



Tracey and John's Journal from Juba-N'Djamena

The Feils serving with MAF South Sudan & Chad

Status June 2022: A Chadian Challenge Issue 10



Since we last wrote in March, we have slept in four countries – and in ten different beds! Two weeks rest in Uganda has restored us to take on the challenges of this dynamic season. We returned to Juba in time for an Easter picnic with the MAF international team, and said goodbye to two beloved families. We also packed up our home and moved to one of the new apartments across the creek – only 80m but with some added benefits. A wheelbarrow and many friends helped out. Three nights in Kajo Keji for Tracey (see below) and then we were off to Chad, with a night in Ethiopia enroute. We are spending a month here, supporting the small team whilst it awaits new staff and others to return from home assignment. It has a very different feel to the countries we have experienced before and we are finding the difference refreshing, despite it being a good few degrees hotter than Juba!



OPERATIONS

'Is Wingman still down?' I asked Deny. 'No, he has been sleeping all day but my wife says now he is awake.' For a moment, I am confused. Then I realise that Deny is speaking about his 2-year-old son, named Wingman after the Flight Operation Program developed and used by MAF. We laugh together as I realise the joke Deny has made. Wingman (the flight operation, not the child) has been 'up' and 'down' for days as we wrestle with the server and power cuts. One of the purposes of John's time in Chad is to support the programme make the change to version 7 of Wingman as he has just managed this in the Juba office. He is spending time with Denis and Togba so that they can understand the differences when making bookings and scheduling for the two aircraft based in N'Djamena and is facilitating staff training in non-technical skills. His presence here releases the flight operations manager/pilot Becki to fly as much as possible although flight hours are somewhat constrained by the difficulty in getting a licenced engineer to Chad to sign-off scheduled maintenance tasks. We feel distant from other MAF bases in N'Djamena, unlike Juba where there are good, established connections with the Uganda and Kenya bases. Becki undertook a medevac flight to Moundou in the South, a lady having suffered a suspected heart attack there. The flight track followed the Logone River that forms the border with Cameroon, a very useful ground navigation aid in deteriorating unseasonal weather. We departed Moundou with heavy rain to the East and made good use of the weather radar as we followed the river North back to N'Djamena. The patient is recovering well. Other flights have supported missionaries working in the East, amongst Muslim communities and with refugees from Darfur. As there is only one pilot currently in the programme, these flights would have been impossible without John holding the fort on the ground. John's office is part of the MAF hangar at the airport and he's appreciated being close to all the plane action! He's also sharing it with me, as I have been writing stories about the flights and our partners. Meanwhile, back in Juba, Malony is running ops with support from the chief pilot and partnership manager and all is going smoothly. It's great to see the team develop there.





Heading to the Holy Nation

In May, Tracey was able to support at a MAF-funded Peace and Reconciliation workshop in Kajo Keji, the land of mangoes! It is now, sadly, known as a 'ghost town.' Violence in 2016/2017 caused the vast majority of people to flee across the border into Uganda. The once-thriving market town is deserted. Claimed by the undergrowth, broken buildings held together by weeds, have gunshot holes littering the walls, and empty rooves robbed of iron sheets. But now, slowly, with signs of peace and renewal, people are beginning to return from the Ugandan camps that have been their shelter in recent years. The church therefore gathered people from the 5 districts of Kajo Keji to participate for the three-day workshop. Joseph, MAF's HR manager and newly-trained Peace and Reconciliation facilitator, is a Dinka. He stands tall with the defining scarification marks across his forehead. His physical difference to the Kuku of this region is apparent. When discussing the power of prejudice, he shares from his own experience. 'I was taught by my parents that Equatorians eat people!' he says to the surprised laughter of the Equatorians gathered. But despite the laughter, there is deep awareness of the prejudice that is held in the room. One later added, 'We believe all the Dinka steal the cattle and grab our land. But that is not true. It is not all.' The Biblical concept of the Holy Nation is one of the main teaching points of the workshop: **'You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation.'** (1 Peter 2:9) The Holy Nation is the identity we take as believers, celebrating our diversity whilst living in unity worshipping our Sovereign God. Another session focuses on understanding our priestly role as believers and how we can 'stand in the gap' to help heal the wounds of ethnic conflict, enabling the work of reconciliation and towards unity. As a Dinka, Joseph knelt down in front of the gathered Kuku people. With all of his heart, he confessed the sins of his people against them. Standing in the gap, he asked for their forgiveness. Rev Edward stood and embraced Joseph. 'Yes, we forgive you, my brother.' It was a powerful moment. Others present stood and lined up to take Joseph's hand and shake it warmly. Afterwards Joseph told us that several said they never imagined that a Dinka would seek forgiveness. Several men and women followed his example and confessed the sins of their group – the Holy Spirit was obviously at work. Towards the end of the workshop, participant Moses, reflecting on all he has heard, announced with joy, 'I have changed direction. I'm not heading to the same place anymore. Now, I am heading to the Holy Nation.'





Pray with us

We give thanks for...

- The newly trained P&R facilitators, especially Joseph and Kiir who have already putting their new skills to work and for the communities who have taken new steps on the journey towards reconciliation.
- New pilots and their families and a finance manager have arrived in Juba!
- Our lovely new home
- A positive time of insight, learning and perspective in Chad
- Possible new teaching leads for JCA and the insight Tracey has gained from visiting other mission schools in the region.

Please pray with us for...

- **The Chad programme** over the next months with a new country director arriving, staff on home assignment and lots of temporary cover in place. We can see the difference the team make in this vast country.
- **The humanitarian situation in South Sudan** which is desperate. In March alone, according to UNMISS, 61,010 individuals, over half of which are children, were added to the 2 million displaced population particularly due to inter communal violence and because of the impact of the annual cycle of flooding, exacerbated by climate changes. UNOCHA predict that an estimated 8.3 million people will experience severe food insecurity at the peak of this year's lean season (May-July) and we are hearing news of this now from our partners in Tonj for example. There is remarkable localised work happening; resilience and strength is shown by communities. Please pray that MAF and our partners can serve these communities by ensuring we get the help, hope and healing where it is needed most in the months ahead.

Juba Christian Academy has welcomed two prospective teachers on visits! It has been great to host these two young women and we are praying that God might lead one or both of them to join our team. In supporting the school in its strategic thinking, Tracey has been able to visit/meet with teachers in two Christian schools in Kampala, Uganda and has benefitted from spending time and meeting the team at the mission school here in N'Djamena. JCA children have enjoyed learning that 'Earth Rocks' and that our God is our rock. We went on a school visit to Rock City- a part of Juba where rock is quarried and women sit at the road side breaking it down into different sized pieces to sell. Children also 'met' Sarah, when she shared her work as a geologist. To great delight, we received a box of books for our library. The last few weeks are busy with reports, our own mini-Olympics, new pre-schoolers on their first visits and preparations for a new school year with thirty children or more!



In other news...

Sarah graduated from Royal Holloway in April and we were able to join the livestream from a coffee shop in Uganda. Mary and Tom were both able to spend the day with her, as were Tracey's parents. While disappointed we could not be there in person to celebrate with her, we are so thankful to be able to join remotely! Tracey has also been able to bring a wedding 'reading' remotely when our friend and supporter, Harriet married Luke. These opportunities help us to stay connected to family and friends back in the UK. Back in Juba on the compound, do you remember meeting our pet, Tortilla the tortoise? Well, meet some of her 27 offspring that we have discovered in the last few weeks in every corner of the compound!



Introducing Nekob, doctor of aircraft! *'When I was a small boy, I wanted to become a doctor, but I did not have the opportunity to become a doctor of people. But now I am a doctor of aircraft.'* Nekob is Chad's maintenance team leader. His eyes sparkle and his face is lit with enthusiasm as he talks about what he does to care for the Grand Caravan and Cessna 182. He ensures both aircraft are in good health: he carries out preventative measures, such as thorough checks every 50 hours. And he is ready when a diagnosis and cure are needed! *'Becki [the pilot] might call me and tell me that the fuel gauge is not working and so then it is my job to work out the problem and do the maintenance to fix it, just like a doctor,'* he explains. *'When it is mended, then I am very happy.'* Nekob knows God has clearly provided for him to do this work he loves. *'God was good to me in my life because I had a hard childhood. I come from a poor family.'* Four scholarships for engineering training were available and Nekob decided to try for one of them. As he tells the story, he joyfully describes the obstacles that he knows God helped him to overcome. *'I did not have a radio so I did not know the [scholarship] exam was announced. On Sunday, I went to the church. My cousin met me and asked, 'Why are you here? It is the exam today - did you not hear on the radio?' But I had not heard. I didn't have the pen, I didn't have paper. My cousin gave me a pen and I went to the exam but I came late.'* The invigilator let Nekob sit the exam but told him, *'You come late but you must finish with everybody else.'* Sitting the engineering scholarship exam alongside 150 others, Nekob thought his chances were slim but he gained the scholarship! *'I am grateful. I believe God is there and He is good and He did this in my life. I feel very, very honoured to work for MAF because MAF allows me to put my skills and qualifications to work to help reach out to unreached people with the gospel.'* However, Nekob's sparkle dims as he shares his hopes for the future. He speaks slowly and seriously now. *'I was born in the war; now I am old in the war in Chad. Now I pray to God to help us to make Chad better so for our sons there will be no war. Maybe I will not see it because I am now old, but maybe there is hope for our sons.'*



Whilst Tracey was in Kajo Keji, John attended the MAF day of prayer with the rest of team, a day set aside twice a year when all programs pause in their busy-ness and gather for prayer. This is always a time of such encouragement and fellowship, lively singing and good food. John was asked to share a little of his testimony, using the chosen theme of the day, Isaiah 40: 31.





Spending time walking in the tranquil landscape of the Crater Lakes in Western Uganda



Our Juba home view after rain



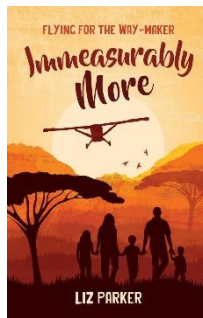
Helping Becki on a medevac



A snack from the camel joint in downtown N'Djamena!

Want to find out more?

- Read [Tracey's full report](#) on the May peace and reconciliation workshop in Kajo Keji.
- **Pray with us.** If you don't receive the MAF UK prayer diary, you can access the current diary [here](#).
- **Help us find teachers.** [Share the recruitment material](#) for JCA with those you know who might be interested. We are also fundraising for playground development. If you would be interested in supporting this, please get in touch.
- **Discover** more about pilot Becki's work in Chad in her blog [here](#). (You might spot a familiar face!)
- **Buy this book**, Immeasurably More - a personal perspective on life in MAF programmes in East Africa, including South Sudan, by MAF UK's Liz Parker. It is available to purchase [here](#) or via Amazon.
- **[Make mango chutney!](#)** This is the recipe Tracey adapts to spice up our meals.



KEEP IN TOUCH

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If you would like to support the work of MAF in South Sudan, we would **love** to have you on our team. This work is only possible because of the financial gifts and prayers of people like you. **You can sign up to join our team on the MAF website.**



Despite our very rusty, school French, we have seen God at work here in N'Djamena and we have learnt so much. Tracey has spent time in the office and on a flight, supporting MAF by compiling stories for the programme. We have enjoyed time with our MAF UK neighbours (the Dillingham family), and walking - with scarf respectfully covering head - to the patisserie for croissants and ice cream or through the market. We even joined a platinum jubilee pudding competition hosted by British BMS World Mission workers! We are thankful for this opportunity to be in Chad. Now we are looking forward to returning to our home in South Sudan to continue the work God has for us there.

With our love and gratitude,

John *Tracey*