



SPRING 2020

LEHMANS' LOG

MISSION AVIATION FELLOWSHIP



God can use even the sound of a plane

Story from Nathan & Becky Fagerlie, pilot in Papua, Indonesia

“I wanted to tell you that your flying was not in vain” -- Liku. The following story illustrates how God used an MAF airplane and pilot for His glory. The pilot, Nathan Fagerlie, remarked, “We are constantly amazed and grateful that we get to be even a small part of stories like this.”

The gospel not only changes lives, but also cultures. A culture of ritualistic cannibalism can become one of neighborly love. A culture of revenge can become one of turning the other cheek. These are not just stories of long-gone missionaries, these things are still happening right now, today!



The village of Mbomban has a long history of revenge beatings and killings. The people lived in fear that any misstep could be avenged at any moment. Anger was currency—running deep and strong.

Just over the mountain though, in the village of Mokondoma, missionaries were teaching a different kind of life—a gospel life. A life fueled by love, service and humility. And it was

catching. Now the church, strong with believers, wanted to teach this message of love and hope to their neighbors. Liku and Landun, two men whose lives have been transformed by the gospel, had travelled to the village of Mbomban. Teaching had gone well, and the message of Jesus was spreading!

When one of the literacy teachers from Mokondoma wanted to marry a man from Mbomban, she found herself harshly rejected by the leaders of Mbomban. Tempers raged. Revenge was promised. And she, driven by depression and guilt, decided to take her own life. More anger and revenge was threatened. Houses were burned and banana trees were cut down.

Liku and Landun, now back in Mokondoma, were grieved to hear of the situation erupting in Mbomban and wanted to get there quickly. Fortunately, MAF pilot, Nathan Fagerlie, was scheduled to arrive in Mokondoma that day. Unfortunately, the airstrip closest to Mbomban, called Dagai, was closed.

Nathan quickly hiked to the top of a hill where he could get a cell signal and called his manager to ask permission to land in Dagai, assuming it looked safe from the air. Looking at the airstrip charts, they decided Nathan could try the landing. Liku and Landun hopped on board, and they were off to Dagai.

Both the flight and landing were uneventful. Liku and Landun said their goodbyes to their pilot, Nathan, and were off into the village.

As Nathan prepared the plane for takeoff, he wondered if he would know what happened to Liku and Landun. Sometimes the MAF pilots don't get to hear the end of the story.

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PRAISES!

- We are so thankful for our years of serving with MAF. They have been incredible! We have seen the Lord change lives, as well as transform us as individuals and as a couple.
- We are thankful for our co-workers who are committed to the Lord. We rubbed shoulders with some for many years which has made the work lighter and helped us grow in the Lord.

PRAYER REQUEST!

- Pray for the right person to replace Steve as MAF's Safety Manager with time for overlap. Part of ending well is to have adequate time to train his replacement.

"...they saw a plane overhead and knew it was MAF, and they got scared."

About four months later, Nathan's family went to Mokondoma to spend a night.

There they saw Liku, and he said, "Nathan, I want to say something. I want to talk to you about that flight four months ago. I wanted to tell you that your flying was not in vain. I want to explain to you what happened. When we first got the news that this lady had killed herself, we were distraught because we knew what was going to happen in that village. But we were thankful because God has provided a flight for us that day. We knew you were coming in.

"When we got on the airplane to go, again, we were just praising the Lord. When you circled overhead, I want you to know the Lord was using that. The people were about ready to fight. And then they saw a plane overhead and knew it was MAF, and they got scared. It was kind of like Adam and Eve when they heard God in the garden. The people knew they were doing something wrong, and they didn't know why MAF was coming, but it took their eyes off of each other and focused them somewhere else.

"We got off the airplane, and we went into the jungle. When we met with the people, the Spirit of the Lord came on us and we wept. We just started crying. And they started crying. They went from fighting to hugging. We could bury our sister in Christ, and we shared the gospel with the people there. I want you to know your flying is not in vain. You're a part of the team."

We are constantly amazed and grateful that we get to be even a small part of stories like this. It is awesome to see the power of the gospel at work. Did you know that you are a part of this too? It takes scores of people to support the work happening in Indonesia. From home staff to supporting churches to individual supporters, we are all a part of the Gospel of Christ reaching and changing the people and cultures of Papua.

RETIRING

I (Steve) will retire this July from my position as MAF's Safety Manager. I have been in the Safety Department for 23 years. Carol and I served with MAF for 34 years.

Carol retired from her work as an Administrative Assistant in August of 2019. She is intentional about having structure and margin. Something to do every day gives her a reason to get up in the morning, like volunteering at MAF a morning a week, participating in a weekly Bible study, playing in a handbell choir, being involved in other church activities, and spending time with Krista (our daughter-in-law) and Abigail (our granddaughter). But, she gives herself margin, time to do things that come up unexpectedly, like going to lunch with friends or spending more time with Krista and Abigail. I hope to follow Carol's example of structure with margin. But, I don't know what that looks like yet...except spending more time with Abigail.

We plan to visit Ohio in early June and hope to see many of you. This will be our last trip to Ohio as part of MAF, but not our last visit.

A simple thank you is hardly adequate to convey our gratitude for the faithfulness of those who have supported the ministry of MAF for many years; some for 34 years. We praise the Lord for you and the part you have played in the legacy of MAF! We want our service with MAF to end well, so we ask that you continue your support through the end of June.

Together in Him,

Steve & Carol

Steve & Carol Lehman

