MMS Aviation

GROUND CREW

DECEMBER 2026

"Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity!" (Ps. 133:1 ESV)

For a few weeks in September, three mission organizations worked together under one roof at the Chilongolo Airport in Lusaka, Zambia. The hangar is home to Flying Mission Zambia's (FMZ) fleet of two Cessna 206 and a Cessna 210, used for rural outreach and church planting work. These 3 aircraft needed avionics upgrades and repairs. Christian Missions in Many Lands (CMML) is based at the Chitokoloki hospital on the Zambezi River and had flown their Cessna 206 to Lusaka so that the MMS team (Mike Dunkley, Tim Reuter, Brittany Umphress and Shawn Monyer) could install new avionics.

In three weeks, the combined teams made major improvements to the navigational and communications equipment in the airplanes. The two Cessna 206 from FMZ were having issues with their audio systems and could barely hear air traffic control instructions. After the work was completed, the pilot remarked that it sounded as if the controller was sitting in the aircraft with him! There was enough time left to make electrical repairs to Flying Mission's Cessna 210. CMML's 206 received a complete avionics upgrade with new digital flight displays and navigational equipment. The pilot says that it now feels like flying a new aircraft!

Each of these upgrades provides a significant advance in safety and effectiveness for the missionaries operating in a challenging environment.

The MMS team visits a rural health/maternity clinic in Western Zambia. The clinic is served by Flying Mission.





HANGAR HAPPENINGS

Dale Coates and his team are working hard on the total refurbishment of a Cessna A185F. **Chuck Egbert** is halfway through repairs to the control surfaces (ailerons, flaps, elevators, and rudder). After Chuck's structural work is complete, the surfaces will be painted and balanced. **Jay Shearer, Brandon Simmons,** and **Phil Sperling** are deep into the belly structure of the airplane, replacing the landing gearbox and repairing the surrounding structure. **Chris Jutte**, **Kristen Williams**, and **Bob Campbell** have nearly finished repairs and modifications to the wings, including Wing X extensions, which will improve flight performance and allow the aircraft to carry an additional 175 pounds. **Jack Harper** is overhauling the engine, and the avionics team is making plans to begin work once the fuselage is complete.



Shawn M. is working under **Jack Harper's** supervision to inspect and measure internal engine components for a Continental O-470 engine which is used in Ecuador. Every apprentice at MMS spends time in our engine shop, which gives them a deep well of knowledge for future troubleshooting.

Mike Dunkley, Tim Reuter, Shawn M., and Brittany Umpress returned from Zambia, where they assisted two missions with avionics upgrades.







Jenny Haver serves as our Director of Maintenance. A big part of this role is maintaining documentation for our Repair Station Certificate from the FAA. Jenny has recently updated our Repair Station Manual, which will ultimately allow us to add several recurring maintenance projects for a partner mission organization. Jenny also coordinates incoming projects and works with production manager **Josh Adelsberger** to staff and equip our work teams.

Mike Mahon continues to serve in the shipping and receiving room. Mike maintains our purchasing and inventory systems, and makes certain that we have a paper trail for every part we install on our aircraft projects. **Dave Shelly** is our safety officer and IT resource.

Several very important people are hard at work, but seldom mentioned in our hangar updates. **Rebekah Martel** is leading our avionics department and planning future projects. **Bob Schwartz**, our Director of Training, can often be found working in the hangar and helping with our inspections department. **Cheryl Lawson** keeps our donor information up to date and assists with other administrative duties.

Jim Newman has been working on avionics systems for a Cessna 207 which will serve in Gabon. The engine is disassembled, and parts have been sent out for specialized inspections which we are unable to do in our shop. This airplane will be a lifeline for Bible translation projects in Western Africa.

Top left: Jay repairing holes in the fuselage of the 185.

Lower left: Jack and Shawn preparing bolts for the engine.

Top row, left to right: Phil S. preparing the fuselage for new rivets, Chris and Bob C. riveting on the 185 wing, Tim and Brittney making repairs in Zambia.

Bottom right: Bob S. cuts out new pieces to repair the 185 horizontal stabilizer.



Merry Christmas

































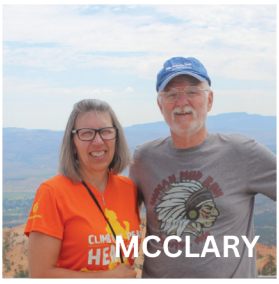
























from the

MMS *family*

sending off the PLITTS

God worked in and through the Plitt family in so many ways during their time here. They encouraged young families and endured trials outside the hangar with perseverance and faith. During his time in the hangar, Ben didn't just want to learn how things worked, but why. He even 3-D printed and built an interactive engine to use as a teaching tool. Ben completed the apprenticeship program, and he and his family are now in North Carolina for flight training with Missionary Air Group (MAG). They hope to serve in Africa after their training.





keeping the SPERLINGS

God revealed the need for missionary aircraft to Phil while he was charging down a turbulent river in a boat in Panama. Since college, God has taken his career from a coffee barista to a youth pastor, where he and Becca served together, and now to an aircraft mechanic. It's amazing how God brings us to the right places at the right times to accomplish His will. Becca was involved with MMS as a child when her dad was in the apprenticeship program, and she was excited to pursue it with Phil and their growing family. Phil recently got his A&P certificate, and we are also excited to announce that he is our newest staff member in the hangar. In addition to his mechanical work, he has also been serving as a videographer while Becca serves as a photographer and media coordinator..

President's Pen

Phil Maddux
President and CEO



With our children grown, Elizabeth and I are accustomed to the settled quiet of a home that belongs to just the two of us. (We kind of like it!) But there are still times when everyone is home under the same roof. Our family of five has grown to 16, and silence is broken by the delightful chaos of eight grandchildren under the age of 6. It's good. A bit crazy, but good.

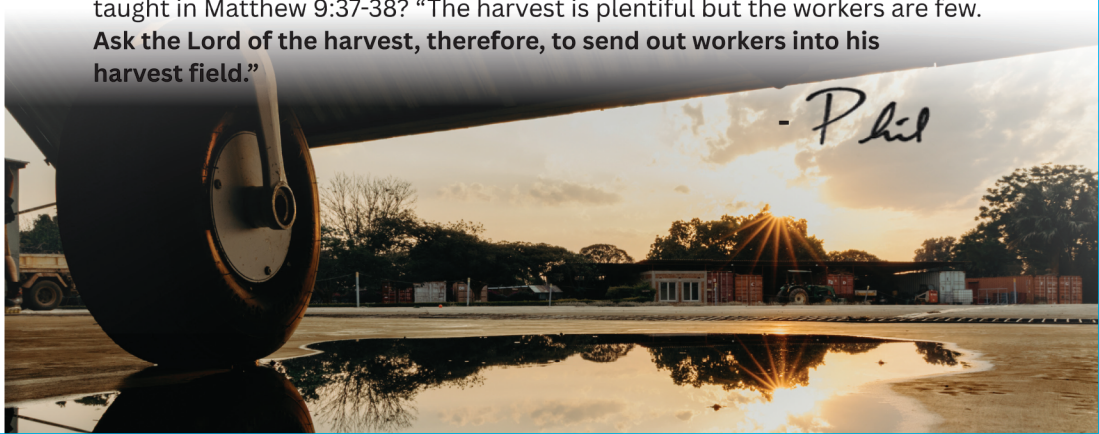
The table at MMS is usually full and noisy as well. In fact, a few years ago we had to tear out walls to enlarge the room where we gather to pray, eat, and share life together. Our monthly family fellowship meals move to the hangar so everyone can find a seat. That's a good spot to watch the youngsters play outside and decorate our ramp with their chalk-art creations as the sun sets on a week of life and ministry together.

For the last few months, our table has felt a bit empty. We have sent out several apprentice families to a new place of ministry. We have also had back-to-back Global Response trips with short-term teams working on the other side of the globe. It's quiet at MMS. In the stillness I remember the song Lanny Wolfe wrote in the 1970's.

> *My house is full, but my field is empty*
> *Who will go and work for me today?*
> *It seems my children all want to stay around my table*
> *But no one wants to work in my field.*

From that perspective, an empty table in the MMS lunchroom isn't so bad. The ones we are missing today are actively working to provide Gospel access for those who live where there are no roads. Several new apprentices should arrive early next year. But there is still a shortage of trained aircraft mechanics to support the work of missionary aviation around the world, and the need for the kind of maintenance we do on missionary aircraft right here in Ohio is great.

As you enjoy your family tables this season, would you please pray as the Lord taught in Matthew 9:37-38? "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. **Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field."**




MMS Aviation
24387 Airport Road
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An early morning flight over Victoria Falls
in Flying Mission's Cessna 206