



# United in Incredible Joy

EXCITEMENT FOR CHURCH HEALTH BUILDS AS PURPOSE  
DRIVEN TRAINING LAUNCHES IN MADAGASCAR

“There is a hunger to work in unity and share Christ,” says Mike Laurence, Pastor of Faith Community Church in Hopkinton, Massachusetts, of the atmosphere at the first Healthy Church training session in Madagascar. Through the PEACE Plan, churches like Faith Community are paired with local churches across a developing nation, equipping them to better solve their community’s needs, becoming what we call an IPC (International Partnering Church).



“Pastor Dinah with me the honor of preaching on Pentecost Sunday,” says Pastor Mike. “Three years ago Dinah was working in business when God called him to start a church. It opened 8 months ago and now has over 200 people, still growing!”

There is a palpable excitement of the faith leaders for the training Mike’s church is providing – new lessons on Healthy Church principles that teach pastors how to align the purposes of God in their church and mobilize their members to ministry and mission. The readiness of the spiritual environment for this new movement was evident when nearly every one of the 150 church leaders invited responded to the invitation with excitement and tables overflowed at the first gathering.

Pastor Dinah Ratsimbajaona, President of the Evangelical Alliance in Madagascar, set the stage for this moment earlier in the year when he gathered 20 key

church leaders from the capital city of Antananarivo and surrounding towns. Pastor Mike and the other Faith Community Church volunteers traveled to the country to hold conversations and build relationships with the leaders. The in-country team took to the vision with enthusiasm, inviting their networks and working together to translate training materials into the local language of Malagasy.



Six months later, the fruit of these efforts was the unprecedented gathering of leaders from across all denominations of Madagascar, from Reformed to Pentecostal. The faith leaders dove in together to lessons on building a Purpose Driven Church.

Lay members from Faith Community Church traveled on a short term mission trip to serve the budding movement, leading table discussion and facilitating large group feedback. These ordinary church members from Massachusetts, none of whom would consider themselves professional missionaries, found themselves being used by God to initiate a nation-wide initiative that is already ushering in unity and health across the body of Christ. They also rejoiced at the opportunity to connect with their brothers and sisters in the local churches of Madagascar – a feeling that became apparent when local pastors danced in worship for the first time with their American partners. Pastor Mike reports, “The joy was incredible. Faith Community Church got our ‘worship jam’ on!” Faith Community’s leaders will continue to build relationship and mentor the pastors in Madagascar via online conferencing and follow up trips planned for the fall.