

September 30, 2008

Dear friends and family,

Greetings from Switzerland! What? Yes, I arrived here yesterday morning. I apologize for the late news but due to a lot of uncertainties, I haven't had anything specific to write until recently. First, I want to thank you so much for your prayers and concern for me over the last month since my mishap. Although it certainly been a difficult time, it has also been a positive time of growing and seeking the Lord. The relatively isolation of Banso and fact that I had just arrived really forced me to turn to the Lord for comfort, strength and encouragement. Due to customs and paperwork problems in Cameroon, the schedule for shipping replacement parts was also significantly delayed which was discouraging at times as well. However that problem has been resolved and the final part needed should now be in the port in Douala and Lord willing it will be released soon.

Several months ago I received an invitation from Bernard to be in his wedding. Bernard is one of my best friends from Switzerland and is now living in England. Although I've been hoping to going to this wedding for quite a while, my incident in August put this into jeopardy due to potential schedule conflicts with repairing and restarting the airplane program. As standard procedure, I need to complete some re-instatement flights before resuming flying but how this was going to be accomplished was unknown until about a week ago.

The final plan which resulted is that I will be returning very briefly to the US for this re-instatement since I'm the only Helio Courier pilot in Cameroon and there were not any pilots available to come to Cameroon. Thus, I'm going to be traveling most of the month of October. The thought is somewhat tiring to me, so I would appreciate your prayers in this regard.

Here's my schedule:

- Oct 2 – 9 Liverpool, England for wedding
- Oct 10 – 17 Neuchatel, Switzerland visiting friends
- Oct 18 – 29 JAARS, Waxhaw, NC
- Oct 30 Returning to Cameroon.

Even though I haven't been flying the last month or so, life has still been really busy due to big change in the helicopter program in Banso. About 2 years ago, we implemented a new helicopter program to meet the growing needs of Wycliffe translators working in very remote places in Cameroon along with providing additional service to the Cameroon Baptist Convention hospitals in this region. The first helicopter was a turbine-powered Bell LongRanger loaned from Samaritans Purses. This helicopter was very capable and served well. However, we also discovered it was too expensive for us to be long-term viable. About the same time, Samaritans Purse requested the return of their helicopter in order to start a new program in Liberia.



*Final flight of Sam's Purse's helicopter in Cameroon. (I'm not the pilot, just along to help with logistics)*

These two years of helicopter service did confirm the need for ongoing helicopter service in Cameroon. As a result, we began to pray and look for a suitable replacement. After a lot of research, we settled on the Robinson R44. It is smaller; however it is also much less expensive to operate. The JAARS aviation team in Waxhaw, NC immediately started fund-raising and reviewing various helicopters for sale. They quickly located a suitable machine and then modified it to fit our needs. It was disassembled and put into a container about 3 months ago and arrived in the port in Douala on September 9<sup>th</sup>. It is still in customs at the moment but we hope to have it released by the middle of October and flying by early November.



*Robinson R44 similar to one coming to Cameroon*

As a result, I have been very busy the last 6 weeks with the departure of Sam's Purse's helicopter and preparation for the arrival of this new one. This has involved a lot of financial changes and helping Eric Wolf, our new helicopter pilot, and his family adjust and get ready to start flying. I have also made several additional trips out to Lus to work on the new runway for the McLean family who are starting translation work there. My most recent trip last week was especially challenging due to the heavy rains and the road continues to worsen each time I go out.



*Digging out a hill next to the runway that is in the way of the wing of the airplane*



*Filling and laying 200# grain sacks full of dirt as a retaining wall to widen the runway*



*One of the passengers we picked up on our return showing us where a taxi had slid 500' – 1000' down the mountain the previous week. There were 8 people in the Toyota Corolla but only the driver was injured.*

Thank you again for your faithful prayers and generosity. Please pray for my travels as well as my return to Banso and continuing adjustment to life there. I continue to seek the Lord for direction regarding how I should be involved in the community outside of work. I am doing well, but I need the Lord's wisdom and direction. May the Lord bless you.

In Him,  
Robert Peterson

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