



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

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Dear Pastors and Prayer Partners,



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

Well, I guess the 3rd time is the charm! Let me tell you what I mean. Since our last update, we have been busy. The church had its very first baptism service, new people have begun our discipleship program, and then, of course, we had an awesome Easter service. However, the Covid cases here on the island began to rise over the past two months as well. One of our Malagasy friends told us that last year the Malagasy thought Covid was a rich man's disease because only rich people seemed to get sick, but this year everyone seems to be getting sick, so they aren't saying it's the rich man's disease anymore. Well, our friend was right. Even the missionary community has not been immune to Covid and its different new variants. Then, the week after Easter - it happened. We were locked down for the third time, but this time it has been different. The president and the leadership realize that a third full lockdown for a country where most people live day-to-day would have devastating consequences. So, Monday through Friday we are on a partial lockdown. The schools, universities, and the airports are to remain closed. No one except those who are hauling food and supplies can come in or out of the city, but people can still go to work if they are healthy. And, there are no meetings of more than 50 people. The weekends are a different story. Everything and everyone is on full lockdown; everyone must stay at home. Even though it's understandable, it's still hard to stomach when you are trying to get a church off the ground. So, because the weekdays were still open for the people to move around, we decided to adapt to the situation. We have been able to continue with discipling people, moving those who were meeting for discipleship on the weekend to a weekday, and then, we and our partners decided to move church services to Thursday and Friday afternoons, keeping inside the guidelines of the law. So far, the Thursday and Friday meetings are going well, but it's obviously not the same as Sunday mornings. When the Covid cases were going up, there seemed to be some hesitancy on the government's part to allow any Covid vaccine to come to the island. However, that has changed in the last few weeks and the first shipment of vaccinations have made it to the island. Hopefully, we will be able to see some light at the end of this long tunnel very soon.

I also wanted to give you an update on some of the things we asked you to pray with us about from our last update. First of all, as I told you earlier, ***we have had some more people begin discipleship. We also have another person who has been through discipleship now leading someone else through the program.*** The other thing we asked you to pray with us about was our next Visa. It seemed we were not able to get a Visa longer than 6 months under the new Visa laws, which meant as soon as we were issued a new Visa, paperwork had to begin to apply for the next one. However, we found a Visa specifically for pastors and missionaries and applied. ***Last week we received a 2-year Visa! Thank you for praying with us in these areas!***

Before I finish up with this update, ***I want ask you to pray about an opportunity with us.*** One thing we have observed as we have ventured out on this church plant here in the capital of Madagascar is that land for a building is hard to come by and very expensive. So we and our partners, the Brown family, have been building a relationship with a school that has allowed us to use their excellent facilities to meet for church. Recently, they let us know of a building project that they need help with. ***We would like to raise \$5,000.00 to help the school we are partnering with.*** Not only will this help the school, but ***it will help cement our place at the school for future use while also giving us greater access to needed space for outreach as well as church activities. This will open tremendous opportunities for outreach not only in the school but out in the community as well. Would you pray about giving to help us with this project?***

Thank you for praying for our family, our church; and us and remember, we are also praying for you.

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