



IACAC NEWSLETTER

International Association of Civil Aviation Chaplains

March 2014

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

The conversations that we have as we go around our airports cover many things from the family, sport and work. Especially at present are the conversations, not only in the airport but with other people, about the disappearance of Malaysia Airlines Flight MH370. This disaster has affected communities across the world most especially the families, friends and colleagues of those who lives have been lost and who will need all the support that can be given to them as will the management and staff of Malaysia Airlines. We also cannot forget the flight crews who have been working above and beyond the call of duty, flying from Pearce Airbase south, of Perth off the coast of south west Australia, as the operation to recover MH370 moves onto the recovery stage. Our thoughts and prayers have to be with them as they work in difficult and testing circumstances. It is at these times that community is most important as it comes together to wrap its caring heart and hands around all those who have lost loved ones along with all those involved in this unprecedented disaster and therefore, I invite us as a community, to hold them in our thoughts and prayers at this time and in succeeding days.

Another community which has suffered great pain and loss is that of Oso in Washington State, USA. Please hold in your prayers the community of Oso as they struggle to overcome the disastrous mudslide that swept away the lives of many people within their town and surrounding area. May God give strength to the rescue teams and comfort to those who have lost so much.

Recently I was chatting with someone who raised the topic of community and how in some aspects of life it has seemed to disappear. He mentioned that the church was at one time a very strong community where people not only gathered on a Sunday but at other times throughout the both the week and over the year for social occasions but now this does not seem to happen. I had to agree with him.

Looking at community in the wider scale we see that this is true, how many people now know their immediate neighbours? I recall talking with a former colleague who was recounting his childhood, he was brought up in what we in Scotland call a Tenement, (a large building divided into flats) and when his mother was out one of the neighbours would take him in after school and look after him until his mother returned home. This was common in Scotland in years past and I am sure it still may go on today.

For many today life is totally different. For myself, in my previous job I lived in a small village outside Aberdeen, I became very good friends with my immediate neighbours but as far as the community life in the village was concerned I played very little part in it. My work took me away early in the morning and returning in early evening I opened the door of my home and that was me till the following morning. For many of the residents in the village, life was the same. It was a commuter community, the real community for them was their work place however large or small that was.

Another change in defining community that has taken place in the last twenty-five years has been the advent of the internet; it has shrunk the world and changed life for us all. We are all part of one or many online communities, such as Facebook, Twitter, Skype, and Facetime. Being part of any one of these means that we are part of a worldwide community which operates 24/7 /365 as there are always people on it. This type of community has enabled other communities to come into being such as our own on Face book. We all at one time or other look at it, maybe not participate as much as many of our colleagues, but being part of it keeps us in the loop as to what is happening in our organisation and to our colleagues. As Yochia Benkler, in his book *The Wealth of Networks* from 2006, suggests that virtual communities would 'come to represent a new form of human communal existence, providing new scope for building a shared experience of human interaction'. Although, Benkler's prediction was not entirely correct, however, it is clear that communications and social relations are extremely complex within a virtual community. The two main effects that can be seen according to Benkler are a 'thickening of pre-existing relationships with friends, family and neighbours' and the beginnings of the 'emergence of greater scope for limited –purpose, loose relationships. Despite being acknowledged as 'loose' relationships, Benkler argues that they remain meaningful.

Benkler also argues that unless Internet connections actually displaces direct, unmediated, human contact, there is no basis to think that using the Internet will lead to a decline in those nourishing connections we need psychologically, or in the useful connections we make socially.

Therefore in our work as Airport Chaplains it is paramount that we loiter with intent in our airports where we are able to make many different kinds of connections and conversations with all whom we come in contact, from the person who greets us as we walk through the door, the passenger who appears to be in

need of help, to the Managing Director. To be a listening ear for their stories and concerns in our airport community, which for some of us is like a small village, a large town or a great city where everyone has a role to play.



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REFLECTION

For many of us, life could be described as a series of crises with brief interludes of relative calm. In our busy, competitive and complex world, it can seem that every decision we face is crucial, every action we take causes conflict and every interpersonal relationship requires high level negotiation. It is as if we are carrying on a global strategy at a personal level and so often we can feel inadequate to handle the crises that come our way. These are the times that we should turn to prayer.

1. We should pray for ourselves so we can be a strong example and a leader - so that we can be of help to those around us and to gain peace of mind and serenity.
2. We should pray for those close to us, never forgetting the needs of those around us.
3. We should pray for all people that they will live in peace and harmony.

For those of us who are Christians we remember that Jesus faced many crises in his life but none more crucial than the conflict that led to his crucifixion, As in all the critical times in his life, he turned then to his father in prayer. In doing so he has provided us with an model for our own praying in times of need.

IACAC ANNUAL 2014 CONFERENCE

This year our annual conference will be held in Amsterdam and our colleagues at Schiphol Airport will be our hosts. The conference is in August, earlier than in past years so please make a note of the date. This year's program promises to be very interesting so plan to join us in Amsterdam.

Conference Date: 19th – 23rd August 2014
[5 nights]

Post Conference Tour: 24th - 27th August 2014
[4 nights]

The theme of this year's conference is "The Added value of Chaplaincy to an Airport". There will also be a follow up session from The Delta Care Team and the opportunity to further explore the role airports play in human trafficking.

More information and registration forms will be available on the website very soon.

NEWS FROM OUR CHAPLAINCIES

Our thoughts and prayers are with Christiane Fisher from Cote D'Azur Airport, Nice whose husband passed away at on Saturday 22nd March. He had been unwell for some time. His funeral was held on Thursday 27th March in the Protestant Church in Antibes, Nice. Christiane is well remembered at conferences for her translation of presentations from English into French for her french speaking colleagues.

On the 12th April Fr Jose Pena, chaplain at Lester Pearson Airport, Toronto will celebrate the 25th anniversary of his ordination. He was ordained on the April 12, 1989 by the Most Rev. Jose C. Sorra, D.D., and Bishop of the Diocese of Virac, at the Our Lady of the Assumption Parish Church, Viga, Catanduanes, and Philippines. A solemn Thanksgiving Mass will be held this coming April 12, 2014, at the Our Lady of the Airway Catholic Church in Mississauga, Ontario, Canada. The Holy Mass will be at 12 noon, and then a reception will follow. Our very best wishes to Fr. Jose on this very important anniversary.

Rev Bob White from Minneapolis/ St Paul sent the following notice of their May 4-7th "Peer Assistance Training" for those chaplains who focus their ministry with the aviation industrial mission. *The MSP Chaplaincy has been heavily involved in providing training to employees who wish to provide their assistance to fellow employees and their family members. Employees from various airlines who are involved in trauma, addiction, wellness, family issues, grief and bereavement, etc. have participated in our program. Brian Murray, who is an Episcopal Priest, and a Family Therapist like myself has been our presenter at all of our trainings. Brian counsels, provides training to pilots, flight attendants and many others in Canada and the United States. We will also have participation from the FAA this year as they are in the process of developing a "Peer Program" for air traffic controllers. Would you please pass this on to those chaplains who primarily focus their chaplaincy work in industrial mission within the aviation community. If they are interested in joining us they can contact me.*

Susan Cook, from Atlanta has asked for prayers for her father Jerry as he begins his journey on the long road to recovery after more than a month in hospital, 24 days of those in ICU. We ask that God grant him strength for the fight ahead to regain his health. Susan is very grateful for the friendship, love, prayers and support shown to her and her family at this time.

THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

Only love can be divided endlessly and still not diminish- Anne Morrow Lindebergh