



FIONA's NEWS
January 2018



“Trust in the Lord your God and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him and He will make your paths straight.” Proverbs 3 v5-6

New year, new start – and I’m having to cling on to the verse above.

Since I last wrote, I have had my “usual” December visit to Papua New Guinea to help prepare for the year end. It was also an opportunity to check on some practicalities relating to living in Mt. Hagen that I haven’t been concerned with on short-term visits.

The cost of shipping, with related customs duties, is so high that MAF PNG are now giving the option of fully-furnished accommodation with just a small allowance to bring in personal items in suitcases. I was pleased to learn of this, as I think that will be much easier for me than splitting the contents of this home. Plans often change, as longer term readers of these letters will now, but I stayed in the house that is likely to be allocated to me.

The second half of the trip was to MAF Technology Services in Goroka, supervising their stocktake, following up on an internal audit and preparing for the year end. There was some tenseness following a number of break-ins in the area so the non-executive board members took advantage of a board meeting to share prayers with the staff and to offer encouragement.



One of those board members is Dr. David Mills, whom I met when my flight from Mt. Hagen to Goroka picked him up from Kompiam Rural Hospital. Enga province has a reputation for tribal warfare. Skirmishes between two tribes near the hospital last year resulted in 40 deaths (and damage to the hospital) before Dr. Mills was able to help broker peace.

MAF’s long partnership with Kompiam Rural Hospital has involved both transporting materials for outstation clinics and the patients using them. In an interview for MAF Dr. Mills said, “Our health centres are spread out all over and they are connected by air. There’s no road network beyond Kompiam. To get a patient out they have to construct some sort of

a stretcher and then carry the person which may take up to three days in some cases. Or they get them to an airstrip then get on the radio and organise a flight.” (Picture by Luke Newell relates to medevac to Telefomin.)

It’s helpful to remind myself of the extent of MAF’s work in PNG – the 500 medevac flights a year, the 30,000 passengers, the 4,000 Bibles distributed, the 1.5m tonnes of freight (building materials, school supplies, foodstuffs) – and how this contributes to isolated people being physically and spiritually transformed in Christ’s name.

Which brings me to this year and my current task of raising financial and prayer support to enable me to serve long-term as finance manager in PNG.

I am very grateful to you and to God for the pledges that I already have that bring me to around 35% of the financial target. Some of this comes from long-standing supporters, some from those who previously supported Joey who had to leave PNG through ill-health and some new donors. It is wonderful to be at this point without having done anything myself towards reaching it.

I know that the balance will be provided and I know that this could be an exciting time as people respond to the opportunity to be part of the team that enables God's purposes to be fulfilled through MAF in PNG. But, now that I've reached the time when I am to work on support-raising, I must admit that I'm more scared by the prospect than I'd anticipated. The fact that I don't much like making phone calls anyway doesn't help!

So far (ie only in the 1st two days of this year), I've been concentrating on written work which I generally find easier but I must soon start to look at possible visits. Making arrangements to meet people is somewhat complicated by housing issues. Mother and I have received an offer on this house, though the purchasers have still to sell theirs so that could take a while to come to completion. We have not yet found a suitable alternative to buy. There are a few possibilities on the market but the agents are having some difficulty contacting the householders to organise an appointment to view. The uncertainty on that front affects my ability to make plans.

At the moment, I'm thinking of staying locally for the next 2-3 weeks – partly because I'm speaking at churches in Kent on 14th and 21st January – and then going further afield for a week, destination currently uncertain as the long range weather forecast's not too good. On 4th February, I go to Papua New Guinea for a month to help with the statutory accounts and dealing with the external auditors. After that I have a week in Cairns, with the chance to catch up with friends and supporters from The Good Shepherd church, before returning to the UK on 8th March when I shall have to start travelling around the UK in earnest.

Thank you so much for your prayers for me and for MAF as I start this new phase. I could not do this without your backing.

- Praise God for the amount of financial and prayer support that has already been promised.
- Please pray for courage to make the necessary phone calls and for those to lead to fruitful meetings.
- Thank God for the offer on this house. Please pray that the sale will progress smoothly and quickly to completion.
- Please pray that Mother and I soon find something suitable to purchase and that this house-moving process will not be too stressful. (I think we are both already tired!)
- Thank God for Dr. David Mills and the impact that he is able to have on both the health and the peace of the 60,000 people in villages around Kompiam.
- Pray for MAF in PNG as it seeks to work more effectively and efficiently to provide services to isolated people in Christ's name.



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