



# Phil & Vala Long

*Taking Life to the forgotten people of Madagascar*

## Mad 4 Life Ministries

*"I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." John 10:10*

[www.Mad4Life.org](http://www.Mad4Life.org)

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### Praises & Prayer Requests

- (Praise) Gabriel Accepted to SBU
- (Prayer) Malagasy language study
- (Prayer) Planning for Tabby's wedding and travel

March 19, 2019



Dear Pastors and Prayer Partners,

Salama from "The Big Red Island" of Madagascar! Well, I am reporting another first in our lives and ministry in Madagascar; I made a sweet Malagasy woman cry. Now, I would love to tell you that the tears she shed were tears of joy or conviction because of my masterful skill behind the pulpit with Scripture and the Malagasy language, but that is not even close to what happened.

Once a week Vala and I go shopping. Now, if you have read our previous letters, you know that shopping day literally takes all day, so in the middle of shopping day we have lunch at a little restaurant called Au Bungalow. It's just a tiny little place not far from the shops and markets. Now that we have a few months of Malagasy training under our belts, I try to use as much as I can. The vocabulary is not necessarily easy, but the sentence structure is completely different than English and French, so I just try to make simple sentences to practice my Malagasy on other people. The Malagasy people are great when it comes to encouraging us. They literally make us feel like champions when we say just one word - even if we mispronounce it. So, there we were at the table when the server brings a small bowl of special Malagasy sauce and a few slices of baguette. As soon as I see her approach the table with the sauce and baguette, I immediately recognize an opportunity to use some of the new vocabulary that I have learned. Let me pause here and say that this sauce does not look like anything special. However, the burn that takes place in your mouth is just shy of touching your tongue to the sun! It's HOOOOT!

Now, in my Malagasy book there is a picture of a mean dog and a spicy-looking pepper. Next to the pictures are three Malagasy words; "masiaka" and "ratsy fanahy," therefore I understood this to have the meaning of "mean" and/or "spicy." Now, if I would have said, "This sauce is "masiaka,"" our super nice server would have understood what I was saying. If I would have said, "This sauce is "ratsy fanahy,"" she may have been confused because unlike "masiaka," "ratsy fanahy" only has the meaning of mean. However, I did not say either of those phrases. No, instead I pointed to the sauce and said, "Ratsy be (*bay*) ny saucy!" and waited for her to acknowledge what a great effort I had made so I could raise my hands in victory for another sentence used in my new language. However, she did not smile and, not only did she not smile, tears began to well up in her eyes as she said, "Ratsy?" Knowing I clearly did something wrong, I quickly switched to French as well as idiot hand signals to let her know that I wasn't sure what just happened, but I was trying to say the sauce was spicy. She then politely and graciously told me the word I was looking for was "masiaka." Then Vala, half embarrassed, informed me that I had just told our waitress that the sauce she brought me was very bad because I put the word "be" at the end of ratsy, which literally translated means "big bad." So we will chock that up to a big missionary language fail!

Someone who did not have a big fail this month is Gabriel. He applied to several schools for college over the last several months. He had narrowed it down to 3 or 4 until a few weeks ago. We are very proud to tell you that he has been accepted to Southwest Baptist University in Bolivar, MO where he will be majoring in Intercultural Studies and has also been invited to be a part of their honors program. He has been awarded several scholarships for academics and field of study. It is not going to be easy for us to drop him off at school, but we are so proud of the man he is becoming.

Thank you for praying for him and our family, and remember, we are also praying for you.

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