



# 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)

July 20, 2021

Dear Pastors and Prayer Partners,

Bonjour and Salama Ireo from the Big Red Island of Madagascar!



Have you ever heard the story of "Goldilocks and the Three Bears?" Of course you have! Here in a minute I am going to tell you about my new "Three Bears Outreach," but first let me say, things have been moving along great since our last update!

If you remember our last update, we were doing church services during the week because the government went into a partial lockdown that only affected the weekends. Since then, the lockdown has been lifted and vaccinations have begun making their way to Madagascar. As some of you know, I hate needles, but I am ready for life and ministry to get back to normal, so our family have all had our first of two COVID inoculations.

Since we have resumed having church on Sundays, we have continued to reach and teach in the area where most of those who go to our church live. We have also begun to do some outreach in a new area, and that is where the "Three Bears" come in.

There are many unique aspect of the Malagasy culture; one of those aspects is their love of stories. I love to tell a good story. One of the stories I love to tell is my version of "The Three Bears." The kids here love it because at the end, Goldilocks screams and the kids all jump and then laugh. So we went into this new area and even took two kids who go to our church with us, and as we are talking to people, I could sense that the people in this area were being polite but, at the same time, wondering why this big, strange, white guy was walking around in their neighborhood. We had a couple of kids and a couple of university-aged young adults come to church the next day.

The next time we went out, again people were polite but standoffish. Well, we passed a small group of about four kids and started talking to them, and they did not seem too interested in us being there. That's when I said, "Hey, do you like stories?"

Suddenly, I had the attention of everyone. "We like stories!"

"Well, have you ever heard the story of 'The Three Bears?'"

"No."

"Would you like to hear it?"

"Yes!"

"Well, you go and get ten friends to listen and I will tell you the story."

It was like the Flight of the Bumble Bee. They were running everywhere until they had all their friends to hear the story. So I sat down on the ground with them, told the story of "The Three Bears," and just like all the other times I have told it, the kids jumped at the end and laughed, then we gave them information about our church. I told them I would have another story for them at church the next day if they would come.

We went to another part of that new area and, again, we received the same feeling of, "Why are you here?" So, I told the story again and, by the end, I looked up and there were kids and adults listening to the story. Just like before, I told them I would have another story for them at church the next day. Over the last few weeks we have had over twenty new kids and adults come from that neighborhood.

Here is how you can be praying for us. We continue to see people saved and growing spiritually from the first couple of areas in which we have been working. Pray that progress continues. Then, please begin praying for us as we reach out in this new community. Pray that people would come to Christ and begin discipleship.

Speaking of discipleship, we want to ask you to pray with us as we have another first in our ministry. Recently a lady told Vala that she would like to go through discipleship. She is excited about the opportunity to get into the Bible and to grow, but this is where the challenge comes and why we are asking you to pray. She will be the first person for Vala to lead through discipleship who is very limited in reading and writing. We know it will take longer to complete, but if she is willing, then we want to do what we can to help her grow in Christ. We are certain she is gifted by the Holy Spirit to serve in our church, and we want to see her grow in her faith and discover all that God has for her! Pray that the Lord would give Vala wisdom on how to lead her, and probably several others.

Let me close with a thank you. In our last update we told you about wanting to help the school with whom we partner as they try to build a few new classes as well as refinish some of the old classrooms. We asked our supporters to pray about helping us with \$5,000.00 so the school could update what they have. We want you to know that we have received all of what we asked you to help with. They are so thankful for your help and so are we!

Thank you for praying for us here on "The Big Red Island," and know that we are also praying for you.

### Phil & Vala Long



Young adults Bible study when we couldn't meet on the weekends



Handing out information about the church in a new neighborhood



Phil telling the story of "The Three Bears" and Sarah translating



Classroom will be painted and desks will be rebuilt



Our team all got the first COVID vaccination

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