

In His Hands

(Isaiah 49:16)



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In 2007, Rob flew from Cameroon to Gabon for the first time. (Email update from 2007: [To the end of the world and back](#)). He was flying a team of medical professors from the Pan-African Academy of Christian Surgeons (PAACS). They came to evaluate Bongolo Hospital as a future training site for their surgeons.



Rob's first flight and dinner at Bongolo Hospital, with PAACS in 2007

Nine years later, in 2016, Rob flew another team of medical professors, this time from the West African Academy of Surgery (WACS). The objective of this visit was to inspect Bongolo Hospital for the purpose of granting accreditation to the PAACS program. This accreditation will allow these graduates to practice anywhere in West Africa. How exciting and gratifying to witness the fruit of the flight Rob did nine years ago!



Rob flying the WACS team to Bongolo Hospital for PAACS accreditation!

Consider also, our amazement at God's providence. In 2007, Rob was single and had no idea he would fall in love with an African girl pursuing her medical degree, and as for myself, I had never heard of Rob or imagined marrying a missionary pilot. Rob had no idea his future wife would benefit from that flight or from his work; he just did what the Lord called him to do. Now, we are married. And I am a medical doctor, training in an ophthalmology program modeled after PAACS with a focus on ophthalmology surgery. We could have never imagined that one day Rob's aviation world would cross my medical world in that way! We marvel at God's providence in having Rob take that flight in 2007 from Cameroon to Gabon!

Some years ago in Africa, it didn't really matter if you had an accreditation when you were practicing medicine in rural areas, but things are changing and accreditations are becoming very important at all levels. So we are praying for the accreditation of both PAACS and ophthalmology residency by WACS and by the Gabonese government. The goal of these programs is to train skilled medical doctors so that they can serve in areas where no one else wants to go. Furthermore, that they will serve from their heart and provide excellent quality healthcare to the forgotten.



And here I am practicing a direct ophthalmoscopy on the pilot, my husband!

Now I'll share a couple of stories from my work. Last Monday, as I was heading home after a very long day at work, I was called back to the hospital. A young boy thirteen years old, caught a fishing hook in his right eye and was in incredible pain.

As the only medical doctor in the eye department, I was not planning to do any surgeries until my attendants returned from their trip. But when I saw Alan weeping, I knew I had to do something. It took Alan and his mom 2 days to get to Bongolo hospital from their remote village. And his mom had a three week old baby in her arms. If nothing was done, Alan would lose his eye.



Oscar, one of our nurses, prepping for an emergency surgery

I prayed. And I called the director of PAACS for legal considerations. With his approval, we went into the operating room with the boy. We completed his surgery around 10 PM. While we were not able to restore his vision to 100%, we were able to save his eye.

That same night, I got another emergency call for a ten year old girl named Lesly whose eye had been shot with an arrow. Fortunately, she didn't live far from the hospital and was able to come the very same day of the accident. After accomplishing the necessary repairs, she has retained acceptable vision. Both cases had a ruptured globe. But the delay in having the surgery made all the difference between both cases.

I am just starting my second year of residency in ophthalmology but I can already see how much of a difference I can make if I let God use me. These two cases I told you about happened on my birthday. While I wasn't able to celebrate my birthday around a nice meal and a great cake, I realized something even more satisfying: the day I was celebrating my arrival into the world, God used me to save two kids' eyes.

And as if God wanted to show to my husband and me that He hadn't forgotten us, we received a greater outpouring of love and wishes and cakes than we ever could have imagined! Between the 2nd and the 3rd of August, we received FOUR Birthday cakes! God brought a rain of love and cakes on us!



One of my 4 birthday cakes! Homemade French pastries!

Not only did I realize that I get to be used by God to bless others in an extraordinary way, but my husband and I also experienced His promise to us: “seek first his kingdom and his righteousness and all these things will be given to you as well.”

PRAISES

- Bintou’s unique birthday – emergencies, birthday cakes and all.
- Two special gifts to help with our trip to the US this fall for Bintou’s naturalization process.
- God’s strengthening as Bintou dealt with several ophthalmic emergencies alone.
- A doctor/pilot visitor to Bongolo who brought several needed aircraft parts and helped Rob get them installed. It was great for him to not work alone.

PRAYER REQUESTS

- We are in Libreville to renew our permit to fly within Gabon. Pray that the inspection will happen on Friday, that it will be successful and that the cost for the permit would be reduced.
- Next Saturday we plan to continue to Cameroon for a biannual avionics inspection on the airplane. During our time in Cameroon, Bintou will work with the “Bible through music education” ministry.
- Preparation and provision for our trip to the US this fall. Pray that a visa for France would be granted so that we can stop in France on our way to the US and help Bintou’s brother get started in his first year of college in France.

By His strength alone,
Rob & Bintou

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