



# FRIENDS of MADAGASCAR MISSION

Vol 11:1

webpage: [www.MadagascarMission.org](http://www.MadagascarMission.org)

Spring/Summer 2022

“Go...make disciples...baptizing...teaching them...and remember I am with you always...” (Matthew 28:19-20)

Dear Friends of Madagascar Mission,

The Malagasy Lutheran Church is all about evangelism. Frequently I receive stories of evangelism outreach, such as the story below shared by Rev. ANDRIAMIHAJA Jean Norbert, President of the Andriry Betroka Synod (SPAB).

“Evangelist VELOMENTSOA Tsiverianiara Rodolphin, is an evangelist in the village of Rehovotsy (sponsored by Jan Pritts who lives in Illinois). In this village there is a boy by the name of Matio who was tormented by the devil and became paralyzed and could not walk. His parents took him to several Malagasy wizards or witch doctors but no one could cure him. One day the Christians from a neighboring village came to Rehovotsy to preach the Gospel and saw this sick and paralyzed child. They shared the story of Jesus’s love and power over the evil spirits. The parents came to faith and little Matio was healed from the demonic evil one, became strong, stood up and walked (compare the story of Acts 3:1-10). But the people of Rehovotsy became upset and drove the Christians out of the village. At this time evangelist Rodolphin was assigned to serve in this village who had previously driven the Christians out, but he bravely went and shared the Gospel to ‘Go...make disciples...baptizing...teaching them...etc’ and now more than 60 people have come to believe in Jesus. Recently 28 people (15 children and 13 adults) were baptized! To God be the glory, amen!”



Evangelist VELOMENTSOA  
Tsiverianiara Rodolphin



Matio and  
his parents  
and sibling



Village of Rehovotsy Christian

PEACE IN CHRIST!

The Rev. David P. Lerseth

**SUPPORT:** If you are interested in supporting an evangelist like Rodolphin (Cost \$800/year), please contact us!

## Ambatoratsy Antalaha Children's Prison

### Gift-Matching Challenge

Someone in Australia who wishes to remain anonymous has given a gift of just over USD\$14000 towards initiating a project to alleviate what I believe is one of the cruellest instances of treating imprisoned children in Madagascar. Madagascar operates under a French correctional system in which people are "guilty until proven innocent". As a result, prisoners, including children, can languish in these hellish prison environments for years until the system provides legal representation to take them before a judge for sentencing.

The Ambatoratsy Antalaha prison is located in the beautiful seaside resort town of Antalaha with cafes, beaches and churches. It is the kind of idyllic tropical destination most of us would love visiting for a family holiday.

However, in this mini-paradise, just a few minutes from the deli "La Saveur Vanille" and an Anglican Church, is the prison where about 131 children are incarcerated for minor offences such as stealing vanilla. They are crammed into two concrete-floored rooms, each of 6m x 6m (19.5 ft x 19.5 ft), which provides barely enough body space for them to lie down. In addition many of these children are undernourished and sick due to prisons providing insufficient food and medical care for their survival. Their families are unable to supplement the low-nutritional value cassava they are forced to live on, which is an expectation of the prison system in Madagascar.

Through the local network of Friends of Madagascar Mission (FOMM) in the island nation, we have initiated a project using this generous gift to build beds and buy mattresses for these children to be able to sleep off the concrete, rat and cockroach infested floors. But we want to do more. We would like to raise further funds for two pastoral evangelists to support these children by visiting them frequently to share the message of hope through the gospel and teaching them vocational skills so they won't engage in activities that return them to prison after release. FOMM's vision is also to see cooking classes for children start in the prison to both supplement their diet and equip them with marketable skills on leaving prison.



Staff reports by Dr. David Isaacson, FOMM's Researcher and Grant Writer, from Victoria, Australia

**SUPPORT:** If you would like to partner in supporting this project by helping us double the amount of \$14,000 gifted so far, please visit the [madagascarmission.org](http://madagascarmission.org) website and contribute financially or if you prefer, you may send your gift to FOMM, PO Box 46381, Eden Prairie, MN 55344, stating that your gift is toward helping the imprisoned children. 100% of your designated donation will go towards the project and even \$1 will make a difference in alleviating the suffering of these children.

### Micro-Internship Program Launched by Friends of Madagascar Mission (FOMM)

Many people have a desire to make a difference in the world by contributing time, energy and talents to projects that are known to make a positive impact on reaching people with the Gospel and alleviating the effects of poverty. However, living far away from the source of the need, taking care of one's own family and needs and busy lifestyles often create barriers to people engaging in impactful projects.

Friends of Madagascar Mission is launching a "micro-internship" program where people can volunteer their time, energy and talents to projects in smaller chunks. A micro-internship does not have to take you away from your normal lifestyle for months, weeks or even days. In fact, a micro-internship can be just a few hours where you do a small task that contributes to a bigger project. For example, you may initiate and carry out a local fundraiser by organizing a garage sale. You will always have the satisfaction of knowing that every cent raised by FOMM goes to designated projects. (continued on next page)

The FOMM website will soon be setting up a new page with more information about micro-internships. This page will outline projects and areas of involvement. What could a micro-internship look like for you? You could:

- ♦ Write an article for our website or newsletter
- ♦ Do a presentation in your Church, school or seminary
- ♦ Produce a video
- ♦ Do research such as identifying trusts and funds where FOMM can apply for financial resources for projects
- ♦ Do a small fundraiser with your friends
- ♦ Use your social media influence to let people know about the needs of the people in Madagascar. Travel to Madagascar to learn about the people and their needs first hand
- ♦ Use your own creativity to come up with a project to support FOMM's projects

### **SUPPORT: What's in it for you?**

Everyone at FOMM is a volunteer, so your interest in participating goes beyond financial reward to the personal satisfaction of making a real difference to the lives of people in need in Madagascar. In addition, you will receive a thank you letter and a certificate to add to your resume about your volunteer project. Many employers are seeking employees who have a social conscience and FOMM can provide you with a tangible opportunity to demonstrate your care and compassion for those in need.

## **Do You Have Beautiful Feet?**

"How beautiful the feet of those who bring Good News of good things!" (Romans 10:15)

Do you have beautiful feet?

Many "bring" the good news in a variety of ways. An evangelist speaks to a stadium full of people, preachers of local churches share the message each week to their congregation, a mother tells of her love for Jesus with her children and teaches them to pray, Sunday School teachers tell of Christ to the youth in a class, a friend witnesses to another over a cup of coffee. Many people have beautiful feet.

But, there is another powerful way to have beautiful feet and "bring" Good News. Each time we believers give generously to support the spreading of the gospel, the Spirit uses our gifts to build Christ's kingdom. That is why I believe that each of you who faithfully support Friends of Madagascar Mission have beautiful feet!

Friends of Madagascar Mission spreads the gospel of Jesus in Word and action through its various programs and projects. We empower the sending of evangelists into many villages, people believe, and churches are founded. We share the love of Jesus in prison ministry. We support Bible schools to equip believers. We support nutrition programs to feed the hungry. We enable the continued education of girls. We print Bibles in native languages. We provide education for the visually impaired. We dig wells to provide "living water" to regions who have none. Beautiful feet, indeed! Through financial support, prayer, and encouragement to the leaders of Madagascar, FOMM is "bringing" the Good News.

All who are partners of FOMM are "bringing" the Good News too. We are providing the financial resources needed for the Spirit to build the kingdom of Jesus Christ in Madagascar. Thank you to all of you who give regularly and faithfully to FOMM! *You have beautiful feet!*

Staff reports by  
Rev. Lee Laaveg,  
FOMM's Development Director  
from Bemidji, MN



## The Vernes Story

Small congregations can do mighty things for the kingdom of Jesus Christ! Vernes Lutheran is a shining star of generosity, with a passion to share the Good News of Christ world-wide.

Vernes Lutheran is a small country church north of Fosston, Minnesota. It was founded by Norwegian immigrants in 1884. In terms of size of membership, it is no longer as large as it once was in years past. But, it is still doing amazing things as a powerful witness for Christ. The congregation worships about 40-60 people per Sunday. They have a long history of being very mission minded, both locally and internationally. They are not living with a survival mindset to keep the proverbial doors open, rather they have a desire to be used of the Spirit to do great things for Christ and His kingdom.



So, when the congregation heard about Friends of Madagascar Mission's "Living Water" Well-drilling Project, and heard the stories of people struggling to survive without clean or adequate water supplies, they were stirred in their hearts. Hearing about FOMM's big, audacious goal to dig up to 100 wells in the near future at \$20,000 per well, they decided they wanted to help.

Vernes Council voted to commit to sponsor a well! The Easter offering for this well-drilling project totaled \$2700. The women of the church donated the monies from the Easter breakfast. This Memorial Day weekend, the women also hosted an all-church rummage sale, sponsored also by Thrivent and raised another \$3,450 for a total to date of \$6,150.00. The congregation believes that they will fulfill their pledge within a year or two!

Are there other congregations, regardless of size, who will repeat the Vernes story? Or perhaps there are individuals or families whom God has richly blessed, who might feel led to sponsor a well in Madagascar. God uses His people's generosity to do amazing, powerful things.

**SUPPORT:** Every gift, large or small, empowers the sharing of the Good News in Word and action. The "Living Water" Well Project literally saves the lives of people who need water to survive, or to irrigate their crops. God bless Vernes Church for her generous commitment. And God bless all who support the "Living Water" Well Project! <https://app.donorview.com/wWjJb>

## Friends Sharing Madagascar Mission

**Are you one of the friends of Madagascar Mission?** As you are reading this, more than likely you are. Ours is a fellowship made up of people who have a long, family connection to missionary work in Madagascar as well as people who have learned of our collective work fairly recently. Our aim is to continue to improve our "New Approaches for the 21st Century". We have even expanded our volunteer staff, and I am one. My primary duty is digital messaging, and I am turning to you for help.

**We use social media to:**

- 1) let you know of progress on our programs and
- 2) to try and make new friends. But to paraphrase Apostle Paul, how will they know if someone doesn't tell them? I am asking you to not just keep up with us through these newsletters but also follow us online and on social media.

(continued on next page)



Staff Report by Rev. Eric Swensson, Director of Digital Media Management from New York, NY



As I get information from Rev. Lerseth or others, it goes up immediately on our Facebook page ([madagascarmission.org](https://www.facebook.com/madagascarmission.org)), our Instagram <https://www.instagram.com/madagascar.mission/> and Twitter <https://twitter.com/missionsmad> (@missionsmad) Please follow us on these and check that you want notifications, and then please do share as you are able. On Facebook, if you click the "Share" at the bottom right corner of the post, a menu will appear, then use one of the top two options to either "Share now" or "Share to feed". Almost everyone is on Facebook and this is a very good way for us to make people aware of the progress of our fellow workers in Madagascar. Twitter is also a great way to share. We aren't able to write as much but if you "retweet" and some of your friends do the same the message has an even greater chance of "going viral" as we say. I always include a link to the website, often to the app we use for people to make a secure online donation.

I am happy to report we have been making more videos since 2021 and am confident you will enjoy these. We even have had a volunteer appear who has made videos for us, some of which are quite enjoyable. We post them on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, so please look for them and share, share!

**SUPPORT:** Thank you very much for reading this message on using social media to share our message. It may seem like such a little thing, but I assure you that it can even have eternal consequences, not only in the life-saving and soul-saving work in Madagascar, but there are people in the West who can be reached with our positive message and who knows, they might be drawn to one of our churches to learn more!

One of the joys of serving in the Friends of Madagascar Mission is receiving reports from the programs and projects that FOMM supports. Such is the case with the largest program we support, the Prison Ministry Madagascar Program (PMM). In our 2022 budget we have increased our support so currently there is a prison ministry in 22 prisons.

**SUPPORT:** There are 83 prisons in Madagascar and our Strategic Plan is to be in all of the prisons within 5 years. A gift of any amount will help start more prison ministries.

We recently received the following letter from one of the leaders of the PMM, the Rev. Theodoric Rajaonary.

"Dear Rev. David Lerseth,

Greeting in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. I was in Ambositra City on May 10-11, 2022 to teach and train 21 new volunteer from the Malagasy Lutheran Church in Ambositra. (This mission ministry is carried out in each prison by members and the pastor of the local congregation where the prison is located.) The first day was spent teaching the new volunteers the Biblical bases for our ministry to the prisoners. And then, the second day, we officially opened the ministry by visiting the prison and conducting a worship service with Holy Communion. There were 385 inmates in attendance at the service. After the worship, we met with the Regional Director of Penitentiary Administration and discussed our mission and ministry. (The Penitentiary Administration seeks FOMM to be in more prisons because they see a great difference in the prisoners who are a part of our ministry.)

Thanks be to the Lord, and thanks to FOMM for supporting us in this work. The Ambositra Lutheran Church has decided to visit the prison every Saturday morning for the worship service. Please pray for us, because on June 20-24 we plan to travel to Farafangana, Madagascar to open another new prison ministry program."



Pastor Theo (center) and the volunteers who are trained to lead the prison ministry.



Staff Report by  
Rev. David P. Lerseth, President and  
Executive Director  
of FOMM from



The Prisoners at the first worship service at the Ambositra Prison.

## **“Cottage Industry Strategy”**

What is this strategy? The plan is to have each program supported by FOMM to have a project to make something that will be marketable in Madagascar as well as for exporting to other countries to sell for a profit. The products must meet a quality standard in order to have an appeal in the market places. The profits from each program after expenses are paid, will be used to support the programs and allow FOMM to expand each program.

The reason for this strategy? While it is great to support the mission programs with gifts from donors like yourself, it is also important to expand the mission programs and secondly to help teach self-sustainability with the Malagasy people. FOMM is committed to helping each mission program to learn about stewardship and becoming more independent.

Below is one such program. In the Prison Ministry Madagascar Program (PMM) we began a few years ago, and disrupted by the pandemic, a Vocational Training Program to teach the prisoners a skill. Our prayer and hope is that the prisoners may use that skill once out of prison to make a living.

Recently a training session was conducted in a women’s prison on how to weave baskets.



**SUPPORT:** All of the items made through the “Cottage Industry Program” will be available for sale through FOMM. For information on how to acquire them, please contact the FOMM office.

## **HONORING THE LEGACY OF FORMER MISSIONARIES**



**Sharilyn (Nielson) Walters** and her husband Mark served as missionaries in Madagascar from 1982-1993.

She died on January 20, 2022 and the memorial service was held at Eastridge Community Church in Hermantown, Minnesota on June 11, 2022.



**Dr. Rev. Arndt F. Braaten** and his wife Hazel served as missionaries in Madagascar from 1952-1968.

Her served as the president of the Manantely College. His memorial service was held at Roseville Lutheran Church, Roseville, MN on May 27, 2022.



**Katharine Quanbeck** and her husband Dr. Stanley Quanbeck served as missionaries in Madagascar from 1964-2004 (40 years)! She served as a nurse in many different capacities. She died on January 14, 2022 and her funeral was held at Bethel Lutheran Church in Northfield, MN on January 19, 2022.

## SPECIAL GIVING

(January through April)

1. Thrivent Choice Dollars	\$ 3,384.00
2. Network for Good	\$ 474.00
3. Fanjahira-Manasoa Cemetery (Missionaries buried there)	\$ 25.00
4. Church Roofs	\$ 200.00
5. Manasoa Rebuilding Fund	\$ 19,720.00
6. Prison Vocational Program	\$ 591.00
7. Village Redemption	\$ 200.00
TOTAL:	\$ 24,594.00
8. Memorial Gifts	\$ 5,639.00

<u>In Memory of</u>	<u>Given by</u>	<u>In Memory of</u>	<u>Given by</u>
Robert Zapolski	Arlene Lellelid	Sharilyn Walters	Paul Hanson
Katharine Quanbeck	Norman & Ardelle Quanbeck	Katharine Quanbeck	Douglas and Mary Goke
Katharine Quanbeck	Arlene Lellelid	Katharine Quanbeck	Charles and Barbara Bucher
Sharilyn Walters	Arlene Lellelid	Katharine Quanbeck	Sonja Quanbeck
Sharilyn Walters	John and Diana Hetzler	Katharine Quanbeck	Lon Kightlinger
Katharine Quanbeck	Gerald Rowell	Dale Peterson	Mary Peterson
Robert Zapolski	Christopher Carlson	Jaona (Madagascar, Dr. Elson's father)	David and Diane Lerseth
Katharine Quanbeck	Arne and Dyanne Sather	Steve Ose	Arlene Lellelid
Robert Zapolski	Joseph and Julie Koegel Jr.	Katharine Quanbeck	Cathy Vivian Wells
Robert Zapolski	John and Diana Hetzler	Katharine Quanbeck	David and Elaine Vold
Katharine Quanbeck	John Lyngdal	Katharine Quanbeck	Shon and Vicky Schetnan
Katharine Quanbeck	Michelle Schulte-Weiber/David Weiber	Sharilyn Walters	Mark Walters
Katharine Quanbeck	Peter and Judith Dyrud	Sharilyn Walters	Carl and Ruth Vaagenes
Katharine Quanbeck	Wayne and Alyce Kivell	Olaf Dahle	Otto and LeWannSotnak
Katharine Quanbeck	Nathan and Heather Grawe	Robert Slagle	Joan Braunhardt
Katharine Quanbeck	David and Catherine Olson	Einor Ellingson	Lester and Valborg Ellingson
Katharine Quanbeck	John and Diane Hetzler	I.S. Rasoanindrina	David and Diane Lerseth
Katharine Quanbeck	Daniel and Sarah Presteng	(Madagascar: Voaly and Denise's mother)	
Katharine Quanbeck	Stanley Quanbeck		
Katharine Quanbeck	Quanbeck Family Trust		
Katharine Quanbeck	David and Diane Lerseth		

**TOTAL SPECIAL GIFTS (January through April 2022)**

**\$ 30,233.00**

## Testimonials

### **1) Jill Ritz, New Mexico**

One Sunday, before giving his sermon, the pastor of my church explained the mission of FOMM. He said that that he and his wife were able to support an evangelist and his wife and eight children for \$50 a month. He explained that the FOMM evangelists start churches, lead literacy programs, teach the bible, and tend to the welfare of their communities. I thought, "What a great investment! For only \$50 a month, I can help enable an entire community to flourish." A smart investor looks for the most return on her money, and I have been delighted to see the bounty of resources and blessings God is bringing into people's lives through the small amount I give to FOMM. Jesus gave his life to give us a great future, and I'm proud to have a small share in the company of people who are helping create that future.

### **2) Ron and Lorraine Simpson, Minnesota**

Pastor Lerseth, and the volunteer staff God has provided, center the Friends of Madagascar Mission based on the Biblical message of God's love for all. Being part of the inaugural mission trip with FOMM was a life changing experience for both of us, and has allowed us to view the Christian impact of FOMM through the various ministries (each ministry led by someone from Madagascar rather than from the outside). Growth of these missions is phenomenal, and we thank God daily for FOMM and for the support you faithfully provide.

(testimonials continued on back page)



FRIENDS of  
**MADAGASCAR  
MISSION**

P. O. Box 46381  
Eden Prairie, MN 55344

### WHO ARE WE?

We are a Christian mission organization, incorporated as a nonprofit with approval by the IRS, with a nine-member board of directors consisting of Lutheran pastors and laypersons. All financial gifts are tax deductible, and donors will receive regular reports on the progress of the project you support.

Welcome to our mission!

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Rev. David P. Lerseth, President  
Rev. Tim P. Larson, Vice-President  
Catherine Marks, Secretary  
Kirsten Schlicht, Treasurer  
Charles Eidem  
Rev. Lee Laaveg  
Loren Morschen  
Craig T. Norenberg  
Rev. Morris Vaagenes

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### Testimonials (continued)

#### 3) Sonia Meehl, North Dakota

*"I am impressed with FOMM's operating model which includes a high degree of both transparency and accountability. FOMM has a small but all-volunteer professional staff that live on three continents with very low administrative costs. They guarantee that 100% of donations are directed to groups undertaking approved projects in Madagascar. Those groups and their projects are also held to high standards of accountability, including quarterly reports and maintenance of required documentation of expenditures."*

### MANASOA BIBLE SCHOOL

In the Fall 2021 FOMM Newsletter we shared the story of the need to raise \$75,600.00 for building a new campus for the Manasoa Bible School. The response was amazing and we received \$107,528.00 for the project. As a result we approved the installation of a solar system for the school at a cost of \$40,000.00. The school at this time does not have electricity and so this will be an amazing gift for the school and its educational goals. (Note: Only 17% of the people in Madagascar have electricity.) We now are seeking to raise the extra \$8,071.91 to fund the total project.

**SUPPORT:** Gifts for this project should be sent to FOMM with instructions to use the money to pay for the remaining costs of installing the solar energy system.