



Christmas flight through Torit with son, Tom



# Tracey and John's Journal from Juba



## The Feils serving with MAF South Sudan Status March 2024: Reaching out with love Issue 16

### Reaching remote communities with God's love

John joined pilot Tobias last month to do a first landing at a new airstrip. The arid, scrubland of Naliel stretched out under the wings of the plane as they dipped towards the airstrip. After a few flyovers and a touchdown to check out the airstrip quality, 5y-MAG landed and was quickly surrounded by a large crowd of people, excited and curious, ready to receive the plane.

Peter (seen in the picture with John), who lives in Eldoret, Kenya, was visiting Naliel to encourage and support Mark and Lorna, Kenyan missionaries who for the past 5 years have lived alongside the Toposa community here. Over time, Mark and his wife Lorna have established small discipleship groups with each one reaching one. As a result, the community of believers is expanding. The next challenge for the community is how to become more established. Peter says, *'It is one thing to disciple. Now we have to change gear to create little congregations that will meet on a regular basis.'*

The team, with the support of the Toposa community, have also started a school on the left hand side of the airstrip. *'It will go up to Standard 8, so that we can reach the youth in a powerful way with the gospel.'*

Access is going to be important as Naliel is becoming the main mission station for Mark and Lorna's work, and that of their colleagues spread farther afield in Eastern Equatoria and with their support team in Kenya.

Peter told John: *'I'm so thankful that MAF is working to get this airstrip licensed. It would make a big difference to have this as an accessible airstrip. We've been driving a land cruiser, a pretty fast car, coming from Eldoret – it takes us 14 hours plus however long the hold ups are at the border. You have to plan on two full days. By plane, it would shorten the time by a lot! To get by road here is really a challenge, and we look forward to working with MAF to help us.'*

This region of South Sudan is often in our security briefings, with revenge killings and cattle raiding between the people groups a common occurrence. What would it look like if the gospel changed each heart here?

*Please pray* for Mark, Lorna and each new Toposa believer as they work for peace for each individual, and peace within and between communities.

As the plane lifted off and took to the clear blue skies above, the beautifully beaded people with traditional scarification, and their skilfully made beehive-style homes became specks in the distance - no longer seen by the plane, but known by God.





The **Toposa** are an ethnic group in South Sudan, living in the Greater Kapoeta region of the Eastern Equatoria. Traditionally, they herd cattle, sheep and goats. Whilst the men take responsibility for the livestock, the women skilfully construct their beehive-shaped homes that are then raised on stilts. This woman, who had come out to see the MAF plane land, took pride in showing John her home where she sleeps. As you lay down to sleep tonight, why not **say a prayer** for this woman and all the women of the Toposa people group?

### Trauma healing ministry for the military



John recently spent some time with Val and the team from our partner, Flame International. **Flame International** is a UK-based charity with a vision to see people set free from the pain and trauma of war, terror or oppression. Through healing, equipping and training, they support local leaders to make a positive and sustainable impact upon their communities and nations. John has met with Val a few times now, as we fly a team at least once a year. John had the opportunity to join them for lunch on their return from a 2-week trip to facilitate workshops for pastors and military personnel in Lui, at the invitation of the Bishop.

The Pastors' workshop was attended by over fifty, and Val shared about the real thirst they had for Bible understanding and application in the local communities. Some of the most exciting and potentially transforming work that Flame facilitates is amongst military personnel. In a country where many have been soldiers since childhood, and grown up in a strongly militarised culture, this is an area of real need for the country to develop further. The Trauma ministry attended by local soldiers resulted in significant signs of God at work, bringing peace to individuals. There was also a time of prayer for the cleansing of the land, especially at a location marked by an old tree that had been the site where slaves were collected to be transported north up the Nile. Val also told about John about some women who had significant physical injuries to legs and feet as they had been attacked with knives and axes. The prayerful foot washing of injured feet resulted in the women being able to wear flip-flops in comfort who then joined the celebratory dancing with joy. It is always a privilege to find out about the work of those we fly – we rarely get the chance to personally experience life beyond the airstrip. John appreciated the time Val and her team took sharing the stories of their work in His name and for His glory. They too expressed their appreciation for MAF, including their pilots Matt and Reuben.





## From the classroom to 'the bush'

**Juba Christian Academy's eldest student, Joel, went on a MAF adventure of his own this term, swapping the classroom for a tukul.** Joel, aged 12, had an amazing experience when he took a week off from school to travel with his dad, Andrew, to a church conference. Joel shared some of his adventure with me:

*'We went to MAF office and had our bags measured. Then we went to board the plane to Kuajok, with uncle Chris as Pilot. I got to sit in the cockpit. We stopped in lots of places. On the last stop, I began to feel a bit sick! Over Juba, you see many buildings. But near Kuajok, it was just a few tukuls and cows and that was it. When we arrived in Kuajok, we got on boda [a motorbike taxi] for a one-hour drive to the place we were going.*

*We stayed in a tukul. I actually saw them make the bed. They didn't use nails at all. They carve it [the wood] and make holes, and then slot the pieces together and they use string to make the base of the bed.*

*The tukul wasn't really in a village; the rural people like to live far apart so if an attack happens they can hear about it and escape better than if they were all living close together in a village.*

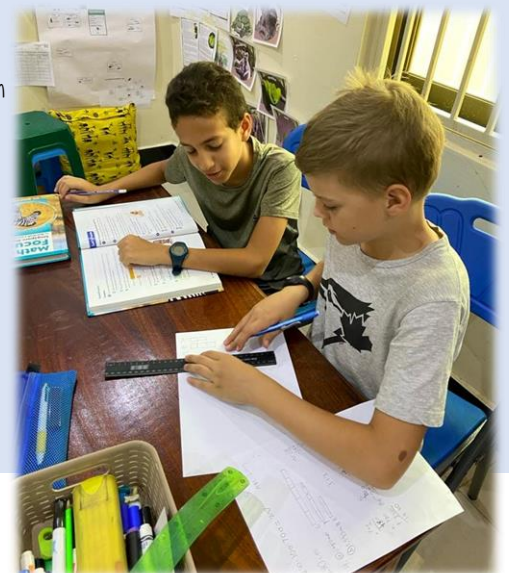
*We were visiting our friend, Uncle Jameel, who plants lots of churches. So this was a conference for all the people from the churches to come. We had to change where the conference was because the people had moved from their homes because of the conflict between the two people groups. Some of the people who came left their homes at 6am and didn't get to the place for the conference til 6pm...Walking! My dad was talking to them about the prophecies about Jesus in the Old Testament; how Jesus was fully God and fully human. Then they go back and teach the people in their own churches.*

*For some of the people, this is the first time they see a foreigner child. I taught a Sunday school class. They sit under a tree. They have sticks like you use for slingshots and put a stick across it to sit on. It was really painful for me to sit on so I sat on the ground and leaned against it instead. I had some pictures of Bible stories and I told them the story of Abram and Lot. They had to translate for me because I do not know their language, Lua.*

*A special moment for me was when a new believer wanted to be baptised. But he also wanted to burn all his old witchcraft things first. So we walked with him for half an hour into the bush to his house. And then a fire was made and he burnt all his old witchcraft stuff.*

*For the flight back, uncle Jono our neighbour [and MAF pilot] came to pick us up with his son, my friend Daniel. We had to stop to refuel too. MAF doesn't usually go to Kuajok on the shuttle but Uncle John (Feil) planned it in for us.'*

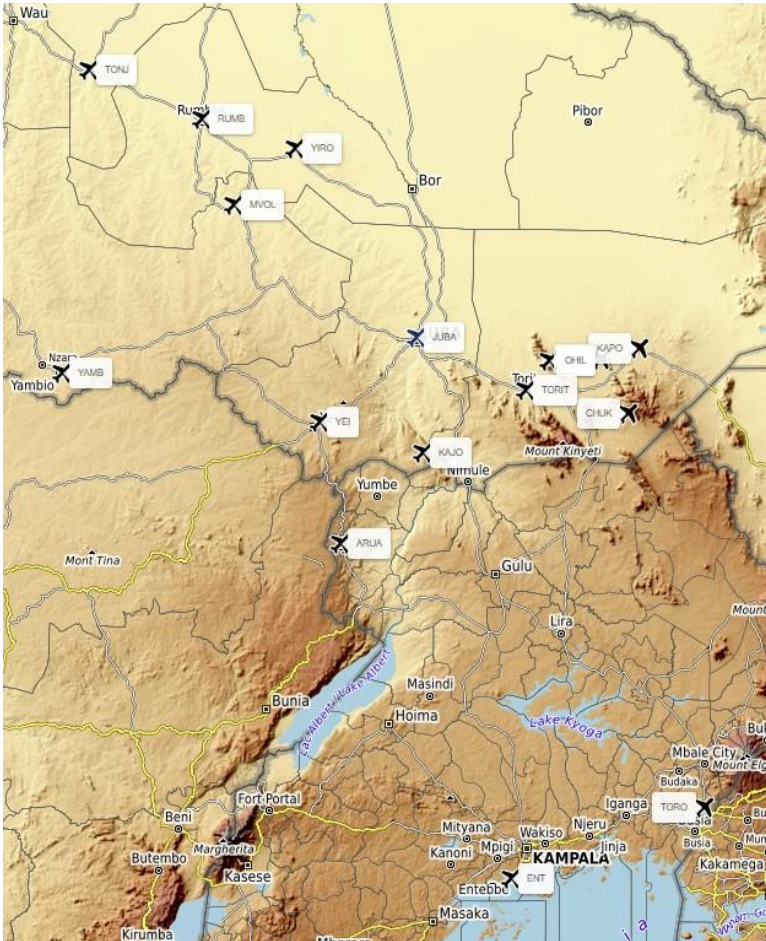
*Top photo credit: Chris Ball. Joel and his dad Andrew on their MAF flight with Pilot Chris  
Right Photo: Joel at work with his Grade 5 buddy, Pilot Chris' son, at JCA*





# OPERATIONS

**Any statistics lovers out there?** On one day last week we flew: sixteen locations, two countries, twenty-two flight legs, four aircraft, seventy-nine passengers plus a LARGE quantity of cargo; a busy day for John, the flight ops team and four of our pilots.



One of these flights was to support our growing partnership that helps connect the USRATUNA rehabilitation clinic here in Juba with the CURE children's hospital in Uganda. The photo below ([www.ugandacure.org](http://www.ugandacure.org)) shows Norah, a nurse at CURE Uganda, talking to Angelo, a caregiver at USRATUNA in Juba. *Please do pray for the children and the caregivers who are receiving help through this partnership; Pray also for the staff who show God's love through their medical expertise. [Click here to read more about how our MAF planes are making a difference, enabling children to receive the physical and spiritual care they need!](#)*



## Juba Christian Academy

Joel's parents, Andrew and Susanna, serve with Living Waters ministries. They also lead the school for vulnerable children here in Juba which has recently opened two more classes. This family can only serve here because Juba Christian Academy can provide quality education for their children. **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 school year 2024-2025. **Please pray for one brilliant teacher to join our team.** If you are interested in teaching at JCA, I would love to chat with you. In the meantime, join me in **giving thanks** for a few volunteers who have stepped in for short times of service to help out this year.

[Click here to view teaching opportunities](#)

[Click here to find out more about our school](#)

Some snapshots of JCA life this term below:



**Thanks for your prayers** for JCA teacher, Moriah. We are delighted to welcome her and Pilot Tobias' baby, Miriam, after her safe delivery in South Africa. Our other teacher, Lydia, is expecting her baby at the end of April and we would appreciate prayers for her in the weeks ahead, including the birth in Juba.



# Family Update

It was great to celebrate Christmas here in Juba with two of our adult children, Tom and Sarah. Sadly, in just a short space of time since our last goodbye, we found ourselves travelling back to the UK, following the news that John's dear mum, Gill, had died. Since we last saw her in November, her health had taken a decline following a fall at home. John travelled soon after we received the news, and I followed a few weeks later to be able to gather with family for the funeral. About 15 years ago, a gift from Gill meant John took his first flying lessons that began our journey with MAF. Over the last few years, this amazing octogenarian often 'tracked' MAF flights online



from the comfort of her Berkhamsted home; she would have made a great Flight Follower! Gill's late brother had spent time in Africa and our adventures brought back memories of his old stories too. We are hugely thankful to MAF for their support during our recent losses and we **appreciate your prayers** as we continue to mourn and seek to support our family from a distance. We also **give thanks** for the unexpected blessing of being able to celebrate with our daughter, Mary, as she turned 30 whilst we were in the UK for compassionate leave.



## Watch out!

It's the hot, dry season with temperatures regularly in the early 40s during the day, rarely dropping below 30 overnight. In these conditions, the chance of coming across a snake is heightened. Many in the community burn the long grasses from the rainy season to destroy the favoured habitat of snakes. As a result, the air - as well as being hot and dry - is quite smoky at this time of year too. In January this long chap - an **Egyptian Cobra** - was spotted in the creek in our compound. Our friend and neighbour, Karyn bravely took a photo to alert us all. We have also had this beautiful **eagle owl** hang out with us recently.



## KEEP IN TOUCH

### Email:

[john.feil@mafint.org](mailto:john.feil@mafint.org)

[tracey.feil@mafint.org](mailto:tracey.feil@mafint.org)

[www.facebook.com/groups/JohnAndTracey](https://www.facebook.com/groups/JohnAndTracey)

### Whatsapp:

+447531525022 (Tracey)

### Postal address:

Mission Aviation Fellowship – Kenya  
ATTN: John & Tracey FEIL - SSD  
Wilson Airport,  
P.O. Box 21123  
00505 Nairobi, Kenya.

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!](#)



Pray with us

This has been a challenging season for us and we are so thankful for your prayers. We have seen encouragement and God's goodness at just the right times! **Philippians 4: 6- 7** has been a helpful reminder - and challenge - to us. Please join us in praying for the items suggested scattered through this letter. In addition, South Sudan especially needs your prayers this year as they prepare for possible elections towards the end of the year. Pray too for the deteriorating economic situation; the South Sudanese Pound has depreciated from 1000SSP to a \$1 to around 1800SSP in the last six months, leading to an increase in commodity prices which is causing hardship for many of our colleagues, friends and neighbours here. **And finally**, we will be in the **UK for a partnership visit in the late Summer/Early Autumn**, so please get in touch in the coming months if you would be interested in hosting us to speak at an event about the work we do here with MAF. We'd love to share more with you!



The peace of God,  
which transcends all  
understanding, will  
guard your hearts and  
your minds in Christ  
Jesus.