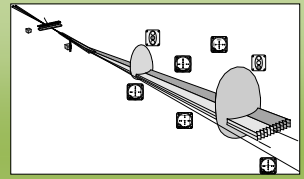


Ken Stoltzfus

Flying Higher



The Way Home

No. 8 in a series

Daring to pursue the highest possible level in all of life

We were spraying mosquitoes in the east. That morning the state's observer, and my copilot and I had waited impatiently for the weather to improve.

Finally the visibility was up to a mile and the tower gave us a Special VFR clearance. We fired up the C-47 and were off to the swamps, 20-miles away.

The state man wanted me to fly at 25' on my spray runs, so I wasn't getting very high in the turns. Still, I noticed that once in a while I was scraping the bottoms of the clouds in my turns over the bay. "Just some local stuff over the water, I'm sure. No problem, because things will be clearing up back at the airport," I thought.

We turned for home when we were out of spray. Better weather was ahead. It always improved after morning fog and it was nearly three hours since our departure.

My co-pilot called the tower, and their response took us by surprise. No, the weather had not improved. In fact it had gone down since we departed. Oops!



The state man knew the area like the back of his hand, and assured us there were no towers or other obstacles in the marshland between us and the airport.

We slowed the Douglas down to about 100-knots and chugged along. When you pull it back like that, those two 1200-hp Wrights just sit out there and sing to you. And there's nothing unsafe about that airspeed when you're light.

We set up on the VOR, which was on the airport, tuned the ADF to the outer marker and made our way home. We always knew where we were in relation to the airport.

The tower was accustomed to spray operations and graciously left us in without a hassle. It worked out okay but it's the kind of situation one tries to avoid.

Both enroute and after we landed, the observer asked how we knew where we were all the time. It perplexed him.

We explained how we had used the VOR and ADF. They were receiving information from trustworthy, unmoving points of reference that would guide us to our destination. No matter that we couldn't tell much from looking around us.

Listen, that says "tons" about life.

We all periodically find ourselves in situations where we can't see very far. Challenges regarding work, health, finances, and family or other relationships often lead to the feeling that we're "flying blind."

My sons and I had a fire that wiped us out soon after we started Preferred Airparts in 1982. There was the realization that we now owed more than we were worth. How could we possibly start over? Where do we go from here?

I could take you to other disappointments and overwhelming challenges. Life is full of them and certainly you've had yours. Maybe even tougher than mine.

But God knows. And He has made it possible for us to find our way through the murk. He has given us several trust-worthy, unchanging, immovable points of reference to help us find the way. They transmit toward us all the time.

First is the nature of God. He is sovereign. Nothing overwhelms or overrules Him.

He is all knowing. Nothing catches Him by surprise.

He is love and kindness. He wants to bring something good to us in every circumstance - - even the worst that life can conjure up for us.

Knowing *that* is what enabled me to say to my family as the ashes still smoldered, "I'm telling you something. If we walk with God through this experience, I promise you that in three years Preferred Airparts will be a stronger business than it could have been without the fire. I don't know how it will happen, but I know God and it will happen." It was so. Preferred Airparts' strength today came out of those ashes and we are grateful beyond measure!

God has also given us the Holy Scriptures. In different ways but in harmony with each other, the Old and New Testaments of the Bible present the way of life.

Both point to Jesus, who said, "I am the light of the world. If you follow me, you won't be stumbling through the darkness, because you will have the light that leads to life." (John 8:12)

It's a dark world out there! There's the seemingly exponential rise of violence in our world. And poverty. And AIDS. And unrestrained greed. There are wars and threats of wars.

There is the growing freedom for business and political leaders and other power people to force their personal agenda contrary to the welfare of the people. And against the moral values that have historically given structure and stability to the American experience. All, create a sense of darkness.

It's true though. The darker the night the brighter the light. And there's a Light out there for all who are looking for one. His name is Jesus. And if we will fly toward Him we can chug along through "the low stuff" and be confident of our destination. He, is our way home.

Are you looking for some light? 1998, rev. 7/10, Bible quotations from NLT



Ken Stoltzfus was born in 1940, the son of a crop duster. He has worked as a pilot, pastor, business man, missionary to Africa and writer.

A Commercial Pilot with S&MEL&S, DC-3, Glider and Instrument ratings; CFI with A-I-G ratings; Ground Instructor A&I; and A&P, Ken lives in northeast Ohio with Elaine, his wife of 50 years. His hobbies are aviation photography and collecting aircraft photos, negatives and slides.

This is #8 in his "Flying Higher" series. ©2010, Ken Stoltzfus, www.John2031.com, P.O. Box 228, Kidron, OH 44636 USA