

Madagascar

SIM is involved in medical ministry, outreach and discipleship, and children's ministry in Madagascar.

Madagascar is the world's fourth largest island. It lies in the Indian Ocean, nearly 402 km (250 miles) off the southeast coast of Africa. Madagascar is filled with friendly people, and time moves at a slow pace. Among the notable sites of Madagascar are the limestone needles in the west, the fabulous Baobab-alley, and the many beautiful beaches.

Current SIM Ministry

Madagascar is one of the world's poorest nations. Its constitution guarantees religious freedom. The Malagasy people have experienced wonderful spiritual revivals in the past, and almost half the population still consider themselves Christian. But today most congregations are spiritually dead, and theological seminaries for the most part accommodate astrology, animistic customs, and Marxist theory. Islam, which first came to Madagascar a thousand years ago, is seeking to make a strong comeback. Good theological training for church leaders could make an enormous difference for the church in Madagascar. Africa Evangelical Fellowship (now SIM) entered Madagascar in 1987 to work with another mission group in a medical and agricultural ministry. The Bible Workers Group (GBT) and the Association of Bible Baptist Churches (FFBBM) are now carrying on the ministries of training church leaders and planting churches that were begun by those missionaries. SIM has recently entered into a ministry partnership with the FFBBM. Evangelism and church planting is at the heart of every FFBBM ministry. SIM's partnership encompasses areas such as medical ministry, micro-enterprise, church capacity building and church training needs.



Unreached People

Many Malagasy villages have never heard the news of Jesus' love and forgiveness. The Malagasy Tankarana (40,000) are Muslims and have never been reached, nor have the Chinese and Indian minorities. Several people groups, including the Tsimihety (550,000), are largely unreached.



History of Christianity

During the seventeenth century, sporadic efforts were made to establish Catholic missions, and a number of missionaries died or were killed, but little was accomplished. King Radama (1810-28) introduced European culture and welcomed missionaries who opened schools and churches and developed a written form of the Malagasy language.

The translation of the Bible completed in 1836 is still used.

Queen Ranavalona I (1828-61) turned against Christianity in 1836, expelling all Europeans and ordering the death of hundreds of Christians. However, the Christian community continued to grow, and their numbers actually increased by the time the missionaries returned in 1861. Queen Ranavalona II became a Christian at her coronation in 1869 and welcomed new missionary activity.

Dissension between Merina rulers and the French caused the wars of 1883-85 and 1895-96 and resulted in the French taking possession of the island to make it a French colony in 1896. A new wave of terror followed with more Christians killed and many churches destroyed. Moreover, French anti-clericalism resulted in severe restrictions being placed on church work. This was alleviated to some degree by the 1897 entrance of the Paris Mission whose strong protests to the French government helped to bring about a more stable situation.

The London Missionary Society was the first mission to arrive, in 1818. Through its efforts, by 1836, 30,000 had learned to read; 2,000 had become Christians; and the translation of the Bible had been completed. In 1866 the Norwegian Missionary Society sent workers to the southern part of the island, and two American Lutheran bodies entered in 1892 and 1895. The Seventh-Day Adventists entered in the 1920s, and two small Pentecostal groups are also at work: Swedish Free Missions, and the United Pentecostal Church.

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Please pray for

- a partnership between SIM and FFBBM characterised by trust and respect.
- strategic ministry opportunities and the right French-speaking missionaries called by God to serve.
- spiritual awakening among the millions of nominal Christians.
- spiritual victory over the dark forces of animism and ancestor worship.

Opportunities

[Researcher and Writer for Madagascar Field Development](#)

[Biblical and Ministry Training Facilitator](#)

Stories

[This isn't how it was meant to be](#)

Partnering



LIFT

To find out more about the LIFT team who are going to Madagascar in September [click here](#).

SIM missionary, Debbie Simpson who is from Kells Presbyterian Church, N Ireland is serving at 'Hopitaly Vaovao Mahafaly,' (The Good News Hospital) in Mandritsara, Madagascar. The Judkins family from Christ Church, Balham, South London, will be joining the team at The Good News Hospital in 2010.

A workshop is being built at the hospital and LIFT has been asked to fit a roof. This workshop will provide training and employment for the local people.

To find out more about LIFT go to www.liftni.org