



Madagascar

Republic of
Madagascar

Africa

Geography

Area 587,041 sq km. The world's 4th largest island – 1,600 km long in the Indian Ocean 600 km off the coast of Mozambique; a great degree of flora and fauna is unique to Madagascar.

Population	Ann Gr	Density
2010	20,146,442	2.72%
2020	25,686,510	2.37%
2030	31,528,452	1.97%

Capital Antananarivo 1,879,013. **Urbanites** 30.2%. **Pop under 15 yrs** 43%. **Life expectancy** 59.9 yrs.

Peoples

Malagasy 97.5%. 38 peoples of mixed African, Indonesian and Arab origin, speaking numerous regional forms of an Indonesian-related language.

Other 2.5%. French 0.5%; Réunionese 0.4%; Gujarati 0.3%; Chinese 0.3%; Arab 0.2%.

Literacy 70.6%. In decline; functional literacy much lower. **Official languages** Official Malagasy, French and English (though not widely used). **All languages** 20. **Indigenous languages** 17. **Languages with Scriptures** 3Bi 1NT 4por.

Economy

Agriculture, fishing and forestry were traditionally the primary means of living for most people, but slash-and-burn farming has destroyed vast areas of forest and caused serious erosion. The service sector is now very important to the country. Was recently listed as the world's 11th poorest nation; much of the population live in poverty. Frequent cyclones, lack of clean water and sanitation, and a lack of infrastructure and foreign investment all limit progress. A slow economic recovery has been underway for nearly 10 years, fuelled by improved education,

transport infrastructure and a boom in mining and eco-tourism. Continuing political instability threatens to undermine any progress made. **HDI Rank** 145th/182. **Public debt** 85% of GDP. **Income/person** \$468 (1% of USA).

Politics

The highland Merina people gained control of the whole island in the 19th Century, a fact still resented by the lowlander peoples. Annexed by France in 1896; independent in 1960. A coup in 1972 led to a failed experiment with Marxism. Popular protest and demands for change were violently suppressed before constitutional change was conceded and multiparty elections granted in 1993. In 2002 the former Marxist ruler was ousted by the newly-elected president after months of massive demonstrations and military confrontation. The president targeted corruption and aimed to stimulate economic growth and reduce poverty while centralizing executive powers, a move viewed suspiciously by some. His tenure ended when an early 2009 military-backed takeover saw the capital's mayor proclaim himself president. This was followed by months of political upheaval, a failed power-sharing agreement and broad international condemnation from within Africa as well as globally. Corruption has long been a major problem.

Religion

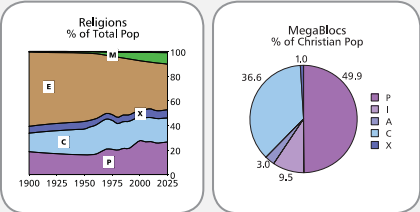
There is officially religious freedom. The power of the old Malagasy folk religion remains pervasive. The four mainline churches have great influence. The government and traditional churches are suspicious of the emergence of younger, more charismatic groups.

Religions	Pop %	Population	Ann Gr
Christian	53.53	10,784,390	3.0%
Ethnoreligionist	37.65	7,585,135	2.0%
Muslim	8.00	1,611,715	4.3%
Non-religious	0.24	48,351	4.5%
Other	0.23	46,337	3.6%
Hindu	0.15	30,220	4.2%
Chinese	0.10	20,146	2.7%
Baha'i	0.10	20,146	2.7%

Christians	Denoms	Pop %	Affiliates	Ann Gr
Protestant	40	31.52	6,350,000	2.2%
Independent	101	5.97	1,203,000	4.4%
Anglican	1	1.86	375,000	2.6%
Catholic	1	23.13	4,660,000	2.1%
Orthodox	1	0.10	20,000	4.6%
Marginal	2	0.25	51,000	7.9%
Unaffiliated		0.30	60,000	-5.8%
<i>Doubly affiliated</i>		<i>-9.60</i>	<i>-1,935,000</i>	<i>0.0%</i>

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Churches	MegaBloc	Congs	Members	Affiliates	TransBloc	Pop %	Population	Ann Gr
Catholic Church	C	320	2,560,440	4,660,000	Evangelicals	11.5	2,310,539	3.5%
Lutheran Church	P	15,962	830,000	3,320,000				
Church of JC - FJKM	P	4,062	731,092	2,610,000	Renewalists	4.1	821,180	6.2%
Episcopal Church	A	1,349	134,892	375,000				
New Protestant Church	I	556	100,000	350,000	Pentecostals	2.1	425,500	5.9%
Seventh-day Adventist	P	430	113,000	161,590				
METM	I	420	71,000	142,000				
Tranozozoro Atranobiriky	I	153	67,500	135,000				
Assemblies of God	I	420	51,471	105,000				
Jesus Saves Pente Ch	P	194	38,739	86,000				
United Pentecostal Ch	P	640	68,908	82,000				
Jehovah's Witnesses	M	351	23,500	47,000				
Eglise du Reveil	I	837	19,250	38,500				
Rhema	I	118	11,833	35,500				
FAAKRI	I	102	10,167	30,500				
Bible Baptist Churches	I	60	15,000	25,000				
CEIM	P	65	10,000	18,000				
Other denominations[129]		2,262	196,265	438,100				
<i>Doubly affiliated</i>				-1,935,000				
Total Christians[146]		28,301	5,053,057	10,724,190				



Answers to Prayer

1 Church growth continues in the midst of political and environmental crises. The most notable increases are of charismatic and neo-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.

Challenges for Prayer

1 Madagascar is locked in a battle with poverty, even though it is often called the “8th continent” and is rich in ecology, ethnicity and history. The majority live on an average of less than \$1US/day and survive by subsistence agriculture. The common slash-and-burn technique is destroying the rainforest cover as well as many unique plant and animal species. About 80% of the original rainforest cover has already been lost. Repeatedly, cyclones further hamper development and destroy property. Pray for appropriate and sustainable development that lifts people out of poverty, and for a long-term approach to this complex challenge.



2 Political troubles and conflict plague this land. Many thought political freedom had arrived with the conclusive defeat of Marxist rhetoric and the ending of civil strife in 2002. The victor of the 2002 and 2006 presidential elections was concerned for the poor but criticized for his autocratic style. He was forced to resign in 2009 after his rival, the capital's mayor, orchestrated street demonstrations and the necessary military backing to seize the presidency. Widespread political condemnation of this move from most of the EU, the African Union and the UN, demonstrates Madagascar's continued democratic fragility and vulnerability to military intervention. Pray for leadership that will serve the people with humility and transparency, not seeking power for its own ends.

3 The Protestant Churches have a glorious history of faith despite their persecution by heathen rulers and harassment by the French Catholic colonial authorities. It grew from 5,000 in 1861 to one million in 1900. There have been significant revival movements within the larger churches in 1895, 1941, 1948, and during the 1980s. Springing from the revivals, movements of indigenous lay “shepherds” are operating within the mainline churches. Their emphasis on healing and exorcism – which relate strongly to the spiritist mentality – has led to conversions and full churches in some areas. Pray that this movement might continue to grow and be rooted in Scripture.

4 **The old beliefs still prevail in many ways**, despite the growth and spread of Christianity. Compromise with the old beliefs, veneration of ancestral spirits, and witchcraft is widespread among those who claim to be Christian. A Christian veneer often prevails, but many have little understanding of the biblical message of salvation. Many churches appear to be spiritually dead and in numerical decline, particularly in mainline denominations. Revival as well as biblical teaching and leadership are urgently needed. Pray for a new move of the Holy Spirit to reawaken these churches that have such a strong legacy.

5 **The Church is highly divided**. Most growth is in the charismatic denominations – by transfer growth and some conversion. Opposition to these newer groups – coming from traditional denominations and the government – has on occasion even reached hostility. Churches split to form new denominations with alarming regularity, too often based on personal feuds between leaders. Promises of prosperity lure the poor away from their previous congregations. Pray for greater unity among leaders and churches, and that pride and jealousy might give way to humility and Kingdom consciousness.

6 **Discipleship and biblical training** are the greatest needs of churches. For both the burgeoning but untrained newer churches and the frequently compromised/syncretized older ones, a knowledge of God's Word and a biblical worldview are essential. Pray for:

a) **Lay discipleship and instruction**. There is little by way of structured training or teaching for ordinary believers. Pray for new grassroots movements that are accessible and relevant to all Christians and that can be multiplied and reproduced throughout the country.

b) **Formal theological training** is a great need, since most pastors are undertrained. There are more than 20 seminaries and Bible colleges run by every denomination of note, but the level of instruction and study resources (especially books) are limited. Bible Training Centers for Pastors (BTCP) runs a two-year training course. Some institutions are subject to theological compromise. Pray for the generation of resources to equip these places, and pray for more teachers with both academic and spiritual credentials.

7 **Young people** are the key to the future of this rapidly growing population. Among the many groups working with young people (from children to university students) are UGBM(IFES), CEF, SU, YFC and YWAM. Thousands are ministered to every week through various programmes, groups and camps. Cities are greatly impacted, but rural areas have been neglected. Pray for the further development of Sunday School and catechism programmes.

8 **Less-reached areas and peoples:**

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a) **The northern and southern extremities** of the island host the least evangelized of the Malagasy peoples. Animism prevails with strong Muslim influence in the north and northwest, and 80% of the south is still non-Christian. Inaccessibility is the greatest challenge, and missionaries have thus far failed to penetrate these regions effectively. Malagasy evangelists travel for days to reach such villages – pray for health, bicycles, finances and faith for them.

b) **Malagasy ethnic religion** dominates among the Sakalava in the west, Tsimihety in the north, Tandroy and Tanosy in the south as well as the Betsimisaraka, Antesaka, Antemoro and Tanala. These are just the larger groups. Shaman healers and witchcraft abound, and demonic oppression is common. Some mission organizations are actively targeting these areas: NMS, AIM, IMB, the Anglicans and others. Pray for the love and power of Christ to be demonstrated to these people groups.

c) **Muslims** are growing in numbers among Sakalava groups on the west coast, the Antemoro in the east and the Antankarana in the north. Extensive Islamization efforts abound; mosque building, radio broadcasts and offers of education are gathering momentum. Folk Islam is the norm. Pray that these peoples are not abandoned to Islam by the Church. Specific outreach to Muslims, though very limited, is proving fruitful; pray for more. The Lutheran Church has a vigorous outreach through the Shalom programme, and AIM has started a ministry among the Sakalava and Bara.

d) **Ethnic minorities**. Pray for the Muslim Comorians, Gujaratis and Arabs, with few known believers among them.

9 **The Protestant mission force** remains smaller than the formidable needs and challenges. Most urgent is the need for more pioneer workers to go to areas where health and living

conditions are difficult. Long-term commitment to and love for the people, their language and their culture is needed; short-term outreaches abound but their lasting impact has yet to be established. Trainers and teachers are still needed. The endemic poverty means that there are plentiful opportunities in aid, development, vocational training, education and health. Many expatriates are committed to ministry with and for existing indigenous denominations in these capacities. Largest mission agencies: **AIM**, Norwegian Mission, **AoG**, **CCCI**, Loving Concern International. Two indigenous Christian associations (**AMEN** in Fianarantsoa and **CEMI** in Tuléar) seek to address the overwhelming social problems from a Christian worldview. The Lutherans and **FJKM** do excellent work in health care and education.

10 Christian support ministries. Pray for increased impact of the following:

- a) **Aviation ministry.** Because much of the land is inaccessible, the ministry of **MAF** and Helimission is very strategic in flying workers and supplies to the places of greatest need. MedAir and several secular aid agencies benefit from these organizations.
- b) **Bible translation.** The Protestant Malagasy Bible has been available since 1836. A revised modern version, using more current Official Malagasy, has been produced by various collaborating denominations. Currently, only the official Merina dialect has the Bible; translation work is ongoing in 10 different Malagasy languages. The Bible Society (UBS) has a widely recognized ministry and a vigorous distribution programme, but lack of foreign exchange limits importation and printing of the Scriptures. *The Children's Bible* is also a popular resource as is the Bible on mobile phone; a high proportion of Malagasy use mobile phones routinely.
- c) **Christian literature** is in short supply. There are few good spiritual books in Malagasy. The Lutherans and Catholics have printing presses, but they badly need modernizing. Quality Christian material that speaks to the Malagasy mindset is also needed.
- d) **Audio Scriptures** are vital in a country where literacy is below 50% and functionally as low as 30%, which makes all the more valuable resources such as **FCBH** and audio teaching in 13 languages on offer through **GRN**, **GNM** and **UBS**.
- e) **Christian radio.** Christian programmes such as those by **UBS** and **SU** are regularly aired on national and many local FM stations in the larger urban centres, but organization and consistent quality programmes remain a need. **Avotra**, a local ministry, has a radio station in Nosy-Be with good local impact. **HCJB** has helped to set up a number of the FM stations in different parts of the island. Both **TWR** and the Adventists broadcast in Plateau Malagasy. Most crucial is providing isolated rural peoples with radios and radio transmissions that reach them; the cities are well covered already.
- f) **The JESUS film** is now available in seven languages, the result of recent translation work. Five more are in progress. Pray for its effective use.

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