

September 2006 from Madagascar

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Dear friends and prayer partners!

The last 3 months were so exciting that we considered writing a book instead of a newsletter. But still we try to keep it short give you an update from us. ☺

Like we announced before, in June/July we had almost 3 weeks visitors from the US. It was a very encouraging time and we enjoyed it a lot. All 4 of us could go to Mahajanga on the North-West coast since Gerd had 1 week of flight program up there. 2 days & 1 night we spent with Gerd in the isolated village Anjobajoba. We were a team of 8 „vahazas“ (white people) and in between the evangelism we treated all sick people, which were probably 99% of the villagers. They had NEVER seen a real doctor, only the witch doctor. One funny “sickness”: A mother complained that her son has yellow urine. We first thought she were kidding, till we realized, that her baby was probably the only person of the 400, who did not suffer from Bilharzias, which causes urine to be bloody and red. It is terrible to see, which bad circumstances people live in. But it is so amazing to see, that they are happy, sometimes happier than we are in our wealthy life. Most sicknesses and pain they have no treatment, they just have to survive it or die. John & Jackie, our visitors from the US, brought a donation, with which the responsible team could buy all kind of medicines and there was still money left for the next trip. The team, which coordinated this mission visits now regularly. Not always with the helicopter, most of the time they go by motorbike, ox carts and walk the rest. 12 hours, instead of less than 20 minutes by air.

By the end of July I finally got my Malagasy midwifery license!!! The 10 days it should take increased to 5 months. Then it took another month to get the internal papers of SALFA, the organisation I volunteer with now. But September 1st I finally delivered my 1st Malagasy Baby☺! Three mornings a week I go to the hospital now. We have prenatal care and if there is a lady in labour I stay for the afternoons. The other mornings I continue my work in the Helimission Office. 2 afternoons I have my Malagasy lessons. My week is full now and I enjoy having more pregnant ladies (mainly other white ladies) coming to our house for the check ups.

It was mid August, when Madame Lalao, our house helper, asked us for a week off because she had to travel to the village, where she was born and her family lives. The reason was that her aunt and her little sister had been murdered. The aunt was a widow already so she left 6 orphans. We offered our help to Lalao, since she was responsible for the 6 kids. After many prayers and thoughts we decided that she should bring all kids to Tana. The 4 older ones were planned to live with her and we find sponsors for the kids; the 2 youngest, a little girl and her brother, should join us in our house. When it was time for them to arrive we waited at the bus station. Madame Lalao came, but she had NO kids. Our two little ones died before they arrived here: The girl nursed after her mother was dead and got too many poisonous fluids and the boy starved to death before someone came to help the kids. They lived in a very isolated hut. We could hardly believe it and had a long talk with Madame Lalao to learn what happened. The other 4 kids stay with different family members. We decided to send Madame Lalao's husband in the village to bring back his mother-in-law and the girl who ended up staying with her, to live with Lalao's family here in Tana. We were so shocked to hear, how bad the situation in the region of our island is, that we decided to start a program for those villages. Together with a French missionary pastor we planed a program for 1 day to bring 2200 pounds of rice and to do a survey. Four weeks after the incident we arrived in the villages. We went with 2 cars for 9 hours (250 Miles☺) to the small village that was as close as possible to the 2 isolated villages. We bought rice and prepared little sacks of 5 pounds each. Then Markus, our college came with the helicopter after he finished his week of flying in the south. Gerd flew 6 people and the rice to the villages. We were quite surprised how welcomed we were. First we had an evangelistic sermon and after that we distributed the rice:



Every lady got one bag and the pregnant ones two bags. They were so happy and excited. While Gerd flew the first 4 people to the second village, I, Tanja, stayed together with a Malagasy pastor. I taught the pregnant ladies about eating better in their circumstances and with their resources; they were interested and open. After that we asked if there were sick people. Some came and it was awful to see: Infected teeth that made a hole in the cheek, boys after circumcisions with bad infections and so on. I had NO medicine to treat them, but we had a great gift: Prayer. We explained about OUR Healer and most of them were willing to receive prayer. Before we left they asked us, no, they begged us to come again. We promised to be back soon, with doctors and medicine and of course the preachers. By this time we had no clue, if we would get the finances for it but we KNEW we HAVE to go back, it was a huge burden on our hearts. In faith we committed to come back and by now we have about half of the costs covered. Aren't we serving a faithful God? In the second village the situation wasn't much better or different. The 2 oldest boys of the 6 orphans are still leaving there, in the same hut where the cruel situation happened. An uncle moved in and helps them. Finally we met the family with which the 6 year old girl is living. We want to say "Thank you" for your prayers and encouraging calls and emails in this time. It was very challenging for us, both, emotionally and spiritually. But by HIS grace we are doing fine and see HIS hand in the whole process. In Romans Paul writes that for those who love the Lord all things work for good. This is our prayer for all people who were involved: the family in the village, the orphans, Lalao's family and last but not least for us.

Here we include some pictures, to give the names a face: On top, the 12 year old girl, Madame Lalao's mother and herself. Below the 6 year old girl and after that the 2 oldest boys. We keep in touch and help them whenever we go down in the villages. November 17th till 21st will be our next time.



Again one „typical-Malagasy- Story“: Saturday evening, 7 pm: the phone rings and a missionary said quite hectic: Tanja, can you quickly deliver a baby? I asked for some details: Their pastor went with his wife -in labor- to the hospital but there was neither a doctor nor a midwife. So they called the “vahasas” (white people - who “always” know to help☺-). And they called me. Gerd helped me packing my bag. 7:10 the missionaries picked me up. 7:20 we arrived and 7:30 the girl was born. Quite exciting for me, since the room was only 15 inches larger than the bed and we were 7 people in this room. Since labor was already so hard she couldn't return home but was at a midwife's house. This midwife had already delivered 3 babies at her house that Saturday so that she was happy to let me deliver the baby. Anyway, 7:45 we walked for half a mile back home with the new mom. At 8:20 pm I was back home. I visited them again and mom and baby girl are doing well! Praise the Lord!



Pretty sure you understand that we are busy, not bored and love to serve our Lord and the Malagasy people. Even though it is a special season here at the moment: No rain for months already and therefore a bigger lack of food and resources. We are confronted with people suffering much more than ever before. Recently a lady looked into our car when we were on our way back home after shopping. She saw all the food and started to cry hard. Not easy to handle.... We asked God, what we can do and here is one idea: We asked our house helper to train a young lady for three months at our house; to teach her cooking, cleaning and shopping. We hope we can have her cook a meal a week for the poorest people in our little village where we live....



May our Lord bless you abundantly,

Your Heli-Missionaries

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