

# **Faith-based Aviation: An Ethnographic Study of Missionary Flights International**

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## **Abstract**

*The development of faith-based missionary aviation is a post-World War II phenomenon. The war effort demonstrated the value, utility, and global reach of aviation to remote, underdeveloped areas of the world. With the beginnings of a worldwide infrastructure for aviation, Christian aviators realized aviation could increase the range and effectiveness of their efforts to reach the world for Christ (Mellis, 2006).*

*A qualitative, ethnographic study was conducted to document the activities of one faith-based aviation organization to gain an understanding of this little known-aspect of civilian aviation. The study was conducted with Missionary Flights International (MFI) of Fort Pierce, Florida, which has been involved in faith-based missionary aviation since its inception in 1964.*

*A constant comparative method was utilized to identify common elements, themes and patterns; common threads woven throughout the fabric of the organization and its culture. With the use of triangulation, three sides of input data from interviews, questionnaires and observations, two general phenomena, aviation and missions, each with six related categories emerged, describing the organization. MFI provides twice a week service to the island of Hispaniola and the Republic of Haiti. In this in-depth study, insight and understanding were gained into the purpose of MFI, its daily routines and operations, and the challenges it faces in maintaining its flight services to Haiti.*

## INTRODUCTION

Aviation is an expeditious means by which people and cargo can be transported especially in remote areas where traditional modes of transportation may not exist. Charitable aviation fills a gap where commercial aviation cannot be financially sustained. We are accustomed to measuring profits by looking at the financial bottom line, but there are many rewards of equal or greater importance that are not measured monetarily: missions accomplished, hurdles overcome, lives saved.

An exceptional example of this was the global response to the devastating January 12, 2010 earthquake in the Republic of Haiti. Haiti is frequently visited by epidemics, tropical storms and flooding. It is the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere and an area of great need. In 2010, Haiti was the epicenter of a severe earthquake from which its people have yet to recover. Nearly one hundred general aviation aircraft flew over 700 mercy flights, transporting 3,800 passengers and 1.4 million pounds of relief supplies in the days immediately after the earthquake, providing a lifeline to Haiti (National Business Aviation Association, 2010). Missionary Flights International of Fort Pierce, FL occupies a most unique niche in flying modernized DC-3s, the DC-3 TP aircraft for missionaries to the Republic of Haiti and the Dominican Republic on the island of Hispaniola in the Caribbean.

A qualitative, ethnographic study through cultural emersion into Missionary Flights International (MFI) was undertaken to gain an understanding of this little-known aspect of civilian aviation and to gain greater insight into the mission and purpose of MFI documenting the activities of this faith-based aviation organization, its daily routine, and the challenges they face in maintaining their flight service to Haiti. The ultimate goal of this study was to document the value of the faith-based aviation services of MFI; to highlight the organization; and to discover its operational methods. In so doing, this study hopes to create a picture, through an in-depth ethnographic study, of mission aviation.

## Background

The development of faith-based mission aviation was largely a post-World War II phenomenon. At the end of WWII, Americans formed missionary aviation groups: Mission Aviation Fellowship (MAF), established in 1945 and Jungle Aviation and Radio Service (JAARS) established in 1948.

Formal education programs for the training of missionaries in aviation have existed since the 1940s and 1950s with Moody Aviation of the Moody Bible Institute and LeTourneau University of Longview, Texas. Many other flight and maintenance programs exist today in the United States for the training of mission aviators. Globally today there are “125 distinct, international and/or cross-cultural mission aviation programs...supported by more than 35 dedicated mission aviation training programs” (McGee, 2007, p. 1).

MFI was established in 1964 and in its early days flew Beech-18 aircraft from Florida to the Caribbean. In 1976, the organization acquired its first DC-3 from Moody Aviation—further evidence and belief in God’s providence that continues today (Beldin,

2007). A major event for MFI was their change from a FAA Part 91 operation to a Part 125 operation in 2008, which is discussed in further depth in this study's results.

The DC-3 first flew for commercial airlines in 1935 and was known for its versatility, safety, dependability and ability to fly into unimproved airstrips. Over 12,000 DC-3/C-47s were produced by Douglas Aircraft Company, and 1,000 remain in service today. The plane was originally powered by the Pratt & Whitney R-1830-S1C3G Wasp radial piston engines. The updated turboprop version is powered by Pratt & Whitney PT6A-65AR turbine engines. Currently, MFI operates two DC-3 TP, DC-3 turboprops.

In addition to background information on the types of planes flown by MFI, it is important to have a brief understanding of the history, demographics and geography of the island of Hispaniola and the country of Haiti. Hispaniola, formerly Española, is the second largest island in the Caribbean in the West Indies between Cuba and Puerto Rico. The island is divided east and west into the Dominican Republic and the Republic of Haiti. The island's strategic location in the Caribbean was essential to Spanish colonization of the region into Cuba, Mexico, Panama, and South America. The Spanish ceded the western third of Hispaniola in 1697 to France, which later gained independence in 1804 becoming the Republic of Haiti. The remainder of the island gained colonial independence in 1844 becoming the Dominican Republic.

Today Haiti, a nation of 8.7 million people is the most impoverished nation in the western hemisphere, clearly illustrated through per capita income, infant mortality rates and life expectancy data. Haiti is also a densely-populated country approximately the size of Maryland; it is largely deforested, with a significantly lower standard of living, income and life expectancy and significantly higher infant mortality and population density than its Dominican Republic or other Caribbean neighbors (Index Mundi, 2013). The 2010 earthquake that struck Haiti registered 7.0 on the Richter scale, and killed 316,000, injured 300,000 and left more than 1.3 million people homeless. The earthquake had an estimated economic cost of nearly \$14 billion to this already impoverished nation (United States Geological Survey, 2013).

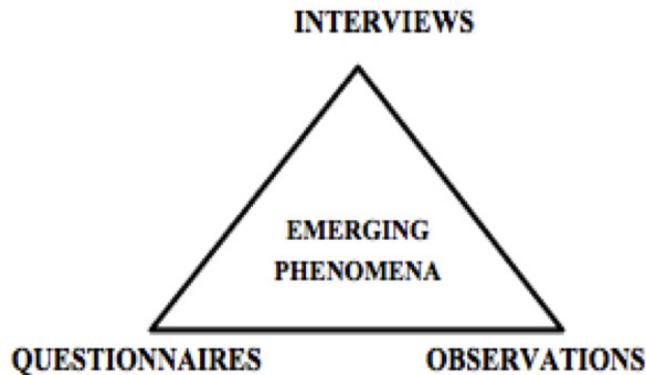
MFI had its first aircraft on the ground in Port-au-Prince within 24 hours of the earthquake. Soon, seven daily flights were ferrying essential, lifesaving cargos and provisions, including medical and rescue personnel to the island from Ft. Pierce (Snook, Budensiek, & Martin, 2010). In 2011, MFI's DC-3s flew 1,600 hours and 275,000 miles, with an average of four flights per week to Haiti, the Dominican Republic and to the Bahamas, with 270,000 pounds of luggage and 230 tons of essential supplies and cargo with a similar amount flown in 2012 (Missionary Flights International, 2013).

## **RESEARCH AND DATA ANALYSIS METHODOLOGY**

Grounded theory with a constant comparison method is a contemporary, dynamic approach to qualitative research which is a "bottom-up" method for the identification of emerging common and recurrent trends and themes from ongoing data analysis, ensuring development of hypothesis and theories about phenomena. A constant comparative method

was utilized to identify common elements, themes and patterns; common threads woven throughout the fabric of the organization and its culture. Figure 1 is an illustration of the triangulation research methods, based on a triangle with three sides of input data from interviews, questionnaires and observations.

## **TRIANGULATION**



*Figure 1. Three sides of triangulation for the development of emerging phenomena.*

### **Data Collection and Analysis**

The author conducted a five-day visit to MFI in Ft. Pierce, Florida, in January, 2013, for on-ground observation of aviation management, aircraft preparation and loading, aircraft maintenance, flight operations and preparation with opportunity for interviews of staff and of clientele served by the organization and to observe and participate in ground and flight activities in Fort Pierce and in Haiti. MFI is a relatively small aviation operation with twenty-one paid employees and additional unpaid volunteers. It has personnel functioning in a wide spectrum of routine essential aviation activities. Departments at MFI include: Administration, Flight Operations, Maintenance Operations, Flight Planning/Loadmaster, Warehouse/Mailroom/Purchasing and Office/Clerical Support Staff. There were five prominent personnel categories at MFI to include those in administration, pilot/maintenance, warehouse/mailroom and purchasing, clerical office staff, and volunteers. The author undertook a directed, intentional and purposeful sampling of employees in each category for both the depth and scope of this inquiry. Over the course of four days nineteen formal interviews were conducted.

One day was dedicated to participating in flight operations with a roundtrip flight to Haiti as a member of the flight crew as the required flight attendant. Eight adult passengers expressed a willingness and interest to participate in a questionnaire process at a later date.

A similar-sized group of MFI customers, unknown to the researcher was surveyed through contact information provided by MFI, for another, independent data set for triangulation purposes. This group was asked the same questions as passengers on the January, 10, 2013 flights to and from Haiti. Commonly asked questions included the individual's experience with MFI; for staff members, their personal experiences, responsibilities and perspectives on the organization and its customers. MFI's clientele were questioned about their experience with the organization. In both cases, those questioned were given the opportunity to expand and develop their thoughts in germane areas.

Following the on-site visit, audio recordings and field notes were transcribed. Data from all sources were examined for common and repetitive themes. These themes were categorized, the frequency or commonality was noted and categories of related themes were also developed in keeping with the study's design.

Data for this study about faith-based aviation and Missionary Flights International was derived from sources within the organization, and sources outside the organization. The internal data was from interviews in Fort Pierce, FL with MFI personnel and were a key source of primary information. The external data was from interviews with Fort Pierce Airport personnel; questionnaires completed by MFI customers; and from five days of field notes and observations with a critical source of external data from MFI customers by questionnaire. Thirteen of twenty questionnaires were completed for an overall response rate of sixty-five percent. At least four distinct and different data sources of information, allowing for triangulation, were derived for analysis to identify and establish core phenomena.

## **RESULTS**

Utilizing a constant comparative method to initially identify potential core phenomena, recurring events and themes emerged and were identified.

### **The Core Phenomena**

Ninety topics about faith-based aviation and Missionary Flights International were initially identified. These topics were further refined and concentrated into twelve categories. Each of these categories was significant and each was confirmed from a variety of data sources. Two core phenomena were identified: flight or aviation and missions or missionaries in keeping with Missionary Flights International's own definition:

Missionary Flights International is not an airline. We do, however, strive to offer affiliated missions the kind of efficient service and professionalism expected of an airline operation. The Lord has led us to "Stand in the Gap" in meeting the air support needs of affiliated Biblical missions in the island fields of the West Indies, particularly Haiti, the Dominican Republic, and the Bahamas. (Missionary Flights International. 2013. para 1)

Table 1 illustrates the final categorization of two research phenomena, with twelve categories, six in under phenomenon.

<b>AVIATION PHENOMENON</b>	<b>MISSIONS/MISSIONARY PHENOMENON</b>
AVIATION	SERVE/SERVICE
AIRCRAFT DC-3 TP	EVANGELIZATION/PRAYER
MAINTENANCE OPERATIONS	FAITH/SUPPORT (GOD'S PROVISION)
FLIGHT OPERATIONS	HISTORY & CULTURE
PART 125 OPERATIONS	PEOPLE (HUMAN ASSETS)
PROFESSIONALISM	VOLUNTEERS

*Table 1. Two Final Research Phenomena with Categories*

## **The First Core Phenomenon: Aviation**

Remarks about aviation consistently addressed the merits of aviation in overcoming geographic hurdles common to other forms of transportation. Likewise, the comment was often made about aviation being a remarkable tool in advancing the kingdom of God. Aviation is a time-saving means for missionaries in Haiti. Aviation is also a secure method of transporting personnel and cargo otherwise vulnerable to hostile inhabitants and hazardous road conditions. MFI's service is reliable and dependable and constitutes a lifeline to the mainland for missionaries. They deliberately establish their charges at the lowest possible rates while meeting expenses. A roundtrip to any of their four destinations has a recommended donation of \$450, or about half of a commercial fare.

### **Aircraft**

MFI utilized the DC-3 radial aircraft from 1973 until 2011. The turboprop version, the DC-3 TP was first introduced to MFI in 2003, with complete conversion in 2011. The professional pilot and maintenance staff at MFI consistently remarked about the dependability and versatility of the aircraft, especially the turboprop version. As a tail dragger aircraft with large, robust main gear, the DC-3 is well suited for primitive landing fields. In essence, it is a simple, easily maintained aircraft. The DC-3 TP is more reliable, requiring only normally scheduled maintenance. The DC-3 TP can be put back into flight service after checking the engine oil and cleaning the galley. The turbine aircraft uses universally available Jet A fuel. Key to MFI's operations is keeping the cost of travel and shipping for missionaries as low as possible. Considering current economics, no other aircraft option is viable.

### **Part 125 Flight and Maintenance Operations**

MFI comes under stringent regulations by the FAA under Part 125 Operations requiring strict adherence to flight operations and maintenance procedures. Conversion to Part 125 Operations in 2008 accelerated change within MFI, with the creation of a Director of Operations and a Chief Pilot, development of standard operating procedures (SOPs)

and flight and maintenance manuals to standardize operations, and greater stringency in training and record keeping. They are conscious of risk management and the importance of crew resource management (CRM) and safety management systems (SMS) programs. Under federal regulations, they are responsible for currency of their captain and first officer pilots (E. Hallquist, personal communications, January 9, 2013). Their move in 2005 to Fort Pierce from West Palm Beach, FL provided a spacious headquarters with a 35,000 square foot hangar with offices, maintenance and storage facilities and warehouses. The aircraft are housed in hangars, greatly reducing aircraft corrosion and greatly enhancing their maintenance and flight loading efforts. The director of MFI is aware of the limitations in having only two functional aircraft for routine operations and realize that with additional aircraft they could expand their missionary aviation services throughout the Caribbean (K. Gumpel, personal communication, January 9, 2013).

### **Flight Preparations**

MFI has seen a continuously changing aviation environment, especially as an international operation post 9/11. There are greater concerns about safety and compliance with American and Haitian government immigration, customs procedures and regulations affecting every flight (E. Hallquist, personal communications, January 9, 2013). In shipping freight and cargo, they must adhere to safe practices and not ship hazardous or banned cargo (W. Norton, personal communication, January 8, 2013).

Missionary team leaders establish reservations several months to a year in advance for their groups. Planning software helps coordinate flight planning efforts merging reservation and cargo data with the number of passengers, onboard fuel requirements and the length of flight legs (W. Norton, personal communication, January 8, 2013). Passport, visa, general declarations and cargo and passenger manifests are submitted electronically in advance to the United States and Haitian governments. Prior permission must be granted for both the departure and arrival of all flights (S. Hengst, personal communication, January 11, 2013).

### **Professionalism**

Richard Snook, MFI's president and CEO, remarked of MFI's desire to mimic a commercial airline operation with professionalism, adherence to regulations and aviation standards, and in their relationships with the FAA. A sense of professionalism was confirmed from external sources at the Fort Pierce Airport. MFI has an experienced cadre of pilots, each flying weekly and approximately 250 hours per year (K. Stratton, personal communications, January 9, 2013). Their pilots have from 5,000 to 25,000 hours of flight experience (R. Snook, personal communication, January 11, 2013). Multiple references were made to MFI's commitment to the missionaries' safety and welfare, through conducting emergency flights evacuating missionaries for catastrophes, medical emergencies and accidents and because of political unrest in Haiti.

All MFI customers surveyed confirmed a high degree of professionalism and competence in flight and office operations. They consistently remarked about MFI's

hardworking, caring, courteous, cheerful and friendly attitudes, being unflappable and innovative especially in the face of emergencies, and with a willingness to “go the extra mile.” A missionary with ten years of experience flying with MFI stated: “Very professional while being compassionate to serve the Lord with excellence” (Interview Questionnaire (Non MFI-Personnel: Clients, Patrons, Sponsors & Benefactor), February 27, 2013).

### **The Second Core Phenomenon: Missions and Missionaries**

Missions and missionaries were defined as the act of proclaiming the Gospel message in service and in love. Those within MFI consider themselves to be stateside missionaries.

### **To Serve**

To serve as a calling or vocation is especially important within this organization in providing for the physical and spiritual needs of others. MFI’s president remarked, everyone, regardless of rank or responsibility has been called to MFI to serve. When interviewed, both paid staff and volunteers spoke of having been called to the mission field and of having been specifically led to MFI. When asked why they serve, volunteers and staff commonly responded that they have the spiritual gift of “helps”; feel called to bring relief and aid to others; and/or possess talents in aviation. When combined, MFI is the ideal platform from which to serve.

### **Service**

MFI has continually developed and refined the services they offer missionaries and their missions. Their missionary services started in 1964 with the delivery of mail to missionaries in the Bahamas. All missionary organizations utilizing MFI’s services must qualify as affiliate members. Each application is reviewed for consistency with MFI’s own doctrinal statement. MFI supports over 300 missionary organizations with more than 750 permanent missionary families residing in Haiti and additional transient short-term missionaries.

MFI’s vision goes well beyond the provision of aviation services for transporting people and material. MFI has compiled a listing of fifteen important services they provide for missions and missionaries in Haiti including disaster relief, feeding programs, sea shipments, construction teams, youth groups, orphanages, agriculture, church building, education, evangelism, emergence evacuations, Christmas bags, well drilling, mail and package service and hospital and medical clinic support.

The greatest service MFI provides is best defined as a concierge service for missionaries. Twice weekly, MFI ships mail to each of its three hundred affiliates in Haiti at no cost. Packages and cargo are shipped at MFI’s costs. This is particularly noteworthy of a non-profit organization that annually hopes to break even financially. The value of this was consistently validated and confirmed by missionaries in the field. Many stated, they could not accomplish their mission in Haiti without MFI; MFI is their link to America, often making life in Haiti more bearable.

## **Evangelization and Prayer**

Evangelization was defined as preaching and good works for spiritual conversion with prayer defined as conversation with God. A common and unifying denominator for those at MFI and the missionaries they serve is spiritual belief and faith. One missionary pilot remarked: "I do it for one reason, so that others may come to know Jesus Christ as their personal savior" (K. Gumpel, personal communication, January 9, 2013). MFI's President remarked on their ultimate spiritual motivation:

We have a burden for Haiti and the unreached. It's not about flying airplanes. Eternity is too important. It's about reaching people. These old DC-3's were once instruments of war. They are now instruments of peace. (R. Snook, personal communication, January 11, 2013).

MFI's employees remarked of routinely seeking God's wisdom and counsel in their operations. At the beginning of each week, those in the MFI community join together in prayer. Nearly two-thirds of the missionaries traveling to and from Haiti specifically mentioned reassurance with the flight crews' routine of prayer for God's protection before each flight.

## **Faith in God's Provision, Support and Fund Raising**

Not surprisingly, in any non-profit organization, fund raising is essential. Those at MFI depend upon charitable donations to sustain their organization and its efforts. Faith, provision and support were defined in this context of trusting God for His provision. Those at MFI are called to be good stewards. In a legal sense, MFI is the owner of the organization. In a biblical sense, they are stewards of the resources God has and continues to provide for them in serving others. Unique to faith-based organizations is the concept of support. Each missionary is responsible for raising his or her own support or salary. Individuals, families and churches have supported these missionaries, and the organization corporately with their consistent contributions (L. Campbell, personal communications, January 8, 2013). Those entering the MFI community must first spend several years developing this financial support before becoming part of the organization (R. Snook, personal communications, January 11, 2013).

This same principle is also applied to the organization. MFI must actively solicit support to sustain their flight operations. In 2013 one of their DC-3 aircraft was refurbished at an expense of well over one million dollars, a private foundation financed the engine overhaul of \$900,000 (J. Karabensh, personal communication, January 7, 2013). MFI's operating budget of nearly four million dollars is provided entirely through financial donations and fund raising (H. Martin, personal communication, January 7, 2013). In 2012 MFI became debt free. As God provides additional people and additional aircraft, MFI plans to expand their services to Cuba, to Central and South America (L. Campbell, personal communication, January 8, 2013).

## **History and Culture**

MFI has a rich culture in its fifty-year history. The missionary calling is common to all within the organization. They share a common desire to fulfill the Lord's command to reach out "to the least of these" (Matt 25:40). Everyone's position and contribution is equally important and valuable. As the CEO remarked: "We are in this together, to serve the Lord. That makes my job easy" (R. Snook, personal communication, January 11, 2013). The Director of Flight Operations remarked about their corporate culture when he said: "As Christians, there is a spiritual issue of maintaining good relationships. We are all committed to our faith and that has an impact on the organization" (E. Hallquist, personal communication, January 9, 2013).

Most members have been with the organization between ten and thirty years. To remain focused and refreshed in their service, each MFI missionary staff member and family is encouraged to spend time in Haiti, living and serving with a missionary family every two years.

Staff members know they are constantly sowing seeds, even in the setting of the drudgery and repetition of their aviation jobs. Their work is an act of spiritual service. "We do things well, even in the details because it's an act of worship. It pleases God to do things well. Everything we do has a spiritual component" (E. Hallquist, personal communication, January 9, 2013).

Charity and generosity are important cultural element at MFI. Members are known for their service and commitment to the Fort Pierce Airport and community and for being responsible corporate citizens. Annually, tens of thousands of meals are prepared at MFI for the Save Our Starving Children food-packing event. MFI donates their spacious hangar for the airport's annual open house, ATC safety seminars and fund raising auctions for the public schools.

### **People and Human Assets**

People are essential and valued at MFI, and key to their daily success. Those at MFI have seen how God has provided the right people at the right time, in the short and long term. Multiple times the organization's leadership expressed personal concerns for the welfare of each staff member. It is noted in the organization's financial commitment to each staff member, its policy for short term mission trips to Haiti for each staff member, regular leave for support raising and compensatory time off following extended duty time. MFI's people are cherished as a God-given resource. Many times short and long term missionaries commonly remarked about the caring, committed and kind nature of those at MFI as well as their shared cultural bonds.

### **Volunteers**

Volunteers were defined as those who work without being financially compensated. They are essential and critical to the daily efforts of MFI, and are recognized as God given. A full-time staff person at MFI has the responsibility for coordinating volunteer services. There are tens of thousands of volunteer hours are served each year (J. Karabensh,

personal communication, March 3, 2013). During the 2010 Haiti earthquake relief efforts, volunteers routinely served ten to twelve hours per day for months, greatly facilitating and multiplying MFI's effective response (T. Long, personal communication, January 8, 2013). Volunteers serve sorting missionaries' mail and cargo and loading aircraft. Fulltime seasonal volunteers assist annually during MFI's busiest seasons.

## **DISCUSSION**

In anthropology and sociology, the term fictive kinship is used to describe a family bound together by common ties of affection, concern, obligation and responsibility and not by bonds of blood or marriage (The Free Dictionary, 2013). This kinship is apparent in examining the data about Missionary Flights International with their shared common spiritual identify and purpose in achieving common goals. It was apparent that Missionary Flights International is a trust, a trust in a spiritual sense, in God having entrusted them with resources and opportunities. It is also a multi-generational time-honored trust with fifty years of traditions being passed from one generation to the next. The people at MFI are deeply committed to their service of standing in the gap for God's people made possible by God's provision from a broad base of support for its operations and its missionaries.

## **SUMMARY**

Missionary Flight International of Fort Pierce, Florida, is part of the post-WWII expansion of mission aviation into the third world. In 1964, the organization began its flight services in support of missionaries in the Commonwealth of the Bahamas. Over the past fifty years, MFI has increased the scope of missionary services, establishing an aviation niche in serving missionaries primarily in the island nation of Haiti. Most mission aviation organizations today are located and operated solely in foreign countries utilizing single engine aircraft with much smaller capacities and shorter ranges, not typically flying over open oceans. There are very few, such as MFI, who routinely utilizing larger aircraft in their application. Consistently, MFI has delivered tons of cargo and thousands of passengers annually for decades.

In considering MFI's air transportation services, a theme emerged of providing a lifeline from the United States to Haiti. Clients of MFI offered a consistent picture of professional, dependable, cost-effective aviation services declared as being essential and critical. Those at MFI see themselves as serving heroes, when in practice, they are also heroes.

In examining MFI, what first stands out is their daily use of aircraft to overcome geographic barriers. As an organization, they have an effective fictive kinship to serve a common spiritual purpose. As central as aviation is to MFI, without faith, there would be no flight. It is in their belief in a higher calling that these aviation professionals labor so arduously for a lifetime. As an organization, they are aware of fiscal stewardship in providing their service. They must be competitive with other carriers and distinguish themselves with superior services. There is an underlying notion of providing and caring for missionaries. As a business practice, they follow the biblical principle of not acquiring debt.

### **Limitations of this Study and Recommendations for Future Research**

This was a qualitative study of a single faith-based mission aviation organization. The intent was to document and illustrate the value of aviation in alleviating human suffering and in the advancement of Christian ministry. It is impossible to extrapolate from this study or from the MFI experience the complete value of faith-based mission aviation in the world or of its potential global impact. MFI is a unique organization, flying older, multiengine, higher capacity aircraft from an American base into and out of the third world multiple times each week. This identical solution might not be applicable to other organizations or in other areas of the world due to different geopolitical factors. Haiti is a unique setting which MFI has carefully nurtured and cultivated over the past half century. Most of MFI's flights are for missionaries originating from North America. The need and utility for a routine use of larger aircraft such as the DC-3 in other settings has not been documented. Faith-based mission aviation is a unique entity, largely beneath the radar and overshadowed by commercial aviation. With resources such as the internet, Facebook and YouTube, this underpublicized aspect of aviation will hopefully be made more visible in the future with greater public awareness and support.

This article is an abridged version of a thesis written in 2013 of the same title and available on line for additional details.

<http://search.proquest.com/pqdtlocal1006849/docview/1371017798/7AF3769F1F0E48F5PQ/1?accountid=4886>

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