

Gospel Ministries International

# Mission Aviation

Summer 2014



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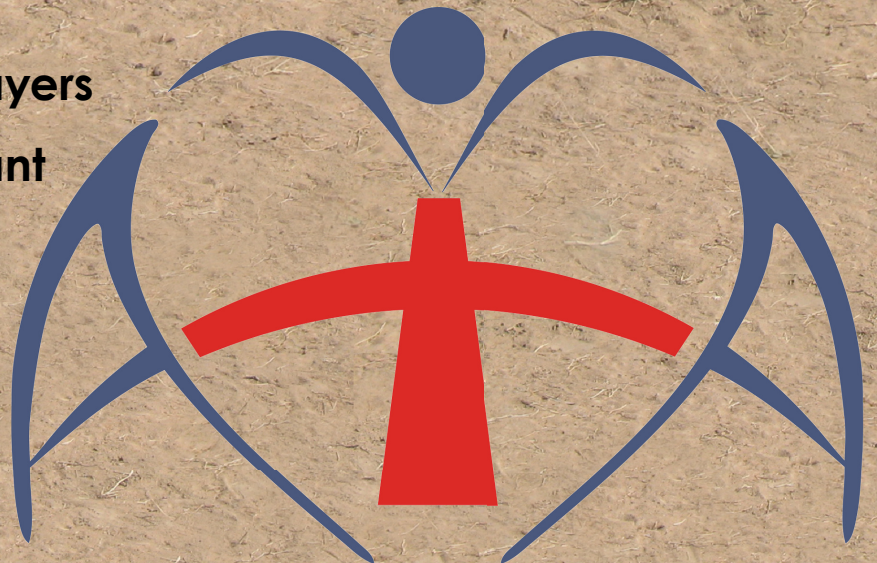
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# His Perfect Timing

Cas Anderson



**L**AST SUMMER, OUR FAMILY WAS in THE STATES on furlough for 3 months. One of the things Todd wanted to accomplish before returning to Guyana was to get his Inspection Authorization (IA) certificate. This would allow him to perform annual inspections and sign-off major repairs and alterations done to the mission planes. But, we didn't have the funds for the course or for travel expenses between Oregon and Tennessee, where the course was held.

Our family had been praying about this for months. None of the mission pilots in Guyana held the inspector certificate, so we relied on IAs willing to come down from the

States to perform the inspections and repairs. It would be a huge benefit to the project for Todd to have his IA.

As the IA classes began to fill, we decided to step out in faith and pay the deposit to hold a place. We continued to pray, but still the finances didn't come. Convinced that Todd needed to take the class, we decided to use the last bit of our savings to purchase the airfare for the trip.

The day before Todd was supposed to leave for Tennessee, we got an e-mail saying that money had come in. The full amount of the class was covered. Praise the Lord!

When Todd flew to Tennessee, he was met by a wonderful, Christian family who housed and fed him for the week and saw that he made it to the airport every morning for class. We had never met this family before, but God graciously made the connection through a friend on Facebook who saw Todd's need for a place to stay.

What a blessing it was to find out that there were only three guys in Todd's class, all of them Christians. We were even more grateful when we realized that the course offered the following

week was full with 25 students! After the week of classes and by the grace of God, Todd passed the test on Thursday and flew back to Oregon.

The following Monday, as we were heading to the airport to catch our flight to Guyana, we stopped by the FAA office to pick up Todd's

**The day before Todd was supposed to leave for Tennessee, we got an e-mail saying that money had come in.**

certificate. We found out that in only a matter of hours the office would be closed due to the indefinite government shutdown. God's timing is always perfect timing!

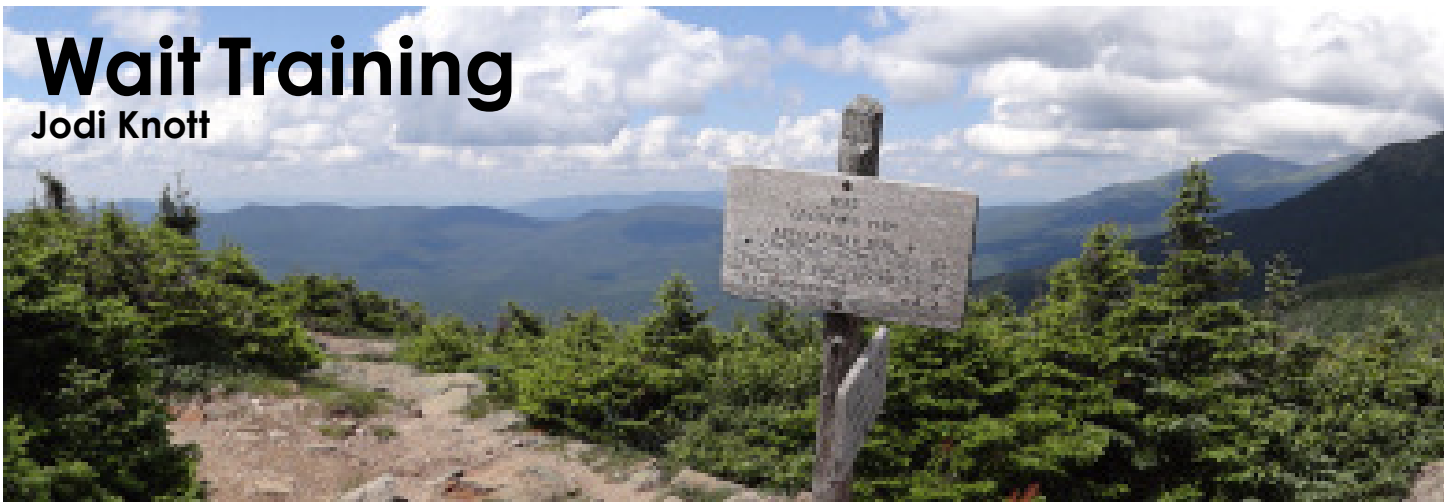
Experiences like this at a regular job would just be stressful, but in working with God, we have found these adventures to be excellent learning lessons. What a blessing it is to see first-hand how our Creator is still our Provider and how He wants to have an incredibly personal relationship with us.

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# Wait Training

Jodi Knott



**H**AVE YOU EVER PRAYED FOR SOMETHING AND HAD TO WAIT a long time for an answer? Waiting in the American culture is hard with so many things bringing instant gratification all around: credit cards, fast food, supermarkets, etcetera. But, just as weight lifting builds stronger physical muscles, ‘wait training’ builds stronger spiritual muscles.

Think about the story of Mary, Martha and Lazarus. The sisters asked Jesus to come and heal their brother when he was very sick, but Jesus delayed and Lazarus died. The sisters got impatient and accused Jesus of being late. Had He come quickly, He could have healed Lazarus and made the sisters happy, but the witness would have ended there. Instead, Jesus chose to wait because He knew that by waiting, He would have the opportunity to perform a miracle resulting in the eternal salvation of many others. If the sisters had realized that, they may have been more willing to wait too, as hard as it may have been. John 11:45 says that “many of the Jews who had come to Mary, and had seen the things that Jesus did, believed in Him” (NKJV). Jesus’ primary mission centered on eternal results; everything else was secondary.

A long time ago, God placed a burden on our hearts to pray for good mission planes. In the last issue, DJ wrote about the specific prayer that God gave us: to pray for five Cessna 182Ps over the course of eight months. We prayed diligently and encouraged others to pray also. But the end of those eight months arrived with not a single plane added to the fleet. All of our efforts to cooperate with God seemed to be of no avail.

**The things that really matter have eternal value; nothing else holds the same significance!**

As we prayed for understanding, the Holy Spirit led us to recognize one of our blind spots: we were so focused on the planes and the eternal good that they could do in the mission field that we lost sight of the eternal results associated with acquiring the planes in the first place!

Since then, God has given us many opportunities to call and visit airplane owners, but this time with a slightly different purpose. The focus is no longer on their airplanes, but on the witness we can be in the meantime. It is so exciting to see how God is working! We left copies of *The Great Controversy* and *Signs of*

the *Times* magazines with all of the guys working at a crop-dusting company in Kansas and we mailed a *Forks Over Knives* DVD and other religious literature to the owner of the company after follow-up conversations; DJ had several long phone conversations listening to and praying with people who needed someone to care; we left literature with several plane owners in North Carolina, one of whom mentioned during a follow-up phone call that he had been reading a book we left him and had questions. The work has only begun!

Friends, the things that really matter have eternal value; nothing else holds the same significance! Will you continue to pray with us not only for airplanes but also for the eternal salvation of the people we come in contact with along the way?

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# When the President Calls

James Ash

EVERYONE KNOWS THAT IT'S NOT "WHAT YOU KNOW," BUT "WHO YOU KNOW" that makes the real difference.

For over a year now, we've been faced with an ominous challenge: to come up with \$26,000 for a newly overhauled Continental O470-L32B airplane engine.

The engine in our missionary Cessna 182 had been showing signs of age. It was nearly

sake, we needed to discontinue flying with it.

The Lord answered many prayers and through a partial donation and a partial loan we were able to order a new, factory-overhauled engine and have it shipped directly to Georgetown.

We then faced our next challenge: how would we import an airplane engine into Guyana without paying a huge sum of importation taxes? Big dollar items

I also took a trip down to the Guyana Revenue Authority (GRA) to get some more answers. After explaining my dilemma, the employees eventually directed me to the top floor, to the office of Mr. Low, who was one of the senior managers. Mr. Low listened carefully to my story, but nicely explained that the only tax that could be waived was the 5% duty. The VAT was required by the Guyana constitution, and there was no way around it.

That news only increased my efforts. Someone had said that the president's office occasionally intervenes with certain importation cases that they consider worthy. So I began praying in earnest. I also requested everyone influential that I knew to call and write letters of petition to the presidential secretariat. I never saw the correspondence, but the result was swift and breathtaking.

A week later, I was driving in Georgetown when my cell phone rang. When I answered, the gentleman on the other end of the phone asked, "Is this James Ash, the pilot with the 'Seven-days' church?"

"Uh... Yes, this is James."

"This is President Donald Ramotar, and I have received your request and approved it. I just got off the phone with Mr. Sattaur, the commissioner at the GRA, and if you call him right now, he'll help you get through...."



23 years since it was factory overhauled. Although the FAA doesn't regulate when private aircraft owners are to replace their engines, this is about twice the age typically recommended. In addition to that, we've also been flying the airplane heavily since its arrival in Guyana, and it had also gone over the allotted hours recommended by the manufacturer. Up until our last flight, the engine was still producing excellent power, but little signs were beginning to show, and we realized that for safety

like this would most certainly incur a 5% - 10% duty fee, and a whopping 16% Value Added Tax. All together, the taxes would be close to \$6,000 U.S. dollars!

I had anticipated this, however, and my original plan was to request one of the government ministries to appeal a tax waiver in our behalf. The first government ministry that I approached didn't respond to my letters or phone calls, so I contacted another ministry, and started a letter writing campaign.

# Patience, Ça Pousse!

## (Be Patient, It's Growing!)

David Macomber

“Thank you! Thank you so much!”  
I hung up the phone in utter shock.

I remember wondering, Am I dreaming, or did the president of Guyana just call me on my cell phone?! A few seconds later when the full impact hit me, I clenched my fist in victory and shouted a lively “YES!!”

Two weeks later, I had the privilege of driving to the Timehri International Airport with all my paperwork in hand and receiving the engine duty-free from customs.

At this time the new engine is installed on the airplane, and Todd Anderson (one of our GAMAS mechanics) and I are working to finish up the annual inspection so we can get back in the air to continue this life saving work.

This experience was humbling for me because it showed me how utterly helpless I was to solve this problem. The Lord gently reminded me that it's not what we know, but Who we know that will ultimately save us in His eternal kingdom. Wouldn't you agree?

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COMING TO CHAD, SARAH AND I EXPECTED TO JUMP RIGHT IN AND MAKE A MAJOR DIFFERENCE FOR CHRIST: I would be flying, Sarah would be saving babies at the Nutrition Center, and we'd be preaching powerful sermons at church. Instead, God has humbled us and helped us to realize that while He wants us to bear fruit, we are but little missionary plants, needing time to grow first.

Even on a personal level, building relationships with the locals and Sarah's success at learning French may, to us, seem very limited. However, when God helps us look from the outside, we see the success He is giving us: Sarah recently had a short conversation in French and locals have emphatically shaken our hands in a way they only do among friends!

God is growing us into the trees He wants us to be. We all just have to remember to stay connected to the True Vine. He will be the One that gives us the nutrients we need to grow. We don't have to worry about growing our own fruit; we just have to securely hold on to the Source. He will do the work in us and through us to bless the world!

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# Chief's Dream Waters Church Planting Seeds

Wendy Roberts

SEVERAL MONTHS AGO, Gary was involved in coordinating and teaching a two month training session to inspire and empower local lay members to become lay evangelists. Apparently this is a tough concept for them because we struggle to motivate the local members to do anything. After the training session was finished, Gary noticed several of the attendees loafing around doing nothing productive. It irked him enough that he called a meeting with several of the men and asked them what they were doing with the training that they had received.

“Well, we don't have....” They always seem to come up with good

excuses. So Gary talked to them and tried again to motivate them to do something for God.

As a result, a man named Joel, who was only baptized within the last year himself, decided that he should return to his own village and spread the Good News he had been learning about. Chadians rarely do things by themselves, so he took an older, more experienced friend with him and they began having a branch Sabbath School under the trees in his home village about 25 km (~15 mi.) away. After several weeks, the two men convinced us to come out and join them one Sabbath, and we were really surprised by what we found. There were over 60 adults attending, including five of the ten

nearby village chiefs! Everyone was very happy and excited to learn.

Since our visit, we heard about a very influential and prominent business man in the area. This businessman, also a village chief, had set his heart against the two men who came to start the branch Sabbath School. He didn't see the need for whatever they were planning to do, and he was going to make things very difficult for them. Shortly after that, he had a dream. In this dream he was told not to oppose this work, but to support it; the work was clearly from God. And so he did, supplying benches for the gathering and attending when in the village!

We praise God for this chief's change of heart and also for Joel and his commitment to serving the Lord. It is exciting for them to see how God is working through them!



## Max, the Flying Orphaned Elephant

Wendy Roberts

WORKING AND FLYING IN THE MISSION FIELD IS A LOT OF HARD WORK. Often pilots are adventure seekers and think they would like to do it because it is exciting, but after they realize how much work is involved, many find something more exciting to do! There are plenty of rewards, however, to make up for the many hours

spent maintaining, fueling, and bouncing around in the heat.

Last March, there was a massacre of over 100 elephants near the border of Cameroon. Upon hearing a rumor of a baby elephant that had survived the slaughter, Gary offhandedly replied, “I'll take it!” A couple days later, the Director of Parks for Chad, who had heard

Gary's comment and knows of his medical training, called him and asked, “Gary, what are we going to do about this elephant?”

“Well, if you can get him here, I will take him,” Gary replied, this time a little more seriously. I thought, “Yeah right! They are never going to give us an elephant!” But Gary wisely started

researching on the internet and found two elephant orphanages in Africa. We sent them e-mails asking what we should do if we did end up with the elephant. The next morning we received a reply from



a lady in Malawi with information on how to care for a baby elephant. I couldn't believe she was taking us seriously!

Shortly after this, the Director of Parks called us again and reported that they had not been able to arrange transport for the elephant, but that they wanted us to go and get it.

By this time, Gary and I couldn't just sit back and leave the poor thing to die, so we flew the Cessna 172 to the nearest airstrip to the elephant's said location. After many politics among the local authorities, they took us in a pickup truck about a two hour drive out into the bush where we finally found Max tied to a tree at the edge of a village. He had a rope burn on his neck and ears, and was sunburned and very scared. We mixed up a bottle of baby formula for him and Gary was able to get near enough to feed him some. Then we physically had to lift him into the

back of the pickup. Poor thing! He was terrified!

We had been told that he only weighed 25 kg (around 55 lbs.) - which we knew couldn't be true, because they weigh more than twice that when they are born. However, we thought we would find a very young elephant. What we really found was an approximately nine month old elephant that weighed between 300 and 400 pounds!

For the next two hours, Max stepped on our feet, mashed our fingers, and tried to get out of the pickup. What was so scary to him was certainly a memorable adventure for us! Finally, a couple hours after sunset we arrived back at the airstrip, hoping to sneak to the plane under the cover of darkness. But it was not to be. In Chad, white people are a big attraction. The plane is an even bigger attraction. So you put an airplane, white people, and now an elephant in one place and it results in a mob! We had to get armed military guards to keep the people at bay. We spent the night giving Max IV fluid through the veins in his ears, trying to persuade him that he didn't want to go back to find his mother, and clearing termite mounds off the runway.

Our next challenge was to figure out if Max would fit in the airplane. Early in the morning,

Gary measured with his belt and informed me that we had about an inch to spare! So with the back and copilot seats out, the door off, and the help of four or five guys, we lifted Max into the airplane. Gary slipped the copilot seat in backwards to block the controls on that side and quickly put the door back on. Max started pushing on the windows - he really wanted to get out! When the engine started, it was all we could do to keep him from doing lasting damage! Finally, a bottle provided a good distraction when Max wasn't busy trying to fly using his trunk on the controls, and we all survived the 45 minute flight home!

The plan was to let Max stay with us until he was stabilized and then to move him to the game park. Unfortunately, we got him about 8 days after his mother had died, and during that time the unknowing villagers had given him cow's milk, a virtual death sentence for elephants. We tried our best to care for him and the lady from Malawi even came to help us, but two weeks later Max died. Despite that, we really enjoyed him while we had him. Elephants are amazing animals, and who else can say they've flown with an elephant in a Cessna 172?

To see a short video of the plane ride with Max, search YouTube for "Flying Orphaned Elephant."

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# A Whirlwind of Answered Prayers

Herman Gonzalez and *Steven Wilson, writing italicized*

**O**UR PRAYERS FOR THE AVIATION PROGRAM IN BOLIVIA HAVE BEEN ANSWERED IN A MIGHTY WAY!

For three years our three airplanes sat on the ground, unable to fly



due to importation challenges. Several months last year we flew a fourth airplane on a 'temporary' permission status. It needed a fair amount of work though, so when its annual came due, I flew it back to the ministry's home base in the States. Now what, I wondered. Everything came down to a grinding halt and I found myself praying constantly for direction.

It seems to me that hitting rock bottom every once in a while is good for us in order to see where our faith really is. Times like these allow us to reflect back on how the Lord has provided in the past and trust His promises that He is in control of whatever happens next. And so it happened to the AMA Bolivia program; at the lowest point, the biggest change occurred! One day in November, all three planes were cleared from their

customs lock and were granted flying permission status!

The news did not really sink in initially; there were so many attempts and failures in the whole process. But, once I had those importation papers in hand, I knew the Lord had delivered His promise. It was now time to get the airplanes airworthy and back in the air.

*About the same time as we received the customs papers for the airplanes, the owners of the airstrip where the planes were located told us that we could no longer keep them there.*

*So we removed the wings from the two Cessna 182s and moved the planes on a truck to the mission base where there is an approved and nearly functional runway. Once the planes were on our property, I waited for calm days to put the wings back on (Santa Cruz is usually very windy). To do this, I used tree limbs to hoist up and reinstall them on the two planes. While waiting for those calm days, I inspected our third plane and corrected the discrepancies I found in order to make a safe ferry flight to the city airport.*

**Once I had those importation papers in hand, I knew the Lord had delivered His promise.**

Soon we found ourselves feeling the need for a place to store our airplanes. The runway at the property is 4,000 ft. long, but







we didn't have a hangar. The Lord knew what we needed next though, and provided just the right amount of money to start building a simple hangar.

Brush was cleared and burned. Then two 40 foot shipping containers were moved into place to be used as walls and placed on cement footings. Next, a handful of volunteers helped to lay a brick floor, and by the time you finish reading this we should have a roof on the hangar!

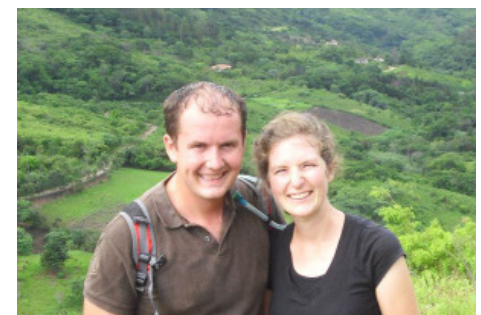
*With the hangar coming together, I was eager to set up shop. We were able to purchase an air compressor, which completed the tools I needed in order to perform compression checks and begin annual inspections on the airplanes. The inspections have gone fairly well, and we were able to send*

*three small suitcases to the States full of engine instruments and accessories needing repair. We hope to have these three planes inspected and fixed soon so they can return to service, that is, after I find the dead cockroach that I think is causing the master switch to arch on one plane and after I catch the live frog that is somewhere inside the other!*

With this kind of progress this year, we are expecting many more great blessings! Pilots and mechanics need to be trained, new territories need to be conquered, and many souls need to hear about Jesus. Please pray for the aviation project in Bolivia. Pray also for those of us working here, that we may work in faith, humility, and love to reach others and show them Christ's true character!



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# Love Illuminates the Darkness

Sean Knapp

**A**N INVITATION CAME TO FLY A LOCAL MEDICAL TEAM deep into the Tawi Tawi region. I originally thought I would drop the team off in Bongao and come home, but after I agreed to do that, they asked me to stay and assist their efforts. I was willing to as long as my presence (as an American with an airplane) would not endanger the team or take away from the gospel work already being done in this remote, Muslim region. The medical team assured me that the local government would provide us with a military escort. So I claimed the promise in Joshua 1:9 and decided to stay.

When I first arrived on the island, I noticed that the village Captain didn't seem to care much for me. Thankfully by the evening of our first day he was smiling at me and allowing people to take our picture together. Later, the captain told

me that I was the first American to ever step foot on his island. At that moment I realized what a privilege and responsibility I had been given, not only in representing my country, but most of all in representing God.

Along with our medical outreach, some of the missionaries were hosting a Pathfinder

Camporee while we were there. The neat part about the camporee was that each Pathfinder club came from a different island and most (if not all) of the Pathfinders were Muslim kids!

Their prayers and pledges were directed to Allah (the Arabic word for God), but said in the name of Isa (Jesus).

Our first evening together, I was given the chance to speak to all the youth at this camporee. After much prayer I was impressed to share with them about the most powerful force in the universe. I shared that this force, one that can change a



human heart, was more powerful than any natural disaster, including the hurricane Yolanda that had just passed by. The most powerful force is the love of Allah – not something He has, but what He is; that Allah is love. I shared how this force had changed my life and encouraged the youth to submit to His love.

This turned out to be a trip I will never forget! I encourage you to take the opportunities God brings your way and let Him use you as an example of His love, bringing a light to the dark corners of the earth.

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# Typhoon Haiyan

Dwayne Harris



AS WE TRACKED THE SATELLITE IMAGE OF THE MASSIVE TYPHOON creeping across the screen towards central Philippines, we prepared for action. We flew to Iloilo as soon as the storm passed and this became our base of operations. Along with some friends, we



immediately began systematic aerial surveys along the path of the storm, documenting everything

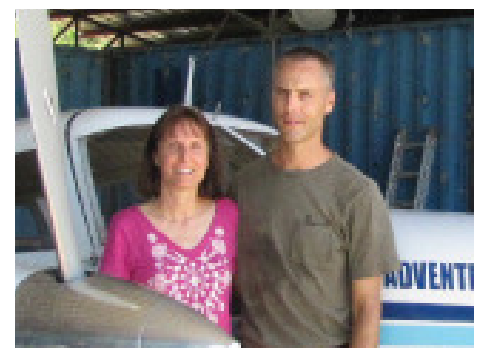
we saw. We were amazed at how wide spread the damage was and how “quiet” it looked with no people milling around and no vehicles or boats moving about the whole island. Several large areas were under water with only the rooftops visible. Other areas were just demolished by the force of the wind, acting like a giant tornado. We shook our heads in disbelief wondering how long it would be before many of these people would ever receive help.

As the days and weeks flew by, we had the opportunity to help some of those same people that we wondered about that first day. We worked with various foreign and local

volunteers coming and going. Sean, our other pilot, and I flew medical teams to the nearest accessible airstrips and made drops of nails, tarps, and wire for building shelters in other remote areas. Wendy helped coordinate medical clinics closer by, working with local Adventist churches that provided volunteers and other logistics, and promised follow-ups with patients who were interested in Bible studies. I helped with the clinics when I wasn't flying. The people were amazingly strong, but they appreciated the help and prayers so much. We took advantage of the chance to share our hope as we offered counseling and sharing tracts to each patient.

Though we are back home now, we continue to support the storm relief as we can with flights, medical missions, and financial support. We cannot forget about the many families who are still without shelter as the rainy season and cold months are already here. The good news is that these increasing disasters give us great opportunities to reach people with the Gospel, and it reminds us and them that Jesus is coming soon!

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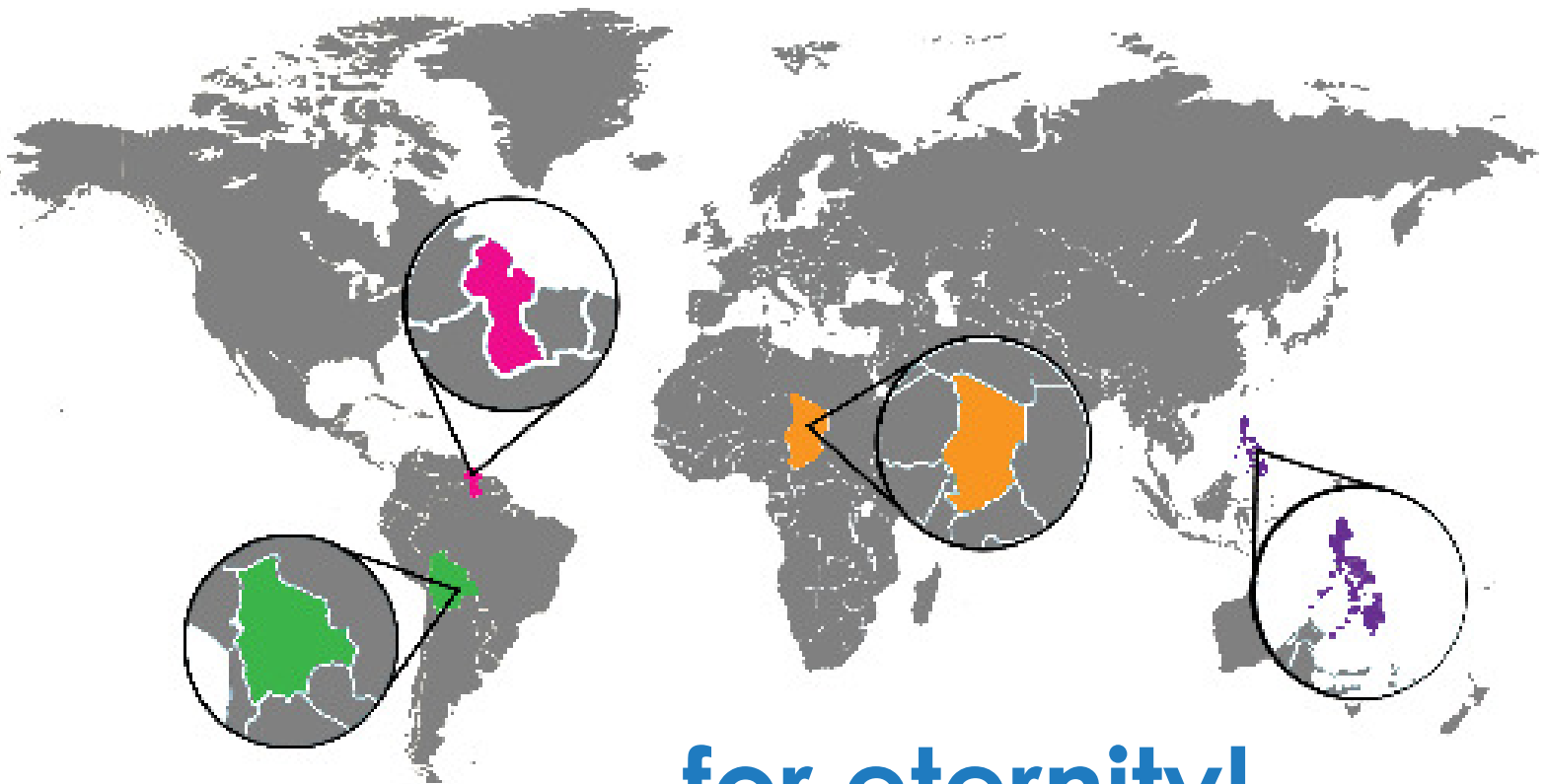
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