



In this letter

Breakthrough

There is More

Things to pray for

Contact

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Newsletter February 2019

Dear friends,

We are travelling from our house in Maroamboka to the capital. We are staying the night in a small tourism place called Ranomafana. We will get some rest before we travel on to Tana tomorrow, about 12 hours from here. We really need some rest, a different surrounding and the fellowship of our mission friends there. Our expectations were right: with the arrival of the motorbike the work has been lifted up to a higher level. Jurgen can do much more than before. We are tired but satisfied!

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In our last newsletter we've told you about our 'first village' Tsiombivohitra: how we started our work there, how it went well, but then appeared to stop completely during the coffee harvest. Luckily, the people were still eager to hear the Gospel when Jurgen came back in November. The pictures of the bible stories were still hanging on the wall and Jurgen was welcomed in. In December, Jurgen shared the story of the two roads: the broad road and the narrow road from Matthew 7. This story encourages the listeners to choose for a live with Jesus: a difficult but very rewarding life, which leads to eternity. The wife of the king, nendrin'i Melice, said that she was seriously considering following Jesus. During the Christmas period we visited the village as a family. After some good social talks, Jurgen decided to repeat some of the stories.'

The story of the two roads got interrupted by nendrin'i Melice who called out: 'I am on the narrow road! Later she added: 'I go to heaven.' Also, her husband, the younger king of the village, said he believes in Jesus now. We are very happy about these testimonies!

After a long wait Jurgen has finally started his visits in Beono. This village is about 11 km away from Maroamboka but that is not a problem with the motorbike. Every week the king makes it clear he is very happy with Jurgen's visits. Among the weekly listeners is the president of the fokontany, a kind of deputy mayor. The king is the traditional ruler, the president is appointed by government. Both men see it as their responsibility to take note of the stories on behalf of their village. They also regularly discuss any practical consequences of believing in Jesus. Often there is a group of children who must be very quiet. The king is strict and does not want to miss any of the stories.

In Tanambao, the Malagasy missionary Doris, together with his wife, is doing a good job. About 3 months after Jurgen started to share the stories, they came to live there.



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Now, about 20 young believers gather on Sunday. Doris asked Jurgen to come and teach the story series and the subsequent practical lessons during their church services. During the week, Jurgen also teaches the children at the school of the village and they really enjoy it. So he goes to Tanambao twice a week.

In the nearby village Ambohitsara the door seems to close. Jurgen has often talked to the king - also a witch doctor - and noticed that there is increasing rejection. The last 4 times they said: "No time!" Fortunately, some children from the village go to the school in Tanambao, so they get the chance to hear the stories and how to be saved. We continue to insist by offering the stories weekly. We hope and pray for an opening, but for the time being school children seem the only opening in this village.

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Finally, the developments in our own village. There is a church near our house where mainly women and children come. There was only something to do for the children during the public holidays. The president of our fokontany who is also deacon of the church asked Jurgen to tell the stories to the children, an hour before the regular church service begins. It is a special time: about half of the church is filled with adults, eagerly listening in! Despite the fact that there are believers in our village and even a church, the level of knowledge is low. Through the lessons on the Sunday morning we carefully try to denounce social abuses in our village, such as diminishing respect for the elderly, alcoholism, theft, and the practices of the many witch doctors in our village (our village is notorious in the whole region). The president said to be happy with the lessons: 'At least they listen to you', he sighed.

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All in all, Jurgen is away from home pretty often. That requires a lot of preparation. In addition, he regularly goes to Sandrohy to keep in touch with Menja, our translator. We have asked Menja to translate the Gospel of Luke into the local Tanala dialect. It's hard and difficult work, he said. We asked him to start this work in June last year, and he is now halfway. To speed things up, we have promised him a bonus if he finishes the translation of Luke in early March. Who knows...

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Last period we unfortunately lost a lot of time with the water supply. We've had all pumps repaired back in 2017, but at the moment only 2 out of 8 pumps are still kind of working - if there is water pressure, that is. It is very frustrating: washing yourself with water that has dead frogs floating in it is a bit too adventurous, even for us. We were very happy with the heavy showers of the past months. Together with the president we try to tackle the problem differently now: we have again bought materials to replace what is broken, but this time locks will be installed on the pumps and operators will be appointed.

Just before our departure
 Jurgen and Issa are fixing
 the road near the house.



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If everything goes as it should, all pumps will work, people will pay a small amount per month and the materials will be carefully handled. This way we hope to come to a system that will also work without our help (and money!), even if we no longer live in Maroamboka. Unfortunately things take a long time here: the materials have been bought two months ago and are still waiting for the plumber to come. Meanwhile, children are getting sick because they drink the water from the river. Sigh!

Finally, of course, there is home schooling the children. Things are going well, but teaching is becoming increasingly difficult. We previously thought that teaching older children would take less time than children who have to learn to read, write and count. Not so. Older children need just as much time and attention, only in a different way: older children learn more from the conversations about the subjects, from critical consideration. That is great fun and interesting, but sometimes it appears that after a good discussion one hour has just been tagged away! Fortunately, we can still find enough time for stuff that really matters, including time to relax.



The children say goodbye to the kitten before he moves to Tsiombivohitra.

At the same time, we also experience the blessings of ageing children in the home: Vanya (14), can already cook several dishes and can be sent to do some shopping in the village store, while Issa (12) likes to help with 'real men's work'. Abbey (10) and Dani (7) regularly come home with fruit and help with making jam or dessert. Simeon (3) likes to gather the eggs from our chickens.

At the end of our newsletter we want to tell you again how happy we are with the motorbike. We were able to buy it thanks to your support. We are of course also grateful for all other gifts and support through prayer and contact. It keeps us going and frees us from the many bothersome things that so easily distract from other important matters.

Stay tuned:

<https://www.facebook.com/jurgenenkatja>

Here we share regularly about our smaller and bigger adventures.

Finally, we've got a surprise for you... Check out our Youtube channel:

<https://youtu.be/k1woO-n7QC0>

Until next time!

With love from the family Hofmann





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Things to pray for:

We are thankful because:

- 1) of the conversion of the king of Tsiombivohitra and his wife;
- 2) we are able to do much more with the motorbike;
- 3) of the small group of young believers in Tanambao.

Pray for/that:

- 1) the king of Ambohitsara will open his heart for Jesus;
- 2) the translation work will be finished soon;
- 3) we will manage to establish a good system for the water pumps in our village.

