

IN THE JETSTREAM

Dreams Lost, Dreams Redeemed

by Shea Oakley

April 2023



Good messages often contain something that remains with the listener well after that message ends. This was true for me with a sermon I heard a few years back. Near the end of the message the speaker said something that struck a deep chord of personal meaning in me. To paraphrase him, he said that sometimes we must die to our dreams in the course of allowing God's true will to be done in our lives, but that sometimes He fulfills those dreams later. I would add that when he does fulfill those dreams it is usually in a way we never would have expected.

Such was the case with me.

Pursuing A Passion

I have had a passion for aviation for as long as I can remember. There was never a time when I didn't look to the sky when an airliner flew over (including as my soon to be bride was walking down the aisle at our outdoor wedding, but that is a different story!). During my childhood, teen, and young adult years my goal was to make aviation my career, ultimately in airport operations at a big facility like JFK. I went to college for aviation management while simultaneously pursuing my parallel passion for airline history and memorabilia collecting. By the time I was 22 I had the career I thought I wanted right out of school and probably the largest collection of commercial aviation historical material of anyone my age.

That year, however, also saw the personal crisis that led me from Atheism to knowing Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior of my life. Around that time, I also found myself feeling revulsion to anything aeronautical! I quit the job I had worked so long to get and put my entire collection in storage. There were a number of factors not relevant to this story that influenced these decisions; but a major reason was that as a new believer I realized my, more than a little obsessive, interest in airplanes had been an idol in my life. It was something with which I tried to fill Pascal's "God-shaped hole" in my heart.

For nearly a decade after my conversion I pretty much ignored aviation. I worked in mental health and educational

publishing. I also went back to school for a Christian liberal arts degree and eventually went on to seminary. Unfortunately for several reasons, including some self-centered motives on my part, my new dream to go into full-time ministry in my early thirties was clearly thwarted. It seemed that God was putting up a large and, at the time, very painful wall in front of my personal aspirations in that area (again, a story for another time). I was confused and depressed by this to say the least and wondered what God's will for my life really was.

That was a dark season in my Christian life.

God's Redirection

One day in 1999, I was walking on a beach in Florida talking to Him and He suddenly spoke to me (not audibly, but in my mind and heart) and said that He wanted aviation back in my life. It was the beginning of an understanding that it actually was God, through my dad, who had put my passion for airplanes in me as a small boy...long before I knew Him.

The first thing I felt Him telling me to do was sell almost all of my collection that had been sitting in storage for nine years, but somehow add a ministry aspect to the selling. I did this by sending an FCAP tract in every package of every item I sold on eBay during the next several years. Simultaneously He blessed me with a large profit in selling that collection. Then he led me to be a volunteer tour guide for an air museum in Northern, NJ. That soon became a paid position and within five years I was executive director of the facility! Meanwhile He graciously gave me back my passion for airline collecting and I began to build a second collection, often at aviation collectible shows where I gave out more of those FCAP tracts.

With aviation now in its proper subordinate position under God, I found myself enjoying it even more than I had as an Atheist many years before!

In 2018 I left the museum after 16 years and began an aviation history consulting business. In the summer of 2022, I was privileged to also become part of FCAP's staff on a

Fellowship of Christian Airline Personnel



*"If I ride the morning winds to the farthest oceans,
even there Your hand will guide me, Your strength will support me."*
Psalm 139:9-10

part-time basis. So today I again look to a future in ministry, God willing. To do His work while still being involved in the airline history community is truly "the best of both worlds" (and I am still collecting as well).

Fulfillment of My Dreams

Today I have a confidence that God Himself has actually fulfilled two dreams from earlier in my life, to pursue my love for aviation and, far more importantly, to pursue serving Him in vocational ministry. God destroyed my earlier dreams, which I wanted in my own way and in my own time, and replaced them with His dreams which incorporated both of the earlier ones, but were in His will and timing.

Not surprisingly all of this has often seemed very counterintuitive for me through the last 32 years, but now it is beginning to make perfect sense as I understand more and more that His ways are not my own. In fact, they are much better. You see, He knows what He is doing in even the most confusing

and trying times of our lives, as He brings about His mysterious but perfect will for His children.

For me the last three decades have been all about the loss of and then the restoration of my dreams in ways that are far, far greater than anything I could ever have come up with for myself.

For that, may God be praised!

"Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make straight your paths." Proverbs 3:5-6 ESV

This article was written by Shea Oakley. Shea is Principal Contributor for FCAP Social Media and also serves on our FCAP Advisory Board.

Additional Message from Shea:

If you just read this story and are perhaps wondering who the God who led me on my journey really is, may I suggest you contact us through fcap.org? We would be happy to talk with you both about Him and how to know Him personally through His Son, Jesus Christ.



UPCOMING EVENTS

MEN'S FELLOWSHIP & PRAYER
Tuesday
April 11 & 25
9:30am
GMT +4

Ladies Fellowship & Prayer
Tuesday
April 4 & 18
9:30am EDT
GMT +4

ENGAGING IN PRAYER & PRAISE
For Our Industry and One Another
All are invited!
Thursday
April 13
@ 9:30am EDT
April 27
@ 12 Noon EDT
GMT +4

free online
FCAP Webinar on Spiritual Warfare
Part 2 - "The Belt of Truth"
Coming in May
Date/Time TBA

Speaker
Jake Joseph
General Director FCAP

Even if you missed the intro, please join us as the series continues in May, July, September and November.

Sign-in instructions for our Prayer and Fellowship times on Zoom:

[LINK for using computer for video](#) Meeting ID: 7704619320 Password: fcap1234

For audio only by phone, dial into +1 646 876 9923 US Meeting ID: 7704619320 Password: 358149

