

# Engineering a New Path

## Moffitt '81 moves from manufacturing to missions

By Ann-Margaret Lambo

**S**teve Moffitt '81 has been interested in avionics since he was a kid. The electronic engineer never imagined that his childhood pursuit would become his adult reality – on the other side of the world and on a heavenly scale.

After leaving a career as an electrical engineer with Joy Manufacturing, Moffitt, his wife and daughters have been missionaries in Kenya. It has been a wonderful journey for the Moffitts, one that the family believes has been piloted by God himself.

The Moffitt family's journey actually began with Steve. The Franklin, Pa., native explained that he was always interested in how things worked and how to solve problems.

"I gravitated towards electrical things at around age 10, when our church asked me to start recording services," Moffitt explained. "When I was a bit older, I became involved in installing and operating the sound system. We lived near the Franklin airport so I always had an interest in aviation, too."

At one time he hoped to attend Embry Riddle Aeronautical University in Daytona Beach, Fla., but finances and distance prohibited that portion of the voyage. He attended Grove City, graduated with an electrical engineering degree, and returned – permanently – to his summer job with Joy Manufacturing. He married and he and his wife, Melinda, started their family. Life was good and the Moffitts were happy.

"Joy turned out to be a great place to work," Moffitt said. "I was blessed with some excellent mentors who patiently taught me to build on what I had learned



**ABOVE: STEVE MOFFITT '81 AND AN AIM AIR CESSNA 206 AIRPLANE. BELOW: THE MOFFITT FAMILY, FROM LEFT, STEVE, MELINDA, NATALIE, 15, CHRISTINE, 11, AND OLIVIA, 17.** / Contributed photos

at Grove City. The work at Joy was such an interesting mix of design, hands-on testing and field work. I also enjoyed working with the guys in the manufacturing plant and traveling to various mine sites to test new equipment and try to solve problems. No one was more surprised than I was when I heard the voice of God saying 'I have something else for you to do.' It was real and it wouldn't go away."

Moffitt finally figured out that God wanted him to do something, but what?

"While I was confused about what



God was trying to do with this feeble engineer, He began bringing people into my life that would help bring direction," Moffitt continued. "One of those people was a mechanical engineer who had

Continued on next page

*from previous page*

become a missionary and was retiring after spending his life building hospitals in remote locations to bring both physical and spiritual healing. I believe God brought us together to show me that He does need and use technical people in ministry.”

Then Moffitt saw a story on Moody Aviation, a program of Moody Bible Institute, which trains missionary pilots, mechanics and avionics specialists for the mission field.

“It was like a light went off inside of me,” Moffitt noted. “Despite the clarity of this answer, I sat on the idea for almost a year. I was afraid it was my idea and not God’s. I knew I didn’t want to start down a whole new path in life unless I was sure God was behind it.”

After much thought, prayer and reflection, the Moffitts eventually applied to Moody, realizing that if they were going to take this leap, they needed assistance. Steve quit his job. And so the journey began.

Steve and Melinda, along with their three daughters, Olivia, 17, Natalie, 15, and Christine, 11, now reside in Nairobi, Kenya. For the last 13 years the family has worked with AIM Air, the aviation support arm of Africa Inland Mission, a non-denominational Christian missions organization seeking to spread the good news of Jesus Christ to the people of Africa.

Steve’s job is to keep the aviation electronics functioning on AIM Air’s fleet of 12 airplanes. Melinda, who is a physician assistant with family practice experience, takes care of lots of children’s sore throats and ears. And although the journey has not been an easy one, the Moffitts would not trade the experience for the world.

“I was so excited when Steve mentioned the idea of a career in missions,” Melinda explained. “I had actually felt called to the mission field as a

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teenager and chose my major with that end goal in mind. By the time Steve and I met, I was fully focused on normal living at that point, and he and I actually never discussed missions. I was not fearful, perhaps because I was blissfully unaware of some of our future challenges!

“We experienced many new challenges once we got to Nairobi,” she continued.

“But looking back, I would not change any of it. There are times now when it looks nice to have the ‘security’ of jobs and a home in the U.S., but I also know from first-hand experience the joy of serving the Lord and having him provide for our needs. Our children are truly blessed to live in another culture and to have an expanded world view. Don’t mistake me, our lives have not been easy, and we do sorely miss our loved ones and family back in the U.S. But along with the challenges come adventure and a deep peace in knowing you are part of something bigger than yourself.”

Added Steve, “I have the greatest job on earth. To do what you love for the One who you love and to bring real truth and change to people’s lives for eternity – I can’t think of anything better than that.”

*(Ann-Margaret Lambo is a freelance writer living in New Castle, Pa.)*



STEVE MOFFITT '81 WORKS ON THE AVIONICS IN THE NOSE OF THE DC-3. / Contributed photo