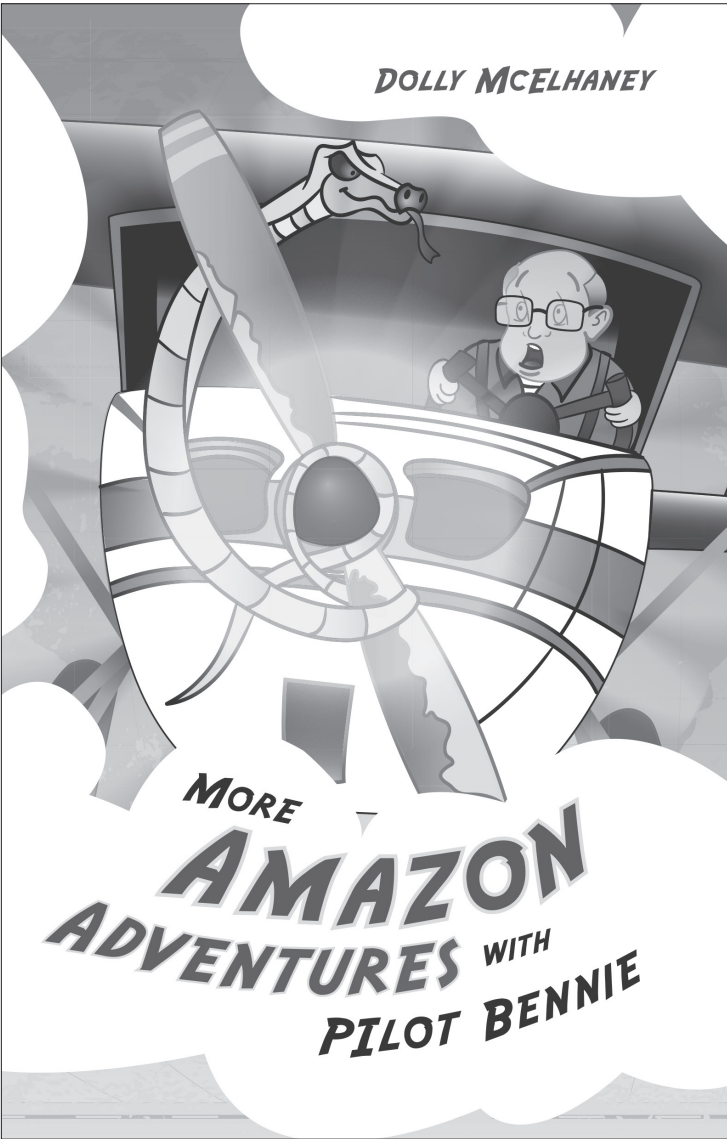


DOLLY MCELHANEY



WAP CHILDREN
An Imprint of Word Aflame Press

WAP Children
36 Research Park Court
Weldon Spring, MO 63304

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Dedication

Beth DeMerchant Sievers
and
Pamela DeMerchant Schuessler,
(Pilot Bennie's daughters
who shared in some of these adventures)

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Preface

All of the stories in this book really happened. Using the original material given to me by Pilot Bennie, I have shaped the tales to be read and enjoyed by children.

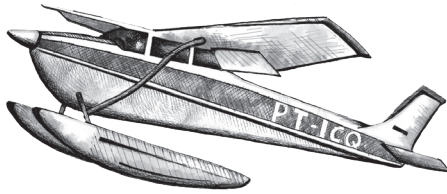
This collection of true stories was first written for grownups. Although a few of the tales have been taken from *Full Throttle: The Missionary Story of Bennie and Theresa DeMerchant*, most can be found in *Still Flying Full Throttle: The Continuing Story of the DeMerchants in the Amazon*, published by Word Aflame Press in 2015.

You can have fun and learn a lot about Brazil and the Amazon by using the internet to look up the people, places, and things mentioned in these stories.



Acknowledgments

Pilot Bennie gave the author the right to use his material to put these adventures into this book. Without that permission, this book could not have been written. Courtney Edmonds assisted with some images. Brent Ratley and Lisa Wearing gave helpful, pithy comments on the manuscript.



Before Brazil

Bennie DeMerchant learned early that God could take care of him wherever he was.

Bennie grew up with six brothers and sisters in a house that stood on a shelf of land above the street. The street ran along the river. The house overlooked the street, the river, and the railroad tracks.



One snowy, winter day, young Bennie decided to try out a new sled. As he joyously zipped down the hill, he slid under a freight train that had just started moving. The sled stopped instantly when its steel runners struck the rail. The little boy scrambled out the other side. He yanked the sled away just before the big boxcar's wheels could crush him.

Bennie learned early to work hard. One cold day a few years later when he was twelve, he was working on a potato farm with his uncle, Clem Goodine. Bennie got his thick overcoat and hands wrapped up in the drive shaft of an idling farm tractor's engine. The engine was connected to a potato digger. His wrapped-up hands inside the coat stalled the tractor engine.

"Help, Uncle Clem!" Bennie cried.

His uncle kicked the clutch on the tractor and jumped down. He unwound the thick fabric from the drive shaft and massaged Bennie's freed fingers and hands.

"If the tractor's engine hadn't stalled, you could have lost both of your hands or even your life," his uncle said.

Bennie's sprained hands hurt for days.

Four years later, a teenaged Bennie was working with a cement mixer underneath a potato house.

He was helping his dad put up new cellar walls. He crawled out from under the house for a quick breather. Seconds later, the supports holding the jacked-up house collapsed. The structure crashed down.

The next day Bennie helped his dad shovel the debris out of the broken building. When the dust settled, Bennie breathed a “Thank You, Lord!”

The cement mixer he’d been working with was flattened.

As Bennie grew older, he learned many skills that would help him become a missionary.

He learned to handle farm machinery on his dad’s potato farm.

He learned a lot about running a business by working at his mother’s store in town.

His dad taught him to tie fishing lures to catch those big salmon in the Canadian rivers.

Then one day, Bennie got his first plane ride and decided then and there he’d be a pilot. Every spare cent he earned went for plane rides. An instructor would take him into the air for a half hour, and once or twice let Bennie put his hands on the controls!

Bennie graduated from high school, then from the Apostolic Bible Institute in Saint Paul, Minnesota. There he met a wonderful young woman who would

become his wife. Together he and Theresa pastored a small church in New Brunswick, Canada.

They applied to be missionaries to Brazil, and after some disappointments, they were appointed missionaries to that country. After they got settled in Manaus, the capital of Amazonas State, they lay on their faces before God, seeking Him and begging Him for one thousand souls.

Then the Lord did a wonderful thing. He provided Bennie with a small floatplane, the Cessna 172. Later the Lord gave Bennie a second plane, the Cessna 206. It was bigger, could fly farther and faster, and carry more passengers and cargo.

How else could Bennie and Theresa evangelize a watery, river-dominated area the size of half of the United States?

After fifty-one years of missionary work, God gave them more than 144,000 souls throughout Brazil. From having no United Pentecostal Church in Manaus, the Lord gave them over two hundred churches in that city alone!