



In this letter

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To Work

Wheels for the Gospel

Contact

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Mandate form (UK donors).

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Where do we live?

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Newsletter May 2018

Newsletter May 2018

From Maroamboka: hello everyone!

After our visit to the Netherlands we have safely arrived back in our village. We have settled back into village life. Katja has started teaching our children and Jurgen has begun telling bible stories in the villages we have been in contact with since 2016.

Home Again

On 3 and 4 March we have travelled from Den Helder, the Netherlands, to Antananarivo, Madagascar. Upon our arrival we have taken the time meet with missionary and Malagasy friends in the capital, shop and get our car repaired and checked. It took a little longer than expected: our car went through MOT thrice before obtaining the clearance!

We arrived in our village on March 23. There was a lot of cleaning to do (the cockroaches had moved into our larder), but no substantial damage was done. The rats only gnawed through most of our jerry-cans, otherwise our cat seems to have become an able rat-catcher. A lovely surprise were the 2 kittens that had been born about 2 weeks before our arrival.

Unfortunately the pumps were not working at all. We asked the president of the fokontany (village head) why there was no fresh water for the village. The answer was that the filter had clogged up since the first cyclone of the season – in December! It took a lot of talking and asking on Jurgen's part to speed up work on the filter, but from April 19 the pumps have been working properly again. We are happy not just for ourselves, but mainly for the villagers. We have a water filter making even river water relatively safe to drink. Our neighbours drink the water from the rice fields without purifying it. As a consequence many people have tummy-aches, especially young children.

Any News?

At the end of a Malagasy greeting comes the question: 'Any news?'. Alas, we heard a lot of bad news from our friends. Firstly Menja, the local teacher and our translator, broke up the relationship with his fiancée. This hurt his reputation in the village, as many people there are related to his former fiancée. On top of this he has been without pay as he is not allowed to teach pending an investigation by the school board. This is not only bad news for him, but also for the village children who are without tuition. Menja has found himself a different job in Sandrohry, about 2 miles from here.

Two other neighbours have also moved away. Gan – Issa's and Dani's friend – and his parents moved to Sandrohry as dadan'i Gans work here had ended. The family was very dear to us, so they are missed. A month ago maman'i Prisca left her husband and moved 15 minutes up the road. She still passes by our house regularly though as the local shop across the road is nearest to her. We have felt unbalanced at times by these bad tidings, feeling for our friends but also counting our own loss of seeing our friends less.

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However, the good news is that we have gained new friends! In April we got a message from Tim, an American missionary living in Manakara. He had been wanting to visit us for a long time and now made it happen. After his visit we were invited to his house. We had a lovely weekend with him, his wife Anna and their 2 children. It has been very encouraging to hear that they and 2 of their team-members also work amongst the Antanala, seeking out remote villages and sharing the gospel in the local dialect. They had done many surveys along the national road, but never noticed our road. Tim remarked that apparently God has not overlooked the villages along our road, but sent us: another confirmation we're in the right place!

To Work

After about a week of house cleaning Katja has started to educate the children. They are motivated and are doing well. We even had time to throw in some physical education on Dani's specific request. It is good fun to work out together. At times, it was very hard to concentrate on learning though as a group of local children hung around our house making a lot of noise calling out to our children. We decided to ignore this behaviour and it has worked. We can now teach and study in relative peace.

During our first term here Jurgen and Menja have translated 40 bible stories and life lessons in the local dialect. Jurgen is still working on the translations: translating them into Dutch for understanding and practising his pronunciation. On May 8 he has started to tell the stories in one of the villages we have been in contact with since before we moved here last year. He walked to Tsiombivohitra with Abbey and was well received. It is about 1,5 hours walk from our house. He now visits the village on Thursday mornings at 10 to tell the stories. About 30 people have joined so far, showing great interest in the stories and their application.

This month Jurgen also started storying in Tanambao and Ambohitsara, 2 villages both over an hour's walking distance away. Then there is Beono, which is too far to walk. As Jurgen needs enough time to prepare the stories he is not sure whether he will have time to start telling the stories in Beono as yet.

Wheels for the Gospel

Towards the end of this letter we ask your special attention for our car. We have a 4 wheel drive car to get us home and out of the area again. It is a strong car, but when the road is very wobbly or wet – which happens often near the rainforest – we cannot travel safely. Jurgen has asked a mechanic friend to fit a locking differential (diff lock) under the car to gain a better grip, even when the road is a mini landscape of potholes and hills and meandering rivers. Especially in the upcoming rainy season (from October onwards) this will make a huge difference. It will not only get us in and out of the area, but also enable Jurgen to visit villages beyond walking reach effectively.

A diff lock is expensive though: about Eur 2.500. It has already been ordered as it is essential to our further ministry, but our car fund is insufficient to pay the upcoming invoices. Apart from this technical improvement regular car maintenance is costly as our road puts our car to the test most every time we travel. So far we spend about Eur 2.000 a year on maintenance. Manual labour is cheap on Madagascar, but the car parts sometimes cost up to thrice the usual price in Europe.

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and donate to our car fund to keep our wheels on the road. You can use this form: <http://www.jurgenenkatja.nl/files/documents/Supportform-other-car.pdf> Or directly: 'AIM International' at Wageningen IBAN: NL91 RABO 01 55 6 57 712 Please mention: **Project Missionwork Madagascar – Car**

You can also choose to give through our fundraiser on Facebook: <https://web.facebook.com/donate/1122621321227739/>

All other information can be found on our website: <http://www.jurgenenkatja.nl/?p=59&lang=en>

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That's it for now. Should you like to follow our adventures in between newsletters (we hope to send the next letter in August) we invite you to visit us on facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/jurgenenkatja>) where we regularly post.

Until then: God bless and goodbye!

Jurgen and Katja Hofmann
with Vanya, Issa, Abbey, Dani and Simeon

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Things to pray for:



We are thankful because:

- 1) that our friends have remained in good health during our absence;
- 2) that home educations works well in our family and situation;
- 3) that the first stories have been told and well received.

Pray for/that:

- 1) present and future hearers of the gospel in Tsiombivohitra, Tanambao, Ambohitsara and Beono;
- 2) a fruitful preparation of the story sessions and language acquisition by Jurgen;
- 3) our health: we are still plagued by many (skin)infections.

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