



THE BROWNS

TO THE ISLAND OF
MADAGASCAR



DAN, RACHAEL, MORIAH, HANNAH & CHLOE

A Day in the Bush

It begins at 4:45 one Sunday morning each month. We quietly prepare for the day in the morning silence. Leaving our house just as the first rays of sunlight pierce the dark sky, we slowly wade through a crowded road hustling with early morning farmers come to sell their goods in the morning market. We meet our friend, a national pastor, and his family at 5:30. We ask for the Lord's blessing and protection on the day and then begin the process of escaping the sleeping city.

Typically the ride to the countryside church takes two to three hours by car and then a one hour hike to the church. On our last visit, the ground was wet with a morning mist causing a slick, muddy road which slowed our progress. After arriving in a nearby village and parking the car, we begin our hour long trek. We abandon the road and descend into rice fields which require keen eyes and a steady foot as we traverse the narrow footpaths made of mud which separate each field of rice. Having learned from experience, a slight misstep often results in a wet and muddy shoe and pant leg.

After the hike, we arrive at the country church where we are warmly greeted by a growing group of more than fifty believers and their children. They themselves have already walked as long as two hours to come for worship. On entering the church, each believer quietly bows his head and asks for the Lord to speak personally to his heart. This is followed by warm and heartfelt singing unto the Lord. Without the aid of any instrument, a woman from the back of the church begins the song and is quickly joined by all. The children, not knowing all the words by heart, bellow out in chorus what they do know. What a joyful noise this must be to the Lord!

As for me (Dan), I had the pleasure of preaching my first Malagasy sermon in April. Being my first time to demonstrate my ability (or inability) to effectively communicate in the Malagasy language, my mind raced with questions: "Will they understand me? Will the message be clear? Is my accent too strong? Is my sentence structure accurate?" Having rehearsed many times in advance and having worked through the sermon with my teachers, there was nothing left to be done except deliver it. As I worked through each page, I did my best to carefully keep my eyes on the eyes of the listeners. As every language learner knows, eyes are an international communication device! Dark, furrowed brows often mean the message is



difficult to understand. Raised eyebrows often mean, “I understand, please continue.” It seemed to me that everyone seemed to be following! As I finished and returned to my seat, our friend, the national pastor, followed up with a simple question, “How many of you understood the message?” I turned my head in suspense and was pleasantly surprised to see the majority of hands raised! Thank you, Lord! Later, our friend mentioned that this is only the beginning. From now on, every message must be in Malagasy.

As the services close for the day, we enjoy a time of fellowship with two men being trained for the ministry together with their families. The meal always includes large bowls of rice and fresh “laoka” (vegetables and meat). A short “staff meeting” is held after the meal and then followed by goodbyes. We begin our trek down the hill and to the car. The ride home is normally filled with chatter about the events of the day. We arrive safely back in town around 5pm and close our time in prayer, thanking God for His blessing and protection on the day.

How wonderful it is to be a part of this small group of believers. Though they have very little physically, they are filled with the joy of the Lord! We are blessed to be witnesses of their faith and commitment to the Lord. We thank you for your part as well in helping to reach the village of Ambohimahatsinjo with the Word of God and the Gospel of Jesus Christ.



The Browns to Madagascar

*“That thy way may be known upon earth,
thy saving health among all nations.
Let the people praise thee, O God;
let all the people praise thee.”*

Psalm 67:2-3

Prayer Requests

- For help and wisdom as we continue our studies of the Malagasy language.
- For the salvation of several individuals we are witnessing to.

Prayer Praises

- When making a follow up visit with a veteran missionary, one lady accepted Christ.
- For God’s help and progress in the Malagasy language.

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