



MEETING JESUS

*How Jesus' interactions with
women still challenge us today*

4 ACCOMPANYING TESTIMONIES



AFRICA
INLAND MISSION



Meet Rosina

Rosina Ferdinand grew up in the traditional Sakalava way —farming and fishing in an island village on Nosy Be off the north coast of Madagascar, believing in cultural taboos and engaging in ancestral worship. But even at a young age she suspected that something was missing in her life and was searching for the truth. At high school she heard the gospel for the first time, and she knew that Jesus was the Saviour, and that she could trust him.

Thinking about how far away from God she had been, and how she had been trapped by the fear of taboos and unappeased ancestors, knowing that her whole community still lived in that bondage weighed heavily on her heart. “I did have the desire to come back to Nosy Be, so that they would be freed and know salvation,” she says, “but I did not have the courage. I dreamt of going back to my village and being part of the family there, living there with them so that through me they may see Jesus and see the gospel. That was my dream, but I didn’t know where to start or how to do it.”

God sent Rosina to All Nations Christian College in the UK. While there, a local church who had a prayer focus on the Sakalava people invited her to visit, and then promised to support her when she returned to minister to her people.

Rosina has served as an AIM missionary on Nosy Be for the last eight years. She now disciples the newest believers at the Sakalava church plant. One of those young men, the leader of the worship band, recently expressed a desire to become a pastor. “This is not something I could have done by myself,” she says. She is grateful for the people who have been praying for her and her ministry among the Sakalava people.

“I just wanted to be with my people,” Rosina explains, “sitting down in the village, being with them so maybe they would see the transformation in my life and see that there is something magnificent in that, and they would know Jesus as well. God loves my people. He wants to raise up Sakalava people to believe in him and to be set free from the bondage of the fear of the ancestors. It is quite amazing to me that the Lord put me right back in the middle of my people.”

If you would like to read a full version of Rosina’s story, you can visit:
eu.aimint.org/going-back/



Sophie's story

Sophie* was brought up in a Muslim home on one of the islands in the Indian Ocean but was having some serious doubts. Then one night she dreamed she was in a deep pit. It was dark, and she couldn't get herself out. She saw Jesus looking down into the pit. He called her name, reached down and pulled her out. She decided to find out more about her rescuer and has eagerly soaked up and stuck to truth even in the midst of persecution. Her faith is simple yet deep.

When she first accepted Christ, she only felt responsible for herself and her own decision. This broadened to a desire to share with her family, and later, her wider community, after seeing her neighbour in a dream, in the middle of the ocean, clinging to a rope which she believed would bring her to paradise. Sophie could see that no one was holding the other end to pull her to safety – she was just floating helplessly, clutching a useless rope.

Shortly after reading about Paul's persecution in Acts, Sophie received a call to say the police were coming to arrest her. She boldly asked the police officer if she was considered dangerous enough to be locked up without a trial. The officer agreed to a court hearing. She came to us and said, "If I go to prison, I go to prison, but I want a chance like Paul to speak. God will be with me and give me the words." In the end her accusers never showed up and her case was dismissed.

Then, just before Christmas she had another dream. She saw a man in bright white who asked her what path she was following. She responded with, "What do you want me to do?" He gave her a holy book and then took her by the hand to where all her extended family were gathered. He then told her to stand in the middle of them and read what he had given her. It was the story of Jonah, and as she read it aloud she understood and was able to explain the parallel to Jesus. Afterwards she fell to her knees pleading, crying, begging her family to accept the truth and Jesus who would save them. At this point she woke up. But she knew she was being asked to share the words she had been given with her family.

For the last few years she has invited her family to eat a Christmas meal with her. This year, after everyone finished eating, she shared the gospel. It was a big step and she was scared, but she knew she needed to obey. She said it was met with mixed reactions – some disagreed but others listened with interest.

For more of Sophie's story, you can visit: eu.aimint.org/sophienov2020/ and eu.aimint.org/directed-by-dreams/

** For security reasons, this is not her real name or photo.*



Meet Queen

“Being a woman in mission has been an advantage for me, as many of the communities I have worked in perceive females as warm, loving and not necessarily as a threat. I have had unique opportunities to share this message of Christ, especially with other women. When I lived in a community among a least-reached group in Malawi, women could talk and visit other women not related to them, but not men. I had access to women whom I would eventually share the stories of the Bible with. I could spend time with their children. This opened up opportunities to present the gospel in ordinary conversations.

The disadvantage though, is that in some communities, a woman is seen to be physically, emotionally and spiritually weak, which makes her vulnerable and sometimes taken advantage of. Her word doesn't carry much weight so women do not necessarily have a 'voice'.

Over the years I have had different roles in different seasons. In seasons like this where our children are young, travel and other commitments are limited. The most important thing is to understand the season, embrace it and enjoy it. There are wonderful things in each season. At the moment we are adjusting to a new location. I am working part time at the AIM Southern Region office, carefully choosing what to commit to and what to refrain from. I'm building friendships with the local ladies, one who has braided my hair and the other who sells fruit in our community. The opportunities may look different but in every season there is a life I can touch. The women who followed Jesus, followed until the end, that's my encouragement. To follow in every season. To follow until the end.”

If you would like to read Queen Basupi's full article, you can visit:
eu.aimint.org/in-every-season



Meet Myriam*

"Susanna has been my best friend since we were children, and it's through her that I can trace some of my Christian story. Susanna lived next door to a Christian missionary called Joanna. One Christmas, Joanna invited me and Susanna to a party. There was a local believer there who started reading the Bible out loud, telling stories about Jesus. I couldn't take my eyes off her. All the words she spoke were just echoing in my heart. I wanted to dismiss it, but this woman, this believer, seemed so kind and gentle, a beautiful spirit. I just had to listen. The words seemed just for me.

Looking round, I could see another local family that I knew. Were these people Christians? Living here? I didn't know that was possible. I'd never met a local Christian.

The lady reading the Bible came and spoke to me. Her name was Malika. We swapped phone numbers and kept in touch. I started weighing the Bible against the Qur'an. Realising the Qur'an wasn't the truth, and that I couldn't follow Islam, was like having to take off my own skin. I had to change everything about myself.

I would go to a little church gathering. I would talk to Malika, and there I would respond to Jesus. I wanted a beautiful life like Malika's. I wanted to live out the truth. But then I would go home and pretend. Malika and the other believers would text me, they wouldn't let me give up on the truth, and they made sure I knew that if I chose Jesus, I wouldn't be on my own. I got more involved in our little church. I realised that I had something to give, that Jesus had given me gifts too. Increasingly, when I read the Bible I began to know peace, and everything else in my life seemed less important than what I was reading. Finally, I was ready to let go of the ties that bound me to my family and my community, and to live for Jesus. I told my family my decision. I even took my mum to church with me! My parents and my siblings haven't followed me into faith, but at least they understand what I believe. And they know that you can be in this country, and be a Christian.

Our church is growing and growing. God is at work here. When I first went, there were about 10 people meeting together. Now we are about 20 people. This Easter almost 100 people came together to celebrate our risen Christ. God has put it on my heart to be a light in my community and to be able to give an answer for the hope that I have. The police know about us and watch us, but we need to be brave so that more people can hear and respond to the truth."

You can read more of Myriam's story by visiting:
eu.aimint.org/faith-in-the-balance/

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