



Newsletter August 2022

A festive month! August is a month to look forward to for us. Simeon turned seven on 29 July, we will celebrate our 25th wedding anniversary on the 14th of August, Abbey will turn 14 on 23 August, Jurgen will turn 50 (48) on the 28th of August, and finally we will celebrate Vanya's 18th birthday on September the first. That's four birthdays out of seven in a short period of time. And let's face it, who doesn't like a party?

25 Years of Marriage!

We arrived on Madagascar almost seven years ago. Since then, we have seen quite a bit of the country. We have always tried to combine work with pleasure. This was not always easy, because life in the village required us, as soon as we had the chance, to take care of all kinds of things that could not be done from the village. So, holidays were always linked to a visit to the visa office, the garage, the dentist, and, for example, the supermarket.

Now, from the capital, it is different. Here we can just close the door behind us and leave. And that is what we did. With the prospect of our 25th anniversary, we saved up for a real tourist holiday to a tropical island off the coast of Madagascar. Île Sainte-Marie (Nosy Boraha) is known for its beautiful blue sea, with lagoons and coral, and the annual visits of humpback whales are also popular.

Thanks also to various generous donations, we travelled to the island at the end of July. Initially, we were going to go by public transport, but we were informed by MAF that they still had seven seats left. MAF flies regularly to the island but does not always have all the seats available. For a bargain, we could fly with Wouter Nagel (the Dutch MAF pilot). What an experience! We were picked up at the airport and taken to the MAF hangar where our friends gave us a tour. The flight took just over an hour... This is just a little different from taking the boat and bus—a journey of more than 21 hours!

We had a wonderful time. Kayaking, snorkelling and lazing around every day. It was also the time of year when the humpbacks arrived in large numbers off the coast to mate and breed. We could come very close with a boat. Magnificent animals! The boat suddenly seemed very small when one of the adult whales swam underneath us. A little further on, another one jumped out of the water while a third one dropped his (or her) tail on the water with a thump.

A visit to the island cannot go without a trip to the only pirate cemetery in the world. The pirate cemetery is the final resting place of pirates who amassed incredible wealth by robbing merchants during the Golden Age of Piracy in the 17th and 18th centuries. The stories go that there are still treasures hidden on the island... The treasures we have found are beautiful shells and wonderful new memories as a family.

Translation

The first contacts have been made! In the last newsletter we said that we are going to look for ways to spread the translated Lukas gospel and the other materials. Meanwhile, Jurgen has made contact with several Malagasy Christians who regularly travel to the south to do missionary work.

Elodie and Nathanael are still in the early stages of their ministry but saw all kinds of possibilities. Elodie knew how to find a printer who could print 5000 copies in one day for a small price. Their first idea was to give away the booklets of the Gospel of Luke together with food parcels.

Sedera is well known in the missionary community in Madagascar. He goes out regularly to give training. His work is mainly to train trustworthy Christians who in turn can share the gospel in their neighbourhood in the yet un-reached areas. Sedera was also pleasantly surprised to hear the gospel in the Antanala dialect.

Finally, Jurgen is in contact with JeanClaude Kouassit. JeanClaude runs a Christian bookshop in the capital. Many missionary workers get their materials from him. JeanClaude would like to see the work and see how he can use it and how he can help us with the distribution.



Maroamboka

In the beginning of July, Jurgen and Abbey travelled to Maroamboka again. The car was as good as ready, so it could be tested immediately. And it got tested! The road to our village was worse than ever. Such a test drive is fun as long as you don't get any technical problems. It became a bit tricky when Jurgen discovered that the four-wheel drive system stopped working. That meant they had to get out of the area with only two driven wheels. On top of that, the brake line tore, and the brake fluid ran out, resulting in: No brakes!

Driving without four-wheel drive is manageable... but no brakes is a bit trickier. Fortunately, Patrick was in the village. Patrick has travelled regularly (as one of the few in the area) and knows a thing or two about cars. Jurgen closed the ruptured brake line and together with Patrick he put new fluid in the other three brakes and bled the lines.

Jurgen and Abbey spent the next few days getting all the school materials together and loading them into the car. They also loaded up all the bedding, toys and a storage cupboard. The car was full again.

But the day arrived they had to go home. It rained every day and that made the road, especially in front of our house, very slippery. The car was heavy and to get up a slippery slope of more than 30° is quite a job. It worked and they were on their way. A few kilometres further down the road there was another steep, long slope. The road was so bad there that the car literally sank to its axles in the mud. The first attempt failed. The car did not get up the hill. Jurgen had to go backwards and slide down towards a narrow bridge with the river on either side. The second attempt! Full throttle, in first gear. The poor car didn't know what was happening to it. We will put the video Abbey has made online. You can see this second attempt for yourself... Car sickness guaranteed!

Sambivelo

The new trip to Maroamboka is already on the calendar. On August the 16th, Jurgen, together with Issa, hopes to go again. We still have a lot of things to pick up, but this time we also want to take Sambivelo to the capital. Sambivelo will learn how to help people with health problems. Accommodation has already been found for him, close to the hospital where he can work and learn for 6 months.

Sambivelo is very much looking forward! We have agreed with Tanja Hock (the German midwife who set up the hospital) that they will provide for Sambivelo's livelihood and that we will pay the rent for the house.

The intention is that after the training, he will go back to Maroamboka and stay there for at least two years. During those two years, he can help people with simple complaints and advice on health.

Trainings

Our very first Malagasy friends were Parany and his wife Miary. Parany has often helped us with, for example, a Malagasy driving licence and car papers. We have talked a lot about ministries and each time it became apparent that Parany has a heart for his un-reached countrymen. He is a deacon in a Lutheran church and as such he has had good biblical training.

Together with Manoa (office employee of AIM-Madagascar), Jurgen and Parany will look at how they can train local Christians in evangelism and missionary work. While we still care about the Antanala, Parany's heart goes out to the Muslim community in and around Tana, and Manoa mentioned the Gujarati as a group that is not reached yet. The Gujarati of Madagascar are generally descended from immigrants from West India in the province of Gujarat.

Family life

We are so incredibly privileged! In our 25 years of marriage, the Lord has given us five children. All five of them, each at his or her own level, love the Lord Jesus. We spend a lot of time together as they are all homeschooled and also go along with Jurgen during his work. The children enjoy everything they learn.

Life in the capital has brought peace. When we leave, we don't have to put everything away because of the rats. No more hoping every day that the water carriers will show up, and when it rains, Jurgen doesn't have to go outside to keep the ditches going. Clothes don't have to be washed after one day, and the vegetable market is just around the corner. It may sound strange, but these things can sometimes put an enormous strain on the family.

Jurgen & Katja

Serving God on Madagascar



We have done it for five years with love, but we are glad that the Lord has given us a new direction.

We notice that the peace and quiet improves the children's learning performance. Besides learning, we also have more time and energy for hobbies. Crafts, video editing, programming, sports, and drawing. It all comes into play. Katja enjoys the large garden... where there are no pigs or chickens running around, eating away the vegetables and destroying other plants. She has already seen the first fruits of her work. She likes to walk through the garden to enjoy the sunshine and the birds in the trees. Jurgen, too, now has more space for his love of apologetics (defending the faith). He regularly makes short videos about various subjects which he then posts on his website (www.apologet.nl).

Thank you!

We hope that after reading this letter you, like us, are also looking forward to what the future will bring. We can make plans, but one thing we know for sure: *"whatever the Lord has planned, will come to pass."* (Proverbs 19:21)

We feel privileged to have so much support in our work. Thank you for your prayers, compassion, support, and encouragements!

Together with you, we want to continue to trust in the Lord! For God is good, all the time! And all the time, God is good!

Many blessings!

Katja & Jurgen

Vanya, Issa, Abbey, Dani and Siemeon Hofmann





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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) we were able to celebrate our 25th anniversary;
- 3) God has blessed us in our work and new home;
- 4) we see that there is a lot of interest in translation work;
- 5) we feel supported and encouraged by you and many others.

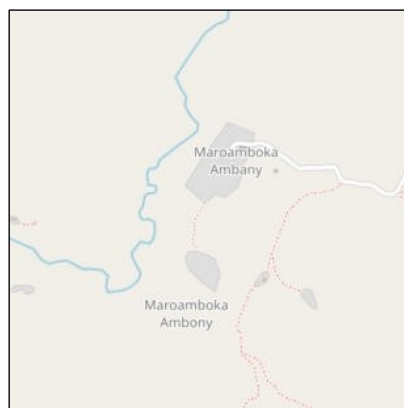
Pray that/for:

- 6) the continuation of our ministry on Madagascar;
- 7) the cooperation with local Christians;
- 8) the Lord will go before us in the ministry from Tana;
- 9) Sambivelo may soon get used to life in the big city.

Where do we serve?

Location Openstreet Maps:
Maroamboka, Madagascar-
[21.59506/47.87529](#)

Location Google Maps:
Maroamboka, Madagascar-
[21.595055,47.875621](#)



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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