

Derek and Jane Waller

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The call in action

Dear friends,

Bishop Samy and holistic discipleship

On 28 February 2018, Rev Samitiana was consecrated as assistant bishop in the Diocese of Toliara to work alongside Bishop Todd. Bishop Samy (as he is affectionately known) is from the central highlands of Madagascar and had been working in Mauritius for the past 10 years as provincial secretary. He and his wife Neny Holy (Neny means mother and is the honorary title given to the wives of clergy including Neny Jane) have five children and the two youngest are with them in Toliara. They have become good friends of ours and are a great support for us in developing discipleship groups through Rooted in Jesus. A year on from his consecration, we asked Bishop Samy about his ministry here..

Bishop, what led you to Toliara Diocese?

We came to Toliara as a result of prayer. My wife and I prayed together many times asking the Lord to show us the next step of our mission. We had a very clear image that we should leave Mauritius and go back home and we believed that we must go to a place where there is sand and also poverty..

How is the culture here in South Madagascar different from where you grew up?

My people are of the mountains, but here they are a people of sand and sea. In both cultures there is the tradition of seeking the blessing of the ancestors. In my culture, this revolves around the family but here the village is most important. Each village has its own traditional priest and this man is the key person in the village. The culture is organised around this priest and he holds the religious power. He is the intercessor between the village and their ancestors. He is also important in everyday lives – in decisions about marriage, building a new house etc. The witchdoctor is also important but only when there are any problems. .

What excites you about working in Toliara Diocese?

What excites me is sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ with people living in a pagan context. Jesus met people like that and it's very exciting seeing how the gospel can change lives. For example, I was recently in the village of Andranovory and it was clear that the candidates for confirmation were longing for new life in Jesus. I believe that if your life is surrendered to Jesus, by the power of his Holy Spirit you can be transformed – that's very exciting for me. I am also excited by the transformation of the life of the village community through the Christian community.

What is hard about ministry here?

This is a baby diocese, officially only six years old, so establishing ownership of the mission by the local people and finding real disciples is hard.



Name: Derek and Jane Waller

Location: Toliara, Madagascar

Our call: To make disciples and encourage young Christians

Our role: Derek is the diocesan coordinator of disciple making. Jane is exploring possible roles in adult education while also working alongside Derek.



Bishop Samy's welcome in Toliara Cathedral

Continued over the page

What challenges does the church here face?

We are constantly praying about building disciples for Christ, people who want to walk with Christ and walk together with the church – the body of Christ. Community development should also be part of our mission as well as discipleship. We have a holistic mission because the poverty here is so absolute. There is material poverty but people also lack an education and many don't see the importance of it. Another issue is that the village, rather than the family, is the key to life here. I believe that the family was created by God and without this, people have no foundation in their lives – a pillar is not there – so I am trying to build what I call "holistic discipleship."

What is your vision for the Diocese?

We need the grace to learn from the experiences of others. We should not try to do too many things but instead focus on what touches people's lives. So holistic discipleship is very important in our witness of Christ and our mission must be local. The diocese needs to say: "This is the village, this is our church – what can the church do to make a difference?" Let Christian families witness to the love of Christ, as salt and light. However, for this to happen, we need the commitment of every local Christian and we can then make a difference.

What would you like to say to Christians in the UK?

We need to create a partnership in mission in both directions. Mission is universal so we need to create that partnership as the one family of God. For example, youth here struggle with the same problems as youth in the UK. We need to share and learn from each other's experiences. This new generation brings with it new challenges so let's re-imagine our partnership together in mission and learn together. If we start with mission to youth, we can then go on to other areas for partnership.

What is mission for you?

Mission is the mission of God, entrusted to us as his church. Mission must also be local to a specific area, bringing the gift of fullness of life to specific people in specific areas.

Please give thanks for Bishop Samy, Neny Holy and their family. Pray that the vision of holistic discipleship he is so passionate about may become a reality in Toliara Diocese. Please also pray for Bishop Todd, on sabbatical until April 21. Give thanks for the new discipleship groups which have begun around the Diocese and pray that these will bear fruit.

In the peace of Christ,

Derek and Jane



Photos from top to bottom: Bisho Samy and Neny Holy; meeting children at Angarazy village church; ready for lunch at Morombe; participants of the Morombe Rooted in Jesus training.

GOING FURTHER WITH CHURCH MISSION SOCIETY

Called into Egypt: Raising up disciples is also central to the work of local partner Habeeb Kamal, and he has seen lives transformed by God in Egypt. Read more about it at churchmissionsociety.org/calledintoegypt

You can give to Derek and Jane at: churchmissionsociety.org/waller

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If you would like to discuss your mailings with us or to receive this link letter on a regular basis, please email supporter.care@churchmissionsociety.org or call 01865 787400

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