

December 2009 from Madagascar

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*Dear Church family and friends,*



The summer is here and we sure are enjoying it a lot. Most of it we enjoy having all the tropical, delicious fruits on every side of the road. Our little Fanilo would love to live on mangos only sometimes we can convince him to have some litchis though. But he is growing and developing very well. He is about the size, that Malagasy kids are, who are 2 or 3 years older than him. He loves going to school and learned a lot already. Like he has always been, he is our joy!



The political situation hasn't been resolved yet. It has been more peaceful in terms of no political demonstrations and shootings. But people aren't happy and peaceful yet. WE have had many peace talks in all kind of countries, but no solution till now. They talk about having elections for a new president in 2010, but we only believe it, when it is actually happening. People who have been here long, longer than us, predict, there won't be real peace, till after the elections. For the Malagasy folks we can only pray and hope, it will change soon – they are suffering!



The more peaceful situation changed Gerd's flying possibilities at least. There is a chance that he can fly as a freelance pilot for a Malagasy company. He is just busy working on his Malagasy Commercial flight license, to have the type rating for the helicopter added, he should fly. Many things in Madagascar are more complicated than other where in the world!



Our midwife mobile: We have a malagasy midwife working with us now. She is a great young lady who just finished her midwifery school. Her name is Vero and she is just perfect for our team and work! A gift from God!



In the middle of October, we were ready, at least from the technical side, to start our service. Only the medical license wasn't ready. Since the German Docs were about to return to Madagascar for the free plastical surgeries they offer once a year, we took our midwife mobile to town and tried to find patients downtown. After a little while a lady approached me from the back and explained, that the father of her first baby died, the father of the baby she was pregnant with was mentally handicapped and she was very lonely and in trouble and of course living on the street. That was a bull's eye! She exactly was such a lady, we want to work with! I felt like God was confirming our plans and ideas to serve the homeless women in our town. We promised that we would come to help her and all the women who were in same and similar circumstances, but only in about two weeks time. We needed the medical license for the truck. We offered her to show the inside of the midwife mobil and after she overcame her fear, she was amazed and very happy.



When we started our regular service in the beginning of November, this lady already knew our car, and our goal, our heart! She immediately told all the women close to her and we had lots of work to do that night, and every night we went ever since. For us, the impressions are going deep and often are painful. Here we want to share two stories that touched us most:

A pregnant lady came with her kids. Only recently she lost her house and the kids couldn't continue to going to school. When we asked why all of that happened, she explained that her family lately had the (so occult) "changing of the bones" event. She had to contribute so much money, that her life was destroyed. Changing the



bones means, that the dead family members are taken out of the tombs. There are big parties, lots of food, too many drinks; everybody is invited. Afterwards, the bones are wrapped in expensive fabrics and put back in the tomb – till next time, they will worship the ancestors!

There is an 11 year old boy, who always enters our midwife mobile as soon as we arrive. He sits quietly in the corner, watches every move we make carefully and interested. HE is a very nice boy, even though he spent all his life on the road, without a mother and with a father that only comes by to beat him up. When I asked him, if he had a blanket for the nights, he pulled a way too big T Shirt out under his sweater and that proudly: yes, I have! Herimampionona, that's his name,

is the first one to come and the last to leave our mobile every time. A few weeks ago, when we were about to leave, he asked me, if he could live with us. Since we already have a Malagasy child he thinks it was fine and he wouldn't cause trouble. While I tried to not fall apart and start crying, I explained him, that life isn't that easy at all. All I could do was sending him back in the rainy, dirty street. Back to a place, without shelter, mommy and daddy. I guess you can imagine how I felt that night... Especially when I was in my warm bed after a nice shower...

There are many stories we can share already, even though we kind of just started. And the more we get to know the people, the more they tell us and the deeper it touches us. But that's the reason why we started the midwife mobile: there is a huge need!

Lately we were invited at a medical meeting at the ambassador's house. The regional medical inspector from the German Embassy was visiting from Kenya and the ambassador invited all medical people to meet him. We were asked to come with our midwife mobile and the ambassador introduced it to all 80 people who were there. People like the former minister of health and head of the medical association came to visit and asked many questions. At the end of the evening, I was totally overwhelmed. The Malagasy people were deeply touched and amazed by the midwife mobile, its services and plans! They immediately wanted to multiply the midwife mobile: 5 to 10 in our town and one for each other big town in Madagascar. Mora Mora, slowly, slowly, I told them... We don't share this out of proud, only out of a thankful heart, that we listened well to God and didn't create something, that wouldn't be accepted from the Malagasy people.



Another year is almost over. For us it was a year full of surprises. The political crises in Madagascar caused that we had to adjust all our plans. Looking back it was still a good year. For the new year, we pray that Gerd can restart flying regularly. And of course, we pray that our midwife mobile service will continue to prosper and develop according to God's plans!

As a early Christmas present we had Tanja's parents visit us for a month! Always special times, when we can have times with family!

Together with a "Thank you" for partnering up with us, for all your prayers, love and support we received in 2009, we send you our nest wishes for the New Year 2010! May it be a healthy, successful & blessed one for each of you!

Your Missionaries  
in Madagascar

*Gerd, Tanja & Josia Fanilo*

<p>Phone in Madagascar 011 261 32 41 941 00 011 261 32 504 30 33 skype us @ helistorch or heligerd !</p>	<p><u>Our Address:</u> B.P. 3900 Assistance Plus 101 Antananarivo Madagascar</p>	<p><b><u>Donations &amp; support through</u></b> River of God Church 4607 68th Street Byron Center, MI 49315 (616) 531-2582</p>
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