

In His Hands

(Isaiah 49:16)



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Dear Friends and Family,

Happy Easter! I, Rob, am unexpectedly writing this from Yaoundé, Cameroon, and as we look back on the last month, “*unexpected*” is a pretty good summary!

One of the first in a series of *unexpected* events, was waking up on a flight day to an exceptionally long and heavy rain. 8 o'clock, and 9 o'clock came and went and at 10 o'clock, under steady rain, the clouds turned into fog. I loaded the bags into another vehicle, picked up the passengers and we started driving for Libreville. Nine hours later, we rolled into Libreville around 7:30 p.m. This was to become **the first of four trips by road** which reminded me that the 8+ hour drive is long and at times rough and the blessing it is to fly this route rather than drive it most weeks!



Shortly after this trip, I flew several Bongolo residents, including Bintou, to Yaoundé, Cameroon, for a dual-purpose visit. The Bongolo residents participated in the annual West Africa College of Surgeons (WACS) conference while I went to work completing a 100-hour inspection on the airplane. **We were delighted by the *unexpected* announcement that the PAACS program is now recognized by the WACS Medical Board!** This greatly expands the number of hospitals where PAACS graduates can serve.



Valentines party in Yaoundé with family and friends

SIL lent me a hand and enabled me to complete the 100-hour airplane inspection in one week versus the two weeks it normally takes. The inspection went well and was on schedule until the **horizontal situation indicator (HSI), which worked perfectly on arrival and was not touched during the inspection, failed unexpectedly.** Forced to leave the plane in Cameroon, the team and I *unexpectedly* returned to Bongolo by road and commercial flight which made for a much longer and more expensive return trip.

A few days later, the annual prayer retreat began at Bongolo. In the middle of our prayer retreat, the main generator, providing electricity to the main building, failed in a very *unexpected* way and at one point, the other department generators in maternity & surgery also failed simultaneously! Despite the enemy's efforts and intentions to throw the prayer retreat off course, **the Lord gave us a rich time of praying for God's light to shine as we sat in the darkness of the Gabonese jungle.**



Shortly after the retreat, I returned to Yaoundé, again by road and commercial flight, to spend a few days doing a minor modification to install a new part on the airplane. **Two weeks later**, I am still in Yaounde; the system is still not working; and I am likely going to need to wait another week for another part to come! It has been a bit painful to cancel flights and to communicate to my scheduled passengers the *unexpected* reality of having to travel to Bongolo by road. **Please pray that I can complete the airplane modification and return to Bongolo soon!**



Working to re-pin the instrument connectors. See also Steve Straw's [blog](#) for additional detail.

And placing the exclamation point (!!!) on this string of “unexpected!” events was one highly *unexpected* event for my dad. As a member of the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA), he is automatically entered into their annual sweepstakes. This year, he won the sweepstakes for a completely rebuilt Cessna 152! Instead of notifying Dad directly, AOPA contacted JAARS to strategize a way to surprise him with the news while simultaneously announcing the sweepstakes winner to their more than 400,000 AOPA members.

As God would have it, a dedication ceremony for a new runway which Dad had been working on for several years was already in the works, setting the stage for JAARS and AOPA to surprise Dad and bring glory to God in a most exceptional manner. **During what Dad thought was a presentation to 400 JAARS colleagues, Dad unwittingly shared his testimony of God's call to missionary aviation with many of the 400,000+ AOPA members who viewed or read about the event online and many others as the news has spread!** Needless to say, Dad was shocked when the AOPA President congratulated him on being the proud new owner of the Cessna which had landed and taxied to the hanger unbeknownst to Dad during his presentation on the runway.



Eric Peterson wins AOPA's You Can Fly Sweepstakes 152: [Article](#) or [Video](#)

Who would have thought Dad would fly again 8 years after transitioning to a non-flight role within Wycliffe!?!

Praise and Prayer Summary

Praises:

- The Gabonese inter-church committee is developing a core mission and vision strategy.
- Fruitful prayer retreat for the Bongolo team and for Bintou and me personally.
- Reminder of God's sovereign presence in the midst of many unexpected events.
- Bintou completing another stage exam in ophthalmology!

Prayer:

- Bintou and I as we continue to heal, experience new joy and learn to trust the Lord with the unexpected.
- For God to bless us with a second child.
- Bintou's heavy schedule at the ophthalmology clinic as well as a full academic reading schedule.
- Completion of the airplane and for my return to Bongolo soon and for Bintou while she is living alone in Bongolo.

By His strength alone,
Rob & Bintou

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Attach a separate note: "Preference for the Wycliffe ministry of Robert Peterson,
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