



**Reaching isolated people in Papua New Guinea!**



**Greetings!**

***Faithful supporters and friends... The time has come again for me to fill you in on my activities in PNG. I regret that I have not been able to write as often as I would like to, but I hope and trust that you will be enlightened by my experiences and what the organisation has been doing over the past 6 months.***

***The verse that has been key for me during this time is the following:***

***"Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding."***

**Proverbs 3:5**

# Timeline of Events



## "My Last Letter"

I last wrote to you about the MAF Technologies Summit which was held on the 9th & 10th of August 2023 where MAF Tech staff, Board Members and Key position holders met to discuss the future goals and ambitions of our organisation and ministry focus in Papua New Guinea.

## September 2023 - "One Team"

The result of the two summit's which were held by both MAF Technologies and MAF Aviation on separate occasions, resulted in a combined mission to bring the two programme's in PNG (Technologies & Aviation), into one programme, otherwise known as the "One Team" project.



**A reminder of the historical context of MAF Technologies and MAF Aviation in PNG:** MAF Technologies was originally known as "Christian Radio Missionary Fellowship" (CRMF) in PNG since the 1950's. CRMF began in PNG to serve the isolated communities and missionaries with HF Radio Communications. Both MAF Aviation and CRMF were founded after WWII with a shared mission to reach isolated people with the gospel through various means, and they have worked closely together ever since. In 2010, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the two organisations that would see **Mission Aviation Fellowship** take over the governance and resources of CRMF. CRMF changed its trading name to MAF Technologies in 2022, but the internal policies and structure remained separate.

The Summit's held by MAF Technologies and MAF Aviation (PNG), concluded that we are better suited and equipped when we actually conduct ourselves as "One Team" in PNG. You may or may not be aware that the operations of Aviation and Technologies have largely been separate with the Aviation head operations being in Hagen (Western Highlands) and the Technologies operational base in Goroka (Eastern Highlands). The One team project has now begun with my involvement extending as far as HR deliberations & discussions.

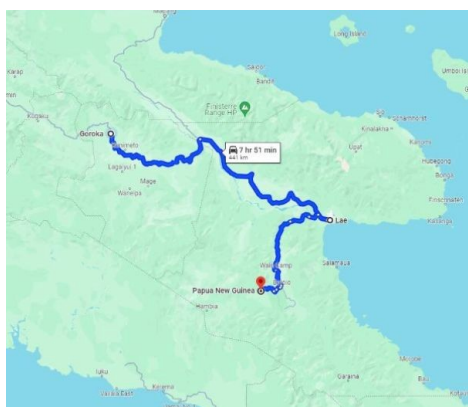


### "Bulolo Outreach Program" (Morobe Province)



Also in September of 2023, I was part of a small impact team sent by MAF Technologies to witness the baptisms of 171 People in the Bulolo District - We witnessed firsthand, the fruit of the hard labour of our partners, **FNBC Church**, who for the past 2 years had run an in-depth bible study course in this region.

FNBC sent missionaries from their home churches to this location, equipped with the bibles that we supplied to them, to run a bible program with the villagers. The program saw idle teenagers, drug users, church goers and many more, attending and transformed by the power of the gospel. To the left are pictured a missionary couple that had spent the past 2 years in a village not their own, teaching the locals from Genesis to Revelation.



The road to Bulolo was long and tiring. We first travelled 5 hours from Goroka to Lae City by public transport, where we stayed overnight. The next morning we hopped on a Dyna truck to Bulolo - this road would take us 9 hours on a bumpy and uneven dirt track through varying terrain! The journey was physically exhausting and mentally taxing, but also enlightening, as I was given a rare opportunity to see how difficult it is to reach remote locations in PNG.



There were 3 locations where baptisms were taking place; **Menyama, Hokinaiwa** and **Javaipo**. Menyama was too hard to reach for our team, (a days additional trek through the mountains; if you google Menyama, you will see just how remote it is). Therefore, we stopped at Hokinaiwa and Jaivapo only. These two places provided much opportunity to witness God's handiwork.



Our first stop, **Hokinaiwa**, was a cold mountainous place, with plenty of rain, mud and mist. It was a mysterious location that was hard to traverse, reached by a windy dirt road that twisted and turned like a snake. I almost felt like I was in England again due to the cold and wind. Despite the weather we were greeted by beautiful singing from all the villagers who gathered together to welcome us to their home.



I spent the first night cramped on the cold hard concrete floor of the village church, in my sleeping bag, with the many other visitors who were also there to witness the baptisms. I could hardly sleep all night, sharing a room with so many people who were also exchanging conversations in their mother tongues. Freezing and uncomfortable, I could not stop longing for the comfort of my own bed at home and wishing I had a mattress to sleep on to ease the pain I was feeling in my soft, inexperienced limbs! However, despite the short hardship - the experience of sharing food, telling stories, even sleeping together with the community, was a snapshot moment in my life that I will never forget. Looking back, the experience reminds me of the verse from **1 Peter 5:10** *"...after you have suffered a little while, (the God of Grace) will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast"*. This is what life is all about for those who put their faith in Christ. Suffering a little while, and then being strengthened again by His immeasurable grace; and the next day, I tell you, we were all witnesses of amazing grace in Hokinaiwa!



The day of the baptisms, God blessed this cold location with a hot and fiery sun that warmed us from the night before. Our aches and pains were forgotten and excitement stirred as the villagers and my team gathered together in the court yard to dedicate the 50 individuals, dressed in white, to God.



What followed next was a beautiful procession of men, women and children, holding palm leaves and singing songs of praise and worship in their *tok ples* (*mother tongue*), as the whole village proceeded down the hill and to the river below. This moment was indescribable; I thought of Passover, when they sang for Jesus as he entered Jerusalem to go to the cross, except now, they were singing for those whom Jesus has saved!

We reached the river and witnessed the many professions of faith in Christ Jesus through the baptism of water. Down went the old man and woman - and up came the new creation!

**"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!" 2**

**Corinthians 5:17.** Our time was up in Hokinaiva, but the people there will forever be in our hearts.

We then made our way down to Javaipo, which was much closer to sea-level and warmer. Here the weather tension was less and a little more comfortable for the MAF Tech team. I was able to sleep on a mattress at Jaivapo and I appreciated the hospitality of our hosts! Like in Hokinaiva, we were greeted by a beautiful procession of singing and dancing!



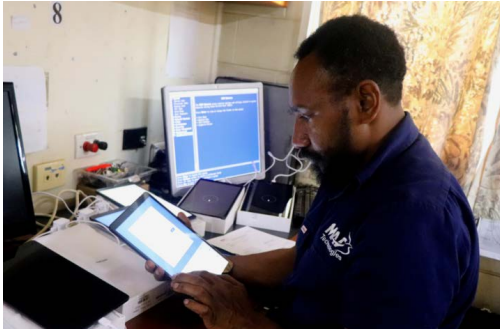
As I was spending time with the village people, I asked them to share their testimonies; why they were being baptized the next day, and how this bible study helped them to make an important decision to follow God? I was able to take video footage of the testimonies of those who had participated in the bible study and how it had changed their lives. A few young men and women told us of how they used to be idle, taking and selling drugs with no purpose in life. Others struggled with understanding the bible and the significance of God's truth; some mentioned that they struggled with pride, thinking that they could go to church on Sunday but live a double life behind the scenes. The way they talked indicated a genuine conversion and heart felt desire to follow God. I was amazed, as they acknowledged the common attitude across PNG; of those who go to church because they're expected to, or because their parents and family want them to, not because they have a personal relationship with the Living God and His Son Jesus Christ, through His Spirit.

What was significant about this trip is our partnership with churches like FNBC who are dedicated and committed to the rural people who live in isolation. We are able to supply bibles and audio bible devices to these churches, who then use these resources within ministry training and outreach programs like the one we attended. **You may be surprised to learn** that accessing a bible in PNG is still largely difficult for most people, with prices that are extortionate for the typical village person that earns a living selling crops or other road side things. Not only that, but bible distribution is still very poor, bookstores are located in the large towns and cities and majority of people live in the rural, mountainous and isolated regions.

The last memorable image I have of our trip to Morobe Province, is the above photo that was taken just as we were leaving Jaivapo. I was on the back of the Dyna truck and this young girl in her teens, who I had made friends with, came to say goodbye to me. I remember what she and many other people had said to me as we were leaving, "We still need bibles!", the echoing voice of many people in isolation. How can we reach Papua New Guinea with the word of God? That is what we endeavor to do as a programme (MAF Technologies). Partnerships with churches and supporters like yourselves help us to do that.





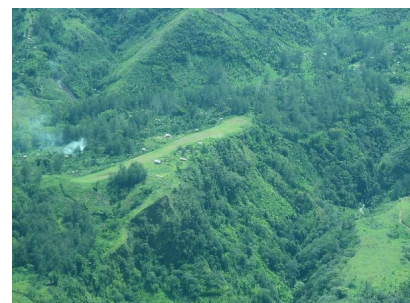


**October 2023** - I travelled back from Morobe with a really bad case of flu! I was in bed for a week and not fully recovered for another 2-3 weeks after that. October saw me trying to squeeze in some recruitment for our IT Trainee vacancy position. Our IT department not only serves the programme internally but also the community at wide; businesses, churches, pastors and missionaries who need help with IT solutions.

In **November 2023**, I attended the annual QSS Conference (Quality Safety Systems) in Cairns, Queensland Australia for one week to gain training in our new Safety Software and to learn how to conduct Quality Audits. I am currently helping to establish good safety and quality in our programme which is sometimes a challenge due to the variety of roles and tasks I am currently undertaking. Safety is an essential aspect of all that we do.



In **December 2023** I worked hard to close the year off in the office, and also welcomed my mum from the UK (pictured above in the yellow hi-vis). She came to visit me and to spend time with her family on New Hanover island. Unfortunately, my mum arrived sick with pneumonia, which completely disrupted her travel plans. Since she was unable to move about and needed to visit the hospital on multiple occasions, I flew to Port Moresby to try to help her recover and support her expenses. After she had recovered a little, we both flew back to Goroka so I could help look after her further. Goroka is a cool and mild climate and I anticipated it would be a good place for her to get some much needed rest. Once recovered, she enjoyed a trip on a MAF flight to Marawaka, another isolated village in the highlands. She was blessed to witness the work of MAF and how I am supporting her country men and women in PNG.





## January 2024 - "Establishing Operations in Bougainville"

At the beginning of January I said goodbye to my mum, who flew on to Perth, Australia to see my older brother. I then got ready for the programme trip to Bougainville to conduct our feasibility study for establishing operations in this region.

On my last letter to you, I touched briefly on the political context of the **Autonomous Region of Bougainville**, an atoll island to the east of PNG that still remains a part of it, but desires to be independent. The island is abundant in natural resources; oil, gold and other mining. After much request from local leadership for our presence to be established in Bougainville, we finally made the long anticipated trip by MAF Airplane all the way from Goroka to Buka Airport, stopping at Hoskins (West New Britain) to refuel. (Pictured above, is one of the 2 major and active volcanoes on the island, taken from our flight).



From 1988 to 1998, Bougainville suffered a violent civil war that left many of the population devastated. Though MAF vows to not involve itself with political ideologies or issues, the aftermath of this war has left the people of Bougainville crying out for development and resources, and our mission, is to now bring help hope and healing. (Click on the picture to the left for more info).

The feasibility study saw us travelling to different locations around the island to meet with government officials, NGOs, church leaders and the local community, to gain a better understanding of the needs on the ground. It was a historical moment for both MAF Aviation and MAF Technologies, as MAF have not touched down on the island for 30+ years since before the civil war. For Technologies we are excited to expand our HF Radio, solar services and biblical resources to those in need in Bougainville.



The project is now underway to establish operations in Bougainville. I am privileged to be on the project team, leading HR and recruitment.

In February 2024, we welcomed a new family to the programme from Switzerland who will be serving with us for the next 4 years. Daniel, (pictured on the left) will be fulfilling the role of Renewable Energy Engineer. As HR officer to the programme, this also means a busy time for me, preparing the new family's orientation to life in PNG and Goroka, and getting them ready for service. Most of February was spent planning their training and orientation schedule and being on standby for support.



I am grateful to have such a multifaceted role within this organisation allowing me to help wherever I can to ensure that the work we do will continue into the future, even after my time of service is up. We would not be able to do all the above without your support and I sincerely want to thank you all again. By supporting me, you are supporting remote communities with bibles, communication devices in the bush, and solar systems that help people to thrive and live a better life.

### **Please Pray For**

- 1. Upcoming Home Assignment Trip to the UK where I will be visiting my supporters!**
- 2. MAF Technologies "Establishing Operations in Bougainville" Project.**
- 3. For Me, for spiritual strength as I navigate both personal and work challenges!**



**Upcoming Visit to the UK - July 2024!**

**I'll be in the UK in July to complete my 2-yearly Home Assignment. I'll be visiting you guys, my supporters around the UK to update you all on what I have been doing in Papua New Guinea with your support. I will be in touch shortly after this prayer letter to arrange visits with you, to say thank you and to recognise your support to the mission of MAF.**

**I look forward to seeing you all and reconnecting with those I haven't see for a while!**