

Dear Friends,

If you are reading this letter, you have been part of the most recent chapters in my life and I want to thank you. Your support and love have sustained me and carried me through times I could not walk alone.

The story so far...

As most of you know, I came to Waco two and a half years ago to pursue the education and experience required to enter the aviation ministry field. Last May I graduated with honors from Texas State Technical College with an Associates of Applied Science in Aviation Maintenance and earned my Airframe and Powerplant Mechanic certificates. On the last day of September, 2009, I passed my FAA oral and practical exam and became a certified Private Pilot with the amazing folks at Wings for Christ.

And, of course, God was so gracious to me during some very difficult personal experiences during that time. The unfailing love of Jesus served as an example of who I wanted to be through those times and He led me to the most amazing and kind woman I have ever met. On May 23, 2009, I married Ellen Miriam Hampton and have been so blessed by her that I often have to stop and reflect on God's grace and favor.

When I embarked on this journey of preparing for ministry I did not have a clear direction of where it would lead. I remained open to wherever God would take me, believing that the Lord would lead the way if I put my foot on the path and trusted that it would go to a place prepared by Him. Through two and a half years of preparation, reflection and prayer, a direction and an opportunity are before me. A beautiful combination of my past non-profit communications experience and my newly acquired experiences in aviation has been forged. I am very excited to announce that I am entering the aviation ministry field as Development Director for Wings for Christ, International in Waco, Texas.

Wings for Christ and Mission Aviation...

Wings for Christ has served mission aviation for nearly 50 years, primarily training pilots for careers in mission flying. In those 50 years the cost of obtaining a commercial flight rating has gone from a few thousand dollars to upwards of \$100,000 and higher. Very few students can earn the required ratings without racking up huge debts, preventing them from entering the mission field for years. Wings for Christ exists to provide that training at minimal cost to students, allowing them to pursue their calling to serve much sooner.

Another shift in mission aviation is occurring that we are working hard to address. Many nations are beginning to bar pilots from working in their country unless they are national citizens. This is not necessarily a bad thing for mission aviation in general and shifting the ministry workload to nationals is a successful model in other areas. Most countries that are moving in this direction are open to having their pilots train in the United States because of the high standards of the FAA and our training schools. Unfortunately, when it comes to training those pilots and maintenance professionals, the costs are even higher.

Wings for Christ can provide most of that training at a greatly reduced cost, but it still takes money to make it happen. Airplane maintenance, fuel, instructors and housing for students all

add up. WfC has some excellent strategies to deal with these challenges and we have been very blessed with dedicated and generous supporters since the beginning. But the task before us demands that we add to that base of support.

The right kind of support...

When I say support I don't just mean financially. Henri Nouwen, in a brilliant essay, states that any real connection between supporter and ministry must transform the recipient, the Kingdom *and* the donor. I fully agree and as development director, I will seek such connections with all my efforts. Just asking for cash isn't building the Kingdom. We must work to find the *right connections* between ministry, partner and Kingdom.

This takes a concentrated effort and consistent relationship building between organization and donor. It goes beyond what can be done "catch as catch can" or by the odd plea for help when times are tight. This work needs the attention of someone who is able to give it undivided and consistent attention. At no time during the history of Wings for Christ have we had a development director specifically tasked to raise the support, financial or otherwise, necessary to provide flight training.

As development director, I will not receive a salary from WfC, but will raise my own support. This allows me to serve without draining the budget in any way. I am hoping to raise enough funds to work full time, but I will work as many days per week as I can raise support to cover.

What does that look like? Let me show you...

I need to raise \$120 per eight hour day of work in order to do my part for the family finances. That breaks down to \$15.00 per hour before taxes, so a forty hour work week would require \$600 in funds raised per week, year round. Spread out over a good sized partner group, this is a very achievable goal. RBC Ministries, the Daily Bread devotional people, raise their multi-million dollar annual budget from an average support commitment of only \$20 per month. Of course they have tens of thousands of supporters, but the fact remains that even in large organizations the bulk of fundraising is done in small bites.

Here is what Ellen and I are inviting you to do...

Will you agree to pray for us and cheer us on with your encouragement?

We want you to join us in my work for Wings for Christ in the most critical role by praying for our family and regularly encouraging us. This is a big undertaking and involves taking a giant step of faith. We cannot do this on our own power. We need our friends and family to stand with us and ask God for His help and to trust in Him.

Will you invest in the effort to help Wings for Christ achieve its mission?

For those who want to contribute financially, we are asking you to consider this as an investment. Our promise to you is that your investment in the Kingdom will be wisely used. Every hour that I can help Wings for Christ reach its goals, is an hour dedicated to furthering the Kingdom of God. Please decide how many hours of work you want to sponsor per month and then make a two year commitment to Wings for Christ to follow through with that support. The goal is 160 hours per month and if we get more than 100 hours per month, I can also help as needed with maintenance on our airplanes. All donations are tax deductible.

