



FIONA'S NEWS December 2025



“...Isaiah says, ‘The Root of Jesse will spring up, one who will arise to rule over the nations, in him the Gentiles will hope.’ May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.” Romans 15v12-13 (NIV)

Over the course of the Saturdays in Advent, my church has been holding a series of short services. Each involves a work of art from the National Gallery, depicting a different aspect of the Nativity story, with an accompanying reflection written by Siobhan Jolley. The themes over the four weeks have been Hope, Peace, Joy and Love – themes which are all applicable to MAF’s work.

MAF has been bringing Help, **Hope** and Healing to isolated people in Christ’s name for 80 years. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZrY5DwXKDUw> is a short video for our anniversary year and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hIPXNsR1kWA> is an even shorter one, Around the World in 80 Seconds, created for our prayer day in November.

MAF flights in Tanzania support a school in Malambo, Tanzania, run by Help for the Maasai. A staff member says “For Maasai children who can't go to school, the reality for them is that their life will look like grazing cattle and early marriage. School is more than just a learning. It is their safety, health and their future.” Girls can be married off as young as 11, in exchange for cattle. Elinami is in a minority to be at school aged 14, giving her the **hope** of a better future than that of many of her peers.



In South Sudan, Dr Emmanuel Oryem is the sole paediatric



ophthalmologist. When MAF flew him and some colleagues for a week-long eye clinic in Yirol, he was delighted to restore the sight of a boy with bilateral cataracts, encouraging the father to send the boy to school now. Most of the cataract patients were older people, but each of these was accompanied by a young caregiver, so surgery brings freedom to them too. Dr Emmanuel says “We tell the patient, now this little girl or little boy should go back to school if possible. They have been assigned to take care of the elderly. But after the operation, why should they not live their life?”



Peace International runs a primary school for South Sudanese refugees in Adjumani, northern Uganda but the teachers were struggling with the behaviour of the traumatised children. Teacher Stella Baru said that “Every five minutes a child would be fighting. The children feared strangers. They said that we looked like the people who killed their parents.” MAF flew in a trauma healing expert for Peace International who gave training to the teachers and now there is little fighting and the school is one of the best performing in the district. The trauma training has since been extended to the wider community, working to establish peaceful relationships between Dinka and Nuer

tribespeople. Both tribes have been guilty of atrocities. Tabitha’s husband, for example, was shot as he preached in church and a further 40 of his congregation were also killed. She is now able to say that the trauma healing training has transformed her heart.

2025 marks the **joy**-filled 50th anniversary of the Laynapuy Homelands Movement in Arnhem Land, northern Australia. When the arrival of mining and its royalties brought social challenges to the Yolngu people living at Yirrkala, near the mining town of Gove, families moved out to their clan lands in the remote hinterland. The isolation has enabled them to preserve their culture and protect their children from negative influences but has also meant that they are reliant on aviation services for access to healthcare and education. The relationships built up between MAF and the local Yolngu over the course of 50 years made it a particular pleasure to fly people to Garrthala to celebrate.



Whilst we fly a wide variety of individuals and staff from numerous organisations, our priority passengers are those who share our aim of showing **love** to those in need because of God's love for us and our love for him. One such is Martha Gafafer who served for 30 years as a missionary doctor at Macenta in Guinea, with Mission Philafricaine. She still occasionally visits in her retirement to help with training and to encourage those who have been physically healed and are in the process of social

reintegration with all the emotion bound up with the stigma for having had the disease. Martha says of her motivation that "The care of leprosy patients was always my heart's desire, I liked it very much. I began to love these disabled patients, the former patients with the after-effects of leprosy, who came at any time because of their wounds, their hands and insensitive feet." (Photo: Joel Conte)

After very stressful delays, Mother and I were eventually able to move back to Tenterden in the middle of October – and 6 days later I went to Papua New Guinea for 3 weeks. There is still work to be done on the house and, later, garden to make them more suitable for us but the location is very good – within walking distance of the church, high street and surgery. I am now back to working full-time for MAF in the Ashford office but join any early morning meetings with staff in the Asia Pacific region from the comfort of my room at home. Whilst I was in PNG, I visited the Internal Revenue Commission in connection with a delayed audit of MAF's tax records and am now involved in preparing supporting information for GST (VAT) returns submitted in the last 3 years. That's on top of year end audit work and the usual range of accounting, insurance, legal and tax queries.

Thank you for the gift that you have been to me this year and throughout my time with MAF. May your Christmas and the forthcoming year be filled with hope and peace and joy and love.

- Thank God for those whose medical and educational skills give hope to children
- Please pray for peace in the countries where we operate, especially South Sudan, Democratic Republic of Congo (MAF US programme) and Papua New Guinea.
- Praise God that MAF has been able to serve, with partners, isolated people around the world for 80 years and pray for all that is needed (finances, staff, aircraft, government permissions) in order to reach more communities by the time of our centenary.
- Pray for the finance team, including Marta Kuliš who starts as Chief Finance Officer in Feb, as we enter the audit season whilst also dealing with multiple tasks alongside routine accounts.
- Please also continue to pray for my personal health – physical, mental, emotional and spiritual.

Please let me or MAF know if you no longer want to receive this quarterly prayer letter or would like it in a different format (post or email) and let us know if you would also like to receive the briefer prayer letter without pictures that I send in the interim months.

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