



## NEWS FROM THE MISSION HOUSE

Winter 2014

### COME AND EAT ELEPHANT



**M**adagascar is world famous for its unique flora and fauna; it has rainforests and areas of outstanding natural beauty plus it is a prime source of precious stones, especially sapphires. It is one of the world's leading suppliers of vanilla and it has many natural resources that are mined and exported.

And yet with all these good things and more, it is listed among the world's poorest countries, 61% of the population are aged 24 and under, there are serious political tensions with occasional civil unrest, in some rural areas law and order has broken down because there are no funds for policing. On top of all that there is a developing threat of famine from locusts migrating up the country from the southwest which are destroying crops. You start to get the picture?

Known as "the Pearl of the Indian Ocean" because of its incredible natural beauty, Sri Lanka is another place with much to commend it. It is an important producer of tea, coffee, gemstones, coconuts, rubber, and is a major supplier of the world's cinnamon.

Its economic situation is very different from that of Madagascar, but nonetheless it also faces many challenges. Most notably these are consequences flowing from the 28 year civil war, which although now over has left much to be done to repair and re-instate people's lives.

In both countries there are real issues being faced by real people who like all of us just want to get on with their lives, make progress and provide for themselves and their families.

As part of The Mission House Team, you are doing quite a lot to help them do that.

You see, as a supporter of The Mission House you are helping to transform the lives of some of the most needy people in Madagascar and Sri Lanka.

Our delivery of help and hope (as our logo tagline says), through all our projects is our *raison d'être*, that is how we express our Christian love through action.

You remember the old question "How do you eat an elephant? Answer: One bite at a time"

Well, in terms of the sheer size of the many challenges, that's what we're up against and how we're making progress – one bite at a time. Selvakumar's story on page 3 is a good example of this.

We are all volunteers, each giving as we are able, some providing support on the front line, some behind the front line and all carrying out a variety of tasks with some providing the essential lifeblood of financial support.

If you are not already on board please come and join us. Come and eat elephant, it leaves a good taste in your mouth.

*Nigel Kiernander*



The Mission House Madagascar Academy - Life Skills Course Graduation



## MADAGASCAR

At the end of last year Nigel and a team of five people, three from the Board of Trustees and two long time lady supporters visited Fort Dauphin in the south east and Antananarivo (the capital) in central Madagascar.

There is always much to accomplish during these visits and Beverly, a Head of Department teacher at Abbot's Hill Independent School for Girls in Hemel Hempstead, UK, visited our Academy in Fort Dauphin to assess the quality of the teaching delivery on our Life Skills and English language courses. Her subsequent input to our tutors has helped ensure we are continually improving the quality of the training we give.

Also, she visited Ambondrona School, about 20 kms from the capital, where she inspected the new refectory building, water wells and washing facilities. These were funded mostly by the excellent fundraising efforts of her pupils converting their academic Community Development knowledge into practical end results.

Myrtle, a retired health care professional who co-sponsored our first Community Health Care student, Julia, through medical school, attended Julia's graduation ceremony in the capital. Whilst there and in Fort Dauphin she also met with a number of doctors who are interested in partnering with The Mission House Community Health Care project in the future.

Julia is now working in rural communities as a midwife, providing

Visiting team from The Mission House UK with Mamitiana and his family.

(left to right) Myrtle Prodger, Graham Cleveland, Nigel Kiernander, Kevin Honour, Beverly Stevens, Stuart Forman  
(front row) Mamitiana, Toky (his wife) and three children



health education to mothers as well as ante natal, childbirth and post natal care.

Elsewhere in Madagascar we are continuing with the financial support of orphans through our Child Sponsorship Program (£24 per month), plus sponsorship of a farm coupled with the orphanage. The farm currently grows rice and vegetables and the goal is to supply all the needs of the children's home and sell any surplus in the local markets.

Last year a severe hurricane ruined most of the crops and demolished the farm buildings – but the project continues unabated.

Our sponsorship of a teacher at a Christian rural primary school is on-going and at this school we have completed the installation of three water wells to provide fresh water for the children and staff.

In the capital, Antananarivo, we have continued to support a school which trains Malagasy people as Christian missionaries. After training they visit villages in the bush to bring help and hope to the rural poor. Some of their students have been based at our Academy in Fort Dauphin and some of our students who have wanted to pursue the mission



Graduation Day – Julia (on left) displays her Diploma

opportunity have received training at the mission school.

Some smaller one-off projects, such as providing rice at Christmas for the prisoners at a local prison in Fort Dauphin and throughout the year making small but obvious improvements to the local town environment have continued. This is done by our Life Skills Course students as part of the Volunteering module of the Life Skills Course.

(Below & left) Ambondrona School, Madagascar – New refectory building and washing facilities provided in conjunction with Abbot's Hill School







## **WATER WELLS PROJECT 2013**

### **MEET ONE OF THE BENEFICIARIES...**

My name is Selvakulasingham Selvakumar and I live in Nagarkovil (NE Sri Lanka) with my wife and three small children.



Nagarkovil was the home of my family until we were displaced during the long period of civil war.

We faced many, many hardships during these years of displacement and war. The family lost everything it owned. After the war ended resettlement began and we were granted permission to return to Nagarkovil. We returned to our home with nothing. Before the war, we earned our living by fishing and had all the implements we required.



(Above & left) Selvakumar and his children

Getting water for our daily lives was very difficult. The nearest well was 200 metres away and my wife and small children found it very difficult to draw water and carry it back to the shelter.

It was at this time that my family were selected as a beneficiary of this project and a water well was constructed for us. This act has been a blessing for me and my family and we are so grateful to The Mission House for helping us in this way.

(Below & left) Some of the beneficiaries making use of the newly constructed wells



### **Memories Camp**

Of the many people in the world suffering pain, distress and deep psychological wounds brought on by strife and disasters, perhaps the most heartrending are the young children caught up in these situations who are then traumatised by sexual abuse. These children should embody innocence and

trusting but that has been stolen from them.

We have sponsored five qualified carers and 10 children (one carer has responsibility for two children and is close by the child at all times) to attend a 'Memories Camp' near the capital of Sri Lanka, Colombo. The camp was a combination of fun outdoor activities,

team games, a visit to a place of interest, teaching sessions and therapy plus a birthday party for all the children, as many have never before celebrated anything. After the camp each child was given a photo album to refer back to for the happy memories, to help counter the many bad ones. The camp was a great success.

## THANK YOU

None of what we do would be possible without all the help and support of those who partner with us, using their talents and abilities to serve in The Mission House in their own unique way.

We honour and give a special 'Thank you' to our international volunteers ... **Cherilee Namee** from the UK, who set up our TEFL program up and has made two visits to Fort Dauphin, Madagascar ... **Gwen Ince** from the UK, who has worked with local mums in Fort Dauphin teaching motherhood, hygiene and cooking skills ... **Tracy Lancup** from Canada who worked in administration ... **Ruthann White** from the USA, who served on our TEFL program as a teacher.

And we honour also and give a special 'Thank you' to our full-time Malagasy workers at The Mission House Academy ... **Mamitiana** – Principal and Country Director ... **Rado** – Life Skills Course Manager and Tutor ... **Salama** – Project Manager and Tutor ... **Sitraka** – Administrative Assistant and Tutor ... **Miora** – Finance, Administration and Tutor.



(Above) Ruthann White teaching on the TEFL program. (Below) Some of the younger pupils at Ambondrona School.



Cherilee

Also we honour and give a special 'Thank you' to our **Prayer Partners**.

We honour and give a special 'Thank you' to our **regular Financial Partners** who are the financial backbone of The Mission House and also our **occasional donors** whose giving is so vitally important and makes us even more effective.

In summary, we continue to change lives in a variety of ways through our biblically based education projects and health projects. As we are able we will continue to do so in the year ahead, providing help and hope to those we serve.



Mamitiana



## PRAYER PARTNER VOLUNTEERS – 2014

Please renew or sign up here

Your only commitment is to pray at least once a week for calendar year 2014. To receive Prayer Partner Updates by mail please provide your details, and return this slip to the address below:

Name

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To renew or enrol for email updates, simply email the address opposite and enter 'Prayer Partner Update 2014' on the subject line.

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