



Mission Aviation Fellowship
of Canada

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Marsh's Journey

Flying for Life in PNG

MAF's Vision: is that isolated people will be physically and spiritually transformed in Christ's name



Bah Humbugs and Hard Decisions

There are sometimes challenges that MAF faces as they minister to the many remote communities around PNG. Not everyone in the villages always has the best interest of the community in mind when they push the limits. Recently on a charter into Benaria, bringing building supplies for a new school, Jason and the Captain found themselves in a tense situation with a difficult decision to make. As part of safety protocol villagers and interested spectators are asked to stay back behind cone markers, however, on this day there was a gentleman who was pushing the boundaries and was determined to get on the flight. As Jason worked on paperwork for the passengers who were scheduled to fly and took weights, this man pushed in and crowded Jason. After asking him to step back Jason asked if there were any patients that needed to get out to the hospital. It turned out there was one young girl to go, along with a traditional wasman (watchman or helper). At this point the gentleman insisted there were two wasman, the other being himself. He was once again asked to step back. During the loading process he tried to slip into the line to get on the plane and was once again asked to leave. Finally with all of the passengers loaded the Captain began giving the passenger brief. This is when the man rushed the plane but this time made it on. Now with a man on the plane that didn't belong there the pilots had a hard decision to make. With no one from the village stepping forward to help out, the Captain made the decision to close the airstrip and all of the passengers were unloaded. No one was able to get out of Benaria that day.

The pilots must always be alert to situations that are brewing and make decisions for both their safety as well as the safety of those who fly with MAF.

In the end Benaria was reopened after the community leaders sent a letter of apology for the incident, knowing how much their community relies on MAF, they must help to protect both pilots and passengers.

Moving Day

Moving days can be stressful enough without having to worry about whether or not the plane (moving truck) will be able to make it in. As the Wagners packed up their home and prepared to leave Simbia for the last time, they prayed and waited on the weather. The first scheduled day the weather was a no go, so Jason and the Captain on the Otter had to try again the following day. Praise the Lord the clouds parted and the plane was able to make it in. After living out in the bush for five years assisting the local church and its pastors, it was time for the Wagners to move on and in the isolated communities in PNG that can only be done with the help of an airplane.



I tell you the truth... I have come that they may have life,
and have it to the full





A Visit from Friends

We have had the privilege over the last few months to once again be re-united with friends from our time down in Western Province. Pastor Jacob and his family have been in Goroka studying at the university, taking a medical teaching course. It is amazing to see their commitment and desire to see PNG move forward. Pastor Jacob has an amazing story to tell. Coming from a cannibalistic tribe as near back as his grandfather, he was encouraged by a teacher at a young age to pick three professions to work toward. He decided he either wanted to be a pastor, health care worker, or teacher, but after his mother died when he was in grade 6 he almost quit school, thinking that there was no need for him to pursue an education. Thankfully he realized that even if he did not have his mother to look after, he would have to look after himself.

Now at the age of 40 with a wife and three children in tow, he has studied abroad in Fiji to become a pastor, has successfully completed the training to become a Community Healthcare Worker (CHW) (the front line health workers out in the bush), and is now training to be able to teach others to become CHWs; completing all three of his childhood profession prospects. His wife is also a CHW and has also taken the teacher training course at the university. Their desire is to take their knowledge back down to Western Province now that they are more equipped to encourage and train the next generation in a more holistic approach to medicine with God's word at the center.

Merry Christmas All!

As we try to get into the Christmas spirit Jason is serenading me with Christmas jingles, somehow they are missing the mark, 'frosty the snowman... jingle bells... may all your Christmases be white...'

There is not much evidence of such things here, and while we miss those familiar things from home it is a good reminder that those things have nothing to do with the reason we stop to celebrate the birth of Jesus.

Joy to the World the Lord is born! Now that is a reason to celebrate!

Blessings All: *Jason, Melanie, Kaleb & Carter*



Pastor Jacob and the kids experiencing a trampoline for the first time.

Praise and Prayer

*As we sit down to finish up this letter we are madly hunting for a surgeon down in Australia who will have a look at Jason's arm. Please pray for a speedy and full recovery following a mountain bike accident.

*Please pray for the leadership team here in PNG. As needs in the country change and pilot numbers dwindle, please pray for wisdom as to how MAF could best serve.

*Please pray for a peaceful holiday season, as Christmas approaches, and along with it holidays, more and more people will be coming into town and this can result in a higher security risk.

*Praise the Lord that even in uncertain times, we can look back and be reminded that God has everything under control. Nothing surprises Him!

Looking Back

With the end of the year fast approaching and as we reach up to measure our boys once again (one of them has grown over 3" this year, with the other not far behind) I am remembering back to when this journey all began. Hard to believe 10 years ago we were getting ready to sell our house in order to move and go back to school. So much has happened since then and it has been truly amazing to look back and see how the Lord has guided and provided. It is also a realization that God does lots of that work through other people. We have crossed paths with so many wonderful people, each contributing something unique, providing support and wisdom along the way. We can truly say that we are blessed as a result of following the call and that blessing has come through so many of you who have encouraged and stood with us in the many different ways over the years. Thank-you!!

(I am also now forced to realize just how much else has changed in the past 10 years as I desperately hunt for a picture of the boys squeezed into the back of the 172 our first year of school, their headsets squishing chubby cheeks. That was before we had a digital camera and we only have a hard copy at home! Sorry I really wanted to share it with you all!)



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