



Missionary Air Group

Help and Hope by Air

Year-End Ministry Summary

December 2014

Dear Ministry Partner,

Just recently, I had the honor of preaching at one of our supporting churches here in Burlington. I was teaching from 2 Chronicles, chapter 20, which deals with trusting (and then obeying) God particularly when it just doesn't seem to make sense. At verse 24, we find that indeed God had ALREADY provided what was needed before His people arrived at the place He was sending them. As I reflect on all that our ministry team accomplished over the past year, it seems to me that none of it was really possible apart from the fact that just about every place we went, we found that God had already gotten there ahead of us with His provision! As I shared with the church, "We never have enough, and yet we always have enough—all at the same time!" So, just as it was for the people of Judah in 2 Chronicles 20, we live and minister in the same difficult but blessed tension.

We started the year with virtually no money and we will end the year virtually the same way. And yet, over the last 12 months we... Began flight operations in Guatemala, Purchased another training aircraft, Doubled the medical brigades visiting Rus Rus, Provided medical care and the gospel to thousands, Completed several building projects, Finalized our Honduran incorporation, and perhaps most significantly, Added two new full-time missionary staff families to our team with more in application. Wow!

In the photo to the right stands the future of this ministry. The Braxtons (left) and the Powells (right) will prepare for field service. The Moras (center) should complete candidacy over the next several months. So, as God grows our territory and our team in the coming year, we will continue to rely on Him to **direct** us knowing that He will also **provide** whatever is needed—before we arrive there. Glad to have you along!



Rev. Sean Donnelly,
President/CEO

Delivering Compassion.

*"When [Jesus] saw the crowds, he had compassion on them,
because they were harassed and helpless..."*
Matthew 9:36

www.missionaryairgroup.org

Missionary Air Group and its parent organization, Harvesters International Mission, is proud to maintain membership in the International Association of Mission Aviation (IAMA), the Technical Exchange for Christian Healthcare (TECH), and the Evangelical Council for Fiscal Accountability (ECFA) in order to operate at the highest level of Professionalism, Integrity, and Aviation Safety.



Additional Medical Team Lands in Rus Rus

The nurses at Rus Rus Hospital see patients every day—stitching up wounds, treating malaria and parasites, delivering babies, and calling the MAG air ambulance to fly out those who are critically ill. Anyone wanting to see a doctor or dentist, however, would normally wait until February when the IHS (International Health Service) team arrives. This year, the wait was much shorter!

In September, MAG hosted a medical/dental team fielded by Front Street United Methodist Church in Burlington, NC. The “hometown” team was organized by Dr. Mark Crissman, a MAG board member who led the medical effort, while the dental team was headed by Burlington dentist, Dr. Mary Lynne McElhane. Over the 3-day clinic, the 9-member team saw patients from 8 different villages, conducting over 500 patient encounters. This is a significant number when considering that many of these patients walked for at least a day to get there, almost half were under 12 years old, and that *these 500 visits* will account for about **20% of all the medical care** that will reach this remote part of the frontier during this entire year!

The week began with a young pregnant woman (top right) who, having been severely injured in a collapsed mine, was carried to Rus Rus on a blanket for about 8 hours. Able to do no more than stabilize her and fly her to a larger hospital, the team prayed. They were overjoyed when, at the end of the week, they encountered the young woman again—alive, and walking with crutches, both she and the unborn baby doing well! The woman was then able to hear about the team who had prayed—and the One who had lovingly answered!



Villagers gather for an impromptu church service in Rus Rus.

Making a Difference That Goes Beyond the Numbers

Amidst an estimated population group of 25 to 30 thousand people, where Missionary Air Group’s Rus Rus Hospital remains the only provider of medical and dental care, we have now passed **10,000 patient visits** over the last four years. Records suggest that while total annual patient visits have remained steady, increased opportunities for clean water and primary care have reduced the number of critically ill patients we see. Yet, there is another impact that, while less measurable, is just as evident. We are receiving invitations to preach and teach the Bible in more villages as more people seem to be seeking God—an indication that spiritual health is being impacted as well!



First Operational Flight for Guatemala Field Program

On July 4, 2014, MAG pilot and program director Paul Jones received the call that had literally been years in the making—an emergency air ambulance flight to transport a critical patient from the Peten to the capital city as the 9-hour trip by ground ambulance would not have been survivable. The doctors at our partner hospital, Hospital Shalom, made the necessary arrangements. Flight plans were filed. Clearances were obtained and priority handling was granted by Air Traffic Control. The ambulance arrived at the airplane with the patient on time and the flight went smoothly. (photos to the left) The Cessna 206 taxied to the ambulance ramp and saw the ground ambulance waiting at the gate ready to receive the patient. Then, inexplicably, came the one thing that we could never have prepared for—ramp security refused to allow the ambulance through the gate. After nearly an hour of pleading and performing CPR, the patient died on the ramp. It was a hard day.

While not glamorous and uplifting like newsletter stories are supposed to be, this demonstrates two critical things: 1. Frontline missions work is difficult, and 2. God is sovereign and will use all of it for His good purpose! Jesus said (John 16:33) ***“In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”*** So, we press on. Paul is doing a great job and many other successful flights have followed!

Progress Slow but Steady on Guatemala Air Ambulance

Plans to complete and deploy MAG’s new air ambulance to Guatemala by the end of 2014 (as the permanent replacement for the current “borrowed” aircraft) have been delayed. Due largely to critical manpower shortages, we are now anticipating completion by June 2015. Still, progress has been made and several major milestones reached, perhaps the most significant being the complete stripping of the airplane in preparation for a full paint job. Cargo tie-down mods and long-range fuel tanks have been added as well.



N382MG is stripped and ready for the paint booth at MMS Aviation in Ohio. It will receive the new MAG paint scheme seen below.



New Training Aircraft Arrives

It was April when MAG's Director of Aircraft Maintenance Scott Grote, amidst the annual inspection of the ministry's Cessna 172 trainer, turned to MAG CEO Sean Donnelly and said *"I don't think this airplane will meet our long-term needs as a trainer. You need to replace it."* The response was *"I can't!"* Prayer ensued.

As preparation continues in Burlington for the arrival of the first missionary pilot/mechanic trainees from MMS Aviation, it is critical that the training fleet be anchored by a good primary and instrument trainer. As God is also aware of this, it should have come as no surprise when a donor called a few weeks later and said *"I believe I'm supposed to buy MAG a training airplane. Here's a check. Pick a good one!"* So, after three months of searching and inspecting multiple candidate aircraft, a "good" one was purchased in New Bedford, MA and flown back to Burlington, NC to begin a year long refurbishment which began with a new N-number (now N381MG) and the installation of a freshly overhauled engine.

In early November, Scott Grote was joined in the hangar by Ben Powell (right-middle photo) and Joel Braxton (right-lower photo), both visiting MAG Headquarters with their families as part of their week-long technical evaluation and initial staff orientation. All went well and the required break-in period for the new engine is underway. Over the course of the next year, virtually every system and surface on the aircraft will be overhauled, upgraded, replaced, or repainted in order to transform this 1976 airplane into a "new" one suitable for training the next generation of missionary aviators. Next on the list will be upgraded avionics and instrument panels. A new interior and the new "standard" MAG paint scheme will come later in 2015 at MMS Aviation in Coshocton, Ohio. And ALL of this is happening—from the project budget to the hands working on it—because people responded to God's prompting. Thanks everyone!



For Apprentices, the Road to Mission Service Passes Through Burlington

Graduates of the MMS Aviation Apprenticeship Program serve as missionary pilot/mechanics and maintenance specialists all over the world—even with MAG (Paul Jones and Scott Grote). The training partnership between MMS and MAG will now allow apprentices to receive 30 months of maintenance training in Ohio followed by 24 months of flight training with MAG in North Carolina (including practical experience in MAG field programs). To date, there are six apprentices approved. The first of these, Aaron Hammitt (far left), is scheduled to arrive in Burlington in January 2017. [The average training time to become a fully-qualified, operational missionary pilot/mechanic is **10 years.**]