



# WINGS OF HOPE



**I**T REALLY ALL BEGAN in 1962 when a Roman Catholic missionary named Houlihan returned to St. Louis after 20 years as a missionary in the Turkhana section of Kenya, and found himself relating some experiences one night to Bill Edwards, a manufacturers' rep.

Father Houlihan was emphasizing a sudden and critical need he left unmet in Africa. He needed an airplane. But there just weren't too many people around in those days giving out free airplanes and until Edwards introduced him to Joe Fabick, his chances of getting one were pretty remote.

The people the priest had been serving in his medical mission were semi-nomadic tribesmen living in an area with somewhat regular but



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**MEDICAL RESCUE GETS TOP PRIORITY.** Wings of Hope pilots Ed Schertz and Guy Gervais assist in loading a medical emergency case from the village of San Pablo on the Amazon in Peru. Schertz then flew the patient to Iquitos, Peru, over impassable jungle, to a Government hospital there for treatment.

“This native child, clinging to me so desperately, was the closest I’ve been to Heaven in a long, long time...”

Max Conrad

limited rainfall, now faced with a two-year drought. Shades of Sahel, when for some inexplicable reason a climatic change produces no moisture, period.

In the aftermath comes dried up fields, lack of fodder, no crops to harvest, dying animals and, ultimately, no food. The phase following this is quiet panic and then starvation plus disease with no end to it ‘til nature relents or until all have died from hunger.

Houlihan saw an airplane, literally, as an instrument of salvation (to keep my religious motif), bringing drugs and medicine to fight the disease, saw the capability of flying the critically ill into hospitals where they could be treated and beyond that, ferrying in powdered milk, vitamins and food supplements.

His story was pretty graphic, his requirement obviously genuine, and his luck was pretty good. Joe Fabick—who professes to being “no more than an average churchman”—was struck by the compelling need of this remote and isolated people and the fact that their lot might be alleviated dramatically if he could somehow negotiate a plane for that mission work.



**A Recent Meeting of Officers and Directors.** Standing from left to right: Joseph G. Fabick, President (John Fabick Tractor Company); Captain Vernon H. Brown (Ret.), Vice President, Operations-Inspection; Paul J. Rodgers, Senior Vice President (Ozark Air Lines); John T. Tucker, Chairman, Advisory Board (Midcoast Aviation Services); Robert L. Chatley, Vice President (Rockwell International, Sabreliner Division). Seated from left to right: William D. Edwards, Executive Director (Edwards Sales Agency); George E. Haddaway, Board Chairman (Publisher, Flight Magazine); John C. Mosby, Vice Chairman, Advisory Board (Sky Prints).



Linked up with George Haddaway, publisher of "Flight Magazine," Paul Rogers, Senior Vice President of Ozark Airlines, and Bill Edwards, they began in entrepreneurial fashion exploring ways one raises cash, which means sundry angles to con your old friends or finding a new approach which will induce people to give.

**Joe hit on the idea** of persuading his more kindly colleagues in the equipment business to donate pieces of used machinery—for which they could get a tax write-off as a donation—and which he, in turn, could fix up and sell through Fabick Tractor Company to generate the cash required.

But airplane salesmen, it turned out, wouldn't take in old motor graders or bulldozers on new Cessnas. And it also turned out that dealers donate used equipment more readily than cash, especially when there is a surplus of the former and a shortage of the latter.

So Fabick Tractor took anything Joe could beg, borrow or steal; meaning old tractors, used boats, secondhand trucks, used cars, off-size generator sets, even used airplanes—and somehow laboriously got them sold while he, Haddaway, Rogers and Edwards put together a legal entity to handle the total transaction.

There was the plane to order with whatever special and peculiar equipment its use required; there was the need to check out dispassionately Father Houlihan's validity and the authenticity of the need. When the plane was finally in hand, there was the little matter of how to get it to Africa and assure it was properly maintained. All of which took fully two years. But in April of 1965, world-famous pilot Max Conrad landed a Cessna 206 into Turkhana and delivered it to the Mission.



He wrote a note back to his friends, supplying in the process the overwhelming evidence of the legitimacy of the need and the enormous benefits the St. Louis group had provided to a cluster of people whom they had never seen and would never know.

Somehow the desperate, abject circumstance itself had reached out half-way around the world and touched the proper spirits who responded out of human compassion and some vague compulsion to lend of their own talent and substance to alleviate the pain of others.

**In his letter Conrad wrote:**

"... My African safari is over. So many things — and some sad ones, too. . . . A few nights ago I stayed at a mission out in the desert where many of the natives are starving. It was the night of the full moon. Far away I could hear a baby or child crying.

"I followed the sound some distance into the open desert, and found a coal-black baby, maybe 1½ or 2 years old, with not a stitch on him. His arms and legs looked like toothpicks. His head and belly oversized, and even at night I could see the whites of his eager eyes as I walked to him and picked him up.

"He clung to me close and warm

*“Joe Fabick was struck by the compelling need of these people... if he could somehow negotiate a plane for that mission work...”*

with his arms and legs, and put his head close against me.

"On this trip I had an audience with Pope Paul VI, and though he was most 'inspiring,' this native child, clinging to me so desperately, was the closest I've been to Heaven for a long, long time.

"I carried him to the mission and handed him over to Sister Michael (from Boston and a flying nun), who fed him and put him to sleep in a strange bed. She said this was not an infrequent experience. Some of the little fellows are even dead when they find them and sometimes half eaten by animals.

"She said they would feed this one and care for him and when he is well and stronger they would try to find his parents. If not, he'd stay on and grow up with the rest of the kids—400 or 500 of them whom they care for. . . ."

**If Conrad's safari** was indeed over and the gang in St. Louis thought their obligation was finished, they had to re-think the strategy. In several parts of the world news of the gift had gone through the grapevine and requests to duplicate that same gesture began filtering back. Each of the appeals seemed as genuine as the first and having the pattern established, the founding



**WINGS OF HOPE** officers pose with their latest gift for service in Brazil. Shown from left are: Francis J. Fabick, Chairman; Paul J. Rodgers, V.P.; Marc Tilia, Pilot; Joseph G. Fabick, President; and Wm. D. Edwards, Director.

group decided to stay in business.

They formed a non-profit, non-sectarian, non-political charitable corporation, elected George Haddaway as Board Chairman, Joe Fabick as President, got a proper Board of Directors, established some ground rules and began this truly remarkable service called "WINGS OF HOPE."

By this writing they have followed up the first gift with another airplane to a sponsoring mission in

*“It would have taken two to three weeks by river travel to deliver this emergency case to the hospital.”*

Peru. Another has gone to New Guinea. There are two in Guatemala, others in Surinam, in Brazil, two more to Peru, one in the Arctic regions of Canada, in New Ireland, one to Mombassa, Kenya, to Mexico, and to the backwoods of Alaska. By this date, without running through the whole works, thirty aircraft have been bought, donated or assisted in an important way by "WINGS OF HOPE."

Recipients must be responsible

organizations, either missionary or humanitarian and medical. And their pedigree, as well as need, are checked out carefully before any action is taken. Concern transcends denominational lines and recipients have been Roman Catholics, Episcopalians, Lutherans, Pentecostals, Good Shepherd Foundation, Gospel Missionaries, Presbyterians, etc.

As a matter of interest, "WINGS OF HOPE" operations bring a new unity to the service areas; a new spirit of ecumenicity. The local government is always consulted and in each case has wholeheartedly endorsed the proposal and eagerly accepted the help.

**A plane today, equipped** properly for this application when delivered, comes to about \$60,000. In many cases, there is a primitive radio network in use through isolated government outposts or church groups. Radio communication is essential in directing this type air service.

When the circumstance is truly desperate and without communication, "WINGS OF HOPE" will supply the basic essential system as well. Gifts go only to those people who have no recognized access to the outside world; meaning no roads exist, no railroads, not even charter service; areas where medical resources are basically lacking.

Requests from such places now under consideration have come from Nigeria, the Philippines, Paraguay, Haiti, Brazil, Alaska, Southeast Asia, Nicaragua, Honduras, Indonesia and a half dozen parts of Africa.

The degree of sophistication developed by this volunteer group has gained worldwide notoriety as consultants to mission-type installations. Existing missionary or fraternal groups *with* funding and budget are often totally ignorant about how the equipment and operational prob-

(Over)

## "Wings of Hope"

lems of the unit are solved; many consult "WINGS OF HOPE" on how to best organize staff and direct the aviation enterprise.

Here they learn the best plane to negotiate the job and the geography, plus what special aviation equipment is required, what supportive ground maintenance is recommended, where to secure the right type pilot and mechanic, the communications stuff necessary to effectively cover the arena of action, the backup ground people, etc.

**A flying missionary** in Peru made a six-year study and reported that without proper management, the average volunteer professional who reports for work in the jungle spends 50 to 90 percent of his time standing around or wheel spinning because no one has figured out where or how to put him to work, and because of inadequate transportation and communication.

Planners simply misunderstand the challenge of the primitive and try to dovetail activity on the basis of civilized patterns. The Peruvian missionary claims to have increased effectiveness of his mission unit 20-30 times, 2,000 to 3,000 percent! Because "Wings" has taught them how to manage the mission.

They have access through a network of colleagues across America to the top technical expertise, thus resolving virtually any question about airplanes, communications, spare parts, power units, building materials, synthetics, electronics, medication, nutrition, education and you-name-it for folks in the back woods requiring answers.

A doctor in Kenya, for example, can be persuaded to spend 3½ hours in the plane enroute to a settlement in the bush, then four days in surgery on countless patients and be back home safely when finished; *providing* he has the plane available; *providing* he has patients specifically scheduled; *providing* he has a team to help, a place to work, the lights, et al.

Without the plane, that doctor would never risk the trip overland for days in savage country, and without *precise management of his*

*time*, his surgical effort is cut to a fraction of its potential. This sort of coordination and expertise is the type of consulting service the missionary had in mind and which he applied to all professionals on the mission staff—engineer, agronomist, teacher, preacher, farmer, social worker, etc.

**Beyond that**, "WINGS OF HOPE" has become a virtual purchasing agent for groups needing medical equipment, supplies, communications, components, systems, aviation equipment and accessories. They also find application for slightly used medical or dental equipment, for surplus drugs and antibiotics, surgical gadgetry, medicines, food stuffs and other items as provided by supporters in the States.

But the payoff to all this is what it has done for specific individuals whose lives are saved by an aircraft and pilot available in an emergency. The reports of these occasions flow in day after day. . .

"I have never seen such a mess in my life. He had a huge flap of skin hanging off from his skull of which a large portion was visible. He was conscious but his eyes were glazed and he kept trying to feel his head with his hands. . . ." (A tree had fallen, crushing his head and shoulder).

"Shoot, I'll have to fly this guy to the city. This fellow probably has several concussions and will need more than sewing. . . Stand at the far end of the airstrip with a flashlight so I'll have something to line up on. . . Within an hour and a quarter after arriving at the jungle strip, that man was in the general hospital in Guatemala City. . .

"The doctors performed a cranial operation and removed three blood clots. . . Five days later Mike visited the man who recognized him and who will probably be back with his family in another week. Regards to all, **Sink Manning, Chief Pilot, Guatemala.**"

"I wish to express my sincere appreciation to you and all of "WINGS OF HOPE" for the vital service

rendered to one of my parishioners, Gaston Ramos Rivadeneyra. He had been seriously bitten by a venomous reptile and no doubt if it had not been for the aircraft 'WINGS OF HOPE', the outcome would have been fatal. . . Iquitos, the nearest center with medical facilities entails over a week of irksome traveling by boat. By plane, one way, is approximately one hour and a half. Thanks to the kind consideration by your pilot, Guy Gervais, whom I contacted by radio, Gaston's life was saved. . . **Fr. Mariano Gagnon.**"

**The testimonials go on and on**, making this far too long a "Christmas story." But the message is clear.

Here is a group of men who have volunteered time, entrepreneurial and administrative skills to the alleviation of human misery and pain. Not by going in person but by becoming enablers—catalysts—by seeing that some group already on the job is better equipped to maximize potential.

The planes and the know-how have added a new dimension to mission work and it is safe to say that every day of the year, somewhere, at least one life is saved only because "WINGS OF HOPE" has responded to the eternal cry of human need. Not with prayers or plans or platitudes, but with planes. They have heard and responded by *acting*.

And to thirty separate enclaves of people in the third world, the word "American" is virtually hallowed; it means help . . . service . . . unselfishness . . . hope . . . friendship.

All of which suggests what a small group of people have done to bring about "good will to men." This Christmas, what does this say of our effort—yours and mine?

**P. E. MacAllister**

**Author's Note:** Joe Fabick is still looking for used machines. His telephone number is: Area Code 314-343-5900. And membership is available to you all in "WINGS OF HOPE." ●

# What do you give the guy who has nothing?

. . . A helping hand!

In this day of "the guy who has everything", much of the joy has gone out of gift giving. Now, however, thanks to the generosity of a number of industry leaders, we in the aviation community have an opportunity to give a gift which can mean the difference between life and death to thousands of people in all parts of the world. That gift is Wings of Hope.

Fully non-profit, non-denominational and tax exempt, Wings of Hope is the nation's first totally aviation oriented charity. Begun in 1966 with the gift of a single aircraft, Wings of Hope planes, pilots and communication systems now serve the diseased, starving and illiterate in remote areas of four continents.

Through your check, you can be part of this industry-wide humanitarian mission to the world's forgotten people. Or if you prefer, you may donate new or used aircraft or support equipment.

So please. Lend a helping hand where it is needed most . . . and the joy of giving will be yours to keep at no extra charge. Give today to Wings of Hope.

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### **Wings of Hope, Inc.**

**2319 Hampton Avenue • St. Louis, Mo. 63139**

**Phone: 314/647-5631**

\_\_\_\_ Please send more information on Wings of Hope.

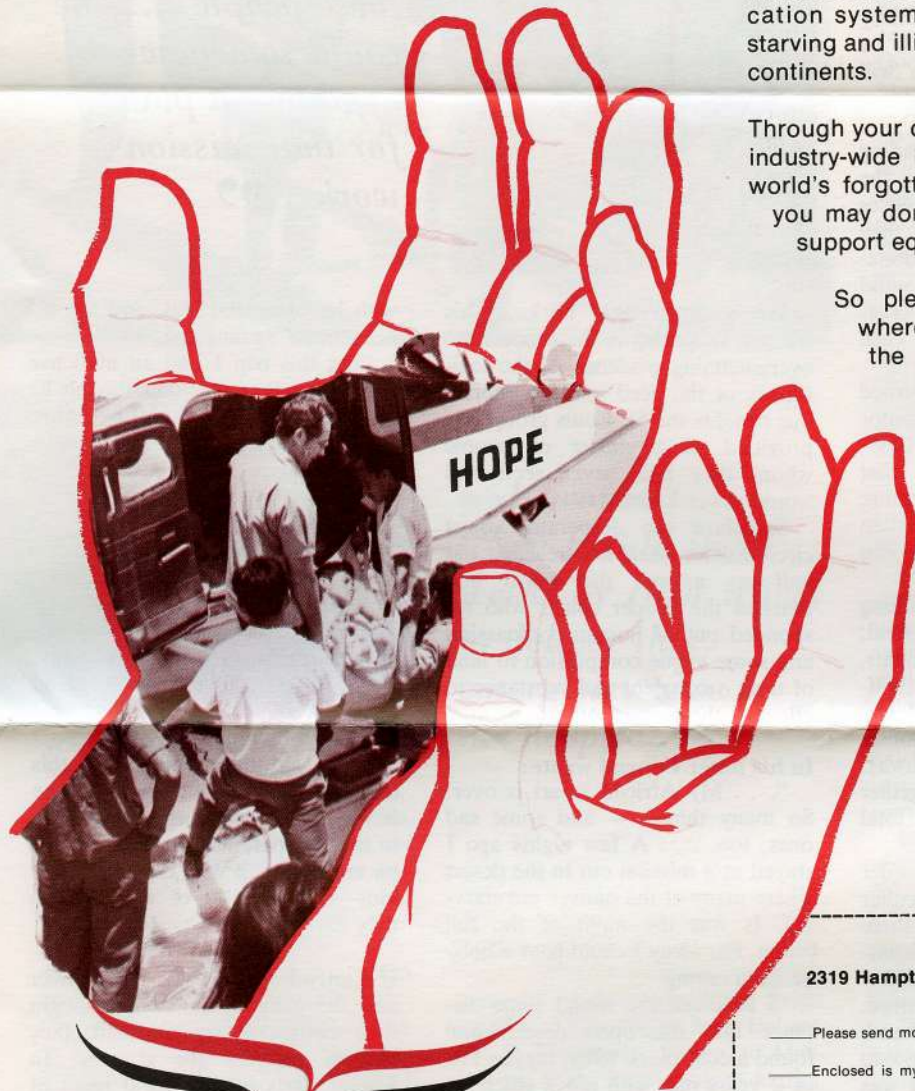
\_\_\_\_ Enclosed is my donation for \_\_\_\_\_

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