



FIONA's NEWS
March 2024



“Great is your love, reaching to the heavens; your faithfulness reaches to the skies.” Psalm 57v10

The **Faithfulness** of God was the topic for a ladies' brunch I was able to attend last week, at the Good Shepherd church in Cairns. Four ladies shared their experiences of God's faithfulness – in times of sickness and difficulty, in trivial matters and those of great import. You will have your own stories and you've read of many of my experiences in my prayer letters. I thought this photo of a rainbow showing over a compound fence in Mt Hagen, PNG, was a beautiful reminder of God's promises – that He is with us and that He loves us beyond measure, exemplified in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus.



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PNG **Finances** continue to occupy a great deal of my time. Having completed the year end accounts for MAF S Sudan, I travelled to PNG for a 3 week visit in February to assist with their statutory accounts preparation. From there I went on to Cairns for what should have been a weekend stopover en route to Juba. Instead, it extended to nearly 3 weeks to carry on helping PNG from the right timezone (whilst continuing to keep up with S Sudan in the evenings). With Jeroen on home assignment, I am now effectively acting finance manager for MAF Technologies until mid-May but for most of the time I will be doing that from S Sudan.

The main reason for assisting from Cairns rather than returning to Mt Hagen was the **Fuel** situation in PNG. Notice was given that the sole seller of aviation fuel was going to cease operating in PNG, leading to immediate fuel rationing. MAF PNG has had to review its flight schedules, cutting back on some flights and being clear on priorities. Bulk fuel from alternative suppliers is now reaching the international airport in Port Moresby but not the regional airports. MAF has placed orders for several containers of fuel in 200Ltr drums to come from New Zealand, taking about 2



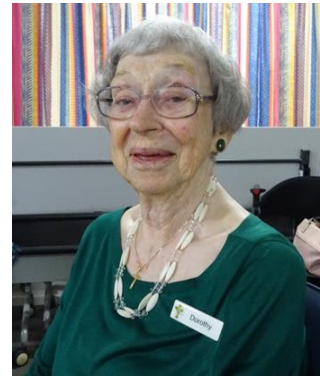
months to arrive. Drum fuel is more expensive than bulk fuel and it is also much more time-consuming and tiring to pump the fuel into the aircraft than to have a tanker pull up beside the aircraft to refuel it.



Before leaving PNG, I had one day of holiday staying with MAF friends in Port Moresby. Sonali took me out to Loloata Island Resort for a walk and a swim and then to Port Moresby Nature Park to see some of the **Fauna** of PNG. In 15 years of visiting or living in PNG, this was my first time to see a bird of paradise! The raggiana bird of paradise is PNG's national bird and is the symbol for Air Niugini, the national airline. I also saw a tree kangaroo with a little joey in its pouch. MAF's passengers sometimes include staff from the Tenkile Conservation Alliance (tenkile being a type of tree kangaroo). Have a look at <https://tenkile.com/> for short or longer videos starring the work of Jim & Jean Thomas and the people of the Torricelli mountains and featuring David Attenborough, Jean Goodall and Tim Flannery.

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Most of my time in Cairns was spent in the office, with more hours at the computer in the evening. The extended stay, however, was also a wonderful opportunity to catch up with **Friends**, most of whom I had not expected to see again in this life. I was extraordinarily blessed with the provision of self-contained accommodation and the loan of my hostess's car. The vehicle meant that I was able to attend my former home group and pay visits to older friends. So many of my church friends from Cairns (as in the UK) have been very faithful in praying for me since meeting me nearly 16 years ago when I first joined MAF. Dorothy, pictured, is one example of the large number of you who pray, give, write and find other ways to encourage me. I have certainly received "a hundred times as much in this present age – homes, brothers, sisters, mothers" Mark 10 v29



My hostess ensured that I took time off on Saturdays to enjoy God's beautiful creation. One day incorporated a trip to Cairns' aquarium, seeing **Fish** and other aquatic life from different local habitats from the inland rivers out to the reef. Another was a full day on the Tablelands inland from Cairns, seeing **Forest & Ferns** at Mamu Tropical Skywalk, and **Falls** at Mungali Creek and elsewhere.



The Tablelands trip took in Mareeba to see MAF's new hangars for our maintenance facility. We also



have a **Flight** school there, teaching new pilots to fly (who may then join MAF) and inducting MAF staff into our standard operating procedures

or instructing them to achieve extra licences or type ratings. The float plane on the far left of the picture came from the (now-closed) Bangladesh programme and is destined for PNG.

I'll be celebrating Easter in South Sudan but I am due R&R and a couple of weeks of annual leave in April which will be spent in England. I've a meeting in the Ashford office during that time when it may become clearer what my future might hold after July – I'm wondering if that might now include further support from a distance for the programmes in Papua New Guinea!

- Please pray for the finance teams in our various programmes that they may have the wisdom and stamina to deal with the pressures of keeping the accounts in good order and handling the different issues that cross their desks.
- Pray for a resolution to the fuel supply issues in Papua New Guinea, bearing in mind the impact of fuel costs on MAF's finances in a year when finances are already under pressure and the thinking too of the effect of price rises on people who are reliant on air transport.
- Praise God for the beauty of creation and for his love and faithfulness. Thank him, too, for how that care is shown through supportive friends and family.
- Thank God that I was able to see my former GP in Cairns to deal with elbow bursitis. Please pray that I manage some good rest during my annual leave and continue to pray for my physical, mental and spiritual health.

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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