

WINGS OF HOPE: ANGELS IN ACTION

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Tropical sounds are easily identified: the screeches of a frog being chased by a snake, the soft thud of a fallen coconut, the scurried dash of the smaller animals, the familiar human noises of a jungle village, the distant drone of an engine — solid, isolated sounds of friendly, relaxing remoteness.

Then there are the all too familiar sounds of disaster: the watery roar of a flash flood, the steamy hum of drought, the moans of an epidemic, the whimpers of pain — sounds of misery intensified to a pitch of panic by that former friendly atmosphere of remoteness. No mistaking these sounds of suffering.

Other sounds, however, can be misleading: the senior vice-president of a large midwestern airline, a manufacturer's representative, the president of a

heavy-equipment firm, the publisher of a popular aviation magazine, a dental surgeon, a retired airline pilot. Sounds like the board of directors of an exclusive country club — sounds unusual.

"Wanted: airplanes, new and used . . . radio equipment, used cars, trucks and heavy equipment, tools, supplies . . . cash donations to be used for reaching remote areas of Africa, South and Central America, New Guinea." Sounds like a paid advertisement from a soldier of fortune magazine — sounds unusual.

These unusual sounds made by men and machines have given a new tone to humanitarianism. With their concern and their contraptions and technical know-how they have disturbed the blaring silence of remoteness and softened the sounds of disaster by adding new sounds of brother-

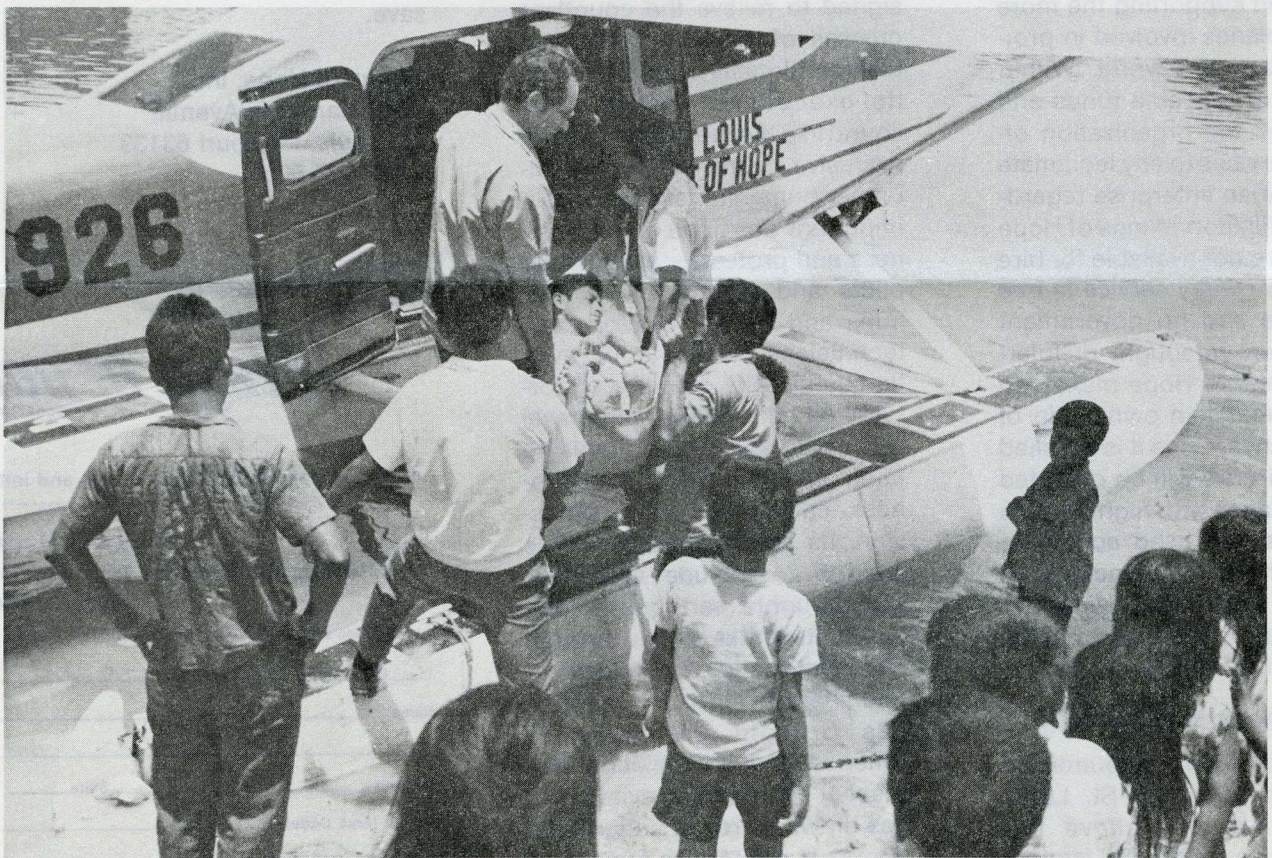
hood to needy and suffering people in remote parts of the world.

Listen to the unusual sounds of brotherhood coming from the skies. . . .

To a group of concerned neighbors ringing the hut of a young Peruvian woman with severe childbirth complications that endanger her life as well as the new life that refuses to be born, it sounds like the distant, determined sound of an airplane that can lift the two threatened lives to a hospital minutes away by air, weeks away by land.

To an excited litter of Brazilian youngsters running to the banks of the Amazon River to greet the fascinating craft that flies and floats, it sounds as though a new teacher has arrived at their remote village.

To an ex-U.S. Navy doctor piloting his plucky Skywagon over tricky Rhodesian routes, it sounds like the soft, assuring



crackle of a new King navcom radio — so badly needed, so well used.

To a weary group of doctors treating the wounds and shock left by a Guatemalan earthquake, it sounds like fresh medical supplies arriving in the single-engine Cessna circling the cracked countryside.

To the remote areas of Brazil, Peru, Guatemala, Alaska, New Guinea, Surinam, Africa, it sounds like Wings of Hope.

Brotherhood with wings

Wings of Hope is an American-based, aviation-oriented charity whose primary purpose is to relieve human misery with the aid of light aircraft and radio communications. It is the crowded sky's contribution to the spread of brotherhood by winging medical assistance, program development, and social and educational services to those who can look only to the heavens for hope, because their land is hopelessly flooded or drought-ridden or locked in inaccessibility. Its planes carry doctors, technicians, and teachers to areas where there is a lack of communication, transport the sick and injured to hospitals, and supply food and medicine to people numbed by natural catastrophes.

As an organization, it is as impartial as the skies it flies. Nonpolitical, nonsectarian, nonprofit, it is staffed primarily by nonpaid volunteers, mostly businessmen and aviation professionals. At a time when fund raising is suspect and foreign aid discouraging, it is assuring to be informed that more than 90 percent of funds donated to the group has gone solely to supplying and supporting the more than 30 planes involved in projects around the world. Within the limit of available funds and personnel, the organization offers its services to any legitimate humanitarian enterprise regardless of affiliation. Wings of Hope aircraft are not available for hire or charter. Every service is free of charge and no government involvement is sought or tolerated. Wings of Hope makes no effort to maintain ownership of the airplanes. Once it is satisfied that an aircraft will be operated in accordance with high aviation standards and used according to the charitable principles of Wings of Hope, then ownership to the plane is often given to the group being served.

Born of the concern of men

Wings of Hope was founded in 1964 by a group of St. Louis businessmen to relieve the needs of a tribe of famine-threatened nomads under the

care of a small group of Irish medical missionaries based at a hospital in a remote area of the Turkhana Desert in Kenya, East Africa. The original idea was to put a light all-metal plane into service to save the famished and diseased desert dwellers. The St. Louis businessmen would act as advisers. The comforting coughs of the engine of that first Cessna Skywagon, flown to its desert destination by the world-famous long-distance pilot Max Conrad, resulted in a roar of requests from hopeful people in very remote areas with very immediate needs.

Since that first successful joint venture in aviation aid, the St. Louis group has expanded and has been incorporated. Affiliates were formed in other countries and planes purchased for other isolated locations. Individuals, groups and foundations, and corporations occasionally contribute cash donations or surplus aircraft, used equipment, and other property. It is admittedly operated on a wing and a prayer. Mr. William D. Edwards, the executive director, recently remarked that Wings has ordered a \$50,000 aircraft for quick delivery to relieve an imminent need and "we don't have the money available to pay for it, but we have the faith that somehow it will be. The money always comes." Wings of Hope, too, has the prayerful backing of all those missionaries and many of the people it serves.

Countless crosses of suffering

Wings of Hope has to be the strangest airline crisscrossing the globe. "Crisscrossing" is the right word: It was founded in a spirit of greater love that characterized Christ's Cross and designed to relieve the countless crosses of suffering and need that continually nag humanity. Its executives, though they sound like the membership of an exclusive country club, are volunteer humanitarians who have important positions in the business and professional world. Its pilots and mechanics include nuns and nurses, doctors and technicians, veterans of aviation, and salty soldiers of fortune. All of its passengers travel first class, having paid the rising fares of suffering and hopelessness, catastrophe and oppression. Its schedules are flexible enough to include epidemics and droughts, earthquakes and floods. Its routes ramble through skies untouched by tourism or uncluttered by luxury liners. It has brought friendship to America and appreciation and respect for general aviation. It has drawn words of congratulation from aviators as famous as Neil Armstrong, paragraphs of

praise from writers as literate as the late Bob Considine, smiles of thanks from thousands as grateful as the Peruvian mother who reached the hospital in time to deliver her baby.

Sounds of support

These are the modern tones of humanitarianism and brotherhood that the aviation community has donated to the human family with Wings of Hope: sounds like the cries of a newborn life, sounds like lessons being taught in a schoolroom, sounds like doctors busy with injured and sick, sounds like words of gratitude such as these from that doctor-pilot in Rhodesia: "Thanks to Wings of Hope for the radio. We will put it to good use, and what is more important, it is the expression that somebody really cares about Christ's poor and underprivileged. The full-time missionaries feel so alone in this respect sometimes, so the radio brings support and consolation to many more than just the few who will directly use it."

And sounds like the words of encouragement and support said to generous people by the Catholic bishops of the world in their Vatican II document, *The Church in the Modern World*: "We must praise and assist those people who volunteer their services to help other men and other peoples. Indeed it is a duty of the whole People of God to alleviate the hardships of our times within the limits of its means, giving generously not merely out of what is superfluous but also out of what is necessary."

Sounds like Wings of Hope, Inc.

Sounds like mission: sent to save.

Wings of Hope, Inc.
2319 Hampton Avenue
St. Louis, Missouri 63139
(314) 647-5631



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