FLYING FOR LIFE

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06 No community is beyond the reach of God's love.

15 MAF provides access to healthcare where no clinics exist.

Brad Bell
President & CEO
MAF Canada

As I write this column I'm preparing for our annual MAF Global Forum, a week set aside for the leadership within MAF's worldwide family to come together to reflect on the previous year, and make plans for the future. Looking back is a great way to put events into a new perspective. And in doing that, it allows me to see events and circumstances that were far beyond our wisdom, and beyond our planning ability. These moments could only have been coordinated by God, and as an organization, we have been blessed immensely by them.

Last year, when we were approached with an opportunity to buy a new aircraft, I initially thought it was completely out of our reach. In fact, it was rather easy to come up with a long list of reasons why this could not work. But as we prayed and explored what was presented to us, God opened our eyes to an immense opportunity that He had created. There were many factors and intricate pieces that came into place perfectly to make that purchase happen - and God had clearly been working in those details. All that was required was that we trusted Him in taking those steps, and because of that faithfulness, we were led through His plan.

Proverbs 3:5 tells us, "Trust in the Lord with all your hearts, and lean not on your own understanding." For all of us, it is so important to be able to discern when an opportunity that He has put in front of us has arrived. This isn't always easy. We need to move forward with a constant, conscious mindset of listening for God while at the same time using the natural gifts and skills He has given us. This publication is full of people doing just that - finding His path and taking it. I hope these stories of faithfulness inspire you as much as they did me.

I want to thank you for always praying for us, and with us, as we follow the direction in which He takes MAF. I want to thank you for blessing our staff, and the people we serve through enabling us to provide physical and spiritual life-changing services. And I want to encourage you to take a moment to listen. Is God telling you something? Is he working in your life, too? Let him guide you, just like He has to all the people in the stories within this Flying for Life. Because when we follow his plan, amazing things will happen.

In Him,

Brad Bell
CEO, MAF Canada

PAGE 17
Saving a week's journey

MAF provides multiple flights in Madagascar to deliver medical and pharmacy supplies to remote clinics around the country, including an unusually large load of about 2,000 kgs, which took two MAF flights to deliver.

Photo Irina Randriamandrato

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Mission Aviation Fellowship (MAF) is a Christian organization whose mission is to fly light aircraft and use other technologies in isolated parts of the world to bring help and hope to people in need. Since 1946, MAF has been spreading the Good News of Jesus Christ in places of deepest human need – where flying is not a luxury, but a lifeline. Worldwide, MAF provides over 200 flights a day. **Mission Aviation Fellowship of Canada** is a Canadian registered charity (Registration # 12994 2561 RR0001) and is able to issue receipts for income tax purposes. Financial statements are available on request. Every gift helps! Please mail your gift, visit us at mafc.org, or call us toll-free at 1.877.351.9344. Each gift allocated toward an MAF approved program will be used as allocated with the understanding that when any given need has been met, additional allocated gifts will be used where most needed.

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Cover MAF pilot Reuben Vermeulen delivers solar radios to Malualkon, South Sudan. **Photo** Jenny Davies.

A Life Changed

Story Irina Randriamandrato

13-year old Sara was badly burned while playing, which left her arm fused to her torso. Three years later MAF had the joy of flying Sara home after a life- changing surgery at HVM hospital, Mandritsara, to release her arm.

Above Sara is all smiles after surgery
Bottom Left Sara with Dr. Jesh
Bottom Right Back home with her mom, Vivian

Sara lives with her mother, Vivian, and her three brothers about 60km north of Antananarivo. She had been playing under the living room table with her siblings in 2019 when an oil lamp tipped over and set the table and Sara on fire. Local hospitals attempted to treat her injuries but without success.

Life has been hard for the family. Vivian is partially blind and unable to work. Earlier this year they lost their home to a cyclone, and they have not had the funds to rebuild their home in addition to paying for Sara's earlier operation. But hope appeared on the horizon.

Nehemia, a Christian relief organization, received funds to send Sara, now sixteen, for treatment at the HVM hospital, Mandritsara, well known for its medical expertise and care. Sara and Vivian left home via taxi-brousse (bush taxi/bus) as soon as they could, travelling the 558km overland to reach the hospital.

Doctor Jeshiah Thiessen, who performed the operation, shared, "Sarah's mother called us the day they left, three hours into the trip, asking if it was normal that they hadn't arrived yet. We had to explain that the trip would take 56 hours and not three hours."

Though the trip was long, thankfully they arrived safely.

After the successful operation, and eight weeks recovering in Mandritsara, MAF was called upon to fly Sara and Vivian home. It was their first experience in a plane, and they were more than delighted!

The flight took just one hour and 20 minutes, in contrast to the 56-hour overland journey they had taken earlier. Three different organizations participated in transforming Sara's life and returning her home safely.

As Patrick Keller, MAF's Country Director, shares, "We cannot do all, but we can do our part. That is what is beautiful about organizations working together. ●

MAF carried **101,733** passengers last year alone. Many of those were emergency medevac patients and others like Sara, who would not have received the advanced medical care they needed to live a better life, if it were not for an MAF flight.

Your gifts to MAF can help fund similar flights. Thank you for your continued support.

We want to hear from you

MAF Canada is celebrating our **50th anniversary** next year, and we want you to be a part of it.

We're inviting all current and former overseas and home office staff, donors, family members, friends, and board members to share with us your stories, photos, news items, and other memories or experienced with MAF Canada over the past 50 years.

Selected entries will be published in one of the 2023 issues of *Flying for Life*, or used in social media posts throughout the year.

Email your stories and photos to **editor@flyingforlife.ca** today!

50
MAF CANADA
EST. 1973

New Fruit in Darjo

There is no community too remote or too isolated for the combined determination of MAF and partner, Fruits Ministry, an indigenous faith-based organization based in Kapoeta East, South Sudan. Fruits Ministry mission director James Nyika shares the vision for their latest initiative, a new ministry outreach to the remote village of Dargo, in Upper Nile State.

story and photos by **Jenny Davies**

At Daga Post (also known as Darjo) airstrip, the small group of missionaries gather for a photograph with members of the community in front of the plane. The team are stepping out in faith to show love to people in an unreached area. Months of planning and years of prayer have led up today.

Their final preparation for this day was a five-day conference held to cover the mission in prayer. James Nyika was encouraged to see the commitment amongst the 30 people that came. "I loved to see how people are catching the vision! The commissioning on Friday was a very emotional time," he shares.

"I've been praying for these people for the last four years. I went to the Joshua Project to see where the unreached people groups are and found that there is no evangelical activity among the people here. God has kept them, and now we are going to encourage them and show them that they are not forgotten by the Lord."

Stepping out in faith

The team comprises four pastors, and nothing about this outreach is easy. The logistics are complicated, the communication is difficult (messages from Darjo have to be relayed by HF radio), and the area is insecure. The reality facing these missionaries is that it's unlikely that a plane will be able to land for the next six months because of the wet season, so during this time, they will have to rely on the

Opposite Page The MAF plane at Darjo
Above Pre-flight with James Nyika and MAF pilot, Alistair Youren
Below MAF Pilot Rafael Flach with James Nyika and members of the Fruits Ministry team

community, their own resourcefulness, and the prayers of the churches back home.

The last time an MAF plane landed here was just before the outbreak of war in December 2013 - the airstrip was reopened in the last few weeks with the assistance of AIMAIR. Preparations for today's flight had to be expedited to get the team in before the wet season as the strip has a section in the middle that becomes soft after rain, which means planes are at risk of getting stuck.

Four days on foot or a two-hour flight

One of the pastors, William Peter, first met people from Darjo when he was working as a missionary in Doro Maban. They invited him to visit the village, and in June 2021, he made a trip there on foot. The terrain wasn't the only challenge he encountered along the way:

"I walked into Darjo from Doro where I was serving as a missionary. It was a long journey; four days of walking from seven in the morning until seven in the evening. Then again on the second day, 7 a.m. until 7 p.m. We stopped for some rest the following three days before continuing for two more days. The same coming back. In total the journey took 12 days through bush, valleys and hills. Sometimes we would find that a lion had been moving ahead of you and was just nearby. One of the days we slept in the bush and heard the lion calling. There were some soldiers that stayed with me who had guns.

In the village William learned simple greetings like, "Diga beek" which means good morning and "Ow a rykey" which means "What is your name?' He's looking forward to being in Darjo once again, beginning the ministry, and making deeper connections with the community there .

"I am excited to go back. I love them. I have a heart for them," William admits.

Impossible packing

As they waited to depart, passengers and Fruits ministry workers filled the MAF waiting room. Mattresses are tied as small as possible, so they don't take up too much space. Bags overflowing with clothes and bedding, nets of onions, bags of salt and laundry soap. They have first aid kit and enough bread for the first few days. "These are just the basics," James explains, gesturing to some plastic buckets and wooden molds for bricks.

Every inch of space and kilo of weight is accounted for to the extent that there's a debate over some empty jerry cans weighing barely a kilo each. 'How can we fetch water without these?' someone asks with exasperation. As items are heaved on and off the weighing scale, packed and repacked, it becomes apparent that every item is essential. They're facing a dilemma: while they can't rely on the community's scare resources, there isn't enough weight to take it all. They will have to build absolutely everything from scratch; the houses, then the clinic, and then the school. It is no small undertaking.

> We're going to teach the young men in the community how to start laying bricks. That is part of the language learning for the missionaries. It is in the process of building together, that relationships are built.

The missionaries will work alongside the villagers to complete the work. As James explains, "we're going to teach the young men in the community how to start laying bricks. That is part of the language learning for the missionaries. It is in the process of building together, that relationships are built - and the men in the community will hear about Jesus. It will be like a reversal of the building of the Tower of Babel!"

Laying firm foundations

It's not just the physical structures they're building from scratch. James explains why he believes a different approach to mission is needed:

"We have come from the place where church leaders are taken from their villages to big towns like Nairobi for training. They are disconnected from the people in the community and elevated by their learning. They learn to deal with books and things that are important in the developed world but not in the village. When the missionaries come back to their home village, they've become irrelevant to the community. People don't see how their contribution relates to them and the missionaries no longer feel like 'This is my place!'"

In Darjo, James has selected a team he believes are up to the task, who will be able to relate well and thrive in the environment. Their only job for the next few months is to build relationships and learn about the language and culture:

"Most of these guys are farmers as well as pastors, who will blend well with the culture. We want to see how they live, their homes, the environment and take this as our starting point. The missionaries will stay with different households, which allows them to learn the language. This way, the person checking your language becomes your friend and there will be natural opportunities to witness. If we send them together, they might not pick it up so quickly.

"After two or three months, once they've mastered enough of the language, the team will start learning the culture," James continues to explain. "Language and culture are all interwoven. When they start telling God's story, they need to know many things, their worship, their stories, how to relate to the people so they can be reached with Jesus. We'll learn from them, and they will also learn from us."

James continued, "we want to work with the local church. We pray that it will be very strengthening to the local church. We've said, "We're called to win souls' so let's start with the people!"'

A 600kg Care package

Three days after the missionaries arrived, another plane touched down in Darjo with the 600kgs of cargo that had to be left behind. James is onboard, making the most of the opportunity to check in with his team. From the missionaries smiling faces, it's clear that things have started well.

Many hands help unload the plane before the precious, everyday items are carried away by ladies on their heads. The village is fifteen minutes on foot.

The pilot, Raphael Flach, is lost amongst a sea of faces as the whole community gathers around the plane. Elders with their ceremonial dress, children of all ages, and women with babies tied to their backs. The two-hour flight time means the team has less than an hour together before the last take-off time. They make the most of the time to greet and encourage one another before they bow their heads for a final prayer.

New models of mission

The next time James sees his team may well be in six months when the missionaries come out for a time. "At the six-month point, the team will report back to the church in Juba and talk about what God is doing amongst the community. When they share the testimonies about how God has provided, it will help to mobilize churches to get behind the missionaries."

For James, mobilizing the church in Juba is key: "The church needs to see and take ownership of their missionaries when they come back. It's ultimately not about us as Fruits Ministry as the mission agent, but the church."

On their return, they will share, and seek input from other mission partners. James is thinking about the next generation of Indigenous South Sudanese missionaries that will come, like Samuel, the university student from Darjo. "We are pioneering this work, but we want them to help us do it the right way. There'll be a lot of testing, a lot of comparing notes, seeing what works and doesn't work as well."

Full of faith, James acknowledges, the outreach is ultimately a work of the Lord. "We pray that the Lord will lead us through and give us mercy, that this might be our pioneering work. We'll see what God can do!" ●

Opposite Page The community gathers around the MAF plane
Below Children pose with pilot, Rafael
Bottom Enroute to Darjo

Following His Direction

Ellya and Breanna Assa have seen first-hand how the Lord has established their steps. As they prepare to serve in Indonesia, they reflect on God's goodness and their amazing journey so far.

story and photos
Ellya and **Breanna Assa**

Ellya

This story takes place in one of the most isolated places in the world, near Wamena, Papua Indonesia. Wamena is in a valley completely surrounded by mountains. There are only two ways in and out—either on foot, or by airplane.

In the small town of Wamena lived a pastor with a young family, and this pastor held a passion to reach the isolated people in the surrounding area. With his young son as his companion, he took off on foot, across the dangerous and rugged mountains to help start a church in the small village of Soba. They journeyed on foot for three days before they finally arrived. The villagers were filled with joy, and celebrated their arrival. But that joy soon faded, as the next morning the little boy woke up, and was unable to get out of bed. A terrible fever raged through his small body.

The father sat by his son's bed, torn as he was faced with an impossible choice. Staying in Soba almost certainly meant that his son would not survive, but he also knew he would not survive the three-day journey back to Wamena to get the help he needed.

If this was your son, what would you do?

Thankfully, he didn't have to make a hard choice that day, because the village of Soba had an airstrip. A Canadian MAF pilot, Rick Willims, was flying in the area, and heard their call for help. Because of that 15-minute flight, the young boy was able to get the medical help he needed.

This MAF flight dramatically changed the outcome for the pastor's family – my family. That father is my father, and that boy is me. In 2017, my family and I had the pleasure of meeting Rick Willims at the MAF Kodiak tour in Saskatoon. My life was forever changed by that MAF flight, and from that point forward, I was passionate going back to Indonesia to serve others, the way MAF once served my family.

Breanna

Many parents across the world are isolated from basic things we take for granted, like access to medical care. As a result, they are faced with life and death decisions daily. My father-in-law would not be able to do the work that God called him to do, to the extent he has been able to do it, if not for the support and aid of MAF. **If it were not for MAF, my husband would not be here with me today**. It is through MAF's partnership with local pastors and missionaries that the Gospel has spread throughout Papua. MAF saves these local pastors hours of travel time, allowing them to focus on what is important - reaching the lost for Christ. As Ministry Ambassadors, we will be developing relationships with local churches, and providing support as they build their ministries. We're passionate about raising up the national church to be a part of what God is doing in Indonesia.

> "We're passionate about raising up the national church to be a part of what God is doing in Indonesia.

Years ago, Ellya's life was saved by an MAF flight. But that pilot is not the only hero in this story – every flight has a team of people that enable it to get to where it is most needed, and that team is just as much a part of saving lives with medical flights, or supporting communities or churches as the pilot and aircraft are.

We are excited to follow the path the God has planned for us, and look forward to carrying the prayers, support and generosity of those here at home with us to the remote communities in Indonesia. ●

Opposite Top and Centre Left Ellya with kids in Indonesia
Opposite Centre Left Ellya as a child with the MAF plane
Opposite Bottom Ellya with his mom and dad
Above Left Breanna in Indonesia
Above Right With MAF's Rick Willms
Bottom Left In Indonesia
Bottom Right Ellya and Breanna with Ellyanna, Mireya, and Levi

Sharing the Gospel with Every Village

story and photos by **Jenny Davies**

Every Village partner with the people of South Sudan and strive to provide every village with access to the gospel by radio, and to safe water through their wells – helping to provide for both physical and spiritual needs.

Since the beginning of this year, MAF has flown 59 passengers for Every Village to remote locations, and in August alone, delivered another 10,000 solar powered radios for them.

South Sudan became the world's newest country in 2011, but Every Village (EV) began working with their work in this country long before that. They were with the people when independence was only a dream, and they celebrated with them when they raised their new flag. They are committed to walking with the people as long as it takes to build a nation for Christ. An estimated 3 million people live within range of one of their five gospel radio stations, receiving daily broadcasts in their local language.

Andrew Brown, Every Village's Executive Director, talked with us about why air transport is so important to their organization, "South Sudan only has about 200 miles of paved roads, so ground transport is extremely challenging. This is why Every Village depends on MAF for our ministry work in South Sudan. Simply put, we couldn't do the work God has called us to do without MAF.

"MAF has been an essential supporter of our ministry for over 15 years – flying mission teams, national staff, and ministry supplies. Just this week, MAF flew another 10,000 solar-powered radios into one of our ministry regions to provide daily access to the gospel in the local language. Through support from MAF, Every Village has now brought 155,000 radios into the country, reaching over 1 million South Sudanese. Truly, MAF is flying for life."

One example of this was a recent flight MAF provided to bring staff together for training and encouragement. As the teams greeted one another after the plane landed in Mvolo, happiness filled the air. "We are looking forward to coming together from each of the three stations, Mvolo, Tonj, and Aweil, for one week, which will be a refresher training for me, and a chance to fellowship with colleagues," shared passenger Peter Bede.

> "When you travel with MAF, you don't worry about safety or insecure roads. It is really difficult to travel to some places in South Sudan, but MAF makes it possible for us

Peter is the Radio Station Manager at Mvolo's Ako'o FM located just off the airstrip. He estimates the reach of this one station to be around 600,000 people. "We broadcast education and health programs, Bible stories, and community development in the local language of Jur Modo," he explained.

Sheltered under the wing, away from the hot sun, was radio engineer Honore who had flown all the way from Benin to lead the training. "Radio is very, very important for these communities," he said. "In rural places like this, it is all about the airwaves."

The week of training provided information on the technical aspects of radio, including how to use the mixer, transmitter, and the power connections covering both the solar and generator power. This knowledge is needed to help the teams know how to troubleshoot and fix problems that may arise and cause a break in service.

Every Village Manager, Daniel Lual shared why travelling with MAF is so important in South Sudan, "We always

Opposite Page
The MAF plane in Malualkon
Above Inspecting the new radios
Above Centre
MAF pilot Reuben with radio station manager, Philip, in Malualkon
Below Skids of radios from Galcom

enjoy flying with MAF because you can land anywhere, on any airstrip, and you keep time and have good customer care. When you travel with MAF, you don't worry about safety or insecure roads. It is really difficult to travel to some places in South Sudan, but MAF makes it possible for us."

59 Every Village passengers, including Daniel, Honare, and Peter, joined MAF flights in the first six months of 2022, travelling in support of a range of initiatives that all work together to ensure the gospel is preached effectively in remote communities.

As well as passengers, MAF has flown several tons of cargo for Every Village since January, including 25,000 solar-powered, fixed-tuned radios manufactured by a Canadian ministry called Galcom.

Each small, blue handheld radio is thought to reach between seven to 10 people. In a country where three out of four people can't read or write, radio programming is an opportunity for people within range of the stations to hear the gospel. These radios are often sold out before they even arrive.

"We get requests for radios all the time. They help listeners out in the villages to have access to our stations. It has been helping the spread of the gospel so much because they don't need to charge them and they can be used in places where there is no electricity," Daniel explains.

Canadian Pilot Reuben Vermeulen piloted the most recent delivery of radios. He described what it was like flying with Every Village for the first time since newly arriving in South Sudan. "We dropped off right at the airstrip and it was neat to fly into Malualkon (about 2.5 hours northwest of Juba). It's a very remote area, but still lots of people came around to help us unload.

"It's a pleasure to do flights like this; to get a chance to stop and chat with the missionaries. I spoke with Philip, the radio station manager in Malualkon, and he said that it costs about $20 to bring each radio in, but they only sell them for about 1,500 SSP (under $15 Canadian dollars). This helps to give people a sense of ownership. EV then broadcasts in the local language; sermons, Bible reading, and songs.

"They also get local pastors to come and broadcast their Bible teachings. It's exciting to play a small part in making this ministry possible, and watching the dedication of the EV team in reaching the remote corners of SSD with Christ!"

Every Village is working to extend the reach of their radio with two new repeater stations and have a third radio station in development. The ongoing partnership with MAF is enabling Every Village to reach more and more people each year with their water and radio ministries. They are thankful not just for the flights that MAF provides but also for the prayers of MAF supporters and staff.

"We are very thankful for MAF and we thank God that MAF is also a Christian organization who cares about our ministry. You pray for us, and for everything we are doing." ●

Above Left MAF pilot Reuben with Philip
Above Right Unloading the radios in Malualkon
Bottom A day well spent

A Different Kind of Safari

The South Masai medical safaris in Tanzania provide isolated Masai villages with medical services, as there are no clinics in the area, while the Malambo Safari transports pastors to provide spiritual nurture to those living in remote communities.

Above Left Weighing children
Above Right Providing vaccinations against deadly-childhood diseases
Middle Pilot Jarkko Korhonen
Below Left A new pastor catches a ride
Below Right Posing with the plane in Kilimatinde

story **Chaundra Eagar**
photos **Raymond Kasoga**

MAF Pilot, Jarrko Kornonen, has had the privilege of flying safaris many times, witnessing the changes that each makes in the lives of people living there. He took the time recently to tell us a little about the impact these safaris have on remote communities.

"It is a very good thing, being able to provide the Gospel to people who have not heard it before. I remember a trip where I flew a new evangelist. He had a strong testimony, and by sharing his own experiences and praying in the peoples' own language, the Gospel is moving forward. I believe that it will transform lives."

One such pastor who travels by MAF plane is Lomanyani Elukumole. He shared, "I have been ministering and sharing the Gospel with the Masai people since 2,000. MAF is a blessing to us, supporting us in reaching the Maasai people with the gospel of Christ, and bringing the clinics closer to home so we don't have to walk miles to access medical services. People here are now building a church, and they are bringing the pregnant women to the clinics. They are understanding how important education is for the children. We pray for MAF as they continue in their work of supporting us."

Jarkko continued, "The villages we fly into don't have clinics, which is why it's important to bring medical care to them. Life is very hard, and in an emergency situation, it is difficult to get help. Because MAF is here, people's physical and spiritual lives are changing, and they are very grateful." ●

Working Together

A providential meeting means some new tools for Papua New Guinea

story and photos by **Chaundra Eagar** with **Greg Reeder**

Last summer when Canadian pilot Tim Neufeld was back in Alberta while on furlough from his post in Papua New Guinea (PNG), he met a KMS Tools employee at a church potluck. This is where he was first introduced to the *Tools for the World* program. He immediately thought of the need within the PNG program, especially the property maintenance side, for reliable and accessible tools for the property manager and his team. He knew a delivery of tools would be an encouragement and blessing, so he wrote to KMS on their behalf.

"Here in Papua New Guinea, we have a fleet of ten aircraft that fly into remote and isolated communities to deliver Help and Hope," reports Tim. "Whether that be bringing trade store goods in, taking locally grown crops out (coffee and cacao are the main ones here), providing medical flights, or bringing in supplies to stock the local health aid post, the work never ends.

"To support our planes and families, our Property and Vehicles Manager has responsibility over at least 70 properties across the country, and I don't even know how many vehicles. One major challenge he faces is to keep his staff equipped with a basic level of tools, and he is at the mercy of what is available here in the highlands. What could have been a 20-minute repair might take the better part of the day if every 'hardware' store in town needs to be checked for a tool or piece needed.

"The roads here are best described as 'poor,' and our vehicles have a rough life. They are in need of the routine maintenance and other repairs brought on by the driving conditions. The mechanics on staff are capable, and while it is incredible what they can achieve with a loose selection of tools, I wonder how much more effective they could be with an increase in tools and equipment at hand."

Stan Pridham (the "S" in KMS tools), along with his daughter Lori, run the Tools for the World program. Upon receiving Tim's email, Lori was excited at the prospect of supplying PNG with what they needed - she had fifty skids that she was looking for a new home for. Greg Reeder, MAF's Western Development Manager, was able to meet with Stan and Lori and pick the tools that would go to the program. It was amazing to watch God move in all the details. Now all that was left was to GET these tools overseas!

After Greg shared what was happening with some other businessmen, two of them stepped in to facilitate this delivery. Gerry Wall, from Nuline Crates donated his time to build a custom crate that helped save on shipping costs, while Glen Reize from Ocean-Air Freight Ltd. donated his time and resources to organize the shipment.

We are so thankful for all the generosity and kindness that has been shown through this amazing endeavor. God has truly been in the details, and has had so many kind people step in to help facilitate it. We know that many hands make light work, and this has never been truer while walking through this experience. We look forward to sharing about the arrival of this precious cargo in PNG, and the impact it will have there! ●

Above Donated tools
Bottom Left Stand and Lori from KMS tools
Bottom Centre Gerry Wall from Nuline Crates
Bottom Right A treasure-trove of donated tools

Seven Days or 40 Minutes?

In Madagascar, we regularly fly for Salama, a local NGO that coordinates the distribution of medical and pharmacy supplies around the country, but this was an unusually large load of about 2,000 kgs, which took two MAF flights to deliver.

story **Chaundra Eagar**
photos **Irina Randriamandrato** and **Ryan Unger**

Canadian pilot Ryan Unger explained the importance of these medical supply flights, "Marolambo is only a 40 minute flight away, but it takes at least seven days by road to travel the 100 or so kilometers to the east coast. From there it's another full day of travel by bus to reach the capital. You'll likely get stuck and you and your fellow passengers will have to dig yourselves out, and chances are you'll also break down, so seven days is the best case scenario. The only other option is to hire a motorbike and ride 12 hours west along rough and muddy paths to the main road where you can catch a bus for another three hours into the city - but just the motorbike ride costs more than a seat on our flight, and of course, you wouldn't be able to carry 2,000 kgs of pharmacy supplies."

Ryan continued sharing about a passenger who sat up front with him on a recent delivery, "I had a frequent flyer to Marolambo join me in the copilot seat. Completely unprompted, he started talking about the value of these flights, saying, 'This airstrip is a real blessing for the community - I don't know what we would do without it.' He is from Tana but works in Marolambo, and without these regular flights, getting back to see his family would be very difficult. 'When I first came to Marolambo, I thought I was lost! After three days on a truck, I thought, where am I going to end up? Without MAF it takes at least seven days by truck to get to the main road or 12 hours on a motorcycle. But if you go by motorcycle, by the time you arrive in Tana, you're sick from the stress and strain of the trip. And sometimes the driver just leaves you if the path is impassable!'"

We are so thankful that MAF is present in these locations, continuing to be a blessing to the communities and staff, offering them a safe and reliable mode of transportation.

Above and Right Medical supplies for Salama
Below The MAF plane in Marolambo

Children of the Light

story and photos **Karyn Ball**

In South Sudan, children are overcoming addiction and continuing their educations, all while learning about Jesus' love for them.

Walking home one day, I sensed I was being followed. We live on an MAF compound on the outskirts of Juba, South Sudan. As a trained teacher, I teach once a week at the community school and love sharing the good news of Jesus with the children from our neighbourhood. Normally my walk to and from the school is a quiet, peaceful journey. But on this day, I knew I was being followed. A gentleman was trailing behind me, a fine balance of keeping his distance and keeping up with me. About halfway between the school and our home, he increased his pace and caught up. Normally people are friendly and welcoming, but I could tell this gentleman wanted something. But what?

Thankfully, it didn't take long for me to find out. "Excuse me madam," he began, "I hear you are teaching about Jesus in English, can you please come and teach our boys?" Music to my ears, and I eagerly agreed. I found out that he worked at Children of the Light Ministries, a Christian home for street boys located behind our compound. In fact, I can see their compound from my window, but until now I never knew who lived there or what went on beyond those walls.

From the very first day I visited, it was a perfect ministry fit! The home was started by an American couple who have opened two other homes for street boys in South America. God laid it on their heart to open a third home in South Sudan. The ministry is run by South Sudanese men and women who have a heart for boys living on the streets. Too often these boys have been neglected by their families; abandoned, abused, mistreated and malnourished. They don't attend school or have a place to call home.

The Children of the Light staff visit the boys on the streets several times during the week; befriending them, sharing food and telling them about Jesus. As they develop relationships, they prayerfully seek His wisdom to know which boys are ready to leave the streets and find new life at the centre. So many are caught up in gang life and addiction that it's actually often quite challenging for the boys to leave behind their life of struggle on the streets.

But for those that do choose to leave and live at Children of the Light home, their lives are completely transformed. They are given an opportunity for second chances and new hope! Slowly, they overcome their addictions, fears and deceit, and begin to walk in the light of Christ as they are cared for, loved upon, and discipled by the staff.

> "Their lives are completely transformed. They are given an opportunity for second chances and new hope!

For the first year or so, the boys are taught at home. Instead of joining the grade 1 class (a common occurrence here in South Sudan), they are taught by a teacher at the centre to receive teaching tailored to their level and work towards catching up. During this time, they become settled in their new environment and are often ready to be placed into an appropriate grade level for their age and are enrolled in school. They gain confidence and encouragement as they reenter the world and continue their education with peers.

I now visit the home weekly, teaching English and Bible to the eight younger boys who have most recently moved in. On my first day, only one of the boys could read. The others struggled with words like "the" and "and". Slowly, over time, week by week, the boys learned the sounds of letters and began to sound out words. They practice reading their Bible story books each night before bed, and they have all come so far in their literacy! Some are reading fluently now, while others are still diligently working to grasp the basics due to their challenging pasts. Life is still a struggle, but they are determined.

Though the home cares well for them, they do not have a large budget for food and eat locally without much fruit in their diet. So, when we learned about the letter 'b', I brought in bananas. When we learned about the letter 'm', I brought in mangoes. When we learned about the letter 'p' - you guessed it – pineapple! The boys loved the fruit and I quickly realized that another way I could share the love of Jesus with them was simply by bringing in fruit each week.

Fruit is actually very expensive here in South Sudan as it is imported from neighbouring countries. One of our supporting churches, Fellowship Baptist Church in Cobourg, Ontario asked me how they could help with our ministry beyond MAF and I shared about the need for fruit each week for the boys. Pastor Bell's Sunday School class quickly got on board and now provide funds for the boys to enjoy a piece of fruit each week after our lessons.

The older eight boys at Children of Light have caught up to their grade level and are enrolled in good schools far away. When I found out that it took an hour each way to walk to school, I wanted to help, but wasn't sure how. Should I use my car to drive them to school each day? Should I provide funds for fuel for their van? What about bicycles?! Not only would they be able to get themselves to and from school easily, they would also gain a valuable skill of knowing how to ride a bike!

Again, I reached out to our donors. Within a few hours, I received all of the funds needed to buy eight bicycles for the boys. The Children of the Light staff went to the market to find the best bikes for the boys with the funds provided. The boys were thrilled and that night the boys and the staff gathered around and prayed over them - for safety for the boys, security against theft, and thanksgiving to God for the gift!

If you have ever biked in Africa, you will know that the roads are uneven and potholed. This frequently leads to broken bikes and flat tires. So, some of our MAF guys started a bike clinic, to teach the boys how to fix their own bicycles. Not only could they learn how to ride their bikes, but they could also learn how to maintain them! What an awesome skill set we have been able to share; we are so thankful to the donors for making this possible!

This relationship with Children of the Light hasn't been only beneficial to myself and the former street boys, but also to our own children. Our son Will is just a few years younger than these boys and he is beginning to build friendships with them. He can bike over to their compound by himself for a visit; he shared his Hot Wheels with the boys, and they showed him the toy cars they have made. They play Uno and football (soccer) together and are enjoying learning about each other.

I thank God for Children of the Light and I am thankful for the staff who invited me to share English and Jesus. I am thankful for the boys who have opened up their hearts and given me their love and trust. And I am so thankful for our amazing support team, who not only make our ministry with MAF possible, but go above and beyond to support awesome ministries like these former street boys at Children of the Light. Praise God, He is making all things new! ●

Opposite Page Left Students with their bikes
Opposite Page Right Learning to read
Top MAF pilot, Chris Ball, demonstrates how the bike operates
Middle 'W' is for 'Watermelon" and 'S' is for 'Smile'
Below Karyn and her students

Come on an Adventure!

Join MAF's Advent Adventure

It's nearly that time of year again.

We're inviting you to come on a journey around the MAF world with our trio of friends; Mike, Alpha, and Foxtrot, to discover fascinating facts and great stories along the way.

Visit a new country each day on a fun-packed adventure delivering Christmas cargo to people in remote villages. You and your family will enjoy opening a new window each day to find out who or what Mike is transporting in his trusty MAF plane.

Listen to Mike, Alpha, and Foxtrot's adventures, and learn **how MAF helps the people in each of the countries we visit, watch inspiring videos, download Christmas activity sheets, and participate in a daily kindness challenge for the whole family!**

Go to **mafc.org/advent** to register for the **MAF Advent Adventure**, and we'll remind you on day 1 to begin your journey.

Don't miss out. Visit **mafc.org/advent** to register today!