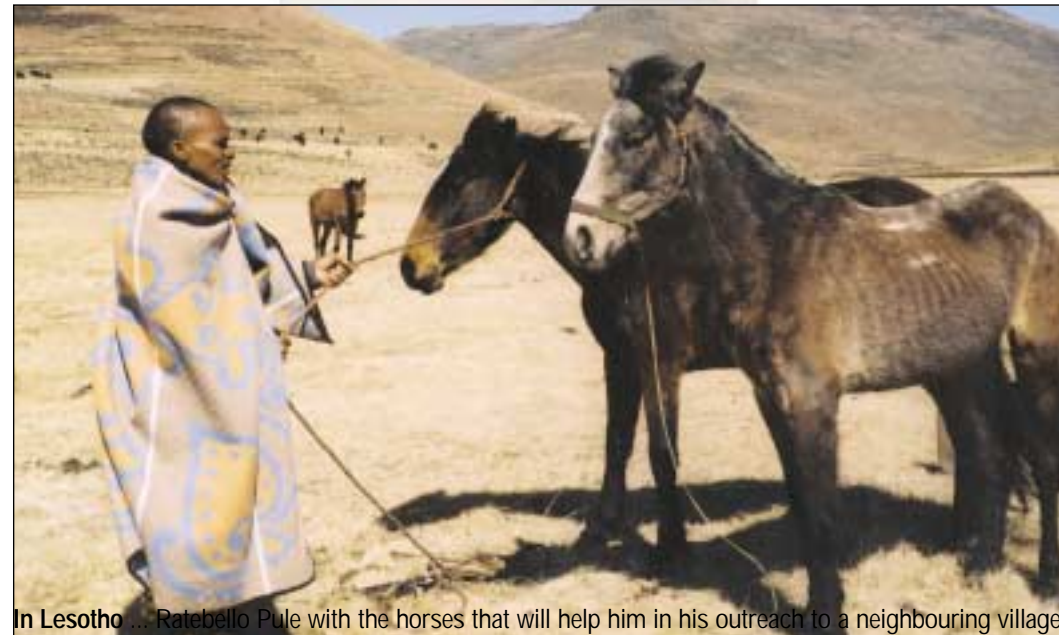




In remote areas of the world, where commercial flights are not available, MAF provides flights for missionaries, national pastors, humanitarian aid and economic development – so that all people can have access to the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the resources to meet their needs.

Veteran pilots from the UK, USA and Australia started MAF at the end of World War 2. In 1973, MAF Canada was formed.

Today, MAF worldwide has about 150 aircraft landing at 4,000 airstrips in 30 nations.



In Lesotho ... Ratebello Pule with the horses that will help him in his outreach to a neighbouring village.

Horses, donkeys and MAF

Reaching into Lesotho's mountain villages

MATEKANE, Lesotho – Ratebello and Matebello Pule are a friendly and courteous young couple whose love for the Gospel is evident in the way they approach everyone. When they stop to speak with neighbours, it doesn't take long for the conversation to turn to spiritual matters.

The Pules live in Matekane as national missionaries with the Apostolic Faith Mission, a denomination with a 90-year history in Lesotho.

No roads lead to their village.

Set on a mountain top at 7,500 feet, Matekane is one of the most remote places served by MAF flights in this tiny, impoverished kingdom, surrounded on all sides by the much larger and wealthier Republic of South Africa.

Over the past two years, MAF has been delivering food relief to drought-stricken Matekane families – cornmeal, cooking oil and soy-meat substitute – as part of a wider initiative by private donors, churches and relief organizations.

Twice a month, when the weather is good, MAF also brings in medical teams and health care workers. Because Lesotho has one of the highest HIV/AIDS infection rates in the world, AIDS education for family caregivers has become part of the health care offered (see separate story inside).

Go ye therefore, and teach all nations...
Matthew 28:19

continued inside...



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AIDS care in Lesotho

MASERU, Lesotho – In this mountain kingdom, half the size of Nova Scotia, tourists ride Basotho donkeys along rugged trails that open onto marvelous vistas, complete with idyllic waterfalls, occasional antelope and blanket-clad Basotho people at work in the fields.

At rest stops, tourists stay in guest rondavels, eating their fill and tasting local drink made of fermented raisins and brown sugar.

But if you are a Mosotho, one of the Basotho people, and call this place home, life here is extremely difficult. Most Basotho are poor and malnourished, child and maternal mortality rates are high, and a third of all adults over 15 years old have HIV/AIDS.

“Everywhere you look you see people with a black strip of cloth around their neck signifying a recent death in the family. Funerals are the main weekend activity,” Canadian MAF pilot Melvin Peters noted when he first arrived in the capital Maseru three years ago.

In the mountain villages, MAF identified a need for rural people to receive help in caring for AIDS-infected family members while protecting others in their family from infection.

Lacking knowledge and adequate home care supplies, some families were leaving loved ones outdoors to die. Other infected people were sent to hospitals in Maseru, too far away for their families to visit, and there they died alone.

When MAF contacted a U.S. pharmaceutical company, it generously agreed to finance a program of home-based care for Lesotho. Now MAF is providing the flights that take two Christian health care workers and their supplies into the mountain villages.



Long drought ... Ratebello Pule, far left, and two local men receive bags of cornmeal for needy families. Melvin Peters is one of the MAF pilots involved in delivering food to drought-stricken areas of Lesotho.



Pule family ... Matebello, Tebello, and Ratebello Pule outside their home near the Matekane airstrip.

Airstrip at Matekane ...

Photo courtesy of Tom Claytor (www.claytor.com).

continued from front page

Horses, donkeys and MAF...

It was in Matekane that MAF pilot Melvin Peters of LaCrete, Alberta, first met Ratebello three years ago. Melvin refers to him as Ntate Pule. The term Ntate is used in the same way we use “Mr.” but it also means father.

The Pules and their infant daughter Tebello live in a new one-room rondavel close to the Matekane airstrip. Until recently, they were living next door in a two-room house that had one room converted into a clinic whenever medical teams arrived, with the kitchen counter doubling as an examining table.

Before she married, M’e (“Mrs.” or mother) Matebello worked in the shops in Ketane, a four-hour walk from Matekane. When she learned that Jesus Christ died for her sins, it became the joy of her life to serve Him. Now, she says, “to serve the Lord here in Matekane makes me very happy inside.”

On clinic days, she sets out basic items for sale, such as candles, matches, cooking oil, heating fuel, laundry soap, flour and sugar. Having these items available at Matekane saves the local people a long walk down the mountain to the next-nearest village.

In addition to his role as preacher/evangelist, Ratebello helps the people of his village learn about basic sanitation – in particular, how to build outhouses – so that the spread of disease can be minimized.

He also travels out of Matekane occasionally to lead seminars at a Bible school in Mansunyane, a trip that requires him to walk for up to seven hours to a location where he can board a taxi bus for the three-hour drive to Maseru, the capital. There he has to transfer to another bus for the long ride out to the school.



Delivering peace ... Holding his daughter, Ratebello Pule stands with one of the Basotho donkeys purchased by MAF Canada supporters to help his ministry in Lesotho.

Remembering the great darkness he sensed in his own life before he became a Christian, Ratebello feels called to reach out beyond Matekane to tell more people about Jesus. As he puts it, “my call is to die in the uttermost part of the earth.”

He has a strong desire to bring the Gospel to the unreached village of Ha Hlalele. This village has no roads and no airstrip, but on horseback, it can be attained in about four hours from Matekane.

Supporters help

MAF supporters have provided Ratebello with some practical help in this Great Commission outreach. Responding to an invitation sent out by pilot Melvin Peters and his wife Kari, supporters have sent in enough funds to buy two horses and two donkeys for the Pule family.

Melvin says these animals will cut the Pules’ traveling time in half and also allow them to transport goods more efficiently.

“We would like to send our thanks and gratitude to you for your generosity,” Ratebello wrote in return. “With these horses and donkeys it will be much easier to reach Ha Hlalele village (where) we are to start the work of God...”

Ratebello asks Canadians to join in praying for this outreach: “We need your prayers very much.”

Kari explains that the main spiritual challenge throughout Lesotho is to break through the hold of ancient traditions and former belief patterns of the Basotho people. “Their animism and ancestor worship is very deep. The temptation is to just add the new beliefs to their old ones, instead of breaking free of the old way of life and beliefs.”

Who would have thought that in A.D. 2003 donkeys and horses could still prove so useful in reaching remote areas of the world with the Good News of Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour?

Remembering that Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey, in fulfillment of prophecy (Zechariah 9:9), we at MAF sometimes like to think of our flight service as a donkey carrying the Gospel to the last remaining unreached areas of the world.

Thank you to all of you who support us – financially, and in prayer – for your part in this Great Commission delivery service!

Mission groups served by MAF Lesotho include Africa Inland Mission, the local Apostolic Faith Mission, Church of the Nazarenes, the Netherlands-based Dorcas Aid, Southern Baptist Mission, and Youth with a Mission. To assist missionaries living in remote areas, MAF has installed a network of SSB HF (single sideband high frequency) radios.

Most MAF flights continue to be booked by the Lesotho Flying Doctor Service, which goes out four days a week to the mountain villages with a team of specialists. MAF was first invited into Lesotho in 1980 to fly for these teams and to provide medical evacuations.

Today, MAF has five staff families living in Lesotho and five Cessna 206s are used to provide flights to 27 mountain airstrips. Melvin and Kari Peters have been serving here since July 2000. For more about the Peters family, see our “May We Introduce” column.

Need a Christmas gift?

These donkeys and horses for Matekane could be provided through Mission Aviation Fellowship of Canada because we encourage our missionaries to identify projects they can administer in their field of service.

If you’re looking for a unique Christmas gift for special people in your life, please consider making a donation on their behalf to our Ministry Fund. This will allow more Canadian MAF missionaries to start projects in their areas of service.

Contact: Mission Aviation Fellowship of Canada, 264 Woodlawn Road West, Guelph, ON N1H 1B6 or call toll free **1.877.351.9344**.

May We Introduce...

The Peters family

Melvin and Kari Peters, featured in this issue's cover story, have been serving with Mission Aviation Fellowship since July 2000 in Lesotho, Africa, where Melvin provides flights to numerous mountain airstrips.

Both Melvin and Kari were raised in Christian homes in LaCrete, Alberta, and both came to know Jesus Christ as Saviour at an early age.

By the age of 14, Melvin already felt called to full-time ministry. He attended Steinbach Bible College in Manitoba from 1988-90 and married Kari, his high school sweetheart, in 1990.



Peters family ... Melvin and Kari with Megan, Japheth, Hannah and Matthew.

He obtained his private pilot's licence three years later, and in 1995, enrolled in the mission aviation program at Prairie Bible Institute in Three Hills, Alberta. In 1997, he graduated with a commercial pilot's licence.

Melvin worked for a summer in Fort Chipewyan, Alberta, flying groceries for a local merchant, and then for a year with a charter company in Norman Wells and Fort Good Hope, Northwest Territories, where he was also called upon to preach on Sundays.

During her childhood, Kari spent four years on the mission field with her parents in the nation of Belize, south of Mexico. After high school, she attended Steinbach Bible College for a year and then entered nurses training at Grace General Hospital in Winnipeg. From 1992 to 1995, she worked at a hospital in Fort Vermillion in northern Alberta.

Matthew was born in 1995, Meagan in 1996 and Hannah in 1997. Two years after they arrived in Lesotho, Melvin and Kari adopted a Mosotho boy they named Japheth, who is now three years old. He had come to their attention after Melvin and Kari began assisting a local orphanage for HIV/AIDS-affected children. (Orphanage story in September 2002 *Life Link*.)

If you are not currently supporting MAF on a regular basis and are considering how you can get involved, please consider supporting Melvin and Kari Peters.

Your gifts, combined with those of other ministry partners, will be used to provide our missionaries with such needs as housing, children's education and medical care. Even a monthly gift of \$20 or \$25 can go a long way toward providing for these needs.

To begin your support of Melvin and Kari Peters, or any other missionary featured in any issue of *Life Link*, simply indicate your preference on the enclosed response card, and send it to us with your next monthly gift.



Hugo Feunekes ... fabricating a tilt table



... working with the avionics team



... and fixing aircraft radio systems

Avionics help for MAF in Indonesia

Canadian engineer's contribution saves testing and shipping costs

SENTANI, Indonesia – With their three small children in tow, Hugo and Erica Feunekes of Aldergrove, British Columbia, traveled more than 40 hours to Sentani this July so that Hugo could offer six months of help with the electrical, communication and navigation systems on MAF aircraft.

Hugo, 30, has an avionics degree as well as an aircraft maintenance engineer's licence with electronics certification (AME-E).

Because no one else at the MAF flight base in Sentani has his qualifications, his abilities have been greatly appreciated, especially as MAF begins to incorporate more instrument flying to improve the efficiency of its flight services in Papua province on New Guinea Island.

To assist MAF with this project, Hugo took a leave of absence from Pacific Avionics and Instruments Ltd in Richmond, BC. The Feunekeses also raised enough fund-

ing from supporters to cover the expenses involved in sending them overseas.

During their first few weeks in Sentani, Hugo fabricated a tilt table to help test the electronic components of the four Cessna Caravans MAF uses in Papua, he fixed radios and backlogged instruments, and he replaced ELTs (emergency locator transmitters) in aircraft.

In addition to the Caravans, MAF Papua has nine C206 aircraft. On one occasion, Hugo flew with MAF pilot Fred Heier of Steinbach, Manitoba, to the flight base at Wamena with a C206 that had a malfunctioning HF radio. There they met a plane with the same kind of radio so that Hugo could do some testing to figure out which component was not working properly.

In September, when one of the Caravans was found to be 30 degrees out on its navigation equipment, it was grounded so that Hugo and a technician could solve the problem.

Since then, Hugo has been fabricating more test equipment, including test cables and break-out boxes that will help determine which components are failing on an aircraft. This equipment will save MAF shipping and testing costs.

An aircraft needing a new ELT will also receive a new radio stack. With this installed, it can become an IFR (instrument flight regulations) aircraft, meaning that the pilot can fly in conditions where he has little or no visual contact.

IFR allows MAF pilots to fly through clouds instead of using up extra time and fuel looking for holes. Bad weather comes up suddenly in this part of the world.

The Feunekes family is due to return to Canada in mid-January. To find out more about their ministry, check out their website at www.hwfeunekes.com.

Our Faith



As we approach the end of another year and reflect on all that has transpired globally, nationally, and personally, the pressures we face can either strengthen or weaken our faith.

When we read Hebrews Chapter 11 and 12, and see the results of faith in the lives of all the people listed there, we recognize that each one of them could only accomplish what he or she did by being focused on the fact that God is real. Hebrews 12:2 says they looked "unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith."

This is easier to say than to do, especially in a world where we are surrounded by so many cares and concerns. But just as we at MAF have had to "hold fast" in times of flagging resources, it is important that each one of us personally keep holding onto our focus, Jesus Christ.

Hebrews 13, after listing various distractions and concerns, proclaims in verse 5 that God will never leave us or forsake us. Therefore, we can boldly say, as in verse 6: "The Lord is my helper!"

Jesus as Messiah came to reconcile the world to God and to bring hope to mankind. It is my prayer that during this season, we can take our focus off of the difficult issues that prevail upon us, and be confident that God will bring to conclusion all that He has started in us.

May God bless you as you live out your faith during this Christmas season. And as the year 2003 comes to a close, let us be sure to finish it well.

Together with you, in His Service,

Ron Epp

Ron Epp
Executive Director
Mission Aviation Fellowship of Canada

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Editor: Claudia Van Riesen

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We exist to demonstrate God's love through aviation, communications, and logistics to meet spiritual and physical needs. Our vision is that all people have access to the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the resources to meet their needs.

MAF Canada is a charter subscriber to the Canadian Council of Christian Charities' seal of financial accountability.

Letters from friends ... near and far

From Dr. Nicole Haley, an anthropologist with the Australian National University -

I am writing to you from Lake Kapiago, Southern Highlands Province, Papua New Guinea, to express my thanks to MAF for airlifting Kelo Sande out of this remote corner of Southern Highlands so that he might receive life-saving medical treatment. Your actions have no doubt saved this young boy's life.

Kelo Sande is a five-year-old boy who was mauled by a pig... (and) sustained a broken leg, several broken ribs and lacerations to his left arm... Without MAF's assistance by way of advice and a subsequent airlift, this boy would, I believe, most likely have died or at the very least continued to suffer unnecessarily. MAF is truly a lifeline for people living in remote areas of PNG. Thank you for the service you provide.

After Dr. Haley contacted MAF by satellite phone, Kelo and a relative were airlifted on Sept. 1, 2003 to hospital in Mount Hagen where the boy was admitted for treatment.

From Philip Dive, UNOCHA field manager in Angola -

Many aid workers remember their first night in Chipindo town because of the quietness of a mass of the people that numbered more than 27,000. The children had no energy to play games... the town itself had been completely destroyed... (Today) Chipindo has a market place, a football pitch and many small areas with maize growing for the next harvest.

The regular flights, typically twice a week, by MAF into Chipindo have served an essential logistical support to the non-government organizations as well as UNOCHA (the United Nations Organization for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Assistance) and WFP (World Food Program)...

The rapid evacuation option provided by MAF has helped aid workers and UN staff to do their difficult and at times dangerous work, in the knowledge that once in the air the MAF pilots will be in Chipindo within 70 minutes and medical help will be waiting back at Lubango airport on their return.

The contribution of MAF in the resolution of the Chipindo crisis is enormous and is well understood and respected by all who have worked in the area.

At the end of the Angolan civil war in 2002, the people of Chipindo were trapped in their village during a final showdown between UNITA rebels and government soldiers. Many had starved to death before they could be reached by relief workers. (Story in March 2003 Life Link.)

From Donna Jacobsson, MAF missionary serving Democratic Republic of Congo -

The town of Nyankunde remains in ruins ... but we are encouraged to hear from Nyankunde believers, scattered in all directions, that they continue to persevere in God's work, sharing His love and hope to people who desperately need some good news!

The Nyankunde Evangelical Medical Centre continues its medical ministry in new "displaced" locations in Oicha and Beni. A small 50-bed hospital and outpatient clinic in Beni serve thousands of displaced people...

Many still hope to return and rebuild Nyankunde in God's time when peace returns to the Ituri region. But for now, we can see that God has spread and multiplied His work in an incredible way...

This excerpt is from a letter Donna sent on the one-year anniversary of her emergency evacuation from Nyankunde, DRC. (Story in December 2002 Life Link.) The Jacobsson family now lives in Uganda, from where MAF pilots are providing cross-border flights into eastern DRC.

From Vera Pletsch, who served in Brazil in the 1960's -

A rough, overgrown runway could be spotted, straight out from the front window of our little house on the demonstration farm in Cristianopolis, Goias, Brazil.

The location of this agricultural project, a joint effort of the Evangelical United Brethren and a national church in Brazil, presented a travel challenge. Major supplies and good medical services lay well beyond the rural village, requiring a bumpy three-hour jeep ride, one way.

On several occasions, my husband Doug had asked the local mayor to level out the dilapidated runway, but nothing happened until bright and early one morning in April 1964.

As the radio blasted out military music and we were informed that a military coup had overthrown the government, we saw a large yellow road maintainer approaching our sad little runway. Politicians everywhere like to be assured of a quick get away.

We seldom used the runway during our 2-1/2 years in the village, but knowing that the MAF planes were ready at their base in Anapolis, Brazil, provided a comfort zone.

Once, when flying out with pilot Frank Gibbs, I was told to "straddle the fuel tank and hold the back door closed." Of course he was joking. Safety always came first.

Vera and Doug Pletsch live near Guelph, Ontario, and have continued to be involved in international projects, mainly through the University of Guelph.

From Anne Lappalainen, who served with a Finnish mission in Ethiopia -

I feel so deeply grateful to MAF that I want to tell you what happened to me seven years ago. My husband and I were missionaries in Ethiopia then at a station, quite isolated, about 400 km from Addis Ababa.

On a day in May 1996, I began to get severe pain. Our nurse diagnosed me with severe appendicitis. The only surgeon who could save my life was on the other side of Ethiopia at Jirga Alem hospital...

MAF came to the rescue. Feeling so ill, I don't remember much of the journey, but landing took some time as they had to drive cows off the runway! At the hospital, the surgical team worked 1-1/2 hours to correct the awful damage caused by my perforated appendix. It took a long time to really recover, but we were able to do one more year of ministry work in Ethiopia.

So many dear ones had prayed and I am so very grateful that MAF was in Ethiopia at that time. I would not have survived without it.

Anne Lappalainen now lives in South Porcupine, Ontario, where her husband is pastor of the Finnish Pentecostal Church.



In Brazil ... Vera Pletsch in front of her home, with the MAF plane, a fellow missionary, and two local school children

Now you can wait until the last minute...

With the hectic end-of-year season fast approaching, it's good to know you can maximize your 2003 donations anytime day or night using our 128-bit encrypted online donation form.

Remember, all donations received online prior to midnight, December 31, 2003, qualify for 2003 tax deductions.

To make your donation online, visit us on the web at www.mafc.org and click on "Donate" to be directed to the secure portion of our site.



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