



MISSIONARY HIGHLIGHT: AUGUST 9, 2020

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## MATT & JULIE ESPELAND

MADAGASCAR

Being a missionary is not easy work. Oftentimes, the fruit of the labor is not always seen. On a small island in the Indian Ocean, the Tanala people live their daily lives in the middle of a thick forest range. While they're a happy and content people group, they desperately need the gospel.

More than 1 million of them live in the mountains in Tanala, Madagascar, spread over about 4,500 square miles. With only one paved road, they are a hard people group to reach. Matt and Julie Espeland, International Mission Board missionaries, spend lots of time hiking the paths along the rough, dangerous forest of Tanala as they seek to share the saving truth of the gospel.

Many villages where they serve have no electricity. The people they minister to live in thatch huts and are very poor. Once the Espeland's arrive at their destination and preach, people oftentimes do not want to hear.

The Espeland's missionary journey might sound a little bit like a movie script, but it is very real and a part of their daily lives. Fortunately, some of the Tanala people have accepted Jesus Christ as Savior and are very eager to learn more about the Bible. Churches are being planted and lives are being changed off the coast of Africa.

Through our Cooperative Program, we support Matt and Julie. Today, let's pray for them and their ministry in Tanala, Madagascar. Pray for the gospel to be received where it is preached and for many new churches to be planted.