

# CMML Flight Service

Zambia



*by John Loudon &  
Bruce Poidevin*

## The Vision...

As I, John Loudon, fly over the vast open land of Zambia, what catches my attention are the trees. While deforestation is becoming a problem in Zambia, from the air some areas look like a huge garden of broccoli. Looking down, I see a small village out in the middle of nowhere, with no roads leading to it, except perhaps a path. There may be a couple hundred miles separating this village from civilization. I can't help but wonder if this village below me has ever heard the Good News of Jesus Christ, or if it is among the thousands of unreached villages.

As I continue my three hour flight from Kalene Mission in the Northwest Province of Zambia to the capital city of Lusaka, I think back to many years ago, when I was a young boy dreaming of being a pilot, spending many hours climbing trees and jumping off swing sets and garage roofs, flapping my arms trying to fly. I remember attending a missionary meeting at our assembly, and hearing the late Paul Logan tell his missionary stories and showing his python skin and elephant bone. It was some years later when Paul came to our assembly again, while I was training to be a missionary pilot. Paul had heard of my commitment to serve the Lord in this way, and said to me, "John, we need a flight service in Zambia." He told me of the difficulties of road travel and how time consuming it is to get around and visit the local villages to take them the gospel. Paul encouraged me to come to Zambia and start up a flight program, as there were many assembly missionaries there. I told him it was also my desire to fly for the assembly missionaries, even though I did not have a plane. But I believed that if it was God's will, He would provide.

That vision of Paul Logan (shared by Bruce Poidevin and me) became a reality in 1993 when the CMML Flight Service began in Zambia. In the intervening years, my wife and I had spent 12 years on the mission field as a pilot with AIM/AIR and MAF in Kenya and Tanzania. Bruce wrote to me while I was flying for MAF in Tanzania, telling how he had managed to purchase a plane and start the flight program. He wrote several times, expressing the need for another pilot/mechanic to join him there at Kalene. The Lord led Karen and me to join the Poidevins in this work in 1996.

**CMML FLIGHT SERVICE** [not part of CMML USA] is a non-profit Christian Ministry providing a high quality aviation service and related support facilities. We have been operating from our base at Kalene Mission in Zambia since 1993, commended from and serving Christians who gather to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Flight Service is overseen by a committee of six assembly missionaries in Zambia. Bruce Poidevin, who founded the Flight Service, is the director and a pilot. John Loudon, who joined in 1996, is the operations manager, a pilot and aircraft mechanic. Marilyn Poidevin and Karen Loudon are the flight-following specialists, who stand by on the radio whenever a plane is airborne.

Our full-time Zambian aircraft mechanic Joseph Chilambe, who joined us in 1994, has been a real asset to the work. Presently we have 15 full-time employees, at times up to 60 workers when a project is under way.

The purpose of the CMML Flight Service is to speed the spread of the Good News of our Lord Jesus Christ in word and deed, through aviation and other services. It is our aim to

assist the medical work, evangelistic outreaches, school work, and the travel needs of missionaries and short-term workers. We are a support ministry to those who are at the forefront of various aspects of the Lord's work in this country.

*Areas of Service...Aviation, Guest House, Service Work, Development, and Ministry Work.*

## Aviation



We started off as a one-plane program, using an eight-seater Cessna 207, purchased in 1990. In 2008 we flew 528.7 hours (our third busiest year). But now we are rebuilding a second plane, a four-seater Cessna 182. We have spent more than 10 months rebuilding it, installing a new larger engine and propeller along with wing extensions (allowing us to carry more weight), extended baggage compartment, and new rear jump seats. The C-182 will cater to the many situations where there are only a few passengers to fly, rather than using the larger plane.

The Flight Service, having flown more than 7,300 hours since 1993, has saved an immense amount of missionary travel time. It is estimated that for every one hour we fly, the missionaries save six hours of road travel. So 7,300 flight hours calculates into approximately 43,800 hours (or 12 years of 10-hour days) saved for the Lord's work. It has also greatly reduced an incalculable amount of repair costs to vehicles, not to mention the wear and tear on the missionaries themselves.

Flights to Lusaka can be filled with missionaries going on furlough or to the capital city for government meetings, other business, or just getting away. This often coincides with returning missionaries or short-term workers giving three, six, or 12 months of their lives to serve on one of the six CMML mission stations.

In addition to missionaries, who else do we fly?

- Visitors and family members coming to help
- Sakeji School students flying to and from school
- Students coming and going to Rift Valley Academy (RVA) in Kenya for secondary education
- Patients needing quick transfer to another hospital
- Volunteers with expertise such as: specialist doctors, Internet technicians, builders, mechanics and teachers

## Guest House in Lusaka

In 1994, shortly after the Flight Service began, the need for a reliable place to stay became obvious. The Flight Service found a house (known as the Flight House) to be used as a guest house for the pilot and the passengers, as well as others. This has expanded into a full catering guest house for assembly missionaries passing through Lusaka whether by air or road. We rented the house for 14 years. But in December 2007, thanks to the Lord's provision, we were able to purchase the house right next door. The whole house had to be renovated; three additions were added, plus a car port. Three employees look after it, Marilyn helps with all the guest house bookings. The number of guests who stayed in the Flight House in 2008 was 2,263.



## Service Work

After landing at Lusaka International Airport, we drive into the city doing as many errands as possible for missionaries up country who are not able to go to Lusaka often. Missionaries living in the "bush" do not have ready access to Home Depot, Canadian Tire, or Wal-Mart, to buy the supplies they need, such as hardware, vehicle spares, medical and general supplies, groceries, etc. They often need someone to go into government offices to pick up or drop off documents, or help to get passports renewed, purchase airline tickets, and take equipment in for repairs. The list goes on of things that need to be done in the capital city. It can be very costly and time consuming for the missionaries to make the long journey to town themselves by road. When we fly to Lusaka, we are able to help support them in their work in the gospel, by carrying out these tasks. At Kalene we provide Internet services and an overseas phone service to the missionaries and some local Zambians. We also assist in other technical areas like telephone systems, mechanics, and electronics.



# Development



Over the years, through the goodness of the Lord and His people, we have built a hangar which is a licensed aircraft maintenance facility. Attached to it are two apartments on the back second story; one is used as a guest apartment, and the other one is

used by the Poidevins. We have also built two houses, one for our Zambian mechanic Joseph, and one for the Loudons.

Other projects include:

- Cessna 207: With the great number of hours put on this plane, we are now approaching its fifth mandatory engine replacement.
- Cessna 182: As the Lord provides, new instruments, interior, and paint will be done.
- A new staff house is currently being built.
- An area to “come aside... and rest a while” is being constructed in an orchard on the flight service plot.



We operate by faith for all capital expenses and are very thankful for the Lord’s provision over the years.

# Ministry

Bruce enjoys distributing gospel calendars, Seed Sowers magazines, and gospel texts throughout the year in Lusaka and other places. Before each flight we pray and commit our trip to the Lord. Some unsaved passengers have never experienced this before and we have had opportunity to witness; one



later accepted Christ at the Guest House. Bruce begins each day with a time of devotions and prayer with our Zambian workers. John holds a weekly discipleship class with several men from various local assemblies. We also have many opportunities to preach at gospel meetings, and conferences during the year.

Both Marilyn and Karen share in the ministry of the Kalene Book Room, library and have open homes for visitors.

The Loudons presently live at Sakeji School so that Karen can help teach due to a shortage of teachers. John is involved on weekends teaching Sunday school and with other duties at the school. Sakeji is a tremendous opportunity to minister to the young Zambian children and missionary kids.

If you desire to use your talents and gifts in service for the Lord, either short-term or long-term, we have an urgent need for: pilots, aircraft mechanics, office help, accountant, web/computer/ IT expert, and a general maintenance person.



For further information or inquiry, please contact us at [info@cmmlflightservice.com](mailto:info@cmmlflightservice.com) or visit our Web site at [www.cmmlflightservice.com](http://www.cmmlflightservice.com).



*Bruce and Marilyn Poidevin were commended by three assemblies in Ontario, Canada in 1980. They have served nine years at Chitokoloki and 20 years at Kalene Mission in Zambia. They have three sons all living in Canada.*

*John and Karen Loudon were commended in 1984 from two assemblies in the Detroit, Michigan area. They have served for five years in Kenya, seven years in Tanzania, and now 13 years at Kalene Mission in Zambia. They have four children.*



**Page 3:** The Cessna 207 taking off. **Page 4: (left column, L-R)** Joseph and James working on the Cessna 182; Ariel view of Kalene Mission - note the Kalene Hill where the mission work started; **(upper right, top-bottom)** The Flight Service Guest House; New house under construction for missionary staff; **(lower right, L-R)** Parcels unloaded in the hangar, ready for distribution; Entertaining the Flight Service committee. **This page: (left, top-bottom)** Planes being worked on in the hangar; John and James working on the Cessna 182; Joseph, John and William installing new engine; Praying before take off; **(right, top-bottom)** Book room work — Bibles and hymnbooks for Angola, Congo and Zambia; John Loudon in discipleship class.