

July 9, 2009

Greetings from Bangui in the Central African Republic! This is about a 3 hour 45 minute flight east of Yaoundé. I am spending the night here and will be returning to Yaoundé tomorrow with a Wycliffe family.

June was quite a month! I flew about 40 hours this month which is more than twice as much as normal. I also spent about 12 nights on the road as well. One of the reasons for the heavy schedule this month was several unexpected medical flights.

One medical flight was for an American lady who was having repeated heart-attack symptoms. I picked her up on Sunday afternoon for the flight to Yaoundé so that she could be evacuated to South Africa. About 30 minutes after departure at an altitude of 9000' things became quite tense when she became short-of-breath accompanied by quite a bit of chest pain. Was I ever glad to have a doctor along with me! We increased the oxygen and kept praying. I spent the whole night with the family and doctor due to delays in getting an overflight permit for Cameroon. The medical ambulance airplane finally arrived the following morning just as the oxygen supply reached its end. Their initial tests indicated possible intermittent heart failure! Thankfully after several days of testing, it was determined to be caused by spasms of the esophagus. I'm certainly not a doctor, but the symptoms were sure similar!

One of the hardest flights this month was a man with a neck injury as a result of a motorbike accident. When I brought him and his wife to Yaoundé, their expectation of recovery was quite high. However my heart was heavy knowing that spinal injuries are serious – even with access to the best medical help possible. One week later I was saddened when they called very discouraged requesting a flight to return to Bango. After the initial consultation, the man's wife went out and bought all the medical supplies for the surgery (yes, you have to buy your own supplies). However, after the second consultation, the doctor said that there was nothing that could be done. The sadness of his wife's face (seated in the back) was unforgettable.



On a more positive note, I called the family last night and although he is still at Bansa Baptist hospital, they were thankful for the good care and for the slight improvement that they have seen. I hope to visit him this weekend when I return to Bansa.

Thankfully, there are other flights that are more enjoyable. About a month ago, two 10-month-old twins from Bansa flew with me to Yaoundé to be cared for by extended family members. The lady that traveled with them is their grandmother and it was her first flight ever. She was quite timid initially but really was smiling by the time we arrived in Yaoundé.



Over the last several months I have also been working on a short article for the next JAARS publication “*Rev. 7*”. The article is titled, “*An Aviator in Africa. Flying for a mission offers variety, challenge, and joy*” and will be released within the next two weeks. **If you would like to receive a paper copy, you can sign up by email at info@jaars.org or by calling 1-888-773-1178.** Once the article is published, I intend to send out a PDF copy. It will also be available online at <http://www.jaars.org/multimedia/publications/rev7>.

Thank you for your continued prayers, notes of encouragement and faithful support. Although this has been a very busy month, it has also been rewarding. In spite of a full schedule, I have also been able to make some new Cameroonian friends. Next week, I am looking forward to a bit of a break and a chance to finish up a number of office projects. Thanks for your continued prayers for spiritual freshness, safety in flying and opportunities to witness to those around me.

In Him,
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