

## CAPRO MISSIONS People Group of the Week:

### *The Malagasy of Madagascar*

The Malagasy are made up of about 26 indigenous peoples people groups that Call the largest African island home. The Betsimisaraka, Merina, Sakalava and Antesaka, just to name a few. The Merina people found mostly on the highland of the island gained control of the whole island in the 19th Century, a fact still resented by the lowlander peoples.



#### Language(s):

Malagasy is the primary language, but French and English are also official languages though not widely used. There are about 20 other indigenous languages, and Literacy is about 70.6% which is in decline. Malagasy is the only indigenous Language with Scriptures and the others only have parts of the Bible translated.

#### Country(s):

Madagascar, the world's 4th largest island – 1,600 km long in the Indian Ocean 600km off the coast of Mozambique is their homeland. The island has a great degree of flora and fauna that is unique to it. A substantial number of Malagasy can also be found in France, and other islands in their region.

#### Religion:

There is officially religious freedom, but notably the power of the old Malagasy folk religions remains persistent. The four mainline churches have great influence over government and are suspicious of the emergence of younger, more charismatic groups. Of this almost 30 000 000 people, about 25% of them are still unreached with the Gospel, only 6.1% of them are Evangelical even though they are 50% Christian. Evangelical Annual Growth Rate is 3.5% as compared to the Global Rate of 2.6%.

### *Prayer Points*

- Praise God that Church growth continues even in the midst of political and environmental crises. The most notable increases are of charismatic and Pentecostal groups, who have also endured some opposition. The Holy Spirit is moving among students, young people, and laypersons, causing the multiplication of small congregations and house groups.
- Madagascar is locked in a battle with poverty making it one of the poorest countries in the world, even though it is often called the "8<sup>th</sup> continent" and is rich in ecology, ethnicity, and history. A combination of manmade and natural disaster has added to this fact. Please pray that God would intervene and put in power those who want to lead for the good of the people.
- The old beliefs still prevail in many ways, despite the growth and spread of Christianity. Many who call themselves Christians compromise to the old beliefs. Veneration of ancestral spirits, and witchcraft is widespread among those who claim to be Christian. People are Christian on the surface, but many have little understanding of the biblical message of salvation. Please pray for a deep encounter with Biblical truth.
- Many tribes have not been reached with the Gospel of Jesus, some of the reasons are that they are found in remote areas of the island like the jungles. Please pray that there would be a focus to reach these people with the gospel of Christ even if it would cost us, the Church of Christ, more. Also pray for the CAPRO work in Madagascar of Church unity and Church planting.