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Dear Co-worker:

Last month we wrote about pilot Ron Gluck listening to the “still small voice” when flying in PNG in the late sixties and early seventies. What follows is another chapter and lesson about Ron in our new book *Heroes at the Ends of the Earth*.

One time Ron was flying the 185 from the Popenetta area of PNG and had set his course NNW for home base, Aiyura, with a passenger on board. (Trace Ron’s course on the cover map.) The cloud cover appeared to be completely overcast though he was able to find a hole in it and fly above the clouds to 8500 feet. He flew on course, but after two hours he wondered where he was. Actually, a strong headwind slowed his flight, and not knowing just where he was he became concerned. He figured he had to be above the long Markham Valley but he didn’t know for sure just where.



A Cessna 185 and the Piper Twin Aztec.

For some reason he turned his head to the left. In a flash he saw a small hole in the clouds about a mile off the wing tip. Banking sharply he woke up his passenger and plunged into the hole and spotted an airstrip of red dirt. Langimar! Now he knew where he was. He was familiar with Langimar and its red dirt because he had worked there for a day with a fellow missionary earlier. Knowing where he was and now flying under the clouds, he set a new course for home.

What told Ron to look to the left at just the right moment? Was it the “still small voice?” Usually pilots have their eyes set looking straight ahead for changes in the clouds and any danger, not to the left or right. In addition, did the Lord direct Ron earlier to go to Langimar to help a fellow missionary? Was he led to volunteer for the right job at the right time and went there to help dig dirt? Experience and knowledge count, and the more we have, the better we can make the right choices.

Another time Ron was fueling the twin engine Piper Aztec at Aiyura for his first flight that day. He grabbed the fuel hose and unwound it from its place and pulled it to the plane. The Aztec has four tanks, and Ron topped off one and then two others so that he would have sufficient avgas for the trip. While he was at the job, a passenger was standing nearby and now and then tried to engage in conversation with Ron. Then Ron went to put fuel in the fourth tank.

But as he opened the valve and let the avgas in, something didn’t sound just right when the gas went into the tank. In the last three years Ron had grown used to a particular sound of the fuel going into the tanks of the Aztec, and this time it did not sound quite like it did before. Something was different about it, not quite right. Puzzled, he took the nozzle out, aimed it toward the ground, and ran some

fuel through his fingers. It felt all right. So he added more fuel to the fourth tank. The tank was still low. Then curiosity took over.

He called out to Jim, the mechanic in the hanger, "Jim, please bring a glass jar over." Taking the jar, Ron walked away from the plane and put some avgas in it. Holding it up to the sky, he looked at the fuel in the jar and it seemed all right. It was colored blue exactly like avgas is supposed to look. But Ron wasn't satisfied. He put the jar on the ground, lit a match and threw it into the jar. Instead of the fuel bursting into flame, the match went out.

Ron looked at Jim. Jim looked at Ron. Astounded, both men said nothing. Ron had just pumped 250 gallons of water into the four Aztec fuel tanks. Finally getting the energy to speak, Jim said that he had just received a truck load of 44 gallon drums of avgas from Lae and had dumped the fresh shipment into the underground storage tank close to the hangar. Jim saw that Ron was shaking, so he helped him walk back to the hangar. Ron was thinking that had he not found this out he very likely would have had just enough avgas in the fuel lines to get the Aztec off the ground and then the engines would have quit.

Was it the "still small voice" speaking to Ron when he heard the different sound of water going into the tanks instead of avgas? From past experience he learned it pays to be tuned-in to what's going on around him. Little things matter. As Ron tells it, it can be a matter of life and death.

The "still small voice" is not just for pilots. It can be true for anyone of us, like driving an outboard motor, an auto, or operating some machinery, or using an appliance, or a stove, or a lamp, or a machete. God wants to be involved. He wants to speak to us through His Holy Spirit to make life easier, and he does so in many different and strange ways. It all depends on how we listen. He wants to improve our behavior. But are we tuned-in to Him! Are we ready to hear what He has to say, or are we only keen on doing things our own way?

One way to help us to be tuned-in is to read a chapter in the Bible every day, and then pray. The Bible provides many stories and commandments about how to behave, how to live life so that we can enjoy it to the fullest. God wants to be involved so that we can truly be His child and He be our Father. Yes, we can be children of God and have a happiness that lifts our hearts that we sing for joy. Life is all about giving our lives over to the Lord Jesus and listening to that "still small voice" whether the going is rough or whether it is smooth.

In His grace,

Ormeal Kooyers

Formatting Doug Heidema
Plane photo by Ron Gluck



Singing students at the Jama School