

**PILOT  
BENNIE'S  
AMAZING**



**AMAZON  
ADVENTURES**

Dolly McElhaney



**WAP CHILDREN**  
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# Dedication



Theresa Shomberg DeMerchant  
Pilot Bennie's beloved partner  
in all of his adventures

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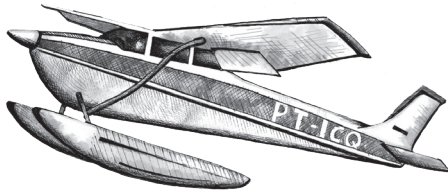
# Preface

All of the stories in this book really happened. This collection of true stories was first written for grownups and can be found in *Full Throttle: The Missionary Story of Bennie and Theresa DeMerchant*, published by Word Aflame Press in 2008.

You can have fun and learn a lot more about Brazil by using the internet to look up the places 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 Bennie Was Pilot Bennie

What do you want to be when you grow up?

Maybe you want to be a doctor, a lawyer, an astronaut, a teacher, or an engineer. Maybe you hope to win a gold medal in the Olympics, or be a marine biologist, or own your own business. Maybe you even dream of becoming president of the United States! There is no limit to what you can be when you grow up.

If you had asked seven-year-old Bennie DeMerchant what he wanted to become, he would have answered very definitely, “I want to be a missionary!”

One night Bennie’s mom and dad loaded their kids in the family’s car and drove across the St. John River to church. Bennie could hardly wait to get there because a missionary was going to speak that night! At

church, the young boy hardly moved in his seat as he listened to the missionary tell about his experiences in a foreign country. On the way home, Bennie heard his parents talking about the missionaries.



He learned that the missionaries and Bennie's pastor were coming to their home that very night! When the car stopped in their driveway, Bennie slipped out and sneaked into the living room. He climbed over the back of a sofa and curled into a ball. From there, he could hear all the stories the missionary would be sharing with

his folks and his pastor.

Then a problem developed.

Bennie fell asleep!

The next morning, Bennie's mom looked all over the house trying to find Bennie. When at last she found him asleep behind the sofa, she scolded him because he would be late to school. Bennie was mad at himself because he missed hearing the missionary's stories.

Three important things happened after Bennie's tenth birthday. First, he got a job delivering newspapers. Bennie worked hard to develop his



paper route. Before long, he was delivering a hundred newspapers every day to his customers in Perth, New Brunswick, Canada. From this, he learned how to run his own business.

The second thing that happened was his baptism. Bennie stood in the Tobique River near the CNR train bridge in Plaster Rock, New Brunswick, Canada.

His pastor asked him, “Brother Bennie, do you intend to live for God the rest of your life?”

When Bennie nodded his head yes, his pastor baptized the boy in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of his sins.

The third thing that happened to Bennie that year was a strange dream he had. The boy dreamed he was standing on a raft of logs in the middle of a wide river. On the left side of the raft, the water was black. On the right side, the water was brown. As far as he could see, the two colors disappeared in the distance. They still flowed side by side, never mixing together. One day, years later, Bennie was flying over a river in the Amazon and saw the same image from his childhood dream!

As Bennie grew into his teen years, his dad taught him many skills. The teenager learned to tie flies, a type of lure for catching salmon. On his dad’s potato farm, he learned to handle farm machinery.



He also worked at his mother's grocery store. There he learned more things about running a business. He didn't know it, but God was on the job, giving Bennie many chances to develop skills he would need later as a missionary.

One day, Bennie got his first plane ride. He decided then and there that he would be a pilot! From that time on, much of the money he earned from mowing lawns, picking potatoes, or working at the store paid for plane rides. He would pedal his bike from Perth to the P&M flying service in Fort Fairfield, Maine, to pay an instructor to take him up flying for half an