



FIONA'S NEWS September 2024



“How can we thank God enough for you in return for all the joy we have in the presence of our God because of you.” 1 Thessalonians 3 v9 (NIV)

I continue to make use of an old Papua New Guinea lectionary & handbook. This week’s subject for thanksgiving is “Those who pray for us”. My Bible readings have been in Thessalonians which also include the same topic. This is so appropriate whilst I’ve had time on home assignment to visit at least some of you to thank you in person for your ongoing support, both financially and in prayer, as I move from one MAF role to another.

When my time in Juba, South Sudan, finished at the start of August my MAF colleagues there *(photo right: Karyn Ball)* gave me what I consider a very precious leaving gift – a large cross.



It is fairly common for ladies in the Presbyterian church to carry a cross, particularly when welcoming a special visitor. As you can see in this photo *(Jaap de With)*, the crosses are of different sizes and designs but all are large enough to hold up and be seen.

There is some carving on my cross but the distinguishing feature is that each of the points are tipped with bullet/shell cartridges ranging in calibre from 0.22 (inches) to 0.50. This seems to me to be like a modern-day equivalent of turning swords into ploughshares. It also feels especially relevant given MAF’s work in facilitating peace and reconciliation workshops.



The central session of those workshop focuses on the cross, where we see how much God loves us. Participants are invited to nail the guilt and shame and pain of their wounded hearts onto a cross, releasing it all to Jesus who died to set us free and reconcile us with God. As hearts are healed and the depth of God’s love is understood, then the Spirit enables reconciliation with enemies, for whom Jesus also died. *(Photos Jenny Davies & Jaap de With)*



These peace and reconciliation workshops in S Sudan are one way in which MAF brings help, hope and healing to isolated people.

The daily flights are, of course, the main way in which we share Christ's love with those in need, so thank you for your part in enabling all these to happen. Their cargo and passengers may be: medicines, doctors and patients; Bibles, evangelists and Bible translators; seeds and agriculturalists; food for malnourished babies and play equipment for traumatised children; blackboards and teachers; well-digging equipment and water engineers, just some of which are pictured below. *(Jenny Davies & Dave Forney)*



Having left Juba, I began my home assignment by staying with the OHP sisters at their convent in Whitby – glorious sunshine and the heather in full flower on the moors. Since then, I have spoken at 3 churches and visited friends as far apart as Kirkcaldy and London, Durham and Southport, with a tour of the Midlands and southern England still to come. It is lovely to catch up in person with friends of so many years, sharing each other's general news as well as personal joys and griefs.

The travel has also enabled my mother and I to visit some places that hold special memories for us.



I had hoped to be able to give you a better update in this newsletter of the details of my next role with MAF. Budget work and holidays, however, have delayed the creation of the job description and related decision on the number of hours that I'll be working. The plan is mainly for project work to do with global financial reporting, probably not starting now until 1st November. In the meantime, I shall be working on improving my knowledge of current accounting standards.

Like Paul, how can I thank God enough for all of you and your love and support! I look forward to visiting more of you in the next couple of months – especially those in Sandgate on 27th October and in Tenterden on 17th November.

- Thank God for the peace and reconciliation workshops and pray that the healing of hearts will lead to the transformation of South Sudan. Pray for peace in the country following the announcement that the first elections will be delayed for a further two years.
- Thank God for all the other flights undertaken by MAF pilots and the help that reaches isolated people as a result.
- Please pray for wisdom in the sorting out of the details of my new contract and for ability to absorb, understand and apply the changes in relevant accounting standards.
- Please pray too for all that is involved in settling back into the UK - establishing patterns for tasks around the house, increasing involvement in church activities, exploring opportunities for different leisure pursuits and maintaining spiritual disciplines.

Please let me or MAF know if you no longer want to receive this 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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