



Newsletter August 2021

Dear Family and Friends,

It's been three months since our last newsletter. Of course, we sometimes post things on social media, but we know that many of you still like to read a more extensive letter. No problem! We have enough to talk about.

Sickness and the Gospel

Summer temperatures in the Netherlands and winter on Madagascar. This means that we have less rain and colder nights... Very cold, sometimes only 16°C, brrr. The big advantage of winter on Madagascar is that we hardly see any cases of malaria any more. After the last newsletter, it seemed like just about everyone contracted malaria. We know many people in the capital who work diligently at clinics, and so we were able to buy enough tests and medicine, from another clinic we even got a few boxes for free! It's so good to know that we have the same goal in mind. Our friends in the capital come from diverse church backgrounds. From super traditional to Pentecostal churches. We know of each other that we love the Lord Jesus and, as true brothers and sisters, we try to be there for each other.

As mentioned, as far as Malaria is concerned, it has become quieter. It was also a great opportunity to share the Gospel. People came from far and wide for advice. Over time, we were able to estimate whether someone had malaria or an advanced worm infection. The symptoms are very similar but progress much faster in case of malaria. As we treated the sick, and we told them about the two golden rules of God. *Love the Lord your God with all that is in you, and love your neighbour as yourself.* We had the opportunity to explain to them that we see them as our neighbours and that we could help them just like the Lord Jesus helped those around Him.

Babies

Mothers do not breastfeed other people's children, even if it means that the child dies. It is a taboo, it is not allowed by the ancestors. What to do when the mother of a child has died? Good baby food is not available here, you have to go to the big city for that. But it will cost you a small fortune. Babies as young as two weeks are then 'nurtured' on rice and sweetened condensed milk. In short, infant mortality is high on Madagascar.

We all know that trusting in Jesus saves, but that it can become immediately visible in a practical sense is always a pleasant surprise. When the Lord created Adam and Eve it was very good. We are still witnessing this today. We have now had several families visiting with babies whose mothers had passed away. There is also a family who have put their trust in the Lord and are therefore not afraid of the ancestors. They asked Katja for advice. Katja looked at the woman holding the baby and asked if she had nursed children herself in the past. Yes? That is beautiful. The second question: *"Do you still have your monthly period?"* Again an affirmative answer! Great, because that means the woman can start feeding the baby. *"But I'm totally dry..."* (and the woman shows her breasts). *"No problem,"* said Katja, *"the Lord has made you wonderful. Just begin, and you will see that milk production starts on its own."*



A week or later they came by again, with a happy baby and a nurturing (new) mother. This is what the Gospel does! It frees people from fear and saves lives, not only in eternity but also here and now.

The Gospel of Luke

It is ready!! The Gospel of Luke. Yes, the translation has been waiting for a while, but now we have 100 copies in print. Jurgen hadn't been in the capital since March, but the office staff made sure that, as soon as we came, we could take the printed booklets with us. Last month the moment was there. The booklets look great.





The price per piece (€ 1.64) means that we will look at how we sell them. This price represents about one and a half day's wages. Just giving it away isn't such a good idea. Many Malagasy are focused on receiving and less on giving.

We want people to understand the value of the translation. After consultation with Christian friends in the area, we decided to distribute the booklets for 0.50 Euro.

While writing this newsletter, the first copies are already gone. Just now a deacon from the Lutheran church came to our house with 4000 Ariary (1,-- Euro) in his hand. He was eager to buy two copies so that he could teach the people in their congregation in a language they really understand. Jurgen also gave him the entire story set.

While he was waiting on the porch, one of the children said: "Hey, that man looks happy, what's going on?" Well, many of the people who recently came to us were sick. So yes, the joy of this brother was surely noticeable.

Other Initiatives

Africa Inland Mission Madagascar has been approached by other mission organisations. One of these organisations, SIL, mostly works on translations. We have been in contact with them before. SIL has had its eye on the Antanala language for some time now, and would like to take steps to translate more material. The Antanala language is divided into three subgroups. The Gospel of Luke which we have translated is in the Antanala language as spoken in our district. Yet, it is also well understood in the other two districts. SIL has asked if they can use our materials. No problem of course!

Besides SIL, there is another organisation. The name of this organisation has escaped us, or it has not been mentioned, that is also possible. This organisation also heard about our work and has been in contact with AIM Madagascar. The focus of this group is on equipping and strengthening the local churches. An invisible border runs from Manakara all the way to Fianarantsoa. We live approximately in the middle of this area. Many Muslims live south of this border. Slowly but surely this group is moving north. Many churches are not able to cope with this Islamisation. With our translation, the organisation wants to see whether education can be optimised within this region.

It is interesting to see how the Lord God directs all things. He uses the weak and turns it into something strong. Before going to Madagascar, we never thought we would be doing translation work. Anyone who has ever heard a real translator, for example from Wycliffe Bible Translators, will undoubtedly have noticed the passion in their voices. Passion for grammar and passion for all things language realed. Well, Jurgen is more of the school: *If it doesn't go the way it should go, then it has to go the way it does.* Nope, Jurgen is very satisfied when people understand him (even if it is a little). But be that as it may, now we find ourselves with 100 copies of a user-friendly translation ready to be distributed. God is good!

Harvest team

There is also a plan to bring a team of students to the area. We call this concept 'harvest team'. The idea is that a group of Malagasy Christians will come and live in our area for a few weeks. The intention is that they will be taught about missionwork in the morning, and that they will be able to put it into practice in the afternoon. Much of these lessons will be given by a Malagasy Christian. Jurgen, and possibly also Katja, will help them to understand the culture of the rural setting (in our area).

We truly hope that these Christians will realise that they are perfectly capable of reaching their own people with the gospel. There is a persistent notion that this kind of work can only be done by official ministers and foreign missionaries. But didn't God give us all His Holy Spirit?

Manoa, an employee of AIM-Madagascar, has now taken the first steps to gather information from potential candidates. It does take some organisation. Contrary to what you might think, it is still quite difficult to get it all off the ground. Candidates must get enough support to be away from their families for a month or two. This means that their environment must learn to give. As mentioned before in this newsletter, this is a difficult concept for many Malagasy. Many live with the assumption that they have nothing and always receive too little. Many Malagasy live their lives from day to day.



Brigitte and her husband are teachers in the Lutheran church.



While this is a major challenge, it is certainly not the only one. Another point is that the candidates will have to forgo the luxuries they may be used to in the big cities: electricity, running water, public transport, and an understandable language. Yes indeed, they will have to learn the Antanala dialect. All in all, we think it's a fantastic opportunity to motivate local Christians to spread their faith.

Jesus film

Jurgen told and explained the whole series of Bible stories in Beono, a village about 7 kilometres down the road. He hopes to return to this village with Doris & Alphossin to show the Jesus film.

Doris & Alphossin like to help with occasional translations (the film is not yet available in dialect) and to answer questions. Pray that this plan may go ahead as well. It would be so nice if the people in Beono would see that the Bible stories do not stand alone but that they are really God's word. Pray that the people, especially the king (Iaban'i Velotia), will exchange their old ways for the narrow but beautiful way of Christ.

Our Family

The last time we, as a family, visited the capital was in January. Last July we were able to see our friends again. We shared our adventures and enjoyed the hospitality. We met new people, including a Dutch family (the Nagel family) who work for MAF. But also the youth club, play and sleepovers made it into a big party for the children.

After we had completed the necessary paperwork and arranged various other matters, we went home again. With eight... Eight? Well, if you count the dog as well. Friends had found the four-week-old puppy—abandoned, dirty, and cold—in the rice fields. Whether we wanted to take care of her. Everyone was in love with the puppy eyes and the decision rested with daddy. Well, daddy didn't want to be a killjoy... But honestly, he enjoyed the dog as well ;)

The normal routine has now returned. The children are busy with their schoolwork again. Of course that doesn't always go smoothly, but in general they enjoy it. This month we will also regularly have to break school for parties. Simeon celebrated his sixth birthday on the 29th of July, we have 24th anniversary on the 14th of August, on August 23 we hope to celebrate Abbey's 13th birthday, it's Jurgen's turn August the 28th (47), and Vanya will be 17 on September the 1th. What it going to be special month!



Finally

We've asked that you dedicate us to the Lord in your daily prayers. Not just us, but the Antanala people as well. Many of the people here are still very much trapped in a world of fear! Pray that they will recognise Jesus as their Lord and Saviour.

In turn, we pray for you, our brothers and sister in other parts of the world, that you too may be a witness to the people around you, and that you too may grow in the love of the Lord.

We'll leave it at this. We hope that by reading this letter you have a good view of our work and adventures.

We sincerely wish you God's blessing!

Katja & Jurgen

Vanya, Issa, Abbey, Dani and Simeon Hofmann



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www.jurgenkatja.nl/en/

Support us!

Mandate form (UK donors)

Donors from other countries can contact the following offices:

US: receipting.us@aimint.org

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Please go to our website for more details about how you can support us.

Things to pray for:

We are thankful because:

- 1) we serve a great God;
- 2) the Gospel of Luke is ready;
- 3) the booklets are received with happiness;
- 4) we feel supported and encouraged by you and many others.

Pray that/for:

- 5) the local Christians learn that they too can preach the Gospel;
- 6) we will trust the Lord in everything;
- 7) we will be strengthened in the Lord;
- 8) the local Christians may grow in faith;
- 9) the Gospel of Luke will reach many hearts;
- 10) the initiatives of the other organisations.

Where do we live?

Location Openstreet Maps:
Maroamboka, Madagascar-
[21.59506/47.87529](https://www.openstreetmap.org/?lat=-18.7529&lon=47.59506)

Location Google Maps:
Maroamboka, Madagascar-
[21.595055,47.875621](https://www.google.com/maps/place/Maroamboka,+Madagascar/@-18.75621,47.595055,15z)

Disclaimer

Thank you so much for your interest in our ministry to the Antanala people on Madagascar. We greatly appreciate the love and support of the wonderful people that God has put around us. This ministry is much larger than our family, and we cannot do it alone.

You have either signed up to receive this newsletter or you have been an important part of our lives and we thought you would like to know about our journey. If at any point you no longer want to receive this newsletter, please unsubscribe:

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