

My day is quickly changing from what I had planned to something quite different. I had been scheduled to haul cement and cinder blocks between two airstrips. It's kind of like an airborne pickup truck of sorts and if you get there early, you can make 8-10 trips, hauling literally tons of much needed construction materials. On my way, however, I was to drop off a few patients at another airstrip, then proceed on to my task for the day.

My passengers look comfortable from the cockpit, despite the turbulence. It is the windy season here now. Between August and November we can expect some days to be just too windy to even fly. Today is not, but mother-nature is reminding us who is in charge. We have several wind sensitive strips in Lesotho. Our first destination is one of them. Arriving overhead, the wind socks show near maximum limitations for a safe landing.

Since we will be landing with a 5% upslope, there is a point on our approach where I must decide whether to commit to land, or abort the landing and turn out of the valley. A huge pocket of sinking air late in the approach makes it clear we will have to turn out of the valley and try again. The second approach started off very similar to the first, but expecting the downdraft and finding some smooth air at the abort point, we continued to a safe landing.



7P-CMV, or "Victor" as we call her, was my "pickup" that day...

With my three patients off loaded, we started up and began the pre-takeoff checks. Just then the clinic Land Cruiser pulled up flashing its lights at us. Shutting down we discover that one of the patients I just dropped off is not from this area. She must have been boarded onto our flight by mistake!

Matsejana is her name. I vaguely remembered picking her up weeks before, but suddenly it dawns on me where she is from. She is from another area with the same name, but a different airstrip altogether, about 35 miles northeast of our location. I remember her clearly now. At 97 years old, she holds the distinction of being the oldest passenger I have ever flown!



*The first signs of spring, peach blossoms!
But with spring come the winds...*

It is difficult to ask her to board our small plane once again for what will certainly prove to be an uncomfortable ride for all of us. I'm embarrassed by our mistake, but still feel the tug to get on with my day. Unfortunately, the airstrip where she needs to go is even more wind-sensitive than the one we just landed on. However, leaving her here would only add to her discomfort and accommodation back in the capital city would be less than optimum. After weighing all of our options, getting her home is now our top priority.

From overhead I can see the wind is howling at Matsejana's home. No need to make a second approach, there will be no landing here today. Looking back to check on her, I hope my eyes can communicate that I want to get her on the ground and home as soon as possible. Fortunately, only 6 miles away there is another strip where favorable winds prevail, and I've got a very good friend who may be able to help us out.

“Not what you do for God but what God does for you—that’s the agenda for rejoicing.”

Luke 10:20 *The Message*

His name is Ntate Moses (“Ntate” is simply a term of respect for men). He is the site administrator at the clinic near this particular airstrip. I know they have a vehicle and sometimes make the journey to the neighboring clinic where Matsejana’s home is. Even though they are only 6 miles apart, the drive will take 3 hours. Ironically, his team was already planning to make the drive later that day! He assured me they would take good care of her and get her home that afternoon.

Being over two hours late to start the cement run, there was no way I would be able to haul the amount of construction supplies I had hoped. However, I couldn’t help but smile on the inside thinking of what had happened earlier in the day. Despite the mix-up and heavy winds, Matsejana would be home tonight.

At our recent family conference this past August, the speaker encouraged us to look for the hand of God each day, large or small. Some days are harder to see than others, but today I am thankful that, together with some colleagues, we could care for Matsejana.

We are so grateful to serve the Lord in flying and maintaining airplanes here in Lesotho. We appreciate so much the opportunity to see the hand of God in this part of the world. Through your prayers and support, you make stories like these possible.

~ Since Our Last Prayerletter ~

Highlights:
Family Conference
Amanda’s Birthday
Justin’s first mountain bike race
Learning to make Pizza!

Prayer Requests:

** Since arriving 8 months ago, Amanda has been looking for her niche where she can minister and find fulfillment in her time here. We pray that she will find just the thing!

** For over a year now, our team has been searching for a Chaplin to care for our passenger’s needs (especially patients like Matsejana). Up to now we have not found one. Please pray the Lord would make clear the way forward.

Praise Items:

*** Justin has completed his initial flight checkout!

*** Praise God no one was seriously injured after one of our team members had a landing accident. Unfortunately, it looks like the airplane cannot be repaired. However, it has been a tremendous blessing to see your team bonding through this tough time.



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