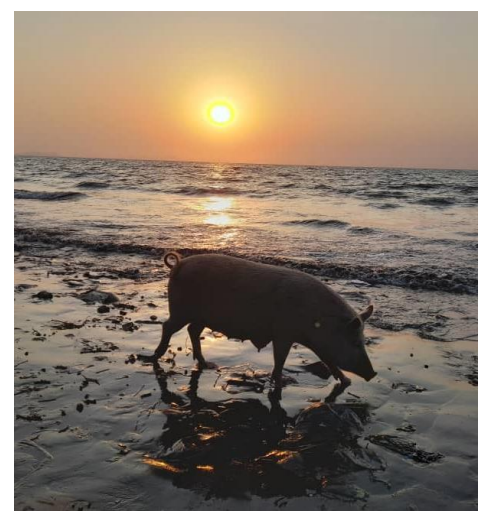




Pigs, planes and purpose

A trip to the seaside is always a good idea. So, it was with enthusiasm that I (John) made the 4000-mile trip from landlocked Juba in the east to Conakry on the west coast following an invitation to coach, encourage, share, learn from, and do Ops with, the newest MAF programme using planes to help, heal and bring hope to communities with big needs. They were expecting a wise man from the east in December, but they got me. Last time I visited MAF Guinea back in Feb 2023 they were just starting out, new procedures, new routes, big plans, a shiny aircraft, and the confidence that comes from a clear calling of a faithful God. This time I was met by old friends, new staff who became friends, a team still determined to be used for God's glory in a difficult place. It's a mission cliché that *'people just need Jesus'*, but this team understands the transformational power from a simple understanding of *'I'm loved and so I love'*, *'I'm forgiven, so I can forgive'*, *'I'm at peace and so I can make peace'*. The fun part is that we can use aeroplanes to make this real. Mission Philafricaine, a Swiss mission organisation and regular flyer operates in many locations within Guinea and shares MAF's vision and values. We flew them to Kissidougou and Nzerekore, towards the forests of Liberia and Cote D'Ivoire, on the same flight were a project team from Pioneer Bible Translators, Codapa (agro pastoral development) and a guy from the Lutheran church. Big country, long flights, unlike the many short hops that challenge our Juba pilots. There was a [tragedy at a football stadium](#) following a suspect referee decision in a politically charged game. A pitch invasion, rocks were thrown, over 50 people died in crush that reminded me of Hillsborough in the 80s. Unsure how to respond we worked with national and local government officials and made the aircraft available for the 2.6 hour flight to Nzerekore. Complex planning and the need for extreme flexibility stretched the team. Personally, I was recharged, physically and spiritually, by the team's commitment to the mission, daily devotions, regular prayer, a weekend boat trip to an island beach, mountain waterfalls, cold beers on the city beach with a warm ocean breeze and wandering pigs, and an opportunity to dust off my sketchy school French. I was supremely well hosted for the 5 weeks by Suisse colleagues, Ueli and Renate; their gentle, caring hospitality and friendship, and a fridge full of Swiss cheese and Toblerone - I thank God some stereotypes are real!

[Find out more? Watch Pilot Brad talk about Flying for Life in Guinea](#)





What does Christmas look like in Juba?



MAF Christmas Party: Goat stew preparation; Car mechanic Butrus enjoyed having a few of his children visit from Uganda; wonderful worship, dancing and fellowship



Hosting Christmas tea for JCA teaching friends



The all-singing, dancing and wonderful gospel sharing of the Watoto Christmas Cantata, and the more reflective Compound Carol Service



Neighbours following South Sudanese tradition of Christmas biscuit making

New Year's Eve traditions: Joining our Dutch friends for Olie Bollen followed by an evening bonfire and game of hide and seek in the dark!



Best Christmas present...Choccy Digestives or having the local road graded by the UN?





A Mission of Love and Learning

Did you receive a copy of the latest MAF UK Flying for Life magazine? Then you might have seen an article about the importance of small mission schools like Juba Christian Academy and spot a familiar face or two! [Check out pages 11-13 by clicking on this link if you missed it.](#) This term I am teaching a grade 3-6 class of 11 students. John's also helping out when he can, putting his rusty old teaching skills (!!) to use with a weekly science lesson!

Are you, or someone you know, being called to support the work of mission organisations in South Sudan by teaching at JCA? We continue to have urgent need for September 2025 and beyond and have **NO current leads** for teachers or an administrator for the future. *Please pray for at least one brilliant primary teacher to join our team.* If you are interested in teaching at JCA, I would love to chat with you.



A time to mourn


Our global MAF team have suffered two significant losses in the last couple of weeks. The beautiful 19-year old daughter of Mark and Sarah Newnham, a long-term MAF UK family now based in Kenya (who we first got to know when we lived in Uganda almost 20 years ago), passed away on December 29th after a short illness. We were able to attend the beautiful memorial service for Amy in Nairobi during our RnR. The same day of the memorial, a road accident in Arnhem Land, Northern Australia, killed MAF pilot/deputy director, Chris Coffey. Chris (36), leaves behind his wife, Alison, and three young children. *Please join us in praying* for these lovely families in their grief, and for the MAF teams in these locations as they both support and grieve too.

We have also heard of the death of our lovely guard at JCA, 'Yabba' (meaning old wise man – he was 53 years old!) Maker. Maker had been sick with TB and we thought he was recovering well; he looked better when I visited him just before Christmas. I will particularly miss his cheerful welcome at the school gate each morning, and his determination to teach me a little more Juba Arabic every day.

Peace and Reconciliation Update

Whilst I have not had the opportunity to facilitate on a workshop since we last wrote, I have met with the wider facilitation team for prayer and sharing of good practice. I was invited to lead a session on lesson planning and thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to promote discussion and idea-sharing with the team. Last Sunday, an exciting new peace and reconciliation initiative began. Three of my fellow facilitators, Pajock, Abdon and Yagub, broadcast a radio programme (South Sudan Broadcasting Company) on the topic of God's original intention for relationships. This is the start of what we hope to be regular program, using the Healing Hearts, Transforming Nations material. *Please pray* for continued opportunity to share the teaching in this way and for God to work in the hearts of those who tune in!





Challenges in the city

This is the view across Juba when landing at the airport on one side of town, across to the jebel (Arabic for mountain), at the other side of town. In this picture we live just to the left of jebel. Every week day, John, the pilots and other office staff travel across this bustling, growing city to reach the airport office. Not a week goes by when a change isn't spotted. There was great celebration in the office car when a new bridge opened over a rubbish-filled creek which means a direct, smooth route on the commute and no longer the bumpy, dusty diversion. New buildings are going up and stores are opening too. The latest billboard posters promote awareness of cholera, following an outbreak of the disease in November, which isn't yet under control. Right now, there is a higher than normal military presence particularly in market areas following violence and looting against Sudanese-owned business' after news spread of targeted killing of South Sudanese in Sudan. When the markets are open, the price of goods continue to rise as the currency devalues; the economic struggle is a challenge for all our national teammates, often the main breadwinner for a large extended family. Jeremiah 29:7 reminds us to 'seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you, Pray to the Lord for it,' and so, in the midst of the overwhelming need we notice, *we pray.*



Pray with us

I heard recently of [the church that prayed for David Livingstone](#). 47 people praying one day, 47 giants protecting Livingstone and his team; a good reminder to never underestimate the power of prayer! Thank you for partnering with us! We hope there are things to give praise and prayer for as you have read our latest news. John has another seaside trip planned; he will be spending the month of February with the MAF team based in Monrovia, Liberia. *Please pray for him and the Liberian team* – a 30 hour journey on 3 planes to get there and then he will have four weeks of working alongside and supporting the team there as they seek to better serve remote Liberian communities with help, hope and healing. Meanwhile at JCA, my admin partner, April, has unexpectedly returned to the USA for family reasons. *Please pray* for her, and for me as we adapt at JCA without her support. During 2025, MAF flights around this nation, serving those in great humanitarian and spiritual need, will continue to be in demand and so we thank you for your partnership with us this new year.

With our love and gratitude,



If you haven't yet watched our 2024 Partnership video, [click here](#).

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 partner with us by clicking here, Thank you!](#)