



Madagascar Matters

"Many are the plans in the mind of a man, but it is the purpose of the Lord that will stand."

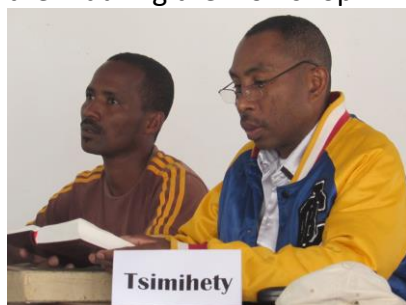
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Planes, airports & visas!

I have been on 14 aeroplanes since I last wrote. Please forgive the delay, it has been a busy couple of months.

5 of the aeroplanes were in connection with the workshop that I had the privilege of attending in Tana back in September/October.

It was a great time, meeting language consultants and the team that I would eventually join. The highlight was undoubtedly seeing 12 of the 14 members of the Tsimihety translation team and the opportunity to work with them during the workshop.



They were very patient with me as I stuttered my way through a language which hadn't passed my lips for almost 2 years! We worked Monday to Friday, from 8am to 6pm with a 2-hour break at lunch time – very intense,

mentally and physically tiring but exciting!

I am thankful that I was able to attend because I left with a much better idea of what I might be able to do during the weeks I spend in Mandritsara with the translation team.

Visa

4 of the 14 aeroplanes I took were to Brussels in an effort to get the appropriate visa required to stay in Madagascar on a long(er) term basis. The 1st time there, I was refused a visa due to the lack of a work permit (which I had applied for during my time in Madagascar in October). So, it was with a heavy heart and many questions, I left for home. 3 days later, my work permit came through and after a few days with friends and supporters in Scotland (2 more flights!) I had a whirlwind of a day return to Brussels, leaving home at 2am and getting back at 10pm **but** this time with a visa in my hand. So now I have a 90-day visa which I hope can be extended, allowing me to stay until October of next year.

Toliara

The final 3 aeroplanes transported me from Dublin to my final destination, Toliara, where I landed 2 weeks ago. I'm finally here! Toliara is a coastal town in south-west Madagascar. During the past couple of weeks, I have been struck by the fact that so far, life here is very different to my experience in Mandritsara but yet there is a strange familiarity, perhaps due to heat, smells, sounds and general Malagasy-ness of my surroundings.

On arrival, I received a warm welcome from Ada, Bev and Leoni. After a cup of home-made Indian tea, I set about unpacking the case I had brought with me. Thankfully the 2nd case, which I had sent by road, arrived safe and sound the following day. I am living with Bev in a large bungalow which is right next door to a 2-story house in which Ada and Leoni live.

The plan for the next few weeks includes some background reading for my dissertation, more studying of Hebrew, and making friends with the team's 2 dogs!

Mandritsara

Perhaps another reason why things feel a little strange is because for 12 years being 'in Madagascar' was synonymous with being 'in Mandritsara'. However, despite being in Madagascar now, Mandritsara feels so far away. Of course, the main reason for returning to Madagascar is to work with the Tsimihety translation team. Therefore, I hope to go to Mandritsara soon, on the 9th January. I am thankful that there is an MAF flight planned and that one of the seats has my name on it! I am also thankful that I will be allowed to share a house with a good friend, Vicky Hopley who is the optometrist at the Good News Hospital.

As I understand it, the 14 members of the translation team have split themselves into 4 smaller groups so that they can work at a faster pace. They meet in their small groups during the week and then all come together on a Saturday to review and edit the verses each group has been working on. If I am able to go in early January, then that will give me several weeks to work with the team before the next bi-annual workshop due to be held in March. It will also give me the opportunity to do some research for the dissertation. Then when back in Toliara, after the workshop, I will be able to continue to work on the dissertation.

These are all, of course tentative plans since I know how well-made plans can soon change in Madagascar!



Give thanks:

- the workshop that I attended in Sep/Oct and for the increased clarity of what I can do in Mandritsara and here in Toliara
- the 90-day visa that I was given
- safe arrival in Toliara of me and my luggage
- the team's kindness and especially Bev helping me feel at home in her home
- uneventful 1st round of the presidential election

Pray for:

- Ada, Bev and Leoni as they learn to live with me!
- the 2nd round of the election to be held on 19th Dec. Pray that there would not be any unrest
- a simple, straightforward extension of my visa so that I can stay until Oct of next year
- I would find a church in Toliara in which I feel welcome
- safe travel to Mandritsara in January and a good time there with friends
- productive sessions with the Tsimihety translation team
- that I would keep my eyes on the Lord, following His purpose for each new day even if it doesn't go according to *my* plans

Due to the change in the **Data Protection Act** which came into effect in the UK and Europe on 25 May this year, it has been advised that I ask you to confirm that you wish to continue to receive these prayer letters. If you receive them by posted mail, please follow the instructions on the inserted slip. If you receive them by email, please hit reply and type "Yes" in the subject box. If you have already done this since the last letter (in August) you do not need to do it again. Also, if you no longer wish to receive them, you need take no action.

Thank you for reading this and for following me from Mandritsara, to Gloucester, and now to Toliara. I really appreciate your support in prayer.

Debbie

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