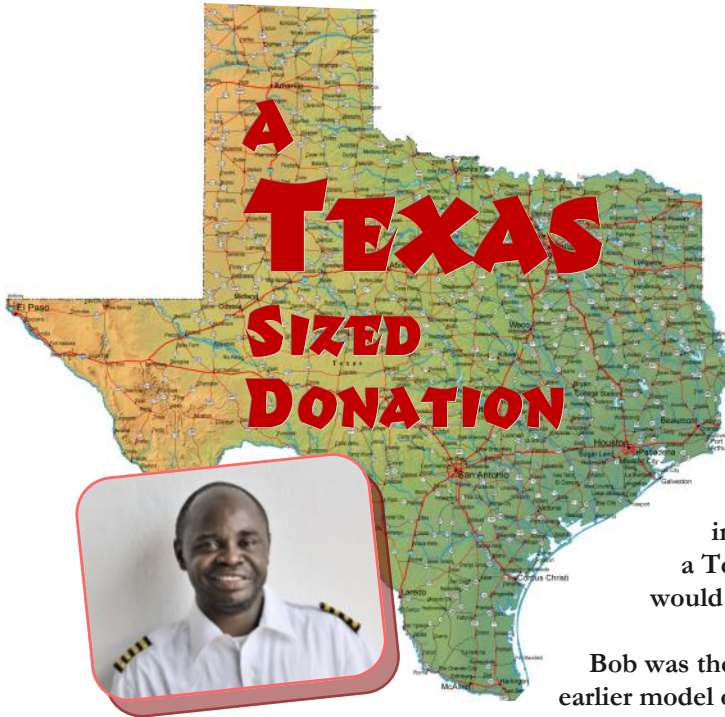
The United Methodist Flyer

United Methodist Aviation Ministries

The Aviation Branch of Global Ministries
of the United Methodist Church

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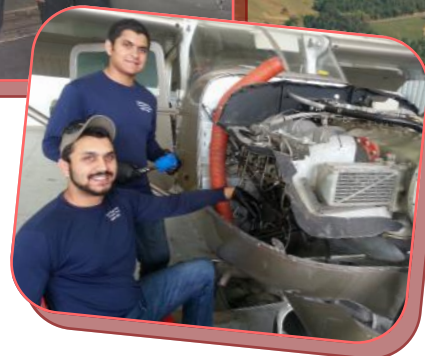
June 2015



Regardless of how reliable and functional modern aircraft engines might be, sooner or later they reach their service limit and must be replaced or overhauled. Such is the case for the powerful Continental TSIO-520 engine which has been powering the South Congo Cessna T210 for most of this century. The need for a new engine was part of the message Rukang Chikomb, South Congo's very capable pilot-mechanic shared last year while in the US visiting supporting churches. One of his speaking tours took him to the small central Texas town of Olney boasting a population of 3,223 proud citizens. As the Lord would have it, Bob O'Dell happened to be in the audience at First Church that evening and was so moved by the stories Rukang shared about his work that he knew he just had to do something to help. And help he did. Bob could have simply put a few dollars in the offering plate like everyone else did that night, but he had a Texas sized idea and something far more valuable to give. "How would you like an airplane?", he asked Rukang.

Bob was the proud owner of several airplanes, one of which was a much earlier model of the very same plane Rukang flies. Before Rukang left town, plans had been made for Bob to donate the plane to the mission board and for the proceeds from its eventual sale to go toward the purchase of a new engine for Rukang.

Of course, an airplane manufactured in 1960 and which hadn't been flown for awhile wasn't about ready to go on anyone's auction block right away. In order to make the plan work, it was time to call in UMAM expert volunteer Bill Hatfield and his mechanical sidekicks, the Caudle boys. Bill made two trips to Olney at his own expense and after the installation of some new parts and a good bit of tweaking, the plane was ready to be ferried back to North Carolina where it would be hangared and properly prepared for sale. Now six months later, with freshly refurbished seats, new carpeting, a fully functional panel, and all systems thoroughly inspected and brought up to spec, Bob's gift is ready to go to a proud new owner. That person might never know just what his or her purchase represents, but Rukang does, Bill does, the Caudle boys do, and Bob certainly does. "November 9434 Tango" (the call sign for the plane) will never make it to Africa, but its spirit will get there in the form of a freshly overhauled engine to go into a Cessna 210 twenty years its junior yet far more capable. The Spirit which inspired Bob to donate his plane is the same Spirit which will work through the piloting skills of Rukang to deliver Hope, Help and Healing to the people of South Congo. Thanks be to God!



Bob O'Dell,
James & Aaron
Caudle,
N9434T in Flight

United Methodist Aviation Ministries

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SOUTH AFRICAN SAFARI

AN UPDATE FROM RACHEL GABLER



Gaston, UMAM's pilot for the North Katanga Conference, and Rachel's husband Dan, UMAM's Maintenance Manager, enjoy a quiet moment between jobs.

MAY 10

This is Rachel, the unofficial translator for Gaston and Dan (G & D). I am going to attempt to explain the work that has been done on the Caravan in South Africa. If G & D try, only they and a few others with "avionitus" will understand. (Definition: Avionitus—The disease that infects with a preoccupation with all things aviation. To date it is incurable.)

Pratt and Whitney (P&W), the manufacturer of the engine in the Caravan, has designed an upgrade on a part for the engine called a stator. (After all this time I still don't understand what a stator is. Some-

thing about a portion of a machine that remains fixed with respect to rotating parts) As an incentive to get all the existing engines worldwide changed over to this new stator, P&W offered to cover a significant portion of the cost of our trip to South Africa, as well as covering the cost of the changeover itself. Since all this was happening, G & D decided to take advantage of the opportunity to have other upgrades and checks done simultaneously. That takes considerable managing to make happen.

So the plane flew into Wonderboom Airport, South Africa on March 27 where the certified maintenance facility, 208 Aviation, is for this type of airplane (this being the closest place to our home base in Lubumbashi, D. R. Congo). Then the 208 Aviation mechanics removed the engine and sent it to Vector which is the only place on the continent that P&W approves to do this modification. Once the engine was being tended to, G & D coordinated with 208 Aviation, an avionics company and other companies to get the other jobs done.

In the tear down inspection prior to the new stator being installed Vector discovered some wear on some part that if it had gone on could have, at a minimum, cost a lot of money to replace. This was not related to the stator nor was it anything to do with our maintenance procedures. God is so good. We are so thankful it was found early.

On Wednesday last week we saw the engine being tested in the test cell at Vector. To me it looked like something NASA would be running. All systems were go! It takes a day to attach the test instruments to the engine and a day to remove them. On Wednesday this week the engine arrived back at 208 and was installed in the plane. Gaston almost began taking up residence in the hangar he was so excited. Amazingly the other jobs that were in play have been or are being completed as I write.

There have been a lot of residual things to do. One of them was cataract surgery for Dan which went very well. Also we have all been pushed by the limits of Gaston's South Africa visa which expires Monday, May 11, 2015. And we had a safety audit performed for us while we were here. Fun stuff! So pray that all this keeps coming together and that we can leave on or before Monday.



MAY 12

This is just a quick note to let you know the Caravan made it safely back to Lubumbashi on Monday. A week ago we were facing what appeared to be a swiftly closing window. And then, PTL, it all came together. God is so good. There were no issues with any of the work that had been done. And the plane performed beautifully in all respects. Added to the mechanical miracle, a friend was able to do a proficiency check ride for Gaston. The timing and place for all of this to happen was truly a God thing.

The last part of the flight into Lubumbashi was another event for which to give thanks. Our fuel stop in Zambia ate up much more time than we had anticipated. Leaving us facing an almost certain expensive fee on landing after sunset. Working all of the factors of winds and power settings and demonstrating magnificent airmanship, Gaston had us squeaking down onto the runway just as the sun set. God is so good.

