

# KENYAN MISSIONARIES IN MADAGASCAR

QUARTERLY REPORT—SEPTEMBER 2008

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Read the latest stories to learn more about Duncan and Victor's ministry in Madagascar. Duncan and Victor are serving with **Church Army Africa** in Toliara and are the first Kenyan Missionaries to serve in the country.

## CHURCH PLANTING IN MORONDAVA

I have now been in Madagascar for four months and am increasingly convinced that God brought me here with a great purpose. Some months ago, I was invited by a priest from the Diocese I am serving here to go minister in his church and I went there on 26th August up to 16th September. This was significant because the Anglican Church in South Madagascar is desperate for evangelism to bolster church-growth and facilitate church planting. I ministered in crusades to promote growth in the local church. The profile of the church was raised in the



area and scores came to Christ. Follow-up needs to be done to sustain the work, but we also did crusades in another area where we planted a new church. By the grace of God I preached in all the crusades and since the concept is new here

many were attending and God was convicting them. I am now praying that God guides me on how to best do evangelism work here. Keep on praying for us.

-Duncan

## NEW BISHOP IN ANTANANARIVO

It is 7am and there is barely any place for someone to sit for a service that begins at 9.30am. Guess why? You have it right. A new Bishop is being consecrated. The Rt. Rev. Jaona Samoela was consecrated as Bishop of Antananarivo Diocese in a

colorful consecration service that was held at the St. Lawrence Cathedral on June 29. Being a high church, there was of course a lot of chanting and the burning of incense. In attendance was the Madagascar president Hon. Marc Ravalomanana.



## YOUTH MISSION

June-September is usually a long holiday for primary and high school students in Madagascar. So, the national exams and all major examinations are done by mid June. During this time most people go to visit their friends and relatives.

In addition to the normal visit, our youth team planned for an outreach

event that lasted for two weeks in the capital city. So two things happened, the youth enjoyed themselves and also they reached out with the love of Christ by sharing the gospel with their neighbors. There was even a mute person who was able to speak in one of their meetings. Glory to God.

## BLACK TEA

Although the major food here is vary (rice) and laoka which could come in the form of meat stew, vegetable or legume; sweet potatoes, cassava and yellow maize also play an important part in any Malagasy meal. Alongside the food there is always a special kind of rice water “rano napango” they call it. At first I thought to myself, aah its a good idea to have tea now, only to realize that I was so wrong!

The other day I enjoyed a meal of “angisy!” What on earth could that be? Believe it or not I ate an octopus! Mmh delicious isn't it? Being in the middle of the ocean we are easily accessible to every kind of fish and any of the sea creatures you can think of. Of late I have been enjoying eating fried crabs and lobsters.

## DRY BONES



Now this has nothing to do with the valley of the dry bones in Ezekiel 37 nor is it a Biology class but one of the many cultural traditions embraced by some of the Malagasy people.

In the ceremony of dry bones, communities gather at the gravesite of a relative who has been dead for about ten years. They then unearth the skeleton of the dead person, straighten it, and

wrap it in a new cloth. The old coffin is broken and burned and the body is placed in a new coffin.

The new coffin is lifted with honor and carried around the town with jubilation and singing, with the women dancing and men carrying the coffin and showering themselves with local brew. The coffin is then taken to the home of the closest relative where a party ensues with dancing the

entire night. Afterwards the deceased is reburied.

“They unearth the skeleton of the dead person, straighten it, and wrap it in a new cloth.”

This ancient cultural practice is reflective of the widespread Malagasy belief that the ancestors have the ability to bless or curse the living. The ceremonial turning of the bones is a way to show that the living still take care of the dead. By honoring their ancestors, the people believe that the ancestors will protect them and take care of them as well. If they fail to do this, they may be cursed throughout their lives.

Imagine that in Madagascar some Christians engage in this practice as well. Pray for us as we minister here. Instead of invoking the dead, may the people of Toliara come to know the freedom of the living Christ.

## LEARNING THE LANGUAGE

I continue to learn Malagasy which is the language of the people here. It has not been easy since I also now have friends who speak English. In the crusades I was preaching in English assisted by a very able Malagasy interpreter. I have also been teaching English in the church though my compatriot, Victor, is now taking a larger role of teaching.

Otherwise we continue to minister in the English service on Saturdays in Toliara but pray that God may give us able interpreters so that we can also preach in Sunday services in all the churches. Remember that one priest here normally has seven to ten congregations and so they rely on evangelists to run the churches. Since we cannot speak Malagasy fluently we cannot preach in the Malagasy services. yet Actually when I went to preach in Morondava recently the Nigerian priest there had a Malagasy interpreter that interpreted for him. A similar arrangement will make us contribute a lot in the Malagasy services. *-Duncan*

Our learning of the Gasy language I must say is greatly improving. Thank you so much for your prayers. We have been in classes everyday from Monday to Friday for 2 hours. The language is interesting to learn because it has overtones of Swahili which is one of Kenya's national languages. As we move on I realize that every province has its sort of language! That means our Gasy is solely for the south and whenever you move out you begin learning a new language, even for the locals. There is the official language but it is only taught in school as a subject and spoken by a few people especially in the central Madagascar. On the other hand French which should also be a national language is spoken by very few people here in the South though again all lessons are taught in French at school! But in spoken, there are several French words that are thrown here and there in the middle of the local language. *-Victor*

## CULTURAL ADJUSTMENTS

Pray for us as we continue to adapt and learn about the culture here. Madagascar is different in many ways from our home in Kenya, and in the regions where we serve we often meet with great poverty and need as well as a lack of development and basic infrastructure.

When I went for a church-planting mission recently there were no houses in the region, including where I stayed, that had a toilet or bathroom. For the toilet people relieved themselves either in the bush or openly, and for bathing they all went to a swamp with dirty water and I had no choice!

*-Duncan*

## ENGLISH DEPARTMENT

Right now we are still in the process of designing our curriculum for English education in Toliara. Previously we held only two classes but now we have classes everyday and sometimes three classes in one day! So in one week we are able to reach out to at least 80 people, both young and old. Each class is unique in itself because it is designed according to their needs. There are classes for the working class & the non-working, adults & children and beginners & intermediate.

The Saturday service is the climax because in that service they are

able to listen to English being spoken and not just English but also God's word. With English songs of worship sung and their meanings given in Gasy no one wants to miss the next service.



best they can do is to invite their friends.

With the direction that this nation is taking now, sooner, rather than later English will become a language that everybody should know. So our contribution covers both the church and the nation.



## About Toliara. . .

Toliara in Southwest Madagascar is the poorest region of Madagascar and one of the poorest areas of the entire world. Toliara is the capital of the Atsimo-Andrefana region and the Toliara Province. It is a port city that imports/exports commodities such as sisal, soap, hemp, cotton, rice, and peanuts. The city has a large slum population and faces many challenges such as extreme poverty, unemployment, poor infrastructure, lack of schools and educational opportunities, and idle youth and crime. The people in the Toliara region are generally subsistence farmers and speak Malagasy. Toliara is one of the least-reached areas with the gospel and includes many who have never heard the name of Jesus Christ.

## Praises

- We've received identity cards and are waiting final processing of two year visas from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
- There is good progress so far in understanding and speaking the language.
- The Lord has opened doors for ministry and we are already seeing much fruit.
- We are adapting well to our new home and culture in Toliara.

## Prayer Requests

- The Lord of the harvest to draw people unto himself.
- A good mastery of the language.
- To fully adapt to our new culture.
- For good weather—the long rainy season begins in November and is often accompanied by cyclones.
- For health and safety

**THANK  
YOU  
FOR  
YOUR  
SUPPORT!**

## KIDS CLUB

Noises are heard from a distance and one wonders what could be happening. An unusual language is being spoken but then there seems to be an understanding of some sort anyway. It only gets clearer when you get closer. It is not just noise but serious work going on.

This season being a holiday, most children have travelled from all over the country to visit their friends and relatives, and just to enjoy themselves. So it happens that there are many children in the

surrounding neighborhood. With my little Gasy language I assembled them together and committed one hour every day where they can come to my house and learn a few common things in English as I enrich my Gasy as well. They are excited to hear me say a few scriptures in their language and sing a few songs as well. I take that opportunity to also teach them a few simple English worship songs. Now a few of them are coming with me to church and will not accept to remain at home on Sunday. -Victor

## SUPPORT DUNCAN AND VICTOR

### IN MADAGASCAR

Financial contributions needed

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Church Army Africa

Madagascar Missions (Duncan/Victor)

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