

Bob Gilbert: Flying ace for the preborn

By Nicholas Marmalejo

This past summer, over the cities of San Francisco and Sacramento, Bob Gilbert flew a pro-life banner to aid American Life League's walkers in its Crusade for Life. While pro-lifers boldly proclaimed the pro-life message on the ground, Bob commanded the skies. In the words of David Dufresne, assistant director of the Crusade for Life walk, "We are thrilled that Mr. Gilbert has donated his time and resources to help these young college students proclaim the pro-life message." Keep reading for more on this pro-life flying ace.

Taking flight

Bob Gilbert has had a passion for flying for as long as he can remember. As a kid he scoured through libraries, unearthing anything he could find on the subject of airplanes and aviation. Even before he formally began "hands-on" flight training at age 15, Gilbert was enthusiastically practicing the FAA's written tests. To interested parties, it came as a delight and no surprise that on his 16th birthday Bob flew solo for the first time.

But today, people watching Bob fly experience the full gamut of reactions. That's because trailing behind his aircraft flaps an unapologetically pro-life banner. Depending on his mission, the banner's wording may vary, but the heart of its message remains the same—"Stop abortion now!"

According to Bob Gilbert, "I have dedicated myself to the message that it is wicked and depraved to kill innocent babies. I will fly any banner that will get in America's face and says, 'Stop abortion now!'"

A missionary life

Gilbert says he has always been pro-life, but it wasn't until he returned from Africa, where he served as a missionary pilot for the World Wide Evangelization Crusade, that he became alarmed at the level of depravity in the United States. "People say that when you go to Africa, you experience culture shock," explained Bob. "But after I returned to America in 1973, I experienced even greater shock when I saw

how the United States plummeted into moral decadence—and at the time I wasn't even aware they were killing babies."

Back in the U.S., Bob worked as an aircraft instrument mechanic and in quality assurance for the federal government, but his missionary zeal never left him. Gilbert dedicated himself to his family, believing that in this way he would be laboring for the re-evangelization of America. "I believe with my whole heart," reflected Gilbert, "that we must train our children to carry the torch to restore America to a country that respects God and all preborn life."

In 2000, Bob felt called to drive a truck with a pro-life message and discovered Covenant Transport, Inc. On the back of his trailer was a sign that proclaimed: "It's a child, not a choice."

"Even when the rest of the truck was dirty, I would wash that sticker every day so America could see the truth," Bob recalled.

In January 2003, Bob met Greg Cunningham of the Center for Bio-Ethical Reform. He was so

inspired by him that he volunteered to drive the center's pro-life trucks around the country. The center had pro-life planes that occasionally flew as well, and when they did, the center's switchboards were overwhelmed with calls. Bob saw this and spent his entire savings to buy a plane and begin "A Voice for the Unborn."

Assembling a fleet

Although he was successful in finding a plane, Gilbert still faces numerous challenges. "We need lots of planes," explained Bob. "My plan is for 12 or 13 regular banner carriers to fly over the America's major cities daily. When people ask me how often I want banners to be flown, I tell them every day, but I'd be happy if it were two to three times a week."

A one man show, Gilbert flies on average 50 hours per month, only about half of which are for the preborn. "I want to spend every minute up in the air that I can for the babies to end abortion," said Gilbert. But unfortunately, he is unable to fly more

often since his expenses are out-of-pocket on a retirement budget of \$1000 a month.

"I am recruiting pilots and aircraft nationwide. There are Godly people out there, willing to go the extra mile for America. That's why I've been so bold in asking for help," said Gilbert.

Despite the difficulty of recruiting, Bob remains undaunted. In fact, he soon might be flying

over your neighborhood: "I'm working this thing 24 hours a day. I'm fighting to get America back to a God-honoring, life-respecting nation and will keep fighting until I accomplish this goal!"

Bob Gilbert operates A Voice for the Unborn, an American Life League associate group. Mr. Gilbert can be reached at UnborncryForJustice@yahoo.com.

Bob and his wife Janelle stand under the wing of Bob's Cessna 172.



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