



PRAY FOR THE SAKALAVA

WHO ARE THE SAKALAVA PEOPLE?

The Sakalava live in the west and northwest of Madagascar. They are a minority ethnic group, making up about 6.2% of the population. Related to the Antakarana, they are semi-nomadic agriculturalists and fishermen, and also keep cattle as a sign of wealth and for sacrifices. Sakalava identity focuses on respecting, honouring and working for both the living and the dead Sakalava royalty. They have a caste system which includes the descendants of royalty, then nobles, commoners and slaves – everyone knows their position in society.

WHAT DO THEY BELIEVE?

They believe in a remote, creator god, who was the first ancestor. He can be reached through ancestral spirits and human mediums. People seek spirit possession, often amid much drunkenness, and sorcery and witchcraft are common. Fear is a constant companion: fear of punishment, of displeasing ancestors, and of death. Taboos are observed in almost everything to do with

“Sakalava are listening to the gospel of Matthew and songs in their own language...”

their daily life. Everything is geared towards pleasing the royal ancestors.

WHAT IS BEING DONE TO REACH THEM WITH THE GOSPEL?

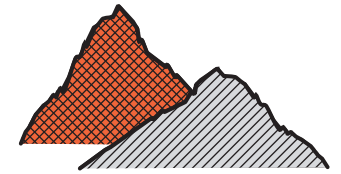
A TIMO (Training in Ministry Outreach) team served among the Sakalava from 2013-2015, and they saw several people come to Christ. Among these were ‘The Band’, a group of musicians who have been writing Bible songs in the Sakalava language. Rosina Ferdinand, the TIMO team leader, continued to minister to the Sakalava, together with one family from the TIMO team. Last year the Ramangalahy family from France joined this team and four Sakalava couples, who are new believers, have received biblical training to equip them to evangelise their own people.

WHAT CAN WE PRAY FOR?

The island of Nosy Be depends heavily on tourism but Madagascar’s Covid-19 response means that borders have been closed indefinitely, meaning that tourism as a source of income has completely gone. Many people pick ylang-ylang flowers and sell them to a factory to be turned into oil. But the price per kilo is one fifth of what it was last year. People are struggling to pay back loans and feed their families. Pray that the church would come together to help people. Pray that God would show himself to them as the great provider.

Pray for Bible translation projects and gospel sharing initiatives going on across the island. Memory cards are being produced that can be used in mobile phones, and through these devices the Sakalava are listening to the Gospel of Matthew and songs in their own language. Thank the Lord for this way of getting the gospel into the homes of the Sakalava people. Please pray that many Sakalava will come to faith in Christ through this outreach ministry.

Recent travel on the island has revealed that three more villages are open to hearing the gospel. The first village has offered to give a plot for missionaries to build a house on. The second village has offered a house for the missionaries to stay in. The third village has openly expressed their desire to have a service held in their village every Sunday. Praise the Lord for these new opportunities of ministry and pray for wisdom for our Malagasy missionaries (Melias, Lebaba, Noel and Jean) as they organise outreach to these villages.



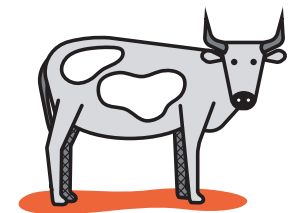
WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Their name means ‘people of the long valleys’. ‘Sakalava,’ as a collective ethnic term, encompasses a diverse array of communities.



SAKALAVA ROYALTY

The Sakalava of the south differ greatly from those in the north. But the true mark of Sakalava identity is that one respects, honours and works for the living and dead Sakalava royalty.



PASTORAL PEOPLE

The Sakalava are a pastoral people, keeping large herds of zebu cattle that outnumber the human population.

You can download our prayer PDFs from: eu.aimint.org/resources.