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Dear Friends,

Valuable lessons in life can be gleaned through the experiences and/or education of others. Diligently applying that knowledge or wisdom circumvents having to learn them in the costly and sometimes painful school of hard knocks.



After months of waiting for the parts, the backup generator was repaired and ready for a good work out! Initially everything seemed fine, yet within five minutes lights dimmed, brightened, and then went dark on three of the four circuits. Surprisingly when we checked the breakers, we found none had tripped off.

A detailed diagnosis determined that the disruption was due to three defective time delay switches.

Apparently during the repair work four wires were loosen at the generator and not retightened properly, this caused an intermittent connection and the power fluctuations which burned out three switches. (costly yet we had replacements). This was a lesson from the school of hard knocks-focus on the task and complete the job! We don't want the wheels falling of the tractor when the lug nut aren't completely tightened. The following story came to mind from *Heroes At The Ends Of The Earth* by Neal and Martha Kooyers.

Chapter 23

A MISSION TRAGEDY

There's a sad tale to tell about the Piper Aztec that you read about in an earlier chapter. In 1972 the plane was being given a routine inspection in the Aiyura hangar. Another mechanic, not Jim, had just finished attaching one of the fuel lines onto one of the engines when he was called away from the job to do another task or answer a phone call. The reports do not give a clear explanation on this point. In any case, the mechanic did not tighten the nut on the gas line with a wrench before he left. It was the last job to do for the inspection, but he left the engine cowling off, thinking he would be back to do it later. Time went by and then another mechanic or pilot, assuming the job was done, fastened the cowling into place.



Piper Aztec at Ambunti

That morning, a pilot was assigned to fly the Aztec from Aiyura to Port Moresby, then to Lae, and then back to Aiyura. However, another pilot in Ukarumpa was near the end of his two-week vacation and was eager to get back to work. He contacted the first pilot and agreed with him that he would take the morning's flight and fly to the two destinations and then Aiyura.

The relief pilot took off and flew to Moresby, refueled at Moresby, and then flew on to Lae. But he noticed that the Aztec was using much more fuel than usual. How much it bothered him, nobody knows. However, after landing at Lae he walked around the plane and did a more than usual external inspection that a pilot does on a plane before takeoff, but he did nothing else like trying to look inside the cowlings. Had he done so, it's possible he would have noticed that gasoline was around in places where it should not have been.

The events that took place next in this story are of very special interest to Neal and Martha. Maybe you know or have heard of their daughter Penny who is at this writing a missionary in the Sepik with Pacific Island Ministries. Penny planned to go on that flight. Fortunately for her, however, the Aztec was fully booked with six passengers: four missionaries and two PNG nationals.

Penny was working in Lae at the time, and she wanted to attend a conference that was taking place over the weekend in Ukarumpa near Aiyura. She was very disappointed to learn that there was no seat available for her on the plane. A couple hours later she heard that only a few minutes out of Lae the Aztec caught fire and crashed killing all seven on board. Evidently avgas from the unfastened nut of the fuel line had spewed into the wheel well, caught fire, and caused the crash.

Many have discussed the disaster. Some like to determine the errors so such accidents do not happen again. Others, like Neal, ponder why they happen in a different sense, but also wonder what people can learn further from these mistakes to better equip them for better living.

PNG is blessed by aircraft and devoted pilots but also by the very important work of PNG's DCA, the Department of Civil Aviation. Their job is to thoroughly investigate plane crashes, determine their cause, and then make and enforce rules, if in order, so that flying is safer. Aircraft accidents happen for a reason. And the making of mistakes can be corrected so that people can fly safer and better.

Death to seven young and middle-aged people due to an aircraft that was improperly serviced is a terrible tragedy. It generates passions and has people ask questions not done in other disasters. Seven people were burned and charred almost beyond recognition. The calamity was caused by a very simple mistake that could have been avoided. The mechanic knew his work, was careful, and loved the Lord.

Tragedies have their purpose. Great losses help us to sensitively focus our lives for the future, and make decisions based on the reality that our lives not go on forever. The Holy Spirit is able to better work in humble and hurting people: Christians realize that the disasters that happen to others can happen to any of us. So it is well we learn what the Almighty God wishes to teach us,

Here is a helpful verse to learn.

He will swallow up death forever; and the Lord will wipe away tear from all faces, and the reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the Lord has spoken (Isaiah 25:8)

(Abridged from the book *Heroes At The Ends Of The Earth*. This book is used by PIM schools as well other public schools in PNG for developing English language skills)

PIM has been given the opportunity to teach and train young people in their formative years. It is joyous thing to see PIM actively being involved as in Prov 22:6 *Train(ing) up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it.*

Thank you for your continued support.

Douglas Heidema

