

# Sucked from a Plane

In 1987, on a commuter flight from Lewiston, Maine, to Boston, Henry Dempsey, the pilot, heard an unusual noise near the rear of the small aircraft, a Beechcraft 99. He turned the controls over to his co-pilot, Paul Boucher, and went back to check it out.

As he reached the tail section, the plane hit an air pocket, and Dempsey was tossed against the rear door. He quickly discovered the source of the mysterious noise. The rear door had not been properly latched prior to takeoff, and it flew open. He was instantly sucked out the door, grabbed the stairway railing, and was hanging upside down on the stairs – partly in and partly out of the aircraft.

The co-pilot, seeing the red light that indicated an open door, radioed the nearest airport, requesting permission to make an emergency landing. He reported that the pilot had fallen out of the plane, and he requested a helicopter search of that area of the ocean.



*Passengers exit the rear of a Beechcraft 99, using a built-in stairway similar to the one on Dempsey's harrowing flight*

After the plane landed, airport personnel and the co-pilot found Henry Dempsey – holding onto the outdoor ladder of the aircraft. Somehow, he had caught the ladder, held on for 10 minutes as the plane flew 200 miles per hour at an altitude of 4,000 feet, and then, at landing, kept his head from hitting the runway, which was a mere 12 inches away.

It took airport personnel 15 minutes to pry Dempsey's fingers from the ladder.

All of us find ourselves in uncomfortable – and, sometimes, desperate – situations from time to time. Nobody lives without troubles.

The question is, in the good times or the bad, but especially when adversity comes along: What are you holding on to?

The answer: Jesus Christ – a relationship with Him and dependence on His promises – created by trusting Him to be the Lord of your life.

It won't mean that you will be delivered from crises, but He will be there to help you navigate safely through the turbulence.

– Beecher Hunter