



It's 6:30 AM, a cool clear morning with the Sun just about to rise. Not much is going on in the town as the coolness of the July morning keeps the people who are much more used to 80 and 90 degree temps from stirring too early. The truck is packed to the gills with totes of camping gear on top, bundles of mosquito nets in the back, food and water stuffed wherever we can find a place, and five of us packed nicely into the truck. Not sure if the night of sleep was sufficient but a cup of hot coffee and the adrenaline rush of what lies ahead keeps me alert. Joanna and I, along with three other Malagasy workers, are headed into the bush to Andranovao, a town of 12,000 lying 30 miles north of Maintirano. Our plan is to do a mosquito net distribution along with a teaching on Malaria followed by a presentation of the Gospel, but before we get there we still have 4 1/2 hours of dirt road, river-crossing, boulder-crawling fun to cover.

After much bumping and jostling we arrive in Andranovao around 11 AM, our plan was to eat lunch, get set up and start with the program around 3pm. However when we drove into town it was evident people had anticipated our arrival. Over 400 people were waiting in the shade of a large tree for the program to start. Some of them had left their house at 3 AM in order to make the walk into town. So much for all that time to set up and prepare! With lunch fast approaching and children making their hunger pains known, we decided to start right into the lessons rather than send everyone home and ask them to come back in the afternoon.

Joanna's lesson on malaria prevention was well received, and the people liked her props and illustrations. Wanting to make sure the Gospel presentation was clear, I had asked Lalaina, who obviously is much more fluent in the Language to handle that lesson. The people listened well and seemed to be interested in what he had to say, but so as to avoid people just saying yes to please the white man, we asked those who were interested in the gospel to stay behind and talk afterwards.

After the gospel presentation we distributed the mosquito nets to those whom the local doctor had deemed most vulnerable. The distribution went off without a hitch and many families now have better protection from mosquitoes because of it.

Afterwards there was a group women who were still waiting to talk with us, but because of cultural formalities we still could not talk as we were requested to eat with the doctor. Finally, after four hours of waiting, we made it back to our patient group of interested women. After explaining more in depth the gospel to them and answering as best I could all of their questions, I asked who would like to receive Christ by faith. All of them eagerly indicated as such, and we sat there as one by one these women prayed professing faith in Christ as Savior. One phrase that stood out was a woman's who prayed "God, today I heard something I have never heard before, but I believe it is true." That is the heart of why we are here; to share the truth with those who have never heard!

Though God alone knows their hearts, we believe that at least two out of this group that prayed really understood and believed. Only time will tell. Now we are working on a strategy to get back and start discipleship classes as all were eager to learn more and asking when we could come back. Please pray for wisdom on this. In a few months the river will rise so we can no longer reach the town until next dry season and the closest airstrip is a 23 kilometer hike away. It was awesome to work in a place that had a true thirst for the things of God. Thank you so much to all who prayed and for your continued support of this ministry!

Trusting always in Him, Bobby and Joanna Burdett

*Let them give glory
unto the Lord, and
declare his praise in the
islands. Isaiah 42:12*

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