



MENNONITE *Air* MISSIONS

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Flying Lessons

Many times in life we do not understand how or where the Lord is leading us. In my flying experience in Guatemala, I have observed many parallels and lessons for life.

When I fly, there are several things required before takeoff. Let me take you on a flight as we draw lessons for life. To start, we must look at the weather conditions and decide if it is safe to make the flight. Once we know it is safe, we proceed to make a flight plan. We also need to make a preflight check on the aircraft to ensure safety. Once all this is accomplished we can proceed with the flight. Now we're boarding. But before we can taxi, we need to make our request known to the controller. The controller will give clearance to taxi, and to ensure safety, we must listen and carefully follow all instructions. We now have taxied and are waiting for clearance for takeoff.

Many times I find myself trying to push ahead and proceed with my agenda and not observing the "weather conditions" in life. Then I forget to plan so that all goes smoothly, and in the hurry of life, I fail to do the "preflight check" in my life to ensure I am prepared. I am in such a hurry that I forget to wait for instructions from the Controller. Through all this I find myself forcing my way through life.

Now we're waiting once again. "Cleared for takeoff" are welcome words for every pilot, and we proceed to take off and the flight plan is activated. We have our directions for a secure and safe flight. During our flight we may encounter many things.



The shadow of the Cessna in flight.

Bad weather and clouds are not a friendly sight for a pilot. A light haze is overtaken by thin fog, and is soon consumed by dense clouds. Now we must completely trust the instruments that we checked before takeoff. Since we are in the clouds we cannot fly by sight, but must completely trust the controller for our safety.

Once we have prepared ourselves and sought the Lord's will, we have "taxied" in life and then proceeded with takeoff. We are pleasantly on life's way when we encounter some difficulties. We then need to rest in the confidence that God's direction was unerring and that the controller will guide us to safety.

We are now nearing our destination, and descending according to the controller's instructions. We are still in the clouds and cannot see the airport. We are lined up for the runway preparing to land when the controller gives us clear direction to fly off course and to terminate the approach. Our fuel is getting low. We're confused about the deviation, but we obey.

When all seems to be going well in life, maybe some adverse weather blocks the way to the destination. We have already begun to make arrival plans when all of a sudden we receive a message to turn off course. Confused but submissive, we obey the voice of the Controller and follow His directions.

There are many reasons why the controller may ask us to deviate. Perhaps to maintain a safe distance between aircraft, or because of a thunder-



Life is like flying: doing a preflight check before takeoff.

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EDITORIAL

by Brian Yoder

The God of Perfect Timing

"But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son" (Gal. 4:4). All by itself, that's a beautiful verse. But it's much more than that. It is sandwiched between the state of bondage to the world and the glorious adoption as sons of God. It stands as a bridge between slavery and sonship, earthly elements and Spirit-filling.

For centuries of captivity and generations of sin, God's people hoped and prayed and waited for a deliverer. Many turned aside to look for other solutions. Others gave up hope. It seemed that the yearning of the faithful did not hurry God, nor did the unbelief of the faithless turn Him aside from His purpose.

In the midst of the struggle, God stood and said, "Now is the time!" And God's Son was born to usher in a dispensation of new life. In God's sovereignty, it could be neither sooner nor later, but when the time was right.

God is a God of perfect timing. He is never early, never late, and never in a hurry. Over and over in God's dealing with people, we read between the lines: *"But when the fulness of the time was come, God."*

Abraham clung to a promise he knew he could count on. God Himself had promised him a son, and God doesn't lie. He prayed and waited for this son for decades. He even tried to help God a bit, but God made it clear: "Abraham, this is something that I will do in My own way." And at an impossible age, in the fulness of time, *God*.

When Israel was a slave nation in Egypt, God's promise to give Canaan to Abraham was a distant dream, longer ago to them than the founding of Jamestown is to us. For century after century, God was silent. *But when the fulness of time was come*, God heard, remembered, and looked upon His people. Four hundred thirty years later to the day, God led Israel out.

The principle of God's perfect timing can be found in issues much smaller than the birth of Messiah, or the conquering of Canaan. The young person wondering about a life's companion can find it. A person facing a hopeless situation can experience it. We can rest in the fact that *when the fulness of time is come, God*.

Our needs are so big, and God's promises are so great, that we think the time must be now. Our will kicks against the waiting, and struggles with "wasted time." Our agile minds invent ways to "speed God up" a bit. Abraham tried that, and reaped an Ishmael, and

an enemy nation for his descendents. Moses tried that by killing the Egyptian, and was rewarded with forty years of sheep herding.

Jesus marks the contrast between Himself and His carnal brothers. *"My time is not yet come: but your time is alway ready."* We're like the brothers: "Anytime, Lord, let's get on with things!" We should be like Jesus: "Your time, Lord, and not a moment sooner."

It's a faith-boosting experience to watch God's perfect timing, in small ways and large. Has it happened to you?

It was almost 8:00 when I pulled away from Pasaco and began my trip home. The coffee in my lap was hot and energizing, but I was tired after a day of church issues and visiting. The trip home was usually a two-hour deal, but tonight there would be a terrible traffic jam around the one-way detour past a section of broken road. It could take hours, and I just wanted to get home.

The 1992 Corolla hummed through the dark farmland along the foothills between the mountains and the coast. All too soon, a stopped tractor trailer was ahead of me, marking the end of a mile-long line of parked trucks, all waiting to get through that narrow detour. No one was moving.

In the morning I had resisted the temptation, but now I yielded to the Guatemalan way. I eased past the long line of trucks toward the front. There was no oncoming traffic, and soon I found myself near the front of the line . . . stuck in the wrong lane. I soon learned that the detour was completely closed for roadwork, and that in ten minutes they would release the oncoming traffic . . . for an hour.

A tall man approached in the darkness. "Headed for Escuintla?" he asked. "I'm trying to get home from work."

I sized him up. "Not sure how long it might take to get through," I said, not wanting to commit to a stranger on a dark night.

Five minutes later, the man was back with the boss of the road crew. "This man works here and needs a ride home," the boss said. "If you'll take him, I'll let you through." Indeed! A minute later, I was driving on the left shoulder, around the first vehicles in line, and across the empty detour. Two minutes later, the road was mine again. The endless line of parked traffic was behind me, and I was cruising West towards home, praising God and enjoying a conversation with a new friend.

Perfect timing!

Flying Lessons . . . continued

storm over the airport. Whatever the reason the controller asks us to deviate, he does so knowing our fuel situation and the conditions we are in.

Our life Controller sees our situations and conditions, and knows what we can handle. Sometimes

we still receive deviation in our lives. In it all, let us never forget to always trust the Controller and obey immediately, because He sees everything, and knows what is necessary to arrive safely.

—James Allgyer

Growing a Vision for Christian Schools

An International Teacher's Institute was held in Siguatepeque, Honduras, from November 22-26 of this year. The activity was planned with the goal of sharing with and training teachers from the whole Central American region.

The classes taught were of much blessing for those of us who attended. The first topic was "The Teacher's Relationship with God," which caused us to reflect on our own experience, since upon this reality depends much of a Christian teacher's success. This topic was followed by a time of meditation and sharing of personal experiences.

I thought of the great privilege and the tremendous responsibility that we as teachers have in

influencing our students for the good, as we relate to them day by day in the classroom. Some of them come from Christian families and hear about God in their homes, but for others, the only spiritual influence they receive is in our schools.

It is of interest to me that the children from non-Christian homes are those who show the most enthusiasm for Bible stories, and more interest in hearing God's Word. I feel an identity with them, probably because I also went to a Christian school, and there began to know the Lord Jesus.

I think of the Christian school as a ministry to children. It is there that we find healthy education
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Pastor of the Month



Jorge and Enma Avila have been married for 60 years, and faithfully serve the City congregation.

Those who have been around the mission know that Jorge Avila is as much a fixture there as the church and the woodshop. Born on May 7, 1928, Jorge grew up in Tiquizate, getting in barely three years of formal

schooling during a life of moving around. He spent fifteen years in Tiquizate working for the United Fruit Company as a train operator. There he met his wife Enma, and was married on June 3, 1951. Three girls and five boys were born to them, but tragically, all five of the boys died. Three died in infancy, one was murdered at 28, and another died of cancer at 29 years old.

In Tiquizate, Jorge had a drunken neighbor. As he observed the terrorized children running to hide from their father day after day, he thought of his own young children. "No," he decided. "I don't want my children to live like that." He stopped drinking and began to attend an evangelical church, where he was later ordained deacon.

Jorge moved to Guatemala City when he was 33. During the following years, his mother joined the Mennonite church in Chimaltenango, and his brother Luis married Harold Kauffman's daughter and was chosen to

pastor the church in San Andres.

In about 1976, Harold contacted Jorge about driving for the mission. For the next number of years, Jorge helped with driving and odd jobs, while attending the mission church with his family. He was accepted as a member in 1986. In 1991, he was ordained as the first deacon at Lirio de los Valles. Besides serving the local church, he also helped start the church in Los Achiotés.

Jorge is now 83, Enma is 78, and they recently celebrated their sixtieth anniversary. Her health is failing, but she hates to miss a service. She is the "Candy Grandma," and the children miss her when she isn't there. Jorge is still an active deacon, taking care of church finances and taking part in services, as well as visiting other congregations to preach.

In Jorge and Enma, God has blessed us with a fine example of faithfulness and encouragement, and we appreciate their ongoing contribution to our congregation.

New Personnel

Lydia Zook, from Holmes County, Ohio, came to serve in October. She will be working with Melanie Mumert in outreach and children's activities in El Chal, eventually freeing Melanie to work in other areas. Her main activities will include girls' classes, children's activities, and visitation.



Lydia Zook, personal worker.

Tiana Kennedy, from Mercersburg, PA, arrived on November 17 to begin an eighteen-month period of service, serving in the clinic in El Chal. Since arriving, she has taken two weeks of Spanish training, and spent one week in a native home as part of her cultural orientation. Her nursing work in El Chal begins in January.



Tiana Kennedy, nurse in El Chal.

Vision for Christian Schools . . . continued

and learn the things we need for life. In our Christian schools, many children find the attention, the friendships, the Christian atmosphere, and even the discipline they need.

I thank God for Christian schools. May God bless those who helped during the time that I was a student, because without that opportunity, I might have never learned to know the Lord. May God continue blessing everyone who supports this ministry today, as well.

During these days of capacitation, I had to think of the mercy of God. As I listened to testimonies from other teachers with greater experience than I, I began to better understand the impact and influence that a teacher has on his students, and to see the great privilege that it is to direct them to the feet of Jesus.

In the topic "Supplying the Needs of a Child," the role of the teacher was also emphasized. We understood more specifically the needs that children have: spiritual, moral, and emotional. We were made more aware of the responsibility we have as teachers.

These days of training in Honduras prepared our hearts to work with greater vision, knowing that children are eternal souls, and that much of what they will be tomorrow depends on their development today.

My prayer is that in every place that a Christian school exists, the name of God could be exalted and honored. May teachers everywhere take seriously their responsibility to develop these children for their future life here on the earth, and influence them for life eternal.

Cesar Vasquez was raised in a broken home situation, and attended the Christian school in Guatemala City, where he came to know the Lord. He just finished his first year of teaching in the same school. Cesar agreed to write this article.



An activity at the Central American teacher's training week in Honduras.

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