

# OUTREACH REPORTS: Madagascar

## REPORT: Madagascar 2005

26 April 2005

Friends in Christ,

Believe it or not, the Madagascar '05 outreach is over and the team is safely back at home. Before saying anything else, I just want to thank you for your prayers and support, and for everyone who made this outreach possible in whichever way. Thanks to the involvement of people like you, the willingness and sacrifices of the team and the Lord's blessing and love for the people who does not know Him, this outreach was once again a huge success.



Above: The South African members of the team in full "war fig" (thanks to Ronny) –l. to r. Miles, Gretchen, Buks, Annemarie and Manie. Crouching in front Any and Juan.

## SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES

### 1. Working Method

As in the past, the team flew to Tamatave (Toamasina) on Madagascar's east coast and from there travelled by "bush taxi" northwards until the road ended. From there we went by boat on the river until the rapids made it impossible to go further, from where we had to walk about 4 hours to the first of three base towns. In each of these three towns a family vacated their bamboo house for us to live in and we worked in the town and in the immediate vicinity of the town.



ABOVE: After the bumpy 8-hour ride in the bush-taxi it was great to savor the fresh air and beautiful landscape ... until it started raining (whats new?).

## 2. Reaching out to the children

With Any in charge, we gave special attention to the children this year. We reached out to them in a very informal and playful way (most saw soap-bubbles and balloons for the first time!) in order to create a platform from which to share the love of Christ.

The Gospel was also shared by means of puppet shows – which was not only popular with the children, but also with the adults. As the people in the bush cannot speak any other language as Malagasy, one team member (usually Miles Penford or Any) had to stand in front and tell the story, while behind the scene Gretchen, Annemarie and Buks had to ensure that the puppets keep up and Victor interpreted the story to the people – indeed a challenge!



Above: Miles (left) tells the story while Victor (in white shirt) translates. Behind the “curtains”, Annemarie, Gretchen and Buks gave life to the puppets.

### 3. Mime shows

An effective way to explain specific aspects of the Gospel, is through short mime shows. Usually the residents of the villages met at a central place and as usual, they flourished on the teams' antics. In the past Buks has proven himself as a true Oscar aspirant, especially in his role as the devil. Juan definitely wins the Oscar for the best newcomer with his convincing role as the gangster in the "Twine scene" (I don't know why it bothers me so much that both were so good in these roles...)



Above: Juan (the sinner in "bondage") and Buks (the devil) in action during the "Ropes"-mime.

### 4. Leadership seminar

During the first half of the outreach a leadership seminar was presented in our base town. It was attended by about 30 existing and prospective church leaders – some of which walked through the mountains for 3 days to be there! Many of these leaders are currently at the head of congregations that came to existence as fruit of past years' outreaches and several are enrolled in the 3-year Leadership Training Program. During the seminar Juan, Victor and I gave training on basic aspects of Christianity and what it means to "be the church". Leaders were also challenged to become involved on a bigger scale in the spreading of the Gospel to thousands of unreached in the area. Some of them testified that God really touched them during the seminar, for which one can only thank the Lord and trust that he will enable them to go back and apply what they have learnt.



Above: Buks (with cap) greating some old friends from previous outreaches. Some of the leaders had to walk for three days through the bushes (5 days' walk for "normal people" like us) to attend the seminar.

## 5. JESUS film:

As always, the generator, film projector and other equipment had to be carried all the way into the bush with the help of local carriers. The Jesus film (with Malagasy soundtrack) was shown on 5 occasions and over and over again there were people who had literally walked kilometers through the bushes to see it.

Beforehand I explained the Gospel in context to help the people understand where Jesus fits into God's plan with man (remember they have no Christian background). After the film, Victor explained the Gospel again and people who wanted to accept the Lord as their Saviour were invited to stay behind. Many reacted on the invitation and were lead in a prayer of surrender. (Please pray for the difficult road of spiritual growth that awaits them, as well as for Victor and his team who will have to do the follow-up.)



Above: Victor (in blue shirt) leads new converts in a prayer of surrender after the film show. Please pray for their spiritual growth.

## 6. New class:

Another result of the outreach was that a group of prospective leaders were identified to form a class and to become part of Philadelphia's leadership training programme on the island. Victor will visit this group monthly and train them by means of the Timothy course (of which phase A has been printed and is used in Malagasy) over the next 3 years. Please pray for him and for them.

## 7. Motorcycle for Victor

A notable highlight at the end of the outreach was that we could finalise the purchase of a motorcycle for Victor. He has prayed for this for very long and was overwhelmed with joy to hear that the Lord has provided in his need (thank you for your faithfulness, Ruveix). This means that he, like Norman in Zimbabwe, will not have to stand for hours next to the road and waste time waiting for public transport, but that he can get to classes easily and quickly to give training.



Above: A very proud and excited Victor on his new motorcycle.

## 8. Need for expansion

While we thank the Lord and give Him all the glory for the great things He has done in peoples lives during this outreach, we came to the overwhelming realization that there are still millions of people in those remote areas who has NEVER heard of the Lord. We realized that the Lord is calling and challenging us as an organization, but also wider as the Church of Christ, to do more to get the Gospel to them. At this stage we still do not know exactly how it should be done, but I want to ask you to pray with us urgently that the Lord will give us a clear vision and also the people and supplies to fulfill such a vision. (We will keep you posted on how this matter unfolds.)

Yes I know this was a mouthful, but it was as short as I could do it. Obviously one cannot add EVERYTHING that the Lord did during this outreach, but at least it gives a basic idea. I also want to say thank you very much to the team – a fine group of people - for their commitment, adaptability and unity. May the Lord make it possible for each of you to come along again next year!

Lastly I would like to ask that you continue to pray for the work in Madagascar (but also for Philadelphia's work in Zimbabwe and Madagascar). Pray for new converts, but also pray for Victor and his team who will have to handle all the follow up work over the next couple of months. Pray specifically for Victor,

Philadelphia's Project Manager, and the approximately 40 church leaders whom he is currently training. Lastly also urgently pray with us that the Lord will guide us on how to expand the work on Madagascar to be more efficient.

PS: On our return 4 team members became quite seriously ill. In 2 cases blood tests confirmed malaria but the cause of the other 2 could not be determined without doubt. Thank you for everyone who has prayed for our recovery – the Lord heard and we are all up and about again.

Stay well and God bless!

Yours in Christ

- Manie  
(Cell 082 925 4125)

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NOTE: You can view more outreach photo's on the Photo Album page!