



FIONA'S NEWS June 2022



“The Lord will watch over your coming and going both now and evermore.”
Psalm 121 v8

How does one summarise the last three months, with all its comings and goings, in the space of 1,000 words!

In the period between overseas assignments, I am thankful to have had time for refreshment. I recovered well from covid-19 in March and was able to go on retreat (to a snowy Whitby) just a day later than planned. After Easter, Mother and I had a very relaxing holiday in Shropshire with a mixture of walks and visits to churches and other places of interest.

I've had a wonderful time giving talks in places as far apart as Kent, Lancashire and Northumberland and having individual conversations even further afield. I managed to talk to over 200 friends and relatives, over half of whom support me in MAF including 20 new supporters (thank you!). Having a stall at a church fete (Wylam) was a new venture, made successful with the support and resources of the NE rep for MAF UK, Chris Million.



Then there was the preparation for South Sudan – sorting out proof of covid-19 vaccination (it took two attempts to have my PNG ones included on my NHS record), applying for an entry visa, photocopying all the additional documents that would be required for the later work permit application and booking flights. Procuring the items to take was a combination of raiding the house and visiting various shops and charity shops. In the end, packing everything into 4 suitcases proved to be easier than I'd anticipated and I had space to add some more items of gluten-free food.

James (Facilities Manager) and Ruth are my link family so they have helped me with shopping and settling in here. For several years they were with CRMF (now MAF Technologies) in PNG – before my time, but we know some of the same people. It's also helpful that we have a common reference point for comparing life in South Sudan. An added bonus has been James fixing some things in the house for me such as putting up the blinds in the sitting room.



I had to stay at the compound until my work permit approvals came through. There is good internet access so I could do things from home. I am very glad that it was only a fortnight before I could go into the office, to get to know people there and start work properly.

Ruman, on the left, is the most senior of the 3 local finance staff. Beyond my desk, towards the right of the photo, is the HR officer, Joseph.

Whilst waiting for my work permit, I was able to join a MAF flight to Kajo-keji, Yei and Arua (Uganda) and then back to Juba. In Kajo-keji, we picked up the programme manager for Alight, an NGO working with those made vulnerable by conflict, who had been visiting a water, sanitation and hygiene (WaSH) project. From Yei, we collected the training co-ordinator for BBC Media Action who



had been working on capacity building at a local radio station. Drama is used as a means of spreading messages to improve maternal health, combat gender-based violence and promote peaceful conflict resolution practices etc. 2 (South Sudanese) staff from ICAP at Columbia University also boarded the plane at Yei. They had been supporting a medical clinic in developing its HIV/Aids care. In Arua we picked up a lady and her young child and baby, funded by Anglican International Development. She had little English and I presume she was a refugee being supported by AID. Two of the people who joined at Yei had spent time as refugees in Kenya or Uganda, gaining qualifications there before returning to South Sudan. (Photo: Ide Gooden weighing luggage at Yei)

One of the customers with whom I have been in contact to assist with queries has been the Lambeth Conference – what a logistical task it is to bring bishops from their various dioceses to the point that they can board an international flight to England and then return them home afterwards! On the other hand, I've also had a meeting with the Diocesan Secretary for Juba, as I first did 10 years ago, to do with the renewal of the lease of the compound we rent from them in the Hai Cinema area of Juba.

There has been quite a changeover of international staff in South Sudan over the past few months. With the new families, Juba Christian Academy (JCA) are expecting 30 children in the next term across the infant and junior age groups. There is an urgent need for more teachers – so if you know someone who could ensure that MAF families can serve in South Sudan because their children can attend school, please encourage them to apply.

A word on communications. This newsletter is quarterly. I also produce a shorter prayer letter in the intervening months. If you don't receive that and would like to, please let me know. MAF produce regular magazines and a prayer diary usually sent to financial supporters so please get in touch with them (details below) if you are not receiving those and would now like to. Via the MAF UK or MAF Australia websites there are also other options for prayer news from around the MAF programmes. We are conscious of privacy and don't want to bombard you with information unless requested!

However much you want to hear from MAF, thank you very for your prayers and support for me as I start this new role, learn my way around the city and acclimatise to the temperature.

- Praise God for how smoothly all the arrangements went for home assignment and then travel to South Sudan and for the prompt issue of my work permit approval.
- Thank God for the work being done by various NGO's to improve the health of South Sudanese, through provision of water & sanitation facilities, education and clinics.
- Please pray for all the new MAF families settling in to life in Juba and for more teachers at the MAF-founded mission school, Juba Christian Academy.
- Please pray for my health and stamina and particularly that I get enough sleep – I'm still adjusting to an early start to the day but I'm also waking up 2 or 3 times during the night which is not helpful!

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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